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AAS NEWSLETTER

A Publication for the members of the American Astronomical Society



KEVIN MARVEL SELECTED AS NEXT AAS EXECUTIVE OFFICER

After a diligent search and careful assessments of a strong set of candidates, the Executive Officer Search Committee selected Kevin Marvel, currently the Deputy Executive Officer to succeed Robert Milkey, who will be retiring in July, 2006. This recommendation was accepted unanimously and with enthusiasm by the AAS Council at a special teleconference meeting held on 7 December 2005.

Search Committee Chair, AAS President Robert Kirshner, said, "Kevin has been a terrific addition to the AAS Washington office, energizing our public policy work. He has the energy and drive to make sure the American

Astronomical Society succeeds in all parts of its mission. I'm sure he will be an excellent Executive Officer for the AAS."

Kevin Marvel joined the AAS Executive Office as the head of Policy Programs in 1998 and has since expanded his role to become Deputy Executive Officer and to manage the Publications Group. His scientific background is in radio observations of young stars: he continues this work and has published in the *ApJ* and the *AJ* on VLBI maser observations in 2005. Prior to joining the AAS office, Kevin was an undergraduate at the University of Arizona, obtained his PhD in 1996 at New Mexico State University, and was a postdoc with Anneila Sargent's group at Caltech.

THE LARGEST EVER MEETING OF ASTRONOMERS?

As far as we can tell the 207th meeting of the AAS was the largest meeting of astronomers ever held, with somewhat more over 3,100 registrants. Attendance at this meeting was up 28% from the meeting in San Diego a year ago. This growth stretched our processes for supporting meetings almost to the breaking point and the success we experienced was only due to the dedication and hard work of the AAS Staff. Our first inkling that this would be such a record breaking meeting came with the count of abstracts received in mid October. Compared to the 2002 meeting in Washington we had almost half again as many abstracts submitted.

The AAS Council and the AAS Staff would like to thank everyone for their support and understanding as we dealt with the challenges that were presented by this record size. The success of such a meeting is always dependent on cooperation between the attendees and organizers and AAS meeting have always exhibited a significant degree of such cooperation. This meeting was no exception, but rather set a new standard.

We also received a record number of requests for both "town meeting" sessions and for splinter meetings to be held within the AAS. As these latter

requests accumulated we had to scurry around to find space to accommodate them.

I also appreciated the many useful suggestions I have received from AAS members attending the meeting. We are always seeking to find ways to make the experience of attending an AAS meeting better and, where possible, we will incorporate these into our future planning.

I do not expect this record to hold for very long – we will be back at the Marriott Wardman in four years and challenging the record.

After what was my last winter meeting as Executive Officer, I want to offer my personal thanks to a wonderful staff – one that always managed to make me look better than I deserved. I look forward to enjoying future meetings as a simple participant and benefiting from the hard work that lies behind these events.

Bob Milkey
Executive Officer

AAS Executive Office Staff

Robert W. Milkey, Executive Officer
Kevin B. Marvel, Deputy Executive Officer
Susana E. Deustua, Director, Educational Activities
Eboni Bowman, Meetings Registrar/Assistant
Kelli Gilmore, Meetings Manager
Scott Idem, Network & Systems Administrator
Judith M. Johnson, Publications Manager
Shantice Jones, Membership Services Specialist
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Faye C. Peterson, Manager, Membership Services
Crystal M. Tinch, Publications Specialist

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Items of general interest to be considered for publication in the *AAS Newsletter* should be sent to crystal@aaas.org. Appropriate pictures are welcome. For information about deadlines and submitting articles, see www.aas.org/publications/newsletter.html. Items submitted to the *AAS Newsletter* are not automatically included in the AAS Electronic Announcements or vice versa. Submit electronic announcement items to ela@aaas.org.

Judith M. Johnson, AAS Publications Manager
Robert W. Milkey, Editor
Crystal M. Tinch, Associate Editor
Jeff Linsky, U. Colorado, Associate Editor, Letters

Manuscript Submissions Using AASTeX

The *AJ* and *ApJ* accept manuscripts electronically that are prepared using the AASTeX manuscript package. Following are some important addresses for obtaining information about AASTeX and electronic submission.

AASTeX Homepage:

www.journals.uchicago.edu/AAS/AASTeX

User Support: aastex-help@aaas.org

Journal Homepages/Manuscript

Submission: *AJ*, *ApJ*, *ApJL*

www.journals.uchicago.edu/ApJ/information.html

AAS Email Policy

To unsubscribe from AAS emails, contact address@aaas.org

For address changes email address@aaas.org

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The AAS Should Not Make Statements Concerning Evolution

Dear Editor:

I see that our Council have been wasting their time once again with a statement supporting the teaching of the Theory of Evolution in the schools. As most astronomers are not experts in biology, we and the AAS probably ought not make statements about whether Evolution is good or bad science. Yet this is exactly what the Council have done. In particular, their assertion that Evolution has been “repeatedly tested and verified through observation” etc. seems both hubristic and a bit farfetched. For years I have searched newspapers and magazines such as “The Economist” in vain for stories of modern tests of Evolution based on DNA typing. Yet the ones I do find seem to contradict Evolution.

I think we would be better off trying to get the schools to teach a deeper understanding of the nature of science—what are its strengths and limitations. This would necessarily delve fairly deeply into philosophy and religion and how these outlooks are different from and complementary to science. It would feature theories (gravity, plate tectonics) that make lots of testable predictions that are useful in every-day life (i.e., in engineering and astronomy) and contrast them with theories that do not, like Evolution and Intelligent Design. It would even give students an idea of how theories themselves can evolve in the light of embarrassing evidence, as Evolution has, or at least should have. It seems to me that presenting weak theories like Evolution as received truth actually damages our teaching of science.

Joel A. Eaton
eaton@donne.tsuniv.edu

Observing Time Available in Australia

Dear Editor:

We would like to bring an observing opportunity to the attention of members of the American Astronomical Society. We have a small observatory located in Sydney Australia, with access to the entire southern skies. The observatory houses a wide field high precision 14 inch telescope with a research grade CCD camera. We are interested in working with high level amateurs and professionals requiring imaging and data collection which may not be easily and continuously accessible from northern latitudes.

Currently I am opening up invitations to interested persons and groups which may benefit from having either indirect or direct access to our observatory. We are interested in making access to our observatory free of charge with the existing levels of infrastructure. We have the professional capacity to introduce additional equipment and infrastructure, pending demand, which may involve costs and charges.

Details of our test observatory are available on our website (www.anssentechologies.com.au). Please notify me should you be interested in further discussions.

Peter Mellander, Director
Anssen Technologies
Sydney, N.S.W. Australia

Astronomy is Tied to the Ship of State

Dear Editor:

Since World War II our Ship of State has been sailing on relatively smooth waters. Astronomy has benefited from the formation of NASA and NSF. Government investments in R&D have fueled our engine. We have built giant telescopes that now cover most of the spectrum. Our growing reputation in astronomy has attracted the best minds to our shores. Peer review has led to a system for determining priorities and assures that only the best research gets funded. From the outside our ship seems to be in good running order.

If we look closer, we see signs of serious internal rust. Growing demands on a critical component of our fuel that drives our engine - federal funding - threaten the health of our field as well as our Ship of State. We are paying interest on a growing national debt. A growth of uncapped entitlements like Social Security and medical care is making our sailors happy, but eats into our fuel. Our growing trade imbalance has made imports cheaper and its effects of rebalancing will be felt only downstream. Our engine is running out of fuel.

Good scientists and engineers from abroad are finding it more difficult to visit and settle here. Tax cuts make our sailors happy but are cutting into our national flexibility. Our unbalanced Middle East policy has encouraged the growth of terrorism where individuals act like the anarchists 100 years ago. We are making expenditures since 9/11 against threats that are both nebulous and undefined. Our Defense Department has assumed many of the diplomatic roles of our State Department. Our Homeland Security is assuming the role the FBI. Our intelligence community has been layered. These reorganizations have increased our bureaucracy. Coupled with deep tax cuts, they have caused a further hemorrhaging of funds formerly available for astronomy. Both Democrats and Republicans have set up districts that virtually assure their reelection and the effects of basic research cuts they make will not be apparent until years after they have left office. Our Ship of State with its happy sailors is suffering from a poor navigation system.

Our Ship of State needs to avoid the looming iceberg. Whether higher taxes, caps on entitlements, or changes in national policy will right our Ship of State is debatable, but clearly our country's decision makers need to recognize that if we lessen our support for basic research, including astronomy, our country will surely suffer in the decades to come.

William E. Howard III
wehoward@sigmaxi.org

MEMBER DEATHS

The Society is saddened to learn of the deaths of the following members, former members and affiliate members:

R. Stanley Alexander
Cornell "Connie" Mayer
Bjarne Goodreau Nilsen

John Perdrix
Gibson Reaves
Ralph R. Robbins

CORRECTION

Bulletin of the AAS Pagination Error

Due to an error in production, the pagination used for Issue 4 of Volume 37 of the *Bulletin of the American Astronomical Society* was incorrect. This issue should have had page numbers 795 through 1386 instead of pages 987 through 1578. AIP regrets this error and apologizes for any inconvenience.

WELCOME

Welcome, Springer Verlag, Our Newest Sustaining Corporate Member

Springer Verlag is the second largest specialist publisher in the Science/Technology/Medicine sector worldwide, publishing 1,450 journals and 5,000 books annually through an extensive network in Europe, Asia, and the USA. These include 11 journals in astronomy or astrophysics. Springer US is based in New York.

The AAS wants to welcome Springer as a Sustaining Corporate member and thank their representatives for this outstanding support of our programs. We look forward to Springer's presence at AAS meetings and participation in other activities.

See www.springer.com for more information.

UPDATES

Please check your email address listed in the 2006 Membership Directory. Corrections can be made by logging into the member only website: <http://members.aas.org>.

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

Robert Kirshner, aaspres@aas.org

The posters are all rolled up from the 207th meeting in Washington and I suppose some other group is streaming up and down the escalators at the Wardman Park Hotel and watching the staff flop those big dividers in the main salon. The meeting was a big success, with over 3100 registrations, outstanding invited talks, prize talks, High Energy talks, and enough public policy talks so that even I was beginning to learn the acronyms.

There's a vitality to our meetings— part of it comes from lots of undergraduates and graduate students, not just my graying contemporaries. The book publishers, who go to a lot of scientific meetings, picked up on this right away—the Astronomy crowd is a young crowd. So many new faces means that even people wearing special name tags with an orange stripe saying something like "President" share a sense of dislocation— who are all these people, all these astronomers?

The underlying cause for big and lively meetings is the rapid advance of our science and the growth in support for it. But every student of calculus knows that a maximum comes when the slope goes through zero. So we should watch that slope. The signs are not good. At the very same time we see a rich flood of data from Sloan and Spitzer, Chandra and Gemini, and we're having a blast learning more about everything from Titan to Gamma Ray Bursts at z of 6, it's hard to escape the conclusion that we will need to face up to some difficult times ahead.

Mike Griffin told us that NASA can't do everything he found on his plate when he arrived. While he seems intent on maintaining a vigorous science program at NASA, it's pretty clear that not all the carefully wrought plans we've developed are going to be carried out in the way we expected. What's hard to detect is exactly how the voices of scientists will be heard within NASA as those hard choices are made. This is an area where the AAS should pay attention, and find ways to help.

At NSF, there's a closer connection between the astronomical community and the hard choices. The Senior Review is an attempt to squeeze the present to help pay for the future. It's not pleasant, but it does seem like something that needs to be done. The future is worth it.

Are we at a maximum? I don't know. I hope not. We've done incredibly well in uncovering the Universe: we know there are exotic planets around other stars, we see the messy web of galaxy formation almost back to its origins, and we've stumbled into appreciating, if not understanding, the cryptic framework of a dark energy universe. These discoveries present incredible opportunities for further exploration. We know this. We want to build giant telescopes to trace the assembly of galaxies, launch arrays to sense the vibrations of gravitational waves, and find

ways to image foreign planets. Our case is good. We need to be persistent and clear in articulating the benefits of these adventures. Astronomy takes everyone beyond the everyday. Astronomy opens up human imagination. Astronomy give us a clear-eyed view of where we are and where we came from. No wonder our meetings are so much fun.

SECRETARY'S CORNER

John Graham,
aassec@aas.org

AAS Election

The results of the latest AAS election are presented below. The Society thanks all who agreed to stand for election, for their commitment and service to the community, and congratulates the winners. New AAS Officers and Councilors begin their terms after the Members Meeting on 7 June 2006 at the Calgary Meeting.

