

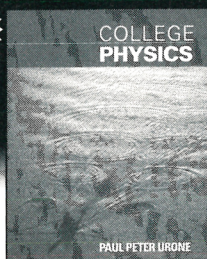
## physics

(fiz'iks) noun

The science of matter and energy and of interactions between the two

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A. Orcutt, director of the Institute of Geophysics and Planetary Sciences at Scripps, who will be AGU's general secretary, and Gordon Rostoker, a professor emeritus of physics at the University of Alberta, who will be the international secretary.

## IN BRIEF

On 1 April, Alexander Bradshaw began a two-year term as president of the German Physical Society (DPG), succeeding Markus Schworer. A chemical physicist, Bradshaw heads the surface physics department at the Fritz Haber Institute in Berlin, and is an adjunct professor at both the Free University of Berlin and the Technical University of Berlin. British by nationality, he is the first non-German to head the DPG. Bradshaw plans to move the society—which has no archival journals of its own—into electronic publishing: For starters, the DPG, together with the UK's Institute of Physics, plans to launch an electronic journal later this year. Bradshaw also wants the DPG to do more for the growing number of physicists who are working outside of academia—in industry, banking, software development, teaching and other fields. “Many thousands are not members [of the DPG],” he says. “I feel we should help to represent them.”



A. BRADSHAW

The UK Astronomy Technology Centre opened at the Royal Observatory, Edinburgh on 1 April. It is intended to be the UK's main hub for the design and construction of instrumentation for ground-based astronomy, activities previously carried out at both the ROE and the Royal Greenwich Observatory. Adrian Russell, who heads up the UK's Gemini twin telescope team, is the UK ATC's first director. The center will have a staff of about 60 scientists and engineers, with most coming from the ROE and a few from the RGO. The Particle Physics and Astronomy Research Council's decision last summer to locate the UK ATC in Edinburgh has meant that the ROE can stay open. The RGO, on the other hand, is being disbanded (see PHYSICS TODAY, September 1997, page 60); at press time, the final fate of its name, staff and activities was still undecided.

In February, Germany's Max Planck Society turned 50. This birthday stamp shows the society's founders—Otto Hahn, fourth from right, was the first president; to his right are fellow Nobel laureates Max von Laue, Richard Kuhn and Adolf Windaus—plus an x-ray image of the Moon, an ion trap and a goldfish nerve that symbolize the breadth of the MPS's scientific research. The MPS started out—over



initial protests by the US and France—as a makeover of the Kaiser Wilhelm Society, which had been founded in 1911 but was closed down after World War II because of its involvement in research under the Nazis. By contrast, says spokesman Andreas Trepte, the new society maintained independence from the state and from industry from the outset. Now Germany's premier research organization, the MPS today has 80 research institutes spanning the physical, life and social sciences; 19 of them have been founded in the former eastern states since German reunification in 1990.

On 15 April, Vladimir Fortov, Russia's minister for science and technology, will lead off a 12-part television series on commercial applications of Russian scientific research. Fortov will speak on uses of intense shock waves for such things as chemical waste treatment, lightning simulation and synthetic diamond production. Second in the series, on 14 May, will be Zhores Alferov, vice president of the Russian Academy of Sciences and director of the A. F. Ioffe Physical-Technical Institute in St. Petersburg, who will discuss applications of semiconductor heterostructures. Sponsored jointly by the Russian Foundation for Basic Research and the University of Missouri—Columbia, the series will resume in October and continue monthly during the academic year. Topics will include commercial applications of high-performance aluminum and titanium alloys, surface modifications and thin films, nanomaterials and optical memory media. The aim of the broadcasts, says producer Richard Potter of the University of Missouri, is to attract Western investments to Russia, and to “alert the Western business and scien-



tific communities of research and technologies that may soon be lost because of the terrible state of funding for science in Russia." Viewers may call or fax questions for on-air discussion. For more information, including how to get access to the series, visit the university's Web page at <http://www.missouri.edu/~ceewww/rsss> or call 1-800-882-7075.

