Media & Communications @ Brookhaven National Laboratory

RHIC & AGS Users Executive Committee Meeting

October 14, 2011

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BROOKHAVEN NATIONAL LABORATORY

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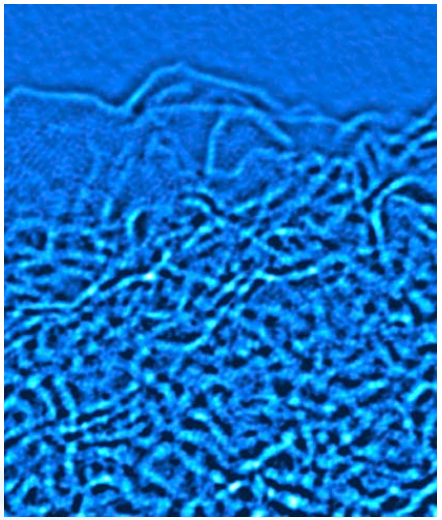
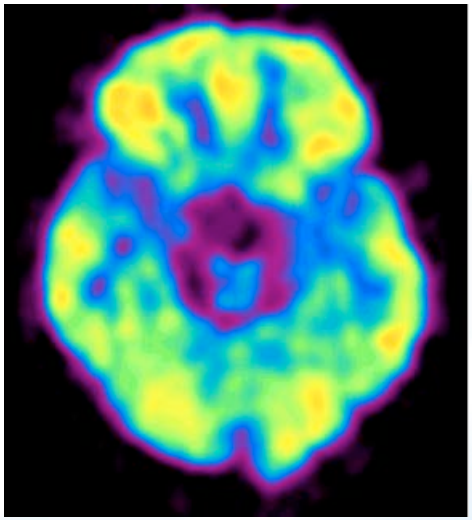
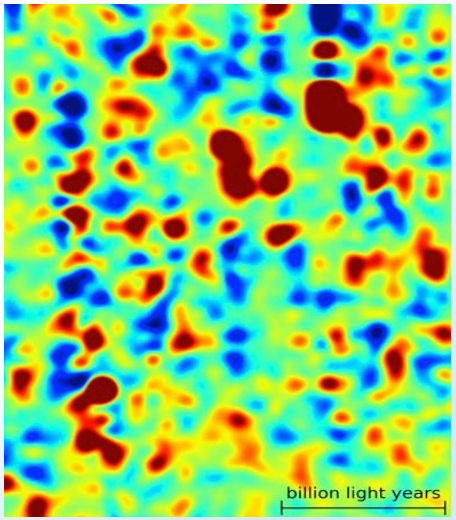
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY | Office of Science

Science Communication and Media Outreach

You do not really understand something unless you can explain it to your grandmother. - Albert Einstein







Science Communication and Media Outreach

You do not really understand something unless you can explain it to your grandmother. . . . or your neighbor, your childhood friend, and your mother-in-law . . . not to mention congressional representatives, funding agency staffers, and potential research and business partners.

