

Rockin' around the HSC

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On the Cover

This month, *The POST* brings you a collection of stories about some of the HSC's hardest workers and about the special people focused on making the holidays a little brighter for patients — and our troops.



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Speaking from the heart

UP FRONT



As someone who ran for student government in high school and lost, U.S. Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz (shown at left with Margaret Duerson, Ph.D.) knew she had to think of a new way to approach the confusing and dizzying political process for herself. During her discussion of health care policy at the Health Science Center Nov. 20, she encouraged UF professionals to do the same and be advocates for change in the medical community. After sharing her own experience battling breast cancer, Wasserman Schultz said she felt primary care providers were often too dismissive of young women who approach them with a problem. Because of this, she introduced the Education and Awareness Requires Learning Young Act into Congress this year. This legislation directs the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to develop and implement a national education campaign about the threat breast cancer poses to young women and the particular heightened risks of certain ethnic, cultural and racial groups. — *Kim Libby* **P**



MEOW

Faculty and staff from UF's College of Veterinary Medicine joined agencies across Florida in November to help shut down a Hendry County cat sanctuary with more than 600 animals. What seemed like an insurmountable task — capturing cats, performing triage, physical exams and vaccinations and providing medical treatment — was completed on time. Animal adoptions are already under way. For more information about the cats or to find out how to adopt one of these kitties, please visit www.ufsheltermedicine.com. Shown with Debbie Fuller (from left) of the Polk County Animal Control/Sheriff's Office and Palm Beach County veterinarian Robin Valentine, shelter medicine resident Cate McManus, D.V.M., (third from left) was one of several UF staff members who volunteered.



THANKS, DOC

Taking care of patients and running a medical group practice isn't easy. That's why this month is the time to celebrate the doctors, nurses and staff members who do it every day. National Group Practice Week will be held Jan. 18- 22. UF Physicians is celebrating with a Jan. 19 luncheon and also will be giving gifts to staff members to say thanks.



NURSING LEADERS TAKE NOTE

The UF College of Nursing will hold its biennial conference, the Dorothy M. Smith Nursing Leadership Conference, Jan. 21-22 on the UF campus. This year's theme is "Nursing Research and Education: Partnering for Patients." The conference will feature national health-care leaders discussing how nursing education, research and practice can be brought together to achieve better outcomes for patients. Topics will include clinical and translational research applications for nursing, and education for new practice models. Keynote speakers include Ada Sue Hinshaw, Ph.D., R.N., dean and professor of the Graduate School of Nursing at the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences and former director of the National Institute of Nursing Research; and Cathy Rick, R.N., chief nursing officer for the Veterans Health Administration. For more information, visit www.nursing.ufl.edu/DMSconference.



BYE-BYE DOUGHNUTS

Looking to shed some pounds in the upcoming year? More importantly, are you looking for a convenient weight-loss option that you'll actually stick to? Fear not: Beginning Jan. 5, Shands and UF employees will have the option of attending Weight Watchers at Work sessions at the Shands Cancer Hospital at UF. The meetings will be held on Tuesdays at noon, Wednesdays at 8 a.m. or Thursdays at 4:15 p.m. in the hospital's Criser Cancer Resource Center. The first meeting is free. For participants who want to join the program, the cost of each 17-week series is \$186. For more information, e-mail Danita Gainer at gained@shands.ufl.edu or call 265-0441, ext. 85394.

Moving Forward & Together

By David Guzick, M.D., Ph.D.

How can the Health Science Center and the Shands HealthCare system get on the same page? How can we make sure that each patient has an exceptional experience when seen by one of our HSC faculty in an ambulatory setting or when admitted to the hospital? Can we visualize the direction of health care and train the next generation of health professionals in a manner that enables them to lead this future forward?

Similarly, can we see the direction of science and train the next generation of investigators to create the kind of knowledge that will be most useful in improving health? How can we foster the best environment for our current faculty to create such knowledge and to attract talented researchers to join them in this effort? Can we improve the population health status of the community we serve?

And how can we ensure that Shands and the HSC colleges generate the resources they need to sustain themselves and invest in the programs needed to achieve our collective goals?

One way is to work together on future goals and strategies. Although many of the operating units of the HSC and Shands have done individual strategic planning over the years, there has not been a comprehensive strategic plan across all academic and clinical units and campuses. In July, we launched a Strategic Planning Cabinet with the aim of developing a strategic plan that encompasses all the HSC colleges in Gainesville, the regional campus in Jacksonville and Shands HealthCare. The cabinet has met several times since then and has adopted a statement that reflects our vision for

the unique collaboration between UF's six health colleges and the Shands HealthCare system:

“Together we create unstoppable momentum toward improving individual and community health through discovery, clinical and translational science and technology, exceptional education, and patient-centered, innovative, high-quality health care.”

In addition, the Cabinet endorsed core institutional values, visualized as a pinwheel around our patients and community: Excellence, Trust, Accountability, Innovation, Teamwork, Integrity and Diversity. The Cabinet also endorsed the following overarching one-year and five-year goals, within which unit-specific goals will be developed. The five-year goals include achieving national leadership in research, becoming national model for interdisciplinary education and health-care delivery and diversifying revenue streams in



PHOTO BY SARAH KIEWEL

support of institutional missions. One-year goals include creating a compelling vision and strategic plan, defining benchmarks for improvement, effecting culture change so “we” and “they” become us, filling key leadership positions and defining the strategic direction for the Jacksonville regional campus and other campuses.

By Spring 2010, we should have crystallized an overall plan, with unit-specific plans completed or near completion. This will serve as the general framework to guide decision-making over the next five years, with modifications on an annual basis.

To all the faculty, students and staff members of the UF HSC and Shands HealthCare system, let me know your reaction to this process and how you think it can be improved. Equally important, when you receive a request for feedback from your dean, center director, institute director or hospital CEO, please don't hesitate to provide your best ideas through the mechanism that they articulate, the key things — large and small — that you may have felt for some time should be done, but may not have had the chance to express in this kind of forum.

Let's learn from each other, and move Forward Together! **P**



Our institutional values are Excellence, Trust, Accountability, Innovation, Teamwork, Integrity and Diversity, visualized with Patient and Community at the heart of our pinwheel graphic. But our objectives aren't purely clinical. A huge part of our institutional mission is, of course, education and research. And, ultimately, both are fundamentally intertwined with patients and community. Biomedical research, for example, can include fundamental research or highly translational work. Regardless, it ultimately is directed down the same path of improved health for patients, for families, for the community. Similarly, strong educational programs that train the next generation of health-care providers are at the foundation of excelling in taking care of patients, of families, of the community. All these things together will propel us forward. — David Guzick, M.D., Ph.D.

When **teachers** become **students**

UF holds Mini Medical School for teachers



PHOTO BY SARAH MEVIEL

By April Frawley Birdwell

It's not every day a middle-school science teacher stands *this* close to a \$400,000 microscope that can take images of cells inside an animal's body and make pictures every 30 seconds for 24 hours.

Huddled inside a small room in the UF Academic Research Building, Thomas Sweeting and a group of other middle- and high-school science teachers listened intently as UF researcher Jae-Sung Kim detailed the impressive capabilities of the

Researcher Jae-Sung Kim (left) describes the department of surgery's confocal microscope to a group of teachers visiting UF for Mini Medical School. The teachers had gone on a tour of the lab with Dr. Kevin Behrns (right).

department of surgery's confocal microscope. It was a lesson Sweeting was already excited to take back to his students at the Darnell Cookman School for the Medical Arts in Jacksonville, a magnet school for students interested in science in grades six through 12.

"It is amazing how they break down the cell to such an extent that we cannot only see it but take it apart look at it and decipher different things about it," Sweeting said. "I'm really excited about that. Events like this really give us a chance to come back and share the wealth."

The event in question was Mini Medical School, a one-day learning experience the UF Medical Guild and Center for Precollegiate Education and Training holds each year for Florida science teachers. The event gives teachers a chance to learn about the latest research in a particular topic — this year's topic was "Exploring Immunity" — visit labs, network with researchers and other science teachers and take part in panel discussions, said Mary Jo Koroly, Ph.D., director of CPET and a research associate professor in the College of Medicine.

This year, about 100 teachers from across the state attended the event, which was held in November.

"Throughout the year I have used the tidbits of information I learned to enhance my kids' knowledge," said Teresa Nick, a Merritt Island High School science teacher who was attending Mini Medical School for the second time. "They like to learn about research from a college they can relate to, because everyone knows the Gators. They think it's really cool."

UF started its Mini Medical School program in 2001. The event is just one of several programs CPET organizes each year to give teachers the latest information to bring back to their classrooms. *For more on CPET and the goal of helping students explore science through teacher continuing education, see below.* **P**



PHOTO BY SARAH MEVIEL

MARY JO KOROLY, PH.D.

RICHARD SNYDER, PH.D.

The path toward science

Grant to help expose rural students to science

By April Frawley Birdwell

To help more high school students from rural Florida get on the path toward careers in science and technology, UF researchers are targeting the adults at the front of the classroom first.