**D**avid Lee is the European Physical Society's new secretary-general. He succeeds Gero Thomas, who held the post for 23 years. A lawyer and California native, Lee joined EPS last fall as administrative director at the society's offices in Mulhouse, France. He became secretary-general at the end of last month.

**L**ast December's Kyoto talks have inspired a coalition of scientists and concerned citizens to launch People Against Carbon Dioxide (PAC), a grass-

roots campaign aimed at getting Americans to find new ways of curbing carbon dioxide emissions. "Our PAC is pushing the every-little-bit-helps approach to combating global warming," says coalition spokeswoman Lirpa Loof. Major television and VCR manufacturers have already agreed to a US government request to lower the standby power requirements of their products by 50-75% and thereby reduce the release of CO<sub>2</sub> into the atmosphere, Loof notes. "We want to see similar regulations for phone and fax machines, coffee makers, microwave ovens, hot-air balloons and particle accelerators." Long-range plans, she adds, call for "replacing the CO<sub>2</sub> in soft drinks, mandating green plants in every building and motor vehicle, getting kids to play with windup toys instead of electric ones and bioengineering gas-free farm animals." ■

### Web Watch

► <http://www.nndc.bnl.gov/>

The National Nuclear Data Center provides information in the fields of low- and medium-energy nuclear physics. In particular, it includes information on neutron, charged-particle and photonuclear reactions, nuclear structure and decay data. In addition to files of data, the site offers analysis and utility software, and programs for producing tables and drawings of nuclear structure and decay data on a variety of computer platforms. The NNDC, based at Brookhaven National Laboratory and funded by the Department of Energy, is intended primarily for use by researchers in the US and Canada.

A related site is the NEA Data Bank (<http://www.nea.fr/html/databank/>) of the OECD Nuclear Energy Agency near Paris. It is intended for use by scientists in the data bank member countries (numerous European countries and also Japan, South Korea and Mexico). The International Atomic Energy Agency's nuclear data section in Vienna (<http://www.nds.iaea.or.at/>) caters to scientists in IAEA member countries, especially developing countries. See also the Table of Isotopes home page mentioned in the November 1997 Web Watch.

► <http://ae-www.usc.edu/astromike/>

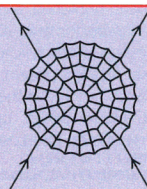
Astronautics and spacecraft design are the central topics of this Web site, created by Mike Gruntman of the University of Southern California's aerospace engineering department. It provides a huge array of links to sites relating to individual spacecraft, spacecraft propulsion and communications, ground and launch systems and the history of space exploration, as well as general space-related sites. The site also has a large bibliography of related textbooks.

► <http://www.aip.org/avsguide/>

The American Vacuum Society's Buyers Guide is available on-line. Over 250 company listings can be browsed alphabetically or searched by category. Company names, locations and descriptions are searchable by keyword. The reference guide provides basic information on topics of general use, such as units of measurement and conversion factors, and also information geared toward the vacuum physicist, such as working pressure ranges of various types of vacuum pumps and gauges. AVS's *Journal of Vacuum Science and Technology* is also on-line, and nonmembers and nonsubscribers can browse the tables of contents of 1995-97.

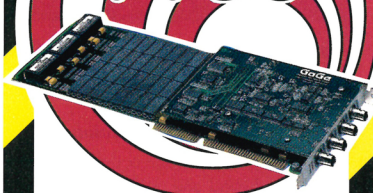
► All links mentioned in Web Watch are included on PHYSICS TODAY's home page, <http://www.aip.org/pt/>. If you have suggestions for other topics or sites to be covered in Web Watch, please e-mail them to [ptwww@aip.acp.org](mailto:ptwww@aip.acp.org).

Compiled by GRAHAM P. COLLINS



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