

Virginia Tech Zone Meeting 2007

1). On Saturday, October 20 2007, Virginia Tech hosted a zone meeting for SPS zone 4. The purpose was to provide an opportunity for SPS students from schools within the Virginia, Maryland and Washington D.C. area a chance to interact and to present research in the form of 15 min. talks or posters during a poster session.



In attendance were students from The University of Mary Washington, The University of Maryland College Park, Northern Virginia Community College, Towson University, as well as many students from Virginia Tech. Also Dr. Greg Topasna Faculty advisor to the SPS at Virginia Military Institute attended. Finally, four students from the University of North Carolina, Asheville, including Associate Zone Councillor for Zone 5, were invited and attended the meeting.

Invited speakers included Kendra Rand Program Coordinator at the SPS national office, Dr. Meredith Newby, assistant professor of biophysics at Clemson University, and Dr. Djordje Minic, associate professor of physics at Virginia Tech.

2). The meeting began with a 30-minute registration and reception at 9:30 AM. During this time, the guests arrived and registered, when they received a nametag, a Virginia Tech folder containing abstracts, a schedule and a Virginia Tech Physics Graduate Program brochure. Guests from institutions other than Virginia Tech also received a Virginia Tech Physics mug. Breakfast, consisting of doughnuts, coffee and fresh fruit was served until the meeting officially began at 10:00 AM.



The meeting continued with an introduction by Dr. Beate Schmittmann, chair of the Department of Physics at Virginia Tech. She welcomed all the guests and invited the students interested in going to graduate school for physics to consider and apply to Virginia Tech.



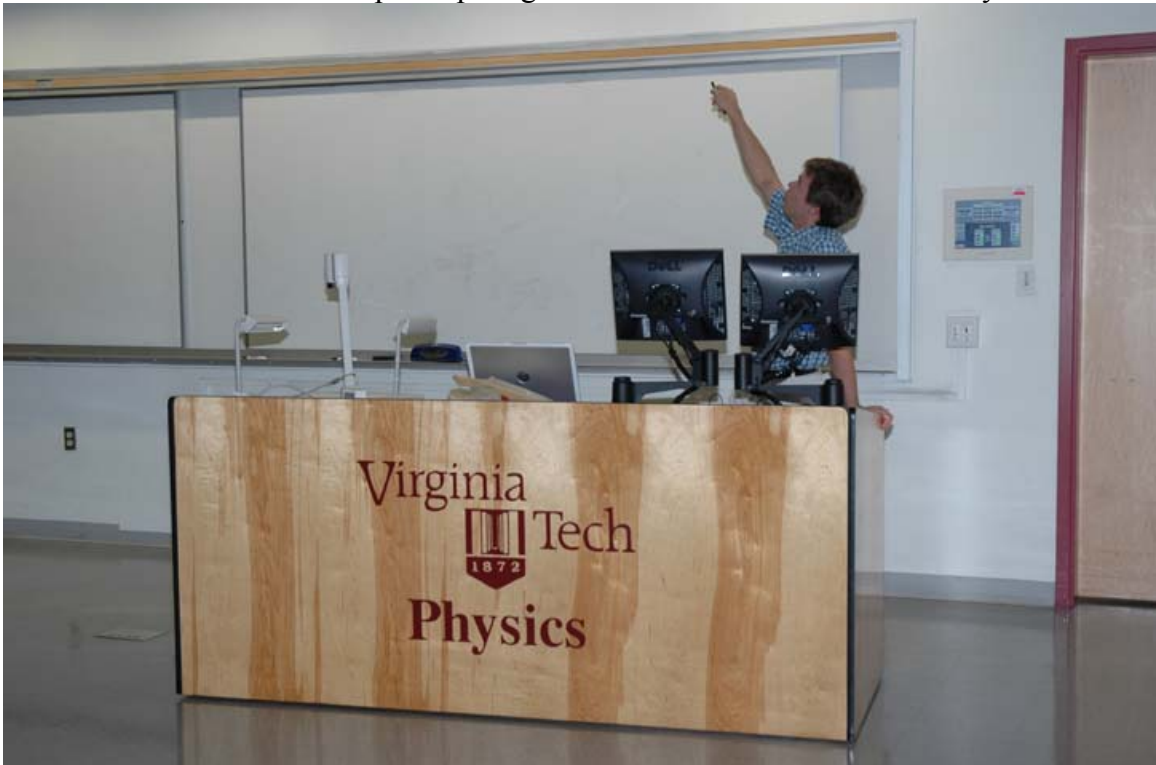
Next Jonathan Hughes gave a fifteen-minute talk on the importance of getting involved in SPS on the national level, focusing on the numerous ways SPS members can get scholarships and other funding.