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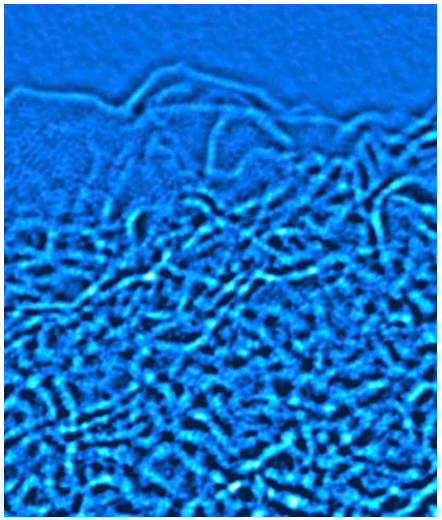
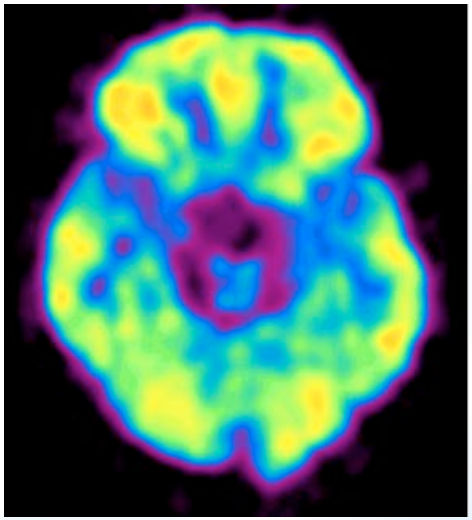
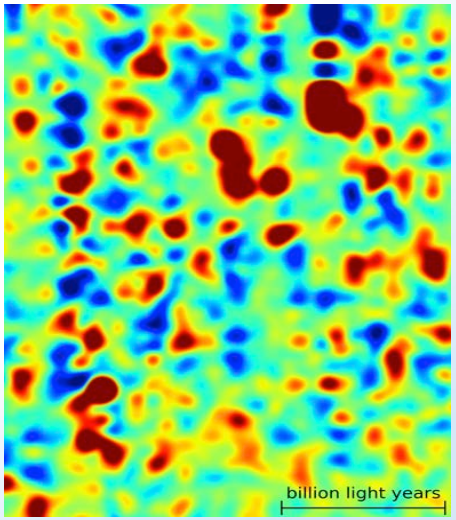






Science Communication and Media Outreach: Goals

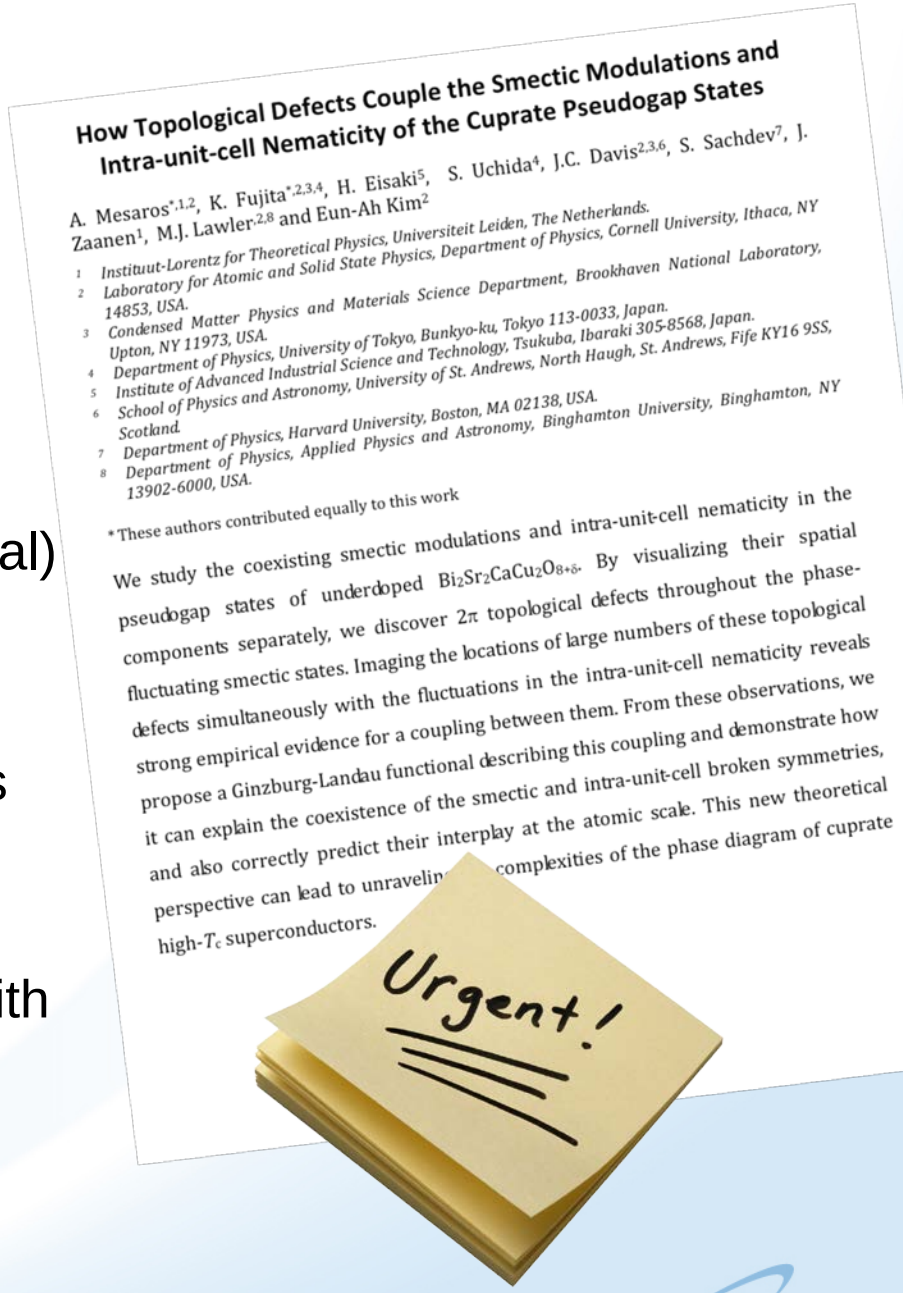
- Promote and position Brookhaven National Laboratory as a center for scientific excellence and innovation
  - Tie to priority projects and initiatives (Strategic/Annual plans)
- Report to the taxpayers *and* agencies that fund our research
  - What are we doing with their money?
  - What are they getting out of it?
  - Why should they keep supporting what we do?
- Communicate the complexities and importance of science
  - “Educate” the public
  - Inspire future scientists
  - Build support for the scientific enterprise
  - Demonstrate the value of DOE's investment in basic and applied research

