

# **THE PHILIPPINE PHYSICS SOCIETY (PPS): INFORMATION AND TRADITIONS**

*by:* **DR. VICENTA C. MAXINO**  
PPS National Secretary

## **I. NATURE AND COMPOSITION**

The Philippine Physics Society (PPS) is an organization of physicists, physics professionals, physics teachers, physics students and physics enthusiasts. It is a national organization based in the southern part of the Philippines and focused to the south. Thus, its activities have been initially concentrated in the Visayas and Mindanao.

During the International Conference on Physics Education for Development held in Manila on December 1-5, 1992, about 150 conference participants coming from Luzon sought membership in PPS. They were consequently admitted to the society.

After a decade of having initial activities in Northern Luzon, the PPS, in 2002, has extended its service to underserved areas in Luzon, as well. The main concern of the PPS is the improvement of its members in their respective fields of research and teaching and the advancement of Physics and Physics Education.

## **II. BRIEF HISTORY**

The Philippine Physics Society (PPS) was born in Cebu City in 1974 from an awareness of a need for an organization of physics people as a vehicle for pooled resources, efforts and concerns by a group of less than 20 young physics graduates from the University of San Carlos. It had its initial meetings at the National Science Development Board (NSDB) Regional Office. It was subsequently admitted as a member of the Science and Technology Forum, an association of scientific and technological organizations in Cebu and Region VII. Professor Gerardo Maxino, its founder, was designated as the Chairman of the Society.

Later on, in 1979, the word "Southern" in parentheses was attached to its name to underline the focus of its interest. In 1987, the members voted to return to the original name of the organization.

Although the founding members originally intended the PPS to be exclusively for physics professionals, it was decided during the first convention in 1979 to open the membership to all those interested in physics. The PPS has been admitted as member of the Philippine Science and Mathematics Council.

The PPS intended originally to focus its attention to the Visayas and Mindanao, which it considered as underserved areas. This explains why its activities were mainly in these two geographical divisions during its first 25 years of existence. At the closing years of the Millennium, however, incontrovertible evidence convinced the PPS that there were many areas in Luzon, even sectors in MetroManila, that were underserved too. Thus, PPS has taken since the Year 2000 the entire Philippines as its area of service. For the Philippine Physics Society is an embodiment of the ideal of service to physics and peoples.

### **III. MEMBERSHIP**

The members of PPS are grouped into:

A - College physics teachers

B - Graduates of professional physics degrees like BS (Physics), BS Physics, MS Physics, PhD Physics

C - High School physics teachers

D - Physics enthusiasts

E - Physics students

F – Research and development practitioners in industry

These groupings are mainly due to interests and members may belong to several groupings if they qualify for them. All the members, regardless of their groups, have the same rights and privileges in the Society. Certain qualifications, however, are required for election to some offices in the Society.

To become a member of PPS, a person simply applies for membership through any member or officer of the Society. Also, for this purpose, an interested person may contact the PPS President through the society's official email address. The second PPS convention in 1980 decided to collect yearly membership fees starting 1980.

PPS is also organized by areas. This is a grouping on the basis of geographical proximity and accessibility of transportation. The aim here is to keep the members in close contact with each other. The first area to be formally organized was the Negros - Siquijor area. Some of the chapters that have been formed are: (1) Bacolod, (2) Bukidnon, (3) Butuan, (4) Cebu, (5) Iloilo province, (6) Iloilo City, (7) Negros Oriental, (8) Southern Negros, (9) Tacloban, (10) Tagbilaran, (11) Cagayan de Oro-Camiguin, (12) Iligan City, (13) Agusan del Norte, (14) Surigao del Norte, (15) Northern Samar, (16) Samar, (17) Siquijor, (18) Region I, (19) Region II, (20) Region III, (21) Region IV, (22) Bicol, (23) NCR, (24) Aklan, (25) Boracay, and South Central Mindanao (2011).