Vice-President ('06 - '09)

Robert W. O'Connell

USNC-IAU, Cat. I ('07 - '09)

Lynne Hillenbrand

Education Officer ('06 - '09)

Timothy F. Slater

Nominating Committee

('06 - '09)

Nancy R. Evans

Robert E. Williams

Councilors ('06 - '09)

Megan Donahue

Margaret M. Hanson

Marc Postman

Committee Vacancies Need to be Filled

Vacancies for several AAS committees will be filled by Council at its meeting in Calgary in June 2006. Current committee members are listed under Council/Committees on the AAS homepage, www.aas.org. Committees which have vacancies are:

Committee on Employment

Investment Advisory Committee

Light Pollution, Radio Interference and Space Debris

Committee on Status of Minorities

Committee on Status of Women in Astronomy

Committee on Childcare at Meetings

AAS Members may themselves volunteer, or suggest other Members for one of the vacancies. To assist members of the Committee on Appointments who may not know everyone, please include the date of PhD, as well as a few sentences conveying the background and area of expertise of the named individual. Our goal is to have both quality and breadth across the AAS committee structure. Please let us know if you can help.

Input must be received in the Office of the Secretary no later than 30 April 2006. Submit suggestions to John Graham, AAS Secretary, aassec@aas.org, Department of Terrestrial Magnetism,

5241 Broad Branch Road, NW, Washington, DC 20015,
Tel:202-478-8867, Fax: 202-478-8821.

Invitations to the Prague General Assembly of the IAU

The International Astronomical Union has now authorized the US National Committee to issue invitations to the XXVIth General Assembly, which will take place in Prague, the Czech Republic, 14-25 August 2006. To receive formal invitations contact the undersigned before 31 May 2006 sending name, mailing address, e-mail address, and institutional affiliation. I hope as many of you as possible will be able to make the trip.

John Graham, Secretary, USNC-IAU
Carnegie-DTM
5241 Broad Branch Road, NW
Washington, DC 20015
e-mail: aassec@aaas.org

PUBLICATIONS NEWS

AAS Begins Move to New Abstract Processing System

The AAS has used the same, custom-developed abstract processing for the last 15 years. Support for the script-driven system is no longer available and the Executive Office is in the process of moving to an off-the-shelf solution that is used by other scientific societies.

What does this mean for our members? It mainly means increased functionality when submitting abstracts (such as editing functionality up to the final cut-off deadline for publication) and expanded real-time support during the submission process to name just the most obvious.

For the Executive Office it means significant time savings, greater ease of production and, especially important, increased scheduling and meeting management functionality.

These improvements do not come without some cost. On the financial side, the system will cost some money, but the initial cost in making the switch is covered by the BAAS reserve fund, which is used for development purposes.

On the inconvenience side, it will require our members to become familiar with a new abstract submittal system. This includes no longer submitting abstract material in LaTeX format. The AAS remains one of the last societies to move away from the LaTeX formatting language for abstracts. Complete functionality for the most common astronomy-related symbols is available in the new system, although the method is more like cut-and-paste than like using LaTeX macros.

Although detailed instructions on how the new system will work are not yet available, we are working with the provider to develop a customized and complete set of instructions in time for the Calgary meeting, 2006 divisional meetings and the January 2007 AAS meeting with the AAPT. When this information becomes available, we will inform you, our members, so you can help us make a smooth transition to the new abstract system.

Feigelson and Laor Appointed as New *ApJ* Scientific Editors

At Washington meeting the AAS Council approved the appointment of two new Scientific Editors at *The Astrophysical Journal*, with terms running from 2006-2008.

Eric Feigelson is a Professor in the Department of Astronomy and Astrophysics at the Pennsylvania State University. He has a distinguished research record in X-ray observations of stars and extragalactic sources, and he is regarded as one of world's leading experts in statistical analysis in astronomy. He will be handling papers in stellar astronomy, star formation, and Galactic X-ray astronomy.

Ari Laor is an Associate Professor at Technion, The Israel Institute of Technology. He is widely recognized for his work on observations and theory of active galactic nuclei and related problems. At the *ApJ* he will mainly handle papers in this area, along with papers in extragalactic astronomy generally. Laor is the fifth overseas editor to join the *ApJ*, following Katia Ferriere (Toulouse), Brad Gibson (Lancashire), Luigi Stella (Rome), and outgoing Editor-in-Chief Robert Kennicutt (Cambridge). This is another reflection of the Journal's international profile and stature; nowadays roughly 40% of its papers are written by overseas authors.

At the end of the year the *ApJ* bid farewell to two Scientific Editors who moved on to other pursuits. In January Paula Szkody took over as the new Editor of the *Publications of the Astronomical Society of the Pacific*, and at the same time Joe Shields gave up his editorship to devote more time to his new position at the Chair of the Physics and Astronomy Department at Ohio University. The departures of these two fine editors, along with a major increase in manuscript submissions last year (up 343 papers or 17% for the main journal alone), has strained the capacity of the current editorial staff, and Profs. Feigelson and Laor will be assuming their new duties as soon as their training is completed. Later this year we will be advertising for additional Scientific Editors, for appointment in 2007-2009.

COUNCIL ACTIONS

Council Actions Taken at the 207th Meeting of the Council of the American Astronomical Society in Washington, DC, 8 January 2006

- Approved rules for the Chambliss Medals for student presentations at AAS meetings and for amateur research achievement.
- Approved the Executive Officer's request for Special Projects funding for the Department Chairs meeting in 2006.
- Moved the formation of a Leap Second Committee to investigate how newly proposed policies will affect scientific research and for the Committee to report back to the Executive Committee before a date yet to be specified.
- Reaffirmed AAS Policy that Post Doctoral appointments should not contain a reply date earlier than 15 February in any year.
- Adopted the statement "Professional and Ethical Standards" as AAS journal policy for the *Astrophysical Journal*, the *Astrophysical Journal Letters*, the *Astrophysical Journal Supplements*, the *Astronomical Journal*, and the *Bulletin of the American Astronomical Society*.
- Accepted the Annual Report of the Publications Board to the AAS Council.
- Accepted the proposal from the Publication Board to reduce the proprietary period for journal access from three years to two years on an experimental basis.
- Authorized the sale of single articles from AAS journals at a price of \$9 per article.
- Appointed an Audit Committee for the six month period January-June 2006.
- Appointed Hervey (Peter) Stockman to a three year term on the Governing Board of the American Institute of Physics, effective 1 January 2006.
- Appointed Eric Feigelson and Ari Laor to three year terms as Scientific Editors of the *Astrophysical Journal*.
- Appointed Kevin Marvel as Editor of the *Bulletin of the American Astronomical Society* beginning with the 2006 volume.
- Approved the recommendations from the committees for the Russell Lectureship, Annie J. Cannon Prize, Pierce Prize, Warner Prize, Tinsley Prize, and the Weber Award.
- Accepted the Committee on Appointments nominations for new chairs and members of the prize committees.
- Elected Professor Sir Martin Rees as an Honorary Member of the American Astronomical Society.

CALGARY MEETING



Calgary, *Heart of the New West* here we come! It's been more than 20 years since the AAS met in Calgary, but we are returning for the 208th meeting this spring. Many exciting sessions are planned for this meeting; and our Invited Speakers include: Michael Perryman, Christine Wilson, Tim Ransom, and

Peter Gilman (2006 Hale Prize Winner).

Topical Sessions are being organized by: Eugene Milone, *Short-Period Binaries*, (Univ. of Calgary); Daniel Wang, *Warm-hot Gas in and around Disk Galaxies*, (Univ. of Mass); John Hughes, *First Results from Suzaku X-ray Mission*, (Rutgers); and Jeonghee Rho, *Dust and Gas Interplay in Supernova Remnants*, (Caltech).

Special Sessions are being organized by: Sun Kwok, *Organic Compounds: from Stars to the Solar System*, (Univ. of Calgary); Paul Vanden Bout, *Imaging Star Formation in the Cosmos with ALMA*, (NRAO); Eileen Friel, *NSF Astronomy Division Senior Review Outcome*, (NSF); Laurie Ruberg, *Improving Astronomy Education with Virtual Support*; Patricia Knezek, *Canadian Women Astronomers; Their Status & Science*, (WIYN); David Weinberg, *Large Scale Structure in the SDSS*, (Ohio State Univ.); and Joseph Lazio, *Future Large Ground-Based Telescopes* (NRL).

The JWST Town Meeting is being organized by Peter Stockman (STScI). NSF and NASA will hold their regularly scheduled Town Meetings in Calgary.

The meeting will be held at the TELUS Convention Center and the Hyatt Regency in the downtown corridor of Calgary, Alberta, Canada, 4-8 June 2006. We are using two headquarter hotels for this meeting, the Hyatt Regency and the Calgary Marriott both connected to the Convention Center. The Astronomy Department from the University of Calgary will be the co-host for this meeting and promises to bring lots of great Canadian culture. The Local Organizing Committee (LOC) has been working hard to prepare the back to back meetings of the Canadian Astronomical Society (CASCA) and the AAS. Full meeting details will be available online at www.aas.org and the University of Calgary website, www.ism.ucalgary.ca/meetings/aas06/.

We will also post Calgary's exciting trips and adventures on the website, so check back regularly. See you there!

FROM THE EDUCATION OFFICE

Susana E. Deustua, Director of Educational Activities
deustua@as.org

Some Meeting Highlights

The most recent AAS Meeting in Washington, D.C., held just two months ago in January, was, as we now know, the largest meeting in the history of the Society, and therefore, busy and exciting for all, but especially for AAS junior members. I counted some 130 undergraduate posters and 130 graduate student posters. Among the oral presentations six were given by undergraduates, thirty six by graduate students and what must be a record number (107!) of dissertation talks.

There were many exciting education talks and posters, including Chris Martin's take on "From the Bottom of the Earth!: Astronomy from the South Pole", and Pamela Gay's "Thieving Trendy Tech for EPO: Making the Mainstream work for Science" (including Slacker Astronomers Podcast), the multi-wavelength 21 foot long posters plus LCD displays of the Groth Strip in Gadgets and Gizmos. A new event was the Monday evening session, *Astronomical Beginnings and Endings*, co-sponsored by the Education Office and the Society of Physics Students (SPS). Vera Rubin and Chris Impey were the two featured speakers, and, of course, supper was provided. Undergraduates who were presenting posters during the regular meeting were invited to bring and display them at the session. Both Vera and Chris looked at the posters, and spoke individually with students as well as giving their own presentations.

Speaking Truth to Power about Science A commentary by Susana Deustua

The Good: A couple of days after his State of the Union Address, wherein President Bush called for the training of 70,000 teachers and the recruitment of math and science professionals to help in K-12 classrooms, he addressed a group of students in New Mexico on the importance of math and science to the nation's economic well being. He said, "In order for America to be a competitive nation in the years to come, we have got to have a work force that is strong in engineering and science and physics."

Yet, on the same day that this news item appeared in a *New York Times* article, a troubling issue was a subject of another article, also printed in the same issue (*NYT*, 4 February 2006).

The Bad and the Ugly: While the main topic of this second *NYT* article, (*NASA Chief Backs Agency Openness*) was the control of the release of science information by NASA's public affairs office, a sub-text was the agenda of a presidential appointee to NASA headquarters George Deutsch. This 24-year-old's personal agenda was fueled by a religious belief in intelligent design, to the extent that he felt justified in dictating how NASA science would be made public—in a mode contrary to normal science. The *NYT* reporter noted that:

"In October 2005, Mr. Deutsch sent an e-mail message to Flint Wild, a NASA contractor working on a set of Web presentations about Einstein for middle-school students. The message said the word "theory" needed to be added after every mention of the Big Bang.

The Big Bang is "not proven fact; it is opinion," Mr. Deutsch wrote, adding, "It is not NASA's place, nor should it be to make a declaration such as this about the existence of the universe that discounts intelligent design by a creator."

It continued: "This is more than a science issue, it is a religious issue. And I would hate to think that young people would only be getting one-half of this debate from NASA. That would mean we had failed to properly educate the very people who rely on us for factual information the most."

The Moral of the Story: Anti-science crusades are not limited to school boards, but are widespread and present at the highest levels of government, directly threatening those fundamental practices that we scientists take for granted, despite comforting words about the importance of science and engineering. Kudos to the NASA folks who made public the extent of political pressure to alter and suppress legitimate scientific results. Stay informed; eschew indifference and complacency.

P.S. Deutsch resigned on Tuesday, 7 February 2006.

THE CHAMBLISS ASTRONOMY ACHIEVEMENT STUDENT AWARDS

Through the generosity of Carlson Chambliss, the AAS has established the Astronomy Achievement Student Awards given to recognize exemplary research by undergraduate and graduate students who present posters at the semi-annual AAS meetings. Graduate and undergraduate posters are considered separately. Awardees will be honored with a Chambliss medal and a certificate. The first meeting where these awards will be made is the June 2006 AAS Meeting in Calgary, Canada.

Rules for participating in the awards: only posters are eligible for judging; students must be members of the AAS; the work must have been done while the presenter was an undergraduate or graduate student; participants must check the box on the abstract submittal form indicating that the poster is being submitted for the award; and participants must submit a letter of endorsement from a supervisor in support of the submission and describing how much of the work was done independently by the student. Participants must be present at the meeting to be eligible.

