

synapse

Qual-Med makes concessions, Patients' Union ends boycott

By Frederick Chen

In a rare instance of individuals winning—or at least tying—in a conflict with a major corporation, the Qual-Med Patients' Union has resolved its differences with the Qual-Med HMO. The union has now ended its call for a boycott of the company.

According to Union founder John Iverson, the patients—who had been going public with their case against the HMO—met with Qual-Med executives in early November of last year. After two weeks of negotiations, Qual-Med agreed to meet the patients' demands. The Qual Med Patients' Union was formed last spring to protest the HMO's refusal to provide "off-label" drugs for its members with HIV disease. (See Synapse, Nov. 5, 1992.)

Qual Med has agreed to provide "off-label" drugs if they have been recommended for FDA approval by the FDA Advisory Panel, shown to be beneficial in a double-blind study, or are commonly used in an accepted community practice. Another point of contention was Qual-Med's proposal to establish "Centers of Excellence" as designated facilities to treat special conditions such as HIV disease. Qual-Med agreed that participation in the Centers of Excellence will be completely voluntary for Qual-Med patients, and other HIV providers will be listed and made available.

Qual-Med will also establish an AIDS Advisory Panel to review and modify Qual-Med's AIDS and HIV treatment guidelines. After much discussion, the HMO agreed to allow a Qual-Med patient to sit on the panel. Initially, John Iverson will be the patient representative on the panel.

Iverson described the discussions as "friendly" after the Qual-Med executives agreed to meet with the Patients' Union. He feels that the union's newspaper advertisements helped bring the HMO to the bargaining table. Iverson stated that Cesar Chavez and the Elizabeth Taylor Foundation had also taken note of the boycott by the time the meeting was called. "If it [the boycott] went on, I knew we would eventually win, but I'm glad it ended when it did," said Iverson.

As a result of the Patients' Union's actions, the city of Berkeley is setting guidelines for its health insurers regarding new or exotic diseases. The guidelines will serve to establish a community standard of care. Insurers will have to agree to the guidelines before they are allowed to do business with the city. Iverson hopes that the guidelines will be adopted by other employers as well.

The Patients' Union plans to continue its work even though it has succeeded in its claims against Qual-Med. "Once the city of Berkeley has finalized its guidelines, we would like to get other employers to adopt those guidelines. We will also make all the other Bay Area HMOs aware of Qual-Med's AIDS Advisory Panel guidelines," said Iverson.



Attacks on Qual-Med by angry patients ranged from commentaries on billboards (like this one off Market St.) to ads in Synapse and the Daily Californian urging UC staffers to boycott the HMO.

Nelkin launches biotechnology lecture series

How Americans view genetics

By Cynthia Corwin

The public's perception of genetics deserves the attention of the scientific community, according to Dorothy Nelkin of New York University. A standing-room-only crowd in HSW-301 heard Nelkin give the opening "Biotechnology in Society" lecture on Thursday, Jan. 7.

Nelkin showed a blow-up of an advertisement for a new BMW—touted as having a "genetic advantage" over other cars. "The gene clearly has an obvious, immediate, and well-recognized meaning to the public," she observed. She also cited an episode of "In Living Color" in which a client holds up a sperm bank, demanding the sperm of Denzel Washington because of its genetic advantages.

Nelkin has studied newspapers, television, advertising, books, film, and other media which, she finds, are "increasingly conveying a message that we call 'genetic essentialism'—the idea that personhood or identity can be defined as DNA." A computer search for newspaper articles relating genetics to behavior yielded a long list of supposedly inherited traits, from mental illness and aggressive personality to zest for life. The prevailing view, according to Nelkin, is that "what is genetic is powerful, predictable, permanent, and hard-wired in the human constitution."

Scientific findings have been appropriated to support social beliefs and legitimize social policies. Recurring images provide insight into cultural beliefs, which shape science and its perception; the media both reveal and create social attitudes. Nelkin stated that "the gene has assumed cultural significance extending far beyond scientific understanding."

Concepts like "blue blood" and "bad seeds" and ideas like "blood is thicker than water" have a long history, which reflect the cultural importance attached to familial relationships. Darwin provided a model for the application of these concepts, and eugenics, the idea of controlling reproduction to control the human future, was popular in the late 19th century. Social Darwinism, in which the survival of the fittest explains behavior and heredity determines class differences, was used to justify discriminatory policies in the same period. An aggressive eugenics movement arose in the United States in response to large-scale immigration from eastern Europe. Nelkin asserted that such theories "tend to thrive in times of economic problems, limited social mobility, and perceived increases in crime or social dislocation. They are less important in times of economic expansion."

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Isabel Allende Writes to Remember

Jodi Marx

Isabel Allende will be talking in Cole Hall Wednesday, Jan. 20, from 7 to 8:30 p.m. Admission is \$5 to \$10 per person; no one will be turned away due to lack of funds.

Allende is the first Latina writer to gain acclaim equal to Latin men for her work on Latin American culture. In 1974, caught in the tumultuous aftermath of a military coup that took the life of her uncle, Chilean President Salvador Allende, she gave up her career as a television journalist and fled Chile for safety. She began writing fiction in 1981, and her first novel, La casa de los espíritus (The House of the Spirits), published in 1982, has been compared to Garcia Marquez's masterpiece, One Hundred Years of Solitude.

Synapse: I know that you fled Chile in 1975, and then you lived in Caracas, Venezuela for 13 years. How did you end up in the Bay Area? What has it been like for you to live here?

Allende: I met an American lawyer who had read one of my books and he fell in love with the book and I fell in love with him. I was on a lecturing tour when I met him and we just locked in; it was incredible. He went to San Jose where I was lecturing and we ended up with a group of people in a restaurant and we just locked in. So I saw him the next day here in San Francisco where I was lecturing. And then I had to leave. When I got home, I decided that I was too old to suffer pains of love, came to spend a week with him and I never left. So I'm still here—that was five years ago. And we are very happy. It's like a soap opera with a happy ending.

Synapse: Do you have any plans to return to Chile?

Allende: I go every year, if I can. Half of my soul is there. I really belong there in many ways, but I think I've adapted myself here pretty well. I have friends, I love this place. You know, my home is where my heart is, in a way, so wherever Willie [her husband] will be, I'll be there.

Synapse: What is the current political situation in Chile?

Allende: There is a democracy, a conditional democracy though, because the dictatorship was defeated in the polls. We had an election and Pinochet was defeated by a democratic coalition. They had one candidate only and they defeated the dictatorship. But Pinochet is still the chief of the armed forces; the military structure and the economic structure remain intact. It's very difficult for the democratic government to func-



Isabel Allende

tion. However, they've been doing it very well for more than two years. And I think that this is a transition government towards a full democracy. We will have that because we have a tradition in democracy.

Synapse: You were a journalist for a number of years before you left your country. How did you become interested in writing fiction?

Allende: Well, I wasn't particularly interested. I was—how can I say it?—I was pushed in that direction. After I left my country, I couldn't find a job as a journalist

and I need to write. It is as if when I write things, they become real. And when I don't write them, I have such a bad memory, I forget everything. It is as if I have not lived. For many years, I had all these unwritten words stuck in my chest. And then in 1981, January 8th, I received a phone call in Caracas saying that my grandfather was dying. I started a special letter for him, and that letter later became my first novel (*The House of Spirits*). When it was published, it became an immediate best seller everywhere in Europe. It was translated and received great reviews. And when I started receiving my first checks, I realized I could make a living with that. However, I didn't leave my job immediately. I couldn't quit because I wasn't sure that I could write a second novel. But then I wrote my second novel and it was also successful. So, I decided that I could do it for a living, which is hard for a writer, very hard, especially for a Latin American writer. You know, it's always difficult. But I did it and it has worked well. I went on writing and have been writing for 11 years.