Communication “Products”

- Press releases — to stimulate interest among (science) reporters to cover our research, with second life as:
  - Web stories (our site and others)
  - Brookhaven Bulletin stories
  - Content for other products
- Fact sheets/brochures
- Video/animation scripts
- Proposals for symposia (AAAS)
- Press events
- Presentation slides
- Posters/exhibits/displays
- Tweets/blog posts
- Science highlights
  - For BSA, DOE, Battelle, etc.

Challenges

- Identifying stories/getting notification of papers
- Complicated, sometimes esoteric science
- Approval process (internal/external)
- Short turnarounds/deadlines
- Managing expectations
- Building/maintaining relationships
- Changing media landscape
- Balance between keeping BNL in the news vs. flooding reporters with news they don't want
- Competing internal demands

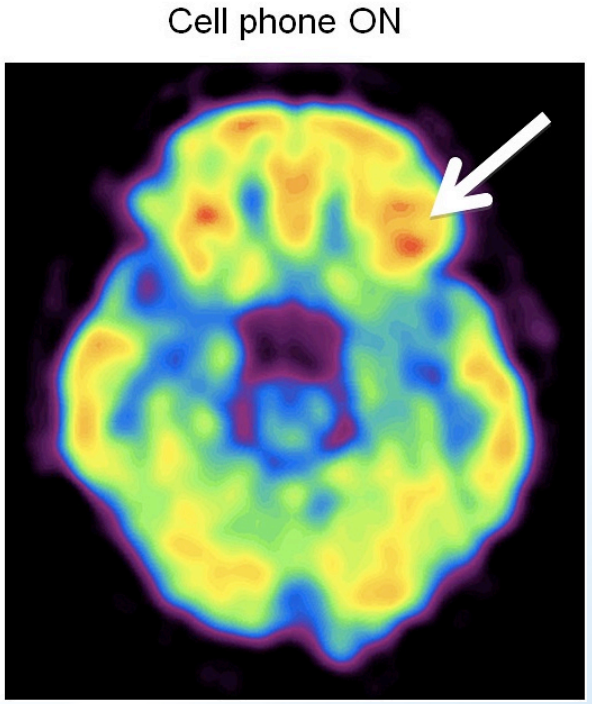


Identifying stories

- Promote Lab priority projects
  - Plan events/news releases to highlight major findings/milestones
- Major publications in *Science*, *Nature*, and other top-tier journals such as *PNAS*, *JAMA, PRL*
- Beat system for staying in touch with Lab managers, department chairs, key scientists; vetting “newsworthiness”
- Talks at important meetings (AAAS, APS, ACS)
- “Piggybacking” on releases from other institutions
- Word of mouth, weekly Med/Com planning meetings

