

## ) MESSAGE FROM THE DEPARTMENT HEAD

### Dear Members of the MIT Physics Community,

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A quick scan of this issue of *physics@mit* will convince you that our Department is doing very well indeed. Again this year our faculty members have won prestigious awards for research, in particular, **Alan Guth**<sup>1</sup> was awarded the Dirac Medal and **Frank Wilczek**<sup>2</sup> received the Lorentz Medal. Our faculty members have also been recognized for their superb teaching—**Barton Zwiebach** won the Baker award for the students' choice of best teacher at the Institute, and **John D. Joannopoulos**<sup>3</sup> received the School of Science Prize for Graduate Teaching. Our new VIII-B degree, described in this issue by the Associate Department Head for Education, **Tom Greytak**, has helped us to increase the number of undergraduate majors from about 35 per year to over 60 per year.

This would not happen without the loyal support of our alumni. For example, **Paul Schechter**<sup>4</sup> writes about the exciting images we are getting from the new Magellan telescopes, built with the help of **Neil** (EE '64) and **Jane Pappalardo** and **Cecil** (EE '23) and **Ida Green**. Neil also initiated and sponsors the Pappalardo Fellowships in Physics program, which has become one of the most sought-after postdoctoral positions in the world in just three years after its launch.

Our greatest challenge is to strengthen the sense of community for faculty and students in a Department that is scattered throughout the Campus. We have increased the number of student and faculty events to get folks together. But without a designated Physics Building we miss the frequent meetings amongst faculty, students, postdocs, and visiting scholars that so often lead to new initiatives in research and education. As Herman Feshbach once told me,



"Physics is a social activity." In the section on the Green Center, you will learn about our proposal to solve this problem. We have a plan for a major renovation in the oldest buildings at MIT that will create a focus for the Department, a place where community members will come together for research and educational activities, as well as administrative services. If we can match a generous challenge grant from Neil Pappalardo with gifts from other friends, we will be able to begin construction soon. I hope you will consider helping us with this important and exciting new venture.

With best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Marc".

Marc A. Kastner

#### ENDNOTES

- 1 Victor F. Weisskopf Professor of Physics
- 2 Herman Feshbach Professor of Physics
- 3 Francis Wright Davis Professor of Physics
- 4 William A. M. Burden Professor of Astrophysics