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University News

Biden, Palin set for Oct. 2 VP Debate:
 Senator Joe Biden from Delaware and Governor Sarah Palin of Alaska, the vice presidential nominees of the Democratic and Republican parties, respectively, will debate each other at 8 p.m. (CDT) October 2 in the Washington University Athletic Complex. This is the first time the University will host a vice presidential debate. It is the fifth consecutive presidential election for which the University has been selected by the Commission on Presidential Debates, the event's sponsor, to serve as a debate host.



Pulitzer and the Brown School join forces to explore social relevance of art
 The Pulitzer Foundation for the Arts and the George Warren Brown School of Social Work have announced a new partnership. Through events, publications, and community projects, the Brown School and Pulitzer hope to explore how social work and the arts can interact in a meaningful way.

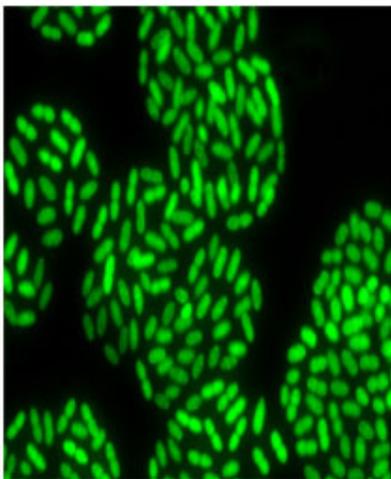
Service First celebrates 10 years of reaching out to the community
 With each new school year comes a fresh start. For the past decade, Washington University students have helped St. Louis-area school children get a new start in clean, colorful hallways and classrooms. More than 10,000 WUSTL students have volunteered their time over the past 10 years to clean and beautify schools as part of Service First.

Research

Finding the work horse
 A team of researchers headed by biologists at Washington University has sequenced the genome of a unique bacterium that manages two disparate operations — photosynthesis and nitrogen fixation — in one little cell during two distinct cycles daily. Himadri B. Pakrasi, Ph.D., the George William and Irene Koechig Professor in Arts & Sciences, spearheaded the drive to sequence the genome of *Cyanothece* sp. ATCC 51142 to understand the workings of this species' ability to produce ethanol and hydrogen, thus giving it the potential to become an inexpensive renewable energy source.

Genetic region linked to a five times higher lung cancer risk
 A narrow region on chromosome 15 contains genetic variations strongly associated with familial lung cancer, says a study conducted by scientists at Washington University School of Medicine and other institutions in the United States and the United Kingdom. The researchers found a more than five times higher risk of lung cancer for people who have both a family history of the disease and these genetic variations. The risk was not affected by whether the study participants did or did not smoke.

Fannie, Freddie and me
 Now that the U.S. government has taken the controls of distressed mortgage giants Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, American taxpayers facing billions of dollars in losses in home loans issued by the private sector are left wondering, "What does this mean for me?" Finance expert Radhakrishnan Gopalan, assistant professor of finance John M. Olin



Unicellular nitrogen-fixing cyanobacteria, shown in this light micrograph, play an important role in the oceanic nitrogen

Business School, comments on the mortgage giants' federal bailout and the impact on taxpayers, shareholders, the mortgage market, and the confidence of the American people.



David Kilper/WUSTL Photo
Christy Moore, science teacher in the Maplewood-Richmond Heights School District, and Patrick Gibbons, Ph.D., professor of physics, conduct an acceleration exercise at a Physics First workshop organized by WUSTL's Science Outreach Program earlier this summer.

Features

First strings first

Always use caution when entering a room filled with physics teachers. You're liable to get hit with flying marbles, step on an out-of-control toy car, or hear the strange buzzing of strings vibrating in harmonic patterns. Physics has a reputation for being the toughest of the high school science courses. But visual models of motion, acceleration, waves, projectiles, and other principles help students of all ages build an understanding of physical science concepts.

M.D./Ph.D. grads have less student debt, more interest in research than M.D. grads

When compared with recent M.D. program graduates from U. S. medical schools, M.D./Ph.D. program graduates are more likely to be male, have less educational debt, choose certain medical specialties, and plan for research to play a major role in their careers. Researchers at Washington University School of Medicine published these findings in the Sept. 10 issue of the *Journal of the American Medical Association*.

Heard on Campus

"With teeth scrubbed, the bathroom light switched off, and just before the light in your brain flickers out, there is a special depth to the dark. It was in that thick quiet that I heard a question move forward from the back of my head. *So tell me*, the voice asked, *are you living a life of meaning?*"

– Alan Alda, speaker at the Big Read Discussion, held in Graham Chapel September 22, 2008, reading from his book *Things I Overheard While Talking to Myself*.

Improving lives of Latinos is front and center

Through clinical practice and ground-breaking research, Professor Luis H. Zayas works to enhance the lives of Latino children, adolescents, and adults. This dedication has led to his formation of the Center for Latino Family Research at the George Warren Brown School of Social Work.

Kudos

Jonathan M. Chase, Ph.D., associate professor of biology in Arts & Sciences and director of the Tyson Research Center, has won the Mercer Award from the Ecological Society of America for a paper published in the proceedings of the National Academy of Science in 2007.

Matthew Arthur has been named a director-at-large on the board of the Association for Information Communications Technology Professionals in Higher Education.

Tuan-Hua David Ho, Ph.D., professor of biology in Arts & Sciences, has been elected president of the American Society of Plant Biologists (ASPB), the most influential, professional plant biology society in the world.

Fiona Turett, a senior majoring in mechanical engineering, is one of only 19 students nationwide to be named a 2008-09 Astronaut Scholar.

About @Washington University in St. Louis

This newsletter is prepared by Special Development Communications Projects staff in Alumni and Development Programs. It is intended to provide a brief summary of what is happening at the University. Alumni, parents, and friends of the University for whom we have valid e-mail addresses automatically receive @Washington University in St. Louis.

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