Jonathan then handed over the floor to Brandi Rollins from the University of Mary Washington who gave a talk “Interfacing and Testing a Spectrometer Using LabView,” about how she and Mary Pilger built a much-needed spectrometer for their physics department.



The next student talk was given by Chris Knorowski a Virginia Tech undergraduate. His talk was about “Functionalized Polymers as Templates for Nanoparticle Self-Assembly,” research he conducted while participating in an REU at Iowa State University.



Before breaking for lunch the first invited speaker of the day, Kendra Rand Program Coordinator at the SPS national office gave a talk. Her talk, “What to do with a Physics

Degree: Career Opportunities,” highlighted the non-traditional career pathway for physicists, that is, non-academic career opportunities for those graduating with a physics degree.



At this point, everybody took a break for lunch which was held in the Johnson Student Center, next to the physics building, Robeson Hall. The Virginia Tech SPS chapter would like to thank Kevin Ayoub, Event Planner for University Unions & Student Activities for getting the facility as well as Spencer Joslin for onsite assistance.

Lunch consisted of 9 feet of submarine sandwich from local sandwich shop Sub Station II, chips, soda, and water.





After lunch, Jonathan Hughes took the group on a short campus tour, showing the physics building, the administration building, Burruss Hall, the Drill Field, the War Memorial Chapel and Torgerson Bridge. The group also made a stop at the memorial to the victims of the tragedy that occurred at Virginia Tech on April 16.





After the tour, the meeting resumed with the second invited speaker for the day, Dr. Meredith Newby, assistant professor of biophysics at Clemson University. In her talk “Biological Physics,” Dr. Newby discussed how she came to be interested in the subject and illuminated the ever-growing field of biophysics.



After Dr. Newby's talk, Jose Zalles from Northern Virginia Community College gave a talk on the research he conducted at Brigham Young University entitled "Characterizing a New Phase of Titanium Dioxide using Transmission Electron Diffraction."

