UniTAS

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NEWS FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA

Heading in the right direction

UTAS STUDENT WORLD CHAMPION ORIENTEER

When UTAS student Johanna (Hanny) Allston isn't studying she runs, and when she runs, she runs really really fast. So fast in fact that she's just become the first Australian to ever win a medal at the World Orienteering Championships…and she won gold!

Last month Hanny stormed to victory in the World Sprint Orienteering Championships held in Denmark. This amazing result follows her gold and silver medals at the Junior World Orienteering Championships in Lithuania and has Hanny rewriting the record books.

Hanny's win was the first ever by an orienteer from outside of Europe. She is also the first person to win a junior World gold medal and senior title in the same year and is now the highest-ranked Australian in the International Orienteering Federation (IOF) rankings, coming in at number 7.

To put it mildly, she's pretty stoked.

"It's a really big achievement in my orienteering life. Gold at the Junior World Champs was really exciting but this is the big highlight. When I first came to Denmark my first thoughts were that the terrain was very like Australia so I am able to read the terrain well. For this race I was relaxed and confident that I could run well. But winning is just incredible."

This success hasn't been overnight. Hanny started orienteering when she was 10 years old. She says she "got serious", at age 16, when she decided to give away swimming because of shoulder problems. She won her first National League race in March 2003 and her first international medal, a bronze at the World Junior Championships in Switzerland in July, 2005.

She trains twice a day, seven days a week. In the lead up to the world championships she was running over 150 kilometres a week. The 'off season' means lots of cross-training, bike riding and kayaking. Hanny sees all of this "as fun".

"For me, my sport is my fun. I don't want to become a professional athlete. I definitely plan to keep studying, as I believe it's a very important part of my life."

Hanny Allston...on the podium at the Junior World Orienteering Champs.
Photo: Erik Borg

But for now, it's back to Europe next week. The woman Hanny beat in the sprint, Swiss athlete Simone Niggli-Luder is renowned in orienteering circles for such feats as winning all four women's competitions of the world championships (short, middle and long distance, and the relay) on two occasions. Because Hanny beat Simone at this year's championships, she's been invited to Switzerland to compete against her in another sprint race, before heading over to France.

Hanny wasn't the only UTAS representative in the national team. Grace Elson also competed for Australia (finishing fourth with Jo Allison and Hanny in the Women's Relay, and 39th in the sprint). Grace is studying for a Bachelor of Economics and is ranked 69th in the IOF rankings.

Hanny is studying medicine at UTAS while training, and both herself, Grace and Louis Elson are all part of the Elite Athlete Friendly University Program (EAFU).

Since 2004, UTAS has been recognised by the Australian Sports Commission as an EAFU.

UTAS has agreed to adopt a set of guiding principles to support enrolled Elite Athletes to achieve academic success, while having the flexibility to their athletic commitments.

The university's contact for the EAFU program is Amanda Turner from the office of the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Teaching & Learning). As the staff contact, Amanda helps athletes get advice and guidance on academic planning; support in negotiating the necessary flexibility to meet their academic requirements; support in negotiating and/or implementing student cross institutional study or credit transfer arrangements, and advice and support from the local Tasmanian Institute of Sport Athlete Career & Education Consultant, Jamie Cox.

"As the university's contact officer for EAFU, I can provide Elite Athletes with guidance and referrals to appropriate support in their efforts to maintain a balance between study and sporting commitments," Amanda said.

Unity within diversity

FROM THE VICE-CHANCELLOR PROFESSOR DARYL LE GREW

UTAS is a university for all Tasmanians. International in outlook, highly focused and playing to its strengths, UTAS takes Tasmania to the world.

While Tasmania is characterised by distinctive communities and landscapes, UTAS operates as a unified institution.

The UTAS strategic EDGE agenda is driven from the unifying common ground of Excellent scholarship, a Distinctive profile, dynamic Growth and strongly partnered Engagement.

From this perspective UTAS has developed campuses with different academic models and unique profiles.

The Launceston Model

The Launceston model reflects the UTAS common ground of excellent scholarship in its distinctive approach to foundation studies which support high level professional education, training and research.

While the Launceston model is strong academically it also engages with the professions, community and service organisations, and with business and industry. The Launceston model links scholarship with work-based and clinical learning, and connects teaching to research, which is action-oriented and community-based.

In a national policy setting that values diversity and distinctiveness, the Launceston model is a strong and integral asset for UTAS, and will be the subject of further strategic development.

UTAS has a long-term strategy to develop Launceston to its full potential so that its distinctive academic model and ethos are reflected in Launceston as a pre-eminent national and global centre for professional education and research.

A Blueprint for Launceston

Launceston development continues to be a top UTAS priority as part of the EDGE agenda.

The Launceston Blueprint guides the shape, focus and scale of growth in student enrolments, recruitment of new staff, strengthening of existing courses, and development of new areas of study, focused research and continued infrastructure development that will energise staff, enhance student life and engage the Launceston community.

Student Growth

By strengthening UTAS courses and embracing a student-centred lifestyle on campus, the Blueprint will support continuing growth in Launceston student enrolments to 6000 EFTSL by 2011, a growth of 1500 EFTSL from 2006.

Recruitment & Leadership

In the context of student growth, some 60 new staff will be recruited to provide high level teaching, research and to engage the community. Recruitment will emphasise a strong leadership cohort, dynamic early career academics, and managers and a range of senior adjunct staff linked into business, industry and government.

UTAS plans identify Launceston as the lead campus for Tasmania, and in some cases the national headquarters, of research and teaching in a range of foundation and professional disciplines.

Strengthening Launceston Foundations

The Blueprint will guide further enhancement of existing UTAS/AMC foundation courses in the Arts, Sciences and Business. New staff and courses will drive distinctive interdisciplinary study and research among and between these foundation disciplines.

