

## Physics Department Serving Up Spooky Demonstrations Halloween Night

Contributed by Lee Eric Smith  
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Malorie Bohnert, a University of Mississippi junior biology major from Chester, Ill., has a hair-raising experience with a Van der Graff generator as associate professor Marco Cavaglia (left) supervises. The presentation was a sneak peek of the unusual sights visitors can see Friday evening at the Department of Physics and Astronomy's annual Spooky Physics Demonstrations, which features experiments with electricity, magnetism and liquid nitrogen. Parents are encouraged to bring their children to the event, which starts at 7 p.m. in Lewis Hall and is free to the public. UM photo by Lee Eric Smith.

OXFORD, Miss. - It doesn't take a rocket scientist to make ice cream. But if you're making ice cream using super-cold liquid nitrogen, it helps.

For the second consecutive year, the Department of Physics and Astronomy at the University of Mississippi is hosting "Spooky Physics Demonstrations" at Lewis Hall on Halloween night. The event starts at 7 p.m. and is free and open to the public.

"Science and physics can be very difficult, but it can also be very entertaining," said Marco Cavaglia, assistant professor who is organizing the demo. "We're going to do real physics experiments, but we're trying to do them in a funny way, and since it's Halloween, also a spooky way."

Those who come should expect a hair-raising experience. One of the experiments involves a Van der Graff generator, a metal globe that shoots enough electricity through those who touch it to make their hair stand up. Harmlessly, of course. Cavaglia also has other 'nefarious' experiments in mind - some involving a bed of nails, fire and using an electromagnetic field to levitate items.

The night will also include food and fun, featuring a Halloween costume contest for youngsters, and freezing ice cream with liquid nitrogen at minus 300 F.

"If the weather permits, we'll have some telescopes to observe the Moon, Jupiter, double stars and star clusters," Cavaglia said.

More than 200 people came to the demonstration last year. Between word of mouth and the fact that this year's event falls on Halloween night, the physics department is expecting an even greater turnout this year.

"Our department is interested in helping everyone see why we like doing physics and astronomy," said Thomas Marshall, physics chair. "One way to do that is to show some of the things we think are both fun and interesting. A number of different physical phenomenon will be displayed on Friday, and we hope people will take advantage of it and come see some spooky physics."

Cavaglia agreed, saying, "This is physics that you do every day in your life. It's better than being in front of a TV. This is something you can do with your hands."

For more information, including accommodations for people with disabilities, call the Department of Physics and Astronomy at 662-915-5325.