

# Medical school researchers pioneer new cloning process

By Kristin Snyder  
Old Gold and Black Reporter

The researchers in the School of Medicine's department of physiology and pharmacology have recently explored a new alternative to traditional stem cell research.

According to Kent Vrana, an associate professor in the department, the process, parthenogenesis, typically involves "tricking" a female egg into thinking it has been fertilized. Unlike an embryo, it will develop into a parthenote—a non-viable, non-fertilized embryo in mammals.

The process does not require the union of a male and female organism or a copy of the cell's DNA; therefore, a human fetus is not developed.

Vrana and partner Kathleen Grant, a professor in the department, have been conducting extensive research on alcoholism in monkeys in order to better understand the disease in humans.

Grant is "one of the world's experts in modeling human alcoholism in monkeys," Vrana said.

The primary goal in the research is "to understand complex human diseases using non-human models. Along the way we have found new things like parthenogenesis, which may be helpful for humans," Vrana said.

However, federal law prohibits the Medical Center from using federal money to do the stem cell research in humans.

The new technique may provide an alternative to the controversial development of viable embryos, only to destroy them for stem cell research. However, a lot of controversy will remain.

"There is no question that there are still ethical concerns," Vrana said. "A lot of people will have difficulty, and I respect that."

According to Vrana, the new process utilizes therapeutic cloning, different from reproductive cloning. Therapeutic cloning deals only with forming cloned cells in test tubes in order to provide valuable tools for curing disease.

Under normal circumstances, this technique would form a human fetus if implanted in a woman's uterus. However, according to Vrana, with the partheno-genesis process, the cell will only develop into a parthenote and not a human fetus.

On Nov. 28 Dr. Jose Cibelli, the vice president for research at Advanced Cell Technology, gave a presentation at the Medical Center concerning the use of cloning for research.

He spoke to doctors and medical-center workers about the benefits of cloned animals to be applied to human medical research. However, he emphasized that it is

too early, and there isn't enough information to begin reproductive cloning in humans.

"Unfortunately, some people who want to clone humans don't look at the animals," said Cibelli in a Nov. 29 *Winston-Salem Journal* article. "I believe this data is useful and should be taken into consideration before going ahead with human trials."

Researchers at the Worcester biotechnology company announced Nov. 25 that they had grown a six-cell human embryo.

Although the cell did not continue to develop or produce stem cells, it spawned a separate experiment directly testing stem cells. Rather than cloning, researchers used the partheno-genesis technique to copy the egg's genetic material. The experiment also failed to produce stem cells.

Some experts see the results of the experiments as a tremendous step for the field, while others disagree, condemning the experiments for not producing fully formed embryos or stem cells.

"All this does is provide support for the opposition of cloning," said Thomas Okarma, the president of the Geron biotechnology company, in a Dec. 2 *Atlanta Journal Constitution* article.

President George W. Bush has denounced the work. The Senate is being pushed to pass legislation before the Christmas recess



Max Langfitt/Old Gold and Black

**Kathleen Grant, a professor of physiology and pharmacology at the School of Medicine, is one of the faculty members exploring a new alternative to traditional stem cell research.**

