

# THE BIOLOGICAL PHYSICIST

The Newsletter of the Division of Biological Physics of the American Physical Society

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lois@ccmr.cornell.edu

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This issue of THE BIOLOGICAL PHYSICIST brings you coverage of the highly successful Workshop on Opportunities in Biological Physics from the March Meeting, as well as some important announcements, and a March Meeting Photo Album!

-- SB

## **FEATURE**

# **Division of Biological Physics Workshop Presents Research Opportunities**

\*\*\*

**By Ernie Tretkoff**

Physicists can make a substantial contribution to many rapidly advancing areas of biology, according to information presented at a workshop held Sunday before the March Meeting in Baltimore.

The workshop was aimed at physicists, especially graduate students and postdocs, who were curious about how a background in physics can provide a unique perspective on biological systems.

The program consisted of eight talks, which focused on the exciting research at the interface between physics and biology, and how physicists can work in those areas. Speakers covered a range of biophysics topics, including physical tools for biology research, molecular motors, computation in biophysics, and physics and brain research.

The speakers were William Bialek (Princeton), Robijn Bruinsma (UCLA), Hans Frauenfelder (Los Alamos), Klaus Lehnertz (Bonn), Yale Goldman (Penn), Charles Stevens (Salk Institute), Zuzanna Siwy (Irvine), and Sunney Xie (Harvard).

The workshop was inspired by two previous standalone conferences on opportunities in biology for physicists that were sponsored by

the APS. The first was held in Boston, in September 2002, and the second in San Diego in January 2004. This year the Division of Biological Physics decided to hold the workshop with the March Meeting, to draw on the large pool of March Meeting attendees, attracting physicists who might not otherwise have attended the biological physics workshop.

Some of the approximately 200 people who attended the workshop already work in biophysics or closely related fields, while others work in other areas of physics but were interested in the topics. The attendees were a mix of graduate students, postdocs, and more senior physicists.

Participant response to the workshop was generally quite positive, said Clare Yu, one of the workshop organizers. Attendees said they enjoyed the talks, though many commented that they would have appreciated more time for networking, and/or the inclusion of some informal or panel discussion in the program. DBP will try to incorporate those suggestions in next year's workshop, which will be held with the 2007 March Meeting.

*[This article was reprinted from APS News.]*

## FEATURE

# Opportunities in Biological Physics Workshop: An Organizer's Perspective

\*\*\*

By Clare Yu

The 2006 APS Workshop on Opportunities in Biological Physics, attended by about 200 participants on March 12, was a one-day event before the March Meeting in Baltimore. About 1/2 the attendees were graduate students and 1/4 were post-docs. I was struck, but not surprised, by the tremendous interest in biophysics that there is among young physicists. The main goal of the workshop was to help graduate students and postdocs enter the field of biophysics, and to show them how a background in physics can provide a unique perspective on biological systems by giving specific examples. We also wanted the participants to leave the conference room in Baltimore with a feeling that physicists and biologists working together can do amazing science by answering crucial questions in biology and medicine.

Because biology is a very broad field, the physics of biology can be very broad too. There were eight speakers spanning a wide range of topics, but it was by no means comprehensive. The speakers provided only a glimpse of the current issues or questions in biology which physicists could explore experimentally or theoretically. Any attempt to tackle such areas would require a genuine collaboration between physicists and biologists. The opportunities are there and wide open to be pursued. Here is a brief summary of the talks in the order in which they were given.

**Hans Frauenfelder** talked about protein dynamics and the analogies to glassy systems and energy landscapes. But he also pointed out that, unlike glasses, one must relate structure to function.

**Sunney Xie** talked about how experimental tools developed by physicists can be used to probe biological systems. He gave some very impressive examples from his own lab such as imaging of single proteins as they were being translated from messenger RNA. He also showed how Coherent Anti-Stokes Raman Scattering (CARS) could be used to image live cells and living tissue.

**Yale Goldman** talked about the motor protein myosin which is responsible for muscle movement as well as for the transportation of vesicles along actin filaments inside cells. Actin filaments and microtubules are like roads, and motor proteins can haul cargo along these roads. He explained that these motor proteins walk much as we do, putting one foot in front of the other, or hand-over-hand, like a child going across monkey bars.

