

Witherell Is Tapped to Head Fermilab

On 1 July, Michael Witherell will become director of the Department of Energy's Fermi National Accelerator Laboratory in Batavia, Illinois. He will succeed John Peoples, who announced last summer that he would step down after a decade in the top job.

Witherell will be moving to Fermilab from the University of California, Santa Barbara, where he has been a professor of physics since 1981. Before that, he was on the faculty at Princeton University. He holds a 1968 bachelor's degree from the University of Michigan and a 1973 PhD from the University of Wisconsin—Madison.

Recently, Witherell has been involved in building the BaBar experiment at the Stanford Linear Accelerator Center (SLAC), which this year will start taking data that scientists hope will explain the asymmetry of matter and antimatter. He also chairs the High Energy Physics Advisory Panel, the body that advises the Federal government on scientific priorities in the field.

At Fermilab, Witherell's biggest challenge will be to plan future directions for high-energy physics, and in particular, the successor to CERN's Large Hadron Collider (LHC), which is slated to begin operating in 2005. Proton-antiproton collisions will resume next year at Fermilab's Tevatron, with a new accelerator, the Main Injector, upping the number of such collisions by an order of magnitude to $2 \times 10^{32} \text{ cm}^{-2} \text{ s}^{-1}$ and also increasing their energy. "We will look for hints of supersymmetry, and of the Higgs boson," says Witherell. "The central question is, What breaks electroweak symmetry?" New discoveries with the Tevatron, he says, "could really change our planning for the field."

"The next machine needs to be something the whole high-energy physics community buys into," continues Witherell. Possibilities include a linear electron collider, a muon collider or a very large hadron collider. "We need to reach a consensus that includes Fermilab and SLAC—that will be up to Jonathan Dorfan [SLAC's incoming head] and me—as well as interested physicists in Japan and Europe." The US is the natural place to build the next high-energy physics

machine, Witherell adds.

Peoples plans to stay on at Fermilab, where he will continue to serve as project manager for the Sloan Digital Sky Survey partnership (see PHYSICS TODAY, February 1998, page 61). Perhaps the biggest scientific event during Peoples's tenure as director was the discovery of the top quark. Early on, Peoples also oversaw the shutdown of the Superconducting Supercollider. And he played a key role in getting the US involved in the LHC: "I helped to get the labs to work together instead of fighting like mad." **TONI FEDER**

Harris Is ASA's President-Elect

The Acoustical Society of America has a new president-elect: She is Katherine S. Harris of the City University of New York. Harris began her term in March, and will succeed to the presidency next year.

Harris holds a PhD in experimental psychology from Harvard University, and since 1954 she has worked at Haskins Laboratories in New Haven, Connecticut, where she is currently a senior scientist. In 1970, she also accepted a professorship at the CUNY Graduate Center's Center for Research in Speech and Hearing Sciences.

Harris's research on human speech

has included studies of speech production and perception.

In other results of the ASA elections, Gilles A. Daigle was chosen vice president-elect. Daigle is a senior research officer at the National Research Council of Canada's Institute for Microstructural Sciences in Ottawa. Two newly elected members of the ASA executive council are Christy K. Holland (University of Cincinnati College of Medicine) and William A. Yost (Loyola University Chicago's Parnly Hearing Institute).

PHYSICS TODAY would like to take this opportunity to report results from the previous two ASA elections. (Regrettably, we did not do so earlier.) Last year, Patricia K. Kuhl of the University of Washington was chosen ASA's president-elect; she is now serving as president. Kuhl



HARRIS



WITHERELL



KUHL

ITP Holds Forum on Black Holes for High School Teachers

High school teachers gravitate toward Caltech physicist Kip Thorne (left) during a break in a one-day educational forum about black holes, held on 6 February at the Institute of Theoretical Physics at the University of California, Santa Barbara (UCSB). The forum drew more than a hundred teachers from all over the country who wanted to learn more about a topic that fires the imagination of their students, and to hear about it from some of the top researchers. On hand to lecture, in addition to Thorne, were Stephen Hawking (University of Cambridge), Roger Blandford (Caltech) and Joe Polchinski (UCSB). All four had agreed to stay over on a Saturday following a conference on black holes they had attended that week, also at the institute. Jim Lochner showed some classroom demonstrations based on educational materials he helped develop at NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center. He also handed out resource materials created at NASA/GSFC and the Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics.

The Forum was the institute's first effort at such an outreach program, and it received funding from NASA to pay the expenses of most of the out-of-state attendees. The teachers said they especially appreciated the opportunity to rub shoulders with working scientists. They also noted that their own eager anticipation at spending time with such researchers as Thorne and Hawking, both known for their popular trade books, had been matched by that of their students.

