March/April
2008
Issue 139

AAS Newsletter

A Publication for the members of the American Astronomical Society

President's Column

J. Craig Wheeler, aaspres@aas.org

"Spring is sprung, the grass is riz, I wonder where the birdies is?" This statement of dubious origin and more dubious grammar was passed down to me through my mother from my grandfather, an Oklahoma high school history teacher. We are now attempting to throw off the cold of winter. In the fiscal environment that means the dramatic crash and burn of the omnibus spending bill passed in December that saw the sudden and traumatic demise of long, encouraging, bipartisan support for the Competitiveness Initiative and the America COMPETES Act and that would have put the NSF and the DOE Office of Science on a path to double their budgets. There was some hope that NASA could ride that spirit in the form of the Hutchison/Mikulski proposal to provide NASA with an extra $1B in supplemental funding to belatedly cover some of the costs in the wake of the Columbia disaster. That also vanished. This spring sees the science policy community attempting to pick itself up, dust itself off, and start all over again for FY2009. The broad support for science is there, but here we are in a presidential election year. It may, if anything, be even harder to garner the attention and support we thought we had last year. Some thought that the Competitiveness Initiative would solve the fiscal problems of the Astronomy Division of the NSF that led to the Senior Review. Wayne Van Citters, perhaps cynical, perhaps realistic, refused to count those chickens. Points to Wayne.

There was a great deal of Society activity following the AAS meeting in Austin and the presentation by NASA Administrator Michael Griffin. Dr. Griffin accused us of failing to support NASA broadly, something we do at Congressional Visits Day and in other venues. He was steamed about certain directed language in the aforementioned omnibus spending bill. There were other hot topics, as well as hot science, swirling around the convention center.

One outcome was a statement from the Society restating our support for setting scientific priorities by means of broad community input and the need to stick to those priorities with due care given to subsequent scientific developments. The statement also made clear that the Society does not condone attempts by individual facilities or missions to engineer specific directed congressional language that has the likelihood of subverting those priorities arrived through broad community input, the decadal surveys and other processes. This Society statement was not in direct response to Dr. Griffin, but was in the works since last Fall when the Committee on Astronomy and Public Policy (CAPP) drafted a new set of goals and policies that were passed by the Council in Austin. You can see this policy statement at www.aas.org/policy/capp_guiding_principles.php. This policy says, among other things, that the Society will not advocate for, nor criticize, individual missions or facilities. The role of the Society is to support astronomy, indeed science, broadly. Interestingly, digging into the history, we found that CAPP was originally formulated as a vehicle to do special pleading for specific facilites. We now believe that this would be strongly counter-productive for our community as a whole. Another outcome from the Austin meeting in this context was an OpEd piece I wrote for *Space News*. That was a response to Dr. Griffin's address and covered many of the points I have summarized here.

The issue of supporting astronomy broadly, not supporting nor critiquing individual missions and facilites, is tricky in practice. Suppose the process of public input were flawed in some way, as proponents of missions often perceive? Where does the Society statement in support of the upcoming Hubble Servicing Mission come into this? That was an individual mission. In that case, there had been a Presidential Commission, and so public input of a sort, but clearly there was also politicking. The temptation is large for a group that is passionate about its science, that thinks it has been treated unfairly, and that has seen others benefit from, let's call them what they are, earmarks. That mode of science funding, however, carried to its extreme of every group for itself leads to dysfunction. We must try to pull together. The Society can attempt to ensure the system is as broadly based and as fair as possible. That does not guarantee a perfect process, but, like democracy,

continued on page 4

The ***AAS Newsletter*** (ISSN 8750-9350) is published in March, June, August, October, and December by the American Astronomical Society, 2000 Florida Avenue, NW, Suite 400, Washington, DC 20009-1231;
Tel: 202-328-2010, Fax: 202-234-2560, aas@aas.org; www.aas.org.

The $125.00 annual membership dues for the American Astronomical Society include $3.00 that is applied toward a subscription to the *AAS Newsletter.* Periodical postage paid at Washington, DC.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to AAS, 2000 Florida Ave, NW, Suite 400, Washington, DC 20009-1231.

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

Judith M. Johnson, 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: aastex.aas.org
User Support: aastex-help@aas.org
Journal Homepages/Manuscript Submission: *journals.aas.org*

AAS Email Policy
To unsubscribe from AAS emails, contact address@aas.org

For address changes, email address@aas.org

From the Executive Office

Kevin B. Marvel, Executive Officer, marvel@aas.org

The winter meeting in Austin was among the largest held outside of Washington, DC, with just over 2,500 attendees. Thanks to everyone who came to the meeting, presented posters and talks and took time away from their other responsibilities to spend time learning from and connecting with your colleagues. The BBQ was great to boot!

For the first time, the AAS has placed video and audio recordings of the invited and prize lectures from the winter meeting online. This material, produced in partnership with our Audio/Visual contractor, is (and will remain) free for all users and has already gained significant attention in the astronomy blog and podcast community as well as among interested amateurs.

For the first month after the meeting they will be available on a high-bandwidth website and then moved to an online archive on the AAS website. We plan to make these talks available for all future meetings and have received considerable input on ways to improve them and their usability from you, our members, and the public in general. Please be patient as we step into the modern online media era. We will do what we can to improve them with the resources we can bring to bear. The web site with the meeting talks for Austin is aas211.showmaestro.com.

A longer term goal is to provide a central repository/clearinghouse for oral communications in our field, such as colloquia, seminars and lectures. These usually small gatherings of astronomers represent a valuable asset in the dissemination of current research knowledge. Stay tuned for more information in the coming year. If your organization already archives your colloquia talks in an online format, please drop me an email and tell me about it (marvel@aas.org).

As our meetings have grown larger, security at the meetings has become more of an issue. Exhibitors and attendees have notebook computers, digital cameras and other valuables with them at the meeting, which, as in Austin, take place in more or less open, insecure venues. We take security seriously and provide our own contracted security staff at every meeting. The contractor works closely with meeting venue security staff and acts very much on our behalf to help keep our attendees safe and our exhibition hall secure.

The imposition of security policies and procedures can often feel like a hindrance to our meeting attendees. However, the small inconvenience of showing your attendee name badge or using only a single entry/exit point for the exhibit hall is far outweighed by the added security we can provide by following these procedures. I hope that members who do attend our meetings will understand the importance of this issue and not feel unduly upset when confronted with policies and procedures designed to make our meetings safe, secure and efficient. We will do our best to keep security below your radar when you attend the meetings and ask for your cooperation by always wearing your name badge, reporting any thefts or other security issues to AAS staff promptly and being cooperative with our security staff as they carry out their duties. With your help, AAS meetings will continue to be a safe and secure environment for scientific communication and collaboration.

Council Actions

Council Actions taken at the 211th Meeting of the Council of the American Astronomical Society in Austin, TX, 6 January 2008

1. Approved the following Executive Committee actions:

a) A statement commending NASA and DOE for working together in obtaining advice for choosing the first mission in the Beyond Einstein program.
b) The appointment of Chris Sneden as *Letters* Editor of the *Astrophysical Journal* for a term 1 January 2008 until 31 December 2010.
c) The upgrading of the National Astronomy and Ionospheric Center to sustaining corporate membership.
d) The application of the Institute of Physics as a sustaining corporate member.
e) The use of funds from the general operating reserve as seed money for the International Year in Astronomy project.
f) The allocated management fee for the *Astronomical Journal, the Astrophysical Journal,* and the *Astrophysical Journal Supplements* supplements is to be increased to 10%.
g) An adjustment of $90K to the current General Fund Budget.
h) The creation of separate reserve funds for the two Society journals.
i) A range in levels 75% - 150% of the annual operating expenses will be adopted for the General Operating Reserve.
j) A revised Financial Procedures Manual as presented by the Executive Officer.
k) The appointment of Back Bay Financial Group as investment manager for the Society.

2. Appointed Lee W. Hartmann to serve a term (2008-2010) as a Category II member (appointed by the AAS Council) of the US National Committee for Astronomy.
3. Following examination of the wishes of the donor, the Council decided not to change the age restriction rules for the Pierce Prize.
4. The Council approved Bylaws changes submitted by the Division of Dynamical Astronomy and by the Division of Planetary Sciences.
5. Kevin B. Marvel was re-appointed for a term 2008-2011 on the Governing board of the American Institute of Physics.
6. Changes to the AAS Personnel and Financial Procedures Manual were approved.
7. The recommendations of the AAS Prize Committees for the awards of the 2008 AAS prizes were accepted.
8. The appointments to the AAS Prize Committees as proposed by the Appointments Committee were approved.
9. The Publication Board was given authority to move its annual meeting to a time of its own choosing.
10. Joan M. Wrobel was appointed to a term as a Scientific Editor of the *Astrophysical Journal.*
11. The Publication Board was authorized in future to appoint for each of its journals all editors except editors-in-chief and the *Letters* editor of the *Astrophysical.*
12. The Editor-in-Chief and the *Letters* Editor of the *Astrophysical Journal* were authorized to move to a *print on demand only* edition of *Astrophysical Journal Letters* starting in January 2009.
13. A new Audit Committee was appointed for the year 2008.
14. Revisions to the 2007 Budget as submitted by the Treasurer were approved.
15. An amended 2008 Budget submitted by the Treasurer and the Executive Officer was approved.
16. The AAS Council accepted a plan recommended by the Treasurer and the Executive Officer to restore the General Operating Reserve Fund to a financially prudent level.
17. The Council approved a proposal from the Education Officer to develop rules for a new category of Education Affiliate membership.
18. The Vision Statement and Strategic Plan for Education as submitted by the Education Officer was approved.
19. Instructed the President to appoint a search committee for an Editor of the *Astronomy Education Review.*

Member Deaths

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

James N. Kile
Howard Lanning
Eugene Tomer
Peter R. Wilson

Letters to the Editor

Letters to the Editor on current issues of importance to astronomers are welcomed. Letters must be signed and should not exceed 250 words. Send to Jeff Linsky, Associate Editor, Letters, (jlinsky@jila.colorado.edu; 303-492-7838 phone; or 303-492-5235 fax) one week prior to the *AAS Newsletter* deadline. Letters may be edited for clarity/length (authors will be consulted) and will be published at the discretion of the Editors.

