

Pg 3



Pg 6



Pg 8

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Gates funding opens door for major lung-health study

A multi-million rand research grant will underpin a four-year longitudinal study on the causes and results of respiratory illnesses among children in the Drakenstein area of the Western Cape

Professor Heather Zar, head of UCT's Department of Paediatrics and Child Health, has been awarded a \$7.56 million (R52.9 million) research grant by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation for a study that will track the lung health of children in the Drakenstein region in the Western Cape.

Aptly titled *The Drakenstein Child Lung Health Study*, the longitudinal study will follow 500 mother-child pairs over four years to investigate the incidence, patterns and causes of respiratory illnesses, specifically pneumonia, or infection of the lung, in early life.

Researchers will track children until they're about two years old. That extended time frame, they hope, will give them insights into the many factors associated with respiratory illnesses in young children, and what impact early-childhood pneumonia will have on later life and on child health.

The research team will be made up of seven sub-groups. The groups will look at the associations between pneumonia and seven risk factors, – the immunological, environmental, infectious, maternal, nutritional, genetic and psychosocial – and, revealingly, the interactions between those risk factors.

"It's often not *one* thing," says Zar. "It's malnutrition and exposure to tobacco smoke and germs; all of which may come together in a child who may already be vulnerable."

The study will take place in the



Prof Heather Zar, based at the Red Cross Children's Hospital, will lead a major new study on lung health among children.

Drakenstein sub-district of the Cape Winelands, and researchers will work closely with Paarl Hospital, where the majority of births in the area take place, and with local clinics.

The project is the first of its kind – the longitudinal element – for South Africa and Africa, where pneumonia remains a leading cause of death among children, explains Zar. It is also of particular use because it will measure just how effective current health measures are, as the Drakenstein is a low- to middle-income area

where vaccines against pneumococcus and H influenzae, bacteria responsible for pneumonia and other respiratory conditions, are readily available.

Zar will work with an expert group of collaborators from UCT, Stellenbosch University and the Drakenstein authorities. They will include co-investigators Professor Gregory Hussey, Professor Mark Nicol, Professor Dan Stein, Professor Colleen Adnams, Professor Raj Ramesar, Professor Willem Hanekom, Associate Professor Landon Myer and Anna

Grimsrud of UCT, as well as Stellenbosch's Professor Robert Gie, and Dr Eckart von Delft, head of paediatrics at Paarl Hospital.

A local operational advisory committee has been established, comprising leading members of the management team of the Provincial Government of the Western Cape, and local health-care providers. This committee will advise on the operational aspects of the study and ensure the smooth collaboration between service providers and the study team.

In addition, an international scientific advisory group of leading experts in specific areas relevant to the project will advise the study team.

The Drakenstein Child Lung Health Study and the Gates funding, says Zar, offers the chance to do the kind of detailed research on respiratory health that has not been possible up to now.

"It really is a wonderful opportunity to look comprehensively at the determinants of child health in the long term." ■



Unstinting support: Recipients of the Vice-Chancellor's Medal in 2011 are alumni and benefactors Henry Blumberg and Prof Marcia Blumberg of the UCT Foundation in Canada.

VC's Medal for Henry and Marcia Blumberg

DI STAFFORD

Long-standing benefactors and directors of the University of Cape Town Foundation in Canada, Henry Blumberg (chairperson) and Professor Marcia Blumberg, are the 2011 recipients of the Vice-Chancellor's Medal for their unstinting support of UCT over the years. The award was made in Toronto recently.

Presenting the award, vice-chancellor Dr Max Price thanked the Blumbergs for their contributions to UCT over the years. He also thanked the foundation's past board members and the staff of Blumberg Segal LLP who played a supporting role in UCT's activities in Canada.

The UCT Foundation was constituted in Toronto in 1993 to raise funds for student bursaries, health sciences and educational outreach projects, and to forge bonds between UCT and Canada. The Blumbergs, both UCT alumni, were instrumental in establishing the foundation, which as a registered charity in Canada makes it tax effective for UCT alumni to donate to their alma mater.

The Blumbergs have hosted many UCT functions and VIPs over the years, always with the university's welfare in mind. For example, visiting South African theatre performances are used as vehicles to raise funds for student bursaries. Of note was a Master's in Drama Scholarship in theatre, performance or applied drama/theatre in HIV/

AIDS, awarded to renowned South African theatre playwright and director Mike van Graan.

Funds raised from a theatre evening in 2008 contributed towards the annual Ikhwezi Community Theatre Festival at the Baxter Theatre Centre. This festival has launched the careers of many promising young artists.

The couple has also contributed to the Blumberg Prize for Service to the Student Community. Established in 2007, the Henry & Marcia Blumberg Prize is an annual award to a student who has worked hard both academically and in service of the wider student community. The Blumbergs were also instrumental in initiating the UCT/York University (Toronto) exchange agreement. ■

Medal is master stroke for Mlambo

Musa Mlambo, a master's graduate from the Department of Zoology, has been named as the UCT winner of the 2010 S2A3 Bronze Medal.

The medal, sponsored by the South African Association for the Advancement of Science (S2A3), is awarded by universities around the country to the student whose master's thesis is considered the most outstanding produced by that university in a particular year.

Mlambo won the award for his 2009 thesis, titled Biodiversity Patterns of Wetland Macroinvertebrate

Assemblages in the South-Western Cape, South Africa, a topic considered vastly understudied. For that project, Mlambo took samples from 140 wetlands in four geographic clusters – the Cape Flats, the West Coast, the Cederberg and the Agulhas Plain.

It turned out to be groundbreaking work, as he discovered no fewer than five new species of invertebrates – animals without a backbone – of which four are considered to be rare or unique.

Examiners and referees were nothing less than lavish in their praise. "I... reckon the entire study

to be the best scripts I have ever reviewed at this level," wrote one. "Rarely have I had the pleasure of examining such a stimulating, well-researched and extremely lucid piece of work," observed another.

Mlambo is currently doing his doctoral work at the University of Oulu in Finland. ■

Award-winning stuff: Musa Mlambo (second from right) shows off his S2A3 Bronze Medal with Assoc Prof John Hoffmann (head of the Department of Zoology) and supervisors Dr Cecile Reed (left) and Assoc Prof Jenny Day.



Grand gesture underpins health support



This year, the UCT Students' Health and Welfare Centres Organisation (SHAWCO) celebrates the fourth anniversary of its partnership with GrandWest Corporate Social Investment (CSI).

