

June 2006
Issue 129

AAS NEWSLETTER

A Publication for the members of the American Astronomical Society

FROM THE (RETIRING) EXECUTIVE OFFICER - BOB MILKEY

The past eleven years have been both extremely challenging and rewarding for me in serving as your Executive Officer. Many things have changed over that period and there are still many challenges for the Society to face. While overall, the Society is in a very good position, I am certainly not passing my successor a position without ongoing challenges.

From my perspective, the most significant AAS accomplishment of the past decade was the introduction of the electronic versions of the AAS journals, but the development of these is still an ongoing process. It was well in progress when I joined the Society as the result of an outstanding display of teamwork between the AAS staff, volunteers, and the personnel at the University of Chicago Press. At present, the journals are serving the authors and readers well, but both publishing technology and economics are in a state of flux. The challenge will be to introduce new features into the journals while at the same time reducing the overall costs of publication. The choices to be made in balancing these two goals will be best made with input from both the authors and readers of the journals. The stewardship of *The Astrophysical Journal* and *The Astronomical Journal* is one of the most important services the AAS performs for the astronomical community and arguably the selection of Editors for these journals is one of the most important acts that your elected Council performs.

Over this same time period the AAS programs in Education and Public Policy have grown substantially, with professional staff members added to the Executive Office to oversee each. The addition of these two positions has been a remarkable asset for the Society. The coming years can be expected to produce new challenges in Federal funding of astronomical research and the public policy activities of the AAS can both inform the members and aggressively advocate the value of astronomical research to the public. In many ways this advocacy is linked to the role astronomy plays in science education, especially through its ability to inspire the public to think about the deeper questions related to the future and fate of the universe. We must continually strive to improve our ability to explain our wonderful discoveries and the methodology behind them to the public and especially to the young people in the formal education system. We must note, however, that these programs, essential as they may be, do not generate their own revenue, as the publications and meetings do, so they will be inherently resource limited, and the major issue will continue to be delivering the best return for the available funds.

The recent changes in the patterns of AAS meetings have created a new set of challenges that must be dealt with in the near future. The winter meetings have been growing steadily while attendance at the summer meeting has, although extremely erratic, been shrinking. Small meetings, if planned as small meetings, are not per-se bad, but it is important to ask what pattern of meetings will best serve the research and education communities.

I must thank all of the people who provided such wonderful support for me during my period with the AAS. The dedication and capability of the staff members in the Executive Office has been central in whatever modest success I may have enjoyed; I could not have asked for a better group of people with whom to work. I also have worked with an outstanding group of volunteer Officers and Councilors, a group too numerous to list here. I would like to mention a few of the key individuals from this group. There were two Secretaries during my term, Arlo Landolt, and John Graham, and the continuity in this office together with the hard work and commitment of these individuals has made my job ever so much easier. There were also only two Treasurers, Len Kuhi and Peter Stockman, and the wisdom and thoughtful guidance provided by these has helped to guide the AAS to a superior financial position. A series of committed and active Presidents has also aided me considerably – Frank Shu, Andrea Dupree, Bob Gehrz, Anneila Sargent, Caty Pilachowski and Bob Kirshner. Lastly, thanks are due to my predecessor, Peter Boyce, for easing my entry into the position, and to my successor, Kevin Marvel, for allowing me to depart with the confidence that the Society is in good hands.

It has been an honor and privilege to serve the Society as your Executive Officer. Please remember that the Society belongs to its members and to obtain maximum benefit from it, these members must be active in governance. Use this power to elect Officers and Councilors who will take the Society in the directions that will best serve the interests of astronomical science.

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Manuscript Submissions Using AASTeX

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

AASTeX Homepage:

www.journals.uchicago.edu/AAS/AASTeX

User Support: aastex-help@aas.org

Journal Homepages/Manuscript Submission:

AJ, *ApJ*, *ApJL*

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

AAS Email Policy

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

For address changes email address@aas.org

MEMBER DEATHS

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

Paul Barr

John Hillman

Gerald F. Tape

CORRECTIONS

Bohdan Paczynski's (2006 Henry Norris Russell Lectureship winner) name was misspelled in the March 2006 *AAS Newsletter*.



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

We apologize to Prof. Matthews for the error. Steve Maran

SECRETARY'S CORNER

John Graham, aassec@aas.org

AAS Prizes

Nominate someone for a prize this year! To be considered for an AAS prize, a person must be formally nominated. However, the nomination procedure, which can be viewed at the AAS website, is not arduous.

In recent years, the AAS prize committees have often noted the small slate of worthy candidates from whom they may choose. This particularly applies to the junior prizes. Bear in mind that it is not only the monetary amount but also the honor and distinction that can mean so much to a young astronomer's career. The award of a prize also adds luster to her/his department of institution in the eyes of the academic community.

Nominations and letters of support must be received in the Secretary's office by 1 October 2006. Shortly after that date, they are distributed to the several prize committees so that late submissions cannot be accommodated.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Support for the AAS Council's Statement on Evolution I

In the 2006 March issue of the *AAS Newsletter* Dr. Joel Eaton writes that the AAS Council has “been wasting their time once again with a statement supporting the teaching of the Theory of Evolution in the schools.” He also claims to have not come across any evidence for modern tests of evolution that would support the theory in newspapers and magazines. He points out that most astronomers are not experts in biology and therefore should not be making statements “about whether Evolution is good or bad science.” Well, biologists we are not, but scientists we are. The basis for defining what is good science and what is bad science was established some time ago and is—or should be—in every scientist's tool box. So it is completely within our province to judge a scientific conclusion *qua* science as good or bad. Indeed, it is our duty to do so when an area of established science comes under attack by individuals who claim to offer an “alternative science” which is not science at all but a complex web of unproven and unverifiable assertions and quasi-mystical beliefs.

I call Dr. Eaton's attention to Ernst Mayr's book *Animal, Species, & Evolution* concerning natural selection (a central tenet of evolutionary thought) and its well documented effect on species evolution and the origin of speciation. Stephen Jay Gould's last book, *The Structure of Evolutionary Theory*, is also good. Jonathan Weiner's book, *The Beak of the Finch*, is particularly dramatic for its demonstration of evolution in action on a time scale of just a year or two. I also recall reading a number of recent news stories on the use of mitochondrial DNA to trace the origins and migrations of ethnic groups of humans. By coincidence, in today's *New York Times* there was a front page article describing new evidence for *evolution in humans* just over the past 7000 years, based on DNA typing. Also consider the “green revolution” in agriculture. Would the hundreds of

millions of people who have benefited from this quiet revolution agree that it resulted from a theory that is neither testable nor useful in everyday life?

Yes, schools should teach a deeper understanding of the nature of science, how to judge what is and what is not science, and science's moral and philosophical implications. Students should learn about the great revolutions that have occurred in our understanding of the world around us and the Universe we live in, the observations that led to these revolutions, and the theories that came out of them. And schools should show that the wide acceptance of these theories is due to the dramatic and verifiable predictions that they have made. These revolutions would certainly include those in geophysics (continental drift), physics (relativity, atomic, nuclear, and gravitational theory), biological sciences (evolution and genetics), and astronomical sciences (the structure and evolution of the universe and its content). And, as Dr. Eaton suggests, this teaching should certainly include a description of how theories evolve in the light of new observations and experiments.