### **IV. GOVERNING BODY**

PPS is governed by a National Board and a National Assembly. All members who have attended at least one PPS National Convention are entitled to attend the National Assembly. The National Assembly is held at the start of the annual PPS convention. It is the National Assembly that elects the members of the National Board from among themselves and decides on the major policies that govern the society. The 1991 National Assembly decided that Prof. Dr. Gerardo Maxino, Prof. Dr. Vicenta Maxino and Prof. Dr. Fr. Herman van Engelen, SVD, shall be permanent members of the National Board and that 7 members from the National Assembly shall be elected to the Board to serve a one-year term. Subsequently, the National Assembly allowed expansion of membership to accommodate representatives from the different regions.

The members of the National Board should have the widest geographical distribution and should preferably be physics degree holders. Initially the members of the National Board elected from among themselves a President, Secretary-Treasurer, and Auditor. They continue to serve in office until replaced by majority vote of the National Board and such action ratified by the National Assembly.

From 1974 to 1979, Professor Gerardo Maxino served as Chairman of PPS. Fr. Francisco Glover, PhD, SJ, was the Chairman of (S) PPS from 1979-1980. The present PPS President is

Prof. Gerardo Maxino, the Secretary-Treasurer is Prof. Vicenta Maxino and the Auditor is Ms. Judith Dianson.

The different PPS chapters elect their own sets of officers. The members of the National Board are disqualified from holding positions at the chapter or group level.

The Philippine Physics Society follows a flat structure and avoids as much as possible unnecessary layering. Thus, a chapter should encompass not more than a province. In some cases, a region may organize into a chapter; however, as soon as conditions allow, the regional chapter should break up into provincial/city chapters. Neighboring towns, constituting part of a province, may also form a chapter. This structure is more responsive to local needs.

The PPS adheres to and encourages the practice of servant-leadership among its officers and members.

PPS observes and honors the traditions of the society while it continues to evolve the best possible structures and processes as it moves along in time. Only the National Assembly on a majority vote may decide to change the observed traditions of the society.

## V. ACTIVITIES

PPS holds yearly its national convention. The first one was held in Dumaguete City on March 31 - April 1, 1979. It was attended by 96 participants including almost all the PhD Physics degree holders in the country. The themes and hosts of the past and present conventions are:

YEAR	THEME	HOST
1979	Physics Research and Teaching in the Context of National Development	Silliman University Foundation University Dumaguete City
1980	Redirecting Physics for the Filipino	University of San Carlos Cebu City
1981	Physics in the Classroom and Industry	MSU-Iligan Institute of Technology Iligan City
1982	Physics and Energy	Silliman University Foundation University Dumaguete City
1983	Physics and Rural Development	Xavier University Cagayan de Oro City
1984	Physics and the Environment	University of Negros Occidental-Recoletos Bacolod City
1985	Communicating Physics	St. Paul University – Dumaguete Dumaguete City
1986	Physics and Social Responsibility	Central Philippines University Iloilo City
1987	Physics and Total Human Development	Fr Saturnino Urios University Butuan City
1988	Physics in the Classroom and Community	Divine Word University Tacloban City
1989	Physics, Ecology and the Development of	Central Mindanao University

