Surgery not linked to memory problems in older patients

By Jim Dryden

For years, it has been widely assumed that older adults may experience memory loss and other cognitive problems following surgery. But a new study from School of Medicine researchers questions those assumptions. In fact, the researchers were not able to detect any long-term cognitive declines attributable to surgery in a group of 575 patients they studied.

"There's a perception that people go for surgery and they aren't quite the same afterward," said first author Michael S. Avidan, M.D., associate professor of anesthesiology and of surgery. "The reports comparing outcomes have varied, but several studies have suggested it affects many elderly people. In my experience as an anesthesiologist, I've found this is not a common concern."

But Avidan and fellow investigators, led by Edward S. Macias, Ph.D., professor and head of Anesthesiology, questioned those conclusions.

"We wondered how reasonable it was to compare people having surgery to people who were perfectly healthy," Evers said. "We thought a better comparison group might be people who were equally old.

Past cognitive studies tested surgery patients just before an operation and again several months later. So if a patient was just beginning to suffer declines at the time of the first test, it might be assumed that further declines at follow-up were caused by surgery operation when, in fact, they already were under way. To get better initial screenings, Avidan and Evers examined data from the University's Alzheimer's Disease Research Center (ADRC).

The ADRC tests cognitive function in volunteers annually. "The idea was to map a person's cognitive trajectory before and after surgery or illness and see whether either are being implemented to generate more interest in membership. "Over the past 40 years, Whittermore House has been a hub of the Danforth Campus. The University's faculty and staff use it for everything from birthday parties, employment center open houses, academic policy luncheons, wedding celebrations and retirement lunches.

In honor of Whittermore House's 40th anniversary as a faculty gathering space, the Whittermore House Board of Directors has voted to alter membership requirements to make the facility more accessible to University faculty and staff members. In addition, several new programs are being implemented to generate more interest in membership.

• Free membership for the first six months for new employees.

• Acceptance of credit cards to make it easier for members to bring guests.

• New special programs for members and their families.

Whittermore House offers members a place to have a high-quality lunch on campus in a quiet, reserved atmosphere for both individuals and groups. "It's a wonderful experience," said Jane Power, secretary to the Board of Trustees and president of the Whittermore House Board of Directors.

"It's also the most reasonable opportunity to belong to a private club in St. Louis, and it's a club that is open only to the Washington University community," said Power. "Members have the opportunity to participate in special events throughout the year and book Whittermore House for private events such as weddings and parties.

The new programs at Whittermore House include:

• The Polar Express Experience, which will be hosted by the Children's Hospital Foundation and will begin at 4 p.m. on Dec. 14. Santa will enter by train ride to the North Pole. Santa will distribute presents, play games and eat holiday treats.

• A book about a child's magical visit with Santa will be given to each child.

• A portion of the proceeds will benefit the St. Louis Post-Dispatch 100 Needy Cases.

See Whittermore, Page 6

I Teach 2010 to host ‘Conversations on Teaching’

By Jennifer Davis

Though faculty members may teach a variety of courses to both graduate and undergraduate students, most have little opportunity to discuss teaching with colleagues from outside their own departments.

That's why I Teach 2010, which will take place Jan. 14, is open to faculty, said Kathryn G. Miller, Ph.D., professor and chair of biology in Arts & Sciences. I Teach is a biennial event at WUSTL faculty can gather to share insights on teaching and to learn about new teaching methods and technology that can improve student learning.

"Faculty often are focused on

Chancellor promotes three to key academic offices

By Neil Schoenherr

Three academic appointments have been announced by Chancellor Mark S. Wrighton, Gerald S. Williams, Ph.D., the Barbara Schups Thomas and David M. Thomas Professor in the Humanities, associate vice chancellor, special assistant to the chancellor for academic affairs, and vice chancellor for student affairs; and Edward S. Macias, Ph.D., professor in Arts & Sciences, and adjunct associate professor of anthropology in Arts & Sciences, has been named vice provost.

