

Evolution in biology labs Outdated science laboratories in Benson renovated over the summer

ANDREA ADAMS AND
CHASE WEAVER
biology writers

A great metamorphosis has occurred in the biology labs this past summer. While the students all left for a relaxing

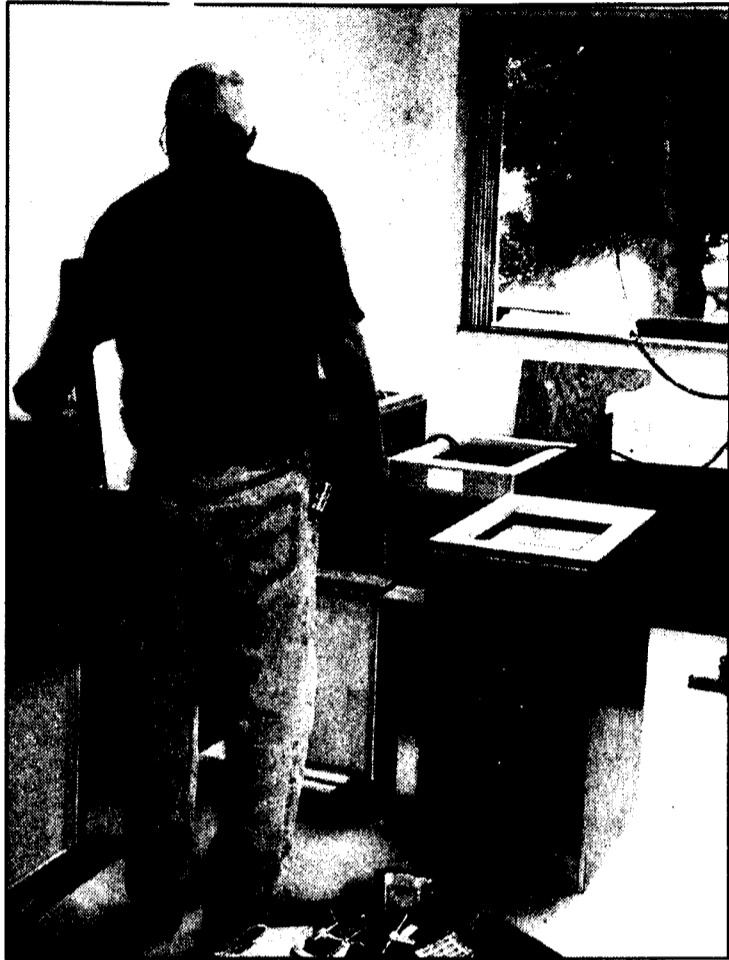
summer break, the real work began in the biology labs. The construction team added new offices, laboratories, equipment and general reconstruction during their time here this summer. This project cost over a quarter of a million dollars. The new

labs provide more area for teaching and storage space.

The new offices and laboratories belong to Dr. Pamela Silver and Dr. Christopher Gee. These laboratories will be used for their research and some class activities permitted by the respective professors. To create their offices, the contractors sealed off the exit doors in Benson 76 and a special thank you goes out to the Math Lounge for shrinking their space and supporting the reconstruction throughout the summer.

The majority of the renovations occurred in Benson 172, where they re-vamped the entire room. They added new lighting, fume hoods, refrigerators, areas for equipment usage, cabinets, places for bone collections, and a new projection system. The contractors added in an area for the physiology equipment which includes the inversion table, bike, and a treadmill, as well as a data logger port in the floor to catalog onto the new laptop areas. This room is also America's Disabilities Act (ADA) Accessible.

The developments of these labs were completed by a few different construction agencies. The lead architect was Jeff Lander from Weber Murphy Fox (WMF) Architect. The on-site supervisor was Kirk Battin from Perry Construction, and VWR's Bud Wittner did the case work in the multiple labs.



Courtesy of the School of Science
Refitting cabinets and drawers has been a major part of the renovations to the biology labs on campus.

OBS Labs to be renovated

BRIAN CARLSON
science editor

The Otto Behrend Science building Chemistry labs are going to be getting a very nice \$ 2.5 million make-over. With this project being so large, it will not be able to be completed

in just the summer of 2010, when most students would be off campus, but instead they will start in early spring and hopefully complete in early fall 2010.

Dr. Knacke, the Director of the School of Science, said that they still have some kinks to

work out so the students will still be able to have their much beloved/hated chemistry labs.

With these new renovations, students and faculty can not wait to see a truly modern chemistry lab for the first time since the 1960s.

A starry night

HEATHER WAGER
physics writer

Cue theme music, set phasers to stun, and enter Dr. Darren Williams.

Although he may not be quite as dashing as either Kirk or Piccard, Dr. Williams is certainly a man of the stars. Dr. Williams, Associate Professor and chair of the physics department at Penn State Behrend, is the man to talk to about astronomy nights.

