

Northwest Section Newsletter

APS Northwest Section

November 2013

<http://www.aps.org/units/nws/index.cfm>

The Annual Meeting: Back to Spring in 2014

As mentioned in last year's newsletter and announced at the 2012 Annual Meeting (Simon Fraser University), due to the results of a membership survey conducted in 2012 it was decided to move our Annual Meeting back to May beginning in 2014. (See details on the 2014 meeting at the University of Washington elsewhere in this newsletter.) That means that although we will not miss an academic year, the 2013 calendar year has no Northwest Section meeting.

Historically, the Section's Annual Meeting occurred in mid-May. For the years 2010-12, it was moved to October on a trial-basis. It can be very difficult to choose the perfect time for the Section's meeting due to possible conflicts with other meetings, conferences, and academic schedules. This is compounded by the fact that our Section covers all fields of physics, two countries, and a large variety of academic calendars. As one example of the difficulty, many institutions like having their undergraduates present at a meeting at the end of the academic year, when they've finished a senior thesis project, while others prefer the fall, after they've finished summer projects. While the October meeting numbers and the membership survey did not overwhelmingly favor May vs. October (other times were looked at too but these appeared to be the best for Spring and Fall), there did appear to be a preference for a return to the May timeframe.

The Northwest Section is the only APS Section to have its Annual Meeting in the Spring, though a couple Sections meet twice a year. Rather than pick a definitive weekend in May, our goal is to work with the local organizing committee to pick a time in May or thereabouts that works best for them. The APS asks that the Section's meeting not conflict with their two large meetings of the year, the March and April Meeting, which in spite of their names sometimes can occur later. The UW Meeting, beginning May 1st, 2014, is our first meeting back to the Spring schedule. During this "year off", the Section hopes to accomplish a couple things. One is the kick-off of an outreach grant program (see details elsewhere). Another goal is to try to get a little further ahead in our planning of subsequent meetings.

Plan Now for the 2014 Seattle Meeting

The XV Meeting of the Northwest Section of the American Physical Society will be held in Seattle from Thursday evening, May 1, through late Saturday afternoon, May 3, 2014. The meeting is being hosted by the University of Washington (UW) Physics Department. The meeting sessions will be held in the UW Alder Commons Conference Center on Friday and Saturday. The format of previous NWAPS meetings with invited plenary sessions in the morning followed by up to five parallel sessions in the afternoon will be used.

Alder Commons is a recently built compact venue for rela-

tively small conferences with a plenary/parallel session room seating over 200 participants, and four rooms for parallel sessions of various capacities. It has a central "commons" area for registration, refreshments and posters. It is adjacent to the main UW Campus. In connection with the meeting, a public lecture sponsored by the Department of Physics is planned for the evening of Thursday, May 1. A banquet will be held in the Walker-Ames room of Kane Hall, inside the UW Campus, on the evening of Friday, May 2.

Advanced registration and abstract submissions will be handled by the American Physical Society. The Program Committee of the NWAPS Section will arrange for the invited plenary and parallel session speakers and programs.

The local organizing committee expects that a block of rooms at one or more of the hotels near the UW Campus and Alder Commons (within five blocks) to be reserved for the conference up to a few weeks before the meeting. The first weekend in May is the start of the boating season in the area, with many festivities and tourists visiting Seattle; we urge participants to make housing arrangements very early and not wait until the last minute.

The local organizing committee members are David Cobden, Alejandro Garcia, Blayne Heckel (Department of Physics Chair), Marjorie Olmstead (Department Associate Chair), Jennifer Raines (Department Administrator), Peter Shaffer, Oscar Vilches (principal contact) and Gordon Watts. Conference reservations, sites and banquet management are handled by Sherri Nielsen-Hazard of UW Conference Services. For further information, please send an email to the local contact, Oscar Vilches, lowtemp@u.washington.edu

A web site with additional information, including regional and local maps, transportation options, amenities in the Seattle area, etc. has been setup:

<https://sharepoint.washington.edu/phys/research/xvmeeting/Pages/default.aspx>

This website is being updated periodically as arrangements are completed.

