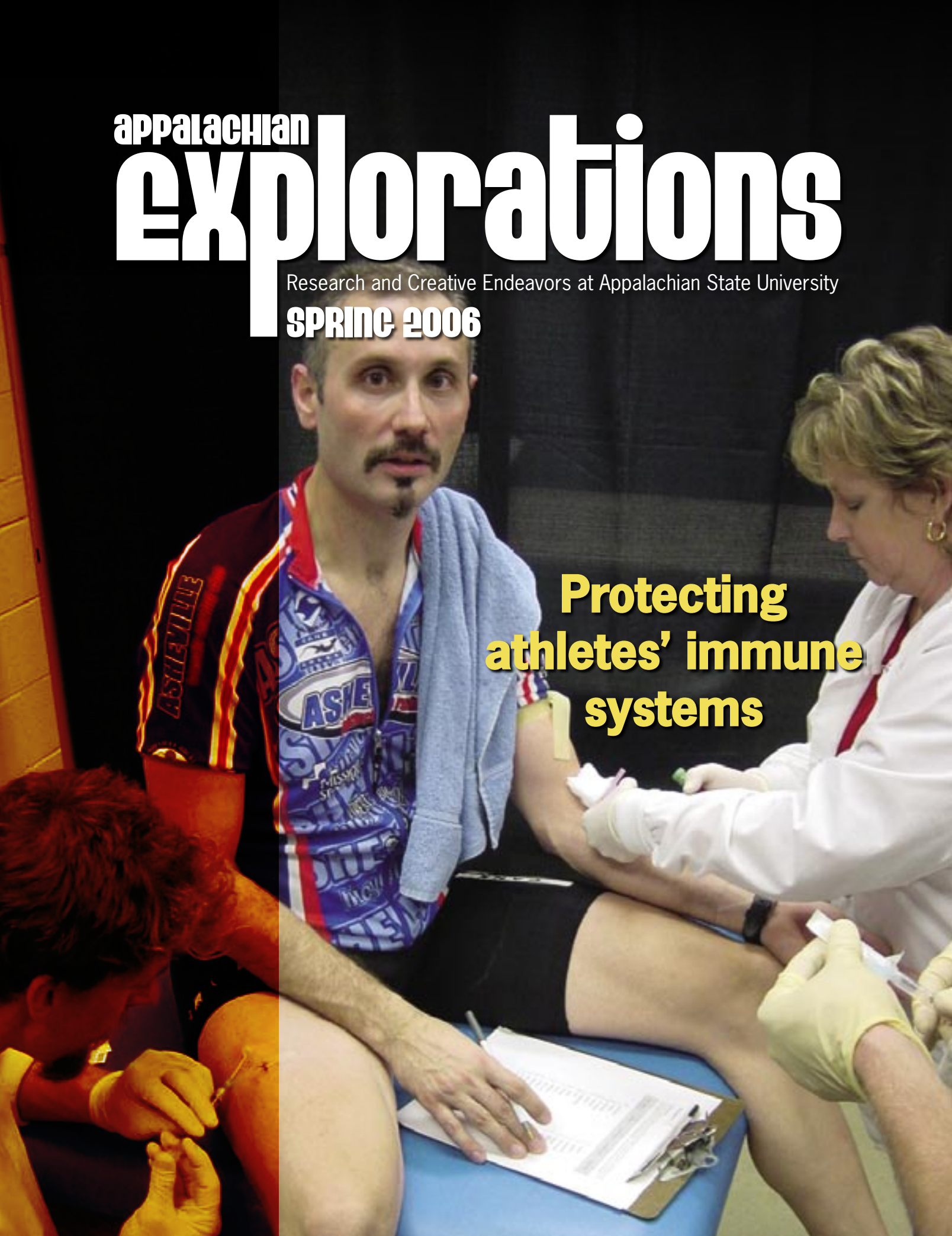
appalachian explorations

Research and Creative Endeavors at Appalachian State University

SPRING 2006



Protecting athletes' immune systems

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vol. 2 no. 1 SPRING 2006

Comments from the Provost

Some have said that universities are the engines behind regional and statewide growth. We believe that to be true. Not only do we educate the next generation, we add new knowledge and provide much-needed expertise and services to today's economy. As you look across our great university, you will see faculty and students in the fine arts, humanities, social sciences and natural sciences actively engaged in scholarship and the creation of new knowledge. This is essential if we are to be successful in our mission.

