

Salk Institute

Renato Dulbecco

## Dulbecco Takes Salk Job

After an exhaustive nationwide search for a new president, Salk Institute officials have found their man—Renato Dulbecco, an insider who had become so popular as acting president that scientists there started a letter-writing campaign to the board on his behalf. Salk officials had spent months trying to woo James E. Darnell, a molecular biologist at Rockefeller University. But he turned down the job in February even after Salk tried to sweeten the deal with an offer to build him a \$750,000 home in La Jolla. Darnell opted instead to stay at Rockefeller, where his long-time collaborator, David Baltimore, its new president, made him an offer he couldn't refuse.

Dulbecco, a Nobel laureate and one of Salk's founders, agreed to take the job through

1992. He has been acting president since late 1988 when Frederic de Hoffmann resigned after contracting AIDS from a blood transfusion.

## Engineer Wins Kudos from NSF

Chemical engineer Mark E. Davis, 34, has been chosen as this year's recipient of the National Science Foundation's Alan T. Waterman Award.

Davis, professor at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, is the first engineer to receive the award in its 15-year history. The honor goes to one outstanding young investigator each year who is given grants of up to \$500,000 for 3 years of research.

Davis was recognized for work in synthesizing "molecular sieves" that are applied in petrochemical synthesis and have potential uses in drug purification.

## Bick Leaves NIH for Italian Foundation

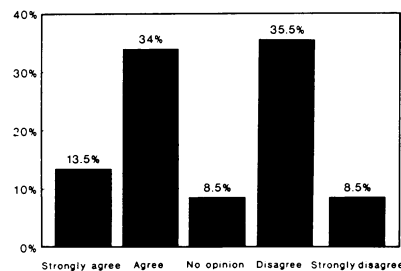
Katherine Bick, deputy director of the National Institutes of Health for external affairs and primary author of last year's aborted rules on conflict of interest among NIH grantees, has left the government. She has taken a job with a nonprofit Italian neuroscience

## Spinoffs from AIDS Research

Conventional wisdom says the war on cancer may not have cured the disease, but it gave a tremendous boost to a broad spectrum of biomedical research. Will there be similar spinoffs from the billions of dollars the government is spending on AIDS research? Yes, according to a survey sent to 400 members of the Institute of Medicine by the Congressional Office of Technology Assessment.

Of the 147 respondents, more than half felt AIDS research had "contributed substantially to the basic science fields of virology, immunology, microbiology, and molecular biology." Nearly half felt federal spending on AIDS is at about the right level, while about one third thought it is too low. But, as the chart shows, opinion was sharply divided on whether too much money had been taken from other fields for AIDS research.

How representative is OTA's sample? That's hard to say. Just under half reported they had no external funding, and 16% were presently receiving federal support for AIDS research. The respondents were primarily physicians (64%), mostly over 50 (79%), and 56% described research as their major professional activity.



Has too much research money been diverted to AIDS?

research group, the Centro Multicentrico Italiano Sulla Demenza. It is based in Florence and focuses particularly on developing pharmaceuticals for Alzheimer's disease. Bick starts work in May as the group's Washington, D.C., representative, insuring that protocols for research are in harmony with U.S. requirements.

Bick says her decision to

leave has "nothing whatever" to do with the negative response to the conflict-of-interest rules, which were withdrawn last December following a barrage of criticism from the academic world.

George Galasso is serving as Bick's temporary replacement. A permanent replacement will not be named until NIH itself gets a new director.



Joe Traver/NYT Pictures

**Grassroots crusader.** Lois Gibbs with her daughter after clearing out of contaminated Love Canal neighborhood.

## Awards for Global Environment Crusaders

The Goldman Environmental Foundation of San Francisco has established what it claims to be the world's largest environmental prize program. This month the foundation, established last year by insurance magnate Richard Goldman and his wife Rhoda, presented its first annual award of \$360,000—\$60,000 apiece to individuals from six continents. Prizewinners are all grassroots activists who "spoke out for the environment at great personal sacrifice."

The winner from North America is Lois Marie Gibbs, the Niagara Falls, New York, housewife—now an activist

in Arlington, Virginia—who organized homeowners in response to the health problems caused by Love Canal.

The other winners were Africa's "rhino man," Michael Werikhe from Kenya; Harrison Ngau of the Rainforest Action Network in Malaysia; Australian physician Bob Brown, whose dam-fighting won him a seat in the Tasmanian parliament; Hungarian biologist Janos Vargha, who successfully fought a giant dam planned on the Danube; and Janet Gibson, who has led battles to save the world's second largest reef system in Belize.