

# NOGLSTP *Bulletin*

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NOGLSTP, PO BOX 91803, Pasadena CA 91109, phone/fax: 626 791-7689, <http://www.noglstp.org>

## NOGLSTP to Host Symposium at 2002 AAAS Convention

Mark your calendars for President's Weekend 2002, and make your plans to join us in Boston, at the American Association for Advancement of Science Annual Meeting and Science Innovation Exposition (AAAS AMSIE). NOGLSTP Chair Rochelle Diamond, and AAAS Section X Secretary Stephanie Bird are co-organizers of the symposium "Scientific & Ethical Perspectives on the Risks of HIV/AIDS Therapeutics", to be presented Saturday February 16, 2002, 9am – 12pm. This symposium is the culmination of a symposium project we initiated back in 1999, only to have our principle speakers withdraw after deciding it was premature to present their controversial data for public scrutiny. The purpose of the symposium is to discuss the possible genotoxic effects of HIV combination therapies, and make people aware that affected germ-line DNA can be passed on to offspring, generation after generation.

The symposium speakers are: Vernon Walker, Lovelace Respiratory Research Institute: *Overview of Antiretroviral Nucleoside Analogs: Clinical Use and Toxicities*; Sheila Galloway, Merck Research Laboratories: *Genetic Toxicology in the Evaluation of Drug Safety*; Stephanie Bird, Massachusetts Institute of Technology: *Lessons from DES: Implications for the Babies of HIV+ Parents*; George Annas, Boston University School of Public Health: *Lessons from the reintroduction of Thalidomide: Strategies For Minimizing Risks*; and Stephen Smith, Minnesota Public Radio: *The Fertility Race: HIV and Fertility*. NOGLSTP Chair Rochelle Diamond will moderate the symposium.

### Symposium Synopsis

*Combination HIV-1 treatments are effective inhibitors of AIDS progression and also help to prevent maternal-fetal transmission of the virus (~70% reduction). Patients live longer, healthier lives and many children who are born of HIV+ mothers are sero-negative. There are, however, potential short and long-term risks involved with the use of these nucleoside-analog reverse transcriptase inhibitors (NRTI). The molecular mechanisms responsible for their effectiveness (incorporation into nuclear and mitochondrial DNA) also mediate their potential toxicity and possible genetic/germline DNA repercussions. The potential risks for long-term health effects of in utero NRTI exposure have not yet been evaluated, although the pharmaceutical industry has established the Antiretroviral Pregnancy Registry that will follow the health of these children over time. Long-term genetic effects during development and into adulthood in children conceived with NRTI-treated sperm are unknown and may be different from effects seen in children treated in utero. Nevertheless, because of the success of these antiviral therapies, some HIV+ men are choosing to have children. The communications media have broadcast stories about doctors and clinics that utilize sperm washing and assisted reproduction techniques in order to allow HIV+ patients to have children without transmitting the virus to their partners or children. The complex and problematic pasts of the drugs thalidomide and diethylstilbesterol (DES), both of which have had serious consequences when used during pregnancy, highlight medical and ethical issues that merit public attention and discussion in relation to NRTI treatment.*

### For Example...

Researchers in Japan report that two women have become pregnant with sperm from HIV-positive men after doctors used a new technique to remove the virus before artificial fertilization, Agence France-Presse reports. The procedure was the world's first successful fertilization using sperm from HIV-positive men, said Koichi Takakua, an assistant professor of gynecology at Niigata University. The sperm-cleansing technique used a centrifuge to separate healthy sperm from seminal fluid that contains HIV. Next, weakened or damaged sperm were removed through a process called the "swim up method." Finally, researchers performed two genetic tests on the remaining sperm samples to ensure that all traces of HIV had been eliminated before the women were inseminated. The women are expected to give birth early next year. Blood tests on the women to date show that they are clear of HIV infection. (from 8/25-8/27/2001 *Advocate.com Headlines, Health Watch*)

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## Workplace Issues

The Human Rights Campaign has been working hard to compile a national source of information on workplace policies and laws surrounding sexual orientation and gender identity. Its WorkNet website, at <http://www.hrc.org/worknet/>, is home to the nation's most comprehensive, accurate and regularly updated database of corporate policies and workplace laws including information on employers with non-discrimination policies that include sexual orientation, employers that include gender identity in their non-discrimination policy, employers that offer domestic partner health benefits, employers that no longer have LGBT-friendly policies, and all employers with a GLBT employee group.