Member Spotlight

In each issue, we will feature one member, their research or other work, a bit of their history and their picture. We will accept suggestions for this feature, but no self-nominations. If you know of a fellow member who does interesting research, came to our field through interesting circumstances or is just a fantastic person, consider submitting their story to us for possible publication (500 word limit). We will only publish stories approved by members willing to be featured. Email your suggestion to Crystal Tinch, crystal@aas.org.

dysfunction. We must try to pull together. The Society can attempt to ensure the system is as broadly based and as fair as possible. That does not guarantee a perfect process, but, like democracy, it is much better than the next best thing. We all have to work to make sure the next decadal survey is as effective as possible.

In the context of our renewed efforts to benefit astronomy in FY 2009, I am delighted to welcome fellow Texan Marcos Huerta as the new Bahcall Public Policy Fellow. Marcos will serve for a full year and will be a great boon to to our policy efforts.

Finally, I am delighted to say that the Executive Committee and the Council rose to my challenge to match my pledge in support of the Bahcall Fellowship and the Van Biesbroeck Award. I urge all of you to consider giving a bit extra to help the Society do its work and support its best and brightest. Please also nominate deserving colleagues for our awards and prizes for which we raise these funds.

2008 John Bahcall Public Policy Fellow

The 2008 John Bahcall Public Policy Fellow will be Dr. Marcos Huerta. Marcos comes to the AAS from the University of Florida, where he was working as a postdoctoral associate with Elizabeth Lada. Marcos received his Ph.D. from Rice University in 2007. His doctoral research was centered around spectroscopic observations and modeling of weak line T Tauri stars to determine their effective temperature independent of spectral type.

Marcos has a background in policy areas having served as the vice president for internal affairs in the Rice University Graduate Student Association and also working in his community as an advocate for mass transit. He will begin as the John Bahcall Public Policy Fellow in mid-February and lead the annual Congressional Visits Day program on 4-5 March.

The Bahcall Fellowship is a one year renewable position working in Washington, DC as the leader of the AAS Government Relations and Public Policy program. The Fellow works closely with the Committee on Astronomy and Public Policy, the AAS President and the Executive Officer to implement a coherent public policy program targeted at enhancing support for astronomy at the federal level.

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 Annual Business Meeting on 4 June 2008 at the St. Louis Meeting.

Vice-President (2008-2011)
Christine Jones

Treasurer (2008-2011)
Hervey Stockman

Councilors (2008-2011)
C. Megan Urry
Charles E. Woodward
Nancy D. Morrison

USNC-IAU, Cat. I (2009-2011)
Sara R. Heap

Nominating Committee (2008-2011)
Bruce W. Carney

Committee Vacancies Need to be Filled

Vacancies for several AAS committees will be filled by Council at its meeting at St. Louis, Missouri in June 2008. 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

AAS Members may themselves volunteer, or suggest other Members for one of the vacancies. Think about areas in which your own particular background might be helpful to us. Committee activity also is a very good way of getting to know other members and can be fun as well. 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 think you could help.

Input must be received in the Office of the Secretary no later than 30 April 2008. Submit suggestions to John Graham, AAS Secretary, by email to aassec@aas.org or at the Department of Terrestrial Magnetism, 5241 Broad Branch Road, N.W., Washington, DC 20015, Tel:202-478-8867, Fax: 202-478-8821.

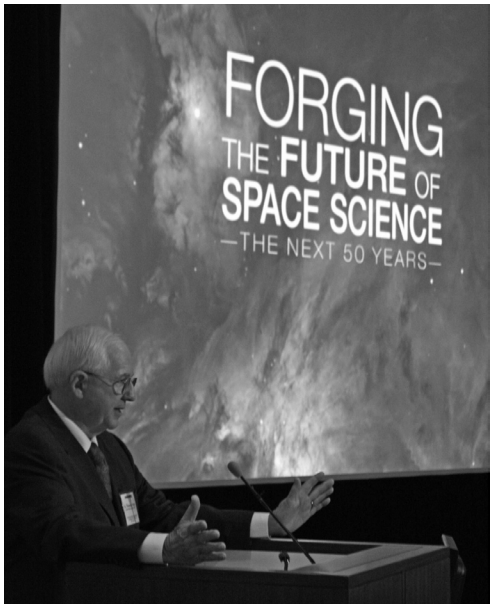
Space Studies Board Celebrates Space Science

Virginia Trimble, University of California, Irvine

Is it yet another of those cosmic coincidences that the ratio of human lifespans to the earth's orbital period is such that most of us get to witness at least a few golden anniversaries? From 4 October 2007 (50 years post- Sputnik), through 31 January 2008 (Explorer 1) and 26 June 2008 (founding of the Space Studies Board under NRC), to 1 October 2008 (opening of the NASA doors) come those that mark the beginnings of the space age, in honor of which SSB is organizing a nation-wide series of lectures and colloquia to celebrate what has been achieved and herald that which is to come. Our share (at U California, Irvine and the Beckman Academies Center) was a day-long sequence of panel discussions and plenary talks on 1 December. Our share (at AAS) is to be one of seven co-sponsors of the full series, meaning logo on the programs, but only the full sponsors, including old friends like Boeing, Ball Aerospace, and Lockheed Martin, as well as NASA and SSB, contributed to the budget.

The full feast is on the SSB website at www7.nationalacademies.org/ssb/IGY_SSB_2007_webcasts_and_presentations.html (and future events in the series are described on www7.nationalacademies.org/ssb/), but in case you have time only for the frosting, there were three lectures:

1. Roger Launius of NASM on "Transcendence and meaning in the first 50 years of space science," with many more facts and figures than you would guess from the title. And I would venture to disagree with him only about the usefulness of drop drills (buildings do sometimes fall down when bombed) and the details of when and why plant life on Mars ceased to seem likely.



Tom Young, the vice-chair of the Space Studies Board, speaking at the Beckman Center of the National Research Council.

2. Soroosh Sorooshian of UCI on "Global climate change: the latest news from space," focusing on hydrometeorology and making the point that changes in precipitation as the earth warms are almost unforeseeable on regional scales, but unlike to be good. My carry-away factoid is that open water in the US southwest, whether in aqueducts or swimming pools, evaporates at the rate of 114"/year.

3. Roger-Maurice Bonnet, president of COSPAR (another 50th birthday, coming up in Montreal in July), emphasizing that international cooperation has been an invariant, surviving unhappy events like the halving of two Solar Polar space craft to one Ulysses and gathering strength from happy ones like the "Cassini save" by its mostly-European component Huygens and the coordination of about 10 missions of different nationalities and original purposes to catch as much of Halley as possible.

And there were three panel discussions:

1. The search for life, with Kenneth Nealson (USC), Steve Benner (Westheimer Institute), Antonio Lazcano (UNAM), and Alexander Pavlov (U. Arizona), from which you get only one tiny curiosity, that in addition to our well-know DNA base pairings, C-G and A-T, four others with similar complexity and bonding can be made in the lab. Oh, and RNA probably came first, but is still a good many steps away from the prebiotic gazpacho.

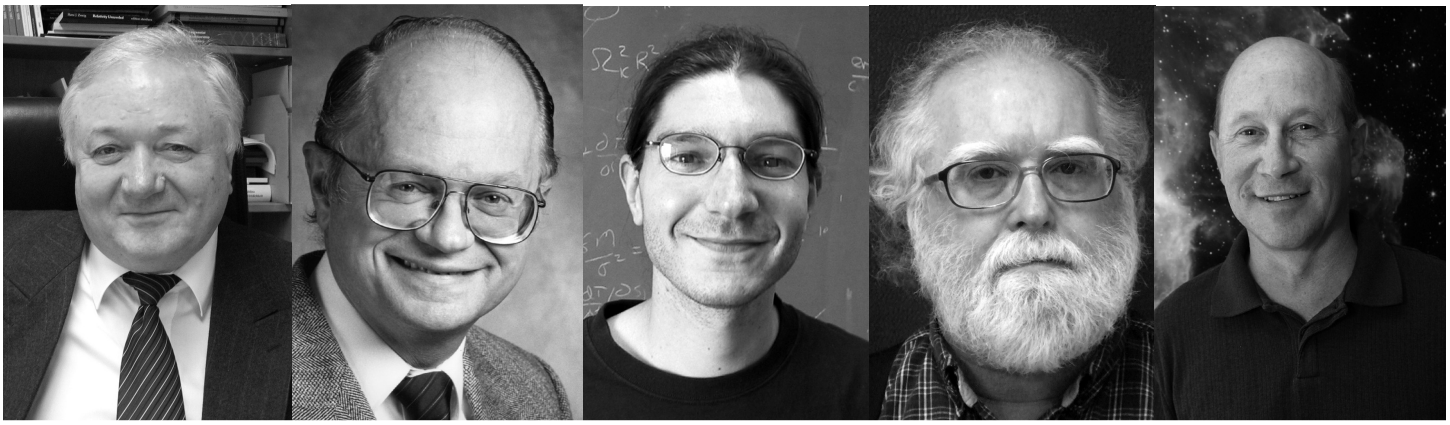
2. Dark Energy, with Charles Bennett (JH), Sean Carroll (Caltech), and Joanna Dunkley (visiting Princeton from Oxford), whose talks neither I, nor possibly you, could have given, but at least the words were all familiar. This was the panel that exercised the greatest grace under the pressure of "non-standard" questions, pointing out that Maxwell had definitely been superseded by QED and that GR is known to be wrong, but that something like quantum mechanics is likely to be part of the final architecture of physics.