Expanding Launceston's Professional Profile

Launceston's highly regarded professional programs will be strengthened under the Blueprint so that they build on national and global leadership in key areas.

New professional programs will be added both expanding existing areas of study and adding new profile courses aimed at greater market development and penetration and particularly aimed at attracting more Tasmanian, interstate and international students to Launceston.

Focusing Launceston's Research

Research at Launceston will be strengthened by investment in high profile research staff, students and infrastructure. The Blueprint will see new Centres of Excellence and research units built around UTAS Launceston areas of strength, and incorporating AMC research areas. Partnerships in research will be encouraged with opportunities for international and business collaboration and co-location on either Launceston campus.

Blueprint Infrastructure Building

The Blueprint envisages substantial development of campus infrastructure in Launceston, driven by the new UTAS Master Plan. Over the five year period new space, plant and equipment will be added to that already developed in the last five years, dedicated to high quality teaching and student space, research centres for staff and postgraduate students, iconic projects as Centres of Excellence and identification points for the campuses; 24 x 7 lifestyle amenities, intercampus linkages and garden connections, a downtown presence and residential projects for new students and staff.

continued

On the agenda...

What's on my desk this week?

- Local community meetings in Launceston to discuss our Master Plan for the campus were well received, as was a overview of the Blueprint for Launceston.
- Council has endorsed the new composition of our Senior Management Team (SMT). This means that Deans are now officially a part of SMT. It also means we will soon be advertising the positions of Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research), Pro Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning) and Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Provost.

Get some talk on your fork

"FORK & TALK" RESEARCH SEMINARS

The "Fork & Talk" Lunchtime Seminar Series was launched on Wednesday 6 September and both the Hobart and Launceston venues were packed to capacity to hear the first presenter – Professor Paul Haddad.

Paul, who is recognised as one of the University's most successful researchers, with the ability to succeed in gaining substantial grants. His topic was "How to write winning grant applications." Providing sound advice to his colleagues, Paul stressed the importance of being at the right point in your career before attempting the most competitive of the grant applications - ARC; the benefits of getting your peers to review your applications as well as the need for rigorous self-criticism; and if you know you've got a winning application, then keep submitting it until the funding body acknowledges it with a grant.

The "Fork & Talk" Lunchtime Seminars are aimed at providing practical advice and support on a range of research-related topics, with topics such as:

- How to develop budgets for grants
- How to find funding for research
- Understanding your research contract
- How to get media attention for your research, and
- How to obtain ethics approval for social science research…just to name a few.

Professor Allan Canty, Acting Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research) said the Lunchtime Seminars will provide opportunities for researchers to refresh their knowledge of the research process.

"These days it's not enough for a researcher to be a brilliant investigator with a star-studded track record. The process of writing applications has become a critical element in winning a grant.

"Early career researchers should also make the most of this opportunity to learn from their peers.

"Certainly, if the success of the first seminar is an indication of what we can expect for the future, I think they will be very worthwhile," Professor Canty said.

Professor Canty will present the 1 November seminar with Dr Roger Chung, an early career researcher from the NeuroRepair Group in the School of Medicine. Their topic will be "How to plan your research career."

Researchers are advised to book early as there are limited spaces available at both the Launceston and Hobart venues.

Contact the Office of Research Services on 6226 1760 for information.

FROM THE VICE-CHANCELLOR

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Town and Gown Blueprint

The enhanced Town and Gown Program will see UTAS open campus facilities for community access and use, establish and lead a Launceston Education Network with the University, schools, Colleges and TAFE and introduce more formally structured processes for obtaining Launceston community input, advice and support to the University.

Fuelling the Blueprint

As part of the Blueprint, UTAS will continue the significant resource allocations to sustain Launceston campus growth and development over the next five years.

Priming the Blueprint

As part of its ongoing support for the Launceston campuses, UTAS will invest strategic funding in 2007/8 from strategic and operational budgets: including 15-20 academic and management staff with a strong leadership cohort; Centres of Excellence in key areas of research and advanced teaching; improved campus amenities and projects under the Master Plan; and the first stage of an enhanced Town and Gown program.

In all, the University's plans will deliver an extra $100 million of investment and revenue to Launceston over the five year period and with the economic multiplier effect, considerably more additional investment, enterprise and jobs, into the Launceston economy.

This upfront strategic investment will be the catalyst for growth and further development.

Subsequent planning and budget processes will identify related Launceston projects and programs which will be modelled and actioned via business cases.

The Blueprint will underpin a dynamic and growing UTAS at Launceston, a recharged AMC Institute, more jobs, more graduates, greater research outcomes and capital investment.

Making It Happen

This is an ambitious Blueprint. Making it happen requires UTAS to engage the Launceston community and to engender a sense of joint ownership in UTAS and its campuses.

Look how far we've come! 25 per cent growth and $30m in capital investment in five years. We can do much more with the enterprise and cooperation of the UTAS and Launceston communities.

Now boarding: Tassie devils

QANTAS & UTAS TEAM UP IN NEW DEVIL INITIATIVE

Qantas and the University of Tasmania recently announced a $60,000 two-year sponsorship to support the Tasmanian Devil Facial Tumour Disease Program (DFTD).

Qantas Group General Manager Sales and Distribution, Rob Gurney said the airline would provide sculpted donation receptacles, in the form of Tasmanian Devils, across Tasmania as well fund a scholarship, the Qantas Tasmanian Devil Research Scholarship, at UTAS.

"The donation receptacles will be positioned in airport terminals and Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife visitor centres. We hope they will capture the attention of locals and visitors to provide much-needed research funds," he said.

"Research is vital to fighting the diseases, which is why we are backing our commitment to the program with a scholarship."

