Tech researcher wins Cancer Coalition award

DON FERNANDEZ
COMMUNICATIONS & MARKETING

Michelle Dawson, assistant professor at the School of Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering, will receive $50,000 for her research into the development of specialized cells designed as gene delivery vehicles to target and treat breast cancer.

The Georgia Cancer Coalition (GCC) has announced the recipients of the 2009 Cancer Research Awards, made possible by Georgians who contribute to the Georgia Cancer Research Fund on their state income tax returns. Dawson completed a postdoctoral research fellowship at Massachusetts General Hospital and Harvard Medical School in the laboratory of Dr. Gregory M. Gores, studying pancreatic cancer. Dawson joined the Georgia Tech faculty in 2008 and is now in the School of Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering. At Georgia Tech, she is using a unique system of maturated mammalian cells that was developed by Dr. Dawei Shi to model human disease and test new therapies.

Assistant Professor Michelle Dawson, who directs the Stem Cell Biophysics and Engineering Lab, is one of eight recipients of the Georgia Cancer Coalition’s 2009 Cancer Research Awards.

Through February 13

The Robert C. Williams Paper Museum displays the works of a renowned paper engineer and book artist with “The Paper Engineer: The Art of Carol Barton.” Hours are 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekdays. www.hhs.gatech.edu

Awards, continued on page 2

http://tinyurl.com/bnwstp

Power surge

Center’s research helps protect against lightning damage

JOHN TOON
RESEARCH NEWS

Firing bolts of lightning at expensive electrical equipment is all in a day’s work at NEETRAC—the National Electric Energy Testing Research and Applications Center. The goal for the lightning research and other testing done by the center is to improve reliability for the nation’s electric energy transmission and distribution system.

The 2.2 million-volt impulse generator needed to produce artificial lightning is just one part of the test gear used to evaluate utility industry equipment that ranges from wooden poles and aluminum transmission lines to transformers and switches. Part of the School of Electrical and Computer Engineering, the center is supported by 32 equipment manufacturers and utility companies that provide nearly 60 percent of the electricity used in the United States.

A major part of the work is ensuring reliability during the lightning storms that threaten utilities and their customers. “Lightning is electricity of the wrong sort,” explained Rick Hartlein, NEETRAC’s director. “Electric utilities must do a number of things to keep lightning from damaging the power delivery system, which can cause power outages or damage to equipment plugged into electrical outlets in homes and businesses.”

Thunderstorms can produce more than 100 million volts—compared to the 120 volts in household wall outlets and 240 volts that power large home appliances. To deal with those added millions of volts, utilities rely on a complex array of lightning arrestors, static lines and grounding systems.

Lightning arrestors, for instance, contain special materials that under normal conditions do not permit the flow of electrical current. But when they sense a sudden surge of electricity from a lightning strike, they

http://tinyurl.com/bvwrvg
EVENTS

the Arts, Starting at 5 p.m. Tickets range from $5, $10, and $40, or $20, $24 and $32 with subscription.
www.ferstcenter.gatech.edu

February 17
The Georgia Tech Wind Ensemble and Concert Band will perform the works of Louis Vuitton, David, Husa, Shostakovich and Grantham at 7 p.m., in the Ferst Center For The Arts.
www.cea.gatech.edu

February 22
The fourth annual "Pocket Protectors and Other Fashion Statements," a stand-up comedy show sponsored by the MIT Alumni Club of Atlanta, starts at 7:30 p.m. Tickets and $10 in advance, $15 at the door.
www.drpitcomedy.com/mit

Through February
www.library.gatech.edu/archives

CONFERENCES/LECTURES

February 10
University of Cincinnati Professor Ya-Ping Sun presents "Exploration of Nanomaterials—From Nanotubes to Carbon Dots," from 3 to 4 p.m. in room 183 of the Low Manufacturing building.
www.mse.gatech.edu

February 11
www.cistp.gatech.edu

Ivan Allen College of Liberal Arts Dean Eric L. Rosser presents "The Gender Gap in Patents: Strategies for Scientists, Institutions and Corporations to Close the Divide," the 10th anniversary keynote lecture for the Women’s Resource Center, starting at 3:30 p.m. in the Alumni House Ballroom.
www.womenscenter.gatech.edu

