

APR14-2014-000419

Abstract for an Invited Paper
for the APR14 Meeting of
the American Physical Society

Everyone Loves Science

MATS SELEN, Univ of Illinois - Urbana

Twenty years ago we started a small outreach program at the University of Illinois called “The Physics Van,” designed to show the fun of science to assemblies of kids at local elementary schools. Many hundreds of shows - and many hundreds of thousands of excited kids, teachers, and parents later - the program is a cornerstone of the department’s outreach efforts. About fourteen years ago I stumbled into a one-time gig with the local CBS television station, which evolved into a weekly live science segment on their morning news show. Very popular with viewers across central Illinois, these science segments now include a colleague from the Department of Chemistry and cover a wide range of topics. The totally unexpected success of both has led me to ponder why these seemingly hapless efforts should have grown to be both successful and sustainable. The conclusions, I believe, are very good news for us all.