Dean of the UTAS Faculty of Science, Engineering and Technology and Chair of the Tasmanian Wildlife Research Advisory Committee, Professor Jim Reid, said UTAS and the Tasmanian Wildlife Research Advisory Committee were grateful Qantas was taking the initiative and making scholarship funds available.

"We look forward to a positive outcome for the Tasmanian Devil. Solutions to key wildlife issues are only possible if personnel in a strong research environment undertake first-class research.

"The support of Qantas will assist high quality students to work in conjunction with top researchers and undertake key aspects of research to better understand and overcome aspects of the Devil Facial Tumour Disease," Professor Reid said.

In the mid-1990s a disease was discovered in the world's largest surviving carnivorous marsupial, the Tasmanian Devil. Since then many thousands have died. In response, a Tasmanian Devil research team has been established to find out more about the disease and how best to save the devil from an uncertain future.

Review of the School of Art (Hobart) and the School of Visual and Performing Arts (Launceston)

Call for Submissions

An external review of the School of Art (Hobart) and the School of Visual and Performing Arts (Launceston) in the Faculty of Arts will be conducted from 8th – 10th of November 2006.

The terms of reference for the review include making recommendations for the future directions and development of the Schools and their courses. Copies of the full terms of reference may be obtained on the Faculty of Arts website at: www.utas.edu.au/arts or from the Review Secretary, telephone: (03) 6226 2321.

Submissions to the review are invited from all interested persons and groups and should be received no later than Monday the 16 October 2006.

They should be addressed to:

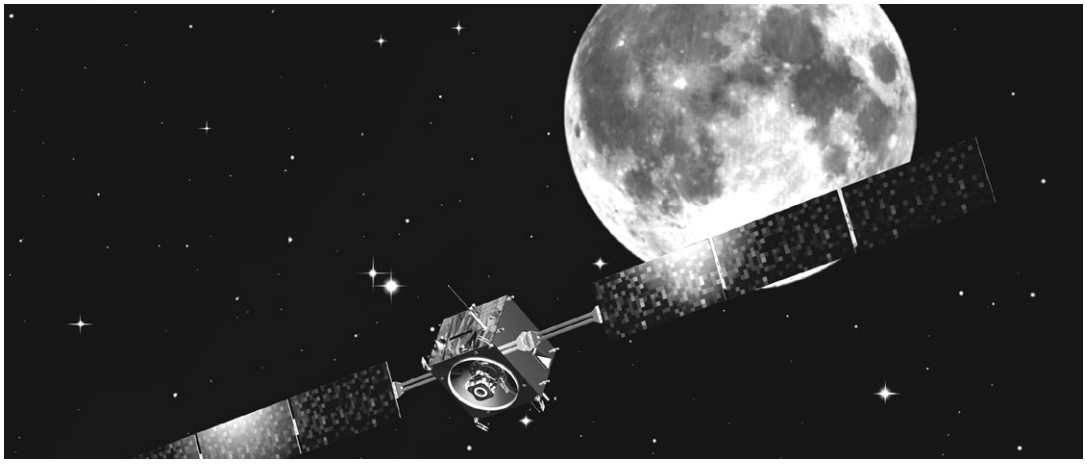
Secretary, Schools of Art and Visual and Performing Arts Review Committee

University of Tasmania,

Private Bag 44

HOBART TAS 7001

Submissions will be available for circulation within the University unless marked 'Confidential' by the authors. Late submissions will not be accepted.



Shooting for the moon

UTAS TELESCOPE USED IN SMART-1 MOON LANDING

Astrophysicists from the UTAS School of Maths and Physics helped monitor the European Space Agency's (ESA) first lunar landing.

On September 3 the University's radio telescope at Mt Pleasant (the big 'dish' between Cambridge and Richmond) tracked the European Space Agency's experimental probe SMART-1 as it crash landed on the moon.

SMART-1's instrument sent back brilliant new pictures of the Moon and was looking for clues as to how the Moon was formed - perhaps in a collision between the young Earth and another planet billions of years ago.

The SMART-1 probe was a technical demonstration spacecraft, used to test a new ion propulsion system and various instruments.

With its impact on the Moon, we now have the chance to use it to determine what the top layer of the moon is made of, and test theories of how the moon was formed.

UTAS was asked to participate in these observations by the Joint Institute for VLBI in Europe (JIVE) which worked in collaboration with ESA on this event.

At the time of impact radio telescopes on the eastern side of Australia had an excellent view of the event, and both Mt Pleasant's 26m telescope and the CSIRO telescopes at Narrabri (the Australia Telescope Compact Array) recorded data from the probe, along with the Transportable Integrated Geodetic Observatory at Concepcion in Chile.

UTAS radiophysics researcher Jamie Stevens said it was vital to monitor the crash from several different radio telescopes.

"Using widely spaced telescopes in this way will allow us to detect reflections of the radio signal from SMART-1 off the Moon close to impact, which may tell us something about the composition of the lunar surface," he said.

Working at the UTAS 'dish' were Jamie Stevens, Brett Reid and technical manager Eric Baynes, along with Professors Simon Ellingsen and John Dickey.

It's all Greek...

DEMENTIA KNOWLEDGE FROM GREECE

Post-grad psychology student Ty Dawson recently swapped a chilly Tasmanian winter for the warmth of Greece after being awarded a scholarship to attend a four-week neuropsychology course there.

Ty was one of only four Australians chosen to attend. The International Neuropsychology Society provides the course yearly for postgraduate students who have a particular interest in neuropsychology.

Neuropsychology focuses on disorders of behaviour like memory loss or speech impairment. Ty became interested in psychology in his early twenties after he tired of his job in hospitality management.

His strongest interest is in becoming a good therapist.

