Baltimore receives Medal of Science

Clinton awards highest honor to Caltech President

By Joe Fassler

Last Monday, January 31st, 2000, Caltech's very own President Dr. David Baltimore was named by President Clinton as a recipient of the 1999 National Medal of Science. The National Medal of Science is the nation's most prestigious science honor, and it recognizes the dedication and contributions the eleven recipients have offered toward science. Dr. Baltimore's Nobel Prize-winning research in virology and his leadership is both academics and public policy were recognized with this award.

In an interview, Dr. Baltimore answered questions about his research and his role as president of Caltech, and offered some sound advice to Caltech students.

JO: How does it feel to receive the National Medal of Science?

DB: I think it's quite wonderful. It's really the highest honor in American sciences, and I think it's terrific to be honored that way.

JO: Can you tell us a little about the research that lead to this award?

DB: The Medal of Science, the citation, is really for my whole career.

JO: And your research for the Nobel Prize?

DB: I discovered an enzyme called reverse transcriptase, which is the base for the ability of cancer causing viruses that integrate into the cell. Really, it's a clear indication that cancer is caused by cellular changes in the DNA.

JO: Do you plan on continuing your research?

DB: Well, I've been working mostly for the last twenty years in immunology, and I have an immunology lab here, working on the molecular aspects.

JO: Do you have any speculation on the future of immunology?

DB: Immunology is still a developing field, because there are some significant aspects about the whole of the immune system, how it's stimulated, that has not been answered yet. But I think we will be answering those questions over the next decade.

JO: How has being Caltech's president worked out so far?

DB: I think it's wonderful. The demand is a challenge, particularly learning about fields outside of biology, so I can at least moderately knowledgeable.

JO: Yes, I mean administrative responsibilities come first, but I think we have to do what we are expected to do. I think we are expected to do many things at the same time.

JO: You have been a key player in politics during the 70's on the issue of genetic research. What do you think is the impact of politics on science?

DB: There are aspects of scientific research that are very sensitive to some members of certain populations. Those generate a lot of political heat, things like abortion, fetal research, and genetic research. And I think it's appropriate that there are public controls, there be a political dimension.

JO: Do you think it's wise to emphasize the political aspect of scientific research in the Caltech curriculum?

DB: No, not really. I don't think we should emphasize that. I think people here try their best to do science independent of politics, and that's the best way. I'd rather try to protect Caltech from too much politics.

JO: Do you have any advice for the 900 Caltech undergrads striving for the Nobel Prize?

DB: The only advice I have is that you have to keep your curiosity, and I think it's important to have a lot of curiosity especially in the last years of your life.
to do the kind of science that you enjoy doing, and if you find yourself in the right situation, you might have the opportunity to do a very important experiment. You might not. You really can't judge yourself on whether you win a prize or not. You got to judge it much more out of whether you find your life satisfying and you feel like you made a contribution.

JO: Where do you see Caltech in the future?

DB: Caltech is going to stay very much the kind of school it is now. Caltech is one of the few schools that try to live in a steady state. There are a lot of small colleges, there are very few research universities that try to remain in a steady state.

JO: Do you have any comments on Caltech's number one ranking from U.S. News and World Report? DB: The rankings are really artificial, and there's almost no meaning in saying that Caltech is a better school than Harvard, or Yale, or MIT. It's a different school. But, the way they decided to calculate, we came out on top. But the effect, I think, has been enormous. A lot more people are aware of Caltech now, we have more applicants, and I wouldn't be surprised if part of the reason that President Clinton came here to Caltech was because of the number one rating.

Dr. Baltimore expressed his gratitude at the interest in his award. The ceremony for the National Medal of Science will be held in Washington, D.C., on March 14th.

