



1

00:00:01,656 --> 00:00:05,026

>> Joining me now over the phone
to give us a little more insight

2

00:00:05,026 --> 00:00:09,546

into the American Physical Society is Becky
Thompson, who is head of public outreach

3

00:00:09,546 --> 00:00:14,306

for the APS, Becky, first off I want
to thank you for joining me today.

4

00:00:14,306 --> 00:00:17,636

Why don't you give us a little general
overview real quick about your organization?

5

00:00:18,026 --> 00:00:19,456

>> Hi, thanks very much.

6

00:00:19,456 --> 00:00:25,246

I work for the American Physical Society, it's
a professional organization for physicists.

7

00:00:25,556 --> 00:00:28,866

Its main goal is to get physicists
talking to each other through meetings

8

00:00:28,866 --> 00:00:31,026

and journals and things like that.

9

00:00:31,026 --> 00:00:33,016

But they also have a commitment to exciting

10

00:00:33,016 --> 00:00:36,716

and inspiring the general
public, which is where I come in.

11

00:00:36,776 --> 00:00:39,436

So we have a small department,

three full-time employees,

12
00:00:39,466 --> 00:00:42,616
and we do a ton of different outreach programs.

13
00:00:42,616 --> 00:00:46,916
Probably our biggest is the web site
that is actually hosting the science

14
00:00:46,916 --> 00:00:48,766
of the sphere [Assumed spelling]
videos, Physics Central.

15
00:00:49,116 --> 00:00:54,116
We also do a series of comic books, a program
specifically for middle schoolers where we send

16
00:00:54,116 --> 00:01:01,066
out equipment to do fun physics experiments,
as well as a lot of the different,

17
00:01:01,066 --> 00:01:03,766
exciting, education and outreach programs.

18
00:01:04,746 --> 00:01:09,106
>> Okay, and can you tell us how did you
-- how it you guys get hooked up with Don,

19
00:01:09,106 --> 00:01:10,756
did you reach out to him or did he --

20
00:01:10,926 --> 00:01:14,706
because he know he always liked to do the
Saturday science stuff on his last flight.

21
00:01:14,706 --> 00:01:18,076
How exactly did you guys get linked up with him?

22
00:01:18,076 --> 00:01:21,566

>> Actually, it was a happy
accident, just a lucky meeting

23

00:01:21,566 --> 00:01:25,536
at the National Science Teachers
Association Conference.

24

00:01:25,536 --> 00:01:29,846
We had a booth there where we were
distributing our materials, letting people know

25

00:01:29,846 --> 00:01:36,156
about all the programs that we run, and someone
from Johnson Space Center, Cindy McArthur,

26

00:01:36,156 --> 00:01:38,486
happened to stop by our booth
and see what we were doing,

27

00:01:38,486 --> 00:01:40,806
and we told her all about our web site.

28

00:01:40,806 --> 00:01:44,506
And she knew that Don really enjoyed
doing Saturday morning science.

29

00:01:44,506 --> 00:01:49,026
But the biggest issue was that there wasn't
quite the right place to host the videos.

30

00:01:49,026 --> 00:01:55,146
So she got in touch with us and it kind of went
from there, and we ended up being able to host

31

00:01:55,146 --> 00:01:59,296
and -- and have, you know, create
an audience for these videos,

32

00:01:59,296 --> 00:02:02,246
starting with the audience we

already had for Physics Central.

33

00:02:02,736 --> 00:02:05,806

And it's a wonderful partnership,
a great way for --

34

00:02:05,806 --> 00:02:10,566

to let people know about our programs,
to be able to show Don's videos.

35

00:02:10,566 --> 00:02:12,746

We have a wonderful time getting the footage.

36

00:02:12,976 --> 00:02:15,436

He is just fantastic to work with.

37

00:02:15,436 --> 00:02:20,946

Sends us amazing, amazing amounts of footage
and we edit them and put them on our web site,

38

00:02:20,946 --> 00:02:23,516

and have really created a
following for that program.

39

00:02:24,586 --> 00:02:27,266

>> Well, he's certainly gotten
down some great videos so far.

40

00:02:27,266 --> 00:02:29,126

Why don't we talk a little
bit about your audience.

41

00:02:29,126 --> 00:02:32,876

You said you're focused on getting
physicists to talk to everybody, so --

42

00:02:33,486 --> 00:02:36,436

and from what I understand most
of the people that are actually

43

00:02:36,436 --> 00:02:38,566

in your organization are
physicists, is that correct?

44

00:02:38,946 --> 00:02:39,876

>> Yup, that's correct.

45

00:02:39,876 --> 00:02:46,536

We represent about 50,000 physicists,
both in the US and internationally.

46

00:02:46,536 --> 00:02:50,826

And you know, we're really the go-to
organization to both publish --

47

00:02:51,086 --> 00:02:54,786

we publish the premier journals in physics.

48

00:02:54,786 --> 00:03:00,096

And to go to our meetings and just have a way
to talk to other physicists about what they do,

49

00:03:00,736 --> 00:03:05,306

and you know, learn about the current
research in different fields of physics.

50

00:03:05,716 --> 00:03:10,476

But one of the things that E P S really
has [Inaudible] to is other programs

51

00:03:10,476 --> 00:03:13,476

to get more people interested
and excited about physics.

52

00:03:13,476 --> 00:03:17,346

And we have our department to do that, we
have an education department that's focusing

53

00:03:17,426 --> 00:03:24,326

on creating physics teachers that have the knowledge to teach high school physics,

54
00:03:24,326 --> 00:03:29,896
also to make sure that undergraduate education in physics is, you know, successful.

