

Study focuses on autism, exercise

BY KELLY NOYES

Children at the Rich Center for the Study of Autism at YSU are in better shape than ever this semester, and they have Jennifer Pintar to thank.

Pintar, an associate professor of human performance and exercise science, and a group of YSU students are in the third year of developing an effective scale to measure the exercise intensity levels of children with autism.

"The results of this study will provide exercise professionals with important information regarding the regulation of exercise intensity among children with autism," said Pintar, who received a \$2,743 University Research Council Grant this year for the project.

"The scale, once validated, will be available to autistic centers around the world."

Autism is a complex developmental disability that usually appears during the first three years of life and affects normal functions of the brain, impacting social interaction and communication skills. It is the fastest growing development disability in the world.

"Children with autism are in need of quality exercise programs, which can positively impact their physical well-being as well as their behavior," Pintar said. "But, since many children with autism lack developed verbal communication skills, it is very difficult for them to express how intense their exercise regimens are."

Two years ago, Pintar and her students began looking for such alternatives. When the use of heart monitors failed, Pintar began developing a Ratings of Perceived Exertion scale designed specifically for children with autism.

The RPE scale is a validated, well-accepted and reliable method to measure the intensity of exercise. The scale measures how easy or difficult a certain activity is based on a scale of 6 to 20. Six, for instance, would be how you feel when sitting in a chair. Twenty, on the other hand, would be how you feel at the

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Michelle Brunner, above, a YSU exercise science major, and five-year-old Kameron Griggs, a student in the Rich Center for Autism, use a new scale to measure the exercise levels of children with autism. The scale is part of a research project by Jennifer Pintar, associate professor of human performance and exercise science. At left, Brunner exercises with five-year-old Joey Bondi as part of the research.



Utility savings gained under new energy plan

A program that allows YSU to implement state-of-the-art infrastructure improvements across campus and guarantees millions of dollars in energy cost savings won the approval of the YSU Board of Trustees.

The board authorized the YSU administration to enter into a contract with Johnson Controls Inc. to implement up to \$12 million in air conditioning, heating, lighting and other infrastructure improvements in the campus' approximately 40 buildings.

Johnson Controls, a global market leader in facilities management and control, guarantees the improvements will generate at least \$15 million in energy savings over the next decade.

If the savings fall short, Johnson Controls will pay the difference.

YSU will borrow money to finance the improvements and repay the loan with the guaranteed energy savings, said John Hyden, YSU executive director of facilities.

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President names seven members to new labor-management panel

YSU President David C. Sweet has formed a seven-member panel designed to improve labor-management relations and the collective bargaining process on campus.

The panel is chaired by Robert K. Herbert, YSU provost and vice president for academic affairs.

Other members are Eugenia Atkinson, executive director of the Youngstown Metropolitan Housing Authority and a member and former chair of the YSU

Board of Trustees from 1992 to 2003; Jim Graham, president of UAW Local 1112 and a YSU graduate; Atty. Dennis Haines, a partner in the law firm of Green, Haines, Sgambati Co., LPA., and a prominent labor lawyer in Youngstown; James Morrison, retired professor and former chair of psychology at YSU and the former chair of the YSU Academic Senate; Atty. John Pogue, a partner in the law firm of Harrington, Hoppe and Mitchell, Ltd., a current member and vice chair of the YSU

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Punching out...

Freshman Cherilyn Robbs of Hubbard and sophomore Austin Beachem of Portersville, Pa., joust on an inflatable mattress on the core of campus. The university has scheduled a variety of campus activities leading up homecoming on Oct. 22.

Byline

'It's YSU,' and international scholars loved it



By Salvatore Attardo
Professor, English

From June 13th to the 17th, 150 scholars from over 20 countries came to YSU for the 17th conference of International Society for Humor Studies. The yearly meetings are a tradition of the society. The conference was a big success, thanks to the colleagues, students and friends who helped, often unpaid and unbidden, in too many ways to list.

However, I am not writing to pat myself on the back, but rather to make two points: the first one, is that YSU is a fine institution that can and does support international scholarship; the second one is that we have an uphill battle to fight against stereotyping of our community in the media.

As I said, the conference was a success: everything went smoothly thanks to the splendid staff of Kilcawley Center (I'd like to thank publicly Mary Margaret Hovanes and K.J. Satrum), housing (thanks to Bill Sperlazza) and the bookstore staff, who held our book fair despite the ongoing renovation. I spent most of the conference down time listening to delegates from some of the biggest universities worldwide telling me what a great location Kilcawley was, how flawless the organization had been, what a lovely campus YSU has, and what great accommodations we had provided.