Washington—Both recorders of the Alaska airline plane which crashed into the ocean on Wednesday were recovered. The airplane fell into the 700-foot-deep waters of the Santa Barbara Channel and is therefore too deep under water for divers. The recorders have data of 48 parameters of the plane including pitch, speed and the position of the stabilizers and their response to the commands from the cockpit. The voice recorder which was found earlier confirms that the pilots struggled from the beginning of the flight with the control over the airplane. The stabilizer was jammed and made the airplane pitch its nose downward. After trying to prepare the airplane for an emergency landing in Los Angeles, the pilots lost the control over the airplane and it very few inverted before crashing into the ocean.

Vienna, Austria—Austria's 14 European Union partners will not form the communications with Austria once the new government is sworn in. The new coalition includes the country's far right party. The president of the French European Union Commission is none other in this case. The coalition government will be comprised of the Freedom Party and the center right People's party and this will be the first time since World War II that a far-right party has any European government ministry. The party leader addressed last year that immigrants and an expanded EU would cost the Austrians jobs. The 14 EU nations agreed Monday to politically isolate Austria if the new government were installed.

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By Katharina Kohler

THE CALIFORNIA TECH

February 4, 2000

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IHC CHAIR

Chris Elion

Back when I was a freshman going through Rotation, I thought to myself, "Wow, I hope the next IHC chair is as cool as Jaidge. And as big and hairy too." This I why believe you should vote for me - because I'm big and hairy, just like Jaidge.

Of course, there are other reasons that I think I would make a good IHC chair. First of all, I've been the (IHC) Rep. for last term. Before that I was made sure that it is possible for everyone to use the ASCIT Bus! This also means that I've gained experience on the ASCIT Board and am familiar with how it is run.

I have also been on my House's Athletic Team for the past year. Trust me, you have no idea how hard it is to get a bunch of molasses to play sports until you've actually tried it yourself. Intramouse sports are a significant part of the IHC chair's duty, and I already have experience dealing with them from an individual house's point of view.

If I'm elected IHC chair, there are a few things that I intend to do. First, I will try to make off-campus room pickups AFTER the seven houses have their room pickups. This will hopefully reduce the number of people that end up in a car driven by me and make sure that more people end up in their first choices. I would also work along with the house presidents to make Rotation nights a bit more lenient, while still keeping the original spirit of them intact.

The position of IHC chair is the most important position that you will decide in this election. Some people may want to vote big and hairy, and others may want to vote Chris Elion. Jason Meltzer

Innerspace

I hate writing pieces like this. They always seem like a justification. But I suppose it's a necessary evil. I'm sure many of you have no idea who I am. Those of you who regularly read Tech will probably recognize me as the author of the sometimes regular column Innerspace. Those of you who don't, start reading the Tech more often! It's a wonderfully distorted view of the world (as it should be included).

I guess I am supposed to write about why I should be IHC Chair, or have the question by stating why I want to be IHC Chair. Primarily, it is because there are some aspects of Coltech Undergraduate life that I believe should be fixed. The process of Rotation and the Rules are important issues. It is my belief that many of the rules should be revised, and some eliminated. Further study would be necessary to determine what exact actions to take, but the removal of the burden of many of the rules would make the process easier and more effective. I also think we should see some sort of informative guide for Fresh produced. While this may take some of the aura of mystery out of the first few weeks, it would probably be comforting for many incoming students to know more about undergraduate life at Caltech before they get here (or very soon after). And with more informed Fresh, the necessity for many of the Rotation rules (sent to preserve them) would be reduced. Another annual problem is the Off Campus Lottery. This is a process that has been refreshed every year since the founding of Avery House. It would be advantageous to try to standardize it in some way, so that it is no longer a source of confusion.

Aside from specific issues, I would like to contribute to the Coltech Undergraduate Continuity in an active way. Writing for the Tech is fun, and I hope others take advantage from my example. I would like to return to the community from which I have gained so much.

