

ALUMNI Update

AUGUST 2010



NOBEL LAUREATE

US Quantum Physicist and Nobel Laureate, Dr William D Phillips presented a lively and informative talk to a packed house at the Seymour Centre recently. *Time, Einstein and the Coolest Stuff in the Universe* kept the audience on the edge of their seats with explosions, carnations that smashed like glass and the applause-inducing demonstration of spinning an 'atom' to make it stabilise within a magnetic field (see image). The front row of children were delighted to see multiple balloons emerge from a small container of liquid nitrogen having helped Dr Phillips count four being put in earlier. Dr Phillips was also keen to highlight the importance of quantum physics as the next breakthrough science. "The Quantum Group at the University of Sydney is working on the frontiers of these exciting questions, and I am looking forward to great new things coming from this research in the next several years." Dr Michael J Biercuk is a former colleague of Dr Phillips having worked with him at NIST. You can catch Dr Biercuk at Cafe Scientific on Saturday 21 August at *Tilley's Devine Café*, Camberra's More details are on page two of the *Update*.

For more information on Quantum Group Research:
sydney.edu.au/science/physics/research/quantum/index.shtml



UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY OPEN DAY 28 AUGUST



The University of Sydney Open Day is an exciting and informative day for future students and parents alike. With tours, lectures and a personalised program (available online) it's a day that should not be missed.

If you need information about admissions, courses or other aspects of studying at the University you can talk directly to faculty representatives, career experts and admissions advisers at the information booths in the Main Quadrangle, Camperdown Campus. Be sure to stroll down Physics Road.

For more information and to download maps (you'll need one!) and to build your own program visit: sydney.edu.au/open_day/

NATIONAL SCIENCE WEEK

Our own Dr Karl Kruszelnicki is urging everyone to take part in a sleep survey. That's right - lie down and be counted!

The survey is being conducted by the University's sleep researchers from the Centre for Integrated Research and Understanding of Sleep (CIRUS) in a team effort with ABC Science. The aim is to find out about how we're all sleeping.

The Big Sleep Survey is on all through August and will answer some interesting questions such as: How much sleep are we actually getting? Have mobiles and laptops in the bedroom affected our sleep? How many people experience 'parasomnias', such as sleepwalking, sleep talking, night terrors and restless leg syndrome? Is someone else's snoring driving you crazy?

To take the survey; www.sleepsurvey.net.au/index.php

National Science Week has events across the country for those who love all things science. To find out what's happening where you live:

www.scienceweek.gov.au/Pages/index.aspx



ABC SCIENCE TALK SATURDAY 21 AUGUST

Saturday 21 August will be all systems go at *Tilley's Devine Café* in Canberra, Dr Michael J. Biercuk, one of the School's quantum physicists, will take part in an ABC Science discussion panel on nanotechnology and its impact on the items we use in our daily lives such as clothes, electronics, packaging, sunscreens and cosmetics.

Hosted by Dr Paul Willis (Catalyst ABC TV) you're invited to come along this lively Canberra hotspot. Starting at 6pm on Saturday 21 August, cnr. Wattle & Brigalow Street, Lyneham, Canberra this is one discussion not to miss. Federal election results will be screened at the Café so you'll be in good company when the results are announced.

Places are filling fast so book now on tel: 6247 7753.



BECOME A MENTOR

Many people recall with fondness the person who was their mentor. At the University of Sydney we offer University graduates the opportunity to mentor our current students. By successfully completing the online Mentor Readiness Questionnaire you can become a mentor. It's that easy. The online mentoring program is designed for alumni to mentor students in relation to their career development and for all parties to enjoy the widely-recognised benefits that mentoring brings.

Alumni need no previous mentoring experience - simply a desire to help a student and the willingness to share their time and life experience on a mutually agreed basis. Mentoring provides a unique opportunity to contribute to a student's career development by sharing knowledge you have acquired through years of experience. We hope you sign up to join this inspirational program and help support our students.

Become a mentor: www.alumni.sydney.edu.au/s/965/index.aspx

QUARKS TO COSMOS

If you've been wanting to update your physics why not join some of our leading astronomers and physicists in this series of special lectures about ten "big ideas" in modern astronomy and physics.

QUARKS TO THE COSMOS: TEN GREAT DISCOVERIES IN MODERN ASTRONOMY AND PHYSICS will have you exploring topics from subatomic physics to black holes and cosmology, while discussing some of the latest research and bringing you up-to-date on recent discoveries in our understanding of the universe.

An evening of star viewing in the Blue Mountains is included. This CCE course is held in the School of Physics from from 6.30pm-8.30pm Wed 8 September to Wed 10 November. Cost is \$330.00.

Details: cce.usyd.edu.au/course/qctd

VALE SIR BRUCE WILLIAMS - FORMER VC



The distinguished former Vice-Chancellor, Sir Bruce Williams, died on 11 August aged 91. Professor Sir Bruce Rodda Williams KBE was Vice-Chancellor of the University of Sydney from 1967 to 1981. He continued to take a keen interest in the affairs of the University and later served as a Fellow of the University Senate, appointed by the Minister for Education from 1994 to 1997, and for that period was Chair of the Senate's Finance Committee. "Sir Bruce Williams was an outstanding Vice-Chancellor in an important period of change at the University", said Her Excellency Professor Marie Bashir AC CVO, the University's Chancellor. "He provided strong and dignified leadership which took the reputation of the University to even greater heights. Sir Bruce will be forever remembered with gratitude." Sir Bruce, BA Hons (Melb), MA (Adel), HonDLitt (Sydney and Keele), HonLLD (Melb and Manchester), HonDEcon (Qld), FASSA, had a long and distinguished career at the forefront of economic and education policy both in Australia and the United Kingdom.

THANKS!

Thank you to everyone who donated to the Science Foundation for Physics June appeal. The generosity of our alumni and friends is terrific. The campaign raised \$10,344.00. Your support does make a difference. Not only is the School of Physics able to offer over \$50,000 in annual prizes and scholarships to our talented and hardworking students but the Foundation supports the School with \$100,000 given each year to fund those items not covered by the university or government grants. Without your help we would not be able to support our academic staff and students in this way. Your support contributes to the success of the School of Physics. Thank you!