Director's Matters

Guest column by Liz Dart Caron, Director of Corporate Communications

3rd USA Science & Engineering Festival inspires the nation

Four days. 750 exhibits. 325,000 people . . . all teaching and learning and having fun with science. The Grand Finale Expo of the 3rd USA Science & Engineering Festival (USASEF), held April 24-27 at the Washington, DC, convention center, was the largest STEM education event in the nation. AIP and many of its Member and Affiliated Societies jumped into the action feet-first. Here are some of the staff’s impressions about the experience.

Becky Flagg croons “Let It Go” (from Frozen), accompanied by a singing Tesla coil. (Author’s note: Look at the enchantment on the kids’ faces in the lower left corner.) See the video on YouTube.

“Big Top Physics was a joint exhibit by APS, AAPT, OSA, and SPS. Our goal was to let people experience the fun of physics, to show them that the physics that explains the world around them is understandable and accessible. One mom said it was the best booth in the entire festival.”—Bo Hammer, AIP associate vice president of Physics Resources

At AIP’s Inside Science green screen exhibit, hundreds of children acted as science TV reporters in front of their choice of multiple video backgrounds, from the Space Station to wildfires. The exhibit’s “junior reporters” included a grandmother
with her three grandkids, a student who chose to deliver his report in sign language, and another young person who decided to recite the first 10 elements of the periodic table.

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Physics Resources Matters

Nearly 1.4 million high school physics students

Results from the 2012-13 Nationwide Survey of High School Physics Teachers show that nearly 1.4 million students were enrolled in high school physics classes. Enrollments in advance placement and second-year courses were up by 26% from four years earlier, while the total number of high school graduates was down slightly. These data are from an article just published in the May 2014 issue of The Physics Teacher.

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Off the Press

Physics Today, May 2014 issue

Cover: In this precisely crafted array of optical resonators and waveguides, light enters from the left, moves along the near edge, and exits at the right. Halfway along, the light skirts a defect but immediately returns to the edge of the device. The photons thus mimic the robust behavior of electronic “edge states” in topological materials. (Courtesy of Emily Edwards.)

Coming Up

May 5-9

• ASA 167th Meeting (Providence, RI)
May 7

- Lyne Trimble Science Heritage Lecture given by David Cassidy: A reading from the play “Farm Hall” (Santa Fe, NM)

May 13

- AIP Publishing Board of Managers meeting (New York, NY)

May 14

- May birthday socials (College Park and Melville)

May 24-28

- ACA Annual Meeting (Albuquerque, NM)

May 28

- SPS Interns first day (College Park)