

AAS Committee on the Status of Women

Issue of January 03, 2020

eds: JoEllen McBride, Nicolle Zellner, Heather Flewelling, Maria Patterson, and
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1. CSWA Activities at the AAS Meeting (2020)
From: Katie Eckert via womeninastronomy.blogspot.com

By Nicolle Zellner, Pat Knezek, and JoEllen McBride

Aloha! We are all very excited to see our colleagues at the 235th AAS meeting in beautiful Hawaii! Many of the CSWA members will be in attendance and the Committee will be hosting several activities during the week as well as supporting others.

Read more at

<http://womeninastronomy.blogspot.com/2019/12/cswa-activities-at-aas-meeting-2020.html>

2. Happy Birthday, CSWA!
From: Nicolle Zellner via womeninastronomy.blogspot.com

2019 marked the 40th year of the [Committee on the Status of Women in Astronomy](#), and we invite you to celebrate with us! Join us at our Meet and Greet at the AAS meeting on Tuesday, January 7 from 6 to 7 pm in Room 306 AB. Light refreshments will be served.

Highlights and accomplishments of the past 40 years will be shared and you'll get a chance to meet current members. Additionally, we'll have opportunities for you to sign-up to write a guest blog; subscribe to *AASWomen*, our weekly electronic newsletter; tell us what CSWA should be doing in the next 40 years; and share your CSWA memories.

We look forward to seeing you at the celebration! A list of other CSWA activities at the AAS meeting can be found [here](#).

Read more at

<http://womeninastronomy.blogspot.com/2019/12/happy-birthday-cswa.html>

3. A Lack of Women in Amateur Astronomy in the US

From: Katie Eckert via womeninastronomy.blogspot.com

By Rachel Freed

I have been an amateur astronomer for 19 years and a member of five different astronomy clubs throughout the San Francisco Bay Area in California during this time. I also get to work in the arena of public astronomy and do a lot of education and outreach. For these almost 20 years I've been hearing the amateur astronomers say amongst themselves "we need to diversify, we need younger people, we need people of color." And for 19 years it hasn't changed much from what I am seeing. While there has definitely been an increase in women in professional astronomy, it's still nothing close to 50-50 and over the last four or five years, there has been a lot of news about sexual harassment in the field. While I don't know if this is a significant part of the problem in the world of amateur astronomy, there are certainly many subtle and not-so-subtle issues that contribute to this lack of diversity.

Read more at

<http://womeninastronomy.blogspot.com/2020/01/a-lack-of-women-in-amateur-astronomy-in.html>

4. Space Astronomy Summer Program - 2020

From: Nodella Jordan [jnodella_at_stsci.edu]

Each summer, the Space Telescope Science Institute (STScI) brings about a dozen highly motivated college students to Baltimore, Maryland, for the Space Astronomy Summer Program to work individually with STScI researchers and staff on projects that include data reduction and interpretation, software development, software engineering, instrument calibration and support, scientific writing, and public outreach. STScI is a premier astronomical research institution, and our scientific staff of astronomers, scientists, analysts, and engineers is at the forefront of some of the most exciting astronomy going on today, from the study of our own solar system and the structure of the Milky Way to the composition of nearby galaxies and dark energy.

Apply to link: <https://stsci.slideroom.com/#/permalink/program/52957>

5. US astronaut sets record for longest spaceflight by a woman

From: JoEllen McBride [joellen.mcbride_at_gmail.com]

By the Associated Press

"A U.S. astronaut set a record Saturday for the longest single spaceflight by a woman, breaking the old mark of 288 days with about two months left in her mission.

"Christina Koch, a 40-year-old electrical engineer from Livingston, Montana, arrived at the International Space Station on March 14. She broke the record set by former space station commander Peggy Whitson in 2016-2017."

