

## UPDATE FROM ATG CHAIR

Randa Shehab

Hello to all Aging TG members. I hope you have had a productive and enjoyable summer! I would like to acknowledge Richard for his willingness to step in without hesitation to get our annual newsletter published.

I hope to see many of you at the HFES Annual Meeting held October 19-23 in San Antonio, TX. Anne has done an outstanding job securing a strong program for us and we will hold our Annual Business Meeting during our usual time. During this year's meeting we will recognize new officers, update members on the group's financial status, announce the winner of the Arnold Small student technical paper award, and reconnect with our colleagues. Lunch will be offered for those interested with the cost shared by the TG. Please look for a meeting sign-up in the near future.

2009 Aging TG Business Meeting:

**When:** Wednesday, October 21, 12:00 - 1:30 pm

**Cost:** \$20 for full members, \$10 for student members

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## NOMINATIONS NEEDED

It is time to solicit nominations for the officers for the ATG. The list of offices available is below. Please send nominations (of others or for yourself) for each of the following offices to me ([rlshehab@ou.edu](mailto:rlshehab@ou.edu)) by Friday, August 28, 2009. All nominees must be full members of HFES. The length of service begins with the 2009 Annual Meeting and will expire at the 2010 Annual Meeting. If you need more information about the duties of each officer, please visit the Aging TG web site at <http://www.psychology.gatech.edu/atg>. The actual commitment is quite minimal and your service to the society is essential. The following positions are open:

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## ELECTRIC SCOOTERS AND THEIR WARNINGS

*(Ed.: The following is a reprint from <http://humanfactorsblog.org> by ATG member Kim Wolfenbarger.)*

Kim Wolfenbarger

Electric shopping carts are common in large grocery stores. Essential for users with mobility impairments, they are also helpful for pregnant women, elderly shoppers, and other who have trouble walking long distances.

A few months ago, my grandfather fell and

## REPORT FROM THE PROGRAM CHAIR

Anne McLaughlin

I'm proud to announce a stellar lineup for the Aging TG sessions at HFES 2009. First, we were able to get two sessions this year, up from 1 last year.

Second, we were able to get two poster slots, beyond our usual single slot. This was due to the number of quality submissions we received this year. Our lecture papers averaged a reviewer rating of 5.63, the discussion panel averaged 6.33, and both posters were rated over 6 on a scale from 1-7.

The first session will be Wednesday at 8:30am. This session consists of a discussion panel run by Diana Schwerha. The panel will address how to keep older adults in the workplace productive and satisfied. The discussion is titled: "The Role of Human Factors in Older Worker Retention: What Do We Know and What Will We Need to Know?" Panelists include Carrie Bruce, Sheree Gibson, Jon Sanford, Diana Schwerha, Diane Spokus, & Harry Whiting.

The second session occurs Thursday, also at 8:30am. This session is our "potpourri" a di-

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## HELLO ATG'ERS

This is Richard Pak pinch hitting as newsletter editor. I appreciate all the contributors and urge ATG members to send anything that might be of interest for future editions. In this issue we have a report on the upcoming roster of exciting presentations and posters from the program chair Anne McLaughlin (on the right) and an update on the elections and annual meeting from TG chair Randa Shehab (below). There are also two reprinted articles from a human factors blog that I maintain with Anne McLaughlin ([humanfactorsblog.org](http://humanfactorsblog.org)). Now excuse me while I curse Microsoft Publisher \*%\$&#%#.

### Inside this issue:

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broke his hip when the cart he was driving either tipped or overturned in a parking lot. (The details we heard from the officer at the scene were unclear.)

Interested in what might have caused the accident, I examined a similar cart at my local store. While the cart appeared stable, red-and-white signs affixed to the inside and outside of the basket read, in large letters, "IN-STORE USE ONLY." Two others warned, "INTENDED FOR USE INDOORS ON LEVEL

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Shopping cart warning

## AGING TECHNICAL GROUP

### GAMES AND COGNITIVE AGING RESEARCH

(Ed.: The following is a reprinted article from <http://humanfactorsblog.org>).

Our own Anne McLaughlin was featured in a recent article in Time.com. Anne and her colleagues Jason Allaire (NCSU) and Maribeth Gandy (Georgia Tech) were recently awarded a \$1.2 million grant from the National Science Foundation to study using games to moderate cognitive decline in older adults.

Their plan is to study what parts of games might help cognitive performance and then to create a new game based on these components.

From the Time.com article:

“There is, of course, no cure for memory loss, and no preventive vaccine. Yet a rapidly growing body of evidence suggests that certain behaviors may reliably slow the effects of age-related cognitive decline. Chief among them: eating right, exercising and engaging in social activity and mentally challenging tasks.

McLaughlin and Allaire’s new study will follow 270 seniors as they play the Wii game Boom Blox. Gameplay involves demolishing targets like a medieval castle or a space ship using an arsenal of weapons such as slingshots and cannonballs.