GrandWest CSI is the sole sponsor of SHAWCO's health programme, and has donated more than R6 million to SHAWCO Health since the start

Far-reaching impact: With the help of GrandWest CSI, who have donated over R6 million over four years, SHAWCO Health is able to provide primary health care to those in dire need.

of this relationship. The funding, and the dedication of student volunteers, allowed SHAWCO to treat over 5 600 patients at 248 clinics throughout the Cape Peninsula in 2010.

SHAWCO provides a primary health care service, screening and treating patients for conditions such as HIV, diarrhoea, respiratory tract infections, TB, and sexually transmitted diseases. They provide holistic management, which includes care provided by medical, physiotherapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy, dietetics and audiology students.

"We wouldn't have been able to

provide the services we do without [GrandWest CSI's] generous giving," says Simon Mendelsohn, SHAWCO Health president. "We extend the greatest thanks to them and specifically to GrandWest CSI Manager, Heidi Edson."

The benefits from the funding are widespread, added Mendelsohn.

"The support from GrandWest CSI has many rewards - from the incredible skill gained by our student leaders and the clinical knowledge and experience attained by our volunteers, to the curative and preventative health care that our communities attending the clinics receive." ■

Potter fellow weathers information storm

What irks Neil Hart, a doctoral student in the Department of Oceanography, isn't so much the shortage and shortcomings of weather forecasts and climate research, but rather how this information is passed on to the likes of policy makers and farmers.

So for the Potter Fellowship Seminar that he hosted – a requirement of the David and Elaine Potter Fellowship he received this year – in

April, Hart assembled a procession of climatologists, oceanographers and other experts to consider the issue. Specifically, he wanted them to discuss how current research on climate variability in the Western Cape can be best trained on socially relevant questions.

So talks at the seminar, titled *Whither the Weather*, covered everything from basic science and the flaws of current forecasting, to how

the science can be packaged for end users. Speakers explained how the climate in the Western Cape is much more complex than high school textbooks may suggest, how ocean phenomena – specifically the El Niño/La Niña-Southern Oscillation climate pattern – influence weather in the region, what work is going into building robust global climate models, and how information is (and should possibly be) packaged for end

users like farmers.

Working in climate dynamics, he very rarely has any contact with end users, Hart admits. The seminar provided him, too, he said, with a chance to hear what kind of data disaster risk managers and those in the agricultural sector, for example, need and can put to use. ■

Under the weather: Doctoral student Neil Hart hosted his Potter Fellowship Seminar on climate change.



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Mouth-watering new Baxter facilities now served

The wait is over. The Baxter Theatre Centre's new restaurant, bars and catering facilities, operated by the forum company, are now open and operational. The old theatregoers' haunt now boasts three refurbished levels: elegant bar, sophisticated restaurant and trendy loft-style bar named Play, each offering new culinary experiences in a sleek setting with modern retro decor. The upgrade incorporates the new Wi-Fi lounge (formerly the gallery space) on the upper level, next to the Golden Arrow Studio, which was completed in December last year.

A further and welcome addition to the three existing theatres is the versatile 200-seater, Flipside at the Baxter, situated backstage of the main Theatre stage. Another critical change was to create a rehearsal room in what was the Studio foyer, thus creating a working environment for the artists while bringing the process closer to the public.

This is the first major structural

renovation that the Baxter Theatre Centre has undergone since opening its doors 34 years ago.

Renovations began in earnest in February this year to overhaul the main restaurant on the second level, the bar, snacks and coffee station in the main downstairs foyer, and the bar on the upper level.

This upgrade and new partnership – with the forum company – is in line with the vision of Baxter CEO and director, Lara Foot, to make the theatre complex a vibrant cultural and culinary hub during the day and at night.

"We would like to create an even more dynamic and accessible experience for our audiences, patrons, artists, communities, corporates, visitors and the public at large," says Foot. "There should be a hive of activity inside our auditoriums, as well as in our foyers and outside spaces. So whether it is for a show, eating out, even a meeting or just drinks, we would like the Baxter to become an inspiring and



Fine dining: The new-look facilities in the Baxter Theatre Centre.

heart-warming experience to all who visit us."

To book for Act restaurant or Play bar, call 021 685 3888 or visit the website at www.theforum.co.za. ■



Safety and violence out in the open

Eighteen months in the making, UCT's Safety and Violence Initiative (SaVI) made its public debut on 1 April when it hosted its inaugural colloquium.

The initiative covers one of the national priorities, crime and violence, identified by vice-chancellor Dr Max Price when he was first appointed. These are areas of interest and concern (climate change, education and poverty are among them) he wanted to turn into strategic research drives at the university.

In response to an appeal for strategic research proposals at the end of 2009, Dr Catherine Ward of the Department of Psychology corralled UCT scholars and researchers from across the campus and proposed the establishment of SaVI. Now finally up and running, the initiative brings together scholars from the Institute of Criminology, the Gender, Health and Justice Research Unit, the Law, Race and Gender Research Unit, the Department of Psychology, the School of Public Health and Family Medicine, the Department of Social Anthropology, the Department of

Social Development, the Centre for Social Science Research (CSSR), and the Department of Surgery, among others.

SaVI is funded by the Vice-Chancellor's Strategic Fund, which has earmarked R500 000 for its start-up research projects.

Getting SaVI off the ground and hosting the launch colloquium took some doing, noted deputy vice-chancellor for transformation and social responsiveness, Professor Crain Soudien, at the opening of the event.

"I think it's because it's been so difficult pulling together people who come out of such disparate corners of the same patch," said Soudien.

And as illustrated at the colloquium, where UCT academics, researchers and students working on issues of violence were able to throw their particular work into the pot, the corners were sometimes far flung.

So, for example, Professor Jeremy Seekings of the Social Surveys Unit in the CSSR spoke of the yardsticks by which the culture of violence in South Africa can possibly be measured. In turn, Dr Marion Walton

of the Centre for Film and Media Studies spoke on the visual representation of xenophobic violence in the media. And Dr Britta Dedekind of the Department of Surgery outlined statistics of women who, as victims of violence, are directed to the Trauma Centre at Groote Schuur Hospital.

Other speakers covered racial and national identity, the association between substance abuse and violence, youth resilience, health promotion and police narratives, among other topics.

With so much ground to cover, greater research integration, or "trans-disciplinarity", is called for, said Ward, who is currently chairing SaVI.

