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## Director's Matters

By *H. Frederick Dylla, Executive Director*



### Protecting the scientific process

Taxpayers fund a significant amount of basic and applied research, and it is important for the federal grant award process to be as open as possible. When legislation is proposed that would negatively affect this process, professional organizations representing the scientific community must act. AIP and four of its Member Societies—AAPT, AAS, AGU, and OSA—signed a letter in opposition to provisions in a bill that has been reported to the House floor. This letter, sent by the Coalition for National Science Funding, to which AIP and several of its Member Societies belong, was sent to every Member of Congress. AIP also endorsed a letter sent by the American Physical Society to Rep. Darrell Issa (R-CA), chairman of the committee with jurisdiction over this bill.

H.R. 3433, the "Grant Reform and New Transparency Act of 2011" or the GRANT Act was approved by the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform last November. Two of its provisions are opposed by many in the scientific community. The first mandates the disclosure of the name, title, and employer of an individual (or a unique identifier) who served as a peer reviewer for the grant program during the six month period before an award is made. The second is a requirement that a complete copy of a funded grant proposal be posted on a government-wide website. AIP is not alone in its apprehension that the disclosure of information contained in grant applications would negatively impact the competitiveness of the scientific process and would also have an adverse effect on patent applications.

These requirements would have a chilling effect on the conduct of scientific research supported by the federal government. AIP will continue to follow this legislation, and report on any further developments in *FYI*. For additional background on this bill, see [FYI #143](#) in 2011, [FYI #5](#), and [FYI #31](#).

## Physics Resources Matters

### AIP selects State Department fellow

AIP is pleased to announce that Dr. James Borgardt has been selected as our State Department science fellow for 2012-13. Borgardt has been a professor of physics at Juniata College since 1998, where he has served as SPS chapter adviser for the last 13 years. Borgardt received his PhD in physics from the University of Arizona in 1998, training in atomic and molecular physics using a MeV Van de Graaff accelerator. While at Juniata, Borgardt initiated a



collaboration with scientists in the Radiation Sciences and Nuclear Detection group at Pacific Northwest National Laboratories. Their research partnership investigated the capabilities of large-area radiation detectors which have since been deployed at US border crossings in an effort to interdict the illicit transport of nuclear material. Borgardt has spent time in India as the on-site director of the Brethren Colleges Abroad program and as a visiting professor of Physics at Cochin University of Science and Technology. Borgardt's scientific background, communication and analytical abilities, and commitment to applying his knowledge of physics to societal issues will enable him to make a valuable contribution to the State Department.

## Member Society Spotlight

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### Leaping into the APS March Meeting



This leap year brought what appears to be APS' largest participation ever in a national meeting of the Society. The conference, which has continued to grow in size and influence over the years, is a hotbed of activity for the physics community. Through active participation, AIP supports the [APS March meeting](#) and connects with the community in many productive and (yes) *fun* ways.

With nearly 9,000 contributed papers, the meeting's content made for a high-energy press room with journalists from around the world. AIP's **Media Services** team supported the planning, preparation, and execution of press room activities. Exciting topics covered included cutting-edge developments in nanotechnology, the physics of cancer, Twitter and relationships, the power of plant roots, spider-silk-based electronics, and much more. Many of the most interesting science stories are posted on [Newswise](#).

The Exhibition was a resounding success, as one of the largest APS commercial exhibits ever held. On behalf of APS, the AIP **Exhibits Division** sold over 170 exhibit booth spaces and provided exhibition management. Exhibitors remarked favorably on the number of attendees and also on the attractiveness of the exhibit and the new Boston Convention and Exhibition Center. A notable highlight was a special visit and Q&A session with APS exhibit attendees from Stephen Wolfram, founder and CEO of Wolfram Research, and creator of Mathematica.



AIP **Publishing's** booth had a high volume of traffic. **Physics Today**(PT) sponsored its 12th Exhibitor Lounge, which is always appreciated by the weary-legged booth staff as a place to relax, grab a coffee or soda and some popcorn. Publishing and PT staff interacted with APS and AIP journal editors in the Meet-the-Editors reception, and our **Inside Science** writers and PT editors attended many sessions on

the prowl for content.