Professor in Arts & Sciences; and will be the principal liaison between the Office of the Provost and Office of the Chancellor. James V. Wertsch, Ph.D., the Marshall S. Snow Professor in Arts & Sciences, director of the McDonnell International Scholars Academy and director of the International & Area Studies Program in Arts & Sciences, has been named associate vice chancellor for international programs.

Priscilla Stevick, Ph.D., director of overseas and undergraduate programs in the International & Area Studies Program and adjunct associate professor of anthropology in Arts & Sciences, has been named assistant provost for international education. She will continue to be responsible for issues related to overseas and off-campus programs, including the development of programs for undergraduate study in Washington, D.C., and Shanghai, China.

"During my tenure here, I have had the privilege of working closely with Dr. Wertsch, Dr. Williams and Dr. Stevick," Wrighton said. "They are outstanding colleagues whose contributions enhance the University and our reputation worldwide."

"We are pleased to welcome Dr. Williams and Dr. Stevick to our team," Wrighton added. "They bring a wealth of experience and expertise to our campus, and we look forward to working closely with them."

The chancellor for academic affairs, special assistant to the chancellor for academic initiatives in the Danforth University Center, Dollar directs United Way’s support of more than 200 health and human service agencies that provide assistance to more than one million people in 16 counties in Missouri and Illinois. In its annual fund-raising drive that launched in September, the St. Louis United Way surpassed its goal of $66.5 million, raising $67.1 million, despite the down economy.

The 2010 program will begin Dec. 20 during their community and to reduce printing and distribution cost.

If you already receive the print edition of the Record, which will go entirely digital in January 2010 in an effort to communicate to the University community and to reduce printing and distribution costs.

If you do not currently receive the eRecord or wish to be added to our e-mail list, please visit record.wustl.edu.
Biodiesel powers WUSTL Dining Services truck

The same oil used on the Danforth Campus to make french fries is powering a truck near you. Used vegetable oil from WUSTL Dining Services kitchens is being reused as biodiesel in a dining services vehicles on campus.

Through the program, which began in November, WUSTL Dining Services is partnering with St. Louis company Kelley Green. Biofuel will be used to prevent approximately 150 gallons of waste vegetable oil each week from ending up in a landfill. Instead, the cooking oil will be used as fuel in a dining services truck.

The truck is collected at three campus locations: the Village House, Mallinckrodt Student Center and the South 40 House. After cleaning the vegetable oil and converting it into biodiesel, Harvey and Linda Saligman -- founders of Kelley Green -- donated a 2008 WUSTL alumnus in Arts & Sciences -- returned the oil in a 366-gallon holding tank at North Campus.

According to Jill Duncan, dining services director, plans are eventually to expand the program to fuel other dining services vehicles.

"Sustainability is the cornerstone of the philosophy at Washington University," Duncan said. "We have purchased directly from small owner-operated and farmers served seasonally, responsibly sourced food and focused on reducing our carbon emissions."

"This biodiesel program takes us one step further in our green commitment to make our environmental footprint as small as possible while providing delicious food for our guests," Duncan said.

To create biodiesel from used vegetable oil, Kelley Green first cleans the used vegetable oil to remove the food sediment and water. Next, sodium hydroxide (lye) and methanol are mixed with the oil to remove the glycerin.

Before the fuel is returned to the campus, Kelley Green tests a portion of petroleum diesel -- the fuel used in vehicles -- with more being required in the winter; when it's cool, and less in the summer when it's warm. This process allows the final product to be cleaner diesel engine without modifying the engine.

One gallon of waste vegetable oil yields about one gallon of biodiesel, which, in turn, has a comparable energy content to one gallon of petroleum diesel.

During the process, Kelley Green stores the oil in salvaged tanks. Kelley Green refinery was built with almost entirely recycled materials.

