

Report from the SPS

From Sara Whitbeck, President of SPS

The UMR chapter of Society of Physics Students has a new, younger look this year. Several of our members have graduated over the last year and we gained quite a few freshman and transfer students from other departments. While the average age in SPS has dropped by about two years the size of our chapter has nearly doubled!

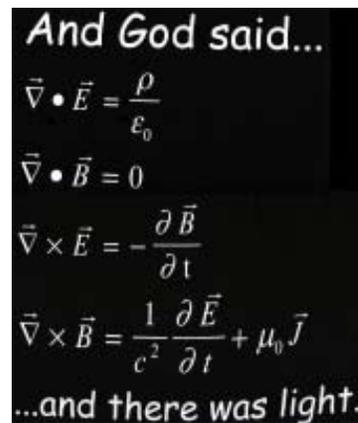
We have been sad to see the elder members graduate and move on. They will be missed. We have not let our youthfulness hold us back, however. We have strived to become even more active than we were in the past. In October several of the SPS members were able to travel to Argonne National Laboratory for their undergraduate research symposium. Our chapter had been unable to make this trip the last two years. It was a new experience for all who went. **Kevin Johnson** presented research on patterning aerogels with metallic clusters that he conducted under the supervision of Dr. **Max Bertino**. It was a great experience for all who went.

In October we also were able to have our traditional SPS/Physics department picnic. It was a great chance for the students and faculty to mingle and get to know one another. Those who were not at the picnic may have heard that for



the first time in history SPS defeated Dr. **Greg Story** in the biannual "students versus Dr. Story" volleyball challenge! On behalf of SPS I would like to apologize to Dr. Story for progressing slowly through the picnic and causing him to forfeit because he had to leave. Hopefully SPS will be able to gain an actual victory in the spring.

This semester SPS is looking forward to new opportunities. The Schrenk Society (chemistry) and SPS



will be holding joint meetings open to all students on campus. We are looking forward to having a chance to mingle with those in other organizations. In April we will once again be participating in the Girl Scout program, "Bridging the Gap," sponsored by the Helix Society. We also plan to participate in the annual

UMR Block Party. Last year we sold liquid nitrogen ice cream and our "God Said..." t-shirts. Both were a big hit with other students on campus and members of the community.

Finally I'd like to thank the outgoing officers, **Toby Case** (secretary) and **Kevin Johnson** (treasurer) and welcome the new officers, **Ryan Kinney** (vice president), **Joe Houston** (secretary), and **Paul Gholson** (treasurer). All have been wonderful in making this an exciting year for everyone in SPS.

UMR Physics Faculty Receive Teaching Awards

This past year, four physics faculty members were honored with teaching awards. **Allan Pringle** and **Greg Story**, received the UMR *Outstanding Teaching Award*, which honors the top 10 percent of teachers campus-wide. In addition, **Ron Bieniek** and Allan Pringle received the College of Arts and Sciences *Excellence in Teaching Awards* for their outstanding effectiveness in large-enrollment courses. According to Dean **Paula Lutz**, "The award is designed to honor a group of faculty who make a special contribution to student retention." **Ralph Alexander** received the College of Arts and Sciences *Excellence in Teaching Awards* for excellence in teaching lab courses.



Teaching Excellence Awardees Bieniek, Alexander, Pringle, and Story