

institute will be headed by Gustave Speth, former chairman of the Council on Environmental Quality. The two vice presidents will be biochemist Jessica Tuchman Mathews, a former member of the National Security Council now on the editorial board of the *Washington Post*, and Wallace Bowman, former director of the National Academy of Science's Commission on Natural Resources. The star-studded board of directors is headed by Matthew Nimetz, former under secretary of state for security assistance, science and technology.

The institute aspires to be the focus of an international network and, with a budget of \$4 million a year, will be "perhaps the largest private United States institution in the field of global environmental studies and policy analysis," according to the MacArthur Foundation.

Speth explained to *Science* that what makes the new organization distinctive is its focus on "planetary scale issues," its scientific orientation, and its focus on being relevant to policy-making. It will conduct "interdisciplinary, scientifically informed policy studies" on everything including fresh water resources, desertification, inadvertent climate modification, energy, ocean resources, and species conservation.

The institute is to have a "hub and spokes" structure to coordinate with other centers and provide a bridge between centers of scholarship and the policy-making process. Ties are already planned with the Energy and Resources Group at the University of California at Berkeley (headed by John Holdren who already has an unrelated MacArthur Foundation award), the Center for Energy and Environmental Studies at Princeton University, and the Ecosystems Center of the Woods Hole Marine Biological Laboratory.

It can be assumed that considerable salience to the institute's publications will be lent by the members of the board, which includes Stanford University president Donald Kennedy, former World Bank president Robert S. McNamara, World Wildlife Fund president Russell E. Train, and former National Cancer Institute director Arthur C. Upton, as well as luminaries in science, industry, and international development.

—Constance Holden

## TV Report Affirms Violence-Aggression Link

Almost a decade ago the Surgeon General released a report that said television violence very likely causes some children to become more aggressive, at least in the short run. A new report, "Television and Behavior," sponsored by the National Institute of Mental Health, affirms this notion and surveys research that has been performed since the first report.

There has been plenty. In fact, the report says, 90 percent of publications on TV and behavior—including its effects on health, family and social relationships, societal perceptions, learning, beliefs, and emotions—have come out in the past 10 years.

Television, the report points out, has become America's third most time-consuming activity, following sleep and work. More Americans have TV than have refrigerators or indoor plumbing. The culture is so saturated with television that to assess its net impact on society is impossible.

Additional evidence is supplied on the question of TV violence (which has not decreased over the past decade), but the cause and effect relationship is by no means unambiguous. For example, some studies have shown that increased aggressiveness correlates with heavy viewing, regardless of the violence content of programs. Says the report, "people who view a great deal of television—and who consequently see a great deal of violence—are more likely to view the world as a mean and scary place." They also exhibit more "fear, mistrust and apprehension" than do light viewers. So, "because there are more victims than there are aggressors, this finding may ultimately be of more significance than the direct relationship between televised violence and aggression."

In a newer area of research, it seems that television has a damping effect on creativity and imagination. One study, for example, showed that children who listened to a story remembered the content better and delivered themselves of more comments and questions than children who saw a televised version of the story. In another study researchers looked at

verbal fluency among children in three towns in Canada, one of them with no television. "Two years after TV was introduced to 'Notel,' its children's verbal fluency scores . . . decreased significantly." Another study showed that among boys, low imaginative capacity correlated with aggressiveness and a taste for violent television.

Oddly enough, none of the research cited examines whether heavy TV viewing promotes passivity. The report comments favorably on experimental curricula designed to teach "critical viewing skills" to grade schoolers, but given TV-watching's overwhelming role as a displacer of other activities, it may be that the most vital skill could be learning when to turn off the set.—Constance Holden

## Taub Appeal Set

The story of psychologist Edward Taub and his deafferented monkeys drags on. His appeal is now scheduled to commence on 14 June and this time he has opted for a jury trial, not having received a satisfactory verdict from a Maryland judge last October, who found him guilty of failing to provide adequate veterinary care for six animals.

Taub, who says he has been supporting himself with a 1-day-a-week hospital consulting job, is hoping money will come from somewhere to pay his legal expenses. He has so far been the beneficiary of \$90,000 worth of unreimbursed legal aid from the Washington law firm of Arnold and Porter. Partner Edgar H. Brenner, who served as Taub's lawyer, is also on the board of the Institute for Behavioral Research which Taub heads. The appeal will be managed by Maryland lawyer James Miller.

A group of neuroscientists has set up a Biomedical Research Defense Fund to help foot Taub's legal fees but most of the money so far collected—about \$8000—has been used up in mailings.

Several professional associations have expressed support for Taub, but only one, the American Psychological Association, has put its money where its mouth is. The APA board recently voted to give Taub \$5000 to pay for witness expenses.

—Constance Holden