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## Director's Matters

By *H. Frederick Dylla, Executive Director*



### More recognition, please

With the notable exception of the Nobel Prizes awarded earlier this month, the US public takes little notice of prestigious awards for science and technology. Most scientific and engineering societies consider the stewardship of awards an important part of their duties to their membership and related community. These awards can commemorate a specific achievement, such as an invention or discovery, or can recognize lifetime contributions to a scientific or technical field. However, recognition for these exceptional contributors rarely gets trumpeted beyond the halls of academia.

On Friday, October 21, President Barack Obama personally presented [12 deserving scientists and engineers](#) with the 2010 National Medals of Science and the National Medals of Technology and Innovation; these awards hardly made a ripple in national press. The National Medals of Science have been awarded since 1962 and are administered for the White House by the National Science Foundation. Under the administration of the Department of Commerce, the first companion National Medals of Technology and Innovation were bestowed several years later, in 1985.



Unlike the Nobel Prizes, or many of the top-level awards offered by professional societies or foundations, there is no monetary award associated with the National Medals. However, these prizes are the highest honor bestowed by the U.S. government on scientists, engineers, and innovators, making these awards our nation's equivalent to the Nobel.



I had the honor of attending the awards ceremony on October 21 for the 2010 laureates, and I came away from the ceremony in awe of the contributions these ladies and gentlemen have made to our knowledge of the world and to our quality of life. A sample of the awards will justify my reaction:

- [Jacqueline Barton](#) was recognized for her discovery of an essential mechanism that enables our DNA to repair itself.
- [Ralph Brinster](#) developed and demonstrated the utility of transgenic mice—an animal model that has led to numerous discoveries in biology, medicine, and agriculture.
- [Richard Tapia](#) was recognized for his development of a numerical analysis technique that is widely used in applied mathematics and engineering studies.
- [Yvonne Brill](#) won one of the Technology and Innovation awards for her invention of the

hydrazine thruster is used by satellites to maintain stable orbits or positions.

- [Michael Tompsett](#) saw his invention being used all around us as attendees took instant, high-quality color photos with their electronic cameras and cell phones. He invented the first charge-coupled device (CCD) imaging system.



Ralph Brinster receives the 2010 National Medal of Science from President Barack Obama.

The full list of awardees is available through [www.whitehouse.gov](http://www.whitehouse.gov).

The National Science and Technology Medals are supported by a [nonprofit foundation](#) that underwrites the awards ceremony and produces minivideo biographies of each of the laureates' achievements. The [awards presentation](#) is already posted to YouTube. Please take the time to watch the video.

You will be inspired that our country has nurtured such remarkable scientists and engineers. If your reaction was like mine, you will want to help us share these stories by using your Forward button.

## Publishing Matters

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AIP journal editors hold fall conference in College Park



The 2011 AIP Journal Editors Fall Conference was held earlier this month at the American Center for Physics and focused on strategies for developing the quality and scope of AIP journals. The conference brings together the head editors of each AIP journal for a day of discussion and innovative thinking. The meeting chair was John Kim from *Physics of Fluids*.

Vice President of Publishing John Haynes kicked off the conference with a presentation titled "The Nature of the Competitive Challenge." Ron Davidson, editor of *Physics of Plasmas* and editorial policy advisor, followed with a report on the progress of two editors' working groups, which are looking at guidelines for ethical issues and editorial best practices. The editors also discussed issues of concern for their journals and heard a presentation by AIP's News and Media Services staff about opportunities for bringing more journal content into the popular news stream.

This was the first time the editors conference has been held at ACP. The editors will reconvene on February 26, 2012, for their spring conference in Boston, held in conjunction with the APS March Meeting. Marsha Lester, editor of *The Journal of Chemical Physics*, will preside as the newly elected conference chair.



Ron Davidson, editor of *Physics of Plasmas* with Hsueh-Chia Chang, editor of *Biomicrofluidics*.