The conference attendees also raved about Youngstown. We had a tour of the city organized with the help of the Working Class Studies Center (thanks to John Russo and Sherry Linkon). Mill Creek Park was a hit (particularly with the Chinese delegates who walked there from campus). In fact, several participants suggested flat out that I should bring the conference back. (I am still thinking about that...).

Now to my second point: I was interviewed by several newspapers, including some foreign ones, about the conference. The subject is one that attracts the press, obviously. We are used to the oddball questions.

However, one asked by the Columbus Dispatch took me off guard. They wanted to know why we had chosen Youngstown for the conference. I politely pointed out that that was where I happened to live and work. The reporter insisted: how had the foreign delegates reacted to the news they would have to come to Youngstown? That's when I finally understood that the reporter was asking me if people were not scared of coming to a town of such ill repute. I was able to proudly report that the delegates loved it.

When the media reflect ugly and old stereotypes about our community, we all suffer. This includes, unfortunately, our own *Vindicator* (witness Mr. De Souza's comments about the quality of the faculty at YSU, after the recent strike).

Each conference we hold, each paper we publish, each class we teach, each life we change for the better is a step forward. There's an old expression which I have heard occasionally on campus: "It's just YSU." I suggest changing it to "It's YSU." It's more accurate. ■

Campus News Roundup

ERIP offered to OPERS employees

The Board of Trustees approved an early retirement incentive program for all YSU employees who contribute to the Ohio Public Employees Retirement System.

The plan calls for the purchase of up to two years of retirement service credit. In all, an estimated 185 employees are eligible, including 131 classified employees and 54 APAS/PA exempt. Of the 185, an estimated 132 are eligible

to retire as of March 2006.

More information about the details of the plan will be available from the Office of Human Resources.

The plan was approved at the board's Oct. 4 meeting. For a summary of other actions at the meeting, visit "For the Record..." on the YSU Web site at <http://www.ysu.edu/trustees/trustees.shtml>. ■



Hispanic heritage...

About 150 people attended the Hispanic Heritage Conference in Kilcawley Center on Oct. 7, featuring a speech by Denise Rodriguez-Lopez, deputy director for the White House Initiative on Excellence for Hispanic Americans. The conference also included area Hispanic school children displaying flags from 22 countries. Among the flag-bearers were, from the left, Dennis Viera and Jason Berrios of East Middle School, Christine Andujar of Woodrow Wilson High School, and Ariel Rivera of East High School..

Students set record at MathFest

A group of seven YSU math students crunched and calculated their way to winning an unprecedented five awards at MathFest 2005 in Albuquerque, N.M.

YSU is the first institution ever to receive five awards at a single MathFest competition, which is conducted at the national annual meeting of the Mathematical Association of America and the national mathematics honor society, Pi Mu Epsilon.

Winning awards went to students Nicole Casacchia of Columbiana, David Gohlke of Youngstown, Joseph Ko-

lenick of Austintown, David Martin of Warren and Maria Salcedo of Boardman. Thomas Cochran of Pulaski, Pa. and Ted Stadnick of Austintown also made presentations. Angela Spalsbury and George Yates, YSU assistant professors of mathematics and statistics, were advisors.

"It is difficult for me to describe how impressed the members of the audience were with the number of awarded presentations given by the YSU students," said Doug Faires, a professor emeritus of mathematics and statistics and also a faculty advisor. ■

YSU United Way sets \$50,000 goal

The 2005-06 United Way campaign at YSU runs through Oct. 31 with the goal of raising \$50,000.

Donation information was distributed to all faculty and staff across campus on Oct. 12, including forms allowing payroll deductions for the campaign. For the first time, employees may elect continuous giving, eliminating the need to complete a pledge form after this year.

Employees making a minimum donation of \$2 a week – or \$104 a year – will be automatically entered into a drawing to win a two-year lease on a 2006 Chevrolet Cobalt.

"While the possibility of winning a lease on the Cobalt is exciting, even more exciting is the opportunity to reach out to those in need," said Pat Shively, associate director of the YSU Center for Student Progress and the YSU United Way campaign coordinator.