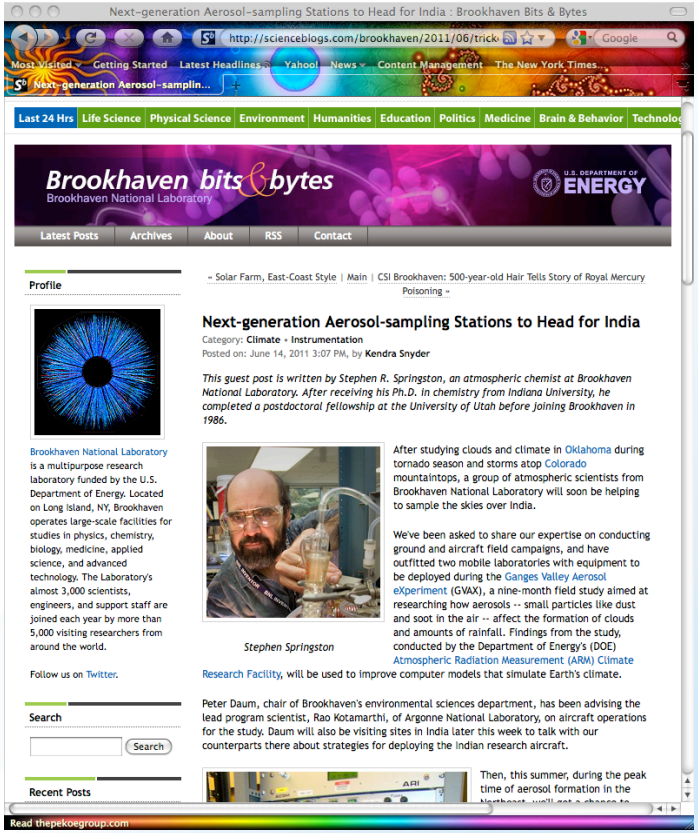
Media training for scientists

- Identify spokesperson(s)
- Prepare/rehearse messages
  - Simplify scientific explanations
  - Put findings, especially controversial ones, in context
- Review presentation slides (if applicable)
- In-depth training conducted on a case-by-case basis
  - Depends on subject matter, complexity, potential for controversy (e.g., cell phones)
  - Essential for promoted talks and news briefings at big meetings (AAAS, APS)



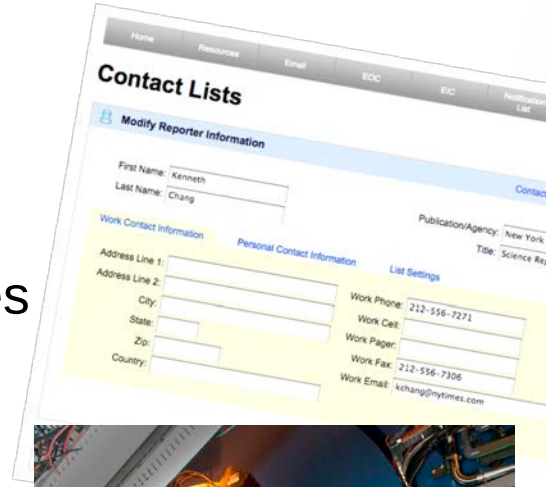
Integrating with social media

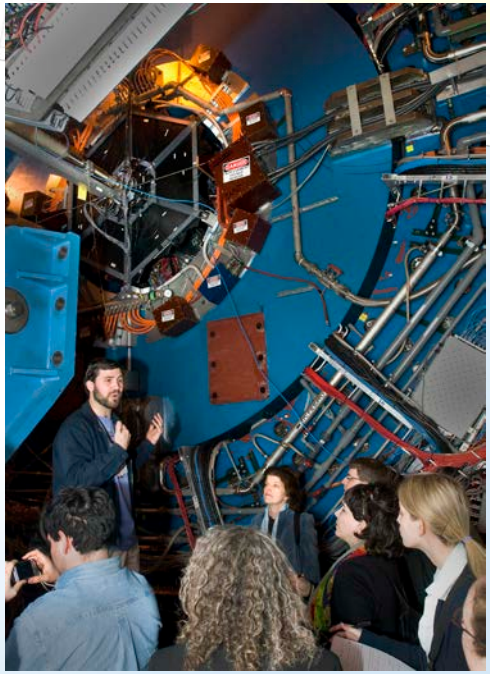
- Rewriting select stories for posting on
  - Blogs (Brookhaven Bits & Bytes on ScienceBlogs/Quantum Diaries)
    - These blogs also feature original content
  - DOE Pulse
- Tweet (follow us @BrookhavenLab)
- Posting videos/animations on YouTube, photos on Flickr
- “Amplification” via DOE Office of Science website/blog



