

# AAS Newsletter

A Publication for the members of the American Astronomical

## President's Column

J. Craig Wheeler, [aaspres@aaas.org](mailto:aaspres@aaas.org)

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Astrozone and  
K12 Educator  
Reception

Two interesting years go by very rapidly. This is my last newsletter article as President. My thanks to all of you who have commented positively on them for your support and to those of you who did not feel so moved on your discretion.

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Scenes from the  
Austin Meeting

My term ends with a bang rather than a whimper with the sudden resignation of Alan Stern and the return to the NASA Science Mission Directorate of old hand Ed Weiler. Reading between the lines, my take on this transition is that Alan was dedicated to doing more with a fixed budget. An important boundary condition is that he could not allow cost growth in missions. His approach to this was one of tough love. He intended to first say "no." Any mission with a threat of overrun had to find its own way of solving that problem by downscoping or delay. If, in especially pressing circumstances, the damage could not be contained in the mission, Alan intended to keep it in the division. No bleeding of planetary problems into astrophysics, nor vice versa. I think what happened is that Alan foresaw overruns coming down the pike for which various pressures beyond his control would not allow him to exercise this tough love. It was thus a matter of principle for him to resign. He did so, by his own statement, with respect for the NASA Administrator and for the team he had assembled. If this is the proper interpretation, and it is personal to me, then there may be storm clouds brewing at NASA. Ed Weiler has weathered storms before. I wish him good fortune and proffer the help of the AAS where appropriate, in doing so again.

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Honored  
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Congressional  
Visits Day

It is as critical as ever to have a star to steer by in these stormy waters, and that is the past and, especially important, the upcoming decadal survey. The intention is to keep a close eye on realistic life-cycle costs and to put everything on the table that is not in development, whether advocated by past decadal studies or not. We need to do this hard work of prioritizing, or some other body will do it for us. In this context, it is very important for the agencies to cut the checks to pay for the process. I hope and trust by the time you read this, that is done and the process is well underway.

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Washington  
News

As I wrap up my term, I want to give special thanks to all with whom it has been my pleasure to work closely on behalf of the Society. The Council has been effective at several levels, helping to steer us through the journals transition and embracing the notion of a more strategic operation. The Executive Committee was on top of all the issues, constant wise heads. Susana Deustua served well as Director of Education before her recent departure, especially in helping to launch the International Year of Astronomy. The headquarters staff work long, hard, dedicated hours, and it was a pleasure and privilege to get to know them personally. I am especially grateful to my ad hoc "kitchen cabinet" comprised of Executive Officer Kevin Marvel, CAPP Chair Jack Burns, Secretary John Graham, and, most recently, our new President John Huchra, for constant support in all matters from details of the bylaws to sweeping policy issues. They made it an especially engaging tour of duty.



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*Items of general interest* to be considered for publication in the *AAS Newsletter* should be sent to [crystal@aas.org](mailto:crystal@aas.org). Appropriate pictures are welcome. For information about deadlines and submitting articles, see [www.aas.org/publications/newsletter.php](http://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](mailto: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](http://aastex.aas.org)  
**User Support:** [aastex-help@aas.org](mailto:aastex-help@aas.org)  
**Journal Homepages/Manuscript Submission:** [journals.aas.org](http://journals.aas.org)

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For address changes, email [address@aas.org](mailto:address@aas.org)

## From the Executive Office

Kevin B. Marvel, Executive Officer, [marvel@aas.org](mailto:marvel@aas.org)

The spring in DC has been particularly nice. The Cherry Blossom Festival is the official start of tourist season and the metro is clogged with tourists a bit unsure of how to use our Capitol's excellent public transport and unaware of the unwritten rules of stand to the right, walk to the left. The natives, noses pointed downward, hastily reading their newspaper or weekly magazine of choice mutter and grunt, pushing by on their way to meetings, hearings and so on. This season, as our John Bahcall public policy fellow, Marcos Huerta, points out in his column, the normal flurry of activity at the start of the annual appropriations process is not with us. It is unlikely that any movement on appropriations bills (or any significant legislation) will take place until at least after the election. Even the OMB is only preparing a continuing services budget for 2010, essentially leaving all budget details until the next administration arrives. The completion of the budget will be a mad flurry of activity from November to March. OMB staffers are not looking forward to the seven-day work weeks of very long days that will be necessary to complete the 2010 budget. It is no wonder that outside the beltway few understand the process or decisions of our government. Things are particularly out of whack this year.

In the AAS Executive Office we are busy gearing up for our St. Louis meeting, which will feature our first Meeting-in-a-Meeting (MiM) sessions. These sessions replace the former topical session format and are meant to provide a mechanism for the usual summer topical meeting or workshop to be held in conjunction with the AAS meeting (minimizing the logistical headaches for organizers, while drawing exciting science to the summer AAS meeting). We look forward to MiMs on the International Year of Astronomy, laboratory astrophysics and the spiral structure of the Galaxy. In addition, the Astronomical Society of the Pacific (ASP) will be meeting under the umbrella of our MiM format and are the prime organizers of the International Year of Astronomy sessions. We look forward to future partnerships with the ASP, including their significant partnership with us and other organizations (like AAVSO, the Astronomical League and many others) for the International Year of Astronomy 2009.

Don't forget that proposals for special sessions for our January 2009 Long Beach meeting are due on 15 May. Your vice presidents meet prior to each AAS meeting to select the content for the next meeting, including selecting invited speakers. Please consider developing an idea for a special session and submit it for their consideration. Nearly any format is available for a 90 minute session of your design, from individual speakers to a panel discussion. Be creative and send in those proposals. Proposals are submitted from the Members Only section of the AAS web pages.

Since we have not met in Long Beach before, Kelli Gilmore and I flew out to Los Angeles to inspect the Long Beach facility and can promise a fantastic meeting in January 2009. There is an exciting, vibrant and safe downtown area with new restaurants and shops, many new hotels, a world-class aquarium and some nice shopping and entertainment areas that will be sure to draw our meeting attendees away from our venue in the evenings. I even spotted a place claiming to have the most beers on tap of any bar in the world. I, for one, will have to check this out in person.

I also want to take this opportunity to welcome to our AAS Executive Office team, Ms. Pamela Wallace, who will be the deputy meetings manager. This new position was created so that we can provide better service to our divisions and provide more comprehensive service for our own meetings. The AAS winter meeting is regularly the largest gathering of astronomers in any given year and the complexity of organizing and executing the meeting is becoming increasingly difficult. The addition of an experienced meeting planner will help us

## AAS Seeks Editor for AER

The AAS is soliciting applications and nominations of candidates for the position of Editor of the *Astronomy Education Review (AER)*. This person will replace the current Editor, Sidney Wolff, who is stepping down at the end of 2008. The *AER* is internationally known as the pre-eminent scholarly journal in astronomy education and research, and the new Editor will be responsible for enhancing the excellence of the Journal. The AAS Council has selected a Search Committee to fill this position, chaired by its Education Officer, Tim Slater.

The Search Committee has identified the following qualifications that must be satisfied by the successful applicant: recognized stature and achievement in astronomy and/or science education; experience with diplomatic management of peers, staff, or students; a clear vision for the future of the *AER*; familiarity with budgets; experience as a referee; and previous editorial experience would be useful but is not required.

The Editor is responsible for building and maintaining a cadre of referees and assigns most manuscripts submitted to the referees, assesses the referee's reports and recommends the papers for publication. The Editor is responsible for maintaining the efficient and timely flow of manuscripts. As part of this process, this person will also actively recruit authors and referees; interface with the AAS Journals Manager; participate in the establishment and management of the Journal Budget; and report to the Publications Board and the AAS Council on the status of the *AER*.

The Society expects to compensate the Editor at roughly \$10,000 per year paid as a stipend and performance will be reviewed annually by the publications board. No additional infrastructure will be provided. Specific questions about the

meet your expectations for excellent service at our meetings.

As always, please send me any thoughts you might have on how your society can better serve your needs. You can email me directly at [kevin.marvel@aaas.org](mailto:kevin.marvel@aaas.org). I look forward to hearing from you and meeting you in person at any of our upcoming meetings.

historical operations of the journal to date can be addressed to Sidney Wolff, [swolff@noao.edu](mailto:swolff@noao.edu).

Candidates for this position should submit a cover letter, CV, bibliography, and names and contact information of three references to Tim Slater, Chair of the *AER* Editor Search Committee, at the above address. Email submission of PDF files is encouraged to [timslaterwyo@gmail.com](mailto:timslaterwyo@gmail.com) using *AER* Editor Search as subject line.

Nominations for the position may also be sent to the same address. Selected candidates will be asked to provide evidence of institutional support for their assuming the above editorial duties.

The cover letter should address the candidate's qualifications, reason for interest in the position, and ideas for the operation, management, and future of the *AER*. In accordance with the Bylaws of the Society, the Search Committee will make its recommendations to the AAS Publications Board and AAS Council. The final selection is made by the Council. Applications and nominations received by 15 June 2008 will be given full consideration. AAE/EOE.

The current website of the *Astronomy Education Review* is [aer.noao.edu](http://aer.noao.edu).

The job announcement is reprinted here and available on the *AAS Job Register* web page [members.aas.org/JobReg/JobRegister.cfm](http://members.aas.org/JobReg/JobRegister.cfm)

## Secretary's Corner

John Graham, [aassec@as.org](mailto:aassec@as.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 2008.** Shortly after that date, they are distributed to the several prize committees so that late submissions cannot be accommodated.

## Bahcall Auditorium



In December 2007, the Space Telescope Science Institute Auditorium was named the John N. Bahcall Auditorium, in honor of John Bahcall who championed the Hubble Space Telescope from its infancy to its ultimate scientific success. Bahcall was a tireless and enthusiastic advocate of the project for over three decades, and his leadership and commitment were seminal in making the dream of the Hubble Space Telescope a reality. Pictured: Neta Bahcall and daughter, Orli.

