

Body cell repair studied at OU

The mechanisms that allow cells to migrate during wound repair are being investigated by cell physiologist Sheldon Gordon of Southfield.

Gordon, an assistant professor of biological sciences at Oakland University, is looking at the process of cell migration — how cells spread and interact to repair a wound in the eye.

This ability to migrate is not fully understood and has implications far beyond his work, Gordon says. In fact, he says interest in his work comes not only from the National Eye Institute, which supports his research, but from other researchers studying cancer and developmental biology.

THE RESEARCHER explains that cell movement is essential for normal embryonic development, or it can mean death for a patient whose cancer has metastasized throughout the body.

"How do cells move? What mechanisms are involved? This is really where investigations on cell motility are directed," Gordon said — "not just wound repair of normal cells, but also the migratory movements and associated mechanisms in embryonic and cancer cells."

A basic researcher, Gordon is looking at his particular puzzle: how endothelial cells move. If we can answer that question, he said, "then we can unlock many secrets of cell movement in general."

The investigator is looking at how these cells move across and interact with their underlying substrata to spread out and repair a wound.

He has had success in learning how to inhibit the movement of these cells and modify their limited ability to divide.

"It's really interesting to watch cells under a microscope as they move, or to look at a preparation of tissue that has been processed during wound repair. One can see what is occurring in general but at the same time not know subcellularly what is going on."

GORDON USES electron microscopy to understand the substructure of cells and fluorescence microscopy to localize specific proteins with antibodies directed against various cellular components.

His research has been conducted on corneas taken from the rabbit and rat.

The scientist does mostly organ culture in which the cornea is excised from the eye and put in a nutrient media. There the researchers can then manipulate the system to see how it reacts to the presence or absence of certain drugs.

In addition to his position in the Department of Biological Sciences, Gordon is an adjunct assistant professor in the Eye Research Institute and holds an associate research position at the Kresge Eye Institute of Wayne State University School of Medicine.

Road panel lists tri-party projects

The last funds in a two-year road program have been committed by the Oakland County Road Commission.

It's called the "tri-party" program because it is financed by the OCRC, the county general fund and local units.

"The tri-party program is an effort to undertake primarily safety-oriented road construction projects," said John Grubbs, managing director of the road commission. The 1987-88 program totaled \$6 million.

THE OCRC board last week allocated the final one-third of this year's \$3.1 million. The work list for Observer & Eccentric area units:

• Beverly Hills — Lahser at 14 Mile, create left-turn lane, \$6,000; Lahser at 13 Mile, improve capacity, \$40,000.

• Farmington — Farmington Road, Eight to Nine Mile, replace catch basins, \$18,926.

• Farmington Hills — 12 Mile at Halstead, construct center left-turn lanes, \$153,000; install new signals at various intersections, \$104,274.

• Lathrup Village — right-turn lane on Southfield Road at city hall, \$28,778.

• Southfield — Lahser Road, 11 Mile to 12 Mile, enclose drainage and widen shoulders, \$258,300.

• Troy — Fourteen Mile from John R. to Deguindre, install edge drains, \$151,200; John R. at

Cumberland, widen intersection, \$70,812; John R. at Wattles, widen intersection, \$190,000.

• Bloomfield Township — Franklin Road from Hickory Grove to Telegraph, resurface, \$58,000; Lahser at Quanton, center-turn lanes, \$199,000; Franklin at Square Lake roads, \$23,896.

• Oakland Township — Stony Creek at Rochester roads, right-turn lane, \$49,000; Snell at Rochester roads, pave east approach, \$46,566.

Ford: Belts, bags save lives

Supplemental air bags and automatic safety belts have launched a new era of highway safety, a Ford Motor Co. engineer says.

Speaking to the Carolina Head Injury Foundation Conference, Robert J. Wheelock, principal research engineer in the company's automotive safety office, briefed health and rehabilitation specialists from the two-state area on new developments in vehicle occupant restraint systems.