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Support for the AAS Council's Statement on Evolution II

Joel Eaton's Letter entitled “AAS Should Not Make Statements Concerning Evolution” in the March 2006 *Newsletter* appears to be based on the premise that evolution is a “weak theory,” unlike theories in astronomy. This claim is wrong on many levels. First, conclusions about the validity of scientific disciplines should be based on articles published in refereed journals, not those in newspapers and magazines.

Second, astronomy and evolution share the problem that a large proportion of their observations are not from experiments, but from currently available static observations—“snapshots”—of past events. Much astronomical data derives from static observations of objects in

the sky whose evolutionary timescales are much longer than a human lifetime. Similarly, data for evolution is based on static observations of fossils. Dr. Eaton calls evolution a “weak science” because we cannot create a dinosaur and watch it evolve. But astronomers cannot create a galaxy and watch it evolve either, so astronomy is also a “weak science” by this criterion. In fact, evolution scientists have the upper hand in experimentation because they can observe evolution over hundreds of generations of fruit flies or bacteria in the lab—something astronomers *cannot* do (except via computer simulation, which is fraught with its own pitfalls).

Third, the claim that evolution cannot make predictions is simply false. Gregor Mendel, who in the 19th century created the first testable scientific theory of evolution, proved his point precisely by creating a model and going out to test it on the short-term evolution of pea populations over many generations.

Fourth, biology is currently undergoing a quantitative experimental data revolution matching or exceeding that in astronomy. Genomes of hundreds of species are being sequenced and compared with each other, and quantitatively correlated with taxonomic structure. As our understanding grows, increasing numbers of quantitative predictions are being made and tested. Proteins are being similarly sequenced; the network of bio-chemical interactions in the cell are being mapped out. Biology is becoming a much more quantitative and theory-laden science as we begin to understand minute details of evolution and biology.

Fifth, the claim that “none of us are experts in evolution and are thus not qualified to make statements about it” is both based on a false premise, and not a sound argument even if the premise were true. For example, I perform research in computer simulation of astronomical systems, but I also study genome sequence assembly, protein folding, and the structure of intra-cellular networks. And even if I didn't, one does not need to be a researcher in an area to be able to create an informed, reasoned opinion on the subject.

continued on next page

And finally, the AAS is, above all, a scientific organization.

Although I agree that science and religion can be treated as orthogonal and complementary, the religionists do not treat them as such. There exist fundamentalists who see evolution, and much of science, as threatening to their view of the world. They threaten science and science education with bad science, and influence policy by way of being vociferous voters and taxpayers. I feel it extremely appropriate—necessary, in fact—for scientific organizations such as the AAS to respond in kind, in defense of science and reason in all its forms.

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Support for the AAS Council's Statement on Evolution III

I must disagree with the letter from Joel Eaton stating that it is not our place, as a society, to comment on the evolution debate and the teaching of Creationism or Intelligent Design (ID) in public schools. As practicing scientists we must do our part, no matter what our particular discipline, to keep the teaching of religious points of view out of the classroom. One does not have to be an "expert in biology" to recognise this. I should point out that I am not outside my element here and have been a practicing biologist for over 30 years, but I am also an AAS member. I do not wish to re-hash what has been stated before endless times by both scientists and the court systems of the land whether Creationism or Intelligent Design (ID) is good or bad science. The court system would at least seem to think it is the latter. Evolution is not a weak theory as Mr. Eaton states but rather is the cornerstone of all of biology and it has been constantly examined, tested and evaluated in light of new evidence. Perhaps Mr. Eaton's feeling was that as astronomers, Creationism or Intelligent Design (ID) has no bearing on our particular discipline. But since many of the proponents of Creationism or Intelligent Design (ID) also believe that the earth and the Universe are only on the

order of thousands of years old, I would say this has a rather direct bearing on our science, and attempts to get these view points into the science class room must be stopped. Not because they are different ideas, but rather because they simply do not represent science. The debate can continue in other forums such as religion and philosophy classes.

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Re-evaluating NASA's Manned Program

I think it is time for the AAS membership to debate the impact of the manned space missions on NASA's science programs.

For starters, the exorbitant International Space Station (ISS) is unquestionably a boondoggle. Its cost is not justified by any technical, scientific or political gains. In fact, the ISS has proven how costly and inefficient manned missions are. The complex Shuttle system needed to support the ISS has a poor safety record (98%) that defies improvement as it increasingly consumes NASA's budget.

Next, President Bush's idea of sending people back to the Moon and even Mars lacks any scientific justification. Nor is there any pressing political need as there was when President Kennedy directed us to pursue the manned lunar program. Since those first manned missions we have learned how exploration can be carried out more efficiently and cheaper by unmanned probes. Even the military has opted not to send people into space because it is unnecessary and counterproductive for any security programs.

The proposed Moon-Mars manned initiatives will consume more of the meager budget than the ISS-Shuttle program. Even now with growing evidence for global warming NASA has curtailed earth surveillance programs that are so vital to understanding this threat to every human. Halting new manned initiatives will not guarantee increased funding of scientific programs, but will at least eliminate the cause for their reduction that we now see.

I ask that the AAS membership fully debate and pass a petition to Congress to re-evaluate, if not curtail, NASA's manned program while increasing practical and efficient scientific exploration using robotics.

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Is NASA's Human Space Exploration Program Bad For Science?

On 14 January 2004 the President spelled out a new vision for Space Exploration at NASA, outlining three goals: (1) to complete the International Space Station by 2010 by returning the Space Shuttle to flight, (2) to develop and test a new spacecraft, the Crew Exploration Vehicle, by 2008, and to conduct the first manned mission no later than 2014, and (3) to return to the Moon by 2020, as the launching point for missions beyond [to Mars]. To succeed, NASA will need international partners to fund technology development, robotic probes and human exploration missions.

The President directed then NASA Administrator Sean O'Keefe to review all of NASA's current space flight and exploration activities and direct them toward these new goals. The latest result of that directive is the announcement by current NASA Administrator Michael Griffith of \$3 billion in cuts to the Science Directorate over the next five years. In order to align Research Opportunities in Space and Earth Sciences (ROSES-2006) with NASA's operating budget and the President's requested budget for next year, NASA HQ has cancelled seven science programs and cut or desopped a further ten. In the near-term, the WISE, SOFIA, Dawn, TPF, NuSTAR, Europa and Mars Scout missions are also on hold. In the longer term, future space science missions like Constellation X face significant delays.

Congress and the White House are faced with three options: 1. focus on human space exploration at the expense of science, 2. provide leadership in science and human space exploration, or 3.

emphasize science and scale back human space exploration. NASA HQ has handed us option 1. We are being asked to lobby our elected officials for option 2. I suggest it is time to consider option 3.

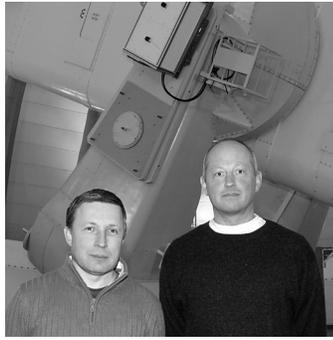
Aside from the technological challenges, the President's vision faces at least three major obstacles. First, without strong popular support, legislators will not have the will or the discipline to finance the colonization of the Moon and astronaut missions to Mars. Second, the nation is not willing to risk astronaut safety to achieve the President's goals. Third, NASA has not demonstrated the scientific or economic benefit of human space exploration over robotic missions.