**Zuzanna Siwy** talked about ion channels, starting with the history of how Hodgkin and Huxley discovered how signals travel down nerve cells. Ion channels are important for letting ions in and out through the cell membrane. Channels can be highly selective, in that, for example, they might let in potassium ions – but not sodium ions – even

though sodium ions are smaller. She gave examples from her own work of how artificial ion channels can be fabricated and can preferentially let current flow one way but not the other, like a diode.

**Robijn Bruinsma** gave examples of opportunities for theory in biological physics by describing 5 problems in biology that needed explanation. **Bill Bialek** talked about searching for principles. Among the examples raised by both Bruinsma and Bialek was the question of how biological systems can function reliably in the presence of noise and fluctuations. Examples include transcribing DNA into messenger RNA as well as translating messenger RNA into proteins. Bruinsma mentioned that Steve Chu determined that there must be 2 proofreading steps in the translation of RNA into protein, but we only know how one of these steps works. Bialek pointed out that spatial correlations are important in determining how an embryo develops and differentiates. The embryo decides where its head and tail will be, based on concentration gradients of chemicals called *morphogens*. But how does the system overcome inaccuracies due to spatial fluctuations? The cells in the embryo could average the signal over time, but that would take too long compared to the time it takes for a fruit fly embryo to develop. More generally, one can ask how a biological system produces the correct output, given a noisy input?

**Chuck Stevens'** talk was perhaps the favorite, according to the limited number of survey responses. One of the problems mentioned by the participants was that many of the attendees knew no biology and so were lost in some of the talks that assumed some basic knowledge of biology. Stevens didn't assume any prior knowledge of biology. He started by explaining that physics-style theory could be very useful in biology, though physicists are not used to considering the importance of

function in biological systems. He then proceeded to use an electronic writing tablet to sketch a neuron and explain some basic facts. Then he gave an example of how simple considerations could lead one to conclude that 3/5 of the volume of the brain was taken up by wiring (axons and dendrites). This prediction turned out to be true, although neuroscientists had never even asked the question.

After taking a break due to the fire alarm forcing us to leave the convention center, we returned to hear the last talk which was given by **Klaus Lehnertz**. His talk was different from the others in that it had more of a medical physics flavor. He talked about relating structure and function in terms of the architecture of the brain. He showed different ways of doing functional imaging of the brain using x-rays, PET, CT, MRI, EEG, and SPECT.

Some of the survey respondents liked Stevens' talk best, while others placed all the last three talks at the top of their list (Bialek, Stevens, Lehnertz). The first two talks were plagued by technical problems: the microphone was not working properly. The morning session also suffered from the projector not working properly; but these problems were eventually fixed. I found all the talks very good and interesting. We provided the attendees with a sort of smorgasbord of topics, which hopefully gave a good sampling of the many ways in which physicists can work at the forefront of biology and biological physics.

The workshop was sponsored by the National Science Foundation, the UC Irvine branch of the Institute for Complex Adaptive Matter (UCI ICAM), the International Institute for Complex Adaptive Matter (I2CAM), and the Institute of Physics (IOP).

*Shirley Chan and Zuzanna Siwy also contributed material to this article.*

# PRL HIGHLIGHTS

Soft Matter, Biological, &  
Inter-disciplinary Physics Articles from  
**Physical Review Letters**

**10 February 2006**

**Volume 96, Number 5, Articles (05xxxx)  
Articles published 4 Feb- 10 Feb 2006**

<http://scitation.aip.org/dbt/dbt.jsp?KEY=PRLTAO&Volume=96&Issue=5>

**Democratic Particle Motion for  
Metabasin Transitions in Simple  
Glass Formers**

[G. A. Appignanesi](#), [J. A. Rodríguez Fris](#),  
[R. A. Montani](#), and [W. Kob](#)

Published 8 February 2006  
057801

**Super-Arrhenius Diffusion in an  
Undercooled Binary Lennard-Jones  
Liquid Results from a Quantifiable  
Correlation Effect**

[Vanessa K. de Souza](#) and [David J. Wales](#)

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057802

**Relation between Rotational and  
Translational Dynamic  
Heterogeneities in Water**

[Marco G. Mazza](#), [Nicolas Giovambattista](#),  
[Francis W. Starr](#), and [H. Eugene Stanley](#)