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Funding to Support Visiting Speaker

Earlier this year the APS Northwest Section announced the creation of a program to support primarily undergraduate institutions that wished to bring speakers to their institutions from around the Northwest Section. The Section's Speaker Program is intended to facilitate connections between researchers and students across the Northwest Section by providing for the travel related expenses of the speaker to visit, present on their area of work, and have an informal discussion with students. Professional networking is encouraged. The full document description is located on the front of the APS Northwest Section unit website. Specifically:

<http://www.aps.org/units/nws/upload/nws-speakerprogram.doc>

The program is seeking submissions on an on-going basis. This Speaker Program is intended to be flexible and easy. We encourage any Section member interested in taking advantage of this program to contact the Section's Secretary/Treasurer (currently J.L. Orrell: john.orrell@gmail.com).

Report from the 2012 Annual Meeting, Simon Fraser University

NWAPS's Fourteenth Annual Meeting was held October 18 – 20th, 2012 in Vancouver, British Columbia. The meeting was hosted by Simon Fraser University at its Downtown Harbour Centre Campus building overlooking Burrard Inlet. The urban setting provided for lots of food, lodging, and tourism opportunities nearby while the exciting program and proximity to many large universities made for good attendance (194). Local organizing committee Chair Andrew DeBenedictis kept everything running smoothly.

The meeting kicked off on a Thursday night with a reception and public lecture by TRIUMF's Reiner Kruecken on the "The Nuclear Physics of Stars". Friday and Saturday morning featured ten plenary talks on a range of exciting talks including the recent Higgs-boson results, aurora, the experiences of an entrepreneurial physicist, the next muon g-2 experiment, tsunamis, Bose-Einstein condensates, and demos from Science World British Columbia. Friday and Saturday afternoon were devoted to parallel sessions in astronomy, cosmology, and gravity; nuclear physics; physics education; biological and applied physics; atomic, molecular and optical physics; particle physics; and condensed matter. The latter two fields had sessions both days. There was also a special session on Upper-year Lab Instruction organized by Joss Ives (Univ. of the Fraser Valley).

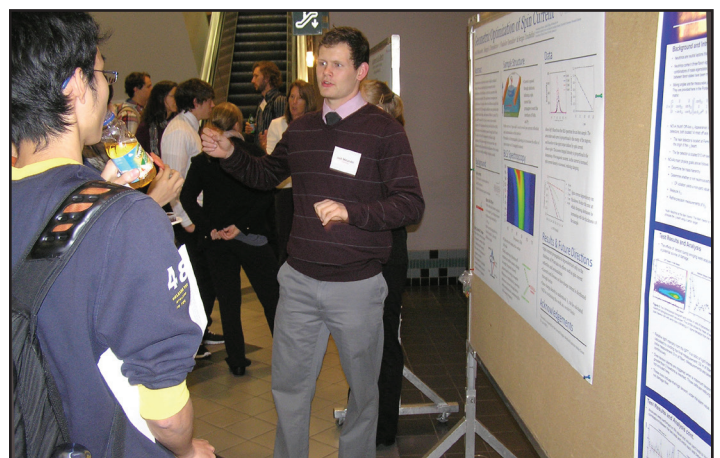
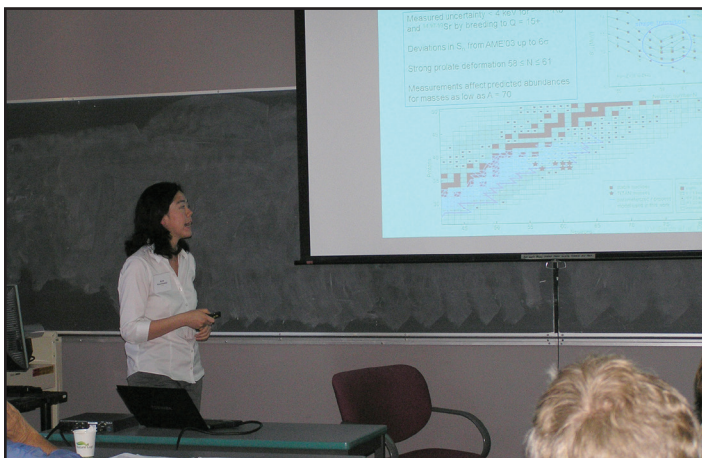
Friday afternoon ended with a poster session with 29 posters. This was followed by our annual banquet. The banquet speaker was Simon Fraser's Glyn Williams-Jones, who spoke on "Big Bangs: Applying Geophysics to the Study of Active Volcanoes." With the previous two section meetings featuring banquet talks on ice-core sampling (Oregon State University) and wine-growing terroir (Whitman College), it appears we like a little geoscience with our dinner! On Saturday, the Society of Physics Students (represented by former NWAPS officer Tom Olsen) hosted a lunch for students. The meeting featured a large number of presentations and posters by graduate students, and many by undergraduates as well.

