Dispelling stereotypes one single at a time

The crowd of Chicago singles perused their most eligible peers: a doctor, a clothing designer, a successful entrepreneur, a professional baseball player, a physicist....

Wait. A physicist?

Yup. Particle astrophysicist Mark Jackson stood in the swanky Museum of Contemporary Art surrounded by many of the city's rich and influential. While few people likely understood what he does for a living -- study black holes and primordial ooze left over from the Big Bang - they did understand his nonacademic title: One of Chicago's top 10 bachelors.

"In our search for successful, interesting candidates, some professions pop up year in and year out (doctors, lawyers, etc.), but we are always on the watch for people whose success is defined by more than just salary," said Chicago Magazine editor Jennifer Wehunt. "Mark revealed himself to be a down-to-earth, funny, good-hearted guy."

Jackson was selected as one of 10 men and 10 women ranked 2008 Most Eligible Singles in the magazine's July issue. Hundreds of people paid for a chance to meet the certified good catches last month at a fundraiser for Northwestern Memorial Hospital's prostate cancer gene therapy program at the museum.

Jackson got interested in the list when he attended the charity event previously and noticed none of the top singles had science backgrounds. He thought having a scientist on the list would make the public think twice before they write off science as uncool.

Read the full story

-- Tona Kunz
Fermilab saved from chopping block--for now
From *Scientific American*, July 7, 2008

A spending package signed into law last week by President Bush will provide enough cash to stave off the sacking of 90 employees at financially strapped Fermi National Accelerator Laboratory (Fermilab) in Batavia, Ill., the nation's leading particle physics lab.

Acting Deputy Secretary of Energy Jeffrey Kupfer told Fermilab it will receive a $29.5-million infusion, including $9.5 million for a key neutrino experiment planned to be completed in 2014.

But it remains to be seen whether Congress will dole out enough funds to keep the lab operating at its current capacity in fiscal year 2009.

The emergency spending measure was passed after Fermilab offered employee buyouts to ease a nearly six-month budget crunch triggered when lawmakers cut its funding by $20 million from the year before.

Judy Jackson, a lab spokesperson, said that 50 workers took the buyout two weeks ago, even though the Senate had passed the bill and the president had signaled he would sign it. But she notes that Fermilab would have had to ax another 90 employees if the new funds, part of $62.5 million forked over to the U.S. Department of Energy's Office of Science, had not been approved.

Office of Science announces new funding plan

A new funding plan announced by the Office of Science is online at:

www.fnal.gov/today/
From AIP FYI, July 8, 2008

Earlier today, the Department of Energy's Office of Science announced how it would distribute the $62.5 million it received under the recently-enacted supplemental appropriations bill. This announcement follows a meeting last week at Fermilab during which DOE Acting Deputy Secretary Jeffrey Kupfer told Fermilab employees "this difficult time has come to an end." Kupfer was referring to cutbacks in staffing and research programs that had been made as a result of a far less-than-expected FY 2008 appropriation for the Office of Science. Senator Richard Durbin (D-IL), Rep. Judy Biggert (R-IL), and Rep. Bill Foster (D-IL) also spoke at the July 2 Fermilab event.

Read more

Additional Activities