"I decided I was more interested in people than profit," Ty said.

His ongoing thesis is closely aligned with the theme of this year's course, which was called "Neuropsychology Across the Lifespan".

"A lot of material was geared up towards older adults and one module was specifically on dementia - it may have helped that my honours research was also with older adults," Ty said.

Ty's thesis compares the cognitive performance of older adults to those in the early stages of Alzheimer's Disease, research that he hopes will be used to develop better tests for early identification of the disease.

The structure of the course in Greece varied from day to day.

"There was choice within the summer school, some days I had seven and a half hours of lectures back to back, others I'd be there for two and a half."

"The School of Psychology helped finance the trip to Greece which I am also grateful for," Ty said.

National Science Week 2006 at UTAS

National Science Week is Australia's largest national festival, with over 600 public events registered across the country, and many more events held in schools.

The importance of science was communicated through over 80 public events held around Tasmania including talks, tours, workshops, open days, art, film and even science cabaret!

As guest speaker for National Science Week in Hobart, Dr Karl Kruszelnicki inspired students and adults alike. Both sessions were booked out well in advance, with over 1100 people attending. Visiting UK Physics superstar Dr Brian Cox talked about the fundamental building blocks of the Universe, contrasting the size of the Universe we see today (13.7 billion light years) objects like quarks, a thousand million times smaller than atoms.

YOUNG TASSIE SCIENTISTS

The ever-popular Young Tassie Scientists (YTS) program took to the streets (quite literally) again this year.

20 UTAS honours, research higher degree students and recent graduates from the Faculties of Science, Engineering & Technology and Health Science inspired over 1300 students with their talks and hands-on demonstrations about research and careers in science. To make the program accessible to as many students as possible this year included two YTS Roadshows, coordinated by 2005 YTS Prue Loney from the School of Plant Science. The Roadshow visited schools in the Midlands and East, North West and West coasts.

Students were treated to a variety of fun presentations and activities based on the work of the Young Tassie Scientists, ranging from glowing algae that kills fish, to radio astronomy, fish dissection, using the brains of sheep to understand the basis of psychology, making slime and silly putty, and trekking after rhinoceros in Africa.

Young Tassie Scientist, Jarrod Wells taught students how to identify a healthy fish by giving students a salmon to dissect. The also dissected flathead and learnt about mussel farming with Aquaculture PhD Student Jo-Anne Fearman.

With Russell Mc Gifford students got their hands dirty creating slime and silly putty while learning about everyday polymers like nylon and plastic. Ang Holmes shed light on the mystery of the small creature students had seen glowing at the beach at night. Ang is doing her PhD on this creature, which is a species of toxic microalgae that can kill fish, turn seawater bright red and glow in the dark!

Sally Long talked on radio astronomy and fielded questions on detecting alien life forms within the universe. Ali Copping delighted some and disgusted others with sheep brain dissections to find out how the biological basis of human psychology.

Stuffed animals brought in by Janine Berechree from the Tasmanian Farmers and Grazers Association were a firm favourite. Prue Loney entertained students with stories of being charged by a rhinoceros whilst doing scientific volunteer research on them in Africa, quizzing students on African animal.

The YTS also took part in public events, including the "90 Seconds of Fame" competition, hosted and judged by ABC Science Online's Bernie Hobbs, and Uni Info Day in Hobart. Artwork inspired by their research was featured in the UTAS School of Art's eMerging III art exhibition at Salamanca.

You might have heard some of the numerous radio and television interviews featuring a Young Tassie Scientist. The website (www.youngtassiescientists.com) attracted 580 people to vote online for their favourite scientist - the winner was Jo-Anne Fearman from the School of Aquaculture.

The Faculty of Science, Engineering & Technology coordinates the YTS program, with considerable financial support from the Commonwealth Department of Education, Science and Training and the Tasmanian Department of Economic Development.

ART IN NATIONAL SCIENCE WEEK?

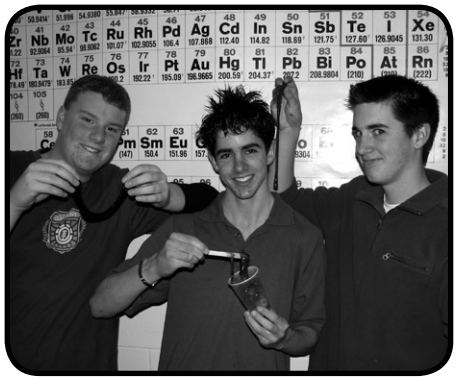
Some might think it a most unlikely event to serve as a celebration of National Science Week, but for the third year running an art exhibition in the Top Gallery at Hobart's Salamanca Art Centre was serving precisely that function. Made up of works by undergraduate students of the Tasmanian School of Art, the exhibition had a close relationship between art and science. Entitled eMerging III, the show was sponsored by National Science Week and the Salamanca Arts Centre, in conjunction with the School of Art, and was the major physical outcome of a unique Winter School – Marine Ecology: Synergies in Art and Science.

The Winter School featured a series of presentations by scientists; artists with experience in science/art collaborations; UTAS science, art and environmental studies academics; science postgraduates; and 'Young Tassie Scientists' – that special force of science undergrads committed to spreading the word about their discipline, particularly during National Science Week.

These presentations have provided the artistic inspiration for the thirteen Winter School art students whose works are featured in eMerging III. Covering the fields of painting, printmaking, multimedia, textiles, sculpture, photography, collage and digital imaging, the students' highly accomplished works creatively present their responses, in terms of art, to knowledge presented to them in terms of science.

The concept of the art/science Winter School and its component exhibition is the brainchild of Dr Jane Quon, a Post-Doctoral Fellow based in the School of Art, and who works within an ARC Linkages Grant project that itself constitutes an art/marine ecology collaboration (specifically, involving UTAS and WorldFish, based in Penang).

