

## Society of Physics Students Zone 17 Meeting- 2007 Final Report

On January 6<sup>th</sup> of 2007 the Seattle Pacific University SPS chapter hosted the regional meeting for Zone 17. The meeting coincided wonderfully with the AAPT/AAS Winter meeting in Seattle for those who wished to attend both.

The day kicked off with a hearty Subway lunch to provide sustenance for all those who had driven from near and far to join us. In attendance were 18 students from 5 chapters, 4 chapter faculty advisors, and 3 representatives of the national SPS organization.



After some time spent dallying over food getting to know one another and exchanging anecdotes on the wonders of Junkyard Wars and the like, we moved on to an egg drop competition (pictured at left). An identical, fairly minimalist set of materials were given to each team of two; including paper clips, one balloon, wooden sticks, string, rubber bands, a section of padding, and a length of string. Some teams came up with very innovative designs, and some with rather outlandish contraptions in an attempt

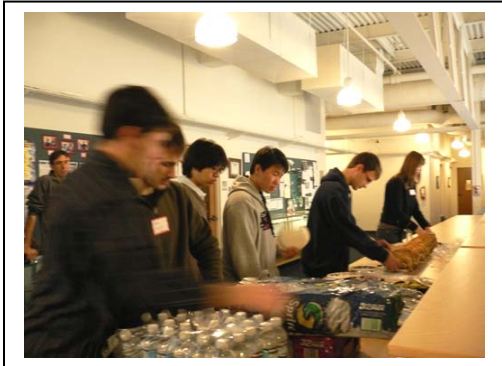
to win the USB thumb drives given out as prizes. In the end a more conventional, but very well constructed, design won the day. I suppose it's conventional because it's proven!

Next we moved into a series of presentations. Kasandra Jorgenson (pictured at right) led off with a presentation on her recent SPS Outstanding Student Award-sponsored trip to the International Conference for Physics Students in Hungary. The main message was that SPS offers amazing awards... if you only apply for them! Historically, the American presence at IAPS meetings has been small and there is no good reason for this. ICPS is a wonderful chance to see research from physics students all over the world, to present your own research in front of a friendly audience, and to see a bit of Europe.



Next we heard presentations by Seattle Pacific University students Asher Danner, Alan Dowden, and Derek Cox on a Reuben's flame tube (pictured at left) and ping pong vacuum cannon they built for use in outreaches to local high schools. Dmitriy Mironyuk of Green River Community College then described the muon telescope they have constructed at GRCC.

After a short break for revitalizing coffee and homemade ice cream we reconvened to hear National SPS Director Gary White give a talk on career opportunities in physics. This is an area of special interest and expertise for Gary. One of his most noteworthy points was the existence of what he terms “hidden physicists”: those who earn a degree in physics but then go on to find a career in a field not traditionally associated with the stereotyped picture of a professor or industrial lab researcher. The diversity of jobs held by these “hidden physicists” is both astounding and encouraging. Gary also gave his famous participatory demonstration on the physics of spandex (pictured above).



A final point of conversation was a recounting of the news and events of the previous year by all the chapters present. The report of Green River Community College professor and Zone Councilor Ajay Narayanan was particularly interesting, as he related information on exciting topics such as liquid nitrogen bombs and the revitalization of the Sigma Pi Sigma program.