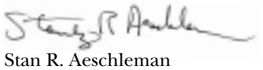
Appalachian State University is one of the nation's premier comprehensive universities. As such, we take great pride in our ability to successfully integrate our core missions of teaching, research and service. This success is the result of several factors. Among them are (1) an outstanding faculty who are knowledgeable in their fields, (2) a recognition of the opportunities for and benefits of interdisciplinary and inter-institutional collaboration, (3) a recognition of the importance of outreach; using our collective knowledge and expertise to benefit the citizens of North Carolina, and (4) a pool of quality undergraduate and graduate students who are eager to learn.

None of this could have been accomplished without adequate funding from government and other sources. Over the last two years, we have seen significant increases in submitted requests for research funding and dollars that are awarded. In fact, as of now, we are approximately 25 percent ahead of last year in both submissions and awards.

Take a moment to read about the important work being done by our faculty. In this issue of Explorations, you will read about exercise and immune function, improving safety and efficiency in the workplace, and experimental economics. Not only are these valuable scholarly works, but the research by these Appalachian State University faculty members contributes to the betterment of our citizenry.

Appalachian State University looks forward to serving you.

Sincerely,



Stan R. Aeschleman
Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor

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www.graduate.appstate.edu/rsp

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Cover Photo: Appalachian State University researchers Chuck Dumke and Rosemary Kaveh prepare cyclist Paul Christopher for a muscle biopsy and blood tests in a study examining the influence of Gatorade, a carbohydrate sports drink, on athletes during heavy exercise.

David Nieman in his lab within the Department of Health, Leisure and Exercise Science.

Exercise and the Immune System

How one marathoner's colds became the impetus for internationally recognized research that improves others' health

By Jane Nicholson '95 MA

David C. Nieman used to run marathons until his own research proved the practice could be unhealthy.

As a long-distance runner, Nieman often became sick with cold or flu-like symptoms after competing. Other runners expressed similar complaints. So when he read a research article disputing negative effects on the immune system following extreme exercise, he decided to find out for himself.

And so began a research career of more than 20 years studying the effects of exercise on the immune system.

Nieman is a professor in Appalachian's Department of Health, Leisure and Exercise Science. He has more than 200 peer-reviewed publications in journals and books, 75 articles in health/fitness magazines, and is the author of nine books. His body of research has been derived, in part, from his own observations as an athlete.

Some might call it a preoccupation. But, his work really is a lifelong devotion to improving the health of others.

Early beginnings

Nieman's interest in diet and exercise began as a teenager. From ages 16 to 26, he was a member of an acrobatic gymnastics team that performed across the United States, Canada and South Africa. "That whole experience of being a gymnast really keyed my interest in health and exercise," he said. "Getting good sleep, eating well and maintaining a training regimen all had an impact on how I performed."

Nieman's interest in exercise further developed at Pacific Union College in California's Napa Valley where he majored in physical education. He continued to perform as an acrobatic gymnast and also coached the traveling team from 1971-77. "When you coach young people, you see how rest, good diet and physical condition are all related," he said.

With a college diploma in hand, Nieman returned to South Africa to teach physical education to elementary and high school students, but he found that he didn't enjoy "helping people learn how to hold a tennis racket or shoot a basketball," he said. "I wanted more of a connection with health."

After a year, Nieman returned to the United States and enrolled in the master of public health program at Loma Linda University.

After earning a master's degree in public health, he taught health for four years at Pacific Union College in the Napa Valley. Nieman loved teaching college students at his alma mater, but to make college teaching a career, Nieman knew he needed a doctoral degree.

It was during his time in Loma Linda's doctoral program in public health that his career path began to jell. Nieman was busy writing, researching and managing the university's fitness lab. "I really started liking everything to do with exercise and health," he said.

After he earned his doctorate in public health in 1984, Loma Linda's School

continued on next page

Exercise and the Immune System

In 1998 as Nieman's graduate assistant, Melanie Austin '97 '99, far right, and other students helped cyclist Lance Armstrong prepare for his post-cancer comeback, among other research opportunities. Students play an important role in research at Appalachian.

of Public Health hired Nieman to run its human performance lab and teach health, exercise and nutrition courses. "In that same year, I read an article in the Journal of the American Medical Association that claimed little evidence of any effect of exercise on the immune system, and very little data to support claims that heavy exertion would cause immune suppression and more sickness."