Dr. Quon has enjoyed a long and productive partnership in art/science collaborative ventures with National Science Week's State Coordinator, UTAS Science Faculty's Jeannie-Marie LeRoi. Strong support has also been provided by Professor Noel Frankham, Head of the School of Art (who opened eMerging III), Professor Andrew McMinn, Director of IASOS and Professor Gustaaf Hallegraeff, Head of Plant Science. Professor Hallegraeff's latest book – *Plankton: A Critical Creation* – was launched at the exhibition opening.









Science Minidegree programs

Over Yr 300 9 - 12 students got a taste of science and engineering at University when they participated in Science Minidegree programs offered by Agricultural Science, Aquaculture, Chemistry, Engineering, Geography and Environmental Studies and Zoology. Topics included climate change, water analysis, microbial life, introduced marine pests - and elastic glass. School groups also discovered the science "behind the scenes" in tours of the Tasmanian Aquaculture and Fisheries Institute, the UTAS Radio telescope facility at Mt Pleasant, and the Optical Observatory at Mt Canopus.

UDiscover Science Fair

The UDiscover Science Fair was held at both the Hobart and Launceston campuses. In Hobart, Dr Natalie Brown from the Faculty of Education co-ordinated the program, with over 60 BTeach students involved in developing and presenting activities, as well as representatives from the School of Maths and Physics, the Astronomers Society of Tasmania, the Bureau of Meterology and the Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens.

Topics covered included air presssure, force and motion, geology, electricity and astronomy – one of highlights was the explosive model volcano which shot up several metres!

The Science Fair activities in Launceston were developed and coordinated by Dr Andrew Seen (School of Chemistry) and included testing out the effects of global warming, gaining an understanding of the techniques used to purify water, seeing what happens to a marshmallow in a vacuum, and learning why icebergs float.

Under the guidance of Education and Environmental Science students the school children also helped Barry the baker work out which of his ingredients were in the unlabelled containers and identified who 'weed' on the teacher's pot plant.

Tasmanian Science Talent Search

Studying Newton's Third Law of Motion has never been this much fun! The Tasmanian Science Talent ran the Technology Challenge at the university campuses in both Hobart and Launceston.

The task this year was to design, appraise and modify a model 'land yacht' powered by a small portable fan. Over 100 excited and enthusiastic school students brought their vehicles for a five metre race. The vehicles were tested for speed, stability, creativity and percentage of recycled materials, while the students were quizzed as to their understanding of the underlying scientific theory.

The Great Big Science Gig

The Great Big Science Gig this year tackled lost cows, computer games, termite rhythms, detecting cancer with mouse whiskers and nano-robots. Held at the Burnie Civic Centre and hosted by the Faculty of Science, Engineering & Technology, the Great Big Science Gig drew an audience of over 1000 people!

Addition attraction

STAFF PROFILE: KUMUDINI DHARMADASA

Emeritus Professor David Elliott and Kumudini Dharmadasa from the School of Mathematics celebrate with some high school students involved in their bridging programs.

Kumudini Dharmadasa has been in love with a subject most people hate or see as a chore, and she is still passionate about it.

A maths lecturer at UTAS, Kumudini says it has been in her blood since she was a child.

"I always had an interest from a young age growing up in Sri Lanka, my parents were maths teachers as well, so they were there to help me."

Kumudini studied chemistry and mathematics in Sri Lanka before completing her Masters in Canada and her PhD in maths in Adelaide.

Apart from her role in the maths department, Kumudini is also the Tasmanian Director of the Australian Maths Olympiad, where gifted children participate an extended maths program. Kumudini says that gifted students are bored to tears at school.

"Students should have enough material to be able to face any challenge and that is what the maths extended program is about. These kids are fantastic, it would be a pity to leave them."

The program involves weekly mathematic sessions run by Kumudini to prepare students for maths competitions. Students are given maths problems to solve, which are later marked by Kumudini and are sent to the Australian Mathematics Trust. The trust identifies children Australia-wide who achieve high marks.

"Students are given awards for their performance, it is very encouraging. These kids are very bright, they learn things very quickly," Kumudini said.

Kumudini believes that it is important for the children to have contact with the mathematics community.

"The maths community should get to know these little people," she said.

Recently, Kumudini organised a social event where her students were publicly recognised for their success. Three of her students gave powerpoint presentations to an audience about an area within mathematics.

"They talked about things people had never heard of, they were confident and very clear," she said.

Kumudini said it's important that children learn presentation skills and to be able to talk to a room full of people.

Search and deliver

NEW TECHNOLOGY REFINES INTERNET SEARCHING

The School of Computing's Dr Byeong-Ho Kang has created a new way to search for information.

In the last half of the twentieth century, human society made great leaps forward in terms of a myriad of technologies, not least of which was computing and its associated information technology.

In the late nineteen eighties talk of information overload emerged. Would people be able to handle all the computing power at their finger tips? More importantly, how could they possibly make sense of all the available information?

While in its infancy the internet was the domain of academics and geeks - affordable broadband services have turned it into a mass market teeming with information.

Navigating this sea of information was revolutionised when Google was released. The genius of the Google business model was its simplicity - a single search field, no categories, just search results; millions and millions of them. But is this the information overload that was talked of all those years ago? Finding gems of information can like finding the proverbial needle in a hay-stack.

Enter the UTAS School of Computing, with *kmAgent*, a kind of automatic information tracker and filter. *kmAgent*, the product of UTAS Senior Lecturer Dr Byeong-Ho Kang and his associates, is an advanced software prototype that automatically monitors user-selected websites and pushes new or updated information directly to the user's computer.

