

## Canadian heads laboratory

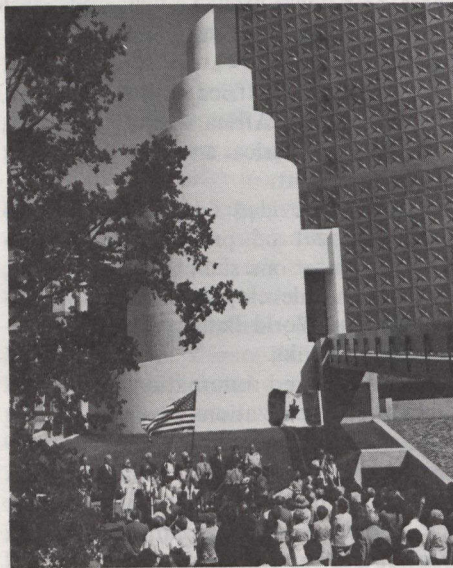
A Canadian scientist has for the first time been appointed Director of the International Atomic Energy Agency's (IAEA) renowned International Laboratory of Marine Radioactivity at Monaco.

Dr. Alan Walton of Ottawa, former Director of International Marine Policy with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans took up the two-year assignment in Monaco at the end of October.

The IAEA, a United Nations' specialized agency, established the laboratory under a tripartite agreement with the Principality of Monaco and the Musée Océanographique in Monaco, whose director is oceanographer Jacques Cousteau.

With an international staff of marine scientists, the laboratory's main research programs concentrate on evaluating the amount of radioactivity in the oceans and establishing valid standards for measuring the effects of radioactivity on marine life. Other forms of marine pollution are also studied at the laboratory, which also serves as a training centre for scientists from developing countries.

## Canadian Thanksgiving in Dallas



*Crowds gather in front of the Spiral of Life Chapel at Thanks-Giving Square in Dallas, Texas to mark the centennial of Canadian Thanksgiving, October 8. The celebration was part of Canada Week, a festival of Canadian life and culture, held in Dallas, October 7-13.*

## Volunteer group helps ease loneliness of the dying

A retired nurse, who works as a volunteer with a group dedicated to dealing with death, says death can be beautiful.

She is a member of Pilgrimage, a Vancouver group set up to visit the terminally ill who often spend their dying moments alone. The volunteers strive to sit and listen instead of attempting to counsel the patient. "It (death) can have so much meaning for the family," she said.

Some advocates of specialized care for the dying, say modern medicine has disrupted society's method of coping with death.

The elderly now die in institutions like intensive-care units at hospitals instead of dying in their homes surrounded by family.

In Canada and the United States, a backlash began about ten years ago and today there are about 1,000 institutions for the terminally ill, said Jo Hannay of the Canadian Cancer Society. These places are often called *hospices*, the Latin word for resting place.

Pilgrimage began four years ago when a social worker at a hospital saw some

lonely terminal patients. He called Denis Boyd, an employee of Catholic Community Services, and suggested he set up a volunteer visiting program.

Many of the volunteers in the program have been previously exposed to death — either of a friend or relative — and according to a survey conducted by social worker Christa Bunton, of 31 volunteers who answered the questionnaire 36 per cent of them were exposed to death less than a year before joining Pilgrimage and 26 per cent had lost a child.

Britain already has an established system of *hospices* for the dying while in Canada they are only in Montreal, Halifax and St. Boniface, Manitoba.

Vancouver may soon have its own *hospice*. This year, the British Columbia and Yukon branch of the Canadian Cancer Society funded a \$60,000 study on *hospice* care.

Administrators at Vancouver General Hospital and Royal Jubilee in Victoria are having preliminary talks on the subject with the provincial government, which is responsible for health care.

## Blind policeman a first

Christopher Chamberlin is a policeman with a difference. The special constable in the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) is the first blind man to be sworn in as a policeman in Canada.

He became a member of the OPP's intelligence unit because he can hear things that people who rely on their sight cannot. Mr. Chamberlin works in the intelligence branch's technical section in Toronto, the unit that intercepts conversations with the aid of wiretaps and hidden bugs and transmitters.

"He can pick out stuff on a tape that to you and I would be incomprehensible," said Inspector W. Robert Patterson of the intelligence branch. "We had one police force bring in a tape that had parts on it they couldn't make out, the quality was so poor. It was a murder investigation and he picked out one word that was critical. He's doing work not only for us now but for police forces across the province."

As a sworn policeman, Mr. Chamberlin is now qualified under the Criminal Code to listen in on conversations as they are being recorded.

The OPP has had requests for information on Mr. Chamberlin from police forces across Canada. A number of other forces, including the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, are considering hiring blind people for their own wiretapping operations.

"I'm sure, it will spread," said Mr. Chamberlin. He says that, like many blind people determined to develop their full potential, he has honed his other senses and continues to expand their possibilities. He recognizes different places by smell. If he gets off the elevator at the wrong floor in his apartment building, for example, he can tell by the smell of the corridor and the feel of the carpet which floor he is on. "In a bar or a restaurant," he said, "I can carry on a conversation but listen to a conversation that's going on two or more tables away."

He has given up counting steps to make his way around the building, where he works. He guides himself by sounds from the corridor walls. His fellow policemen say he knows whether an office door is open or shut. Mr. Chamberlin says it is a simple matter of acoustics.

Even though he lost 100 per cent of his sight to congenital glaucoma 12 years ago, he graduated from high school and has completed one year of university.