## Publications Board Meeting in Bristol

Chris Biemesderfer, Journals Manager

In early November 2007, the AAS Publications Board met at the offices of the Society's new publisher, IOP Publishing, in Bristol, UK. The Board is typically joined at its meetings by the journal editors and managing editors, and staff members from the publisher and the AAS Executive Office. This year, the Board's chair is Mike A'Hearn (Maryland); the Board also includes a representative from the library community, Donna Coletti (CfA).

After hearing a series of status reports, the Board discussed and debated such issues as Open Access and journal revenue models, and the deep archive of our digital journal material. As expected, considerable attention was paid to the transition of the journals, especially the *AJ* transition which was in progress during the meeting.

Bristol is a lively and engaging city, the sixth largest in England, famous for its floating harbor and enjoyable for its gourmet meat pies. (No, not kidding about that.) All of the meeting attendees, as well as several other guests, gathered for dinner at Carpe Diem, a fine restaurant with the additional merit of being environmentally friendly. The Board meets at the publisher's location once every four years; we will look forward to our next meeting in Bristol.



Front row: Lee Ann Willson, Elizabeth Korves, Judith Barnsby, Anne Cowley. Second row: Margaret Hanson, Richard Green, Chris Biemesderfer, Ethan Vishniac. Third row: Bo Reipurth, Virginia Trimble, Chris Sneden, Pat McCarthy, Donna Coletti. Back row: Kevin Marvel, Andrew Wray, Kerry Koffe, Mike A'Hearn, Jay Gallagher, Gary Ferland, Butler Burton

# AstroZone and K12 Educator Reception: Reaching out and Impacting Local Communities at AAS Conferences

Jake Noel-Storr and Emilie Drobnes

The movable feast that is the AAS semi-annual meeting offers the unique chance for the astronomical community to make a national impact on a local scale, by sharing our excitement in science and leaving an imprint on every city we visit. In the past when the 700 to 3,000 scientists, education specialists, and others convened in the city **approved by the AAS Council** we generally left four days later, largely unnoticed by the local community...but now, two new programs: AstroZone and K12 Educator Reception, offer all AAS members the chance to build connections with the locals wherever we visit.

The “*K12 Educator Reception*,” held on Sunday evening of most conferences, right ahead of the opening reception, is a reception for local K-12 teachers, and educators from local museums and science centers. Throughout the event, participants are provided the opportunity to interact with astronomers in a social setting, gain background knowledge, and collect resources to take back to their classrooms. The reception is designed to reinforce the fact that ‘scientists are normal people’ (or as normal as we can be) and give teachers the chance to ask those questions that they have always had in their mind but never had the chance to put to anyone with the answer. Teachers are also encouraged to watch out for news items in local and national media during the week, helping them feel connected with what is going on – after all, they were really there!

“*AstroZone*” is a four-hour open house for local families, teachers and kids to learn about the cool science that AAS members are currently involved in. One weekend afternoon prior to the AAS meeting, participants have a chance to meet scientists, do hands-on astronomy activities, and take home astronomy related resources collected during their visit to continue their excitement beyond the event. The AstroZone program takes its inspiration from an existing and successful model: held the Sunday prior to each of their annual meetings, the American Meteorological Society (AMS) hosts the WeatherFest program. With over 3,000 participants and volunteers, the program brings together scientists, area role models and the local community. Large national facilities and individual astronomers from smaller colleges are all welcome to participate (and have participated in the past) in AstroZone. Around 400 individuals attended AstroZone: Austin at the 211<sup>th</sup> meeting of the society, and the 250 we surveyed represented a good cross section of the local community.

We plan to expand both programs at future meetings. More scientists and education and public outreach groups will share the collective excitement of the AAS. Anyone interested in running education and outreach activities at AstroZone, or in meeting and talking science with teachers should contact Jake Noel-Storr ([jake@cis.rit.edu](mailto:jake@cis.rit.edu)). Advance signup is necessary to participate in both events, but anyone can just show up and enjoy AstroZone!

The K12 Educator Reception and AstroZone are sponsored by the AAS and Association for Astronomy Education (AAE) and co-organized by Jake Noel-Storr (AAE President) of Rochester Institute of Technology, Insight Lab and Emilie Drobnes (SPD EPO chair/AAE Vice-President) of NASA, Goddard Space Flight Center/ADNET Systems, Inc. The K12 Educator Reception was also sponsored by Lockheed Martin in both Austin and Honolulu. Any other parties interested in sponsorship opportunities should contact Emilie Drobnes ([emilie.drobnes@nasa.gov](mailto:emilie.drobnes@nasa.gov)). For more information on these events please visit the AAE website ([www.aae.org](http://www.aae.org)).

## Member Deaths

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

Robert F. Doolittle  
William Kraushaar  
Mirek Plavec  
Maurice M. Shapiro  
Heinrich Wendker

## 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](mailto: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.

## Correction

Lea Zernow was the 2008 undergraduate student winner of the Chambliss Astronomy Achievement Student Award.

## Opting Out of AAS Publications

If you would no longer like to receive paper copies of the *AAS Newsletter*, the *AAS Membership Directory*, or the *AAS Calendar*, please send an email to [address@aaas.org](mailto:address@aaas.org).

To unsubscribe from AAS emails, contact [address@aaas.org](mailto:address@aaas.org)

# Scenes from the Austin Meeting

Over 2,500 attendees converged on the Austin Convention Center for the 211<sup>th</sup> AAS meeting on 7-11 January 2008. They swarmed the Job Center, and the Internet Cafe, had a ball listening to the Austin Lounge Lizards at the conference banquet, and presented hundreds of oral and poster papers on recent findings. As the meeting went on, updates were displayed on about 175 “ViewSpace” screens around the USA, in science museums and other venues. Press conferences were well attended, and were transmitted to reporters at remote locations, who heard the audio via phone lines and viewed the presentations by means of “slidecasts” on an internet site. All photographs that are not otherwise credited are AAS Photos by Kelley Knight, © 2008 American Astronomical Society.



**Left photo:** David Lambert (left, Director, McDonald Observatory) received the Henry Norris Russell Lectureship from University of Texas-Austin colleague, AAS President J. Craig Wheeler. Lambert spoke on *A Half-Century of Spectroscopic Astrophysics*. **Middle photo:** Speakers at a press conference on the next Hubble Servicing Mission were (left-to-right) David Leckrone (Senior HST Project Scientist), Alan Stern (NASA Associate Administrator for Science Missions Directorate), John Grunsfeld (lead EVA Astronaut for the mission), and Sandra Faber (UCSC). Faber served on the NRC committee on extending the life of HST. Stern has since left NASA. **Right photo:** Galaxy experts who presented new findings included (L-to-R) Gene Byrd (U. Alabama-Tuscaloosa), Duilia de Mello (Catholic U. & NASA Goddard), Elizabeth McGrath (U. California, Santa Cruz & U. Hawaii) and Eric Gawiser (Rutgers U.).



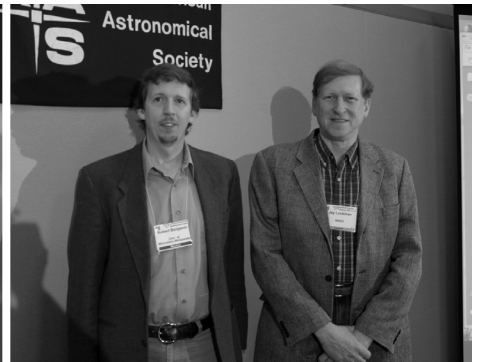
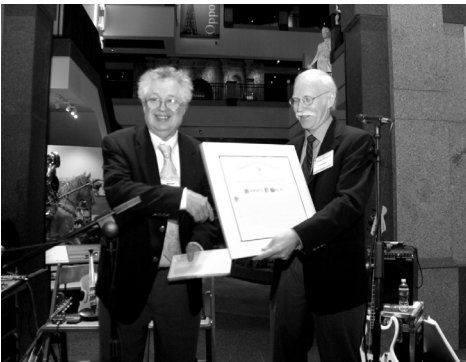
**Left photo:** Historical Astronomy Division Chair Sara Schechner (Harvard U.) and Past Chair Donald Yeomans (JPL) flanked David DeVorkin (National Air and Space Museum) as he received the LeRoy E. Doggett Prize for Historical Astronomy. DeVorkin recounted the history of Astronomy on the Mall in Washington, DC. Photo, Joe Tenn, Sonoma State U. **Middle photo:** Sara Seager (MIT) received the Helen B. Warner Prize for Astronomy from AAS President J. Craig Wheeler and lectured on the search for habitable exoplanets. **Right photo:** (L-to-R) Jay Frogel, Bill Smith, and Marylu Evans staffed a booth celebrating AURA’s 50 years.



**Left photo:** Gary Davis (left, Director, Joint Astronomy Centre, Hawaii) and Stephen Warren (Imperial College London) announced the first world data release from the UKIRT Infrared Deep Sky Survey. Shardha Jogee (U. Texas-Austin) spoke on disk galaxy evolution results from large, deep, and multi-wavelength surveys. **Middle photo:** Speakers at a press briefing on black holes were (L-to-R) Kelly Holley-Bockelmann (Penn State), Gregory Sivakoff (Ohio State), Steve Howell (WIYN/NOAO), Mauri Valtonen (Tuorla Observatory, Finland), and AAS President, J. Craig Wheeler (Independent Commentator). **Right photo:** Exoplanetary explorers at Austin included (L-to-R) Diana Valencia (Harvard U.), Rory Barnes (U. Arizona), Eric Mamajek, (Harvard-Smithsonian CfA), Carl Melis (UCLA) and Warner Prize Lecturer Sara Seager (MIT).



