



Just push it!

Introducing **Auto SE**, the simplest thin film measurement tool ever!

All it takes is pushing one button.

With **Auto SE**, easily get the full description of your thin film stack in only a few seconds. Routine work will never be the same!

www.AutoSE.org

Middle East synchrotron. On 3 November SESAME celebrates an inauguration to mark completion of and staff moving into the facility's building in Allaan, Jordan. SESAME—Synchrotron-light for Experimental Science and Applications in the Middle East—has the dual goals of facilitating good science and good relations in the region (see *PHYSICS TODAY*, February 2007, page 29). Iran joined the project earlier this year, bringing the number of partners to nine.

"One of the big problems that worried me was the funding of beamlines," says SESAME founding council president Herwig Schopper. "A miracle happened! This year we received the components for five complete beamlines from Daresbury [Laboratory in the UK]." With other equipment from France and the US, he adds, "we have all the components for the first generation of beamlines." What's more, he says, a community of several hundred users has been established. "The big worry by some people that SESAME would become a white elephant can be definitely discarded." SESAME is slated to open in 2011.

Coinciding with the inauguration, the project's council presidency is changing hands from one former CERN director general to another: Schopper's successor is Chris Llewellyn-Smith. TF

Enrollments and degrees. For the seventh straight year, undergraduate physics degree production in the US

rose in 2006. The 5373 physics bachelor's degrees conferred that year represent a 5% increase from the previous year and a 47% jump from 1999.

The number of physics PhDs awarded in 2006 also rose, to 1380, 26% more than two years earlier. In the class of 2006, physics made up 0.03% of bachelor's degrees and 3% of PhDs awarded across all fields in the US.

In 2006, 57% of physics PhDs were awarded to non-US citizens. Projections suggest that US citizens will make up the majority by the end of this decade.

In recent years the number of women in physics has remained steady. They made up 21% of bachelor's recipients and 17% of physics PhDs in the class of 2006. No change has been seen for many years in the proportions of underrepresented minorities in physics. In the late 1990s, an average of 10 physics PhDs were conferred to African Americans annually; that jumped to 18 in the early 2000s, but has since fallen to 11.

These are among the highlights in the recent *Enrollments and Degrees Report, 2006*, which covers physics and astronomy and is available free of charge at <http://www.aip.org/statistics/gradtrends> or from the American Institute of Physics, Statistical Research Center, One Physics Ellipse, College Park, MD 20740; e-mail stats@aip.org; phone 301-209-3070. TF ■

web watch

To suggest topics or sites for Web Watch, please visit <http://www.physicstoday.org/suggestwebwatch.html>. Compiled and edited by Charles Day

<http://messenger.jhuapl.edu/encountersm2>

On 6 October, NASA's *Messenger* spacecraft swooped down over the surface of Mercury for its second flyby. The mission's **Flyby Visualization Tool** provides an interactive, visually rich overview of the observations carried out by the spacecraft's seven scientific instruments.



http://www.astrosociety.org/education/resources/womenast_bib.html

Andrew Fraknoi of Foothill College edits **Women in Astronomy**, a collection of online material about the challenges and triumphs of female astronomers past and present. To be featured in the collection, an astronomer has to be the subject of a nontechnical article that's available online. Fraknoi welcomes suggestions for new entries.



<http://science.gov>

Seventeen organizations in 13 agencies discharge the federal government's science responsibilities. To search through what those organizations have published, including patents and papers, the Department of Energy has created **Science.gov**. Now in its fifth year, the portal lets you browse content by subject rather than by agency.

