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MEDICAL ADVANCES

UMC doctor performs new prostate laser surgery



Dr. Sanjay Ramakumar, UMC urology surgeon, has pioneered a new surgical method for a laparoscopic prostatectomy, or removal of the prostate gland.

WILL SEBERGER/Arizona Daily Wildcat

Laparoscopic surgery brings new hope for prostate cancer patients

By Shelly Shelton
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

University Medical Center made history last month when Dr. Sanjay Ramakumar performed the hospital's first laparoscopic prostate removal, making UMC the only medical institution in the Southwest to perform the operation.

The procedure, laparoscopic radical prostatectomy, is a minimally-invasive laser surgery that requires half the healing time of open surgery.

The process relies on only a few small incisions, usually about five millimeters, rather than a large cut in the abdomen to remove the entire prostate and then attach the urethra directly to the bladder. The laparoscope guides the surgeon through one site, while other surgeons and a voice-controlled robotic arm operate through the other incisions, according to the Kongrad Urology Web site.

The scope then sends magnified images to a monitor that can be easily viewed by all people in the operating room, allowing for more accuracy during the process.

"It places us at the top of the field of urology," said Associate Professor of Surgery Craig Comiter, UMC's chief of urology. "I give Dr. Ramakumar full credit for that."

Ramakumar is currently the only surgeon in southern Arizona certified to perform the procedure. However, the success of the LRP has enabled UMC to recruit another LRP surgeon to come on board July 1, Comiter said.

July 1 is also the target date to begin teaching the surgery to students, he said.

See SURGEON/3

SafeRide express shuttle takes off

The closure of Park Student Union sparks new late-night shuttle service for students

By Rebekah Kleinman
NEWS EDITOR

The SafeRide Express Shuttle made its debut last night, and didn't stop running until 4 a.m.

The shuttle, a joint effort between ASUA, SafeRide and the Arizona Student Unions, will operate seven days a week from 6:30 p.m. to 4 a.m.

In its first night, the service transported between 30 and 40 students to various areas on campus, beginning at the Student Union Memorial Center.

SafeRide Director Sharjeel Durrani said he expects the number of passengers to increase in upcoming weeks as more students become aware of the service.

"Slowly the word is getting out there," he said.

The shuttle's six stops include the new Student Union Memorial Center, the Integrated Learning Center, the science library, Yavapai Residence Hall, Arizona-Sonora Residence Hall and Gila Residence Hall — all of which are also stops on the Cat Tran route. In mapping the route along that of the Cat Tran, Durrani hopes students will become more comfortable using the Express Shuttle.

See SAFERIDE/3

Anti-virus software does little to protect computers

By Arek Sarkissian II
STAFF WRITER

With thousands of data-munching, system-speed-slowing viruses created every day, computer users and experts alike are struggling to protect their systems.

The bugs are finding new and faster ways of entering machines across campus and in homes, because nearly as soon as software protection programs detect one, another seems to slip

through the cracks, said Chris Carpenter, systems analyst for the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences computer network.

Carpenter said that many users rely too heavily on their virus protection software; meanwhile their systems often continue to contract viruses the old-fashioned way, through e-mails that promise anything from riches to explicit pictures.

"The biggest factor is the human factor, people just don't know," Carpenter said.

Ted Frohling, network systems analyst for the Center for Computing and Information Technology agreed. He said that while viruses that attack thousands of computers across the nation might be making headlines, it might be too much to say that awareness is increasing.

"I'd be hopeful to say that's happening, but I don't think it is," Frohling said.

What is increasing, however, is the susceptibility of systems to viruses that spread through

See VIRUS/3

Last chance to vote in student elections

By Kristina Dunham
ASSISTANT NEWS EDITOR

Tomorrow morning, 13 UA students will wake up and partake in their normal morning activities. The only difference is they will no longer be an ASUA candidate, but an elected student body officer.

Today is the last day of the 2003 Associated Students of the University of Arizona general

election. Students can go online to vote for student body president, administrative vice president, executive vice president and senators until 8 p.m. Winners will be announced an

hour later at Gentle Ben's on East University Boulevard.

Students may also access the voting ballot at a kiosk set up on the north side of the Student Union Memorial Center.

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