3. Robots in space, with Thomas Young (Lockheed Martin, retired), Charles Elachi (JPL), Takashi Kubota (JAXA), and Michel Doyon (CSA), the development of which will have three stages: little autonomy while assisting humans in real time; replacing humans under supervision; and independent operations perhaps improving on humans. The resemblance to the three stages by which women were incorporated into astronomy (think Caroline Herschel, Annie J. Cannon, Cecelia H. Payne) gives me pause.

How successful was the gathering in reaching the intended public audience? There were bottoms on just about 100% of the seats; logistics pleasant (no surprise when you hear that our own former meetings manager, Diana Alexander, was very much involved); talks educational. But only a very few of those attending were remotely young enough that they might possibly somewhere for the corresponding 100th anniversaries, though announcements went to nearby high school and college science teachers.

Conflict of interest statement: as the AAS representative, I got a very good free dinner, and so am in effect being paid about 10 cents a word for these paragraphs (not AAS money!)

2008 Prize Winners



Left to right: Rashid Sunyaev, James B. Kaler, Eliot Quataert, Peter Stetson, Mark Reid

Rashid Sunyaev
The 2008 Henry Norris Russell Lectureship is awarded to Rashid Sunyaev of the Russian Space Research and Max Planck Institutes for his seminal contributions to high energy astrophysics and cosmology. His theoretical insights defined the modern paradigm for gravitational accretion, provided interpretations for a host of high energy processes in the Galaxy and beyond, and laid the foundation for the current era of precision cosmology.

James B. Kaler
The 2008 AAS Education Prize is awarded to James B. Kaler (University of Illinios) for significant contributions to many aspects of astronomy education throughout his entire career.

For his inspired teaching and mentorship of graduate and undergraduate students, many of whom have gone on to noteworthy careers in the field.

For his wider contributions to introductory astronomy education through his textbooks and many engaging astronomy books.

For maintaining a popular website with a wealth of useful material regularly consulted by astronomy teachers and students,

And for his contributions to the public understanding of astronomy through his prodigious number of public lectures, his work with planetarium, television, and radio programs, and for his numerous books and articles for amateur astronomers as well as the general public.

Eliot Quataert
The 2008 Helen B. Warner prize is awarded to Eliot Quataert (University of California, Berkley) for his contributions to plasma astrophysics and accretion processes, the theory of low luminosity galactic nuclei, and an extraordinary range of other topics in theoretical astrophysics.

Peter Stetson
The 2008 George Van Biesbroeck prize, honoring an individual for long-term extraordinary or unselfish service to astronomy, is awarded to Dr. Peter B. Stetson of the Herzberg Institute of Astrophysics' Dominion Astrophysical Observatory in recognition of his life-long efforts to enable, counsel, and help others do effective research with the tools that he has developed, specifically the DAOPHOT family of reduction programs for the analysis of astronomical images. These programs have been incorporated into—and have served as the working base for—the community reduction programs used at major institutions around the world. He has been described as the undisputed world-wide master of digital photometric techniques for measuring stellar fluxes in every conceivable astronomical situation. His fine physical insight allows him to make continuous advancement in crowded field photometry, with steadily improved and ever more automated algorithms. Astronomers across the globe will continue to benefit from his contributions for many years to come.

Mark Reid
The 2008 Beatrice M. Tinsley Prize is awarded to Mark Reid, Harvard-Smithsonian, Center for Astrophysics, for his precision astrometry experiments with the VLBI and the VLBA and his pioneering use of cosmic masers as astronomical tools. His innovative research in radio astronomy has enhanced our understanding of the processes in star forming regions and has resulted in primary distance measurements throughout the Local Group of galaxies.

Jenny E. Greene (not pictured)
The 2008 Annie Jump Cannon award is given to Jenny E. Greene, Harvard University, for her studies of massive black holes and their relation to galaxy formation. She has conducted important work on galaxies with low-mass (< 1 million solar masses) central black holes, and the comparison of the black hole mass - bulge mass relation of normal galaxies with those with active galactic nuclei. With techniques and

Left to right: Lisa J. Kewley, James R. Houck, Imke de Pater, Jack Lissauer, Ronald H. Bissinger

methods that she innovated, she has discovered numerous intermediate-mass black holes with masses of 10,000 - 100,000 solar masses. Her work put a firm lower limit on the space density of intermediate mass black holes.

Lisa J. Kewley

The AAS awards the 2008 Newton Lacy Pierce Prize to Lisa Kewley, University of Hawaii, for her influential contributions to both the theoretical and observational fields of galaxy evolution. Dr. Kewley has pioneered new and improved techniques to determine key physical parameters as the star formation rate, chemical compositions, and energy source (massive stars versus AGN), which have brought new insights into the history of star-forming galaxies.

James R. Houck

The 2008 Joseph Weber award for instrumentation is given to James Houck (Cornell University) for his extraordinary contributions over nearly four decades to major instrumentation for infrared astronomy. From early pioneering rocket experiments and major contributions to IRAS instrumentation to most recently the design and construction of IRS for the Spitzer telescope, Houck's contributions have been seminal to make infrared astronomy among the most exciting in the entire field. Scientifically, Houck's contributions have spanned the range from HII regions to the Galactic Center to extragalactic IR sources.

Imke de Pater, Jack Lissauer

The Chambliss Writing Award for 2007 is given to Imke de Pater (Univ of California, Berkley) and Jack Lissauer (NASA/Ames Research Center) for their book, "Planetary Astrophysics." "Planetary Astrophysics" is an ambitious text, which surveys the entire field of planetary astronomy, at the advanced undergraduate or beginning graduate level. In the words of one nominating letter, it "has rapidly become the standard text for teachers of planetary sciences."

Ronald H. Bissinger

The AAS awards the 2007 Chambliss Amateur Achievement Medal to Ronald H. Bissinger of Racoon Run Observatory, Pleasanton, California, for his many contributions to the photometric study of transiting extrasolar planets. He has been involved with NASA and University of California scientists since 2001, via the transitsearch.org team, recording transits of exoplanets across the disks of their parent stars. These observations require exquisite precision for ground-based observations, often at a level rarely achieved even by professional astronomers. Among his many contributions, Bissinger was codiscoverer of the exoplanet XO-1b; he provided the first external confirmation for several exoplanet discoveries, including HD 149026b, which produces only a 3-millimagnitude dip in its star's brightness; he discovered anomalies in the transit light-curve shape of TrES-1; and he developed techniques now used by other researchers in their photometric studies of low-amplitude variability.

While this award is made specifically in recognition of contributions to research, we also note Bissinger's positive service to astronomy in other ways. For example, he has worked as a docent for the National Park Service, explaining astronomy and the night sky to the public; he has advised UCSC undergraduates on observing techniques; and he was an interviewee on the Timothy Ferris PBS special *Seeing in the Dark* and on an American Institute of Physics video on amateur photometry.

Andrew C. Fabian (not pictured)

The American Institute of Physics (AIP) awards the 2008 Dannie Heineman Prizes for Astrophysics to Andrew C. Fabian of the Institute of Astronomy at the University of Cambridge. The citation says that his "innovative and influential work in the field of X-ray astronomy has spanned a wide range of topics, including rotation of massive black holes, the X-ray background, hot gas in rich clusters, and non-thermal emission from accretion disks."

Chambliss Astronomy Achievement Student Awards

Through the generosity of Carlson Chambliss, the AAS established the Astronomy Achievement Student Awards to recognize exemplary research by undergraduate and graduate students who present posters at the semi-annual AAS meetings. Awardees are honored with an engraved bronze Chambliss medal and a certificate. Graduate and undergraduate posters are considered separately. Students with Honorable Mentions receive a certificate.

The AAS thanks all the students who participated in the 211th Meeting of the American Astronomical Society Chambliss Student Achievement Awards and who made the judges' job difficult indeed due to the high quality of the presentations. We also thank all the judges who volunteered their time and energy.

