

# Northwest Section Newsletter

APS Northwest Section

August 2012

[www.units.aps.org/units/nws/](http://www.units.aps.org/units/nws/)

## Mark Your Calendars: Simon Fraser University is hosting the Fourteenth Annual Meeting of the Northwest Section

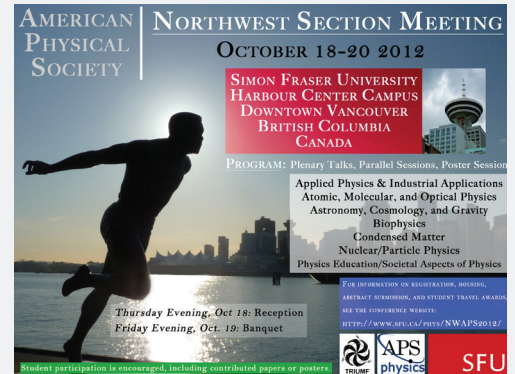
Downtown Vancouver, British Columbia  
October 18-20, 2012

Conference Website: <http://www.sfu.ca/phys/NWAPS2012/>

### Key Deadlines:

Sept. 14, 2012 Abstract submission closed

Sept. 30, 2012 Deadline for registration at normal rate



The conference poster can be accessed at  
<http://www.sfu.ca/phys/NWAPS2012/>

Our Fourteenth Annual Meeting will be held on the Downtown Harbour Centre Campus of Simon Fraser University in beautiful Vancouver, British Columbia. Our last Northwest APS meeting in Vancouver holds the record for attendance and therefore we expect 250 to 300 people in attendance from across the region for this year's meeting. That will make this an unparalleled event for students and faculty and APS members of our large region to interact with each other and to learn new physics. The Local Organizing Committee Chair is Andrew DeBenedictis ([adebened@sfu.ca](mailto:adebened@sfu.ca)) and the Program Chair is Brian Milbrath ([Brian.Milbrath@pnnl.gov](mailto:Brian.Milbrath@pnnl.gov)).

What makes our Sectional meeting lively and unique for all—from faculty members to undergraduate students—is the balance between invited talks, contributed talks, and posters. Our morning plenary speakers are chosen to give outstanding talks at a level to reach the entire audience and explain what is new and exciting in their field. This year we have been able to line up a large number of speakers from beyond the traditional areas of physics. We encourage contributed talks and posters in all areas of physics and astronomy. This really is THE meeting to find out not only what is happening in your area, but in other physics fields across the region as well.

The conference opens Thursday evening, Oct. 18 with a reception and, continuing the tradition of the past few meetings, a public lecture. (The speaker is not yet confirmed—watch the meeting website for details.) The conference banquet will be Friday evening, Oct. 19. This year's plenary speakers (Friday and Saturday morning) will include:

**Leah Bergman** (Univ. of Idaho)—ZnO-based alloys tailored for desired optical emissions.

**James Booth** (BCIT)—The application of elastic collisions to study the properties of atom traps.

**Sandy Eix** (ScienceWorld)—What does informal science education have to offer, and how does a science centre do what it does best? Be forewarned: this presentation may involve audience participation and rubber chickens.

**Moe Kermani** (Kermani Inc.)—The BC Technology Industry Association's Person of the Year (2011) talks about his transition from physics to high-tech industry and leading multiple start-up companies.

**Anadi Canepa** (TRIUMF)—Recent LHC results!

**David Hertzog** (Univ. of Washington)—Measuring the anomalous magnetic moment of the muon.

**Harry Yeh** (Oregon State University)—Modeling the extreme wave amplification that results in a tsunami.

**Eric Donovan** (Univ. of Calgary)—The physics of aurora.

**Nate McCrady** (Univ. of Montana)—Astronomy

**Peter Engels** (Washington State Univ.)—Hydrodynamic behavior in Bose condensates.

Sectional meetings are an excellent venue for post-docs, graduate students, and undergraduate students to present their first presentations or posters. Student presentations have long

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been a hallmark of the Northwest APS meeting and the percentage of attendees who are students is quite high. It is an excellent chance for students to network with each other, faculty, and potential employers, plus learn about some of the major questions being studied in other fields of physics. The registration costs for students are quite low, plus students should consider applying for travel awards to help support expenses. See more information at <http://www.aps.org/units/nws/meetings/student-travel-award.cfm>. There will be a free Society of Physics Students luncheon for undergraduate students on Saturday, October 20, 2012. And, hey, did we mention the meeting is in Downtown Vancouver!

Another trait of the Northwest APS meetings is that we strive to keep meeting expenses low. The trend continues this year with registration fees of only \$15 for undergraduates, \$30 for graduate students, and \$50 for regular members. Two hotels in the area, the Ramada Limited Downtown Vancouver and the Delta Vancouver Suites, have APS-NW conference rates subject to availability, but these rooms are going fast and you are encouraged to reserve your rooms soon. Details are in the conference website, and some other affordable hotels nearby are also identified. There are many restaurants in the immediate vicinity and the conference is within walking distance of several downtown Vancouver attractions including The Lookout Tower, Gastown, and Canada Place. Downtown Vancouver is an exceptional venue which promises to provide all participants with a great experience.

The conference poster can be found at the main conference website above. Please consider printing and posting it in a prominent location in your department.

We hope to see you in Vancouver!

## Welcoming Young Scientists

A major goal of the NW section is to support student research, at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. At the annual meeting, students can present their own work, learn about some of the major questions being studied in various fields of research, and network with peers, faculty, and potential employers. A Society of Physics Students luncheon will be held on Saturday, Oct. 20, 2012.