Nieman, who had been running marathons since 1976, knew from personal experience that the article's author was on the wrong track. "If I hadn't been a marathon runner at the time, I wouldn't have probably thought much about the article. But I knew there was a connection because of my experiences and the experiences of other runners," he said. "Common lore among the runners was that during regular training they felt protected against colds and sore throat, but when they ran a marathon, they felt they had a higher risk and were more prone to sickness."

Because of the article's claims, Nieman focused his research on exercise and its effects on immune system.

Building a team to solve the puzzle

Nieman's first major research into the effects of exercise on the immune system came in the summer of 1987 at the Los Angeles Marathon. Instead of competing, Nieman and a research team were on the sidelines surveying 2,300 runners before and after the race. "It's still the largest epidemiologic study ever conducted," he said. The research showed that the odds of getting sick after the race were six times greater than normal.

The next step was showing what physiological changes occurred to the immune system.

After arriving at Appalachian in 1990, Nieman continued his collaboration with Sandra Nehlsen-Cannarella, chief immunologist at Loma Linda University, and enlisted numerous colleagues in other departments at Appalachian to assist in his research.

One constant over the past 16 years has been Dru A. Henson, professor and assistant chair in the Department of Biology. With a specialty in immunology, Henson measures immune cell activity as well as changes to inflammatory markers as a result of extreme exercise.

Henson has seen a variety of benefits to being part of a cross-disciplinary research team.

"It removes perceived barriers across the academic disciplines," she said. "Clearly, the impact of exercise and physical stress on the immune system is an interesting and credible question. The research team represents a variety of specialties that are critical in looking at the different facets of immune function, physical performance and fitness. Everyone has a significant role in making these projects successful. Dr. Nieman has done a remarkable job in building and maintaining such a strong collaborative team."

Important components of the team are undergraduate and graduate students who have assisted in a range of studies. "When you have a strong team conducting research, it benefits students," Henson said. "They have the opportunity to observe and participate in significant research that is nationally recognized."

One of those who benefited from her faculty members' research is exercise science graduate **Melanie Austin '97 '99**, who now manages Appalachian's Human Performance Lab in the Holmes Convocation Center. Other students have gone on to earn a Ph.D. in immunology and other disciplines and now teach at universities across the country.

Nieman echoes Henson's comments. "Modern research today is being conducted by teams or institutions working together," he said. "Collaborative teams are becoming essential to producing data that will be published in the top academic journals and attract grants."

Nieman and his fellow Appalachian faculty began studying ultra-athletes in the lab or in the field at races such as the Iron Triathlon, the Western States 100-mile race, and the Charlotte Observer Marathon. They have even conducted research on the U.S. Women's rowing team at the ARCO Olympic Training Center in California.

Through a series of tests of blood, saliva and muscle tissue, the team documented the changes occurring to stress hormones and to cytokine and leukocyte cell counts in athletes during heavy exercise, among other measures. "We have shown repeatedly that the immune system does suffer suppression during heavy exertion bouts," Nieman said.

But even with this knowledge, athletes said they were going to compete regardless of the health outcomes.

This spurred a new research angle: "Is there something we can do, as athletes, to protect our immune systems," Nieman asked.

Solving that puzzle has been the primary focus of Nieman's research for the past 10 years. Nieman and his research team at Appalachian have looked at the effects of carbohydrate sports drinks, large doses of vitamins C and E, and ingestion of non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs), like ibuprofen or Advil. They have found that mega doses of NSAIDS and the vitamins actually harm the immune system, while carbohydrate sports drinks reduce some of the negative inflammatory effects.

Exercise benefits for the nonathlete

While Nieman's recent research has focused on extreme athletes, he also is known for research on the benefits of exercise to the average person.

"People who didn't exercise for three to four hours at a time wanted to know about the benefits of moderate exercise," Nieman said. "And, runners who were training 30-35 miles a week kept telling me they had lower infection rates than other people."

