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Carpe Diem!

Tempus fugit! Time flies today just as fast as it did in Julius Caesar's day, even though things seemed to move more slowly then. Think, for instance of the chariots on the cobblestoned Appian Way, traveling at what was considered high speed then! Compare that "high" speed with today's automobiles and aircraft. And then think of the new microprocessor recently unveiled jointly by both Intel and IBM.

Time *seems* to travel faster today, too. Many people try to keep up with it, and suffer anxieties when they feel that it is getting away from them. Yet, as members of Tallahassee Scientific Society (TSS), we have so much territory to cover that it seems there is not enough time in which to do it! The latter part of 2006 (the first school semester) was heavily populated with sporting events, so attempts are being made to fit just about everything else into the first part of this year (the second school semester). Many of the scientific activities taking place in our region are listed in this issue.

Let us try to do all that we can to advance the cause of the sciences—*carpe diem!* And be sure to take some time for relaxation and personal fulfillment, too.

From Our President—



Presidential Vision

We live in paradoxical times. Our love affair with gadgets is increasing, and our population is growing. We will need all the knowledge that science and technology can bring to our world to provide the "wizardry" for our new toys and to improve agricultural efficiencies to enable us to feed our swelling numbers. Despite our dependence on science and technology to provide us a comfortable existence, science continues to be a low priority in most people's lives. We fail to provide the nurture and support that future scientists and technicians need to consider entering these necessary fields.

Perhaps we have succeeded too well. If our technologies were less reliable, we might collectively consider the possibility of life without those benefits, and take steps to protect them. Unfortunately, failures are few, and the connections between our technology and its human origins have been forgotten.

We now face an uphill battle to educate our populace about what science and technology are really about, and the benefits they provide. We need to give them the knowledge to make sound judgments about the future course of our society, and we need to do it now, not later.

Einstein recognized the true nature of science's quest ("*All religions, arts and sciences are branches of the same tree. All these aspirations are directed toward ennobling man's life, lifting it from the sphere of mere physical existence and leading the individual towards freedom.*") Nevertheless, most members of the general public distrust scientists and discount reason as a basis for making decisions; instead, they rely on "facts" provided by those with personal agendas, or join the latest "politically correct" bandwagon.

It is my hope that the Society will partner with other groups to bring about

changes to improve our educational system, and provide informational resources directed toward pertinent local issues as well as those spanning the globe. We should strive to become the place for objective, reasoned answers to the critical questions of today.

Work with me this year as we begin to focus on more long-range projects to correct these problems. Come to the meetings prepared to mould our programs, and be willing to make the sacrifices that will bring these ideas to fruition. While what we do individually may seem insignificant, what we do for each other, collectively, is irreplaceable, and the basis of our civilization. If our society is to continue, we need to work together towards common goals, and move beyond our individual needs to the common good.

Respectively submitted,

Barry R. Boerner, Ph. D., President.

Motor Vehicle Fuel: Alcohol from Corn, via Coal

"Making ethanol from crops has considerable, and growing, allure. As an energy source, bioderived ethanol is renewable, and its by-products are biodegradable. And, most important, to the extent that the ethanol takes the place of gasoline, it economizes on imported oil and can reduce greenhouse gas emissions. . . ." Thus begins an article by William Sweet in the January issue of SPECTRUM magazine, published by the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers. Readers are invited to peruse this article at www.spectrum.ieee.org/jan07/inthisissue/4832.

Correspondence

Our Newsletter would love to hear from members. Please send your letter to the postal or E-Mail address above. Any scientific development in which you are involved, any activity that you wish to announce, and any personal mention to be shared -- please write us about it, and we will be happy to publish it.

The Newsletter is looking forward to hearing from you.

Regional News

Science Fairs are in the air, and we are moving steadily to the two nationwide climaxes. One will be the Intel International Science and Engineering Fair to be held in Albuquerque, New Mexico, May 13 – 19, 2007, and the other will be the Intel Science Talent Search to be held in Washington DC March 8 – 13, 2007. Nine of the forty semi-finalists are from Florida. Each of these events promises excellent scholarships to winners, for scientific acumen which originated in science fairs in their respective high schools.