Published 9 February 2006  
057803

**Granular Species Segregation under  
Vertical Tapping: Effects of Size,  
Density, Friction, and Shaking  
Amplitude**

[Massimo Pica Ciamarra](#), [Maria Domenica  
De Vizia](#), [Annalisa Fierro](#), [Marco Tarzia](#),

[Antonio Coniglio](#), and [Mario Nicodemi](#)

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058001

**Energy Trapping and Shock  
Disintegration in a Composite  
Granular Medium**

[C. Daraio](#), [V. F. Nesterenko](#), [E. B.  
Herbold](#), and [S. Jin](#)

Published 9 February 2006  
058002

**Exact Solution of the One-  
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Energy Sandpile**

[Luca Dall'Asta](#)

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**Relation between Single Neuron and  
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Effects on Network Activity**

[Hideyuki Câteau](#) and [Alex D. Reyes](#)

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**Hydrodynamic Flow Patterns and  
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[Andrej Vilfan](#) and [Frank Jülicher](#)

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**Nonlinear Model Predicts Diverse  
Respiratory Patterns of Birdsong**

[Marcos A. Trevisan](#), [Gabriel B. Mindlin](#),  
and [Franz Goller](#)

Published 6 February 2006  
058103

**Flow Correlated Percolation during  
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## **Tumors**

[D.-S. Lee](#), [H. Rieger](#), and [K. Bartha](#)

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## **Hidden Stochastic Nature of a Single Bacterial Motor**

[Ekaterina A. Korobkova](#), [Thierry Emonet](#), [Heungwon Park](#), and [Philippe Cluzel](#)

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## **Protein Folding Dynamics via Quantification of Kinematic Energy Landscape**

[S ema Kachalo](#), [Hsiao-Mei Lu](#), and [Jie Liang](#)

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## **Capillary Aging of the Contacts between Glass Spheres and a Quartz Resonator Surface**

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Published 7 February 2006

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## **Evidence for Interfacial-Storage Anomaly in Nanocomposites for Lithium Batteries from First-Principles Simulations**

[Yuri F. Zhukovskii](#), [Palani Balaya](#), [Eugene A. Kotomin](#), and [Joachim Maier](#)

Published 9 February 2006

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## **COMMENTS**

### **Comment on "Sequencing-Independent Delocalization in a DNA-Like Double Chain with Base Pairing"**

[A. Sedrakyan](#) and [F. Dom nguez-Adame](#)

Published 10 February 2006

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## **Caetano and Schulz Reply:**

[R. A. Caetano](#) and [P. A. Schulz](#)

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**Articles published 11 Feb - 17 Feb 2006**

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### **Structure of Dense Liquid Water by Neutron Scattering to 6.5 GPa and 670 K**

[Th. Str assle](#), [A. M. Saitta](#), [Y. Le Godec](#), [G. Hamel](#), [S. Klotz](#), [J. S. Loveday](#), and [R. J. Nelmes](#)

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### **Electric-Field-Induced Chirality Flipping in Smectic Liquid Crystals: The Role of Anisotropic Viscosity**

[M. Nakata](#), [R.-F. Shao](#), [J. E. Maclennan](#), [W. Weissflog](#), and [N. A. Clark](#)

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### **Propulsion with a Rotating Elastic Nanorod**

[Manoel Manghi](#), [Xaver Schlagberger](#), and [Roland R. Netz](#)

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068101

### **Observation of Bistability and Hysteresis in Optical Binding of Two Dielectric Spheres**

[N. K. Metzger](#), [K. Dholakia](#), and [E. M. Wright](#)

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### **Detecting Electronic Coherence in Excited-State Electron Transfer in Fluorinated Benzenes**

[S. A. Kovalenko](#), [A. L. Dobryakov](#), and [V. Farztdinov](#)

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**Logarithmic Chain-Exchange Kinetics of Diblock Copolymer Micelles**

[Reidar Lund](#), [Lutz Willner](#), [Jörg Stellbrink](#), [Peter Lindner](#), and [Dieter Richter](#)

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**Criticality and Phase Transition in Stock-Price Fluctuations**

[Ken Kiyono](#), [Zbigniew R. Struzik](#), and [Yoshiharu Yamamoto](#)

