CERN Bulletin

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More articles at *http://home.cern/cern-people*

ALUMNI INTERACTIONS LEFT OVERWHELMING TRACKS AT CERN

The First Collisions event left all participants with fond memories of this unique experience and with a lot of enthusiasm for growth of the network

The inaugural CERN alumni event included networking breaks, where visitors could take souvenir photos as if they were in the LHC tunnel. The event brought together 360 alumni from around the Globe. (Image: Christopher Smith/CERN)

A memorable event, there are no better words to describe it: some 360 Alumni out of the 2600 currently signed up for the dedicated platform gathered at CERN on 2 and 3 February to participate in First Collisions, the kick-off event of the CERN Alumni Network. They came from Europe, the US, India and Russia, and many others watched the event remotely via live webcast. Bringing their wealth of history, experiences and ideas, the participants came to reunite with former colleagues, to develop their network, or just to come back to CERN and see how the Laboratory has changed.

The talks delivered by CERN Alumni were the centrepiece of the whole event. The inspiring speakers were able to trigger interesting discussions among the participants during the networking events and, above all, during the exclusive dinner in the CMS experimental hall, which was transformed into an impressive venue for one special evening.

First Collisions was also an opportunity for many families and friends to explore various parts of the Laboratory together. Many of the experimental sites visited by the participants and their families had been opened exclusively for them.

(Continued on page 2)

A WORD FROM FRÉDÉRICK BORDRY

PREPARING FOR THE LAST YEAR OF LHC RUN 2

This year's LHC performance workshop took place in Chamonix from 29 January to 1 February. As always, its purpose was to look back on lessons learned from 2017, and forward to the year ahead. 2018, however, is no ordinary year. It is the last year of Run 2, with much work to be done to prepare for the LHC's second long shutdown (LS2).

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A WORD FROM FRÉDÉRICK BORDRY

PREPARING FOR THE LAST YEAR OF LHC RUN 2

For this reason, just one of the four days was devoted to the traditional backward and forward looks, with three days given to planning LS2 and technical discussions on the LHC Injectors Upgrade (LIU) and High-Luminosity LHC (HL-LHC) projects, in particular how best to optimise the 20 days of machine development allocated to these projects. Since this year is the last chance for machine development before 2021, more days may be added if necessary and if the integrated luminosity goal is reached after the summer. The Chamonix workshop concluded with a meeting of the CERN Machine Advisory Committee (CMAC) on Friday, 2 February, which focused on technical issues in advance of the third LIU and HL-LHC cost and schedule review, which will take place during the last week of March.

One important outcome from Chamonix '18 is that the objective of reaching a total of 150 fb^{-1} of data for Run 2 looks to be achievable. We also started to map out an energy roadmap for the LHC: valuable input for the ongoing European Strategy update. We will run the machine at 13 TeV in 2018, ramping up to 14 TeV after LS2. Dipole bypass diode consolidation through the DISMAC project (Diode Insulation and Superconducting MAgnets Consolidation), accompanied by a training programme at the end of LS2 will make this possible. A study was also launched to evaluate the possibility of pushing the energy higher, to 15 TeV, for Run 4 or Run 5.

In total, some 250 people contributed to the Chamonix workshop this year. I'm sure that many more of you will want to know about their deliberations. I would therefore like to invite you to a summing-up and conclusion session in the Main Auditorium at 2.00 p.m. on 7 March 2018 (*https://indico.cern.ch/event/705545/*)

Frédérick Bordry
Director for Accelerators and Technology

ALUMNI INTERACTIONS LEFT OVERWHELMING TRACKS AT CERN

In many cases, the spokespersons of the various experiments played the role of the guide for our Alumni: a truly unique opportunity for them all.

The event is now over but it's “until next time” rather than “goodbye” for the members of the network. Indeed, we are just at the beginning. The CERN Alumni network will continue to grow and will be shaped by the needs, the enthusiasm and the active involvement of its members. This will require a lot of work and a strong vision. Just before Alumni First Collisions, the first meeting of the CERN Alumni Advisory Board was also held at CERN. A roadmap for the future based on these initial few months of collaboration with the new community will soon be available.

