

# Safety & Total Health Day

## Speakers mix humor, challenge, and hard facts

By Mary Peterson

The master of ceremonies at Teague Auditorium, Phil West, pegged it right when he said, "Can you believe it? A doctor with a sense of humor." From JSC's own Space and Life Sciences Directorate, Dr. Dave Williams, to guest doctors Robert Conn and Tom Marshburn, the audience was in for more than a few laughs mixed in with some very serious subject matter.

Marshburn, who preceded Conn's keynote, spoke on a subject of concern to all of us at some time or other: cholesterol. Speaking about how the history of food and diet evolved, Marshburn said, "In the old days, there wasn't much more around [to eat] than squirrels, nuts, and berries, and you had to chase after much of that because it was either hard to find or ran away." As time went on, though, things changed. "Now," Marshburn said, "we have progressed to 'happy meals' – Ding Dongs, Twinkies, and pizzas. And, much of it we don't have to chase after. It even comes to us." The point being, fast food can be a fast road to heart attacks. "This," he said, "has given rise to incredible buildings (hospitals), and a chance to know its occupants (doctors) better than



Dr. Robert Conn

what you eat. Keep your cholesterol below 200, LDL at less than 160, and HDL above 35. Emphasize, as your mother told you, a lot of fruits and vegetables in your diet. Be active. Don't pick up the phone every time you want to call someone across the office. Walk over to talk to them. Take the stairs. Park farther from your destination. Walk! Walk! Walk!

And, of course, choose your parents wisely. Well, we can't do that exactly, but Marshburn reminded that genetics do play an important role in our physical makeup and longevity. Still, though, genetic predisposition can be somewhat managed by careful attention to diet and exercise.

In an earlier talk, Dr. Williams touched upon things more serious. For

you ever wanted to." He even showed a picture of a fancy yacht that we can, and probably do, contribute to.

Marshburn's message was true and clear. Watch

openers, he predicted the imminent new year, 2000, to be a time of curious new resolutions and also of much sadness. "Having worked as an emergency trauma center physician, I have seen a lot of accidents related to drinking and driving – something that can, and should, be avoided. Don't let it happen to you.

"We at JSC are as concerned about your safety at home as at work, and don't think things can't happen to you," Williams warned. He told the story of a fellow physician who died quite unexpectedly of a heart attack – at age 50.

Another instance involved a personal friend, the senior emergency physician at the trauma center where he worked and whom he considered a mentor. "My friend didn't show up for work one day. Upon checking, he was found dead at the base of the stairs in his apartment. He had slipped and suffered an apparent fall, breaking his neck. He would have been 48 years old." A simple accident, it was a reminder that slips, trips, and falls also account for the majority of injuries on site.

Williams said most of us give more thought to financial management than we do to our personal time and risk management. Why? "It's the changing of our culture," he said. "Things we

wouldn't have thought of doing just a few years ago are now commonplace. Take extreme sports for example."

Williams cited a number of activities that push risk to the limit, including snowboarding, scuba diving, rock climbing (a popular version of which is without a safety belt), skydiving, skateboarding, and freestyle skiing, to name a few. "People even take ridiculous new social risks. Ever been to a punchbowl party?" he asked. This, he explained, is where people bring any drugs and medications they can find and drop them into a punch bowl. Guests then pull out and consume whatever they get. "You could get young men strung out on something as crazy as birth control pills combined with antidepressants. Some combinations could have disastrous results. When you work 10 years as a trauma center physician, you see everything, and, sadly, much of it preventable."

In closing, Williams charged, "Take responsibility for your own risk management, because you can make a difference in your own health and safety."

These words segued nicely into those of Dr. Robert Conn, next to speak, who has made a crusade of teaching risk management. ■

## Best Safety & Total Health Day ever! *say employees*

By Mary Peterson

No question about it. Safety & Total Health Day 1999 was the biggest, the boldest, and the best received of any of its predecessor events. And that's not hype. That's the consensus of the people the day was designed to benefit, the employees.

"You only had to walk among the booths, stroll around the pond area, or eavesdrop at a seminar," said Gail Bowie, a publications specialist, "to hear positive remarks. They had to do with being able to pick up some needed information on a health problem, learning some new aspect of safety, or someone's delight at being able to have something personal done, like having their cholesterol screened. I wish I could have taken in even more of the events myself."