Synapse: You mention that it's especially difficult for a Latin American writer to make a living with writing. Many critics have observed that you were the first Latin American woman writer to achieve worldwide acclaim. How do you respond to that?

Allende: Well, it's too bad that's the case because there are many good writers in Latin America, very good women writers. It's hard for us to make a living mainly because you make a living when you are translated. If you are successful in other countries, you earn real royalties. The royalties you have in your own country are usually eaten up by inflation when you are paid. So, you need the translations. In order to be known as a writer you have to be published in Europe. If you are published in any of the Latin American countries, you will be stuck there forever. You will maybe be very well known in your own

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Mentoring Program launched for Women Scientists on Campus

By Renée Williard

The San Francisco chapter of the Association for Women in Science (AWIS-SF) and Women in Life Sciences (WILS) are establishing a mentoring program primarily for women graduate students, post-doctoral scholars and medical research fellows to help them form relationships with UCSF women faculty and women scientists working in San Francisco Bay Area biotechnology and pharmaceutical companies.

The Association for Women in Science (AWIS) is a national non-profit organization founded in 1971 that works to improve the educational and employment opportunities for women in all science fields. For 20 years, through the national organization and more than 35 regional chapters, AWIS has been developing resource materials and conducting projects that advance women in science education and in the scientific workforce.

Women in Life Sciences (WILS) is a UCSF registered campus organization founded by women graduate students in 1991. Membership is free and open to graduate students, postdoctoral scholars, faculty, and staff. Its purpose is to provide support for women developing advanced careers in science through assisting in the establishment of a local network of professional women scientists.

The goals of the AWIS-SF Mentoring Program are to:

- 1) Strengthen networks for women graduate students, post-doctoral scholars, and medical research fellows, as well as to provide advice on becoming integrated within more traditional science networks.

- 2) Provide additional training and research opportunities for women graduate students, post-doctoral scholars, and medical research fellows and, through personal and institutional efforts, to increase access to these opportunities.

- 3) Retain women who have begun doctoral and post-doctoral work in scientific research and promote continuation of their careers in science.

- 4) Help women become better prepared for advancing in scientific research careers, including careers in academia, industry, and government.

The term mentor originally referred to a character named Mentor in Homer's epic, *The Odyssey*. Mentor was an old friend and advisor of Odysseus who was entrusted with the care of Odysseus' only son, Telemachus. The word came to mean a trusted counselor or guide.

The goal of the AWIS-SF Mentoring Program is *not* to provide mentees with a traditional, single "all purpose" mentor. Rather, the project emphasizes the value of involvement in a variety of professional networks and advocates the concept of seeking multiple mentors. Having multiple mentors (each of whom performs one of several mentoring functions) has advantages for both the mentee and the mentor. The mentee doesn't have to search out the "perfect mentor;" she need only find someone who can provide a single mentoring function such as serving as an advisor on scientific, institu-

tional, or departmental matters, providing information about specific career opportunities, or offering ideas and support in balancing family and career responsibilities. The mentee also has the advantage of evaluating advice from diverse sources and perspectives. From the mentor's perspective, she may feel more comfortable with less responsibility in the mentee's career development and with a smaller time commitment.

The AWIS is funding the Mentoring Project via a grant from the Sloan Foundation, which seeks to increase the percentage of women who graduate with bachelor's degrees and doctorates in the sciences. The focus of this nationwide project is on mentoring undergraduate and graduate students, although a potential outcome may be increased skills and contacts for mentoring pre-college students and women scientists at all levels.

The AWIS-SF Mentoring Program is a local program designed to provide mentoring to women pursuing careers in science at graduate and post-graduate levels. The program is focused on supporting and retaining women who have already selected science as a career choice. Women graduate students, post-doctoral scholars, and medical research fellows at the UCSF campus have been targeted as the primary source of potential mentees. The Mentoring Program is accepting applications from as many mentees as interested (regardless of position or educational background) but does not guarantee a match. Mentors have been recruited from UCSF as well as Bay Area biotechnology and pharmaceutical companies. Mentors vary widely in position and rank and provide a broad range of interests for mentees.

While the specifics of the mentoring relationship will be up to the pair, the main focus will be on the mentee's career development issues, and the typical initial time commitment should be approximately two hours every four to six weeks for approximately six months. The Mentoring Program will formally last through August. Of course, mentees and mentors will have the option of continuing their relationships after the official close of the program.

An orientation and reception for program participants will take place in February and a *Mentoring Guide* is available to those interested. If you would like to participate in the program or would like further information, contact Renée Williard at 476-1518. The deadline for applications is Friday, Jan. 29, 1993. Women faculty and research staff are encouraged to share their career experiences through service as mentors.

Back Issues Needed

Little elves have made off with our office copies of the Sept. 24 and Oct. 15 issues of Synapse. If you have either of these issues, please call us at 476-2211.

Announcements

Financial Aid Applications for 1993-94

Financial aid applications for 1993-94 should be available soon; our office has not yet received all the necessary forms to complete the application packet. Students who applied for aid this current year will be notified via a postcard once the 1993-94 applications are available. The priority deadline date for those students applying for campus-based aid for 1993-94 is February 19. Please read the application packet over carefully as there have been many changes in the application process for 1993-94! Contact the Financial Aid Office (MU 201/476-4181) if you have questions.

Announcing the 1993 Student Talent Show

ASUC is sponsoring a talent show to be held on Saturday, Feb. 27. If you can sing, dance, play an instrument, act, tell jokes, stand on your head and eat oysters simultaneously, etc., sign up at the ASUC office and start rehearsing! This is your chance to share your talent with your classmates and friends. If you are a little shy but have organizing skills, ASUC needs your help planning and producing the event. Contact Cristina Gruta at 476-2010.

Biotechnology and Society lecture, Jan. 14

Charles Weiner will discuss "The Commercialization of Academic Biology: Recent Historical Perspectives" in HSW-301 at noon on Thursday, Jan. 14.

Clinical Approaches to Survivors of Sexual Assault, Jan. 14

This workshop is an introduction to issues in the treatment of survivors of sexual assault. Tamera White, coordinator of the Rape Prevention Education Program at UCSF, will speak on the emotional and behavioral characteristics which a survivor of sexual assault might present. Dr. Michelle Berlin and Carmen Henesy, R.N., will discuss issues in medical care and evidence collection, including appropriate history and physical exams, prophylactic treatment for STDs, and use of a rape kit. Sponsored by WMSA. Thursday, January 14, 5-7 p.m. in N721.

Post-Hannukah Celebration, Jan. 14

Potato latkes will be served at the post-Hannukah party, Thursday, Jan. 14, 5 to 7 p.m., Millberry Union NE Quad, sponsored by the Jewish Student Association, ASUC and NCHC.

WILS discussion: Impact of Biotechnology on Women, Jan. 20

Women in Life Sciences wants to write a response to an article called "Patenting Life" which appeared in the Nov/Dec 1992 issue of *Ms Magazine*. The underlying theme of the article is that biotechnology is BAD for women. Do you agree? If you have any feelings in response to the article, please come and share them at this informal round table discussion. Bring your breakfast to \$30 at 8:30 a.m.!