**Left photo:** Andrew Fraknoi (at left, Foothill College) received the \$5000 Andrew Gemant Award from James Stith (Vice President, Physics Resources Center for the American Institute of Physics) and lectured on Astronomy in popular culture. **Middle photo:** Volker Bromm (left, U. Texas-Austin) briefed reporters on supercomputer simulations of the Universe's first stars on a press tour of the Texas Advanced Computing Center, led by TACC Director Jay Boisseau (at right). Photo, University of Texas-Austin. **Right photo:** Meghan Gray (left, U. Nottingham) and Catherine Heymans (right, U. British Columbia) reported on galaxy evolution and dark matter in supercluster Abell 901/902.



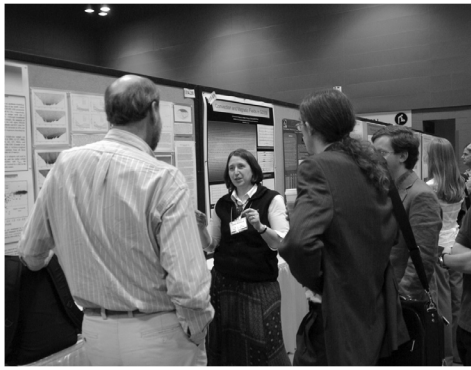
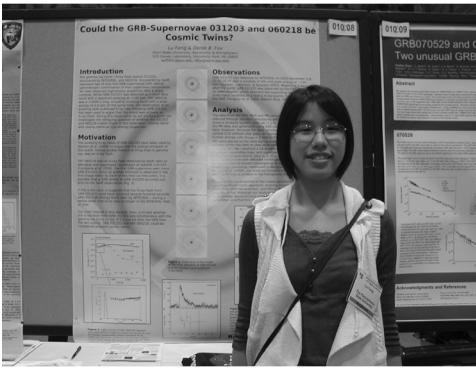
**Left photo:** Press Officer Steve Maran accepted the George Van Biesbroeck Prize from President Wheeler. **Middle photo:** Paulo Freire (left, Arecibo Observatory) found that a pulsar in Messier 5 is unusually massive. Nathan Smith (right, UC Berkeley) studied recent supernovae whose circumstellar media show evidence of pre-explosion shock interactions. **Right photo:** Robert Benjamin (left, U. Wisconsin-Whitewater) and Jay Lockman (right, NRAO) told what the Green Bank Telescope revealed about Smith's Cloud and what will happen when it strikes the galactic disk. Lockman also explained the discovery on National Public Radio. It was later featured on the History Channel.



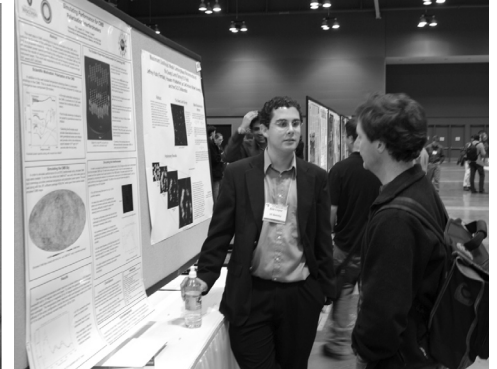
**Left photo:** HEAD Chair Stephen Murray (left, CfA) gave the Bruno Rossi Prize to Neil Gehrels (NASA Goddard), who spoke on gamma ray burst discoveries with Swift. **Middle photo:** Robert Kennicutt (left, U. Cambridge) received the Dannie Heineman Prize for Astrophysics from James Stith (AIP) and spoke on star formation in a cosmological context. **Right photo:** Keith Noll received the AAS Education Prize from President Wheeler.



**Left photo:** The meeting attracted the most TV crews in several years. Photo, Inge Heyer. **Middle photo:** NASA Administrator Michael Griffin urged astronomers to support the whole NASA flight program, not just robotic exploration. Photo, Beth Fernandez. **Right photo:** Sandra Faber (UCSC) spoke on emerging principles of galaxy formation and showed what could be an "HR diagram" for galaxies. Photo, Beth Fernandez.



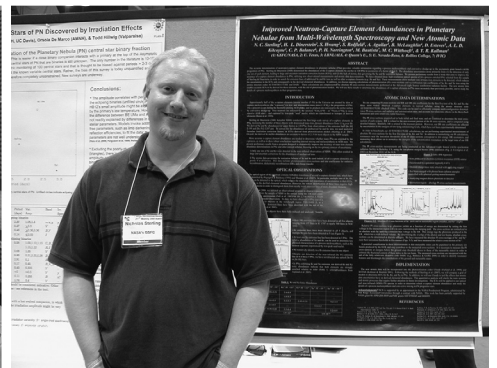
**Left photo:** Lu Feng (Penn State) investigated whether two GRBs/X-ray flash events, one discovered by INTEGRAL and one by Swift might be “cosmic twins” with nearly-identical high-energy properties. Photo, Beth Fernandez. **Middle photo:** Heidi Newberg (RPI) attracted a crowd with her poster reporting “significant substructure in the velocities of the spheroidal stars in every direction that we probe.” **Right photo:** Winners of the Chambliss Astronomy Achievement Student Awards posed at the banquet with President Wheeler (far right).



**Left photo:** Hilding Neilson (U. Toronto) gave a dissertation talk on his analytical derivation of pulsation driven mass loss in classical Cepheids. **Middle photo:** James Lattis (U. Wisconsin) explained the use of the astrolabe in mapping and navigation as recommended by Clavius. **Right photo:** Eric Lopez (left, UC Berkeley) told Jean Dupuis (Canadian Space Agency) about simulated instrument performance for the EPIC mission, which would measure polarization in the microwave background interferometrically.

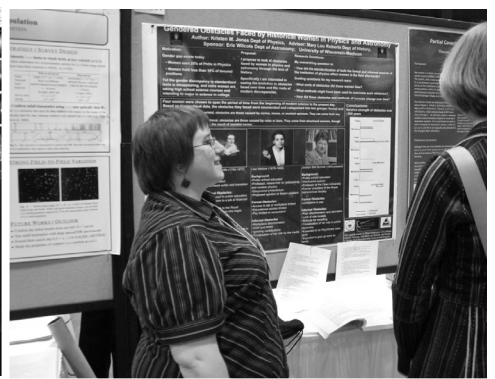
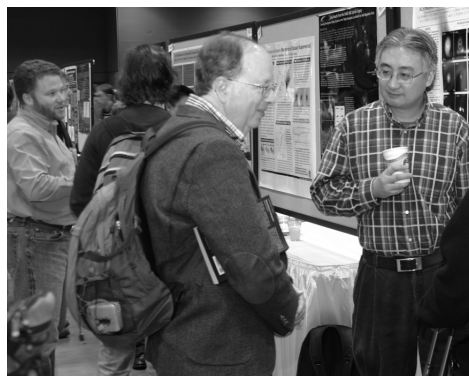
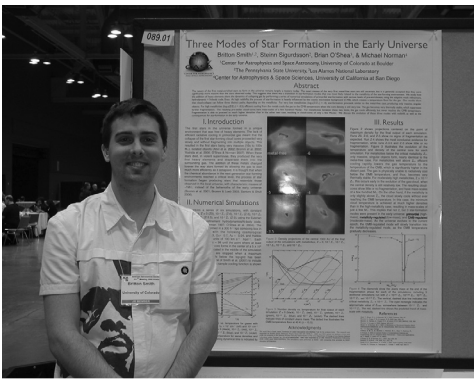


**Left photo:** Physics Nobelist Steven Weinberg (left, U. Texas-Austin) chatted with Ron Cowen (*Science News*) at a reception. **Middle photo:** US International Year of Astronomy 2009 staffers at the IYA Town Hall were (L-to-R), Susana Deustua (now at STScI), Douglas Isbell (NOAO), and Lars Lindberg Christensen (ESA Hubble & IAU). Photo, Peter Stockman.. **Right photo:** Astronomers came a long way to exhibit for the Academia Sinica’s Institute of Astronomy and Astrophysics.

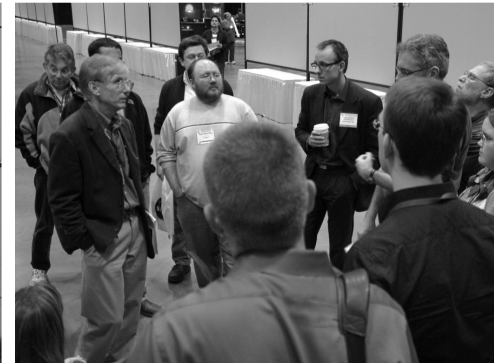
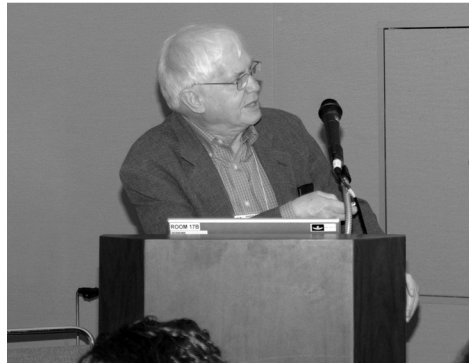


**Left photo:** Carolyn Collins Petersen (Loch Ness Productions) tried on space gloves after the Hubble servicing press conference as Philip Plait (BadAstronomy.com) looked on. **Middle photo:** Eduardo Marin (San Diego State U.) modeled eclipses of a classical nova and a novalike variable. Photo, Beth Fernandez. **Right photo:** Nicholas Sterling (NASA GSFC) presented improved neutron-capture element abundances in planetary nebulae. Photo, Beth Fernandez.





**Left photo:** Britton Smith (U. Colorado) studied star formation modes in the early universe. Photo, Beth Fernandez. **Middle photo:** Jiasheng Huang (Smithsonian Astrophysical Obs.), in plaid shirt, told Jay Gallagher (U. Wisconsin-Madison) about multi-wavelength studies of starburst-dominated ultraluminous infrared galaxies in a narrow redshift interval around  $z = 1.85$ . **Right photo:** Kristen Jones (left, U. Wisconsin) reported on gendered obstacles faced by historical women in physics and astronomy.



