

Newly opened outpatient Infusion Center fills critical need



Tania Chatila

At left, Thelma Calantas, a nurse at the USC University Hospital Infusion Center, checks on patient Aurora Lazo as she receives her weekly iron infusion. The Infusion Center opened two months ago and has six dedicated infusion chairs to serve all types of infusion-related needs, including IV fluids, blood platelets, antibiotics and hydration.

By Tania Chatila

Two months since its opening, the USC University Hospital Infusion Center is making significant strides in enhancing the care of patients needing infusion-related services.

The outpatient center, located on the third floor of USC University Hospital, has six dedicated infusion chairs and serves all types of infusion-related needs, including IV fluids, blood platelets, antibiotics and hydration.

Since opening in late January, hospital administrators say the center has already relieved other clinical areas where infusion patients were formerly seen, like the Judy and Larry Freeman Cancer Day Hospital and the Evaluation and Treatment Clinic (ETC).

"Before the center opened, infusion patients were being seen in the ETC, at the Day Hospital and even in inpa-

tient units at USC University Hospital," said Amy Surnock, center director.

"Now, not only are we able to free up clinical space in those areas," she said, "but we are also able to treat our infusion patients in one centralized location with everything they need. It's a win-win situation."

The Infusion Center currently sees about four to five patients a day, but nurse Kelly Thompson said the center is able to accommodate many more.

"We are very eager to grow and provide this service to the USC patients who need it," said Thompson. "It's so convenient. Patients can see their doctor and walk right over here for treatment."

The USC University Hospital Infusion Center is open Monday through Saturday, 8:30 a.m. to 9 p.m. To make an appointment, call (323) 442-8724 or send a fax to (323) 442-8819.

Pharmacy professor returns, with gifts, to his old school

By Kukla Vera

Mel Baron, USC School of Pharmacy associate professor, has had a long-standing commitment to increasing literacy and education in the community. Recently he made a contribution that hit very close to home for him.

With a successful series of bilingual health education fotonovelas and an educational kidney transplant DVD in the works, Baron decided to give back to the place that served as the foundation for his own education—Sheridan Elementary School in the Boyle Heights area of Los Angeles.

Baron attended Sheridan back in the '30s, and when he learned of their new collaboration with the "Wonder of Reading" organization to build a new library facility, he knew he wanted to help.

Baron presented his alma mater with a check for \$500 toward the project, as well as copies of all the fotonovelas, for the new library. The gift was presented at a school-wide assembly on March 18, coordinated by Cesar Armendariz, director of community outreach on the Health Sciences Campus.

A large group of students greeted and guided Baron

during his visit to Sheridan.

"It is an honor to welcome Dr. Baron to our school," said sixth-grader Aaron Fernandez. "He is very kind and inspirational."

In addition to all the children, many parents and all faculty also attended the event. According to principal Genaron Carapia, receiving alumni gifts is not typical at the school.

"In my twenty plus years as an administrator, I have never had the privilege of accepting a generous donation from an elementary school alum," said Carapia. "This is unprecedented because we tend to donate to our college alma mater, and maybe to our high school, but never to the foundation of all our education—elementary school."

When it was Baron's turn to speak to the students, he urged them to stay in school and work hard to get good grades. "Make sure to work hard in math, science and reading, and take any opportunities you get to be a leader and do community service," he said.

Baron was given a tour of the school by several students. Sheridan is one of the USC

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—Sheridan Elementary School principal Genaron Carapia



Virginia Nemethi



Carl Nemethi

Keck School supporters leave school \$4.6 million

By Imelda Valenzuela

Carl Nemethi, a Keck School of Medicine Class of 1938 graduate and former USC football player, was a quiet philanthropist who, with his wife, Virginia, recently left behind a legacy of \$4.6 million to the Keck School in the form of an estate gift.

Nemethi was 98 when he passed away late last year, and his wife was 94 when she died in 2006. The couple married a year after Nemethi graduated from the Keck School, and they remained married for 67 years. According to longtime family friend Doug Trehwitt, the very religious and highly social couple "never had a shortage of fun in their lives."

They made their home in Beverly Hills, where they were longtime residents. Nemethi served as an Army flight surgeon in World War II and upon returning to Los Angeles, specialized in hand injuries and surgery, since many of his patients worked at nearby manufacturing plants where hand injuries were common. Nemethi opened several clinics and was instrumental in opening the first emergency room at California Lutheran Hospital.