Student Mixer, Jan. 20

All UCSF students are invited to a student mixer on Jan. 20 from 5 to 9 p.m. at Millberry Union. There will be beer, wine, soda, munchies, music and dancing. Comedian Stuart Silverstein (a UCSF-affiliated physician) will be featured. The event is sponsored by the School of Nursing and Millberry Arts & Performances. For more information contact Larry Varela at 346-5008.

Poets Wanted

UCSF students, staff, and faculty members are invited to participate in the first annual Black Heritage Month Poetry reading scheduled for Feb. 9. Contact Denise Harvey at 476-5836 for more information.

"Self-Guided Stress Management"

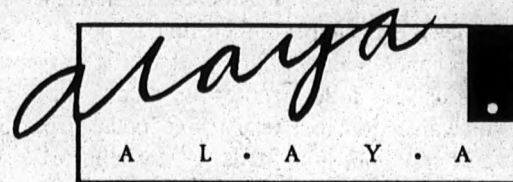
The Landberg Center is sponsoring a 4-week series entitled "Self-Guided Stress Management" on Wednesdays, noon to 1 p.m., in N-527. First session is Jan. 20 on "What is stress and what are its signs?" For more info call Mary or Seraphim at 564-3515.

Brown Bag Lectures

Bring your lunch to HSW-300 at noon each Wednesday for a one-hour program. Jan. 20: Alexis McGuire ("former corporate president turned stand-up comedienne") on "Life threatening career changes." Jan. 27: Charles McNeill, Clinical Professor, Restorative Dentistry, on controversial issues of the diagnosis and management of temporomandibular disorders.

Blood Donation Day, Jan. 26

Donation sites will be in the MU conference center from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. and the Nursing building mezzanine level from 11:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Raffle prizes are a pair of gift certificates for \$50 each at the Washington Square Bar & Grill. Donors are asked to bring personal identification.



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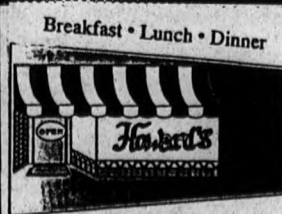
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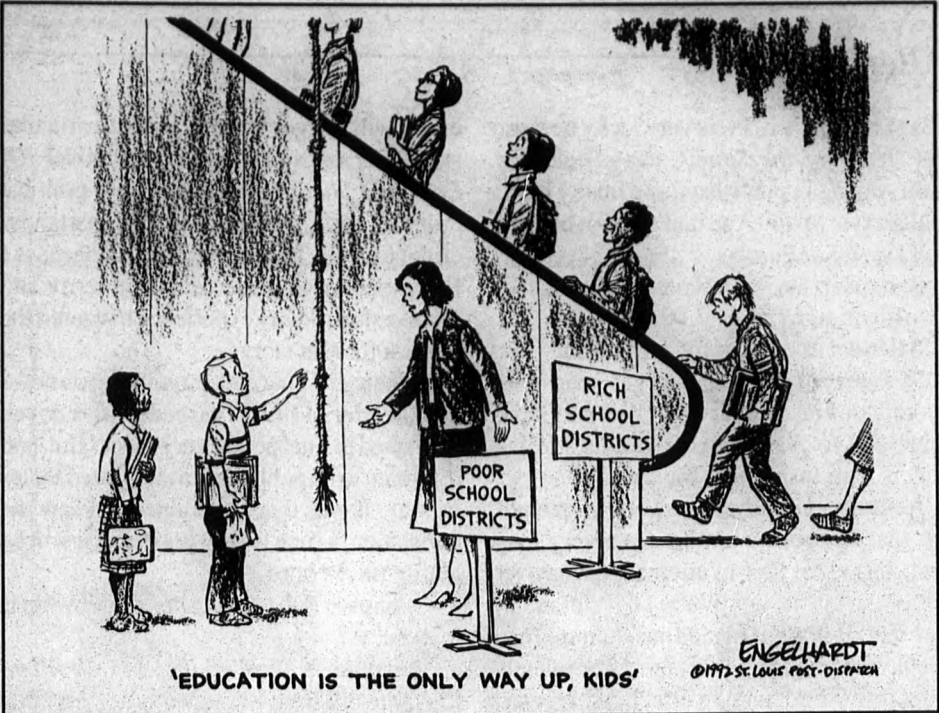


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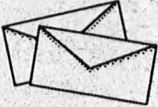
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Letters

UCSA opposes regent nominee



To the Editor:

The UC Student Association, along with Common Cause and the Latino Issues Forum, is lobbying to defeat the confirmation of UC Regental candidate John Davies.

Many of us have long criticized the lack of diversity on the UC Board of Regents. There are 18 appointed UC Regents; of the 17 other appointed regents, 11 are white males and at least six are millionaires. John Davies is also a white male, and holds at least \$1.3 million in property and investments. The California Constitution requires that the UC Regents "shall be able persons broadly reflective of the economic, cultural and social diversity of the state, including ethnic minorities and women." (Article IX, Sec. 9 (d)).

Clearly Governor Pete Wilson's appointment of John Davies does not further this requirement. The appointment does, however, continue the tradition of the Governor appointing political supporters and campaign contributors to the Board of Regents. Davies is a close friend of Wilson's and oversees the Governor's personal blind trust. In addition, Davies has contributed \$39,000 to Wilson's campaign and inaugural committees since 1989.

Confirmation of a UC Regent requires a two-thirds vote of the State Senate. Because there are currently three vacancies in the Senate, only 11 votes are needed to defeat the nomination. Davies was appointed by Wilson in March, 1992, and has been a voting member of the Board of Regents while his confirmation is pending. One of Davies' first votes on the Board was in support of former UC President David Gardner's \$2.4 million retirement package.

The Senate Rules Committee is expected to hold a hearing on the Davies appointment in late January, which leaves us very little time to rally the troops. If you want to join in this campaign, please send a letter of opposition to your local state senator and to: Senator David Roberti, Chairman, Senate Rules Committee, State Capitol, Room 500, Sacramento, CA 95814. If you don't know how to contact

your local state senator, call the Secretary of State at 916/445-4251.

Andy Shaw
Executive Director
UC Student Association

Golf tourney to benefit hurricane victims

To the Editor:

It has been three months since Hurricane Iniki visited and devastated our beautiful island of Kauai. Two weeks ago I went there to see firsthand the damage that had been done. As I toured the island it was obvious that recovery to pre-Iniki conditions is many months—or even years—away. The Federal Emergency Management Agency has placed the number of destroyed or uninhabitable homes at 6,800 with 7,500 others sustaining moderate damage. Only recently has electric power been restored to most of the island. Telephone service is still erratic and undependable. Mass feeding centers continue to serve 5,000 meals a day and many families still live in substandard housing.

Although the "Aloha Spirit" is alive and well and everyone is working hard, the task to restore pre-Iniki normalcy to our beloved island is indeed monumental. Government relief agencies, insurance companies, the military and private charities are all pitching in. Even Mother Nature seems to be apologizing by acceleration the re-greening of the flora of the island.

Despite all of this aid, the people of Kauai are still in need of all the assistance they can get. A group of Bay Area golfers are sponsoring a benefit tournament to assist these friends in their time of need. The KAPAA United Church of Christ has consented to be the sponsoring charity for this affair and will be responsible for the disbursement of whatever funds we are able to raise. Of course, all donations will be tax deductible.

