

AIP | Matters

January 26, 2015

Director's Matters

By Catherine O'Riordan, Vice President, Physics Resources



Public engagement and the Arrow of Time

"We can turn eggs into omelets but not omelets into eggs; ice cubes melt in warm water, but glasses of water don't spontaneously give rise to ice cubes." So began the lecture given by Sean Carroll, Caltech physics professor and science communicator, speaking to a packed house at the Reuben H. Fleet Science Center in San Diego on January 5, 2015.

Science took center stage in Carroll's exploration of concept of "The Origin of the Universe and the Arrow of Time" for a largely public audience. The occasion was the AIP Gemant Award lecture, and Carroll, the 2014 award recipient, easily garnered enough interest to fill the 250 seat IMAX theatre to capacity. The lecture was unique in that it marked the first time that the Gemant Lecture was given to a primarily public



Gemant winner Sean Carroll receives his award from AIP Vice President Catherine O'Riordan at the Fleet Science Center. Credit: Jason Bardi

audience. The date was chosen to coincide with the AAPT annual winter meeting in San Diego, and was publicized by AAPT as a plenary lecture. The Fleet Center also publicized the talk widely to its own members and to the general public in San Diego. The local PBS radio and TV station ran an interview with Carroll on the day of the event causing the phones at Fleet to ring steadily and creating a waiting list of science fans.

When Bo Hammer, Associate VP for Physics Resources and organizer of event logistics, and I arrived at the Fleet Center, a crowd was waiting outside. Those with reservations were seated first and then the walk-ins filled all available seats. The use of the IMAX theater provided an enormous screen to project images and simulations, as well as an intimate experience for the speaker and audience members.

[Read more.](#)

Physics Resources Matters

Honoring gifted science writers



Fred Dylla, Lee Billings, Alexandra Witze, and Jason Bardi at a special AAS press reception in honor of the 2015 AIP Science Communication Awards. Credit: photo © 2015 Joson Images.

Each year, AIP recognizes authors who excel in the art of communicating science. The 2014 [awardees were announced](#) in the fall, and the winners for three of the four categories received their awards earlier this month at the national AAS and AAPT meetings.

Several dozen journalists came to a special reception at the AAS meeting in Seattle, WA, to recognize the work of Alexandra Witze and Lee Billings. Witze took the award in the “Articles” category for her essay “[Spinning the Core](#),” published in *Science News*

magazine. [Read more.](#)

Astrophysicist Piero Madau awarded the 2014 Dannie Heineman Prize



Credit: photo © 2015 Joson Images

AIP and AAS recognized astrophysicist Piero Madau as the 2014 recipient of the Dannie Heineman Prize for Astrophysics. Madau was honored “*for fundamental contributions to our understanding of the era of first light in the universe, the ionization and heating of the intergalactic medium, and the formation and evolution of galaxies.*”

[Read more.](#)

Off the Press

AIP History Newsletter

[Fall 2014 issue](#)



Coming Up

January 26-27

- AIP Board of Directors' Meeting (College Park)

January 29

- ACP Super Bowl XLIX luncheon, 12-1pm (College Park)

January 30

- Physics Today Advisory Committee Meeting (College Park)

February 4-6

- 2015 PSP Annual Conference (Washington, DC)

February 12-16

- AAAS Annual Meeting (San Jose, CA)

February 16

- AIP Investment Advisory Committee (IAC) Meeting (Phoenix, AZ)

February 25

- AIP Publishing Board of Managers Meeting (New York, NY)
- AIP Education Committee meeting (in conjunction with the NSBP Conference in Baltimore, MD)

February 25-28

- NSBP 2015 Annual Conference (Baltimore, MD)

February 26-27

- Physics Resources Advisory Committee Meetings (College Park, MD)

February 28

- Physics Resources Policy Committee Meeting (College Park, MD)