If you missed the event, you can visit the programme webpage (*https://indico.cern.ch/event/625910/timetable/#20180202.detailed*) and enjoy recordings of most of the sessions (CERN or CERN Alumni login required). Please also help us by spreading the word in your networks and inviting other CERN Alumni to join in. There will be more Collisions events and we want to reach out to as many of you as possible!

Pierre Darriulat gave a moving lecture about his time at CERN, where among other things he was spokesperson of the UA2 experiment and Director of Research. Read his testimony. (https://indico.cern.ch/event/625910/contributions/2749624/attachments/1592395/2525785/alumni.pdf) (Image: Christopher Smith/CERN)

Antonella Del Rosso

BUILDING 107: A SAFE SPACE FOR CHEMICALS

The new Building houses equipment for the surface treatment of vacuum equipment and the production of printed circuit boards

View of the new building 107, which will host laboratories for the treatment of accelerator parts and electronic circuits. (Image: CERN)

On the corner of Rue Salam and Rue Bloch, you can now find the imposing Building 107. In a few weeks' time, this new building will be home to two technical activities vital to CERN's operations: laboratories for the surface treatment of vacuum equipment and workshops for the development, manufacturing and treatment of printed circuit boards. Both of these activities involve chemical processes and require similar systems for ventilation and for the treatment of gaseous and liquid waste. This is why they have been brought under one roof in this new 5000 m^2 building, when previously they were spread across several different buildings, some of which were becoming obsolete.

The main thing you notice when you enter Building 107 is how much effort has gone into making the installations as safe as possible. The treatment of accelerator parts and electronic circuits involves many chemicals, which are stored in special tanks. These tanks, fitted with overhead cranes, are lined up in huge workshops, one of which is equipped with two 4-metre deep pits for the treatment of very large parts.

A detailed risk assessment was carried out to ensure that no leaks were possible, and as a result the tanks not only have a double skin with leak detection sensors, but are installed above high-tech retention basins. "*The retention basins also have leak detection sensors, pumping systems, buffer tanks and, most importantly, a special coating able to withstand more than 100 types of chemical,*" explains Luigi Serio, who led the final phase of the Building 107 project. The basins are designed to withstand the chemicals for several days in the event of a leak. The storage areas where components arrive are also equipped with this type of retention basin.

"*We did an extensive risk assessment, studying every eventuality and carrying out analyses and tests on samples of the materials,*" continues Luigi Serio. The building was also designed to be fire- and earthquake-resistant. As well as the retention basins for the chemical tanks, a large basin has been installed along the west side of the building to retain and test water collected after heavy rainfall.

The way in which the ambient air in the building is checked and treated was also carefully considered. The tanks are fitted with air extractors to avoid the dispersion of gaseous emissions. Various extraction networks have been installed to take account of the different gases and operating conditions involved. The gases collected end up in an impressive service room at the top of the building, which will be controlled automatically and monitored from the CERN Control Centre. In this room, treatment systems using scrubbers or active carbon filters purify the gases. All the mechanical systems have backups.

Building 107 also houses a whole host of other equipment designed to ensure the safety of people and the environment. Cameras and an access control system ensure that only authorised persons are admitted to the building. The building also has gas and fire sensors, along with visual and audible alarms.

"*In order to be completely transparent, we asked the Geneva cantonal water protection and major hazard prevention services to visit the installation,*" explains Christophe Brouard, who was in charge of civil engineering for the project. *"The fire and police services also checked the new building and gave us the green light."*

Finally, the cherry on the cake is that the building is equipped with solar panels and a heat recovery system, which saves around half the energy that would otherwise be needed to heat the building.

The construction of this complex building depended on contributions by many teams. "*All of the CERN departments were involved,*" says Nicolaas Kos, the designated representative of the building's future users. "*Without effective cooperation, this project, eagerly anticipated by the users, would never have succeeded.*"

The building's users have already started to move in and install their equipment ready for operations to start in April.