Rules for judging are: submissions will be assigned to poster sessions on Monday through Wednesday; each poster will be judged by at least two reviewers, using a standard review process, at the meeting; awards will be announced at the banquet.

Further information will be available on the AAS website at www.aas.org.

DIVISION NEWS

HISTORICAL ASTRONOMY DIVISION (HAD)

Don Yeomans, Chair, hadchair@aas.org



With the January 2006 meeting of the HAD, our group completed its first quarter century – activities that began with the first HAD meeting in Albuquerque NM in January 1981. In Washington, there was standing room only for the Doggett prize lecture by Steven J. Dick, the NASA Chief Historian. Steve outlined a classification

system for astronomy, analogous to similar classifications in biology and some other sciences. His classification system included three kingdoms (planets, stars, galaxies) along with 18 families and many more sub-divisions. There were special sessions on the Preservation of Astronomical Archives and Early Space Astronomy. In the first of these sessions, there were invited lectures by Brenda Corbin (USNO, retired), Shaun Hardy (Carnegie-DTM), and Ellen Bouton (NRAO) while the second session included invited talks on the Orbiting Astronomical Observatory by Nancy Roman (OAO), Art Code (Wisconsin), Jordan Marche (Kutztown) and David DeVorkin (NASM).

A series of excellent contributed and poster papers included topics as diverse as publication citation rankings by subject, wavelength and telescope by Virginia Trimble (try cosmological observations or observe brown dwarfs using the VLA to increase your citations...), a comparison of longitude

determinations using the GPS and lunar distances by David Floyd (use the GPS), John Winthrop's observations of the 1761 Venus transit from behind enemy lines in Newfoundland by Sara Schechner, the use of astronomy to plan wartime attacks by Brad Schaefer and why V.M Slipher, long term director at Lowell, received relatively little respect by Joe Tenn (was Slipher the Rodney Dangerfield of astronomy?).



In the HAD Business meeting, a discussion centered on the preservation of historical materials in astronomy and the current era when most correspondence is by email and hence not archived. In particular, David DeVorkin and Steve McClusky circulated a white paper summary and draft recommendations relating to astronomical site, instrument and archive preservation. In addition, the HAD membership discussed the current problem having to do with two decades worth of *ApJ* papers, referee reports and correspondence that will be trashed at the end of 2006 unless a plan can be established to archive these papers.

Photo 1: The Leroy E. Doggett Prize awardee, Steven Dick, accepts the HAD prize from Don Yeomans, the current HAD Chair.



Photo 2: Ellen Bouton (NRAO) discusses the successful attempts to archive the history of the NRAO, a story that included mention of the first successful solar eclipse observations made during a torrential rainstorm (Grote Reber's radio observations in 1950).

Photo 3: David Floyd (STScI) presented his account of a voyage to re-enact Captain Cook's first voyage on the sailing ship Endeavor where David compared longitude determinations using lunar observations with GPS determined values. Differences were often as small as 15 miles.

Photo 4: Long time HAD member Ruth Freitag, who has just retired after 47 years at the Library of Congress, receives a HAD plaque of appreciation from HAD Chair Don Yeomans for her Bibliographies of the History of Astronomy, 1988 – 2001.

Photo 5: HAD Vice-Chair, Sara Schechner, outlines a chapter in the early history of North American Astronomy – John Winthrop's Venus 1761 transit observations from Newfoundland, which was then behind enemy lines during the French and Indian wars.



HIGH ENERGY ASTROPHYSICS DIVISION (HEAD)

Stephen S. Murray, Chair, headchair@as.org

Taking over reigns as Chair of the HEAD-AAS from Roger Blandford is a mighty challenge. Roger has guided this division through some of the most difficult times for our field. His wisdom and foresight have helped the HEAD to become a stronger and more important voice in the community. I am delighted to know that Roger will remain a part of the HEAD-AAS executive committee over the next two years, and that I will be able to call on his vast experience and council.

These are indeed perilous times for science and astronomy. Space Science in particular is facing a crisis as NASA attempts to configure itself to address the President's Vision for Exploration. The newly announced NASA advisory structure makes it clear that the access by the scientific community to the decision making process will be more limited than in the past. But this does not mean that we should sit back and await our fate. One of the most important tasks for the HEAD-AAS Executive Committee will be to come up with a strategy for giving a voice to our concerns that can be heard at the levels of policy and decision making within NASA. It seems ironic that our organization, whose main concern should be scientific, must in today's environment, take on what are essentially political activities in order to promote science. Please stay tuned for more on this subject from the Executive Committee.

As for the latest news:

Elections for three new members of the Executive Committee and a Vice-Chair are due. A nominating committee has been appointed and they will shortly submit a slate of candidates for your consideration. The election will be via e-mail. Look for more information in the next few weeks.

The three members of the Executive Committee that are rotating off this year are Deepto Chakrabarty, Fiona Harrison and Kim Weaver. We thank them for their fine service to the HEAD. Also rotating off the committee is the previous Chair, Josh Grindlay. He has served the Division for six years and has earned all of our thanks and appreciation.

The Rossi Prize for 2006 has been awarded to Deepto Chakrabarty, Tod Strohmayer and Rudy Wijnands for their work on millisecond pulsars, QPO's and neutron stars. Congratulations to the winners! It is also a good time to mention that nominations are open for the 2007 prize. Letters should be sent to Christine Jones (cjf@head.cfa.harvard.edu) the Secretary-Treasurer of the HEAD.

The next HEAD meeting will be held 4-7 October 2006 in San Francisco, CA. The meeting will be organized by Eureka Scientific and we look forward to a wonderful, informative and enjoyable meeting. More details will be forthcoming as the Executive Committee (which serves as the SOC) meets to set up the sessions

and invited speakers. Members who would like to make suggestions may send me e-mail which I will share with the rest of the Committee. Also, those who are interested in organizing special sessions at the HEAD meeting should contact John Vallerga at Eureka Scientific (info@eurekasci.com) to make arrangements for time and room.

We want to remind everyone of the next meeting of the Division of Astrophysics (DAP) of the American Physical Society (APS), which will be held 22-25 April 2006 in Dallas, TX. Please refer to the DAP website for more information on this meeting.

DIVISION ON DYNAMICAL ASTRONOMY (DDA)

Marc Murison

Secretary, DDA, ddasec@as.org

The 2006 Meeting of the Division on Dynamical Astronomy

The DDA will hold its annual Meeting on 25-29 June 2006, at Saint Mary's University, Halifax, Nova Scotia. All astronomers and planetary scientists with an interest in dynamics will find the annual DDA meeting a stimulating, friendly, and rewarding experience. The Meeting will feature invited review talks on a range of topics in dynamical astronomy, contributed oral papers (no parallel sessions), and poster papers which are displayed throughout the entire meeting. For information on the DDA Meeting, and links to Halifax local and travel information, please consult the DDA homepage: <http://dda.harvard.edu/>

DDA Student Stipend Program

For the twelfth consecutive year, the Division is making available two student stipends to help defray costs for students and encourage participation in the annual Division meetings. The stipends are now \$600 each, and meeting registration and abstract fees are waived. Any full or part-time student presently enrolled in an academic program at a college or university is eligible and highly encouraged to apply. See the DDA homepage for application details and further information.

DIVISION FOR PLANETARY SCIENCES (DPS)

The 37th Meeting of DPS in Cambridge, England was completely successful. The final count of registrants was 848, some 300 more than the original target. In fact the number of attendees was so great that on the weekend of September 3 and 4, the planetary science community totally swamped the hourly bus service from London Heathrow to Cambridge. And then on arrival in Cambridge some delegates found their booking had been overlooked. Fortunately the LOC managed find suitable housing at literally a moment's notice in St. Catharine's College. Most delegates enjoyed the Hogwart's experience at St. John's College, where a magnificent banquet was held. Other delegates enjoyed the more modern ambience of Robinson College, where a dance band livened up the Caribbean buffet. The Meeting featured about 700 abstracts, divided equally between oral and poster. The facilities at the Law and Music Faculties of the university worked fine. The Historical Astronomy Division joined DPS for the 31st HAD meeting. This synergy was judged a success. Financially the Meeting was a success: all costs were covered by registration, very generous sponsorship, and charges for the housing. Finally the weather: we opened with a great thunderstorm and closed with a great thunderstorm, but between times it was just as wonderful as England ever gets.

Simon Mitton

COMMITTEE NEWS

STATUS OF WOMEN IN ASTRONOMY

Patricia Knezek

CSWA Chair, WIYN Observatory, knezek@noao.edu

The January 2006 issue of *STATUS*

The January 2006 issue of *STATUS* is now available from the CSWA website, see: www.aas.org/~cswa/pubs.html. It includes several articles on balancing career and family, including ways that institutions have implemented change, and suggestions for further improvements. It also includes an article on Dorrit Hoffleit, and several book reviews. If you would like a paper version of *STATUS*, please email membership@aas.org.

The January 2006 AAS Meeting

The CSWA held a very successful session on Wednesday, 11 January 2006, at the Washington, D.C. AAS Meeting. During the first part of the session, Dr. Laura Kay (Barnard) and Dr. Rachel Ivie (AIP) reported on the Second International Conference on Women in Physics that was held 23-25 May 2005 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. They both noted that the issues faced by women

in physics and astronomy vary greatly from country to country, and thus it is difficult to draw any broad conclusions.

Dr. Ivie then provided a very informative presentation on the results of the AIP survey she led of the situation for women in astronomy, published earlier this year. She noted that the results have often been misrepresented in the press as concluding "There is no leaky pipeline in astronomy." To access the full report, as well as answers to frequently asked questions about the report, please go to www.aip.org/statistics/trends/gendertrends.html. Both Dr. Kay's and Dr. Ivie's presentations, along with the follow-up questions and answers, are posted off of the CSWA web site, www.aas.org/~cswa/.

Update on the Pasadena Recommendations

The CSWA has resumed pursuing ways to encourage the implementation of the Pasadena Recommendations. We have drafted a letter to be sent to the departmental chairs and division heads of colleges, universities, and institutions encouraging them to publicly endorse the Recommendations, as well as implement appropriate recommendations. This letter notes that CSWA will maintain a list of institutions that have endorsed the Recommendations on our web site. We are in the process of organizing a group to undertake the longitudinal study of young women in astronomy, and we are actively working to prioritize recommendations that we can work with the community to implement.

The Women in Astronomy Database

The CSWA would like to encourage AAS members to make use of the Women in Astronomy database that it maintains. *New submissions are welcome and strongly encouraged.* The database lists the names, professional affiliations, scientific interests, talk titles and contact information for women in astronomy and astrophysics.

The Women in Astronomy list can be used to

- find speakers for colloquia, scientific meetings, or school visits
- solicit job applicants
- sort by education, expertise, research interests, etc. for statistical or search purposes

The information contained on this list is submitted by each person listed using the CSWA Submission Form (internal to the database). If you are a member of the database, and haven't looked at your information recently, you might want to make sure everything is up to date! To find out more about this resource, please go to: www.aas.org/~cswa/WIAD.html.

NEWS FROM...

NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION

Eileen D. Friel, efriel@nsf.gov
Executive Officer, Division of Astronomical Sciences

New Faces at AST

The Division is pleased to welcome three new program officers to NSF. Dr. Phil Puxley joins the Division as permanent program manager for AST facilities. Phil brings to the Division his years of management experience at Gemini Observatory and UKIRT and a research interest in high-mass star formation in galaxies and near-IR instrumentation. His expertise in management and oversight of complex international projects will be a valuable addition to the Division.

Dr. Wei Zheng joins AST as program officer in the Astronomy and Astrophysics Research Grants programs. He comes to the Division on a visiting scientist appointment from Johns Hopkins University, where he has been a research scientist for the past 15 years. We look forward to drawing on his extensive experience and expertise in extragalactic astronomy and instrumentation.

Dr. Tom Barnes joins the Division on a visiting appointment from the University of Texas, where he has spent his professional career, serving for many years as Chief Operating Officer of McDonald Observatory. Tom will assume responsibility for oversight of national facilities and management of large projects. The Division will also benefit from Tom's scientific expertise and interest in stellar astrophysics and optical/IR instrumentation.

Update on the AAG

The 15 November 2005 deadline brought a record number of proposal submissions to the Astronomy and Astrophysics Research Grants program. The Division received over 520 proposals for FY2006 funding, an increase of over 20% from last year's total, which was also a significant increase from previous years. Unfortunately, the budget for the unrestricted grants program can not keep pace with this increase, and the higher proposal pressure will inevitably result in a significant reduction in the success rate. In 2005, although the success rate dropped from previous years, we were able to achieve levels approaching 30%. We are unlikely to be able to maintain this funding rate given the pressure of proposals this year. As we enter the proposal review season, we are estimating a return this year to the low rates of ~25% common in the late '90s.

As we stated in the August 2005 newsletter, the Division recognizes the critical importance of the unrestricted grants programs and will make every effort to maintain a healthy success rate. However, the continuing increase in proposal pressure makes this a particularly difficult challenge this year.