Graduate Student Chambliss Medal Awardees

Julia Comerford, UC, Berkeley, *Dual Supermassive Black Holes in Galaxy Merger Remnants in DEEP2*

Genevieve de Messieres, Spitzer, *Mid-Infrared Spectra of Selected Galaxy Cluster Cooling Flows*

Honorable Mention: Graduate Students

Alicia Aarnio, Vanderbilt University, *Magnetic Reconnection Events as Contributors to T Tauri Angular Momentum Evolution*

Joshua Adams, University of Texas at Austin, *The Lyman-α Halo of Radio Galaxy B2 0902+34: 2D Spectroscopy and Modeling*

Zachary Byerly, Louisiana State University, *Long Term X-ray and Optical Variability in EXO 0748-676*

Phillip Cargile, Vanderbilt University, *A Lithium Abundance Study of Solar-type Stars in Blanco 1 using the 2.1m McDonald Telescope: Developing Undergraduate Research Experiences*

Katie Chynoweth, Vanderbilt University, *New HI Clouds in the M81/M82 Group*

Jeffrey Coughlin, New Mexico State University, *Long-term Photometric Analysis of the Active W UMa-type System TU Bootis*

Claudia Cyganowski, University of Wisconsin-Madison, *A New Approach to Identifying Massive Young Stellar Objects: Extended 4.5μm sources in the GLIMPSE survey*

Michael Gill, University of Maryland, College Park, *Using Mass Segregation to Look for IMBHs in Globular Clusters Graduate Student*

Yilen Gomez Maqueo Chew, Vanderbilt University, *Infrared Light Curves of Parenago 1802: A Low Mass, Pre-Main Sequence, Eclipsing Binary*

Sehyun Hwang, Department of Astronomy, University of Texas at Austin, *2-D Spectroscopic Observations of O II Recombination Lines in the Planetary Nebula NGC 7009*

Jeyhan Kartaltepe, Univ of Hawaii, *Properties of 24 μm Selected Sources in the COSMOS Field*

Andrea Kunder, Dartmouth College, *The Distance to the Sagittarius Dwarf Galaxy from MACHO Project RR Lyrae Stars*

Naved Mahmud, Rice University, *Absolute Proper Motions in the Hubble Ultra Deep Field*

Jeremy Murphy, University of Texas, Austin, *Explorations of Intracluster Starlight Kinematics with VIRUS–P*

John Parejko, Drexel University, *The Soft X-ray Properties of "Ordinary" SDSS Galaxies"*

Alireza Rafiee, York University, *Quasar Lifetimes and Black Hole Spins*

Amy Reines, University of Virginia, *Emerging Massive Star Clusters Revealed: High Resolution Imaging of NGC 4449 from the Radio to the Ultraviolet*

Reinabelle Reyes, Princeton University, *Space Density of Optically-Selected Type II Quasars from the SDSS*

Micaela B. Stumpf, Max-Planck-Institute for Astronomy, *High Resolution Monitoring of Binary Brown Dwarfs with NGS and Laser Guide Star Adaptive Optics*

Yamina Touhami, Georgia State University, *Be Stars Visibility Curve Constraints from Measurements with the CHARA Array Long Baseline Interferometer*

Laura Trouille, UW-Madison, *The Chandra Lockman Area North Survey: Examining the LFs and X-ray and Optical Properties of Obscured versus Unobscured AGNs*

Joshua Wing, Boston University, *Distant Clusters Associated with Radio Sources*

Randi R. Worhatch, University of Texas, *Fe II Correlations in Active Galactic Nuclei*

Jason Young, Pennsylvania State University, *ACS Photometry of Tidal Debris in HCG 31*

Undergraduate Student Chambliss Medal Awardees

Tyler Desjardins, University of Florida, *SDSS AGN Variability and Blackhole Mass*

Honorable Mention: Undergraduate Students

Eric Baxter, Harvey Mudd College, *Determining the Distance to NGC 2264 from the Rotational Properties of its Member Stars*

Honorable Mention: Undergraduate Students

Blakesley Burkhart, University of Louisville, *Density Fluctuations in MHD Turbulence: Moments, Correlations and Bispectrum*

Jennifer Carton, Villanova University, *Continued Investigations into the Magnetic Activity of alpha Centauri A*

Amy Colon, Hunter College CUNY, *Spectroscopic Properties of Selected Narrow Emission Line Galaxies from the COSMOS Field*

Jessica Donaldson, Maria Mitchell Obs., *Optical Monitoring of a Sample of Gamma-ray Blazars at the Maria Mitchell Observatory*

Jacqueline McCleary, University of Chicago, *Understanding the Nature of RY Tau's Dark Lane*

Quintin Schiller, University of Wisconsin-Madison, *Synchrotron Emission Model from a Hypothetical Galactic Wind*

Alexander Smith, UC Davis, *Using Photometric Variability to Detect Binarity in the Central Stars of Four Planetary Nebulae, A 43, A 74, NGC 6720, and NGC 6853*

George Sumter, Truman State University, *Semi-detached Eclipsing Binary Systems with Pulsating Components*

Robert Zellem, Villanova University, *The Guiding Light: Vri/uvby & Tio Photometry Of The Chromospherically Active & Spotted Binary System Im Peg - The Guide-star For The Gravity Probe-b Mission*

Lea Zernow, Harvey Mudd College, *Ultraviolet and Visible Analysis of Star-Forming Regions in Several Dwarf Galaxies*

Honored Elsewhere

Shectman Receives Jackson-Gwilt Medal

The Royal Astronomical Society has awarded AAS Member Stephen Shectman of the Carnegie Observatories the 2008 Jackson-Gwilt Medal for his exceptional work in developing astronomical instrumentation and in constructing telescopes. Shectman was the project scientist for Carnegie's twin Magellan 6.5-meter mirror telescopes at Las Campanas, Chile, and has designed and built numerous of its instruments.

Shectman received a B.S. in physics from Yale University in 1969 and a Ph.D. in astronomy from the California Institute of Technology in 1973. He was awarded an Alfred P. Sloan Research Fellowship in 1984 and was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in 1997. In 2005 he received the Weber Award for Astronomical Instrumentation from the American Astronomical Society.

Crafoord Prize Awarded to Sunyaev

The Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences has awarded the Crafoord Prize in Mathematics and Astronomy 2008 with one half (mathematics) jointly to Maxim Kontsevich and Edward Witten; and the other half (astronomy) to AAS Member Rashid Alievich Sunyaev, Space Research Institute (IKI) of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow, Russia and Max Planck Institute for Astrophysics, Garching, Germany.

The laureate in astronomy, Sunyaev, has studied the most extreme processes in the Universe and developed theoretical models of how black holes devour matter and the origin of the structure of the cosmological background radiation. His description of how matter drawn towards a black hole forms a thin, rapidly rotating disc is essential if we are to understand how black holes can be the most powerful sources of radiation in the Universe. Sunyaev´s work with the cosmological background radiation has inspired measurements that provide clues to the creation and structure of the Universe. This radiation derives from a period when the Universe was only a few hundred thousand years old and contains information about what happened during Big Bang. On its journey to us it has also been influenced by the distribution of matter in clusters of galaxies billions of years later.

Sunyaev is the AAS 2008 Russell Lecturer and is pictured on page 8.

Eichron Awarded 2008 RAS Award

The Award for Service to Astronomy is given to AAS Member Günther Eichhorn of the Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory. Eichhorn was, until 2007, the project manager for NASA's Astrophysics Data System, leading the small team of six who develop and operate it. He is a hands-on programmer and developed much or most of this specialized database system and its web interface, including connections to astronomical research papers available electronically and a large set of scanned images of archive copies.

It is no exaggeration to say that his work has revolutionized the way that astronomical research is carried out–almost every astronomical reference is available in seconds without leaving one's desk. The system is democratic, both in that all articles are equal and all users are equal (open access).

212th Meeting of the AAS - St. Louis

The AAS 212th meeting will take place 1-5 June 2008 in St. Louis, Missouri, with workshops and some other events taking place the weekend prior to the full meeting. Known for the Gateway Arch and its rich history of blues music, St. Louis is also home to the St. Louis Cardinals baseball team and a variety of nearby cultural activities, including the home town of Samuel Clemens aka Mark Twain. Although not yet confirmed, we hope to have block seating available at a Cardinals night game on the first full day of the meeting.

The meeting itself will have an exciting program of invited speakers and feature the first full meeting within a meeting program (MWM). Highlighting these activities is the 120th meeting of the Astronomical Society of the Pacific (ASP) and a companion MWM focused specifically on preparing for the International Year of Astronomy. Accompanying workshops will help national, state and local educators and outreach experts focus on the IYA activities. We very much welcome our sister Society and all ASP's members to our overall meeting and look forward to such partnerships in the future.

Other science sessions include a workshop for prospective Kepler guest proposers, two-day sessions on Circumstellar Media and Supernova progenitors, a three-day session on bridging the laboratory and astrophysics, a one-day session on the spiral structure of the galaxy, and special sessions on galactic star formation and mm- and submm- surveys, and new media in education and public outreach. Additional contributed sessions, both poster and oral, will be developed based on submitted abstracts. Remember that summer meetings allow posters to be up for two full days, enhancing the time available for interaction with your colleagues.

Additionally, the planning committee, led by senior VP Paul Vanden Bout, has selected fourteen exciting invited speakers to address the Society on a wide range of topics. It should be a jam-packed meeting in an exciting and historic city. We look forward to seeing you in St. Louis.

Working Group on Laboratory Astrophysics

Steven Federman, University of Toledo

At its summer meeting in Hawaii, the AAS Council established a Working Group on Laboratory Astrophysics. The Working Group is comprised of experimentalists, theorists, and modelers encompassing research in atomic, molecular, solid state, nuclear, particle, and plasma physics. A list of its current members and their areas of research are given below. The Working Group is charged with improving the interaction between data users (astronomers, astrophysicists, and astrochemists) and data providers (laboratory astrophysicists and astrochemists).

We hope to facilitate closer interactions in a number of ways. Foremost, we plan to hold Special and Topical Sessions on laboratory astrophysics, and how it impacts astronomy, at future AAS meetings. These sessions will build upon previous ones on high density plasmas and laboratory efforts in atomic and molecular physics. The Working Group will also provide a communications channel by which astronomers can request needed data from the physics and chemistry communities.

We have produced a Web site (www.aas.org/labastro/), where links to past NASA Workshops on Laboratory Astrophysics (dealing mainly with atomic, molecular and solid state physics), the White Papers that resulted from the Workshops, and meetings (both recent and future) are provided. Links to funding opportunities in laboratory astrophysics and the results of the selection process will also appear on the Web page. There is now an account on the AAS server (labastro@aas.org) that allows you to communicate with the Working Group. We are particularly interested in hearing about your data needs and your ideas for future AAS sessions as well as about meetings of interest to the community.