Given the current political and fiscal realities confronting the federal government, NASA will not be able to rebuild the human space exploration program while leading the way in earth and space science. A protracted and ultimately unsuccessful attempt to realize the President's vision would be a bitter blow to science and to the nation. I urge the AAS council to take up an independent impact and feasibility study of NASA's human space flight program. It is not enough to trumpet the great advances that have been achieved as a result of NASA's past commitment to science. I believe it is time to question the premise that human space exploration trumps all other goals within NASA.

Marc Gagne
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Note: 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.

CHRÉTIEN GRANT AWARD WINNER



Stanislav Melnikov Wins Chrétien Grant Award

The 2005 Chrétien Grant Award winner is Dr. Stanislav Melnikov of the Ulugh Beg Astronomical Institute of the Uzbek Academy of Sciences. The Chrétien review committee, chaired by Regina Schulte-Ladbeck, had a difficult time selecting from a wide range of excellent applications, finally selecting Melnikov's collaborative proposal with Dr. Jochen Eislöffel from the Thüringer Landessternwarte in Tautenburg, Germany.

Dr. Melnikov's proposal, entitled "A Search for the Brown Dwarfs in Old Open Clusters," outlines an ambitious plan to search for brown dwarfs and very low mass stars in three relatively old, nearby open clusters of similar age. Based on theoretical models for brown dwarfs, the team estimates that the stars should be detectable using I-band imaging on 2-m class telescopes. Their proposal outlined an imaging survey using the Tautenburg 2-m Schmidt telescope and Schmidt camera, with follow-up observations of candidate objects using the Calar Alto 3.5m telescope.

The AAS is pleased to continue to award the Chrétien research grant in cooperation with the Chrétien foundation to honor of the memory of Henri Chrétien, French Professor of Optics and co-originator of the Ritchey-Chrétien telescope design. Emphasis is on long-term visits and the development of close working relationships with astronomers in other countries. Full information on the grant and application procedures are available on the AAS web site.

HONORED ELSEWHERE

Landolt Astronomical Observatory at LSU

On 30 March 2006, Arlo Landolt was presented with the keys to the observatory at the dedication of the Landolt Astronomical Observatory at Louisiana State University. Landolt, former AAS Secretary, was "the core" of the astronomy program at LSU. Given his long and very strong contributions to LSU astronomy, American astronomy, and world astronomy, LSU dedicated the observatory as the "Landolt Astronomical Observatory" as a small recognition of Arlo's work. To read more about the observatory visit: www.phys.lsu.edu/landoltobservatory/

John Bahcall Physics Day in Israel

A special physics seminar held in John Bahcall's honor took place on 30 April 2006 at the Tel-Aviv University. This one-day conference celebrated the life and science of John Bahcall.

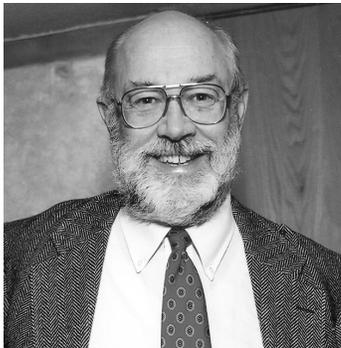
John was a prominent leader of the international astronomical community, winning the Dan David Prize, the U.S. National Medal of Science, the NASA Distinguished Service Medal and the Exceptional Scientific Achievement Medal, and numerous other awards, for his pioneering contributions to Astrophysics, particularly to solar neutrinos and to the development of the Hubble Space Telescope. John mentored over 200 postdoctoral fellows in the Astrophysics program at the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton for nearly four decades. John played a major role in developing astronomy in Israel and in supporting many astronomers early in their careers.

A John Bahcall Fellowship and an Annual Lectureship have been established in Israel in honor of John.

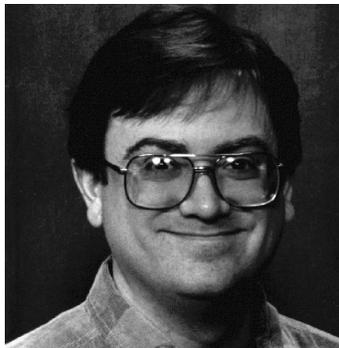
DIVISION NEWS

SOLAR PHYSICS DIVISION (SPD)

James Klimchuk, Chair, spdchair@aas.org



Peter A. Gilman



Steven R. Cranmer

The SPD is delighted to announce that Peter Gilman of the High Altitude Observatory is the winner of the 2006 Hale Prize for outstanding contributions to solar physics over an extended period of time, and Steven Cranmer of the Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics is the winner of the 2006 Karen Harvey Prize for outstanding contributions to solar physics early in one's career. The official citations read as follows:

The 2006 Hale Prize is awarded to Peter A. Gilman for his unique insights and substantial scientific achievements in understanding the dynamics of the solar convection zone and the mechanism of the Sun's magnetic dynamo and for his leadership and support of solar physics research programs.

The 2006 Karen Harvey Prize is awarded to Steven R. Cranmer for his major theoretical and observational contributions toward understanding the roles of waves and turbulence in heating and accelerating solar wind plasma.

DIVISION ON DYNAMICAL ASTRONOMY (DDA)

Marc Murison, Secretary, DDA, ddasec@aas.org

The Brouwer Award

The Dirk Brouwer Award is an annual award competition that recognizes outstanding contributions to the field of dynamical astronomy, including celestial mechanics, astrometry, stellar systems, galactic and extragalactic dynamics. It is open to candidates of any age or nationality, occupation, or specific field of interest. The Award consists of an honorarium of \$2000 plus an appropriate certificate. The Brouwer Award Selection Committee (BASC) of the DDA would like to invite nominations from any member of the AAS between now and the deadline at the end of the calendar year.

If you know of a colleague who would be a worthy candidate for the Brouwer Award, please consider submitting a nomination. Necessary documentation includes a letter of nomination by a member of the AAS or the DDA, a curriculum vitae, a list of the nominee's publications, and at least three supporting letters from experts in the field of the nominee attesting to the long term impact and influence of the nominee's contributions to dynamical astronomy. Nominations and supporting documentation should be sent to the BASC Chair: Dr. Alessandro Morbidelli, Observatoire de la Côte d'Azur, B.P. 4229, Nice, Cedex 4 F-06304, France, morby@obs-nice.fr. Additional information regarding the Brouwer Award is available at the DDA web site (<http://dda.harvard.edu/>).

HIGH ENERGY ASTROPHYSICS DIVISION (HEAD)

Steve Murray, Chair, headchair@aas.org

HEAD Officers

The ballots from the HEAD election have all been counted. Please join me in congratulating Mitch Begelman who has been elected Vice-chair along with Julie McEnery, Chris Reynolds and Roger Romani who were elected to the Executive Committee. Thanks again to Rick Rothschild, Rene Ong, Fred Baganoff and Dimitrios Psaltis for standing for election. And thanks to Josh Gindlay, Fiona Harrison, Kim Weaver, and Deepto Chakrabarty for their past service on the Executive Committee.

HEAD Meeting

The High Energy Astrophysics Division (HEAD) will hold its next Divisional meeting in San Francisco, CA from Wednesday, 4 October 2006 through Saturday, 7 October 2006. The meeting will be held atop Nob Hill at the Stanford Court Hotel in San Francisco and will be hosted by Eureka Scientific Inc.

We strongly encourage HEAD members, and the wider community, to join us for this special meeting in October. For more information please see <http://www.confcon.com/head2006/head06.php>

If you are interested in organizing a special workshop/session associated with the HEAD meeting, or if you have suggestions for organizations who you think would be willing to help sponsor this meeting, please contact Steve Murray (ssm@cfa.harvard.edu).