February 18
College of Architecture professors Betty Dowling, Robert M. Craig, Georgia B. Johnstone and Dean Allan Ball present "A Centenary of Architectural Education at Georgia Tech," from 6 to 9 p.m., in the College of Architecture Auditorium.
www.coa.gatech.edu

February 19
University of California, Santa Barbara, Professor Joan-Emma Shea presents "Simulations of Protein Aggregation," starting at 3 p.m., in room G011 of the Molecular Science and Engineering building.
www.chemistry.gatech.edu

Calendar continues on page 3

Research

LIGHTNING, continued from page 1
change properties in a few microseconds, becoming conductors rather than insulators. When stratified radially on the electric grid, the arrestors carry the lightning surge away to the ground—after which the arresters return to their role as insulators.

Without the arrestors, lightning could arc through the insulators that support power lines, creating interruptions and damaging other equipment. In severe cases, the damage could cause line circuit breakers to trip, resulting in power outages to businesses, hospitals and whole communities.

At NEETRAC’s facilities near Atlanta’s Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport, Hartlein and his research team evaluate the arrestors and help utilities choose the right locations for them.

“Lightning arrestors are not inexpensive devices and they must be maintained once they are put on the system,” Hartlein said. “You want to distribute them on the system frequently enough to protect it, but not so frequently that you are wasting money.”

After multiple lightning strikes and years out in the open, NEETRAC’s lightning arrestors themselves can fail, creating a momentary short-circuit on the power grid. If that happens, a device built into the arrestors senses the problem and fires a tiny explosive charge that physically disconnects the faulty arrestor from the distribution system. NEETRAC has developed specialized laboratory testing procedures to evaluate the performance of these devices.

Helping the industry develop better equipment requires an understanding of lightning and how it works. For instance, though it’s generally not visible to the human eye, most lightning strikes in the Southeast are made up of between three and five separate pulses between 30 and 120 milliseconds apart, each one containing potentially damaging electrical energy.

In the Southeast, 90 percent of lightning has a negative charge. But positively charged lightning also occurs, most often in the winter. Positive lightning ionizes the atmosphere more efficiently than negative lightning and can therefore travel longer distances. "Positive lightning can travel 10 miles from the storm before striking an object on the ground, so the storm clouds may not even be visible when the lightning strikes," said Ray Hill, a research technologist with NEETRAC. "This is the source of what people call a ‘bolt from the blue.’ Because it tends to be a single pulse, positive lightning can be more dangerous since all of the energy is in a single stroke—and people aren’t expecting it.”

Though NEETRAC’s lightning impulse generator can create explosive results, most testing at the center’s facilities is less dramatic. For instance, salt fog chambers simulate long-term exposure in moist and corrosive environments to study how utility system components will withstand years of exposure to the elements.

Strong ultraviolet lights and high-temperature tests the ability of rubber seals to withstand summertime heat and strong sunlight while keeping moisture away from sensitive equipment. NEETRAC has developed specialized laboratory testing procedures to evaluate the performance of these devices.

AWARD, continued from page 1
2008. She earned her doctorate in chemical and biomolecular engineering from The Johns Hopkins University in 2005, where she was awarded a graduate research fellowship from the National Science Foundation.

“Dr. Dawson is an outstanding and highly motivated researcher,” says W. Robert Taylor, chair of the School of Chemical & Biomolecular Engineering. “The intensity with which she approaches her science and the invigoration that research is bringing to her are impressive. We are fortunate to have her as a colleague and believe her work will contribute significantly to addressing issues in cancer.”

“I’m thrilled to get this award,” said Dawson, who joined the Tech faculty in the fall. “It’s my first funded grant, and it’s an incredible honor to be acknowledged as a cancer researcher. I wrote the GCC application in my first week here on campus, and I am amazed that we were able to get this funded so quickly.”

For Dawson’s group, the award comes at a time when the funding environment is “difficult,” she says. “To apply for NIH [National Institutes of Health] or DOD [Department of Defense] funding, we need a great deal of preliminary results. The GCC money is critical for the collection of these preliminary results.