55
00:03:29,896 --> 00:03:34,906
We have a department that's specifically for -- specifically talks to Congress,

56
00:03:34,996 --> 00:03:37,196
let's them know about the importance of research.

57
00:03:37,196 --> 00:03:41,126
And we have a group that reaches out to people internationally.

58
00:03:41,126 --> 00:03:45,666
So in addition to our commitment to getting people --

59
00:03:45,666 --> 00:03:48,646
to getting physicists to talk to each other, we also have a commitment

60
00:03:48,646 --> 00:03:51,386
to getting the rest of the population excited.

61
00:03:51,976 --> 00:03:52,396
>> Got you.

62
00:03:52,396 --> 00:03:56,906
And so with these videos, you know, I mean, we're taking a look again

63
00:03:56,906 --> 00:03:59,656
at that water droplet one, and that certainly caught my eye,

64

00:03:59,656 --> 00:04:05,076

and I can imagine any school child or even high school kids, anything like that,

65

00:04:05,076 --> 00:04:07,926

that are watching are just going to be instantly fascinated about it.

66

00:04:07,926 --> 00:04:10,946

What about the -- what about our physicist population,

67

00:04:10,946 --> 00:04:12,816

are they -- have they been really excited?

68

00:04:12,816 --> 00:04:15,116

Because I would imagine they don't get, you know,

69

00:04:15,116 --> 00:04:19,816

a ton of video from this micro gravity environment, unless it's somebody

70

00:04:19,816 --> 00:04:21,146

on the International Space Station.

71

00:04:21,146 --> 00:04:23,056

What's their response been like?

72

00:04:23,056 --> 00:04:24,536

>> It's been wonderful.

73

00:04:24,536 --> 00:04:31,156

As you saw in the video that was just shown, every week Don poses a challenge question.

74

00:04:31,156 --> 00:04:37,166

And one of the ways we can see who's viewing the

videos and who's really engaging is by looking

75

00:04:37,826 --> 00:04:41,216

at the people who are responding
to the challenge question.

76

00:04:41,216 --> 00:04:43,186

And what's neat is we get a wide range.

77

00:04:43,186 --> 00:04:46,926

We get people that are, you know, professional
physicists or physicists by training

78

00:04:46,926 --> 00:04:50,146

that have moved into different
careers, and that's neat to watch.

79

00:04:50,276 --> 00:04:55,556

We even had one challenge submission that
once sited physical review letters article.

80

00:04:55,556 --> 00:05:00,076

And so we have a wide range of people, and
then we have middle school science classes

81

00:05:00,076 --> 00:05:01,616

that are also submitting answers.

82

00:05:01,616 --> 00:05:05,196

So the physics community
is absolutely loving that.

83

00:05:05,346 --> 00:05:10,856

Loving seeing what's going on, loving having
a different way of looking at concepts

84

00:05:10,856 --> 00:05:12,496

that they've spent their life studying.

85

00:05:13,026 --> 00:05:18,356

>> Okay, and real quick question,
among these videos is there any --

86

00:05:18,356 --> 00:05:21,966

has there been any one in particular
that's been very popular with people?

87

00:05:22,376 --> 00:05:27,996

>> Well, there's one that comes to mind, that
anti bubble video which wasn't this past week

88

00:05:27,996 --> 00:05:31,416

but the week before, was
picked up by a group in the UK

89

00:05:31,496 --> 00:05:35,346

and has at this point almost
gotten 200,000 views on YouTube.

90

00:05:35,346 --> 00:05:37,636

So that was extremely popular.

91

00:05:37,636 --> 00:05:42,406

And we're really, really excited about the
one that's going up today, it should be up in

92

00:05:42,406 --> 00:05:45,976

about an hour or two, with
water droplets on a speaker.

93

00:05:45,976 --> 00:05:50,356

And I think internally, we are
very, very excited about this one,

94

00:05:50,356 --> 00:05:52,236

it even has some neat music at the end.

95

00:05:52,236 --> 00:05:55,936

So we're hoping that that

one gets the same reception

96

00:05:55,936 --> 00:05:58,226

that the anti bubbles video has gotten.

97

00:05:58,776 --> 00:06:01,696

>> Well, it certainly sounds pretty cool, and we'll be watching out for it.

98

00:06:02,386 --> 00:06:08,246

What about for the future, do you guys plan on doing these for the rest of Don's space flight?

99

00:06:08,596 --> 00:06:09,596

>> Absolutely.

100

00:06:09,596 --> 00:06:11,926

We will put up anything that he sends down.

101

00:06:11,926 --> 00:06:15,366

We're constantly excited about new footage,

102

00:06:15,366 --> 00:06:19,336

we really hope he continues doing this for as long as he's up there.

103

00:06:19,336 --> 00:06:24,606

We've gotten such a great reception, people are so excited about it, and we definitely,

104

00:06:24,606 --> 00:06:28,596

definitely love it, and we want it to continue as long as it possibly can.

105

00:06:29,466 --> 00:06:32,056

>> Well, it certainly seems like he's having a lot of fun doing them,

106

00:06:32,056 --> 00:06:34,316

and I know we're all having
a lot of fun watching them.

107

00:06:34,866 --> 00:06:39,046

Well, Becky, I want to thank you so much
for joining me today, and anybody interested

108

00:06:39,046 --> 00:06:43,106

in seeing those videos be sure and check out
the American Physical Society's web site,

109

00:06:43,106 --> 00:06:48,536

at www.physicscentral.com/explore/SOTS.