It has been nearly a month since the last newsletter. I hope that everyone had a wonderful Christmas break. The snow on Christmas Day was exciting and added to the atmosphere of the season. Although, I must remark about the TV weathermen, who are always so excited to predict snow and especially to predict snow on Christmas day, to start their reports by stating it “technically” was not a White Christmas because someone made the rule that there had to be at least 1 inch of snow and it had to be on the ground before 6:00 AM to be a White Christmas. It still looked great!

I must mention that David Steffy, Al Nichols, Nixon Mwebi and Jan Gryko were all successful with their grants to study the effects of the Gulf Oil Spill. I am happy to see JSU participating with all the other research universities in Alabama on this important problem. Great work on the proposals! Good luck with the upcoming research. I hope this becomes a continuous stream of research funding.

To everyone, have a great semester. Enjoy the teaching. Please note that there is a Department meeting coming up on a Monday and the travel grant deadline is 24 January (NOT 28 January).

-- Lou

Department News

Department Meeting
We will have a Departmental meeting Monday 24 January at 12:30 in the Joint Conference Room.

Second Call for University Travel Grants
University Travel Grant Applications are due no later than January 24, 2011 to the Dean. [Please note this is 4 days before the University deadline to allow the Dean to read through the requests.] For more information and application visit our web site http://www.jsu.edu/academicaffairs/travel_grant.html.

Second Saturday Space Safaris
Travel through space and explore planet Earth during these exciting programs for families and children. 7:00 PM Saturday, January 8, February 12, April 9 and May 14 at the JSU Planetarium (3rd Floor Martin Hall). Fee: $5 per person.
University News

**JOT to Present Operas Based on Works of Gertrude Stein**

Ring in the New Year with the Jacksonville Opera Theatre as we present two operas by the poet Gertrude Stein. The pieces, which will be presented the weekend of January 15-16, 2011, are *In a Garden* by composer Meyer Kupferman and *Three Sisters Who Are Not Sisters* by composer Ned Rorem. The evening of opera will be presented on Saturday, January 15, 2011 at 7:30 p.m. and Sunday, January 16, 2011 at 3 p.m. in the Performance Center of Mason Hall on JSU’s campus. Tickets are $9 for the general public and $5 for students, senior citizens and the military. For ticket reservations, call JOT at 256-782-5876. Both performances promise to be intriguing. This evening of opera will be an evening you won’t forget!

**Board of Trustees Report**

**Board of Trustees Quarterly report items not reported last newsletter:**

Dr. Nouredine Zettili, Professor of Physics, presented “The Nuclear Born Openheimer Method and Nuclear Rotators,” as an invited plenary talk at the Fifth Meeting of the Saudi Physics Society, Abha, Saudi Arabia, October 25—27, 2010.

Dr. Nouredine Zettili, Professor of Physics, presented, “Bringing Technology into Physics Classrooms,” as an invited plenary talk at the Fifth Meeting of the Saudi Physics Society, Abha, Saudi Arabia, October 25—27, 2010.

Dr. Nouredine Zettili, Professor of Physics, presented, “Guided-Inquiry in Teaching Physics,” and an invited talk at King Fahd University of Petroleum and Minerals, Dhahran, Saudi Arabia, October 31, 2010.

Dr. Nouredine Zettili, Professor of Physics, had an interview featured in the October 2010 issue of the Physics Journal of the Saudi Physics Society.

Dr. Nixon Mwebi, Assistant Professor of Chemistry, and Mr. Brian Ogendi, and undergraduate student, attended and presented the research paper “Antioxidant potential of sweet, mild and hot peppers: Effect of cooking” at the Annual Biomedical Research Conference for Minority Students (ABRCMS) held at Nov 10-13 at Charlotte, North Carolina.