UF researchers have received an \$808,000 Science Education Partnership Award from the National Institutes of Health's National Center for Research Resources to fund a program that will help teachers in rural school districts expose students to the sciences and better prepare them to pursue education and careers in the field of biomedical sciences.

"We're trying to show (students) that there are multiple pathways to science careers so they can make educated decisions," said Richard Snyder, Ph.D., a co-principal investigator on the grant and director of the UF Center of Excellence for

Regenerative Health Biotechnology. "It really begins with educating the teachers, and with this program teachers are not just getting up to speed, they will be able to teach and guide students in the state of the art."

Often, teachers and students don't know about the variety of careers available in science and technology.

This can limit a student's perspective before he or she even starts college, said Mary Jo Koroly, Ph.D., the principal investigator on the grant and director of the UF Center for Precollegiate Education and Training. Because of this lack of knowledge about science and biotechnology careers, some students never even consider pursuing these fields, she added.

"We want to show students that science is fun and exciting and that there is a place for them even if they

don't want to be physicians or Ph.D.s," Koroly said. "Rural Florida is so underrepresented in Florida's colleges and universities. We want students to know there are tremendous opportunities out there, and they can succeed if they are interested."

UF's program will bring teachers to the university for a summer institute, where they will learn about translational research. The teachers, who receive three graduate credits for their work, will spend time in labs and will develop action research proposals to use what they have learned in their own classrooms, Koroly said. Teachers also will be able to borrow equipment to use in their classes.

"We wanted to make it so teachers are our partners, whether they are teaching students who choose career pathways or the academic ladder," Koroly said. **P**

Do you believe in *magic*?

UF invention helps clinicians get a closer look inside machines and patient simulators

By Kim Libby

The comic book dream of X-ray vision has now become a reality in the field of medicine. Developed by UF researchers in the colleges of Medicine and Engineering, a new invention dubbed the magic lens makes certain objects appear transparent, thanks to infrared tracking cameras and technology similar to what TV broadcasters use to project the virtual “first-down” line on a football field.

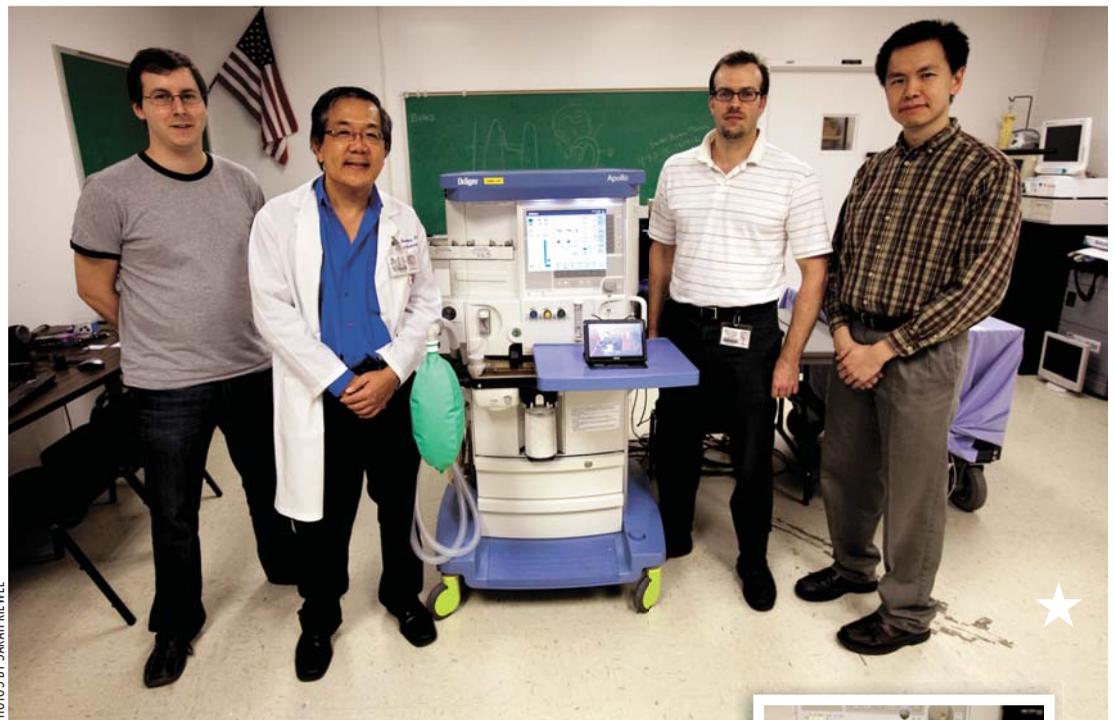
The technology was developed by John Quarles, Ph.D., as part of a doctoral dissertation supervised by Benjamin Lok, Ph.D., an assistant professor of engineering. The magic lens uses transparent reality visualization techniques already developed by UF anesthesiology researchers Samsun Lampotang, Ph.D., and David Lizardas for anesthesia machines.

The magic lens itself is a handheld display that gives students an inside look at gas flow and moving parts within anesthesia machines, systems that deliver anesthetic gas to patients. The magic lens is an important step toward patient safety because it enhances a clinician’s understanding of how an anesthesia machine actually works and could help decrease user errors when operating these machines, said Lampotang, a professor of anesthesiology and director of the Center for Simulation, Safety and Advanced Learning Technology.

“In a study of 72 adverse events related to anesthesia machines, user error caused three times more adverse events than mechanical failure,” Lampotang said. “It’s critical our residents understand how they work and how to use them.”

In recent studies published in engineering journals, subjects using the magic lens to view and understand the inner functions and processes of anesthesia machines performed up to six times better than others using different instructional materials.

So, how does it work? The lens visually opens up impenetrable “black boxes,” such as ATMs and cars, by augmenting reality with virtual information superimposed over the real object, a technique



PHOTOS BY SARAH KIEWEL

Researchers Isaac Luria (from left), Samsun Lampotang, David Lizardas and Benjamin Lok worked together to design a device they dubbed the magic lens, which allows people to see the inner workings of devices such as anesthesia machines.



generally known as augmented reality. The term “black box” is basically engineer-speak for objects where the inputs and outputs are visible but the internal structure and processes connecting the inputs and outputs are not evident.

Another example of augmented reality is projecting a first-down line across a football field. The computer-based technology continually calculates and recalculates the object from the changing perspective of the lens as it moves. Sensors have to continually track the magic lens as it moves in relation to the object being viewed.

Now, students can actually observe internal functions and processes from a variety of angles and perspectives simply by repositioning the lens and adjusting the controls and settings on the actual anesthesia machine.

“The magic lens would help visual learners interpret all these numbers and amounts of gas on a real machine without any risk,” Lampotang said.

Quarles studied 20 undergraduate psychology majors to confirm the effectiveness of the magic lens. The students were split into two groups of 10. The first group was introduced to an anesthesia machine with a 2-D simulation while the second used the magic lens. Both groups studied for an hour and a half before taking an exam 25 hours later. During the test,

a part of the anesthesia machine, the inspiratory valve leaflet, was removed to deliberately introduce a fault. Results showed just one student out of the 2-D group realized what was wrong, while six who studied using the magic lens identified the problem correctly.

In collaboration with UF neonatologist Michael Weiss, M.D., the magic lens has now been applied to a baby-sized patient simulator to help visualize the abnormal blood circulation in a baby with hypoplastic left heart syndrome. When the magic lens is pointed toward the baby’s chest, the abnormal circulatory system can be observed with blood flowing through the heart, lungs and body.

If there is a problem with blood oxygen saturation, the first instinct of a clinician might be to increase the amount of oxygen, which can actually harm the infant. The magic lens would provide an unobstructed view of what’s happening in the body, helping the clinician make the right decisions.

The final hurdle in the device’s development is standardization, Lampotang says. Not every hospital uses the same type of anesthesia machine or equipment, and the type of machine the magic lens is viewing has to be pre-programmed into the device beforehand, almost like a blueprint of what it’s about to read. Once this is overcome, Lampotang thinks the number of potential applications will expand drastically. **P**



ANIMALS in need

Veterinary students practice shelter medicine at St. Francis House



PHOTO BY SARAH KIEWEL

Third-year veterinary student Kristine Aviles and Dr. Brian DiGangi tend to one of two kittens Carey Hall (left) brought to the St. Francis Pet Care Program for a regular checkup.

By Jessica Metzger

Izzie was a very ill puppy. Brought into the St. Francis House Pet Care Program in June, she was relinquished by her owner to the UF College of Veterinary Medicine, whose students and shelter medicine faculty take care of animals brought there as part of the St. Francis Pet Care Program.

It was suspected the puppy had parvovirus, a canine disease characterized by bloody diarrhea, remembers Melanie Hasson, one of the students who cared for Izzy. After being placed in isolation and treated with iron supplements and fluids, the puppy began to improve.

Were it not for the St. Francis Pet Care Program, Izzy, who has since been adopted, probably would have been another statistic, Hasson says. Another homeless dog. Another euthanasia.

