

Doc Rock?

Image alters as MDs develop

Like Davy Crockett, the kindly, old country doctor has outlived his time. He can never be revived, no more than people like Daniel Boone or Natty Bumppo, says the dean of the state's newest medical school at Texas A&M University.

Texas A&M has as its goal training of family physicians for rural areas of the state, explains Dean Robert S. Stone, but that shouldn't cause the public to think the country doctor will rise, like the phoenix.

Stone, former director of the National Institutes of Health and dean of medicine at the University of Oregon Health Sciences Center and at the University of New Mexico, is reluctant to make claims that Texas A&M will revolutionize medicine just because it is going to turn out primary physicians, the computer-age term for family doctors.

The modern physician is surrounded by a complex set of ethical issues including euthanasia, abortion, prescription drug abuse, accusations of malpractice and high medical costs.

For one thing, family medicine has turned into a specialty, he says, and these doctors are no cheaper to produce than their specialist colleagues. He added that the requirements are the same.

For another, in this age of specialists, the medical school has little influence on the careers of its students. They will embark on four more years of formal education and may change their minds about family medicine.

Most, it is hoped, will stay in primary care fields such as pediatrics, family practice and internal medicine.

Soviets want U.S. to fund pool repairs

United Press International
UNITED NATIONS — Someone, it seems, has been messing with their capitalist-style swimming pool, and the Soviets are irate.

So irate they have submitted a formal protest — and a bill for \$5,017 — to the United States.

The pool is at the Soviet Union's U.N. Mission in the Riverdale section of New York City. The Russians say someone, on Aug. 2, lobbed three containers of an "easily soluble white liquid" from outside the complex into the pool.

The result: "The pool was closed and out of operation for a period of a week and a half," the Soviets said in a letter to the United Nations.

And there was the expense, according to the Russian note: "...mechanical and chemical treatment of the pool and its machinery and equipment, on a two-fold water analysis and on the purchase of chemicals and so forth, \$5,017 (statement of expenses enclosed)."

The Russians were numbering it among "hostile acts" directed against them and were demanding the Americans pay up.

The Americans, say the Soviets, hadn't even bothered to reply to their complaint.

Let alone that bill of \$5,017.

medicine, and choose to remain in non-urban areas of Texas.

Non-urban regions are generally defined as communities larger than 1,000 but smaller than the census' Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area, and located far, even by automobile, from adequate medical treatment.

Realistically, says Stone, about 60 percent of Texas A&M's graduates may continue to serve non-urban areas while their classmates may choose to live in the city and specialize.

Most students interviewed for admission say they are interested in family practice, and he feels they are sincere, although there is no way to assure that those selected will remain true to that interest.

So, despite the assumption most Texas A&M graduates will be family physicians in small communities, the return of the country doctor is not assured.

"The country doctor conjures up an image of a kindly, old man sitting by the bedside waiting for the crisis to pass. That is not what modern medicine is," Stone says.

The country doctor image is traditionally a man, but the image now includes blacks, Latinos and women, he explains.

The modern family practitioner must command a breadth of knowledge beyond biology and chemistry that might discourage a specialist colleague, he notes.

The modern physician is surrounded by a complex set of ethical issues including euthanasia, abortion, prescription drug abuse, accusations of malpractice and high medical costs. That's a lot for a student to handle without some early exposure to the profession's internal code of conduct, Stone says.

To this end, the College of Medicine supports a strong program of ethics and humanities in its curriculum.

But the medical students learn their "block and tackle" before mov-

ing to study ethics, community service and career choice.

Despite advancements in the medical and science fields, the individual doctor is less authoritarian than before, Stone believes.

In general, today's physicians are letting the patient in on more of the decisions. People are also more aware of their own responsibility for their health.

Doctors shouldn't have to be father figures, telling patients not to be overweight or not to smoke, he says.

Texas A&M has an unusual clinical phase of training in that it is not directly associated with a large teaching hospital.

Instead, the college has an agreement with Scott and White Hospital in Temple and Veterans Administration facilities in Waco, Temple and Marlin. The closest of these is 60 miles away.

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Stone notes that Texas A&M is solving the distance problem by depending heavily on relay closed-circuit television between here and Temple.

In spite of the logistical problems, Stone is satisfied with the arrangement.

"Too often, medical students are educated in large, publicly run hospitals, where the pressure of taking care of so many people is such that the humane aspects of medicine are often lost in the hurly-burly."

"The administration of a school is different from that of a hospital and I think Texas A&M's College of Medicine is better off leaving that in the hands of people with that expertise."

Aggie Tidbits

Texas A&M turned out more officers who served in World War II than any other school including the United States Military Academy at West Point. There were 18,000 Aggies who served in World War II, 13,000 of which served as officers.

Thomas Gathwright was the first president of Texas A&M. Jefferson Davis, former president of the Confederate states during the Civil War, was offered the position first, but refused.

Med students get \$10,500 in scholarships and awards

By LIZ BAILEY
Battalion Reporter

Students in the Texas A&M University College of Medicine received \$10,500 in scholarships and honors awards this year.

First recipient of the \$1,500 Niederer Scholarship in Medicine was first-year medical student Jan Dymke who also received one of 20 Merit Awards worth \$300.

The Niederer Scholarship is sponsored by Mr. and Mrs. Donald H. Niederer of Bloomington, Ill. The scholarship may be renewed each year if the holder is in good academic standing as judged by the medical school faculty.

Financial need, faculty recommendations and academic achieve-

ment are considered when the recipient is chosen.

The Sam Houston Sanders and Harrison scholarships in medicine were renewed to Jay Franklin and Tim Field, respectively.

Each scholarship is worth \$1,500 per year and may be renewed if the holder is in good academic standing.

Nine other Merit Awards were given to first-year students and ten went to second-year students.

Merit Awards are made available by appropriations of the Texas Legislature to all Texas medical schools.

Two \$300 scholarships from the Muscular Dystrophy Memorial Scholarship Fund, endowed by Sam W. Law, will be awarded early this fall.

Cancer-linked chemicals may be burned in Texas

United Press International
DEER PARK, Texas — An industrial waste company has asked federal approval to establish disposal plants in Louisiana and Texas for a heat-absorbing chemical linked to cancer, liver disease and birth defects.

a leading pollution threat to the environment.

Rollins Environmental Services Inc., has applied for permission to burn and bury PCB waste materials at its disposal plants in Deer Park and Baton Rouge, La.

Jerry D. Neel, plant manager for Rollins in Deer Park, said the plant had been burning PCB wastes routinely until the new regulations took effect.

PCBs, or polychlorinated biphenyls, have been ranked by the Environmental Protection Agency as

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