Upcoming Deadlines for FY2006 funding:

20 March 2006: Advanced Technologies and Instrumentation Special Competition: Astronomical Applications with the Advanced Electro-Optical System (AEOS) of the U.S. Air Force. This special competition makes available to the U.S. community approximately 90 hours of observing time on the 3.67-meter AEOS telescope. See the program solicitation NSF 06-519 and contact Dr. Andy Clegg (aclegg@nsf.gov) for more information.

20 July 2006: CAREER (MPS) – Faculty Early Career Development Program – Submission guidelines are unchanged from last year; see program solicitation NSF 05-579. Contact Dr. Randy Phelps (rphelps@nsf.gov) for more information.

17 August 2006: REU Sites – Research Experiences for Undergraduates (REU) Sites – See the new program solicitation NSF 05-592. Contact Dr. Randy Phelps (rphelps@nsf.gov) for more information.

REU Supplement proposals may be submitted at any time, but we encourage PI's to request funds early in the fiscal year.

NSF Senior Review Update

The Senior Review committee plans on making its report and recommendations to the Astronomy Division by April 2006. The June AAS meeting will provide an important opportunity for the Division to present the report's conclusions and recommendations. We expect to hold a special session in Calgary to discuss the report, its recommendations, and the development of an implementation plan with the community. We encourage you to attend both this special session and the regular NSF town meeting in Calgary. Please check the AAS program for time and location of these sessions.

ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY OF THE PACIFIC

Mike Bennett, mbennett@astrosociety.org
Executive Director

Conference Series Improves Editorial Efficiency

The *ASP Conference Series* has implemented a new on-line system to assist editors in preparing manuscripts. The new web-based editorial tool now allows the volume's editor to correct and change text and formatting within the volume while it is in the manuscript stage—after it has been submitted to the ASP but before it goes to the printer.

Editors of *Conference Series* volumes may now choose to go on-line to review the manuscript version of each chapter of their volume, then make their own corrections and changes directly to the working manuscript.

The new system also allows the volume editor to review the fully formatted version of the publication via the web. Editors can now

see exactly what the final format is before the manuscript is submitted to the printer.

“Our editors have been asking for these improvements for a long time,” said *ASP Conference Series* Managing Editor J. Ward Moody. “The *ASP Conference Series* has always been very cost-efficient, and now we are becoming even more time-efficient for editors as well. This change will save time, money and effort and will help conference proceedings reach their readers even more rapidly.”

PASP Implements UCP's WPR Submission/Review System

The *PASP*'s editorial transition has been completed smoothly and The *PASP* editorial offices are now located at the University of Washington. At the same time, we have moved to an electronic system for paper submission and review. Papers may now be submitted using the Web-based Peer Review System of the University of Chicago Press. Please check the new *PASP* home page at www.journals.uchicago.edu/PASP/ for the latest information and submission instructions.

ASP Sponsoring National EPO Conference

The ASP's 2006 Annual Meeting will be hosted by the Space Telescope Science Institute in Baltimore, MD, 16-18 September 2006.

Entitled “Engaging the EPO Community: Best Practices, New Approaches,” this symposium is for scientists, educators, writers, designers, developers, webmasters, journalists and public affairs professionals working in the field of astronomy and space science education and outreach. It is designed to highlight the best practices in the field and share new approaches to serving students, teachers, and the public. For more information, abstract submission deadlines, and registration instructions, go to the ASP's web site at www.astrosociety.org.

CANADIAN ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY

Jim Hesser, President

We look forward to welcoming AAS members to Calgary for the back-to-back meetings of CASCA and the AAS in June 2006. With so much in common to astronomers in the United States and Canada, these meetings provide a special opportunity to discuss the many issues and projects of interest to us all. The overlapping day of the two meetings, Sunday, 4 June, will focus on education and public outreach, which are of great importance to the future health of our scientific endeavours and of our relations with society at large. Our mutual partnerships in current and proposed facilities doubtless will be much in evidence at the meetings, with many of us looking forward to the special AAS sessions on ALMA, Gemini and other topics. To encourage AAS

member participation in the CASCA meeting, the LOC is offering registration for the CASCA meeting at the same rate as for CASCA members. We hope many will take advantage of this scientific opportunity, and also the chance to enjoy the unparalleled beauty of the nearby Canadian Rockies (www.ism.ucalgary.ca/meetings/aas06/index.html)

Of the many other activities in Canada over the past months, four merit mention. Since last summer, the Coalition for Canadian Astronomy (a partnership between academia, industry and CASCA) has been lobbying intensely for political support to realize the financial goals of the mid-term review of Canada's Long Range Plan for astronomy and astrophysics (www.casca.ca/lrp/mtr_approved.pdf). As a result of an early, somewhat unexpected, Federal election, there is now a need to regroup with a focus on the new Government that will be in place after 23 January. The election call also affects the efforts of the National Science Advisor, Arthur Carty (the public policy speaker at the January 2003 Seattle AAS meeting), to establish a national approach to major science investments. CASCA and the Coalition have contributed constructively to efforts to ensure that, were a national science policy to be adopted, it would address some of the “big science” issues that the current and coming generations of international astronomical facilities face. We recognize that the adoption of what would be internationally a pioneering process faces many hurdles, while implementation of immediate aspirations faces real barriers within Canada. Therefore, the Coalition has created a working group whose mandate is to focus on facilitating more effective cooperation between the multiple sources of funding for Canadian astronomical research. This effort is enjoying participation by representatives from the Vice President level of the organizations, which appear to recognize that the lessons learned over the past five years through efforts to fund the components of the LRP could be used to improve the system, to the benefit of other fields besides astronomy. Finally, after a lengthy gestation period, the Canadian Space Agency initiated in January a new “announcement of opportunity” process that replaces ad-hoc procedures for soliciting proposals. This important development is something that CASCA has long felt would strengthen CSA's impact on the Canadian scientific community, including astronomy, and thus is very welcome.

We look forward to seeing many of you in Calgary.

2006 PRIZE WINNERS



Marc Davis
University of California,
Berkeley

AAS/AIP Heineman Prize

Citation states: The 2006 Dannie Heineman Prize for Astrophysics is awarded to Marc Davis for his pioneering work on the large-scale structure in the Universe. We recognize his innovative and influential contributions to

observations, simulations and instrumentation, and his outstanding mentoring of students, as examples of outstanding work in the field of astrophysics.

Lisa J. Kewley
University of Hawaii

Annie Jump Cannon Award

Citation states: The AAS awards the 2006 Annie Jump Cannon award to Dr. Lisa Kewley for her powerful work on theoretical modeling and analysis of galaxy spectra. She developed and maintains the on-line MAPPINGS code to model galaxy spectra, and she devised new techniques for simultaneously deriving star formation history, metallicity and reddening. She leads the way in measuring the star formation and chemical enrichment history of the Universe.



Bryan M. Gaensler
Harvard Smithsonian Center
for Astrophysics

Newton Lacy Pierce Prize

Citation states: For his work on the interactions between neutron stars and their surroundings, which led to our appreciation of the wide diversity of magnetized neutron stars.



Re'em Sari
California Institute of
Technology

Helen B. Warner Prize

Citation states: For his diverse contributions to the theoretical understanding of relativistic explosions, gamma-ray bursts and the dynamics of solar system bodies.



Sidney Wolff
National Optical Astronomy
Observatory

AAS Education Prize

Citation states: For her extraordinary commitment to science education throughout her career, beginning with authoring an introductory textbook, and culminating in the first professional, refereed, astronomy education journal, the "Astronomy Education Review," which has become a highly-valued and influential communication channel for astronomy educators.

For her dedication, attention and outstanding contributions to astronomy education while in leadership positions at the National Optical Astronomy Observatory, the American Astronomical Society, and the Astronomical Society of the Pacific.

For her efforts in highlighting and advancing astronomy education policy at the local, national and international levels, creating and promoting new opportunities for educators, students and the public.

J. Roger Angel
Steward Observatory,
University of Arizona

Joseph Weber Award for Astronomical Instrumentation

Citation states: For his superlative work spanning two decades on the development of a new generation of large telescopes, his establishment of the Steward Observatory Mirror Lab and a host of extraordinary conceptual ideas that have been turned into practical engineering solutions for astronomy.





Bodan Paczynski
Princeton University
Observatory

**Henry Norris Russell
Lectureship**

Citation states: For his highly original contributions to a wide variety of fields including advanced stellar evolution, the nature of gamma ray bursts, accretion in binary systems, gravitational lensing, and cosmology. His

research has been distinguished by its creativity and breadth, as well as the stimulus it has provided to highly productive observational investigations.



John E. Carlstrom
University of Chicago,
Department of Astronomy and
Astrophysics

Beatrice M. Tinsley Prize

Citation states: John Carlstrom is awarded the 2006 Tinsley Prize for his innovative work on the use of interferometry to study the early Universe through CMB fluctuations and polarimetry and the Sunyaev-Zeldovich effect. He has produced

results that strongly constrain cosmological models of the amount and nature of dark matter and energy and the influence of cosmic inflation.

**JOHN BAHCALL HONORED POSTHUMOUSLY BY
NASA**

NASA Administrator Michael Griffin conferred the agency's Medal for Exceptional Scientific Achievement on the late John Bahcall at the 207th AAS meeting on January 10. John's widow, Neta Bahcall, accepted the award, with daughter Orli Bahcall also present, and received a standing ovation by the audience of about 3000.

"In his 70 years, John Bahcall was a legend in this community," Griffin said. "I have followed the career of John Bahcall and long admired his scientific accomplishments and passionate advocacy for space-based astronomy."

John Bahcall's work on the Hubble Space Telescope was just one reason for the honor. After helping conceive the project, he was a passionate advocate of HST from the time it needed a Congressional go-ahead to recent years, when he called for another servicing mission to keep the spacecraft working well into the future. He also helped develop HST and conducted much science with it. Other contributions for which he received the Medal included extraordinary service to NASA's space astronomy program and leadership of an NRC Decadal Survey that led to the popularly named "Bahcall Report."

Of his many contributions to the scientific literature, Bahcall, a past President of the AAS, is best known for his pioneering work on the Sun and what became the "solar neutrino problem." Neta Bahcall, herself a former AAS Vice President, summarized his brilliant career, "The Hubble, Spitzer, and Chandra flying above, the solar neutrinos and how the Sun shines, quasars and the Galaxy, and the 200 postdocs that John trained over five decades are part of John's extended family and his legacy."



IEWS OF THE 207TH AAS MEETING

While colleagues in Europe worked on concepts for the Overwhelmingly Large Telescope (OWL), the AAS held our first “overwhelmingly large meeting,” in Washington, DC. In the same hotel (albeit under different owners and in a newer wing) where world famous citizens such as Dwight D. Eisenhower and Douglas MacArthur once kept apartments, 3135 registered attendees, plus a slew of special guests and VIP entourages met for the 207th and largest AAS meeting. Astronomers came in dresses and suits and in denim and T-shirts, and at least one wore the flowing robes and fur-trimmed hat of his Emirate, and one presenting important new findings was reportedly barefoot. More than 90 brand-new PhDs gave talks on their dissertations, and there were requests to accommodate over 200 small “side meetings” as well. Over 130 journalists attended, and made sure that the whole world heard the news from the meeting.

Standing on a small balcony at one end of an immense hotel ballroom, we watched as astronomers streamed into the room by the many hundreds to hear an address by NASA Administrator Michael Griffin. As time went on, huge sections filled and still another great high wall retracted, opening a new section of the room that seemed to fill at once. We suspect it was the largest audience of professional astronomers in history, and certainly the largest at an AAS meeting.

All pictures are AAS Photos by Kelley Knight, ©2006 American Astronomical Society.



The Honorable Anthony A. Williams, the Mayor of the District of Columbia and an astronomy enthusiast himself, welcomed all those attending.



Michael Turner (NSF) spoke at a Press Breakfast for LIGO, presented an invited talk on NSF's future role in Astronomy, and commented at a briefing on gravitation and cosmology.



A Black Hole Briefing was presented by (l-to-r) Kim Weaver (NASA GSFC), Kambiz Fathi (Rochester Institute of Technology), and Ron Remillard (M.I.T.).



AAS President Robert Kirshner (baseball cap) commented at a press conference by (l-to-r) Nicholas Suntzeff and Armin Rest (both, Cerro Tololo Inter-American Observatory), Edward Sion (Villanova U.), Steve Howell (WIYN Observatory), and Nancy Evans (Center for Astrophysics).



Nergis Mavalvala (M.I.T.) gave an invited talk on detecting gravitational radiation with interferometers.



Investigators of the Milky Way reporting at the meeting included (l-to-r) Leo Blitz (U. California, Berkeley), Robert Lupton (Princeton U.), and Donald Figer (Rochester Institute of Technology).



Jason Hessels (McGill U.) discovered the fastest known pulsar with the Green Bank Telescope. Would you believe 716 rotations per second?