Started in 2007, the St. Francis Pet Care Program was founded by UF shelter medicine veterinarian Natalie Isaza, D.V.M., Gainesville veterinarian Dale Kaplan-Stein, D.V.M., and Chris Machen, UF President Bernie Machen's wife, to prevent pet owners from giving up their animals. Kaplan-Stein said the clinic is specifically for people who are too poor to afford veterinary care for their pets.

"How come your dog gets to sleep in your bed, and another doesn't get fed? We wanted to reach out to the indigent people, make their quality of life better," Kaplan-Stein said.

The opening day brought only one client, but now the program boasts more than 500 clients, said Isaza. All items, such as vaccinations and heartworm medications, are donated.

The clinic, open every Tuesday at St. Francis from noon to 2 p.m., only performs primary care and spays and neuters, which are done at the veterinary school. Since 2008, Kaplan-Stein

said the veterinary students have performed more than 200 spays and neuters on cats and dogs.

UF veterinary students work at the clinic as part of the Merial shelter medicine clerkship, which Isaza oversees. The course is a two-week rotation that offers students a chance to improve their surgical skills, said Isaza, a clinical assistant professor of shelter medicine. While under the supervision of veterinarians, students perform spays and neuters, implant microchips, perform initial exams and vaccinations, and devise treatment plans.

"It's really important for students to learn how to communicate with the client. A different clientele is a whole different mindset," Isaza said.

Hasson, who completed the shelter medicine rotation during the summer, said this rotation helped her gain confidence in her surgical practice. She also gained confidence when speaking with clients and giving helpful recommendations for their pets.

"As senior students, (the veterinarians) let us take the reins and go with it. We made the diagnosis, chose the treatments, gave the advice. Of course, if there was anything we left out, the veterinarian was there to correct us," Hasson said. "But overall, what we gained surgically is unmatched. This is the first time we're given a patient from beginning to end."

Jonathan Block, a senior veterinary medicine student, said he thinks more people should take an hour each week to volunteer for programs such as the one at St. Francis.

"It's commonly misunderstood that homeless and low-income people are bad pet owners. They might not have the financial needs, but they are compassionate pet owners. It's unfortunate that just because someone doesn't have the means, that they should have to crunch their budget and give up their pet," Block said.

Kaplan-Stein said her dream is for someone to donate a building on the Eastside of Gainesville where she can set up a more permanent shelter veterinary clinic. She wants more community involvement, too, especially from local government.

"I think we're doing a lot of good, reaching out to a lot of people," Kaplan-Stein said. "I'm flabbergasted that no city or county commissioners have come down to see it.

"I would like to see the homeless we service back to work," she added. "When I first went to St. Francis, I was a little concerned when they came out to my car and took my (medicines) that they would run. But they just want to help carry things. They want to work. Like pay it forward. What I've learned is if I do something nice, then they end up doing something nice." **P**



PHOTO BY PRISCILLA SANTOS

LISA BROWN, M.S., C.G.C.

Safe TESTING

New law prevents insurers, employers from using genetic tests to discriminate

By Laura Mize

After her third diagnosis of colon cancer, she knew she couldn't wait any longer. She needed answers.

A survivor of cervical cancer once and colon cancer twice before, she had delayed genetic testing for years. Doctors recommended testing for Lynch syndrome, a mutation that greatly increases a person's risk of multiple kinds of cancer. "Mary," whose name was changed to protect her privacy, wanted answers for herself and for her offspring. Were her children or her niece and nephew prone to cancer, too?

But the risks attached to knowing were harrowing: She feared positive test results would cost her grown children their health insurance coverage.

In 2008, a solution arose. After a decade of attempts by advocates of genetic testing, then-President Bush signed GINA, the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act.

GINA has been implemented in two phases: In May of this year, health insurers were officially banned from discriminating against individuals based on results of genetic tests or on family medical history. They can't refuse, modify or discontinue coverage of these individuals, or charge them more, because of

genetic information.

On Nov. 21, GINA's second phase was implemented, prohibiting employers from making decisions about an employee's job based on genetic information or family medical history and from asking employees to undergo tests for genetic conditions.

Mary learned about the law from her genetic counselor at the UF Shands Cancer Center, Lisa Brown, M.S., C.G.C.

"It's definitely affected my views (on genetic testing)," Mary said of the law. "I had genetic counseling originally, maybe 12 years ago, and decided at that time not to have genetic tests run."

But in March 2009 she finally underwent testing. She said she knows it was the right thing to do.

"It was hard to do it, and it was much harder to hear (that the results were positive)," she said. "I knew. I was expecting it."

Mary's daughter and niece have been tested for Lynch syndrome. Both received negative results. She said her son and nephew also plan to be tested.

GINA is the first federal law addressing discrimination based on genetic information. Numerous states, including Florida, had similar laws before GINA was passed, but details varied nationwide.

But even GINA isn't perfect. The law does not apply to businesses with fewer than 15

"THEY'RE AFRAID THAT THE LAWS WILL CHANGE, AND THAT'S A POSSIBILITY. THEY THINK THAT INSURERS CAN GET AROUND IT OR JUST BE DEVIOUS."

— LISA BROWN, M.S., C.G.C.

employees, or to life insurance or long-term care insurance. Military personnel are not protected under the law, though Brown said advocates are working to change that. And GINA does not protect those whose genetic mutations have led to actual diseases. Health insurance companies are allowed to make decisions based on the manifestation of a disease, but not genetic information alone.

Some people, Brown said, are still wary because the law has not been tested in a court case. Others just aren't convinced.

"They're afraid that the laws will change, and that's a possibility," Brown said. "They think that insurers can get around it or just be devious."

Despite some people's fears, GINA is just what Brown has been waiting for since she founded the UF Shands Cancer Center Hereditary Cancer Program in 2001.

"GINA is a huge accomplishment is the bottom line," she said. "People don't have to be as scared about genetic discrimination." **P**

READY TO PLAY

Tips for keeping kids safe on the field



PHOTO BY SARAH KIEWEL

About 144 local teens attended the first UF Sports Medicine Jamboree in August. The UF Sports Performance Center drew a big crowd at its booth for its vertical jump test.

By April Frawley Birdwell

Week after week, the injuries pile up in the highlight reels and on the ticker that scrolls across the bottom of the screen on ESPN. *Questionable: Kurt Warner (concussion), Michael Turner (ankle sprain) Out: Fred Taylor (torn ligaments) ...*

And these are the professionals. So what happens to the kids all across the country who don't have highly paid trainers, coaches and nutritionists by their sides? Injuries, of course. Lots and lots of injuries, which for some promising young athletes could prevent them from ever even appearing on that ticker list of injured pro athletes.

In August, about 144 local teens took steps toward becoming better athletes when they participated in the first Sports Medicine Jamboree, an event held to help student-athletes prepare and avoid life-threatening and career-ending injuries. More than 100 parents and coaches also attended the all-day event, which featured nine short talks as well as presentations by vendors.

Only a few months have passed since the event, held at the Hilton

University of Florida Conference Center, but UF leaders who organized the jamboree are already planning for the next event in 2010, says John Ross, M.D., a UF professor emeritus of pediatric neurology who organized the event with Rob Lawrence, M.D., a UF professor of pediatrics. They have even secured a donor who plans to contribute \$6,000 to the event this year, which will be held in early August.

"The Sports Medicine Jamboree was a free, educational service aimed at teaching parents and athletes what they need to know about everything from nutrition and treatment and prevention of injuries to skin conditions and problems caused by sun exposure," Ross said. "There were nine formal talks and the kids got to interact with 19 vendors. The kids liked the vendors and the parents liked the talks."

The professors — who teamed with faculty members from five UF colleges, the Children's Miracle Network, Alachua County Public Schools and St. Francis Catholic High School to pull off the event — hope to reach even more students and parents this year. There are more than 8,600 student-athletes in Alachua County alone.

But with spring sports looming, many parents may be looking for some tips now before their boys and girls take the field. To help, Ross has shared some tips gleaned from experts at the jamboree. *See box above.*

For more information, visit www.sportsmedicinejamboree.com. **P**

- 1 Eat:** Florida Athletic Association nutritionist Cheryl Zonkowski says athletes should eat six times each day. A pre-game meal is essential three to four hours before a competition. Taking in fluids, carbs and protein 30 minutes after exercise also helps with muscle growth and repair.
- 2 Hydrate:** Athletes should drink before, during and after practice or games, taking in about 90 to 125 ounces of fluid a day, according to the Florida Athletic Association.
- 3 Train the right way:** Injuries can often occur when muscles are overused. To prevent this, experts advise athletes exercise all their muscles and do aerobic exercises too. Also, athletes should vary their workouts, scheduling tougher days and easier days, and make sure to practice the same motions they perform during games.
- 4 Take concussions seriously:** Student-athletes with symptoms of a concussion — vomiting, headaches, dizziness, slurred speech, vision problems — should see a pediatric neurologist or family physician.

Photos By Sarah Kiewel

Now see this . . .

This month, *The POST* brings you a few of the most interesting unpublished photos from 2009



Geoffrey, an 8-month-old giraffe owned by the Barton G. company of Miami, nuzzles UF veterinary technician Sarah Purcell Nov. 5 at UF's Veterinary Medical Center after a bottle-feeding. Geoffrey was recuperating from arthroscopic surgery performed on his right front hock.