**Left photo:** Susan Kelly (Norwalk Public Schools) and Larry Krumenaker (U. Georgia) enjoyed the Educators Reception. **Middle photo:** Owen Gingerich (Harvard-Smithsonian CfA) described “The Case of Thomas Harriot” who made telescopic observations of sunspots before Galileo. **Right photo:** Tony Tyson (left foreground, UC Davis) told about LSST. Ryan Scranton (Google) and Lars Christensen (holding cup, Hubble Europe) are just to Tyson’s left.



**Left photo:** Tommaso Treu (UCSB) explained the discovery of a double Einstein ring to Lindsay Patterson (Earth & Sky radio). **Middle photo:** Edward Guinan (far left) and Jason Merritt (next to Guinan), both of Villanova U., reported a probable long-term activity cycle in Proxima Centauri. Evgenya Shkolnik (center, U. Hawaii) found a rare low-mass, quadruple-lined spectroscopic binary. Dean Hines (to the right of Shkolnik, Space Science Institute) and Glenn Schneider (far right, U. Arizona) discovered an oddly shaped circumstellar disk, “The Moth” with the Hubble Space Telescope. **Right photo:** David Weinberg (far left, Ohio State) announced the Sloan Digital Sky Survey III. In the foreground are Eileen Ryan (left) and Michelle Creech-Eakman (both, New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology) who gave updates on the Magdalena Ridge Observatory Interferometer and 2.4-meter Fast Tracking Telescope. At the rear are U. Texas-Austin’s Gary Hill (center) and Karl Gebhardt (right), who described new developments at the Hobby-Eberly Telescope to study dark energy evolution.



**Left photo:** Jay Pasachoff (Williams College) relived the Moonwatch era of amateur Sputnik tracking at a HAD session. Photo, Donald Yeomans. **Middle photo:** President-Elect John Huchra (CfA) sat with USA IYA 2009 fundraiser Stanley Weinstein. Photo, Peter Stockman.

# Committee on the Status of Women in Astronomy

Geoffrey Clayton (CSWA Chair, Louisiana State University, [gclayton@fenway.phys.lsu.edu](mailto:gclayton@fenway.phys.lsu.edu))

## The January 2008 AAS Meeting

The CSWA convened a panel at the Austin AAS meeting in which astronomers at various stages in their careers described the ways in which they made their decisions about when to raise a family and how their choices have had an impact on their careers. The panel members were: Hannah Jang-Condell (University of Maryland & GSFC), Margaret Hanson (University of Cincinnati), Orsola De Marco (American Museum of Natural History), Charles Liu (CUNY) and John Debes (DTM).

One of the most difficult decisions facing professional women is whether to have children and, if so, when. In practice women in astronomy have chosen a variety of solutions, ranging from delaying or interrupting graduate school or postdoctoral fellowships, delaying child rearing until after tenure, or even abandoning the idea of having children. These decisions usually have a considerable impact on the career path of a professional woman. The following points summarize the views of the panelists and members of the audience:

### When is the best time to have kids?

1. All times are equally good, meaning that you need to have kids when the time is right for you. Women cannot always count on waiting until 'the time is right' to get pregnant. Nature doesn't always oblige on a schedule and if you wait too long into your late 30's or early 40's, it may be too late.

2. If you have a choice in the matter, then having kids during grad school might have the least impact on your career because it is easier to take some time off. When you are a postdoc you are usually on a two-year clock and when you are tenure track, you usually on a five-year clock.

3. Finding a daycare situation you really trust and that your child loves is critical to your peace of mind, i.e., that they are well taken care of and that you are not a 'bad parent' for not raising them yourself fulltime.

4. Men need to be proactive and ask about benefits and policies with regard to parental leave, delay of tenure, etc., and make use of these opportunities themselves, so it is not always associated with female astronomers (to reduce biases), and to become a more fully engaged new parent.

5. During the hiring process you may want to be open about your two-body (or N-body) problem during job interviews. But the best time to bring it up, whether at the beginning of the process or when on the short list, will vary with the situation.

6. Don't listen too much to anyone's advice (including ours!). Everyone's kid is different; everyone's personal circumstances

are different; everyone's parenting style is different. You know what's best for your family, and don't let anyone else tell you differently.

7. A supportive partner, or developing a circle of support from friends and family is extremely helpful.

8. Having kids is really hard, let alone trying to work at the same time, but it may be the most rewarding thing you ever do.

## Update on the Pasadena Recommendations

The following letter has been sent from the AAS President to Department Chairs encouraging them to publicly endorse the Pasadena Recommendations.

Dear Department Chairperson,

In January 2005, the American Astronomical Society (AAS) unanimously endorsed a series of recommendations aimed at promoting gender equity in astronomy. We are writing your department to encourage you to follow suit. We all want to increase the diversity of our field, for the betterment of the science, for fairness to non-traditional students (women, minorities), to continue to be supported by a diverse public, and because equal opportunity is the law (Title IX). Universities are aware of the continued barriers that women face in academia, as noted by the "Statement on Gender Equity in Academic Science and Engineering" signed by nine universities in 2001 and reaffirmed by the same institutions on December 6, 2005. National laboratories and other institutions are also concerned with achieving a diverse and fair working environment.

The AAS has long been a proponent of diversity in science. To this end, the AAS created a Committee on the Status of Women in Astronomy in 1972, and a meeting was held to address ways to promote equity in 1992. That meeting resulted in the Baltimore Charter for Women in Astronomy (see [www.stsci.edu/stsci/meetings/WiA/BaltoCharter.html](http://www.stsci.edu/stsci/meetings/WiA/BaltoCharter.html)), an initial set of recommendations to improve the environment for women in astronomy. A second meeting was held in Pasadena in 2003, and led to another set of recommendations that extend those in the Baltimore Charter. The Pasadena Recommendations suggest concrete steps that can be taken by individual institutions.

The AAS has been very forward thinking and proactive in increasing the number of women – and we are finally seeing results; since 2003 over 50% of AAS members between the ages of 18-23 have been women. Now we ask you to come together and consider the Pasadena Recommendations – discuss them, endorse them officially (notify us, we will post endorsements on our web site [www.aas.org/cswa](http://www.aas.org/cswa)), post them prominently (a brochure, suitable for printing, is

## Committee on the Status of Women in Astronomy continued

available at our web site), advertise them to your university administration, and take proactive steps to promote equity in your own institution. We also welcome comments and feedback.

Sincerely,  
J. Craig Wheeler  
President, American Astronomical Society

### CSWA Web Site

We are continuing to upgrade the CSWA's presence on the web. We plan more improvements in the coming year including, making the AASWOMEN newsletter available via RSS and the introduction of a CSWA Blog. You can find us at, [www.aas.org/cswa](http://www.aas.org/cswa).

## Committee on the Status of Minorities in Astronomy

Louis-Gregory Strolger, [louis.strolger@wku.edu](mailto:louis.strolger@wku.edu)

The Committee on the Status of Minorities in Astronomy (CSMA) met at the Austin winter meeting to discuss our goals and priorities for the upcoming year and beyond. We identified several areas in which we intend to reinvigorate CSMA participation, and seek at-large AAS community participation in as well. Among them are coordinated education and outreach efforts with more attention on K-12 education, and increased participation and visibility in larger forums involving African-American and Hispanic-American STEM participation (see D & I Caucus response below).

We also addressed the growing need for advocacy and support for minority professionals at all levels in their careers (including undergraduates) through peer mentorship. This, and the need for further networking opportunities (also see Luncheon announcement below), has led to the creation of an electronic mailing list called the `aas_panchromatic`. This list intended as a networking and mentorship gateway, to keep the community better informed of upcoming events and issues, and to promote wider participation. It is not intended as an open forum for political discussion or as a distribution list for job advertisements.

Those interested in including themselves on the `aas_panchromatic` mailing list should see instructions on [email.rutgers.edu/mailman/listinfo/aas\\_panchromatic](mailto:email.rutgers.edu/mailman/listinfo/aas_panchromatic) and [www.physics.rutgers.edu/~ajbaker/aas\\_panchromatic.html](http://www.physics.rutgers.edu/~ajbaker/aas_panchromatic.html).

### The Diversity and Initiative (D & I) Caucus Response

In late January 2008, the Congressional Diversity and Initiative Caucus contacted the AIP National Committee on Minorities for input on the following three questions: (a) What does your group believe are the the biggest barriers to minorities and/or women entering the STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) workforce. (b) What institutional policies or practices are in place that

can mitigate these challenges and have proven effective in successfully increasing diversity in the STEM fields? (c) What can Congress and federal agencies do to promote and ensure a more favorable environment for minorities and women to enter the STEM fields and pursue careers in STEM.

The AAS representative on this committee is Dr. Kartik Sheth from the Spitzer Science Center at Caltech. On behalf of the CSMA and CSWA, he solicited community input on these three questions and received an overwhelming response from over forty society members from undergraduates and graduate students, to senior academic and scientific staff members. We submitted a brief report in advance of the Caucus's hearing which can be found at: [spider.ipac.caltech.edu/~kartik/caucus.pdf](http://spider.ipac.caltech.edu/~kartik/caucus.pdf)

We are extremely pleased that we were able to amplify the role of the astronomy community in the larger national scientific community. We believe that we made an important contribution to the D&I Caucus and the Congressional dialogue on science policy and its goal of improving the participation of underrepresented minorities in Science, Technology and Engineering fields.

