HUC green roof features fresh herbs for your dining pleasure

UAB’s four campus buildings featuring green vegetative roofs have performed well through the years, but are largely out of view of the public. The latest vegetative roof can be viewed up close and personal.

Eight university departments and student organizations recently built and planted the first easily visible vegetative roof on the second floor of the Hill University Center. The roof is the first pilot-scale green roof at UAB to include an irrigation system, supporting mostly native plants and fresh herbs that Sodexo chefs will use to prepare meals in the Blazer Café Food Court.

“This has just been a phenomenal project,” says Julie Price, a fourth-year doctoral student in biology under Stephen Watts, Ph.D., and coordinator of the development. “These groups have worked together tremendously well to construct something that has a real opportunity to be attractive to everyone who passes. We have flowering plants and evergreens, and they’re all butterfly attractors. We expect to see birds and moths around. It’s going to be great to see what this will become.”

Departments including Biology, Engineering, Facilities Roofing Maintenance, Campus Services & Grounds, and Energy Management and student groups including Science & Technology Honors Program, Leadership Foundations and the Green Initiative all contributed to the project, which is one of the first developments by UAB’s Sustainability Committee to come to fruition, says Olen Pruitt, assistant vice president for Facilities Management.

“The Sustainability Committee is trying to encourage the use of green roofs and gather the information and publicize and market it,” Pruitt says. “This is a pilot program. What we’re trying to do is demonstrate that green roofs are practical, economical, great for the environment and great for research. This is getting students involved in a real application of their skills. It’s not just theoretical any more. They’re doing research on real roofs. Hopefully they can learn from here and encourage new structures like this one to be built and used wherever they go to work.”

The buildings on campus that currently have green vegetative roofs include the Halsey Building, the engineering side of the Business-Engineering Complex, Chemistry Building and Campbell Hall. Chemistry and Campbell Hall house several test roofs, and there are research beds on the BEC. Most of these roofs have been operational for two years or more.

The new roof on the HUC — while significantly smaller than the others — is the most complex both in build and in plant selection.

The roof features a 20,000-gallon drip-irrigation system that catches the rainwater and uses a minimum amount of water to keep the plants properly hydrated.

“It’s a drip irrigation system, but it has capability dispensers on it that really minimize the amount of water needed to keep it moist,” says Robert Peters, Ph.D., professor of environmental engineering.

Diabetes study embodies SOM strategic plan

Progress toward aspirations outlined in the UAB School of Medicine’s Strategic Plan is evident in a new study that found existing high-blood-pressure drugs may counter diabetes. Led by Anath Shalev, M.D., director of the UAB Comprehensive Diabetes Center, the study builds on UAB’s historic strength in diabetes research to propose a novel, future treatment approach to the disease.

Diabetes, obesity and metabolism represent one of seven thematic priority areas in the plan where the leadership of UAB has committed to strategic investment.

Shalev’s study, published March 22 in the journal Diabetes, found that a common high-blood-pressure medication appears to reverse the diabetes-related death of insulin-producing, pancreatic beta cells in both Type 1 and Type 2 diabetes. The finding is especially important because, of the nearly 26 million adult patients with diabetes, 67 percent also have high blood pressure.

The authors argue that the findings, while in human pancreatic islets and diabetic mice — could have clinical implications as physicians consider that calcium channel blockers may address two major, related diseases. They also found evidence in past clinical trials that the study drug verapamil may slow diabetes. No one suspected that calcium channel blockers might reverse beta cell death because past studies measured their effect on heart attacks, not blood sugar.

UAB researchers were surprised to find hints of verapamil’s effect amid their effort to design a drug to shut down a protein called TXNIP. They had previously published several papers describing
Get tickets for the Fiesta Ball 2012
The Young Supporters Board of the UAB Comprehensive Cancer Center will present the opportunity to celebrate Cinco de Mayo for a cause.
The Fiesta Ball, to be held at 6 p.m. Thursday, May 3 at B&A Warehouse, is a fun-filled, Mexican-themed event like no other. Guests will enjoy live music, Mexican food, beer and wine — all while supporting the UAB Comprehensive Cancer Center.
Tickets are $30 in advance, $35 at the door. Visit www.uab.edu/fiesta for tickets or more information.

Ingalls/UAB NAS Award accepting nominations
To be eligible, the faculty member must be a full-time, regular employee, be a past recipient of the President’s Award for Excellence in Teaching and have served UAB for 20 or more years.
Nominate someone by completing and submitting a nomination package by May 11. Guidelines and a nomination form (with a listing of eligible faculty) are available from Linda Pitts, 934-9438 or lapitteo@uab.edu.