Please contact John Vallerga (headmeeting06@earthlink.net, 510-530-1688) for any help with your logistical needs and/or any questions regarding this meeting.

NRAO Legacy Projects Workshop

The NRAO invites all astronomers to a one-day Legacy Projects Workshop on Wednesday, 17 May 2006 at the Array Operations Center in Socorro, NM. Legacy projects should produce results of high scientific impact or data of long-term value to the entire astronomical community. They may require large amounts of time on one or more telescopes, collaborations of many astronomers from several institutions, new instrumentation and software, and new modes of observing. The goal of this workshop is to bring together like-minded people who can identify the leading scientific and technical opportunities for legacy projects and refine NRAO's policies for implementing them. The program includes invited speakers, a panel discussion, and both oral and poster sessions enabling every participant to present ideas related to legacy programs involving NRAO facilities.

COMMITTEE NEWS

STATUS OF WOMEN IN ASTRONOMY

Patricia Knezek
CSWA Chair, WIYN Observatory, knezek@noao.edu

The June 2006 AAS Meeting

The CSWA is co-sponsoring a special session with Stephanie Coté, (HIA) Jayanne English (U. Manitoba), Brenda Matthews (HIA), and Michael Reid (CfA/SMA) on Monday, June 5, 2006 at the Calgary AAS Meeting. The session is entitled "Canadian Women Astronomers: Their Status and Science," and takes advantage of the consecutive CASCA and AAS meetings to highlight the achievements of women astronomers in Canada. Jayanne English will chair the session.

The first part of the session will focus on the status of women astronomers in Canada, including some history, and current statistics based on the results of a second Canadian survey of Canadian institutions. This survey is similar to the survey that the CSWA conducted in 2003 (see <http://www.casca.ca/ecass/issues/2004-me/> for an article on the results of the first Canadian survey, and <http://www.grammai.org/astrowomen/stats/> for the results of the CSWA survey). There will also be time for discussion about the differences and/or opportunities there are for women who are based in Canada, as opposed to the U.S. (such as the University Faculty Awards that NSERC has created to increase the participation of women in science). Confirmed speakers include Michael Reid (CfA/SMA), Christine Clement (U. Toronto), and Elizabeth Griffin (HIA).

The second part of the session will include short science talks by several eminent female astronomers in Canada. This will provide the AAS community the opportunity to hear from scientists that would normally attend CASCA, but not AAS

meetings. Confirmed speakers include Kim Venn (U. Victoria) and Samar Safi-Harb (U. Manitoba).

We hope you will join us!

Former CSWA Chair Meg Urry Selected as AWIS Fellow

The CSWA would like to congratulate former CSWA committee member and chair, Meg Urry, on her selection as a 2006 Association for Women in Science (AWIS) Fellow. The Fellows Program aims to recognize and honor women and men who have demonstrated exemplary commitment to the achievement of equity for women in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). Meg has long been a proponent of gender equity, and has done an outstanding job of inspiring women to pursue scientific careers. In addition to her service as the CSWA chair, she is a former editor of *STATUS*, as well as the *AASWOMEN* Weekly Electronic Newsletter. She also co-organized both the 1992 "Women in Astronomy" conference in Baltimore and the 2003 "Women in Astronomy II" conference in Pasadena. She helped author both the Baltimore Charter and the Pasadena Recommendations. We are delighted to see that her many contributions to the promotion of women in science are receiving recognition.

Update on the Pasadena Recommendations

The CSWA is working with the AAS Executive Office to finalize the letter to be sent to the departmental chairs and division heads of colleges, universities, and institutions encouraging them to publicly endorse the Recommendations, as well as implement appropriate recommendations. This letter notes that CSWA will maintain a list of institutions that have endorsed the Recommendations on our web site. We also organized a core group to undertake the longitudinal study of young women in astronomy, and this group has begun to formulate a proposal for funding at least part of such a study. In addition, we are actively working to prioritize recommendations that we can work with the community to implement.

CSWA and the IAU

The CSWA has begun a dialog with the recently formed IAU Working Group on the Status of Women in Astronomy. CSWA committee member Francesca Primas is also a member of the IAU Working Group, and IAU Working Group member Andrea Dupree attended the CSWA Executive Session in January.

NEWS FROM...

NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION

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

Upcoming Program Deadlines

AST announces the following deadlines for research and instrumentation grant opportunities in FY2007.

20 July 2006: CAREER (MPS) - Faculty Early Career Development Program – (NSF 05-579). See http://www.nsf.gov/funding/pgm_summ.jsp?pims_id=5262&from=fund

17 August 2006: REU Sites - Research Experiences for Undergraduates (REU) Sites – (NSF 05-592). See http://www.nsf.gov/publications/pub_summ.jsp?ods_key=nsf05592

12 September 2006: International Research Fellowship Program - (NSF 05-599). See <http://www.nsf.gov/pubs/2005/nsf05599/nsf05599.htm>

11 October 2006: NSF Astronomy and Astrophysics Postdoctoral Fellowship Program (AAPF). An updated program solicitation will be issued in July. The program will continue to support integrated programs of independent research and education and will consider projects in astronomy and astrophysics of observational, theoretical, instrumentation, or laboratory nature. We encourage applicants to read the new solicitation carefully for application instructions. A general program description can be found in the current program announcement NSF 03-578 (http://www.nsf.gov/publications/pub_summ.jsp?ods_key=nsf03578).

1 November 2006: Advanced Technologies and Instrumentation (ATI)

15 November 2006: Astronomy & Astrophysics Research Grants (AAG) in all areas, including the

Research at Undergraduate Institutions (RUI) program. See program announcement NSF 05-608 for the AAG (http://www.nsf.gov/publications/pub_summ.jsp?ods_key=nsf05608) and NSF 00-144 for RUI proposals (http://www.nsf.gov/publications/pub_summ.jsp?ods_key=nsf00144).

Anytime: Research Opportunity Awards and REU supplements and Meeting or Conference support proposals.

A New Administrative Structure in AST

With the arrival of new staff and the creation of three new positions in the Division, we are provided an opportunity to restructure our organization to better reflect the way the business of the Division is actually carried out, to improve the interfaces with other areas of the NSF, and to dissolve artificial

programmatic barriers and improve our interaction with the community.

The Division will be organized along functional lines, doing away with the previous wavelength-oriented unit structure. Activities will now be organized into three functional areas dealing with a) national facilities and major research equipment, b) mid-scale instrumentation, infrastructure and projects and c) individual investigator awards. Individual program officers will work in more than one area depending on their programmatic responsibilities and expertise.

Activities in the area of National Facilities and Major Research Equipment will be led and coordinated by Dr. Craig Foltz. The mid-scale instrumentation, infrastructure and project activities will be led by Dr. Vern Pankonin, and Dr. Nigel Sharp will serve as the lead in the area of individual investigator programs.

The increase in staffing also allows several shifts and sharing in program responsibility in the area of facility oversight. Dr. Tom Barnes will assume responsibility for oversight of NOAO and NSO allowing Dr. Craig Foltz to become program officer for the Gemini Observatory. Dr. Vern Pankonin will assume responsibility as program manager for NRAO as Andy Clegg devotes much of his attention to issues of spectrum management with Tom Gergely. Dr. Phil Puxley will join Bob Dickman in serving as program officer for the ALMA project.