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**Universal Behavior of Optimal Paths in Weighted Networks with General Disorder**

[Yiping Chen](#), [Eduardo López](#), [Shlomo Havlin](#), and [H. Eugene Stanley](#)

Published 16 February 2006  
068702

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Articles published 18 Feb - 24 Feb 2006**

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**The Frozen State in the Liquid Phase of Side-Chain Liquid-Crystal Polymers**

[H. Mendil](#), [L. Noirez](#), [P. Baroni](#), and [I. Grillo](#)

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077801

**Glassy Conformations in Wrinkled Membranes**

[Sahraoui Chaieb](#), [Vinay K. Natrajan](#), and [Ahmed Abd El-rahman](#)

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**Continuum Theory of Retroviral Capsids**

[T. T. Nguyen](#), [R. F. Bruinsma](#), and [W. M. Gelbart](#)

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078102

**Effective Potentials for Folding Proteins**

[Nan-Yow Chen](#), [Zheng-Yao Su](#), and [Chung-Yu Mou](#)

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078103

**Functional Modes of Proteins Are among the Most Robust**

[S. Nicolay](#) and [Y.-H. Sanejouand](#)

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**Mean Chain Length of Adsorbed Supramolecular Polymers**

[Henk J. A. Zweistra](#) and [N. A. M. Besseling](#)

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078301

**Surface Wave Assisted Self-Assembly of Multidomain Magnetic Structures**

[A. Snezhko](#), [I. S. Aranson](#), and [W.-K. Kwok](#)

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078701

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**Velocity Autocorrelation Functions of Hard-Sphere Fluids: Long-Time Tails upon Undercooling**

[Stephen R. Williams](#), [G. Bryant](#), [I. K. Snook](#), and [W. van Meegen](#)

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087801

**Coupling Hydrophobicity,  
Dispersion, and Electrostatics in  
Continuum Solvent Models**

[J. Dzubiella](#), [J. M. J. Swanson](#), and [J. A. McCammon](#)

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087802

**Light Scattering and Phase Behavior  
of Lysozyme-Poly(Ethylene Glycol)  
Mixtures**

[J. Bloustone](#), [T. Virmani](#), [G. M. Thurston](#),  
and [S. Fraden](#)

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087803

**Anomalous Vibrational Dispersion in  
Holographically Trapped Colloidal  
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[Marco Polin](#), [David G. Grier](#), and  
[Stephen R. Quake](#)

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088101

**Stress-Dependent Elasticity of  
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[M. L. Gardel](#), [F. Nakamura](#), [J. Hartwig](#), [J. C. Crocker](#),  
[T. P. Stossel](#), and [D. A. Weitz](#)

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**Interface Instability in Shear-  
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[S. Lerouge](#), [M. Argentina](#), and [J. P. Decruppe](#)

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**Optimal Cell Approach to Osmotic  
Properties of Finite Stiff-Chain  
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[Dmytro Antypov](#) and [Christian Holm](#)

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**Cyclic Motion of a Grafted Polymer  
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[Rafael Delgado-Buscalioni](#)

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[Zheng Liu](#), [Masanori Koshino](#), [Kazu Suenaga](#),  
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[D. Manoussaki](#), [E. K. Dimitriadis](#), and [R. S. Chadwick](#)

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088701

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**System of Mobile Agents to Model  
Social Networks**

[Marta C. González](#), [Pedro G. Lind](#), and  
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**Comment on "Intrinsic Low  
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[Kenji Mizoguchi](#), [Shunsuke Tanaka](#), and  
[Hirokazu Sakamoto](#)



Published 3 March 2006  
089801

**Nakamae *et al.* Reply:**

[S. Nakamae](#), [M. Cazayous](#), [A. Sacuto](#), [P. Monod](#), and [H. Bouchiat](#)

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**Optical and Resonant X-Ray  
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**SmC<sup>\*</sup><sub>T12</sub>-SmC<sup>\*</sup> Liquid Crystal Phase  
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[S. T. Wang](#), [Z. Q. Liu](#), [B. K. McCoy](#), [R. Pindak](#), [W. Caliebe](#), [H. T. Nguyen](#), and  
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[Jacco H. Snoeijer](#), [Wouter G. Ellenbroek](#),  
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[R. Elliott](#), [I. Szeleifer](#), and [M. Schick](#)