The next time you want to know something about a potential employer, or perhaps would like to make an investment decision based on the social progressiveness of a company, use the HRC website as a resource.

## Statistics to Ponder

According to the latest statistics released in early August by the Census Bureau, California and Vermont lead the nation with the highest percentage of same-sex couples who are living together. There are a reported 92,318 cohabitating same-sex couples in California, and 1,933 in Vermont. The numbers represent nearly 1% of each state's total population. To date the Census Bureau has released data for 42 states, showing 472,289 gay and lesbian couples living together in the United States--with numbers still to be released for New Jersey, Texas, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Virginia, Wisconsin, Mississippi, and Arkansas.

In 1990 the Census Bureau counted 121,346 cohabitating same-sex couples. The bureau says the numbers collected last year are more accurate than they were 10 years ago because in 1990, census officials assumed that all people who checked "spouse" or "married" to someone of the same sex had made a mistake. Such people were categorized either as heterosexual couples or "other relationships," such as roommates or relatives. However, David Smith, spokesman for the gay lobby Human Rights Campaign, cautions that the current figures, while encouraging, shouldn't be construed to represent all gay households. "Because prejudices still exist, some people aren't comfortable identifying themselves as gay or lesbian on a federal form--even when it's an anonymous form," Smith says. The numbers also can't reflect the true number of gay men and lesbians in the country since they do not count single gay people.

Among the statistics reported Wednesday by the bureau, probably the most interesting is that the city considered by many to have the highest concentration of gay people--San Francisco--does not appear to have the highest concentration of cohabitating same-sex couples in California. That distinction rests with West Hollywood. San Francisco ranks third in the state after Palm Springs. (from 8/9/2001 *Advocate.com*)

## Scientific Freedom of the Press

Several top medical and scientific journals are preparing to implement a new policy that allows them to refuse to publish drug company-sponsored research unless the researchers are guaranteed scientific independence. The journals--the *New England Journal of Medicine*, *The Lancet*, the *Annals of Internal Medicine*, and *The Journal of the American Medical Association*--established the new policy in response to the fact that drug companies have become the primary funder of biomedical research. The pharmaceutical industry also now exerts increasingly tight control over research results and over whether and how these results are made public.

One former editor of the *New England Journal of Medicine* said she sometimes received manuscripts from company-sponsored studies that had the "methods" section--the area of a report that tells how the study was carried out--left blank. Other drug companies have successfully blocked publication of studies showing that generic medicines or alternative therapies work as well or better than their brand-name drugs. The journals plan to officially announce their new policy in mid September.

### Book Review:

#### *Slow River by Nicola Griffith*

Although this book has been around since 1996, I only just discovered it during a hedonistic browsing and buying binge at our local bookstore. I enjoy judging books by their covers and savoring the scent of the print, almost as much as I enjoy discovering the twists and turns of their content, and *Slow River*, written by Nicola Griffith, was no disappointment.

*Slow River* is a Patty-Hearst-meets-Gattica kind of tale, told in the first person from two converging time-frame points of reference. Born into a bioengineering family made wealthy by cleaning up after humanity, protagonist Lore van de Oest leads a life of privilege and power, until she is kidnapped for ransom. She escapes from her captors when she realizes her family isn't going to pay the ransom, but has no identity chip. Naked, alone, and wounded, she is saved by the brutally street-smart Spanner, who teaches Lore to survive by exploiting the Net (and human) weaknesses. To learn to trust, though, Lore must face her demons, one by one, until she can begin again. Griffith's biotech-science details seem plausible, and she fits them smoothly into the story in the manner of a cyberpunk master.