Hessels (second from left) was joined in a press conference about the 50th anniversary of the National Radio Astronomy Observatory by (l-to-r) Scott Ransom and Chris Carilli (both, NRAO), Crystal Brogan (U. Hawaii), James Ulvestad, Mark Reid, and Dale Frail (all, NRAO).



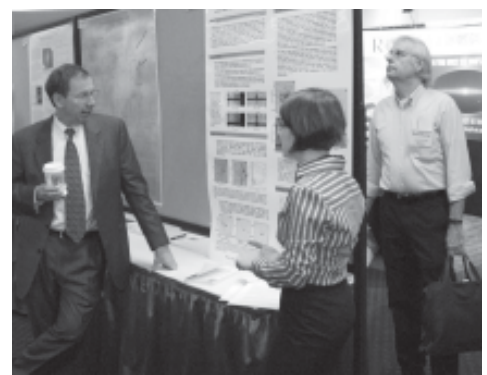
NRAO Director Fred Lo (left) celebrated the Observatory's 50th anniversary at a reception during the meeting. Here, he chats with Jeff Kanipe, whose new book *Chasing Hubble's Shadows*, partly based on AAS meeting interviews, debuted at the Washington meeting.



Investigators of the Galactic Center, Farhad Yusef-Zadeh (Northwestern U.) and Susan Stolovy (Spitzer Science Center) posed in front of Stolovy's new Spitzer mosaic image of the region.



Thomas Statler (left, Ohio U.) studied Chandra observations of hot gas in elliptical galaxies; Rogier Windhorst and Amber Straughn (both, Arizona State U.) explored the "tadpole" phase of galaxy evolution with Hubble.



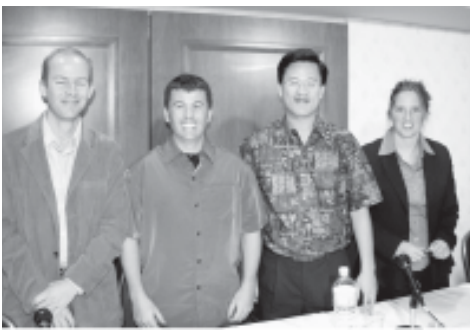
While NASA Administrator Michael Griffin (left) chatted with Caitlin Ramsey (U. Illinois) about her poster paper on the environments of luminous X-ray sources, Dave Bruning (U. Wisconsin-Parkside) read the paper on the other side of the board.



Five of the many exoplanetary experts who converged at the meeting are (l-to-r) Neal Evans (U. Texas-Austin), Marc Kuchner (NASA GSFC), Jaymie Morris (U. British Columbia), Jian Ge (U. Florida) and Deepak Raghavan (Georgia State U.).



Speakers at a press conference on Gravitation & Cosmology were (l-to-r), Commentator Michael Turner (NSF), GRB-researcher Bradley Schaefer (Louisiana State U.), Andreas Koch and Eva Grebel (both, U. of Basel), and Robert Nemiroff (Michigan Tech).



“All smiles” at the performance of the Laser Guide Star Adaptive Optics system on the Keck II telescope are (l-to-r), Antonin Bouchez (Caltech), who studied satellites of large KBOs, David Le Mignant (Keck Observatory), who helped develop the system, Michael Liu (U. Hawaii), who imaged a binary brown dwarf (one cloudy, one clear), and Jessica Lu (UCLA), who studied stars orbiting near the galactic center.



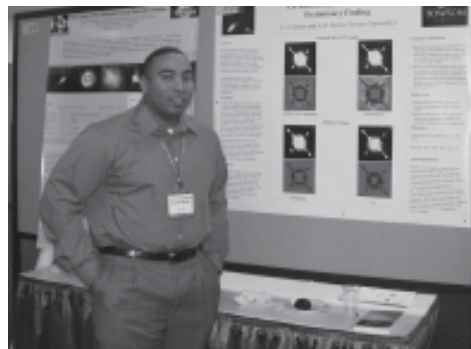
Principal Investigator Michael A’Hearn (center, U. Maryland-College Park) presented new findings from Deep Impact, along with Jessica Sunshine (SAIC) and Peter Schultz (Brown U.)



Massimo Robberto (STScI) presented a mosaic image of a region mapped through 9 filters as part of the HST Treasury Program on the Orion Nebula.



Investigators reporting on young stellar objects included (l-to-r), FUOr theorist Shantana Basu (U. Western Ontario), Thomas Megeath (Center for Astrophysics), who identified a possible future Trapezium, and William Herbst (Wesleyan U.), who monitored photometric variations in the Orion Nebula cluster.



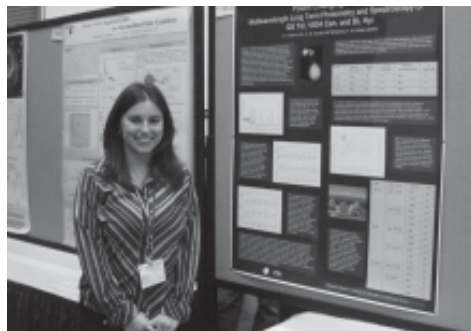
Calvin Garner (Towson U.) investigated the spatial distribution of carbon monoxide in the Red Rectangle.



Midshipman Eric Roe (in uniform) and Jeffrey Larsen (both, US Naval Academy) are searching for large bodies in the outer solar system.



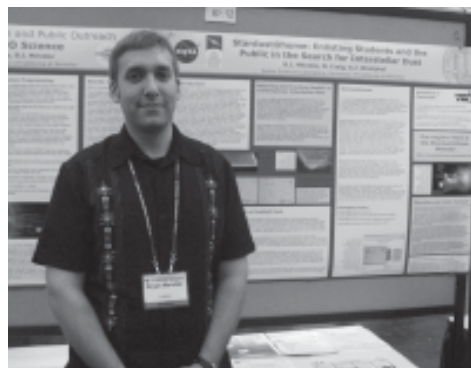
Andrea Schweitzer (Little Thompson Observatory) pointed to a photo of her holding a baseball-sized meteorite that landed near the LTO, in Berthoud, CO.



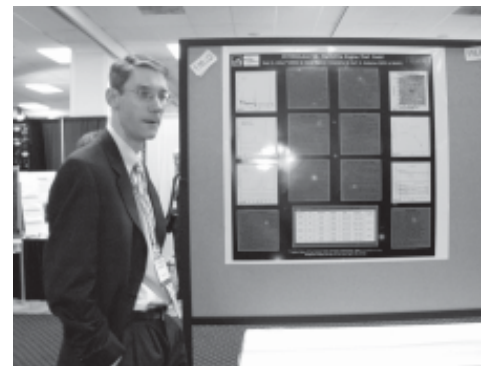
Jill Gerke (U. Arizona) watched as polars changed state.



Karen Knierman (U. Arizona) told Anil Seth (U. Washington) about unexpected young star clusters in the tidal debris of NGC 2782.



Bryan Mendez (U. California, Berkeley) urges all to sign up for Stardust@home.



Neal Miller (NRAO) described the “highly unusual galaxy” J170902+641728.



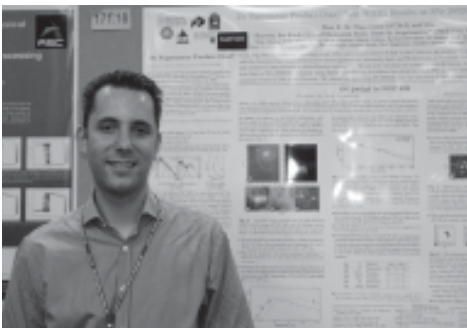
Beth Brown searched for diffuse X-ray emission in a sample of the poorest galaxy groups; Christopher Gunn photographed the meeting for NASA. Both are at Goddard Space Flight Center.



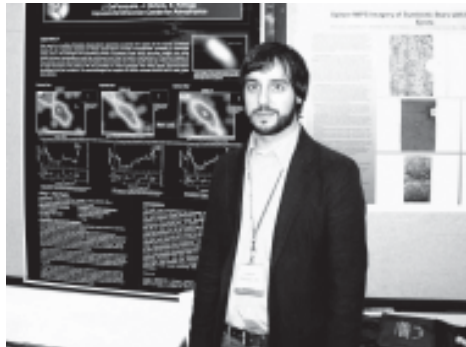
Christopher Martin (Oberlin College) brought along some of the gear needed when conducting astronomy from the South Pole.



Abraham Loeb (Harvard U.) kicked off a special session on the Epoch of Reionization with a talk on fluctuations in the 21-cm brightness from cosmic hydrogen at redshifts above six.



Ben Sugerman (Space Telescope Science Institute) reported on dust formation in supernova ejecta



Joseph DePasquale (Center for Astrophysics) studied a new jet in R Aq.



Brian Kenney (U. Colorado), used observations from HST, FUSE, the VLA, Arecibo, and Apache Point Observatory in his thesis which concluded that dwarf galaxies could be primarily responsible for enriching the intergalactic medium with metals.



Kenneth Brecher and Erin Bardar (both, Boston U.), reported on a Light and Spectroscopy Concept Inventory.



Record crowds packed the scientific sessions. Mukul Kundu (U. Maryland-College Park) is third from left, facing the camera in the second row. Heidi Hammel (Space Science Institute) is second from left in the front row.



Brian Rich (UCLA) presented very deep observations of stars in the inner spheroid of the Milky Way.



Pamela Gay (Harvard U.), told about doing educational outreach with podcasts, blogs, and wikis.



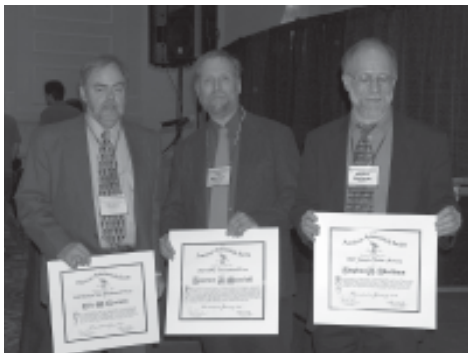
Sarbani Basu (Yale U.) presented an invited talk on Studying Stellar Evolution with Seismology.



Albrecht Poglitsch (Max Planck Institute for Extraterrestrial Physics) described the Photodetector Array Camera and Spectrometer for the Herschel Space Observatory.

PRIZE-WINNERS GALORE

Prize-winning astronomers were out in force at the 207th meeting, ranging from young stellar astronomers in high school or just beyond, through mid-career awardees who are already widely recognized, to the Henry Norris Russell Lecturer, James Gunn, honored “on the basis of a lifetime of eminence in astronomical research.” Note: all pictures are AAS Photos by Kelley Knight, © 2006, American Astronomical Society, except where otherwise indicated.



Three astronomers and the awards that they received at the banquet are (l-to-r) Eric Greisen (NRAO), the George Van Biesbroeck Prize; Laurence Marschall (Gettysburg College), the Education Prize, and Stephen Shtetman (Carnegie Observatories), the Joseph Weber Award for Astronomical Instrumentation. AAS Photo by Crystal Tinch, © 2006 American Astronomical Society.



James Gunn (Princeton U.) delivered the Henry Norris Russell Lecture.



HEAD Chair Roger Blandford (left) presented the 2005 Bruno Rossi Prize to Stan Wosley (U. California, Santa Cruz).



Marc Brodsky (far left, AIP Executive Director) and Robert Kirshner (far right, AAS President) posed with winners of the 2005 Dannie Heineman Prize in Astrophysics, George Efstathiou (left, Director, Institute of Astronomy, Cambridge) and Simon White (Director, Max Planck Institute for Astrophysics). AIP and AAS award the Prize jointly; the winners lectured at the meeting.



Bok Award winner Anand Palaniappan (Yale U.) presented “A New Algorithm for Multiple Hypothesis-based Tracking and Discovery of Potentially Hazardous Near Earth Objects,” developed when he was in high school.



Christopher Reynolds (U. Maryland-College Park) gave the Warner Prize lecture, on accretion, supermassive black holes, and galaxy formation.



Mary Masterman (Westmoore H.S., Oklahoma City) gave a late-paper on her development of inexpensive spectrographs that use the Raman effect and a Littrow configuration. She shared the \$5000 Richard D. Lines Special Award in Astronomy with schoolmate Sarah Louise Howell at the 2005 Intel International Science and Engineering Fair.

IT'S GOOD TO BE IN DC

A Special Report from the 2006 AAS Meeting

By Melissa McClure, SPS Reporter, University of Rochester

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Hi, I'm Melissa McClure, a senior astronomy and math major at the University of Rochester, and this report describes my experiences at the 207th meeting of the American Astronomical Society. I had the good fortune to be sent by Cornell and Rochester to present a poster about my REU work on modeling Spitzer Class I protostellar spectra at Cornell last summer. What I expected was a very sedate formal gathering. Reality was refreshingly different than my expectations.

