



Scoop

Sept. 26, 2003

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS MEDICAL SCHOOL AT HOUSTON

Events to Know

September

29 Biochemistry & Molecular Biology Seminar, 11:45 a.m., MSB 2.135.

30 History of Medicine Lecture, Dr. Buja, noon, MSB 2.135.

October

1 Flag football. Interested in signing up for the league? Contact **Chucky Son**, 713-500-8422.

10 Fun Fest, 2-6 p.m., Hornberger. Volunteers needed! See <<http://www.uthouston.edu/funfest/hel.html>>.

13 SECC contributions due.

14 Willerson Lectureship, Dr. Jay Cohn, noon, MSB 3.001.

18 Lung Disease Symposium, Dr. Dani Zander, codirector. Call 713-798-3671.

NIH WOMEN'S HEALTH DIRECTOR TO GIVE KEYNOTE ADDRESS

Dr. Vivian W. Pinn, director, Office of Research on Women's Health (ORWH) at the National Institutes of Health (NIH), will discuss "Trends in Women's Health Research: Where Do We Go from Here?" 5:30 – 8 p.m. Tues., **Oct. 28**, at the McGovern Museum of Health & Medical Science.



Dr. Vivian W. Pinn

The ORWH, under Pinn's leadership, serves as the focal point for women's health research at the NIH and is charged with determining the research agenda for women's health in this country. Pinn has led the ORWH since 1991, having come to the NIH from Howard University College of Medicine in Washington, D.C., where she served as professor and chair of the Department of Pathology. In 1994, she was named associate director for Research on Women's Health at the NIH. Pinn's previous appointments were at Tufts University and Harvard Medical School. She earned her M.D. from the University of Virginia School of Medicine in 1967, where she was the only woman and minority in her class.

This is the first annual symposium of the Texas Medical Center Women's Health Network, founded in 2002 by Dr. Kathryn Peek, a research professor at Texas Woman's University, and Dr. Joslyn Fisher, a physician at Baylor College of Medicine and Ben Taub General Hospital. The organization is dedicated to advancing women's health and seeks to increase resources committed to women's health, as well as to link local, regional, and national resources relevant to women's health. For more information and to register, visit <<http://whn.library.tmc.edu>> or call 713-794-2480.

- N. Shire

Hard Hat Update

DOORS, GATES BEING INSTALLED TO PREVENT FLOODING

Submarine doors, flood doors, and flood gates are being installed in the Medical School Building in an effort to keep the building's interior and its contents dry the next time it floods. As part of the flood mitigation project and the reconstruction of the building following Tropical Storm Allison, the first flood door has been installed in the new Webber Plaza entrance under the pagoda.

"The difference between a flood door and submarine door is that there is no open air gap at the top of the submarine door – it can be fully submerged," explained Hyde Griffith, senior project manager, Facilities Operations.

The flood door can withstand a height of approximately 7 feet of water, which is higher than the 500-year flood plain of 47 feet above sea level. The dark red granite around the building ends at this 47-foot level for reference purposes.



Hyde Griffith, Facilities Operations, shows off the first flood door.

(Continued on back page)

ATTENTION ALL MEMBERS OF ALPHA OMEGA ALPHA

The Fall General Membership meeting of Alpha Omega Alpha (Delta of Texas) to elect new members will be held 5:30 p.m., Mon., **Sept. 29**. If you would like to nominate a resident or alumnus/a for membership, please send the name and reason for the nomination to **Dr. Eugene Boisaubin** at <Eugene.Boisaubin@uth.tmc.edu>, by this weekend. If you are not sure if your candidate is already a member, please contact **Pat Caver** at <Patricia.E.Caver@uth.tmc.edu>.

BREAKING GROUND FOR THE NEW IMM

President James T. Willerson and **Beth Robertson**, at right, break ground for the new Institute of Molecular Medicine for the Prevention of Human Diseases, at a ceremony held on the grounds Tues., Sept. 23.



THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS
HEALTH SCIENCE CENTER AT HOUSTON
MEDICAL SCHOOL

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DOORS, GATES BEING INSTALLED TO PREVENT FLOODING, CONTINUED

“With this type of flood mitigation, we are most concerned about the height of the water relative to the ground floor elevation,” Griffith said.

Flood doors also will be installed on the Fannin-side of the building, on both sides of Ross Sterling Drive (north at the new Learning Resource Center and south at the current guard’s desk), and in the cross-walk (blue elevator lobby) on the ground floor between the John Freeman Building and the Medical School Building. This is a total of five perimeter wall flood doors on the ground level.