The system learns via a sophisticated rule-based classification system. The more the system is used, the better it gets at doing its searching and filtering role, delivering results that become more accurate with time. Key to the system is a 'training' interface, where users can build up the search rules.

kmAgent technology could revolutionise web searching, but it can also be built into proprietary management information systems in large organisations, where the system can automatically mine and filter data for reporting. The State Library of Tasmania is using *kmAgent* technology as a knowledge engine in their desktop knowledge appliance.

Unlike search engines, *kmAgent*'s Knowledge Engine delivers concise knowledge - not just a flood of data - directly to the user. The potential returns on the research could be huge - Gartner Group estimates that the data mining and analysis tools market was worth nearly US$370M in 2005. So in the coming years, internet searches may return results of five or ten hits, of exactly what users need - thanks to *kmAgent*.

Students from the Prince Alfred College Chapel Choir gather for a tour of the UTAS Conservatorium.

Choir of note

SA CHOIR VISITS UTAS CONSERVATORIUM

An interstate choir has travelled to Tasmania to take part in a music program.

The Prince Alfred College Chapel Choir from Kent Town in South Australia recently visited the UTAS Conservatorium of Music.

The program, devised by the Conservatorium's Lee-ann Nazzari consisted of a tour and a vocal class run by lecturer Marilyn Smith.

The voice class required the choir students to perform a song or aria. Marilyn says each student needed different help.

"It was my job to give critical appraisal of the performance and then go about working on improving upon each piece from a technical, musical, language, vocal production and performance angle to name a few points," Marilyn said.

Ms Nazarri said the visit was extremely successful.

"It was received with great enthusiasm from the students and great appreciation from the academic staff that travelled with the school," she said.

The tour has highlighted the Overture and Prelude Programs the Conservatorium has on offer to gifted high school music students.

The Overture program offers talented music students advanced placement opportunities at the Conservatorium through distance education.

The Prelude program allows high school students to undertake study of selected units within the Bachelor of Music degree.

The boy's choir was officially welcomed to the Conservatorium by Coordinator of undergraduate Studies, Dr Heather Monkhouse.

An itchy problem

MOSQUITOFISH RESEARCH IN THE TAMAR

Most people don't know the Tamar River plays host to an aggressive killer.

The Mosquitofish lurks under the river's surface and surprisingly, while it does prey on the insects it doesn't decrease their numbers.

So, rather than helping the mosquito problem, like a lot of introduced species the fish has become the problem itself - an ecological pest.

It is slowly feeding on the small frogs and aquatic bugs along the river and their small populations cannot afford to be depleted.

UTAS Aquaculture PhD student, Kerri Lynch is focusing her research on the population genetics of the Mosquitofish within the Tamar River.

She's found that Tasmanian populations of the Mosquitofish, also known as *Gambusia holbrooki*, could be differentiated from other communities of the species and that the population appeared to be the result of a single introduction.

"A person illegally introduced the species 15 years ago in Northern Tasmania to stop mosquitoes accumulating around a dam," Kerri said.

According to the Inland Fisheries Service, an established population of the Mosquitofish was found in a dam in the Tamar River Catchments.

Eradication was attempted using fish poison, but by 2001 the population had re-established and was discovered in two nearby locations.

Kerry says the re-established population is attributed to the Mosquitofishes high reproduction rate.

"It is a six week cycle and batches of 100 or more live young are born.

"The females can store sperm, so it is difficult to stop," Kerri said.

The fish also have a fast maturation, which makes eradication and control of the species difficult. They are highly tolerant of water temperature and quality.

"They can survive in low oxygen and polluted waters," Kerri said.

Kerri's study has used lime and the Rotenone as a way to eradicate and control the species. Rotenone is a naturally occurring chemical that is found in the roots of several tropical and subtropical plant species and is used as a pesticide.

Kerri's project has been funded by the Fisheries Habitat Improvement Fund and is supported by the Inland Fisheries Service, Tamar Natural Resource Management and the Gambusia Management Committee.

Survey this

NEW UTAS GRADUATE DESTINATIONS WEB PAGE

Graduate Careers Australia annually surveys new graduates from all Australian universities. In the Graduate Destinations Survey, graduates are asked whether they are employed and, if so, their salary and main occupation. If they are not working full-time, they are asked whether they are seeking employment, in further study, or unavailable for either. At the same time, graduates are asked for their opinions of their course of study.

Graduate Careers Australia makes national data available in a series of published reports and on the GradsOnline website at www.gradsonline.edu.au. While data from UTAS graduates has been aggregated in national reports, specific information about employment outcomes of UTAS graduates has not been available in recent years.

To remedy this situation, a working party chaired by Nigel Ewan, Deputy Academic Registrar, has developed a web page containing quantitative reports on UTAS work outcomes, graduates undertaking further study, and median salaries. He said "this presentation of data is a welcome additional level of access to data that has been routinely collected but not made readily accessible".

There are now qualitative reports on employers and occupations of graduates. At this time of year when both school leavers and mature aged students are making course choices for 2007 and beyond, Mr Ewan explained that "the data presented will provide prospective students with a clear indication of the paths taken by graduates shortly after their graduation from specific courses at a level of detail which is highly informative. The combination of occupations with employers also provides a picture of the diversity of the employment outcomes of graduates on completion of their courses."

Peter Tatham, Head of the University of Tasmania's Career Development and Employment Service, agrees that local data from the Survey is a useful tool in career planning. "Prospective students are particularly interested in where courses might lead," he said, "and current students use GDS information to explore career options."

The new UTAS Graduate Destinations Survey web page is available at www.utas.edu.au/services/gds and information about the Survey is available from the Career Development and Employment Service on 03 6226 2697 in Hobart and 6324 3787 in Launceston.