Two of my other friends from Rochester, Amanda LaPage and Grant Tremblay also went to the conference, which was convenient because I could split a room with Amanda. They both flew down to DC, but to give my schedule more flexibility (since my poster session was on Thursday), I decided to drive from my hometown of Ithaca instead of flying. The trip was smooth enough, except around Germantown, where I got lost looking for a gas station. Getting lost was a fixture of the week; the hotel was like a giant maze. After arriving at the hotel late and flustered, I found Amanda and we made it down to the undergraduate orientation just as it was beginning. There we saw many people from our summer research programs over the past two years. From the orientation, we migrated to the opening reception. The crowd in the entry-way was enormous, but as we made our way to the head of the stairs to look for food, we saw that the floor below us was packed with even more people. As we learned later, the total number of conference registrants was over 3000, the largest gathering of astronomers ever. We descended the stairs and got in line for refreshments. According to veteran AAS goers, the food this year was much improved, with a larger variety and more substantial foods. The reception was very good for finding and talking to people we already knew, but it wasn't that helpful for networking, since most of the people had just arrived and were engaged in catching up with old acquaintances. Afterwards, we headed back up to our room in the central tower and proceeded to highlight all of the talks and posters that we wanted to see during the week.

On Monday morning, I got up early to get coffee and listen to the opening talk, but got lost trying to find the Starbucks in the hotel. The talk was almost over by the time I found the main ballroom, so I headed upstairs to check the on-line news at the Cyber Cafe. Fortunately, there wasn't much of a line when I arrived, although one developed by the time I left. Before the oral presentations began, I decided to scope out the poster presentations in the massive galleries below the conference rooms. I was only able to stop at half of the posters that I wanted to see before I had to head

up to talks. The first 2-3 minutes of each one was informative; after that, they were interesting but over my head. Ironically, one of my undergraduate friends overheard some professors echoing those sentiments; afterwards they laughed that they all wanted to be astronomers when they "grew up". It was encouraging to see professors and researchers still talking and thinking like us students.

Over the lunch break, I went back down to the poster session. While I was reading the material at the NRAO table, the representative asked if I wanted a poster and laughed at me when I asked how much it was. After leaving with several posters, which he insisted that I take, I ran around with child-like greed, picking up all of the free material until I couldn't carry anymore. Then I found the free heavy duty plastic NASA bags (a million thanks to whoever came up with those!) and proceeded to collect even MORE samples. I met up with Amanda, who had already done the rounds that morning, and she directed my attention to a number of cool items that I'd missed, like the thermometer magnets by the Einstein display, the paper Swift airplanes, and the GLAST playing cards. There were a few things, such as the airplanes, that I took doubles of for my 6 year old brother, who is going through a cool-things-that-fly phase. After absconding with our loot to our room, we got lunch at the Woodley Market and headed back down to the talks.

What I expected was a very sedate formal gathering. Reality was refreshingly different than my expectations.

Later that night, we met up with Grant and went to the special SPS undergraduate session. Since all three of our posters had been selected for display at this session, we got there early to set up. Once again, the food was really good and sufficed for dinner. The first hour was spent reviewing the posters, which was good practice for everyone who had yet to present at the poster session, and the rest of the time was spent listening to themed talks by Vera Rubin and Chris Impey. Vera, whose presentation was about 'beginnings,' went first, describing how she became an astronomer. We were in stitches from the moment she described how she found her husband: she was so impressed with Feynman after he gave a colloquium at Vassar that the minute she was introduced to Feynman's graduate student Bob Rubin, she knew she wanted to marry him. She then explained how she got started with her work on galactic rotation curves; since this problem, followed by a discussion of dark matter, is a staple of astronomy textbooks, it was just incredible to be able to hear it discussed by the first person to look at it. After describing her research into the problem, Vera went on to describe *her* first AAS conference, which she attended with her first, and still very young, baby. Throughout the entire talk, she was incredibly modest, not explaining her experiences in terms of an epic struggle of women's rights, but rather as her standing up for what she, personally, had worked for. Her last comment was that we now live in a data-rich period of time, in contrast with her student years, and in these circumstances, it is incredibly important to forcibly take the time to stop and really think about the bigger theoretical picture, in addition to doing massive amounts of data

analysis. It was incredibly inspiring to everyone in the audience, and the applause at the end was thunderous.

After Vera stepped down, Chris began his talk with a prelude in which he responded to her last comment about taking time to think. He pointed out that it was essential both to astronomy as a whole and to us personally to slow down once in a while and deliberately engage in deeper thought. Then he segued into the body of his talk, which was all about “endings”. As inspirational as Vera’s talk was, Chris’s talk was equally hilarious and elicited lots of laughter. Beginning with early religions, he explained how the concept of a time as a finite thing with both a beginning and an end was a direct consequence of the Judeo-Christian mythology, in contrast with older religions which viewed time as a more cyclic entity. The focusing idea of his talk was how to respond to questions like, “you’re an astronomer...tell me how the world is going to end!” With some political references, he glossed over the obvious response of “We’ll manage to blow ourselves up somehow.” and addressed the idea that we will be obliterated by a meteorite, complete with movie clips. Multimedia was a big part of his talk; for the next segment, on our sun’s eventual death, he played clips from various “sun” songs (*Here Comes the Sun* will never be the same...). Moving on, he covered how the galaxy will eventually burn out and become dark, and then the various possibilities in which the universe might end. However, there was a small ray of hope amidst the clouds of despair; Chris concluded by pointing out that according to logicians, it is very probable that we are all simulations, so none of the end-of-the-world possibilities are significant! Knowing this, there was no reason to lose sleep that night pondering our fate in the distant future.

The next morning, Tuesday, I attended various talks while Amanda, Grant, and some of Amanda’s co-NAU REU students presented their posters. For lunch, Amanda went out to eat with some other undergraduates who were applying to the University of Maryland for graduate school, while I took a nap. At 2 pm, I had the opportunity to interview Chris for this report. Since he and Vera had both spoken of taking time to just think about astronomy in general, I was curious to know how he managed to fit that into his busy schedule. Chris pointed out that going observing provided the perfect opportunity to think and brainstorm in isolation with his colleagues. Having one on one time to advise his students also made him stop and think. Time management allowed him to fit everything into his busy schedule; he sometimes wakes up at 5 am to finish writing something, but does not take his work home on the evenings or weekends, which gives him time for his family. Additionally, getting out and exercising is really important to him. Since Chris has experienced the education systems in both the UK and US, I asked him what he felt the challenges faced in each system were. First, he pointed out that the UK has drastically improved the percentage of the populace

in pursuit of higher education from approximately 10 % when he was a student to 40% now. The UK also does more one on one studying and conversation groups between students of a particular discipline, which he felt would make for a good change in the US. However, US undergraduates in general had more opportunities for research experience and the school system was less rigid here. One problem that he has noticed is that many US students seem to be taking on more than they can chew, maxing out their time with double majors and extracurriculars. While he felt that some of this was normal in my age group, he noticed a drop in academic performance associated (again!) with not having the time to sit back and think about the concepts between problem sets. Better prioritizing is important, and although a double major can still be very useful, Chris advised forcing oneself to slow down and cut back on “extras” that just added to a student’s stress level. Finally, I asked him what he thought were the most important skills for today’s young astronomers to learn. He replied that communication skills were essential and closely coupled with the ability to present concepts clearly and in an interesting manner. To do this, we should also improve our knowledge of computational and simulation techniques in addition to basic programming languages, particularly those used most often in astronomy. After a few more questions, such as clarifying the names of the songs he had used in his presentation, we went our separate ways.

...at the NRAO table, the representative asked if I wanted a poster and laughed at me when I asked how much it was.

That night, Amanda and I went out to eat at “Tomate!”, a local Italian restaurant, with Grant and his parents, who had flown down to tour the city while he was at the conference. The food was really amazing, and we had an excellent view of a church of Scientology across the street, which engendered a lot of vigorous discussion! Maybe we are all in fact simulations of the Emperor Xenu...

On Wednesday morning, I finally got down to the exhibition hall early enough to get a free bagel at the coffee stations before an line formed. This was really nice, because the prices at the Starbucks in the hotel were inflated; a bagel and a coffee came close to 6 dollars. After attending the morning’s talks, Amanda and Grant went with Grant’s parents to the National Air and Space Museum during the lunch break, where they saw Space Ship 1 displayed. Apparently it was more dinged and scuffed than they had anticipated. In another exhibit, a recording of Vera Rubin explained dark matter, and Grant’s parents were impressed that we had actually heard her speak on Monday night. Meanwhile, I was meeting with Vera over lunch to interview her for this report. We both sat down with Cobb salads and I started with my questions. First, I was curious what she was working on now, since she was so well known for her association with dark matter. The answer was dwarf irregular galaxies, which I had to admit I knew nothing about. Fortunately, Vera took pity on me and gave a succinct explanation. Then I asked her several of the same questions that I’d asked Chris, hoping to see how their perspectives

CONTINUED ON PAGE 22

differed. According to Vera, she finds that walking to work is the best way to clear her mind and give herself time to think, although admittedly it depends on the person; not everyone works close enough to walk or finds walking relaxing. I was also curious how she felt the US education system had changed since the 1940s and 50s. She, also, was impressed by the number of undergraduates who are being brought into research so early, and she was very enthusiastic about this development. The one thing that she thought could use improvement was in the student's ability to find the right advisor to support him or her in learning how to research. I asked how she managed having a thesis and several children while only in her early twenties. For reference, I'm 21, and when she was 22 she had completed her Masters at Cornell and was presenting a controversial topic at AAS with a baby in tow; I was understandably boggled and slightly alarmed by this realization. Her response was that her husband and parents were very supportive, and the timing between the births of her children was good. She did point out that even with both of those circumstances, it wasn't an easy time; she would get up in the morning, take care of the children during the day, and then work on her thesis from 7 pm until 2 am. I asked her if it was worth it, and she replied that it certainly was. Out of curiosity, I asked what fields her children were in, and she described how interesting family gatherings could be with two astronomers, a physicist, two geologists, a mathematician, and the families of her children in one house. At this point, we noticed that it was 1 pm, and Vera had to leave for a town hall meeting. Our conversation was definitely one of the highlights of my day, both as an astronomer and as a female scientist.

Later that evening, Grant and Amanda attended the banquet at the Wardman Marriott. I had forgotten to sign up for it during registration, so I joined one of my friends from the Cornell REU program, Adrienne Stilp, and several of Addie's friends from an REU at the VLA to eat out at a sushi restaurant called "The Sake Bar". This was my first experience with sushi, but I chickened out when faced with the eel and only tried some anari and a regular entree. We all had a really great time talking about our current projects and reminiscing about the REUs that we had done. Ironically, one of Addie's Socorro friends, Nicole, is now a first year at UVa with another of my Rochester classmates who graduated last year. Even though AAS was really big, the world is very small! After dinner, we went back to the hotel and several people left to go to the party at "Tom Tom's". The rest of us went back out to a coffee shop to replenish our blood with much needed caffeine. I tried a Washington Carver, which is a frozen coffee/chocolate/peanut butter mix that tastes like a liquefied Reese's peanut butter cup. We continued to chat there until someone checked the clock on the wall and realized it was almost midnight already. Since several of us, myself included, had our poster sessions and traveling home to do the next day, we called it a night and headed back.

...and then spent a half hour explaining some basic astronomy to a Wendy's manager when I stopped for directions...

I woke up really early on Thursday morning to get myself together for the poster session (since I'm nervous about being on the spot, I had to psych myself up for it) and take my luggage out to my car. There were a large number of people already down in the exhibit hall at 8:30 even though the session didn't open until 9:20, and it seemed like everyone wanted to see the posters before their flights in the afternoon. My space was next to a professor whose talk on FU Ori events I had gone to the day before. He asked me a lot of questions about my poster, which I hope that I answered correctly, given that I was in awe of him and hadn't had my morning coffee yet. After he left for a talk, I said hello to the student whose poster was on my other side. He was from Urbana Champaign and his project was almost identical to mine except that his Class I sample was in Perseus and mine was in Taurus. We exchanged comments about how our models were working out, and then more people started to trickle in, so we went back to answering questions. One thing that I found very confusing, this being my first poster session, was the question of whether I was

supposed to wait for someone to ask a question about my poster or immediately start explaining it before they started reading. Other than that, the morning progressed smoothly until 11, when I had to run up and check out of my room, which took longer than I wanted because the hotel double charged Amanda and me for the room's

internet service. During the afternoon, there weren't many people passing by our posters; as someone said, that's the frustrating thing about presenting on the last day of the conference when everyone starts to go home. I did manage to see a whole lot of people whose names I recognized from papers I'd read. This was somewhat disconcerting, because I really wanted to say hi but felt like saying that I liked their papers would sound lame; presumably they already knew their papers were really good and inspirational, since they are the top in their fields.

Right before the session ended, I stopped by a few more of the tables where sponsors were trying to finish off open boxes of posters so they wouldn't need to carry them back. In this manner I got five copies of the NRAO poster contest winner, which my friends back in Rochester really appreciate! Then I packed up and started back home. True to form, I got lost again between 15 and I-83 around Harrisburg and then spent a half hour explaining some basic astronomy to a Wendy's manager when I stopped for directions and he asked me why I was driving back from DC. Finally I got home at midnight, and proceeded to get a parking ticket the next day at Cornell when I stopped by to tell my summer mentors there how the conference had gone.