> **"Of all the preventive measures for the common cold, regular exercise has emerged as one of the strongest."**
> – David Nieman

That prompted a series of studies in which people walked 45 minutes a day for five days over a 12-week period. When compared to a group that was sedentary, the walkers had half the days of sickness than nonwalkers. More recent research showed the favorable changes occurring to the immune system as a result of the daily walks.

"Of all the preventive measures for the common cold, regular exercise has emerged as one of the strongest," he said.

Nieman says his studies showing the health benefit of walking have been the most rewarding.

"The fact that we were able to show this huge public health benefit to walking was the key to keeping me going with this line of research," he said. "When you look at percentages of Americans, nearly everybody can walk and gain benefit to their immune system. When it comes to showing that heavy exertion causes immune suppression and that here is something you can take to counter that, that's applicable to the war fighter or athlete who may represent 5 percent of the population."

But research costs money, whether it's studying the effects of daily walks or supplements for the extreme athlete or soldier. "I find more satisfaction in the walking research than the athletic research, but most of the money is in the spectrum that we are in right now, which is athletes and war fighters," Nieman said.

Appalachian and the U.S. Army

Impressed with his research on extreme athletes, the U.S. Army contacted Nieman about researching a substance that might help maintain soldiers' immune systems.

The Army and its Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) awarded Nieman $1.1 million for a two-year study of the effects of quercetin, a naturally occurring substance found in red grapes, red onions and other fruits and vegetables. The findings may lead to strategies that will help maintain soldiers' immune systems when they are on long missions without sleep or food.

Like his other studies, the DARPA project will involve an interdisciplinary team of researchers with assistance from graduate and undergraduate students.

The team is comprised of faculty from the academic areas of health promotion, exercise science, nutrition, biology and psychology.

Nieman also expects to receive a $90,000 grant from the Gatorade Sports Science Institute to study beta glucan, a substance in the cell wall of oats that also may help boost the immune systems of athletes.

"This is one of the most exciting areas of research – that there are actually substances within the plant kingdom that may have benefits to the immune system to people who are under a lot of physical stress. That's what we are chasing right now," Nieman said. AE

David C. Nieman can be reached at niemandc@appstate.edu or (828) 262-6318. See related link: www.hles.appstate.edu.

Teaching Appalachian students continues to be one of Nieman's passions.

Making industry safer and more productive

By William Purcell '94

Eighty percent of American employees say they enjoy their work more when they have the right tools to do the job. This psychologist's research helps workers *and* their employers have a better day.

The little things get Timothy Ludwig out of bed every morning: stopping a 40-ton tractor trailer from wrecking, keeping a warehouse worker safe from a falling pallet of Cheerios and adding a million or two dollars to the bottom line of major corporations.

Describing Ludwig as a problem solver is too simple. An industrial and organizational psychologist by title, Ludwig is a sleuth supported by an investigative team of Appalachian State University students.

Top, an employee zips a pallet jack through the nearly million-square-foot warehouse of MDI, the largest food distributor in the Southeast. Above, a worker wears a computerized headset to more accurately fill client orders from MDI's inventory. MDI moves 65 million cases of food and food-related products a year.

He tackles the problems of corporations like Pep Boys, Radio Shack, Lowes Foods and food distributors MDI and Institution Food House (IFH).

Whether he and his students help truckers make more on-time deliveries, reduce the number of packing errors in a warehouse or keep pizza delivery drivers safe, the work all boils down to a question Ludwig first pondered as an undergraduate student at Lenoir-Rhyne College.

"Why does anyone get out of bed in the morning?" Ludwig said.

"That is the question that made me choose psychology as a career. I've been trying to answer that question ever since."

A complex process

Most people get out of bed in the morning to go to work. For a researcher who studies the behavior of people in the workplace, finding out what motivates workers to drive safely or perform well is a complex process.

Ten years ago, Ludwig sat with his students in parking lots watching pizza delivery drivers to monitor their safety habits.

"It wasn't high tech back then," said Ludwig, a professor in Appalachian's Department of Psychology since 1994. "We had clipboards, pens and crude poster board charts made with magic markers that we took into meetings."

Today, the theoretical concepts remain the same, but the process is all about technology.

Ludwig and his students receive thousands of computerized records from billion-dollar companies. They crunch numbers, analyze data and make professional presentations in company boardrooms – all toward helping integrate technology into the workplace to increase safety and productivity.

