Science, art, and theater

In August of 1609, a 45-year-old Italian astronomer, physicist, and mathematician, Galileo Galilei, shocked a group of Venetian lawmakers by demonstrating the remarkable capabilities of the telescope. By the end of 1610, Galileo had discovered mountains and craters on the face of our moon, several of the moons of Jupiter, and an entire universe of stars invisible to the naked eye, and, in the process, turned human understanding of the cosmos on its head. Some 350 miles up the road in Prague, a young German astronomer and mathematician by the name of Johannes Kepler was witnessing the culmination of more than 10 years of detailed and rigorous scholarship—the publication of *Astronomia Nova*, his groundbreaking treatise on the orbit of Mars and the theory of a heliocentric solar system. In honor of these revolutionary events and coinciding with their 400th anniversary, the International Astronomical Union and UNESCO have declared 2009 the International Year of Astronomy (*IYA2009*), setting an inspiring goal: "to help the citizens of the world rediscover their place in the Universe through the day- and night-time sky, and thereby engage a personal sense of wonder and discovery."

It is with the anniversary of these events in mind that the American Center for Physics (ACP) hosted its semiannual art exhibit, *Cosmic Curiosities*, last Tuesday. The evening was a runaway success, with more than 100 attendees hearing presentations on art, astronomy, and theater. The event began with talks by art curator Sarah Tanguy and artist Gay Glading. Tanguy noted that the exhibit celebrates the stargazer and the power of the imagination and creativity to translate the faraway into something tangible that all can appreciate. After Tanguy’s remarks on Josh Simpson’s dazzling, space-inspired glass planets and platters (exhibited in the rotunda), Glading, equally passionate about the night sky and astronomy, explained the complex layering of science, mythology, and history found in the paintings from her *Constellations* series (exhibited in the first-floor conference rooms). Subsequently, American Astronomical Society (AAS) Executive Director Kevin Marvel (shown left) gave a captivating presentation on the astronomical images on display as part of the exhibit, and also commented on what the IYA means to the field of astronomy and to the public. Marvel demonstrated the "Galileoscope," a low-cost telescope developed by AAS to celebrate the year. The *Galileoscope* (which only costs $15) will help hundreds of thousands of people around the world experience the wonder of the...
universe by allowing them to see lunar craters and mountains, four moons circling
Jupiter, the phases of Venus, Saturn's rings, and countless stars that are invisible to the
naked eye. The evening concluded with a talk by playwright Karen Zacarias about her new play, *Legacy of Light*. Zacarias, who wrote *Legacy of Light* while pregnant with her third child, talked about her inspiration for the play that focuses on 18th century French astronomer Emilie du Châtelet and her present-day counterpart, Olivia, and their struggle to balance the dreams of scientific immortality with the responsibilities of motherhood.

For those of you who were not able to experience Tuesday's event, *Cosmic Curiosities* will be on display until October 16, 2009. For more information on the exhibit please visit the ACP website.

Sincerely,

Fred

Publishing Matters

**Sowing the seeds for social networking at the APS March Meeting**

Held March 16-20 at the David L. Lawrence Convention Center in Pittsburgh, PA—the first "green" convention center in the US—the 2009 APS March Meeting proved to be the perfect site for AIP to reach out to visitors. Much of the buzz centered on a survey that AIP staff conducted to determine the use of various social networking and Web 2.0 technologies by physicists in both their work and their private lives. This survey will help AIP select future social media and Web 2.0 offerings to the physical sciences community. Many of our journal editors were on hand for the AIP/APS co-hosted "Meet the Editors" reception, packed with researchers vying to speak with editors, including David Campbell (*Chaos*), Nghi Lam (*Applied Physics Letters*), Albert Macrander (*Review of Scientific Instruments*), Craig Taylor (*Journal of Renewable and Sustainable Energy*), and James Viccaro (*Journal of Applied Physics*), among others. RSI's editorial board also held a productive meeting. Feedback from our editorial boards, and from the wider community, is vital to ensuring that the AIP journals serve the community's needs.

