

Brain of Brains

Our congratulations go to Gillian Ainslie, Associate Professor in the Respiratory Clinic, who won the national 'Brain of Brains' title. Run by the radio stations 567 Cape Talk in Cape Town and Radio 702 in Johannesburg, the competition tested the general knowledge of contestants.

Gill, who entered the competition just for fun, and insists that "I am under absolutely no illusion that I am the brainiest person at UCT, let alone Cape Town or even Johannesburg!", won all her rounds in Cape Town before going head-to-head with Jo'burg's Bernie Switala.

After three rounds of questions live on national radio, the two contestants were tied. This led to a sudden death round, in which Gill held her nerve to emerge victorious and, in so doing, earn herself a cool R40,000!



Opening of Faculty's New Postgraduate Computer Centre

Three years ago, MSD and its American parent company Merck USA donated \$224,000 to the Faculty of Health Sciences for Postgraduate Information Technology Development. The first phase saw the opening of a 6-station postgraduate suite in Grootte Schuur Hospital in May 2005.

A much larger suite, consisting of 24 state-of-the-art computer workstations, was opened in the Barnard Fuller Building on 10 March. Available to all postgraduate students in the Faculty (*i.e.* honours, masters and doctoral), this facility is now open 24/7 and 365 days of the year. Access is via a standard swipe card and will be restricted to students from our Faculty.



At a festive event in the MAC Club, presided over by our Dean and Dr Jim McNamara, Executive Director of Development, the laboratory was officially opened by Mr Steffen Brygger, Chief Executive Officer of MSD (pictured above, unveiling the plaque). The next day, the lab was packed with postgrads, eager to track down their research material.

Launch of *Child Gauge*

The *South African Child Gauge 2007/2008*, launched last week by UCT's Children's Institute, celebrates the new Children's Act, which gives children a constitutional right to social services.

The *Gauge* contains a series of essays, including an overview of the current situation, and describes how the new act offers hope in resolving the current crisis in providing social services to children.

"It is a pioneering step forward", says Paula Proudlock of the Children's Institute. "The act provides the strong legislative foundation that will enable the country to respond adequately to the needs of vulnerable children".

But there are challenges ahead. The Constitution places an obligation on the state to give effect to the rights of children. To meet its obligation, the state will therefore have to allocate adequate funds to fulfil these rights.

Using the best available national data, derived from the General Household Survey, the *Child Gauge* provides an annual snapshot of South Africa's progress in realising children's constitutional rights, such as their access to socio-economic entitlements, including health care, water, electricity, housing, and education.

[Monday Paper]



DEAN'S CORNER

This month we mourn the untimely death of one of our brightest and most well-loved alumni – Ivan Toms, MBChB 1976, human rights activist and advocate for gay rights who epitomised the values of primary health care in his approach to health equity, and in his day-to-day practice. By his example, and through seminars and tutorials, Ivan taught our students about the challenges of health care delivery in resource-poor settings, where convergence of poverty and lack of access to even the most basic health services impede progress in advancing the right to health. A remarkable colleague, friend and role model, his unique contribution to our students'

learning, to health and to South Africa will be greatly missed.

Tributes following his death are made all the more sad by the realisation of the many missed opportunities the Faculty has had to honour him during his lifetime. In particular, his Presidential award of the Order of Baobab in Bronze – for his "outstanding contribution to the struggle against apartheid and sexual discrimination" – would have been the ideal chance for our Faculty community to celebrate this special alumnus and bask in the reflection of his glory. But good intentions gave way to other work, and the moment was lost.

This has been a wake-up call to me, to find ways of acknowledging the outstanding achievements that our living alumni and colleagues continue to make – to science, to health, and to societal service. There are a few people in the Faculty who take the time to nominate staff, students and alumni for special awards. These efforts are appreciated, and in the same spirit, your suggestions for other appropriate ways to honour our achievers will be welcome.

The obituaries and memorial gatherings for Ivan have been deeply moving, but how much more joyous the celebrations of his life would have been if he had been present.

Publication of the Month

This month's choice is a paper by Benjamin Irving, MSc student in Biomedical Engineering, and his two colleagues from Medical Physics, Gerrie Maree and Egbert Hering:

Maree GJ, Irving BJ, Hering ER, "Paediatric dose measurement in a full-body digital radiography unit", *Pediatric Radiology*, 37(10): 990-997, 2007.

They have just heard that their article has been selected for the Walter Berdon Award, given to the most outstanding Basic Science Paper appearing in *Pediatric Radiology* in 2007.