Astronomy nights were founded by Dr. Roger Knacke, Director of the School of Science, sixteen years ago. He and Dr. Williams continue the program to this day, bringing future scientists, children, and common folk all together to witness the majesty of the night sky.

"The great thing about astronomy," Dr. Williams says, "is that it appeals to nearly everyone, at many levels, no matter how technical the topic."

Astronomy nights start off with a 60-minute discussion on a newsworthy topic in astronomy. They then hold a question and answer session, and culminate in a chance to go out and observe stars and planets, along with their moons. Students use the telescopes housed in the observatories behind the Otto Behrend Science Building.

This year provides a unique view in the sky. Mars will be closer to the Earth than it has been for two years. Jupiter and its moons, along with our own moon, will also be objects of interest in the coming night sky. This year is also the international year of astronomy.

Dr. Williams is also collaborating with a graduate student at the Penn State University Park campus on a project to model how light reflects off different planets. This will hopefully allow astronomers to identify planets like Earth with a liquid water surface.

Upcoming Astronomy Nights

(unless otherwise noted, all events held at 7:30 p.m. in OBS 101)

September 24
Darwin: Discovering the Tree of Life (McGarvey Commons)

October 29
Missing Spots on the Sun: Anything Wrong?

December 3
The Star of Bethlehem

Feb. 25
Medieval Islamic Astronomy

March 18
What's Inside a Black Hole? Better Ask Hawking

April 15
Dark Energy in the Universe

"While we may not discover life as we know it in our lifetime, we are certain to discover worlds around other stars that life could inhabit."

Dr. Darren Williams
Physics Department Chair

Top Science News:

ENVIRONMENTAL

Teams from both Washington and Massachusetts are racing against each other to harness the tiny voltage in trees. If scientists can make this work, forests may be able to power their own sensory networks to monitor the health of an ecosystem.

SPACE

A newly-appointed panel says that NASA could be able to send astronauts to Mars by 2020, but only if their budget is boosted. Obama's new "space panel" was created to review NASA human spaceflight plans and with the review being finalized, the fate rest in the hands of the White House and the Congress.

TECHNOLOGY

A new swimming camera will be able to be swallowed by a patient and, using tiny propellers, the camera capsule will swim through the human digestive tract. This will allow for a much easier and complete diagnostic test for future patients.

Scientist of the Week:

Today in 1819, Jean Bernard Léon Foucault was born in Paris and is best known for the Foucault Pendulum.

This pendulum demonstrates the rotation of Earth on its axis. He also made an early measurement of the speed of light and discovered eddy currents.

New Science Faculty:

The School of Science welcomed seven new professors this year:

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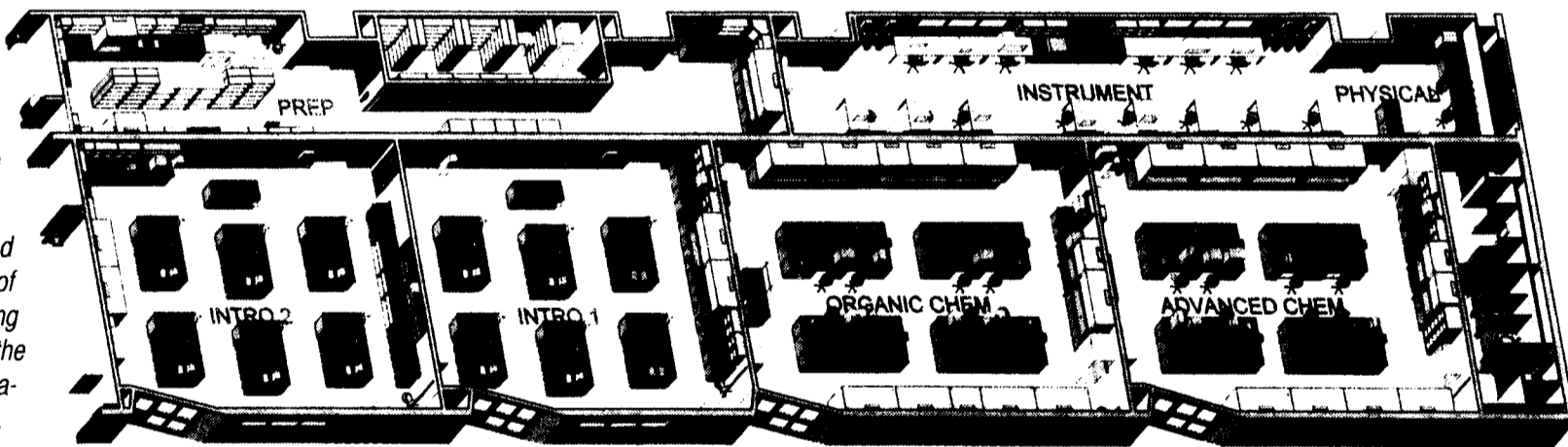
Marie Ebner

Math Writer

Nichole Buczynski

Courtesy of the School of Science

An top-view sketch provided by the School of Science showing an idea of how the OBS lab renovations will look.




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