Register for lab-safety workshop
Attend a one-day course on laboratory safety May 22 for in-depth discussions and demonstrations on biosafety, chemical safety, hazardous materials waste, general safety, environmental and emergency management.
There is a $25 fee for UAB employees; a catered lunch will be provided. Register at www.hr.com.uab.edu/learning-system.

Surplus auctions set
A public auction will be held at 9 a.m. Wednesday, May 9 to dispose of surplus used equipment in the University Stores Warehouse, which has relocated to 3313 First Ave. North. Registration will begin at 8:30 a.m. See items available for sale from 8:30 a.m. to noon and 1 to 4:30 p.m. May 7-8. A chair and office furniture sale will be held at 9 a.m. Friday, May 16.
The warehouse will be closed to the campus April 30-May 4 to prepare for the public auction. Direct questions to 934-3344 or 934-5144.

UAB biotech company wins funding
Proteomic Profiling Technologies LLC, a UAB biotechnology company, won $21,780 in proof-of-concept funding from the Economic Development Partnership of Alabama. The startup company founded by Michael Heaven, a graduate assistant in the Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Genetics, was one of four to split the Alabama Launchpad competition’s $100,000 prize.

Researchers look for online scam victims
Kent Kerley, Ph.D., and Heith Copes, Ph.D., are conducting a study of Alabama residents who have been victimized by work-at-home online scams. The associate professors in the UAB Department of Justice Sciences will look at how the scams are designed and delivered, what made them attractive to the victims, how it affected the victims and why they decided to contact or not contact law enforcement.

Volunteers will receive $40 for their participation in the study and will be given a short interview lasting 30 minutes to an hour. If you are interested, email crkerley@uab.edu or jhcopes@uab.edu. Visit www.Operation-Swordfish.com for more information.

Employee of the Month nominations needed
Each month, UAB recognizes an outstanding employee for their dedication, hard work, and contributions to our success. If you know of a great employee who exemplifies what is best about UAB and would like to nominate them for Employee of the Month, just send at least three letters of nomination using examples and as much detail as possible to bweldon@uab.edu. Hard copy nominations can be submitted through campus mail at Employee of the Month Committee, AB 360, 1103.

Pre-doc fellowships available in NORC
Pre-doctoral fellowships are available in the Nutrition Obesity Research Center to U.S. citizens or permanent residents. NORC studies virtually all aspects of obesity ranging from molecular biology to epidemiology. Applications are due June 7. Learn more at www.norc.uab.edu.

Attend Football 101
Learn more about the fundamentals of football at Football 101 for Women hosted by UAB Football Coach Garrick McGee and his wife from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. May 5 in the UAB Alumni House. The cost is $25 and includes lunch.
Sonographer uses life’s adventures as backdrop for novel

Laurie Van Dermark spends her weekends working two 12-hour shifts in the ultrasound department.

In her free time she loves to write and has a special place in her heart for charities, especially ONE, Partners in Health and Friends of Chimbote. Van Dermark put her love for writing to good use by writing her first novel — “The Battered Heiress Blues” — that was recently released.

Van Dermark’s life is full of interesting tidbits; she’s lived in New Zealand, traveled to Chimbote, Peru in 2000 as a missionary to learn about the social and political misunderstandings that contribute to poverty and adopted two children from Guatemala. Now, she is writing her second novel.

All of these life experiences have influenced her writing.

“Absolutely they have,” says Van Dermark, a Newman, Ga., native who has worked at UAB since June 2010. Portions of the book take place in Chimbote where I do missionary work. That was a place I could use as a backdrop for the book where I could highlight the violence and different things that occur there near the mission.”

Van Dermark recently spoke to The Reporter about her job, her book, her family and her passion to help the poor.

Q. What’s appealing about the ultrasound department?
A. I am月薪 to work under the best radiologists in the country. Their knowledge and guidance serves to elevate my job performance. The Baylor shift also provides the flexibility I need to write during the week.

Q. What made you decide to be a sonographer?
A. The practice of sonography changes daily and is extremely operator-dependent. Today's sonographer must possess a high level of skill in order to provide exam details that can successfully aid in properly diagnosing a patient. I enjoy these daily challenges.

Q. What took you to New Zealand, and how was life there?
A. Adventure. I was fortunate enough to be granted permanent residency status when I moved to Tauranga, New Zealand. The residents are beyond words! The kiwi lifestyle is vastly different from how we live in the states. We are a bit more hamsters on a wheel compared to their family-focused, casual approach to enjoying life. Americans tend to work hard/play hard. Kiwis tend to work hard/play hard.

Q. OK, spill it — what’s the secret to writing a great novel?
A. A great novel is the result of an inspired author.

Q. The story’s main character is philanthropist Julia Spencer. Does she resemble you?
A. We are kindred spirits in our love and compassion for the poor and our thirst for social justice. “Jewels” may be a bit more direct than me, but I’ve never suffered from meekness.

