Our Mission
To improve human health through innovative genetic research and education

Since 1954, scientists at McLaughlin Research Institute have been working to defeat human diseases. Their research has made important contributions to the fights against Alzheimer’s, Parkinson’s, diabetes, multiple sclerosis, hearing loss, and mad cow disease. Early research at the Institute was influential in the development of transplantation medicine.

For more than 50 years, McLaughlin has nurtured young scientists-in-the-making through our internship program for high school and college students. Our education program also includes working with the Great Falls Public Schools to enhance science education.

Our work is the foundation for understanding disease and finding future treatments.
McLaughlin Research Institute is undergoing an exciting period of growth. As construction continues on the expansion and renovation of the facility, the research faculty is also growing. This year we reached an important milestone in expanding the scope of our biomedical research with the addition of a fifth investigator, Dr. Teresa M. Gunn.

This ongoing growth is funded by our Road to a Cure fund drive, which continues toward its goal of adding more investigators. We’re grateful to all of you who have helped make this expansion a reality. Broadening our research will significantly advance our mission to improve human health.

It was a big year for neuroscience at MRI. The addition of Dr. Gunn, with her work on the molecular mechanisms of degenerative brain disease, strengthens the Institute’s increasing focus on neurodegenerative diseases. Meanwhile, other faculty members produced dramatic results with their own neurological research.

Dr. George Carlson and his prestigious collaborator, Dr. Leroy Hood, whom you can read about in this report, published groundbreaking results in their research on prion disease that paves the way for early diagnosis of these deadly brain diseases.

Dr. John Mercer’s lab helped advance the understanding of how memory works at the molecular level by working with their collaborators to identify a key function of a protein necessary for learning and memory.

Dr. Deborah Cabin’s Parkinson’s disease research received funding for another five years with a $1.6 million grant from the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke. Her lab is moving forward in its study of the early stages of the disease, where it could possibly be stopped before major symptoms occur.

Doctoral student Miranda Orr received a National Research Services Award from the National Institutes of Health. This highly competitive fellowship funds her
work in Dr. Carlson’s lab to determine whether stem cells from a mouse brain can help make an accurate mouse model for Alzheimer’s disease.

In order to encourage more students like Miranda to become scientists, MRI is strengthening its education mission. For many years, high school students and teachers, as well as college students, have worked in MRI’s labs. Like everything else at McLaughlin, our education program is in an exciting state of growth.

This year Great Falls Public Schools successfully implemented the first stages of a new inquiry-based curriculum developed by science teachers working at the Institute. Teachers and students alike are excited about the process of discovery, which is expected to inspire potential scientists in the classroom. This aspect of the education program, and a new public lecture component added this year, are funded by a 5-year grant from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute. MRI faculty and a visiting scientist presented two lectures on scientific topics of interest to the public. Bridging the gap between scientific research and the community is another way McLaughlin Research Institute is spreading its reach.

Thanks for being part of this exciting phase of our development as we seek to enhance the lives of current and future generations.

Nancy O’Brien
Chair, Board of Directors

George Carlson, PhD
Director & Professor

People of Science Clockwise from far left top: Dr. Gunn; expansion project; Dr. Hood, student intern Kaitlyn Carlson and teacher Brian Sullivan; Dr. Cabin; Dr. Carlson and Nancy O’Brien; the teachers of the HHMI project; PhD candidate Miranda Orr; Drs. Bemingham and Mercer; and visiting lecturer Dr. Nitin Baliga of the Institute for Systems Biology.
This past summer, Dr. Isabel Beerman took a week’s vacation from her position as a postdoctoral fellow at Harvard Medical School to help her family harvest the wheat and barley on their farm near Power, Montana, as she does every year. “I come home to drive combine,” she said. “I like being home for that time of year.”

While a high school student growing up on the farm, Isabel worked as an intern in Dr. George Carlson’s lab at McLaughlin Research Institute for two summers during the mid-1990s. The experience steered her toward a career in research, which she pursued by earning a bachelor’s degree in biochemistry from Harvard University and a PhD in genetics from Yale.