Students pose for a group shot at the awards reception. SPS' Gary White (kneeling with 2 pairs of glasses) and APS' Crystal Bailey (to the right of White) join the fray. Photo credit: Ken Cole of APS.

The **Society of Physics Students** (SPS) booth often had visitors lined up to play Plinko and win fun prizes like physicist playing cards. Students and their mentors were eager to hear more about the Fall 2012 Congress of Sigma Pi Sigma, especially about the speakers and the tours of the Kennedy Space Flight Center. Networking opportunities abounded as SPS sponsored or co-sponsored six contributed student sessions and over 100 presenters, as well as two receptions and an awards event for the best presenters. Complementing SPS' assertion that a rich research experience is a crucial element to undergraduate physics education was an inspiring session about research collaborations, featuring paired talks by undergraduate students and their mentors, a real highlight of the meeting.

The APS Education team, in collaboration with **GradschoolShopper.com**, organized a three-day-long Graduate Fair, which was held in the undergraduate student's lounge. Students could discuss their graduate school plans with recruiters from various universities face to face in a casual environment. The GradschoolShopper booth supplied extensive information about graduate programs.

**History Center** staff conducted a workshop on oral history interviewing for members of the APS Forum on History of Physics, and **Industrial Outreach** engaged with the APS Forum on Industrial and Applied Physics.

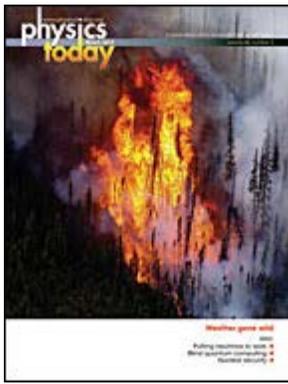
For more information about the meeting and to view the image and video galleries, see the [APS virtual press room](#). **Congratulations to the staff of APS for putting on a most successful meeting!**



GradschoolShopper's Moriel Schottlander (right) poses with undergraduate Tim Clark of the University of West Florida, who won a free copy of the 2012 Graduate Programs book for creating the farthest-flying paper plane in the origami flyer competition.

## Off the Press

**Physics Today, March 2012 issue.** Cover—Historically bad weather plagued the US last year: Hurricane Irene caused major flooding in the Northeast, powerful tornadoes ravaged the Midwest and Southeast, and prolonged



drought led to one of the harshest fire seasons on record in the Southwest. In the article on [page 31](#), the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Jane Lubchenco and Thomas Karl write that 2011 continued a decades-long trend toward warmer climate and wilder weather. (Photo courtesy of the US Fish and Wildlife Service, Fire Management Branch.)

## Around AIP

ADP Etime anywhere, anytime!



AIP employees: Please remember that [ADP eTIME](#) can be accessed offsite and from any computer with Internet Explorer or Mozilla Firefox and does not require VPN access. It is important to enter and approve your e-time in a timely manner, and be sure to read your emails from Payroll as they may contain important information or reminders.

If you have forgotten your password, enter your user name and click the "forgot my password" link *before* locking yourself out on the third try. If you should happen to lock yourself out, contact the following people to reset your password:

[Donna Jones](#) (ext. 3031); [Laura Magri](#) (ext. 2293); or [Tammy Ferris](#) (ext. 3146).

## Coming Up

*\*All AIP Events listed below are in College Park, MD*

Friday–Saturday, March 9–10

- PRC Advisory Committee and Policy Committee Meetings

Sunday, March 11

- Parents' fond farewell to the ACP Childcare Center

Wednesday, March 21

- Audit Committee Meeting
- AIP Executive Committee meeting

Thursday, March 22

- Assembly of Society Officers Meeting

Friday, March 23

- AIP Governing Board Meeting

March 31–April 3

- APS Spring Meeting (Atlanta, GA)