The biodiesel program at Washington University is one of many steps toward environmental sustainability taken by WUSTL Dining Services and Bon Appetit Management Co., the contractor that provides dining services on the Danforth Campus. In 2007, Bon Appetit launched its Low Carbon Diet, which pledges to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 25 percent by 2010. At WUSTL, sustainable practices by dining services include using local products when possible, reducing the connections between food choices and climate change and serving only sustainably-seafood.

Campus Watch

The following incidents were reported to University Police Dec. 1-7. Readers who have information concerning these incidents are urged to call 935-5055.

Dec. 1
10:21 a.m. -- A person reported a second theft from a vehicle parked in the Gilpin Plant Growth Facility Nov. 30 between 9 a.m. and 10 p.m.

Dec. 3
4:11 a.m. -- A person reported a laptop computer being stolen from a classroom in Brown Hall. University police responded - but were unable to locate the subjects. The third subject reported that his iPad had been stolen. Officer verified seeing the suspicious person with the victim's description.

Additionally, University Police responded to four sick cases, two accidental injuries, two auto accidents, one drug offense and one larceny.

Reported theft of an unsecured bike from the north side of Brown Hall.

Dec. 7
11:11 a.m. -- A suspicious person was seen walking in front of Brown Hall. University police responded - but were unable to locate the subjects. The second subject reported that his phone had been stolen. Officer verified seeing the suspicious person with the victim's description.

Biodiesel powers WUSTL Dining Services truck

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Genetic variation does not alter asthma treatment response

By Gwen Erickson

Studies have suggested that asthma patients with a specific genetic variation might not respond as well to certain treatments as those with a different variation.

But a recent article in a recent edition of The Lancet shows that patients with either variation respond to combination treatment, and that this treatment should be continued for these patients.

The study, called the Long. Acting Beta Agonist Response by Genotyping (LARGE) trial, was conducted by The Asthma Clinical Research Network established by the National Institutes of Health, Mario Castro, M.D., professor of medicine in the Division of Pulmonary and Critical Care Medicine and of pediatrics, is one of the study's authors.

"This study is important as it provides reassurance that the use of combination medications, inhaled steroids and long-acting beta-agonists (trade names: Advair or Symbicort), which are widely prescribed for asthma, are safe in patients who have this genetic variation," he said.

The genetic variation relates to the beta-2-adrenergic receptor that asthma bronchodilators bind to in order to exert their effects. Some studies suggest that patients with two genes coding for the amino-acid arginine at a certain position in this receptor (termed B16 Arg/Arg) benefit less from long-acting beta-agonists such as salmeterol, and inhaled corticosteroids than those with two genes coding for amino-acid glycine (term B16 Gly/Gly) at this position. The authors investigated whether there is a genotype-specific response to treatment with a long-acting beta-2 agonist in combination with an inhaled corticosteroid.

In this randomized controlled trial, adult patients with moderate asthma were enrolled in pairs of similar lung capacity and ethnic origin according to whether they had the B16 Arg or B16 Gly/ Gly genotype. Individuals in a matched pair were assigned to receive inhaled long-acting beta 2 agonist (salmeterol) or a placebo for 12 weeks. An inhaled corticosteroid was given to all participants during the treatment periods. Doctors monitored morning peak expiratory flow (PEF) for each study participant.

The study found that PEF did not differ between treatment groups. However, airway constriction in response to methacholine administration also was assessed, which is a common method for testing for an asthmatic response. The test revealed that B16 Arg genotype patients did not benefit from the addition of salmeterol in response to the methacholine challenge.

Another interesting finding was that the lung function of African-Americans with the B16 Arg genotype did not improve with the long-acting beta-2 antagonist while African-Americans with the B16 Gly genotype did. This may modify the risk-benefit ratio of long-acting beta agonists in this population. Twenty percent of African-Americans have the B16 Arg genotype.

"The findings provide reassurance that in the general population, patients should continue to be treated with long-acting beta-2 agonists plus moderate-dose inhaled corticosteroids irrespective of B16 genotype," the authors wrote.

