



Director's Matters

Last Friday was indeed "history in the making," as portended by last week's *AIP Matters*. Many distinguished historians and scholars convened to celebrate Spencer Weart's tenure as Director of the internationally acclaimed AIP Center for the History of Physics. The culminating event was a symposium, *History that Matters: The Life and Heritage of Science*. For the last 35 years, Spencer dedicated his professional career to preserving the heritage of our discipline. Under his direction, AIP grew a remarkable library and archive with fundamental references, documentation, oral interviews, and photographs that provide an accurate account of the people and ideas that literally changed the world. In Spencer's own words, "The way we live, our entire society today would be utterly different without the physics discoveries of the past couple of centuries—and much worse off. The physics community has long recognized a need to figure out how all this happened and explain it to the public."

If you take a few moments to glance over the [symposium program](#), you will appreciate the high-level of speakers who participated. Leading historians spoke about the challenges of preserving history, the biography of Einstein and biographies of scientists who are not Einsteins, but important contributors to science nonetheless. In a panel discussion, historians expressed how the resources within the History Center and the Niels Bohr Library & Archives have positively impacted their research. Indeed, most of the hundreds of books on the development of modern physics and allied sciences published in recent decades have relied on the resources amassed and preserved by AIP. Given this track record, it is evident that the *past* does hold significant relevance for the *future*. And it's a bright one....

On Friday, the Avenir Foundation made a three million dollar (\$3,000,000) gift to endow the Spencer R. Weart Directorship of the Center for History of Physics at AIP. This is the largest gift ever given to AIP and establishes the first endowed position at the Institute. This endowment will ensure the Center's stature and growth into the foreseeable future. As stated in Friday's [press release](#), the Avenir Foundation is expressly interested in the sciences and recognizes that the "principles of physics are basic to human existence, and it is of vital importance that a historical record of the application of these principles be preserved." We are humbled and gratified by this generous gift, and feel our responsibility to the scientific community deeply.



Fred Dylla and Spencer Weart present a certificate of appreciation to Norman Wilson of the Avenir Foundation.

Sincerely,

Fred

Publishing Matters

Countdown to NYAS launch

[Fulfillment & Marketing Services](#) is preparing to launch an e-commerce site and to begin providing membership management services for the [New York Academy of Sciences](#) (NYAS). In anticipation of the May 20 launch date, staff attended a training session to learn the business rules of this new customer. Participants reviewed changes made to the MACS database screens to accommodate the particular needs of NYAS, and examined their newly designed e-commerce site. NYAS Director of Membership David Smith reviewed their membership structure and provided valuable insight into the types



of inquiries AIP staff will likely field from NYAS members.

JPCRD editors chart a course for the future

In mid-April, the editors of [Journal of Physical and Chemical Reference Data](#) (*JPCRD*) convened a meeting of the journal's editorial board at the [National Institute of Standards & Technology](#) (NIST) in Gaithersburg, MD. A journal unique to AIP and the scientific community, *JPCRD* publishes critically evaluated physical and chemical property data, fully documented as to the original sources and the criteria used for evaluation. AIP has enjoyed a long, fruitful relationship with NIST's [Standard Reference Data](#) section—the home of *JPCRD*'s editorial effort. An exciting joint project is underway to offer a comprehensive online backfile for *JPCRD* on [Scitation](#). Future joint projects include enhancing the journal's online functionality to better serve the needs of researchers in capturing and using the data presented.



Acting Publisher Mark Cassar (far right) poses with *JPCRD*'s three co-editors (from left to right), Robert W. Watters, Jr., Donald R. Burgess, Jr., and Allan H. Harvey.

(Note of thanks: Kudos to Andy Jack and the NY tech support team for setting up a very successful video conference, which enabled some key AIP staff to participate seamlessly.)

Physics Resource Center Matters

PT attends Society of Vacuum Coaters meeting



On April 21 and 22, *Physics Today* hosted its first exhibitor lounge at the [Society of Vacuum Coaters \(SVC\) annual technical conference](#) in Chicago, IL. The six-day meeting attracted more than 100 exhibitors and 1,200 attendees. The Society of Vacuum Coaters represents the industrial side of vacuum and thin-film work performed by companies. The scope of SVC programs overlaps some of the interests of AIP's Member Society, AVS: Science and Technology of Materials, Interfaces, and Processing.

PT's lounge provided refreshments and a space for the exhibitors to relax and take a break from the busy exhibition floor. While in the lounge, exhibitors learned more about *Physics Today* by looking through copies of [Physics Today magazine](#) and [Buyers Guide](#). Fifteen posters showed all of *PT*'s various advertising opportunities. Representing *Physics Today* were publisher Randy Nanna, marketing director Jeff Bebee, and assistant to the publisher Ameta Coleman. All *PT*'s U.S.-based sales representatives attended and visited with their customers at both the lounge and exhibitors' booths. *PT* Career Network's (PTCN) Bonnie Feldman and Justin Stewart explained to exhibitors the benefits of posting jobs on the PTCN website.

Sigma Pi Sigma ($\Sigma\Pi\Sigma$) induction season

Shannon McKinney was one of nine students and alumni inducted as charter members in the Marshall University Sigma Pi Sigma chapter. In a ceremony last month, SPS staff member Kendra Rand installed Marshall University (the subject of the 2006 motion picture, *We are Marshall*), as the newest chapter of the physics honor society. There are currently over 500 [Sigma Pi Sigma](#) chapters across the country. About 1,000 of the best undergraduate physics majors are inducted each spring. They join the ranks of over 80,000 scholars received into $\Sigma\Pi\Sigma$ since its inception in 1921.



Nico Orsini, Physics Department Chair (left); and Ralph Oberly, SPS Advisor (right); sport their "Einsteins" with new $\Sigma\Pi\Sigma$ member Shannon McKinney.

We invite your feedback to this newsletter via e-mail to aipmatters@aip.org.

For past issues of this newsletter, visit the [AIP Matters archives](#).