The Tournament is scheduled for March 7, 1993 at the Adobe Creek Golf Course in

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OPINION

MLK

Martin Luther King, Jr., like his forerunner, Mohandas K. Gandhi, recognized that nonviolence need not imply submission, but could be a powerful instrument for social change. King emerged in the 1960s as the apostle of militant nonviolence in America. He was militant in the sense that he never wavered in his resolve to see his dream come true; he used non-violent action to aggressively attack the system that perpetuated racism and prejudice. King's life exemplified the fight for civil rights and equality for all peoples.

King advanced the movement by leading marches, rallies, and voter registration drives; going to jail for civil disobedience; giving press conferences, delivering public speeches and publishing articles and books espousing equality. His most enduring words were delivered August 28, 1963, to hundreds of thousands of Americans who had come to Washington to demand civil rights legislation and enforcement. The enactment of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965 showed the power of nonviolent direct action.

Most of us have heard little more than a few sound bites and brief quotes from the speech, thereby missing the impact and the overall importance of the message. In light of the recent violence spawned by racial division and unequal opportunity, we would all do well to reconsider Dr. King's text.

—Ginard Henry

Fivescore years ago, a great American, in whose symbolic shadow we stand today, signed the Emancipation Proclamation. This momentous decree came as a great beacon light of hope to millions of Negro slaves who had been seared in the flames of withering injustice. It came as a joyous daybreak to end the long night of their captivity.

But 100 years later, the Negro still is not free; 100 years later, the life of the Negro is still sadly crippled by the manacles of segregation and the chains of discrimination; 100 years later, the Negro lives on a lonely island of poverty in the midst of a vast ocean of material prosperity...

So we've come here today to dramatize a shameful condition. In a sense we've come to our nation's capital to cash a check. When the architects of our republic wrote the magnificent words of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence, they were signing a promissory note to which every American was to fall heir. This note was the promise that all men, yes, black men as well as white men, would be guaranteed the unalienable rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

It is obvious today that America has defaulted on this promissory note in so far as her citizens of color are concerned. Instead of honoring this sacred obligation, America has given the Negro people a bad check; a check which has come back marked "insufficient funds." We refuse to believe that there are insufficient funds in the great vaults of opportunity of this nation. And so we've come to cash this check, a check that will give us upon demand the riches of freedom and the security of justice...

Nineteen sixty-three is not an end, but a beginning. And those who hope that the Negro needed to blow off steam and will now be content, will have a rude awakening if the nation returns to business as usual. There will be neither rest nor tranquility in America until the Negro is granted his citizenship rights. The whirlwinds of revolt will continue to shake the foundations of our nation until the bright day of justice emerges.

But there is something that I must say to my people who stand on the warm threshold which leads into the palace of justice. In the process of gaining our rightful place we must not be guilty of wrongful deeds. Let us not seek to satisfy our thirst for freedom by drinking from the cup of bitterness and hatred. We must forever conduct our struggle on the high plane of dignity and discipline. We must not allow our creative protest to degenerate into physical violence. Again and again we must rise to the majestic heights of meeting physical force with soul force.

The marvelous new militancy which has engulfed the Negro community must not lead us to a distrust of all white people, for many of our white brothers, as evidenced by their presence here today, have come to realize that their destiny is tied up with our destiny and they have come to realize that their freedom is inextricably bound to our freedom. This offense we share mounted to storm the battlements of injustice must be carried forth by a biracial army. We cannot walk alone.

And as we walk, we must make the pledge that we shall always march ahead. We cannot turn back. There are those who are asking the devotees of civil rights, "When will you be satisfied?" We can never be satisfied as long as the Negro is the victim of the unspeakable horrors of police brutality.

We can never be satisfied as long as our bodies, heavy with fatigue of travel, cannot gain lodging in the motels of the highways and the hotels of the cities. We cannot be satisfied as long as the Negro's basic mobility is from a smaller ghetto to a larger one.

We can never be satisfied as long as our children are stripped of their selfhood and robbed of their dignity by signs stating "for whites only." We cannot be satisfied as long as a Negro in Mississippi cannot vote and a Negro in New York believes he has nothing for which to vote. No, we are not satisfied, and we will not be satisfied until justice rolls down like waters and righteousness like a mighty stream.

I am not unmindful that some of you come here out of excessive trials and tribulation. Some of you have come fresh from narrow jail cells. Some of you have come from areas where your quest for freedom left you battered by the storms of persecution and staggered by the winds of police brutality. You have been the veterans of creative suffering. Continue to work with the faith that unearned suffering is redemptive.

Go back to Mississippi; go back to Alabama; go back to South Carolina; go back to Georgia; go back to Louisiana; go back to the slums and ghettos of the northern cities, knowing that somehow this situation can, and will be changed...

I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia, sons of former slaves and sons of former slave-owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood.

I have a dream that one day, even the state of Mississippi, sweltering with the heat of injustice, sweltering with the heat of oppression, will be transformed into an oasis of freedom and justice.

I have a dream my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character. I have a dream today!

I have a dream that one day, down in Alabama, with its vicious racists, with its governor having his lips dripping with the words of interposition and nullification, that one day, right there in Alabama, little black boys and black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and white girls as sisters and brothers. I have a dream today!

I have a dream that one day every valley shall be exalted, every hill and mountain shall be made low, the rough places shall be made plain, and the crooked places shall be made straight and the glory of the Lord will be revealed and all flesh shall see it together.

This is our hope. This is the faith that I go back to the South with. With this faith we will be able to hew out of the mountain of despair a stone of hope. With this faith we will be able to transform the jangling discords of our nation into a beautiful symphony of brotherhood.

With this faith we will be able to work together, to pray together, to struggle together, to go to jail together, to stand up for freedom together, knowing that we will be free one day. This will be the day when all of God's children will be able to sing with new meaning—my country 'tis of thee; sweet land of liberty; of thee I sing; land where my fathers died, land of the pilgrim's pride; from every mountain side, let freedom ring"—and if America is to be a great nation, this must become true.

So let freedom ring from the prodigious hilltops of New Hampshire. Let freedom ring from the mighty mountains of New York. Let freedom ring from the heightening Alleghenies of Pennsylvania. Let freedom ring from the snow-capped Rockies of Colorado. Let freedom ring from the curvaceous slopes of California. But not only that. Let freedom ring from Stone Mountain of Georgia. Let freedom ring from Lookout Mountain of Tennessee. Let freedom ring from every hill and molehill of Mississippi, from every mountainside, let freedom ring.

And when we allow freedom to ring, when we let it ring from every village and hamlet, from every state and city, we will be able to speed up that day when all of God's children—black men and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Catholics and Protestants—will be able to join hands and to sing in the words of the old Negro spiritual, "Free at last, free at last; thank God Almighty, we are free at last."

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Synapse seeks to act as a forum for the campus community. Articles and columns represent the views of the author and not necessarily those of the editors. Unsigned editorials reflect the majority view of the editors and not necessarily that of the Board of Publications or the University of California.

Nelkin

from page 1

Therefore, she said, social problems were explained in terms of environmental factors in the prosperous late 1950s and early 1960s, while today, when such problems seem to be growing, biological explanations have more appeal.

