

EDITOR'S NOTES

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RESEARCH IS FUN AND REWARDING

Two recent announcements demonstrate that research can be fun and rewarding. The "fun" aspect is obvious to anyone who has attended any of the Energy Challenge competitions. For the most recent challenge, sponsored by the U.S. Department of Energy, the Institute of Paper Science and Technology, Hercules, and WindSense, teams of university students spent months designing a functional paper sailboard. The final test was to race the sailboards on a lake. For previous competitions, teams designed a paper sail and a paper kayak, testing the final product in a race.

The "reward" aspect is often personal and sometimes monetary. It can be the simple satisfaction of solving a problem, proving an idea, gaining a patent, or having a research paper published. Sometimes the reward is recognition from your peers for a specific idea or project, or for contributions and a body of work that span a career.

A team of chemical engineering students from Georgia Institute of Technology won the 2002 Energy Challenge and a prize of US$ 15,000 for their school. A team from Miami University of Ohio placed second, earning US$ 10,000, with third place and US$ 5000 going to the University of Maine. The real reward, however, was the knowledge and experience the students gained in working as a team on the project.

Melvin T. Tyree will receive the 2002 Marcus Wallenberg Prize of 2 million Swedish kronor (roughly US$200,000) this fall. Now supervisory plant physiologist and project leader at the USDA Forest Service's Northeastern Research Station in Vermont. Tyree has spent a career researching water uptake in trees and forest ecosystems. He also serves as an adjunct professor, which itself can be fun and rewarding.

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