"Carl practiced medicine into his eighties," said Trehwitt. "He was very ethical and very dedicated to medicine. He wanted the best for the world."

Nobel Laureate McFadden examines dysfunction of U.S. health care

By Cristy Lytal

When it comes to regulating health care, the common perception is that Democrats trust the government while Republicans rely on the market. But as Daniel McFadden—winner of the 2000 Nobel Prize in Economics and Presidential Professor of Health Economics at USC—recently explained to USC students, faculty and staff, government interference and private market shortcomings are both “serious contributors to the dysfunction of our health care system.”

In his first presentation since joining USC’s faculty in January, McFadden presented an economist’s view of the 2010 Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act during the recent seminar, “Sick Insurance: The Trials of Health Policy in America,” held at the USC School of Policy, Planning, and Development (SPPD).

The event was part of the Leonard D. Schaeffer Center for Health Policy and Economics Seminar Series. It was sponsored by the Schaeffer Center, SPPD, the Titus Family Department of Clinical Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Economics and Policy, and the USC School of Pharmacy.

McFadden put the Affordable Care Act in perspective, giving background on national health care in Germany and Great Britain, as well as earlier U.S. attempts at health insurance reform dating back to Theodore Roosevelt.

He also discussed the experience with

the market for prescription drug insurance, established in 2006 under Medicare Part D, which he considers a successful experiment that could hold valuable lessons for the implementation of the act.

McFadden outlined some of the provisions of the act—creating health insurance exchanges for the uninsured, mandating insurance and having a penalty for non-enrollment, and requiring large employers to provide insurance or pay a penalty.

Acknowledging the controversy and partisanship surrounding the bill, McFadden explained where health care in America stands relative to the rest of the world.

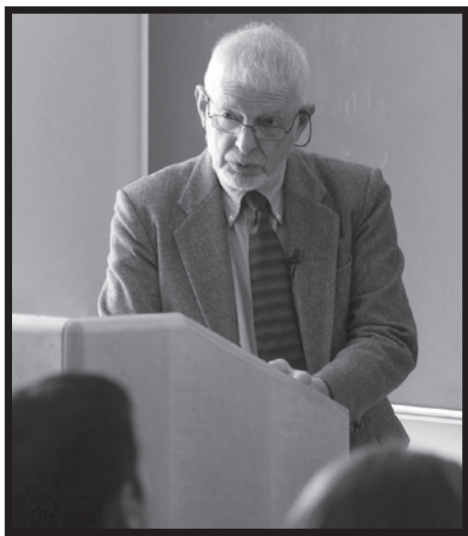
Over the past half century, the cost of U.S. health care has been rising 2 percent faster than the gross domestic product.

“The U.S. is a high-cost country,” said McFadden, who holds joint appointments at SPPD and the Department of Economics at USC College. “It’s higher cost than anybody else. But one question is: Are we simply buying the best health care you can buy?”

McFadden’s data suggests that the answer to this question is no.

Over the past 50 years, the average life expectancy for men and women in the United States has climbed from 69 to 77—largely due to lower infant mortality rates. In the same period, the U.S. has dropped from 15th to 32nd place among nations in terms of life expectancy.

McFadden attributed high U.S. health care costs to three main factors: diabetes



Daniel McFadden addresses health care policy during a recent presentation at the USC School of Policy, Planning, and Development.

Tom Queally

treatment, coronary bypass operations and magnetic resonance imaging. Far more than other countries, the United States relies on these expensive treatments—with often less than encouraging health care outcomes.

“So who’s at fault for all of this?” he asked. “Is it greedy and irresponsible manufacturers, insurers and providers? Is it consumers who eat Big Macs and don’t look after themselves? Is it government interference in private markets and bungled regulation? Or are there systemic failures in private health markets? And the answer is yes. All of these play a role and particularly the last two.”

‘The U.S. is a high-cost country. It’s higher cost than anybody else. But one question is: Are we simply buying the best health care you can buy?’

—Daniel McFadden, Presidential Professor of Health Economics at USC

Summit focuses on effects of health care reform

USC University Hospital and USC Norris Cancer Hospital sponsored a continuing education course with the Southern California Society of Pharmacists last week, attracting nearly 100 medical professionals and students to the summit focusing on health care reform.