I was really exhausted when I finally got home, but it was completely worth it. The conference wasn't a very good place to meet people for the first time, but it was excellent for reconnecting with friends from over the summer and to get an overview of a variety of new research areas. I'm really looking forward to future meetings as a graduate student!

ANNOUNCEMENTS

IAU General Assembly Travel Grant Deadline Change

In order to better coordinate the distribution of travel grants with the IAU, the AAS is moving the deadline for its International Travel Grant to 7 April 2006. This deadline is for applications for travel to the International Astronomical Union General Assembly in Prague ONLY, not for the normal second review period for 2006.

Any questions about this change may be sent to Deputy Executive Officer Kevin Marvel, marvel@aaas.org.

CSO Call for Proposals Due 31 May 2006

The Caltech Submillimeter Observatory (CSO) encourages observing participation by astronomers from both U.S. and non-U.S. institutions. For instructions on applying and for information about available instruments, including new bolometer cameras, see <http://www.submm.caltech.edu/cso/cso-call.html>.

Applications for observing time between 1 September 2006 through 31 January 2007 are due by mail 31 May 2006. Applications will be reviewed by an outside peer group.

NSO Observing Proposals

The current deadline for submitting observing proposals to the National Solar Observatory is 15 May 2006 for the third quarter of 2006. Information is available from the NSO Telescope Allocation Committee at P.O. Box 62, Sunspot, NM 88349 for Sacramento Peak facilities (sp@nso.edu) or P.O. Box 26732, Tucson, AZ 85726 for Kitt Peak facilities (nsokp@nso.edu). Instructions may be found at <http://www.nso.edu/general/observe/>. A web-based observing-request form is at <http://www2.nso.edu/cgi-bin/nsoforms/obsreq/obsreq.cgi>. Users' Manuals are available at <http://nsosp.nso.edu/dst/> for the SP facilities and <http://nsokp.nso.edu/> for the KP facilities. An observing-run evaluation form can be obtained at ftp://ftp.nso.edu/observing_templates/evaluation.form.txt.

Proposers are reminded that each quarter is typically oversubscribed, and it is to the proposer's advantage to provide all information requested to the greatest possible extent no later than the official deadline. Observing time at National Observatories is provided as support to the astronomical community by the National Science Foundation.

NASA Infrared Telescope Facility Observing Proposals

Due date for the 1 August to 31 January 2006 semester is 1 April 2006. See <http://irtfweb.ifa.hawaii.edu/userSupport/indexota.html>. Available instruments include: (1) SpeX, a 1-5 micron cross-dispersed medium-resolution spectrograph (up to R=2,500); (2) CSHELL, a 1-5 micron high-resolution spectrograph (up to

R=30,000); (3) MIRS, a 5 to 25 micron camera and low-resolution spectrometer (R=100 to 200), (4) NSFCAM2, a 2048x2048 pixel, 1-5 micron camera with a 0.04 arcsec/pixel scale and a circular variable filter; and (5) PI-instruments including a low-resolution 3-14 micron spectrograph and high-resolution spectrographs for 8-25 microns. Information on available instruments can be found at: <http://irtfweb.ifa.hawaii.edu/>.

Call for NRAO Observing Proposals

Astronomers are invited to submit proposals for observing time on the NRAO Green Bank Telescope (GBT), Very Large Array (VLA), and Very Long Baseline Array (VLBA):

Instrument	Deadline	Observing Period	Note
GBT	2006 Jun 1	2006 Oct - 2007 Jan	
	2006 Oct 2	2007 Feb - 2007 May	
VLA	2006 Jun 1	2006 Oct - 2007 Jan	#,*
	2006 Oct 2	2007 Feb - 2007 May	#,+
VLBA	2006 Jun 1	2006 Oct - 2007 Jan	
	2006 Oct 2	2007 Feb - 2007 May	

Notes: (#) A new on-line VLA proposal tool is being introduced at the Feb 1 deadline, and we anticipate that it will be the only mechanism for VLA proposal submission at the 1 June deadline and beyond.

(*) C configuration with a maximum baseline of 3 km.

(+) D configuration with a maximum baseline of 1 km.

Users of NRAO instruments from most U.S. institutions may request travel support for observing and data reduction trips, as well as page charge support. In addition, a program to support GBT research by students at U.S. universities covers student stipends, computer hardware purchases, and student travel to meetings to present GBT results. Applications to this program are tied to GBT observing proposals. Awards of up to \$35,000 are possible.

The NRAO and the European VLBI Network jointly handle proposals for observing time on the Global VLBI Network at centimeter wavelengths; the deadline is 1 June 2006 for the session in 2006 October. Also, the NRAO and a set of European observatories jointly handle proposals for VLBI observing time at a wavelength of 3mm; the deadline is 1 October 2006 for the session in 2007 May. The NRAO also handles proposals for the High Sensitivity Array for VLBI at the same deadlines as for the VLBA; this Array includes the VLBA, VLA, GBT, and Arecibo in the U.S., plus Effelsberg in Germany.

Further information on NRAO instruments, proposal submission routes, and user support is available from the NRAO home page at www.nrao.edu.

New USNO Publication Covering the IAU Resolutions of 1997 and 2000

The series of resolutions passed by the International Astronomical Union at its General Assemblies in 1997 and 2000 are the most significant set of international agreements in positional astronomy in several decades and arguably since the Paris conference of 1896. U.S. Naval Observatory Circular 179, *The IAU Resolutions on Astronomical Reference Systems, Time Scales, and Earth Rotation Models: Explanation and Implementation*, by George Kaplan, explains these resolutions and provides guidance on their implementation. This publication is the successor to USNO Circular 163 (1982), which had a similar purpose for the IAU resolutions passed in 1976, 1979, and 1982. Circular 179 is intended for astronomers, geodesists, engineers, and others with an interest in positional astronomy.

USNO Circular 179 is available free of charge as a PDF document at http://aa.usno.navy.mil/publications/docs/Circular_179.html. A bound, printed version of the circular is available from the U.S. Naval Observatory for a nominal fee.

University of Hawaii's Reaction Dynamics, Laboratory Astrophysics, and Planetary Sciences Program

In collaboration with several research groups from the Hawaiian Institute of Geophysics and Planetology (HIGP), the Institute for Astronomy (IfA), and The Open University (UK), cutting edge research projects (laboratory experiments, electronic structure calculations, astronomical observations) will be linked to lecture courses outlining fundamental principles in physical chemistry, physics, reaction dynamics, astrochemistry, astrobiology, planetary chemistry, combustion sciences, and nanomaterial research. Students are required to accumulate 6 credits in seminars and 18 credits in graduate courses. Requirements are reduced for those students holding a master degree or equivalent. An interdisciplinary seminar series is an integral part of this graduate program. Speakers involve participating graduate students, local faculty members, and external guest lecturers, which are internationally recognized experts in the fields of reaction dynamics, astrophysics, astrobiology, planetary sciences, and combustion chemistry. Extensive collaborations within the International Astrophysics Network and the involvement of our lab in the NASA-Astrobiology Institute at The University of Hawai'i enable graduate students at an early stage of their career to gain also valuable professional research experience beyond the State of Hawaii.

Interested candidates should send a letter of interest, three letters of recommendation, transcripts or equivalent documentation, and a curriculum vitae to Prof. Ralf I. Kaiser, Department of Chemistry, University of Hawai'i at Manoa, 2545 The Mall, Honolulu, HI 96822, USA (email: kaiser@gold.chem.hawaii.edu) or to Prof. Klaus Sattler, Department of Physics, University of Hawai'i, Honolulu, HI 96822, USA (email: sattler@hawaii.edu). Depending on the qualification, candidates are offered teaching (TA) or research assistantships (RA) and full tuition fee waivers.

WASHINGTON NEWS CONTINUED FROM BACK PAGE

the NASA budget request for FY 2007 goes up 3.2% to \$16.8B. This total and the increase ignores the emergency spending money provided to NASA for hurricane recovery activities. The SMD request is \$5.3B, up roughly 1.5% from FY 2006. Given current rates of inflation, this represents a decline in the overall SMD budget. Although some in the administration would defend the SMD budget as being larger now than it has been in the past, the harsh reality is that (as a fraction of NASA's overall budget) less funding is available in real terms today than was available a decade or so ago.

A few specific reductions need to be highlighted:

- SOFIA is zeroed out for FY 2007 pending a review of the program
- TPF is deferred indefinitely
- Research in Solar System Exploration drops from \$327M in 2006 to a proposed level of \$274M for 2007
- The Navigator program drops from \$145M in 2006 to \$128M in 2007
- SIM drops from \$117M in 2006 to \$99M in 2007
- GLAST drops from \$126M in 2006 to \$85M in 2007
- The Discovery program within the Astrophysics Division drops from \$138M in 2006 to \$101M in 2007
- The Explorer program within the Astrophysics Division drops from \$85M in 2006 to \$68M in 2007
- The Living with a Star program drops from \$239M in 2006 to \$226M in 2007
- The Solar-Terrestrial Probes program drops from \$94M in 2006 to \$84M in 2007
- The Explorer program drops from \$130M in 2006 to \$73M in 2007
- Research in the Sun-Earth Division drops from \$882M in 2006 to \$878M in 2007

Some programs did see growth however:

- Discovery within Solar System Exploration grows from \$146M in 2006 to \$162M in 2007
- New Frontiers grows from \$148M in 2006 to \$155M in 2007
- The Mars program grows from \$650M in 2006 to \$700M in 2007
- JWST grows from \$364M in 2006 to \$443M in 2007
- HST grows from \$267M in 2006 to \$337M in 2007
- Research grows from \$305M in 2006 to \$307M in 2007
- International programs in Astrophysics, including Herschel and Planck funding grows from \$13M in 2006 to \$20M in 2007
- Beyond Einstein grows from \$14M in 2006 to \$21M in 2007

The AAS Executive Committee and the Committee on Astronomy and Public Policy are actively working on a policy response to the budget proposal. Remember that the President proposes while

the Congress disposes. A strongly worded statement from the chairman of the House Science Committee, Representative Sherwood Boehlert (R-NY), deplored the cuts to NASA's science programs and pledged to help NASA science during the appropriations process. Get ready for a long, hot summer.

Pay attention to AAS Action Alerts and Informational Emails for the most accurate information on all the cuts as well as descriptions of positive actions you can make to help secure a brighter future for astronomy funding.

Griffin Speaks at AAS Meeting in Washington

At the January AAS meeting, Dr. Michael Griffin, NASA Administrator spoke to a crowded lecture hall. An exact count was not possible, but it seemed that nearly all of the meeting's 3,130 attendees were crowded into the space to hear Griffin's speech.

He began by posthumously awarding a NASA service medal to John Bahcall, one of our field's most admired scientists and policy advocates. Neta Bahcall accepted the award from Dr. Griffin and pointed out that John understood the connection between cutting-edge science and advocacy. He knew that to get the best science done, one must actively convince Congress and others to support projects. He also recognized that support, once earned, was not necessarily kept forever. His tireless efforts in Washington to implement the recommendations of the decadal survey for the 1990s and his ongoing active support for the Hubble stand as examples for us all.

Griffin then proceeded to tell us that we needed to tighten our belts. We had heaped too much upon NASA's plate. Not all we asked for would come to fruition. Not thrilling news.

The budget for FY 2007 as outlined above bodes ill for astronomy and space science research at NASA. Not all of the required cuts have come about because we were too ambitious, but a share has. An urgent push to redesign our human space flight infrastructure appears to be the root cause of the cuts. Although a serious issue, we can take some comfort in the administrator's comment that he wants to preserve NASA's robust science program. Priorities are a must though, and he thanked our community for producing a prioritized list of mission needs.

On Hubble, Mr. Griffin said either a shuttle mission would repair Hubble, or it would not be repaired. The shuttle is currently getting an overhaul to ensure it is capable of safe flight. Only time will tell if a servicing mission is possible.

Although the tone of his talk was positive and many astronomers I spoke with after the talk seemed pleased with the administrator and certainly with his up-front demeanor, I was not particularly heartened by his comments. We are facing a lean season for

astronomy at NASA, at least if Congress goes along with the administration's plans for the agency.

We must all step forward and help Congress in the coming years, beginning now. We must let our Senators and Representatives know that astronomy and space science are a vital part of NASA as an agency, and—taken together—garner the majority of public good will toward the space agency. It is not enough to snipe at the unpalatable administration budget submission amongst ourselves, frittering away time zapping grumpy emails to our friends and colleagues. Take the time you spend to write such emails and write letters to your Representative and Senators advocating for a strong science program at NASA. This year such communications will be more important than ever.

NSF Senior Review

The winter AAS meeting also was the forum for the final Senior Review Town Hall, sponsored by NSF. This broad review of the NSF-AST facilities hopes to free up some amount of funding so that implementation of high priority facilities outlined in the decadal survey can begin.