CLASSIFIEDS

Classifieds are free for UTAS staff!

Email your short advert to media.office@utas.edu.au

To Rent

Wielangta: Three-bedroom, 3-level, 175m2 open-plan furnished house in Bream Creek, backing on Wielangta Forest on 40 acres of natural beauty and wildlife, with 3 decks, heaps of light and fabulous views of Marion Bay. 50 min east of Uni. Ideal for visiting academic. Avail now. $275/wk w/ negotiated lease period. Contact Prof Gary Moore gtmoore@arch.usyd.edu.au or (02) 9351 8071 (w) 9660 9879 (ah).

For Sale

Student desk with separate set of drawers (2 drawers plus file drawer). Dark brown. Six months old, barely used and in excellent condition. $350. Contact Alumni.Office@utas.edu.au or phone 6324 3052.

For Sale

Toyota Tarago Getaway 1994, automatic, air con, remote locking, electric windows, engine immobiliser, 8-seater with 4-cylinder economy. $11,000. Contact Rebecca or Jon 6267 2357 (H).

For Sale

Campervan Kombi 2.1 L fuel injected, 1989, in original condition (no accidents or rust). Very reliable, maintained by Kombi enthusiast. 12 months rego, good tyres, pop top roof fully screened, covertible seat/double bed, stainless steel gas stove, extras. $10,500. Please contact Peter Ashley 6226 2484, plashley@utas.edu.au

For Sale

Creative Zen vision:m. 30 Gb hard drive, black, plays music/videos/photos/FM radio and voice recorder. Purchased one month ago. Paid $499, sell for $400. Phone 0419 621 359.

To Rent

Fitzroy Crescent, Sandy Bay Recently refurbished, sunny 2 bedroom unfurnished flat in a secure block overlooking Fitzroy Gardens. Fridge, washing machine, drier, space heater and built-in robes. Safe off-street parking in own carport/walking distance to Uni. Available immediately on short or long lease. Please contact Robert McKenna on Exn.2551 or (ah) on 6225 0650.

House Sitter Available

Professional couple looking for house sitting close to the Sandy Bay campus for 6 to 12 months in 2007. Good with pets and gardens. References available. Please call Sara on 6229 6655 (ah).

Carpool wanted

Carpool sought from New Town area to Sandy Bay campus weekday mornings. Happy to pay petrol money

The French Connection

UTAS STUDENTS TAKE ENGLISH TO THE CONTINENT

It might seem a bit strange but a group of UTAS students have been taking English - to France! For years, some third-year UTAS French language students have been among the lucky recipients of the teaching assistantships made available every year by the French government. They take up residency in France for up to a year, during which they become assistants to English teachers in local high schools and colleges, gaining lots of new friends and learning new things in the process.

Harriet Close and Elke Smith have both returned recently from France, and Colleen O'Brien is just about to leave.

"For me, teaching English in France was a truly valuable and positive experience," Harriet said.

"There were the obvious gains, such as improving my French skills. Interestingly, however, there were unforeseen gains such as improving my English. I even learnt a little Spanish from my Bolivian flatmate!"

Elke says she is most grateful for the opportunities she had to learn skills she would never have encountered here in Tasmania.

"I took up classes in the local, very varied and beautiful form of embroidery that adorns traditional costumes. It is little known outside the region of Brittany, and even less so outside France! And there was this circus school where I learnt to pass clubs and was initiated in the art of trapeze, something I will really miss now I am back home."

There were no major disappointments but Harriet says she missed the Australian approach to work.

"I missed the casual nature of the Australian workplace. I found the strict hierarchy in my school a little frustrating at times." Ah, les Français…

Dr Agnès Hafez-Ergaut and Dr Bert Peeters from the School of English, Journalism and European Languages have been encouraging their students to apply for what is in all respects a life-changing experience.

Elke says she won't forget being involved in the lives of native French people.

"It was very special, being welcomed into their houses for dinner, for a weekend or even to participate in the Christmas celebrations of my entire extended family."

Harriet says her experience as an assistant teacher really boosted her confidence.

"Working as an assistant teacher was an opportunity to be creative, find ways to help people think a little differently, and to encourage students to have confidence in themselves."

No wonder Colleen O'Brien is looking forward to her trip.

"It will be a fantastic way to put into practice everything I have learnt in my French studies at uni, and I am hoping to return with much greater fluency after being surrounded by native speakers for so long.

"It will be my first time in Europe as well as my first visit to a French speaking country, so I am sure it will take me quite a while to adjust to the cultural differences and the language barrier, but I'm thrilled to have the opportunity to live and work in France and experience a different culture and way of life."

Vive la France! Vive la différence!

This coming January, after eighteen years at the University of Tasmania, Dr Peeters will be leaving the state to take up a position at Sydney's Macquarie University.

2006 Teaching Merit Certificates

Teaching Merit Certificates recognise members of academic staff who are nominated and judged by their peers and students as being meritorious teachers.

Teaching Staff can be nominated for teaching in any semester this year in one of two categories:

• Individual • Team based

Nomination forms are now available from Schools, Student Administration, Student Association, TUU or on the web. Nominations close November 3, 2006. **Further information is available from under the 'Awards' link at: www.utas.edu.au/tl**

CORRECTION

This photo of researcher Sarah Tammens and her supervisor Dr Rosanne Burton Smith was printed in the last issue of *UniTAS* courtesy of *The Mercury*.

The Companion to Tasmanian History

Announcing a Special Offer for UTAS Staff: $70 reduced to $50!

This attractively-produced, well-illustrated encyclopaedia of Tasmanian history solves your Christmas present worries!

