

**"WEIRD SCIENCE" MAKES  
LEARNING FUN**

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**NEWS RELEASE**

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**"Flying moles, slime, potato guns . . . what a way to spend a Friday morning!"**

**"They didn't give speeches. They made learning FUN!"**

These are among student assessments of "Weird Science," the next presentation in the University of Southern Indiana's Community of Scholars series designed to demonstrate to Tri-State students that science is both fascinating and fun.

Three northern Illinois educators -- Bob Lewis, DeWayne Lieneman, and Lee Marek -- will be featured in the program on Saturday, November 14, in Forum I at the University. At 9:30 a.m., they will show Tri-State science teachers techniques that make students flock to their classrooms. At 3 p.m., they will demonstrate their bag of tricks for Tri-State students, their parents, and all others interested.

The free programs are sponsored by the USI School of Science and Engineering Technology and School of Education and Human Services, with support from the American Chemical Society, General Electric, Hoosier Association of Science Teachers, Inc., Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineers, Southern Indiana Gas & Electric, and Tri-State Council for Science and Engineering.

"Weird Science" evolved from a 1985 conversation among chemistry teachers driving to a Chemistry West meeting, an alliance of Chicago area educators. Since then "Weird Science" has occurred around the nation, as Chemistry West members extended their ideas to other educators or demonstrated to Midwest and American youth that chemistry is fun and understandable.

Their reputation spread, spurred by such events as Lewis being featured in a 1990 *Newsweek* issue on science education and both Lewis and Marek appearing on the David Letterman show.

The "Weird Science" demonstrators cite Hubert Alyea: "Surprise, humor, and truth are the servants of a good lecture." They contend a teacher cannot communicate with those who are not mentally present, that attention must be captured. "Weird Science" is a fast-paced series of

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demonstrations of chemical and physical phenomena that provides tools to capture attention. The program lasts about an hour and stimulates students by involving them in the process.

Discrepant events are the backbone of "Weird Science," as the educators note that they follow George Gilbert's suggestion and "Don't tell them what is going to happen, treat each one (demonstration) as an experiment."

Bob Lewis has taught chemistry at his alma mater, Downers Grove North High School, for 22 years. He is a leader in Chem-5, a Woodrow Wilson Chemistry Team specializing in microscaled laboratories, and active in improving science education in the elementary schools in his district. He is a Davidson, Sigma Xi, and Presidential award winner.

DeWayne Lieneman, a 25-year veteran in the classroom, teaches advanced placement chemistry at Glenbard South High School, has been a lecturer and lab director at the Fermi Summer Institute since its beginning in 1983, and a Woodrow Wilson environmental chemistry team member. He was a Woodrow Wilson Master Teacher in 1989 and a Sigma Xi Award winner.

Lee Marek is a chemistry teacher at Naperville North High School with more than 20 years of experience. He has been director of the chemistry section of the Fermi Summer Institute for Science and mathematics since 1984 and on a Woodrow Wilson chemistry team since 1989. He has received Presidential, Davidson, Tandy Science, and Regional Catalyst awards.

For information on the USI programs, contact Marie G. Hankins, chair of the Physical Sciences Department, 812/464-1716.