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[Ido Golding](#) and [Edward C. Cox](#)

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[Timo Betz](#), [Daryl Lim](#), and [Josef A. Käs](#)

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**Quasiperiodic Events in an  
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[O. Ramos](#), [E. Altshuler](#), and [K. J. Måløy](#)

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**Controlled Irradiative Formation of  
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[Vance Bergeron](#), [Charles Berger](#), and [M.  
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**Dynamics of Networking Agents  
Competing for High Centrality and  
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[Petter Holme](#) and [Gourab Ghoshal](#)

Published 7 March 2006  
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Articles published 11 Mar - 17 Mar 2006**

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**Segment Distributions of End-  
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[R. Lehner](#), [J. Koota](#), [G. Maret](#), and [T.  
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**Dynamics of Chain Molecules in Disordered Materials**

[Rakwoo Chang](#) and [Arun Yethiraj](#)

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107802

**Intrinsic Rates and Activation Free Energies from Single-Molecule Pulling Experiments**

[Olga K. Dudko](#), [Gerhard Hummer](#), and [Attila Szabo](#)

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**Dynamics of Structural Transformations between Lamellar and Inverse Bicontinuous Cubic Lyotropic Phases**

[Charlotte E. Conn](#), [Oscar Ces](#), [Xavier Mulet](#), [Stephanie Finet](#), [Roland Winter](#), [John M. Seddon](#), and [Richard H. Templer](#)

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[Rajesh Ganapathy](#) and [A. K. Sood](#)

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**Articles published 18 Mar - 24 Mar. 2006**  
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[Denis Fenistein](#), [Jan-Willem van de Meent](#), and [Martin van Hecke](#)

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[Thomas Bornschrögl](#) and [Matthias Rief](#)

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[F. Ritort](#), [S. Mihardja](#), [S. B. Smith](#), and

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**Overembedding Method for Modeling Nonstationary Systems**

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**Scale Dependence of Branching in Arterial and Bronchial Trees**

[Juan G. Restrepo](#), [Edward Ott](#), and [Brian R. Hunt](#)

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**Inference of DNA Sequences from Mechanical Unzipping: An Ideal-Case Study**

[V. Baldazzi](#), [S. Cocco](#), [E. Marinari](#), and

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**Ion Complexation: A Route to Enhanced Block Copolymer Alignment with Electric Fields**

[Jia-Yu Wang](#), [Ting Xu](#), [Julie M. Leiston-Belanger](#), [Suresh Gupta](#), and [Thomas P. Russell](#)

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**Multiscale Coarse Graining of Diblock Copolymer Self-Assembly: From Monomers to Ordered Micelles**

[Carlo Pierleoni](#), [Chris Addison](#), [Jean-Pierre Hansen](#), and [Vincent Krakoviack](#)

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## **SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT**

# **DBP & the Biophysical Society Joint Symposia at 2007 Meetings by Bob Eisenberg**

The American Biophysical Society will have a Symposium at its 2007 annual meeting (Baltimore MD, March 3-7) sponsored by the Division of Biological Physics of the APS. The goal of the Symposium is to present biophysical systems that can be analyzed in the physical tradition to help design useful experiments.

The DBP will have a Symposium at the APS 2007 March Meeting (Denver CO, March 5-9) sponsored by the American Biophysical Society. The goal of the Symposium is to present biophysical systems that are so well known experimentally that they are ripe for analysis in the physical tradition.

The proposed symposium for the 2007 Biophysical Society Meeting in Baltimore MD will be titled **Modeling as a Tool in Biophysics**. The preliminary program will be as follows:

Submitted by Bob Eisenberg, Councilor of the Division of Biological Physics of the American Physical Society with the most useful help and advice of Barry Lentz, President-Elect of the (American) Biophysical Society.

We propose a symposium to show how mathematical methods can help the

understanding of four important biological processes. We will not provide a compendium of mathematical methods. Rather we will show how modeling can help biophysicists examine biological mechanism: a good model is one that shows how it itself can be tested and extended by new experiments.

1] Robert Eisenberg. Molecular Biophysics & Physiology, Rush University Medical Center. "How can a channel tell  $\text{Ca}^{++}$  from  $\text{Na}^{+}$ ?"