Q. How did your trip to Chimbote, Peru, influence you?
A. The conditions in which the global poor live are outrageous. I was appalled to see large families crowded into one-room shacks with dirt floors, no electricity or running water and very little food to share. The poor have limited to no access to medical care or education. Father Jack Davis oversees Our Lady of Perpetual Help in Chimbote and has been instrumental in soliciting medical missions from various teaching hospitals to attend to the needs of the poor. Governments must be held accountable for the conditions that they allow their citizens to endure. We are all responsible as equal heirs in this life that we’ve been granted.

Q. Did these trips influence your decision to adopt?
A. I traveled to Guatemala to be united with my son several months before my first trip to Chimbote. Choosing adoption is a very sacred decision — a calling. A good number of the children at orphanages are not actually considered adoptable. They are left for a period of time so that their parents can leave to find work.

Q. Why are you a supporter of ONE, Partners in Health and Friends of Chimbote?
A. ONE aims to fight extreme poverty through trade reform and policy changes by urging members to apply political pressure to those who legislate. PFI believes that all people should receive medical care regardless of social standing, ability to pay or the simple unfortunate consequence of being born in an oppressed region. Friends of Chimbote raises funds to support a medical clinic, a shelter for battered women, a drug rehabilitation center, a hospice and provide mission jobs and school tuition. A share of Coats for Chimbote and links to the charities I support can be found on my website, www.laurievandermark.com.

Q. Where is the book for sale?
A. The Battered Heiress Blues is available on Amazon.com, Kindle and all major book retailers. Thanks for the support. I appreciate my UAB family.

A professor marked the two-year anniversary of the largest of offshore oil spill in U.S. history. UAB researchers continue to seek solutions and measure the impact of the Deepwater Horizon disaster even as public attention shifts.

“The created the UAB Gulf Oil Response Initiative to allow our world-class researchers to study the long-term effect of the oil spill has on the environment and the community,” says Thomas M. DiLorenzo, Ph.D., dean of the UAB College of Arts and Sciences.

Minimizing disasters

Kugenia Khatsianv pea. Ph.D. works with nanotechnology in the Department of Chemistry. “We have created microspores that, once they are tested and approved, will be used en masse to absorb oil spills to reduce the immediately danger,” she says. “After absorption, these microspores will then decompose the oil into safer chemicals and compounds and decrease environmental waste.”

Mickie Powell, Ph.D., a research assistant professor in the Department of Biology, is looking at high-sensitivity toxicity screening of dispersants and residual oil using molecular biomarkers. Elizabeth Gardner, Ph.D., an assistant professor in the Department of Justice Sciences, also is using molecular biomarkers as she researches the effects of oil-degrading bacteria.

Measuring impact today

Kent Kerley, Ph.D., an associate professor of criminal justice, and Michael Howell, Moroney, Ph.D., an associate professor of public administration, are looking at the social and attitudinal effects of the oil spill on residents of the Gulf Coast.

They are interested in finding out what residents think about the spill, who they think is to blame and who they still trust. Their survey asks about people’s perception of offshore oil drilling, government involvement and accountability.

There are nearly 16,000 species that call the Gulf of Mexico home. This includes endangered species like the loggerhead sea turtle that had nearly 70,000 turtle eggs relocated to prevent hatchlings from swimming into the oily Gulf and eating crude-soaked food. It also includes the diamondback terrapin that is listed as the highest conservation concern.

Thane Wibbels, Ph.D., a professor of reproductive biology, has studied turtles for more than 25 years. He is looking at the genetic implications of relocating the loggerhead eggs and the effect the oil spill has had on the health and reproduction of the loggerheads.

Small species, large impact

R. Douglas Watson, Ph.D., a professor of endocrinology and developmental biology, is studying endocrine disruption and the impact on basic cellular and physiological processes in invertebrate species.

Shahid Mukhtar, Ph.D., a research assistant professor of functional genomics and systems biology, is researching zooplankton and how it is affected by the Corexit dispersant. Zooplankton is the model system for studies in ecology and evolution, and its depletion could set the stage for the collapse of higher organisms.

Karolina Mukhtar, Ph.D., an assistant professor in plant molecular biology, is studying the toxic effect of the oil spill on turfgrass. Seagrasses trap and stabilize sediment, restrict water flow, inhibit erosion and promote deposition. Moreover, it serves as a food source for many benthic invertebrates and as a nursery area for many fish.

The UAB Gulf Oil Response Initiative funded 16 university projects for a total of $300,344.