While those particular skills may not seem transferable to off-screen life, McLaughlin says she and her colleagues chose Boom Blox specifically because it does require a wide range of real-world skills, including memory, special ability, reasoning and problem solving. [ed: ‘special ability’ should be spatial ability]”

Why Boom Blox? Anne says that she:

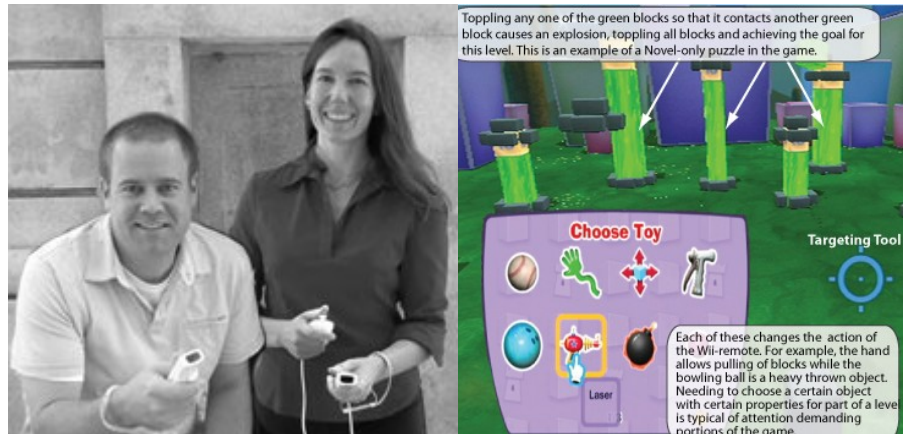
“...actually chose the game after doing task analyses on many games, seeing what fit our profile, then showing those games to OA [older adults] in a focus group and getting “buy in” for what they said they would play.”

The article in Time magazine can be found at:

<http://tinyurl.com/atg-time>

The team’s project website is:

<http://www.gainsthroughgaming.org>



Left: Jason Allaire & Anne McLaughlin playing err, I mean researching with Wii controllers. Right: Screen capture of the Boom Blox game

## REPORT FROM THE PROGRAM CHAIR (CONT'D)

(Continued from page 1)

verse representation of aging research ranging from the perception of robotic help in the home to using the internet as a source of health information and many things in between.

- **Cognition and Illness Experience are Associated with Illness Knowledge Among Older Adults with Hypertension**  
Jessie Chin, Laura D'Andrea, Dan Morrow, Elizabeth Stine-Morrow, Thembi Conner-Garcia, James Graumlich, Michael Murray
- **Hearing Levels Affect Higher Order Cognitive Performance**  
Carryl Baldwin
- **Older Adults and Internet Health Information Seeking**  
Sara Czaja, Joseph Sharit, Sankaran Nair, Chin Chin Lee
- **Emotion Recognition of Virtual Agents Facial Expressions: The Effects of Age and Emotion Intensity**  
Jenay Beer, Arthur D. Fisk, Wendy Rogers
- **More than a Servant: Self-Reported Willingness of Younger and Older Adults to Having a Robot Perform Interactive and Critical Tasks in the Home**  
Neta Ezer, Arthur D. Fisk, Wendy Rogers

Last, we have two posters with accompanying proceedings papers at the Tuesday 1:30-3:00pm session. These posters contain detailed data best suited for the poster format and discussion.

- **Functional Anthropometry and Ranges of Motion of Older Mexican American Adults**  
Arunkumar Pennathur, Luis Contreras, Odi Ikpe, Julia Bader
- **The Aging Farmer: Human Factors Research Needs in Agricultural Work**  
Anne McLaughlin, Laura Fletcher, John Sprufera

Last, many thanks to the session chairs and co-chairs, including Richard Pak, Chris Mayhorn, Randa Shehab, and myself. See you all in October!

## ELECTRIC SCOOTERS AND THEIR WARNINGS (CONT'D)

(Continued from page 1)

SURFACES ONLY!" and "DO NOT TAKE THIS CART OUTSIDE THE STORE." An instruction manual I found online had similar statements in several places.

Here is the problem: A customer who uses the cart while shopping will surely want to use it when taking groceries to the car. My grandfather lived independently and drove himself to the store, but rheumatoid arthritis made walking difficult. Using an electric cart made it possible for him to do his own shopping. While he most likely saw the warning, he may have dismissed it as a statement written to merely to discourage lawsuits. (This is speculation—he could not converse following the accident and died a few weeks later—but it is consistent with his personality.)

Clearly the manufacturer had anticipated that people would use the carts outside and thought this behavior might be hazardous. But did the store share this concern? Since the cashier loaded the bags into his cart following the purchase, it appears that, despite the warning, the store expected him to drive the cart to the parking lot.

The signs and repeated warning statements in the manual suggest a mismatch between the design of the product and the expected behavior of users. So how should the problem be addressed?

First, if the carts are truly not stable outdoors, stores should not allow them to be driven into the parking lot. Instead, employees should carry out groceries for all customers who use a motorized cart.

Offering the service is not enough; some customers, not wanting to be a bother, will refuse assistance if asked. Instead, when the cashier begins checking out a customer with an electric cart, she should immediately summon a sacker to load the groceries into a push cart and take the groceries to the customer's vehicle.