Her next move, to her current postdoctoral position, took her back to Harvard and, indirectly, back to McLaughlin. At Harvard Medical School’s Immune Disease Institute, Dr. Beerman works in Derrick Rossi’s lab, studying blood-forming stem cells. Dr. Rossi was previously a postdoc in Irving Weissman’s lab at Stanford University, making him Dr. Weissman’s “son,” in research parlance, and Isabel his “granddaughter.” The use of family tree terminology in the profession lends insight into a scientist’s training; certain hypotheses and perspectives are passed from generation to generation.

Isabel is honored to have this connection with Dr. Weissman, “one of the founders of the field” of stem cell research. Dr. Weissman was MRI’s first high school intern and remains Chair of the Scientific Advisory Committee. He also serves on the Scientific Advisory Board of Harvard’s Immune Disease Institute, and when he attended a retreat there, Isabel said, “Everyone was envious that I got to dance with Dr. Weissman.”
Dr. Beerman commented on the wonderful opportunity for her as a high school student to hear eminent scientists like Irving Weissman speak at MRI. “The outstanding leaders in their fields were coming to talk to us in Montana,” she said.

“McLaughlin is involved in amazing research, but they make it accessible to everyone. As a high school student with absolutely no bench experience, MRI taught me all the basic lab skills I needed.” When she got to Harvard and worked in a population genetics lab, Isabel had a head start. “Because of the experience and the confidence I had gained working at MRI, I was able to work on projects almost immediately and was training more senior students my sophomore year.”

In her postdoctoral research, Dr. Beerman is working with the hypothesis that stem cells don’t function properly as they age, leading to a higher incidence of autoimmunity and blood disorders in the elderly. “What’s exciting for me about this research is its direct application to human well being,” she said. She hopes to find ways to exploit the therapeutic potential of adult stem cells, especially in the context of the blood forming system.

While Boston is a long way from the wheat fields of rural Montana, Isabel doesn’t feel as far away as she might. “I feel a connection to home here, knowing my PI [Principal Investigator] was trained by Dr. Weissman, because to me, McLaughlin will always be home. I’m certain that other interns feel the same and that we will always have a deep appreciation for the opportunities provided to us by MRI.”

Over the years, more than 200 students have interned at McLaughlin.
In 2007, *Newsweek* named longtime MRI Scientific Advisory Committee member Dr. Leroy Hood one of the “10 Hottest Nerds,” who could turn out to be the “Einstein” of the 21st century. Dr. Hood, a Montana native, is President and co-founder of the Institute for Systems Biology in Seattle. He has won a long list of awards for his visionary work, which helped make possible the Human Genome Project and which is revolutionizing medicine by building on the results of that project. “He’s always been twenty years ahead with these pie-in-the-sky-sounding ideas, and then he turns out to be right,” MRI Director George Carlson said.

Dr. Hood’s work to transform medicine from its current reactive form into a personalized, predictive, preventive, and participatory one, which he calls “P4 medicine,” was advanced by a groundbreaking study Dr. Hood conducted in collaboration with Dr. Carlson.

In March, the scientists published the results of their study on prion disease (best known for its bovine form “mad cow disease”) in *Molecular Systems Biology*. Using systems biology to look at the disease in mice, the researchers gained fundamental new insights into degenerative brain disease and paved the way for new approaches to early diagnosis. The collaborators are expanding their study to other neurodegenerative diseases, and the approach shows promise for studying diseases of all kinds. “I think this is the pioneering paper that, in a comprehensive manner, took this systems view of diseases and was able to demonstrate its power,” Dr. Hood said.

Since the human genome was sequenced, scientists have learned that genes and the proteins they encode almost never work alone but interact in highly complex ways with each other and other molecules. Systems biology studies these interactions, using computation and a variety of disciplines.
Dr. Hood is a founder of this emerging field. “This study is an example of how network models of disease can be used to understand disease in an entirely new way, not as collections of symptoms, but rather as systems of interacting biological molecules that are not working properly,” he said.

