Alumni UPDATE

- Space Science
- Death Stars
- Indigenous Astronomy

CALLING ALL UNDERGRADS

If you know someone who wants to find out more about studying at The University of Sydney then you can’t miss the University’s Information Day on Tuesday 5 January 2010.

The Information Day provides prospective undergraduate students with course advice and support for making their final decisions about University Admissions Centre (UAC) preferences. If you’re still unsure about which science degree to choose or want to find out more about a particular area of study, our Information Day offers a chance to talk first hand to academics and students who are studying here. There will be a series of mini-lectures about each of the degree paths in Science as well as booths staffed with representatives from the Faculty Office and each of the Schools and Disciplines within the Faculty of Science. On the day there will be over 130 mini-lectures and talks, a variety of demonstrations, exhibitions and free entertainment. Don’t miss it!

DEATH STARS features one of our own School of Physics astronomers. Associate Professor Peter Tuthill, (seen left in the KECK telescope) appears in an episode for "The Universe" series entitled "Death Stars" This series was recently aired on the History Channel U.S. The History Channel in Australia will now show The Universe and is planning to premiere this ‘Peter Tuthill episode’ on Wednesday the 9 December at 7.30pm. If you get the History Channel make sure you tune in! Dramatic stuff…

Dates to Remember

5 Jan
The University of Sydney INFORMATION DAY running from 9.30am – 4.00pm, The Great Hall. Main Quadrangle, Camperdown Campus. See story opposite.

21-23 Jan
FRACTURED AGAIN is a multimedia concert in The Great Hall. Featuring a glass harmonica based on an invention by Benjamin Franklin this is a rare concert experience not to be missed. And tickets are just $30! For bookings call 1300 668 812 or go to the University’s Festival website. Staff, students and alumni receive a 10% discount on tickets. For more information:
In November the Rudd Government ramped up the nation’s space effort with the opening of round 1 of the new Australian Space Research Program. The Program will provide $40 million over four years through competitive merit-based grants to support space-related research, education and innovative activities.

“The program’s first stream will provide from $200,000 to $1 million for collaborations between universities and secondary schools or other institutions,” stated Kim Carr, Minister for Innovation, Industry, Science and Research. “Projects will inspire students to become involved in the space industry and could range from developing mini-satellite payloads that can observe earth to helping students study courses not available in Australia.

“The program’s other stream will offer between $1 million and $5 million to help develop Australia’s niche space capabilities by supporting collaboration between researchers and industry on space science and innovation projects in areas of strategic national priority. Grant applications close at 3pm AEST on Friday, December 4. Information on the program and how to apply is available from the Australian Space Research Program website: http://www.innovation.gov.au/Industry/Space/Pages/AustralianSpaceResearch

The Yolnu people of Arnhem Land have a strong astronomical component in their lore, ceremonies, and art forms, including stories that explain the motions of the Sun, Moon, planets, and constellations.

The rising and setting of particular stars indicate the time to harvest a food source, and stories explain why the Moon is connected to tides, and why Venus is never seen far from the Sun. Such traditions reveal a depth and complexity of Aboriginal culture which is not widely appreciated by outsiders.

On Wednesday 9 December Dr Ray Morris will present a talk on Walu, Ngalindi and Yolnu astronomy at the Macleay Museum. This free public talk will explore the Yolnu astronomical stories and traditions, and the way these are used for practical applications such as navigation and harvesting.

Dr Norris will also talk on the journey of western traditions in exploring this treasury of ancient Aboriginal knowledge. Norris studies the astronomy of Aboriginal Australians, and is an Adjunct Professor in the Department of Indigenous Studies at Macquarie University. He also currently leads a project to image the faintest radio galaxies and star-forming galaxies in the Universe, to understand how they form and evolve.

When: Wednesday 9 December from 6pm

Where: Macleay Museum,
Gosper Lane off Science Road (opp. Post Office),
The University of Sydney

RSVP: email: macleaymuseum@usyd.edu.au

Thank you to all our alumni and friends for your support throughout 2009. Alumni Update will return in February 2010 with a brand new look. Wishing you all a happy, healthy and safe holiday season, from all of us at the School of Physics and the Science Foundation for Physics.