2006 NSF Astronomy and Astrophysics Postdoctoral Fellows

The Division of Astronomical Sciences is pleased to announce the 2006 class of NSF Astronomy and Astrophysics Postdoctoral Fellows. Fellows engage in a program of research of an observational, instrumental, or theoretical nature, in combination with a coherent educational plan for the three-year duration of the fellowship. The program is intended to recognize young investigators of significant potential, and provide them with experience in research and education that will establish them in positions of distinction and leadership in the community.

Marcel Agueros - Columbia University/American Museum of Natural History - “Lifting the Veil: A Multiwavelength Picture of the Galactic Plane and of Its Stellar Remnants”

Peter Frinchaboy - University of Wisconsin-Madison - “Mapping the Dynamics of the Milky Way: The Bar to the Edge of the Disk”

Christopher Groppi - University of Arizona - “Wide-field Submillimeter Spectroscopic Imaging Systems for Galactic Plane Surveys”

DeWayne Halfen - University of Arizona/Steward Observatory - “Probing the Chemistry of Photon-Dominated Regions: A Combined Laboratory and Observational Study”

Thomas Renbarger - University of California-San Diego - "Rocketing into the Background: Enlightening Young Scientists and the Reionization of the Universe"

Tamara Rogers - High Altitude Observatory/National Center for Atmospheric Research - "Toward a Self-Consistent Model of the Solar Dynamo"

David Rothstein - Cornell University - "Black Hole Weather: Observing It, Predicting It, and Sharing It"

Kurtis Williams - University of Texas-Austin - "A Large, Homogeneous Open Cluster White Dwarf Sample"

Andrew Zentner - University of Chicago/Kavli Institute for Cosmological Physics - "Dark Matter Halo Substructure: A Key to Fundamental Physics and Galaxy Formation"

ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY OF THE PACIFIC

Mike Bennett, mbennett@astrosociety.org
Executive Director

2006 Bruce Medal Awarded to Frank Low

The ASP has awarded its highest honor, the Catherine Wolfe Bruce Medal—for lifetime achievement in astronomy—to Frank J. Low, Regents Professor Emeritus, University of Arizona.

The development of modern infrared astronomy parallels Frank Low's scientific research career, beginning with his invention in the early 1960s of the Gallium-doped germanium bolometer, the first really sensitive infrared detector for the thermal infrared. His pioneering in-flight use of the open-port telescope during the 1970s led to the use of the chopping secondary, a technique still in use today as a means of removing the sky and telescope background emission. He was also instrumental at that time in assembling the team that proposed and built the Infrared Astronomical Satellite (IRAS), a landmark infrared space telescope that provided the first all-sky census of mid and far-infrared sources. In addition, he made many pioneering observations of the planets and galactic sources, showing that molecular clouds were very luminous infrared sources and that galactic nuclei could emit enormous amounts of infrared radiation.

Without his leadership in the development of infrared detector technology and his skill at applying it to sensitive astronomical observations, we would not today be witnessing the explosion in infrared data being returned from both ground and space that is dramatically reshaping our view of the cold and the high-z universe.

ASP Announces 2006 Astronomy and Education Awards

In addition to the Bruce medal, the ASP has announced the following 2006 awards:

- Maria & Eric Muhlmann (for developing innovative instruments and techniques):
Michael Skrutskie, University of Virginia, and the 2MASS team
- Robert J. Trumpler (for outstanding recent PhD thesis):
Steven Furlanetto, degree awarded by Harvard University
- Thomas J. Brennan (for teaching of astronomy in grades 9-12):
Thomas Morin, Belmont HS, Belmont, NH
- Klumpke-Roberts (for contributing to the public understanding of astronomy):
Jeffrey Rosendhal, NASA (retired), Reston, VA
- Las Cumbres Amateur Outreach (for outreach to K-12 students and the public):
Asghar Kabiri, Sa'adat-shahr, Iran
- Amateur Achievement (for significant observational or technological contributions):
Kamil Hornoch, Czech Republic

ASP Executive Director Mike Bennett To Retire

ASP Executive Director Michael A. Bennett has informed the Board of Directors of his desire to retire from full-time service before the end of 2006. Mr. Bennett has worked for the ASP for eleven years and has served as Executive Director for over five years. "My years with this wonderful organization have unquestionably been the most rewarding and fulfilling of my career," said Bennett. "But now, with the ASP stable and growing, I can start slowing down a bit. I will definitely continue serving the ASP by working part-time on a few projects, but I am also looking forward to moving into semi-retirement."

"The ASP has made great progress under Mike's tenure," said ASP President Dennis Schatz, "especially through his leadership in sharpening the Society's strategic focus on education and professional development for educators. We're sorry to see him step down, but we respect his decision and we look forward to his continued involvement with specific projects and his help during the transition."

Schatz announced that a committee has been formed to conduct a national search and recommend a successor to the Board. A full position announcement is located on the ASP web site at <http://www.astrosociety.org>.

Founded in 1889 in San Francisco, the ASP is one of the nation's leading organizations devoted to improving people's understanding, appreciation, and enjoyment of astronomy and space. Serving research astronomers, educators of all descriptions, and amateur astronomers, the ASP publishes both scholarly and educational materials, conducts professional development programs for formal and informal educators, and holds conferences, symposia, and workshops for astronomers and educators who specialize in astronomy education and outreach. The ASP's education programs are funded by its own members, corporations, private foundations, NASA, and the National Science Foundation.

JAMES WEBB SPACE TELESCOPE PROGRAM

Special Review of the James Webb Space Telescope Program

The Special Review of the James Webb Space Telescope (JWST) Program initiated by the NASA Program Analysis and Evaluation office has concluded and briefed its findings to the NASA Administrator. This review was initiated following the 2005 cost increase in the program. The JWST project at the Goddard Space Flight Center has worked to restructure the program to follow the guidelines recommended by the Science Assessment Team (http://www.stsci.edu/jwst/project_highlights/SAT_report_final.pdf) and to reduce program risk for a 2013 launch. This restructured program was the subject of the 4 month-long review. The Special Review Team (SRT) was an independent, external group of senior managers, engineers, cost analysis experts and scientists convened by the Program Analysis and Evaluation office. This office is outside the management line of the NASA Science Mission Directorate (SMD) and reports to the NASA Administrator.

The SRT reached the following conclusions. The rebaselined mission meets the scientific performance expected by the community. The JWST project technical content is sound and complete and includes prudent risk mitigations for this stage of the mission formulation. The project has an appropriately prioritized plan for reducing its technical challenges and for further observatory development. The project personnel, contractor, government, university participants and foreign partners are effective. The overall contingency level for the project is, however low in the early years compared with current standard values associated with major missions. NASA will be working over the next few months to determine the next steps for JWST. The SMD intends to work with the NASA Advisory Council and its Astrophysics subcommittee to consider the programmatic mix as it develops its FY08 budget.

For further information about the JWST Project visit <http://www.jwst.nasa.gov>

JWST Science Assessment Team

(see <http://www.stsci.edu/jwst> for our reports and membership)

The recent release of the NASA budget and the cancellation or delay of many worthy missions have trained a spotlight on funded “Flagship” missions, and the James Webb Space Telescope (Webb) in particular. As members of the Science Assessment Team (SAT) that NASA chartered to look at the science priorities of JWST and its place in observational astrophysics in the 2013 era, we would like to make a few comments with regards to our role and the current state of the Webb mission.

