

## **IRPA 12 in Buenos Ares, Argentina: L. Scott Walker**

The Accelerator Section of the Health Physics Society in combination with the Health Physics Society itself sent me as their delegate to the 12<sup>th</sup> Congress of the International Radiation Protection Association (IRPA). The Congress was very well attended (though a bit disorganized). The venue was great. We met at the end of October which is the middle of our fall but the middle of spring in Buenos Ares. The weather was fantastic with average temperatures around 70-75 degrees Fahrenheit. The trees and flowers were blooming. The city natives, as well as the tourists, were enjoying the spring atmosphere.

The IRPA meeting was well attended with ~1100 people from 78 different countries. My personal focus was on accelerators and shielding. There were many papers on new shielding designs. The vast majority of the papers were presented in poster sessions. One poster from Brazil highlighted the design of a new concrete mixture that increases the water content by a factor of 2-3 (thus making concrete a much better neutron shield). Another paper from Spain described a new high density concrete with a density greater than 4 gm/cm<sup>3</sup>. On a more practical note, a poster from Paraguay showed how well adobe type building material shielded an X-ray machine. My favorite paper (and the paper that basically justified the trip to Buenos Ares) was from the German PTB and described a new detector system for the albatross neutron survey meter using silica diodes to measure activation from the silver. This paper has prompted our facility to address some radical changes in a new design for the albatross uses at our facility.

The food was great. One of Argentina's largest exports is beef. Beef (in the form of steaks etc.) is very inexpensive and delicious. In addition, the Argentine people are very nice and will go to great lengths to help those who do not speak their language. In short, I am very thankful to those in the Accelerator Section and the Health Physics Society who chose me as a delegate to the IRPA 12 meeting.