Alzheimer's research into amyloid may shed light on potential treatments for urinary tract infections

By Michael C. Perry

Research into Alzheimer's disease seems an unlikely approach to yield a new way to fight urinary tract infections (UTIs). But that's what scientists at the School of Medicine and elsewhere recently reported.

Linking the disparate areas of research are amyloids, which are hollow, sticky protein aggregates. Some infectious bacteria use amyloids to attach to host cells and to build biofilms, which are bacterial colonies embedded in a matrix of extracellular material that hides antibiotics and immune system attacks. Biofilm also form in the urinary system in Alzheimer's disease. Perturbing disease and other neurodegenerative disorders.

To probe amyloid's contributions to antibiotic-resistant disease, scientists altered potential UTI-fighting compounds selected for their ability to block bacterial ability to make amyloids and form biofilms. But when they brought the compounds back to UTI research after the neurology trials, they found the changes also had unexpectedly made them more effective UTI treatments.

"This thanks to research, we have evidence for the first time that we may be able to use a single chemical to impair both the bacterial ability to start infections and their ability to defend themselves against antibiotics," author Scott J. Hultgren, Ph.D., chair of Molecular Microbiology, said.

Hultgren, who also has a joint appointment in Molecular Toxicology, is the corresponding author of the study, which was published in the online August 19 edition of Nature Chemical Biology.

"Thanks to this research, we can develop a new way to treat urinary tract infections and cause around $1.6 billion in medical expenses annually in the United States," said co-lead author Jerome S. Pinkner, research lab director.

"We think it likely that women infected by recurrent bouts of UTIs could be treated by a single persistent infection treatment, instead of the current approach to yield a new way to fight urinary tract infections (UTIs). But that's what scientists at the School of Medicine and elsewhere recently reported.

"The findings were reported recently online in Nature Chemical Biology.

The National Institutes of Health has reported that more than 80 percent of microbial infections are caused by bacteria. Growing in a biofilm, scientists at Umea University in Sweden, to develop compounds that block bacteria's ability to make curli, disrupting their ability to make biofilms and to build biofilms, which are bacterial colonies embedded in a matrix of extracellular material that hides antibiotics and immune system attacks. Biofilm also form in the urinary system in Alzheimer's disease. Perturbing disease and other neurodegenerative disorders.

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Wildwood's 2002 election. "The Campaign," said curator Bunny Burson, a printmaking arts and member of the Sam Fox School's National Council, whose husband, Charles Burson, J.D., is a senior professor of practice at the law school. "It's a great way to let one end of campus know what the other end is doing." Burson said that most of the works on view explore legal and/or other end is doing. "All of them are making terrific work," Burson said. "It's a pleasure and an honor to highlight what they're doing." The installation, which is located in the WL. Hadley Griffin Student Commons, was made possible with the support and encouragement of Kent Svedra, J.D., dean of the School of Law and the Ethan A. H. Shepley University Professor; Ruth Chi- Fen Chen, Ph.D., professor of practice in the School of Engineering & Applied Science; and Carmen Cotogno, dean of the Sam Fox School and the E. Desmond Lee Professor for Collaboration in the Arts. All works will remain on view through the end of the fall semester. For more information, call 935-7567.

Arts from (left) Joan Hall, Lisa Bulawsky and Bunny Burson admire Burson's work "The Lords of In-Between" at the opening of the School of Law's art exhibit Dec. 2 in Anheuser-Busch Hall.

**WUSTL women printmakers exhibit at the School of Law**

**BY LIAM OTTEN**

Washington University is a big place, both metaphorically and physically. Last week, eight women printmakers, all or some of whom are from the Sam Fox School of Design & Visual Arts, sought to bridge some of that distance by installing a series of artworks in the School of Law's Anheuser-Busch Hall.