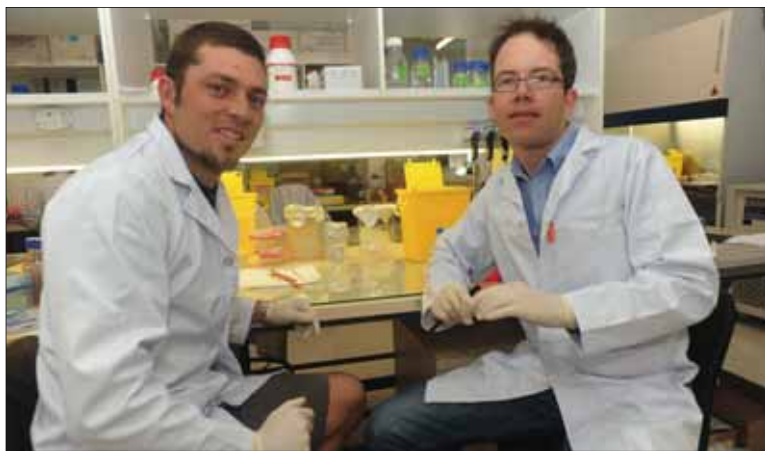
"The sense that we have is that violence, just like any other social problem of the 21st century, cannot be addressed within the boundaries of a single discipline."

Morgan.Morris@uct.ac.za

All-embracing: Dr Catherine Ward spoke of the need to bring many disciplines under the umbrella of the Safety and Violence Initiative.



Prestigious awards for young TB researchers



Prevent and cure: Drs Digby Warner (right) and Thomas Scriba of the IIDMM have won plum international awards for their contributions to TB research.

Drs Digby Warner and Thomas Scriba of the Institute of Infectious Disease and Molecular Medicine (IIDMM) have been named winner and first runner-up, respectively of the prestigious BioVision-Lilly Award in conjunction with TWAS. The award recognises young researchers from developing countries for outstanding scientific achievements in tuberculosis-related research.

The winners were announced at a special ceremony at the 7th Biovision World Life Sciences Forum, in Lyon, France, hosted by TWAS, aka the Academy of Sciences for the Developing World.

Warner was honoured for his work on mycobacterial metabolism, which promises to have a major impact on understanding the development of drug resistance in *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* – the bacterium that causes TB. In turn, Scriba was singled out for his research on TB vaccines and the body's immune response to the TB organism.

Different sides, same coin.

"In some ways, we have approached the same problem from different angles, but there are opportunities to work together on this

and collaboration is definitely on the cards," said Warner.

Both agree that the award reflects well on the research done at the IIDMM. However, they're quick to add that the heart behind their research eclipses the glimmer of awards.

Finding an African solution to an African problem, that is.

"It's important to recognise that there is really good science being done in developing countries. Local scientists should be consulted in terms of potential interventions for developing world diseases," Warner added. ■

IPD joins forces with Namibia

In June last year, the Institutional Planning Department (IPD) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the University of Namibia (UNAM), becoming the first support and administration department at UCT to enter into such an agreement with another university.

While MoUs have a reputation for often leading nowhere, the IPD and UNAM have been taking theirs very seriously. Particularly around the topic of quality assurance (QA), which Namibia is beginning to embrace in its higher education sector, as are a number of other countries in the Southern African Development Community (SADC).

But South African universities are ahead of the curve, having gone through a QA process in recent years. So when representatives from the two institutions met at an international QA conference in Johannesburg in 2009, UNAM leapt at the opportunity to strike up relations with UCT. (Other SADC universities showed a similar interest.)

"South Africa is one of the African countries that have QA systems in place," says Lindi Tlou, quality-assurance manager at IPD.



African connection: (From left) Dr Sefiso Nyathi, director of the Centre for Quality Assurance Management at UNAM; IPD's Judy Favish; Prof Osmund Mwandemele, UNAM pro-vice chancellor for academic affairs and research; and the IPD's Lindi Tlou at a workshop in Namibia.

UCT also has plenty of experience in the matter, following its audit by the Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC) in 2005, and then drawing up its own Quality Improvement Plan, aka UNIQUIP, in 2006.

It's know-how from those exercises that IPD has been sharing with UNAM over the past months. UNAM delegates visited UCT a few times, and, in the latest exchange, the IPD ran a capacity-building workshop in Namibia (about to launch a national QA campaign) about how UCT prepared for an institutional audit, pulled its UNIQUIP report

together, and conducts its departmental reviews.

The meeting was attended by senior university management and heads of departments, among many others.

"That workshop in Namibia was opened by their deputy minister of education, so they took it incredibly seriously," reports Judy Favish, IPD director.

The MoU, adds Favish, fits in well with UCT's Afropolitan ambitions and allows the university to broaden its knowledge of universities in other parts of Africa. ■

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Fishy causes of rising occupational asthma and allergies

The rise of occupational asthma, particularly in the fisheries industries, took centre stage at Professor Mohamed Fareed Jeebhay's inaugural lecture, *From Farm to Fork – A Fishy Story of Allergy and Asthma*, to a packed theatre on 20 April.

Over the past decade, Jeebhay, who is based in the Centre for Occupational and Environmental Health Research (COEHR) in the School of Public Health & Family Medicine, has focused his research on the relationship between airborne food allergens and allergy and asthma. He paid special attention to identifying the occupational risk factors for disease, in order to develop strategies for prevention.

While the vast majority of published reports focus on allergic symptoms following ingestion or skin contact, it's the lesser spotted route – the inhalation of aerosols – that Jeebhay addressed in his presentation.

"Aside from the commonly encountered oral route in domestic settings, seafood also finds its way into the human body through inhalation in domestic, recreational and work settings," he said.

In both shellfish and fish factories, airborne wet and dry particles are produced during processes like boiling, bagging, degutting and mincing. And it's these particles, containing aerosolised allergens, that are inhaled by workers and that, much like

household allergens that feed off a genetic predisposition, cause allergy and inflammation of the bronchial tract, resulting in rhinitis and asthma.

Enter occupational asthma.

The first case report of seafood allergy was reported in 1937 by the Norwegian bacteriologist Arent de Besche, who wrote of a fisherman who developed allergic symptoms and asthma when handling codfish. This report sparked Jeebhay's interest in occupational asthma.

Not surprisingly, allergies went hand in hand with the growth of the seafood industry.

"The increased demand and consumption for seafood and its by-products has been associated with a concomitant rise in fishing and aquaculture activities. Aside from the potential depletion of marine stocks if not managed in a sustainable manner, recent studies suggest more frequent reporting of allergic health problems among consumers as well as processors of seafood."

A study of some 600 workers by Jeebhay and his co-investigators along the west coast of St Helena Bay, the epicentre of fish harvesting and processing in South Africa, showed that symptoms of work-related asthma may develop either after only a few months or after several years of commencing work.