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Well, we did it. We survived — and thrived — during the 10-week Scale Back Alabama competition, which took place from Jan. 21 through April 13. And it wasn’t just the 16 of us in our own little competition in the Office of Public Relations & Marketing and the Comprehensive Cancer Center who had success. More than 600 UAB employees lost a combined 5,533 pounds during the competition. That’s more than 18,729 pounds. 11,723 Big Macs, 17 Sumo wrestlers, 10 lions and three 1969 Volkswagons to put it in a real-world perspective.

“Our participants shattedtered last year’s weight-loss results by 1,300 pounds,” says Lauren Whitt, Ph.D., coordinator of UAB Wellness and adjunct professor in the Department of Human Studies. “It was an exceptional showing and an overwhelming success for many of our faculty, staff and students.”

This year’s participants did lose an impressive amount of weight:

• 246 people lost more than 10 pounds
• 48 people lost more than 20 pounds
• 15 people lost 30 pounds

I’m excited to say the employees in our departmental competition filled each of those categories. We had one person lose 32 pounds, five more lose more than 20 and two lost more than 10.

As a group of 16, we lost 227 pounds (more than 14 pounds apiece!), or the equivalent of 1.19 U.S. males or 1.38 U.S. females. So we lost a person, and have no interest in finding him.

Overall, nine UAB teams had all four members lose 10 or more pounds, making them eligible for the statewide $1,000 apace prize. Winners will be announced during a webcast April 30 at www.scalebackalabama.com.

Whitt says Scale Back works because it sets participants up for success.

“The program sets a reasonable weight-loss goal of one pound per week and provides educational resources, healthy eating tips and weekly lesson plans to help participants stay on track,” Whitt says. “We hope all employees who have not yet achieved their goal weight will continue striving to lose 1-2 pounds a week.”

Scale Back Alabama requires participants to compete in teams of four, with each member striving to lose 10 pounds in 10 weeks, or one pound per week. “Scale Back teams give us a support group and help people stay accountable,” Whitt says.

At the end of 10 weeks, weigh-outs were completed at various locations, and winners were announced. Prize drawings were held for three categories: teams with all four members losing 10 pounds, individuals losing more than 10 pounds, and individuals losing more than five pounds. The Alys Stephens Center, UAB Campus Recreation, UAB Hospital Health Club, UAB Dermatology, UAB EatRight, UAB Hospital Food and Nutrition Services, UAB Athletics and Zen Yogurt provided prizes for UAB competitors.

Scale Back Alabama was initially brought to UAB in 2007, and faculty and staff have lost more than 27,300 pounds in the past six years.

“We are excited that faculty and staff have made a choice to lose weight and get healthier,” Whitt says. “Weight-management and healthy living is a daily choice, and utilizing Scale Back helps UAB continue to build a healthy culture.”

Whitt says UAB Wellness will do its part to help faculty and staff build on their success and help those who want to get started. A new program will kick off in June in conjunction with the Farmer’s Market in the North Pavilion that will enable employees to track their blood pressure and weight on a weekly basis.

“We’re going to be working with the advance nursing group to offer blood-pressure screenings, BMI and waist measurements on Friday’s in June in the North Pavilion,” Whitt says. “Faculty, staff and visitors from the community will be able to get blood-pressure checks and monitor and measure it during the summer so they can continue to lose weight and focus on blood pressure.”

This will mark UAB’s first summertime wellness program, and Whitt promises more programs will be put in place to help employees on their quest to become healthier.

“This is just the beginning,” Whitt says. “We have more coming.”

For more healthy tips and employee programs, visit UAB Employee Wellness at www.uab.edu/wellness.

— Tyler Greer

Faculty, staff honored, new appointments made

Navin Nanda, M.D., distinguished professor of medicine in the UAB Division of Cardiovascular Disease and director of the echocardiography laboratories at UAB, has been named ‘The Father of Modern Echocardiography’ by the Indian Association of Cardiovascular and Thoracic Anesthesiologists for his ‘pioneering contributions in all fields of cardiac ultrasound, including peri-operative echocardiography.” The honor was conferred at the group's annual conference in New Delhi.

Bruce Korf, M.D., Ph.D., professor and chair of the UAB Department of Community Health, has been named president of the American College of Medical Genetics Foundation for Genetic and Genomic Medicine. The foundation is a national nonprofit foundation dedicated to improving health and patient care through the support of research, education and the safe, effective practice of genetic and genomic medicine.

Massoud Leesar, M.D., has been named section chief of Interventional Cardiology, professor in the UAB Division of Cardiovascular Disease and co-director of the UAB Heart and Vascular Center. He is nationally recognized for his research in fractional flow reserve and intravascular ultrasound. Before coming to UAB, Leesar was professor of medicine, director of Cardiac and Vascular Invasive Services and associate chief of the Division of Cardiology at the University of Cincinnati.