"This is really a wonderful collaboration," said curator Bunny Burson, a printmaking arts and member of the Sam Fox School’s National Council, whose husband, Charles Burson, J.D., is a senior professor of practice at the law school. "It's a great way to let one end of campus know what the other end is doing." Burson said that most of the works on view explore legal and/or political themes. For example, Maryanne Ellison Simmons, a 1992 MFA alumna and a former city council member in Wildwood, Mo., contributed the print suite "American Landscape/Documentation Series," which reproduces a series of partition panels created during Wildwood's 2002 election.

"I wanted to select women representing a range of careers," Bunny Burson said. "I've also taught at Washington University for three decades and I'm internally known. Lisa, Maryanne and Yvette are well-established printmakers, while Kjetil, Kim and Amanda all are recent graduates. "All of them are making terrific work," Burson said. "It's a pleasure and an honor to highlight what they're doing." The installation, which is located in the WL. Hadley Griffin Student Commons, was made possible with the support and encouragement of Kent Svedra, J.D., dean of the School of Law and the Ethan A. H. Shepley University Professor; Ruth Chi-Fen Chen, Ph.D., professor of practice in the School of Engineering & Applied Science; and Carmen Cotogno, dean of the Sam Fox School and the E. Desmond Lee Professor for Collaboration in the Arts. All works will remain on view through the end of the fall semester. For more information, call 935-7567.

**Navigating Conflict**

**ICN/coginus**

**Gene Function**

"All works will remain on view through the end of the fall semester. For more information, call 935-7567."
Winter wonderland

Despite the un-winter-like temperatures in early December, Mudd Field turned into a winter playground Dec. 1. Against the 90-degree felt-plastic sheet designed to accommodate real snows. More than 125 students took a break from late-term studies and took advantage of the activity. ‘I heard many students comment that the last week of the semester is the most stressful, and this was a way to have fun for the sake of it – if only for a few minutes,’ said Leslie Heusied, director of the Denton University Center. In addition to the skating and hot chocolate activities, some of the students included an opportunity to design their own coffee mug and make holiday ornaments.
Promotions

- From Page 1

Williams & Wertsch

professorial schools at the University.

Wertsch is an expert on collective

functional identity and community. He

has particular interest in how these

issues are illustrated in Russia, the

Republic of Georgia and Estonia.

He is working in the Republic of Georgia,

involving collaboration with col-

gleagues to better understand the

emergence of civil society and democracy.

He is particularly interested in

how cultural and social interac-

tions are harnessed to create and

maintain collective memory.

In addition to his work with the

scholarly academy and interna-

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The group discusses teaching

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members of the group in an effort to

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McDaniel and Frey will talk about

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projects, including cancer, renew-

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There also is a lunch buffet

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Whitemore Initiative

for has been eliminated

- From Page 1

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Dinners. On the first of each

February, members can attend a

wine dinner that features

wines from across the globe.

• Wednesdays at Whittemore.

Through the generosity of

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For more information about

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46 RECORD WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY IN ST. LOUIS

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C and the RCGA most prestigious honor. During Wrighton's tenure as chancellor, Washington Uni-
versity has had more than a twofold increase in undergradu-
tate applications. The University also lives through educational, envi-
ronmental and science initiatives. “It is a real privilege for me to receive this honor,” Wrighton said. "Washington Uni-
versity is one of many institutions that make St. Louis a won-
derful region. I owe this recogni-
tion to the many talented stu-
dents, faculty, staff and alumni who have contributed to the success of the University in building a strong, vibrant, prosperous city during my tenure here.” The RCGA connects business and civil communities in the 1-county, bistate St. Louis region. It serves as the regional chamber of commerce for more than 250 member companies and in the region's leading economic develop-
ment operation. A cover story of Wrighton is upcoming in St. Louis Commerce Magazine.

A memorial service for Lee F. Levey, a University alumna and Jewish leader, will be held Sunday, Dec. 13, at 1 p.m. at the University's Meyers Hall, 660 S. Euclid Ave., Box 8134, St. Louis, MO 63110. For more information about the memorial service, visit stlouis.hillel.org.