We found that the scientific potential of the Webb telescope was at least as great as that discussed in the 2000 Decadal

report. True, the diameter of the primary has been reduced to approximately 6.5 m compared to the 8 m goal in order to reduce mission cost. However, the science capabilities of the US, European, and Canadian supplied instruments are superior to those considered in 2000 and provide for a very broad range of scientific investigations. This is important for a world class observatory. More to the point, we felt that the recent breakthroughs in fields as far ranging as cosmology to extra-solar planets have only increased the value of Webb. Like Hubble and other Great Observatories, it will make major, unique contributions in most if not all of these fields.

The big issue, therefore, is one of cost. Webb’s costs to launch are estimated to be \$3.6B (in real year dollars, with ~ \$1B already spent). NASA’s and the community’s concern is whether there will be future increases against a declining NASA Astrophysics budget (almost 25% lower in purchasing power in 2009-2010 than now). The SAT’s role was to look at the global relevance of the Webb mission and prioritize those science capabilities that would materially affect cost and risk (future growth). We concentrated on instrument capabilities, optical performance, and integration and test. Since the Webb instruments provide for basic imaging and spectroscopy in the near and mid IR, we could not recommend the elimination of a major instrument – and at least 50% of the instrument payload is internationally contributed at no cost to NASA. We did recommend that capabilities for wavelengths below 1.7 μm should be de-emphasized and, in one case, eliminated. This recognizes the power of giant ground-based telescopes that we anticipate being completed in the next decade. In like manner, we recommended the elimination of optical requirements below 1.7 μm while maintaining the requirements at 2 μm and above. This significantly reduces the risk of added costs in the production of the telescope optics. Integration and testing of Webb will be costly. We recommended that the requirements for scattered light due to particulate contamination be relaxed to permit more efficient testing and standard launch vehicle preparation. All these measures were estimated to save hundreds of millions of dollars of future costs. We encouraged NASA to take advantage of the lessons learned from Keck and other large ground-based telescopes with regards to the ability to adjust image performance with JWST’s active optics and further simplify pre-launch ground testing.

NASA will complete demonstrating the readiness of the key JWST technologies by early 2007. Projects that have successfully met this milestone and have had the kind of the intense budget scrutiny that has and will occur throughout this year generally suffer little additional cost growth unless perturbed by outside influences or delays. We continue to support the community’s desire for a balanced science program that includes small and medium-sized missions as well as “Flagship” missions. Under the current plans, the Webb and SIM/Planet Quest will be the only major space observatories in the next decade, when the first generation Great Observatories (Hubble, Chandra, and Spitzer) are no longer operational.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

AAS Membership Calendar

As a membership benefit, the AAS Membership Calendar includes important dates, such as proposal and grant deadlines and AAS sponsored meetings. Sponsors receive selection of a photo layout page, 250 words of text and sponsorship recognition in the calendar matter. For only \$1800, your institution or department can show support for the whole astronomical community and be featured prominently in astronomers' offices across the country. Sponsors and potential sponsors for future AAS calendars are reminded that sponsorship space is provided on a first-come, first-served basis. Groups interested in sponsoring a month may contact Crystal Tinch (crystal@aaas.org) for more information and pricing details for the 2007 calendar. Deadline for sponsorship is 1 September 2006.

Pale Blue Dot III - Call for Expressions of Interest 18-20 September 2006

The Adler Planetarium & Astronomy Museum and the NASA Astrobiology Institute (<http://nai.arc.nasa.gov/>) are co-convening the third Pale Blue Dot workshop, which is made possible by the Brinson Foundation. Pale Blue Dot III will provide a venue to forge links between terrestrial and astronomical biosignatures, and to develop ideas and methods that may be used for the detection of life beyond Earth. Pale Blue Dot III will also establish a two way dialogue between scientists and media that will facilitate lasting relationships, better media coverage of science, and enhanced public awareness and understanding of science.

Scientific themes addressed by the workshop include: Earth as a Pale Blue Dot: Planetary Scale Biosignatures; Environmental Evolution of Venus, Earth, Mars and Titan; Remote-Sensing Techniques for Biosignature Detection; Recognizing Habitable Environments in our Cosmic Neighborhood; Future Observations of Distant Habitable Worlds; and Contemplating the Distribution of Life in the Universe.

To receive further news and updates on the workshop, please register your expression of interest at http://www.adlerplanetarium.org/pale_blue_dot

2006 National Virtual Observatory Summer School Deadline: 5 June 2006

In this week-long, hands-on summer school, astronomers and software developers will work with experienced NVO users and software specialists to become familiar with the data discovery, data access, and high performance computing capabilities of the Virtual Observatory. Participants will be introduced to VO analysis tools and utilities and have the opportunity to become proficient users with the guidance of the faculty. In the latter

part of the summer school, small teams will pursue their own VO-enabled research projects by applying VO tools and/or developing their own applications.

Participation is open to anyone interested in learning how to use the VO for astronomical research, to develop VO-aware tools, or make astronomical data collections available to VO users. We especially encourage advanced undergraduates, graduate students, and post-doctoral fellows to apply. Programming experience will be helpful but is not required. The summer school begins with a two-day introduction to the basic technologies used in the Virtual Observatory.

Space and budgetary constraints limit participation to 40 people. Applications will be reviewed by the organizing committee and participants will be informed by July 1 of their acceptance to the Summer School. Application instructions are posted at <http://www.us-vo.org/summer-school/2006/>.

There will be a \$500 registration fee for participants. If this presents a financial hardship such that it would preclude attendance, applicants may request a waiver of the fee. The organizing committee will review such requests on a case by case basis. Upon acceptance to the Summer School, the fee will be due by 1 August. Accommodations, breakfast, and lunch are provided for all participants.

Additionally, a travel stipend of up to \$400 and per diem stipend of \$225 are available for successful applicants from US institutions who can commit to attending the whole course and who do not have funds available to cover these expenses.

Questions about the summer school should be directed to summer-school@us-vo.org.

The NVO Summer School is made possible through the support of the National Science Foundation and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration.

NSO Observing Proposals

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

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Washington News continued from back page

numbers, but NASA determined that they weren't enough to keep that 30-year-old technology operational.

The fact that science spending has increased as a percentage of the NASA budget since 1992 also does not amount to an argument for budget cuts. All that the percentages indicate is that the science programs during that period came up with new and exciting projects, while other portions of the agency did not. Is NASA proposing to punish the science programs for their success? Again, the question is what will actually be accomplished with a particular level of spending.

As I've pointed out before, NASA's science programs for a long time now have been the most successful programs the agency runs. They advance satellite technology, they advance human knowledge, they teach us about our own planet and they excite the public, including students. The same concerns about losing a generation of experts that are repeatedly trotted out to keep funding flowing to the human spaceflight program are equally true of the nation's space science and earth science enterprise, and its scientists and engineers.

NASA cannot forever picture success as recreating the Apollo era. A futuristic agency should not be defined by nostalgia. NASA's science programs run inspiring and daring and successful missions. That doesn't mean they can expect unlimited funding or that we should not pursue the president's Vision for Space Exploration. But it does mean that we ought to be a lot more concerned about the pattern being established in this budget of transferring funds away from science programs. And that needs to spark a fuller and more thoughtful debate."

Astronomers can take heart that other members of Congress, from a variety of backgrounds and points of view, share Mr. Boehlert's perspective. What Congress needs now is clear evidence that the NASA science community supports their efforts.