The Institute for Systems Biology is developing computational tools that can sequence the complete genomes of individuals rapidly and inexpensively, which will make it possible to predict disease and ultimately to prevent it. ISB has embarked on an ambitious collaboration with the government of Luxembourg in which scientists will sequence the genomes of thousands of people from families with specific diseases. “We’ve already seen really dramatic results, and the paper we will write on this will be a classic in human genetics,” Dr. Hood said.

“We see McLaughlin as our mouse model partner in the study of neurodegenerative diseases, and that’s a very important part of the Luxembourg project,” he said. MRI’s mouse genetics specialty complements ISB’s multidisciplinary expertise. According to Dr. Carlson, “Their expertise in technology and computation enables our research to reveal much more extensive results.” The ongoing collaborative mouse studies in degenerative brain disease will guide ISB’s researchers in their analysis of the human genetic data they’re gathering.

Visionary Collaborator Dr. Leroy Hood is working to transform medicine from reactive to predictive and preventive.
Women now earn 45% of the PhDs in biology in the U.S., according to a new study by the National Academy of Sciences. Despite this healthy percentage, the study also found that women remain underrepresented in applicant pools for tenure-track positions, presumably because family considerations prevent many women from pursuing them.

McLaughlin Research Institute is fortunate to have four female scientists who are making exciting contributions to biomedical science in the area of degenerative brain disease. These women have found different ways to stand out in their respective fields while meeting the personal challenges presented by a career in research.

Associate Professor Teresa Gunn joined the Institute in July. Her husband will relocate to Great Falls once they sell their house in New York, where Dr. Gunn was on the faculty of Cornell University. She points out that it’s more typical for women to follow men to their jobs, which is why many female PhDs don’t apply for full-time faculty positions. The question of children further complicates the matter. “Science is not a nine to five job; it’s very demanding, and you don’t leave it at work,” she said. Dr. Gunn, who has a son in kindergarten, maintains that while women often choose family over career, they can choose both. “Sometimes it’s been difficult,” she says, “but it’s worth it in the end.”
Doctoral student Miranda Orr has spent two years living separately from her husband, who works in Texas as an engineer, in order to follow her desire to do Alzheimer’s research in Dr. George Carlson’s lab at MRI. “We’re really ready for this separation to end,” she said, noting the toll it has taken on the couple. Fortunately, engineering jobs are available in the San Francisco Bay area, where Miranda plans to begin her postdoctoral work at Stanford University in 2010, and where her husband will later join her.

Dr. Dan Zou is a postdoctoral fellow in Assistant Professor Deborah Cabin’s lab. She has made major personal compromises for her career. She moved to Montana from China in 2003 in order to work in a cutting edge lab. “China doesn’t have enough equipment for research, and equipment is very important in biology,” she said. Her husband remains in China, where he is on the faculty of a university, and spends his school breaks in Montana. Their son stayed with his father for a year before joining his mother in the U.S. Now a neuroscience major at UC San Diego, he is following in his mother’s footsteps and plans to pursue a career in research or medicine.

Dr. Deborah Cabin’s own mother was a scientist. Dr. Cabin always knew she wanted to be a biologist, and that path seemed a natural course for her to follow. Her mother worked as an analytical chemist in industry and the military during the 1940s and ’50s. “Many of her female friends were chemists, too, and one of them was on the faculty at Johns Hopkins,” Dr. Cabin recalls. But during her mother’s era, it was unusual for women to seek advanced careers in science, and her mother did not pursue a doctorate. For Dr. Cabin’s generation, there were fewer obstacles. “I always knew this was the route I’d take,” she said.

Women in Science Pictured above left to right: Dr. Dan Zou, Dr. Deborah Cabin, doctoral student Miranda Orr and Dr. Teresa Gunn.
When James and Duane Talcott raised their three children in Great Falls, the family was well acquainted with their neighbors Maurice and Perle Weissman and their children. The Weissmans’ son Irving was McLaughlin Research Institute’s first high school intern during the 1950s. He is now a leading stem cell researcher at Stanford University and Chair of MRI’s Scientific Advisory Committee.