### Long Beach Winter Meeting Mentorship Luncheon

The CSMA is planning a Special Session, likely in the form of a luncheon, on mentorship and job networking at the upcoming AAS Meeting in Long Beach. Further details will be provided through the `aas_panchromatic` list, and on the CSMA website: [www.vanderbilt.edu/csma](http://www.vanderbilt.edu/csma)

### Seeking Recent Minority Graduates

The CSMA would like to continue highlighting recent minority PhD recipients in its *SPECTRUM* newsletter. If you are a recent minority graduate, or know one, please contact the *SPECTRUM* editor at [keivan.stassun@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:keivan.stassun@vanderbilt.edu)

# Committee on Employment

Luke D. Keller, lkeller@ithaca.edu

## Preparing for the College Teaching Job Market

I once had a cross-country running coach who advised that if you want to run fast, you need to run fast. Having been on three faculty hiring committees over the past five years, I see that a similar rule goes for landing a teaching-oriented college faculty job: If you want to be a teacher you need to teach. Teaching experience is the single most important aspect of an application to be a professor at a college or university where undergraduate teaching is the primary focus. If at all possible it should be teaching as the instructor of record (you are in charge) teaching a college-level course in physics or astronomy. It is not enough for teaching to be important to you – after all, teaching is important to most people looking for this kind of faculty position – nor is it enough to have a well-articulated teaching philosophy, though this is helpful and often requested in applications. What you need to demonstrate clearly throughout your application packet is that you have designed and taught at least one course, written exams, interacted with students as their primary instructor/professor, and that you, your students, and your teaching colleagues think it would be good for you to do it again.

There are many paths to a teaching-focused faculty position. The following suggestions are intended to help current graduate students who have no previous teaching experience and who want to apply for college-level teaching jobs immediately after graduating or after a short postdoc career:

- Getting teaching experience that will convince a hiring committee to invite you for an interview is the most important step. If you are lucky enough to be at a school that will let you teach your own class, take advantage of your good fortune. If not, look at the on-line job listings at a nearby small college or community college. Contact the physics department chair with your willingness and interest in teaching, even if there are no positions currently available. Most colleges have regular openings for teaching introductory physics and astronomy, and many are actually happy to help proto-professors develop and hone their teaching skills.
- Offer to teach the lecture, not just a lab, since you most likely already have or will have lab instruction and tutoring experience as a TA. The goal is to get your own class and your name at the top of a syllabus that you have written. Without this kind of teaching experience, your chances of success on the job market are reduced.
- More than one or two semesters of teaching while in grad school is not necessary. Keep in mind that you also need a well-established research program to land that college job and for that you need to finish your

dissertation! Most search committees are reluctant to hire a person into a tenure-track job who will not have defended by the time classes start. Teaching is fun and it gets easier with experience so you may be tempted to spend more time on teaching at the expense of your dissertation; avoid that trap.

- Give your students the opportunity to evaluate your teaching even if the place you teach does not normally do student evaluations for adjunct faculty. This will give you feedback and material for your own letters of application and for your reference letter writers.
- Identify at least one faculty member, either at the college where you teach or at your home institution, who will visit your class a few times over a semester or quarter and then write a letter of recommendation that emphasizes your teaching. Give this person access to your student evaluations. Ideally this will NOT be your dissertation advisor since s/he will most likely be writing you a research-oriented letter that will be read along side the teaching letter. Most teaching-oriented jobs will ask for at least one letter that focuses on your teaching experience and effectiveness. You should also ask your supervisor (where you teach) to visit your classes and be prepared to write a letter on your behalf.
- It is rarely a good idea to try to teach – especially your first course – while taking full load of graduate courses. Wait until you have completed your course work. When you do finish with classes, get that M.A. or M.S. Though rarely required to go on for the Ph.D. in astronomy or physics, a master's degree will help you get that first teaching job while still in grad school. Some jobs require the master's.
- Get help and advice on teaching methods, interacting with students, etc., especially if your teaching job is not at your Ph.D. institution. The best way is to talk with your colleagues, especially those who are likely to write letters for you later. You should also plan to attend at least one teaching workshop or conference. Many professional conferences (including AAS meetings) showcase pedagogy research and have optional teaching workshops for college-level teachers of physics and astronomy. The American Association of Physics Teachers is another excellent resource.
- Balancing teaching with finishing your dissertation is essential and it is like balancing teaching and research after you land that faculty job. Expect your first teaching experience to take a lot of time. In the balance, though, realize that teaching is a project that

## Committee on Employment continued

takes as much time as you give it so set boundaries. Remember to factor commuting time into your scheduling and planning and make sure that your dissertation advisor knows when not to expect you to be in your office or in the lab.

- You may experience well-meaning resistance to your teaching project from your own teachers and advisors. This may be in the form of advice that concentrating on your research is the best way to prepare for the job market. The question you should ask is “Which job market?” Try to make it clear that you want a job that requires teaching experience and ask their advice about balancing teaching with research.

### **So you found the perfect job ad...**

Faculty hiring committees usually know exactly what they are looking for. Their teaching job must be ‘Plan A’ for you. You are wasting your time and theirs if you just change the institution name at the top of your research/postdoc job applications. It is astonishing how many application letters I have seen that basically say, “Look at my fabulous research and, by the way, I’m committed to excellence in teaching.” Teaching must come first; after all it will have to come first if you get the job. Teaching must also be the primary emphasis of your CV; list your teaching and teaching-related experience first, then your research experience and publications. Your application letter should reflect the ad and use similar language to argue that you fit the position and have done your homework to learn about the department and program. If you really want the job, contact the hiring committee chairperson for more information so you can really tailor your application to the position.

## Donate to the AAS Now and Help Astronomy Happen

By donating to the AAS, members of the public can help enable astronomers to make new discoveries, collaborate more effectively and share their results with the public through publication.

The AAS publishes the major research journals in the field, holds scientific conferences each year, carries out programs to help young astronomers pursue their career and has many programs to enhance astronomy education. In addition, the AAS is a 501(c)3 non-profit corporation and all donations are fully tax deductible.

Donate today, because one sky connects us all!  
[members.aas.org/contributions/](http://members.aas.org/contributions/)

### **Whether to postdoc...**

The above guidelines go for postdocs as well. Even if you have decided to concentrate for now on research, if you know you eventually want a teaching job you need to prove it to yourself and future hiring committees by teaching sooner rather than later. It is very hard to convince a committee of teachers that teaching is your number one priority when your CV has a long list of papers, but no teaching experience beyond a few TA jobs in grad school. Consider applying for one of the growing number of teaching postdocs that carry a small teaching load, sometimes just one class per year.

Most teaching-oriented colleges like to see postdoctoral research experience in addition to teaching experience. They would like to see evidence of a well-established, even if modest, research program that is obviously doable in parallel with a heavy teaching load and with no graduate students.

### **But I want to be a professor at a large research university...**

The tier-one research universities are placing increasing emphasis on undergraduate teaching skill, especially in their new faculty hires. Top that fabulous CV off with a semester at the front of a classroom.

The bottom line: if want to be a teacher, you need to teach.

*The AAS Committee on Employment is pleased to highlight useful resources for astronomers. Please check out our website ([www.aas.org/career/](http://www.aas.org/career/)) for additional resources and contact information for the committee members.*

## 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@aaas.org](mailto:crystal@aaas.org).

# News from NSF Division of Astronomical Sciences

Eileen D. Friel, Executive Officer, Division of Astronomical Sciences, [efriel@nsf.gov](mailto:efriel@nsf.gov)

## Recent Changes in the Division of Astronomical Sciences

On 14 April 2008, Dr. Wayne Van Citters accepted a new position as Senior Advisor in the Office of the Assistant Director, Mathematical and Physical Sciences (MPS). Wayne leaves his position as the AST Division Director, a position that he has held with distinction since 2001. NSF will shortly begin an open search for his replacement. I have agreed to serve as Acting Division Director until a suitable replacement is found.

In his new position, Wayne will work on MPS-wide strategic issues, including facilities management and oversight and planning of future facilities for MPS. This area is one of growing importance to MPS and to NSF. Wayne's many years of experience and leadership in facilities planning, development, construction, operations, management, and oversight for AST will be invaluable. In particular, his leadership in carrying out the recent Senior Review in AST is widely regarded and supported in NSF. In his new role, Wayne will continue to follow strategic issues in AST, including the continuing implementation of the Senior Review.

I think I can speak for my colleagues when I say we will miss our daily interactions with Wayne. Fortunately, he will be located just across the atrium in the MPS front office, a short stroll from AST, and we look forward to working with him in this new role.

Speaking personally, it has been an honor to work with Wayne in his position as Division Director. His dedication to the mission of the NSF and the good of the astronomical community, as well as his tireless nature, diplomacy, integrity and good cheer make him "a tough act to follow!"

Craig Foltz  
Acting Director  
Division of Astronomical Sciences

## 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 Dr. Brian Patten ([bpatten@nsf.gov](mailto: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 Dr. Tammy Bosler ([tbosler@nsf.gov](mailto:tbosler@nsf.gov)) or Dr. Dana Lehr ([dlehr@nsf.gov](mailto: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 Dr. Brian Patten ([bpatten@nsf.gov](mailto:bpatten@nsf.gov)) for more information.

**8 October 2008:** NSF Astronomy and Astrophysics Postdoctoral Fellowships Program (AAPF) (NSF 07-572)

**1 November 2008:** Advanced Technologies and Instrumentation (ATI)

**15 November 2008:** Astronomy & Astrophysics Research Grants (AAG) (NSF 05-608) provides individual investigator and collaborative research grants for observational, theoretical, laboratory and archival data studies in all areas of astronomy and astrophysics.

## AST Committee of Visitors (COV)

In February 2008, the Astronomy Division was reviewed by a Committee of Visitors, a regular event for all divisions at NSF. The Committee spent three days examining documentation of the review process and proposal actions, reviewing the management of national observatory facilities, and discussing with the Division our processes and planning for the future. The committee produced a report which will be found at [www.nsf.gov/mps/advisory/cov.jsp](http://www.nsf.gov/mps/advisory/cov.jsp) along with the Division's response to their recommendations. We thank the members of the COV for their extensive dialogue with us and the complimentary and constructive report they produced.

## 2008 Astronomy and Astrophysics Postdoctoral Fellows

The Division of Astronomical Sciences is pleased to announce the 2008 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.