The State of Florida's Fair will take place April 11 to 13 in Fort Myers, and is in need of judges. If you can help, please contact Dr. Nancy Besley by E-Mail to besleyn@ocps.net, or visit the Fair's website at www.floridassef.net and follow the leads for registering as a judge, obtaining hotel information, etc. This activity is all voluntary.

The **Capital Region Science and Engineering Fair** took place on February 9, 2007. TSS presented an award to the Senior Division winner in the category Botany. The award consists of a one-year subscription to Scientific American, and a check for \$100.

The **Annual Open House of the National High Magnetic Field Laboratory** will take place on Saturday, February 24, from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

The **American Society of Civil Engineers** will hold an Engineering Expo at the FAMU/FSU College of Engineering on Saturday, February 24, 2007—the last day of Engineers Week, 2007—to promote Engineering as a Career to middle and high school students. The Society hopes that this will be an annual event.

The **Mary Brogan Museum of Arts and Sciences**, in association with the Smithsonian Institution, will hold its Fifth Annual Florida Wine Festival April 12 to 14, 2007. On Friday the 13th, at 7:00 p.m., they will feature the musical group FAB, presenting a Tribute to the Beatles. Further information is available at www.thefloridawinefestival.com.

The **Florida Academy of Sciences (FAS)** will hold its Annual Conference at the St. Petersburg Campus of the University of South Florida, March 15 – 17, 2007. The Academy awarded its 2006 Medal for Outstanding Service to the Sciences in the State of Florida to Dr. Jim O'Brien, one of the founding Directors of TSS. Dr. O'Brien is also the State Climatologist Emeritus, and is internationally renowned for his work in climate prediction studies. He will be the Guest Speaker at the Society's Banquet in St. Petersburg on March 16.

TSS Members are invited to attend the Academy Conference. The fee is \$65, including the Banquet, and hotels in the area are providing special discounts for the event.

The Academy has smiled on Tallahassee once again this year, as it has awarded its Medal for 2007 to Dr. Bob Holton, for his work in the treatment of the disease Cancer.

Dr. Holton will attend at St. Petersburg to receive the award on March 16, 2007, and will be the Guest Speaker at the March, 2008, Banquet at the University of North Florida in Jacksonville.

Departments

Awards

The Awards Committee will shortly be inviting nominations for the award of the TSS Gold Medal of Honor, which will be presented at the Society's Annual Meeting later this year. Please stand by for the announcement.

Environmental Issues

Our Environmental Issues Committee has been keeping a close eye on activities in our region that affect the environment. The Committee also took a close look at operations at the closed Leon County Landfill on US 27 South, and prepared a report for the Executive Committee, which indicated that the Landfill operators are "doing a good job" in keeping the site in good condition, and making use of scientific procedures in the treatment of the waste at the site.

Lannutti Memorial Lecture

The Tenth Annual Lannutti Memorial Lecture will take place at the Florida State University Physics Lecture Theater, UPL101 on Thursday, April 5, 2007, beginning at 3:45 p.m. This year's Lannutti Lecturer will be Dr. Homer Neal, Director of the University of Michigan's ATLAS Project, and the Samuel A Goudsmit Distinguished Professor of Physics at the University. As a member of the DZERO Collaborative at Fermilab, he was a part of the team that announced the discovery of the top quark in 1995. His research specialty is Experimental High Energy Physics, in which he collaborated with the late Dr Lannutti. He fondly remembers Dr. Lannutti: "I knew Joe and had a very high regard for his professional accomplishments in Physics and computing, and greatly admired his wonderful human character."

The theme of his Lecture will be *Stresses in US National Science Policy*. "In high energy physics, for example, the nation is facing the prospects of having zero cutting edge accelerators for a period of more than a decade, even though this is a field where the U.S. had previously been one of the dominant players. Our present successes have been built on past sound national science policies. One can question whether our policies of today are properly preparing the nation for the future."

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