2] H. Eugene Stanley. Physics Department, Boston University. "Mechanism of Amyloid  $\beta$ -Protein Aggregation as Revealed by *Ab initio* Discrete Molecular Dynamics."

3] Fred Salisbury. Physics Department, Wake Forest University. "Computational Modeling of DNA Repair Enzyme."

4] Dean Astumian. Physics Department, University of Maine. "Mechanisms of Biological Motors Modeled by Stochastic Resonance."

*The preliminary program and list of speakers for the Symposium to be held at the APS March Meeting is not yet available.*



## **SPECIAL DBP ANNOUNCEMENT:**

### **2006-2007 DBP Committee Appointments**

#### **2006 DBP Executive Committee**

Chair: **Marilyn Gunner** (1-year term, expires March 2007)  
Chair-Elect: **Dean Astumian** (1-year term, expires March 2007)  
Vice Chair: **James Glazier** (1-year term, expires March 2007)  
Immediate Past Chair: **Peter Jung** (1-year term, expires March 2007)  
Secretary/Treasurer: **Shirley Chan** (4-year term, expires March 2008)  
APS Councilor: **Bob Eisenberg** (4-year term, expires December 2008)

At-Large Members:

**Lois Pollack** (3-year term, expires March 2007)  
**Stephen Quake** (3-year term, expires March 2007)  
**Stephen J. Hagen** (3-year term, expires March 2008)  
**Chao Tang** (3-year term, expires March 2008)  
**Réka Albert** (3-year term, expires March 2009)  
**Brian Salzberg** (3-year term, expires March 2009)

#### **2006 DBP Program Committee**

Chair: **Dean Astumian** (1-year term, expires March 2007)  
Co-Chair: **Marilyn Gunner** (1-year term, expires March 2007)  
Tutorial Chair: **James Glazier** (1-year term, expires March 2007)

Committee Members:

**Shirley Chan** (4-year term, expires March 2008)  
**Lois Pollack** (1-year term, expires March 2007)  
**Stephen Quake** (2-year term, expires March 2007)  
**Chao Tang** (3-year term, expires March 2008)  
**Réka Albert** (3-year term, expires March 2009)

#### **2006 DBP Fellowship Committee**

Committee Chair:

**James Glazier** (1-year term, expires March 2007)

Committee Members:

**Partha Mitra** (1-year term, expires March 2007)  
**Jin Wang** (1-year term, expires March 2007)  
**Mark Williams** (1-year term, expires March 2007)  
**Ned Wingreen** (1-year term, expires March 2007)

#### **Education Liaison**

**Stephen Hagen** (1-year term, expires March 2007)

#### **Fundraising Committee for Biological Physics Prize**

**Peter Jung** (1-year term, expires March 2007)  
**Stephen Quake** (1-year term, expires March 2007)  
**Jin Wang** (1-year term, expires March 2007)

#### **DBP-BPS Contributing Symposium Committee**

**Robert Eisenberg** (1-year term, expires March 2007)  
**Brian Salzberg** (1-year term, expires March 2007)

# A DBP Photo Album

## Snapshots from the Business Meeting APS March Meeting, Baltimore, March 14, 2006



*Outgoing DBP Chair Peter Jung presents Eshel Ben-Jacob with an APS Fellowship.*



*DBP Executive Committee Member Stephen J. Hagen.*



*Center, Eugenie Milczarek, Hans Frauenfelder and Eli Greenbaum. At the far right of the row behind Eugenie Milczarek is Margaret Foster of Physical Review E.*



*DBP Secretary-Treasurer Shirley Chan discusses the division's finances...*



*Incoming DBP Chair Marilyn Gunner talks with Secretary-Treasurer Shirley Chan.*



*Flavio Fenton and Elizabeth Cherry of Cornell University.*



*Outgoing DBP Chair Peter Jung talks with Kamal Shukla, NSF Program Director for Molecular Biophysics.*



*Alfred G. Redfield, winner of the 2005 Biological Physics Prize, accepts his award.*



*APS Fellow J. Leo Van Hemmen, taken by surprise!*



*Stephen J. Schiff receives an APS Fellowship from outgoing DBP chair Peter Jung.*