Not long after Dr. Weissman became a professor of biology at Stanford, the Talcotts’ oldest son Jim went to Stanford as a biology major. It was there that he learned through Dr. Weissman about the biomedical research at MRI. “It’s a tremendous asset to Great Falls to have a first-rate research facility,” he said.

After graduating from Stanford, Jim Talcott went to Oxford University as a Rhodes Scholar during the mid-1970s. Near the end of his two-year stay, he again crossed paths with Dr. Weissman, who had come to Oxford on sabbatical. “I left him with my Austin Mini when I returned to the States,” Jim remembers. After earning his MD at Yale, Jim went on to become a medical oncologist and cancer researcher at the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute and then Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston.

Jim’s career inspired his brother Brad to become more seriously involved with McLaughlin after having been a longtime supporter through his company, James Talcott Construction, which was named for his father, who started the business. He appreciates the fact that researchers have to spend a significant percentage of their time seeking funding in an extremely competitive funding environment.

Brad Talcott serves on the Institute’s Board of Directors and chaired its Smuin Ballet Committee in 2008. His relationship with MRI began 20 years ago, when McLaughlin was raising funds to build its current facility. At the time, Brad and his sister Diana operated the family business along with their father James, who passed away in 2005. James’s longtime friend Lee Walker was chair of the Institute’s Board of Directors, and he solicited a contribution from the company.
The Talcott family’s support has grown along with the Institute since that time and has given a major boost to the building expansion now underway. The three Talcott siblings and their mother Duane have remained faithful supporters of MRI.

Diana Talcott has retired from Talcott Construction and moved to Portland. She grew familiar with McLaughlin’s work through her friendship with the late Jack Stimpfling. Dr. Stimpfling, a renowned mouse geneticist, was the Institute’s director and lone scientist for many years. “Knowing Jack gave me a sense of how unique and important this little institute is in the world,” she said.

Brad and his wife Linda Caricaburu have made their major gifts to MRI go further with the Gannett Foundation matching program through the Great Falls Tribune, where Linda was an editor for many years. Brad commented on their choice to support the Institute so generously: “Not only do we want to support research and science education, but we also know McLaughlin is good for the local economy. It brings in money from outside to provide jobs for people to live and work in Great Falls, for a good cause.”

Family Matters Pictured above left to right: Diana Talcott with her mother Duane Talcott and sister-in-law Linda Caricaburu, brothers Jim and Brad Talcott.
**George Carlson, PhD**

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<th>Date</th>
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| September 2008 | American Association of Independent Research Institutes (AIRI) Presidents’ Meeting, Howard Hughes Medical Institute (HHMI), Janelia Farm Research Campus, Ashburn, Virginia  
               | AIRI Annual Meeting, Washington DC                                                        |
|            | Board of Directors Meeting, N. Bud Grossman Center for Memory Research and Care, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, Minnesota |
| October 2008  | DNA of Innovation Symposium, Institute for Systems Biology, Seattle, Washington            |
|            | Genetics in Health and Disease Study Section, Center for Scientific Review, National Institutes of Health, panel meeting, Washington DC |
| November 2008 | Presentation, *Genetic, Stem Cell and Systems Approaches to Neurodegenerative Diseases in Mice*, Department of Cell Biology and Neuroscience Seminar Series, Montana State University, Bozeman, Montana |