Genetic Essentialism

"Personhood is a socially defined concept," Nelkin stated. "A human being can be defined in terms of community, culture, social status, or relationship to a divine being." While genetic essentialism is currently popular, identity has been associated with other body parts, including the pineal gland, blood, and brain. Nelkin feels that "the equation of DNA with personhood requires a profound leap of faith. Yet at a time when community and family appear in disarray, the idea of the gene as a supposedly solid source of identity appeals." The concept appears in television programs in which women seek fulfillment through passing their genes on to their children and in a fertility handbook which Nelkin quoted as saying, "The desire for a family rises unbidden from our genetic souls." Adoptees, once blocked from seeking their biological parents, are urged by the media to

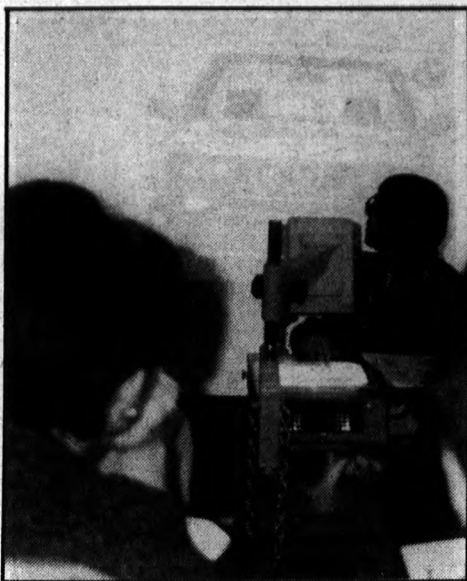
"There's no fundamental reason, it seems to me, why the DNA, rather than the heart or liver, should be the locus of personhood. Heart surgery, even brain surgery, is not construed as tinkering with the soul."

find their genetic connections. Genealogy services have proliferated in the past few years.

Biological determinism, the belief that the physical and behavioral traits of individuals and the social and economic differences between groups are caused by inborn distinctions, has become prominent in recent years, Nelkin said. Popular women's magazines publish articles about the heritability of personality traits, and child-rearing books stress that parents must understand the in-born tendencies of their children and adapt their parenting strategies accordingly. Nelkin has found that the media now convey a fatalistic attitude, a retreat from the "bootstrap ideology" of the American past. While the belief that anyone can succeed through hard work was once common, success and failure are now described as resulting from good or bad genes. Visual images in the media depict people as prisoners of their DNA. Self-help articles now stress tracing one's genetic predispositions, particularly to health problems, and planning accordingly. Nelkin is concerned that "many references to genetic influences draw on research in molecular and behavioral genetics. They ignore the complexities of genetic and environmental interactions and the distance between the molecular level of genetic systems and actual behavior."

Genetic arguments may be used to support stereotypes about gender and race, and may influence how research is done, Nelkin said. She cited evidence that scientists are more likely to study violent crime by minorities than white-collar crime. As an example of the acceptance of genetic arguments for gender stereotypes, she gave media treatment of sociobiology, which argues for in-born differences in male and female behavior patterns. In the late 1970s, the press covered it as a disputed discipline, but today sociobiology is an accepted part of the culture.

Concerns that humanity is evolutionarily threatened are common. Nelkin described her collection of buttons on the topic: one reads "Gene police. You — out of the pool!" and the other "You are standing in the shallow end of the gene pool." These concerns were common in the population control movement of the 1950s, Nelkin said, when adver-



Nelkin illustrates her point.

tisements warned of problems caused by high birth rates among criminals and the poor, and Paul Ehrlich's book *The Population Bomb* contained supposedly scientific arguments for sterilizing welfare mothers. Such ideas have re-emerged, according to Nelkin, in today's discussions of reducing benefits to welfare mothers and paying them to use Norplant for temporary sterilization. She also asserted that today "the popular media convey a sense that having a perfect baby is more than a personal preference. It's a social responsibility to avoid inflicting a genetic disability on your child."

Spiritual Significance

For some people, Nelkin said, "the gene has assumed a kind of spiritual significance, so that tampering with genes becomes a threat. Increasing access to the genome has aroused old images of Frankensteins, or monsters and mad scientists." On a recent episode of *Star Trek*, people bred to do specific jobs lost their human qualities. In real life, it took three years for the National Institutes of Health to approve a gene therapy experiment on a child with an immune deficiency, and animal rights activists, farmers, and religious leaders oppose experiments with transgenic animals. Nelkin said, "There's no fundamental reason, it seems to me, why the DNA, rather than the heart or liver, should be the locus of personhood. Heart surgery, even brain surgery, is not construed as tinkering with the soul. Yet religious magazines identify the gene as sacred, even God-given." Anti-abortionists use the uniqueness of genetic information to an individual and the fact that all genes are present at conception to support their position.

"That popular interpretations extend so far beyond scientific intentions reflects current social dislocations," according to Nelkin. "Much of the popular discussion of genetics has to do with reinforcing traditional family life and traditional sex roles, accounting for deviance, explaining race and gender differences, and especially has to do with shifting responsibility and blame." She said that "whatever the reason for its appeal, the surfacing of hereditary beliefs has to be taken seriously, for such beliefs have practical implications affecting individual choices and social policies."

If genetics is accepted as destiny, it could affect our judicial system, which is based on free will. Children perceived as genetically inferior might receive less special help, and genetics might be used to reinforce stereotypes about gender and race. Nelkin concluded, "We often dismiss the media as simply entertainment or simply frill, but it also provides insight into the cultural meaning of the gene. Common beliefs about heredity will ultimately shape the uses of a powerful science, one that offers prospects for promising applications but also possibilities for pernicious abuse."

Allende

from page 1

village but that's it. I was very lucky because *The House of the Spirits* was rejected by Latin American publishers, and finally it was published in Spain. And that's why it became well known in Europe.

Synapse: Do you write in English or Spanish or both?

Allende: No, no, only in Spanish.

Synapse: Where do you get your ideas for your stories and novels? You had mentioned that you have a lot of words inside, but what is your inspiration for writing?

Allende: Usually, it's a very deep emotion that has been with me for a very long time. I need the time to internalize whatever it is: pain, anger, joy. When I have internalized that, it is transformed inside me. Then one day it comes out, and it looks completely different. It is something else, but it is based in that emotion. I take a lot from real life, clippings from newspapers. The world is full of interesting stories. One can never run out of stories. And then I interview people; people have fascinating lives. There is no such thing as an uneventful life. So by talking with people, I also get lots of ideas.

Synapse: So, it's sort of a mixture of what you see around you and your own experiences?

Allende: Yes, usually my own experi-

ences will trigger interest in that particular story. For example, my second novel (*Of Love and Shadows*) is based on a political crime. I was interested in that particular crime because I was an exile. And because I had experienced persecution and terror and dictatorship. So my experience triggered the interest for that story.

Synapse: What are you working on now?

Allende: In 1991 I finished another novel, published in Europe and very successful, and it's going to be published in the United States in May. It was translated already. I saw the translation, which is very good, and it will be out in May, I hope.

Synapse: What is it called? And what is it about?

Allende: It's called *The Infinite Plan*. It's quite different from everything else that I have written because it's an American story, placed in the United States, in California.

Synapse: On January 20th when you come to talk at UCSF, what will you be talking about? Will you be doing a reading or talking about your past or...?

Allende: Well, I don't exactly know yet. I usually talk about storytelling, and about my own experience as a writer. I like to open a conversation with the audience to see what they are interested in. That's the most interesting part of the evening.