One of the laboratories for the surface treatment of vacuum equipment of the Building 107. The tanks with a double skin are installed above high-tech retention basins with a special coating to withstand chemicals. (Image: Maximilien Brice/CERN)

Corinne Pralavorio

COMPUTER SECURITY: TAKE IT SERIOUSLY

In the physical world, we apply many safety measures automatically and repeatedly. How come we are more relaxed in the virtual world?

When it comes to personal health or safety, we usually apply best practices to protect us from adverse events, illnesses or harm. This is more than logical, since our physical life depends on it. But how come in the virtual world, many best practices are simply ignored: “I have nothing to hide”, “Nothing will happen anyhow”?

In the physical world, we apply many safety measures automatically and repeatedly. We look left-right-left when crossing a road; we learn to swim early in childhood; we put on a coat when it is getting cold; we use a helmet when cycling; and even put on safety shoes and a harness when working in construction areas (and are required to do so when working in such areas at CERN!). We avoid dark alleys at night and do not accept gifts from strangers (chocolate, anyone?). We even lock our flat and car when leaving them, and keep our PIN codes and credit card numbers secret. And if asked if we would like a new car with an enhanced airbag system that improves personal safety by, say, just 30%, who would decline?

How come we are more relaxed in the virtual world? Are we? As we have written in previous issues of the Bulletin, our virtual life is deeply entangled with our physical world: Your smartphone and your laptop hold many more photos, documents and data about you and your family than you would ever disclose to your most intimate friends (*Open door, open screen, open life...*). If we lose either our smartphone or laptop to an attacker, we stand naked: (*Smartphone lost - Privacy gone*). On a bigger scale, our life in general is deeply tied to digital and computerised control systems and the failure of those control systems would transport us back to the stone age (*Our life in symbiosis*).

So, try to follow a few simple best practices for digital security:

- Choose a secure password. Yes, password rules are annoying. But they are the best solution we have. And in the end, we are CERN: we have brains! (*Brain Power vs. Password Managers*);
- Keep your computer and your smartphone up to date. This is a no-brainer. Auto-updates come with any operating system nowadays. Just don't turn them off. And use an anti-virus software for additional protection. They don't provide 100% more security, but the aforementioned 30% airbag enhancement would help too, wouldn't it? (*WannaCry? The importance of being patched!*);
- Encrypt your hard disks. Laptops get lost (or stolen). Encryption at least ensures that the data stored on them cannot be extracted (*Trips and Travel: some Recommendations*);
- Stop – think – don't click. If you doubt the provenance of a web address, link or URL, just don't click on them. If an unsolicited e-mail comes with an attachment, beware. Only go ahead if you trust the sender and were expecting the e-mail (*One click and BOOM...*);
- And finally: you are not alone. Let us help you! If you have any questions or suggestions, check our website or contact us at Computer.Security@cern.ch.

Protect your life. In the physical world and in the digital. Have a safe and secure 2018!

Do you want to learn more about computer security incidents and issues at CERN? Follow our Monthly Report (http://cern.ch/security/reports/en/monthly_reports.shtml). For further information, questions or help, visit our website (http://cern.ch/Computer.Security) or contact us at Computer.Security@cern.ch.

The Computer Security Team

Official communications

CERN HEALTH INSURANCE SCHEME (CHIS): CHANGES TO THE SUPPLEMENTARY CONTRIBUTIONS

As previously announced, as of 1 March 2018 the CHIS will apply a new scale for the supplementary contributions (see the Official Communication of 12 July 2017 (*https://home.cern/cern-people/official-communications/2017/07/cern-health-insurance-scheme-chis-new-rules-1-september*)). This concerns present and former Staff Members or Fellows, and Beneficiaries of the Pension Fund, who are Main Members of the CHIS and whose spouse[1] has:

1. an income derived from a professional activity (i.e. income from employment or self-employment, or a retirement pension) in excess of 2500.- CHF; and
2. no adequate primary health insurance other than the CHIS.