Read more at

<https://local12.com/news/nation-world/nasa-astronaut-sets-record-for-longest-spaceflight-by-a-woman-cincinnati>

6. This drone will fly on one of Saturn's moons. Here's the woman leading the mission

From Matthew Greenhouse [matt.greenhouse_at_icloud.com]

By Jamie Leventhal

'A billion miles sounds impossibly far, but in planetary terms, "You can get there," said Elizabeth Turtle.

'In Turtle's lifetime, she's seen human technology reach Uranus and Neptune, quick flybys that completely transformed our understanding of the solar system.

'That's why she is leading the hunt for rocks on Titan – one of Saturn's moons that, surprisingly, could tell us a lot about Earth's early days.'

Read more at

<https://www-pbs-org.cdn.ampproject.org/c/s/www.pbs.org/newshour/amp/science/this-drone-will-fly-on-one-of-saturns-moons-heres-the-woman-leading-the-mission>

7. Bringing New Voices into the Sciences

From: JoEllen McBride [joellen.mcbride_at_gmail.com]

By New Voices in Sciences, Engineering & Medicine initial cohort

'Panelists representing federal agencies noted that diversity benefits individuals, teams and corporations by providing strengths that may be lacking in more homogenous groups. Representatives from the government sector highlighted that basic scientific research at federal agencies hinges on a diversity of ideas and the representation of individuals from all sectors of society asking novel, timely and socially relevant questions.

'For example, an increase in the number of women in the field of cardiology has led to better outcomes for women with heart disease—because women understand that women express symptoms differently. This thinking can and should be extrapolated to other aspects of diversity, with implications for multiple medical conditions and surgical interventions.'

Read more at

<https://blogs.scientificamerican.com/voices/bringing-new-voices-into-the-sciences/>

8. How one astronomer hears the Universe

From: JoEllen McBride [joellen.mcbride_at_gmail.com]

By Elizabeth Gibney

'Astronomy is inextricably associated with spectacular images and visualizations of the cosmos. But Wanda Diaz Merced says that by neglecting senses other than sight, astronomers are missing out on discoveries.

'For 15 years, Diaz Merced, an astronomer at the International Astronomical Union (IAU) Office for Astronomy Outreach in Mitaka, Japan, has pioneered a technique

called sonification. The approach converts aspects of data, such as the brightness or frequency of electromagnetic radiation, into audible elements including pitch, volume and rhythm. It could help astronomers to avoid methodological biases that come with interpreting data only visually, argues Diaz Merced, who lost her sight in her twenties.'

Read more at

<https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-019-03938-x>

9. Unprofessional peer reviews disproportionately harm underrepresented groups in STEM

From: JoEllen McBride [joellen.mcbride_at_gmail.com]

By Nyssa J. Silbiger and Amber D. Stubler

'In an anonymous survey of international participants in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields, we investigated the pervasiveness and author perceptions of long-term implications of receiving of unprofessional comments. Specifically, we assessed authors' perceptions of scientific aptitude, productivity, and career trajectory after receiving an unprofessional peer review.

'Results

'We show that survey respondents across four intersecting categories of gender and race/ethnicity received unprofessional peer review comments equally. However, traditionally underrepresented groups in STEM fields were most likely to perceive negative impacts on scientific aptitude, productivity, and career advancement after receiving an unprofessional peer review.'

'Discussion

'Studies show that a negative perception of aptitude leads to lowered self-confidence, short-term disruptions in success and productivity and delays in career advancement. Therefore, our results indicate that unprofessional reviews likely have and will continue to perpetuate the gap in STEM fields for traditionally underrepresented groups in the sciences.'