This distinction will be recognised at the congress of the Society for Pediatric Radiology that will be held in Scottsdale, Arizona next month.

Since ionizing radiation has a detrimental effect on the human body it is important to minimize the dose. Their objective was to measure the entrance dose and calculate the effective doses for various radiological examinations in children on the Lodox Statscan, based on linear slit-scanning, and the Shimadzu radiography units. The effective dose from the Statscan unit was well below that from the Shimadzu unit as

well as that found in other radiological studies in children from around the world.



Blue Medal for Eric

Eric Bateman, Professor of Medicine and Director of the UCT Lung Institute, recently completed his 28th Two Oceans marathon. By managing to finish the race in a leisurely 6 hours and one minute, he earned his first blue medal.

This medal was added to his impressive collection of two Golds, 15 Silvers, a Sainsbury and a Bronze medal. Congratulations Eric!



Monthly Quiz

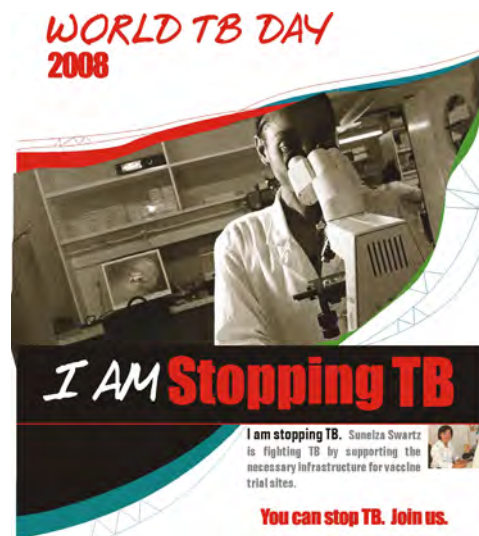
On the first page is a story about Gill Ainslie. What was the sudden death question she was asked and what is the correct answer? Send your answers to: kit.vaughan@uct.ac.za

Answer to last month's quiz: the Nobel Laureate who recently gave a lecture in the Student Learning Centre was Sydney Brenner who shared his Prize for Medicine in 2002 for his discoveries concerning "genetic regulation of organ development and programmed cell death". The title of his lecture at UCT was "The 100,000 year-old genome".

Jacque Greenberg was first with the correct answer and wins the R100 book voucher.

World TB Day

This year World TB Day was marked on 24 March, and focused on the theme 'I am stopping TB'. The South African TB Vaccine Initiative (SATVI) highlighted its ground-breaking vaccine studies through the launch of its community newsletter at a World TB Day programme at three Worcester schools participating in its adolescent studies. The programme mixed education and awareness with entertainment. Activities included a rap on TB, a role-play and short presentations in a joint initiative with the Regional Department of Health.



Globally, this year's World TB Day campaign was driven by the Stop TB Partnership, based at the World Health Organisation. The campaign theme is more than a slogan. It is the start of a two-year effort that belongs to people everywhere who are doing their part to Stop TB.

As part of this campaign, SATVI contributed to the production of a global publication to share the stories of people working in the field of TB prevention, research, advocacy and treatment. Posters and pamphlets (see above) on 'Stories from the Field' are being produced by in association with AERAS, a lead funder of its TB vaccine studies. Material also includes an educational cartoon on TB symptoms and treatment. This material will be distributed to schools, health facilities and places of work.

[Linda Rhoda]

The MAC Club's Back in Business

Our Faculty's Postgraduate Students' Association (PGSA) has taken the lead in revamping the MAC Club. The Dean's Office was first approached by Gemma Carvill, the PGSA's Chair, in mid-2007 with a view to them taking over the running of the Club.

The Dean readily agreed to this arrangement and, with the advice of the University's internal auditor, Guy Murcott, a business plan was put together and a sponsor found in Merck Chemicals (Pty) Ltd. Gemma's successor as Chair of the PGSA in 2008, Joanna Evans, took up the reins and she and her executive hosted the re-opening of the MAC Club on 6 March. Almost 100 staff and postgraduate students packed into the Club to enjoy a spit braai and drinks, plus the conviviality of Hiram Arendse tickling the ivories (below).

Membership of the MAC Club costs just R20 per annum and the bar will be open Thursdays (from 17h00) and Fridays (from 16h00), with PGSA members serving as barmen. In addition, the Friday luncheon, costing just R25, has been relaunched and runs from 12h00 to 14h00. All staff, postdoctoral fellows and post-grads are most welcome!

