

UMR Ph.D. Finds Career in Medical Physics

Editors note: Dan Otero graduated in Winter 2000 with a Ph.D. in computational atomic and molecular physics under the supervision of Curators' Professor of Physics, Don H. Madison and Professor Jerry L. Peacher. Dan writes

I landed my first job as Postdoc at University Hospital and Medical Center, SUNY-Stony Brook in the Department of Radiation Oncology, barely before graduation. At Stony Brook, I participated in the development of an interfacing computer package for performing quality control on medical linear accelerators used for delivering external beams (electrons and x-rays) in cancer treatment. I was impressed with the great marriage of my skills with medical applications, i.e., my knowledge of particle scattering and computer applications. I decided that my career would henceforth be in Medical Physics. Then, in November 2000, there was an advertisement for a Medical Physics Residency Fellowship at Johns Hopkins Hospital in Maryland. I emailed my resume, and within one day there was a phone call interview followed by an invitation. I attended the fully arranged interview, and within a day the director called me that his staff said "if you don't get Dan here then you should resign". The package was very attractive. When I had finished my training in less than the stipulated two years, my director would not let me go. But, life has to continue ("You can't get dry where you have taken a bath - a Kenyan saying implying that a change is imminent when necessary). I applied for four permanent jobs as a medical physicist in five hospitals; all extended an offer. It was hard making the selection but I decided to join St. Francis Hospital and Medical Center in Topeka, KS, effective August, 2001. I have to say that I have been blessed so much that the major obstacles that most of the international students meet in the Visa sponsorship have never arisen. For every success, there must have been somebody behind it. For my case, my family, wife and kids are always the winners in my successes. However, the training that I obtained under Dr. Madison, is one that I would live to cherish. - Dan Otero.

Alumni Notes:

Laura (Morey) Bosnak (BS '63) is an Associate Research Chemist with Bayer Corp. in Stilwell, Kansas. Laura writes "after 15 years with Bayer Corporation's Environmental Research Metabolism group, I am now working with the Field Residue Program as Database Administrator."

Leroy Alt (BS '61, MS '66) retired from East Central College in 1993 and now teaches in the Electrical and Computer Engineering Department at UMR.

Franklin Kone (MS '70) recalls many fond memories of the NSF Summer Institutes, 1967-1970, and how the "good doctor" Harold Q Fuller held the "upside down" maps he would draw to get them to the Kickoff Picnic (and then work, work, work!) at Meramec Springs Park.

James Perez (BS '94, PhD '00) has joined the faculty of Luther College, Decorah, IA, as an Assistant Professor of Physics.

Jeff Schroeder (BS '95) reports "life continues to be great in Colorado. My wife and I are expecting our third (!) child in July. My career has taken an interesting turn, and I am now managing three different companies, doing web consulting work."

G. Jay Doster (BS '93, PhD '01) who received his Ph.D. at the December commencement, is currently working for Cutting Edge Optronics, a division of TRW which offers solid state diode-pumped laser technology, combining the reliability and efficiency of laser diodes with the optical performance of both rods and zig zag slabs.

Gregory Caudle (BS '57) is enjoying retirement and consulting. He plans to build a new house at Terre du Lac in the Bonne Terre, MO area.

Harry Dreeste (BS '51) has enjoyed his 12 years of retirement. He keeps busy around the home, working on model train layouts and his old Studebaker cars. He belongs to two old car clubs and volunteers at the VA Hospital. He reports that his medical treatments are going well.

Joel Brand (BS '86, MS, PhD '94) and his wife Ann still love Colorado Springs, and have started their own instrumentation company with **Aron Gaus** (BS '88, PhD '94). You can see them on the web at www.brandgaus.com.

Chris Thornton (BS '90) has been named CIO of NuVok Communications, a competitive telephone provider headquartered in St. Louis.

Sandra Magnus (BS '86), an astronaut with NASA has been scheduled for her first trip into space on a July 2002 mission to the International Space Station, where she will help deliver a segment of the space station's truss along with equipment to help space walkers move around the station's exterior. We'll be rooting for her the whole way! Go Sandra!



Sandra Magnus

Chris Mertens (BS '84, MS '88) has been hired as a research scientist in atmospheric physics at the NASA-Langley Research Center at Newport News, VA.

Chris Bouchard (BS '96) earned his MS degrees from UIUC in Physics and Math in 1999. That same year he married Amy Kellogg, joined the Navy, and became a father. He recently graduated from the U.S. Navy Basic Nuclear Power School at Naval Nuclear Power Training Command, Goose Creek, SC.