The section works hard to keep meeting expenses low for all participants. Frequently, the meetings are partially supported by deans of the host institution. Student registration and banquet tickets are subsidized by the NW section. This year, undergraduate student registration will be only \$15! Students should also consider applying for a travel award, which can support up to \$200 of student travel expenses. See more information at: [www.aps.org/units/nws/meetings/student-travel-award.cfm](http://www.aps.org/units/nws/meetings/student-travel-award.cfm)

Membership in the NW section provides the funding for section activities, including the annual meeting and student travel awards. Although the section membership is of no additional cost to the member, the APS provides a small amount of funds to the section budget for each member. Please encourage your colleagues to also join the section, as this helps provide additional funding for students and section activities.

## Timing of the Annual Meeting: Membership Survey Results

From the results of a recent membership survey our AP-SNW members are clearly somewhat ambivalent about whether our annual meeting should be held in the spring or in the fall. As a result of the survey, the next meeting will be held in the spring of 2014.

An amazing 174 people submitted responses to the recent membership survey which was conducted in the winter of 2011. Professors or instructors at colleges or universities comprised 59% of the respondents. Other respondents included 13% graduate students, 10% retired, 10% national lab scientists, as well as undergraduates, scientists in industry and post-doctoral fellows. The purpose of the survey was to understand the typical calendar year of our members, so that meetings can be timed optimally, and also to gather feedback on how we can improve the meeting content.

As you may know, from 2010-2012 we experimented with holding the conference in October: prior to that, the conference was usually held in May. Regardless, it seemed like the conference timing was a major topic of discussion among the Executive Committee members and attendees at the 2011 annual meeting. Indeed, the survey bore this out: timing was by far the most common primary reason that survey respondents could not attend a recent conference, including the 2009 conference in May, and the 2011 and 2012 conferences which were held in October. While we had hoped to see a consensus, it turned out that May did hold a slight edge as the best time. Unfortunately, even in May, only 50% of survey attendees could 'usually' attend the conference. This compares to 40% who could 'usually' attend a conference in October, the next best month. This seems to be largely due to the very wide range of university calendars reported by faculty respondents. As a result, the Executive Committee has decided to hold the next meeting in May, 2014, and will soon consider bids to host that meeting.

For the three most recent conferences, survey respondents said that their primary reason for attending was to meet colleagues of the region. Mentoring students, and a location which was close by and convenient, were also important reasons. Many great ideas were suggested for future conferences, which should support these goals. Examples include leaving posters up for a longer period of time, holding career-related events such as a panel discussion, connecting better with regional industry partners and having longer coffee breaks. This has given the Executive Committee lots of ideas to consider. We thank all those who participated in the survey. Please feel free to contact any members of the Executive with further feedback and ideas.

## Report from the 2011 Annual Meeting, OSU, Corvallis, Oregon

The 2011 annual meeting of our Section was held at Oregon State University, Corvallis, Oregon, October 20-22. It was very ably hosted by a local committee chaired by Henri Jansen. As usual, the afternoon sessions were devoted to contributed and invited papers in parallel sessions, covering the wide spectrum of physics. Thursday evening and Friday and Saturday mornings offered 10 plenary talks, giving many of the highlights of recent physics research, worldwide, including a peek at how

the search for the Higgs boson was going. The plenary talk on Thursday evening, which opened the conference, was a well attended public lecture by Dr. Mario Livio, of the Space Telescope Science Institute in Baltimore, MD, who gave delightful images of the scientific achievements of the Hubble Telescope.

The 203 participants of the annual meeting enjoyed an excellent banquet, including some of the excellent wines of the Willamette Valley, and the coffee breaks were well organized to enable interaction among the participants. The local committee of OSU is congratulated for giving us such a good meeting, and the plenary and invited speakers are thanked for their essential contribution.

**About the APS-NW Section**

Our Section of the APS is one of its newest units, formed in 1998, but not the smallest nor the least active. We straddle a large domain, including mountains, desert, ocean and islands, and we are the only Section crossing an international boundary. It is a challenge to provide interaction among physicists from such a large region. Our annual meetings have struggled to address this challenge.

The annual business meeting of the Section will be held on Friday afternoon, October 19, at the end of the scientific sessions and before the conference banquet, at a place and time which will be announced on the conference website (see above) and earlier during the meeting. All members are very welcome at the annual business meeting.

The APS-NW Executive Committee is given in the box below. The terms of office of the members shall begin at the close of the annual business meeting of the Section, following their election. Elections will be held in the summer to fill the slots which expire at the 2012 meeting.

*—Items written by Jennifer Heath, Brian Milbraith and Erich Vogt*

Your APS-NW Executive Committee is:

<b>Chair:</b> Erich Vogt .....	10/11 - 09/12
TRIUMF	
<b>Chair-Elect:</b> Brian Milbrath .....	10/11 - 09/12
Pacific Northwest Natl Lab	
<b>Vice Chair:</b> Jo-Anne Brown .....	10/11 - 09/12
Univ of Calgary	
<b>Past Chair:</b> Jennifer Heath .....	10/11 - 09/12
Linfield Coll	
<b>Secretary/Treasurer:</b> John Orrell.....	10/11 - 09/14
Pacific Northwest Natl Lab	
<b>Councillor:</b> David McIntyre .....	01/11 - 12/14
Oregon State Univ	
<b>Member-at-Large:</b> Mary Alberg .....	10/08 - 09/12
Seattle Univ	
<b>Member-at-Large:</b> Shannon Mayer .....	10/09 - 09/13
Univ of Portland	
<b>Member-at-Large:</b> Oscar Vilches .....	10/10 - 09/13
Univ of Washington	
<b>Member-at-Large:</b> Andrew Dawes .....	10/11 - 09/14
Pacific Univ	