The Youngstown/Mahoning Valley United Way provides funds to more than 70 programs operated by 30

agencies throughout the region, including the American Red Cross, Goodwill Industries, Help Hotline, Millcreek Children's Center, Salvation Army, Second Harvest Foodbank, YMCA, YWCA and the Youngstown Area Urban League.

Shively noted that for every dollar donated, 99 cents stays in Mahoning County, Girard, Hubbard and Liberty. One of every four people in these areas is helped through United Way. "That is truly an impressive ratio," she said.

The YSU campaign is led by a 33-member steering committee, including a planning committee consisting of Shively; Jane Reid, professor of marketing; Jane Kestner, associate dean in the College of Arts and Sciences; Betty Jo Licata, dean of the Williamson College of Business Administration; and Gwen Latessa, administrative assistant in the Division of Student Affairs.

For more information, call Shively at 330-941-3197 or visit www.ymvunitedway.org. ■

Videos explore Extreme Engineering

The Rayen College of Engineering and Technology's Fall 2005 video series continues on Friday, Oct. 28 in the Schwebel Auditorium of Moser Hall.

The series, launched three years ago, features videos that explore interesting topics in engineering. The theme of this semester's series is "Extreme Engineering - from the Past to the Present."

The videos are shown from 1 to 2 p.m. on the following schedule: Oct. 28, "Extreme Engineering: City in a Pyramid"; Nov. 18, "Extreme Engineering: Building Hong Kong's Airport"; Dec. 2, "Extreme Engineering: Bridging the Bering Straits."

For more information, call 330-941-3009. ■

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Faculty/Staff

Grants

The following faculty members have received University Research Council Grants for 2005:

Joan Boyd, professor, Health Professions, \$2,500 for "Evaluation of Quantitative Ultrasound and Comparison of Dual X-Ray Absorptiometry Measurements of Men and Women with Fractures."

Eleanor Congdon, assistant professor, History, \$4,600 for "The Letter Collections of Marco Bembo and Ambrogio Malipiero 1476-1486: Historical Context for Bembo's Letters."

Qi Jiang, associate professor and **Robert Weaver**, professor, both of Sociology and Anthropology, \$495 for "An Assessment of Student Learning in a Classroom Setting: Student Norms and Class Participation."

Johanna Krontiris-Litowitz, professor, Biological Sciences, \$5,000 for "Gender-Based Differences in the Development and Maintenance of Cardiac Hypertrophy."

Alina Lazar, assistant professor, Computer Science and Information, \$1,400 for "Income Prediction Using Rule Induction and Applied to Government Data."

Nancy Mosca, professor, Nursing, \$2,500 for "School Nurse Clinic Environments: Physical Structure and Equipment Needs for a Safe and Effective Facility."

Presentations

Tom Diggins, assistant professor, Biological Sciences, presented the paper "Primary Succession of Riparian Broadleaf Woodlands in the Zoar Valley Canyon, New York" at a joint meeting of the Ecological Society of America and the International Association for Ecology, in Montreal, Canada. Four YSU students, **Erin Pfeil**, **Nikki Casacchia**, **William Fairchild**, and **Joseph Kolenick**, served as co-authors.

Professional Activities

Patrick Durrell, assistant professor, Physics and Astronomy, was recently awarded, along with a research team of which he is part, 14 orbits of observing time on

the Hubble Space Telescope for the project "The Formation History of the M81 Spheroid" in April 2005.

Gunapala Edirisooriya, professor, Department of Educational Administration, Research, and Foundations, chaired the expert-panel discussion session, "Survey Design from Beginning to End: An Opportunity for Feedback from Experts," at the American Educational Research Association's 2005 meeting in Montreal, Canada.

Rangamohan V. Eunni, assistant professor, Management, co-presented the paper "Macroeconomic Reformation or Entrepreneurial Transformation? Privatization Experiences in Latin America and Eastern Europe" at the annual meeting of the Academy of International Business in Quebec City, Canada.

Gabriel Palmer-Fernandez, professor, Philosophy and Religious Studies, and director, James Dale Ethics Center, presented a four-part lecture series on "Ethical Issues of the Day - Medicine, Technology, and War" at the First Presbyterian Church in Sharon, Pa. and gave the keynote address "On the Fundamental Duty of Self-Care" at the Ursuline Center in Canfield.

Lawrence W. Hugenberg, professor, and **Barbara S. Hugenberg**, part-time instructor, both Communication and Theater, edited the 9th volume of Teaching Ideas for the Basic Communication Course.

