

found, "generally using the same books and covering the same topics." But by merely replicating the four-year college curriculum, two-year schools may actually be discouraging the development of new courses that are more appropriate for their students, the report notes.

Aaron Wenger, a physics professor at Itasca Community College in Grand Rapids, Minnesota, agrees. As he sees it, two-year college teachers need to do more than just overcome professional isolation—they need to work on reducing the "isolation of the physics curriculum from the real world." At his school, physics is taught as part of an integrated engineering lab course, which also incorporates chemistry, computer science, economics and writing. "We no longer teach physics as if we were trying to turn out physics majors," Wenger says.

Reducing isolation

"It's nice to now have in writing what we in the two-year college community knew already," says Mary Beth Monroe, a physics instructor at Southwest Texas Junior College and a leader of the TYC21 project, a national effort to set up a network among physics teachers at two-year colleges. Of particular interest to Monroe is the AIP report's finding that people who belong to professional organizations such as the American Association of Physics Teachers tend to be more innovative in their teaching. The TYC21 project, which AAPT sponsors with funding from the NSF, has sought to reduce the isolation of two-year college faculty by, among other things, holding regional and national meetings and creating e-mail discussion groups. Since the project began in 1995, about one-fifth of all two-year college physics instructors have attended TYC21 meetings.

What's more, many who have become regulars at TYC21 meetings previously had had no contact with their physics peers, says Zito, who serves as one of the project's regional leaders. "Now they're talking about getting new computers and upgrading their labs," he says. "I guess if you're used to going to research meetings to discuss the search for the Higgs boson, that may sound penny-ante. But it's a big step for two-year college teachers."

Single copies of *Physics in the Two-Year Colleges* are available free of charge from AIP, Education and Employment Statistics Division, One Physics Ellipse, College Park, MD 20740; phone 301-209-3076; fax 301-209-0843; e-mail stats@aip.org. Information on the TYC21 program is available on the AAPT Web site, <http://www.aapt.org>. **JEAN KUMAGAI**

Chidester Is Vice President of ACA

Members of the American Crystallographic Association have elected Connie Chidester to be their vice president for 1999. On 1 January, Chidester succeeded Abraham Clearfield of Texas A&M University, who is now the association's president.



CONNIE CHIDESTER

Chidester is a senior research scientist with the pharmaceutical company Pharmacia & Upjohn, where she has worked since 1967. In recent years, she has been researching drugs for the central nervous system, using crystal structure and molecular modeling techniques to construct pharmacophore models for dopamine and serotonin receptors. Chidester holds a BA in physics from Kalamazoo College and an MA in mathematics from Western Michigan University.

Also taking office last month was Louis Delbaere of the University of Saskatchewan, the ACA council's new Canadian representative.

IN BRIEF

For the past 28 of its 104 years, the venerable *Astrophysical Journal* has had Helmut A. Abt, of the Kitt Peak National Observatory, as its editor in chief. Two years ago, Abt announced that he would retire from the journal, but it wasn't until this past fall that *ApJ*'s owner, the American Astronomical Society, selected a successor. He is Robert C. Kennicutt Jr, a professor of astronomy at the University of Arizona's Steward Observatory and a vice president of AAS (see PHYSICS TODAY, June 1998, page 58). Kennicutt will assume the editorship later this year, most likely over the summer.

Johns Hopkins University and Brown University have been awarded \$2.5 million and \$2.3 million, respectively, to be used toward bridging the physical and biological sciences. The grants are from the Burroughs Wellcome Fund, which awards up to \$10 million total every second year to interdisciplinary university science programs. As foundation spokesper-

Web Watch

<http://vulcan.wr.usgs.gov/>

<http://www.dartmouth.edu/~volcano/>

Volcanoes, mainly in the Cascade Range in the Pacific Northwest, are the subject of the US Geological Survey's Cascades Volcano Observatory Web site. The geographical span of Dartmouth College's *The Electronic Volcano* is broader, containing information about all the world's active volcanoes.



<http://www.aip.org/history/heisenberg>

Heisenberg/Uncertainty is an extensive on-line exhibition mounted by the American Institute of Physics' Center for History of Physics. With text by David Cassidy, author of a definitive biography of Werner Heisenberg, the exhibition includes numerous pictures and quotations covering all aspects of Heisenberg's remarkable and controversial career.



<http://www.un.org/Depts/unscom/index.html>

The work, mandate and composition of the United Nations' Special Commission (UNSCOM) on Iraq's weapons of mass destruction are detailed on UNSCOM's Web page, which also includes a gallery of pictures that record the commission's work.



<http://njp.org/>

One of the world's most recently established on-line physics journals, *New Journal of Physics*, has published its first papers. Peer reviewed and free of charge, the NJP is published jointly by the German Physical Society and the UK's Institute of Physics.

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To suggest topics or sites for Web Watch, please contact ptwww@aip.org by e-mail. Compiled by **CHARLES DAY**