Nancy Brickhouse (CfA) - databases for modeling
John Cowan (Oklahoma) - nuclear astrophysics
Paul Drake (Michigan) - plasma physics/high density plasmas
Steven Federman (Toledo) - UV/visible atomic and molecular physics
Gary Ferland (Kentucky) - modeling
Adam Frank (Rochester) - astronomical plasmas
Paul Goldsmith (JPL) - mm/sub-mm spectroscopy
Wick Haxton (Washington) - nuclear physics
Eric Herbst (OSU) - astrochemistry
Keith Olive (Minnesota) - particle astrophysics
Farid Salama (NASA/Ames) - IR spectroscopy including solids as well as planets
Daniel Wolf Savin (Columbia) - atomic and molecular collisions

A special Meeting-within-a-Meeeting on Connecting Lab Astrophysics with Observational Astrophysics will be held at the AAS St. Louis Meeting this June.

Washington Needs Astrophysicists

Julia Kregenow

Everybody knows about the Hubble, NSF, Chandra, and Spitzer fellowships, but you may not know about fellowships in science policy which are just as prestigious and competitive. I recently took one called the Christine Mirzayan Science & Technology Policy Graduate Fellowship in Washington, DC, and it expanded my career options tremendously. A science policy fellowship can be an effective stepping stone in your career in OR outside of academia.

You can get involved in science policy at any stage in your career, and stay for as little as a couple of months or as long as retirement. Fellowships make a great introduction to the DC policy scene, and you don't have to have a strong interest in politics to be good at policy. Some are designed for mid- or late-career scientists, who bring a great deal of accumulated experience and wisdom from their field. Others are pitched specifically to postdocs and grad students. Investigating the latter turned up several established science policy fellowships, including those with the AAAS, AIP, APS, and sometimes AAS, usually lasting 12 months. I was fortunate enough to receive the Mirzayan Fellowship, which is shorter—only ten weeks. I spent Fall 2007 working at the National Academies in Washington DC along with 16 other fellows from around the country, including medical doctors, engineers, physicists, an evolutionary biologist, and a lawyer, all at the same stage in their careers, all of us trying something entirely new. It blew my mind.

I had a great experience in DC. I got to see the intricate details of how the National Academies assembles experts to research and report on all kinds of science and technology issues, and how their authoritative consensus reports directly influence policy. In the spirit of "completely different," I chose to work in a field outside my graduate training and so I got to learn all about environmental sustainability and biofuels: a very hot topic in DC these days! I spent about a third of my time on this project: researching and writing briefs on current sustainability projects, organizing a national meeting to discuss these projects, writing a summary report, and researching and proposing new ideas. Another third of my time was spent on an unrelated project, also at the Academies, planning and hosting an educational seminar on a topic of our choice: the 2007 Farm Bill and public nutrition. That was exhilarating, and provided the opportunity to learn all about yet _another_ new topic. The remaining third of my time was probably the most illuminating. We fellows were encouraged to attend events outside the Academies to broaden our exposure to policy. I got to tromp all around the city, attending Congressional hearings and briefings, seminars at local think tanks and universities, roundtable discussions, breakfast with a Representative from my home state, observing the House and Senate in session (and voting!), sitting in on committee meetings, hearing a leading Presidential candidate announce their science and education platform, attending dozens of science policy happy hours, and more. The fellows went to any events we could find and get invited to, and just crashed the others. It was phenomenal; a great view of policy and of Washington, DC.

An unexpected picture emerged through all that tromping: Washington needs astrophysicists. To be sure, our government needs more input from scientists in general—that is essential to good science policy. But I think astronomers are particularly well-suited as liaisons between science and policymakers: Who is more accustomed to looking for the big picture of issues than we who study the whole Universe? We also necessarily have a very broad science background encompassing many subdisciplines, since we have to understand size scales from subatomic particles to billions of light years. I can attest that this is a great preparation for science policy in DC, where often your research specialty doesn't matter and you could be asked to work on any science or technology issue that comes up.

Finally, you will gain perspective. Science policy is a way to see (AND INFLUENCE) how our work in science fits in to the larger scope of society—something hard to do from a single vantage point within science. Expanding your perspective to see the connection between science and society will make you more informed about the implications of your work, and highlight the importance of communicating it. Learning how science is shaped by policy, how science progresses, what obstacles it faces, and how government approaches it, working in policy will help you understand the whole problem better so you can make your own science and teaching goals more concrete, and therefore be more effective. I even found that simply working with the other fellows—brilliant, articulate scientists, and not an astronomer among them—exposed me to perspectives, patterns of thinking, and approaches to problems I would not have otherwise seen. After six years in grad school, it was instructive to work with non-astronomers for a while!

A majority of new astronomy PhDs consider non-academic jobs, and the Mirzayan Fellowship is the perfect way to investigate one such career without abandoning academia. It is short enough to do during graduate school or a postdoc without throwing you off track. If afterward you decide to pursue policy further, the experience is invaluable because the Mirzayan serves as a feeder program for other policy fellowships and gives you a serious "in" and connections throughout DC. Even if you intend to continue in academia, a stint in policy in DC will enrich your experience as a scientist and/or educator (not to mention your resume). Even if you're not interested in politics or not planning to leave research, I encourage late stage grad students and recent graduates to consider a science policy fellowship as a stepping stone in your career, no matter what you want to be when you grow up.

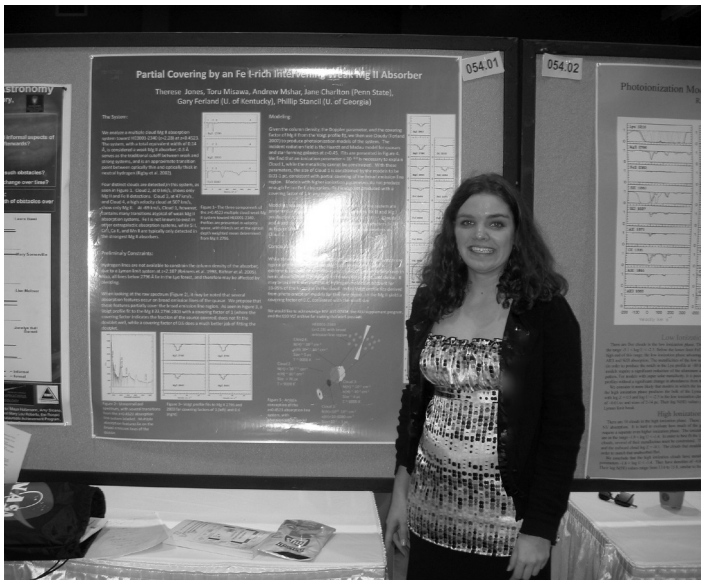
SPS Reporter Brings Space News from Austin

Therese Jones, SPS Reporter, Penn State University

The week in early January that corresponds to the AAS meeting is generally my favorite time of year. The fact that this year's meeting was in Austin, TX, was an added bonus, given that weather in Pennsylvania is not usually pleasant in the winter. This year I represented the Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics (CfA), at which I participated in an REU program last summer, as well as SPS and Penn State, my home university.

I arrived Monday, just in time to get registration materials and head to the undergraduate orientation, which was followed by the general orientation. The undergraduate orientation is a great time to talk to professors about REU programs and graduate school, while the general orientation is a good time to eat food and catch up with people who have moved to other institutions. Even though the general orientation food is "not to be construed as dinner", everyone who leaves is so full that they can barely move.

Tuesday morning the conference was kicked off with opening remarks by William Hobby, the former lieutenant governor of Texas, and namesake of the Hobby-Eberly Telescope. The first plenary, a talk on extrasolar planets by Penn State's Jim Kasting, immediately followed.



SPS Reporter Therese Jones at the Austin Meeting

I was unable to stay for that talk, however, because I had to make it to the first press conference. Apparently as an SPS reporter I was entitled to everything to which other reporters were entitled, including a mailbox with all of the press releases in it, and the ability to go to the press conferences, press reception, and tour of the new supercomputer here. I had already checked out my mailbox by that point and managed to post the press releases on my blog promptly after the embargo deadline had passed.

Attending the press conferences was certainly a new experience. In previous years, I had fallen into the usual schedule of plenary session, short visit to the poster session and the free breakfast there, oral session one, plenary session, lunch, oral session two, another visit to the poster session, and then two plenary sessions. The press conferences conflicted with many of these events, although I may have grasped more scientifically by attending the press conferences than attending the other sessions. The press conferences are at an almost-layman level, where sessions tend to be well understood only by those in the specific subfield. One becomes more aware of which discoveries of the year are most important to the field. Press conferences also gave me the opportunity to be in awe at the fact that I was in a room surrounded by reporters from big names like *Science, Nature*, BBC News, and *Scientific American*.

Wednesday I presented my poster on an intervening quasar absorption line system. I was pleased with the people with whom I managed to talk; although there weren't a significant number who visited early in the day, many came toward the end, and were knowledgeable about the subject matter. Giving a poster is nice in that you have the ability to interact with people one on one, but it is significantly more work than giving a five minute talk, and standing by the poster the entire day can be trying.

Thursday and Friday were similar in schedule to Tuesday. They were rather hectic because of the press releases; in all I had over 50 blog entries at the meeting, 90% of which were press releases. I also attended all of the press conferences except those on Wednesday, as they conflicted with my poster.

I managed to find the AAS president, Craig Wheeler of the University of Texas at Austin, Friday afternoon for an interview. He is in the last six months of his two-year term, and described the improvements he has made while in office. His major projects have been to create a council that is focused on the long-term goals of the society instead of serving as a "functionally rubber stamp council," and to make a committee that explores the internet as a means of revolutionizing communication and research in astronomy. He cited astro-ph as a service that came out of nowhere, but presently plays a huge role in the daily lives of most astronomers.