Publications

Joanne Gallagher, coordinator, Career & Counseling Services, had the article "Relocate to Launch Your Teaching Career" published in the 2006 Edition of the Job Search Handbook for Educators.

William Greenway, professor, English, had the poem "The Computer Tries to Enter Heaven" in the Spring/Summer 2005 issue of *Comstock Review*.

Ronald P. Volpe, professor, Finance, recently co-published "Financial Literacy, Education, and Services In The Workplace" in *B>Quest (Business Quest)*. ■

Cardiac kids...

Students work up a sweat at the new Andrews Student Recreation and Wellness Center. The center recorded nearly 14,000 student visits during the first two weeks of operations, with the majority of visits from freshmen. From the left are Sara Lyons of Meadville, Pa., Jenna Hamrock of Poland and Jackie Williams of Austintown.



YSU prof is 'chief' among Latin readers

BY KAREN SCHUBERT



John Sarkissian

It's not all Greek to him. Sometimes it's Latin.

John Sarkissian, professor and chair of YSU's Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures, this past summer finished his second year as chief

reader supervising the scoring of the national Advanced Placement exam in Latin.

Sarkissian spent 13 days at the College of New Jersey, near Trenton, overseeing a panel of about 60 high school and college Latin teachers from around the country.

The panel read and scored exams taken by about 7,500 high school students.

"It's still one of the smaller AP exams, but the growth has been remarkable," said Sarkissian, who is in his 14th year as a reader for the test.

The Advanced Placement Program, started 50 years ago, is a partnership between secondary schools and colleges and universities, providing high school students the opportunity to take college-level courses at their home high schools.

For each of the 34 AP courses, in subjects ranging from biology and calculus to U.S. history and computer science, the program administers a test annually in May. Based on their performance on the test, students can earn college credit. Last year, nearly 2 million AP tests were taken nationwide.

In June, thousands of high school and college faculty members from around the world gathered at colleges and universities throughout the United States for the annual AP reading, where they evaluate and score the exams. Readers are led by a chief reader, who is responsible for set-

ting standards that reflect college-level achievement and ensuring that students receive grades that accurately measure their ability.

As chief reader for the Latin exam, Sarkissian said there are many steps in place to make sure the test is fair and judged accurately.

"We have a reputation for being very consistent" in scoring from year to year, he said.

Sarkissian said he has a highly competent and dedicated group of readers with which to work.

"The readers work hard," he said. "Imagine grading answers to the same question for seven hours a day for six or seven days. But the satisfaction of

performing the valuable work of promoting Latin in the schools makes the effort well worthwhile."

Although Sarkissian said that he knows of no Youngstown area high schools currently offering

AP courses in Latin, he said the number of students nationwide taking the Latin AP exam has nearly tripled in the last 13 years, from about 2,600 in 1992.

"There are students who relish the challenge of reading a great literature in the original language," he said.

Sarkissian, who earned a doctorate from Duke University, first got involved in scoring the Latin exam after being nominated by a colleague and a fellow reader. He was nominated and named chief reader two years ago.

Sarkissian said that stronger high schools nationwide are increasing their offerings in AP courses, and more students are choosing to take them. Studies show that those who take the courses tend to do better overall in college, and that some colleges look at AP courses in their admissions process, he said. ■

"There are students who relish the challenge of reading great literature in the original language."

- John Sarkissian



On the hunt...

Rene Gannon of FirstEnergy Corp. and Vince Whorten of Youngstown, a junior civil and construction engineering tech student at YSU, meet at the annual fall semester Job Expo sponsored by the YSU Office of Career & Counseling Services. A total of 73 employer organizations and 280 students and alumni participated in this event on Sept. 29 in Kilcawley Center.

Foundation donates \$100K to Rich Center

The Commercial Intertech Foundation has donated \$100,000 to the Paula and Anthony Rich Center for the Study and Treatment of Autism at YSU to develop a state-of-the-art program in speech, physical and occupational therapy.

"We are excited by this gift and the wonderful opportunity it presents for our staff, the university and, most importantly, for the children here at the Rich Center," said J. Georgia Backus, Rich Center executive director.

"This funding will allow us to develop

a research-quality program that will provide cutting-edge services that directly benefit children with autism spectrum disorder."

Backus said the new facility will permit the collaboration of therapies during a therapeutic session so that, for example, a child may simultaneously work towards

a speech goal and a physical therapy goal.

