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From the brain, to biofuel and Carnival

MARILUCE MOURA – EDITOR IN CHIEF

Pesquisa FAPESP magazine presents yet another English language edition. This is the fourth time we have gathered the 18 most significant articles about some of the best scientific and technological research in Brazil in a magazine for those who do not read Portuguese. This time, the articles span the period from November 2006 to September 2007.

We have tried to provide articles from a wide ranging area, following the same pattern as *Pesquisa FAPESP* in Portuguese. Besides science and technology research, we carry articles on the country's scientific and technological policy in all editions, and also address studies on the humanities. At

least half the texts are about research projects financed by the main non-federal science development agency in the country: the São Paulo State Research Support Foundation (*FAPESP - Fundação de Amparo à Pesquisa do Estado de São Paulo*). The other half deals with projects from elsewhere in the country. This ratio reflects the fact that São Paulo is the country's wealthiest and most industrially developed state. Home to some of Brazil's best universities, it accounts for more than 50% of the country's scientific production.

FAPESP publishes *Pesquisa FAPESP* in Portuguese every month – and seasonally in English, Spanish and French



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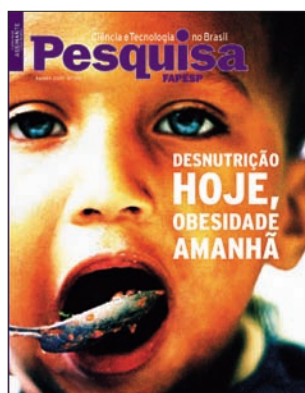
February, 2007



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June, 2007



July, 2007



September, 2007

– as a means of publicizing some of the research projects financed by the Foundation and to render accounts of its activities. Part of its mission is also to disclose science, and not only to São Paulo readers. That is why the magazine is always found in the newsstands of Brazilian cities with strong centers of higher education.

This edition discusses Brazilian themes, naturally, which are also current for readers from around the world. Cutting edge experiments involving the brain, conducted at both Duke University, in the United States, and the Edmond and Lily Safra International Institute of Neuroscience in Natal, the capital of the state of Rio Grande do Norte, draw attention to the main centers specializing in this field. They account for ten pages in this issue of the magazine, covering details of this research project. A novel treatment that combines chemotherapy with stem cells to

treat type 1 diabetes, conducted by a group from the University of São Paulo in Ribeirão Preto, in the inner-state region, is a radical bet for fighting the disease and one that may become very useful in the future; thus, it merits becoming better known.

In São Carlos, another inner-state city in São Paulo, researchers are working on equipment with light emitting diodes or LEDs. To date, they have created a new traffic light, medical-dental materials, a photobiology studies table and a new optical microscope. We talk about all these products that are an offshoot of scientific research and about how most of them are ready for commercial production.

Technological innovation concerning biofuels is also an issue that has gained priority status. Biofuels have been studied in Brazil for many years and excellent results have been attained. We do not refer merely to ethanol,

the best known biofuel, but also to biodiesel, the production and distribution of which is beginning to gain ground in this country.

Where the humanities are concerned, it is interesting to highlight the article on Carnival, Brazil's most popular festival. In this specific case, we are talking about Carnival in the state of Bahia. Intellectuals demand that the event undergoes certain changes and criticize what one of them calls 'the dictatorship of joy'. The expression is connected with the fact that for almost 20 years the tourism, music and Carnival industries have heavily exploited the notion of people and things in Bahia, while television imposes the idea of a place where people party round the clock and where one is permanently happy.

We hope that this edition pleases those who are interested in science and culture. Enjoy your reading.