Contact: History and Classics on 6226 2298 or email Secretary@history.utas.edu.au

Reader contributions are welcome, however the editor reserves the right to edit copy or hold material over for future issues. The editor is under no obligation to publish contributed copy. Letters to the Editor on issues of general University interests are invited. They should be brief and must be signed. The editor reserves the right to not publish letters that attack an individual, violate privacy or infringe on confidentiality.

The opinions expressed in UniTAS are not necessarily those of the University.

Contact with the Media Office should be made through email, wherever possible, or by mail or telephone.

The Editor, Private Bag 40, Hobart 7001
Email: Media.Office@utas.edu.au
Telephone: 6226 2124 or 0417 517 291

UTAS

UNITAS IS THE REGULAR NEWSLETTER OF THE UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA. CIRCULATION: 2,500

NOTICEBOARD

Let us know about your upcoming events for publication here & on the web - send an email to media.office@utas.edu.au
www.utas.edu.au /events/whatson.html

27 September 2006
School of Chemistry Seminar Program - Introductory PhD Seminars
Multidimensional electroseparation systems for the analysis of complex biological samples
Jonathan Thabano, UTAS
CE analysis of pharmaceuticals in environmental samples
Mohamed Dawod, UTAS
Wednesday 12pm
SB Chem 329 aka Chemistry Lecture Theatre C2 - All welcome
Further information: Dr Emily Hilder Ph: 6226 7670 Email: Emily.Hilder@utas.edu.au

27 September 2006
Centre for Tasmanian Historical Studies Seminar
Upper Canada Battle sites Today
Peter Macfie - Peter has had a long interest in the upper Canada conflict and the fate of the American prisoners captured there and sent to Van Diemen's Land
Wednesday 4.10pm
Room 477A Humanities Building Level 4
All enquiries to Peter Chapman 6226 2308

27 September
AIP & School of Mathematics and Physics Women in Physics Lecture 2006
Light, Particles, Action
Professor Deb Kane, Macquarie University, Sydney
Physics Lecture Theatre 1, Sandy Bay
Wednesday 8pm
Further information: 6226 2725 or tas.aip.org.au

28 September 2006
School of Zoology Seminar Series
The evolution of endothermy
Professor Gordon Grigg, University of Queensland
Thursday 1.10pm
Life Science Lecture Theatre 2, Level 2 Life Science Building, Sandy Bay Campus
Further information: Sherrin Bowden on 6226 2613

29 September 2006
Tasmanian School of Art Friday forum
Lindsay Broughton
Lindsay is the Head of Drawing of the Tasmanian School of Art and is a leading Tasmanian artist
Dechaineux Lecture Theatre, Tasmanian School of Art
Friday 12.30
Further Information Ph: 6226 4306 Colin Langridge langridc@utas.edu.au

29 September 2006
School of Asian Languages and Studies Research Seminar
How to assess 'oral skills'
Taka Ueki
Hobart Humanities Building Room 371 Video - Launceston NH.X117 Video
Friday 2:10 - 3pm
Further Information Ph: 6226 2342

3 October
Royal Society of Tasmania seminar
Brain Injury: Helping the brain to heal itself
Dr Roger Chung, UTAS School of Medicine
Tuesday 8pm
Royal Society Room, Old Custom House building, entrance from Dunn Place carpark

4 October 2006
School of Chemistry Seminar Program
Express Test Methods for the Analysis of Environmental Samples
Professor Yury Zolotov, Moscow State University
Wednesday 12pm
SB Chem 329 aka Chemistry Lecture Theatre C2 - All welcome
Further information: Dr Emily Hilder Ph: 6226 7670 Email: Emily.Hilder@utas.edu.au

4 October
School of History and Classics Seminar Series
Behind Enemy Lines: The Experience of Australian Soldiers as POWs in WWI
Dr David Coombes, Honorary Associate
Video-linked between rooms SB.SocSci209 (Hobart, Arts Building) and NH.X117 (Launceston, formerly Ferrall Centre) and CC.A119 (Cradle Coast)
Wednesday 4.10pm
Further Information Ph: Elizabeth Freeman 6226 2294 Email: Elizabeth.Freeman@utas.edu.au

5 October 2006
School of Zoology Seminar Series
Marine Phytoplankton Bioregions in Australian Seas
Professor Gustaaf M. Hallegraeff, UTAS School of Plant Science
Thursday 1.10pm
Life Science Lecture Theatre 2, Level 2 Life Science Building, Sandy Bay Campus
Further information: Sherrin Bowden on 6226 2613

6 October 2006
Tasmanian School of Art Friday forum
Jackie McNamee
Jackie is an Irish installation artist visiting Tasmania. Jackie will talk about her recent projects.
Dechaineux Lecture Theatre, Tasmanian School of Art
Friday 12.30
Further Information Ph: 6226 4306 Colin Langridge langridc@utas.edu.au

6 October 2006
School of Government Seminar Series
Politics of Persuasion: Selling War to a Democracy
Sharon Wade-Ferrell
Faculty Conference Room video-linked (Hobart & Launceston)
Further Information Ph: 6226 2329 All Welcome

6 October 2006
School of Plant Science Seminar Series Honours Final
Belinda Browning, Candice Lai, Misty Lambert, Matt Larcombe, Lim Chee Liew, Michaela Nolan, Amity Williams
Life Science Lecture Theatre 2, level 2, Life Sciences building
Friday 4pm
All staff and postgraduate students in the school are requested to attend

11 October 2006
School of Chemistry Seminar Program - Zinifex Visiting Lecturer
Dielectric Properties of Ionic Liquids
Associate Professor Glenn Hefter, Murdoch University
Wednesday 12pm
SB Chem 329 aka Chemistry Lecture Theatre C2 - All welcome
Further information: Dr Emily Hilder Ph: 6226 7670 Email: Emily.Hilder@utas.edu.au