

# Northwest Section Newsletter

APS Northwest Section

July 2011

[www.units.aps.org/units/nws/](http://www.units.aps.org/units/nws/)

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*Items written by Jennifer Heath, Erich Vogt, and Brian Milbrath*

## Upcoming Thirteenth Annual Meeting October 20-22, 2011 Oregon State University, Corvallis, Oregon

Conference website: [www.physics.oregonstate.edu/NWAPS2011](http://www.physics.oregonstate.edu/NWAPS2011)

### Key deadlines:

Sept. 15, 2011 Abstract submission closed

Sept. 22, 2011 Deadline to reserve conference rate housing

Oct. 14, 2011 Last opportunity for post-deadline poster abstract submissions

Mark your calendar: an exciting program is being prepared for our upcoming Thirteenth annual meeting in Corvallis, Oregon. Come hear about the physics research currently being conducted in the Northwest and meet your colleagues in the region. The program committee is chaired by Erich Vogt, and the local organizing committee is chaired by Henri Jansen.

The conference opens Thursday evening, Oct. 20, with a reception and public lecture by Mario Livio of the Space Telescope Science Institute on the scientific achievements of the Hubble telescope.

What makes a Sectional Meeting lively and exciting for all of the participants — from faculty members to undergraduate students — is the balance between contributed talks, invited papers, and plenary sessions. Contributed talks and posters in all areas of physics research are welcome. We hope the allowance of post-deadline poster abstracts will encourage reports on summer research projects and other late-breaking news.

The morning plenary talks, given by outstanding speakers at a level which reaches the entire audience spectrum, form the core of the meeting. This year's plenary talks will include:

**Gordon Semenoff** (UBC, Vancouver) on that wonder substance, Graphene, which won last year's Nobel Prize in Physics;

**Ken Krane** (OSU, Corvallis) on Physics Teaching and the 50th Anniversary of Halliday and Resnick;

**Isabel Trigger** (TRIUMF, Vancouver) on results from the LHC, in CERN - Isabel heads the large Canadian contingent working on ATLAS which searches for the Higgs Boson and Dark Matter;

**Yun-Shik Lee** (OSU, Corvallis) on Terahertz Physics;

**David Thouless** (UW, Seattle) on Topological Quantum Numbers;

**Thomas Ruth** (TRIUMF, Vancouver) on Medical Isotopes and the Current Crisis;

**Dean Karlen** (Univ. of Victoria, Victoria) on recent Neutrino Experiments;

**Stanley Schriber** (Univ. of Montana) on the future International Linear Collider and its technology; and

**Andrei Kounine** (MIT, Boston) on the AMS Experiment on the International Space Station. The AMS is the large spectrometer which recently was transported to the Space Station on the last shuttle flight.

APS American Physical Society  
physics Northwest Section Meeting OSU Oregon State

October 20 - October 22, 2011 Oregon State University, Corvallis, OR

**Program:**  
Plenary Talks - Parallel Sessions - Poster Session  
Applied Physics & Industrial Applications  
Astronomy, Cosmology, and Gravity  
Atomic, Molecular, and Optical Physics  
Biophysics  
Condensed Matter  
Nuclear Physics  
Particle Physics  
Physics Education

Thursday Evening, Oct 20: Reception Drinks hosted by OSU Physics  
Friday Evening, Oct. 21: Banquet  
Saturday Midday, Oct 22: Undergraduate Luncheon hosted by the Society of Physics Students (SPS)

Abstract submission deadline: Sept 16th, 2011.

For information on registration, housing, abstract submission, and student travel awards, see the conference website:  
<http://www.physics.oregonstate.edu/nwaps2011>

Student participation is encouraged, including contributed papers or posters.

The conference poster can be found at [http://www.physics.oregonstate.edu/files/physics/nwaps\\_2011\\_poster.pdf](http://www.physics.oregonstate.edu/files/physics/nwaps_2011_poster.pdf). Please consider printing and posting it in a prominent location in your department.

