



## Director's Matters

By H. Frederick Dylla, Executive Director & CEO

### Scholarly Publishing Roundtable releases report to Congress

Scholarly publications, such as journals, are the primary form of communicating research results in science, having served this function well for the past 350 years. Journal subscription income sustains the scholarly publication system, as well as the many learned societies who publish journals. With the advent of the Web, it is easy for authors to post their works as soon as they are created. That content, however, is not likely to be folded into the body of scholarly knowledge without the publisher's contributions, such as registration, peer review and certification, distribution, and archiving. The cost of these functional roles of publishing (vetting, formatting, posting, distribution, archiving, etc.) is typically between \$1,000 and \$4,000 per article and, in certain cases, substantially more. Such costs are recovered through institutional library subscriptions and site license fees in the case of more than 90% of the current global scholarly publication business.

Over the past two decades, online access to journals has increased tremendously. Publishers and librarians have worked together to provide greater access to an increasing number of journals and their backfiles, thus allowing scholars around the world to access, download, read and interact with more of the peer-reviewed scholarly literature. Some believe strongly that scholarly publications should be freely available at no charge to everyone with a Web connection, asserting that this would benefit science and its applications, particularly in the case of less advantaged institutions and small businesses around the world. Furthermore, the argument goes, the results of research funded by the public (taxpayers) should be freely available to the public. Indeed, this would be ideal, but it is bound to come at a price because there are real costs to be accounted for—as the stressed music recording and newspaper businesses have found. The debate surrounding these issues has intensified in recent years, and I have written about it in previous *AIP Matters* columns:

- [Publishers and librarians do well as allies](#) (August 24, 2009)
- [Taking a stand on author deposit mandates](#) (February 2, 2009)
- [AIP's response to the NIH public-access mandate](#) (July 7, 2008)
- [Public input on public access](#) (March 24, 2008)
- [Open Access—unfettered, but not costless](#) (March 3, 2008)

To bridge the divide in this debate by attempting consensus among the stakeholders, the US House Science and Technology Committee convened the Scholarly Publishing Roundtable last June to provide recommendations to the federal government on how to accomplish public access to federally funded research. The roundtable members were drawn from the library, university administration, research and publishing communities. I was honored to be one of the publisher representatives in this group, which has released its [report](#) to Congress today. The core recommendation recognizes the

responsibility of the federal government to develop policies for public access to the research results of publicly funded research. However, the Roundtable urges the government to develop, implement, and monitor such policies in collaboration with all the stakeholders in order to ensure the sustainability and continued rapid evolution of the scholarly publication enterprise. Roundtable members identified and validated the following principles that "should inhere in scholarly publishing:" the necessity of peer review, increased access, adaptable business models, interoperability of online platforms, and the need to pay careful attention to archiving and preservation. We agreed that scholarly publications are essential to scholarship and that any changes to the system of scholarly publishing would have to be carefully designed, implemented and monitored. We also acknowledged appropriate roles for the government, institutions and publishers, particularly in ensuring the value that increasingly interoperable platforms for online content have: for storing, searching, accessing and interacting with complex and changing journal content and the underlying data. The desired interoperability cannot be fully realized through a single government, institution or publisher platform. It requires a cooperative system.

One of the most important outcomes of the Roundtable transcends any of the individual recommendations in the report: We uniformly felt that we had demonstrated a useful process for dealing with a contentious issue among stakeholders. And, while we did not arrive at an absolute consensus, the overwhelming majority of the Roundtable members (12 out of 14) endorsed the full report and its recommendations. We came to the first meeting with a diverse set of views, but by the time we left we had fashioned a set of recommendations that required compromise by all parties. We also left with a conviction that many of the recommendations and the process we have employed will help deliver a sustainable path for the evolution of scholarly publications. Please [read the report](#) and send me your comments.