- Bethany Cobb - University of California, Berkeley, "Clues to gamma-ray burst formation through observations of afterglows, GRB-supernovae and dark burst host galaxies"
- David Lai - University of California, Santa Cruz, "Chemical Signatures of Recent Merger Events in the Outer Halo and the Role of Dwarf Spheroidals in Building the Milky Way"

## News from NSF continued

- Makenzie Lystrup - University of Colorado, Boulder, “Ionosphere-Magnetosphere Energetics and Dynamics at Jupiter and Saturn: a Multi-Wavelength, Multi-Faceted Approach”
- Karin Menendez-Delmestre - The Observatories of the Carnegie Institution of Washington, “Exploring Galaxy Evolution as a Function of Environment Using Submillimeter Galaxies as Signposts of Protoclusters”
- Stephen Muchovej - California Institute of Technology, “A Multi-Wavelength Study of Polarized Foregrounds and Anomalous Emission in the ISM”
- Jeremiah Murphy - University of Washington, “Multidimensional Radiation-Hydrodynamic Simulations of Core-Collapse Supernovae, Winds from Oblate Hot Stars, and Explosions of Rapidly-Rotating Stars”
- John Wisniewski - University of Washington, “Young Circumstellar Disks: Exoplanet Diagnostics”

### FY 2008 CAREER Awardees

The Division of Astronomical Sciences is pleased to announce the FY 2008 Faculty Early Career Development (CAREER) program recipients. This NSF-wide program is the Foundation’s most prestigious award for support of the early career-development activities of junior faculty members. The intent of the program is to provide stable support at a sufficient level and duration to enable awardees to develop careers as outstanding teacher-scholars in the context of the mission of their organization. The FY 2008 CAREER recipients are:

- Dr. Linda Elkins Tanton, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, “CAREER: Building rocky planets: From Mercury and Vesta to GL 581c”
- Dr. Charles Keeton, Rutgers University - New Brunswick, “CAREER: A New Frontier in Dark Matter Substructure Studies”
- Dr. Lisa Kewley, University of Hawaii, “CAREER: The Cosmic Metallicity and Star Formation History of Galaxies”
- Dr. Andrea Lommen, Franklin and Marshall College, “CAREER: Gravitational Wave Detection Using Pulsars”
- Dr. Dimitrios Psaltis, University of Arizona, “CAREER: Exploring the Warped Spacetimes of Astrophysical Black Holes”
- Dr. Mary Putman, University of Michigan - Ann Arbor, “CAREER: Tracing Gaseous Galaxy Evolution and Galaxies as a Teaching Tool for Middle School and College Students”

### News about PAARE

The PAARE (Partnerships in Astronomy & Astrophysics Research and Education) program is new to AST, and had its first round of competition in FY2008. The program is designed to improve and strengthen the education infrastructure in astronomy and astrophysics, and to increase recruitment, retention and degree attainment by members of groups underrepresented in the field. This will be accomplished by stimulating the development of formal, long-term, collaborative research and education partnerships between minority serving colleges and partners at research institutions, which include universities, private observatories and NSF/AST supported facilities. Principal investigators on PAARE proposals must hold full or part time faculty appointments at minority-serving colleges or universities.

We were able to make four awards in the first year of PAARE: Frederick Jenet at the University of Texas, Brownsville partnering with NAIC Arecibo Observatory and NRAO; John Stacy at Southern University, Baton Rouge partnering with University of Massachusetts, Amherst; Keivan Stassun at Fisk University partnering with Vanderbilt University, Boston University, and the University of Cape Town; and Don Walter at South Carolina State University partnering with Clemson University and NOAO.

We hope to make a similar number of awards next year. We encourage you to consider developing or building on collaborative projects with eligible institutions and PI’s to help achieve the goals of the PAARE program. A new version of the PAARE solicitation is currently available on the NSF/AST website along with contact information for NSF program officers. The proposal deadline for the FY2009 cycle is 3 August 2008.

# News from the Astronomical Society of the Pacific (ASP)

James Manning, Executive Director

## Planting SEEDs and Teaching the Cosmos

Sometimes, it all begins with the planting of a seed.

The Astronomical Society of the Pacific was founded nearly 120 years ago on the premise that there were important things to be gained in bringing professional astronomers and astronomy enthusiasts together to share their knowledge of and passion for the cosmos. Ever since, the Society has manned the crossroads of astronomy exchange, seeking to create and enhance connections between researchers, educators, amateur astronomers, and the public.

One of the very recent efforts we have undertaken to make connections between the research community and the education and public outreach effort, for example, is a program called the Simple, Effective Education and Dissemination grants program for astronomy researchers—the SEED program for short. Sponsored last year and this by ESA's Planck Mission through the Jet Propulsion Laboratory, with additional assistance from an anonymous donor, this small grants program provides researchers in cosmology and space science an opportunity to share their work with the larger public through K-12 formal education, informal education, or outreach programs.

The grants program provides up to \$2,500 to active researchers to engage in EPO activities, including the purchase of supporting equipment, supplies and materials, and travel costs associated with such activities. The funds can also be combined with other EPO funds to add value to larger projects.

The application deadline is 15 June. For details, visit the ASP's SEED grant page at: [www.astrosociety.org/education/grants/grants.html](http://www.astrosociety.org/education/grants/grants.html).

The grants are seed-sized, but from a little acorn, we know what can grow. Likewise, when a seed is planted in the right mind at the right time, wonderful things can happen. If you would like to try your hand at astronomical husbandry, visit the web page, and send us a proposal.

There are many ways to plant seeds, and if you teach introductory astronomy to non-science majors at your college or university, you also understand the importance of creating positive attitudes toward and understanding of science among those who may not become tomorrow's astronomers, but will become part of a voting public that we want to be more science literate. We have something for you as well. It is a resource guide called *Cosmos in the Classroom 2007*, a compendium of the papers, handouts, and resources offered at last summer's national conference of the same name. The conference, held every three years by the ASP, brings together introductory astronomy teachers from around the country and beyond to share and learn from each other about the most effective ways to reach and teach those non-science majors. The convenient loose-leaf format includes 73 contributions filled with practical advice, reviews of instructional tools, curriculum guides, and class activities that instructors can put to direct use. The volume is available for purchase through the ASP's AstroShop.

To check out the table of contents, go to: [www.astrosociety.org/events/cosmos/cosmos07/cosmos07toc.pdf](http://www.astrosociety.org/events/cosmos/cosmos07/cosmos07toc.pdf). To order online, go to: [www.astrosociety.org/online-store/scstore/p-BO366.html](http://www.astrosociety.org/online-store/scstore/p-BO366.html). And start planting those seeds!

## International Year of Astronomy 2009

International Year of Astronomy 2009 was proposed by former IAU President, Franco Pacini to commemorate the 400th anniversary of Galileo's first observations through a telescope. Of course, it is also be much larger than that, and represents a major opportunity for astronomy outreach and education. IYA2009 was approved at the IAU General Assembly of August 2006 held in Prague, Czech Republic. UNESCO endorsed IYA2009 at its assembly in the fall of 2005. The IAU is currently working toward receiving full United Nations approval for the International Year and expects to present a resolution at the October 2007 General Assembly of the UN.

- Celebrate Galileo and the 400th anniversary of using the telescope for astronomy
- Illustrate the amazing cultural influence astronomy over time, and better connect science with today's culture
- Demonstrate that astronomy is one of most captivating branches of the natural sciences and an ideal inspiration for people of all ages, especially students
- Remind humanity that we are responsible for the long-term future of our planet
- Show astronomers as truly a global family of peaceful international collaborators
- Encourage a stronger perspective of scientific/critical thinking in society

The IAU considers IYA2009 an opportunity to:

The IAU IYA2009 website is [astronomy2009.org](http://astronomy2009.org).



# Honored Elsewhere

## Fan Named 2008 Guggenheim Fellow

Xiaohui Fan (Associate Professor of Astronomy, Steward Observatory, University of Arizona) has been named a 2008 Guggenheim Fellow for his work in the end of cosmic dark ages: beyond the redshift barrier. Guggenheim Fellows are appointed on the basis of distinguished achievement in the past and exceptional promise for future accomplishment.

## Tyson receives 2007 AAAS Award

The American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) has named astrophysicist Neil deGrasse Tyson, director of the Hayden Planetarium at the American Museum of Natural History in New York City, as winner of the 2007 AAAS Public Understanding of Science and Technology Award. Tyson was cited for his passionate commitment, sustained excellence, and dynamic leadership in engaging the public in the frontiers of science.

In 2004, he was appointed by President George W. Bush to serve on a nine-member Commission on the Implementation of United States Space Exploration Policy dubbed the “Moon, Mars, and Beyond” commission. This group made recommendations on ways to carry out a new vision for U.S. space exploration.

Tyson is a researcher in the department of astrophysics at the American Museum of Natural History. He continues to publish in scholarly journals. His research interests include star formation, exploding stars, dwarf galaxies, and the structure of our Milky Way. Tyson obtains his data from the Hubble Space Telescope, as well as from telescopes in California, New Mexico, Arizona, and in the Andes Mountains of Chile.

Tyson graduated from the Bronx High School of Science in June 1976. He earned a bachelor’s degree in physics from Harvard University in 1980 and a master’s degree in astronomy in 1983 from the University of Texas, where he researched star formation models for dwarf galaxies. He received his Ph.D. degree from Columbia University in 1991. His doctoral research involved chemical evolution, abundances and structure related to the galactic bulge. The International Astronomical Union named an asteroid “13123 Tyson” in his honor, and – on a lighter note – *People* magazine named him “Sexiest Astrophysicist Alive” in 2000.

Established in 1987, the AAAS Award for Public Understanding of Science & Technology recognizes scientists or engineers who, while working in their fields, have also contributed substantially to public understanding of science and technology. Contributions include books, articles in magazines and newspaper, broadcasting, lecturing, museum presentation and exhibit design.