Robins memorial service
Jan. 16 at Graham Chapel

A memorial service for Lee B. Nelson Robins, Ph.D., professor emeritus of basic science in psychiatry, will be held Jan. 16, 2010, at 1:30 p.m. in the Graham Chapel. A reception will immediately follow in the Graham Hall lobby. His family requests that memorial donations be made to the Department of Psychiatry for more than 50 years. Her early research made key obser-
vations about how psychiatric disorders are linked to life's traumas. She is the author of the book, "The Psychiatrist's Guide to Drug Abuse.

In the United States,” Washington University re-
ceived a 2009 Developer/Developer of the Year award from St. Louis Development Corporation Okt. at America's Center. The award was presented to St. Louis Mayor Francis G. Slay in recognition for WUSTL’s contribution in further-
ing the economic development of the City of St. Louis — specifically for the development of its North Campus, the construction of the Brain Science Building and WUSTL’s role in the development of the Medical Campus.

Chancellor Mark S. Wrighton and his wife, Nina Zwerling

Wrighton, received the 2009 Morris and Ann Laureld
Lampighter Award from Chabad, the University’s Jewish house, at a ceremony in November. The Wrightons were recognized for their efforts at making Washington University more inclusive.

Yoram Vardi, Ph.D., the James M. McElroy Professor in the School of Engineering & Applied Sciences, has received a three-year, $200,000 subcontract from the University for his research on "Theoretical Physics and Control Theory research entitled "From First Principles to Realization of Biometric Catalysts for Enhanced Selectivity.”
Starting a new chapter

Robert L. Grubb Jr. and his family, celebrating daughter Mary Connell’s wedding on Pewley Island, S.C., in October. From left: wife, Julie Grubb; Robert L. Grubb Jr.; daughter-in-law, Jessica Grubb; granddaughter, Louise Grubb; son, Robert L. Grubb III; and grandson Connell Grubb.

Robert L. Grubb Jr., M.D., professor emeritus of neurosurgery, kept a difficult and important resolution last year. Grubb had decided to leave his desk when he turned 60, and that's exactly what he did in July 2008.

"I was still doing fine in the operating room, but I had kind of pulled 60 out of the air years ago and decided to quit then while I was still ahead," he says and then chuckles. "I'll only know what the stock market crash of 2008 was going to do to my retirement accounts three months later. I never would've stopped!"

Grubb laughs at his own expense often, and the target of his humor is frequently his age or his four- and a half decades of service. A moment after pointing out his poise in the Department of Neurosurgery's conference room, he says, "The surgery everyone with a portrait up here is dead. What does that say about me?"

The real punch line to these jokes, though, is that they seem to be the product of an extraordinary degree of comfort with his change of status. Far from being "one foot in the grave," as he jokes at anniversaries, it's been a year of breakneck "anniversary prep." In the first draft of Grubb's recent complete first draft of a history of the Department of Neurosurgery, "It needs a lot of editing and is not likely to be a bestseller," he says.

The narrative, assembled from documents, anecdotes and personal histories, Grubb pulled together in the department and from the medical school archives, covers the period from the founding in 1931 until the retirement of Sidney Goldmacher, M.D., in 1989. Grubb laughs at his own experience with the stock market crash of 2008: "I told my retirement was going to be admired." He is a great colleague and certainly an important person to the department and to the medical school, he says. "Dr. Grubb has done a great service to the department by compiling our history, but his impact in making our department great through his expertise as a neurosurgical surgeon and teacher over the past 40 years have been even more notable," Ralph G. Dacey, M.D., says.

Robert L. Grubb Jr., M.D. (left), and his son, Robert L. Grubb III, M.D., look at X-rays in Grubb Jr.'s office. "Dr. Grubb has done a great service to the department by compiling our history, but his impact in making our department great through his expertise as a neurosurgical surgeon and teacher over the past 40 years have been even more notable," Ralph G. Dacey, M.D., says.

Making history

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