Did I mention Lore is a lesbian? In fact, most of the major characters are lesbian. Which explains why *Slow River* won the Lambda Literary Award as well as the Nebula Award. Well worth your time!

- Barbara Belmont

## Renew Your Dues On-Line!

In an effort to embrace technology in its entirety, NOGLSTP is pleased to announce that it is now possible for you to pay your membership dues and advise us of changes online.

In this current implementation of on-line dues management, we have partnered with PayPal to process your Visa and Mastercard dues payments to NOGLSTP. PayPal is the world's largest internet payment network, and provides a means for small businesses such as NOGLSTP to accept credit card payments without having to pay a monthly service charge. It's free, easy, and secure for individuals to make credit card payments through PayPal. PayPal will invite new users to join their network (they would like you to keep your funds in their money market), but you do not need to do so to use their service. However, if you do join their network, NOGLSTP will receive a \$5 commission.

So check your mailing label, and if it's time to renew your dues or you need to make corrections, just point your web browser to the NOGLSTP home page, <http://www.noglstp.org>, and follow the link to Member Services.

### More Ways to Give Us Money

You probably already know that NOGLSTP is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, and that donations you make to us are tax-deductible. What you may not know is that it is easy for you to make donations online, via the non-profit advocate Helping.Org. Just point your web browser to <http://www.helping.org>, search for NOGLSTP, click on our organization name, and select the "donate now" link. 100% of your donation goes to NOGLSTP. (Helping.Org's administrative expenses are funded by a grant from AOL Time-Warner). You can designate how your donation should be used (e.g., to support AAAS projects, to support educational pamphlets, to support a local symposium) or you can make it unrestricted.

Right now, NOGLSTP is trying to raise funds to support the 2002 AAAS reception and symposium. We hope you will help.

### Events Calendar

**September 15, 2001: NOGLSTP is a sponsor of Pasadena Pride**, Memorial Park, 11am-3 pm., <http://www.pasadenapride.org>

**September 29-October 1, 2001: Gay and Lesbian Medical Association's 19th Annual Conference: COMMITMENT, CARING, AND ADVOCACY, 20 YEARS OF GLMA**, Sheraton New Orleans; <http://www.glma.org/conferences/annual/2001/>

**October 5-7, 2001: OUT AND EQUAL WORKPLACE SUMMIT**, Cincinnati OH; <http://www.outandequal.org>

**October 21-25, 2001: American Public Health Association (APHA) annual meeting and expo: "One World, Global Health"**, Atlanta GA; <http://www.apha.org/meetings/>

**February 16, 2002: NOGLSTP Symposium at AAAS AMSIE**, Boston MA

**February 17, 2002: NOGLSTP Annual Meeting and Reception at AAAS AMSIE**, Boston MA

## IS IT TIME TO RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP DUES?

Check your mailing label. If it says 200109-200111, it is time to renew your dues. If it says 200106-200108, or trial2, it is past time to renew or join, and this will be your final newsletter unless we hear from you. We need and appreciate your continued support. You may renew online (and pay with a credit card), or fill out the form below (and on the other side of this page), and return it with your check to NOGLSTP, PO Box 91803, Pasadena CA 91109. Remember to add \$5US if you are subscribing outside of the US. Thank you. You may also use this form to inform us of any address or area code changes.

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### Membership Form

To renew your NOGLSTP membership or become a member of NOGLSTP, support its activities, and receive a newsletter, complete this form and send it with a check or money order to:

**NOGLSTP  
PO BOX 91803  
Pasadena CA 91109**

Annual Membership Dues are:

\$15-35 (sliding scale) (tax deductible after the 1st \$10)

\$10 for students and unemployed\*

\*inquire about our limited free memberships to 'starving students'

\$5 extra for memberships outside of the US  
(for the extra postage) (US Funds only, please!)

