Almost one-third of women age 45 and older have at least one risk factor for osteoporosis, yet most of these women have never spoken to their doctor about the disease. “This is a significant concern considering Arizona’s aging population that is more at risk for hip fractures and other bone injuries,” says Nancy Winchester, arthritis/osteoporosis program manager for the Arizona Department of Health Services.

With current screenings, treatment and education options, there is great opportunity for reducing the incidence of osteoporosis and its disabling fractures. To address this health issue, the Arizona Legislature created the Osteoporosis Prevention and Education Program, which was funded in 2006, and now is operational. The purpose is to establish, promote and maintain an osteoporosis prevention and education program to increase public awareness of the causes and the value of early detection and possible treatments. State funding runs through 2008.

ADHS is working with the Arizona Osteoporosis Coalition (AZOC) to carry out the legislative mandate. They have partnered with the Well-Woman Health Check Program, whose goal is to increase access to quality screening and diagnostic services to improve early detection and treatment of breast and cervical cancer among women who are at risk due to age, medical condition, income or inadequate access to medical care. Since the Well-Woman program aligns with the same population targeted by the osteoporosis program, three

Susan Trujillo, RT, provides bone density screening on the DEXA bus.

Osteoporosis doesn’t just affect women. While one out of two women is likely to develop osteoporosis, it also affects one out of eight men.

Did You Know?

Continued on p. 7
Join Us for ‘Lunch with Lute’ and Support the Arthritis Center

“Lunch with Lute,”
Thursday, Oct. 18, 2007
11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

Fleming’s Prime
Steakhouse & Wine Bar
6360 N. Campbell Ave.,
Tucson (southeast corner of Campbell and Sunrise)

Join Coach Lute Olson as he shares his pre-season thoughts on the team in a private setting and stays after lunch for photos and autographs.

Cost is $100 per person; $175 per couple; $680 table of 8. Limited to 125 seats. (Tax-deductible donation: $45 per person; $65 per couple; $240 for table of 8.) This event sells out; advance payment is required to reserve seats. Visit our Web site—www.arthritis.arizona.edu—or call (520) 626-7901 for registration information.

Mark Your Calendars for Spring Events

- Silent Auction with Lute Olson and UA Men’s Basketball Team
  — Friday, April 11, 2008, at Randolph Golf Complex
- Golf Tournament—Saturday, April 12, 2008, at Randolph Golf Complex

Last season our supporters and sponsors, including the Southern Arizona Home Builders Association (SAHBA), helped the Arthritis Center raise more than $76,000. Please join us once again to make these upcoming events even more successful!

Sponsor Packages Available

More than 750 people took part in our fundraising events last season. If your business would like to demonstrate your support for the Arizona Arthritis Center, please contact us about sponsorship packages. With your help we can continue to find better ways to diagnose and treat arthritis, which is one of the leading causes of disability in the United States. For sponsorship information, please call (520) 626-7901.
Arizona Arthritis Center Clinics

Patients now have several convenient options for seeing Arizona Arthritis Center rheumatologists and receiving treatment.

At the University Physicians Healthcare (UPH) Clinics at 535 N. Wilmot, patient care includes:
- Complementary and alternative therapies
- State-of-the-art infusion clinic
- Special expertise in lupus, rheumatoid arthritis, osteoporosis and osteoarthritis

Patients also can make rheumatology appointments at the Clinics at UPH Hospital, 2800 E. Ajo Way.

No referrals are necessary except when required by insurance. Most insurance plans are accepted. To make an appointment, please call (520) 694-0611.

Clinical Staff
- Jeffrey R. Lisse, MD, Interim Director, Arizona Arthritis Center; Chief, Section of Rheumatology, Professor of Rheumatology
- James Posever, MD, Assistant Professor of Medicine
- Cindy Straw, ANP, Adult Nurse Practitioner
- Berchman Austin Vaz, MD, PhD, Assistant Professor of Medicine
- Kyaw (Joe) Swe, MD, Assistant Professor of Medicine
- Sujata Sarkar, MD, Assistant Professor of Medicine

Seeking Better Treatments
The Arizona Arthritis Center conducts clinical research in osteoarthritis, rheumatoid arthritis, lupus, osteoporosis and other disorders. To see if you qualify, please call (520) 626-3739.

Arizona Arthritis Center Welcomes New Fellow

Augusto Posadas, MD, is a first-year fellow at the Arizona Arthritis Center. He recently completed his residency in internal medicine at The University of Arizona. Dr. Posadas, who has a medical degree from University of the East in the Philippines and a bachelor’s degree from the University of Illinois, Champagne-Urbana, is participating in a number of research studies related to rheumatoid arthritis.

