

## Summary of the Spring SEPS/AAPT Meeting at St. Joseph's University April 11/12, 2008

### Friday night

The Friday night session began with a reception and dinner in the President's Lounge at the Student Union Center at St. Joseph's University. After a delicious dinner we walked over to the Science Center and heard from Gino Segre, Professor of Physics at University of Pennsylvania, on the topic of the Copenhagen Conference, and the early struggles with quantum theory. These were exciting times and controversy reined as the world's best minds in science struggled to understand the structure of the atom. Gino walked us through these sessions as a tour guide giving us a sense of the drama of the topic and the participants. Gino then signed copies of his latest book, **Faust in Copenhagen: A Struggle for the Soul of Physics**.



The Saturday session began at 8:30 with coffee and refreshments and after an introduction and welcome from our President, Fran Poodry, and our host and Vice President, Paul Angiolillo, Don Scholl introduced our Invited speaker, Robert Beck Clark. Robert Clark is part of a very successful physics teacher training program at BYU and discussed the nature of the program and how one university produces 5% of the Physics teachers of America. He also described how the growth in Physics education in the high school will require more, not fewer, high school Physics teachers in the next decade. Where are these new Physics teachers coming from? His wisdom and humor made for a fascinating discussion.



After a short break we began our Contributed Papers session. Members were encouraged to offer a brief demonstration or give a contributed paper on a topic of interest. Our first speaker was **Connie Cooper** who discussed the growth of Physics education in China and brought us up to date on her recent trip to China.



Next, **Marc Baron** of Sun Valley HS did a neat demonstration with a laser beam showing how a person pushing on a wall actually deflects the wall a bit. The laser beam and mirror acted like a giant lever, amplifying the movement of the wall.



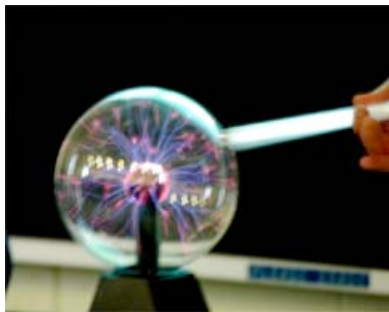
The next speaker was **Barry Feierman**, Westtown School, who showed how a motion sensor and volleyball can be used to demonstrate conservation of mechanical energy in six seconds. Participants were asked to predict the shapes

of PE, KE, and total energy graphs as the ball made three bounces. This was a lab used for Barry's 9<sup>th</sup> grade Physics class at Westtown School.

Our next speaker was **Jeff Wetherhold**, Parkland HS. Jeff has become our expert on home-made video demonstrations and showed some of his newest creations on escape velocity and simulated gravity.



The next speaker was **Deborah Goldader**, Friends Central School. Deb showed how a plasma state can be made using simple equipment and described why states of matter were an important part of her course. It was fun to see how a fluorescent bulb can be lit up from a simple plasma state toy (without getting shocked).



Our last speaker was **Harry Woodcock**, Philadelphia University. Harry considers himself to be a theoretical physicist, and discussed some "errors" in textbooks. The title of his talk was "truths not told in physics textbooks."



We next held our annual election of officers. Unlike previous years where nominations were made from the floor, we had a Nominations Committee do the ground work before the election. The nominations submitted were voted in to office, including:

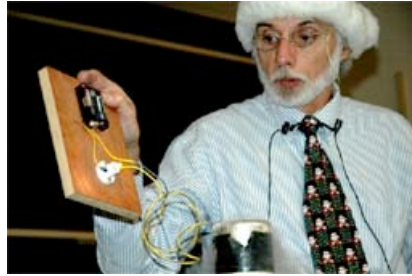
President - **Paul Angiolillo** (St. Joseph's University)  
Vice President - **Eldred Jay Bagley** (Philadelphia School District)  
Recording Secretary - **Craig Halpern** (Ewing HS) )  
Corresponding Secretary - **Barry Feierman** (Westtown School)  
Treasurer - **Art Zadrozny** (East HS, West Chester)  
Section Representative (3 year) - **Ling Liang** (LaSalle University)  
Web page: **Harriet Slogoff** (U.Penn) and **Martha Takats** (Ursinus College)

Members-At-Large

**Marc Baron, Doug Vallette, Sardari Khanna, Deborah Goldader, Bob Schwartz, Bill Berner, Jeff Wetherhold**

We next presented gifts of appreciation for all of their hard work for many years to John Patane, outgoing Treasurer, and Chet Zach (long-time secretary) of SEPS. Both of these men have held our section together for decades.

We then presented a special award and gift to Bill Berner (U.Penn) for all of the interesting demos he has shown us for years, including his annual and now-famous Christmas show for high school students.



Finally we held our annual door prize “give-away” by the master of give-aways, **Bob Schwartz** of Harriton HS.



After lunch we had three workshops:  
**Gravity Workshop** led by **Don Scholl** and **Jeff Wetherhold**  
Participants built lots of cool gadgets including a projectile launcher.



**Modeling Workshop** – led by **Doug Vallette** and **Jess Dykes**  
Doug and Jess took us through the paradigm of modeling using specific examples from kinematics. They are offering a follow up three-week course in Modeling Physics and Chemistry at Ridley HS this summer.



**College topics:** open discussion led by **Paul Angiolillo**



The day ended well with all of us realizing that there is much to engage us in our profession as teachers. Teachers teaching teachers about teaching is cool.

We also agreed to form some Standing Committees to help run the organization:

Outreach Committee - Fran Poodry  
Nomination Committee  
Financial Planning Committee  
Constitution Committee - update our Constitution

We agreed to hold the next year's Spring Meeting at Villanova University and hope to have it be a joint meeting with the NJ and Central Pa sections.

Our next officer's meeting will take place on May 2 6 pm at St. Joseph's University. Members are welcome to attend and help plan next year's activities.

Submitted  
Barry Feerman  
Corresponding Secretary