According to Booth Committee co-chairs Jonathan Manning and Terri Blackwelder, more than 60 booths, the

most ever, participated this year, and requests for more booth setups had to be turned down as late as two days before the event. "We think this upsurge of interest is attributable possibly to two things," said Manning. "One, Safety & Total Health Day has established itself as an important event at the center, and, two, our employees are taking the day a lot more seriously – taking part, making suggestions, and even encouraging others to bring something to the day."

That kind of enthusiasm was not lost on Barrios employees either. Spearheaded by Sharon Kemp, an administrative assistant, the company asked everyone to take an active role this year. She said, "We told our people that we wanted their commitment to volunteer on S&TH Day and contribute something beyond the Barrios program."

The chance to do something different was appealing, and soon volunteers were everywhere. And work they did – putting

up signs, placing posters, table tents, flyers, banners, and whatever else the already overburdened Communications Office needed help with. "They were a godsend," said Rindy Carmichael, of Safety Communications. "Not only that, I think they benefited from feeling a part of the production. We need that kind of involvement."

Besides the individual directorate activities, employees had a wealth of things to see and do. The cholesterol screenings, the blood drive, the Texas-New Mexico Power Company arc demonstration, the JSC Clinic M\*A\*S\*H\* tent, the JSAT VPP "Why I Work Safely" booth, the motorcycle safety booth, CPR training, the great Max-Q Band, the child car seat check were very popular as was the Health Run/Walk event that closed out the day. A sizable number of employees took in at least one of the several outstanding seminars that were offered.

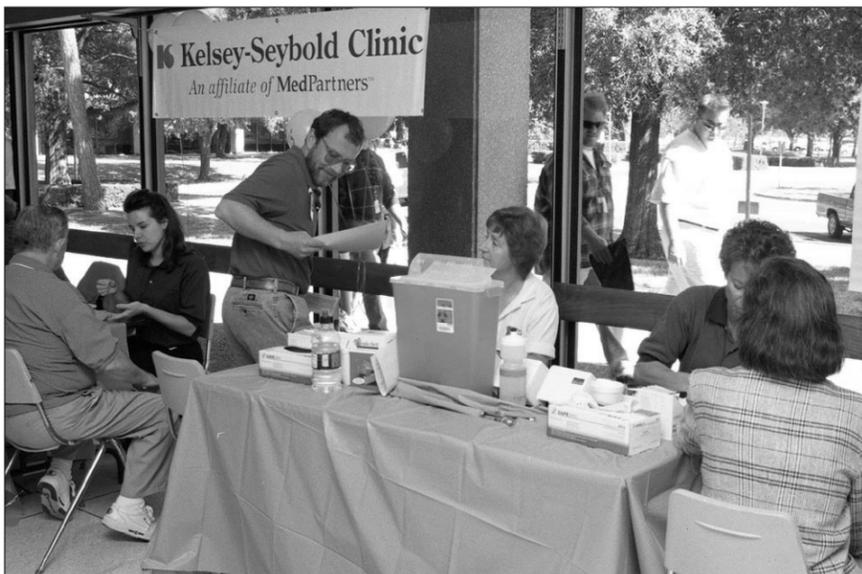
Even Barbara Zelon, JSC's busy PAO director, took time to participate in

some of the booth activities. Zelon walked one of the therapy-trained dogs, a beautiful, friendly wheaten terrier, who was part of the Pet Partners Animal-Assisted Therapy exhibit. "If seeing one of these wonderful dogs work won't raise your spirits, nothing will," Zelon said.

New this year were the Pictionary Contest and the presentation of the "George Award." Winners and details will appear in the next *Roundup*.

This S&TH Day will be a tough act to follow in 2000. Can they do it? This year's co-chairs Perry Bennett and Chuck Sawin think so. "We had a great committee who knew what to do and how to get it done," said Bennett. "They were the key. But, most of all," he said, "if injuries and lost workdays continue to go down, all the time and effort were more than worth it." ■

*Let's not disappoint!*



NASA JSC S99-13241 Photo by Steve Candler

Employees take advantage of free cholesterol screening offered by the JSC Clinic on Safety and Total Health Day.



NASA JSC S99-13240 Photo by Steve Candler

Want fries with that? It could be you. Texas-New Mexico Power Co. employees dramatically demonstrate electrical safety do's and don'ts.