Christopher Williams, 8, joined the Horses Helping People program after discovering it on the Internet. Riding horses has helped Christopher, who is autistic, improve his balance, coordination and flexibility.



You won't be able to find one of these in Office Depot — it's the 3-D printer in the laboratory of neurosurgery **professor Frank Bova**. The device is used to develop simpler and less expensive tools for image-guided cranial surgery. By using CT and MR scans to calculate a surgical trajectory, clinical scientists can “print” a faceplate that uniquely fits a patient to guide doctors during cranial surgery.



People may not always think of dental surgeons saving lives, but that's what College of Dentistry surgeons who work at Shands at UF do every day. Here, **Dr. Marcio Guelmann** operates on a child at the Shands Children's Surgical Center.



- On March 20, UF celebrated the installation of a historical marker at **Wilmot Gardens**, the camellia garden located across the street from the Cancer and Genetics Research Complex. Dr. C. Craig Tisher, the Folke H. Peterson Distinguished Professor and former dean of the College of Medicine, spoke to guests, painting a picture of the future landscape of the gardens.



PHOTO BY SARAH KIEWEL

Rockin' around the HSC ...

Health care and research don't stop for the holidays. While some of us are roasting chestnuts, watching football or perhaps "It's a Wonderful Life" for the 5,000th time, there are many folks across campus who still work or volunteer their time no matter what day of the year it is. This month, with Hanukkah, Christmas, Yule, Kwanzaa, New Year's Day and other celebrations upon us, The POST is shining a light on a few of the people who stay hard at work regardless of the day and who often don't get a lot of attention for what they do — be it unclogging toilets or making the season a little brighter for patients and our troops.

Volunteer Christine Martin helps patient Zamaria Shavers, 4, create a penguin door hanger in the pediatrics unit playroom at Shands at UF.

Where a kid can be a kid

Every Dec. 24, a special visitor leaves his reindeer by the curb and rides the elevator up to the fourth floor of Shands at UF. Clad in his traditional red garb with Mrs. Claus by his side, Santa Claus ho-ho-hos his way through the pediatrics unit, visiting every child who would like to greet him.

Just like a traditional visit with Santa, the event is photographed, and for many families, that small, instant print-out is a precious memento, says Naomi Martinez, a Shands Child Life specialist.

“Parents will cry because it may be their child’s first Christmas or it may be their child’s last,” Martinez said. “And that’s the part that really gets you, when you see the families.”

Kids don’t stop being kids just because they’re in the hospital. That’s why Shands and UF staff members who work with children band together to make every holiday special on the pediatrics floor, be it Halloween or Hanukkah. Shands Guest Services, Child Life, Arts in Medicine and the clinical staff are just a few of the groups that make the holidays a little brighter for children.

“We really want to show parents that we care about their child, more than just as a sick child who we are going to take excellent care of their

medical needs,” said Marie Kaspro, M.S.N., a pediatrics nursing manager. “But we understand their child is a child and we don’t want them to miss out on things.”

Each year, during the winter holiday season, the pediatrics nursing staff picks a theme for the floor and buys decorations — often using their own money. This year for “Winter Wonderland,” intricate snowflakes dangle from the ceiling of the playroom and glittery snowmen lurk around every corner. Activities in the playroom often match the theme, too. In early December, a group of UF students gathered to help children make penguin and snowmen door hangers for their rooms.

Every child who stays in the hospital during Christmas also receives a special surprise when they wake up Dec. 25 — presents the nurses deliver while children are sleeping.

“We try to make this a happy experience for kids,” Kaspro said.

To donate presents for pediatrics patients, you can purchase presents directly from the Shands Children’s Hospital wish list at www.amazon.com/gp/registry/CWU7FPAU07Z6. If donations cannot be made prior to Christmas, toys can still be used for pediatrics patients throughout the year. — *April Frawley Birdwell*

Sinks clog on holidays, too

ivian Young, a senior custodian supervisor, won’t forget the Christmas Day she was called at home about a building emergency. A security guard had discovered a faucet left running in a lab in the Basic Science Building and the flooding spanned two floors. Young came in to oversee the cleanup and called in other custodial staff to help on that wet Dec. 25.

There may be a lot fewer Health Science Center employees working in labs and offices during the holiday break, but there are still emergencies, trash that needs collecting and toilets that need to be unstopped. A skeleton crew of six custodial staff who volunteer to work the weekdays between Christmas and New Year’s Day is here to take care of those needs.

“Research doesn’t cut off during the break. Some people need to be here every day or every other day to monitor research, and people also use the time to catch up on their work,” said Young, adding that the fifth floor of the McKnight Brain Institute, the basement labs in the Communicore Building and the Human Development Center are among the busiest areas during holiday break.

Directed by one of the custodial services supervisors (they take turns every year), the six-member crew spreads out to cover an area that, on a normal workday, would be cleaned by 60 custodial staff.

It’s a lot of work, but it does have its perks, says Clifford Gordon who, before transferring recently to the Academic Research Building, worked for several years at the College of Veterinary Medicine and was the sole custodial staff member to clean the college’s academic buildings and hospitals in the last week of December.

“I was authorized to visit parts of the buildings I didn’t normally see,” Gordon said. “During my work breaks I could peek through the windows of the operating rooms of the Large Animal Hospital and see surgeons operating on horses and a cow. It was very, very interesting.”

Working amid quiet hallways and shuttered classrooms can get lonely, but it’s also a good opportunity for those who are here to bond, said HPNP Complex custodial staff member Estelita Winkel.

“We all enjoy working together and getting to know each other,” Winkel said. “I’m looking forward to working with the group again this year. I’m pretty sure each one of us made a self-sacrifice to break away from families to work voluntarily this season.” — *Jill Pease*

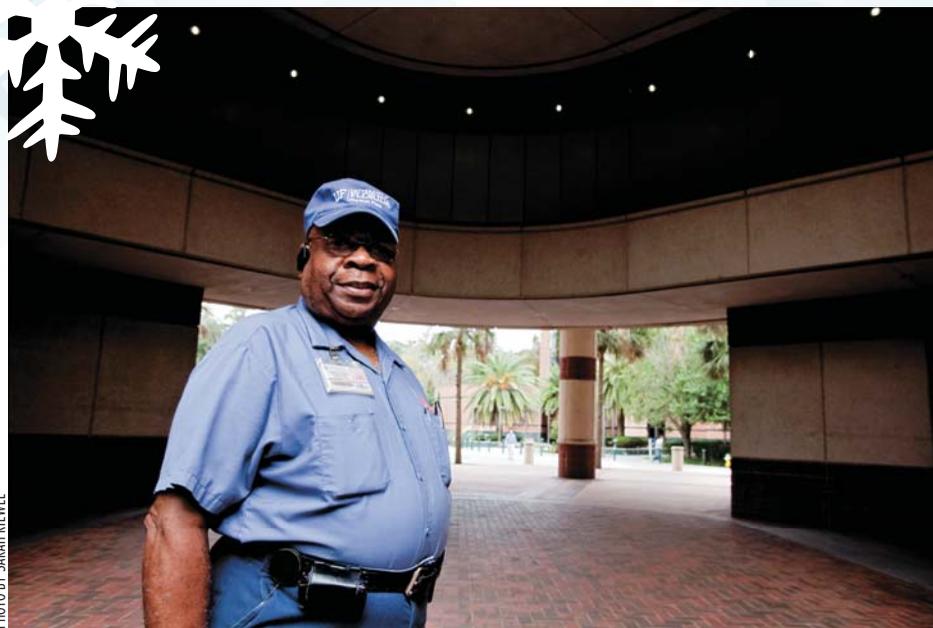


PHOTO BY SARAH KIEWEL

Clifford Gordon is one of six custodial staff members who will be on hand to keep the HSC in shape during the holiday break.

Heart to heart

Allison Kleinfeldt knows sickness knows no holidays.

As one of five patient schedulers for the department of thoracic and cardiovascular surgery who will be around the office during the holiday break, she remains willing and eager to carry on business as usual. Kleinfeldt and the other schedulers serve as the first point of contact for patients who wish to schedule surgeries or appointments — and they reschedule appointments when unexpected heart transplants or surgeries make changing the schedule a life-saving necessity. She also books clinics, fields questions and retrieves proper scans and documents.

“Allie is a saint,” said Tomas Martin, M.D., who has worked with Kleinfeldt for more than 10 years. “I always tell everyone there are three women in my life — my wife, my daughter and my secretary — and I just do whatever they tell me to.”

Martin said even though Kleinfeldt is not trained in medicine, she has learned a lot about the field and serves as the department’s “executive coordinator.”

She often even has to work as a counselor, apologizing when things don’t go perfectly or easing patient fears and concerns about surgery, he said.

“Her duties extend way beyond her job description,” Martin said. “If she and others like her weren’t here during the holidays, our patients would not know where to go or how to get there.” — *Kim Libby*



PHOTO BY SARAH KEWEL

Allison Kleinfeldt and Diane Strong are two of five schedulers who work throughout the holidays to make sure heart surgery patients get the care they need.