Yet, numerous studies show that a large

proportion of occupational allergy and asthma remains under-detected and poorly managed, despite the knowledge that work-related factors are responsible for between 15 to 30% of adult asthma.

Jeebhay's research not only accounts for the cause and prevalence of the disease, but looks to identification, prevention and cure. Molecular studies identified several forms of seafood proteins, some known as parvalbumin, found in indigenous pilchard species that have been linked to seafood allergy. Jeebhay and his group have subsequently developed a model of fish allergy that could be used to test different recombinants of allergens, a model that can be used in immunotherapy, which is currently not available for those who suffer from seafood allergies.

In addition to treating asthma and rhinitis symptoms, Jeebhay's research calls for a change in food processing practice, better exposure control, mandatory product labelling, and regular medical surveillance of workers to reduce the incidence of allergic reactions to inhaled seafood allergens.

"Exposure control measures include eliminating exposure or worker relocation," he said. "This can be done by identifying high risk activities for aerosol exposure such as fishmeal bagging and gutting machines, and the introduction of improved local exhaust ventilation systems." ■



It's in the air: Prof Mohamed Fareed Jeebhay presented his research on occupational asthma in the fishing industry at his inaugural lecture on 20 April.

news briefs • news briefs • news briefs • news briefs • news briefs • news briefs

Farewell to Beall

"UCT is a robust organisation and I will miss it – in all its idiosyncrasies: the intellectual life, the eloquence of senators making their case, the inaugural lectures, the open lectures and the panoply of exposure to an extraordinarily vibrant intellectual life," said deputy vice-chancellor Professor Jo Beall at the university's farewell to her in April.

Beall has returned to the UK to take up a position as director: education & society of the British Council, the country's international organisation for educational opportunities and cultural relations.

Clearly, one of the highlights of her two-year stint as DVC at the university was the launch of the popular Global Citizenship: Leading for Social Justice programme for students, launched last year in conjunction with the Centre for Higher Education Development. The programme is designed to get students thinking critically about confronting the challenges of the contemporary world and community participation.

"I'll miss the students and their extraordinary energy and curiosity."

Beall thanked the team at the African Centre for Cities, which she said had been her "intellectual home" at UCT.

UCT had also been a "strange and difficult" place at times, she said, citing the twin demands posed by Groupwise and bandwidth, and the ongoing struggle between the 'yellows' and the 'red' (the designated PASS and academic parking bays) on campus.

"There's always speculation when anyone leaves," Beall said, "but for me there have been many pull factors



Farewell: Prof Jo Beall (left) and Prof Nan Yeld, Dean of the Centre for Higher Education Development, who will be acting DVC following Beall's return to the UK.

to the UK – and no push factors."

In his tribute to Beall, vice-chancellor Dr Max Price lauded her for the role she had played in confirming UCT's position as an Afropolitan university, the MoUs signed with international partners, and her role in enhancing UCT's international research profile by promoting academic exchanges and partnerships worldwide. He cited particularly links with the London School of Economics and the Worldwide University Network. Beall was also instrumental in the launch of the Confucius Institute at UCT and played a role in internationalisation, through the International Academic Programmes Office (IAPO).

Director of IAPO, Dr Loveness Kaunda, said: "Jo tackled her role with infectious energy and enthusiasm, acknowledging internationalisation as a cross-cutting goal impacting on UCT's other strategic goals." ■

Mellon VP drops in at UCT

Dr Mariët Westermann, vice-president of the Andrew W Mellon Foundation, long-running supporters of UCT, visited the university in March. Over her six-day call – packed wall-to-wall with meetings – Westermann met with university executives and a procession of academic and PASS heads to familiarise herself with life at UCT. Stops on her visit included those offices responsible for managing and running Mellon-funded academic development and scholarship programmes. A fine-arts historian, Westermann also enjoyed guided tours of the National Museum and the National Gallery, and spent some



time viewing the South African College of Music's Kirby Collection of indigenous instruments with (in picture, from left) curator Michael Nixon; Dr Stuart Saunders, the former UCT vice-chancellor who is now a senior advisor to the Mellon Foundation; and college director, Dr Morné Bezuidenhout. ■

Inspire teachers to inspire learners, says scholar

Education should get the right people to be teachers, develop them into effective instructors, and the system should be able to deliver the best instruction for every child, says Professor Sir John Holman of York University in the UK.

Delivering a lecture, *Teachers: The key to success in science and maths?* at UCT on 13 April, Holman said that the quality of education depends ultimately on the quality of teachers.

"Excellent teachers have excellent subject knowledge and their teaching inspires children."

The event, which was attended by scholars and teachers, was organised by the Schools Development Unit and formed part of their 10th anniversary celebrations this year.

Holman, who said his aim was



to close the gap between the best and the worst performing learners, noted that the world is becoming increasingly high-tech, and can't get enough science, technology, engineering and maths professionals.

Such professionals are highly rated, and learners should be enticed, as early as primary school, to consider them as possible career paths. ■



Genome luminaries visit UCT

A recent series of seminars, workshops and conferences drew the world's who's who of human genome studies to Cape Town. Among these were Sir Walter Bodmer and Professor Sydney Brenner, two of the most respected scientists in the field. Bodmer, a geneticist involved in the planning of the Human Genome Project, was appointed in 2005 to lead the People of the British Isles project, which sets out to examine the genetic structure of the population of the UK. Brenner is the South African biologist who won the 2002 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine for his work on *Caenorhabditis elegans*, a 1mm-long soil roundworm that he established as a convenient model organism for studying animal development. Both visitors were guests of the *Joint Conference of the African and Southern African Societies of Human Genetics*, hosted by UCT's Division of Human Genetics in Cape Town. Between meetings, the two also visited UCT as guests of Professor Raj Ramesar, chairperson of the conference organising committee. This allowed them to meet the vice-chancellor, Dr Max Price, among others. In picture above are (from left) Bodmer, Brenner, deputy vice-chancellor Professor Danie Visser, Price and Ramesar. ■

New health financing and systems consortium

The first annual management planning meeting of a new health financing and systems consortium, the Resilient and Responsive Health Systems (RESYST) consortium, funded by the UK's Department for International Development (DfID), was held in Cape Town in April.

RESYST will undertake health policy and systems research, with a focus on financing, health workers and governance, in a set of African and Asian countries, including South Africa, India, Kenya, Nigeria, Thailand, Tanzania and Vietnam.