## PUBLISHING MATTERS

### Cross-disciplinary research in focus at the MRS fall meeting



At the beginning of December, AIP put on a strong exhibit presence at the [2009 Materials Research Society \(MRS\) fall meeting](#) in Boston. More than 6,000 attendees and 220 exhibitors gathered at this important five-day conference, which provided an excellent opportunity for AIP to interact with our readers and authors. At the meeting, AIP officially unveiled the [newest release of AIP UniPHY](#), and encouraged MRS attendees to stop by our booth to sign up for this new scientific social networking site. Sample journals from both the [AIP journal collection](#) and our partner journals were on display, and booth visitors were able to meet with staff to discuss accessing content and submitting their research for publication.

Following a long-standing tradition, the joint editorial board of three of AIP's premier journals—[Applied Physics Letters](#), [Journal of Applied Physics](#), and [Applied Physics](#)



Visitors to the AIP booth at the recent MRS fall meeting enjoyed user-friendly registration for [AIP UniPHY](#), the world's first literature-based professional social networking site for physical scientists.

**Reviews**—convened during the meeting.



Representing AIP and partner publications were, from the left, AIP staff members Mary Griffin, Alison Loudon, and Mark Cassar.

An important event for many of the researchers who publish in AIP journals and proceedings, the MRS meeting was composed of 50 symposia in the categories of information processing and sensing, nanoscience and technology, energy and the environment, materials across the scales, and health and biological materials. A highlight of MRS's "Super Sunday" was a workshop on [third-generation solar technologies](#), which centered on the importance of

fostering multidisciplinary approaches to accelerate progress in renewable energy technology. It included a poster session on collaborative work between mathematicians and physical scientists. Lawrence Kazmerski of the National Renewable Energy Laboratory presented a talk in MRS's [Frontiers of Materials Research](#) lunchtime series, illustrating the importance of solar photovoltaics. Founded in 1973, the [Materials Research Society](#)—an Affiliated Society of AIP—now serves more than 15,000 members located in the US and 70 other countries with its vital mission to encourage communication and the exchange of technical information across the various fields of science affecting materials.

## PRC MATTERS

### Spooky science

The Society of Physics Students (SPS) national office knows that local SPS chapters like to have a good time, so SPS staff sent out a call for the spookiest science-related photos from fall 2009. We received a frighteningly large number of entries—nearly 100—and secured assistance from the SPS National Council in determining the top five photos. Winning chapters received an official SPS spooky science kit. To see all the chilling entries, including several videos, visit the [SPS website](#).



#### Pumpkin Graveyard

There isn't much left of a pumpkin after being launched some 250 feet by students from Green River Community College, in Auburn, WA.

*Photo courtesy of Green River Community College*

#### Singing Flame

SPS members from Rhodes College in Memphis, TN, entertain the crowd with fire after their legendary pumpkin drop.

*Photo by Annie Wise*



### **Phun with Phluorescence**

This scene from the Idaho State University haunted lab will scare the light right out of you.

*Photo by Jordan Keough*

## **AROUND AIP**

### **To your health, Mother Earth!**

If one of your goals for the New Year is to be friendlier to the environment, check out these websites that provide suggestions for saving energy, conserving resources, and reducing waste:

- [15 resolutions for the environment that actually make a difference](#)
- [25 New Year's resolutions for going green in 2010](#)
- [Top ten New Year's resolutions for a 'greener' workplace](#)
- [New Year's resolution: Reduce your carbon footprint](#)

AIP has adopted several "greener" practices during the past two years, and continually strives to reduce its impact on the environment. We encourage our employees to do the same.

### **Symmetrix takes flight**

AIP has a new blog, entitled [Symmetrix](#), for the internal use of AIP employees. The main purpose of the Symmetrix blog is to share ideas about how we can grow our company through collaboration, hence the subtitle "Mining ideas for innovation." We also want to use the space to share information about our daily jobs and about ourselves. Our first blogger, Carol Nissenbaum, says it best: "We are all working toward the same goal, which is to help AIP continue to grow and flourish. Learning about our fellow workers and recognizing their valuable roles and contributions toward this end can help us all to realize that." Visit Symmetrix at <http://blogaip.int.aip.org>.

We invite your feedback to this newsletter via e-mail to [aipmatters@aip.org](mailto:aipmatters@aip.org).

For past issues of this newsletter, visit the [AIP Matters archives](#).