Adam Lawton

Hey everyone, I'm Adam, and I'm running for the office of IHC Chair. The IHC Chair is a pretty important position, and to be a good IHC Chair, you need to be effective at leading a pretty elite group of students, as well as interfacing with lots of high profile people around campus. I'm really enthusiastic about doing the job, and I think I'm pretty qualified, so I thought I'd take a little bit of your time to tell you about some of the things I've done.

Most of my involvement for the past year has been centered around my job as Fleming's social chair. In that position, I was in charge of pulling everything together for our after-dinner receptions during rotation, as well as planning an event every single week. To do my job, I had to work closely with the Flex Life staff and the Dean, and I'm happy to say that I'm on excellent terms with everyone in both of those offices.

But what have I done outside the scope of house governance? Quite honestly, not enough! And that's one of the reasons I'd like to be the next IHC Chair. Actually, most of what I've done in this arena has been social chair also, if you were at Fleming's huge party in the fall or at our UFO party ten last year or at our subma­

Vanessa Sih

serve to aggrandise us and compel us to defy authority. I would like to continue the work of the current IHC in finding a good solution.

The house system is good because it provides a sense of community. As IHC chair, I would work with the house presidents to make Rotation a positive experience and help freshmen find the community that is best for them. In terms of qualifications, I have been a member of the Debney Exon for the past two years and participated in the pick process. I am dedicated, I have worked as the ad manager for the Tech and business manager for the little I. Remember, a vote for Vanessa is a vote for freedom.

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The California Tech

February 4, 2000
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The California Tech

Derek Shannon

I'm Derek Shannon, and I'm running to serve as your ASCIT secretary. That's the 16th way that the secretary relates to the rest of Caltech? The ASCIT Minutes published in every Tech, will your friends, sit down, cause this might come as a shock—the ASCIT Minutes are a world that has been pulled over your eyes to blind you from the truth. What you know you can't explain, but you feel it. The ASCIT Minutes are dull, and you never read them. Well, as ASCIT Secretary, I will end this injustice. Never again will one of Tech's violent events

March 2, 2000

Jason Cardema

When I was a freshmen, I came to Caltech thinking that this was the ideal place to be. There was so much to learn and so much things to be involved with. I was young and idealistic and thought that perhaps one day I might make a difference. But I can contribute to our understanding of the universe, that might somehow improve the human condition and promote peace, happiness, and love throughout the world. But I quickly realized that I couldn't do everything, especially as a EE major.

Stephen Wexler


Tim Crosby

Recently, it seems that there has been a lot of disillusionment among Caltech's student government. I too share this disillusionment. However, rather than simply whine about it (as I have already done), I want to change it.

Carolyn West

Jake West is the name. I haven't a clue to say. I'd like to be your next ASCIT treasurer. Someone has got to do it, somebody's got to take it on. It's got to be done, somebody's got to take it on. It's got to be done, somebody's got to take it on.
Director of Academic Affairs

Emma Kang

Melinda Turner

Molly Swanson

Jason Tran

Scott Payne

Ram Srinivasan

Ted Jou

Meghan Smith

Philosophy and the importance of open-mindedness. Of course, this is something that I have to do, and it is also important to help people, including my friends, by encouraging them to pursue their goals.

For those who don't know me, my name is Jason Tran, and I'd like to see you as my fellow Director of Academic Affairs. The Director of Academic Affairs has many responsibilities, including helping together the CUL, being well with the Core Curriculum, etc. It's his or her job to make your academic and research experience a better one. The actions of the Director of Academic Affairs may affect you directly, so it's important whom you want as your vote for you want to take an active role in the decision making process that governs which classes I have to take, and which research opportunities are available to you. I feel that I have what it takes to fulfill the responsibilities assigned to this job, and I hope that you will help me, and I'm committed to doing my job.

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Dilbert® by Scott Adams

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It turns out the "2" in the "7 billion" didn't refer to him not being a contestant.

The only thing that ever goes out of style is the lifestyle.

If you still don't understand, I offered you a shot, didn't I, you dork?