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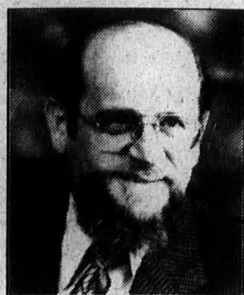
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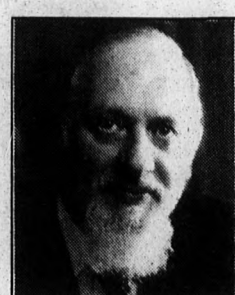
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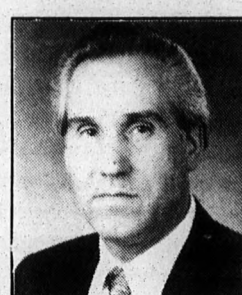
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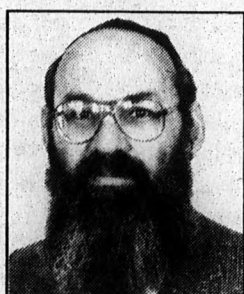
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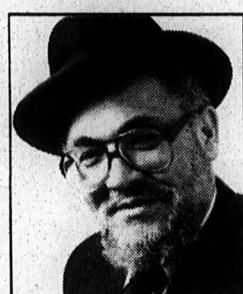
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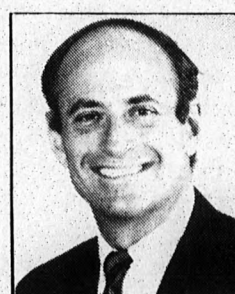
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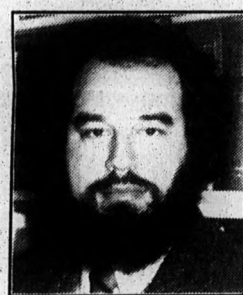
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From left: Rabbi Pinchas Lipner, Institute Dean; Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and Nobel Laureate and Mission Lecturer Rosalyn Yalow, PhD, at banquet in Tel Aviv during last July's Prime Minister's Medical Mission to Israel.

From June 21 - July 1, 1993, the Institute for Jewish Medical Ethics of San Francisco will sponsor its second annual Medical Mission to Israel.

Highlights will include touring the land, receiving CME credit for medical

lectures by Israel's leading halachic and medical authorities as well as meeting Chief Rabbis and leading government and political figures.

To receive further information, please contact the Institute.

Medical Mission
 To Israel
 1993

Medical Mission
 To Israel
 1993

Vietnamese History

Indochine

Starring Catherine Deneuve
Bridge Theater
3010 Geary at Blake
751-3212

By Kieu Loan Nguyen

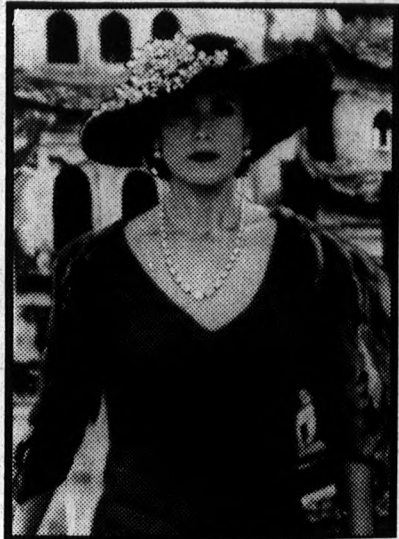
Foreign movies were extremely successful in 1992. Features such as *Howard's End* (England), *35 Up* (England), *Raise the Red Lantern* (China), and *La Belle Noiseuse* (France) were among the best new films, according to American movie critics. In the waning days of the year, *Indochine* —an original and poignant French film— was added to the list.

From the first scene—a prince's funeral on the Huong River of central Vietnam—to the final silhouette of Catherine Deneuve against the background of Lake Geneva, *Indochine* draws the audience into the turmoil, beauty, and passion of French Colonial Vietnam. It was directed by Regis Margnier, at a cost \$26 million—the most expensive French movie ever produced. Filmed in Vietnam, Malaysia, and Switzerland, it tells the story of Eliane (Catherine Deneuve), a rubber plantation owner; her adopted daughter Camille (Linh Dan Pham), the little princess of Anam who was orphaned by her parents' accidental death; and Jean-Baptise (Vincent Perez), a handsome French naval officer, whose love separated the two women.

Engaged to a Vietnamese man of royal blood, Camille finds herself in love with Jean-Baptise, who she believes has saved her life. (She was shot during a Communist prisoner's escape attempt.) Eliane, who has had a passionate relationship with Jean-Baptise, forces his transfer to a remote outpost in northern Vietnam. Camille runs away to find him. She befriends a family desperately seeking a better life, kills a French officer and winds up in prison among the Vietnamese Communists. Both the love story and the political story are told with understanding and sensitivity.

Indochine is in French and Vietnamese, with English subtitles. It runs 2 hours and 35 minutes, and one's interest never lags for a moment.

Catherine Deneuve gives Eliane an aura of dignity and elegance. She portrays the planter as both vivacious and tired, hopeful and cynical, strong and vulnerable. Her life involves misunderstandings with the people closest to her heart, and even if one does not understand Deneuve's spoken French, her emotions are clearly conveyed. Co-stars Vincent Perez and Linh Dan Pham had a narrower range. Perez, although convincing



Catherine Deneuve

as the temperamental Jean-Baptise, seemed to be over-acting at times. Pham, similarly, always seemed sad as Camille, excelling only when faced with drastic circumstances.

Aside from the beautiful acting and the witty, incisive dialogue, *Indochine* contains breathtaking cinematography. It authentically recreates French Colonial Vietnam—from the rubber plantation and rice fields of the central highlands, to the cities of Hanoi, Hue, and Saigon. The accuracy extended to the tiniest details of the people's clothing, housing, and regional accents. This was the only major movie I've seen where Vietnamese actors and actresses were cast, resulting in the clearest possible spoken Vietnamese.



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At the Eye of the Storm

As Real as it Gets

By Carol Pogash
Birch Lane Press, 1992,
249 pp., \$18.95

By Joshua Lee

Carol Pogash tells the sweeping, dramatic story of the AIDS epidemic by focusing on one public hospital, San Francisco General Hospital—SFGH, "The General," "ground zero" of AIDS treatment. She weaves together the tales of several people, including a young nurse coming to terms with mortality after suffering an accidental needle stick that leads to seroconversion; a researcher valiantly trying to create a new drug and facing resistance from AIDS activists and the scientific establishment; and an oncologist who begins to treat AIDS patients long before he realizes the magnitude of the risks involved in AIDS care.

SFGH is an arm of UCSF, a major research institution, and the facility responsible for the care of all of San Franciscans. Early in the epidemic, when most of the AIDS patients in San Francisco were upwardly mobile gay men, many who would normally have been treated at posh tertiary care centers were clamoring for beds at SFGH. Later, when most of the caseload was made up of urban, poor, IV drug users, SFGH took care of those that other hospitals turned away. SFGH set the standard for both inpatient and outpatient HIV-disease care, and still draws many clinicians from around the world who want to stay abreast of the latest developments in the field.

In narrating multiple story lines, Pogash's approach is reminiscent of that used by Randy Shilts in *And the Band Played On*. In that book, the various characters were so diverse that their individual stories rarely intruded on one another. Yet at San Francisco Gen-

eral, the universe is much more contracted, and so the reader sometimes feels like he or she is hearing the same stories over again.

Pogash creates many heroes and few villains in her various storylines. She clarifies issues rather than reducing them to simplistic visions of good and evil. Her treatment of Dr. Lorraine Day is a case in point. Day was outspoken and dramatic in her conservative approach; for example, she wore a space suit in the operating room, to highlight the risks of HIV transmission to health care workers. Many vilified Day as homophobic and alarmist, but Pogash tries to depict Day in the best light possible—as a principled crusader who felt that a dissenting voice needed to be heard. Pogash complements her description of Day with a portrait of Dr. William Schecter, another surgeon who took a very different path with regards to treating patients with HIV.