Mark F. Sasse, M.D., has joined the section of interventional cardiology in the UAB Division of Cardiovascular Disease as an associate professor. Sasse has extensive clinical experience in coronary and peripheral intervention and a burgeoning interest in structural heart disease. Prior to joining UAB, Sasse was director of the William S. Middleton Memorial Veterans Hospital Cardiac Catheterization Laboratory and a staff interventional cardiologist at the University of Wisconsin.

Louis “Troy” Brustmng, M.D., has joined the UAB Division of Cardiothoracic Surgery as an associate professor. Brustmng is an internationally recognized authority on robotic and minimally invasive cardiac surgery techniques, and comes to UAB from Mercy St. Vincent Medical Center in Toledo, Ohio.

Ami Iskandrian, M.D., professor of medicine and director of nuclear cardiology in the UAB Division of Cardiovascular Disease, is the editor of a newly released Atlas of Nuclear Cardiology: Imaging Companion to Braunwald’s Heart Disease, a companion to Braunwald’s Heart Disease textbook. It provides the most clinically relevant, case-based, evidence-based, practical and contemporary atlas of nuclear cardiology and features color images and a DVD with videos.

Christopher A. Girkir, M.D., MSPH, has been named chair of the UAB Department of Ophthalmology. Girkir, who has been interim department chair since October 2011, has been on the faculty at UAB since 1999.

The UAB Center for Aging has appointed two new associate director. Ali Ahmed, M.D., MPH, professor of medicine and epidemiology, will direct the Advanced Illness, Multi-Morbidity and Heart Failure Research Program. Lori L. McMahon, Ph.D., professor and director of the Comprehensive Neuroscience Center, will direct the Neuroscience and Aging Program.
New weight-loss study to focus on keeping the pounds away

Anybody who has ever attempted to lose weight can attest to the difficulty. Changing eating habits, learning to exercise and gaining self-control isn’t easy. But once you’ve reached your goals, the next hurdle is often a little bit higher — keeping the weight off.

Gareth Dutton, Ph.D., associate professor of preventive medicine, is seeking participants for the Improving Weight Loss (iMWeL) study, which aims to learn what types of long-term programs help people manage weight-loss over time. Dutton hypothesizes that brief but intensive periods of follow-up care may serve to bolster patients’ motivation and more effectively address any relapse problems.

“As difficult as it is to lose weight, weight-loss maintenance is inherently more challenging,” Dutton says. “The abundance of new technology has contributed to creating a more sedentary lifestyle for many, and of course there are lots of high-calorie, high-fat foods readily available to us any time of the day or night. There are biological factors at play, too. Our bodies may respond to weight-loss by reducing its rate of energy expenditure, and subsequent hormonal changes may increase our appetite.

But motivation also plays a big role. Sure, we’re motivated to get the weight off, but keeping it off? “The thing is, maintaining the same weight — even if it’s a new, healthier weight — is less fun and reinforcing than losing weight,” Dutton says. “When you're initially losing weight, that’s rewarding and people are noticing. You’re feeling better and your clothes are fitting better. It’s not as much fun to wake up tomorrow and weigh the same as you weighed yesterday. It’s not as reinforcing. And that can be a battle.”

There is good news, however. Many people are very successful in long-term maintenance. Dutton says the research at UAB and elsewhere has developed a better picture of those characteristics and behaviors that have clinical implications through the connection with verapamil.

“It is very exciting to see the strategic plan come to life in studies like this one, which has the potential to improve the lives of patients in Birmingham, the state and beyond,” says Ray L. Watts, M.D., senior vice president and dean of the School of Medicine. “The work of Dr. Shaley and her colleagues serves as a fine example of how we are expanding UAB's capability to drive treatment advances as an internationally renowned research university.”

Specifically, strategic plan investment has enabled the diabetes center to establish an Inlet Biology Core that offers specialized measurement technology, including some that enabled Shaley’s team to determine whether beta cells lived or died under varying conditions. Moving forward, another strategic plan-supported initiative — a Seed Funding Request for Applications (RFA) in Glucose Homeostasis — will fund three additional research projects within the diabetes center. That support also has made it possible for three outstanding UAB researchers — John Chatham, Yabing Chen and Martin Young — to enter the diabetes field as part of multidisciplinary projects. Chatham’s proj- ect focuses on another signaling pathway in beta cells, and the team plans to explore its interplay with the TXNIP pathway. Taken together, the strategic plan support promises to help the team compete for exter- nal diabetes funding down the road, Shaley says.

In a new preventive medicine study, Gareth Dutton hopes to determine what types of long-term programs help people manage weight-loss over time. Overweight and obese adults can enroll in a 16-week behavioral weight-loss program. Those who achieve a pre-specified amount of weight loss are then eligible for the 12-month study.