1990	Community Physics and Agricultural Technology	Musuan, Bukidnon Visayas State University Baybay, Leyte
1991	Physics and Information Technology	University of San Carlos Cebu City
1992	Physics and Education	Holy Name University Tagbilaran City
1993	Physics Literacy for People Empowerment	University of Negros Occidental – Recoletos Bacolod City
1994	Physics, Ecology and Sustainable Development	University of Eastern Philippines Cataraman, Samar
1995	Physics in the Philippines in the Year 2000	Central Philippine University Iloilo City
1996	NIChood through Quality Physics Education	Ateneo de Davao University Davao City
1997	Quality Physics Education through Networking	Silliman University Dumaguete City
1998	20 Years of Shared Service	University of San Carlos Cebu City
1999	PPS Silver Jubilee: Revisiting our Roots	Liceo de Cagayan University Cagayan de Oro City
2000	Physics Para sa Mahirap	Fr Saturnino Urios University Butuan City
2001	Physics and Culture	Holy Name University Tagbilaran City
2002	Becoming a Physics Community of Competence and Service	Silliman University Dumaguete City
2003	A Silver Jubilee Celebration of Community and Mission	Samar State University Catbalogan, Samar
2004	PPS Pearl Anniversary: A Tribute to Fr. Francisco “Kiko” Glover, SJ	Ateneo de Davao University Davao City
2005	Physics, Appropriate Technology and the Development of Peoples	University of Baguio Baguio City
2006	Physics, Tourism and Ecology	Aklan State University Banga, Aklan
2007	Physics and Indigenous Technology	Fr. Saturnino Urios University (lead host), Butuan City
2008	Physics and Magic, Mystics and Wizardry	Siquijor State College Larena, Siquijor
2009	Physics and Natural Disasters	Central Bicol University

2010	Physics and Climate Change	Pili, Camarines Sur Xavier University Cagayan de Oro City
2011	Physics and Environmental Well-Being	Silliman University Dumaguete City
2012	Physics, Nationalism, and Development	Colegio de San Juan de Letran -- Calamba Calamba City, Laguna

During the annual convention, papers on physics research and teaching are presented by the members of the Society and by invited scientists and educators. Short courses which treat a particular topic in physics in depth, along with shorter lectures and workshops on a variety of topics, are also conducted during the convention to meet the needs of the members. During the group meetings, the members discuss their concerns, elect their officers and share their expertise on particular topics in physics. Merit awards are given for exemplary commitment to physics education through active participation in the PPS annual conventions, according to the following category:

- ORDER OF GALILEO* - at least 5 PPS annual conventions
- ORDER OF NEWTON* - at least 10 PPS annual conventions
- ORDER OF MAXWELL* - at least 15 PPS annual conventions
- ORDER OF EINSTEIN* - at least 20 PPS annual conventions

The members of the National Board are also elected during this time and recognition is given to deserving physicists. The *Golden Service Award* is the highest honor and distinction given by the PPS. It is conferred on one who has spent a lifetime of commitment and passion for service and community towards the development of physics and physics education in the country, as an offering to the Filipino people. Those who have made significant contributions in Physics are conferred the Outstanding Achievement Award. Those who have served the society and the struggle to improve physics and physics education in the Philippines for many years through lectures, workshops, and other worthy activities are given the Outstanding Service Award. Those who for years painstakingly labor in physics education – caring for, nurturing, and mentoring the youth – even at times, or always in the case of some, bring their students to attend the PPS conventions are given the National Physics Educator Award. Administrators who faithfully support and allow their teachers and students to attend the activities of the society are conferred the Outstanding Administrative Service Award. Through the years, the PPS awardees have been:

***Golden Service Awardees:***

- 2004 Fr. Francisco “Kiko” Glover, Ph.D., SJ
- 2006 Fr. Herman van Engelen, Ph D, SVD
- 2011 Mr. Narciso F. Mefragata

***Outstanding Achievement Awardees:***

- 1980....Dr. Casimiro del Rosario
- 1981....Fr. Francisco Glover, Ph.D., SJ
- 1982....Dr. Zoilo M. Bartolome
- 1983....Posthumous awards to:

Fr. Philip van Engelen, SVD  
Fr. Hubert Lorbach  
Fr. Franz Oster, SVD  
Fr. Michael Richartz, Ph.D., SVD  
1984....Dr. Venancio Alcantara, Jr.  
1985....Dr. Jack John Brennan  
1986....Dr. Robert Wild  
1988....Fr. Herman van Engelen, Ph.D., SVD  
1989....Dr. Manuel Eugenio