"There is no program or facility like this in the region," she said.

"We saw a very special opportunity because of the very special work that is going on

here," John Gilchrist of the Commercial Intertech Foundation said at a reception announcing the gift.

The money will be used to establish the Commercial Intertech/Cushwa Speech and Physical/Occupational Therapy Program and Facility.

Commercial Intertech, formerly Commercial Shearing, was founded in Youngstown in 1920, and was acquired by Charles Cushwa Sr. and two other local businessmen in 1923. The company began as a small processor of steel scrap and grew into an international manufacturer of tank heads and hydraulics systems.

The company was bought out by Cleveland-based Parker Hannifin in 2000. The gift to the Rich Center is part of the distribution of the final assets of the Com-

mmercial Intertech Foundation, which was established in 1952.

Lenore Collupy, Rich Center program coordinator, said the gift means the center can purchase equipment and other resources that will greatly expand the center's support services for children.

"We'll be able to provide unique opportunities for children and professionals alike," she said. "It's a monumental step forward."

The Rich Center, which serves about 40 children with autism, was established in 1995 to improve the social, educational and vocational success of children with autism. The center provides referral, treatment, and support to families as well as education for professionals and students through YSU. ■

"There is no program or facility like this in the region."

-J. Georgia Backus

Autism study

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end of an exercise stress test or after a very difficult activity.

Pintar said her former doctoral advisor, Dr. Robert Robertson at the University of Pittsburgh, spearheaded much work on RPE scales. As a doctoral student, Pintar assisted with the development of the OMNI scale, an RPE scale for children.

But the scales are not effective for children with autism, Pintar said.

So Pintar and her YSU students have developed a new scale designed for children with autism. During a break from exercising, each child's heart rate is measured and each child points to one of four

pictures (not tired, a little tired, tired and very tired) on a card to show their level of exertion.

"Once validated, this new scale could replace the need for expensive and intricate equipment necessary to determine exercise intensity among children with autism," she said.

Pintar is being assisted in her study by YSU exercise science majors Michelle Brunner, Deanna Deardurff, Shawn Aker, Alyssa Goist and Lisa Hutch. The study will last for a year and conclude in May 2006. ■

Energy costs

(Continued from page 1)

That means the university does not need to use state capital or university general funds to finance the project, he said.

"With utility costs increasing year to year, it is vital that YSU does what it can to reduce energy consumption and avoid continued cost increases," Hyden said.

"This is a unique and attractive program for the university because it allows us to control costs, conserve energy, offer more consistent and reliable utility services and help improve the environment."

YSU's utility costs amounted to \$4.2 million in fiscal year 2005, Hyden said.

With the energy improvements, Johnson Controls estimates that YSU's utility costs will be reduced by more than \$1 million a year.

State law allows public universities to implement energy saving measures that are paid for out of funds saved by the reduced energy usage.

For more details on actions by the YSU Board of Trustees, read "For the Record..." online at <http://www.yzu.edu/trustees/trustees.shtml>. ■



Professorial two step...

Annette M. Burden, assistant professor of mathematics and statistics, and dance partner Dustin Jones, co-owner of the Fred Astaire Dance Studio in Boardman, cut the rug at a dance presentation in Kilcawley Center on Oct. 4. Burden is a faculty advisor for the YSU Dance Club and coach for the YSU Dance Competition Group.

Labor-management panel

(Continued from page 1)

Board of Trustees and chair of the board's Internal Affairs Committee; Tom Shipka, professor and chair of philosophy and religious studies at YSU and current chair of the YSU Academic Senate.

"Our work is really about two sets of activities: healing recent wounds, and then recommending future structures that will facilitate better communication on a

regular basis as well as mutual feelings of respect and common membership," Herbert said.

The formation of the panel comes in the wake of two employee strikes in August at YSU. The 400 members of the YSU Association of Classified Employees went on strike Aug. 16, followed by the strike of about 390 faculty members on

Aug. 23. Faculty approved a new contract and ended its strike on Aug. 28. Negotiators for the classified employees reached agreement on the morning of Aug. 29. Fall classes started on schedule on Aug. 29.

In a memo to the university community, Sweet said the panel will interview participants in the recent negotiations, including the leadership of both bargain-

ing units and the university. The panel also will schedule open forums and solicit written testimony so everyone who wants to participate will have had the opportunity to do so.

The president has requested that the panel forward its recommendations to him by the end of the year. ■