On the iMWeL study or to take part, call 975-7108 or e-mail IM WeL@dopm.uab.edu.

Dutton says there are several factors that combine to make keeping lost weight off difficult:

1. The fixed-interval schedule, such as monthly visits. However, we do not really know the best formula for each complete assessment. All information given as part of the trial is confidential. For more information about the study, call 975-7108 or e-mail IMWeL@dopm.uab.edu.

2. The trial will examine the effects of an alternative schedule of follow-up, which Dutton refers to as a clustered campaign approach. This alternative approach will include sets of clustered treatment sessions that share common themes or campaigns.

3. Participants will have more frequent contacts with treatment staff during these brief periods of time, which Dutton believes may offer novelty and keep participants engaged in long-term treatment as well.

4. The trial will include sets of clustered campaign approach and a self-directed comparison condition.

5. To evaluate this alternative approach, overweight and obese adults will be enrolled to participate in a 16-week behavioral weight-loss program. Those who achieve a pre-specified amount of weight loss (5 percent of initial body weight) will be eligible and randomized into a 12-month extended-care weight-loss maintenance program. The purpose of the randomized trial is to compare the weight-loss maintenance outcomes of two extended-care obesity programs — the clustered campaign approach and a self-directed campaign condition.

6. The study, which is funded by the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases (NIDDK) through the National Institutes of Health (NIH), will take place in Medical Towers, and there is no cost for participation. Study participants will receive a $25 gift card for each complete assessment. All information given as part of the trial is confidential. For more information about the study, call 975-7108 or e-mail IMWeL@dopm.uab.edu.

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VF Corporation honored for commitment to public health

VF Corporation honored for commitment to public health

T
could they have rebuilt it anywhere. That was a recurring thought for School of Public Health Dean Max Michael, M.D., about the VF Corporation’s Hackleburg Distribution Center, a 446,000-square-foot factory that was obliterated in the tornadoes of April 27, 2011.

“VF Corporation is a huge, multinational business, and they could have made a decision to move their plant anywhere they wanted,” Michael says. “Instead, they made a decision to rebuild the factory in Hackleburg and that ultimately will have a tremendously positive impact on the well-being of the community.”

Because of their decision to rebuild the plant — which was the factory of its largest employer, Wrangler — and all of the other benefits it provided to its workers and the community in the aftermath of the tornado, the School of Public Health presented its 2012 Lou Wooster Public Health Award to VF Corporation April 4. The award is given annually to people or businesses who spend their professional career outside of the health care or public health realm, but step out and beyond their normal activities to do something that improves the health of the public.

Michael says VF’s decision to rebuild the facility will provide more than economic well-being for its employees. He says it will strengthen the fabric of the community and assure its survival in a way that is critical to the long-term health and well-being of the townspeople.

“For generations to come, the Wrangler factory will be a powerful factor in the prevention of disease and disability in the population,” Michael says. “From a modern-day public health perspective, VF lives up to the standards that we believe as a state institution and an educational and research facility, we should be pushing this information out to everybody in our community and the rest of the state. When we first started, there was no information on green roofs and how they would do in our area. The research we’ve done so far has been very, very positive, and it’s helped us set our standards at UAB going forward. Now, our standards here at UAB is that if we don’t do a vegetative roof, we go to a white reflective roof. We hope to eventually create a standard and if we can prove the return on investment long-term, hopefully we can get our standards set up to where that becomes the way of the future.”

The Alabama Department of Environmental Management (ADEM) has visited and inspected the green vegetative roofs and is very interested in promoting them to encourage vegetative roofs across the state. ADEM has been very supportive of UAB’s research in green roof design. The School of Engineering has received two research grants from the Alabama Water Resources Research Institute (AWRRI) to study the hydrology and water quality aspects of vegetative roofs. The research efforts have produced very promising results. As a result, plans to build a new vegetative roof on the BSEC are under way.

Price also regularly gives tours to garden clubs, industry professionals, and even classes from other institutions around the state, including a landscape architecture class from Faulkner University.

For more on this and other UAB green initiatives, visit www.uab.edu/green.

Max Michael escorts an actress playing the role of Lou Wooster as part of the SOPH’s Lou Wooster Award festivities.

GREEN ROOF

continued from page 1

“The soil is only about four to six inches deep,” Watts adds. “The irrigation system enables the plants to use the water as they need it, and then slowly release it, that way you have the water going back out in a natural cycle.”

That creates another advantage — a limited amount of water runoff into the storm water drain, something UAB researchers hope to replicate with future green vegetative roofs. By collecting the stormwater from the roof and pumping it back through the irrigation system, it keeps polluted water from running into area creeks.