The supplementary contribution is a monthly lump-sum payable in addition to the monthly contribution, which is deter-

mined on the basis of the spouse's gross monthly income according to the table below. The relevant regulatory provisions can be found in Section 2 of Chapter VII, Art. XII 1.06, V 1.02 and XV 1.04 of the CHIS Rules.

The most significant change is the replacement of the five income bands used so far to determine the supplementary contributions by a set of twelve bands. These new bands and the corresponding supplementary contributions are as follows (all amounts are monthly, in Swiss francs):

Spouse's Gross Income From (excl.):	**Spouse's Gross Income** To (incl.):	**Supplementary Contribution**
0	2500	0
2500	4500	170
4500	6500	267
6500	8500	365
8500	10500	462
10500	12500	559
12500	14500	656
14500	16500	753
16500	18500	851
18500	20500	948
20500	22500	1045
22500	No limit	1142

Staff Members and Fellows will be notified of their new supplementary contribution in their March 2018 payslip. Former Staff Members or Fellows and beneficiaries of the Pension Fund will be notified of any change in their supplementary contribution by e-mail or postal mail.

Questions regarding the new supplementary contributions should be addressed to the SHIPID Service: by e-mail at chis.shipid@cern.ch or by telephone at +41 (0) 22 766 43 67 (on Mondays or Thursdays between 10:00 and 12:00).

[1]As per Article S IV 1.02 of the Staff Rules and Regulations, the term “spouse” includes registered partners

SUMMER WORK FOR CHILDREN OF MEMBERS OF THE PERSONNEL

During the period from 11 June to 07 September 2018 inclusive, there will be a limited number of jobs for summer work at CERN (normally unskilled work of routine nature), which will be made available **to children of members of the personnel** (i.e. anyone holding an employment or association contract with the Organization). Candidates must be aged between 18 and 24 inclusive on the first day of the contract, and must have insurance coverage for both illness and accident. The duration of all contracts will be 4 weeks and the allowance will be CHF 1500.- for this period. Candidates should apply via HR Department's electronic recruitment system (http://ert.cern.ch): https://jobs.web.cern.ch/job/13123

Completed application forms must be returned by 3 April 2018 at the latest. The results of the selection will be available by the end of May 2018.

For further information, please contact: Virginie.Galvin@cern.ch Tel. 72855 (Geraldine.Ballet@cern.ch Tel. 74151)

HR Department

TAXATION IN SWITZERLAND

Memorandum concerning the 2017 internal taxation certificate and the 2017 income tax declaration forms issued by the Swiss cantonal tax administrations.

You are reminded that the Organization levies an internal tax on the financial and family benefits it pays to the members of the personnel (see Chapter V, Section 2 of the Staff Rules and Regulations) and that the members of the personnel are exempt from federal, cantonal and communal taxation on salaries and emoluments paid by CERN.

I - Annual internal taxation certificate for 2017

The annual certificate of internal taxation for 2017, issued by the **Finance and Administrative processes Department**, will be available on **9 February 2018**. ***It is intended exclusively for the tax authorities.***

1. If you are currently a member of the CERN personnel you will receive an e-mail containing a link to your annual certificate, which you can print out if necessary.
2. If you are no longer a member of the CERN personnel or are unable to access your annual certificate as indicated above, you will find information explaining how to obtain one here (*http://admin-eguide.web.cern.ch/en/procedure/annual-internal-taxation-certificate*).

In case of difficulty in obtaining your annual certificate, send an e-mail explaining the problem to service-desk@cern.ch.

II - 2017 income tax declaration forms issued by the Swiss cantonal tax administrations

The 2017 income tax declaration form should be completed in accordance with the general indications available here (*http://admin-eguide.web.cern.ch/en/procedure/income-tax-declaration-switzerland*).

If you have any specific questions, please contact your tax office directly.

This information does not concern CERN pensioners, as they are no longer members of the CERN personnel and are therefore subject to the standard national legal provisions relating to taxation.