At Merchants Distributors Inc. (MDI), a wholesale grocery distributor based in Hickory, Ludwig and his students have helped cut late deliveries, streamline the customer complaint process and reduce employee errors in the warehouse by nearly 90 percent.

"MDI is a $1.5 billion company with nearly one million square feet of warehouse space, and they move more than 65 million cases of food and food-related products in and out of there a year," Ludwig said.

"The company experienced four errors per 1,000 cases. We worked with them as they implemented a new system for picking products in the warehouse, and now the error rate is one per 4,000 cases."

The reduced error rate saves the company a lot of money, he said.

On the warehouse floor

Ludwig and undergraduate Sam Berger worked with MDI as the company implemented a $1 million computerized, voice-directed headphone system called Vocollect®.

To fill orders, workers at MDI used to carry around a long stream of paper detailing what items to select and where to find them in the warehouse.

"If a worker picked Fruit Loops instead of Wheaties, that cost MDI a good bit of money in lost time and reimbursement to the grocery store," Ludwig said.

The new Vocollect® system eliminates paper and uses voice prompts over a headset, connected to a computer server via radio frequency, to tell the worker exactly where to locate the correct product.

But, MDI still wanted to ensure reduced errors. So, they created a system of eye-level numbers on each product bin to compliment the voice system. The worker states the number into the headset and, if he or she is in the right place, gets confirmation. If they are in the wrong place, they get the immediate feedback "incorrect slot."

The system is so reliable and efficient that MDI gives grocery stores automatic credit for one error per 5,000 cases, eliminating the need for time-consuming inspections of shipments and costly reimbursements for errors.

Other projects with MDI included docking warehouse workers' pay $1 for each error they make unless they met a preset goal, and decreasing late deliveries by telling truckers how they compare to their peers.

One of Ludwig's graduate classes worked with MDI to manage an issue involving customer complaints and suggestions.

Making industry safer and more productive


Timothy Ludwig

"A customer could call sales, talk to a trucker or call the warehouse floor with a complaint or suggestion," Ludwig said. "Calls were falling through the cracks."

Ludwig and his students collected data, analyzed the problem and found a solution. The students created a Web page and phone log to centralize the complaints and suggestions no matter who took the call.

Dana Rice '03 MA worked on the customer complaint project as a graduate student.

"I loved Dr. Ludwig's teaching style," said Rice, who went on to an internship with MDI and now works in MDI's Human Resource Department. "He puts you in real-world situations and doesn't give you cookbook instructions. He sets a high expectation and lets the students solve the problem. That is real life, and it prepared me for work after college."

Ludwig admits to purposefully putting his students in the line of fire.

"It is intimidating for students to walk into a conference room with floor workers, supervisors and executives," Ludwig said. "It gets them out of their comfort zone."

Next steps

For their next project, Ludwig and his students hope to help MDI improve safety issues through the Vocollect® system.

On-the-job accidents cost industries billions in lost time and insurance premiums, so Ludwig wants to combine Vocollect® with a GPS system to prompt workers to slow down in high traffic areas, remind them to wear back support and watch for pedestrians at crossings inside the warehouse.

He also plans to work with MDI truckers to reduce the need for hard braking, which is a primary indicator of wrecks and near misses. MDI trucks have been outfitted with on-board computers that monitor numerous safety issues such as speed and hard braking. Ludwig has research planned to use the touch screen monitors in the truckers' cab to deliver real-time prompts and feedback about their driving safety, give routing info, and offer warnings in accident prone areas.

Ludwig hopes to work with the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health to help make truck drivers safer on the roads.

MDI is part of the larger company Alex Lee Inc. Ludwig partners with Alex Lee's other units: Lowes Foods and IFH.

"Alex Lee teaming with us is a real win-win relationship," Ludwig said. "They are opening up proprietary information and letting our students use their multi-million dollar facility.

"If what we suggest doesn't work, it could cost them millions."

But Ludwig's solutions have worked.

Though Alex Lee Inc. remains a primary partner for Ludwig's research, he is branching out to other regional and national chains.