As for the future of astronomy, Dr. Wheeler did not see the resolution of funding issues in the near future, because of matters more important to the country, such as healthcare. He feels that large collaborations will play larger and larger roles in the future of astronomical research, and that significant advances will be made both by collaborations and increased computing power. He expects that galaxy formation

and evolution will be a major area of research over the next few decades, as data from the James Webb Space Telescope piles in. Other promising subfields include stellar evolution, a field in which many mysteries have yet to be unlocked; and astrobiology, where steps toward finding the first signs of extraterrestrial life are continually being taken in the search for exoplanets.

When asked about what undergraduate students who wish to be successful in the field of astronomy should do, Dr. Wheeler responded that a solid background in physics is an absolute necessity. He also cited finding an institution where there is a congenial environment as a vital step for any student. He concluded the interview by encouraging undergraduates to "set your sights high and work hard."

Naturally, there exist other highlights to meetings other than science. One thing that never gets old is running around to collect all of the free things booths are giving away. There are tons of posters and images from all of the telescopes, plus the usual small giveaways such as pens, but there are generally must-haves each year. This year's included: a plastic ball with panels that turned inside out when you threw it into the air, a pin that had a sign that you could program to say different things that moved across the screen, a USB drive, LISA laser pointers, NASA drawstring backpacks, and a glowing orb. One of the more unusual giveaways was steak sauce, contributed by AAS itself, with the title "Home on Lagrange."

There are often cool displays each year produced by a company that comes to the meeting. This year, Google won the competition. They had a room devoted to Google Sky. Outside of the room there were multi-colored bean bag chairs, while the inside was filled with colorful lights and blocks, as well as computers where you could learn to use the program. They also had regular sessions on the special features of Google Sky.

News from the Astronomical Society of the Pacific (ASP)

James Manning, Executive Director

Consider for a moment what we knew of the universe in 1608. Conventional wisdom said it was small and cozy, and we were the Big Cheese at the center, toiling away on a mundane Earth under a divine and largely decorative sky. There were contrarians, but they tended to publish on their deathbeds (think Copernicus) or got flamed for their unorthodox views (think Bruno).

But when Galileo fixed some lenses in a tube and took a peep upward beginning in 1609, everything began to change.

In 2009, we celebrate the 400th anniversary of that audacious act in a year-long observance of the modern era of astronomy—when we began to use tools and an increasingly scientific perspective to see the universe as it really was. The United Nations, UNESCO, and the IAU have all proclaimed it the International Year of Astronomy (IYA), providing a unique opportunity to shine a spotlight on astronomical endeavors around the world.

The IAU is coordinating a global celebration through a series of activities and "cornerstone" projects to stimulate worldwide interest in this oldest of the sciences, and has established national coordinating nodes in some 100 countries. The AAS is the national node for the U.S. and is developing a series of national signature programs and encouraging regional and local efforts in education and public outreach under an overarching goal: "To offer an engaging astronomy experience to every person in the country, nurture existing partnerships and build new connections to sustain public interest." Check out the IAU and AAS efforts at www.astronomy2009.org and www.astronomy2009.us, respectively.

The Astronomical Society of the Pacific's own mission (to increase the appreciation and understanding of astronomy as a vehicle for advancing science literacy) dovetails perfectly with these efforts, and we're assisting. One of the ways we're doing this is to use our annual meeting in 2008 as a vehicle for advancing IYA preparations. We will use the "meeting within a meeting" format to join the AAS at its summer meeting in St. Louis to conduct an IYA Symposium in partnership with the Society, 2-4 June. The Symposium will bring together scientists, educators, and outreach professionals to share and learn from each other, and to plan together as we prepare our activities and programs and link our efforts to the important themes of the big year. Two days of workshops (on May 31 and June 1) will precede the symposium to provide opportunities for IYA practitioners to demonstrate their activities to their colleagues and target audiences. For more information, visit our meeting website at www.astrosociety.org/events/meeting.html.

IYA offers a wonderful opportunity for scientists and educators to work together in common cause to advance astronomy awareness and understanding among the public, and to help them connect with a cosmos that could barely be hinted at through Galileo's simple telescope. We've come a long way since then. Let's go a little bit farther—to St. Louis this summer and to the IYA Symposium—to connect with each other and make the most of this singular opportunity to raise global awareness of our universal heritage.

Committee on Employment

Travis Metcalfe, travis@ucar.edu

The AAS Committee on Employment (EC) serves as an advisory body, providing input and suggestions for the employment services offered by the AAS. The EC is charged with facilitating the professional development and employment of astronomers at all career stages and on all career paths, and promoting balance and fairness in the job market. The EC is always interested in hearing from the community about issues and concerns related to jobs and careers. Please don't hesitate to contact us and let us know how we can serve you better. Check out our website at www.aas.org/career/.

The Non-Academic Network

We want to make our members, particularly young students and postdocs, aware of the variety of career options available to those with astronomy degrees. The "Non-Academic Network" is a group of people with astronomy degrees who are not actively engaged in astronomy research in an academic environment. Those who have signed up to be a part of this network are willing to discuss their career paths, the job sector they work in, as well as the particular organization they work for. This is an opportunity to talk to a colleague who has taken a career path that you may be considering, or perhaps you are intrigued by what you read on the network web pages. Don't hesitate to contact the members of this network to become better informed of the opportunities outside of academia.

If you are not looking for a job, but would be interested in being a mentor to a younger colleague, please sign up to become a network member. Also, encourage your friends and colleagues with astronomy degrees who may have moved out of academic research to become a part of this network. All it takes is a short email and you can help spread the word about the wide variety of exciting jobs available to people with astronomy degrees. The better populated and more diverse this network is, the better we can all help ourselves! Learn more about the Non-Academic Network at www.aas.org/career/nonacademic.php.

Special Session: What Does it Take to Land a Job Anyway?

Since the winter meetings are often packed with job seekers, the EC usually organizes a special session with this audience in mind. At the January meeting in Austin our special session sought to provide current information about the astronomy job market from a practical perspective. One of the committee members, Travis Metcalfe (NCAR), started the session with an overview of the trends and correlations between funding levels, numbers of Ph.D. recipients, and jobs advertised in the *AAS Job Register*. The presentation was based on a study recently published in *PASP*, which is available as a preprint at http://arXiv.org/abs/0712.2820/.

After establishing the current state of the job market, the session continued as a panel discussion with remarks by people who actually hire astronomers. This included representatives from a postdoctoral fellowship committee, an astronomy department at a large public university, as well as managers from both a government lab and the aerospace industry. Based on her experience with the Chandra Fellowship program, Nancy Evans (CfA) gave the perspective of someone on a prize fellowship committee. Although some of her comments were specific to Chandra, most of them were applicable to other prize fellowships – including specific advice about how to approach the development of a research plan, and some statistics about the career paths of typical fellowship recipients. For information about hiring grant-funded postdocs as well as junior faculty, Neal Evans (UT Austin) presented the perspective of a department chair at a large university. After providing some general guidelines for preparing a successful application, he emphasized the role of recommendation letters in separating the good candidates from the excellent ones, and he offered specific advice about how to position yourself to get the best letters.

Given that most students naturally model their careers after their faculty advisors, it's not surprising that many never consider options outside of the "traditional" path. To ensure that students were exposed to some of the common alternatives, the panel discussion then shifted to government and industry jobs. Summarizing the many opportunities at national laboratories, Jonathan Gardner (GSFC) provided the view of a government employee at a major research center. He concentrated on the cultural aspects of working in a mission oriented hard-money environment, and he offered an extensive list of web resources and advice about government research positions and science policy jobs. Finally, as someone currently managing a contract to support a major satellite project, Gary Matthews (ITT) gave the industrial perspective. After discussing the distinct "for-profit" orientation of the private sector, he focused on the crucial role of industry scientists as interpreters between the science and engineering requirements of a project. The session wrapped up with a brief question and answer period that tapped the expertise of all of the panel members. If you missed it in Austin, you can access the presentations from the committee web page at www.aas.org/career/.

Graduate Student Networking Event

As at previous winter meetings, the EC also organized a networking event for graduate students to connect with prospective employers. The reception on Thursday evening featured a mouthwatering selection of appetizers sponsored by the Las Cumbres Observatory Global Telescope network (LCOGT.net) and was well attended by students and representatives from academia, NASA, and industry.

Afterwards, a prospective employer said that he was pleasantly surprised at the strong interest and regretted that he had neglected to bring more specific material to hand out. He promised to come more prepared next year.

Not surprisingly, the majority of the students attending the event were in the final year of their thesis. For future events, we would like to encourage students to attend who have more time remaining. In particular, for anyone who is interested in a non-academic career, summer internships are a risk free way of test driving a new environment. The best time to do this, however, is two or even three years prior to completing a degree, when the time pressure is less intense. As in many situations, it is best to plan ahead.

If you have ideas for future special sessions that might be organized by the Committee on Employment, please send your suggestions to the committee chair: Anita Krishnamurthi (Anita.Krishnamurthi@nasa.gov).

News from NSF Division of Astronomical Sciences

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

Joint NSF-NASA VAO solicitation announced

NSF and NASA have issued a program solicitation for the Management and Operation of the Virtual Astronomical Observatory (VAO). The VAO will be the long-term implementation of the National Virtual Observatory (NVO) development effort and will be jointly funded by NSF and NASA. The Virtual Astronomical Observatory will serve to link a multitude of astronomical data sets into an integrated system that allows automated search and analysis among all cataloged objects. The VAO will provide access to data sets, create and maintain data protocols and standards, and provide analysis tools and services to the astronomical research and educational community. The VAO is expected to act as an enabling and coordinating structure to facilitate the development of tools, protocols, and collaborations necessary to utilize fully the scientific potential of current and future astronomical data.