HR Department
Contact: HR-Internal-tax@cern.ch

Announcements

17 FEBRUARY: EMERGENCY STOP TESTS PRÉVESSIN SITE - AREA 10

The emergency stop tests of the area 10 on the Prévessin site are planned on Saturday 17 February 2018 from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Frequent power cuts will occur on the Prévessin site - Area 10 (buildings 867; 864-865 blocks 1 & 2; 866-892 blocks 3 & 4; 904; 927; 926; 933; 880; 881; 939). The EN-EL group recommends that you turn off all your critical equipment and computer equipment.

For any further information please refer to the “note de coupure” (*https://edms.cern.ch/ui/file/1900634/1/ENNC_EL_2018_023_AUG_PREVESSIN_ZONE_10.pdf*).

Thank you for your understanding.

BREAKTHROUGH INITIATIVES: SEARCH FOR LIFE IN THE UNIVERSE

At 2.00 p.m. on 15 February, a seminar about the Breakthrough Initiatives will take place in the Council Chamber, presented by Pete Worden, Executive Director of the Breakthrough Initiatives.

The Breakthrough Initiatives are programmes of scientific and technological exploration, probing the big questions of life in the universe.

On 20 July 2015 at the Royal Society in London, Yuri Milner, Stephen Hawking and Lord Martin Rees announced a set of initiatives — a scientific programme aimed at finding evidence of technological life beyond Earth entitled “Breakthrough Listen”. In addition, on 20 April 2016, atop the One World Trade Center in New York, Breakthrough Starshot was announced, a project for an interstellar voyage to Alpha Centauri.

These are the first of several privately-funded global initiatives to answer the fundamental science questions surrounding the origin, extent and nature of life in the universe. The Breakthrough Initiatives are managed by the Breakthrough Prize Foundation.

More information about the event can be found here: https://indico.cern.ch/event/703896/.

5-8 MARCH AT CERN: 11TH INVERTED CERN SCHOOL OF COMPUTING

The 11th edition of the "Inverted" CERN School of Computing (iCSC 2018) will take place at CERN from **5 to 8 March 2018 in the IT Auditorium** (Room 31/3-004).

An excellent programme is planned, consisting of lectures and hands-on exercises selected from a range of proposals submitted by CSC 2017 students. You are not obliged to attend every lecture, indeed you can simply attend the lectures and exercises that interest you the most.

Attendance is free and open to everyone at CERN, and the event will be webcast for those who cannot attend in person.

Registration is not compulsory, but will allow you to enjoy coffee courtesy of the CSC, and obtain a hard copy of the booklet, which includes the lecture slides and notes (while stocks last).

Programme and registration: https://indico.cern.ch/e/iCSC-2018.

iCSC 2018 programme
This year's programme, selected from a range of CSC 2017 student proposals, focuses on challenging and innovative topics, including:

- Blockchain and Decentralised Consensus
- Backend Systems
- Complexity and Data Structures
- Data Analysis
- Identity Federation
- Medical Imaging
- Open MP
- Parallel Programming

This year's lecturers are:

- Alejandro Avilés, Bity SA
- Lennaert Bel, Nikhef
- Plácido Fernández, CERN/University Carlos III of Madrid
- Gabriele Gaetano Fronzé, INFN & Università di Torino/Subatech et IMT-Atlantique Nantes
- Christian Graf, Max Planck Institute for Physics
- Hannah Short, CERN
- Victoria Tokareva, JINR
- Georgios Voulgarakis, CERN

About the iCSC
The Inverted Schools of Computing (iCSC) are part of an annual series of schools organised by the CERN School of Computing (CSC). The iCSC consists of lectures presented over a few days by former CSC students, providing advanced education in specialist topics. The Inverted School provides a platform for them to share their knowledge, turning the students into teachers.

The CERN Schools of Computing
The two other Schools that make up the annual CSC series this year are:

- The Thematic School (tCSC 2018) taking place in June in Split, Croatia; (*https://home.cern/cern-people/announcements/2018/02/6th-thematic-cern-school-computing*)
- The Main School (CSC 2018) taking place in October in Tel Aviv, Israel.

For further information on the CERN School of Computing, see http://cern.ch/csc or e-mail computing.school@cern.ch.

