

fund graduate and undergraduate research, and hold public lectures and other outreach activities. The MCTP combines the physics department's aims to build up theoretical physics and break down barriers between fields, and fits with its aspirations to become one of the "Top Ten" in physics, according to founding director Michael Duff, a string and M-theorist. The center is starting out with 34 faculty members from the physics, math, astronomy, and chemical engineering departments, and with \$450 000 a year for four years from the university. Much of the first year's startup money will go to renovating the physics building to make way for the new center.

European grid funded. Datagrid, a project for pooling computing power, will receive 9.8 million euros (about \$9.2 million) over the next three years from the European Union. The project's 21 partners, headed by CERN, will need to match the EU money two to one. The grid is needed to cope with the petabytes of experimental data expected to accumulate annually after the 2005 scheduled start of CERN's Large Hadron Collider. Thousands of European physicists will need access to the data. The project will be developed alongside other grids worldwide (see PHYSICS TODAY, November 2000, page 48). Biologists will also be involved in planning the grid, since data-rich genomics experiments are likely to be the next testbed of grid technology.

Funding physicists to do biology. The Human Frontier Science Program, an organization that funds international interdisciplinary research collaborations in neuroscience and molecular biology, is broadening its net to support researchers from the physical sciences, computer science, and engineering who work in biology. Founded in 1989, the Strasbourg, France-based HFSP was the brainchild of Japan's former prime minister Yasuhiro Nakasone. With money from G7 countries, the European Union, and Switzerland, the HFSP spends about \$50 million a year on research worldwide. Upcoming deadlines are 30 March for research grant letters of intent and 1 September for postdoctoral fellowships. For further information, see <http://www.hfsp.org>.

Natural hazards journal. Tsunamis, volcanoes, earthquakes, landslides, meteorology, and hydrology are among the topics to be covered in a new peer-reviewed journal published by the European Geophysical Society. Spanning theory, modeling, forecasting, measurement, and risk media-

tion, *Natural Hazards and Earth System Sciences* will appear quarterly beginning this month. See the journal's Web site, <http://www.copernicus.org/EGS/nhess/nhess.htm>, for subscription, submission, and related information.

New editor at applied physics journal.

P. James Viccaro is the new editor of the *Journal of Applied Physics*, published by the American Institute of Physics. Viccaro, a University of Chicago physicist who uses x rays for materials studies and was one of the planners of the Advanced Photon Source at Argonne National Laboratory, took the reins on 1 January. He succeeds Steven Rothman, who remains a consulting editor. During his 11-year watch, Rothman says, the number of submissions skyrocketed, and the fraction coming from the US dropped from 60% to 25%—although the fraction accepted from the US remains higher than that.

NOAO director appointed.

Australian astronomer Jeremy Mould has been named as the new director of the National Optical Astronomy Observatories (NOAO), Tucson, Arizona, succeeding astronomer Sidney Wolff, who announced more than a year ago her intention to step down as soon as a new director could be found (See PHYSICS TODAY, January 2000, page 45). Mould

is both an administrator and an active researcher, having recently played an important part in the Hubble Space Telescope Key Project on the Extragalactic Distance Scale. Most recently he was the director of the Australian National University's Mount Stromlo and Siding Springs Observatories. The announcement was made by the Association of Universities for Research in Astronomy, which oversees NOAO. "I'm delighted that Jeremy will join AURA in this new capacity," said AURA president William Smith. "I am confident that he will fulfill the role of the National Observatory as recently called for by the Astronomy and Astrophysics Survey Committee." Mould said he is looking forward to NOAO's playing a role in several of the projects called for by the committee, including the development of a segmented mirror telescope; a facility aimed at surveying the whole sky every week; and establishment of a national virtual observatory. "NOAO ought to play a role in each of these, and it is finding the right role in the entire system of US astronomy that is interesting," Mould said. ■



MOULD

Web Watch

<http://www.triax.com/vlfradio/natradio.htm>

Coined in the late 1980s, the term "natural radio" refers to the very-low-frequency radio waves that emanate from lightning storms and disturbances in Earth's magnetosphere. Because their frequency range overlaps the audible range of the human ear, the waves can be converted to sound and listened to with relatively simple equipment. Stephen P. McGreevy's Web site **The Realm of Natural VLF Radio** provides a wealth of information about natural radio and includes audio files of the waves.



<http://duszenko.northern.edu/joyce>

In his online essay **The Joy of Science: New Physics in *Finnegans Wake***, Andrzej Duszenko explores the "multiplicity of similarities between new physics and the universe of *Finnegans Wake*." Duszenko, who is an English professor at Northern State University in Aberdeen, South Dakota, argues that James Joyce incorporated elements of relativity and quantum mechanics into his novel because he found them consistent with his own view of the world as mutable and uncertain.



<http://www.microgravity.com>

Sponsored by NASA's Marshall Space Flight Center, **Microgravity News and Research** seeks to encourage public interest in NASA's microgravity program. Alongside news of upcoming microgravity missions, the site contains tutorials on areas of microgravity research, such as combustion and protein crystal growth.



To suggest topics or sites for Web Watch, please e-mail us at ptwww@aip.org.

Compiled by **CHARLES DAY**