The morning presentation, held on March 11 in the USC University Hospital Norris Inpatient Tower Cafe, featured guest speakers Minor Anderson, chief executive officer of the Doctors of USC; Sanjit

Mahanti, associate administrator of business development for the USC hospitals; and Michael Nichol, director of Graduate Programs in Health at the USC School of Policy, Planning and Development. It also included a panel discussion and a question-and-answer period with the audience. Event attendees included

staff members from the USC hospitals, pharmacists from the Southern California area and students from the USC School of Pharmacy. Discussions focused predominately on issues surrounding health care reform, such as quality, cost, access, accountable care organizations and expanding Medicaid coverage.



Tania Chatila

Left, Sanjit Mahanti, associate administrator of business development for the USC hospitals, speaks during a health care summit on March 11 as panelists Michael Nichol (middle), director of Graduate Programs in Health at the USC School of Policy, Planning and Development, and Minor Anderson, chief executive officer of the Doctors of USC, look on. At the podium is Scott Evans, chief operating officer of the USC hospitals.

The Weekly, USC Norris Cancer Report honored for excellence at CASE awards

Staff in the USC Health Sciences Public Relations and Marketing office recently won three regional awards from the Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE).

CASE is a professional association serving educational institutions and the advancement professionals who work on their behalf in alumni relations, communications, development and marketing.

Competing against institutions in Arizona, California, Guam, Hawaii, Nevada and Utah, staff led by Jane Brust, associate senior vice president of Health Sciences Public Relations and Marketing, won these awards:

- Silver in Periodical Staff Writing for External Audiences for *USC Norris Cancer Report*—edited by Katie Neith with stories by Tania Chatila, Neith, Sara Reeve and Imelda Valenzuela;
- Bronze in Periodical Staff Writing for Internal Audiences for *The Weekly*—edited by Jon Nalick with stories by Ryan Ball, Katie Neith, Sara Reeve and Imelda Valenzuela;
- Bronze in Print Internal Audience Tabloids and Newsletters for *The Weekly*—edited by Jon Nalick.



The Weekly

Next Issue: April 15

The Weekly is published for the faculty, staff, students, volunteers and visitors in the University of Southern California’s Health Sciences Campus community. It is written and produced by the Health Sciences Public Relations and Marketing staff. Comments, suggestions and story ideas are welcome. Permission to reprint articles with attribution is freely given.

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Distinguished Speakers Series answers, ‘What’s up Doc?’

By Imelda Valenzuela
Seventy USC Associates, Keck School of Medicine administrators, faculty and staff members gathered at the Eli and Edythe Broad CIRM Center for Regenerative Medicine and Stem Cell Research at USC on Feb. 27 for “What’s Up Doc?”—part of the USC Associates’ Distinguished Speaker Series.
The event marked the first time in over 10 years that an Associates’ meeting occurred on the Health Sciences Campus. The USC Associates is the university’s premier academic support group.
“We want to expose more people in the community and in the Associates group to all of the exciting new things happening on the Health Sciences Campus, which is why we brought back ‘What’s Up Doc,’” said Jane Popovich, president of the USC Associates Board of Directors. “This has been by far one of the best attended events, with the most questions and the most interest I’ve seen. People are interested in medicine because medicine

affects our daily lives.”
Keck School Dean Carmen A. Puliafito addressed the group and provided an overview of milestones and highlights at the USC Health Sciences Campus, including the 2009 purchase of USC University Hospital and USC Norris Cancer Hospital, Keck School faculty recruitment and research, the opening of the Eli and Edythe Broad CIRM Center for Regenerative Medicine and Stem Cell Research, and Keck School student programs, such as the M.D./M.B.A. degree program between the Keck School of Medicine and the USC Marshall School of Business.
“It’s a very exciting time for USC medicine,” said Puliafito. “We’re all very proud of the tremendous progress that USC has made over the last 20 years, and here at the medical school, we’re poised to become, as USC President Max Nikias puts it, ‘part of the undisputed elite’ of U.S. universities.”
Michael Kahn, co-director of the USC Center for Molecular Pathways and Drug Discovery, professor of biochemistry and

molecular biology, provost’s professor of medicine and pharmacy and co-leader of the USC GI-Oncology program, discussed a promising new drug entering clinical trial, that, in preclinical studies, has shown the potential to benefit patients suffering from several diseases and conditions, including cancers, degenerative diseases and fibrotic disorders.
“We believe that this class of molecules safely targets an extremely fundamental cell biological switch. We are very excited about the broad potential to treat a wide array of diseases even beyond cancer, based upon our preclinical results to date,” Kahn said.
Lisa Werth, a first-year medical student and recipient of a USC Associates scholarship, expressed her gratitude as she addressed guests at the event. “Thanks to the Associates program, I was able to shift my focus away from the financial stresses of medical school and instead focus on what I really want to do with my medical career,” she said.