To Iraq with love



College of Veterinary Medicine staff members have been collecting holiday goodies to send to employee Linda Stanley's son, U.S. Army Spc. Sean Cavanaugh. In Iraq, Cavanaugh and his canine partner, Ata, work to ensure areas are bomb-free before other troops arrive.

Thanksgiving is a favorite holiday for Linda Stanley’s family. So, three days before the annual turkey fest, it was hard for her to talk about who wouldn’t be at her table this year — her son, Sean.

Of course, it’s hard for Stanley to talk about Sean’s absence most days. Stanley’s son, U.S. Army Spc. Sean Cavanaugh, has been serving in Iraq since Aug. 24. Cavanaugh is part of a canine unit and he and his dog, Ata, are responsible for checking for bombs in places where the troops are headed. Like any mother, Stanley worries. A lot.

“I am so proud of him, but by the same token I know he is in harm’s way and that’s hard,” said Stanley, a client services representative for the UF College of Veterinary Medicine. “It is miserable to know your child is out there and you can’t do anything.”

Wanting to do something to help her son and his unit — and their canine companions — Stanley and her colleague Linda Howard began collecting items to ship to Iraq a few months ago. The box started out small, but as word spread about Stanley’s son and the canine unit, the boxes began to multiply, filled with everything from doggie goggles for keeping the dogs’ eyes safe from sand to snacks for the soldiers, human and canine alike.

The first shipment was 50 pounds. The second, sent for Thanksgiving, weighed more than 140.

During the past few weeks, the women have been collecting items to send the soldiers for the holidays, too. Although they have again been flooded with donations, Howard admits they could still use funds to help pay for costly shipping.

The outpouring of support means a lot to Stanley, who has to keep back tears when people she doesn’t know come in loaded with bags of stuff to send to her son.

“The students, they are paying for school and probably having a hard enough time as it is, and they are coming in with bags of stuff for the doggies,” Howard said. “It’s so heartwarming.”

For more information, e-mail Linda Howard at howardl@vetmed.ufl.edu.
— *April Frawley Birdwell*

What's cooking?

The cafeteria may be closed on the holidays, but it doesn't mean Shands at UF Food and Nutrition Services workers aren't busy throughout the season. Patients still need to be fed, and parties need to be catered.

On Thanksgiving, Shands at UF patients received a special holiday meal, complete with turkey, dressing, mashed potatoes, green beans and pie. Thanks to Parkview Baptist Church, a local congregation, the families of pediatric patients received the same meal for free. The parish paid for holiday meals with all the fixings for patients' families.

Food and Nutrition Services prepared the meals, which church members delivered. Faye Hunter, manager of patient nutrition services, said the patients and their families don't take the gesture for granted.

"Thanksgiving is all about giving and counting your blessings," she said. "That's the greatest thing we can do, to provide those families with holiday meals. I think it's a great thing that we're doing."

Patients also get special meals on Christmas and New Year's Day. This year's Christmas meal will be prime rib. Yum!

Other Food and Nutrition Services employees are helping people get in the holiday spirit, too. Lisa Millen, commercial food services manager, and her employees cater about 50 parties every holiday season, some with as many as several hundred guests.

And thanks to Lee Raynor, executive chef, the Health Science Center has its very own homemade gingerbread hospital this year. — *Laura Mize*



PHOTO BY SARAH KEWEL

Lee Raynor, an executive chef for Shands at UF Food and Nutrition Services, prepares a gingerbread hospital for the holidays.



PHOTO BY SARAH KEWEL

Shands Arts in Medicine musicians Cathy DeWitt (from left), Anastacia Sams and Nan Gordon play holiday music for passers-by walking through the tunnel linking Shands at UF's North and South campuses.

and sometimes it's not even their songs or performances that help patients. Paula Patterson, a dramatist in residence who runs AIM's Playback Theater program, remembers one year when she walked into a patient's room and found the girl's mother crying. Doctors had told the family the girl could go home for Christmas if she ate something, but the only thing that seemed appetizing was wonton soup, something the Shands kitchen could not make. Patterson left the hospital and got the girl her soup.

"Her mother burst into tears and said, 'This is the most wonderful gift I have ever been given,'" remembers Patterson. "The two were alone together away from the hospital for the first time in four months."

— *April Frawley Birdwell*

The art of giving

There are sounds you expect to hear in a tunnel between two hospitals: the click-clack of busy feet, the whooshing of carts and wheelchairs rolling through the corridor, the sound of a 16th century recorder playing "Greensleeves" ...

OK, maybe not the "Greensleeves," but if you happen to meander through the visitor's tunnel between the Shands at UF South and North campuses in December, that may just be what you hear. Led by Arts in Medicine's music program coordinator Cathy DeWitt, musicians from the Shands AIM program will be performing every Monday and Friday around lunchtime in the tunnel. Of course, this is just one of the many things AIM is doing this year to make the holiday season a little brighter for patients and staff members.

"Some of our musicians have been known to visit patients on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day," DeWitt said.

The group also held its annual AIM for the Holidays event Dec. 11, which featured a daylong concert in the Shands at UF lobby, performances in the South Campus, dancing, Christmas carols and Hanukkah stories.

AIM artists volunteer their time throughout the holidays,

Attention: men

Unique clinic provides relief from ongoing testicular pain



PHOTO BY SARAH KEVEL

By Czerne M. Reid

Chronic testicular pain, or chronic orchialgia, is defined as more than three months of constant or intermittent pain in the testicles. Although many men suffer from the condition, some are reluctant to seek treatment or are unaware that medical help is available. A new type of robot-assisted technique developed in the UF College of Medicine department of urology relieves the pain by severing certain faulty nerves in the testicles. The UF clinic, run by **Sijo Parekattil, M.D.**, director of male infertility and microsurgery, is the only center in the world offering the robotic procedure. Parekattil's clinic is also the first in the United States dedicated to the treatment of chronic testicular pain. This month, Parekattil answers our questions about this type of pain.

How common is chronic testicular pain?

About 6 percent of all men after a vasectomy, up to 18 percent after inguinal hernia surgery, 1 percent after scrotal surgery, 1 percent after a pulled-groin injury or trauma to the scrotum or pelvis and 1 percent of those who have epididymitis suffer from chronic testicular pain. When you add those up, about 150,000 to 200,000 men a year in the United States suffer from the condition. Not all those patients have severe pain, and many don't seek treatment. Some find it difficult to approach their doctors, while others just don't know that they can get help.

What causes chronic testicular pain?

The two-hit theory is that men with chronic testicular pain have a baseline hypersensitivity in the nerves that run in the spermatic cord. Trauma or insult to the area then sets off the pain, and once activated it doesn't turn off. When you image these patients everything appears to be normal because the nerves are intact but are just functioning abnormally. It's frustrating for these patients because doctors might tell them it's psychosomatic and that nothing is wrong. Many are prescribed antidepressants. By the time many men come to the UF clinic they've been to seven or eight urologists already and are at the point where they are even considering removing their testicle because of the pain.

What novel treatments does the UF clinic specialize in?

Robotic neurolysis is a process in which malfunctioning nerves in the spermatic cord are disconnected surgically. At UF, we developed the robot-assisted procedure and as of early November 2009, we've done 62 cases. Just under 90 percent of those patients report a reduction in pain. Seventy percent reported one month after surgery they no longer had pain that affected their well-being and everyday functioning. Before surgery, we are careful to rule out other causes for the pain such as kidney stones, tumors, herniated discs, pinched nerves or hernias. That is done using ultrasounds, CT scans and MRIs.

What are some advantages of robot-assisted surgery?

The advantage of the robot is that it gives the surgeon four arms. I use my fourth arm to hold a Doppler for real-time monitoring of where the testicular artery is, to reduce the risk of injury. The robot-assisted procedure takes the surgery to the next level in terms of what we are able to do, and it decreases the level of reliance on an assistant. From a patient safety perspective, it means the surgeon has greater control of the surgical area.

What does the procedure entail?

It's a minimally invasive outpatient procedure that takes 30 to 40 minutes. First, the patient is anesthetized and one small incision is made in the lower groin area. We bring up the spermatic cord then bring the robot in to microdissect out the faulty nerve fibers and ligate them. There is no loss of sexual function because we stay away from nerves that go to the penis. Immediately after surgery, patients have to avoid straining themselves, but in two to three weeks they are able to get back to normal activities — pain-free.

Study measures hookah use in teens

TRACEY BARNETT, PH.D.

PHOTO BY SARAH KIEWEL

By Jill Pease

Hookah pipe smoking has gained a foothold with Florida teens, according to a new UF study, which shows 11 percent of high school students and 4 percent of middle school students have tried it.

The findings were presented Nov. 9 at the American Public Health Association's annual meeting in Philadelphia and appeared in the November issue of the *American Journal of Public Health*. The study was conducted in collaboration with the Florida Department of Health.

Rooted in Middle Eastern culture, hookah pipes burn charcoal and tobacco, also known as shisha. Air is drawn through the tobacco and into the pipe, where it passes through water.

