



Henry Mead Kaiser unveils plaque for Edgar F. Kaiser Health Center Thursday. D.O. Wagster reads inscription.



Youngsters enjoy puppets during Open House at the public Saturday. Edgar F. Kaiser Health Center. Center was open to (Photos: Richard Brown)

Sickle-cell research jeopardized

by Henry Duvall

Former president Richard M. Nixon in a message to Congress in 1971 declared sickle-cell disease as a priority health problem. Congress reacted by setting in motion legislation to form the National Sickle Cell Disease Program in 1972.

In a hotel across the Potomac River in Arlington, Va., experts in the field gathered at a conference recently to observe a decade of progress in sickle-cell disease research, treatment and counseling—but with concern about future support.

Many challenges face the sickle-cell disease program today. There is worry about what the "new Federalism" in health care portends for a disease that primarily affects blacks. The federal government wants the states to assume the responsibility of this and other genetic disease programs, with funding to come from health block grants for services to communities.

Administration budget cuts and Congress' incorporation of the sickle-cell act into the genetics diseases act have also raised concern about funding of sickle-cell disease projects.

"There is competition for money to fight diseases, and sickle cell is caught up in that," says Dr. Roland Scott, director of the Howard University Center for Sickle Cell Disease and one of the chief architects of the national program.

Dr. Scott, whose center co-sponsored the recent conference observing the 10th anniversary of the national sickle-cell program, also

points out that some people think it is hopeless to search for cures for genetic diseases, and that perhaps the concentration should be on infectious diseases. "There's an attitude that you can't do anything about genetic diseases. This is a misconception."

Sickle-cell disease is an inherited blood abnormality that strikes about one of every 500 black Americans as well as Caucasians of Mediterranean origin and blacks from other regions of the world. An estimated 50,000 persons in the United States suffer from this disease in which, as the result of an abnormal hemoglobin, the red blood cells have a sickled shape rather than the normal round shape.

This disease occurs in the offspring of two individuals who both carry the gene for the sickling trait. If the child inherits this gene from each parent, the child will have sickle-cell anemia. If he inherits the gene from only one parent, he will have sickle-cell trait, which usually presents no medical problem for him but may possibly affect his own offspring.

Persons afflicted with this sometimes fatal blood disorder, particularly young children, have an increased susceptibility to bacterial infections. Infections seem to precipitate crises, periods in which the symptoms of the disease become active, causing severe pain.

Although there is no cure for the disease, advances in early detection, patient care and management have led to longer life spans of the disease's victims.

Sickle-cell disease can now be di-

agnosed before a baby is born through amniocentesis. And a simple test of blood from the umbilical cord can detect the disease immediately after birth.

Prior to 1970, interest in the disease was at a "relatively low scientific and health-care priority," says Dr. Scott. Legislative, political and organizational initiatives helped to establish comprehensive sickle-cell disease centers, which have developed programs of research, public information, improved patient care, screening, as well as counseling and community involvement.

But Howard's Dr. Scott is concerned that public and government support is waning. In addition to diminishing resources, he cites "creeping" apathy and black Americans' sensitivity to being identified with and perceiving the blood disorder as a "minority disease." "People are concerned first of all about jobs and paying bills," he said during the three-day conference.

"Education (of the public) is the bottom line," Dr. Scott emphasizes. "Without education and visibility of interest, the program cannot achieve the necessary government and citizenry support required to bring the problem under control."

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Mondo Piccolo heralds U.N. Week

Kicking off U.N. Week, Oregon United Nations Association bursts forth on Saturday, October 16, with its first "Mondo Piccolo Gala."

The celebration, taking up both ballrooms of Neighbors of Woodcraft Hall for twelve festive hours (10 am to 10 pm), will feature world-wide cultural displays, international delicacies, a cosmopolitan wine and beer garden, as well as continuous international film showings and live entertainment by colorful "round-the-world" dancers and singers. Admission is free.

The Mondo Piccolo Hoedown Dance (8 pm to midnight) will feature Rick Meyers and the Stehkin River Ramblers with National Fiddling Champ Carol Ann Wheeler and other surprise attractions. Admission to the dance is \$2.50 per person.

Both Mondo Piccolo Gala and Mondo Piccolo Hoedown Dance are being held at the Neighbors of Woodcraft Hall, 1410 S.W. Morrison St., Saturday, October 16—sponsored by Oregon United Nations Association and World Affairs Council.

Mondo Piccolo ("small world" in Italian) will boast cultural intrigue happenings by American Indian, French, Greek, Cambodian, Irish, Italian, Japanese and Norwegian groups, to name a few, plus informative "what-have-you" booths by a variety of community enterprises.

Ross Catley, Executive Director for Oregon United Nations, says, "We're providing a marvelous opportunity for families to see the 'world on a string'—global studies in a capsule—something really great for global or social studies teachers to encourage students and their parents to explore."

On Sunday, October 17, Mayor Ivancie officially opens U.N. Week at a 3 to 5 pm, admission-free, public reception at the Scottish Rite Temple, 709 S.W. 15th Ave. There will be free entertainment and refreshments; the Oregon Consular Corps will be honored and Portland's international students are to be introduced.

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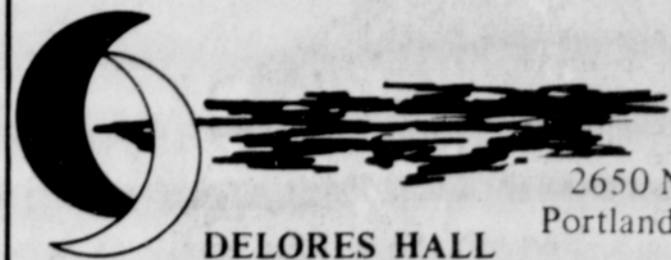
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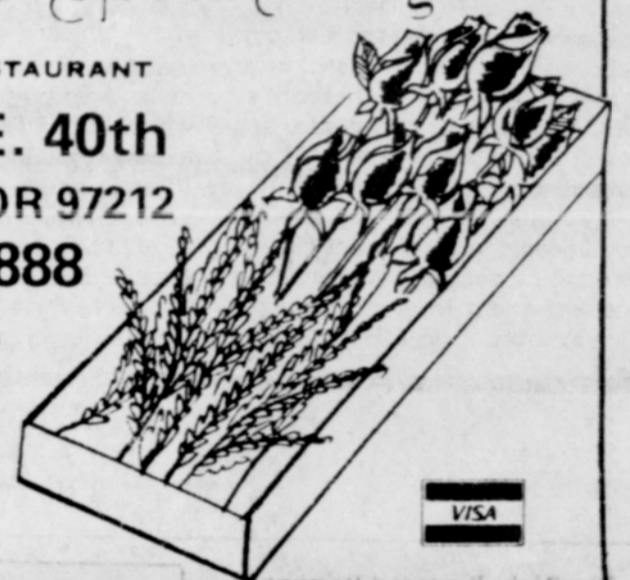
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Born in Canton, Virginia, educated at Berea College, Kentucky, he earned his B.A. in 1907 and his M.A., from the University of Chicago, in 1908. After receiving his Ph.D. from Harvard in 1912, he became a college professor and Dean of the College of Liberal Arts at Howard University, in 1921. In 1910 he organized the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History. He initiated the Annual February observance of Negro History Week in 1926, and wrote and published 16 outstanding books on Black History. He received the Spingarn Medal in 1926.



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