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—Keck School Dean Carmen A. Puliafito

Keck School researchers show drug aids prevention of diabetes, cardiovascular disease

By Leslie Ridgeway
Playing a leadership role in a nationwide clinical study, researchers in the Keck School of Medicine have found that pioglitazone, a drug that reverses some of the bad effects of obesity, reduced the risk of type 2 diabetes by 72 percent in pre-diabetic patients.
They also found that the drug slowed the development of an early marker of cardiovascular disease in the carotid arteries.
Findings of the study, “Pioglitazone for Prevention of Diabetes in Impaired

Glucose,” were reported in the March 24 issue of the *New England Journal of Medicine*.
Thomas A. Buchanan, professor of medicine, obstetrics and gynecology, and physiology and biophysics at the Keck School, was a co-investigator of the study, along with two other Keck researchers: Howard N. Hodis, the Harry Bauer & Dorothy Bauer Rawlings Professor of Cardiology, and Wendy J. Mack, associate professor of preventive medicine.
The lead investigator was Ralph A. DeFronzo of the University of Texas

Health Science Center at San Antonio. Also contributing to the study were researchers at the University of California at San Diego, the University of Tennessee, Georgetown University, Pennington Biomedical Research Center in Baton Rouge, Phoenix VA Health System, and State University of New York Health Science Center in Brooklyn.
Patients who are pre-diabetic have impaired glucose tolerance (IGT), which is also associated with increased risk of cardiovascular disease. In the

study of 602 patients, 2.1 percent of participants who received pioglitazone developed type 2 diabetes, compared to 7.6 percent of participants given a placebo. In addition, 48 percent of drug-treated participants saw their glucose tolerance levels return to normal, compared to 28 percent of those who received a placebo.
Pioglitazone is one of a class of drugs called thiazolidinediones, in which Buchanan has been a pioneer investigator for more than 15 years.

“One way these drugs improve glucose tolerance is by taking fat from the liver, muscle and abdomen and moving it to under the skin, where it is less dangerous,” he said. “Patients on pioglitazone gained some weight—an average of eight pounds compared to two pounds for the placebo group. Some of the weight gain was water and some was fat. However, metabolically they acted as if they had lost weight because it was in a better place.”
In examining pioglitazone’s effect on the development of cardiovascular disease, the researchers found that it slowed the development of atherosclerosis, or thickening, of the carotid artery; of those in the study who received the drug, their carotid thickness was 31 percent less than the placebo group.
Hodis developed the ultrasound method of measuring the thickness, and he and Mack applied that method to the study’s subjects.

BARON: Visit to school inspires students to go to college, pursue success

Continued from page 1
Family of Schools, a program that provides educational, cultural and developmental opportunities through the university’s community outreach. The visit made quite an impression on the students.
“Dr. Baron inspired me to go to college and showed me that I could be successful in life, just like him,” said sixth-grader Mark Gonzalez.
Sheridan is the largest of the primary schools surrounding the USC Health Sciences Campus, with over 1,200 students. The new library, built from four converted classrooms, features carpeted story steps for group reading, individual work stations for tutoring, a cozy corner for quiet reading, as well as \$10,000 worth of new books.
At the USC School of Pharmacy, Baron and his team have produced a series of fotonovelas—comic book style stories in both Spanish and English—that deal with some of the nation’s most pressing health issues, including diabetes, asthma and medication compliance. His health messages are presented



Chris Van Booven

Mel Baron, right, visits with students at Sheridan Elementary School, where he recently donated reading and educational materials.
in an upbeat way that strives to engage readers. The day at Sheridan was certainly an engaging one for the students.
Student Veronica Velez summed up the visit with Baron this way, “He showed me that anything and everything is possible.”