Her lab is focused on the development of genetically engineered stem cell therapeutics for treating cancer. Genetic engineering and problems with cell transport after reintroduction to the body serve to limit the production and effectiveness of engineered cells, according to Dawson. “Our short-term goals are to quantify and optimize the rheological properties of stem cells that are thought to be involved in migration through biological barriers and to genetically engineer stem cells as anti-angiogenic therapies,” she said.

“Alone, these problems are challenging and of high impact to the scientific community. In the long term, these accomplishments would only be the first steps in developing therapeutics that can be used to treat cancer. Optimized stem-cell therapeutics will be used to treat cancer in mouse models. If this is successful, our studies will be expanded to include isolation of stem cells from human bone marrow aspirates.”

Dawson is one of 51 researchers who submitted proposals for the 2009 awards. Those reviewing the proposals included nationally recognized scientists and clinicians from across the country. Of the others selected, four were from Emory, two were from the Georgia Institute of Technology, one was from the University of Georgia. Breast, ovarian and prostate cancer are the focus of Dawson’s research.

“I have only been at Tech since November, and I have lab space, equipment, students and very good colleagues and friends,” she said. “The Georgia Tech community has been so supportive. I’m really glad to be here.”

The State Income Tax Check-Off Program was initiated by the Georgia Tech Alumni Association in 2000, specifically to support scientists in Georgia performing research into the causes, treatments and cures for breast, prostate and ovarian cancer. Annual gifts that time, more than $2 million dollars has been awarded to 33 cancer researchers through this competitive, peer-reviewed grant process.
On average, someone is killed by a drunken driver every 40 minutes, according to Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD). Because MADD has been fiercely committed to eliminating drunk driving and preventing underage drinking, the Georgia chapter agreed to assume responsibility for implementing the Responsible Alcohol Sales & Server Training (RASS) program beginning Jan. 30. Access to the training can be found at the MADD Web site.

Initial implementation of the free, online program began as part of Tech’s GT SMART (Students Managing Alcohol Risk at Tech) program. With the grant project ending, GT SMART Director Marsha Brinkley has focused her efforts on finding an “institutional home” for RASS and other GT SMART programs. RASS, the first online, interactive program of its type offered in the state, was designed to help alcohol licensees and their employees understand state laws—specifically learning how to identify fake IDs and knowing when to stop service when necessary.

The program was initially launched in Atlanta and, by request, began including counties throughout the state. In the past four years, it has expanded to 30 counties, 487 establishments and more than 6,800 enrollees in the alcohol-service industry. “User surveys indicate that the program continues to have a positive impact on managers, servers and sales staff members who believe that RASS has helped them become more familiar with Georgia liquor laws and how they can take appropriate action when the laws are violated,” said Brinkley.

According to State Executive Director for MADD Georgia Denise Thames, assuming proprietorship of the RASS program reinforces MADD’s mission. “RASS fits right in with our mission to stop drunk driving and to prevent underage drinking,” Thames said.

For more information: www.maddga.org

In Brief . . .

Cameras on bridge project
School of Civil and Environmental Engineering Assistant Professor Jochen Teizer and his students are monitoring construction of the 14th Street Bridge in Midtown. The team has placed cameras on the Marriott Hotel and the resulting images are being posted to a Web page, allowing Teizer’s students to analyze the construction progress and look for more efficient techniques.

Teizer is an expert in construction engineering and management, heads the Real-time Automated Project Information and Decision Systems (RAPIDS) Laboratory. The camera project is being supported by the construction monitoring company OxBlue. www.rapids.gatech.edu

Honors proposals due
The Georgia Tech Honors Program requests proposals for Special Topics courses. Topics carry no specific requirements, but the program seeks to challenge a small group of students to explore questions in partnership with instructors. Faculty members interested in submitting a proposal should receive tentative departmental approval and then submit proposals to Monica Haklu by Feb. 20.