## Welcoming Young Scientists

A major goal of the NW section is to support student research, at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. At the annual meeting, students can present their own work, learn about some of the major questions being studied in various fields of research, and network with peers, faculty, and potential employers. A Society of Physics Students luncheon will be held on Saturday, Oct. 21, 2011.

The section works hard to keep meeting expenses low for all participants. Frequently, the meetings are partially supported by deans of the host institution. Student registration and banquet tickets are subsidized by the NW section. This year, undergraduate student registration will be only \$10! Students should also consider applying for a travel award, which can support up to \$200 of student travel expenses. See more information at: [www.aps.org/units/nws/meetings/student-travel-award.cfm](http://www.aps.org/units/nws/meetings/student-travel-award.cfm)

Membership in the NW section provides the funding for section activities, including the annual meeting and student travel awards. Although the section membership is of no additional cost to the member, the APS provides a small amount of funds to the section budget for each member. Please encourage your colleagues to also join the section, as this helps provide additional funding for students and section activities.

## Scheduling of the Annual Meeting: an ongoing discussion

Scheduling of the annual meeting continues to be a hot topic of discussion, and the executive committee would like to solicit your input. Please contact Jennifer Heath (email: [jheath@linfield.edu](mailto:jheath@linfield.edu), phone: 503-883-2267) or any of the executive committee members listed at the end of this newsletter, to voice your perspective on this issue. Our desire is to enable broad participation in the annual meeting, including undergraduate and graduate students, as well as faculty and professionals across the spectrum of physics research specialties.

Clearly, differences in academic calendars and curricula between institutions, as well as in disciplinary meeting obligations, make optimization of the meeting date a difficult issue. As the executive committee discusses this question and crafts the wording for a resolution to be placed before the membership next year, we would like to hear from as many voices as possible.

Historically, the NW section met in the latter part of May. Following a vote of the section, the 2010 meeting was moved to October, for a successful inaugural fall meeting at Whitman College. The Corvallis meeting in 2011 will be our second fall meeting, and we currently plan to also meet in fall, 2012. A decision to remain with October meetings or return to a May meeting will be discussed at our business meeting on Friday, October 21, 2011, in order to craft the wording for a resolution. Then, this question will be put before the membership for a vote in the ballot to be distributed next summer.

## Science and Government

At the 2010 annual meeting, Kristopher Larson of the APS gave an interesting plenary presentation entitled, "DC State of Mind, A Congressional Update." Many aspects of governance

are outside the specific arena of physics but nonetheless critically affect our funding and ability to conduct research. Larson discussed ways in which physicists can be productively involved in the political process. A simple visit to a congressional office, to put in a few words on the importance of physics research for technology and the economy, can have an impact on legislation and funding.

This year, Brian Milbrath represented our section on Capitol Hill during the annual APS congressional visits day, on April 14, 2011. Both Milbrath and Erich Vogt attended the annual APS convocation the following day, at the APS headquarters in College Park, Maryland.

NWAPS members from the United States may recall that April was when months of Continuing Resolutions concerning the federal budget came to a head with threats of a possible government shutdown. This would've effectively canceled the Visits Day but as it turned out, a deal was made and the budget was being passed that very day. Because of this the APS DC office needed to quickly revise the focus of visits towards the upcoming fiscal year's budget. APS visitors were teamed by state and instructed in advance how to arrange meetings with congressional offices.

Jim Riley (UW and the Division of Fluid Dynamics) and Milbrath visited the offices of both Washington senators (Cantwell and Murray) and three of its representatives (Hastings, Inslee, and McDermott). Meetings with the legislators themselves would've been a rare coup, but in all but one case they were able to meet with the staffer in charge of science affairs. The APS prepared a list of talking points to cover during the visit, as well as a packet of materials to leave behind, in support of the "primary ask": keeping science research a priority in next year's budget. APS visitors learned that any meeting on Capitol Hill where the "ask" is not clear is considered a waste of time.

Milbrath states, "Although some of the Democrat staffers were a little down from the week's events, we were impressed by enthusiastic support shown by the staffers on both sides of the aisle, and particularly surprised with the level of awareness the staff showed concerning scientific projects occurring in their district/state. The APS DC Office says repeatedly that these visits are very impactful and encourages APS members to do this when in DC. I certainly came away from it feeling that the visits had been more useful than I thought they would, as well as a fascinating educational experience."