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FoxTrot by Bill Amend

Before we begin playing, I want to be a millionaire. This first question is for you, Roger.

Tell us a little bit about this...I mean, English major in college...

That's enough for now. Thank you.

Our first question comes from the e-mail address of advanced mathematicians...

Hey! You just killed me with a question that looks easy, you big, fat, dumb, beautiful moron.

If you'll just pass me my two hundred bully sticks, I'll teach you how to play the game.

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Small Fonts Extravaganza

Dean's Corner

As science fiction would have it....

by Jean-Paul Revel

February 4, 2000

It is a testimony to the loneliness of our kind and of its insatiability that we yearn to find life elsewhere in the Universe. This yearning has engendered much Science Fiction, but there is still not very much Science reality. The prominent avenues are still just that: prominent. But the fiction! How we love a good story, be it Little Red Riding Hood or Peter and the Wolf. Tales of abduction by little green men or parasites by sleuth- ing moxiers with teeth like broken window panes make us feel so pleasantly terrified. None too top that evening in 1938 when Orson Welles broadcast a story on the radio, based on HG Wells' "War of the Worlds." His account of aliens from Mars invading New Jersey created a widespread panic. Listeners ran to the streets, some began to evacuate their homes, holding handkerchiefs to their faces to protect themselves from fumes. In many popular "scare me stories," our wonderful planet Earth is invaded. Of course, in these contexts we have to wish, for how else to explain that the author and his readers survived?

Sometimes the yarn describes adventures of Earthlings in other worlds. Jules Verne's heroes don't actually make it to the moon. Edgar Rice Burroughs sent his heroes to Mars, starting in 1911, with "A Princess of Mars," and with a similar new yarn yearly after that. Although the stream slowed down, Mars was the locale all the way to 1940 with "Luna of Gathol," and than jumped to another environment with the "Skeletor Men of Jupiter." More recently Asimov ruled us with intergalactic tales. But you probably know more than I. When humanity left this world during the Apollo Moon Program, NASA worried that the spacecapsule and the astronauts inside might come back contaminated by some unwelcome organisms. Many thought it was far fetched, but with the argument that it would be catastrophic if foreign pathogens were brought back, the astronauts were quarantined for 3 long weeks on their return from the moon.

What we did not know is that out of this world materials were already present on earth. Mummies which landed on the earth were presumably all cooked to a crisp, their outside sterilized on the way down through our atmosphere. There was no evidence of the kind of organic material which could have originated from living things like those on earth. The story changed with the discovery of the meteorite ALH84001 in Antarctica. Analysis of the meteorite indicated a Martian origin, and excitement was very high when there was an announcement of the existence of structures which looked like earthly bacteria along with crystals of magnesium like those produced by living organisms here on earth. The putative critters were much smaller than earthly bugs, but then, they came from another world. It is still not clear if these structures are the remnants of living organisms. For life as we know it is required, so there is great excitement as a result of evidence for a watery ocean under the icy surface of Europa. The latest support comes from a Galileo flyby at a distance of only 8 km from the surface. And there has been at least one meteorite (Moonlands 1998) recovered on Earth which contained water (nicely aged, like good wine), actually as old as our solar system, but nevertheless opening the possibility of life elsewhere. But things are getting very serious now. As of January 17 that starship had been recognized for which there is evidence of a circling planet. In one system there are no less than 3 objects orbiting around the central star. It is interesting that most of these planets are large and Jupiter-like. Their orbits are mostly elliptical instead of being circular, and most are very close to their star — some even closer than Mercury is to the Sun. While it is exciting to find all these potential harbors for life, none of these appear bright prospects. They would be too gaseous and too close to their star. Of course Carl Sagan imagined flutters in Jupiter's atmosphere, but... Smaller rocky planets may exist, but are too small to be detected. Do these findings mean that our hopes for companions are to be dashed once more? We don't know and so we continue an increasingly sophisticated search of the skies for purposeful signals from the beyond, which tomorrow may bring.

