functions and, in particular, how human activities affect that system in profound ways."

Other AGU officers elected include **Terry E. Tullis** (Brown University), who was reelected as general secretary, and **Anny A. Cazenave** (Laboratoire d'Etudes en Geophysique et Océanographie Spatiales and Centre National d'Etudes Spatiales),who was reelected as international secretary. Both candidates were unopposed.

Sargent Is New Vice President for AAS

On 2 June 2004, **Wallace L. W. Sargent**, Ira S. Bowen Professor of Astronomy at Caltech, will take office as vice president of the American Astronomical Society.

Sargent attended the University of Manchester in the UK, where he earned a BSc in physics in 1956, an MSc in theoretical astrophysics in 1957, and his PhD, also in theoretical astrophysics, in 1959. After completing his PhD, he became a research fellow at Caltech. Between 1966 and 1981, he worked his way up in Caltech's division of physics, mathematics, and astronomy, from assistant professor to the named professorship he now holds. He was a member of the staff at Owens Valley Radio Observatory from 1978 to 1988 and director of the Palomar Observatory from 1997 to 2000.


Sargent

Sargent says one of the primary functions of the AAS vice president is "to help organize the scientific content of the meetings." He says he will "maintain a high scientific standard, giving prominence to all fields of astronomy." A strong advocate of diversity, he adds that "women and minority speakers are particularly important as role models."

AAS also elected a new secretary, **John A. Graham**, a staff member in the Department of Terrestrial Magnetism of the Carnegie Institution of Washington; he was AAS vice president from 1984 to 1986. **Jill Bechtold** (University of Arizona), **Karen S. Bjorkman** (University of Toledo, in Ohio), and **Alan M. Title** (Lockheed Martin Advance Technology Center) were elected to three-year terms as councilors, and Melissa McGrath (Space Telescope Science Institute) and Lee G. Mundy (University of Maryland, College Park) became members of the nominating committee.

In Brief

Jack Wilson, who had been serving as the interim president of the University of Massachusetts since last August, was named president of the system in March. He is a past chair of the American Physical Society's forum on education, was an executive officer with the American Association of Physics Teachers, and was on the governing board of the American Institute of Physics. Wilson was instrumental in AIP's move from New York to College Park, Maryland, and made the preliminary political and legal arrangements for the creation of a tax-exempt American Center for Physics.

Next month, **Viola Vogel** and her research group will move to ETH Zürich to establish a new institute for biologically oriented materials. There, researchers will study the engineering principles of biological nanosystems to inspire new technologies, from tissue engineering to biomedical therapies. Vogel is a professor in the department of bioengineering and an adjunct professor in the physics department at the University of Washington, Seattle.

Michael Atiyah and **Isadore M. Singer** jointly received the Abel Prize for 2004 from the Norwegian Academy of Science and Letters at a ceremony last month at the University Aula in Oslo, Norway. This is only the second time this international mathematics prize has been given. The pair were honored for their "discovery and proof of the index theorem, bringing together topology, geometry, and analysis, and their outstanding role in building new bridges between mathematics and theoretical physics." Atiyah, who retired in 1997 as master of Trinity College, University of Cambridge, is an honorary professor in the School of Mathematics at the University of Edinburgh. Singer is an Institute Professor in the mathematics department at MIT. The two shared the cash prize of 6 million kroners (about $861 000).

After 20 years as editor of the *Astronomical Journal*, **Paul Hodge**, professor of astronomy at the University of Washington, Seattle, is leaving that post to spend more time on research. His successor will be **John S. Gallagher III**, professor of astronomy at the University of Wisconsin–Madison. The transition of editorial offices from Seattle to Madison will be finalized by the time Hodge's term as editor is completed in December 2004.

Next month, **Douglas Durian** and **Andrea Liu** will join the University of Pennsylvania as professors in the department of physics and astronomy. Currently at UCLA, Durian is a professor of physics and Liu is a professor in UCLA's department of chemistry and biochemistry.

Pallab Bhattacharya, James R. Mellor Professor of Engineering and a professor of electrical engineering and computer science at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, joined the staff of the *Journal of Physics D: Applied Physics* on 1 January 2004 as the publication's editor-in-chief. He succeeds outgoing editor **Allister Ferguson**, who had held the position since January 1998. Ferguson is a professor of photonics at the University of Strathclyde in Glasgow, Scotland.

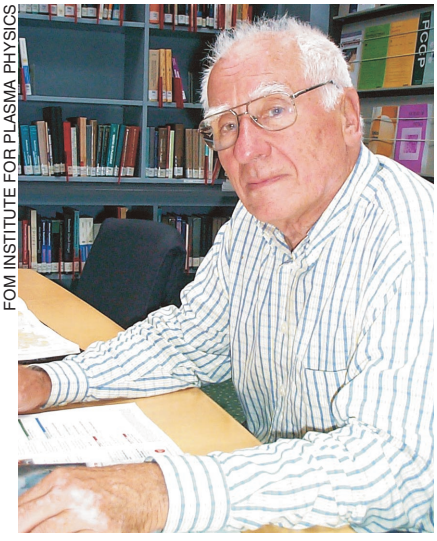
The American Mathematical Society and the Society for Industrial and Applied Mathematics awarded the 2004 Norbert Wiener Prize in Applied Mathematics to **James Sethian** at the joint AMS-SIAM meeting in Phoenix, Arizona, in January. Sethian, professor of mathematics at the University of California, Berkeley, was honored for his "seminal work on the computer representation of the motion of curves, surfaces, interfaces, and wavefronts, and for his brilliant applications of mathematical and computational ideas to problems in science and engineering."