Reporter relationships

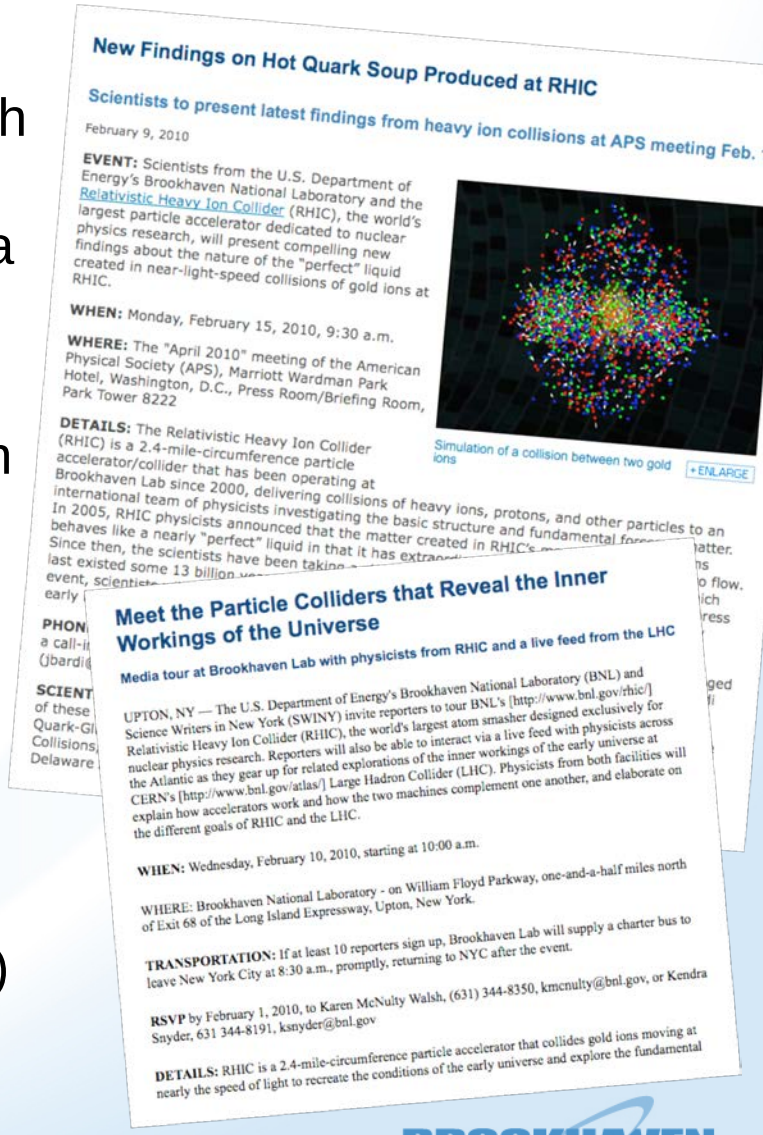
- Maintain active reporter lists and update regularly
- Proactive pitching and responding to media inquiries
  - Connecting reporters with scientists
  - Arranging TV crew visits (from last-minute local cable to National Geographic documentaries)
  - Sensitivity to deadlines
- Attend networking/workshop/conference events
  - AAAS, NASW, CASW, SWINY, ScienceOnline
- Host events at BNL and off site for science writers
  - SWINY tours, on- and off-site media roundtables
- Coordinate talks and news briefings at scientific meetings





Case study: APS Feb 2010 RHIC press conference

- Convened strategic planning meetings with RHIC communications team to hone messages, craft two news releases, media advisory, and animation script
  - Multiple meetings over several months
- Coordinated production of video animation
- Trained speakers, tweaked slides
- Coordinated news conference, media outreach with AIP PR staff
- Pitched event to reporters
- Planned linked RHIC tour for SWINY
- Connected reporters with speakers at meeting (in person, via e-mail, and phone)
- Coordinated follow-up interviews



New Findings on Hot Quark Soup Produced at RHIC

Scientists to present latest findings from heavy ion collisions at APS meeting Feb.