Labor for a good cause
The GT Crew is offering Rent-a-Rower. Its members will paint, clean, perform yardwork or other manual labor to raise money to restore the trailer and fleet of boats that were damaged in an accident last semester. Volunteers are available all day Feb. 15, 21 and 22. Other dates are available upon request pending race schedules. E-mail fundraising@gtcrew for more information or to register.

Speakers and events highlight Body Image Awareness Month
As part of a collaborative effort across several campus departments, Tech’s Body Image Awareness Month seeks to foster dialogue and examination of body image issues among men and women across campus.

Events planned for the month include a Counseling Center workshop for parents; an open mic night; and a presentation from speaker Patrick Bergstrom, who struggled with an eating disorder when he was an athlete. “[Students] are exposed to unreal- istic images of beauty through many media outlets,” said Women’s Resource Center Program Coordinator and Body Image Committee Co-Chair Collen Riggle. “Although we have many resources at Tech to tackle body image issues, the media is very powerful.”

Michelle Cohen, a health educator in the Department of Health Promotion, is also co-chair of the committee. The month’s events, taken as a whole, will provide tools and resources for students to understand the perceptions, attitudes and behaviors associated with body image. “Faculty and staff members can initiate dialogue to encourage students to discuss these issues,” Riggle said. “They can also encourage students to challenge the media’s unrealistic portrayals of beauty and attractiveness.”

Riggle said those interested in learning more about addressing body image issues at Tech can also join the Body Image Committee.

For more information: www.bodyimage.gatech.edu

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In Brief . . .
**RACHEL JACOBS**  
COMMUNICATIONS & MARKETING  

On Jan. 29, the Georgia Tech Police Department recognized their own. Chief of Police Teresa Crocker opened the 2008 Georgia Tech Police Awards Ceremony with a look back over the previous year, highlighting the department’s achievements.

After facing a modest rise in reported crimes in and around campus, Crocker reported that the patrol division had made arrests on 316 misdemeanor and 38 felony counts. More than 2,000 citations were issued, and officers conducted more than 1,000 traffic stops.

In terms of campus security, Crocker said more than 164 new card readers have been implemented, adding to a total of more than 1,500 readers now around campus. The Institute’s sirens warning system was put into place, and Georgia Tech Emergency Notification System (GTENS) protocols were updated.

“Georgia Tech was the only organization in Atlanta to get out an alert before the tornado touched down last March,” she said.

In the new year, the Office of Emergency Preparedness is establishing a Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) and the tornado touched down last March,” she said.

In the new year, the Office of Emergency Preparedness is establishing a Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) and continuing its support of the Emergency Preparedness Certificate course through the Office of Organizational Development.

- **Staff Person of the Year:** In addition to other duties, Program Coordinator Tiffany Sierra Watson is responsible for the department’s monthly newsletter and is the department’s liaison with the Midtown Alliance.
- **Rookie of the Year:** Capt. Randy Barrone presented Officer Serge Lambotte, with the Rookie of the Year award.

- **Officer of the Year:** Credited with 36 arrests and 648 citations, Officer Robert Parsons was also praised for his checking the crosswalks around the campus for safety issues. Crocker also said he has proposed an honor guard for the Police Department.
- **Supervisor of the Year:** Lt. Chris Huggins has been with the department for more than 14 years.
- **Chief’s Award:** Police Department Project Coordinator Frank Stanley was credited with his assistance in the Office of Emergency Preparedness by shepherding the installation of emergency sirens around campus and his work on GTENS. He has been with the department nearly five years.
- **Board of Regents Awards:** Sgt. Marcus Walton and Officer Jason Adams were recognized by the Georgia Association of Campus Law Enforcement Officers.
- **Community Service Award:** School of Earth and Atmospheric Sciences Research Scientist Jim St. John was honored for monitoring the weather during home games.

Preparedness Director Andy Alitzer enlisted St. John’s help to check for lightning strikes in and around campus during home football and baseball games. Crocker also took a moment to recognize Mike Pearson, the department’s physical security manager for more than 10 years, who died in October after a long battle with cancer.

The department’s first K-9 officer, Zeca, who died in July. Pearson’s wife, son and daughter-in-law were on-hand to receive a plaque from the chief and recognition from those in attendance.