The UA Rheumatology Fellowship is a two-year approved program to prepare physicians for board eligibility in rheumatology. The fellowship program provides a widely varied rheumatology experience with both inpatient and outpatient rotations, as well as ample opportunity for participation in clinical and basic research projects.

Other second-year rheumatology fellows studying at AAC include Eric Mueller, MD, and Noe Olvera, MD.

Arizona Arthritis Center Welcomes New Faculty

Kyaw Swe, MD, has joined the Arizona Arthritis Center as an Assistant Professor.

Dr. Swe received his medical school training at Institute of Medicine, Yangon University, Myanmar. He had three years of medical training in England before he came to the United States. He completed his internship and residency in internal medicine at The University of Arizona, as well as his post-doctorate fellowship in rheumatology.

Dr. Swe is conducting research on the association between inflammatory markers and the quality of a couple’s relationship in patients with rheumatoid arthritis. He also is participating in the Coccidioidomycosis (valley fever) study of patients with rheumatoid arthritis who are on anti-tumor necrosis factor agents and disease-modifying anti-rheumatic drugs. (See related story on p. 4.)

Dr. Swe’s clinical interests include osteoporosis, rheumatoid arthritis and vasculitis. He is certified to read bone density (DEXA) scans. He sees patients at University Physicians Healthcare Clinics at Wilmot and at UPH Hospital. He also enjoys teaching medical students, residents and rheumatology trainee fellows.

In Memory of Jack Marchalonis

This past summer the Arizona Arthritis Center family mourned the loss of renowned immunologist John Jacob “Jack” Marchalonis, PhD, who passed away on June 22. He was 66. Dr. Marchalonis was Professor of microbiology and immunology, pathology, and medicine, and Former Chairman of the Department of Microbiology and Immunology (now the Department of Immunobiology) at The University of Arizona College of Medicine.

Regarded nationally and internationally, Dr. Marchalonis was a pioneer in the fields of molecular immunology and the evolution of the immune system. His research helped advance the understanding of arthritis. He remained an active faculty member, mentoring several graduate students until his death.
Every year about 150,000 people—an estimated 2 to 3 percent of the population living in the Southwestern region of the United States—become infected with valley fever (Coccidioidomycosis). Rheumatoid arthritis (RA) patients who are undergoing immunosuppressive therapies may be at greater risk for contracting valley fever and the more serious, disseminated form of the disease, according to a research team led by Berchman Austin Vaz, MD, PhD, Assistant Professor and Director of the rheumatology fellowship program at the Arizona Arthritis Center.

But do all of these therapies carry the same risks? What recommendations can researchers make for physicians treating people with the growing number of available biologic therapies for rheumatoid arthritis?

Dr. Vaz’s team plans to build a database from approximately 1,000 Arizona Arthritis Center patients with arthritis treated with immunosuppressive medications. Using patients on methotrexate as a control group, the team is comparing the rate of valley fever infections to groups on biologics, such as infliximab (Remicade), etanercept (Enbrel), adalimumab (Humira), abatacept (Orencia) and rituximab (Rituxan). The researchers also are analyzing the risks of exposure to medications by patient years and use of concomitant corticosteroids.

“We now have more effective options for treating rheumatoid arthritis, but does this translate into more risk, especially with opportunistic infections like valley fever in the southwestern U.S.?” asks Dr. Vaz. The team anticipates completing the database analysis soon and will publish results within the next year.

From their study, they hope to provide physicians with better recommendations for treating and monitoring valley fever for patients on biologic therapies. “We really don’t know what to tell physicians at this point, other than they should remain vigilant about monitoring patients for valley fever and placing them on appropriate anti-fungal treatment as soon as possible,” says Dr. Vaz.

The Research Path

In 2006, Dr. Vaz led a preliminary review of 415 patient records to assess the risks of developing valley fever or tuberculosis (TB) among people with rheumatoid arthritis, juvenile rheumatoid arthritis, psoriatic and reactive arthritis on patients receiving biologic anti-TNF therapies. While the research team found the TB risk primarily was limited to reactivation of the disease in people who had prior cases, they saw an increased risk of contracting valley fever and developing the disseminated form of the disease among patients receiving anti-TNF therapies.

Biologic infusion therapies effectively treat rheumatoid arthritis symptoms, but do they increase the risk of contracting valley fever?