February 9, 2010

EVENT: Scientists from the U.S. Department of Energy's Brookhaven National Laboratory and the Relativistic Heavy Ion Collider (RHIC), the world's largest particle accelerator dedicated to nuclear physics research, will present compelling new findings about the nature of the "perfect" liquid created in near-light-speed collisions of gold ions at RHIC.

WHEN: Monday, February 15, 2010, 9:30 a.m.

WHERE: The "April 2010" meeting of the American Physical Society (APS), Marriott Wardman Park Hotel, Washington, D.C., Press Room/Briefing Room, Park Tower 8222

DETAILS: The Relativistic Heavy Ion Collider (RHIC) is a 2.4-mile-circumference particle accelerator/collider that has been operating at Brookhaven Lab since 2000, delivering collisions of heavy ions, protons, and other particles to an international team of physicists investigating the basic structure and fundamental forces of matter. In 2005, RHIC physicists announced that the matter created in RHIC's [illegible] behaves like a nearly "perfect" liquid in that it has extraordinarily low viscosity and flows. Since then, the scientists have been taking [illegible] to learn more about what last existed some 13 billion years ago, moments after the Big Bang event, scientists [illegible] early [illegible]

Simulation of a collision between two gold ions

+ENLARGE

Meet the Particle Colliders that Reveal the Inner Workings of the Universe

Media tour at Brookhaven Lab with physicists from RHIC and a live feed from the LHC

UPTON, NY — The U.S. Department of Energy's Brookhaven National Laboratory (BNL) and Science Writers in New York (SWINY) invite reporters to tour BNL's [http://www.bnl.gov/rhic/] Relativistic Heavy Ion Collider (RHIC), the world's largest atom smasher designed exclusively for nuclear physics research. Reporters will also be able to interact via a live feed with physicists across the Atlantic as they gear up for related explorations of the inner workings of the early universe at CERN's [http://www.bnl.gov/atlas/] Large Hadron Collider (LHC). Physicists from both facilities will explain how accelerators work and how the two machines complement one another, and elaborate on the different goals of RHIC and the LHC.

WHEN: Wednesday, February 10, 2010, starting at 10:00 a.m.

WHERE: Brookhaven National Laboratory - on William Floyd Parkway, one-and-a-half miles north of Exit 68 of the Long Island Expressway, Upton, New York.

TRANSPORTATION: If at least 10 reporters sign up, Brookhaven Lab will supply a charter bus to leave New York City at 8:30 a.m., promptly, returning to NYC after the event.

RSVP by February 1, 2010, to Karen McNulty Walsh, (631) 344-8350, kmcnulty@bnl.gov, or Kendra Snyder, 631 344-8191, ksnyder@bnl.gov

DETAILS: RHIC is a 2.4-mile-circumference particle accelerator that collides gold ions moving at nearly the speed of light to recreate the conditions of the early universe and explore the fundamental

2010 RHIC press conference — Results

- Top-tier media wrote in-depth, original stories; many used animation
  - *NYT, Newsweek, USA Today, Science, Nature*
  - 500+ stories in 40+ countries from *Reuters and Agence France-Presse (AFP)* pick up
- Stories/messages on target
  - most accurately explained findings; many discussed future RHIC research
  - Nearly all mentioned DOE; many quoted DOE Office of Science director
- Huge social media response
  - Thousands of blog posts/comments, (*HuffPost, DailyKos, and SlashDot)*
  - 160+ “re-tweets” of our Twitter feed, and 800+ tweets linking to stories
  - 100,000+ views of animation on YouTube
- Nearly 38,000 visits to BNL’s online newsroom — significant spike
- Positive external “peer-review” analysis of news coverage, strategy
- 2010 Bronze Anvil, 2011 Gold and Bronze Bulldogs