Four submarine doors that can take up to 25 feet of water will be installed at the building’s loading dock, and the largest submarine door – 12 by 18 feet — will be located at the cyclotron building’s loading dock. Two more submarine doors will be installed in the basement to protect the forthcoming gross anatomy lab and morgue.

All doors will be in an open, locked position and must be manually closed in the event of an emergency. Both types of doors, and the 30 inch-high flood gates, have inflatable seals internally and externally that must be manually pumped to activate. The submarine doors have the seal around the whole perimeter while the flood doors and gates do not have such a seal across the top.

“Environmental Health and Safety is updating the emergency response plan that will call for a maintenance person to unlock the doors and inflate the seals. In an emergency, the loading dock doors will have to be closed first, and then we’ll work from the lower elevations to the higher elevations and from the outside to the inside to secure all of the doors and gates,” Griffith said.

All of the doors have portholes and are tied into the building automation system, which monitors the status of the latches and the pressure of the seals.

Flood gates provide another layer of protection and are presently in place in the interior of the building around the new Imaging Center.

“When these flood gates are closed, it automatically shuts down a drain from the Imaging Center to preclude water from backing up into the center, and it shuts off a valve so that new water is not let into the Imaging Center, which encompasses a total of 9,600 square feet,” Griffith said.

Other flood prevention measures taking shape include the installation of aquarium glass and thick concrete walls being erected around the perimeter of the building and in the basement.

- D. Brown



SEPTEMBER EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH - COLLEEN O'BRIEN

This month the tables are turned on **Colleen O'Brien** – the editor of *Scoop* and the September Employee of the Month. Colleen has authored many dozens of employee of the month features – one of her favorite aspects of the job — and now she is the subject of one.



Colleen O'Brien

Colleen has had a career at the Medical School for 10 ½ years and first started work in the Department of Neurology for **Dr. Gage Van Horn** in the Neurology Clinic. Colleen earned her bachelor’s degree in history from The University of the State of New York in Albany. She has been the editor of *Scoop* in the Office of Community Affairs and Public Education for the last six and a half years.

“From students to neurosurgeons, chairs, and deans, she is in dialogue with our community day in and day out,” wrote her nominator. “Her approach is service with a smile, and she makes the time to help anyone who calls or e-mails their requests. She has earned the trust, not only of employees, but of departments throughout the Medical School.”

“When I look back, I must have written hundreds of stories for *Scoop*,” she said, adding that her most significant interviews to date included one with **Nancy Dickey, M.D.**, the first female president of the American Medical Association, and one earlier in

her career with **Grover Washington Jr.**, who had just come out with a Grammy Award-winning album.

“This job is very rewarding. Everyone I interact with helps me do my job better, and ultimately, they become part of my story. Although the technical aspects of the position are ever-changing and evolving, that comes with the territory. I like challenges. I try to stay open to new ideas while holding onto time-honored Medical School traditions.”

It was a familial feeling that brought Colleen to the medical school a decade ago. “I was basically attracted to the Medical School I think because there are a lot of medical professionals in my family tree. Both my mom and my aunt were nurses; my great-grandmother was a head nurse in a London hospital; and my uncle was a veterinarian, a graduate of Cornell University. So, I felt right at home,” she said.

Colleen said that while the core nature of her work, reporting medical news, remains the same, “The nature of being an editor has deepened in scope as far as skills required, due to electronic journalism, and in addition, we aspire to interest a broad range of readership levels -- from faculty, staff, and students, to the wider Houston area and beyond.

“I feel it’s an honor to have the people I have around me supporting me — **Dr. Bryant Boutwell, Darla Brown and Alexis Basha**. “We’re there for each other. As much as possible we cross-train each other; and support each other,” she added.

Aside from writing for various health science center publications and *TMC News*, Colleen also does free-lance writing for *Business Today*, a Bay-area publication, and *Small Change News*, a monthly newsletter. She also has her own decorative faux wall finishes business and is a Pampered Chef consultant. Her other hobbies include organic gardening and horseback riding.

Colleen has two sons, **Austen**, who graduated from Clear Lake High School and who now is a general manager at a GNC store in Pasadena, and 17-year-old **Ian**, a senior at Faith Christian Academy in Pasadena, who plans to attend hotel management school at the University of Houston.

