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February 2004

University News

### ARVIDSON TEAM WORKING ON MARS

**MISSION:** While NASA engineers and scientists determined how to roll the Spirit robotic rover onto the Martian surface, the No. 2 scientist for the mission, Raymond Arvidson, Ph.D., the James S. McDonnell Distinguished University Professor and chair of the Department of Earth and Planetary Sciences, and other Washington University personnel were doing their part to make the project a success.

### THE NEW YORK TIMES SPOTLIGHT:

Washington University's ascent from "streetcar college" to the elite ranks of the nation's finest research universities was the subject of a front-page feature in the December 22, 2003, edition of *The New York Times*. The article notes that the University recently moved into the top 10 of *U.S. News & World Report* rankings. "Such an ascent is what almost every university strives for, but none have come close to matching Washington's success," says education reporter Greg Winter.

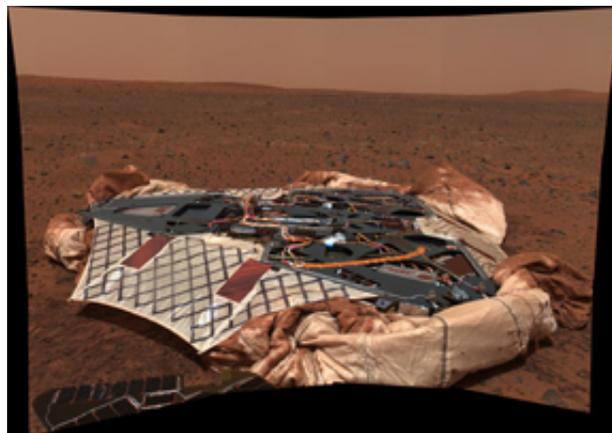


Image courtesy of NASA/JPL/Cornell  
This image mosaic taken by the panoramic camera onboard the Mars Exploration Rover Spirit shows the rover's landing site, the Columbia Memorial Station, at Gusev Crater, Mars.

**SURPRISING LITTLE PLAY:** Tennessee Williams lost a playwriting contest? It happened in 1937, when Williams' broad, anti-war farce, *Me Vashya*, placed fourth in a student competition at Washington University. It was a brutal blow to the shy young playwright -- then known as Tom -- who uncharacteristically stormed into his professor's office before storming out of St. Louis altogether, expunging *Me Vashya* from his list of works and his time at Washington University from his 1975 *Memoirs*. The play, never published or performed, will debut on the Edison Theatre stage February 6.

**NEW FACILITY TO SPEED GENETIC TREATMENTS:** The Good Manufacturing Practice facility, a high-tech haven of cleanliness and environmental control comparable to the orbiting International Space Station, will make it easier for researchers to engineer and manipulate cells for use in a variety of new treatments.

## Research

WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY CENTER FOR



**MIND/BODY:** A team of researchers at Washington University School of Medicine is creating a new Center for Mind/Body Research to focus particular attention on how mind/body interactions affect human health. The Center will focus specifically on ways in which mental health affects diabetes, heart disease, cancer, and



other illnesses.

### CANADIAN DRUG IMPORTS: PROBLEMATIC POLICY?

Jackson Nickerson, Ph.D., associate professor of organization and strategy in the John M. Olin School of Business, says that allowing the import of drugs from Canada would likely raise prices for both Canadian and U.S. consumers. Nickerson is currently engaged in a major research initiative with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration and the pharmaceutical industry to modernize the regulation of manufacturing and product quality.

### ALCOHOL-DEPENDENCE GENE IDENTIFIED:

Investigators at Washington University School of Medicine and other research centers have identified a gene that appears to increase the risk of alcoholism. The study, published in the January issue of the journal *Alcoholism: Clinical and Experimental Research*, is the first to demonstrate an association between this particular gene and alcohol dependence.

## Features

ARE GAMBLERS IMPULSIVE? Casual gamblers may be no more impulsive than non-gamblers when it comes to discounting the value of a delayed reward in favor of a smaller amount of cash on hand. But gamblers are more likely than non-gamblers to take a chance on a possible higher payoff instead of taking a smaller guaranteed reward, according to three psychology researchers at Washington University.

A DIFFERENT KIND OF CHEMO: The young science of chemoprevention follows leads from traditional medicine to find new ways of reducing cancer risk. Ming You, M.D., Ph.D., professor of surgery, is determined to convince both the general public and other faculty members at the School of Medicine that not only is chemoprevention a hard science, it is a field in which the potential benefits are worth pursuing.

LOSING YOUR KEYS: With the graying of America, millions of people across the nation are facing the same tough issue: when is it no longer safe for some drivers to be on the road? Driving performance declines at a different rate for every individual, says John C. Morris, M.D., director of the Washington University Center for Aging and co-director of the University's Alzheimer's Disease Research Center.



An herbal tea mixture has been shown to reduce the rates of esophageal cancers. Will green tea be the next chemopreventive agent?

## Kudos

Ramesh Agarwal, Ph.D., the William Palm Professor of Mechanical Engineering, has been named a fellow of the American Physical Society.

George Burris, director of off-campus housing, received the highest honor the National Association of College Auxiliary Services bestows, the Robert F. Newton Award for Distinguished Service.

John Hoal, Ph.D., associate professor of architecture and urban design, has been selected to receive the National 2004 Institute Honor Award for Regional and Urban Design from the American Institute of Architects.

Michael A. Kass, M.D., professor and chairman of the Department of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences, was awarded the 2003 Lewis Rudin Glaucoma Prize by The New York Academy of Medicine.

Jeffrey H. Miner, Ph.D., associate professor of medicine and of cell biology and physiology, received the 2003 AstraZeneca Young Investigator Award from the American Physiological Society Renal Section.

Paul C. Paris, Ph.D., senior professor of mechanical engineering, received the Walter J. and Angeline H. Crichlow Trust Prize from the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics.

Frank C-P Yin, Ph.D., the Stephen F. and Camilla T. Brauer Professor and chairman of the Department of Biomedical Engineering, has been elected to chair the College of Fellows of the American Institute of Medical and Biological Engineering.

## Announcements

The symposium "Tennessee Williams: The Secret Year" runs February 12-14. In addition to *Me Vashya*, which will be introduced by the playwright's brother, Dakin Williams, the event includes performances of *The Glass Menagerie* and a program of five early short works, lectures by Williams scholars, an exhibition of photographs and manuscripts, and a bus tour of Williams-related historical sites. For more information, call (314) 935-7025, or [visit the symposium Web page](#).

Additional public performances of *Me Vashya* and *The Glass Menagerie* take place at 8 p.m. February 6, 7 and 14; and at 2 p.m. February 7, 8 and 15. For ticket information, call the Edison Theatre Box Office at 314-935-6543.

The Midwest Alcoholism Research Center presents the Fourth Annual Guze Symposium on Alcoholism, Thursday, February 19, 2004, at the Eric P. Newman Education Center at Washington University Medical Center. For more information, call 314-286-2258, or e-mail: [GuzeSymp@matlock.wustl.edu](mailto:GuzeSymp@matlock.wustl.edu)

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One Brookings Drive, St. Louis, MO 63130  
(314) 935-5200