I got a thrill reading about some of the clinicians from whom I have learned over the past two years. I am sure many others in the UCSF community will enjoy this book for the sheer joy of reading about their teachers, their colleagues and even about the hospital itself. In some ways, SFGH was the reason I came to UCSF to study medicine. There are few other hospitals in which it is possible to see all the faces of HIV: gay men and IV drug users battling disease and social stigma, whole families with HIV, healthcare workers confronting their own fears and continuing to provide the highest standard of care, and others reacting with understandable fear and confusion.

Cogently and eloquently, Carol Pogash shows us each of these faces in turn—the healer, the sick, the triumphant and the beset. She is to be commended for weaving together this tapestry so seamlessly.

Cafe 66: Undiscovered Gem

1654 Haight Street 558-9134
Serving breakfast, lunch, dinner and espresso coffees
Sun-Thurs 9am-9pm Fri-Sat 9am-11pm
by Gregory Arent and Erik Gryler

The stretch of Haight Street closest to campus, known as the Upper Haight, attracts many people for many reasons. There are record shops, used clothing stores, burrito joints and bookshops. While a walk down the strip is entertaining, it isn't one of the most savory streets in San Francisco; there are drug pushers, panhandlers and pit bulls on every corner. Yet amidst all this is Cafe 66, a restaurant which would be more at home on Union or Chestnut Street.

Cafe 66 opened last November on the site of the former Ozone Restaurant, between Cole and Clayton Streets. After a tumultuous start, the owners hired the third and current chef, 29-year-old Scot Johnson. Johnson has completely reworked the menu in his own style, emphasizing "clean food"—legumes, pasta and vegetables. Texture plays a vital role in Johnson's cooking, and he said "I'll scream if I see a customer who can't hold a piece of my pizza [between thumb and forefinger] without it flopping over." To get that perfect crust he uses a wood-fired oven and, instead of tomato sauce, olive oil. Flavors, according to Johnson, are derived largely from fresh herbs rather than spices, and dairy products are used sparingly.

Cafe 66 has a surprisingly concise dinner menu which, Johnson asserts, "absolutely dictates freshness." Food that comes in goes out the same day. He buys most ingredients from local farmers and businesses since he "doesn't trust agribusiness." If he gets an ingredient that is especially good, Johnson likes to "max it out" by incorporating it into new creations for the menu.

The menu lists 10 starters (\$2.50-\$6.95) and four entrees (\$7.95-\$10.95). Between three diners, we ordered five starters to get a good sample of the food. This proved to be plenty. Our dinner included artichoke

ramekin with grilled house bread (artichoke hearts in a basil cream sauce); hand-rolled goat cheese ravioli in an herbed vegetable ragout; shrimp pillows with Chinese parsley and sesame oil; tomato, basil and red onion pizza and goat cheese, spinach and white onion pizza. Each dish was exquisitely presented and had superb taste and texture. The ramekin was a favorite, being unique and flavorful without being overly contrived. The pizzas were also excellent, especially notable for their crisp, thin crusts. The ravioli were well liked, but the sauce had a bite. For dessert we ordered an "orange zest pound cake," served warm with citrus sauce and vanilla bean cream cheese. The various elements provided a unique sweet and sour taste which, combined with the crispness of the toasted cake, made a delicious end to our meal.

Johnson said that more emphasis is being placed on the food than the decor, which is a holdover from The Ozone. The style is late '80s/modern. Extensive use of metals, including the furnishings and impressive copper door coupled with gray-tone murals, give a somewhat cold, industrial feel, but soft jazz music and space heaters help to take the edge off. After developing a clientele, Johnson hopes to remodel.

Don't be surprised if you find this excellent restaurant nearly empty. At 8:30 on a Saturday night, there were customers at only three tables. Along with the problem of location, Johnson explains that Cafe 66 suffers from "empty restaurant syndrome." As we enjoyed our meal, we noticed several parties stop, scrutinize the menu, look in, notice lack of patrons and walk on to dine elsewhere. We recommend you don't make the same mistake.

Clubs 'R Us

By Gary Tom

UCSF Cycle Club

The UCSF Cycle Club was formed to provide the campus and neighborhood population easy access to organized rides. The club is geared to the intermediate and advanced rider. If you are new to the Bay Area or just unfamiliar with the numerous cycling opportunities available, this may be an excellent chance to learn about them. Throughout the quarter, the club takes biking trips on various trails in Tiburon, Merced, Mill Valley, across the Golden Gate Bridge, through the Presidio, and more. These challenging yet scenic rides are usually on a Saturday or Sunday and can last anywhere from one to four hours.

Here are some upcoming rides that the club has scheduled:

Sunday, Jan. 17, 10:15 a.m.

Marin Headlands Loop: Fast pace and hills. Over the bridge and watch surfers at Fort Cronkite for a short break. 22-25 miles. 1.5-2 hours.

Saturday, Jan. 23, 9:15 a.m.

Paradise Loop: Through Tiburon, approximately 45 miles, moderate pace and hills. 2.5-3 hours.

Every Wednesday at 12:05 p.m. the club gets together for the "Wednesday Lunch Jaunt." This ride loops through Golden Gate Park, down JFK to the Great Highway, around Lake Merced and back. For this 55 minute-ride, all you have to do is show up promptly at 1216 4th Av. If you would like to participate, contact Alan Tower at 476-0356 for the rest of the 1993 Winter Schedule and more information.

UC Blades

The UC Blades is a rollerblading club open to students, MU members, UC employees, and residents in the adjacent community. They are now offering a new round of free lessons on occasional Saturday mornings and afternoons to the campus community in conjunction with Skate Pro, the Golden Gate Park Skate Patrol, and the Outdoor Rollerskating Association of America. Intermediate as well as beginners' lessons are

offered in Golden Gate Park between 6th Ave. and MLK Drive (off Fulton St.). There is a skate rental fee: students, \$5; MU members & UCSF Employees, \$7; unaffiliated friends, \$14. Lessons will be given on Jan. 23; Feb. 6 and 27; March 6 and 13; April 3 and 10; May 8 and 22. Beginner sessions are 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Intermediate sessions are 2 to 4 p.m.

To reserve a space, call Skate Pro at 752-8776 by 5 p.m. on the Thursday prior to the day of the lesson. There is a 20-person maximum for each lesson and the sessions fill up fast. This is a great opportunity to learn the fundamentals of rollerblading at a very affordable price.

The UCSF Chess Club

For those of you who are into chess and wish to meet others with similar interests, a Chess Club has formed. Whether you're an experienced pawn-pusher or a beginner just learning the rules, the club is for you. Some of the activities planned include weekly chess games, instruction for beginners, sharing of chess news, game reviews, and annual open chess competitions. Interested individuals can write Dr. Oladimeji Sorunke at UCSF Box 0800 or call him at 476-5608 or 5609 or 2207.

Golf

from page 3

Petaluma. Entry fee is \$150 per golfer and includes the green fees, golf cart, a roast beef banquet, prizes, and more. For the banquet only, the cost is \$25. Deadline for entries is January 31, 1993. Donations of tournament and/or raffle prizes would be greatly appreciated. For entry forms and further information, contact Reverend Mineo Katagiri at (415) 928-7658.

The group promoting this tournament is not composed of professional fund-raisers. We are purely a voluntary group and administrative expenses will be minimal. Our primary objective is that the victims of Hurricane INIKI receive all funds collected less tournament and dinner expenses. We do promise to do our utmost to make this a memorable and fun day for all participants.

