

NEWS

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Medicine gets 'Wii' bit of help

Practicing medicine is complicated, serious business. But learning to practice medicine – even surgical techniques – can be aided by some simple games designed for fun.

That's a conclusion based on research by Kanav Kahol, an assistant professor in the Department of Biomedical Informatics in ASU's Ira A. Fulton School of Engineering, and Marshall Smith, a surgeon with Banner Health who directs a medical education center at Banner Good Samaritan Medical Center in Phoenix. Kahol also is on the faculty at Smith's education center.

Kahol and Smith conducted studies in which trainee surgeons played a Nintendo Wii video game called *Marble Mania*, which requires players to develop dexterity in their hand movements to succeed at the game.

The trainees then wore "cybergloves" that allowed Kahol and Smith to evaluate their performance in simulated surgery. The researchers discovered that the trainees who played *Marble Mania* performed the surgical exercises significantly better than those who did not play.

Web site connects people to cause

Volunteer Information and Referral Services at ASU is a one-stop shop for charities looking for volunteers, organizations searching for volunteer group activities, and people contemplating ways to connect to a cause.

It's also the most comprehensive volunteer Web site in the Valley, says Pit Lucking, coordinator of Volunteer Information and Referral Services, part of Academic Community Engagement Services in University College at ASU.

Those who are interested in volunteering will be able to use the new Volunteer Information and Referral Services Web site to easily match people to organizations in need of volunteers.

People who are looking for volunteer opportunities can search by proximity to their home and the type of work they're interested in. Agencies can post volunteer needs from one-time events to long-term needs.

"This is a great networking opportunity for

all of the agencies that are working to make the community a better place," Lucking says.

Preparing for the next "megacity"

Environmental and resource challenges of a "megacity" – a city with a population that exceeds 10 million or more – are at the heart of ASU ecologist Nancy Grimm's research.

"When we think of global change, images of melting ice caps and pasture replacing tropical rain forests come to mind," Grimm says. "What drives these changes? In fact, much of the current environmental impact originates in cities – and with demographic transition to city life, the urban footprint is likely to continue to grow."

Urban challenges face communities worldwide, with solutions lagging behind. Grimm and her colleagues promote a global perspective of urban development. Their analyses capture some of the commonalities that will face city planners and societies, viewing cities as drivers of – and responders to – environmental change.

These changes range from land use and cover, urban waste discharge and urban heat island effects to global climate change, hydrosystems, biodiversity and biogeochemical cycles. Grimm and her researchers demonstrate that urban ecological study offers pivotal insight in how to navigate a sustainable urban future. As soon-to-be dominant ecosystems, cities harbor a wealth of ideas and creative accomplishments, as they have over centuries of urban living.

Chinese students explore Mars

SkySong, ASU's Scottsdale Innovation Center, the idea of exploring Mars drew 15 high school students from China, plus seven more from Nogales (Ariz.) High School, to the Tempe campus as part of the first-ever China Youth Space Academy.

The China Youth Space Academy (CYSA) was designed to catch the attention of space-minded Chinese high school students and their parents, and make them aware of ASU's leading role in space exploration.

The CYSA generated significant media coverage in three languages. Especially in China, it has been widely covered by all media formats, from Xinhua News Agency to Hong Kong Phoenix Satellite TV, from popular

regional newspapers to wide online coverage. An upcoming television documentary will be aired nationwide in China. These stories reach audiences of millions, and the long reach helps boost ASU's global engagement.

"The Chinese Youth Space Academy is a unique program," says Jennie Si, electrical engineering professor at ASU and director of China initiatives and special projects in the Office of Vice President for Research and Economic Affairs. "And it gives us a chance to select top students to attend ASU."

Si adds that ASU has made great efforts to brand itself in China, and that the China Youth Space Academy has furthered that goal.

"The first CYSA has been a great success, which gives us the confidence to turn it into a sustainable program for student recruiting," Si says.

For more information and photos, visit the Web site <http://cysa.sese.asu.edu>.

ASU's Danforth Chapel turns 60

Danforth Chapel, which recently celebrated its 60th anniversary on ASU's Tempe campus, has served as the setting for numerous weddings, a sanctuary for quiet meditation, a meeting place for campus religious groups – and a place for students to ponder the spiritual questions of life.

William Danforth, one of the founders of the Ralston Purina Company, established the Danforth Foundation in 1927 as a national education philanthropy. Part of its mission was to fund meditation chapels at universities across the United States, providing \$5,000 for each.

ASU's was one of the 19 chapels built before Danforth's death in 1955. The balance needed to build the ASU chapel was provided by student fund-raisers and gifts from individuals and churches.

Over the years, the chapel has been the setting for hundreds of weddings, beginning in 1948 with that of Billie Stephens and Dorothy McKenzie, who both earned master's degrees from Arizona State Teachers College.

Photos of the couple, emerging happily from the chapel, are located in University Archives. The silk gown and veil that Dorothy McKenzie wore on her wedding day also reside in archives.