Hookah smokers widely, but mistakenly, believe the pipe is a harmless alternative to other forms of tobacco use, said lead researcher Tracey Barnett, Ph.D., an assistant professor in the UF College of Public Health and Health Professions' department of behavioral science and community health.

"Users tend to think smoking with a hookah is safe because they believe the water in the pipe acts as a filter," Barnett said. "Many actually don't

think that shisha has tobacco, while others feel it's a more pure form of tobacco that doesn't have as many chemicals, although there's really no reason to believe this."

In fact, during a typical 20- to 80-minute hookah session, users may smoke the equivalent of 100 or more cigarettes, according to the World Health Organization.

The findings are based on data from the 2007 Florida Youth Tobacco Survey, an anonymous annual survey administered by the Florida Department of Health to a random sample of public middle and high schools. The 2007 survey, completed by 9,000 students, was the first to include questions about hookah use.

There are at least 100 hookah lounges in Florida and most have opened in the past few years, Barnett said. Hookah is typically shared in groups and smoked with sweetened, flavored tobacco.

"The social nature of hookah smoking appeals to young people," Barnett said. "An 18-year-old high school senior can't get into clubs where alcohol is served, but he or she can legally smoke." **P**

The sound stealers

How escaped proteins affect hearing loss

By Czerne M. Reid

Age-related hearing loss is the most common sensory disorder among the elderly. But scientists are still trying to figure out what cellular processes govern or contribute to the loss.

Now a UF team and researchers from University of Wisconsin and three other institutions have identified a protein that is central to processes that cause oxidative damage to cells and lead to age-related hearing loss.

The findings, published online in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, help point the way toward a new target for antioxidant therapies.

One theory of aging holds that free radicals damage components of mitochondria, the energy center of cells. Such damage accumulates over time, leading to a destabilization of the mitochondria, which leads to release of certain proteins.

"Within the mitochondria these proteins cause life, but when they're out they're deadly," said Christiaan Leeuwenburgh, Ph.D., chief of the biology of aging division at UF's College of Medicine and a member of the Institute on Aging.

The cell death triggered by the escaped proteins leads to physical effects we associate with aging, such as hearing loss.

More than 40 percent of people over 65 in the United States suffer from age-related hearing loss, according to the National Health Survey. It is estimated that the condition will affect more than 28 million Americans by 2030.

CHRISTIAAN LEEUWENBURGH, PH.D.



JINZE XU, PH.D.

Age-related hearing loss involves the death of certain sensory hair, nerve and membrane cells in the inner ear. Since the hair and nerve cells do not regenerate in humans, their death leads to permanent hearing loss.

One protein called Bak is known to play a role in the weakening of the mitochondrial membrane. The more of the protein present, the leakier the mitochondrial membrane becomes, allowing harmful proteins to travel out into the rest of the cell.

Bak is typically induced by oxidative stress and its levels increase as people age. The researchers wanted to see whether its absence would prevent the age-related hearing loss in the inner ear. Tests showed that Bak-deficient middle-aged mice were found to have hearing levels comparable to that of young mice. In addition, fewer of the critical hearing cells died, compared with mice that did not have the protein deficiency. **P**

[Small addition], (big treatment)

Small change to therapy helps fight colon cancer

By John Pastor

UF researchers have found a way to use just a fraction of the normal dosage of a highly toxic, debilitating chemotherapy drug to achieve even better results against colon cancer cells.

More research is needed before the therapy can be tested in patients, but the discovery in human colon cancer cell lines and mice with established human tumors suggests that the addition of a small molecule to the cancer drug Temozolomide disrupts repair mechanisms in a type of tumor cells that is highly resistant to treatment.

The discovery will be featured on the cover of December's *Molecular Cancer Research*, a journal of the American Association for Cancer Research.

"This is very important because aside from aggressive surgery with possibly chemotherapy, there are no specific treatments for colon cancer," said Satya Narayan, Ph.D., a professor of anatomy and cell biology at the College of Medicine and a member of the UF Shands Cancer Center. "The recurrence rate for this type of cancer after surgery is very high, about 30 to 50 percent, and there is an urgent need to develop new approaches to manage this deadly disease."

The National Cancer Institute estimates there will be about 106,000 new cases of colon cancer in the United States in 2009. It is the second most common cause of cancer-related death in both men and women in the Western hemisphere. The disease forms in the large intestine and survival rates vary according to how soon the cancer is diagnosed and the treatment is started.

Narayan's research team evaluated more



PHOTO BY SARAH KIEWEL

SATYA NARAYAN, PH.D.

than 140,000 small molecules, finally arriving at a tiny molecule that precisely blocks the ability of cancer cells to recognize and repair the DNA damage inflicted by Temozolomide, or TMZ.

"Our idea was if you induce DNA damage (with TMZ), and at the same time block cell repair, you can synergize toxic effects to the cancer cells," Narayan said. "We hope that with this combination treatment we can reduce the tumors drastically and expand the lifetime of patients much longer than is currently possible."

TMZ is commonly used against certain types of brain cancer. It works by damaging the DNA of the cancer. However, the challenge of treating patients is that colon cancer is not a single disease but an array of disorders with distinct molecular mechanisms, with one type being quite proficient at repairing the DNA damage inflicted by the drug.

By combining TMZ with the small molecule, Narayan's team was able to disable the colon cancer's ability to manufacture repair enzymes.

The UF researchers effectively used an amount of TMZ that is about 10 times lower

than recommended in its studies of mice with human colon cancer tumors.

If only about one-tenth as much TMZ is needed to kill cancer cells, Narayan said, it will be possible to use lower doses of a drug that creates a great deal of adverse side effects, a partial listing of which includes anxiety, back pain, breast pain, constipation, cough, diarrhea, dizziness, drowsiness, dry skin, hair loss, headache, joint pain, loss of appetite, mouth sores, muscle aches and nausea.

"By using these strategies we can predict that disruption of DNA repair by small molecules can bypass drug resistance factors and dramatically reduce side effects caused by toxic doses of TMZ," Narayan said.

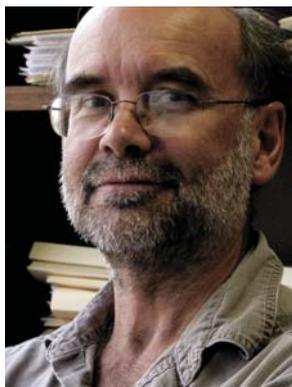
More study is needed before the combination can be tested in patients, but Narayan believes that TMZ can be combined with the small molecule in a single dose in pill or capsule form.

Additional members of the UF research team include Aruna Jaiswal, Ph.D., postdoctoral associate Harekrushna Panda and David Ostrov, Ph.D., of the UF Shands Cancer Center. The research was supported by grants from the National Cancer Institute of the National Institutes of Health. **P**

From bunnies to bone marrow . . .

How a rabbit virus could help improve bone marrow transplants

By Czerne M. Reid



GRANT MCFADDEN, PH.D.

A virus that in nature infects only rabbits could become a cancer-fighting tool for humans. Myxoma virus kills cancerous blood-precursor cells in human bone marrow while sparing normal blood stem cells, a multidisciplinary team at the UF College of Medicine has found.

The findings were published online in the journal *Leukemia*.

The discovery could help make more cancer patients eligible for bone marrow self-transplant therapy and reduce disease relapse rates after transplantation.

“This is a new strategy to remove cancer cells before the transplant,” said virologist Grant McFadden, Ph.D., senior author of the paper and a member of the UF Genetics Institute. “This is the first time anyone has shown in a living animal that a virus can distinguish normal bone marrow stem cells from cancerous stem cells.”

The major therapeutic applications will likely be for blood cancers such as leukemia, lymphoma and bone marrow cancers, the researchers say.

In mouse studies, myxoma virus was used to purge cancerous cells from leukemia patient bone marrow samples before they were infused into the test animals. The technique was effective against an aggressive form of leukemia that is resistant to conventional chemotherapy.

Patients who have certain types of cancer such as acute myelogenous leukemia are usually treated with high doses of chemotherapy. But that can destroy the patient’s own immune system unless he or she receives a transplant of blood stem cells, which can be from the patient’s own marrow samples or from a donor.

Although reinfusion of a patient’s own bone marrow stem cells is generally safer in the short run, those patients are at high risk of dying from return of disease because of leukemia contaminating the infused bone marrow.

“That’s one of the major frustrations, so we’re looking for ways to clean these stem cells before putting them back into patients,” said Christopher R. Cogle, M.D., an assistant professor in the division of hematology and oncology, a member of the UF Shands Cancer Center and a leader of the research team. **P**



CHRISTOPHER R. COGLE, M.D.

By Jennifer Brindise

Pelvic floor disorders, which affect bowel or bladder function, are very common. What’s not so common is a patient’s willingness to discuss these problems.

Sanda Tan, M.D., Ph.D., a UF colorectal surgeon, said published findings estimate that by 2010 there will be 150,000 women and 40,000 men in North Central Florida who will have been diagnosed with pelvic floor disorders.

To address this need, a team of gastroenterology, surgery and urology physicians at UF have organized a centralized UF Pelvic Floor Program. The team also works with dietitians and physical therapists to offer a full range of treatments to patients.