The Weekly NEWSMAKERS

On March 28 KABC TV interviewed **Steven Richeimer** of the USC Pain Center about research that shows that emotional pain—like when someone breaks up with you—can show up in the brain during an MRI. “When you effect negative emotions, you will activate a lot of the same nervous systems and chemistry that are involved with bodily pain,” said Richeimer.
On March 30 *U.S. News & World Report* ranked USC University

Hospital No. 3 in Los Angeles in its Best Hospitals list. It was also ranked No. 8 in the nation for ophthalmology and No. 16 in the nation in urology. USC Norris Cancer Hospital was ranked No. 21 in Los Angeles, and Los Angeles County+USC Medical Center was ranked No. 36 in Los Angeles. City News Service, ABC News and *Los Angeles Daily News* also covered the rankings.
A March 30 *Los Angeles Times*

article quoted **James Ou**, professor of molecular microbiology and immunology at the Keck School of Medicine of USC, about boceprivir, a new drug that offers breakthroughs in the treatment of hepatitis C. “There are still some problems, particularly side effects,” said Ou, “but if the patients can tolerate it, then the chance of them being cured is up to 70 percent ... and that’s a very big improvement,” he said.

A March 30 *Los Angeles Daily News* article covered a rare double-hip replacement performed at USC University Hospital, which allowed a man with cerebral palsy to walk for the first time in five years.
An Apr. 1 *New York Times* story quoted **James Salz**, clinical professor of ophthalmology at the Keck School of Medicine of USC, about monovision, in which one eye is corrected for distance vision and the other for near vision.

Calendar of Events

This Calendar of events is also online at www.usc.edu/hscalendar for the Health Sciences Campus community

Tuesday, Apr. 12

Noon. “Earthquake Preparedness: What Every Person in LA Needs to Know,” Steve Goldfarb, USC. NML East Conference Rm. Info: (213) 740-5127

Wednesday, Apr. 13

11 a.m. – 2 p.m. USC Hospital Guild: “Darlene Dafau Reid Walk the 5K for Keck.” Harry and Celesta Pappas Quad. Registration fee: \$10 for students; \$20 for faculty, staff and friends. Includes lunch provided by Burger Continental. Info: (310) 545-2239

Thursday, Apr. 14

5 p.m. “Addiction, Disease and Choice: Resolving a Scientific and Conceptual Muddle,” Gene Heyman, Harvard. HMR 100. Info: (310) 994-9974

Friday, Apr. 15

8:30 a.m. “Dissecting the Mechanisms of Interstitial Lung Disease: Insights from Hermansky-Pudlak Syndrome,” Lisa Yound, University of Cincinnati. IRD 732-734. Info: (323) 226-7923

Noon. Pharmacology and Pharmaceutical Sciences Seminar. “Acetylation Targets the M2 Isoform of Pyruvate Kinase for Degradation Through Chaperone Mediated Autophagy and Promotes Tumor Growth,” Qunying Lei, Fudan University, Shanghai. PSC 104. Info: (323) 442-2184

Tuesday, Apr. 19

Noon. Psychiatry Grand Rounds. “An Update on the Genetics of PTSD,” Colin Dias, USC. ZNI 112. Info: (323) 442-4065

Thursday, Apr. 21

10:30 a.m. LAC+USC Medical Center Emergency Room Renaming Celebration. IPT Conference Rooms A & B. Info: (323) 409-6899

Friday, Apr. 22

Noon. Medicine Grand Rounds. “Renal Transplant,” Joel Angel, USC. IPT Conference Rm. B. Info: (323) 226-7556

Tuesday, Apr. 26

6 p.m. “Leadership Lessons from the Top of the World,” Conrad Anker, American mountaineer, environmentalist and author. Geoff Tabin, Univ. of Utah. Wine and cheese reception at 5:30 p.m. NRT Aresty Auditorium. Info: (323) 442-1900

Thursday, Apr. 28

3 p.m. Pharmacology and Pharmaceutical Sciences Seminar. “Nanoparticles as Cancer Therapies: Gold at the End of the Rainbow,” Joseph Barchi, National Cancer Institute at Frederick. PSC 104. Info: (323) 442-2341

4 p.m. Pharmacology and Pharmaceutical Sciences Seminar. “Glycan Arrays and Cancer Vaccines: Partners for Life,” Jeff Gildersleeve, National Cancer Institute at Frederick. PSC 104. Info: (323) 442-2341

5:15 p.m. Vladimir Zelman, Distinguished and Endowed Lectureship. “Fragile Brains, the Young & the Old,” James Cottrell, SUNY Downstate Medical Ctr. NRT Aresty Aud. Reception begins at 4:30 p.m. Info: (323) 409-6856