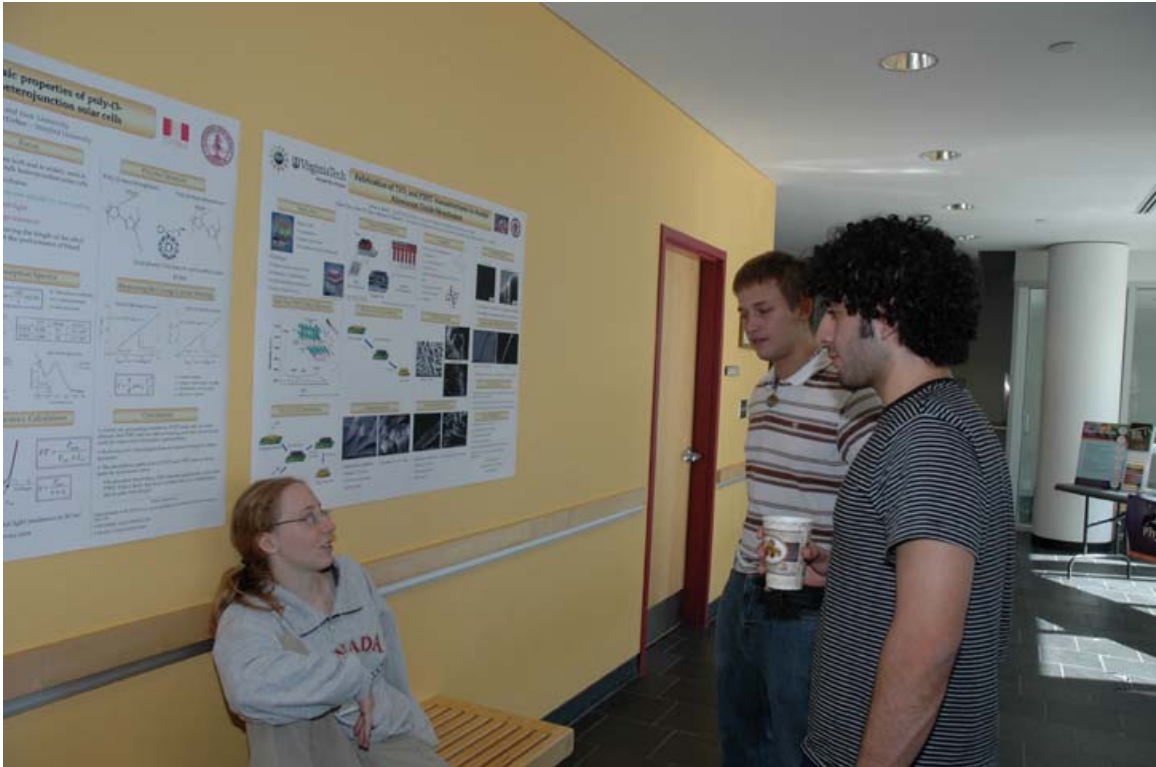


The next talk was given by Reza Montezami, a graduate student at Virginia Tech. He was a senior when he originally signed on to give a talk, but after the rescheduling of the meeting, he was accepted as a graduate student. His talk was “Electrochromic Properties of Asymmetric ISAM Device Based on Two Active Electrochromic Polymers.”

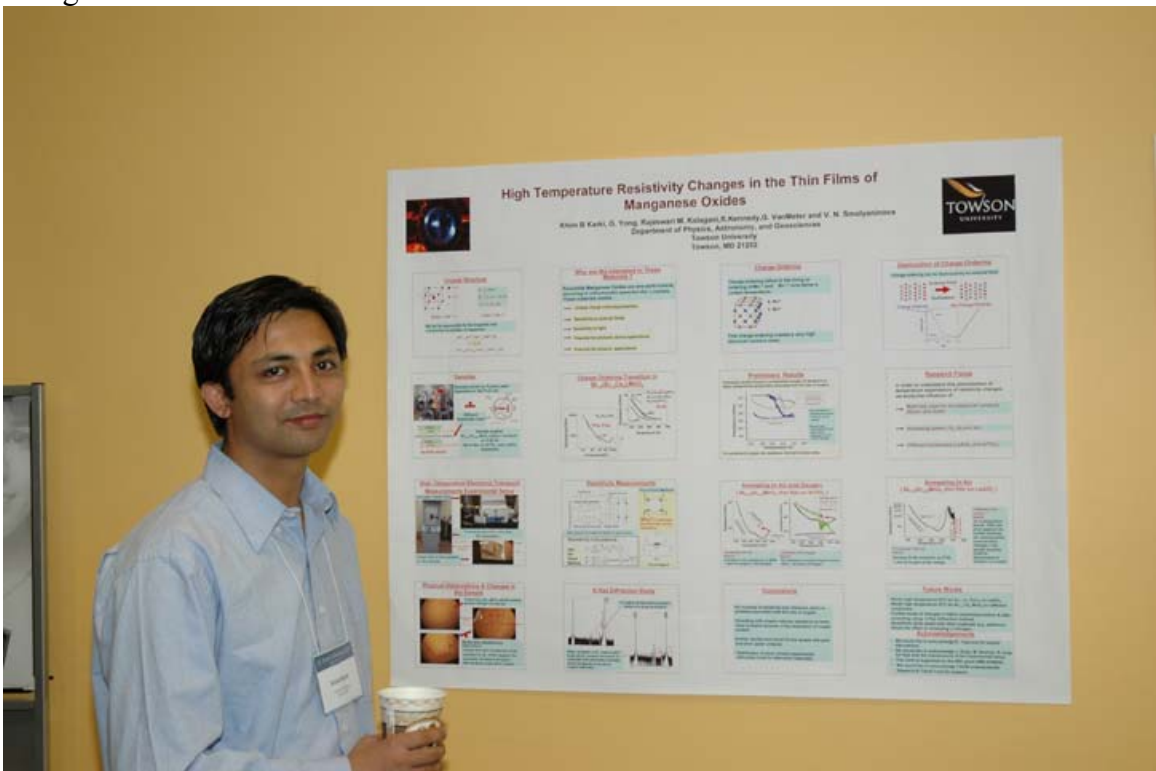


Following Reza’s talk was a poster session and coffee break, during which four posters were presented by Virginia Tech student Anna Belak, Towson University student Khim Kharki, and University of Mary Washington student Mary Pilger.