"The new consortium is an exciting opportunity to interact with colleagues from various parts of the world in research areas such as how progressive financing systems can be developed and how health system leadership capabilities can be strengthened," explained Professor Lucy Gilson, consortium co-research director. (Gilson is a joint appointment between UCT's School of Public Health & Family Medicine and the London School of Hygiene and

Tropical Medicine [LSHTM]).

"Through co-ordinating these and other activities, the consortium will provide the required support and resources needed to sustain existing, and develop new, multi-country collaborations in health financing and systems research," Gilson said.

In addition to conducting research, the consortium will strengthen efforts to support research uptake to enable policy and management changes that promote health, health equity and poverty reduction and support a range of capacity development activities.

For South Africa, UCT's Health Economics Unit will lead work around key research questions related to financing (Professor Di McIntyre) and governance (led by Gilson). Associate Professor Sue Cleary will also be a member of the consortium's management group.

DfID awarded £6 million (over R65 million) to RESYST, and overall activities will be co-ordinated by the LSHTM until 2016. ■



Healthy outlook: At the recent meeting of RESYST, a new international consortium looking at health management and financing issues, were (from left) Dr Sassy Molyneux (Kemri Wellcome Trust Research Programme, Kenya), Dr Duane Blaauw (Centre for Health Policy, University of Witwatersrand), Dr Kara Hanson (Health Economics and Systems Analysis Group and the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine), Dr Jane Chuma (Kemri Wellcome Trust Research Programme, Kenya), Dr Viroj Tangcharoensathien (International Health Policy Programme, Thailand), Prof Lucy Gilson (School of Public Health & Family Medicine, University of Cape Town), Assoc Prof Susan Cleary (Health Economics Unit, University of Cape Town), Dr Walaiporn Patcharanarumol (International Health Policy Programme, Thailand), Dr Weerasak Phuthasi (International Health Policy Programme, Thailand), and Dr Andrea Egan (London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine).

Responsible governance on the table



UCT's Graduate School of Business (GSB) recently hosted the annual meeting of the Association of African Business Schools (AABS), and the first-ever AABS conference.

The theme for the gathering was responsible management, and the

Responsible leadership: At the AABS conference and annual meeting were Dr Marcellina Chijoriga, dean of the University of Dar es Salaam Business School; Jonathan Cook, AABS chairperson; Dr Enase Okonedo, dean of Lagos Business School in Nigeria; and Prof Walter Baets, director of the UCT GSB.

event attracted deans and directors from more than 30 business schools from 12 African countries.

The one-day conference addressed the principles of the United Nations' Compact on Responsible Management Education. In turn, the annual meeting reviewed quality in management education from an African perspective.

"We are signalling that good governance, ethical behaviour and environmental responsibility are essential components in what we teach," said AABS chairman, Jonathan Cook, on the AABS choos-

ing responsible management as the topic of this year's conference. "We need to produce managers who are both highly competent and deeply responsible."

Cook, director of the Gordon Institute of Business Science at the University of Pretoria, described the conference as "an opportunity to bridge theory and practice by bringing together both academics from among our members and practitioners whose organisations we serve".

In addition to the Africa-based delegates, leading authorities from Europe also spoke at the conference. ■

Catastrophe theories hold no water – scholar

The end of the world – Earth as we know it – is not nigh. Not for the next billion years, anyway.

So said Dame Jocelyn Bell Burnell, who delivered a public lecture, *Will the World End in 2012?* The lecture was hosted by UCT's Astrophysics, Cosmology and Gravity Centre and was part of the second Middle East-Africa International Astronomical Union regional meeting that took place in Cape Town from 10 to 15 April.

Bell Burnell is a visiting professor at Oxford University and a Fellow of Mansfield College. During her postgraduate research at Cambridge University, she, together with her supervisor, Anthony Hewish, discovered radio pulsars.

Misinterpretations of the ancient Mayan calendar ending in 2012 has spurred scores of opportunistic, pseudo-science citing that this would signal the end of world

(a simple Google search for end of the world 2012 renders some 56 million results). The movie *2012* didn't help much, either.

Nothing sells like the promise of a pending apocalypse, right?

But what do experts say?

There is sound scientific proof that the astronomical phenomena and conspiracy theories that are cited as potential causes (solar storms, planets or asteroids crashing into earth, planetary alignments, or Earth being swallowed by a black hole) are unfounded, said Bell Burnell.

"The real threat is that people don't know enough science to realise that they're being misled."

But the end will come. In about one billion years the sun will become so hot that it will probably boil all the oceans. And in 4.5 billion years the sun will swell to about 100 times its size. ■



*Apocalypse now? Dame Jocelyn Bell Burnell, delivered a public lecture, *Will the World End in 2012?*, in April.*

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Dr Ari Sitas

Department of Sociology,
University of Cape Town

Date: Tuesday, 10 May 2011 • Time: 17H30 to 19H00

Venue: Centre for the Book, 62 Queen Victoria Street, Gardens, Cape Town

RSVP: Lavenia Benjamin • Email: lavenia@ccr.uct.ac.za

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German expertise for music college

German musicologist Associate Professor Rebekka Sandmeier has taken the reins from Professor Peter Klatzow, who retired from the South African College of Music (SACM) last year after 37 years.

Sandmeier's field of expertise is in musicology – or rather the scholarly study of music. At the SACM she will be teaching Western classical music history, focusing on 19th and 20th century works.

"I always thought I'd like to work abroad," she says. "I saw an advert for this position in a German newspaper, and thought it the perfect opportunity. South Africa is wonderful."

"UCT has been so accommodating and helpful; especially the Research Office. Here, there are institutional offices where I can get help immediately."

Sandmeier studied music and

modern English literature at Trinity College Dublin, Ireland. She completed her PhD in musicology there, too. From 1999 to 2008 she worked as a lecturer in musicology at the University of Münster, Germany, where she was awarded the Habilitation, the highest academic qualification their scholars can achieve. In 2009 and 2010 she was deputy professor of musicology at the universities of Potsdam and Münster, both in Germany.

She has published widely on English music, opera and oratorio, as well as on the music of the 15th, 19th and early 20th centuries. Her current research interest centres on oratorio in Germany in the 19th century, specifically the reception of Händel's oratorios and on oratorios about the apocalypse.

In her spare time she plays violin (baroque, modern) in various ensembles. ■



Musician abroad: Assoc Prof Rebekka Sandmeier has joined the South African College of Music from Germany.

Humanities unveils state-of-the-art postgrad commons



In style: Humanities students enjoy the new Postgraduate Commons facilities, now available in the Graduate School for Humanities.