*When not in the lab, Dr. George Carlson can often be found giving presentations on his latest findings.*
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| February 2009 | Genetics in Health and Disease Study Section, Center for Scientific Review, National Institutes of Health, panel meetings, San Francisco, California  
Presentation, *McLaughlin Research Institute’s K-12 Science Education Program*, HHMI Northwest Net Undergraduate Science Education Meeting, Bozeman, Montana  
Presentation, *The Prion versus Slow Virus Controversy*, Lewis & Clark Medical Society, Helena, Montana  
Presentation, *Systems Biology: Prion Disease Networks*, St. Peter’s Hospital, Helena, Montana |
| March 2009 | HHMI Peer Cluster Evaluation of Protein Modeling Science Education Program, Milwaukee School of Engineering, Milwaukee, Wisconsin  
Presentation on McLaughlin Research Institute, Great Falls Economic Development Summit, Great Falls, Montana |
| June 2009 | *Stem Cells* table host, *Food for Thought* Fundraiser for the Billings Public Library, Billings, Montana  
Genetics in Health and Disease Study Section, Center for Scientific Review, National Institutes of Health, panel meetings, Washington, DC |
McLaughlin Scientists Learn, Share and Contribute

John Bermingham Jr, PhD

November 2008  Poster Presentation, *The Secreted Protein Lgi44 is Required For Peripheral Nerve Development*,
Society For Neuroscience 2008 Annual Meeting, Washington, DC

Montana State University Great Falls, COT, Great Falls, Montana
Supported by a science education grant from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute.

April 2009  Presentation, *Genetic Control of Peripheral Myelination*,
Montana State University, Bozeman, Montana

Deborah Cabin, PhD

November 2008  Seminar, *Modeling Parkinson’s Disease in Mice*,
Montana State University, Bozeman, Montana

February 2009  Poster Presentation, *Modeling Parkinson’s Disease in Mice*, Keystone Symposium,
Neurodegenerative Diseases: New Molecular Mechanisms, Keystone, Colorado

John A Mercer, PhD

October 2008  Presentation, *Myosin-V in the Nervous System*,
Montana State University, Department of Cell Biology & Neuroscience, Bozeman, Montana

American Society for Cell Biology annual meeting, San Francisco, CA

Montana State University Great Falls, COT, Great Falls, Montana
Supported by a science education grant from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute.

May 2009  Lecture in cell biology course, *Molecular motors*,
University of Montana, Department of Biology, Missoula, Montana

June 2009  Presentation, *RNA Transport From Schwann Cells to Axons After Injury*,
Montana Neuroscience Retreat, Double Arrow Ranch, Seeley Lake, Montana

August 2009  Lecture, *Unconventional myosins: are we biased by names?*,
EMBO World Practical Course, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

August 2009  Presentation, *Myosin-Va and cell-to-cell RNA transfer*,
IV International Symposium on Myosin V, Buzios, Brazil

Richard Bennett, PhD

February 2009  Presentation, *Differential PrPSc Accumulation in a Mouse Neurosphere Model of Infection*,
Fairchild Prion Review Meeting, San Francisco, California
**Dan Zou, PhD**

- **February 2009**
  - Poster Presentation, *Modeling Parkinson’s Disease in Mice*, Neurodegenerative Diseases Conference, Keystone, Colorado
- **June 2009**
  - Poster Presentation, *Modeling Parkinson’s Disease in Mice*, University of Montana Neuroscience Retreat, Seeley Lake, Montana

**Miranda Orr**

- **July 2008**
  - Platform Presentation, *Novel Stem Cell and Mouse Models to Study Frontotemporal Dementia*, Weissman Lab Retreat, Hamilton, Montana
  - Platform Presentation, *Novel Stem Cell and Mouse Models to Study Frontotemporal Dementia*, Collaborator Meeting, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, Minnesota
  - Poster Presentation, *Novel Stem Cell and Mouse Models to Study Frontotemporal Dementia*, International Conference on Alzheimer’s Disease, Chicago, Illinois
  - Platform Presentation, *Novel Stem Cell and Mouse Models to Study Frontotemporal Dementia*, Montana Neuroscience Retreat, Big Sky, Montana
- **February 2009**
  - Poster Presentation, *CNS Stem Cell Lines from Tau Transgenic Mice to Study Frontotemporal Dementia*, Keystone Symposium, Keystone, Colorado
- **June 2009**
  - Poster Presentation, *CNS Stem Cell Lines from Tau Transgenic Mice to Study Frontotemporal Dementia*, Montana Neuroscience Retreat, Seeley Lake, Montana

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**Celebrating Darwin**

Drs. John Mercer and John Bermingham presented talks on Darwin and his impact on biology.


