Well, it seems like I joined JSU yesterday. And here we are at the end of the spring semester with essentially just final exams left. I wish the students the best of luck as they swot (a British term used in New Zealand for "cram") for their exams.

So, how can I summarize my first semester at JSU? It has been easier than I thought. The budget crunch has been eased by Agency accounts within the Department—although we still have 5 more months in this fiscal year! The students, even if some lack strong backgrounds in academia, are, for the most part, motivated and hard working. The "demands" from the Dean have been fair and easy to handle. The faculty have been patient and supportive. I appreciate the efforts from all of you in making this transition easy.

Living in Jacksonville has been good. Our house is starting to look like a house, so we are getting anxious to move in. (And to get all our possessions out of storage.) That should happen sometime in June. I do notice the lack of good restaurants in the town, but that is something can change rather quickly. And, we have not had any unbearably hot weather... yet.

Let’s get the semester wrapped up and prepare for May and the summer terms. We will continue to move forward as the Department grows in strength and size.

Lou

Department News

American Chemical Society Project Seed Funding
To Nixon Mwebi for a total of $11,700 (with matching funds of $1,000 from JSU) to support 4 high school students on summer research.
Congratulations for Research Funding
Special congratulations to the following individuals in the Department for being successful with Faculty Research Grants. We were awarded no less than SIX grants. The well-deserved Principal Investigators are: **N. (Vasi) Vasumathi, David Steffy, Al Nichols, Nixon Mwebi, Brent Helms, and Jan Gryko**. Total funding is $14,500. Great job!

**IDEA (Individual Development and Educational Assessment)**
Please remind your students to fill out the course and instructor evaluations by Tuesday 21 April. Each one will be entered into a drawing for a JSU jump drive, a $100 gift card to the JSU Bookstore, or an iPod Shuffle.

**Faculty Annual Reports (FAR) due on Friday, 8 May**
The report forms can be downloaded from the College of Arts and Sciences web page: [http://www.jsu.edu/depart/cas/collegepolicy.html](http://www.jsu.edu/depart/cas/collegepolicy.html)
These should be completed and turned in to the Head of Department by 8 May. Meetings with the Head will be scheduled for 18 – 29 May.

**Department Meeting**
On Friday 17 April at 3:00. Mark your calendars.

**Final Class and Demonstrations**
**Nouredine Zettiti** has students build electrical motors, generators, ring launchers and has various electrical demonstrations, some quite shocking and hair-raising. Yet, as you can see in the photographs, no one seems to mind.
PHS202: (clockwise from above)
One of the students with her hair on-end. A group of students standing in line to get zapped. One student flinching back and the other tracking a metal ring from their home-built ring launcher when it sends a ring up to the ceiling in the room.

University News

JSU Community Orchestra Concert
Sunday, 19 April, at 3:00PM in Mason Hall. Laura Weinkauf is playing, the program sounds fun: songs from Phantom of the Opera, Stars and Stripes, Villa-Lobos guitar concerto and Copeland’s Fanfare for the Common Man among other pieces. Admission is free.

2009 Faculty Awards Reception
Tuesday, 12 May at 5:00 in 1103 Houston Cole Library with hors d’oeuvres following the presentations on the 12th floor.

Save the Date
College of Arts and Science Reception is scheduled for Thursday, 14 May. You will be receiving more details shortly.

Required Annual Sexual Harassment Prevention Training
http://www.jsu.edu/hr/sexualharassment.html
This annual training must be completed by April 30, 2009.

Publications and Presentations

Allison Newton is the Keynote speaker at the Georgia Geographic Alliance Spring GEOFEST at Kennesaw State University, Saturday 18 April.

Special Thank You to Stephen Fordham
For arranging the presentation of Autumn Cole, Forensic Scientist for the Alabama Department of Forensic Sciences at the Thursday evening ACS Student Meeting. It was a great presentation.

Volunteers needed for Midnight Snack
The annual midnight snack (breakfast) in the dining hall will be 10:00 PM until midnight on Wednesday 22 April. Please contact the Office of Student Life at 782-5491 if you plan to be awake at that time and can help out.

Trivia Quiz (answers at the end of this newsletter)
1. What makes a good steak appear red?
2. Why does the steak turn brown when cooked?
3. True or False: Your heart stops when you sneeze.
4. What is the largest sea in the world?
5. True or False: No two snowflakes are identical.
6. How is it possible to throw a ball as hard as you can and have it come back to you without hitting anything, without anything attached to it or without someone else catching it and throwing it back?
7. A ½ full water bottle is placed in the freezer and all the water freezes. Will the bottle contract or bloat?
8. Speaking of ice, what would freeze faster, and ice cube tray with cold water or an ice cube tray with hot water.
9. A camel’s hair brush is made from the hair of what animal?
10. True or False. A left-handed person finds it easier to open a jar than a right-handed person.

Plant Sale
Saturday 18 April from 8:00 AM until noon on the lawn in front of the Theron Montgomery Building at JSU. The sale of vegetables, herbs and flowers benefits Beta Beta Beta, the National Biological Honor Society

Degenerate States

Further Adventures of Norman and Norma
The River Walk
Norma goes out for a walk. She comes to a river and sees Norman on the opposite bank. "Yoo-hoo!" she shouts, "How can I get to the other side?" Norman yells back, "You ARE on the other side."
Norman on the Sun
Norman met a Russian and an American in the bar. The Russian said, "We were the first in space!"
The American said, "We were the first on the moon!"
Norman said, "So what? We Kiwis are going to be the first on the sun!"
The Russian and the American looked at each other and shook their heads. "You can't land on the sun, you idiot! You'll burn up!" said the Russian. To which Norman replied, "Eh, we're not stupid, you know. We're going at night!"

In a Vacuum
Norman and Nora were playing Trivial Pursuit one night. It was Norma's turn. She rolled the dice and landed on Science and Nature. Her question was: "If you are in a vacuum and someone calls your name, can you hear it?"
She thought for a time and then asked, "Is it on or off?"

Contact Details
If you have items of news or interest that you would like included in the Department of Physical and Earth Sciences newsletter, then contact Tracy Casey before noon on Thursday at; tscasey@jsu.edu or phone (256) 782-5232.

Trivia Quiz Answers
1. True, but the lights can flicker, the kid erased
2. False, water up if you don't believe it
3. True, the question is correct, then the water expansion
4. South China Sea is about 3.5 million sq. km, false
5. False, the absorption band of the benzene vapor
6. False, iron is in the blood for a group of myoglobin oxides (muscles) and others
7. False, iron is derived from the animal
8. False, myoglobin is a oxygen storage protein in the muscle – it is not the blood