The Faculty of Humanities has unveiled its hi-tech postgraduate computer lab, known as the Postgraduate Commons. Housed in the Graduate School of Humanities, this purpose-built facility meets the needs of the faculty's senior students.

The brainchild of a team headed by humanities IT manager, Puleng Makhoalibe, the project was conceived in October last year. The project team had noted that the faculty's existing facility was not on par with similar facilities in other faculties. Neither did it meet the needs of the postgrads.

"Our postgrad students were not making optimal use of the designated space," said Makhoalibe.

Working with the Humanities Postgraduate Student Committee, the

project team conducted a poll among postgraduate students. What emerged was a need for updated equipment, better connectivity (Wi-Fi connectivity particularly for laptop users), and a space that offered seminar rooms, an area for relaxation - and a tea room.

Building commenced in November 2010 and the project was completed in February 2011. The space is now unrecognisable. New features also include modern carousels with big-screen PC monitors and private work spaces.

A novel feature of the laboratory is a 'stop and go' area for quick, 15-minute internet and email access. The new computer lab also incorporates a print room offering printing, photocopying and scanning facilities, private lockers and break-away rooms

that can be reserved online. There is also a dedicated reception area for the resident tutors who are on-hand to assist students each day between 08h00 and 20h00.

"This has been an incredibly exciting and challenging project for us," added Makhoalibe. "We received enormous support from the humanities executive as well as from Associate Professor Colin Tredoux of the Department of Psychology. This enabled us to create a space that is visually appealing, contemporary and conducive to creativity."

For more information on the new postgraduate lab, visit the Humanities Central Technology Unit website at www.ctu.uct.ac.za/index.php/article/labs/post-graduate-commons ■

Fun all the way in maths competition

Waiting to register for the UCT annual mathematics competition, it was clear one mother and daughter pair looked anxious.

The Grade 8 learner wasn't concerned that she was about to take part (for the first time) in the biggest maths gathering in the Western Cape, attracting over 6 000 learners from 130 schools, but how she would get home to Gugulethu after the competition, which was scheduled to end at 21h00. The school bus would take them only as far as her school in Athlone.

"God will make a plan," said the mother. "I could not disappoint my daughter because she was looking forward to this event."

Their dilemma is testimony to the lengths some learners are willing to go to be part of the legendary 35-year-old competition.

"The competition not only helps learners improve their maths skills and attitudes towards the subject, but it also makes them think a bit further," said teacher Jomari Naude of Drostyd High Technical School in Worcester, which sent 75 learners to the event.

Like many others, Grade 11 learner Nabeela van der Schyff of Queen's Park High School in Woodstock said that the competition had piqued her interest in studying at UCT.

"I would love to be part of the UCT family after matriculating," she said.

Competition director, Emeritus Professor John Webb of the Department of Mathematics and Applied Mathematics, said: "We show learners that maths can be interesting. That is the point." ■



In contest: Amina Khalfan and Abigail Moleka, both Grade 9 learners from Queen's Park High School, were among the more than 6 000 learners who participated in this year's UCT Mathematics Competition.

Open Day a draw card to campus

Thousands of high school learners, some in the company of their parents, tasted university life when UCT hosted its annual Open Day in April.

Exhibits were held in various venues on upper campus and University Avenue was alive with the visitors moving to the various exhibits and talks.

The learners were exposed to a wide range of campus life, and had the opportunity to meet staff from all academic programmes and student services, as well as senior students who provided valuable insights into what it takes to pursue certain academic niches. The learners also toured the libraries and residences.

Another popular destination was



Enticing: Throngs of high school learners visited upper campus for the annual UCT Open Day.

the Student Learning Centre in the Steve Biko Building, where students were encouraged to submit online applications, getting in early. ■

Peaceful warriors root their *chi* at camp

Bounded by the Kogelberg Mountains and the Atlantic Ocean, the Disakloof Youth Camp in Betty's Bay was the perfect getaway venue for the 40 members who attended the UCT Tai Chi and Aikido camp in April.

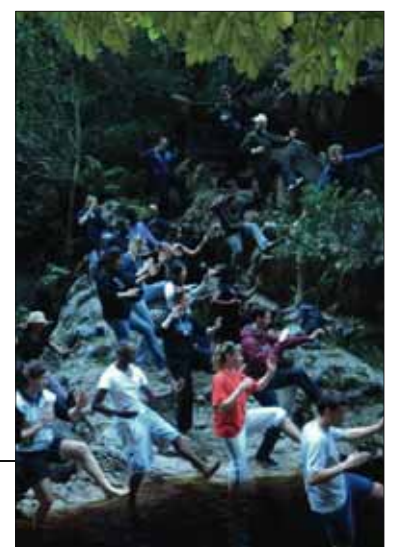
The programme began at dawn on Saturday 16 April with basic stretching, then a practice in the fields, followed by meditation and a cross-practice with the Aikido club, which coach Peter Williamson referred to as "cross-pollination".

Sunday had the added feature of a nature hike and members conquered their fears and performed movements in water, on the rocks, and on logs. "We learnt more about sinking,

becoming humble, and, as the coach would say, 'letting go of bias, not fighting, nor giving in'," said Aditi Hunma of UCT Tai Chi.

Looking back, one member commented: "Tai chi has been an interesting journey thus far, filled with uncoordinated flailing, pain in muscles I didn't know I had, and stretching into shapes I didn't know I could make! I've enjoyed it immensely." ■

Twist and shout: Members of the UCT Tai Chi and Aikido clubs joined forces at a weekend camp in Betty's Bay.



EVENTS

INAUGURAL LECTURES

Speaker: Professor Willem Hanekom, Department of Medicine, Faculty of Health Sciences Topic: Vaccines to prevent TB. When: Wednesday, 04 May 2011 at 17h30. Where: Student Learning Centre, Lecture Theatre, Anatomy Building, Faculty of Health Sciences, University of Cape Town. RSVP: michelle.moses@uct.ac.za for seating and catering purposes by 04 May 2011. Guests to be seated by 17h15

GSB Research Seminar Title: "The Innovator's DNA: Mastering the Five Skills of Disruptive Innovators." Speaker: Prof Hal Gregersen. Date: Mon 9 May, 13:00 – 14:00. Venue: Boardroom 1. Title: "The New Growth Path: Implications for SA's Spatial Economy." Speaker: Prof Ivan Turok. Date: Wed 11 May, 13:00 – 14:00. Venue: Syndicate Rm 1, GSB, Breakwater Campus, Portwood Road, Green Point. RSVP: tamlyn.mawa@gsb.uct.ac.za