Ludwig, who is also an editor for the Journal of Organizational Behavior Management that publishes behavior change research, partners with Texas researcher Dave Goomis to help automotive retailer Pep Boys. They are writing a book about human performance technology, such as the Vocollect® system used by MDI, and a hand-held scanner system used by Pep Boys.

Pep Boys's warehouse workers find products with a hand-held scanner that confirms if the right product is picked. Ludwig and Goomas want to add a goal system so that the scanner tells employees how many boxes they will need to pick in a time frame to meet their goal.

"The power of immediate feedback is the great thing about this technology," Ludwig said. "And employees want this technology."

He said that, in general, 80 percent of American employees say they enjoy work more when they have the right tools to do the job.

He said immediate feedback technology can work in any industry.

"I may even start research to help teen drivers be safer on the roads," Ludwig said. "With two kids of my own rapidly approaching driving age, that's a real reason to get out of bed each morning." AE

Tim Ludwig can be reached at ludwigtd@appstate.edu or (828) 262-2712. See graduate program link: www1.appstate.edu/~huelsman/iohrm.html

Experimental economics help predict our energy future

By William H. Purcell '94


Tanga McDaniel

Imagine energy companies competing for your electric bill.

One company offers lower rates, another boasts fewer outages while yet another touts the high percentage of green energy it delivers.

Consumer choice in utilities from electricity to natural gas may be closer than you think.

Appalachian State University economist Tanga McDaniel uses a mix of theory and laboratory experiments to analyze the energy industry. She believes consumer choice in the energy industry will be in all of our futures.

A handful of states have followed a world-wide trend to lessen regulation of energy, some with more success than others. California consumers, for example, have the benefits of a free market system, but they experienced blackouts in 2003.

Among her research questions, McDaniel wants to know if consumers will benefit from a free market system in the energy industry, if companies will invest in infrastructure to sustain the industry and what problems deregulation might mean for consumers.

"In the real world, testing deregulation would put millions, perhaps even billions of dollars at risk," said McDaniel, an assistant professor in the Walker College of Business's Department of Economics. "It makes financial sense to test these scenarios in the lab many times before unleashing a new market design on the entire United States."

McDaniel believes switching to a free market system would allow electric and natural gas rates to decrease as utility companies compete for customers.

She's still not sure whether nationwide deregulation is best for consumers, though.

"If the companies compete on quality, then there would be better customer service, fewer outages and more green energy available," she said. "However, if companies compete only on price, they could cut corners on quality – meaning more brownouts, blackouts and less environment-friendly energy sources.

The many changes facing the energy industry are perfect fodder for experimental economics. Some decisions must be made where data does not exist.

That's when experimental economists like McDaniel step in to design experiments in controlled environments to isolate effects and test hypotheses in areas where empirical evidence or economic theory are lacking.

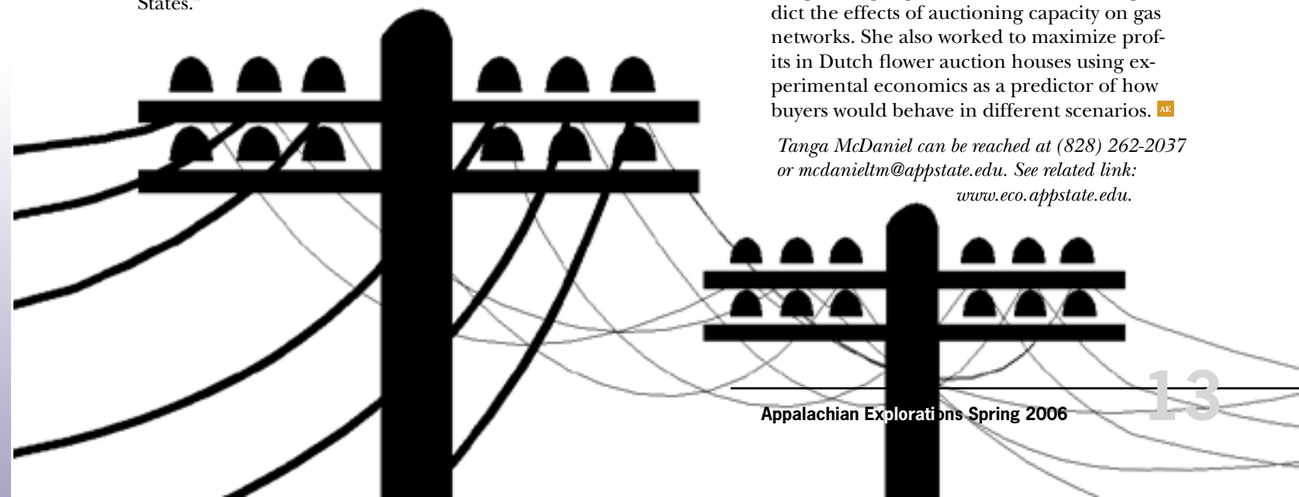
Economists from around the world came to Appalachian last April for a conference on experimental economics. Hosting the conference put Appalachian on the experimental economics map, said McDaniel, who helped organize the event.