Pelvic floor disorders include constipation, fecal incontinence, overactive bladder, urinary incontinence, painful bladder syndrome, and rectal or vaginal prolapse. Treatments and therapies range from dietary changes to physical therapy to medication to surgical procedures. While these conditions require the treatment of different physicians, the UF program offers a centralized place for patient calls and care.

“We understand how socially debilitating loss of bowel or bladder control can be,” Tan said. “A lot of times people are embarrassed to talk about the issue to begin with, and if you have to go to different physicians and repeat the same thing over and over, people can become discouraged. So, in this way we have formed a centralized

Something to **talk** about

UF pelvic floor program focused on improving patients’ quality of life

phone call area so we can arrange for all of these issues to be handled in an efficient and timely manner for the comfort of the patient.” She added that the team meets regularly to discuss patient care so patients’ treatments and therapies are coordinated.

Louis Moy, M.D., a UF assistant professor of urology, said these conditions can affect people of all ages, races and gender, but typically they occur more in women than men and with higher frequency as people age.

To learn more, visit www.pelvicfloor.health.ufl.edu. **P**

Shining a (pink) light on breast cancer



By Lorrie DeFrank

As the great pyramids of Giza glowed in a flood of pink lights nearby, Shahla Masood, M.D., represented the UF College of Medicine-Jacksonville at an international event that demonstrated that breast cancer has no boundaries, no limits.

Masood, a professor and chair of the department of pathology and laboratory medicine, spoke at UF's 15th annual Multidisciplinary Symposium on Breast Disease and the First International Breast Health

Education Program. The weeklong event in late October was organized by Susan G. Komen for the Cure and the Breast Cancer Foundation of Egypt under the auspices of Egypt's first lady Suzanne Mubarak. About 10,000 people gathered at the pyramids for the Egypt Race for the Cure, the first Komen race in the Middle East.



SHAHLA MASOOD, M.D.

"I believe the symposium at Cairo was a reflection of our commitment to excellence in global breast health education for the public and the physician," said Masood, who founded the symposium. "This symposium brought a significant amount of visibility to the University of Florida."

Nancy Brinker, founder of Susan G. Komen for the Cure and the symposium's keynote

speaker, thanked Masood for initiating the global collaboration and for raising awareness of breast cancer education in the Middle East and North Africa.

Participants — with titles as varied as princess, professor and president — represented cancer institutes, universities, medical centers and agencies around the world, including the American Cancer Society and the National Institutes of Health. More than 400 people attended the symposium's public forum with simultaneous Arabic and English translations in Cairo's Grand Hyatt Hotel. Breast cancer advocates from 10 countries in the Middle East also received training during the week.

Nearly half a million women worldwide die from breast cancer each year. Brinker said illuminating the pyramids pink sent a clear message that breast cancer knows no boundaries and that worldwide collaboration can make great strides against the disease. GE Healthcare, which introduced digital mammography 10 years ago, supported the lighting of the pyramids. **P**

A year without smoke

By Erin VanWey

Nov. 20 marked one year of being smoke-free at the UF Health Science Center-Jacksonville. Last year, the HSC-Jacksonville, Shands Jacksonville and UF Jacksonville Healthcare Inc. clinics banned the use of tobacco products on their campuses.

For several employees, the anniversary of this policy change coincides with their own decisions to stub out cigarettes for good.

For Sherri Brown, a purchasing agent at Shands Jacksonville and the mother of a 7-year-old daughter, the announcement of the hospital going smoke-free gave her the push she needed to quit.

"I knew smoking was slowly killing me," she said. "When the hospital decided to prohibit smoking on campus, I did not look at it as a restriction on my rights. I looked at it as a much-needed tool to help me quit."

Brown joined the hospital's free tobacco cessation program. The six-week program consists of a weekly one-hour class in which participants learn ways to manage cravings by establishing healthy habits and participating in a support group. The program was recently expanded to include employees' spouses.

"I carried a picture of my daughter with me to every meeting and whenever I thought I couldn't do it, I would look at her picture," Brown said. "I do believe you have to be ready, but the support you receive from the stop-smoking program is wonderful."

With the help of the hospital's smoking cessation program, UF employee Tracy Hancock celebrated her first anniversary of being smoke-free Oct. 27.

"This was my third attempt to quit. I believe the class was a big part in helping me," Hancock said. "Learning different things to do when I got the urge to smoke and having a support group really helped. I believe I gained my health as well as my life back when I made the choice to quit."

Jacksonville employees who want to quit smoking can call 904-244-4095 for more information. Employees at UF or Shands in Gainesville, where a tobacco-free policy was initiated Nov. 1, can visit www.tobaccofree.health.ufl.edu for resources. **P**

| November '09 | | | | | | |
|--------------|---------|-----------|----------|--------|----------|--------|
| Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday | Sunday |
| 30 | | | | | | 1 |
| 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
| 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 |
| 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 |
| 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 |

Clinical and Translational Science Institute names fellows

UF's Clinical and Translational Science Institute has named 12 new fellows for the 2009-10 academic year. Six junior faculty and six predoctoral trainee fellowships were awarded to individuals conducting research on a range of topics. By providing research funding and formal training in areas such as biostatistics, manuscript-writing for human and clinical studies, clinical research practice and ethical conduct of research, the fellowships give awardees practical training on how to turn basic-science laboratory discoveries into clinical applications. "We think that these programs will provide fellows with a background that they otherwise don't have in conducting clinical research," said Marian Limacher, M.D., director of the CTSI's training and professional development program. "We are hoping that this level of training will prepare the workforce to design and accomplish the research that will improve health over the next decades." — *Czerne M. Reid*

JUNIOR FACULTY SCHOLARS

THOMAS BUFORD, Ph.D., of the College of Medicine department of aging, studies age-related changes in skeletal muscle perfusion and regeneration.



Thomas Buford

RONIEL CABRERA, M.D., M.S., an assistant professor of medicine in the College of Medicine, studies regulatory immunologic mechanisms in hepatocellular carcinoma.



Roniel Cabrera

RAMIRO ISAZA, D.V.M., M.S., an assistant professor of small animal clinical sciences in the College of Veterinary Medicine and service chief of zoological medicine, studies the risks of working with tuberculosis-infected elephants.



Ramiro Isaza

BAHA MOSHIREE, M.D., an assistant professor of medicine in the College of Medicine, is conducting a study of the efficacy of the drug mesalamine in treating diarrhea-predominant irritable bowel syndrome. She previously received a CTSI pilot grant to study the use of azithromycin for treatment of gastroparesis.



Baha Moshiree

MARGARETE RIBEIRO-DASILVA, D.D.S., M.S., Ph.D., a postdoctoral fellow in the College of Dentistry, studies the influence of genetics, hormones and inflammatory response on gender differences in the occurrence of temporomandibular joint disorder.



Margarete Ribeiro-Dasilva

CARMEN RODRIGUEZ, Ph.D., A.R.N.P., an assistant professor in the College of Nursing, studies the use of technology to help patients who cannot speak communicate with hospital staff.



Carmen Rodriguez

PREDOCTORAL SCHOLARS

DUSTIN BLANTON, College of Medicine, studies the genetics of type 1 diabetes using targeted immune system phenotyping arrays.



Dustin Blanton

EMILY FOX, P.T., M.H.S., D.P.T., College of Public Health and Health Professions, studies advancement of walking recovery after incomplete spinal cord injury.



Emily Fox

JASON KARNES, Pharm.D., College of Pharmacy, studies the use of genetic sampling of tissues from large-scale clinical trials to formulate a risk-assessment algorithm for antihypertension-induced type 2 diabetes.



Jason Karnes

JENNIFER KIELCZEWSKI, M.S., College of Medicine, studies pro-angiogenic and vascular protective effects of insulin-like growth factor binding protein-3



Jennifer Kielczewski

MEGHAN SOUSTEK, College of Medicine, studies identification of siRNAs that reduce tafazzin expression and lead to muscle and cardiac phenotypes similar to those in Barth syndrome patients.



Meghan Soustek

JENNIFER STAMPS, College of Medicine, studies the link between olfactory dysfunction and neurodegenerative disease.



Jennifer Stamps

To learn more about CTSI training and development opportunities visit www.ctsi.ufl.edu and click on "Education" or e-mail Marian Limacher at limacmc@medicine.ufl.edu.

DISTINCTIONS

COLLEGE OF DENTISTRY

SHARON COOPER, Ph.D., R.D.H., M.S., M.Ed., an associate in the department of operative dentistry, successfully defended her dissertation in higher education administration. Cooper's dissertation research investigated faculty perceptions of the academic work environment that best predicted career satisfaction at the college.