CONFERENCES

Jubilee Congress of the Commission on Legal Pluralism Theme: Living Realities of Legal Pluralism. Date: 8-10 September 2011. Venue: Kramer Building, Middle Campus, UCT. Contact: Deidre Raubenheimer, Tel: 021 4066167, Email: deidre.raubenheimer@uct.ac.za, Website: www.commission-on-legal-pluralism.com

African Conference on Software Engineering and Applied Computing Date: 19-23 September 2011. Venue: Ritz Hotel, Cape Town. Contact: Deidre Raubenheimer, Tel: 021 4066167, Email: deidre.raubenheimer@uct.ac.za, Website: www.acseac.org

COURSES:

Energy and Climate Change certificate course 23 - 27 May 2011 presented by the Energy Research Centre. For further information please see website www.cpd.uct.ac.za or contact Heidi Tait 021 6505793 or email ebe-cpd@uct.ac.za

Business Writing for Professionals in Industry certificate course 6 - 8 June 2011 presented by A/Prof Jane English. For further information please see website www.cpd.uct.ac.za or contact Heidi Tait 021 6505793 or email ebe-cpd@uct.ac.za

Certificate courses offered by CPD programme in EBE Faculty: Research Methodologies: 2 - 6 May 2011 presented by Dr Stephen Townsend Sustainable Urban Systems: 2 - 6 May 2011 presented by Department of Civil Engineering Rail Planning and Operations Management: 9 - 13 May presented by the Centre for Transport Studies. Antenna Theory with Applications in Radar and Electronic Defence: 15 - 20 May presented by Prof Mike Inggs. Introduction to Electronic Defence: 6 - 10 June 2011 presented by Prof Mike Inggs. Transport Demand Analysis and Project Assessment: 20 - 24 June 2011 presented by the Centre for Transport Studies. For further information on these courses please see website www.cpd.uct.ac.za or contact Heidi Tait 021 6505793 or email ebe-cpd@uct.ac.za

VACANT POSTS

EXECUTIVE AND ACADEMIC POSTS:

Professor: Education, School of Education, Faculty of Humanities, Closing date: 6 May 2011

Chair: Comparative Law in Africa, Faculty of Law, Closing date: 6 May 2011

Lecturer, Department of Molecular & Cell Biology, Faculty of Science, Closing date: 6 May 2011

Senior Lecturer, Division of Clinical Pharmacology, Department of Medicine, Faculty of Health Sciences, Closing date: 6 May 2011

Senior Lecturer: Anatomy, Department of Human Biology, Faculty of Health Sciences, Closing date: 13 May 2011

Lecturer/Senior Lecturer: African Linguistics, Department of English Language & Literatures, Faculty of Humanities, Closing date: 16 May 2011

Professor/Associate Professor and Head of the Division of Chemical Pathology, Department of Clinical Laboratory Sciences, Faculty of Health Sciences, Closing date: 20 May 2011

Lecturer/Senior Lecturer, Higher & Adult Education Studies and Development Unit (HAESDU), Centre for Higher Education Development (CHED), Closing date: 20 May 2011

Lecturer/Senior Lecturer: Medical Statistics, Department of Medicine, Faculty of Health Sciences, Closing date: 27 May

RESEARCH, PROFESSIONAL, ADMINISTRATIVE AND SUPPORT POSTS (PASS)

Senior Scientific Officer, Department of Molecular & Cell Biology, Faculty of Science, Closing date: 3 May 2011

Team Leader: Systems Development, Systems Division, ICTS, Closing date: 3 May 2011

Information Services Librarian, UCT Libraries, Closing date: 4 May 2011

Statistical Consultant, Department of Statistical Sciences, Faculty of Science, Closing date: 4 May 2011

Site Co-ordinator: Vredenburg, Primary Health Care Directorate, Faculty of Health Sciences, Closing date: 5 May 2011

Quality Assurance Manager, Institutional Planning, Closing date: 6 May 2011

Administrative Assistant, Department of Psychiatry & Mental Health, Faculty of Health Sciences, Closing date: 6 May 2011

Research Officer/Assistant Research Officer, Department of Chemical Engineering, Faculty of Engineering & The Built Environment, Closing date: 12 May 2011

Research Officer (Project Manager), PRIME, Department of Psychiatry & Mental Health, Faculty of Health Sciences, Closing date: 13 May 2011

Communications Co-ordinator, PRIME, Department of Psychiatry & Mental Health, Faculty of Health Sciences, Closing date: 13 May 2011

POSTS FOR UCT STAFF ONLY:

Senior Helpdesk Consultant, ICTS, Closing date: 3 May 2011

Assistant Warden: Tugwell Residence, Department of Student Affairs, Closing date: 6 May 2011

Assistant Warden: Rochester Residence, Department of Student Affairs, Closing date: 6 May 2011

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Fish Hoek: Fully furnished house for long-term rent, 3 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, swimming pool, safe off-street parking. Contact Natasha at 0785077267 or holiday@capecoastal.com

Rosebank: Lovely three bedroom renovated flat to let in Rosebank. Superb View. Communal garden. Secure parking. Contact Jarrod on 0828801058 or Nancy on 0826799546. Alternatively email jball@golder.co.za or kathryn.e.ball@gmail.com

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CD: Artist: Heather Mac Title : " WITHIN " Price : R130 brand new(just released) contact: ext: 4739 or 0716775061

Speakers: Logitech Z3 speakers with sub-woofer in excellent condition for sale for R 380. Interested? Contact: ammorani@gmail.com

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Falling on hard times: UCT's Gina Sole (in blue) looks to pick up a loose ball as Vics' Kara Scheepers goes to ground.

Hockey women off to a bright start

Perhaps it wasn't the most polished performance, but the UCT women's first team got their season off on the right foot, beating Victorians 3-1 in their Western Province Hockey Union (WPHU) Grand Challenge match in Stellenbosch on Saturday, 16 April.

It was jittery stuff for both sides, but it was UCT – who had a bye in the opening clashes the weekend before – who took advantage of their opportunities, leading 2-0 at half time. Vics (the Stellenbosch second team) pulled one back, but UCT added a third goal to restore their two-goal advantage.

The win encouraged UCT coach, Matthew McConkey, who had to field a very young team on the day.

Out with injuries were two of his key players, Amy Freakes and Robyn Tully, both national junior players.

McConkey's also delighted with the five or six young players he's recruited for his squad this year. Most of them, he reports, have represented their home provinces.

"It's quite nice, for once, to get good youngsters in."