Physics Resource Center Matters

**Sigma Pi Sigma fundraising drive includes vanity plates**

Sigma Pi Sigma (ΣΠΣ) recently spearheaded an initiative, with the Maryland Motor Vehicles Administration (MVA), that allows donors residing in the state to proudly display their membership and support of the physics honor society with custom
license plates, complete with the ΣΠΣ insignia and initials. Assistant ΣΠΣ Director Thomas Olsen (who is hopeful about his request for plate number 0001) oversaw the project and worked with Education Division designer Phillip Payette to create the artwork, pictured here. The Education Division and Development Office then led a successful campaign drive (pun intended) that garnered the necessary number of responses to order the plates. Delivery is expected by early summer, so keep your eyes peeled for the distinctive plates around the ACP parking lot. If you are a Sigma Pi Sigma member interested in ordering one of the plates, contact Thomas Olsen at ext. 3009 by Tuesday, April 28.

DBIS provides customized service to partners
Teaming up with the Dreyfus Foundation, Discoveries and Breakthroughs Inside Science (DBIS) recently launched its newest website, focused on chemistry. DBIS provides twelve 90-second reports for subscribing local TV newscasts all over the US. Three of our current partners—the Acoustical Society of America, the American Mathematical Society, and the Materials Research Society—will be receiving the benefit this year of a similarly seamless website, on topics related to their science.

Around AIP

Negotiating pricing
The recession is making us all cut costs and AIP is no exception. Thus, we have to take an aggressive approach to reduce costs without compromising the quality of products and services acquired from outside sources. Many companies are desperate for business, which gives buyers the upper hand in negotiating better prices. The Purchasing Department staff conducts value analysis and product and price comparisons, as well as negotiates with vendors to secure the maximum value for the money expended. Requisitioners are asked to accurately communicate their specific needs to facilitate this process. Other AIP units may also be negotiating with their repeat vendors for exhibit giveaways, mailings, or design work. Attach vendor quotes to your purchase requisitions, and Purchasing can provide additional price comparisons. For computer-related items, Business Systems, Publishing Technology, or ACP Tech Support conduct product and price comparisons.

Another tip on cutting travel costs: Hotel prices are dropping. If you have booked lodging for an upcoming meeting, check the hotel's website for better rates or new deals that might have become available since your booking.

Bardi on the fifth postulate
AIP congratulates Jason Bardi, of Media and Government Relations, on publishing his second book, The Fifth Postulate: How Unraveling a Two-Thousand-Year-Old Mystery Unraveled the Universe. Bardi recounts a tale from the early 1800s when three great mathematicians independently solved a mystery that had persisted since the time of the ancient Greeks. In doing so, they opened an entire new universe of non-Euclidian geometry, which changed our view of mathematics forever. Bardi discussed this work and his first book, The Calculus Wars, at an April 14 book signing at Reiter's Books in Washington, DC
Who we are—Office of the Publisher, Journals & Technical Publications

Led by Mark Cassar, AIP’s Office of the Journal Publisher (see page 19 of the organizational chart) serves as the nexus for management of the scholarly publications owned by AIP, for support of the community of eminent scientists who form our board of editors, and for expansion of service to the wider scientific community through publishing partnerships with AIP’s Member Societies and other organizations. From journal policy to competitive analysis, subscription prices, and journal acquisition, the advisory and leadership responsibilities of the Journal Publisher are wide-ranging. AIP-owned journals include Applied Physics Letters, Chaos, Journal of Applied Physics, The Journal of Chemical Physics, Journal of Mathematical Physics, Physics of Fluids, Physics of Plasmas, Review of Scientific Instruments, Journal of Physical and Chemical Reference Data, copublished with NIST, and two exciting new journals recently launched by AIP—Biophysics (BMF) and Journal of Renewable and Sustainable Energy (JRSE). Within the Journal Publisher’s Office are the Product Management and Journal Development teams, the Office of Rights and Permissions, and the Editorial Operations team.

Editorial Operations, led by Doreene Berger, provides expert assistance to a diverse constituency, which includes editors, editorial board members, reviewers, authors, librarians, and members of scientific societies. The staff manages annual changes to editorial boards, assists the remote scientific editors in establishing and implementing journal policies, and manages expenses and provides financial support for ongoing operations of the remote editorial offices. The office maintains the internationally adopted Physics and Astronomy Classification Scheme (PACS), and monitors the assignment of classification terms to published articles within its purview, including all articles integral to AIP’s SPIN Database. It also provides administrative support for the Society of Rheology and the annual conference on Magnetism and Magnetic Materials (MMM). The Peer Review Administration team operates the peer-review process for three AIP-owned journals, a society customer, and the MMM conference.

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.