Read the full study at

<https://peerj.com/articles/8247/>

10. I Don't Care That Miss America Is a Scientist!

From: JoEllen McBride [joellen.mcbride_at_gmail.com]

By Shannon Palus

'Thursday night, Camille Schrier, a pharmacy doctorate candidate at Virginia Commonwealth University, [won this year's edition](#) of the nearly-century-old Miss America contest. For the competition's talent portion, she reprised the skill she used to secure her Miss Virginia title over the summer: She "ditched the glittery outfit for a lab-coat, goggles, and rubber gloves," as [Inside Edition explained](#), and dropped potassium iodide into colorful beakers of hydrogen peroxide, creating a reaction that [produces](#) streams of foam. The [headlines announcing the win](#) exalted the fact that a scientist won Miss America, and I watched some of my science writer friends get [genuinely excited](#). Me? I do not see this as a breakthrough.'

Read more at

<https://slate.com/technology/2019/12/miss-america-scientist-i-do-not-care.html>

11. Meet Annie Jump Cannon, who cataloged and ranked over 300,000 stars by their hotness

From: JoEllen McBride [joellen.mcbride_at_gmail.com]

'In the house where I was born, there stood on the white marble mantel, a candelabra representing a gilded tree. At the base two children are about to waken a sleeping huntsman. Five outspreading branches support the candles, which are surrounded by glass prismatic pendants. I remember no earlier plaything than these prisms which were easily detachable. To hold one in my hands, to catch a sunbeam, and watch the brilliant prismatic colors dance over the wall was a delight to my youthful eyes. Even now I hold one of these pendants in my hands, and note that it is embossed with stars. Stars and prisms! How prophetic was this baby amusement of the profession which was destined to fill my life.' –

[Annie Jump Cannon](#)

Read more at

<https://massivesci.com/articles/annie-jump-cannon-stars-space-scientist-women-in-science/>

12. Not surprisingly, science still has a huge racism and sexism problem

From: JoEllen McBride [joellen.mcbride_at_gmail.com]

By Vanessa Vieites

'Stereotypes about others' gender and race can influence the way we perceive and judge them. Such biases have been shown to affect employers' hiring decisions, even when evaluating "fake" but identical resumes. A 2019 [study](#) examines how intersecting stereotypes about gender and race influence professors' perceptions of fictitious post-doctoral candidates applying for positions in different STEM departments at universities.'

Read more at

<https://massivesci.com/notes/racism-sexism-academia-physics-biology-chemistry-hireability-hiring>

13. How to Submit to the *AASWOMEN* newsletter

To submit an item to the *AASWOMEN* newsletter, including replies to topics, send email to aaswomen_at_lists.aas.org

All material will be posted unless you tell us otherwise, including your email address.

When submitting a job posting for inclusion in the newsletter, please include a one-line description and a link to the full job posting.

Please remember to replace "_at_" in the e-mail address above.

14. How to Subscribe or Unsubscribe to the *AASWOMEN* newsletter

Join AAS Women List by email:

Send an email to aaswomen_at_lists.aas.org. A list moderator will add your email to the list. They will reply to your message to confirm that they have added you.

Join AAS Women List through the online portal:

Go to <https://lists.aas.org/postorius/lists/aaswlist.lists.aas.org> and enter the email address you wish to subscribe in the 'Your email address' field. You will receive an email from 'aaswlist-confirm' that you must reply to. There may be a delay between entering your email and receiving the confirmation message. Check your Spam or Junk mail folders for the message if you have not received it after 2 hours.

To unsubscribe from AAS Women by email:

Send an email to aaswlist-leave_at_lists.aas.org from the email address you wish to remove from the list. You will receive an email from 'aaswlist-confirm' that you must reply to which will complete the unsubscribe.

Leave AAS Women or change your membership settings through the online portal:

Go to <https://lists.aas.org/accounts/signup> to create an account with the online portal. After confirming your account you can see the lists you are subscribed to and update your settings.

15. Access to Past Issues

<https://aas.org/comms/cswa/AASWOMEN>

Each annual summary includes an index of topics covered.

AASWomen Newsletter mailing list -- aaswlist@lists.aas.org
To unsubscribe send an email to aaswlist-leave@lists.aas.org