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# WebSights



*WebSights* features reviews of select sites presenting physics teaching strategies, as well as shorter announcements of sites of interest to physics teachers. All sites are copyrighted by their authors. This column is available as a web page at <http://PhysicsEd.BuffaloState.Edu/pubs/WebSights>. If you have successfully used a site to teach physics that you feel is outstanding and appropriate for *WebSights*, please email me the URL and describe how you use it to teach. The person submitting the best site monthly will receive a T-shirt.

## **Getting Connected with Other Physics Educators and the Physics Community**

Physics educators often struggle to find colleagues to communicate with about teaching physics, and there are many online opportunities for professional discourse. Perhaps the greatest resource you can find is your local physics teachers' alliance—groups of local group of physics teachers who meet roughly monthly to discuss physics teaching hopefully near you. The website at <http://www2.umassd.edu/physics/Alliances/> lists approximately 250 entries for contacts of LPAs (Local Physics Alliances) in the US, and most are affiliated with the American Association of Physics Teachers (AAPT), <http://www.aapt.org>. The AAPT state sections typically meet twice per year in your region and are another opportunity to meet with regional colleagues—see <http://www.aapt.org/Sections/>. The AAPT meets nationally twice per year and the meetings are profound professional development opportunities for physics educators: start planning on attending one at some point in your career. Joining the AAPT and subscribing to *The Physics Teacher*, together with receiving the monthly *Physics Today* news-magazine, are also a way to stay in touch with other physics teachers and the field of physics. One notable resource for new teachers of introductory physics is the Physics Front online community, <http://physicsfront.org/>, and their collection of materials that are part of the compADRE collections of Digital Resources for Physics and Astronomy Education.

For electronic communicators, there are online communities (international and regional listservs) dedicated to physics teaching and physics culture. The largest of these are the more general PHYS-L, <http://physiced.buffalostate.edu/PHYS-L/>, and the more high school specific physhare, <http://www.geocities.com/physhare/>. Many states and regions (and often AAPT state sections) have regional or state lists dedicated to physics teaching.

Finally, many local college and university physics departments take an interest in physics teacher preparation, professional development, support, and outreach. A call to the secretary of the local physics department can help put you in contact with local area physics educators. A coalition of

more than 100 physics departments with avowed interests in physics teacher preparation is PTEC, <http://www.compadre.org/ptec/>, with a PTEC physics department possibly somewhere near you.

## **The Perimeter Institute for Theoretical Physics outreach website: [http://www.perimeterinstitute.ca/en/Outreach/General/Outreach\\_Overview/](http://www.perimeterinstitute.ca/en/Outreach/General/Outreach_Overview/)**

Funded by the RIM Corporation (makers of the widely known BlackBerry handheld device), this research institute located in Waterloo, Ontario, Canada, has an extensive outreach program that has been described as a “Disneyland for physics teachers” interested in introducing their students to popular theoretical topics such as cosmology, particle physics, quantum foundations, quantum gravity, quantum information, and superstring theory. Recommended highlights include “The Mystery of Dark Matter” video, a free 28-min classroom video plus a field-tested classroom manual with algebra-based worksheet explorations at [http://www.perimeterinstitute.ca/Perimeter\\_Explorations/General/Perimeter\\_Explorations/](http://www.perimeterinstitute.ca/Perimeter_Explorations/General/Perimeter_Explorations/). This package is the first in a forthcoming series of five such. For enrichment on other exotic physics topics, visit [http://www.perimeterinstitute.ca/en/Outreach/Public\\_Lectures/View\\_Past\\_Public\\_Lectures/](http://www.perimeterinstitute.ca/en/Outreach/Public_Lectures/View_Past_Public_Lectures/) to access four years of streamed video archives from visiting international physics literati presenting monthly public lectures at the Institute.

PI also sponsors free one-week summer modern physics workshops for international physics teachers (called EinsteinPlus) and a two-week summer camp for international physics students of 16-17 years of age called the International Summer School for Young Physicists (ISSYP), featuring “the weird quantum world of atoms and subatomic particles, black holes, warped spacetime, and the expanding universe.” See the Students and Teacher menus at [http://www.perimeterinstitute.ca/en/Outreach/General/Outreach\\_Overview/](http://www.perimeterinstitute.ca/en/Outreach/General/Outreach_Overview/). Start planning now for summer 2009.

*Contributed by Dave Doucette, Vice President of the Ontario Association of Physics Teachers, a high school physics teacher and a facilitator at PI's Einsteinplus summer teacher program.*