Dr. Nixon Mwebi, Assistant Professor of Chemistry and six undergraduate students attended and presented their research findings at the regional Southeastern Regional Meeting of the American Chemical Society held at New Orleans LA in Nov 30-Dec 4, 2010. The students and presentations are:

- Ms. Samantha Gacasan, an undergraduate student of Dr. Nixon Mwebi "Effects of storage on the antioxidant potential of raspberries and blackberries"
- Mr. Andrew Woods and Mr. Brian Ogendi, undergraduate students of Dr. Nixon Mwebi "Antioxidant potential of peppers: Effect of cooking"
- Mr. Cain Eric Kirk, an undergraduate student of Dr. Nixon Mwebi "Heavy metals in composted sludge: Speciation and bioavailability"
- Mr. Calvin Scott and Ms. Courtney Crosby, undergraduate students of Dr. Nagarajan Vasumathi, "Efficiency of activated zeolites as catalysts for PABA ester synthesis under solvent free MW irradiation"
Dr. L. Joe Morgan, Assistant Professor of Geography and Ms. Holly Park, an undergraduate student presented the poster: Panopticon Revisited: Gated Public Housing and Crime Reduction at the annual meeting of the Southeastern Division of the Association of American Geographers, Birmingham, Alabama, Nov. 21-23, 2010.

Dr. L. Joe Morgan, Assistant Professor of Geography presented the paper: Gated Communities: Institutionalizing Social Stratification at the annual meeting of the Southeastern Division of the Association of American Geographers, Birmingham, Alabama, Nov. 21-23, 2010. (The paper has also been submitted for publication in the Southeastern Geographer.)

Dr. Jonathan Herbert, Assistant Professor of Geography, and undergraduate student J. Caudill presented the poster "Assessing Climate Change in Alabama Using Climate Normals" at the annual meeting of the Southeastern Division of the Association of American Geographers, Birmingham, Alabama, Nov. 21-23, 2010.

Dr. Nixon Mwebi, Assistant Professor of Chemistry, was awarded a BP-Marine Environmental Sciences Consortium (MESC) Gulf Oil Research Initiative grant for "Separation, spectral analysis and studies of degradation products" in response to the recent gulf oil spill, in the amount of $69,000, for the year 2011.

Dr. Jan Gryko, Professor of Chemistry, was awarded a BP-Marine Environmental Sciences Consortium (MESC) Gulf Oil Research Initiative grant for "Interaction of oil-spill with marine sediments and solid surfaces" in response to the recent gulf oil spill in the amount of $46,000, for the year 2011.

Dr. Al Nichols, Professor of Chemistry, was awarded a BP-Marine Environmental Sciences Consortium (MESC) Gulf Oil Research Initiative grant for "Dispersed oil in the sediments of the gulf coast of Alabama" in response to the recent gulf oil spill in the amount of $34,500, for the year 2011.

Dr. David A. Steffy, Professor of Environmental Science, was awarded a BP-Marine Environmental Sciences Consortium (MESC) Gulf Oil Research Initiative grant for "Evaluating changing surfactant capabilities" in response to the recent gulf oil spill in the amount of $14,829, for the year 2011.

Whew! You all have been busy. Keep up the good work! -- Lou

Student News

JSU Symposium
The online abstract submission form is available now for the 2011 Symposium on the Arts and Sciences website. Students may submit abstracts (up to 450 words) at any time up to the January 28, 2011 deadline. Prizes of $50 are awarded to the best presentations.
Degenerate States

WARNING:
· The consumption of alcohol can leave you wondering what happened to your underwear.
· The consumption of alcohol can create the illusion that you are tougher, smarter, faster and better looking than you are.
· The consumption of alcohol can lead you to think people are laughing WITH you.
· The consumption of alcohol can cause you to think you can sing.
· The consumption of alcohol can cause pregnancy.
· The consumption of alcohol is a major factor in dancing like an idiot.
· The consumption of alcohol can cause you to tell your friends that you love them.
· The consumption of alcohol can make you think you can converse with members of the opposite sex without spitting.
· The consumption of alcohol can make you think you are whispering when you are not.

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: tcasey@jsu.edu or phone (256) 782-5232.