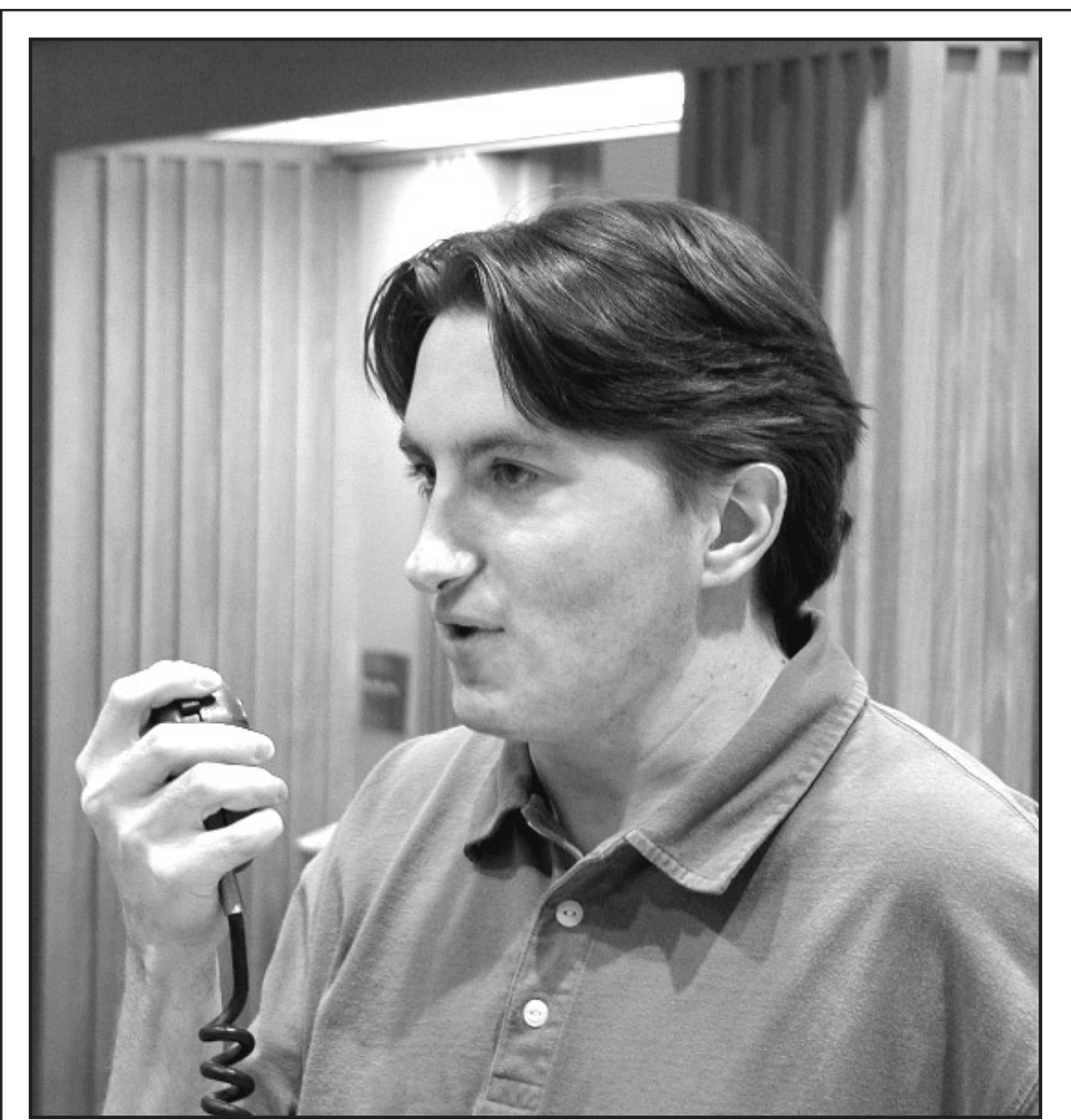
that would prohibit further work in human cloning. Bush said Aug. 9 that the government would only pay for certain stem cell experiments, while all other research in

therapeutic cloning can only be funded for within private companies, such as the Advanced Cell Technology.

"It has taken us two years to

get our team together, our equipment, our space," Grant said of his research.

"I think it is a program that will continue indefinitely."



Will Wingfield/Old Gold and Black

## Closing time

Peter Romanov, a grad student and evening circulation supervisor, announces the closing of the library at 1 a.m. Dec. 5. Until the end of the semester, the library will remain open until then to accommodate students studying for exams. The 24-hour study rooms will remain open as usual.

# Students reach out to community for AIDS Day

By Vanessa Raba  
Contributing Reporter

In recognition of World AIDS Day, a group of university students spent Dec. 1 visiting with the residents of the Holly Haven home of AIDS Care Service. This care facility, located in downtown Winston-Salem, meets the basic needs of those with HIV and AIDS and provides a supportive home-like environment conducive to rehabilitation.

Accompanied by Natascha Romeo, the university health educator, five students spent the afternoon decorating Christmas ornaments, cleaning the outside of the house, playing cards and chatting with the residents.

They also helped prepare the dinner that they provided for the Holly Haven residents and donated items to the kitchen.

Freshman Liz Lewis heard of the trip through a classmate, and took the initiative to help out after reading *Angels in America*, a play about individuals with HIV and AIDS.

"It's amazing to enter the world (of Holly Haven) after being here at Wake Forest," Lewis said. "Around here it's all about getting myself to classes and watching out for myself. This was the first thing I had done for (the center), but they made me feel really welcome. I played Spades with one resident, cooked some green beans and sat in a girl's room and watched a Lifetime movie with her. Just did everyday things. I really don't see them as being any different from any of us. It's just that they have these real problems that we don't really see at Wake."

When it opened in 1999, Holly Haven was a hospice, a quiet place for those with the disease to spend their last days. Holly Haven's activity director recalls a time when the six-bed facility "was a final peaceful resting place. But luckily, we found out that doesn't always happen. Now some come to Holly Haven and go on to live on their own."