Second, the warning should describe the potential hazard. A customer who thinks the warning is intended to prevent collisions with automobiles may decide to accept that risk. On the other hand, a shopper who understands that the cart may be unstable may be less likely to take it outside the store.

Finally, manufacturers should assume that customers will take electric carts outdoors and

design them accordingly. As human factors engineers have said for years, a warning is no substitute for good design.

**Update:** After the initial publication of this article in the Human Factors Blog, I conducted a few informal interviews. Checkers at a large grocery store (part of the same chain where my grandfather had shopped) told me that shoppers were not supposed to take the carts past the yellow posts outside the doors, and that employees at the front of the store were responsible for monitoring this.

They were not aware of any formal efforts to provide assistance in carrying groceries to the cars. Shoppers said they did sometimes drive carts to the parking lot. One woman stated, "They don't like it, but I do it anyway." And my mother reported that my grandfather's regular practice had been to drive the cart to his car, unload his groceries, drive the cart back to the store, retrieve his walker, and walk back to his car. Clearly there is room for improvement in both cart design and customer service.

*Kim Wolfinbarger is the recruitment coordinator and an adjunct instructor for the School of Industrial Engineering, University of Oklahoma. Her research interests include usability, product design, industrial ergonomics and design for special populations.*



## UPDATE FROM TG CHAIR (CONT'D)

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**Agenda:** Please let me know ([rlshehab@ou.edu](mailto:rlshehab@ou.edu)) if you would like time on the agenda. This is a good opportunity to raise points for discussion, make announcements, and offer other relevant comments/ideas for the Aging TG.

Thanks and I look forward to seeing each of you in San Antonio!

## NOMINATIONS NEEDED (CONT'D)

(Continued from page 1)

- Chair-Elect
- Secretary/Treasurer
- Program Chair Elect:
- Newsletter Editor
- Web Master/Blogger

For a description of the duties see page 4. An email will be sent out soon soliciting nominations.

## AGING TECHNICAL GROUP

### ATG STUDENT SCHOLARSHIP

**D**id you know that the ATG has a scholarship to help students pay for research-related expenses?

The ATG's goal is to provide scholarships (up to \$500) to students to conduct their research (1-2 scholarships per year based on resources; open to MS or PhD level). Students must be members of the aging technical group and agree to submit their research to the HFES conference within 2 years of receiving the award.

Students must submit a 1-2 page description of their project and request for funds. The applicants must provide a letter of support from faculty stating:

- 1) how the funding from the aging technical group is critical to the research,
- 2) what the student's academic/scholarship record is, and
- 3) an endorsement of the student's research plan. Students should also present a timeline for their research leading up to graduation.

Proposals are due **August 15th** and awards will be made by **September 15th**. Submit your application to Diana J. Schwerha, Ph.D. at [Schwerha@ohio.edu](mailto:Schwerha@ohio.edu)

### OFFICER JOB DESCRIPTIONS / CURRENT OFFICERS

#### Chair (2-year term)

The TG chair has overall responsibility to ensure that the group meets its minimum requirements. The chair works with the HFES executive director in scheduling the TG's annual business meeting and arranging other events; with the newsletter editor regarding timing, content, distribution method, and cost of newsletters; and with other officers to ensure that TG activities are being carried out. The chair also represents the TG as a member of the Council of Technical Groups.

#### Chair-Elect (1-year term)

The chair-elect usually assists the current chair, though ultimate responsibility for the TG's operation lies with the current chair. The current chair-elect will move into the office of chair at the end of the chair's 2-year term.

#### Secretary-Treasurer (1-year term)

In some groups, these offices are separated: one person is secretary and another is treasurer. Although the secretary-treasurer may be responsible for the TG's finances, the Operating Rules stipulate that this is ultimately the chair's responsibility. Therefore, close coordination between these offices is essential. All financial records (checkbook, bank statements, etc.) for TGs are held in the HFES central office. Invoices should be sent to Lynn Strother at the central office for payment.

#### Program Chair (1-year term)

In some TGs the chair appoints this position; in others, the program chair is elected. The program chair is responsible for overseeing the technical review of proposals submitted for the HFES Annual Meeting. See Appendix E for detailed guidelines in the "Handbook for Program Chairs."

#### Program Chair-Elect (1-year term)

The program chair-elect may assist the program chair with the technical review of papers for the annual meeting. The program chair-elect will move into the position of program chair for the subsequent term.

#### Newsletter Editor (1-year term)

The newsletter editor is responsible for producing at least two newsletters per year and distributing them to TG members. The newsletter is the vital link between a TG's officers and its members, and its quality and frequency are often associated with members' level of satisfaction with their TG affiliation.

#### Web Master (1-year term)

The web master is responsible for maintaining current information on the Aging TG website.

#### Current Officers

- *Chair: Randa Shehab*
- *Chair-Elect: Richard Pak*
- *Secretary/Treasurer: Kari Babski-Reeves*
- *Program Chair: Anne McLaughlin*
- *Newsletter Editor: Calvin Orok*
- *Web Master/Blogger: Anne Adams*