## 2008 Young Physicist’s Prize to Komatsu

The Commission on Astrophysics (C19) of the International Union of Pure and Applied Physics (IUPAP) is pleased to announce the award of its 2008 Young Physicist’s Prize to Eiichiro Komatsu of the University of Texas, Austin, for his work on the interpretation of cosmic microwave background data, first from COBE and more recently from WMAP, especially limits on the non-Gaussianity of the CMB.

Komatsu received his PhD in 2001 from Tohoku University, Sendai, Japan in 2001 and held visiting student and postdoctoral positions in Princeton before joining the UTA faculty in 2003, where he has just been promoted to associate professor. Among his other honors are The Astronomical Society of Japan Young Astronomer Award (2004), an Alfred P. Sloan Research Fellowship (2005), and the Morita Memorial Award (2006).

The Prize (consisting of a gold medal and a cash award) will be presented to Komatsu at the December 2008 “Texas” Symposium on Relativistic Astrophysics in Vancouver, BC, Canada, where he will also deliver a talk about his work.

IUPAP Young Physicists’ Prizes are awarded to individuals who have had less than eight years research experience since receiving the PhD degree. The first, 2006, award in astrophysics went to Dr. Marta Burgay for her contributions to the discovery and characterization of the first orbiting pair of pulsars.

C19 expects to present its third prize in 2010. An announcement of opportunity to nominate will appear in newsletters and/or web sites of IUPAP, the International Astronomical Union, the European Astronomical Society, the American Astronomical Society, and other organizations, with a deadline in early spring 2010.

Because the pool of nominees was truly outstanding this year, the Commission on Astrophysics has designated two recipients of Honorable Mention for the young physicist’s prize, which, sadly, cannot include the medal or cash award. These are Marta Volonteri, who received her PhD in 2003 from the University of Milan and is now assistant professor at the University of Michigan, for work of the evolution of black hole in the early universe, especially reionization by mini-quasars, powered by intermediate mass black holes.

Sarah Gallagher, who received her PhD in 2002 from Pennsylvania State University and is about to take up an assistant professorship at the University of Western Ontario, for studies of highly absorbed quasars, especially the dense material that makes many broad absorption line (BAL) QSOs weak in X-rays.

Planetary Science increases by 6.9 percent to \$1.33 billion, compared to FY 2008. The Mars Scout 2011 mission is delayed to 2013 and an Outer Planet Flagship mission is added. The Mars exploration budget decreases by 30.2% to \$387 million, whereas New Frontiers, Discovery, and Outer Planets all see increases in FY 2009.

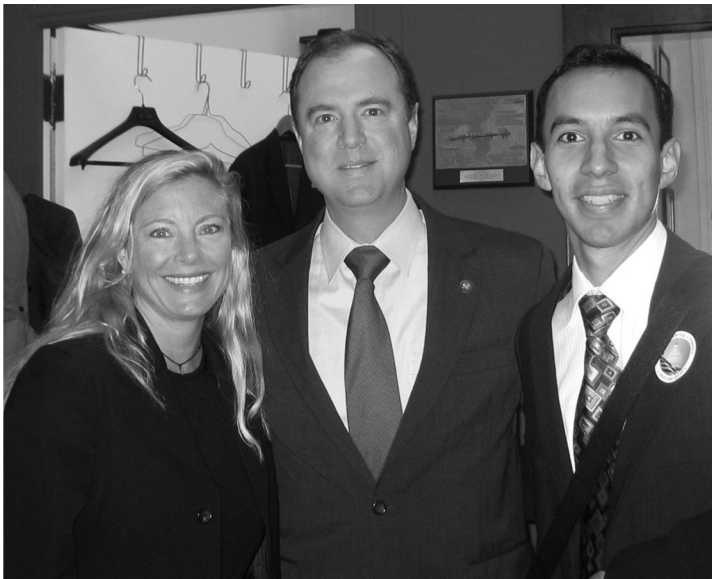
The general feeling in Washington is that because of the difficulty Congress had in last year's budget negotiations, Congress will pass a Continuing Resolution through at least February of 2009, and proceed with the budget only after a new president takes office in January of 2009. Thus all the proposed budget numbers from the President's budget are likely to undergo significant changes in a very short amount of time early next year.

There is an ongoing effort by some in the science policy community to attempt to restore funding in FY 2008 for science in an upcoming supplemental funding bill, which will otherwise primarily be to fund the war in Iraq. While some are cautiously optimistic about restoring some funds—especially at the DOE—it should be noted that Congress has many other domestic spending priorities more likely to appear in a supplemental than science funding. Additionally, the supplemental may have a hard time getting passed as the democratic majority is likely to include 'management riders,' which will attempt to force policy actions on how the Iraq and Afghanistan operations are being managed. Both the

administration and the congressional Republicans are likely to oppose such directives.

Mars and planetary science were among the topics discussed at a 13 March hearing on NASA science programs at the House of Representatives Committee on Science and Technology Subcommittee on Space and Aeronautics, which featured the AAS's own Jack Burns, the chair of the AAS Committee on Astronomy and Public Policy. Also testifying were Dr. Alan Stern, Associate Administrator for NASA SMD; Dr. Lennard A. Fisk, the chair of Space Studies Board at the National Research Council; Dr. Berrien Moore, the chair of the Committee on Earth Studies at the National Research Council, and Dr. Steven W. Squyres from Cornell University.

Soon after this hearing, the astronomical community was surprised to hear that Alan Stern had stepped down as Associate Administrator at NASA. In his farewell message to NASA he stated "I assure you that my decision to resign came only after several months of hard thought and reflection about the consequences of spiraling mission costs that SMD could not control." NASA administrator Michael Griffin appointed Ed Weiler as the interim Associate Administrator for SMD, who had been the head of NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center, and previously ran SMD (formerly known as the Office of Space Science) from 1998 to 2004.



**Photos from the 2008 Congressional Visits Day. Left photo:** Amanda Hendrix (NASA JPL), Representative Adam Schiff (D) California 29th District, and Marcos Huerta. **Right photo:** Louise Prockter, Johns Hopkins - Advanced Physics Lab.

## Congressional Visits Day

This year the AAS again participated in the Science-Engineering-Technology Working Group's Congressional Visits Day ([www.setcvd.org](http://www.setcvd.org)), which occurred 4 and 5 March. Nine astronomers came to Washington to lobby their members of Congress on behalf of their fellow AAS members for funding of NASA, NSF, and DOE. This year's participants were Daniel Savin, Dennis Ebbets, Harriet Dinerstein, Louise Prockter, Amanda Hendrix, incoming AAS President John Huchra, Marc Postman, Megan Donahue, and Anne Verbiscer.

Since the visits occurred earlier this year than in the past, we were able to lobby for a specific request for the National Science Foundation, in addition to general lobbying for astronomy and science funding.

A House "Dear Colleague" letter, distributed by Representatives Vern Ehlers, Rush Holt, Bob Inglis, and Brian Baird asked members to support the full \$7.326 billion authorized in the COMPETES Act, and that signers put that amount in their programmatic request to the House Appropriations Committee. The letter ultimately achieved 135 signers.

On the Senate side, a similar letter distributed by Senators Joe Lieberman and Christopher Bond asked for \$6.85 billion for the NSF. That letter ultimately reached 47 signatures.

Such letters help drive policy forward on the Hill by building promises of support from members in both houses of Congress.

CVD participants have a fun but intense two days in Washington. It is vital for those in the astronomical community to make our case to our representatives in Congress. Please consider joining us for next year's Congressional Visits Day. Contact me directly if you are interested in participating.

Also, remember that you do not need to come to Washington to make a difference—you can write letters, emails, and make calls to your Senator or Representative—about science or any issue that concerns you, even if you are a federal employee (you just can't lobby for your particular pool of federal funds, e.g. don't call up to make a pitch to increase your own salary!). Better still, consider visiting your Senators or Representatives in their district offices—they might be located very close to where you live or work. You can find out exactly where using the 'Zip-to-It' feature on the AAS public policy web pages, which will tell you how to find your members of Congress. I hope to do more to encourage and facilitate AAS members to visit local congressional offices in the future in support of science funding. Stay tuned!



**Left photo:** At the Congressional Visits Day Reception and Award Ceremony, AAS members spoke with a fellow Ph.D. - Representative Rush Holt (D) of New Jersey's 12th District. From left to right; Marcos Huerta, Marc Postman, Daniel Savin, John Huchra (AAS President-Elect), Louise Prockter, Anne Verbiscer, and Rep. Holt. **Right photo:** Harriet Dinerstein, University of Texas.

# Division News

## High Energy Astrophysics Division (HEAD)

Mitch Begelman, Chair

Chryssa Kouveliotou, Vice-Chair

Ann Hornschemeier, Secretary-Treasurer

(headsec@aas.org)

### HEAD News from Austin

HEAD traditionally plays an active role at January AAS meetings, and this year was no exception. Outgoing Chair Steve Murray presented the 2007 Bruno Rossi Prize to Neil Gehrels and the Swift Team, and Neil lectured on “Gamma Ray Burst Discoveries with the Swift Mission.” We also organized HEAD special sessions on “Outbursts from Supermassive Black Holes” and “Ultra-High-Energy Cosmic Rays,” the latter featuring results from the Pierre Auger Observatory.

At our annual Business Meeting, we welcomed new Executive Committee members Dale Frail, Dieter Hartmann, and Angela Olinto; a new Vice-Chair, Chryssa Kouveliotou; and a new Secretary-Treasurer, Ann Hornschemeier. Ann replaces Christine Jones, who stepped down to run (successfully) for AAS Vice-President. We also have a new Press Officer, Megan Watzke, who replaces Ilana Harrus. Thanks to Christine, Ilana, and retiring Executive Committee members Roger Blandford, Julie McEnery, Chris Reynolds, and Roger Romani for their past service.