She also has been instrumental in developing the department's modern experimental economics computer laboratory.

"We are using interactive lab experiments to complement traditional classroom lectures. It opens up a whole new avenue for learning," McDaniel said.

Before coming to Appalachian in 2003, McDaniel worked in Europe using experimental economics to predict the effects of auctioning capacity on gas networks. She also worked to maximize profits in Dutch flower auction houses using experimental economics as a predictor of how buyers would behave in different scenarios. AE

Tanga McDaniel can be reached at (828) 262-2037 or mcdanieltm@appstate.edu. See related link: www.eco.appstate.edu.



Professor makes history more interesting

Tim Silver wants to change the way historians write: Rather than penning dry textbooks, historians should write intriguing stories for the layperson.

"There is such a public interest in history right now with popularity of books, movies and the History Channel. Professional historians should be writing accessible pieces because the public interest is there for true stories that are told well," said Silver, an Appalachian history professor and award-winning author.

Silver points to Ken Burns' successful series on the Civil War and on jazz as models for making history accessible.

He takes the same approach to teaching. "Students come to us with an innate interest in history," Silver said. "It is our job not to kill it while they are here."

Silver practices what he preaches. To make history more accessible, he wove entries from his personal journal into his popular and award-winning book about Mount Mitchell. "Mount Mitchell and the Black Mountains: An Environmental History of the Highest Peaks in Eastern America" has been a hit with readers and his academic peers, too.

In 2003, it won the Ragan Old North State Book Award for the Best Work of Non-Fiction by a N.C. writer, and a Southern Environmental Law Center Phillp D. Reed Memorial Award.

The book continues to sell well three years later and leads Silver to a variety of speaking engagements, from rooms full of professional historians to anglers at Trout Unlimited meetings.

The tall, bearded professor looks and lives the part of an outdoorsman, something he discovered as an Appalachian undergraduate in the 1970s. The avid hiker and angler received a master's degree at Appalachian in 1979 and his Ph.D. at the College of William and Mary in 1985.

At William and Mary, Silver discovered environmental history, a subfield that looks at the relationship between people and nature.

His research led to his first book, which is still in print after 13 years. "A New Face on the Countryside" focused on how colonization changed the southern landscape and its people.

With his second book, he wanted to tell a big history of a small place. "I walked over every piece of land I wrote about," Silver said of Mount Mitchell. "We're not supposed to get emotionally involved as professional historians, but I couldn't write an honest history without exploring the real spirit of the place."

Part of that spirit is in Silver's blood; his family is from nearby Kona. The book covers Mount Mitchell's history from the ice age to present day.

Tim Silver, historian and lover of the outdoors, received acclaim for his book "Mount Mitchell and the Black Mountains: An Environmental History of the Highest Peaks in Eastern America."

Silver's third book is equally ambitious. He has started research on the Civil War and the environment, particularly how disease spread in animals and humans, how weather affected battles and how the war changed the demographics of the South.

Silver has taught in Appalachian's Department of History since 1984. ■

Playing video games may have positive effects

Psychology professor Mary Ballard has found that people who play video games can possess better multi-tasking and problem-solving skills, and may have sharper memories.

Mary Ballard

"A lot of attention has been given to the negative aspects of gaming, especially the negative effects of violent video games," said Ballard, who has taught in Appalachian's Department of Psychology since 1991. "For example, we have found that violent games increase hostility, aggression and physiological arousal. But, very little research exists on the benefits of playing video games. In a preliminary study, we found that there seem to be some positive effects as well."