Harold Itokazu

Harold Itokazu taught Periodontics at the UCSF School of Dentistry in the early 1960s. He currently has a periodontal practice in San Francisco (though he says he's semi-retired). His son, Harold Jr., is a fourth-year student at the School of Dentistry.

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Outdoors Unlimited

FEB 6-7 • INTRO TO X-C SKIING

For those with no previous ski touring experience, this clinic focuses on technique, equipment, and safety. Mandatory classroom session, Jan. 27, 7 pm; WEEKEND PRACTICAL: Feb. 6-7; COST: \$50/70 (includes two nights lodging); Sign ups start Jan 19.

FEB 6 • DAY HIKE: East Bay Hills

Strenuous. PRE-TRIP: Feb. 2, 6:30 pm, OU Center.

FEB 6 • DAY HIKE: Point Reyes

The Tomales Point Loop will take us on a circumnavigation of Tomales Point on a day with a minus 1.1 tide. PRE-TRIP: Feb 3, 7 pm, Millberry Conference Center.

FEB 6 • SUNSET/MOONLIGHT HIKE:

Mt. Diablo PRE-TRIP: Feb 1, 6 pm, MU Conference Center.

FEB 6-7 • X-C Cabin Trip: South Tahoe

Clinic graduates encouraged to join the fun. We will tour hills & meadows of the Carson Pass area and soak in Markleville hot spring Saturday night. PRE-TRIP: Feb. 1, 6 pm, Millberry Conference Center.

FEB 6-7 • CANOEING/KAYAKING:

South Fork of the Eel

Canoe or kayak a Class II run on the beautiful South Fork of the Eel near Leggett. Stay at the Eel River Hostel, with a wood stove and a very hot, toasty sauna to relax and thaw out! Experienced Class II boaters only. \$11 youth hostel fee. PRE-TRIP: Jan. 26, 6:30 pm, OU Center.

FEB 7 • BICYCLING: Sweets & Flowers

Bike from See's Candies to Acres of Orchids in Colma. Tour the orchid greenhouses - picnic lunch and peddle back along the coast. 25 miles with a few BAD hills. PRE-TRIP: Feb. 4, 6:00 pm, OU Center

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Cung Chuc Tan Xuan

By Kieu Loan Nguyen

The new year always falls on January 1st, right? Don't bet on it! For those who consult the lunar calendar, the first day of the year is rarely the same from year to year. This new year, the Year of the Rooster, will start on Jan. 23, and be celebrated by millions of Asians all over the world.

While many Asian nationalities celebrate the new year's holiday on the same day, their traditions differ. For the Vietnamese, the first day of the year is only the beginning of a long and joyous period of celebration and goodwill. Festivities can last from three days (the typical length of time for those living in the United States) to more than two weeks. In Vietnam—and for expatriates, too—the new year celebration serves to link the people spiritually and to reaffirm their national identity.

At the stroke of midnight, the new year will be heralded by thunderous fire-crackers, the pealing of temple bells, and shouts of "*Cung Chuc Tan Xuan*," a phrase used to wish each other a happy and prosperous new year. All the noises are designed to scare away any bad luck left over from the old year and to prevent new evils from entering the upcoming year. The temples will be packed with young people, burning incense and praying. The streets will be crowded with travelers, either going to church, to the temple, or to the many nighttime village festivals. For those who choose to stay home, there are games played with relatives, plenty of food, and the traditional ceremony welcoming the new year, often conducted by the oldest male in the household. A pair of carefully chosen couplets written on red parchment are posted to celebrate the new year. Great care is taken in selecting the person who is first to enter the family house on the new year (it often depends on the sign of one's birth year). For example, the elders would never let a person born in the year of the snake enter the house first in this year of the rooster, as snakes and roosters are natural enemies and conflict could ensue.

According to Vietnamese beliefs, what

one does on the first day will set the pattern for the entire new year. Thus, New Year's Day is treated as a special holiday, with people on their best behavior, wearing their finest clothes, and feasting on the most delicious morsels they can afford. Even the poorest make great efforts to ensure meat on the table, new clothes for the children, and wines and tea for the adults.

The food eaten on this day varies region-

ally. However, there will always be "*banh chung*" or "*banh tet*," a meat-filled rice cake, wrapped in green bamboo or banana leaves to symbolize the earth, its plants and animals, and "*banh day*," a white, round cake made of sweet rice flour to symbolize the sun in its shining glory. And what would the new year be without the traditional "*li xi*," the act of handing out red envelopes containing money—symbolizing wishes for good fortune—to the younger relatives?



Often, the entire new year's day is spent visiting families, the younger members coming to the elders' houses bearing gifts of tea, five kinds of fruits, and other food. If there is

time, some go to the temple and bring back branches of fresh flowers or leaves, symbolically renewing the family's vitality. These are kept in a place of honor, along with the traditional branches of cherry blossom flowers. The longer these branches stay fresh and blooming, the better the new year will be.

The third component of a Vietnamese new year—along with food and family—is the arts. Festivals, organized in every large village and city, feature dancers, singers, actors, musicians, and artists (who are not formally paid, but are given generous gifts of money, food, and fabrics by the villagers). These festivals may provide the only contact all year between people of remote villages. They may also provide opportunities for men and women to meet without strict chaperoning. These meetings often result in marriages between members of different villages.

This year, to celebrate the upcoming Year of the Rooster, the Vietnamese Student Association at UCSF has produced a New Year Festival Cultural Show, to be held on Saturday, Jan. 16. The show is a collection of songs, dances, short plays, and musical skits. Most of the acts will be original creations, choreographed and performed by students from the Medical, Dental, and Pharmacy schools. The show begins at 6:30 p.m. in C701 (the Postgraduate Dental Auditorium), following a 6 p.m. reception at the same location. It is free to the public, and all are encouraged to attend. This event represents a unique opportunity to participate in a traditional Vietnamese event, and to have some fun watching your classmates perform in public.

Chung toi xin kinh-chuc qui-vi mot nam moi an-khang va thinh-vuong. (We wish all of you a happy, healthy and prosperous new year.)

Clara's Kitchen

By Clara Hsu

This curry needs to simmer for an adequate length of time so that the eggplant become very tender and almost fluid. Sour cream can be used instead of yogurt, but yogurt does just as well in creating a smooth, creamy texture, without the extra fat. This curry can be served with either pita bread or rice.

Eggplant Curry

3 cups white rice
pita bread (optional)

2 Tbsp oil
1 onion, very finely chopped
1 large eggplant, cubed
2 tomatoes, finely chopped
4 cups water

1 1/2 tsp curry powder
1 1/2 tsp cumin
1/2 tsp salt
1/2 tsp pepper
1/2 tsp ground ginger
1/4 tsp cinnamon
1/4 tsp cloves
1/4 tsp chili powder
2 garlic cloves, minced
2 Tbsp brown sugar

8 oz plain yogurt

Cook rice according to package directions. Meanwhile, heat oil in a large saucepan. Cook onion at high heat, stirring frequently with a spatula, until golden (about 5 minutes). Add eggplant, tomatoes, water, and spices. Simmer, stirring occasionally, until eggplant is very soft, about 20 minutes. Add yogurt and simmer gently at low heat, stirring occasionally, another 3 minutes. Serve warm over rice and/or with toasted pita bread. Makes about 4 servings.

If you have any comments or suggestions about the recipes of Clara's Kitchen, or if you have a recipe that you would like to share, please write to Clara's Kitchen, c/o Synapse, Box 0376, UCSF, San Francisco, CA 94143.

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