## Physics Resources Matters

### Student awardees present research in Budapest

One of the Society of Physics Students' (SPS) most prestigious honors is the [Outstanding Student Award for Undergraduate Research](#). It is given to one or more SPS members annually, based on the quality of the applicant's research abstract, letters of recommendation, and active participation in SPS. The prize consists of a \$500 honorarium for the recipient and \$500 for the recipient's SPS chapter, along with an all-expense-paid trip to the annual International Conference of Physics Students (ICPS). The 2011 ICPS was held August 11–18 in Budapest, Hungary. Following are reflections about the conference by the award recipients.



Award recipient Lauren Richey and her husband Kyle in front of the Medieval Castle at Visegrad during the ICPS excursion day.

#### **Lauren Richey, Brigham Young University**

"I am grateful for the opportunity I had to travel to Budapest to present my research and be part of an international community of physics students, and for the support from the AIP and Sigma Pi Sigma members that made it possible. Overall, the conference was very enjoyable and well organized, creating a good mix of scientific discussion and cultural exploration."

#### **Lena Bradley, Penn State University**

"This year marked the 25th anniversary of the ICPS. Since its founding, the conference has been held in many cities across Europe, but the ICPS returned to its home in Budapest in 2011 to celebrate this milestone. As has become the norm, the conference included mostly student lectures and poster presentations, as well as invited lectures, parties, and an excursion. Overall, ICPS was a very rewarding experience."



The top of Gellert Hill offered spectacular views of Budapest.

#### **Thomas Markovich, University of Houston**

"All in all, the ICPS was a great meeting—it is responsible for sparking my interest in international travel and collaboration. It was really nice to talk to a variety of people about the different educational systems around the world. I would definitely recommend that SPS continue to fund this award. It provides students with a unique experience in a foreign nation that helps significantly enrich their education."

To see photos, abstracts, and full feature articles about the recipients' experiences at the 2011 ICPS, visit the [SPS website](#).



The US delegation in front of the hostel, from left to right: Thomas Markovich, Jason Bartell, Lena Bradley, Lauren Richey, and Kyle Richey.

### Incoming science policy fellows

The new class of AIP fellows have begun their year-long assignments in Washington, DC. Two Congressional fellows, one cosponsored by ASA and one State Department fellow, partially funded by AAS, will learn the ins and outs of Congress and the Executive Branch. After a two-week orientation at



American Association for the Advancement of Science, the fellows interviewed with a variety of offices and accepted placements in their designated assignments, where they will work through August 2012. Welcome to:

- **Meredith Drosback**, PhD, University of Colorado at Boulder; AIP Congressional Fellow. Placement: Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee, Science & Space Subcommittee Majority Office
- **Makenzie Lystrup**, PhD, University College London; AIP-ASA Congressional Fellow. Placement: Congressman Edward Markey (D-MA)
- **Sarah C. Case**, PhD, University of Chicago; AIP State Department Fellow. Placement: US State Department's Office of Chinese and Mongolian Affairs

AIP is proud to have sponsored science-policy fellows for over 20 years. Fellowships are open to members of Member Societies. More info can be found on [AIP's public policy webpages](#). Also see the recent interview with former AIP-AVS fellow Chris Spitzer, "[A Year on the Hill](#)."



Sarah Case  
AIP State Department Fellow



Makenzie Lystrup  
AIP-ASA Congressional Fellow



Meredith Drosback  
AIP Congressional Fellow

## Coming Up

October 30–November 4

- [AVS 58th International Symposium & Exhibition](#) (Nashville, TN)

October 31–November 1

- AIP/AVS Industrial Physics Forum: "[Energy: Transition to a Sustainable Future](#)" (Nashville, TN)

October 31 – November 4

- 162nd ASA Meeting (San Diego, CA)  
>> See News and Media Services' first ever webcast of media highlights at a Member Society meeting on Monday, October 31st at 11:00 am. [www.aipwebcasting.com](http://www.aipwebcasting.com)

Monday, November 7

- AIP Executive Committee meeting (College Park, MD)

Tuesday, November 8

- AIP Governing Board meeting (College Park, MD)