In this initial research, Ballard found that people with a history of playing complex video games had better working memory (holding, manipulating and processing information at the same time) and sequential processing skills (performing steps in order). She and adjunct professor Bobby Hamby are now exploring these findings further with a larger, more complex study.

"Video games require doing things in a certain order, step-by-step," Ballad said. "It's like doing a complex math problem."

Juggling multiple tasks, absorbing information from multiple sources, and solving problems are skills that employers look for, according to Ballard.

But, a key to obtaining these benefits may be playing complex role-playing and three-dimensional video games like Metal Gear Solid™, and playing lots of them, Ballard found.

"Those with a longer history of playing complex games had more benefits," Ballard said.

In Metal Gear Solid™, a player has to retain memory of mission assignments, ammo and weapon stores, all while manipulating the controller to maneuver the shooter through changing terrain. The player must process all this information while taking stock of radar warning screens and inset maps, and choosing to harm or evade guards on the way to save the world from a nuclear holocaust.

Although an early study of video games showed improved hand and eye coordination in gamers, such benefits became overshadowed as the public grew concerned with video game violence.

Ballard wants to delve further into the positive effects. The military and some corporations use video games for employee training, but she acknowledges that most people use video games for entertainment.

"I would like the outcome of my research to be that video game manufacturers realize there are ways to program games to help people learn and improve themselves without all the blood, guts and gore," Ballard said. ■

William M. Hutchins has translated more than a dozen books from Arabic to English.

Hutchins brings Arabic lit to English readers

William M. Hutchins's bookshelves are lined with the works of Arabic poets, novelists and other writers. They also hold more than a dozen book-length works of Arabic literature that Hutchins has translated.

A professor in Appalachian's Department of Philosophy and Religion, Hutchins has been translating Arabic literature since the mid-1970s when he taught Arabic at the University of Ghana at Legon. What was supposed to be a translation project for his students turned into a 900-page translation of plays by an Egyptian playwright.

Among his subsequent projects, Hutchins was the lead translator of "The Cairo Trilogy" by Naguib Mahfouz, published by Doubleday in the 1990s.

In recognition of his work, the National Endowment for the Arts awarded him a $20,000 Literature Translation Fellowship, which will support one of his current projects: a translation of Ibrahim al-Koni's "The Seven Veils of Seth." It is the second novel by the 67-year-old author that Hutchins has translated. His translation of al-Koni's "Anubis: A Desert Novel" was released last April by the American University in Cairo Press.

Hutchins's translation of the novel "Dar al-Basha" by Tunisian Hassan Nasr will be released this year by Syracuse University Press. AUC Press has also scheduled a 2006 release of his translation of "Ten Again" by the late Egyptian author Ibrahim Abd al-Qadir al-Mazini.

Hutchins, who has taught at Appalachian since 1980, began learning Arabic in 1964 while teaching at a prep school in Lebanon.

Arabic is a complicated language, even for the native speaker, Hutchins said. "Arabic has an absolutely huge vocabulary. It's like Latin, Spanish and Italian all rolled together. There is a literary form of the language, and a form most people speak," he said.

Hutchins believes it's important to bring Arabic literature to the English-speaking world. His colleagues agree. "In a world where misunderstanding can promote hatred and understanding can promote peace, the work of the translator takes on ever greater significance," said Ozzie Ostwalt, chair of the Department of Philosophy and Religion. ■

“BlueGreen Oval,” 2003

“Wedge,” 2003

“The ordinary is quite extraordinary,” ceramist Lynn Duryea says of her art. Duryea, a nationally known studio artist for more than 20 years, joined Appalachian’s Department of Art in 2004. Among her recent works, “Wedge” was exhibited in the 2004 International Emerging Ceramic Artists Invitational Exhibition at FuLe International Ceramic Art Museum, Fuping, Xian, China and is now part of the museum’s permanent collection. “BlueGreen Oval” was included in a group show at Baltimore Clayworks in 2003.

Duryea’s ceramics have been represented in numerous publications including “The Best of Pottery” edited by Jonathan Fairbanks and Angela Fina, and “Discovery: Fifty Years of Craft and Transformation at Haystack,” edited by Carl Little. She received an Emerging Artist Award from the National Council on Education in the Ceramic Arts in 2004.

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