This summer plan on receiving several AAS ACTION ALERTS, telling you when and to whom to write advocacy letters. Please make time to follow their directions and write or call. If you possibly can, try to arrange personal visits. The Congressional calendar, indicating when members will be in their home districts, is available on the AAS public policy web pages. Personal visits remain the most effective way to communicate with legislators, followed closely by letters (in a recent survey of Congressional staff, the Association of Society and Association Executives produced the following ranked order of ways to communicate an advocacy message: 1) In-person issue visits from constituents; 2) Individualized postal letters; 3) Contact from a person who represents many constituents; 4) Individualized e-mail messages; 5) Visit from a lobbyist; 6) Individualized faxes; 7) Form letters, e-mails, faxes).

Only through effort on our part will Congress fully fund the ACI and repair the cuts in the proposed NASA Budget. To prevent a long lean season for NASA science, we must take the time to act this summer.

Congressional Visits Day

In March 2006, CAPP members and early career AAS members participated in the tenth annual Congressional Visits Day program. The fifteen (15) participants visited more than 45 Congressional or Committee offices and had several face-to-face meetings with members of Congress, as well as meeting with OMB staff. The AAS continues to host the web pages for the CVD event, which may be accessed through www.setcvd.org.

CVD begins with a full day of executive branch briefings and is followed by a second day of visits on Capitol Hill. An informational briefing at AAS headquarters by Eileen Friel of the NSF-AST division began the first day of the event. After a briefing on the current policy environment (by Deputy Executive Officer Marvel), the group then heard from NASA staff, including Eric Smith and Jennifer Wiseman. The day concluded with briefings from senior staff from the Hill as well as administration staff and a special lecture by an IBM vice president, well known in policy circles, Irving Wladawsky-Berger. An award ceremony and reception followed the briefings, where Representative Frank Wolf (VA) received the George E. Brown, Jr. award from the SETWG.

On the second day, in addition to visits with members of Congress, the group had a special one-hour meeting with the OMB staff responsible for the NSF, NASA and DoE office of Science budgets.

The participants deemed the event successful and a number of suggestions from the participants will be included in planning for next year's event. The Committee would like to thank the following people for their time and effort as participants in this event: Jack Burns, Dan Lester, Joseph Alexander, Andrew Baker, David Hernandez, Daniel Kittell, Mark Keremedjiev, Mark Sykes, Matt Bowen, Michael Meyer, Scott Ransom, Will Fischer, David O'Brien, Rachel Osten and Ashley Zauderer. Some pictures from CVD2006 are included at the end of this report. Overall, this year was the largest event yet, with more than 310 participating scientists and engineers and the largest AAS participation ever.

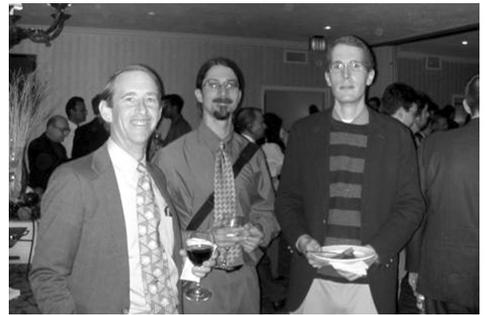
Individuals interested in participating in CVD 2007, should contact Kevin Marvel (marvel@aaas.org) no later than January of 2007.



CVD Participants getting briefed by NSF AST Division Executive Officer, Eileen Friel.



CVD Breakfast with more than 350 scientists and engineers crowded into the Senate caucus room.



CVD Participants at the George Brown Award Ceremony (l to r) Dan Lester, David O'Brien and Andrew Baker.



The Arizona "Gang of Four" prepare to make the pitch in Senator Kyl's office. (L to R) Michael Meyer, Mark Sykes, David O'Brien, David Hernandez.



Dan Kittell outside the offices of Senator Voinovich of Ohio. Dan asked to participate in CVD after talking with Kevin Marvel at an AAS meeting event.



Tourists and protestors intermingle in front of the Supreme Court, a common sight for our CVD participants this year as they bounced back and forth from one side of the Hill to the other.



CAPP Chair Jack Burns introduces Congressman Jay Inslee from South Carolina. Congressman Inslee has been a strong proponent of increased funding for basic research.



Congressman Jay Inslee (l) and Congressman John Culberson (r). Two vocal supporters for increased basic research funding.



Participants engaged in policy discussion at the George Brown award ceremony. (Clockwise from left) Dan Kittell, Michael Meyer, Will Fischer, Mark Keremedjiev, David Hernandez (back of head to camera).



Scott Ransom and Rachel Osten (Hubble Fellow) outside the office of Senator John Warner. CVD participants quickly appreciated the difference between the House and the Senate, made oh-so-visible through the fine appointments of the Senate offices and buildings.



Andrew Baker and Ashley Zauderer, both of University of Maryland, prepare to visit the office of Congressman Thomas Price, a certified medical doctor and strong supporter for basic research, although his staffer was a challenging conversationalist.

CALENDAR

AAS & AAS DIVISION MEETINGS

High Energy Astrophysics Division

4-7 October 2006 — San Francisco, CA

Contact: Dr. John Vallerga
(headmeeting06@earthlink.net)

Division for Planetary Sciences

8-13 October 2006 — Pasadena, CA

Contact: Alan Harris, LOC

(awharris@spacescience.org)

Kevin Baines, SPC

(kbaines@aloha.jpl.nasa.gov)

209th Meeting - Seattle, WA

(Joint with AAPT)

7-11 January 2007

Contact AAS Executive Office

gilmore@aas.org

OTHER EVENTS

*The First Stars and Evolution of the Early Universe

19 June - 21 July 2006 — Seattle, WA

Contact: Nancy Tate

(tate@phys.washington.edu)

www.int.washington.edu/PROGRAMS/06-2a.html

6th INTEGRAL (International Gamma-Ray Astrophysics Laboratory) workshop "The Obscured Universe"

2-8 July 2006 — St. Petersburg, Russia

www.rssd.esa.int/Integral/integ_workshops.html

Physics and Astrophysics of Supermassive Black Holes

9-14 July 2006 — Santa Fe, NM

Contact: F. Melia (melia@physics.arizona.edu)

http://qso.lanl.gov/meetings/meet2006/index.html

*MIT Short Course: Relativity, Gravity, and Cosmology

10-13 July 2006 — Cambridge, MA

Contact: Professional Institute

(tavish@mit.edu)

http://web.mit.edu/mitpep/pi/courses/relativity_gravity.html

16th Kingston Theoretical Astrophysics Meeting ("KIK")

17-20 July 2006 — Ontario, Canada

Contact: Rob Thacker (KIK@astro.queensu.ca)

www.astro.queensu.ca/KIK

*7th Annual Summer School on Adaptive Optics

4-11 August Santa Cruz, CA

Contact: Cherilin Stephens (cherilin@ucolick.org)

http://cfao.ucolick.org/aosummer/2006/index.php

IAU Special Session 2

Innovation in Teaching/Learning Astronomy

17-18 Aug 2006 — Prague, Czech Republic

Contact: Jay Pasachoff

(jay.m.pasachoff@williams.edu) or

Rosa Maria Ros (ros@mat.upc.es)

www.communicatingastronomy.org/innovation2006/

Long Wavelength Astrophysics

(Joint Discussion 12 at the IAU General Assembly)

21 Aug 2006 — Prague, Czech Republic

Contact: T. Joseph W. Lazio

(joseph.lazio@nrl.navy.mil)