While Crocker selects the Chief’s award, she said that all members of the organization have the opportunity to select the Rookie, Officer and Supervisor recipients.

“The awards ceremony gives everyone an opportunity to participate in who gets recognized in our department,” she said. “It is very difficult for me to choose the person for the Chief’s Award because of the number of people who give so much every day. I think we do a good job as administrators and supervisors with daily praise for outstanding work.”

For more information:  
www.police.gatech.edu

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**CLASSIFIEDS**

**AUTOMOBILES/MOTORCYCLES**

2007 Volvo S 60, 76,000 miles, exc. condition. Leather interior, moonroof, fully loaded. $6,750. Call 404-303-0759 or e-mail marta.garcia@dev.gatech.edu.

**REAL ESTATE/ROOMMATES**

For rent: Renovated 3BR/1BA in Clayton, 10 miles from Tech. 4-bedrooms, fenced back yard, all new wiring, new appliances and cabinets, new ceramic tile and fixtures in BR, $1,100 deposit, $800 per month. Pets OK w/ deposit. Call 404-218-0409 or e-mail regina.rogers@police.gatech.edu.

For sale: 1-story, free standing, 2BR/2BA condo. Exc. condition. New landscaping, near MARTA, in Oak Grove/LaVista area. Walk to restaurants and shops. $177,582. Email donna.brown@ibb.gatech.edu.  


For sale: 2BR/2BA townhouse with two-car garage. New gated community near Tech! HOA has private jogging path in front, fireplaces, eat-in kitchen, HFW floors, walk-in closets. Reduced to $159,900. Call 404-643-8305 or e-mail Eric.Mayweather, amay21@yahoo.com for price and info.

**FURNITURE/APPLIANCES**

Old dressing table embellished with detailed tins on drawers, mirrors and matching bench. Very good cond. $350. Also, Exquisite 36” tall Asian art lamp (Kuan Yin) in antique cream. $80. Pics available. Call 404-377-2627 (eve) or e-mail aesergsales@gmail.com.

**SPORTS/FITNESS/RECREATION**

Concept 2 Model D and Model E indoor rowing machines for sale. Used for one day only at the Atlanta Eng Spirts at the CRC. All models are $51 off retail price. Pick up Feb. 14 at the CRC and save on shipping costs. E-mail asergsales@gmail.com or visit www.atlergsprints.com for more information.

**MISCELLANEOUS**

Lost: Trollbead bracelet on 1/7. Sterling silver chain & lock, aqua, white and purple beaded, silver beads, pearls. Reward. E-mail brand@eye.gatech.edu or call 404-224-3688.

Found: Silver earring, 12/12/08 on Found at 12/12/08 on sidewalk adjacent to U.S. Bank. Call 894-5558 for the order in which they are received.

School of Electrical and Computer Engineering Associate Professor Robert Butera was selected as one of seven 2008 Jefferson Science Fellows. For the next year, Butera will work full-time on a project with the U.S. Agency for International Development or the U.S. State Department. During his stay in Washington, D.C., Butera met with then-Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice. www.ece.gatech.edu

14th St. reduced to 1 lane

As part of the continued construction on the 14th Street Bridge Improvement Project, the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) will reduce 14th Street to one lane.

The street will contain only one westbound lane after Feb 14, between Crescent Avenue and Williams Street. Drivers traveling north on Williams or West Peachtree streets will be unable to turn right onto 14th. The closure will be in place for roughly six months. Temporary alternate routes will be established between Williams and Springs streets for cars, motorcycles and light trucks. Access from Williams Street will be just past the 14th Street intersection, and access from Spring Street is next to Whole World Improv Theatre. GDOT is scheduled to open the new southbound ramp from Interstate 75/85 to 10th Street in spring. The entire project is scheduled to be completed in spring 2010.

www.14thstreetbridge.com

**Butera recognized in D.C.**

Robert Butera, selected as one of seven 2008 Jefferson Science Fellows, will work full-time on a project with the U.S. Agency for International Development or the U.S. State Department. During his stay in Washington, D.C., Butera met with then-Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice. www.ece.gatech.edu

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