Director’s Matters

Going for the gold

Luckily, the physics community doesn't have to wait another three years for a summer Olympics. The American Association of Physics Teachers' (AAPT) Physics Olympiad competition has again put the best and the brightest to the test (literally) to identify the high-school-student members of the U.S. Physics Team who will go on to compete in the 40th International Physics Olympiad in Mexico next month. AIP is proud to support AAPT in this endeavor, through fundraising support and publicity. All AIP Member Societies contribute to this worthy program that gives students the opportunity to increase their knowledge and express excitement for the discipline.

Each year, AAPT volunteers design several exams that are administered throughout the country. The exams cover a spectrum of topics, such as mechanics, electricity and magnetism, thermodynamics, waves, and optics. Nineteen students' academic prowess earned them a spot on the U.S. Physics Team. (Are you intrigued? To see how you might stack up to the competition, try your hand at a few past tests, available through the Physical Sciences Resource Center collection of the ComPADRE digital library.) Yet, with this distinction came the real competition—each other. For 10 days, 13 hours a day, the students participated in a physics "boot camp" held at the University of Maryland, a marathon of fast-paced lecture classes and hands-on labs that challenged the depth and breadth of their knowledge of physics.

Our media staff captured the essence of the camp best in their efforts to generate press in local newspapers. Quoting head lab coach Warren Turner, "The experimental side is similar to what they do in their high schools, but we give them something that pushes them a little further." Instead of simply measuring the motion of a pendulum, for example, the students develop their own mathematical models to take into account and predict the nuances of the swinging bob. Finalist Marianna Mao gave her impression: "At physics camp, we had a daily tradition of writing the day of the week on the board because we tended to lose track of time. The past ten days have been some of the most engaging and exciting days of our high school careers." But the camp members had their fair share of fun, as there was ample opportunity to debate if alternative energy schemes inspired by science-fiction novels would actually work and for field trips to NASA and the Smithsonian museums.
From the rigor of the boot camp emerged five stellar students, selected as the elite "traveling team" who will represent the US in the international competition July 12–19 in Merida Yucatan, Mexico. The finalists—who were announced in a ceremony last Tuesday at ACP—have big shoes to fill, as the 2008 team brought home four gold medals. AAPT is hosting a blog where you can read more about the students’ experiences and track their progress. To show your support, you can purchase a "Proud Supporter of the U.S. Physics Team" magnetic bumper sticker by contacting Kristal Burgess. Congratulations to AAPT for having procured such fine talent, the students' local teachers for cultivating the students' interest and knowledge, the Olympiad coaches for honing their skills, and, of course, all the students who participated. We wish the traveling team well in the international competition!

Sincerely,

Fred

Join me in welcoming the Society of Physics Students' summer interns, who are at ACP today for orientation. See next week's issue of AIP Matters for more details.

Publishing Matters

Reflecting on publishing services
Twice a year, representatives from AIP Member Societies gather at the Melville Publishing Center to discuss various publishing services initiatives. The May 2009 meeting of the AIP Subcommittee on Publishing Services, chaired by A. Jeffrey Giacomin of The Society of Rheology, began with opening remarks from AIP CEO Fred Dylla and vice president of publishing John Haynes. AIP staff gave presentations on the forthcoming C3 Scitation platform, the new usage statistics service, and other items of interest. Member Society representatives offered helpful feedback and shared news from their own societies. AIP thanks these volunteers for their guidance and for making time to participate in this worthwhile effort.

Physics Resource Center Matters

Science's strong stance atop Capitol Hill
On Congressional Visits Day, April 28–29, AIP government relations staff introduced a dozen scientists from the American Astronomical Society and AVS to members of Congress as part of an annual event to raise visibility and support for science, engineering, and technology. The topic of choice for scientists and members of...
Congress alike was federal funding for science—the provisions made through the annual budget and the new opportunities under the stimulus package. The funding allocation among the federal agencies was of key interest, as scientists around the country will be affected by stimulus funds. Together, the crew visited about 50 members of Congress.

**New researchers in the Niels Bohr Library and Archives**

In early May, Russian film producer Irina Bakhtina, science historian Vladimir Kartsev, and cameraman Vladimir Vizin conducted research in the Niels Bohr Library and Archives for a program on Soviet emigré physicist George Gamow (1904–68). Because he defected in 1933 and settled in the US in 1934, Gamow is virtually unknown in Russia, where his name was banned from scientific and general publications during the Soviet era. Bakhtina and her crew also researched Gamow at repositories in New York, Princeton, Denver, and Washington, DC. Bakhtina, Kartsev, and Vizin are shown here reviewing the transcript and audio tapes from an interview with Gamow in our collection; they also selected Gamow photos from our Emilio Segrè Visual Archives.

Bakhtina is a widely known Russian filmmaker, and this program is slated for the Russian TV channel Kul’tura. Her 2007 documentary about Russian scientists currently working in the US won the main prize of the International Human Rights Cinema Festival in 2008. She has also directed about 30 documentaries about Khrushchev, Gorbachev, Mao, Deng, and others for Russian TV.

**Around AIP**

**Making wellness a priority**

AIP has implemented an online wellness program through its primary medical carrier, Aetna. This program is available to all interested staff—Aetna members and nonmembers alike. Nonmembers should contact Human Resources to arrange access. The wellness program is designed to fit into your busy life and to provide you with added support to reach your personal health goals and live a healthier lifestyle. Click here for a virtual tour of the program. Human Resources will e-mail more information this week.

**Who we are—Production Operations**

AIP Production Operations (see the organizational chart, pages 31–36) is a high-volume, deadline-driven, quality-conscious operation, which is responsible for over 100 journals. Although
the environment is frenetic, the division's relentless attention to
detail makes quality control its hallmark. Because Production
Operations serves as a hub through which all manuscripts and graphics are routed, the
staff must interact effectively with societies, editorial offices, and authors. In a nutshell,
production editors trained in XML, Photoshop, Speedflow, and Xyvision are responsible
for taking articles from the manuscript stage through publication, both print and online.

The enterprise is headed by director Carol Fleming and assistant director Janice
Wilmot, and production is divided into four teams, all under the direct guidance of
production manager Greg Lupion. The teams continually strike a balance between
streamlining the process and taking the proper steps to ensure quality and accuracy.
The managers and team leaders are shown here; each of the four production teams
will be introduced in subsequent issues of this newsletter.

A fifth team, the Quality Assurance Associates (QAA), supervised by Anne LoPresti, is
charged with checking files that have been copyedited before they are composed.
Serving as a quality gatekeeper, the QAA team (pictured below) catches inaccuracies
and monitors the copyediting and XML functions.

Whether a journal is e-first or print-driven, the teams fine-tune their workflows to meet
each customer's needs while maximizing efficiency. Whether a production editor is
meticulously correcting a paper after corresponding with the author, performing an
online quality-control check before posting an article, or sending an issue to the printer,
a methodical approach blended with a sense of urgency is a constant in this
department.

Production Operations managers and team leaders, from the left: Barbara Carbonaro, Diane
Brzozowski, Greg Lupion, Janice Wilmot, Carol Fleming, Debbie Glide, Jackie Beggins, and
Maryann Gross.
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.