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American Physical Society invites Savannah to discover plasma

Free science event expected to draw thousands.

SAVANNAH, Ga.—The Plasma Sciences Expo—planned as the biggest celebration of plasma physics for students in the region—presents teachers, students and the general public with a free opportunity to explore what scientists call "the 4th state of matter."

Plasma is the energy source of the sun and other stars, and scientists from around the world are conducting plasma research to help create that same power on earth. During the week of November 16, more than 1,500 plasma scientists will be gathering for the American Physical Society's Division of Plasma Physics 57th Annual Meeting. At the Savannah International Trade and Convention Center, plasma scientists will staff exhibitor booths to excite students and the public about science, research and technology in the "hot" career field of plasma physics.

The Plasma Sciences Expo will be open for school groups on November 19 and 20 from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m., and for the general public on November 19 from 6 to 8 p.m. The Expo is a free event sponsored by the American Physical Society's Division of Plasma Physics and the U.S. Department of Energy.

Those attending this hands-on science event will be able to create arcs of lightning, manipulate glowing plasma with magnets, and don special glasses to observe color spectra of various plasmas. Participants can play golf using protons in magnetic fields, observe their fluctuating body temperatures on a monitor, or create a cloud in a chamber. They may even explore optics using a laser.

In addition to the Expo, local teachers are invited to attend Science Teachers Day on Tuesday, November 17 from 8:00 a.m. to 4 p.m., where they will spend the morning learning about the fundamentals of fusion energy and plasma science. The remainder of the day is spent in workshops of their choosing, focusing on such subjects as the nature of matter, cosmology, principles of mechanics, lasers, the electromagnetic spectrum, and Newton's Laws. The workshops align with national science standards and the Common Core Georgia Performance Standards (CCGPS). There is no charge for this event, but online registration is required and available on the event website at

http://fusioned.gat.com/dppoutreach/. Science Teachers Day includes parking, lunch and raffle prizes at no cost to participants.

Until recently, plasma was rarely mentioned in high school textbooks, though matter in the plasma state makes up 99 percent of the visible universe. Our sun, stars, the Northern Lights, solar flares and lightning bolts are all examples of naturally occurring plasmas. Man-made plasmas are used for lighting (fluorescent lights), sterilizing medical equipment, welding, manufacturing computer chips, fusion energy research and some medical surgery procedures.

To learn more about these free educational events, visit the Discover Plasma website at http://fusioned.gat.com/dppoutreach/.

Global Plasma Month

Young scientists promote plasma physics with public pub-talks

The Young APS-DPP Community, in collaboration with the science pub-talk organization called Nerd Nite, has created an on-going world-wide event called Global Plasma Month. Young scientists present public talks on plasma topics ranging from fusion energy to solar physics to plasma engineering at locations all over the globe including New York City, London, Los Angeles, Berlin, Philadelphia, Washington D.C., Chicago, Honolulu and Atlanta.

Theresa Wilks speaking at Nerd Nite Atlanta.

The goal for Global Plasma Month is to raise awareness about important plasma physics issues in an informal way. Nerd Nite organizers in various cities hold monthly events where science experts come and present their work in local pubs and bars where anyone (over-21) can come in, drink, eat, and learn science. While informative for the public and offering a forum to address issues such as the future role of fusion energy in society, the event also provides a way for young scientists to develop and practice the art of science communication.

More information can be found at the Global Plasma Month Facebook Page: https://www.facebook.com/GlobalPlasmaMonth or by contacting David Schaffner at mdschaffner@brynmawr.edu.

About the American Physical Society, Division of Plasma Physics
More than 1,500 physicists gather annually to discuss the advancement of plasma science, science education and the science community. Division members represent academic institutions, national laboratories, and industry from around the world. The goal of the Plasma Sciences Expo and Science Teachers Day is to increase community awareness of science and inspire students to pursue science-related careers.

About the Young APS-DPP Community

The Young APS-DPP Community (or Young Plasma Physicists—YPP for short) is a newly formed coalition of young plasma researchers, post-docs, graduate students, and undergrads who are seeking to develop cohesion and community as the next generation of plasma scientists.