“We sit at the bottom of a valley, and all of the water coming into the valley goes into the storm water system, which goes into a creek that feeds into the Black Warrior River — where we get our drinking water,” Pruitt says. “Runoff carries pollutants with it. We don’t really want the storm runoff from an urban area going into the Black Warrior River. Now, imagine the effect this could have if there were hundreds of downtown buildings with these types of roofs.”

The plants being used also are unique for UAB green roofs. The Huley Building, for example, has hundreds of sedums, a desert-like plant. For the HUC, Price selected mostly native plants — including many perennial sun plants — and worked with Sodexo to pick the right herbs needed to prepare meals. Basil, thyme, oregano, chives, peppermint, rosemary, sage and cilantro are among the herbs that were planted. The Leadership Foundations student group initially met with Sodexo to get approval to plant the herbs for use in the dining halls and then used their funds to purchase the herbs. They really gave our students a valuable real-life example of how to successfully manage a public health and business crisis,” Michael says.

Michael and other School of Public Health officials watched as VF broke ground on its new facility April 26. The new plant is expected to be complete in 2013, and 50 additional jobs are expected to be added. The new facility also will include a safe room large enough for all of their employees to take cover should another tornado strike.

Peters says. “These green roofs just give you less of a load for the air-conditioning system to have to shoulder, and they reduce the heat island effect common in urban areas.”

And it’s not just vegetative roofs making a difference. White reflective roofs have been put on several buildings — including Heritage Hall, the newest academic building — and can be used on other buildings on campus where vegetative roofs aren’t possible. White reflective roofs can be retrofitted onto almost any building, Peters says.

Both the vegetative and white reflective roofs are considerably cooler in the summertime than standard black roofs. The surface temperatures on the vegetative and white reflective roofs have been around 110-115 degrees during the peak summer season, according to UAB research. Black roofs run closer to 190 degrees during the middle of the day.

“You could virtually fry an egg on those,” Peters says. “These green roofs just give you less of a load for the air-conditioning system to use to have to shoulder, and they reduce the heat island effect common in urban areas.”

When Pruitt and Peters first began their green roof research, they agreed that all of the data that is collected would be public information — a stance that hasn’t changed.

“It’s not proprietary,” Pruitt says. “We believe as a state institution and an educational and research facility, we should be pushing this information out to everybody in our community and the rest of the state. When we first started, there was no information on green roofs and how they would do in our area. The research we’ve done so far has been very, very positive, and it’s helped us set our standards at UAB going forward. Now, our standards here at UAB is that if we don’t do a vegetative roof, we go to a white reflective roof. We hope to eventually create a standard and if we can prove the return on investment long-term, hopefully we can get our standards set up to where that becomes the way of the future.”

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Send feedback or suggestions to sustainability@uab.edu.

6 UAB Reporter April 30, 2012
Green’s commitment to excellence sets tone for division

Marcia Green takes issue with getting an automated message when she calls a business. 

Press one for this and two for that — it’s too confusing, says the administrative support specialist in the Division of Gerontology, Geriatrics and Palliative Care. And, more important, it’s not personal.

That’s why she’s more than happy to be a voice patients hear when they interact with the division. It’s her only real contact with patients, but Green sets the standard patients can expect to receive when they come to UAB. In addition to displaying a gift for talking and comforting sick patients and their families, co-workers say Green is a valuable asset to everyone in the division, including medical fellows, residents and students.

Because of her kindness and commitment to excellence, Green has been selected as April’s Employee of the Month.

Green says comforting patients is something that she really enjoys, adding, “I like people.” She says the main thing she wants to impart is that someone cares about them and their struggles.

“I am in the age of many of the people who call us, so I understand some of the issues they are facing,” Green says. “I’ve experienced the death of my mum, and my dad is 90. I know all about thisstuff first hand. I just hope talking with them helps them or lets them know there is somebody friendly out there who wants to help them and cares.”

Green often has to get essential health information from patients, find the appropriate professional to manage it and follow-up through on the delivery of care. She does these things with great care, compassion and thoroughness, says Patricia Goode, M.D., the Gwen McWherter Professor of Geriatric Medicine.

“I have often said that Marcia takes a more appropriate and succinct medical history than many doctors-prepared, health-care providers with whom I have worked or trained,” Goode says. “Patients with whom Marcia has interacted on the telephone often ask to meet her when they come to clinic. They want to put a face with the very pleasant and helpful voice on the phone.”

Green’s role in the division goes much further than helping patients. She oversees the geriatric physician call schedule and juggles a group of 17 physicians. She is responsible for developing the geriatric learning schedules each month for an annual total of 45 internal medicine residents and 25 or more other interdisciplinary learners.