Recent headlines

Brookhaven Lab findings eye birth of the universe

Originally published: February 15, 2010 6:41 PM
Updated: February 15, 2010 9:20 PM

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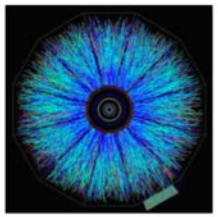
Permanent Address: http://www.scientificamerican.com/article.cfm?id=anti-helium-4-rhic

Antimatter of Fact: Collider Generates Most Massive Antinucleus Yet

The Relativistic Heavy Ion Collider has produced several nuclei of the antimatter counterpart to helium 4

By John Matson | Thursday, March 24, 2011 | 32

Most people know two things about helium. One is that it makes your voice comically high-pitched when you inhale it; the other is that it is extremely light, which is why balloons filled with the stuff float upward through the heavier air. But in particle physics terms—and especially when it comes to the nuclear physics of antimatter—helium is no lightweight. With two protons and two neutrons, ordinary helium is four times as massive as hydrogen, the lightest element. (Both hydrogen and helium have other stable isotopes—atomic varieties with differing masses—but



SHADOW DANCE: Within the shower of particles produced in collisions of gold ions, researchers have identified rare and fleeting antimatter helium-4 nuclei.
Image: STAR Collaboration/BNL

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SPECIAL ISSUE

A Scanner Suitable for Rats and Other Squirmers

By SINDYA N. BHANOO
Published: March 14, 2011

Researchers from the Brookhaven National Laboratory and Stony Brook University have built the first positron emission tomography (PET) scanner that is suitable for rats and other small rodents.

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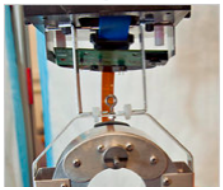

A PET scan shows how the body's tissu
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In Brookhaven Collider, Briefly Bre...

In Brookhaven Collider, Scientists Briefly Break a Law of Nature

By DENNIS OVERBYE
Published: February 15, 2010

Physicists said Monday that they had whacked a tiny region of space with enough energy to briefly distort the laws of physics, providing the first laboratory demonstration of the kind of process that scientists suspect has shaped cosmic history.

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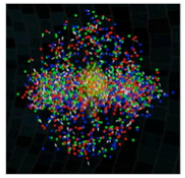

Brookhaven National Laboratory
HOT A computer rendition of 4-trillion-degree Celsius quark-gluon plasma created in a demonstration of what scientists suspect shaped cosmic history.

The blow was delivered in the Relativistic Heavy Ion Collider, or RHIC, at the Brookhaven National Laboratory on Long Island, where, since 2000, physicists have been accelerating gold nuclei around a 2.4-mile underground ring to 99.995
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This happened in bubbles smaller than the nucleus of an atom, which lasted only a billionth of a billionth of a billionth of a second. But in these bubbles were "hints of profound physics," in the words of Steven Vigdor, associate director for nuclear and particle physics at Brookhaven. Very similar symmetry-breaking bubbles, at an earlier period in the universe, are believed to have been responsible for breaking the balance

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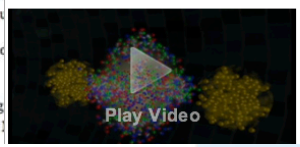

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WSJ.com

U.S. NEWS | FEBRUARY 23, 2011

Brain Reacts to Cellphones

Study Finds Region Nearest Antenna Is More Active; Health Implications Unknown

By SHIRLEY S. WANG

Cellphone use appears to increase brain activity in regions close to where the phone ante
head, according to a new study, but researchers said the implications for health are still u

The study is the first to demonstrate that radiation from the devices has a direct impact
likely to fuel a long-running debate over the safety of cellular phones.

"This study shows that the human brain is sensitive to electromagnetic radiation coming
Nora Volkow, an author on the study published Tuesday in the Journal of the American
is something we need to face."

However, "our finding does not tell us if this is harmful or not," said Dr. Volkow, who is head of the National Institute on Drug Abuse.

Some medical experts have been concerned for years about the