Wheelock demonstrated an automatic safety belt system in one car and deployed an air bag in another.

"The traffic fatality rate in the United States eased downward in 1987 to an all-time low of 2.4 per 100

million vehicle miles traveled, but there is potential for dramatic reduction in the rate of both fatalities and serious injuries in the decade ahead," Wheelock said.

"We believe that improved occupant restraint technology, coupled with growing acceptance of mandatory belt-use laws, has launched a new era of highway safety."

THE MOST advanced restraint technology is the supplemental air bag system that Ford plans to have as standard equipment in 11 car lines in 1990.

Air bags are currently available as options in two models of four-door

sedans, and there are more than 31,000 of these cars in use nationally.

"The Tempo and Topaz air bag fleet has covered 390 million miles of customer travel, during which there were 1,800 accidents, including 213 that were severe enough to deploy the air bag," Wheelock said. "In each instance the system operated exactly as designed."

"Air bag systems for both the driver and right-front passenger will be standard equipment, an industry first for U.S. automobiles."

WHEELLOCK SAID the company

also is introducing motorized automatic safety belts gradually.

These belts automatically glide along a track adjacent to the door opening and wrap easily and comfortably around the upper torsos of front-seat occupants. They already are standard on several models.

"The comfort and convenience of motorized automatic safety belts has resulted in extremely favorable customer acceptance," he said. "Independent surveys show that 95 percent or more of the front-seat occupants are using the automatic shoulder belts. This extraordinarily high usage rate will translate into saved lives and reduced injuries."

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MET applicants from all age groups

Applications for the Michigan Education Trust are coming from all age groups, says state treasurer Robert A. Bowman. MET is the state's prepaid college tuition guarantee program.

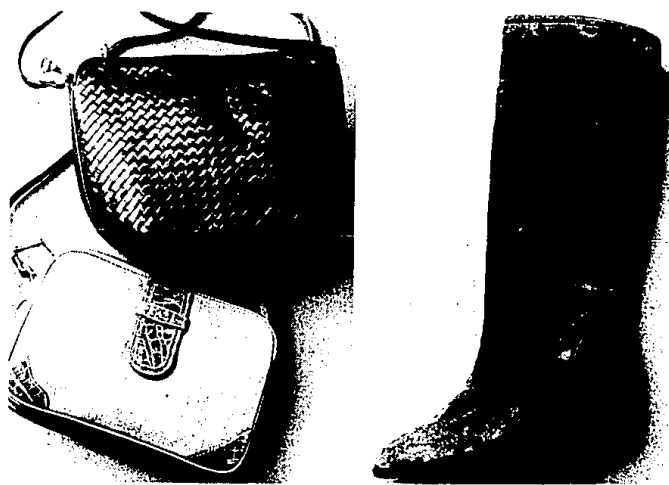
"The fact that parents signed up as many newborns as they did 10-year-olds shows the wide appeal the MET program has for parents with children of any age," Bowman said. "Such a diversity of ages among MET applicants assures parents that the trust will be financially sound."

During the MET enrollment peri-

od of Aug. 1-5, the Treasury Department received 82,495 applications. Applicants have been sent a notification card that their application has been received. MET contracts should be mailed in early September, Bowman said.

Applicants will have until the end of the year to arrange financing and return the MET contract with their payment. Treasury representatives are available to answer questions about the Michigan Education Trust on the toll-free MET hotline, 1-800-MET-4-KID.

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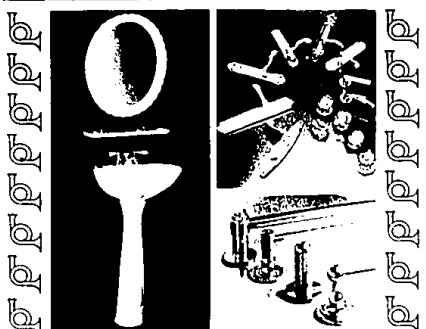
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