With the current, more in-depth study, Dr. Vaz’s goal is to use the findings to develop
recommendations physicians can use to better monitor patients for valley fever risk while they are treated with the wide variety of biologics currently available.

The Research Team
In addition to his rheumatology expertise, Dr. Vaz has a doctorate in microbiology and immunology and previously has studied risk and dissemination of valley fever among immunosuppressed AIDS patients. As director of AAC’s fellowship program, he has received support from all members of the rheumatology section, particularly current fellows: Eric Mueller, MD, Noe Olvera, MD, Augusto Posadas, MD; and past fellows: Kyaw Swe, MD, (who recently joined the AAC faculty) and Darush Rahmani, MD. The research is funded by a grant from Centocor Pharmaceuticals.

Valley Fever Symptoms
According to The University of Arizona’s Valley Fever Center for Excellence, most cases of valley fever are very mild. It is thought that more than 60 percent of infected people either have no symptoms or experience flu-like symptoms and never seek medical attention.

Of those patients seeking medical care, the most common symptoms are fatigue, cough, chest pain, fever, rash, headache and joint aches. Some people develop painful red bumps that gradually turn brown (the medical term for this is erythema nodosum). These symptoms are not unique to valley fever and can be caused by other illnesses. Therefore, identifying valley fever as the cause of illness requires specific laboratory tests.

Most common valley fever symptoms:
- fatigue
- cough
- chest pain
- fever
- rash
- headache
- joint aches

Valley Fever
Still Time to Register for the Week of Your Life at Canyon Ranch

Thriving with Arthritis Week
Oct. 14 through 21, 2007

Learn how to live well with arthritis during a week that integrates the best that the Arizona Arthritis Center and Canyon Ranch offer. If you have any of the 100 forms that arthritis takes, this week was created for you.

Health professionals from the Arizona Arthritis Center and Canyon Ranch will team up to assess your condition, suggest appropriate treatments and provide an important network of support. Thriving with Arthritis balances medical components with fun and relaxation. Professionals will include occupational therapists, physicians, psychologists, nutritionists, exercise physiologists, physical therapists and movement therapists.

The Thriving with Arthritis package includes:
- Lectures and group sessions with Canyon Ranch and Arizona Arthritis Center health care experts
- 30-minute consultation with a rheumatologist
- 30-minute consultation with a rehabilitation therapist (physical or occupational)
- Complete blood profile and 30-minute follow-up with a physician to review results
- Allowance for Canyon Ranch services

Rates start at $6,250 for deluxe accommodations and include three nutritious, gourmet meals daily. A portion of the proceeds from this program supports arthritis research at the Arizona Arthritis Center at The UA College of Medicine.

For more information or to make a reservation, please call 1-800-742-9000 or visit canyonranch.com.
Another Eventful Year for Arizona Arthritis Center Friends

Please join the Arizona Arthritis Center Friends once again for a robust series of events designed to enrich, encourage and educate families and friends concerned about arthritis.

As a member of AAC Friends, you are part of an important Center of Excellence at The UA College of Medicine. This world-renowned center has been advancing state-of-the-art research to improve arthritis care since 1970. It is very likely that you, a friend or family member suffers from arthritis, which is a growing epidemic among our aging population as well as a condition that afflicts thousands of children.

Through your AAC Friends membership, you will support the Center’s mission to create a world free of arthritis and autoimmune diseases, a mission put into action through basic and clinical research, excellent patient care and education. Annual Friends membership dues remain the same—only $35 for an individual or $60 for a family. In exchange, you’ll be invited to exceptional programs and receive discounts on special events.

Please visit us online at www.arthritis.arizona.edu or call us at (520) 626-7901. Take a look at our upcoming events, and invite your family, friends and neighbors to join us as we work together to create an arthritis-free world.

Thank you for your support!

Best wishes,

Ralph Silberschlag

Chair, Arizona Arthritis Center Friends

Benefits of Being a Friend

Join us for the following AAC Friends events:

AAC Friends Membership Tea
Skyline Country Club on Thurs. Nov. 1, 2007
Meet Center researchers/rheumatologists and receive presentations on the latest findings.
Speaker: John Szivek, PhD, The University of Arizona.

The Eva Holtby Memorial Lectureship/Conversations and Lunch
The Arizona Inn, on Thurs. Feb. 14, 2008
Our premier event featuring a world-renowned rheumatologist.
Speaker: Robert D. Inman, MD, Department of Medicine/Rheumatology, Toronto Western Hospital.

The Breakfast Chat
World-renowned Canyon Ranch Health Resort Spring 2008
A complimentary morning of arthritis presentations and delicious buffet. Members only.