***Outstanding Service Awardees:***

1989 Dr. Gerardo C. Maxino  
Dr. Vicenta C. Maxino  
1993 Dr. John D. Brule  
1995 Mrs. Aida D. Eugenio  
1998 Ms. Nila Sabal  
Ms. Judith Dianson  
2000 Dr. Pelagia Joven  
2001 Dr. John L. Holdsworth, Ph.D.  
Dr. Ed van den Berg, Ph.D.  
Dr. Christopher Bernido, Ph.D.  
Dr. Victoria Bernido, Ph.D.  
2002 Ms. Remedios Cardino  
Ms. Josefina Clarete  
Mr. Leopoldo Millamena  
Ms. Teresita Taganahan  
2003 Dr. Remigio G. Tee  
Mr. Narciso F. Mefragata  
2005 Dr. Perla Funa  
Mr. Raymund Vizcarra  
2007 Dr. Hope M. Bandal  
Dr. Loreto B. Feril, Jr.  
Dr. Asonita Parmisana  
2010 Dr. Gil Nonato C. Santos

***National Physics Educator Awardees***

2005 Mr. Jose Caberte  
Mr. Jose Luna  
Mr. Vicente Simplicio Villegas  
2006 Mrs. Lottie Dingding  
Mrs. Esperanza Caballero  
2007 Ms. Myrna Genandoy  
Mr. Romulo Sopena  
Mr. Roel Taroc  
2008 Dr. Veneranda Rizon  
2009 Mr. Rene B. Cabrera  
Mrs. Susana C. Cahig

- 2010 Mr. Jaime H. Rillorta  
Mrs. Marlyn G. Jover  
Dr. Mario P. Obrero
- 2011 Ms. Grethel A. Mende  
Mr. Felix L. Nistal  
Mr. Roberto A. U. Dangkulos

***Outstanding Administrative Service Award***

- 2007 Dr. Saturnina Chenfoo  
Dr. Dominador. Cabanganan  
Supt. Ponciano Joven

Since its birth, the geographical focus of PPS has been the Visayas and Mindanao. After conducting seminar-workshops at the Divine Word College of Vigan (Vigan City, Ilocos Sur) in 1990 and Divine Word College of Bangued (Bangued, Abra) in 1999, the society found out that there are also many underserved areas in Luzon; as a consequence, the Luzon Conference was started in 2002. This conference is held only if the venue of the subsequent annual national convention is in Mindanao or the Visayas. The Luzon Conference hosts have been Adamson University (Manila, 2002), Mapua Institute of Technology (Manila, 2003), Technological University of the Philippines (Manila, 2005) and Colegio de San Juan de Letran - Calamba (Calamba City, Laguna, 2007).

PPS publishes the *Philippine Physics Journal* [formerly *The (S)PPS Proceedings*], for articles on physics research and teaching. From the manually typed paper-bound mimeographed sheets of manuscripts in 1979, the *Philippine Physics Journal* is now a better-looking journal, electronically processed, and stitch-bound with a printed cover. In her study in 2000 in Central Visayas, Dr. Asonita J. Parmisana found that in the period 1989 to 1999, of the physics articles published in the national level, 60 percent were from the *Philippine Physics Journal*. This is indicative of the important role of the *PPJ* in physics education in the country. The *PPJ*, by tradition, is published by the labor of love of its faithful staff assisted by the undergraduate BS Physics students. Starting with the 2008 issue, the *Philippine Physics Journal* has been processed at Maxino College with the assistance of its BS Physics students and those of its other physics-related courses.

PPS also publishes the *PPS Newsletter*, as need arises, to keep contact with its members. Since January 2006 PPS has maintained a website (<http://philippinephysicsociety.com> or <http://philippinephysicsociety.org>) where news and information can be shared readily with all members who have access to the internet. It also holds Physics Summer Institutes for upgrading physics education. The first Physics Summer Institute was conducted free of charge in cooperation with Foundation University which granted the bureau credits for the given courses during the summer of 1980. The teachers taught without compensation.