Susan Ginsberg joined the US Department of Homeland Security in December as the senior policy adviser to the science and technology directorate. Ginsberg, who has a background in materials science and planetary studies, had previously been a senior science-policy fellow in the American Physical Society's office of public affairs.

Obituaries

Cornelis Marius Braams

Cornelis Marius "Kees" Braams, a fusion pioneer and emeritus professor in plasma physics at Utrecht University, died in De Heeg, the Netherlands, on 29 July 2003, follow-


FOM INSTITUTE FOR PLASMA PHYSICS

Cornelis Marius Braams

ing a heart attack. For three decades, Braams was the personification of fusion research in the Netherlands: He was a founder and the first director of the Foundation for Fundamental Research on Matter (FOM) Institute for Plasma Physics "Rijnhuizen."

Braams was born in 's Hertogenbosch, the Netherlands, on 5 July 1925. Following World War II, he studied physics and mathematics at Utrecht, where he graduated in 1952 with a master's degree in physics. In that same year, *Nature* published his explanation of the phenomenon of the so-called Tippe Top, a toy that spontaneously turns itself upside down when spinning. He conducted part of his thesis studies at MIT from 1952 to 1954. In 1956, he received his PhD from Utrecht for his thesis, entitled "Energy Levels of Calcium Isotopes," under the guidance of Pieter Endt.

In the following years, Braams was actively involved in the foundation of Rijnhuizen, for which he was the director from 1959 until his retirement in 1987. His scientific interests in fusion research were concentrated mainly on the transition regime from gas discharges to plasmas. He tried to answer questions such as, Can a rotating gas blanket be used to stabilize a toroidal arc? And can the combustion process in a reactor be maintained by removing the ashes by means of diffusion to and from a cold-gas blanket?

In 1962, Braams became a professor of plasma physics at Utrecht and mentored a large number of doctoral students, whom he taught to be critical and independent scientists. During the year 1963–64, he worked at the Boeing Scientific Research Laboratories in Seattle, Washington, in the Plasma Physics Laboratory.

Braams was very active in building the joint European fusion research network. He was a member of numerous national and international committees and councils, very often in the role of chairman. He was especially instrumental in the realization of the Joint European Torus, or JET, project and, in 1979, became the first chairman of its scientific council. In the Netherlands, he reanimated the Dutch Physical Society during his chairmanship in the 1970s. During all those public activities, he managed to find time for his other passions. With his sons, he designed and handcrafted a seaworthy yacht. His beautiful collection of exotic trees on the park grounds surrounding Rijnhuizen is a living testimony to his strong love for nature.

At his retirement, Braams was awarded a royal decoration by Queen Beatrix of the Netherlands. He later saw it as his duty to record the scientific history of fusion research of magnetically confined plasmas. He did this in his own style, by checking all the facts, preferably by contacting the main characters directly. The result is a book he wrote with Peter Stott, entitled *Nuclear Fusion, Half a Century of Magnetic Confinement Research* (Institute of Physics, 2002). Braams was a passionate physicist, ever ready to fight pseudoscience, especially if fusion was involved. Whether it was ball lightning or cold fusion, he built his criticisms on a solid and thorough scientific analysis.

Until his death, Braams worked a few days a week in "his" institute, where he still had an office. He remained especially active in engaging public interest in fusion research, for which he had always been an untiring and well-spoken advocate.

Niek Lopes Cardozo
Noud Oomens
Mark Westra
FOM Institute for Plasma Physics "Rijnhuizen"
Nieuwegein, the Netherlands

Allen Lewis King

Allen Lewis King, a member of the physics faculty at Dartmouth College for more than 60 years, died on 11 December 2003 in Lebanon, New Hampshire, of age-related complications. During his active years, his physical research interests were chiefly in optics, thermal physics, and biophysics. In later years, he became engrossed in the history of physics as revealed in physical apparatus.

Allen was born on 27 March 1910


FERN MEYERS

Allen Lewis King

in Rochester, New York. He received his BA, with a major in chemistry and a minor in physics, in 1932 and his MA in physics the following year, both from the University of Rochester. In 1934, he began research at Rochester under Lee DuBridge on photoelectric and thermionic properties of thoriated tungsten surfaces. He received his PhD in physics in 1937.

Beginning his professional career at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, Allen remained there from 1937 until the US entered World War II. His research on the temperature dependence of elastic constants of alloys and a fledgling consultancy with industry had to be deferred "for the duration." Early in 1942, Allen was called to Dartmouth to help establish what later would become the US Navy V-12 program, the largest program for training naval officers. Every recruit was required to take two terms of physics. In the winter of 1944, that requirement led to the largest class in basic physics held anywhere up to that time. Allen taught the course with the help of more than 40 hastily trained professors from other departments of the college. Many of them never got over their hectic foray into physics.

The tectonic shifts in US education that were produced by the war precluded a return to the old educational patterns, although many longed to go back to using those traditional approaches. Allen was eager to resume his prewar research and to begin work in biophysics and medical physics. His insistence on the importance of research to support effective teaching was critical at that time: He secured support in the Dartmouth administration for the changes that enabled it