

Staff In Focus - Jeff White

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Jeff White - CHES

When I agreed to write the “Staff in Focus” article I thought sure, how difficult could it be, no problem. Within a week, I knew that I indeed had a problem: who was to be my choice. The staff at CHES are a fantastic group of people; to choose just one was going to be a challenge. I decided to enlist the advice of a few others. When one of them quickly said “What about Jeff White?” I knew instantly that was the perfect choice. Then I simply wondered why I hadn’t already decided upon Jeff.

Jeff has been employed by Cornell University for over 17 years. He grew up in Western Pennsylvania and was an undergraduate at IUP (Indiana University of Pennsylvania) where he majored in Chemistry and minored in Physics. From there, he went to the University of Buffalo where he received his master’s. He studied I₂ containing organic conductors using x-ray diffraction techniques with Phil Coppens at the University of Buffalo, NSLS (National Synchrotron Light Source), and at CHES (Cornell High Energy Synchrotron Source).

Jeff’s journey with CHES began as one of our users. He then became employed at CHES as one of our invaluable CHES Operators. Since then, he has held many titles, such as Programmer, Assistant Operations Manager, Operations Manager, Interim B-line Staff Scientist, CHES Safety Committee Chairperson, and his current title – Technical Service Coordinator. Throughout the years he has overseen changes in software, work done on the vacuums, coordinated operations for undulator runs, Machine Shop scheduling, safety equipment designs for new experimental facilities and stations, and improved beam conditions for users. He helped to institute a feedback system to stabilize the CHES vertical beam position. Jeff worked on some of the first internally cooled monochromators. From all of this, if a role needs to be filled, with his expertise, Jeff can easily step in and assume the responsibility.

While he has seen the loss of some of his co-workers to other institutions and places of employment over the years, he has also seen many improvements throughout Wilson Lab. Beam currents have been raised from 20-30 mA during HEP to 300-350 mA. Beam stabilities have improved by a factor of 5 and the number of user

stations has doubled. Improved optics have further increased the delivered flux to stations and many new people have come to the facility.

Jeff and Liz, his partner, live in the Ithaca area and have recently purchased a ‘get-away’ cottage. He enjoys hiking, canoeing, bird watching, astronomy, and photography. Also, he is a member of the International Union of Crystallography, Adirondack Mountain Club, Cornell Lab of Ornithology, and holds season tickets to Ithaca College and Cornell University’s Theatre. His love of theatre also finds him taking occasional trips to New York City. If all of that was not enough, he holds interests in Formula 1 racing and motorcycles, is a member of the American Canoe Association, and is a volunteer at Shoals Marine Lab in Appledore Island, Maine.

How he finds the time to do even a few of the above, let alone all of them, completely amazes me although I have the inside scoop that even he needs a break now and then. I guess that he is not Superman after all, but pretty close. Maybe all of this holds a clue as to why his handwriting steadily worsens year after year- good thing he can type!

Jeff plays an important role at CHES and in writing this article about his experiences and interests; I suspect the same holds true elsewhere. All of this goes to show you that choosing Jeff White as the “Staff in Focus” should have been a simple choice. My dilemma: CHES is not only fortunate to have Jeff, but many others with their own talents.