In Summer 1981, STEP in Physics (Southern Teachers Enrichment Program in Physics) replaced the Physics Summer Institute. STEP in Physics was funded by FAPE (Fund for Assistance to Private Education) and offered scholarships for a Bachelor of Science in Physics degree or a Master of Science in Physics degree at the University of San Carlos for three consecutive summers to qualified physics teachers. More than 50 physics teachers enrolled in the BS Physics program and more than ten took the MS Physics program. None of the teachers, however, decided to finish the BS Physics degree, it being a second degree for them at the

baccalaureate level. Many of those who participated in the program, both at the undergraduate and graduate levels, eventually finished masteral and doctoral degrees.

In Summer 1986, PPS, as a member of the Philippine Science and Math Council, was one of the organizations that conducted the FAPE-sponsored Physics Summer Science Institute at the University of San Carlos.

In October 1986 to March 1988, PPS cooperated with Silliman University in conducting the Certification Program for Physics Teachers in Secondary Schools sponsored by the Science Education Institute of the Department of Science and Technology.

In Summer 2003, a cooperative program among Siquijor State College, the Philippine Physics Society, the Silliman University Center of Development in Physics and Ateneo de Davao University Physics Department was initiated. The program offered a three-summer course leading to Master of Arts in Science Teaching (Physics). About 20 Physics teachers participated in the program. In June 2005, a special graduation ceremony held at Siquijor State College granted the degree Master of Arts in Science Teaching (Physics) to ten of the participants and the degree Master in Teaching (Physics) to three of the participants. A second run of the program, this time with the inclusion of the Master of Science in Science Education (Physics), is on-going for Summers 2011-2012 through the collaboration of Siquijor State College, the Philippine Physics Society, and Maxino College, with the latter as instructional venue.

The year 1986 illustrates the vitality of PPS. What started as a PPS upgrading activity for science teachers in Tagbilaran in 1982 exploded into PPS chapter activities in 1986 with upgrading seminars on various topics in Physics held in Cebu City (2); Binalbagan, Negros Occidental; Dumaguete City; Iloilo City; Butuan City; Musuan, Bukidnon; Bacolod City; Sta. Catalina, Negros Oriental; and Kabankalan, Negros Occidental. At present, with many active PPS chapters, upgrading seminars have become regular yearly activities in many provinces and cities of the Visayas and Mindanao areas. In 1990, PPS held the very first Physics Seminar in Vigan City at the Divine Word College of Vigan under the sponsorship of the UNESCO University Physics Project in the Philippines.

To cite another example, from the renewed vitality of community life emerging from the 24<sup>th</sup> PPS Convention at Silliman University in April 2002, a Regional Upgrading Seminar On Electricity, Optics and Modern Physics was held for the first time in Siquijor in August 2002. This resulted in the formation of the PPS -- Siquijor Chapter. In October 2002, at the invitation of Adamson University, PPS held its first upgrading Physics seminar in Electricity, Optics and Modern Physics in Metro Manila, indeed, the First Luzon Conference. The seminar was well attended by physics teachers from schools all-over Luzon and resulted in the formation of six new chapters. Not to be outdone, the Negros Oriental Chapter had its own Physics upgrading seminar on Electricity and Optics in Tanjay City in November 2002. In July 2005, a similar physics upgrading seminar was conducted at Aklan State University resulting in the establishment of the Aklan PPS Chapter and Boracay PPS Chapter.

In 1980, PPS started its Laboratory Extension Assistance Program (LEAP) in the Negros-Siquijor Area. In LEAP, any Physics teacher who has difficulties in his laboratory may request for assistance from PPS. Requests for such assistance must be made in writing to the PPS National President. A LEAP team will then visit the physics teacher. The LEAP team repairs equipment when possible and shows the teacher how to use the equipment found in the school's laboratory. LEAP services are free. The expenses of the LEAP team is supported by the PPS membership fees. A physics teacher of Sacred Heart Academy of Bais City was the first to avail of this service. The LEAP is now being reinvigorated with the support of the Physics Education Center of Maxino College, Bagacay, Dumaguete City.

