

Robin K. McGuire, president and principal of Risk Engineering Inc in Boulder, Colorado

John W. Morris Jr, professor of metallurgy, materials science, and mineral engineering at UC Berkeley

Lloyd N. Trefethen, professor of numerical analysis at Oxford University

James J. Truchard, president, chief executive officer, and founder of National Instruments Corp in Austin, Texas

Anil V. Virkar, professor of materials science and engineering and chair of the department of materials science and engineering at the University of Utah in Salt Lake City

David A. Whelan, vice president, general manager, and deputy president of Boeing Phantom Works, Boeing Co, in Seal Beach, California

James Clair Wyant, dean of the College of Optical Sciences at the University of Arizona in Tucson

Charles F. Zukoski, William H. and Janet G. Lycan Professor and vice chancellor for research at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

Below are the newly elected foreign associates involved in physics:

Timothy Berners-Lee, senior research scientist at MIT

Joachim Heinzl, president of Bayerische Forschungsförderung at the Technical University of Munich in Germany

Kenichi Iga, executive director of the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science in Tokyo

Joseph (Yosi) Kost, professor in the chemical engineering department at Ben Gurion University of the Negev in Beersheba, Israel

Arnold Migus, general director of CNRS in Paris

Xi Yao, professor and dean in the School of Electronic and Informatic Engineering at Jiaotong University in China.

in brief
Robert B. Kerr has been appointed director of the Arecibo Observatory in Arecibo, Puerto Rico, succeeding **Timothy Hanks**, who had served as interim observatory director since September. In his new post, Kerr, whose most recent position was as a program director in aeronomy at NSF, is responsible for maintaining the observatory's scientific and technical program and developing new science and technology capabilities. He was named to the position in February by Cornell University's National Astronomy and Ionosphere Center, which manages the observatory for

competitive use by more than 250 telescope users annually.

NASA has named **S. Alan Stern** associate administrator for the agency's Science Mission Directorate, following the retirement in March of **Mary L. Cleave**. A planetary scientist, Stern joined NASA from the Southwest Research In-

stitute's space science and engineering division in Boulder, Colorado, where he served as executive director. Stern began this month in his new position, where he is responsible for all of the agency's space science, Earth science, astrophysics, and planetary science missions and research activities with an annual budget of \$5.3 billion.

obituaries

To notify the community about a colleague's death, subscribers can visit <http://www.physicstoday.org/obits>, where they can submit obituaries (up to 750 words), comments, and reminiscences. Each month recently posted material will be summarized here, in print. Select online obituaries will later appear in print.

Alan Graham MacDiarmid

Alan Graham MacDiarmid, who made important contributions to physics and chemistry, died in his home in Philadelphia on 7 February 2007. Despite being in poor health, he was about to depart on a long and arduous trip to New Zealand, his homeland, to see family and to visit the MacDiarmid Institute for Advanced Materials and Nanotechnology, the scientific organization created in his name. Weakened by myeloplastic syndrome, a leukemia-like disease, Alan fell down a flight of stairs just moments before the planned departure.

Born in Masterton, New Zealand, on 14 April 1927, Alan worked part-time and attended classes at Victoria University College, where he received his bachelor's and master's degrees in chemistry. He earned two PhDs in inorganic chemistry, one at the University of Wisconsin in 1953 and the second at Cambridge University in England in 1955. After a brief appointment at the University of St. Andrews in Scotland, he became a chemistry professor at the University of Pennsylvania.

Alan, Hideki Shirakawa, and I were awarded the Nobel Prize in Chemistry in 2000 for the discovery of conducting polymers. Three earlier Nobel Prizes in Chemistry had been presented for discoveries in polymer science: to Hermann Staudinger in 1953, to Karl Ziegler and Giulio Natta in 1963, and to Paul Flory in 1974. Their discoveries are associated with three generations of polymers: natural ones, such as leather, spider webs, and silk, that have been used by our ancestors for thousands of years; synthetic fibers; and the struc-



Alan Graham MacDiarmid

tural plastics that are so important in our society today.

None of the first three generations, however, is interesting in relation to electronic materials. They are insulators. The materials that Alan, Shirakawa, and I discovered in the late 1970s brought electronic function into the area of polymer science. Conducting polymers are the fourth generation of polymeric materials; they are electronically active and have the properties of semiconductors and metals.

Now, three decades later, our discovery is well known and often used as a highly successful example of the importance of interdisciplinary research. When we started this work, however, the basic concepts that define semiconducting and metallic polymers were not understood. Alan and I had previously worked on poly(sulfur-nitride), a