

AIP | Matters

A bi-weekly publication of the American Institute of Physics

October 7, 2016

Director's Matters

Guest column by Yuen Yiu, *Physics News Writer and Editor*



And the Nobel Prize goes to...

At precisely 5:45 a.m. EDT on October 4th, this year's Nobel Prize in Physics was announced for "theoretical discoveries of topological phase transitions." Writers at newspapers and various media outlets proceeded to scramble for material on the science behind the prize. *Wired* ran with an article titled "Nobel Prize in Physics Goes to Another Weird Thing Nobody Understands," while *The Telegraph* went with "British scientists win Nobel Prize in Physics for work so baffling it had to be described using bagels."

While this turn of events may be surprising and confusing to some—since scientists usually use donuts to explain topology, not bagels—the bigger question remains: What is topology?

[Read more.](#)

Around AIP

Physics Trends Flyers

As part of its data dissemination efforts, the Statistical Research Center produces two sets of *Physics Trends* flyers each academic year. These 8½ x 11 posters depict data targeted to the interests of either undergraduate or graduate students and are intended to be posted in hallways and public areas of colleges and universities. The flyers have proven to be a successful way to communicate relevant information to physics and astronomy students who may not otherwise have been informed on a topic.

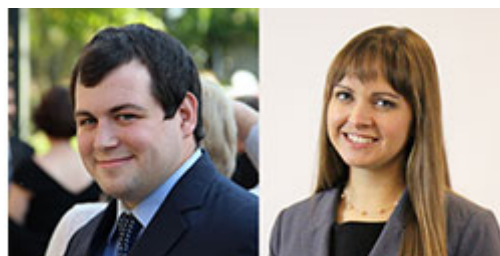


[Read more.](#)

Placement for congressional fellows

This year's AIP and AIP-ASA congressional fellows, [Ryan Murphy and Rebecca Reesman](#), have begun their work in the halls of Congress. Once they get to DC, the first step in this process is participation in AAAS's two-week [Science and Technology Policy Fellowships Orientation](#), which "provides information about the legislative and executive branches, helps define fellows' roles, and offers context and contacts that will be useful in fellowship assignments."

The AIP and AIP-ASA congressional fellowship programs are run under the umbrella of the AAAS fellowship program, enabling our fellows to be part of the incoming class of 300 fellows placed in all branches of the federal government. After orientation, all congressional fellows interview with various offices—personal and committee, House and Senate—and receive their placements. This year, Ryan Murphy is working in the office of Rep. Betty McCollum and Rebecca Reesman is working in the office of Rep. Derek Kilmer. We welcome them to DC and wish them the best for a rewarding fellowship year.



[Read more.](#)

***Physics Today* finds new homes for old books**

As described in the March 31, 2014 AIP Matters, *Physics Today* has been working for several years with Uppsala University in Sweden to donate new books to physics departments around the world. PT receives the books from publishers, who send them for review in PT's Books Department. Recently, two PT staff members left AIP. They also left about 400 physics books that had been in their personal collections. Because the books had been on the editors' shelves for years, they were relatively old. Rather than simply throw them away, PT contacted AIP's Center for History of Physics for advice.



[Read more.](#)

Coming Up

October 21

- History Liaison Committee Meeting (College Park, MD)

October 24

- AIP History Task Force on Professional Standards and Operations Meeting (College Park, MD)

October 27

- AIP Venture Partnership Meeting (College Park, MD)

October 28

- ACP Blood Drive (College Park, MD)

November 1-2

- AIP Board of Directors Meeting (San Francisco, CA)

November 3-5

- 2016 Quadrennial Physics Congress (San Francisco, CA)

November 11

- Education Liaison Committee Meeting (College Park, MD)

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