

March of Dimes Fights Pollution with Bacteria

Scientists funded by the March of Dimes Birth Defects Foundation at the University of Illinois have bred bacteria which can totally decompose the "Agent Orange" ingredient called 2,4,5-T, according to a report in the Dec. 4 issue of the journal Science.

The team, headed by Dr. Ananda M. Chakrabarty, professor of microbiology and immunology, used a new

BLOOD DRIVE

Newark — The Newark Developmental Disabilities Service Office and Developmental Center has scheduled a blood drive from 1 to 6 p.m., Wednesday, Jan. 20, at the school gym. To make an appointment, contact Norman Brust at 331-1700, ext. 386.

breeding method which may enable scientists to produce strains of bacteria capable of removing many other toxic pollutants from soil and water.

"Agent Orange" is the military term for a herbicide whose use by U.S. forces in Vietnam has given rise to controversial claims of long-lasting or delayed damage to health, including birth defects in veterans' children. Composed mainly of two chemicals, 2,4,5-T and 2,4-D, it has also been widely used under other names to suppress nuisance plants in this country. Like many synthetic chemicals, 2,4,5-T is not naturally decomposed by bacteria, and therefore accumulates to become a low-level but widespread environmental contaminant.

Dr. Chakrabarty's team

obtained natural soil bacteria from toxic chemical dumps at New York's Love Canal, Florida's Eglin Air Force Base, and a site in Arkansas. None, they found, had natural ability to decompose 2,4,5-T by using it as a food source.

Because different strains and species of bacteria are known to exchange genes in nature, the researchers mixed the dump-site bacteria with other types known to carry genes enabling them to decompose various chemicals distantly related to 2,4,5-T. They placed the mixed bacterial populations in flasks with small amounts of 2,4,5-T and grew them, gradually increasing the levels of 2,4,5-T over a period of months.

Their expectation was that, as a random process of gene exchanges and gene mutations

occurred in the mixed colonies of bacteria, increasing levels of 2,4,5-T and diminishing levels of other food sources would poison or starve all strains except those which, by chance, had acquired the gene combinations needed to

enable them to thrive on 2,4,5-T.

It worked. After 8 to 10 months, several strains of bacteria were surviving on a steady diet of the herbicide. The researchers hope soon to test the bacteria's ability to

remove 2,4,5-T from some heavily contaminated areas.

"Microbial bio-degradation is the cheapest, fastest and most ecologically acceptable way of accomplishing this," Dr. Chakrabarty says.

Southwest Winter Assembly Slates Vocations Discussion

The Southwest Region Winter Assembly is scheduled from 7:15 to 9:30 p.m., Wednesday, Jan. 20, at St. Helen's Church. Using the theme "Called Together," the focus will be on the call we all receive from the Lord and the various ways in which this call is lived out in our lives.

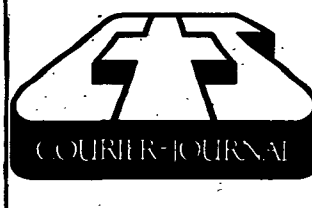
The theme reflects the fact that we are all called to a

vocation whether it is to single life, religious community life, priesthood, or married life.

The meeting has been planned by Father Thomas Valenti, diocesan director of vocations, and his team, and will be assisted by a vocations team from the Southwest Region. Frank and Sue Staropoli from the Office of Family Life will conduct a

session for adults, and members of the vocations team have planned a group session for high schoolers. It is the hope of the team that there will be a good attendance from the high school age group.

Registration forms are available at all parishes in the Southwest Region.



Southern Tier Auburn-Geneva

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10 Graduated from St. James

Hornell — Ten members of the 71st graduating class of St. James Mercy Hospital School of Nursing received diplomas at graduation ceremonies Dec. 20 in St. Ann's Church.

Roxanne Williams of Wellsville received three awards. She earned the Medical Staff Award for the highest academic average; the Sister Mary Aide Award, which goes to the student who "best exemplifies the profession of nursing," and the Faculty Award, presented for "demonstrated leadership, professionalism, self-direction and contribution to the health of the community."

The Women's Board Award, for the second highest average, went to Rebecca Dennis of Jasper.

The St. James Alumni Achievement Award for improvement during the course of studies went to Theresa Baylor of Nunda.

Sister Jean Marie Kears, superior general of the Sisters of Mercy, gave the commencement address. Speaking of changes in the future for

the nursing profession and other aspects of health care services, she pointed out the needs of people to whom the graduates will minister: "compassion, fidelity, friendship, love, hope, healing and especially mercy," she said.

"Mercy is a name I carry as a Sister of Mercy and it is precious to me as a way of life. It is also a word that is engraved on the pin you received today because of your years of training at St. James, a quality that is hopefully engraved in your heart as well. We live in a world that cries for mercy and not for violence or hatred or war. You, as professional nurses stand in the gap left by the brokenness of human lives. You hold both of the shattered ends within yourselves and with your skills, and equally important, the very nature of your healing presence, you help us bridge our way back to wholeness. We feel mercy only when we are ready to live in and with the struggles and sufferings of our world and its people."



The three award winners among 10 students who recently were graduated from the St. James Mercy Hospital School of Nursing are, from left, Theresa Baylor, Roxanne Williams, and Rebecca Dennis.

St. Joseph's Names New Board Member

Elmira — Gordon L. Black of Horseheads was elected to the St. Joseph's Hospital Board of Directors at its December meeting.

Black, retired general manager for the Elmira area for the New York State Electric and Gas corporation, brings a broad background of community experience to the board.

A charter member of the hospital's Development Council, Black was presented the "Centurion of the Year" award in 1980 for dedicated service to the hospital and its community.

Black also has served on the boards of the Bethany Retirement Center, Chemung County Chamber of Commerce, Elmira Symphony and Choral Society, the Horseheads Free Library, Horseheads Savings Bank, Junior Achievement of Chemung County and Southern Tier Economic Growth.


A member of the Elmira City Club, Elmira College Council and Elmira Rotary Club, Black also served as general chairman for the

1977-78 United Way campaign.

A widower, Black is the father of two children. He will serve on the Planning Committee of the Board of Directors.

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Deserved Honor

Specially honored at the annual sports banquet of St. Patrick's parish in Seneca Falls was Matthew Ferrara Sr., right, with Father Michael Conboy, pastor. Ferrara has been involved all his life with the parish, dating back to school days. He currently is on the Building, Grounds Committee of the Parish Council and in 1979 was on the ad hoc committee for the church's renovation. This year, he was co-chairman of the Bishop's Thanks Giving Appeal. He is a member of the SMS Lodge, the Knights of Columbus, Veterans of Foreign Wars and the Moose Lodge.

Church and Today's People

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