Director’s Matters

The prestigious Frankfurt Book Fair, or Buchmesse, as it is known in German, is the most important meeting for publishers -- period. It is held in a “Fairground” of approximately four square miles containing 10 buildings (and a large concert hall) each of which is as large as an American convention center, like the Javits Center in New York City. The buildings are connected by skyways and moving walkways. The first day of the Fair is “publishers only,” and then it is open to the public. More than 6,000 publishers attend, bringing over 100,000 representatives who schedule 50-minute meetings (the other 10 minutes being required to travel to the next meeting). Attending this meeting gives one a true perspective of the magnitude of the industry in which we work. About 350,000 Germans attend the Fair over four days.

Marketing Services has put together a custom-built exhibit for the Fair that will highlight our consortia sales offerings, the new AIP Digital Archive, and AIP Publishing Services -- featuring Scitation. Some key Marketing staff and I are attending the Buchmesse this week, interacting with our major customers and making the most of our time at the biggest marketplace worldwide for ideas, books, electronic media, and the international rights trade. No doubt there will be exciting news to report upon our return.

Sincerely yours,

Fred

Publishing Matters

AGU's online sales break a record

In mid-September, AIP’s Marketing & Fulfillment and Business Systems & Operations units re-launched the e-commerce website for the American Geophysical Union (AGU), to offer their customers a more unified and consolidated shopping experience. The new site allows AGU members to renew membership, update demographics, register for conferences, buy books, and make donations, all within the same session. Non-members also benefit from the consolidated “cart” functionality, allowing them to join AGU while shopping for AGU products and services, so they can immediately benefit from the discounted services members enjoy. Not surprisingly, the consolidated experience is also helping to boost sales for AGU. This past week, AIP distributed 40,000 membership renewal notices via email. The response had our credit card processors humming, setting a new record high for one-day e-commerce sales.

Journal Catalog makes a world tour

The 2008 Journal Catalog for AIP, its Member Societies, and Publishing Partners was mailed last month to 10,500 librarians and agents worldwide. (An online edition of the catalog is also available.) We are pleased to note that the catalog has been completely redesigned. To strengthen each journal’s brand, we used full color throughout, including journal covers whenever possible. Standardized journal entries now enable easy location of key bibliographic data by librarians, who often keep these catalogs for reference long after the renewal season has ended.

Physics Resource Center Matters

Ralph A. Alpher memorial

When noted physicist and astronomer, Ralph A. Alpher died on August 12,
the world mourned the loss of a creative thinker who realized the implications of the then hypothetical Big Bang theory and derived predictions that were later proven through experiment. His seminal dissertation in 1948 suggested that a Big Bang theory would explain the varying abundances of elements in the universe. Months later, he and two colleagues suggested a big bang would have released an "echo" and predicted the appearance of cosmic background radiation. This was confirmed through observation in 1964 by Drs. Penzias and Wilson of Bell Telephone Labs in New Jersey.

Alpher's obituary requested donations in his memory be given to three institutions, one of them the American Institute of Physics "to support science fellowships and grants at the undergraduate and graduate level." AIP set up a Ralph A. Alpher Fund and an online donation form accessible via a link from AIP's home page. Alpher's family has expressed their gratitude to AIP for quickly creating the web page and dedicating the fund in his memory. This fund will help support the SPS Outstanding Student Award for Undergraduate Research, SPS Internships, and the Sigma Pi Sigma Undergraduate Research Award.

MGR guides AAS members on Washington visit
AAS, together with other science societies, recently sponsored several of its members to visit Capitol Hill, as part of an organized "Congressional visits day." AIP Media and Government Relations (MGR) assisted by scheduling visits with members of Congress, leading teams of scientists on visits, and translating AAS member interests into legislative language. This demonstrated to Congress the importance of voting for NSF funding and educated scientists about the role of science in the civic decision-making process.

Open Enrollment time!
On Tuesday and Thursday of this week, we will be holding Open Enrollment meetings in Melville and College Park respectively, which will kick off the Open Enrollment "season" for AIP and some of our Member Societies. Prior to these meetings, you will have received a memo outlining various points about benefits offered by AIP for 2008, including a few small changes, as well as the new premium rates. These memos include the meeting times for you to hear from the carriers' representatives and the Human Resources staff. This will be your perfect chance to ask whatever pressing questions you might have about Aetna plans, the HIP plan (in New York), Benisource flexible spending, etc. So read carefully, and we'll see you at the meetings! See the HR website for a current list of AIP benefits.

When disaster strikes
Experts estimate that it could take up to nine days to restore electricity to customers in the aftermath of even the weakest hurricane. Are you and your family prepared for an outage lasting that long? Luckily, the Red Cross and the Department of Homeland Security have assembled a preparedness brochure for individuals, families and businesses to help prepare for an emergency. Simple things like keeping water, canned food, blankets, and a flashlight on hand can make a big difference in the first few hours/days of an emergency. (Don't forget the manual can opener!) For other tips and preparedness checklists check out http://www.ready.gov. AIP has a disaster recovery plan...you should have one too.

We invite your feedback to this newsletter via email to aipmatters@aip.org.

For past issues of this newsletter, visit the AIP Matters archives.