Guess what! It is cold outside! I am still gathering weather data from the top of Sparkman Hall (up 10 stories). With over 41,000 data points, the average wind speed is only 3.3 mph. Although the monthly averages of 3.0 mph for the summer months has increased to slightly over 4.2 mph for December, so far. We are still far below the 8 mph threshold that Alabama Power wants. The temperatures have dropped, dramatically. I remember reading the long-range forecasts called for a warm and dry winter. Well, on Wednesday, 7 December the AVERAGE temperature for the day was 32.7°F. The low was down to 24°F. Compare that to 4 August when the average temperature for the day was 90.7°F.

Not too much else new is happening. Please note that grades are due on Tuesday. Those who are taking off early for Christmas, have an enjoyable holiday time.

-- Lou

Department News

Planetarium to Present Star of Bethlehem Program Dec. 11
Travel through space and explore planet Earth during the JSU Planetarium’s Second Saturday Space Safari! On December 11, 2010, the program will explore the Star of Bethlehem. The event will be from 1:30 - 2:30 p.m. in the JSU Planetarium on the third floor of Martin Hall. Admission is $5 per person, and groups are encouraged to please call (256) 782-5697 or e-mail fieldschool@jsu.edu to pre-register.

Fall Terms Grade Due
On Tuesday, 14 December by 12 noon.

University News

Fall Commencement Set for Friday, December 17
Jacksonville State University’s Fall 2010 Graduation Ceremonies will be Friday, December 17 at Pete Mathews Coliseum. This semester, there will be two ceremonies. The College of Arts and Sciences and the College of Commerce and Business Administration will confer degrees at 5 p.m. Commencement for the College of Education and Professional Studies and the College of Nursing and Health Sciences will follow at 7 p.m.
Adjusting for the Ever Increasing Price of Gasoline
Effective January 1, 2011, the mileage allowance for use of a privately owned vehicle will change to 51.0 cents per mile. A copy of the updated travel brochure will be sent to budget managers. A digital copy is also available on the Controller’s Office webpage.

Little River Canyon Center

JSU Field Schools- Little River Canyon Center Programs for January 2011
A new year will bring great new opportunities to get back to nature through the JSU Field Schools and Little River Canyon Center!

Greener Day at Little River Canyon Center
The National Park Service staff and volunteers will present “Green & Grey” living programs on the second Saturday of each month. Topics include climate change, recycling, energy conservation, eco-gardening, exotic plants, native landscaping, pollution prevention, green energy, and more!
Date: Saturday, January 8, 2011
Where: Little River Canyon Center in Fort Payne, AL
Time: 1:00 pm – 3:00 pm
Fee: Free

Second Saturday Space Safaris
Travel through space and explore planet Earth during these exciting programs for families and children.
Date: Saturday, January 8, 2011
Where: JSU Planetarium (3rd Floor Martin Hall) in Jacksonville, AL
Time: 7:00 pm
Fee: $5 per person; pre-registration encouraged especially for groups

Wilderness Survival 101
Let your instincts come alive and learn to survive. Larry Beane (National Park Service) will teach hands-on methods of basic survival skills dealing with water, shelter, food, fire and getting found. Skills are similar to those shown on popular TV. This program will be OUTSIDE, hands-on, hiking, collecting materials with hands so wear appropriate clothing for a cold winter day in the wilderness. Participants will be sitting on the ground, crawling on the ground as necessary, and will get “dirty” so to speak. Dress in layers. Bring your own lunch, snacks and water/drink.
Date: Saturday, January 22, 2011
Where: Little River Canyon Center in Fort Payne, AL
Time: 10:00 am – 2:00 pm Pre-registration required
Fee: $10 adult; $5 child/student (ages 15—22)

