

Harris laboratories offer students cash for experiments

By Kent Warneke

Some UNL students have found a way to make \$500 to \$1,000 for a minimum amount of work, according to Dr. James McClurg, vice president and technical director of Harris Laboratories.

The 46-year-old Harris Laboratories sells their research and evaluation services to clients.

Three UNL students, Blanche Sindelar, Rocky Yapp and Mitch Purnie volunteered for the studies.

"I did a study that took two weekends, from Friday until Monday and we were taking an antibiotic," Sindelar said. "What it really came down to was that I got \$400 for 100 blood samples."

Yapp said that he wasn't worried about getting sick from the experiment, but he wanted to know everything that was going to happen and what type of drug he was taking.

Purnie's experiment, however, did not require the time commitments Yapp's and Sindelar's did and did not require taking any blood samples.

"I WENT IN one Friday night and one of the staff members fixed me my favorite drink until I was slightly buzzed to where I probably would have had a hangover in the morning. Then I drank Alka-Selzer to see if it would cure it and picked up \$50," Purnie said.

"We calculate the money earned on the length of the time commitment," McClurg said. "A study may range in time from five to 24 hours to 20 straight days, and the money will range from \$50 to \$1,000 dollars." Harris labs also do agriculture research of soil, plants and herbicides and test race horses and dogs for illegal administration of drugs. It is their human studies division that involves people, McClurg said.

"The division has been active for 10-12 years and we test pharmaceuticals, cosmetic and household products and make evaluations of their products which are required by

federal regulations," McClurg said.

ACCORDING TO McClURG, most of the evaluations that are done are for products as common as aspirin and simple antibiotics, which need a bioavailability test.

"A bioavailability test is simply a test to see if a change in shape, color or size of a medication will get into the bloodstream as fast as the old form would," McClurg said.

"It's not like we're testing some exotic new drug to see if it works or not. In fact most of the time it is some product already on the market which is being tested to see if a new form is just as effective," McClurg said.

Nevertheless, as profitable as the experiments might seem, McClurg said that constantly are in need of volunteers.

"WE USED approximately 3,000 volunteers in a year on studies because they're going on continuously, but we still find that people are afraid to volunteer," McClurg said. "If we could just get them to realize the incredibly extensive and strict protocols we have.

"Every evaluation done at the laboratories is reviewed by FDA, the client's themselves, the laboratories' medical staff and a special committee set up, which is completely separate from us. They all have complete veto power on any evaluation," McClurg said.

"The volunteers never have to sign a waiver or release form, we take complete responsibility for whatever happens," McClurg said. "We have a full staff of physicians, nurses and technicians who have CPR training. And we're very close to Lincoln General Hospital in case anything serious should happen.

"HOWEVER, WE have never had a serious problem, by which I mean anything more serious than a headache, stomachache or diarrhea," he said.

Both Yapp and Sindelar echoed McClurg's feeling on the safety precautions administered.

"I know everything that was going on and we were free to do what we wanted while there. I think it's safe enough to recommend it to anyone who needs some money," Yapp said.

Sindelara said that she, too, felt that the laboratories were safe. The only reason she volunteered was for the money, she said.

"MOST PEOPLE who are wary of the things we do become supportive after they understand what the evaluations are for," McClurg said.

Another type of research that the laboratories do is the evaluation of household and cosmetic products through the use of skin-patch tests, administered to a large group of people.

"The standard procedure is for a patch to be put on the volunteers every other day for three weeks with samples of the product on the patch. Then we check to see if any allergies or skin reactions show up," McClurg said.

"We've done some work with bands and sorority houses here in Lincoln. Right now we're doing one with a church with 250 volunteers each earning \$25," McClurg said. "You'd have to have an awful lot of bake sales to earn \$2,500 to \$3,000 for something as easy as wearing skin patches."

McClurg said they are looking for average, healthy young adults who can pass a physical to become volunteers. He indicated that a high percentage of applicants pass. Even if they don't, they are still paid for taking the physical.

FDA regulations, however, will not allow female volunteers to participate in 85 percent of the studies done, McClurg added.

"We still have a publicity problem though and need volunteers," McClurg said. "We hope that more people will volunteer, because after all, it's different way to spend a weekend."

Senator says Cuba given Russian subs

WASHINGTON—The Soviet Union is arming Cuba with weapons systems that could pose a major threat to our oil supplies, demonstrating a pattern of behavior that is "hostile to the interests of the United States," Sen. Henry M. Jackson said Tuesday.

Jackson, in a speech on the Senate floor, said the Soviets have given Cuba two submarines, including one that could mine U.S. coastal waters, threatening U.S. oil tankers. The other is a training vessel, Jackson said.

Research beans

VANCOUVER, British Columbia—A dozen volunteers

will be paid \$25 a day to eat beans in a research project aimed at developing a gasless variety of the vegetable that could feed the world cheaply without discomfort or embarrassment.

Dr. Brent Skura, 31, a microbiologist and food scientist at the University of British Columbia has a \$36,000 grant from the Canadian Agriculture Ministry for the project, which he plans to begin early next year.

The volunteers will eat specially doctored bean products to determine which produce the least gas. To vary their menu, beans will be made into muffins and soups as well as prepared in the more common dishes such as baked beans and bean salad.

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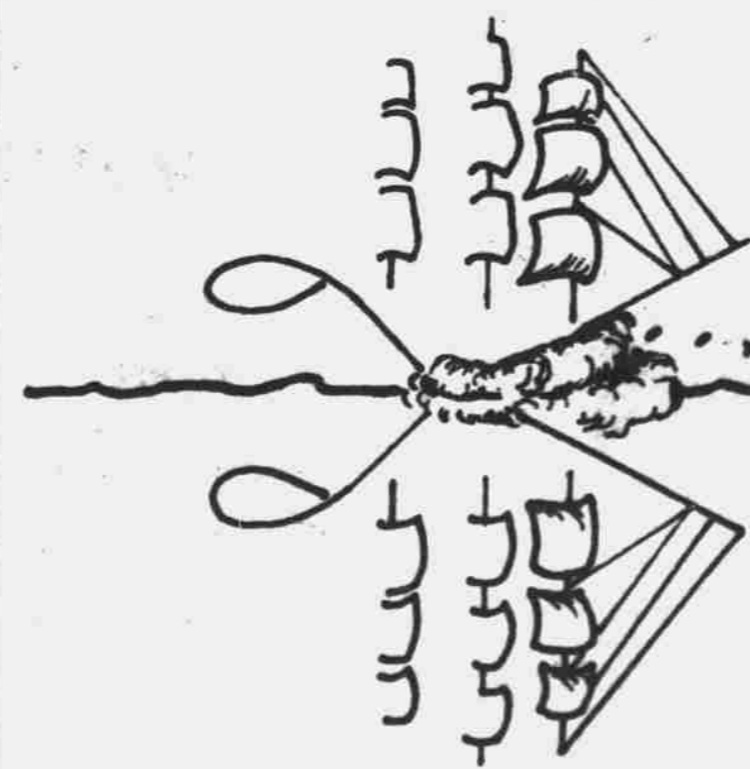
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