Sebastian Łopieński, Director, CERN School of Computing

SUBSCRIPTION TO THE PAPER VERSIONS OF THE BULLETIN AND ECHO

Dear readers,

As explained in a previous issue (*https://home.cern/cern-people/announcements/2017/12/subscription-paper-version-bulletin-and-echo*), we have updated the distribution list for the paper versions of the Bulletin for the CERN Community and the Staff Association's Echo.

Those who returned the reply slip to us will continue to receive both publications, printed entirely in black and white from now on, by post.

You can sign up for e-mail alerts for the Bulletin for the CERN Community, including the information published by the Staff Association (Echo), at http://cern.ch/go/subscription

If you have any questions, please contact us at internal.communication@cern.ch

The Editorial Content Development section (IR-ECO-CO)
and the Staff Association

THE POLES, WITNESSES AND ACTORS OF THE CLIMATE

As a doctor specialising in sports biology and nutrition, Jean-Louis Etienne has taken part in numerous expeditions to the Himalayas, Greenland and Patagonia as well as crewing with Eric Tabarly for a round-the-world race aboard Pen Duick VI.

Jean-Louis Etienne is also a totally committed environmentalist; he led a number of education-oriented scientific expeditions to raise public awareness of the Polar regions and to learn more about their impact on the Earth's climate and life forms. He will present during the evening his next expedition: Polar Pod (*http://www.jeanlouisetienne.com/polarpod/EN/*).

Thursday 1 March 2018, 6.30pm, Globe of science and innovation
Conference in French with simultaneous interpretation into English.
Free entrance but mandatory registration on the Indico webpage of the event (*https://indico.cern.ch/event/702791/*).

Conference organised by the French Group at CERN (GFC), in collaboration with the Education, Communication and Outreach Group.

6TH THEMATIC CERN SCHOOL OF COMPUTING

The sixth Thematic CERN School of Computing (**tCSC 2018**) will take place this year in **Split, Croatia, from 3 to 9 June 2018**. The theme is "High Throughput Distributed Processing of Future HEP Data", looking at:

- The challenges of HEP data processing in the post-upgrade scenarios.
- Scientific software as the key to achieving the deliverables of the (HL-)LHC physics programme.
- Parallelism, performance and programming models for exploitation of resources on a single box or on a cluster.
- The central role of data management, input and output.
- Evolution of hardware and platforms and their requirements on data analysis and tools.

The School is open to postgraduate students and research workers with a few years' experience in elementary particle physics, computing, engineering or related fields. All applicants are welcome, including former and future participants in the main CSC summer school.

Applications will be accepted until Sunday, 11 March 2018.
Participation is limited to 24 students.
To register, please go to: https://indico.cern.ch/e/tCSC-2018.

About:
The Thematic Schools are part of the annual series of CERN Schools of Computing, to promote advanced learning and knowledge exchange in scientific computing among young scientists and engineers involved in particle physics or other sciences.
They are shorter and more focused than the main Summer CERN School of Computing, but still maintain the same guiding principles: an academic dimension on advanced topics; theory and practice; networking and socialisation.

For more information on the CSC, see: http://cern.ch/csc.
For registration and more information on the tCSC 2018, see: https://indico.cern.ch/e/tCSC-2018.

Sebastian Łopieński, CSC Director

CERN PENSION FUND WEBSITE SURVEY

Dear Member/ Dear Beneficiary,

We are pleased to inform you that a new Pension Fund website will be developed and launched during 2018. We have put together a short survey to help us understand what people want from the new CERN Pension Fund website. Our aim is to provide an informative, easily navigated and modern website.

The survey can be completed anonymously and will take only 5-10 minutes.

It will be available until Sunday 25th February 2018.

Please, do not hesitate to share this survey with anyone that you think may be interested.

To respond to the questionnaire: Please click on the link below or copy/paste this link in the navigation bar of your Internet browser.

https://pension-fund-survey.web.cern.ch/english

We thank you in advance for taking the time to complete the survey. Your feedback is important to us.

CERN Pension Fund

CLOSURE OF ROAD ARAGO

Due to construction works, road ARAGO will be closed from Monday 12th February until 31st October 2018.

