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Back to the Future at SFU

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He may be a blast from the past but his theories and laws were, and continue to be, the groundwork for future inventions and applications in science. Albert Einstein (1879-1955) will be present, if not in body or spirit, at least conceptually in experiments and workshops at an open house hosted by SFU's physics department on Friday, April 22. The open house, 10:30 a.m.

-3 p.m., will include demonstrations, hands-on activities and workshops, such as Electricity and Magnetism, Light and Sound and States of Matter at Burnaby campus. A mini-show, Fabulous Feats of Physics will feature large-scale and "Do not try this at home" physics demonstrations, designed to stimulate young minds. The shows will take place in room B9200 of the Academic Quadrangle (AQ); the workshops will be in rooms P9412, P9414, and P9416 of the Shrum Science Centre (SSC). The open house is part of the World Year of Physics 2005, which is a United Nations endorsed, international celebration of physics. The celebration pays special tribute to Einstein. This year marks the 100th anniversary of his three famous publications on the theories of relativity, quantum physics and Brownian motion. Einstein's theories have revolutionized modern physics. "If it weren't for his initial rejection of quantum mechanics, I might be convinced that he came from the future," says Jeff Sonier. The SFU physicist is coordinating the open house for Tri-city students 5-11 years of age, which will also feature a physics play area for toddlers. "A number of Einstein's revolutionary ideas about space and time were not confirmed until years after his death, and some of them have yet to be tested. The Global Positioning System that uses satellites for landing aircraft, navigating ships, and guiding vehicles, as well as for oil exploration, bridge construction, and geological studies, would not exist if it were not for Einstein's theories of special and general relativity."