The APS convocation, on the following day, is aimed at introducing the officers of the various APS Sections, Divisions, Forums, etc. to the support services offered by APS. To encourage more interaction, the Convocation took a new approach this year, employing roundtable session discussions with the various APS departments such as Accounting, Membership, and Outreach. Section officers attended these rotating sessions together, and learning how other Sections approach various issues was often the most enlightening facet of the discussions. In general, APS oversight of the Sections is increasing in areas such as accounting and meeting registration. APS is also interested in working with the Sections in regards to student activities and diversity efforts at meetings.

## Report from the 2010 Annual meeting, Whitman College

From September 30 to October 1, 2010, members of the Northwest section were hosted by Whitman College, in Walla Walla, Washington, for the twelfth annual meeting. The 186 attendees, including 73 undergraduate and 31 graduate students, were awarded with crisp, clear fall days, beautiful scenery, and a veritable banquet of physics. Efforts of the local organizing committee, chaired by Mark Beck, the program committee, chaired by Jennifer Heath, and all of the contributors, ensured a smooth-running and interesting conference. The meeting website is still up, at [www.whitman.edu/content/apsnw](http://www.whitman.edu/content/apsnw).

The meeting opened with a well-attended public lecture, the Brattain lecture, by Dr. Barry Barish, of California Institute of Technology, and, at the time, president-elect of the APS. Dr. Barish spoke about Einstein's legacy and general relativity in a manner which was both accessible to the public and inspiring to the physicists in the audience.

Dr. Barish's lecture set the stage for two days of presentations, and the other speakers lived up to his precedent. Many of the invited presentations have been archived at [www.whitman.edu/content/apsnw/presentations](http://www.whitman.edu/content/apsnw/presentations). Registrants enjoyed Walla Walla valley wines at the poster session while meeting their Northwest section colleagues and discussing the 35 poster presentations. Later that evening at the banquet, attendees learned more about the geological contribution to wine flavor profiles, during a lecture by Dr. Kevin Pogue of Whitman College entitled, "Quantifying Terroir."



*Attendees of the twelfth annual Northwest section meeting discuss the poster presentations.*

## Current Officers of the Section Need to Hear From You

Northwest Section officers handle items of business for the members. The Executive Committee meets face to face at the annual meeting, but we conduct business electronically throughout the year. Input from the membership is always welcome.

The annual business meeting, open to all NW section members, will be Friday afternoon, Oct. 21, 2011 in Corvallis. The exact time and location will be posted within the conference program at [www.physics.oregonstate.edu/NWAPS2011](http://www.physics.oregonstate.edu/NWAPS2011).

The terms of office for the Executive Committee members shall begin at the close of the Regular Meeting of the Section following their election. Elections will be held this summer to fill slots which expire at the upcoming 2011 meeting. Please watch for a ballot in your email inbox.

Your NW-APS officers are:

Chair:	Jennifer Heath ..... 10/10-10/11 Linfield College • <a href="mailto:jheath@linfield.edu">jheath@linfield.edu</a>
Chair-Elect:	Erich Vogt ..... 10/10-10/11 TRIUMF • <a href="mailto:vogt@triumf.ca">vogt@triumf.ca</a>
Vice-Chair:	Brian Milbrath ..... 10/10-10/11 PNNL • <a href="mailto:brian.milbrath@pnnl.gov">brian.milbrath@pnnl.gov</a>
Past-Chair:	Michael Miller ..... 10/10-10/11 WSU
Secretary/treasurer:	Thomas Olson ..... 06/08-10/11 AIP/SPS
Councillor:	David McIntyre ..... 01/11-12/14 OSU
Member-at-large:	John Orrell ..... 06/07-10/11 PNNL
Member-at-large:	Mary Alberg ..... 06/08-10/12 Seattle U.
Member-at-large:	Shannon Alberg ..... 06/09-10/13 U. of Portland
Member-at-large:	Oscar Vilches ..... 10/10-10/14 UW