The deadline for proposal submission is 22 April 2008. See the program solicitation NSF 08-537 or contact Nigel Sharp (nsharp@nsf.gov) or Eileen Friel (efriel@nsf.gov) for more information.

Upcoming Deadlines for FY2009 funding:

mid-July 2008: CAREER (MPS) - Faculty Early Career Development Program – The CAREER Program Announcement is under revision and is expected to be released in spring 2008. For information on the program see the AST web site or contact Brian Patten (bpatten@nsf.gov).

3 August 2008: Partnerships in Astronomy and Astrophysics Research and Education (PAARE) – An updated program solicitation will be available soon. See the current solicitation NSF 07-561 for information on the program or contact Tammy Bosler (tbosler@nsf.gov) or Dana Lehr (dlehr@nsf.gov).

18 August 2008: Research Experiences for Undergraduates (REU) Sites – A new program announcement has just been issued. See NSF 07-569 or contact Brian Patten (bpatten@nsf.gov) for more information.

WRC report

The 2007 World Radiocommunication Conference (WRC-07) has ended, and AST's Electromagnetic Specturm Management Unit has posted a document summarizing the results as they affect radio astronomy. The document also summarizes the radio astronomy issues that will be addressed at the next WRC, planned for 2011. The report can be found under the 'Related URL's' section of the ESM web page, which itself can be accessed through AST's home page or directly at www.nsf.gov/mps/ast/radio_astronomy_summary_of_wrc-07_v071214.pdf.

2006 NSF PECASE awardee

NSF is pleased to announce that Dr. Brian Keating of the University of California at San Diego has been named as the recipient of the 2006 Presidential Early Career Award for Scientists and Engineers for his work "The Birth Pangs of the Big Bang: Detecting Primordial Gravitational Waves with Microwave Background Imaging of Cosmic Extragalactic Polarization (BICEP)." The PECASE program recognizes outstanding scientists and engineers who, early in their careers, show exceptional potential for leadership at the frontiers of knowledge. This Presidential Award is the highest honor bestowed by the United States Government on scientists and engineers beginning their independent careers. Brian and other PECASE awardees were honored at ceremonies in Washington and at the NSF on 1 November 2007.

Division News

Division for Planetary Sciences (DPS)

Richard P. Binzel, Chair, rpb@mit.edu

The 39th annual meeting of the Division for Planetary Sciences was graciously hosted in Orlando by the University of Central Florida, 7-12 October 2007, with Humberto Campins and Dan Britt serving as the Local Organizing Committee and Program Committee Chairs. More than 750 participants enjoyed a packed week of 650 talks and posters. Special sessions included results from the New Horizons mission's Jupiter encounter and exploring our current understanding of the Late Heavy Bombardment. A special session "We Want YOU to Work on Exoplanets" highlighted the new science opportunities in this emerging field. Ongoing results from the Cassini mission filled sessions in planetary atmospheres, rings, satellites, and more. Representatives from NASA Headquarters (Alan Stern, Jim Green, Yvonne Pendleton) presented their views and goals for their new stewardship of NASA missions and programs, with particular emphasis on improvements in the funding and management of Research and Analysis programs. An "NSF Town Meeting" presentation by Vernon Pankonin outlined the opportunities for funding solar system astronomy by this agency.

Outgoing DPS Chair Guy Consolmagno (Vatican Observatory) presented the 2007 Kuiper Prize to Andrew Ingersoll (Caltech) who delivered an invited lecture on "Giant Planet Atmospheres." Francis Nimmo (UC Santa Cruz) received the 2007 Urey Prize and presented an invited talk on "Geodynamics of Icy Bodies." Additional 2007 prize recipients included Tom Gehrels (U. Arizona) who received the Masursky award in recognition of founding the Space Science Series. In addition, several DPS community members outgoing from long-held positions were recognized: Nadine Barlow (NAU) served 13 continuous years in the roles of DPS Press Officer, Committee Member, and Treasurer. Heidi Hammel (Space Science Institute) founded the DPS website and served as webmaster for a dozen years. As a capstone to the meeting events, the Florida weather cooperated beautifully for the outdoor evening banquet, which featured Dava Sobel (author of *The Planets, Longitude,* and *Galileo's Daughter*) speaking about the life and times of Copernicus.

Education and Public Outreach has become a major component of DPS meetings in recent years. More than 900 elementary and middle school students also "attended" the Orlando meeting. (These students were greater in number than the registered participants!) Arriving in groups of 20 to 40, a reserved area of the exhibit hall allowed the students to participate in activities ranging from *A Tour of the Solar System*, *Humans in Space*, *Meteorites*, and *What is a Planet*. In addition to seeing the meeting posters displaying current research results, the students also benefited from exhibitors with educational handouts. All in all a huge effort and success made possible by past DPS EPO Officer Larry Lebofsky (U. Arizona), current EPO Officer Jennifer Grier (Planetary Science Institute), *Astronomy To Go* partner Bob Summerfield, and many others.

The DPS membership looks forward to its 11-15 October 2008 meeting hosted on the campus of Cornell University with James Bell (Cornell) and Beth Clark (Ithaca College) serving as LOC co-chairs. Jean-Luc Margot (Cornell) is serving as the Program Committee chair. More information on the 2008 meeting can be found at http://dps08.astro.cornell.edu

Left photo: *DPS Chair Guy Consolmagno confers the 2007 Urey Prize to Francis Nimmo (UC Santa Cruz) in recognition of outstanding achievement by a young planetary scientist. Credit: Joseph Harrington, UCF.* ***Middle photo:*** *Former DPS EPO Officer Larry Lebofsky (U. Arizona) leads local Florida middle school students through an exercise What is a Planet? Credit: Larry Lebofsky, UA.* ***Right photo:*** *Noted author Dava Sobel displays a modern manifestation of an historical astronomical icon during her banquet address. Credit: Joseph Harrington, UCF.*

Solar Physics Division (SPD)

Todd Hoeksema, Chair

Hugh S. Hudson

Mark G. Linton

The 2008 Hale Prize is awarded to Hugh S. Hudson for his fundamental contributions to many aspect of solar and heliospheric physics, in particular his studies of magnetic reconnection and particle acceleration in solar flares, the initiation of coronal mass ejections, nanoflare coronal heating, and the variability of the solar irradiance. He is also recognized for his leadership and contributions to the solar physics community, especially his untiring support for international research collaborations.

The 2008 Karen Harvey Prize is awarded to Mark G. Linton for his major contributions to studies of kink-instabilities in delta spots, the interactions of magnetic flux tubes, and patchy reconnection in solar flares.

Washington News continued from back page

U.S. reputation among its scientific partners and set back the project at a time when international cooperation is essential to addressing long-term energy issues. If funding is not restored for ITER, the United States may lose its ability to participate in and have access to the scientific results of this major international energy project.

- The future of the U.S. high energy physics program is threatened by the severe cuts to major projects planned for Fermi National Laboratory and other high energy physics facilities. If these facilities are mothballed, they will deteriorate and be enormously expensive to restore and replace.

- The major cuts in funding will significantly damage university research and harm our ability to attract and retain the next generation of DOE researchers.

NSF (2% increase vs FY 2007 to $6B overall) was also not immune from the poor funding results. The Coalition for National Science Funding, of which the AAS is a member, has issued a statement highlighting the damage done to the NSF as a result of the omnibus appropriations bill. The highlights of this letter (available on www.cnsfweb.org) are:

NSF expected to fund 7,435 research grants and increase the average award size in FY 2008. With the final FY 2008 appropriations the NSF will be able to fund at most 6,435 grants and average award size may fall.

The NSF Graduate Fellowship Program provides students with three years of support for research focused master's and PhD degrees in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. The number of Graduate Fellowships awarded will likely drop by 230 compared to FY 2007.

The impact of the lower NSF budget on Astronomy is not clear at this time, but it is likely that both the facilities and the grants program will be negatively impacted.

NASA's budget fares better on the surface, with a budget of $17.1 billion for FY 2008 that ends up almost $200 million short of the request and $850 million more than last year for a 5.2 percent increase. Nearly all of this increase for R&D goes to development and to R&D facilities, especially in the area of manned space flight. The basic research programs ended up in the appropriations process with a flat budget compared to FY2007.

There is good news in this budget, except for a few special cases, we did not receive less than was appropriated for FY2007. Many programs and projects did receive less. Although things could have been better, they could have been much, much worse. It is because of the committed efforts of the science policy community and our champions on the hill that we did as well as we did.

The coming budget season does not look much better. The appropriations process is typically scrambled in presidential election years. New initiatives are few, yet Congressional earmarking can increase, leaving less money for existing programs. The AAS released a statement on the importance of sticking to the Decadal Surveys and other priority setting documents and avoiding direct appeals to Congress for support of missions and projects. Only by working together in unison can we continue to be as successful in securing federal funding as we have in the past. Our long history of working as a community and sticking to the priority- setting documents has served us well and will continue to serve us well in the future.

During 2008 the AAS will work in partnership with other organizations and coalitions to once more convince Congress to support basic research at the level necessary to secure America's competitive place in the world. A likely recession during 2008 will help motivate our arguments as the combination of basic research and the dynamic economic engine that is America are a potent combination to drive economic growth.

As always, keep an eye out for AAS Action Alerts in your email inbox. We only send them when we think your communications to policy makers can have an impact, so your response to our calls for action are tremendously important. Please continue to set aside the small amount of time necessary to respond to our calls to action and stay informed through the Newsletter, Website and Informational Emails.