One of the fantasies that have been revived at times is that the putative creatures from out there would be of C, H, N, & O as we are, but of sterner stuff like SiC. Biochemists however warn that Si is too likely a building block. The atomic distances are a bit too large and some molecules with lots of Si-Si bonds may be prone to falling apart more easily than molecules with C-C bonds. Also if excess carbon dioxide brings about a greenhouse effect, SiO2 would also be trouble since it's pretty hard and story (insoluble stuff at rainfall). But who knows what else would be different in a Si world? After all, ever imaginative Sagan once postulated what creatures on Venus would have to be like. Let's see, an atmosphere containing sulfuric acid, a ground temperature of 700 °C, an atmospheric density of umpine bar... well, nothing so much as a hoppy loof and a thick skin along with a fiery breath would do. Venus is not inhabited by pal- ledrmaids and delicate creatures but by nasty devils. And now there is new evidence for the existence of Martians. Isn't it curious that so many attempts at reaching Mars have been thwarted? Could this not be explained by the pres- ence of invisible warriors protecting the secrets of the Red Planet? Of course the two probes that did land and returned pictures from the surface showed no such creatures disporting themselves in front of the lander's TV camera: Surely that could go past the idea that the wily Martians managed to keep all their kit out of sight, so as not to blow their cover. Most Martian cities are anyway concent- rated in the south pole (the Martians do need water). So the craft that landed there last December had to be aerostatically quick, quick: they had only a few minutes to blind it, and this was achieved by covering it with COP snow. The inten- tions were broken off to keep it silent... so the Martians had not counted on the senility of our technologies. There are reports that perhaps appear from the bur- ned craft was heard, but then they may be per- haps not... "baba radio telescopes of the world..."

Jean-Paul Revel

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The Caltech Cheerleading Squad will present a free showing of "Rosewood" on Thursday, February 10 at 7 p.m. in Moore 207 to commemorate Black History Month. Refreshments will be provided and a discussion will follow the movie.

John Astin is Edgar Allan Poe in One Oscar, Too Many, Caltech's Beckman Auditorium, Feb. 11 at 8 p.m. in Caltech's Beckman Auditorium. With flashes and humor, Poe takes the audience through Poe's life and his frequent battles with himself. Oscar and Emmy-nominated Astin is best known as the original Gomez, patriarch of The Addams Family. Tickets are $25, $12, and $4 for students and under $12. For more information, call 1-888-2CALTECH.

The Merchant of Venice, Ramo Auditorium, Feb. 11, 12, 18, 19, 23, and 26 at 7:30 p.m. and Feb. 13, 20 at 2 p.m., presented by Theater Arts at Caltech. Admission to be announced; for more information, call 1-888-2CALTECH.

Cappuccino Concert, presented by the J. E. Beckman String Quartet, will be held at 7 p.m. in the J. E. Beckman Auditorium. Tickets are $12, $7, and $4 for students and under $12. For more information, call 1-888-2CALTECH.

The vocal ensemble Anonymous 4 will perform at 8 p.m. in Caltech's Beckman Auditorium. The program for this concert is "16th century - Love Songs of Landiandini." Anonymous 4 is renowned for its astonishing vocal blend and technical virtuosity. Tickets to this performance are $25, $21, $17, $12, and under $5 for students and seniors, and $10 for seniors and students. For more information, call 1-888-2CALTECH.

Jazz Band concert at 8 p.m. in Caltech's Beckman Auditorium. This concert is called "The Selvidge - Love Songs of Landiandini." Anonymous 4 is renowned for its astonishing vocal blend and technical virtuosity. Tickets to this performance are $25, $21, $17, $12, and under $5 for students and seniors, and $10 for seniors and students. For more information, call 1-888-2CALTECH.

The Caltech Progressive Coalition presents a free viewing of "Rosewood." Be sure to bring your ID to this party in order to receive free wine and hors d'oeuvres.

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