IAU Special Session 5

Astronomy for the Developing World

21-22 Aug 2006 — Prague, Czech Republic

Contact: John Hearnshaw

(john.hearnshaw@canterbury.ac.nz)

www.astronomyeducation.org

IAU Symposium No. 238

Black Holes: from Stars to Galaxies -

across the Range of Masses

21-25 Aug 2006 — Prague, Czech Republic

Contact: Vladimir Karas

(vladimir.karas@cuni.cz)

http://astro.cas.cz/iaus238

IAU Symposium No. 239

Convection in Astrophysics

21-25 Aug 2006 — Prague, Czech Republic

Contact: Ian W. Roxburgh

(i.w.roxburgh@qmul.ac.uk)

www.astro.keele.ac.uk/iaus239/

IAU Symposium No. 240

Binary Stars as Critical Tools and Tests in Modern Astrophysics

22-25 Aug 2006 — Prague, Czech Republic

Contact: William I. Hartkopf

(wih@usno.navy.mil)

http://ad.usno.navy.mil/iaus240

*NVO Summer School

6-14 September 2006 — Aspen, CO

Contact: Sarah Emery Bunn

(summer-school@us-vo.org)

http://us-vo.org/summer-school/2006/

*2006 AMOS Technical Conference

10-14 September 2006 — Wailea Maui

Contact: Lewis Roberts

(lewis.c.roberts@boeing.com)

www.maui.afmc.af.mil/conferences.html

ASP 118th Annual Meeting - Engaging the EPO Community: Best Practices, New Approaches

16-18 September — Baltimore, MD

Contact: Marilyn Delgado

(meeting@astrosociety.org)

www.astrosociety.org/events/meeting.html

Pale Blue Dot III

18-20 September — Chicago, IL

Contact: Dr. Grace A. Wolf-Chase

(gwolfchase@adlerplanetarium.org)

www.adlerplanetarium.org/pale_blue_dot/index.shtml

Applications of Gravitational Lensing: Unique Insights into Galaxy Formation and Evolution

3-6 October 2006 — Santa Barbara, US

Contact: Leon Koopmans

(lensing@kitp.ucsb.edu)

www.kitp.ucsb.edu/activities/auto2/?id=353

*Galaxy Mergers: From the Local Universe to the Red Sequence

4-6 October 2006 — Baltimore, MD 21218

Contact: Barry Rothberg (gryce@stsci.edu)

Radiation Backgrounds from the First Stars, Galaxies and Black Holes

9-11 October 2006 — College Park, MD

Contact: Susan Lehr (october@astro.umd.edu)

www.astro.umd.edu/october/

Astronomical Data Analysis Software & Systems XVI

15-18 October — Tucson, AZ

Contact: Dick Shaw (adass2006@adass.org)

http://adass.org/adass2006/

*Massive Galaxies over Cosmic Time 2

1-3 November 2006 Tucson, AZ

Contact: MGCT2 SOC/LOC

(mgct2@noao.edu)

Cool Stars 14

6-10 November 2006 — Pasadena, CA

Contact: John Stauffer

(stauffer@ipac.caltech.edu)

http://ssc.spitzer.caltech.edu/mtgs/cs14/

***Extragalactic Surveys: A Chandra Science Workshop**

6-8 November 2006 — Cambridge, MA

Contact: Paul Green
(xsurveys06@cfa.harvard.edu)
<http://cxc.harvard.edu/xsurveys06>

IAU Symposium No. 241

Stellar Populations as Building Blocks of Galaxies

10-14 Dec 2006 — La Palma, Spain

Contact: Alexandre Vazdekis
(vazdekis@ll.iac.es)
www.astro.rug.nl/~peletier/IAUS241.html

***2007 Planetary Defense Conference**

5-8 March 2007 Washington, D.C.

Contact: William Ailor
(william.h.ailor@aero.org)
www.aero.org/conferences/planetarydefense/index.html

Living with a Star 1: A new era in understanding our space environment

26-29 March 2007 — Boulder, CO

Contact: Karel Schrijver (schryver@lmsal.com)
www.lws1.org

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

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

Announcements continued from page 11

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.

The United Nations Basic Space Science Initiative

Pursuant to recommendations of the United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE III) and deliberations of the United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNCOPUOS), annual UN/European Space Agency workshops on basic space science have been held around the world since 1991. These workshops contributed to the development of astrophysics and space science, particularly in developing nations. Following a process of prioritization, the workshops identified the following elements as particularly important for international cooperation in the field: (i) operation of astronomical telescope facilities implementing TRIPOD, (ii) virtual observatories, (iii) astrophysical data systems, (iv) concurrent design capabilities for the development of international space missions, and (v) theoretical astrophysics such as applications of nonextensive statistical mechanics.

Beginning in 2005, the workshops focus on preparations for the International Heliophysical Year 2007 (IHY2007). The workshops continue to facilitate the establishment of astronomical telescope facilities as pursued by Japan and the development of low-cost, ground-based, world-wide instrument arrays as lead by the IHY secretariat.

Wamsteker, W., Albrecht, R. and Haubold, H.J.: *Developing Basic Space Science World-Wide: A Decade of UN/ESA Workshops*. Kluwer Academic Publishers, Dordrecht 2004.

MERCI BEAUCOUP TRANSLATION VOLUNTEERS

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Please consider asking your colleagues from abroad to become AAS International Affiliate members. Full details are available at www.aas.org/membership/classes.html.

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This year's White House Easter egg roll was marred by a heavy downpour during the early morning hours. Small children, perfectly attired in proper white shoes and delicate spring fabrics mobbed the south lawn of the White House with large ladles, attempting to move their eggs rapidly down the gentle slope. The

general tendency of eggs is to roll downhill, but soggy, wet grass can be an effective impediment to forward motion. Tears were shed, but someone went home the winner. That someone figured out how to effectively move their egg through the prevailing conditions. There is a lesson to be learned here.

The appropriations process, after an initial early charge forward has slowed down due to a variety of issues, including lobbying reform, immigration reform and the slinging of accusations. Advocates—thankfully including many astronomers!—have been visiting policy makers and making the case for increased funding for space science and astronomy in the NASA budget while simultaneously supporting the President's American Competitiveness Initiative (ACI). The ACI calls for a large increase for NSF, the DOE Office of Science and NIST. NSF-Astronomy would share in the increase, with the grants budget proposed for a double-digit increase in FY2007.

Although the conditions on Capitol Hill have slowed advocacy efforts, I encourage all astronomers to rekindle the strong sense of action that we all felt when the President's budget was released. Space Science at NASA is facing severe cutbacks in FY2007, which have been outlined in previous communications and a variety of media outlets. Although the devil is in the details, the cuts are so broad that one can now advocate for all science at NASA and be assured that one's own program will be covered by your message.

Thankfully, members of Congress have stepped up to the plate. Chairman Sherwood Boehlert (R-NY), who has announced he is retiring from public life, wrote the following letter to the editor of *Space News* (April 10, 2006) in response to Mike Griffin's defense of NASA's proposed budget:

"...I remain concerned that NASA is downplaying the severe impact its proposed fiscal 2007 budget for science will inflict. To say that science is "healthy" simply because funding amounts to a large number is to sidestep the central questions of budgeting, namely: "Which activities are being paid for and which are being omitted?" After all, one could point out that the fiscal 2006 budget projections for the shuttle also involved very large

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