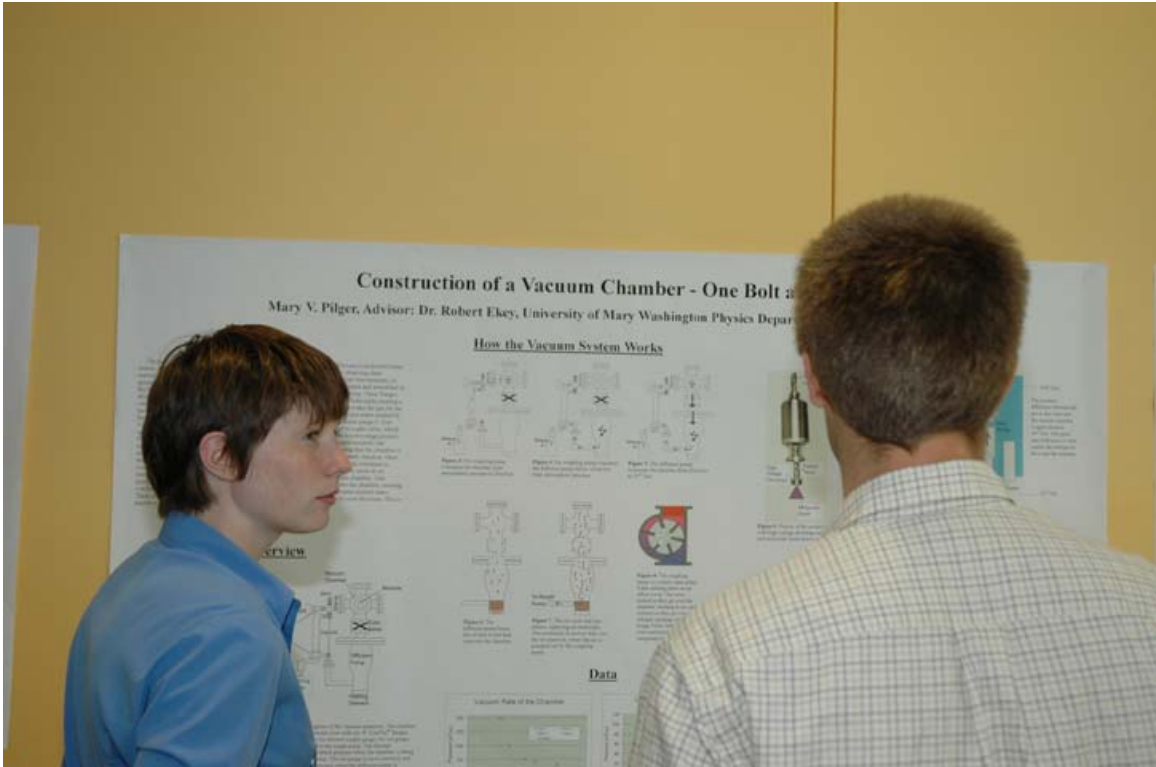
Anna presented two posters: “An Investigation of the Photovoltaic Properties of the poly-(3-alkylthiophene):fullerene Bulk Heterojunction Solar Cells.” And “”



Khim presented his poster “High Temperature Resistivity Changes in Thin Films of Manganese Oxides.”



And Mary’s poster was “Construction of a Vacuum Chamber: One Screw at a time.”



To finish off the meeting, the final invited speaker, Virginia Tech Professor of physics, Djordje Minic gave a talk on “The Magic Cube of Physics.” Always an entertaining speaker, Dr. Minic discussed the unions between quantum physics, special relativity, and relativistic gravitation, and the as-of-yet undiscovered factor, the “far corner of the magic cube” connecting all three. It should also be noted that Dr. Minic was wearing the students’ favorite shirt displaying Schrödinger Equation with a hammer and sickle in the place of Ψ . The words on the reverse side of the shirt are “For Love, Not Money.”





3). The Virginia Tech SPS would like to thank Dr. Vicki Soghomonian for all her help in putting this meeting together, Dr. Meredith Newby, Dr. Djordje Minic, and Kendra Rand for their wonderful talks, Virginia Tech for the use of their facilities, and all the students and professors from zone 4 who came to make this meeting a huge success.