Although there have been a few meetings that have had a larger number of participants, the Simon Fraser meeting had a high percentage of participants who gave a talk and this resulted in setting a number of records for our meeting. Records set include: Most Astronomy/Gravity/Cosmology talks, Most Nuclear Physics talks, Most Particle Physics talks (Thanks, Higgs-boson!), Most Physics Education talks (including the special session), Most Parallel Session talks in total, and Most Parallel and Poster presentations in total. Thanks again to Simon Fraser University for hosting such a superb meeting in a fine location.

Consider hosting a Section Meeting!

NWAPS meetings have been held all over the Section through the years:

1999	Univ. of British Columbia	Vancouver
2000	Univ. of Oregon	Eugene
2001	Univ. of Washington	Seattle
2002	Univ. of Alberta	Banff
2003	Reed College	Portland
2004	Univ. of Idaho/WSU (posters & banquet in Pullman)	Moscow
2005	Univ. of Victoria	Victoria
2006	Univ. of Puget Sound	Tacoma
2007	Idaho State Univ.	Pocatello
2008	Lewis & Clark College	Portland
2009	Univ. of British Columbia	Vancouver
2010	Whitman College	Walla Walla
2011	Oregon State Univ.	Corvallis
2012	Simon Fraser Univ.	Vancouver
2014	Univ. of Washington	Seattle



We are always interested in hearing from institutions that might be willing to host a NWAPS meeting. Typically, meetings are held on campus to the extent possible to keep registration costs down but we are flexible to the constraints of the local institution – it is clear that classroom space is getting harder to come by at many places. Hosting such a meeting can provide recognition to your department and easy access for your students and faculty to hear about exciting physics research happening across the region. NWAPS officers work through budgets with the local organizing committee so that the meeting does not result in financial cost to the institution. We have begun preliminary discussions with a host for the 2015 meeting but would like to hear from institutions interested in hosting a meeting in the future. In particular, we are interested in Oregon schools that might be interested in hosting a meeting in 2016 or after. Please contact a Section officer if interested!

About Our Section

Founded in 1998, our section represents over 1200 physicists from Canada (British Columbia and Alberta) and the United States (Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, and Alaska). It is the only transnational APS Section and comprises a number of world-class physics departments and research institutions, as well as many first-rate small colleges. Our meetings allow us physicists at the end of the continent to hear about exciting physics from many fields being performed right here in the Northwest.

Besides fostering regional collaboration, a major goal of NWAPS has always been to support student research, both undergraduate and graduate. At the Annual Meeting, students can present their own work, learn about the major questions being studied in other fields, and network with peers and potential employers or graduate schools. The Section works hard to keep meeting expenses low and subsidizes student registration costs. In addition, travel awards are offered to help with student travel expenses to get to meetings. Further information can be found at www.aps.org/units/nws/index.cfm.

The Section's annual business meeting will be held as part of the 2014 NWAPS meeting in Seattle and is open to all section members. Prior to the meeting, elections will be held electronically for section officers. Please watch for a ballot this spring. Terms for the newly elected officers will begin at the close of the annual business meeting. Our current NWAPS officers are listed below. Please feel free to contact them with any input you wish to provide.

2013 APS Leadership Convocation

Each year the APS hosts members of the elected leadership from each of the APS Units at the APS headquarters in College Park, MD. The February 2013 APS Leadership Convocation was the official "roll-out" of the five year strategic plan that had been under development during the previous year. During 2012 the APS Council the Executive Board sought input from the Unit leadership how to best direct the APS in the coming years. This resulted in a strategic plan with four goals:

1. To better serve the Members
2. To better serve the Physics Community
3. To better serve the Society
4. To increase organizational excellence

In briefest summary these goals entail improving communication and broadening the Society's diversity, maintaining the APS journals and meetings as the premiere international venues for physics research dissemination, advocating vigorously for support of physics research efforts, becoming the recognized authoritative resource for information about physics to the public and supporting STEM education development, and to finally to ensure the Society is financially sound as the journal-based revenue model faces pressure in the modern era. The APS Strategic Plan announcement and full document are found at:

<http://www.aps.org/publications/apsnews/201205/fiveyearplan.cfm>

In addition, each year the APS Convocation is preceded by a day of visits to Capitol Hill. In the last two years I (J.L. Orrell) have participated in the Capitol Hill visits, meeting staff in the offices of Sen. Maria Cantwell, and Sen. Patty Murray, and Rep. Doc Hastings (I live in the eastern part of Washington State). I personally found these visits very educational and valuable for seeing inside how issues are brought to our elected representatives. The staff members at the APS Office of Public Affairs in Washington do an excellent job of providing the background and context for how to meet with elected representatives and present on behalf of the broad physics community. However, what are clearly the most germane topics of discussion on Capitol Hill are the personal stories from the elected official's constituents. In our case, as physicists, this means how we are affected by choices made in Washington, DC regarding funding for science and technology development. Every staff member I have met has given us a warm, welcome reception and took as much time as was needed to understand our concerns and ask us questions to best understand the message we were conveying.

Northwest Section Inspires Another

Former Northwest Section APS member Stephan Schlamming (at UW during his time out here) missed the benefits of a Section so much after leaving the area, he helped to start a new one! After moving to the National Institute of Standards and Technology in Maryland near the other, smaller Washington (D.C.), he was surprised to find himself in an area with no APS Section. After complaining of this to NSF's Beverly Berger at the APS April 2012 meeting, she replied "Why don't you start one?" and so he did. After getting some other key players and APS involved, the 200 members needed were recruited and the APS Council officially approved the Mid-Atlantic Section in November of last year. Stephan currently serves as the Chair of the Interim Executive Committee for the Section while they go through nominating and electing an official Executive Committee this month. The Section has also begun planning their first Section meeting in October of 2014 at Pennsylvania State University. It has been growing at a rate of approximately 50 members per month and is near 1000 members at this point.

The Mid-Atlantic Section includes Delaware, D.C., Maryland, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia and was the last area of the United States to have a Section. The region is home to many fine universities and colleges, and a host of many government laboratories and agencies. One reason that it may have been the last region within the U.S. to assemble a

section is that for much of the APS's history there was always one national meeting in D.C. each year and even after that, it has still been a frequent location. The APS national headquarters are in College Park, Maryland, also near Washington, D.C.

I (B. Milbrath) spoke with Stephan to ask him about his new Section and what it was that he liked about his old one. Unfortunately, with the U.S. government shutdown, he had plenty of time to talk to me! He mentioned that when he came to UW he was new to the United States and APS and found his first national meeting to be overwhelming: too many people and too easy to focus exclusively on one's area and not get to know anyone. (This was an April meeting. Imagine if he'd gone to a March meeting!) Subsequently, he went as a fill-in

speaker for his boss to a Northwest APS meeting and found the setting to be much more congenial. He could learn about work being done across all fields of physics in the region, and talk to a wide range of physicists during the coffee breaks. He found that by going year after year, one could get to know regular attendees from across the region and catch up on their work. He particularly liked the opportunity to visit other universities and areas around the region such as the meetings he attended in Moscow (Univ. of Idaho), Portland (Lewis & Clark Univ.), and Pocatello (Idaho State University). Best of luck to Stephan and our new younger sibling Mid-Atlantic Section.

Contributors: Brian Milbrath, John Orrell, and Oscar Vilches

Your APS-NW Executive Committee is:

Chair: Brian Milbrath 10/12 - 05/14 Pacific Northwest Natl Lab (Brian.Milbrath@pnnl.gov)	Councillor: David McIntyre01/11 - 12/14 Oregon State Univ
Chair-Elect: Jo-Anne Brown..... 10/12 - 05/14 Univ of Calgary (jocat@ras.ucalgary.ca)	Member-at-Large: Shannon Mayer 10/09 - 05/14 Univ of Portland
Vice Chair: James Imamura..... 10/12 - 05/14 Univ of Oregon (Imamura@uoregon.edu)	Member-at-Large: Oscar Vilches 10/10 - 05/15 Univ of Washington
Past Chair: Erich Vogt..... 10/12 - 05/14 TRIUMF	Member-at-Large: Andrew Dawes.....10/11 - 05/16 Pacific Univ
Secretary/Treasurer: John Orrell.....10/11 - 05/15 Pacific Northwest Natl Lab (john.orrell@gmail.com)	Member-at-Large: Yi Gu..... 10/12 - 05/17 Washington State Univ