That bodes well for the team's plans to finish in the top four of the Grand Challenge, after having to settle for eighth spot in 2010.

Similarly, the men, 2010 Grand Challenge champions, enjoyed a winning start to their season. Playing on the same field in Stellenbosch later that evening, UCT beat Victorians by 4-2. ■

Pedal for Peddie rides again

On 21 April, four able if not Absa Cape Epic-fit health practitioners took to the saddle to trek some 1 000km across South Africa in a fundraising initiative known as *Bike for a Bakkie, Pedal for a Pickup* – the second instalment of the Pedal for Peddie project that raises funds for rural health care in the Peddie area of the Eastern Cape.

UCT's Dr Paul Roux and Professor Steve Reid, with Stellenbosch University's Professor Hoffie Conradie and occupational therapist Debbie Nash, have set off in a bid to raise money for a minibus to transport patients between clinics and hospitals in Peddie. There is just one doctor servicing 11 rural health clinics in the area presently, many of these accessible only by the roughest of roads.

"The service burden in rural hospitals is enormously high," says Reid. "There has to be support by local community-based organisations and NGOs if you want to meet the needs."

Last year, Pedal for Peddie raised some R150 000 for programmes that support orphans and vulnerable children in the area, among others.

The beneficiary of the cycling epic is the Keiskamma Trust, a non-profit organisation based in Hamburg, Eastern Cape, that offers health services to the local communities. From the Cape Town side, the cycle tour is being championed by



Profitable pedalling: UCT's Dr Paul Roux (right) and Professor Steve Reid have set off to bike some 1 000km to raise money for rural health care in the Eastern Cape.

the Kidzpositive Family Fund, an NGO – co-founded by Roux – that is dedicated to improving the lives of children living with HIV in Southern Africa.

The cyclists set out from Hamburg in the Eastern Cape, traversing a route through the rural back roads of the Eastern and Western Cape, before arriving at Groote Schuur Hospital in Cape Town on 2 May.

"This is us doing our bit," adds Reid. "We love cycling, and it's for such a good cause." ■

South African aces Two Oceans

Port Elizabeth athlete George Ntshiliza had South Africans in patriotic spirits when he won the 56km Old Mutual Two Oceans Ultra Marathon – and the R250 000 winner's purse – on Saturday, 23 April.

Ntshiliza finished the race – dominated by international runners in recent years – on the UCT sports fields in a time of 3:08:31, a mere 18 seconds ahead of Motlhoko Nkhabutlane of Lesotho, whom he'd overtaken over the last kilometre. More good news was that four South Africans finished in the top 10, making amends for the solitary gold medal won in 2010.

As expected, Russian twins Olesya and Elena Nurgalieva ran the show in the women's race, Olesya winning in 3:33:58, just over four minutes ahead of her sister. Olesya has won three of the last four Two Oceans Ultras, losing to her sibling only in 2009.

This year, 13 runners in UCT colours completed the ultra. Will Robinson was the first in, clocking 3:44:04. Dr Andrzej 'AO' Okreglicki of the Division of Cardiology ran his 10th consecutive Two Oceans Ultra. Jennifer Kithinji, the only UCT



Green mile: George Ntshiliza breaks the tape on the UCT sports fields to win the Two Oceans Ultra Marathon. (Photo courtesy of Old Mutual Two Oceans.)

woman to do the ultra, completed her race in a respectable 5:54:28.

In the half marathon, which boasted 11 124 finishers (by cut-off) this year, the UCT Athletics Club finished second in the women's team event. The UCT women, former winners, were pipped by the professional team

from the Nedbank Central Gauteng Running Club, which included defending champion Rene Kalmer.

The UCT men's team came third in the half-marathon category. Nelson Bass, the first UCT runner, was 19th overall. The race was also Bass' 10th half. ■

Epic victory for father and son

Professor Marc Mendelson, head of the Division of Infectious Diseases & HIV Medicine, and his son, Ben, were among the 496 teams that finished this year's Absa Cape Epic.

The duo rode in KidzPositive colours to raise awareness of the NGO that looks after the interests of HIV-infected children and adolescents, with a number of projects based at UCT.

Ben (18) is a first-year student at UCT. It was Mendelson's second Epic (he rode his first in 2006) and Ben's first.

"It's the hardest mountain bike race in the world," Mendelson commented afterwards. "However, more importantly, it shows you some of the most beautiful perspectives of the Western Cape that few get to see. You meet the most amazing people sharing adversity and triumph, and you go through more emotions in one day than you can imagine possible."

Father and son have ridden one-day races together before, but had never competed in a stage race together. The duo came 481st in 57 hours 19 minutes. Of the 600 teams that started, 496 finished.

"The low point and high point was undoubtedly Stage 3, the hardest stage of all, although the organisers didn't realise it until the professionals came in and told them how tough it was," Mendelson recalled. "They immediately extended the cut-off time to 11 hours (from 10). At about 50km, not knowing about the extended cut-off, we entered a nature reserve that was sand and rocks. Realising that we still had over 70km to ride and knowing the profile of the course, we knew



Tough ride: Prof Marc Mendelson and his son, Ben, finish the Absa Cape Epic. Mendelson rode the same bike he did in the 2006 Epic, a full suspension Santa Cruz Blur LT. Ben rode a Bianchi Pulse hardtail. (Picture courtesy of Sportograph.)

that we had little chance of making the cut."

But the duo crossed the line, with two minutes to spare, having been in the saddle for 10 hours and 58 mins.

"That was the high point emotionally. Not even crossing the line at Lourensford compared. After that we got stronger and mercifully, the course became more rideable, even though we still had both the longest stage, and the stage with the most climbing to come. The other highlights were the inspirational feats of some of the teams, like one of the riders from the Knight Riders team, who completed the last 15km of Stage 1 without a tyre, on his rim alone, and countless other teams who underwent extreme physical and technical adversity and still finished.

"The never-give-up ethos of the Epic shines through in every team that

finishes, even though you may think you are finished more times than you like to remember! And it was a great lesson for an 18 year-old and one couldn't wish for greater role models than those who were around us."

The dynamics of father and son were "interesting".

"Ben is a much stronger and more accomplished rider, but had to ride at my speed (riders in a team must be within two minutes of each other at all times). This was both frustrating for him at times, but a good thing as he didn't burn out early, which can happen when the 'testosterone starts to fly'. We worked well as a team, although he gave the old man hell at the water points! It was a tremendous experience riding together and one that we will always cherish."

Will there be a next time? "Yes, hopefully in 2012." ■