

Faculty, Staff, & Student Notes:

- Emeritus Chancellor and Physics Professor **John T. Park** has been appointed by Missouri Governor Bob Holden to head the eight member **Missouri Life Sciences Research Committee**, which will provide guidance to the state in issuing grants from the \$21.5 million tobacco settlement money set aside for life science research.
- In September, **Gerry Wilemski** was notified that the U.S. Dept. of Energy's Division of Material Sciences and Engineering would fund his research project entitled "Theoretical Studies of Nucleation Kinetics and Nanodroplet Microstructure." Total funding for the three year project is \$395,000.
- The department was pleased to welcome **Dedie Wilson** into the department as Senior Clerk in the Cloud and Aerosol Sciences Laboratory (CASL).
- Professor **Allan Pringle** served as site coordinator for one of Missouri's regional Science Olympiad competitions. This past year was the first that a Science Olympiad was held on the UMR campus. More than 500 students from grades 6 to 12 competed in 38 separate events, which ranged from construction of a Rube Goldberg device using as many as 30 separate simple machines to launch a ping-pong ball, to a test of contestants' knowledge of cell biology, and DNA analysis. The events emphasize creativity, teamwork, and fast "on-your-foot" thinking and acting. Physics faculty members **Ralph Alexander**, **Greg Story**, and **John Schmitt** served as supervisors in four of the events.

Come Back for Homecoming

The UMR Physics Department warmly invites you to return to Rolla for **UMR Homecoming 2002** on the weekend of **October 11-13, 2002**. On Friday afternoon, October 11, the department will hold an open house and special programs for its alumni and friends. Tours of laboratories and educational facilities will be offered and there will be opportunities for interaction with current UMR physics students. Come see what we have done since you received your degree.

In keeping with a long-standing tradition, a UMR alumnus or alumna will deliver the Homecoming 2002 Physics Colloquium at 4 PM. on Friday, October 11. Later that evening, professors **Ed** and **Barbara Hale** will host a homecoming reception in their lovely home. Contact us at physics@umr.edu for specific information about physics department activities, or alumni@umr.edu for general homecoming information. Come home to your college roots, and help us celebrate UMR's past, even as we work to shape its future!

- For a second year, **Ron Bieniek** has been the UMR professor most often cited by UMR graduates as having had a positive influence on them. Bieniek, who has been expanding the Learning Center concept pioneered in the Physics department to the rest of the campus, also received the Faculty Member of the Year Award from the Residence Hall Association & National Residence Hall Honorary, and has been selected by Chancellor **Gary Thomas** to be UMR's coordinator for the UM-system New Faculty Teaching Scholars Program.
- In early October Professor **Ron Olson** spent two weeks at the University of Groningen, The Netherlands, developing theoretical methods to support an experimental group that has built a magneto-optical (MOT) trap to study atomic collisions. Six laser beams and two anti-Helmholtz coils are used to cool and trap sodium atoms at 1 mK. After collision by 3 MeV/u O⁶⁺ ions, a kinematically complete measurement of the momentum transferred during the collision is determined. Travel support was provided by an NSF-International programs grant. In late October Olson and postdoctoral associate **Juan Fiol** traveled to Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, to work with physicists at the Catholic University for two weeks in a collaboration with Brazilian experimental programs jointly funded from NSF-International programs and the CNPq (the Brazilian NSF equivalent). Efforts are focused on four-body systems and electron correlation parameters in fast ion-atom collisions. New theoretical methods developed by Olson and Fiol allow prediction of electron correlation signatures.
- Drs. **Dan Waddill** and **Michael Schulz** were the recipients of 2001 UMR Faculty Excellence Awards, which are given annually to faculty who best exemplify the ideals of excellence in research, teaching, and service to the UMR campus.
- The Physics Department was saddened to learn of the September, 2001 death of **Judy West**, who worked in the Physics Department front office from 1981 to 1984. Our sympathy goes out to her family.

To Contact UMR Physics

If you would like to contact us for any reason, you can reach us by phone at (573) 341-4781 and by e-mail at physics@umr.edu. You might also be interested in checking out our web page, <http://www.umr.edu/~physics>.