Green also sorts through more than 100 options for half-day clinical blocks each month, collaborates with the geriatricians and ends up with excellent geriatric learning experiences for each person — this is despite faculty going on vacation, taking maternity leave and traveling.

“Marcia always finds a suitable learning experience for each person, sometimes at the last minute in extenuating circumstances.” Goode says. “She also never fails to get these schedules completed in time. These two big areas demonstrate Marcia’s excellence in accountability, collaboration, can-do attitude and service.”

Green also has to interact with the students and residents, and many of them never hesitate to call her if they have problems. She always is able to help them solve whatever administrative problem they may have, says Caroline Harada, M.D., assistant professor of medicine.

And Green has such a good feel for people that Harada says she relies on her instincts to help her in many instances. “Her input as to learners’ behavior and professionalism is exceedingly important to me, and I never offer a spot to a fellow candidate without first seeking her opinion,” Harada says. “Marcia is a great judge of and role model for good character and professional behavior. This makes her a great asset to the educational initiatives in our division.”

Green provides administrative support for Richard Sims, M.D., Barrett Bowling, M.D., and Goode and Harada, and she coordinates the weekly Geriatric Noon Conference for Sims each Thursday. “Marcia illustrates the values we try to promote within the Division of Gerontology, Geriatrics & Palliative Care, including initiative, innovation, teamwork and a commitment to excellence,” says Richard Alman, M.D., Parrish Endowed Professor of Medicine and director of the Center for Aging. “Marcia carries out all of her responsibilities with a commitment to excellence and demonstrates a caring attitude for everyone with whom she works, regardless of their position or social status. She has a tremendous work ethic and always strives to do the very best that she can do.”

Green has worked at UAB since 1988 and has worked in her current position since July 1991. Green says she hasn’t sought opportunities to leave in large part because of the group of people she works with on a daily basis.

“I have no desire to go anywhere else because of my co-workers,” Green says. “I went through some rough personal things a couple of years ago all at once, and everyone here was so good to me. They fed me when I wasn’t eating, gave me the time off I needed and listened when they had their own busy schedules. I couldn’t have made it through a lot of that stuff without them. They’re just great to work with and they have been the entire time I’ve been here. I’ve never felt like an outcast. I’ve felt like I’m part of a team.”

Neverending stories: What Dickens tells us at 200

I have been exactly 200 years since the birth of Charles Dickens, the Victorian novelist who wrote a bookshelf of classics, including Great Expectations, Oliver Twist and A Christmas Carol. For the past 100 years, Dickens has been terrifying schoolchildren across the United States — at least as much for the sheer girth of his books as for the hair-raising characters and incidents everyone can relate to. With Dickens, it’s often the opposite; he loves quirks, gestures, voices — the things that make people different from one another.

“When you’re reading a Dickens novel, the world starts to seem much less predictable and more interesting than it did before. Everything is very strange in a Dickens novel: People are strange, families are strange, cities are strange, evil is strange, even goodness is strange, which is hard to pull off. Ebenzer Scrooge is a weird guy, but Bob Cratchit is much weirder.”

Siegel, a specialist in Victorian literature who has written several academic studies of Dickens’ works, shares his love of Dickens in a graduate seminar at UAB. The course will be held again in fall 2012. He says that people shouldn’t be daunted by the epic length of Dickens’ novels.

“If you’ve never read one, you’ve got to start with David Copperfield or Great Expectations; these are incredibly, viscerally fun.”

Green’s commitment to excellence sets tone for division
### Schedule of Events

**Thursday, May 10**
- Session 1
  - Quarterfinal Game 1: 11:00 AM
  - Quarterfinal Game 2: 1:30 PM
- Session 2
  - Quarterfinal Game 3: 4:30 PM
  - Quarterfinal Game 4: 7:00 PM

**Friday, May 11**
- Session 3
  - Semifinal Game 1: 2:00 PM
  - Semifinal Game 2: 4:30 PM

**Saturday, May 12**
- Session 4
  - Championship Game (televised live on the CBS Sports Network): 1:00 PM

### Promotions Schedule

**Thursday, May 10**
- Youth Day - Students in grades K-12 are invited to attend. Call 934-5391 for more information.

**Friday, May 11**
- UAB Employee & Camper Day - Discounted rates are available. Call 934-6633 for more information.

**Saturday, May 12**
- Little League Day - Discounted rates are available. Call 934-6633 for more information.

### Ticket Information

Tickets may be purchased by calling 975-UAB1 or by logging on to UABSports.com

- **All Session**
  - Adult General Admission: $20
  - Youth General Admission (ages 6-17): $10

- **Single Session**
  - Adult General Admission: $10
  - Youth General Admission (ages 6-17): $5

For more information, visit www.UABSports.com