

## **Joint Spring Meeting 2008: TSAAPT, TSAPS, Zone 13 SPS, and the National Society of Hispanic Physicists**

### **SPS Reporters: Henry F. Schreiner, III and B. Logan Hancock**

The 2008 Joint Spring Meeting of the Texas Section of the American Association of Physics Teachers (TSAAPT), the Texas Section of the American Physical Society (TSAPS), Zone 13 of the Society of Physics Students (SPS), and the National Society of Hispanic Physicists. The TSAAPT and TSAPS portions of the program were hosted by the Texas Electronic Coalition for Physicists at the Omni Hotel in Corpus Christi. The Angelo State SPS hosted the Zone 13 portion of the meeting. The meeting was held, despite unfavorable weather in many portions of the state, from Thursday, March 6 to Saturday, March 8.

The Angelo State University SPS representatives, a group of 17 students and faculty advisor Toni Sauncy, arrived in Corpus Christi, TX late on Thursday afternoon March 6, 2008. The students were warmly greeted by the registering officials in the foyer of the Omni Hotel, and were all very impressed with the level of hospitality; not to mention the view of the bay! The zone meeting got started with a welcoming reception for SPS students and mentors attending the meeting. We were very pleased with the turn out. At the reception, students were given a chance to socialize with other physics majors from different schools in Texas, and enjoyed a light dinner catered and served by the hotel.

Following dinner, a few announcements were made regarding the meeting and a number of door prizes were given away. The reception kicked off the “Future Faces of Physics” theme with a presentation regarding Albert Einstein’s beliefs about racism and discrimination, including the book by Fred Jerome and Rodger Taylor,



**Figure 1 – Some students gathering around the Einstein against racism poster at the reception dinner for a photo**

“Einstein on Racism”. The SPS petition was introduced and signed by a number of attendees pledging to uphold Einstein’s promise to “not be silent” about the issue.

Due to some severe weather in airports around Dallas, TX, a number of planned speakers were either delayed in arrival or unable to attend the meeting, resulting in a number of unplanned schedule changes. Beside this slight confusion, a number of interesting talks and sessions were attended by all members of our chapter. One of these sessions in particular was the “Science of the Texas Petawatt Laser” presented by Todd Ditmire from the University of Texas. He told about the construction and possible uses of a laser that they are building at the University of Texas that will be, when complete, the world’s most powerful laser. Following these plenary sessions were parallel sessions presented by researching undergraduate students as well as a few High School research project collaborations such as the “Forces and Potential Energy Function for a Bow and Arrow System” by Lake Highlands High School.

After a very well-prepared luncheon catered by the Omni hotel, the parallel sessions continued as well as a poster session for student research presentations. A demonstration



**Figure 3 - The weather might have been bad on the way, but it was beautiful by Friday**

of the impressive new TI-NSpire calculators was there primarily as a workshop for teachers, but a few students got to try using them. After most of the early afternoon displays and talks were over, the San Angelo SPS students put on a game of “Future Faces of Physics” Jeopardy in a special session aimed at issues of Diversity. This was thoroughly enjoyed by all the participants, including many SPS students from other universities, as well as the audience members. The Jeopardy did highlight some facts very relevant to the central theme of diversity that many people present did not know. Later that afternoon, a number of students got the opportunity to take in some of the local bay-front scenery of Corpus Christi before attending the formal banquet that night. Lionel Hewett, from Texas A&M University at Kingsville, presented a compelling presentation regarding “The Physics of Hang Gliding” including stories of

his personal experiences and accounts with the sport and his work in increasing the safety of it, complete with a full-size hang glider in the banquet hall, making an ideal visual aid. See Figure 3.

Saturday morning started slowly. A few morning talks were attended by some ASU students, though most of us were waiting for the final session, packing, eating, or exploring. The final APS session, running from ten thirty to twelve, was attended by all the ASU students. This had several interesting talks over several quantum subjects, and even an unusual classical-only explanation of the charge of an electron. Rishiraj Pravahan, from the University of Texas, gave an excellent talk on the physics that may be studied from construction of the world’s largest particle collider.

The meeting was one of the smallest in recent years, due in part to the bad weather; however, it still managed to be a fun and highly educational time with many opportunities to meet professors and students from a range of different universities.

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**Figure 2: The Physics of Hangliding**



**Figure 4 - Rishiraj Pravahan and "The Physics of the Very Small Using a Very Large Machine"**



Figure 5 – The Angelo State University SPS students in Corpus Christi TX – Zone 13 Meeting, Joint with the TSAAPT and TXAPS

**OTHER PHOTOS FROM THE MEETING:**





Submitted by Logan Hancock and Henry Schreiner III, Angelo State University