Announcements

Greening the AAS Office

The AAS has implemented a set of policies and procedures meant to reduce the Executive Office's overall environmental impact. Based substantially on the Portland Oregon Office of Sustainable Development's guidelines, the AAS polices and procedures are now being fully implemented. From such small things as always printing double-sided, to larger actions, such as ensuring computer hardware and office equipment are as energy efficient as possible, the new guidelines will help the AAS reduce its overall environmental impact. We will also follow these guidelines at our meetings and ask that our members help us make a difference by minimizing paper usage and recycling name badges for future use. We strive to attend conference centers that have recycling programs and encourage our members to make use of these whenever possible. If you have additional ideas for us, please send them to marvel@aas.org.

Call for NRAO Observing Proposals

Astronomers are invited to submit Regular and Large proposals for observing time on the NRAO Green Bank Telescope (GBT), Very Large Array (VLA), and Very Long Baseline Array (VLBA). A Large proposal is defined as requiring at least 200 hours of observing time on one or more of the NRAO instruments.

Instrument	Deadline	Observing Period	Note
GBT	2008 Jun 2	2008 Oct - 2009 Jan	
	2008 Oct 1	2009 Feb - 2009 May	
VLA	2008 Jun 2	2008 Oct - 2009 Jan	*
	2008 Oct 1	2009 Feb - 2009 May	+
VLBA	2008 Jun 2	2008 Oct - 2009 Jan	
	2008 Oct 1	2009 Feb - 2009 May	

Notes: (*) The A configuration with a maximum baseline of 36 km.
(+) The B configuration with a maximum baseline of 11 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 research by students at U.S. universities covers student stipends, computer hardware purchases, and student travel to meetings to present observing results. Applications to this program are tied to observing proposals. Awards of up to $35,000 are possible. For details, see wiki.gb.nrao.edu/bin/view/Observing/NRAOStudentSupportProgram

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 2008 for the session in October/November 2008. 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 2008 for the session in May 2009. The NRAO also handles proposals for the VLBI High Sensitivity Array 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 via the NRAO website at www.nrao.edu

NSO Observing Proposals

The current deadline for submitting observing proposals to the National Solar Observatory is 15 May 2008 for the third quarter of 2008. 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 2008 to 31 January 2009 semester is Tuesday, 1 April 2008. See http://irtfweb.ifa.hawaii.edu/observing/applicationForms.php. 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) MIRSI, a 5 to 25 micron camera and low-resolution spectrometer (R=100 to 200), (4) NSFCAM2, a 2048×2048 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/Facility/.

CSO Call for Proposals Due 31 May 2008

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 bolometer cameras, see www.submm.caltech.edu/cso/cso-call.html. Applications for observing time between 1 September 2008 through 31 January 2009 are due by 31 May 2008. Applications will be reviewed by an outside peer group.

Calendar

AAS & AAS Division Meetings

AAS 212th Meeting
1-5 June 2008, St Louis, MO
Contact: Kelli Gilmore (gilmore@aas.org)
www.aas.org

HEAD 10th Divisional Meeting
31 Mar-2 Apr 2008, Los Angeles, CA
www.confcon.com/head2008/

DDA Meeting
28 April-1 May, Boulder, CO
dda.harvard.edu/

SPD Meeting (joint with AGU)
27-30 May 2008, Ft Lauderdale, FL
spd.aas.org/navbar_meetings.html

DPS 40th Annual Meeting
10-15 October 2008, Ithaca, NY
dps08.astro.cornell.edu

HAD Meeting
6-7 January 2009, Long Beach, CA
www.aas.org/had/meetings/

Other Events

***STScI 2008 Spring Symposium: A Decade of Dark Energy**
5-8 May 2008, Baltimore, MD
Contact: Nor Pirzkal (npirzkal@stsci.edu)
www.stsci.edu

***The Warm & Hot Universe**
7-9 May 2008, New York City, NY
Contact: Richard Lieu (lieur@cspar.uah.edu)
warmhot.gsfc.nasa.gov/

The Fifth Harvard-Smithsonian Conference for Theoretical Astrophysics, 21cm Cosmology?
12-15 May 2008, Cambridge, MA
Contact: Lisa Rowan
(lrowan@cfa.harvard.edu)
www.cfa.harvard.edu/events/2008/cos2008/

IAU Symposium No. 253: Transiting Planets
19-23 May 2008, Boston, MA
www.cfa.harvard.edu/IAUS253

***Compact Stars in the Rockies**
25-28 May 2008, Banff, Canada
Contact: Rachid Ouyed
(ouyed@phas.ucalgary.ca)
www.capca.ucalgary.ca/meetings/CSR08/

Gravitational Wave Astronomy
25 May-13 June 2008, Aspen, CO
Contact: Matthew Benacquista
(benacquista@phys.utb.edu)
aspen08.gravity.psu.edu/

***Observing with ALMA: A Workshop**
26-27 May 2008, Calgary, Canada
Contact: Rene Plume
(plume@ism.ucalgary.ca)
www.phas.ucalgary.ca/alma08/

***Stellar Pulsation, Challenges for Observations and Theory**
31 May-4 June 2008, Santa Fe, NM
Contact: Joyce Guzik (joy@lanl.gov)

***International Workshop on "Solar Variability, Earth's Climate and the Space Environment"**
1-6 June 2008, Bozeman, MT
Contact: Dibyendu Nandi
(svecse2008@solar.physics.montana.edu)
solar.physics.montana.edu/SVECSE2008/

Eleventh Synthesis Imaging Workshop
10-17 June 2008, Socorro, NM
Contact: Amy Mioduszewski
(amiodusz@nrao.edu)
www.aoc.nrao.edu/events/synthesis/2008/

***Astronomical Polarimetry 2008**
6-11 July 2008, Quebec, Canada
pol2008@astro.umontreal.ca
www.astro.umontreal.ca/astropol2008

***Radio Galaxies in the Chandra Era**
8-11 July 2008, Cambridge, MA
Contact: Paul J Green
(pgreen@cfa.harvard.edu)
cxc.harvard.edu/radiogals08

***Astrophysical Studies of Neutron Stars from Multi-wavelength Observations**
37th COSPAR Scientific Assembly
13-20 July 2008, Montreal, Canada
Contact: Victoria Kaspi
(vkaspi@physics.mcgill.ca)
www.cospar-assembly.org/

CMB Component Separation & the Physics of Foregrounds
14-18 July, Pasadena, CA
Contact: Clive Dickenson
(cdickens@ipac.caltech.edu)
planck.ipac.caltech.edu/content/ForegroundsConference/

Probing strong gravity and dense matter with X-rays
37th COSPAR Scientific Assembly
13-20 July 200, Montreal, Canada
Contact: Didier Barret
(didier.barret@cesr.fr)
www.cospar-assembly.org

The Interplay between the Interstellar and Intergalactic Media
37th COSPAR Scientific Assembly
13-20 July 2008, Montreal, Canada
Contact: Q. Daniel Wang
(wqd@astro.umass.edu)
www.cospar-assembly.org

Asteroids, Comets, Meteors
14-18 July 2008, Baltimore, MD
Contact: Margaret Simon
(margaret.simon@jhuapl.edu)
http://acm2008.jhuapl.edu/

***CITA Workshop on Parallel Programming in Astronomy & Astrophysics**
21-25 July 2008, Toronto, ON
Contact: Mubdi Rahman
(mubdi@cita.utoronto.ca)
http:// pca.cita.utoronto.ca/

10th Symposium on Nuclei in the Cosmos
27 July-1 August 2008, Mackinac Island, MI
Contact: Hendrik Schatz
(schatz@nscl.msu.edu)
meetings.nscl.msu.edu/nic2008/

*New or revised listings

Note: Listed are meetings or other events that have come to our attention. 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 cadcwww.hia.nrc.ca/meetings.

American Astronomical Society
2000 Florida Avenue, NW, Suite 400
Washington, DC 20009-1231

Periodical
Postage
Paid
Washington DC

Newsletter 139 March/April 2008

Washington News

Kevin Marvel, Executive Officer
marvel@aas.org

The ramifications of the passage of the 2008 omnibus appropriations bill are beginning to sink in. In the final stage of the appropriations bill preparation, which involves late night negotiations between majority and minority clerks from various congressional committees and often the staff of the congressional leaders, the hope for significantly increased appropriations for basic science research were shattered.

Far from fulfilling the promise of the America Competes Act or even the President's bold vision to enhance American Competitiveness, the ultimate check sent by Congress to the science community essentially bounced. The Department of Energy Office of Science, slated to receive a significant increase for FY 2008, actually received significantly less (a 5.3% increase vs. FY2007), but only particular program areas received increases with the following ramifications (excerpted from a planned letter from the Energy Sciences Coalition to Congress seeking emergency supplemental support):

- Loss of over 550 existing scientific, engineering, technical support and administrative jobs at DOE national laboratories and user facilities and as many as another 500 jobs at universities and in industry across the country, including postdoctoral fellows, all of which are supported by the DOE Basic Energy Science, High Energy Physics, Nuclear Physics and Fusion Energy Sciences programs.

- Many DOE scientific facilities (e.g. synchrotron light sources, neutron scattering centers, and nanoscale science research centers) in which American taxpayers have invested hundreds of millions of dollars will be forced to curtail or even halt operations. This poor use of resources will cause irreparable damage to U.S scientific capabilities and infrastructure.

- U.S. companies that use DOE facilities to develop and improve new products will accelerate offshore outsourcing of their R&D capabilities and facilities to be closer to international facilities that offer greater accessibility and more reliable operation times.

- The failure to fund the U.S. commitment to the international fusion project ITER will irreparably damage the U.S. reputation among its scientific partners and set back the project at a time when international cooperation is essential to addressing long-term energy issues. If funding is not restored for ITER, the United States may lose its ability to participate

continued on page 17