BARBARA GOSS LEVI





WEST

earned her PhD in psychology from the University of Minnesota and in 1977 joined the University of Washington, where she is now a professor and the chair of the department of speech and hearing sciences. Kuhl's research focuses on the development of language

and speech and how language information is stored in the brain.

In the 1997 election, James E. West of Lucent Technologies, Bell Laboratories was chosen as the ASA president-elect. West joined the labs in 1957, and is now a Bell Labs fellow and a distinguished member of the technical staff in the acoustics research department. Best known for his 1962 coinvention, with Gerhard Sessler, of the foil-electret microphone, he holds 47 US patents and more than 200 foreign patents on various microphones and techniques for making polymer foil-electrets.

Sargent Will Lead AAS in 2000

In June, Anneila I. Sargent will become president-elect of the American Astronomical Society. In one year's time, she will assume the presidency, succeeding Robert D. Gehrz of the University of Minnesota.

Sargent has spent her entire career at Caltech, where she is currently a professor of astronomy and director of the Owens Valley Radio Observatory.

She also received her graduate education there, earning an MS in 1967 and a PhD in 1977. Sargent's research interests include ground- and space-based studies of star formation, the origins of planetary systems and merging galaxies.

Also taking office in June will be J. Craig Wheeler as

the newest of AAS's three vice presidents. Wheeler, who earned a physics PhD from the University of Colorado at Boulder in 1969, is a professor of astronomy at the University of Texas, Austin and works on the theory of stellar evolution, supernovae and accretion disks.

In other results of the AAS elections, Leonard V. Kuhl of the University of

Minnesota was reelected treasurer, and Bruce G. Elmegreen was chosen chair of the publications board. Roger D. Blandford (Caltech), Debra M. Elmegreen (Vassar College) and Douglas N. C. Lin (University of California, Santa Cruz) were elected councilors. AAS's new representative to the US National Committee of the International Astronomical Union is James W. Liebert of the University of Arizona.

IN BRIEF

Under Canada's federal budget for fiscal year 1999, which began on 1 April, additional funds are being made available to the physical sciences. Canada's Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council is getting an extra, non earmarked Can\$25 million each year for three years, plus Can\$7.5 million each year for three years for health research, bringing the agency's total budget for FY1999 to Can\$538.5 million. The Canadian Space Agency, which celebrated its tenth birthday in February, is to receive Can\$430 million in new funding over the next three years, spread to stabilize its total annual budget at about Can\$300 million. The Canadian Foundation for Innovation (CFI), a private organization set up in 1997 by the government to fund re-

search infrastructure, is getting a lump sum of Can\$200 million. And Can\$90 million, spread over three years, will go to setting up virtual networks in targeted fields of research, with the funds to be allocated competitively among the social, natural and medical sciences. The government has not yet considered whether it will fund the Canadian Neutron Facility (see PHYSICS TODAY, January, page 61), and the CFI is expected to say soon whether it will contribute to a proposed synchrotron light source.

The European Science Foundation has announced six research themes for which it will coordinate small programs intended to promote international collaboration. The themes are molecular simulations; experimental and theoretical studies of polymer structures; interactions of femtosecond laser fields with atoms, solids and plasmas; quantum information theory and computation; statistical physics of glassy and nonequilibrium systems; and vortex matter in superconductors at extreme scales and conditions. Funded by various national research organizations, each program will have an annual budget of at least \$70 000 for five years, to be used mainly for "à la carte" grants for traveling to meetings and visiting labs. ■

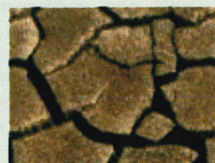


Web Watch

http://www.dir.ucar.edu/esig/HP_roger/sourcebook

<http://www.dir.ucar.edu/esig/socas>

The National Center for Atmospheric Research offers two Web sites that cover weather at its worst. Broad in scope, the **Extreme Weather Source Book** contains a variety of information about the nature and impact of tornadoes, floods, droughts, El Niño episodes and other phenomena. The **Societal Aspects of Weather** focuses on the economic costs and human casualties of extreme weather in the US.



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

Andrei Sakharov: Soviet Physics, Nuclear Weapons, and Human Rights is the latest on-line exhibition mounted by the American Institute of Physics' Center for the History of Physics. Genady Gorelik's text, which is illustrated throughout, charts Sakharov's early career and describes how the father of the Soviet hydrogen bomb became, in the words of the Nobel Peace Prize committee, "the conscience of mankind."



<http://www.nasw.org/endsci.htm>

In a fascinating and sometimes sardonic essay entitled **The End of Science Writing**, veteran science writer Jon Franklin recounts how the reporting of science has evolved since 1945. Franklin's essay, which was originally given in 1997 as the Alfred and Julia Hill Lecture at the University of Tennessee, is available on the Web site of the National Association of Science Writers.

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

Compiled by **CHARLES DAY**