Growin’ Up Wild for Preschool Children: Bird Beak Buffet
Join Canyon Center staff and volunteers for fun nature and art programs for preschool age children. This program is based on the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources Project Wild: Growin’ up Wild curriculum.
Date: Friday, January 21, 2011
Where: Little River Canyon Center in Fort Payne, AL
Time: 11:00 am - noon
Fee: No fee; some programs may have limited space so pre-registration is encouraged
River Rhythms Family Fun Program: Feeding Winter Birds
Join Canyon Center staff and volunteers every fourth Saturday of the month for fun nature programs including hikes, crafts, games, nature talks, activities and more. Kids will learn how to attract and feed birds during the winter months.
**Date:** Saturday, January 22, 2011
**Where:** Little River Canyon Center in Fort Payne, AL
**Time:** 1:00- 3:00 pm
**Fee:** No fee; some programs may have limited space so pre-registration is encouraged

The Climate Project (TCP)
The Climate Project United States is the American branch of Nobel Laureate and former Vice President Al Gore’s climate change leadership program founded in June 2006. As a program of the Alliance for Climate Protection, TCP’s mission is to educate the public about the harmful effects of climate change and to work toward solutions at a grassroots level worldwide. TCP supports more than 3,000 diverse and dedicated volunteers internationally, and TCP U.S. comprises one third of this global force. These volunteers are known as TCP Presenters and have been personally trained by Vice President Al Gore to deliver an updated version of the slide show featured in the Academy Award-winning documentary An Inconvenient Truth. TCP Presenters have delivered 70,000 presentations and have reached a combined global audience of more than 7.3 million TCP is committed to educating the global community about the urgency of implementing comprehensive solutions to the climate crisis.
**Date:** Saturday, January 29, 2011
**Where:** Little River Canyon Center in Fort Payne, AL
**Time:** 1:00- 3:00 pm
**Fee:** No fee

Grant News

New Form 42 to use
Effective immediately, please ensure that all your faculty use the newly updated (9/20/10) BA Form 42, Approval Form for Sponsored Projects. Any older form versions received after today’s date will be returned to the department. An electronic version of the form may also be found on the OIRA web site, and it should soon be available in the Business Procedures Manual listing of forms. [The new forms needs twice as many signatures! – Lou]

Student News

Complete Distance Education Survey and You Could Win an iPod Touch
JSU Distance Education is conducting a survey for any student who took an online or videoconferencing distance education course during fall semester. The deadline for participation is December 14, 2010. Each student should complete the survey only once. Because we know that it’s such a busy time with finals and holiday preparations, here’s a little incentive. Every survey participant will have the opportunity to enter a drawing for an 8GB iPod Touch that we are giving away as a token of our appreciation to DE students. Please note that taking the survey more than once will NOT increase your chances of winning.
JSU Symposium
The online abstract submission form is available now for the 2011 Symposium on the Arts and Sciences website. Students may submit abstracts at any time up to the January 28, 2011 deadline.

Degenerate States

Cyber sex?
A French teacher was explaining to her class that, in French, nouns, unlike their English counterparts, are grammatically designated as masculine or feminine. One puzzled student asked, "What gender is computer?" The teacher did not know and the word wasn't in her French dictionary. So for fun she split the class into two groups, appropriately enough by gender, and asked them to decide whether "computer" should be a masculine or feminine noun. Both groups were required to give four reasons for their recommendation.

The women's group concluded that computers should be masculine ("le computer"), because:
1. To get their attention, you have to turn them on;
2. They have a lot of data but they are still clueless;
3. They are supposed to help you solve problems, but half the time they ARE the problem; and
4. As soon as you commit to one, you realize that if you'd waited a little longer, you could have had a better model.

The men's group decided that computers should definitely be of the feminine gender ("la computer"), because:
1. No one but their creator understands their internal logic;
2. The native language they use to communicate with other computers is incomprehensible to everyone else;
3. Even the smallest mistakes are stored in long-term memory for possible later retrieval; and
4. As soon as you make a commitment to one, you find yourself spending half your pay on accessories for it.

By the way: computer - ordinateur (masculine).
In German (der Rechner) is also masculine – Lou
In Polish (Komputer) is also masculine according to Jan!

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 Thursdays at: tscasey@jsu.edu or phone (256) 782-5232.