Living Healthy with Arthritis
University Medical Center, Early May
A four-hour, nominal-cost morning conference, offering several workshops and a healthy mid-morning brunch.

We’ll also keep you up to date on other AAC events and publications, such as:

Lunch with Lute
Fleming’s Steakhouse on Thurs. Oct. 18, 2007
A fund raising event benefiting the AAC.

Free Annual Open House
Enjoy refreshments while visiting with researchers to learn more about exciting projects.

Lute Olson Auction & Golf Tournament
Randolph Golf Complex, April 11 & 12, 2008
Fund raising events benefiting the AAC.

Arizona Arthritis Center Update Newsletter
The biannual publication detailing Center research and activities.

Join Us for Living Healthy with Arthritis Monthly Lecture Series

The Arizona Arthritis Center launched a monthly series of Living Healthy with Arthritis lectures. September’s program, “Oh My Aching Joints—Could This Be Arthritis,” was presented by Jeffrey Lisse, MD, Interim Director of AAC and Professor of Rheumatology at The University of Arizona.

Join us Wednesday, Oct. 3, when Liz Barta, BSN, CHES, presents “How Do You Spell R.E.L.I.E.F.” The program is scheduled from 6 to 7:30 p.m. at University Medical Center, 1501 N. Campbell Ave., in the Chase Bank Auditorium, Room 8403.

Future talks will cover how to identify and manage stress, nutritional strategies for joint health, complementary treatments for arthritis, and getting the most from physical and occupational therapy. Check out the AAC Web site: www.arthritis.arizona.edu for more details; or contact Michelle Cornett, (520) 626-5040, or via e-mail mcornett@u.arizona.edu.
Wanted: Technology that Keeps Pace with Arizona Arthritis Center

The Arizona Arthritis Center has grown recently in terms of new faculty, new programs, new campuses and breakthrough research. Unfortunately, our technology has not kept pace with the rapidly expanding Center. We have identified $60,000 in new technology needs to support the Center’s research and education missions. Your support will help us:

- Update computers and software programs. A recent inventory showed that our newest computer is five years old. Current computers and new software programs will help our researchers with critical data analysis.
- Obtain more computer “tablets” to expand MyWebClinic. This has proven to be a great interactive method for collecting patient data and tracking changes in patient conditions. We need several additional tablets at a cost of $2,500 each to implement this program in our clinics.
- Improve technology to support two-way conferencing between Chase Auditorium and the Phoenix campus. The UA College of Medicine expansion into Phoenix has benefited the Arthritis Center in numerous ways, including the opportunity to educate more medical students about rheumatology and to forge stronger affiliations with Phoenix-area physicians. We need to update the technology in our auditorium to improve communications.

If you can help the Center with these needs or want more information, please call Brian Riese at (520) 626-7396.
A Message from the Interim Director

The staff and friends of the Arizona Arthritis Center are moving forward at a robust rate on a number of fronts to continue our tradition of excellence. It is truly a privilege to be part of an organization comprised of so many dedicated, hard-working staff and volunteers who are committed to improving diagnosis and treatment of the more than 100 different forms of arthritis and to helping people live healthier lives.

We hope you will join us on Oct. 18 for “Lunch with Lute,” a very popular fund raising event that helps us further our mission. (Please see details on page 2 of this newsletter.)

Our “Living Healthy with Arthritis” staff has launched a wonderful monthly lecture series designed to educate and empower people and families as they strive to achieve optimal health in spite of arthritis. Visit our Web site at www.arthritis.arizona.edu for the upcoming topics and schedule. The next lecture will be Oct. 3, with certified health education specialist Liz Barta, RN, who will discuss ways to cope with stress and enjoy life more. Our tireless Arizona Arthritis Center Friends are planning another fantastic round of events that we hope you will find informative and enjoyable. You’ll find more information on all of these events inside this newsletter.

This past summer we welcomed two new faculty members—Sujata Sarkar, MD, and Kyaw (Joe) Swe, MD, who are enabling us to see more patients in a timely manner and to expand our research pursuits. We now see patients at the UPH Clinics at 2800 E. Ajo Way as well as at 535 N. Wilmot Road. Please call (520) 694-0611 to schedule an appointment.

Our search committee has been working diligently to recruit a permanent director. During the past few months two very strong candidates visited the Center, and we anticipate that we soon will select a leader who will take the Arizona Arthritis Center to a new level of excellence.

I thank you for your continued patience and support. Together we are making great progress toward creating a world free of arthritis and autoimmune disease.