Well, the Texas Travelers have returned, and I have been promised a report for the next newsletter. However, Joe Morgan did report that his application for a Fulbright Fellowship to Indian was approved. So Joe will be leaving in July for 5 or so months overseas. We will be expecting regular reports from him about life in India.

The NMR is up and running. It is not yet fully calibrated. Still, the magnet is activated and will stay activated (even if the power is shut off). There seems to be a lot of misconceptions about the device. If you get within 12 inches of the magnet, it could cause problems. The problems range from having the magnetic strip on your credit card deactivated to magnetizing your watch or messing up a pacemaker. If you have metal implants in your body, you might experience some pain. If you have metal tools, they might get sucked into the magnet. If a wrench or screwdriver would happen to get into the magnetic field, not only would they get pulled to the center of the magnet, but the metal object entering the magnetic field will quench the magnet. (I explained about quenching in a previous newsletter. This is when the superconductivity stops and all the liquid helium boils off in a few seconds.) It also damages the magnet and it will cost us about $50,000 to get the magnet fixed. If you stay outside the little room (blocked off with a yellow chain), you cannot hurt the magnet and it cannot hurt you. So, please, know what you are doing if you must go into NMR room. (See the story below about McGee being evacuated.)

-- Lou

Department News

May 4 week Term Grades are Due TODAY (Friday 27 May)

Please note this fast turn-around for the term (final exams are on 26 May). The schedule for final grades for the summer is:

May Four Week: May 27, 2011 1:15 PM
May Six Week: June 10, 2011 1:15 PM
May Eight Week: June 29, 2011 1:15 PM
June Four Week: June 29, 2011 1:15 PM
May Twelve Week: July 29, 2011 1:15 PM
June Six Week: July 29, 2011 1:15 PM
July Four Week: July 29, 2011 1:15 PM
McGee Hall Evacuated!

McGee Hall was evacuated at about 11:00 PM on Tuesday (24 May) night. There are two large cryostats of liquid helium and two large cryostats of liquid nitrogen that are used to cool down the magnet in the NMR. These cryostats build up a small pressure of the gas inside as the liquid boils away. One of the nitrogen cryostats was releasing some of the nitrogen gas through a relief valve. A cleaning lady happened to walk by and heard the tank go "psssss." She immediately called campus police who evacuated the building in case all the oxygen in the entire building had been displaced by this tank going "psssss." They called the Jacksonville Fire Department who brought two trucks, including the hook-and-ladder truck. The Bruker technician was working in the building at this time. He was unaware of any oxygen depletion and only after he saw all the flashing lights out the window and was signaled with a bright strobe light and ordered to immediately evacuate the building did he leave the lab. With full hazmat suits and gas detectors, the firemen bravely entered McGee hall and took the offending nitrogen cryostat outside. It was carefully inspected and it was noted that there was a small crack in the one plastic fitting (that protects the glass fill gauge). Other than that the cryostat looked okay. With the assurance of the Department Head (who was, a few minutes earlier, sound asleep) the offending cryostat was put back in the building and everyone went home. The offending cryostat is now safely in the back corner of the instrument lab and can “pssss” to its heart’s content.

Board of Visitors Meeting 16 Sept.
The Board of Visitors (an advisory group of successful alumni) will hold their next meeting in Martin and McGee Halls. They will be shown the new NMR machine. The meeting is in the early planning stages. I hope that they follow through with their requests to interact more with the University and to hear student research presentations. I hope to know more as we approach the date. It might be a good day to keep your teaching schedule down to a minimum.

University News

FEMA Reimbursement
In the wake of the recent tornado event on April 27, 2011, many JSU faculty and staff have graciously provided various assistance and services to members of the community affected by the tornado. Expenses associated with these activities - those that were performed either at JSU or as a representative of JSU at another location - are eligible for reimbursement to JSU from FEMA. The Office of Institutional Research & Assessment will be facilitating the collection of information that will eventually be provided to FEMA for reimbursement. Please help us to provide FEMA with the most accurate information possible by contacting your various Department Heads/Deans/Directors and request that they provide the information that will be needed via the attached Personnel Activity Report for FEMA Public Assistance. Expenditures that have been incurred are eligible for submission to FEMA i.e., personnel expense, transportation costs, equipment usage, materials purchased, etc. Please have them include all costs associated with the assistance - more information is better than less at this point. If you have any questions about the form, please do not hesitate to contact Lynn Garner in the Office of Institutional Research & Assessment at lgarner@jsu.edu
JSU Offers Free Workshop on Data Loss and Fraud Prevention
Jacksonville State University's Small Business Development Center will partner with Multiplex Corporation to present an informational workshop on Data Loss and Fraud Prevention. The workshop will be held at the JSU College of Business and Commerce Merrill Building on Wednesday, June 1 from 1:00 p.m. - 2:00 p.m. Julie Ryan, a Certified Theft Risk Management Specialist, will present the workshop. She will cover federal regulations regarding data loss, privacy policies and procedures that are most often violated, and risk mitigation techniques for companies and their employees.

This workshop is open to the public and there is no charge to attend. However, advance registration is required as seating is limited. Please call the Jacksonville State University Small Business Development office at 256-782-5271 or contact us by email at sbdc@jsu.edu for more information or to register for the event.

Compliance Issues

Annual Training for Prevention of Sexual Harassment
The training program is available online and may be taken at a time that fits your schedule. It may be taken all in one session or you may bookmark and return at a later time. To access the training, go to the Office of Human Resources web site at http://www.jsu.edu/hr/ and select Preventing Sexual Harassment Training from the right hand side of the page. This annual training must be completed by May 31, 2011.

Degenerate States

Where Engineers Go
An engineer died and ended up in Hell. She was not pleased with the level of comfort and began to design and build improvements. After a while, the sinners had flush toilets, air conditioning and escalators, and everyone grew very fond of the engineer. One day God called to Satan to mock him, "So, how's it going down there in Hell?" Satan replied, "Hey, things are great. We've got air conditioning, flush toilets and escalators, and there's no telling what this engineer is going to come up with next." God was surprised, "What? You've got an engineer? That's a mistake. She should never have been sent down there in the first place. Send her up here." "No way," replied Satan, "I like having an engineer, and I'm keeping her." God threatened, "Send her up here now or I'll sue!" Satan laughed and answered, "Yeah, right. And just where are YOU going to get a lawyer?"

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.