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Director's Matters

By H. Frederick Dylla, Executive Director



Recognition where due

Last week was a special week for the world of geophysics: the AGU held its annual Fall Meeting in San Francisco, and the event was its largest—attracting more than 20,000 attendees. During the annual awards ceremony on Wednesday evening, AGU paid tribute to several of the society's most distinguished members. I felt fortunate to be present when AGU President Mike McPhaden bestowed the society's most prestigious award, the Bowie Medal, to AIP's Governing Board Chair Lou Lanzerotti. The Bowie Medal is named after AGU's founding president and is bestowed upon a member of the AGU community who has made "outstanding contributions to fundamental geophysics and for unselfish cooperation in research." I have had the distinct pleasure of knowing Lou for 30 years, and I cannot think of an individual who better personifies both of these areas of accomplishment.



AGU President Michael McPhaden presents the Bowie Medal to Lou Lanzerotti. Photo by Gary Wagner Photos, courtesy of AGU

I first met Lou when I worked at the Princeton Plasma Physics Laboratory as a research scientist, and I found out that he had a talent for explaining science to a lay audience. My colleague Dennis Manos and I had started "[Science on Saturday](#)," modeled after a similar program at Bell Labs, which featured science lectures to local high-school students and their parents and teachers. We were fortunate to convince Lou to give one of the Princeton program's inaugural lectures on astronomy. His presentation thrilled the audience, and the program still runs today.

Lou's career in astronomy spans nearly four and a half decades of designing, implementing, and analyzing experiments from numerous ground-based and satellite platforms. You can get a feel for his impressive scientific accomplishments and community involvement by scanning Lou's [biography](#), posted by his current institution, the New Jersey Institute of Technology, where he continues to train and mentor students. The AIP community appreciates Lou's remarkable talent in managing the large and diverse AIP Governing Board with its complex agenda. Yet this assignment is just a continuation of Lou's long interest in serving both the scientific community and the public by guiding deliberative bodies to arrive at and embrace pragmatic strategies.

We are very fortunate to have Lou serve as our Governing Board chair. He brings to this position a summation of his expertise in science and engineering from his professional career, his skills in group

dynamics gained through serving on numerous National Academy panels, and his practical knowledge of science's important role in policy from having served as a council member and mayor of his hometown of Harding Township, New Jersey.

I must note one more thing. Lou is a modest man and he would rather get on with business than hear someone praise his accomplishments. Nevertheless, I follow AGU's lead in taking this appropriate time to thank Lou for all he has done for us and the science community at large.

Publishing Matters

Scitation adds new features to encourage browsing content

The Scitation team is in the process of updating the AIP journal home pages, changing featured articles "stacked" on the journal home pages to tabs in order to bring more content above the fold. The new tabs are on [AIP Advances](#) and will soon be included on every AIP journal. Readers can browse each journal's "research highlights," "most read," "most recent," and soon, "most cited" articles, without leaving the home page.

In conjunction with this project, a number of other features have been incorporated that make AIP content more accessible. The "most cited" function was recently launched. "Most read" and "most cited" article pages can be accessed from any page on a journal's site via the browse tab. Moreover, each journal's most cited pages' left navigation provides links to the most cited articles from the other AIP journals to promote cross traffic.

Physics Resources Matters



NBL&A grows its online oral histories collection

The Niels Bohr Library and Archives (NBL&A) has begun work on a new project to put an additional 500 oral transcripts online over the next two years. Over the past 6 months, more than 100 new transcripts have been added to the website, bringing the current total to 630. The online [browsable list of these interviews](#) is updated every few weeks, so keep an eye out for new additions. Included in the latest batch are interviews of physicists Norman Ramsey (seen in the photograph), Benjamin Peery, S. Jocelyn Burnell, Harmon Craig, Tony Cox, Edward Byram, Gerard De Vaucouleurs, and many more.

Library staff will be adding foreign language as well as English language transcripts, and 50 more audio clips as the project moves forward. In addition, plans are developing to make the online collection cross searchable. The project is supported by a grant from the [National](#)

[Endowment for the Humanities](#).

Member Society Spotlight

AGU's ever-growing Fall Meeting



With this year's attendance shattering the 20,000 milestone, the AGU 2011 Fall Meeting occupied all three buildings of San Francisco's Moscone Center. Geoscientists from across the world congregate at this meeting to take in a copious volume of knowledge, to connect with colleagues, and to expand their contact base with those working in similar areas of research.

There is no shortage of news and research highlights coming out of the AGU meeting. Take a few minutes to visit the new blog from AIP's Inside Science, [Inside Science Currents](#), launched last week to coincide with the event. Writer/editor Chris Gorski posted seven blog entries, including a report on the meeting's very first news conference (concerning the March 2011 tsunami in Japan), new insights into earthquakes in the interior US and videos of sprites, colorful bursts of energy in the atmosphere that occur at high altitudes—about 50 miles up. In addition, Inside Science News Service released a feature story on an unexpected, minor, but significant [crop condition change](#), endangering the pinot noir grape's suitability for France. From the [AGU Media Center](#), interested readers can access dozens of press releases and 32 additional blogs.

Several staff members from AIP attended this important meeting. CEO Fred Dylla and VP of Physics Resources Catherine O'Riordan were there to support Lou Lanzerotti during the award ceremony. Cathy also met with AGU staff and volunteer leaders to raise the awareness of PRC programs.

Students were an important focus for AIP. More than 5,000 students presented papers. Most of them were graduate students, but there was also a substantial undergraduate presence. Finding one's place among such a large crowd can be difficult for anyone, and AIP endeavors to support the students and their role in the meeting. SPS sponsored oral talks and posters on the topic of social media and science outreach. Anish Chakrabarti (SPS intern) gave a presentation on the work he did this summer developing local support for science cafés. Deborah Watson from Coe College attended as an SPS reporter and will submit a

report for the SPS website. Education staff members Gary White, Jack Hehn, and Kendra Redmond also participated in AGU's events for students. They reported that the student breakfast sponsored by Exxon was completely filled, with over 500 people attending; the student mixer and the career networking lunch were likewise well attended, with hundreds of students meeting industry and agency and nonprofit leaders. Workshops for teachers addressed various topics, including teaching methods that increase learning and engage diverse students. O'Riordan, who participates in a mentoring program for MsPHD (Minority Students Pursuing Higher Degrees) focusing on graduate students in



Cathy O'Riordan presented the AIP 2010 Science Communication Award to Tom Zoellner for his book: "Uranium: War, Energy and the Rock that Shaped the World."

earth and physical science, was able to connect with her mentee, Nitza Santiago from the minority bridge program at Fisk-Vanderbilt.



From the left: Mark Wilson, Steve Benka, and Chris Gorski meet up between sessions.

Steve Benka and Mark Wilson from *Physics Today* gathered an abundance of material for future issues of the magazine, running between press conferences, lectures, posters, and scientific sessions.

A few other highlights were the standing-room-only career workshops, which revealed that prospects for geoscientists, especially in the oil and gas industry, are favorable. "Communicating your science

to the public" sessions demonstrated how to best convey one's science message via video, in which Hollywood directors/writers critiqued 10 short films submitted by AGU scientists. Congratulations to AGU on a very successful conference!

Coming Up

Monday, December 12

- Committee on Publishing meeting (Melville, NY)

Monday, December 19

- AIP Publishing Center holiday lunch (Melville, NY)

Through Tuesday, December 20

- ACP holiday gift drive, benefiting College Park Youth and Family Services (College Park, MD)

Wednesday, December 21

- AIP holiday lunch (College Park, MD)