Renewal  New  Info change only

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: (don't forget your zip code!)  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email/URL: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Technointerest or profession:  
\_\_\_\_\_

Latest Degree/Subject:  
\_\_\_\_\_

Do you want your name and phone/email printed on a membership roster to be released to other NOGLSTP members?

YES

NO

Do you want your email/URL to be placed on the NOGLSTP web page?

YES

NO

Don't forget to fill out the other side



## Queer Scientist of Contemporary Note: Margery L. Cook

Distinguished author and researcher Margery L. Cook passed away July 2001. Born in Independence MO in 1925, she was granted a Ph.D. in Medical Microbiology and Immunology from University of California Los Angeles. Her dissertation involved *varicella-zoster*, a herpesvirus the causes the childhood disease chicken pox and the painful adult disease shingles.

After completing her Ph.D., which showcased her vast electron microscopy experience, Cook remained at UCLA with her mentor, Dr. Jack Stevens. Together they published a seminal paper in *Science* in 1971, which established the first direct evidence that herpes simplex virus (the one that causes cold sores) can and does es-

### Membership/Renewal Form (continued):

Please list any other professional organizations that you belong to:

Special Techno-Interests or Expertise:

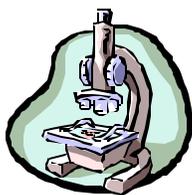
For New Members: How did you learn of NOGLSTP?

### WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO HELP US WITH? (CHECK ANY THAT INTEREST YOU)

- BOARD OF DIRECTORS
- HOLD OFFICE
- AAAS
- FUNDRAISING
- NEWSLETTER ARTICLES
- EDIT NEWSLETTER
- PRODUCE NEWSLETTER
- NEW PAMPHLET TOPICS
- GRANT WRITING
- G/L/B/T CAUCUS OF PROFESSIONAL SOCIETIES (which one?)
- OTHER \_\_\_\_\_

establish a persistent and latent infection in the spinal ganglia of mice. Her work continued in the herpes virology field, generating many more papers, including the *Science* 1987 report that part of the herpes simplex genome remains harbored in the trigeminal ganglia, allowing the latent virus to reactivate.

Margery retired from UCLA in 1993 after mentoring a host of collaborators, post-doctoral fellows, graduate students and technicians. She was uniformly respected for her knowledge, patience, and kindness, as well as her wit and vitality. She is survived by her partner, Shirley Ashford, as well as her sister and her nephews. (Source: *Los Angeles Times*, August 2001)



### Volunteer Opportunity:

Edit the NOGLSTP newsletter. Involves collecting and creating content, laying out with desktop publishing software, and delivering electronic version to NOGLSTP Office via email on a quarterly basis. One year commitment, minimum. No pay, just glory. Inquire at [editor@noglstp.org](mailto:editor@noglstp.org)

### ABOUT NOGLSTP

NATIONAL ORGANIZATION OF GAY AND LESBIAN SCIENTISTS AND TECHNICAL PROFESSIONALS, INC., is a nation-wide organization of lesbigay scientists and technical professionals, regional and caucus groups, and others interested in technical matters and the gay and lesbian community. NOGLSTP's goals include dialog with professional organizations, providing information, improving our member's employment and professional environment, opposing homophobia and stereotypes, educating the gay, scientific and general communities, and fostering inter-city contacts among our members. National Organization of Gay and Lesbian Scientists and Technical Professionals, Inc. is a tax-exempt educational organization under IRS section 501(c)3, incorporated in the State of California (TAX ID # 95-4358685). Written correspondence may be addressed to: NOGLSTP, PO BOX 91803, Pasadena CA 91109-9813. For more information, see our web page at <http://www.noglstp.org/>

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#### Newsletter

The **NOGLSTP Bulletin** is published quarterly. Articles are encouraged and gratefully received. e-mailed articles to the NOGLSTP office c/o [editor@noglstp.org](mailto:editor@noglstp.org) are preferred. Next publication deadline: November 1, 2001.

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