Friday, Apr. 29

6:45 – 8:30 a.m. Anesthesiology Grand Rounds. “Preoperative Aneurysm Management,” James Cottrell, SUNY Downstate Medical Ctr. MCH 256. Info: (323) 409-6856

8 a.m. Pathology and Laboratory Medicine Grand Rounds. “Nevoid Melanoma: Beware!” Scott Binder, UCLA. NOR 7409. Info: (323) 442-1180

Notice: Deadline for calendar submission is 4 p.m. Monday to be considered for that week’s issue—although three weeks’ advance notice of events is recommended. Please note that timely submission does not guarantee an item will be printed. Send calendar items to *The Weekly*, KAM 400 or fax to (323) 442-2832, or e-mail to eblaauw@usc.edu. Entries must include day, date, time, title of talk, first and last name of speaker, affiliation of speaker, location, and a phone number for information.



Irina Ianculescu

AT JAPAN BENEFIT, ICE CREAM SELLS LIKE HOT CAKES—

Graduate and Professional Student Senate (GPSS) members and several doctoral students set up a table at Harry and Celesta Pappas Quad on March 24 to sell ice cream to assist a fundraising drive to help disaster-stricken Japan.

The owners of Fosselman’s Ice Cream Company donated 12 gallons of their ice cream for the event and, despite the cold weather, students, faculty, staff and other visitors contributed \$635 in two hours for AmeriCares Japan fund. In addition, the corporate sponsors of AmeriCares matched donations 35 to 1 multiplying the value of the original donation for Japan to \$22,225.

“I didn’t realize we could have this kind of impact” said Damon De La Cruz, GPSS programming chair and doctoral candidate in pathology.

Pictured, Helty Adisetiyo (at left) and Emma Liang hand out Fosselman’s ice cream at the USC for Japan fundraiser.

Keck School feted at annual scholarship dinner

By Imelda Valenzuela

An inspiring evening showcasing the medical, as well as musical, talents of students at the Keck School of Medicine was celebrated at the Medical Faculty Family and Friends and Salerni Collegium Annual Scholarship Benefit Dinner March 6 at the Jonathan Club in downtown Los Angeles.

The Medical Faculty Family and Friends and Salerni Collegium are organizations of the Keck School of Medicine, sharing the mission to raise money for medical student scholarships.

The evening opened with a surprise duet performed by Dean Emeritus of the Keck School of Medicine Allen Mathies and Keck School second-year student Morgan Cross.

Fourth-year medical student and pianist Matt Greenberg provided piano music during dinner, and third-year medical student Kimberly DeQuattro

sang a musical selection from the opera *Carmen*. Chorda Tympani, a mixed voice, a cappella singing group and service organization comprised of medical students from the Keck School, provided additional student entertainment.

The medical talent of the students was apparent through the announcement of 12 student scholarships representing \$95,000 in scholarship funds, as presented by Dean Carmen A. Puliafito and Donna Elliott, associate dean for student affairs. A total of \$79,000, some of which will be dedicated to future medical student scholarships, was raised that evening.

Faculty honorees for the

evening included Donald I. Feinstein, emeritus professor of medicine in the Jane Anne Nohl Division of Hematology at the Keck School of Medicine and emeritus chief of medicine at USC University Hospital and USC Norris Cancer Hospital, and his wife, Jackie; and Steve Giannotta, professor and chair of the Department of Neurosurgery at the Keck School of Medicine, and his wife, Sharon.

The evening was capped off with a live auction featuring the dean’s Dodgers box seat tickets, master chorale concert tickets at the Walt Disney Concert Hall, jewelry and a Hawaiian vacation.

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The Weekly adds smartphone-friendly website link

To offer readers an easy way to connect to *The Weekly* website via their smartphones, the publication now includes the phone-readable QR code visible just to the right of this article.

Smartphones equipped with a QR-reading app can scan the matrix barcode and direct their web browser to *The Weekly* 2011 index of stories.



In case of an emergency...

Call the Emergency Information Phone: 213-740-9233 The emergency telephone system can handle 1,400 simultaneous calls. It also has a backup system on the East Coast.

Visit the USC Web: <http://emergency.usc.edu> This page will be activated in case of an emergency. Backup Web servers on the East Coast will function if the USC servers are incapacitated.