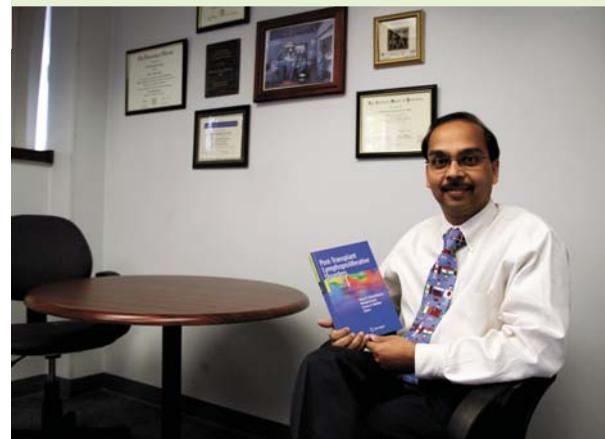


Sharon Cooper

FONG WONG, D.D.S., M.S.D., an assistant professor of prosthodontics, was elevated to full fellow status within the American Academy of Maxillofacial Prosthetics in November during the group's annual meeting in San Diego. Wong joined the college in 2004.



Fong Wong



Book highlights rare but deadly complication

Drugs designed to prevent the immune system from attacking a newly transplanted organ can save lives. They can also lead to a rare but dangerous complication: cancer. Because these medicines suppress the immune system, patients who receive them are more at risk for infection. The drugs can also stop the immune system from searching for and weeding out malignant cells. Allowed to proliferate, these malignant cells can lead to a type of cancer called post-transplant lymphoproliferative disorder, says UF pediatric nephrologist **Vikas Dharnidharka**, M.D., M.P.H, who has edited the first book ever published on the disorder. Published in October, *Post-transplant Lymphoproliferative Disorders* features chapters written by leading experts in the field and the latest information on this rare but deadly complication.



Alzheimer's expert to lead new center

Todd Golde, M.D., Ph.D., formerly the chair of the department of neuroscience at the Mayo Clinic in Jacksonville, will create and direct the UF College of Medicine's new Center for Translational Research in Neurodegenerative Disease. He will lead an effort to develop treatments and diagnostics for Alzheimer's disease, dementias, Parkinson's disease and other neurodegenerative diseases, said Michael Good, interim dean of the college. "Dementia impacts our lives with such devastation, and it is estimated that it will touch nearly a half a million patients and their families in Florida alone in the coming year," Good said. "Dr. Golde's recruitment to UF strengthens our team with one of the brightest minds working in this field. He and we are determined to beat this foe."

JACKSONVILLE

RUI P. FERNANDES, M.D., has been named chief of head and neck surgery, a new section in the division of oral and maxillofacial surgery. Fernandes joined the UF faculty in 2005. He also serves as program director of the oral and maxillofacial residency program and director of the microvascular surgery fellowship.



Rui P. Fernandes

COLLEGE OF NURSING

DEE WILLIAMS, Ph.D., R.N., an associate professor of nursing, executive associate dean and associate dean for clinical affairs within the college, was honored for excellence in community nursing by the Florida Nurses Association as a part of their Centennial Great 100 Nurses. The Great 100 Nurses were nominated by their peers and selected as representing excellence in diverse areas of nursing practice.



Dee Williams

PUBLIC HEALTH AND HEALTH PROFESSIONS

LATARSHA CHISHOLM, a student in the health services research Ph.D. program, received a dissertation grant from the National Institutes of Health National Center on Minority Health and Health Disparities. Her research will assess potential causes of racial disparities in nursing home care. She is also studying the association of market and organizational characteristics with nursing home segregation.



Latarsha Chisholm

JAMES W. HALL III, Ph.D., a clinical professor in the department of communicative disorders, recently assumed duties as chair of the Board of Governors of the American Board of Audiology. The American Board of Audiology is dedicated to enhancing audiologic services to the public by promoting universally recognized standards in professional practice. In his one-year tenure as chair, Hall will oversee the development of specialty certification in pediatric audiology and a national examination for audiologists.



James W. Hall III



PHHP names employee of the year

Danielle Sevier has been named the College of Public Health and Health Professions' 2009 Employee of the Year. She was recognized at the college's annual employee recognition dinner in October. Sevier, the coordinator of administrative services in the department of physical therapy, was honored for her efficiency, organizational skills, professionalism and leadership. She is known in the department for her creative problem solving and calm demeanor in stressful situations. "Danielle is always quick on her feet with sensible reactions in all the circumstances I've seen her," said one nominator. Sevier was also recognized for her positive attitude and the depth of her knowledge and experience. "Danielle always has a smile and is an excellent ambassador for the department," a nominator said. "She is a key player in making our staff the best in the university."



A friend in the library

By Kim Libby

The staff of the HSC Library is missing its spark, as staff and students mourn the loss of Gloria Mae London, 56. London, a senior librarian technical assistant at the library for 17 years, passed away Oct. 29. She was in charge of billing patrons for fines and working with customers and is remembered as always being happy and cheerful. She also managed half of the fiscal department for access services, along with technical assistant Kathleen Spinks.

"She was just a wonderful person, she could light up anyone's day," Spinks said.

Spinks and London became close friends after sharing a small office, which they lovingly dubbed "the closet," for 13 years.

"She was always showing me something new, saying, 'Hey, Kath, look at this or that.'"

London was considered the motherly figure around the office, said Wallace Barrett, director of circulation. She was close with students and others who visited the library. One student burst into tears in the cafeteria upon hearing of her

passing, senior secretary Lori Eubanks said.

"She had a great sense of humor," Spinks said. "It didn't matter who you were, she could always joke around with you."

A former minister, London also was known for her strong belief in God and held services at her house on Sundays for family and friends. Last year, she unveiled her hidden talent of singing, belting out a gospel song at the library's holiday party. She had planned on singing a George Benson song this year, Barrett said.

London will be missed for her loving encouragement and uplifting spirit, her colleagues say. According to Spinks, she never had a bad word to say about anyone and had great respect for others.

"She was a true believer in God, and she showed it in every way possible," Spinks said. "I think she's where she wants to be now." **P**

3 Third career's a charm



PHOTO BY SARAH KEWEL

GAYLE WHEELER

By Kim Libby

When Gayle Wheeler was a young girl, someone told her the most interesting people never held the same job their whole lives. Now at age 56, she has set out to be anything but boring.

With her enrollment in UF's accelerated B.S.N. program, Wheeler is now working on career No. 3. The program currently enrolls a class of about 55 students who earn five semester's worth of classes in a one-year period.

Long before she ever decided to enter nursing school, Wheeler received undergraduate degrees in German and Russian and taught language at the secondary level for four years, even teaching abroad for a year in Germany. But when her husband, Bruce, who is now a UF professor of biomedical engineering, made a career switch to the Midwest, teaching jobs in Russian and German were not easy to find.

"People only wanted to hire French and Spanish teachers in that area; Russian and German aren't so common," she said. "I wasn't about to sit around and wait for a job opening. That's not me."

She went back to school, earned her M.B.A. and spent the next 23 years in business administration, serving as vice president of finance for an Illinois company that publishes

books and information on sports health and fitness. Although she was intrigued by what the company produced, her job on the business side of the group kept her curiosity at bay.

However, she still maintained an active lifestyle, joining an adult co-ed soccer league as opposed to picking up the knitting needles. It wasn't until a broken foot slowed her down that she had the time to delve into reading the company's books thoroughly.

"The next thing I knew I was enrolled in a few evening nutrition classes here and there," she said. "Then, I realized I wanted to get back to helping and working with people, and we moved to Florida where I transitioned to nursing."

Although she still has rotations in labor and delivery and pediatrics to complete in the spring, Wheeler is most excited for her rotation in community health. She said she wants to focus her career on educating people about preventive lifestyles so that illnesses such as heart disease, obesity and diabetes can be avoided.

Considering her family's accomplishments, Wheeler's new career choice seems fitting. Her daughter, Julie, 25, is a second-year veterinary medicine student at the University of Tennessee, while her other daughter, Jean, 27 is a graduate of the University of Illinois in material sciences and engineering. Even though it hasn't been easy to switch from one course a night to a full-blown semester of classes, she credits her family's support for her motivation.

She also said she serves as the "mother hen" to most of her classmates.

"Everyone knows I usually have cash instead of just plastic, especially when it comes to paying for mailbox rentals," she said. "I'm a lot older than everyone else, people definitely know my name."

Wheeler said she encourages her classmates to learn by doing, rather than looking at their first job out of college as what they'll be doing forever. People need to examine themselves and what they want out of a job, as well as pursue passions and think of life as a journey, she said.

For now, Wheeler is enjoying her studies, hard work and classes. She even got excited when hearing about the College of Nursing formal dance.

"It's like the high school prom, so I'll definitely be dragging my husband along," she joked prior to the event, which was held Nov. 20. "But, I'm behind; I haven't even decided what to wear yet." **P**

SEE YA!

T.L. Thomas, a cook for Shands at UF Food and Nutrition Services, carves turkey to serve to hospital patients on Thanksgiving.



PHOTO BY SARAH KIEWEL



PHOTO BY SARAH KIEWEL

College of Medicine staff member Jim Mullins helps decorate a Christmas tree near the Founder's Gallery. Staff members from the Office of the Senior Vice President for Health Affairs put up the tree each year.



PHOTO BY SARAH KIEWEL

Sarah Kiewel, the photo editor for The POST, recently took a trip to Iraqi Kurdistan to conduct a workshop for Kurdish journalists.

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