The closure will be from the parking of building 183 up to the intersection with road FERMI.

Thank you for your understanding,
SMB-DI

Obituaries

BILL BURGESS (1942 - 2017)

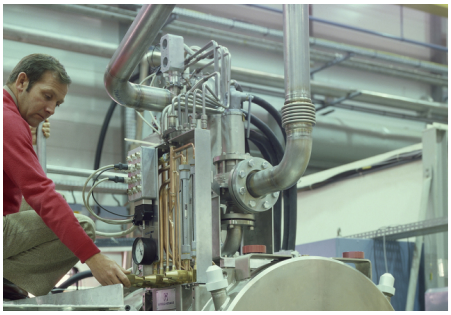
It is with much regret that we announce the death of Bill Burgess on 10 October 2017 at his home in Arizona. He was 75. Bill had been finding life increasingly difficult these last years, but ever upbeat he was always looking for the silver lining, and ready with a joke to tell.

Hailing from Scotland, it was as a technical assistant at CERN that Bill developed his interest in cryogenic engineering. His practical and intuitive knowledge was admired and valued by all. He contributed to the successful installation and operation of the ISR superconducting low-beta insertion magnets, and later with preparation for the LEP insertions.

In 1988, Bill was recruited by SLAC, to work on the SLD detector. His first challenge was to design a liquid helium system for a particle detector. His second challenge was his move into an engineering leadership role… After success with SLD, he worked on several projects involving cryogenic systems. Crucially, he took all the necessary steps to ensure his section would provide good service, and would continue to do so after he retired.

His enthusiasm was only outdone by his likeability. Bill made lifelong friends wherever he went, and he will surely be remembered by all those who knew him.

His friends and colleagues at CERN and SLAC.



Bill Burgess in 1978, making final preparations prior to testing an ISR low-beta quadrupole. (From CERN archive)

Ombud's corner

WHAT CAN I, IN MY ROLE AS OMBUD, DO TO HELP YOU IN PRACTICAL TERMS?

People often ask me: *"But what can you do for us in practical terms? What actions can you take?"*

The first thing I can do is quite simply **listen** to you, without taking sides. Discussing something that's going on with a neutral person, such as the Ombud, often lightens the burden and enables people to see things more clearly. My role usually goes beyond just listening, though: I analyse the situation with you with no holds barred and try to **advise** you on how best to proceed. For example, if you have a disagreement with a colleague, what's at the root of it? What are the interests at stake – your own, of course, but also your colleague's? Why do you think your colleague's behaving like this? Putting yourself in the other person's shoes and trying to work out the reasons for their behaviour is often the key to resolving a conflict.

If you don't feel able to reestablish communication with the other person yourself, I can try to **mediate** between you. Mediation is a voluntary process undertaken at the request of two parties who truly want to reach an agreement but can't get there on their own. I'll listen to both parties separately, several times if necessary, in order to understand not only their differences of opinion, but also their shared interests, which are the key to successful mediation. I'll then lead a three-way discussion with the aim of reaching an agreement.

In other situations, my role might be to give you **information** to help you navigate the maze of rules and administrative procedures and to point you in the right direction.

If your problem lies outside my field of expertise, I'll **refer** you to someone else. I'll do this, for example, in the event of a dispute between you and the Organization, or if I believe the problem to be health-related. You'll be supported by the Staff Association in the first case and by the Medical Service in the second.

Whatever the subject of our discussions, I wish to remind you that they're protected by absolute **confidentiality**, which is no different to medical confidentiality or the protection of a journalist's sources: whatever you tell me, I'm bound by professional secrecy, and it'll remain strictly between the two of us. The Ombud's role in the Organization is protected by this. There's just one exception: if I find out that someone's life is in danger.

The other fundamental principle is that you keep full **control** of the process: I'll do nothing without your consent. That's the benefit of the informal nature of the Ombud's role.

If you'd like to comment on any of my articles or suggest a topic that I could write about, please don't hesitate to e-mail me at Ombuds@cern.ch .