



Alumni Update

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SCIENCE TEACHERS GO BACK TO SCHOOL...

The School of Physics that is! The Science Teachers Workshop (STW), a Science Foundation for Physics initiative, updates teachers about physics research while honing their skills with hands-on experiments and challenges. Designed to fit in with the NSW Higher School Certificate, the 2008 STW will include a speed dating session with physicists and teachers. The STW will be held in the School of Physics on 12 and 13 June. Regional Workshops will be run in Wagga Wagga 22 & 23 July, Dubbo 25 July, and in Armidale on 28 & 29 July 2008. To book your place visit: www.physics.usyd.edu.au/foundation or contact Alex Viglienzone on (02) 9036 6188.

COLLECTORS

If you're based in Australia be sure to tune into ABC1 TV on Friday 6 June at 8.00pm. Our own Julius Sumner Miller Fellow, Dr Karl Kruszelnicki, talking with presenter, Andy Muirhead, highlights some of the objects in the Physics Museum collection.

Particular emphasis is placed on the equipment used by Professor Julius Sumner Miller during his time at the School of Physics. Why Is It So? Tune in and find out! (*The object pictured is part of the Physics' collection that shunned the limelight.*)



SUPER SCIENCE

Dr Manju Sharma is well known within the University of Sydney for her SUPER skills in science education and she continues in her groundbreaking educational techniques. Manju and former student Derek Muller have developed an online kit of syllabus-based physics tools with the support of an Australian Schools Innovation in Science, Technology & Mathematics (ASISTM) grant. The new website www.hscphysics.edu.au/home addresses the HSC syllabus laying out lesson plans, demonstrating difficult to teach concepts (e.g. Planck & Einstein's differing views on research and its application in social and political terms) and uses video clips as well as Q&A for teachers and their students.

A team of high school teachers working with the SUPER group conducted detailed research, using proven methods such as the Richard Myers principles for multimedia tools, in order to build

this comprehensive online toolkit for teaching HSC physics. The material is also available on DVD. To complete the kit, Australian physicists have been profiled to give students a feel for what a career in physics entails.



Manju (*left*), who has a long career in physics education, soon shifted her focus to the transition between high school and university. "It's where we can make a difference, touch people's lives. We need better-informed support for teachers to solve physical problems – global problems. It's also an area where, in order to conduct teaching in more advanced areas of the discipline, one needs to know about both education and the subject matter [physics]."

Her work brings the two together seamlessly. "It's exciting and good fun," she enthuses. It allows her to work with other disciplines – biology, chemistry, maths and education. "And I also love the interaction with students and people in the workplace." Manju had thought about possibly taking on the engineering syllabus as well but has rethought that idea saying, "There's so much to do here already! To do engineering too I would need another lifetime!"

SIR PRIZES - Henry Chamberlain Russell

Thank you to David Malin who emailed me: 'I don't think Henry Chamberlain Russell was entitled to call himself 'Sir Henry', as reported in the (May) Alumni Update. He was a CMG not a KCMG.' Obviously I promoted him! My apologies.

Thank you to Mr Ted King, Henry Chamberlain Russell's great-grandson, who presented the HCR Prize in Astronomy to joint winners Chris Hales and Juliana Kwan. Mr King's presentation made the Prizes Ceremony most memorable. Congratulations to Juliana and Chris. **Henry Chamberlain Russell** was a very intriguing character but did you know that he was almost the victim of an assassination plot? A new play by Nigel Sutton, "Getting Away with Murder", details the attempt to blow up the Government Astronomer (and possibly Sydney Observatory as well) and will be performed this weekend, June 7-8, to mark the 150th Anniversary of Sydney Observatory.

For details on what is sure to be a fascinating insight into one of the first examples of terrorism within Australia please call Sydney Observatory on (02) 9921 3485.