

MRI staffer drawn to U of A by forces at work

Michael Brown

Just like principles that drive the magnetic resonance imaging machine he cares for, Peter Seres says there is a certain magnetism that draws him to the University of Alberta.

“The university is a great institution for both education and research. The support that comes for research is amazing, and the recognition of support staff is a very important part of why the university is doing as well as it is,” said

Seres, a magnetic resonance research assistant with the Department of Biomedical Engineering in the Peter S. Allen MR Research Centre.

Originally from Slovakia, Seres came to the university in March 2003 looking to put his engineering master’s degree in automation and control to good use.

He started providing MRI services for researchers in the Department of Psychiatry, but it wasn’t long before his workload expanded to include research imaging for neu-

staff spotlight

rology and spinal-cord researchers.

Beyond performing MRIs using three different machines—the largest of which, a 4.7 Tesla (strength of the magnetic field) MRI unit is the strongest full-body system in Canada—Seres analyzes the results to help improve future scans, and provides some assistance to the centre’s senior engineer to keep the systems in shape.

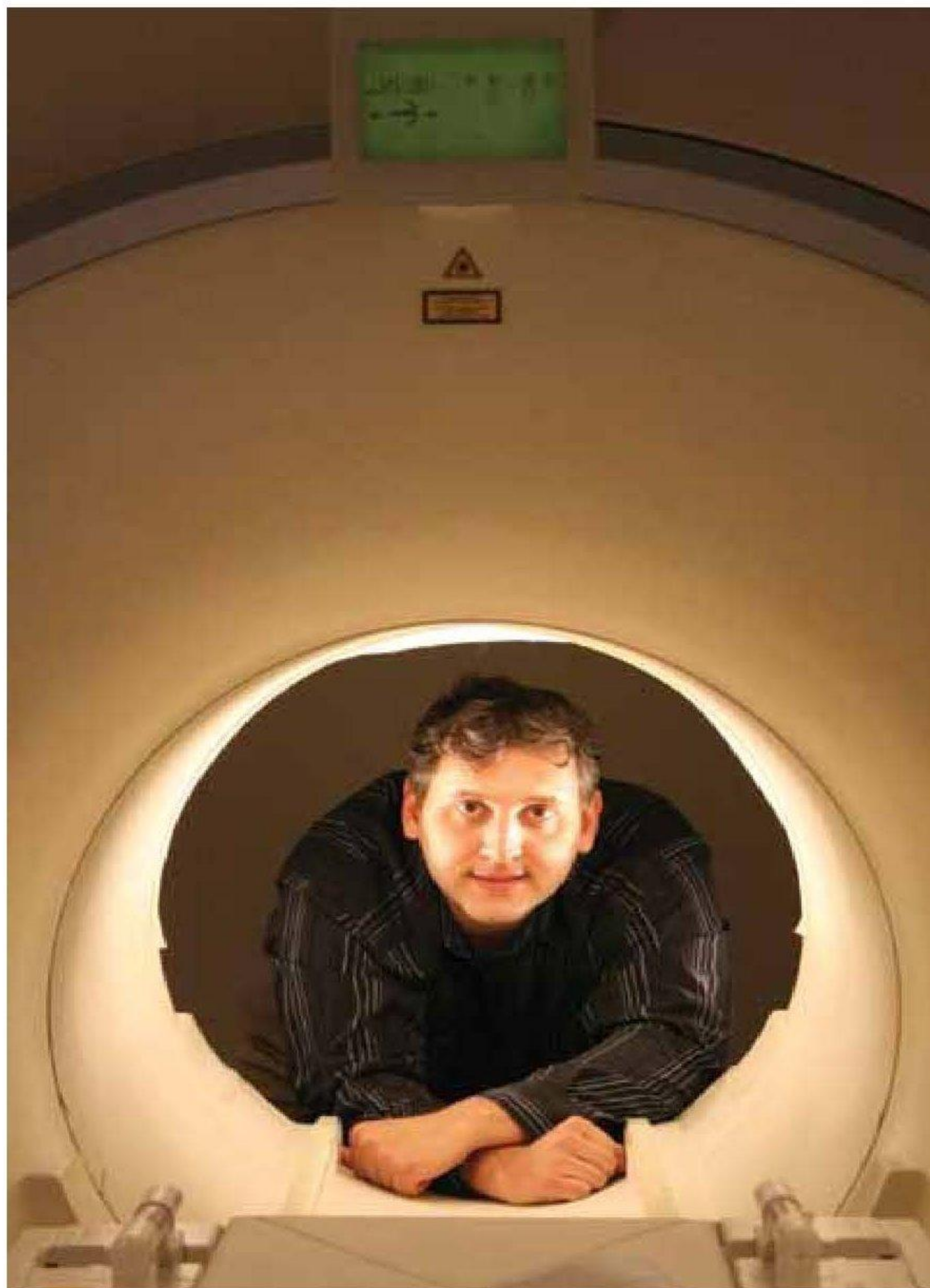
“Sometimes I have to roll my sleeves up and do some work on these systems,” said Seres. “It is very interesting because I get to use some of the experience I got from my university studies, plus it’s fun to tinker with the systems, to understand how they actually work, so when something goes down during a study, we can troubleshoot and continue on with minimal disruption.”

Being an expert on every little detail of the MRI process, Seres says the most satisfaction he gets from his job is sharing his knowledge with anyone who is interested.

“I’m not a trained educator, but at the same time it is fun to talk to these students who are not from this field, and explain to them the basics of the physics of the MRI while I am actually running the scan,” he said.

Despite using up a portion of free time guiding ski tours in Jasper and Lake Louise, MRIs are never far from Seres’ mind. As a hobby, Seres created the website for the Peter S. Allen MR Research Centre. He is also the web editor for the *International Society of Magnetic Resonance in Medicine*.

He says his deep interest in his work is simple—he loves what he does. “The group that has been assembled by Peter Allen is an amazing group of people who make it a great place to come to every day,” said Seres. “Life has its ups and downs but the centre, at least for me, is always the steady point.” ■



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Peter Seres checks out one of the MRI machines in the Peter S. Allen MR Research Centre.