The list above includes articles published July 1, 2008 - June 30, 2009.
# Our Staff

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<td>Professor</td>
<td>John A Mercer, PhD</td>
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<td>Associate Professor</td>
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<td>Assistant Professor</td>
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<td>Professor &amp; Transgenic Facility Advisor</td>
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<td>Physician Associate</td>
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<td>Miranda Orr</td>
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<td>Sherry Turner, Supervisor, Jill O’Moore</td>
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Worldwide Collaborators

McLaughlin’s collaborators worldwide share knowledge across borders and oceans to further research on human disease.

Scientific Advisors
Seven of our eight Scientific Advisory Committee members joined us in 2009 for this photo. From left: Nancy Jenkins, Neal Copeland, James Spudich, David Cameron, Jeffrey Frelinger, Leroy Hood and Irving Weissman. Not pictured: David Baltimore.
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We need and appreciate your generous gifts to McLaughlin Research Institute, which support our research and education missions. The donor list below includes gifts received July 2008 through June 2009.

Please check these lists for accuracy. You deserve proper recognition for your gifts and, while we make every effort to get the names correct, occasional errors occur. If you find we omitted or misspelled your name or placed you in the wrong giving category, please call David Crum in the Development Office at 406.454.6009 to allow us to apologize and correct the records. We want to correct even "minor" errors.

Thank you again for your gift and, if necessary, your forbearance.

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For more information, contact Dave Crum at 406.454.6009.

McLaughlin Research Institute’s Tax ID is 81-0459235.
### ASSETS

#### CURRENT ASSETS
- Cash and cash equivalents: $1,074,440
- Accounts receivable: 1,037
- Grants receivable: 2,120,570
- Current portion of contributions receivable: 210,691
- Prepaid expenses and inventories: 50,162
- **Total Current Assets**: $3,456,900

#### RESTRICTED CASH & INVESTMENTS
- Cash restricted for building expansion: 896,596
- Other investments: 1,726,208
- Annuities: 249,681
- Long-term investments–endowment: 1,734,803
- **Total Restricted Cash & Investments**: $4,607,288

#### PROPERTY & EQUIPMENT
- Land: 25,000
- Building: 6,730,000
- Building improvements: 506,288
- Equipment: 2,606,241
- Construction in progress: 1,634,643
- **Subtotal**: $11,502,172
- Less accumulated depreciation: -4,054,402
- **Total Property & Equipment**: $7,447,770

#### NON-CURRENT ASSETS
- Contributions receivable, net of current portion: 292,349
- Other assets: 10,015
- **Total Non-Current Assets**: $302,364

**TOTAL ASSETS**: $15,814,322

### LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS

#### CURRENT LIABILITIES
- Current portion of capital lease obligation: $4,128
- Current portion of long-term debt: 19,498
- Accounts payable: 1,354,356
- Accrued vacation: 55,088
- Other liabilities: 45,148
- Deferred contractual grant revenue: 1,647,646
- **Total Current Liabilities**: $3,125,864

#### LONG-TERM LIABILITIES
- Annuity obligations: 120,543
- Capital lease obligation, net of current portion: 2,582
- Notes payable, net of current portion: 291,960
- **Total Long-Term Liabilities**: 415,085

**TOTAL LIABILITIES**: 3,540,949

#### NET ASSETS
- Unrestricted / undesignated: 6,054,008
- Unrestricted / designated: 1,511,767
- Temporarily restricted: 2,337,450
- Permanently restricted: 2,370,148
- **Total Net Assets**: 12,273,373

**TOTAL LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS**: $15,814,322

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Summer student intern

Josephine Coburn examines a plate for growth of bacteria in a step towards expressing genes involved in prion infection in stem cells.

Reproduced from the June 30, 2009 Financial Statements, audited by Hamilton Misfeldt & Company PC. The complete audit report and financial statements are available from McLaughlin Research Institute.
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McLaughlin Research Institute
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