Due to changes in treatment and rehabilitation that have occurred with respect to AIDS, the mission of Holly Haven has changed since it opened its doors. The home operates under the AIDS Care Mission Statement: "To help our brothers and sisters living with the AIDS disease improve their quality of life by responding to health needs and providing a home-like environment."

Associate Director Christine Jolly, envisions the program as providing a home for those who need extra support.

"Many of our residents have been homeless, they have been without food, they have been out of compliance with their medication, and morale is very beat up," she said. "They haven't had an environment that allows them to get well. At Holly Haven we become family."

Jolly said a typical patient stays at Holly Haven for six to seven months — which includes 24-hour holistic care, social interaction and emotional support.

"Some come to Holly Haven to get well, and we are here to help with their rehabilitation in any way we can. Some come to Holly Haven to die comfortably surrounded by family, loved ones, and we're here for them in their hour," she said.

The student-organized visit was a part of the international effort on Dec. 1 for World AIDS Day.

This year marks the 13th anniversary of World AIDS Day; the theme was, "I care. Do you?"

World AIDS Day began after the 1988 World Summit of Ministers of Health on Programmes for AIDS Prevention. The mission of those involved is to bring compassion, hope, solidarity and understanding about AIDS to every country in the world.

This year also marks the 20th year since the first case of AIDS was officially recorded.

There are currently 40 million people living with the HIV virus. World AIDS Day is the only international day of coordinated action against the disease.

## BRIEFLY

Campus organizations may have their announcements listed by sending e-mail to [news@ogb.wfu.edu](mailto:news@ogb.wfu.edu), faxing to Ext. 4561 or writing to P.O. Box 7569. The deadline for inclusion in each week's paper is 5 p.m. Monday.

### Theme year sponsors book drive for Uzbeks

The coordinating committee of the Year of Unity and Hope: *Pro Humanitate* at Work is sponsoring a drive for books for an English library founded in Uzbekistan by Jessica Jackson, '00. Books may be donated in the Student Government office in Benson 304. More information is available at [www.wfu.edu/unity](http://www.wfu.edu/unity).

### Scholarship available for victims' families

The National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities and the Citizens' Scholarship Foundation of America has established the Families of Free-

dom Scholarship Fund to provide scholarship support based on financial need for dependents of those killed or permanently disabled as a result of the terrorist attacks on America.

Eligible students can apply for the scholarship for the second semester of the current academic year. For more information, contact CSFA at 1-877-862-0136 or e-mail [freedom@csfa.org](mailto:freedom@csfa.org).

### Salvation Army now collecting winter coats

The Salvation Army is collecting winter coats until Dec. 10 to distribute to those who cannot afford them. Coats can be dropped off at any A Cleaner World dry cleaners in the Triad area. Anyone who is unable to drop off a coat to the

dry cleaners, but would still like to donate on should contact Grant Brown at [browgu1@wfu.edu](mailto:browgu1@wfu.edu).

### Fall textbook buyback set for finals week

The University Bookstore will buy back used textbooks from the fall semester from Dec. 10 to 15. Students can return their current textbooks to the bookstore in exchange for cash throughout the week.

### Applications for Dijon program now available

Applications for the fall 2002 Dijon program are available in the Romance languages office in

Greene 325. Completed applications should be turned in by Dec. 7. For more information, contact Stephen Murphy at Ext. 5492 or [murphy@wfu.edu](mailto:murphy@wfu.edu).

### Museum shop holding holiday sale

The Museum of Anthropology Shop is currently holding its annual holiday sale which will last until Dec. 22.

The shop features unique folk crafts and jewelry from the cultures of Africa, Asia and the Americas, in addition to a wide array of tree ornaments.

Note cards featuring illustrations of objects from the Museum's collections can be purchased as well.

Students, faculty and staff will

receive a 10 percent discount on purchases \$5 and above, while Museum Friends receive a 20 percent discount.

Shop hours are 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Saturday. For more information, please call Ext. 5282 or e-mail [moa@wfu.edu](mailto:moa@wfu.edu).

### Service organization planning spring break

Wake Alternative Break, is an agency of Volunteer Service Corps that plans spring break trips to various cities where groups volunteer a few hours each day and explore the cities in the evenings. If you are interested in helping plan a trip contact Melissa Henderson at [hendma0@wfu.edu](mailto:hendma0@wfu.edu).

### Student Development sponsoring angel tree

Volunteer Services and the Office of Student Development

are sponsoring an angel tree. Students can take an angel off the tree located in the Benson lobby and buy the gift written on the back.

Wrapped gifts can then be taken to Benson 317 by Dec. 14.

For more information, call Ext. 5921.

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