Although the results of such a review have the potential for causing great pain in our community, the concept of such a review and the particular process being followed in this case must be embraced by astronomers.

The reason is that NSF leadership is watching this effort very carefully and will judge our community on how it proceeds. The US taxpayer funds our work. It is right that we carefully review ourselves from time to time, seeking input from all stakeholders and judge if we are spending money in the right way on the right facilities and programs. If we do not endorse the process, then at least our near-term future at NSF will be severely constrained. A community that does not embrace such a review cannot expect significant growth in the future.

AT THE DC MEETING...



Neal de Grasse Tyson (l) and Harley Thronson (r) managed to find two open seats at the meeting to have a chat. No word on whether they received a complimentary shoe shine or not. Photo by Tamara Koch.

CALENDAR

AAS & AAS DIVISION MEETINGS

208th Meeting - Calgary, Alberta

4-8 June 2006

Contact Russ Taylor
russ@ras.ucalgary.ca

Division on Dynamical Astronomy

25-29 June 2006 — Halifax, Nova Scotia
Contact: Joe Hahn (jhahn@ap.smu.ca)
<http://dda.harvard.edu>

High Energy Astrophysics Division

4-7 October 2006 — San Francisco, CA
Contact: Dr. John Vallerga
(head2006@earthlink.net)

209th Meeting - Seattle, WA (Joint with AAPT)

7-11 January 2007

Contact AAS Executive Office
gilmore@aas.org

OTHER EVENTS

*RAS National Astronomy Meeting 2006

3-7 April 2006 — Univ of Leicester, UK
www.nam2006.le.ac.uk/

IAU Symposium No. 234

Planetary Nebulae in our Galaxy and
Beyond
3-7 April 2006 — Waikoloa Beach, HI
Contact: Michael J. Barlow
(mjb@star.ucl.ac.uk)
www.ifa.hawaii.edu/iau234/

*MASSIVE STARS: From Pop III and GRBs to the Milky Way

8-11 May — Baltimore, MD
Contact: Quindairian S. Gryce
(gryce@stsci.edu)
www.stsci.edu/institute/conference/may_symp

The Fourth Harvard-Smithsonian Conference on Theoretical Astrophysics

15-18 May 2006 — Cambridge, MA
Contact: Lisa Rowan
(lrowan@cfa.harvard.edu)
www.cfa.harvard.edu/bh2006/

*Galaxies in the Cosmic Web

15-19 May 2006 — Las Cruces, NM
Contact: Anatoly Klypin
(aklypin@nmsu.edu)
<http://astronomy.nmsu.edu/aklypin/CONFERENCE/index.html>

*From Protostellar Disks to Planetary Systems

18-19 May 2006 — London, Canada
Contact: Dr. Eduard Vorobyov
(disks@astro.uwo.ca)
www.astro.uwo.ca/~disks/

*Title Small Ionized and Neutral Structures in the Diffuse ISM

21-24 May 2006 — Socorro, NM
Contact: Snezana Stanimirovic
(sstanimi@astro.berkeley.edu)
http://astron.berkeley.edu/~sstanimi/Tiny/tiny_page.html

Small Ionized and Neutral Structures in the diffuse ISM

22-25 May 2006 — Socorro, NM
Contact: Snezana Stanimirovic
(sstanimi@astro.berkeley.edu)
http://astron.berkeley.edu/~sstanimi/Tiny/tiny_page.html

The Red Rectangle

23-25 May 2006 — Charlottesville, VA
Contact: Ciska Markwick-Kemper
(ciska@virginia.edu)
www.theredrectangle.net

Cosmic Voids

28 May-17 June — Aspen, CO
Contact: Michael Vogeley
(vogeley@drexel.edu)
www.aspenphys.org/documents/program/summerworkshops.html

*Galaxy Evolution from Large Surveys

29 May-18 June Aspen, CO
Contact: Mauro Giavalisco
(calzetti@stsci.edu)
www.aspenphys.org/documents/program/summerworkshops.html

2006 Annual Meeting of the Canadian Astronomical Society/Societe Canadienne D'Astronomie (CASCA)

1-4 June 2006 — Calgary, Alberta
Contact: Rene Plume
(plume@ism.ucalgary.ca)
www.ism.ucalgary.ca/meetings/casca06

Bethe Centennial Symposium on Astrophysics

2-3 June 2006 — Ithaca, NY
Contact: Dong Lai
(dong@astro.cornell.edu)
<http://astro.cornell.edu/~dong/bethe.htm>

Summer School in Statistics for Astronomers & Physicists II

5-9 June 2006 — State College PA
Contact: Eric Feigelson
(edf@astro.psu.edu)
http://astrostatistics.psu.edu/scma4/program.html#Summer_School

*Deconstructing the Local Group: Dissecting Galaxy Formation in our own Backyard

12 June-2 July — Aspen, CO
Contact: Kathryn V. Johnston
(kvj@astro.wesleyan.edu)
www.aspenphys.org/documents/program/summerworkshops.html

Statistical Challenges in Modern Astronomy IV

12-15 June 2006 — State College, PA
Contact: Eric Feigelson
(edf@astro.psu.edu)
<http://astrostatistics.psu.edu/scma4>

*Neutrino 2006

13-18 June 2006 — Santa Fe, NM
Contact: Brenda Dingus
(dingus@lanl.gov)
neutrinosantafe06.com

Tenth Synthesis Imaging Summer School

13-20 June 2006 — Albuquerque, NM
Contact Kristy Dyer
(kristy.dyer@gmail.com)
www.phys.unm.edu/~kdyer/2006

*Sixth International LISA Symposium

19-23 June 2006 — Greenbelt, MD
Contact: Stephen Merkowitz
(lisa6@athena.gsfc.nasa.gov)
<http://lisa6.gsfc.nasa.gov/>

*First Light Science with the GTC

28-30 June — Miami, FL
Contact: Rafael Guzman
(guzman@astro.ufl.edu)
<http://conference.astro.ufl.edu/GTCUF/>

6th INTEGRAL (International Gamma-Ray Astrophysics Laboratory) workshop “The Obscured Universe”
2-8 July 2006 — St. Petersburg, Russia
www.rssd.esa.int/Integral/integ_workshops.html

***Physics and Astrophysics of Supermassive Black Holes**
9-14 July 2006 — Santa Fe, NM
Contact: F. Melia
(melia@physics.arizona.edu)
<http://qso.lanl.gov/meetings/meet2006/index.html>

***16th Kingston Theoretical Astrophysics Meeting (“KIK”)**
17-20 July 2006 — Ontario, Canada
Contact: Rob Thacker
(KIK@astro.queensu.ca)
www.astro.queensu.ca/KIK

IAU Special Session 2
Innovation in Teaching/Learning Astronomy
17-18 August 2006 — Prague, Czech Republic
Contact: Jay Pasachoff
(jay.m.pasachoff@williams.edu) or Rosa Maria Ros (ros@mat.upc.es)
www.communicatingastronomy.org/innovation2006/

***Long Wavelength Astrophysics**
(Joint Discussion 12 at the IAU General Assembly)
21 Aug 2006 — Prague, Czech Republic
Contact: T. Joseph W. Lazio
(joseph.lazio@nrl.navy.mil)

IAU Special Session 5
Astronomy for the Developing World
21-22 Aug 2006 — Prague, Czech Republic
Contact: John Hearnshaw
(john.hearnshaw@canterbury.ac.nz)
www.astronomyeducation.org

IAU Symposium No. 238
Black Holes: from Stars to Galaxies - across the Range of Masses
21-25 August 2006 — Prague, Czech Republic
Contact: Vladimir Karas
(vladimir.karas@cuni.cz)
<http://astro.cas.cz/iaus238>

IAU Symposium No. 239
Convection in Astrophysics
21-25 August 2006 — Prague, Czech Republic
Contact: Ian W. Roxburgh
(i.w.roxburgh@qmul.ac.uk)
www.astro.keele.ac.uk/iaus239/

IAU Symposium No. 240
Binary Stars as Critical Tools and Tests in Modern Astrophysics
22-25 August 2006 — Prague, Czech Republic
Contact: William I. Hartkopf
(wih@usno.navy.mil)
<http://ad.usno.navy.mil/iaus240>

***ASP 118th Annual Meeting - Engaging the EPO Community: Best Practices, New Approaches**
16-18 September — Baltimore, MD
Contact: Marilyn Delgado
(meeting@astrosociety.org)
www.astrosociety.org/events/meeting.html

***Pale Blue Dot III**
18-20 September — Chicago, IL
Contact: Dr. Grace A. Wolf-Chase
(gwolfchase@adlerplanetarium.org)
www.adlerplanetarium.org/pale_blue_dot/index.shtml

***Applications of Gravitational Lensing: Unique Insights into Galaxy Formation and Evolution**
3-6 October 2006 — Santa Barbara, US
Contact: Leon Koopmans
(lensing@kitp.ucsb.edu)
www.kitp.ucsb.edu/activities/auto2/?id=353

***Radiation Backgrounds from the First Stars, Galaxies and Black Holes”**
9-11 Oct 2006 — College Park, MD
Contact: Susan Lehr
(october@astro.umd.edu)
www.astro.umd.edu/october/

***Astronomical Data Analysis Software & Systems XVI**
15-18 October — Tucson, AZ
Contact: Dick Shaw
(adass2006@adass.org)
<http://adass.org/adass2006/>

From Cosmic Static to Cosmic Evolution
15-19 Oct 2006 — Charlottesville, VA
Contact: Ken Kellerman
(kkellerm@nrao.edu)

Cool Stars 14
6-10 November 2006 — Pasadena, CA
Contact: John Stauffer
(stauffer@ipac.caltech.edu)
<http://ssc.spitzer.caltech.edu/mtgs/cs14/>

IAU Symposium No. 241
Stellar Populations as Building Blocks of Galaxies
10-14 December 2006 — La Palma, Canary Islands, Spain
Contact: Alexandre Vazdekis
(vazdekis@ll.iac.es)
www.astro.rug.nl/~peletier/IAUS241.html

Living with a Star 1: A new era in understanding our space environment
26-29 March 2007 — Boulder, CO
Contact: Karel Schrijver
(schryver@lmsal.com)
www.lws1.org

Note: Listed are meetings or other events that have come to our attention (new or revised listings noted with an asterisk). Due to space limitations, we publish notice of meetings 1) occurring in North, South and Central America; 2) meetings of the IAU; and 3) meetings as requested by AAS Members. Meeting publication may only be assured by emailing crystal@aas.org. Meetings that fall within 30 days of publication are not listed.

A comprehensive list of world-wide astronomy meetings is maintained by Liz Bryson, Librarian C-F-H Telescope in collaboration with the Canadian Astronomy Data Centre, Victoria, BC. The list may be accessed and meeting information entered at <http://cadwww.hia.nrc.ca/meetings>.



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WASHINGTON NEWS

Kevin B. Marvel, Deputy Executive Officer
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The FY 2007 Budget

On Monday, 6 February 2006, President Bush submitted his budget to Congress and thousands of policy trackers scampered around Washington attending briefings. The cab drivers always look forward to budget release day, although I suspect they must get better tips when agency budgets are proposed for increases than declines. A more detailed summary of the budget will be available on the AAS Policy web pages at www.aas.org/policy, as this summary is just meant to tough on the very top-level items gleaned from a few hours of reviewing budget documents while our *Newsletter* staff pounded on my door requesting camera ready copy.

The good news is that the President has undertaken an initiative, first announced in his State of the Union address, dubbed the “American Competitiveness Initiative.” A (many MB) brochure highlighting the program can be downloaded from www.ostp.gov/html/ACIBooklet.pdf and a fact sheet is available at www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2006/01/20060131-5.html. The core of the ACI is a tax break for American companies that invest in R&D, the so-called “research and experimentation tax credit,”

which provides tax reductions for mainly large companies that invest certain amounts in certain types of R&D. A smaller portion of the ACI is an increase in funding for three of the core science agencies, NSF, DOE Office of Science and NIST. From a cost standpoint, the tax break costs taxpayers about 75% of the total ACI cost and the increases to the agency budgets are the remaining 25%.

The President’s Science advisor Jack Marburger spoke at a special OSTP budget roll-out briefing and highlighted the various percentages up and down, with the near-term news being a 7.8% increase for NSF. Also of note is the 14% increase for DOE’s Office of Science. NIST got an increase as well, though confusingly it is listed as a negative increase in the ACI brochure, which I thought implied a decrease, but actually one must compensate for the highly earmarked NIST budget when adding funding (don’t blame me, I just work in this town, I don’t write the documents). The long-term goal is to double these three agencies’ research portfolios by 2016 from their FY2006 levels. Twenty to thirty percent of this increase is due to inflation alone, but it still represents a significant governmental commitment to basic research compared to past years.

The NASA outlook was not so rosy. Numerous programs in the Science Mission Directorate (SMD) received reductions. Overall