Since many schools have poorly equipped physics laboratories, PPS encouraged capable physics teachers to make low cost physics equipment to be sold at cost to their fellow PPS members after they have undergone a short course using the equipment. PPS provided the seed money for this construction but required that no teacher will be allowed to buy unless he has undergone the short course associated with this equipment. This activity has been strongly supported by the Physics Department of Silliman University, University of San Carlos, Mindanao State University – Main Campus at Marawi City, and recently by Maxino College, as well as by Narciso Mefragata of NF Mefragata Enterprises. At the PPS 24<sup>th</sup> Convention in 2002 at Silliman University, Mr. Mefragata donated two boxes of equipment in Basic Electricity to PPS which will allow physics teachers to acquire at minimal costs equipment they assemble with their own hands. Recently, Ateneo de Davao University, Bicol University – Regional Science Teaching Center, and Western Visayas State College of Science and Technology have joined these efforts to equip the Physics laboratories of our country.

PPS has initiated and propagated the Physics Olympics in the Philippines, if not in Asia. The first Physics Olympics was held in Dumaguete City in December 1983. Now, the Physics Olympics is held in many places in the Philippines. The first National Physics Olympics for teachers was held during the 10th PPS Convention at the Divine Word University of Tacloban in Tacloban City on April 6-9, 1988. Since then, the National Physics Olympics has been a regular feature of the annual PPS Convention. A well attended Physics Olympics Congress in September 19, 2007 at La Consolacion in Bacolod City indicated that many students and teachers would like to understand better the physics principles that govern the physics Olympics. The occasion also served as a chance for the Bacolod PPS chapter to reorganize and revitalize.

In 1997, PPS handled the technical aspects of the First TRITECH Inter-Regional Physics Olympics sponsored by the Tri-Sectoral Forum for Technology Excellence (TRITECH) at SM, Cebu City. The 2<sup>nd</sup> TRITECH Inter-Regional Physics Olympics was held on July 26, 2000 under the sponsorship of TRITECH and DOST-Visayas Cluster (led by Region VII).

The Physics Olympics has really taken roots in the country. Now, during this annual national event, three categories are kept: high school students, college students, and professionals/teachers.

Since 1993, at the University of Negros Occidental - Recoletos, Bacolod City, PPS has conducted the National Physics Fair during the annual PPS Convention. Here, investigatory projects, inventions, and exhibits are presented by teachers and students in all levels. Mentoring in research is done during the Physics Fair.

Through the efforts of Dr. Robert Wild, PhD, PPS received a donation of about 3600 volumes of books and journals which were shipped to the Philippines free of charge from the United States of America through the Operation Handclasp of the U.S. Navy. These books and journals were turned over to requesting schools on a first come-first served basis after sharing the costs of transporting the books from Subic Bay to the recipient's place.

## VI. PHILOSOPHY

The Philippine Physics Society was born out of the following convictions:

- self-reliance - the improvement of physics research and teaching in the Philippines will primarily come from our own resources and efforts; that no matter how poor we are, there is always some significant thing we can do.

- sharing - talents and resources must be shared by individuals, among physics departments, between schools and community and among groups; that when each brings the little s/he has, the sum can be a very potent force.
- indigenization - physics and physics education, as we encounter it in the Philippines, must be grown from Philippine soil, should be understood by the Filipino and must be responsive to the country's needs
- hominization - physics research and teaching must be reflective of endeavors that are truly human (matter and spirit) rather than purely materialistic pursuits; that doing physics is a participation in God's work of creation
- socialization/ community-building - the Philippine Physics Society must bring all those involved in physics into a truly human community, a loving, caring, and struggling community that is fruitful of growth and progress.

This philosophy has nourished and sustained the growth and vitality of the Philippine Physics Society, which dared to be different, which took the courage of developing from below.

Updated October 6, 2011