The Executive Committee awarded the 2008 Rossi Prize to Steven Allen, J. Patrick Henry, Maxim Markevitch, and Alexey Vikhlinin for their pioneering work on the use of X-ray observations to study the physics and evolution of clusters of galaxies, and on the use of clusters as cosmological probes. We also instituted a new HEAD Dissertation Prize, to recognize outstanding Ph.D. Dissertation research in any area related to high-energy astrophysics. Stay tuned for details and the first call for nominations, sometime prior to the 11th HEAD Meeting in 2010!

### HEAD Meeting in LA

The 10th HEAD Divisional Meeting was held at the Omni Hotel in downtown Los Angeles, CA, from 31 March through 3 April 2008. Once again, the organizational genius of Trish Dobson and Ruth Paglierani and their colleagues at Conference Connection, and John Vallergera at Eureka Scientific, made for a delightful meeting attended by more than 320 astronomers. At the banquet - held in the newly renovated Union Station - we honored Schramm Prize winner Ron Cowen for his article in National Geographic Magazine entitled “Bang! The Cataclysmic Death of Stars.”

The meeting covered an enormous range of topics from the role of X-rays in planet formation (the subject of

a special session organized by Eric Feigelson of Penn State) to gravitational wave astronomy and ultra-high-energy cosmic rays. Highlights included reports on the smallest Galactic black hole discovered to date (3.8 solar masses) and the “naked-eye” gamma-ray burst of 19 March, as well as first-year results from the VERITAS collaboration. In addition to the 12 “regular” sessions, HEAD members organized nonespecial sessions and workshops. At the Swift special session, astronomers demonstrated several ingenious ways to use a GRB observatory for non-GRB science: supernovae, AGN, classical novae and comets! Another special session focused on results from the gamma-ray observatory INTEGRAL, while participants at the various workshops got tips on astrostatistics, analyzing Chandra data, and writing a good GLAST proposal.

The main drawback to this densely scheduled program was an absence of lunch breaks and programming that went on for 12 hours on a couple of days (with only short dinner breaks!). This program overdensity prompted some of the participants to suggest that the next meeting be extended by a day. Whatever its duration, we expect the next HEAD meeting to be held in the spring of 2010—a gap of two years, rather than the customary 18 months—to avoid temporal overlap with the next GLAST Symposium and the 10<sup>th</sup> Chandra Anniversary meeting, both scheduled for the fall of 2009. A poll of participants on the next meeting venue revealed a strong preference for “Hawaii/Alaska/Caribbean.” We welcome comments and suggestions on possible venues and on the meeting length.

## Historical Astronomy Division (HAD)

Sara J. Schechner, Chair, [schechn@fas.harvard.edu](mailto:schechn@fas.harvard.edu)

It has been a very busy year of meetings, prizes, and initiatives for the Historical Astronomy Division.

### Meetings

Our division had an excellent meeting in Austin in January 2008 with two special sessions of invited speakers, two sessions of contributed papers, and one poster session. One special session commemorated the 50th anniversary of the International Geophysical Year and the dawn of space-based astronomy. Speakers included Jay Pasachoff and Joel M. Weisberg, who recounted their formative experiences on Moonwatch teams, William Keel on early Soviet space astronomy, and McKim Malville on auroral research during IGY. The other session recognized the 400th anniversary of the founding of Jamestown (the first permanent English settlement in North America) and the role of astronomy in the exploration and colonization of America. Owen Gingerich and Jim Lattis shared new findings respectively on Thomas

Harriot and Christoph Clavius, Sara Schechner explored the meaning of Captain John Smith's daring escape from the Indians in Virginia with the help of a sundial and Pocahontas, Katherine Haramundanis and Edward Gaposchkin investigated archaeological records on the Oregon coast for clues to 16th century longitude determinations, and Don Yeomans offered a survey of colonial American astronomy. And if this were not enough, the twelve contributed papers delivered the next day continued the stimulating discussion among HAD members.

We are now planning our special sessions for Long Beach in 2009 with an eye toward topics relevant to the history of telescope making and the International Year of Astronomy.

### Prizes

Every two years, the Historical Astronomy Division awards the LeRoy Doggett Prize for Historical Astronomy to an individual who has significantly influenced the field of the history of astronomy. This year's Doggett Prize was awarded to Dr. David H. DeVorkin. David is well known to AAS members for his numerous activities on behalf of the society and to scholars for his path-breaking research. Since 1981, David has been the curator of the history of astronomy and space sciences at the Smithsonian Institution's National Air and Space Museum. His many research papers, books, and monographs—including a recent biography of Henry Norris Russell—provide a detailed and fascinating study of twentieth century space science and astrophysics and the roles of the military, religion, and government in their development. The prize citation read: "To David DeVorkin for his seminal work in illuminating the origins and development of modern astrophysics and the origins of the space sciences during the twentieth century."

At the Austin meeting, HAD Chair, Sara Schechner presented the Doggett Prize to David DeVorkin, who then delivered an invited plenary lecture on "Astronomy and Its History on the Nation's Mall."

As originally instituted, the Doggett Prize could be awarded for either a lifetime effort or a significant publication. In practice, however, only lifetime achievements have been recognized, and worthy books could not compete effectively. The playing field was not level. Being empowered to change these rules by majority vote, the HAD Committee has redressed the situation. Starting in 2012, the Doggett Prize will be reserved for lifetime contributions to the history of astronomy. The Committee also announces the establishment of a new prize—the HAD Book Award—to be given in odd-numbered years, beginning in 2011, to honor a recent book that significantly illuminates the history of astronomy.

### Other News and Initiatives

We are pleased to report the launching of a new AAS Working Group for the Preservation of Astronomical Heritage, which was established by the AAS Council in January 2007 in response to an initiative from HAD. It is charged with "developing and disseminating procedures, criteria, and priorities for identifying, designating, and preserving astronomical structures, instruments, and records so that they will continue to be available for astronomical and historical research, for the teaching of astronomy, and for outreach to the general public."

The Historical Astronomy Division is responsible for the preparation of the memorials to deceased members of the AAS that are published annually in the *BAAS*. Under the editorship of HAD Vice Chair Tom Hockey, 29 obituaries were published this past year. As a result, we are caught up on a long-standing backlog of unwritten obituaries save one. (If anyone has information on Albert G. Mowbray, please contact Tom.)

The HAD Committee has also been considering the creation of a short cultural astronomy summer school or workshop. The idea is to give astronomers early in their careers some experience with historical methods and a cultural understanding of past astronomy, which might be of use in their teaching careers or interaction with the general public. Planning for this outreach program is in the preliminary stage, and we invite comments and suggestions.

## IAU Commission on Education and Development

The spring 2008 Newsletter of IAU Commission 46 on Education and Development is now online at [physics.open.ac.uk/~bwjones/IAU46/pdf/](http://physics.open.ac.uk/~bwjones/IAU46/pdf/) and linked to the Commission's main Website at [www.astronomyeducation.org](http://www.astronomyeducation.org). The newsletter discusses a variety of education-related news from the US and around the world, including the International Year of Astronomy.

# 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 \$2000, 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@aas.org) for more information and pricing details for the 2009 calendar. Deadline for sponsorship is 1 September 2008.

## Preparations for SOFIA Science in mid-2009

First science flights of the Stratospheric Observatory for Infrared Astronomy (SOFIA) are expected in mid-2009. SOFIA is a 2.5-meter telescope in a modified Boeing 747SP aircraft that flies in the stratosphere above more than 99% of the infrared-obscuring water vapor. It is a joint program between NASA and the German Space agency, DLR.

A process to help involve the U.S. scientific community in SOFIA's early science program began with a workshop at the Austin January 2008 AAS meeting. Attendees heard the latest information about the SOFIA mission and the observatory's instruments and scientific capabilities, and then broke into working groups to begin drafting components of a white paper regarding SOFIA's main science themes.

There will be a second SOFIA AAS workshop, to be held in St. Louis from 1 to 5 p.m. on Sunday, 1 June (the day before the start of the main AAS meeting), to present drafts of the white paper components and continue discussions aimed at readying SOFIA's science case for the Decadal Review. All members of the astronomical community are welcome—you do not need to have attended the January AAS SOFIA workshop.

The 1 June AAS SOFIA workshop will also include information regarding the first two SOFIA general calls for observing proposals, aimed at: (1) the "Short Science" program, in which 1-2 projects will receive approximately three flights each using either a mid-IR camera or a far-IR / sub-mm spectrograph. A "Dear Colleague" letter inviting participation in Short Science will be issued in the summer of 2008; and (2) the "Basic Science" program in which 1-2 projects will receive approximately ten flights each during a period of 1-2 months; the call for SOFIA Basic Science proposals will be issued at the end of 2008.

The AAS Workshop co-organizers are Bob Gehrz of U. Minnesota and Tom Roellig of NASA-Ames. For more information, please go to this URL: [www.sofia.usa.edu/Science/AASworkshops/workshops.html](http://www.sofia.usa.edu/Science/AASworkshops/workshops.html)

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# Calendar

## AAS & AAS Division Meetings

### DPS 40<sup>th</sup> 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

### 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 2008, 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)  
acm2008.jhuapl.edu/

### CITA Workshop on Parallel Programming in Astronomy & Astrophysics

21-25 July 2008, Toronto, ON  
Contact: Mubdi Rahman  
(mubdi@cita.utoronto.ca)  
pca.cita.utoronto.ca/

### 10th Symposium on Nuclei in the Cosmos

27 Jul-1 Aug 2008, Mackinac Island, MI  
Contact: Hendrik Schatz  
(schatz@nscl.msu.edu)  
meetings.nsl.msu.edu/nic2008/

### GONG 2008/SOHO XXI: Solar-stellar dynamos as revealed by helio- and asteroseismology

11-15 August 2008, Boulder, CO  
www.hao.ucar.edu/gong-soho/

### \*The Sloan Digital Sky Survey: Asteroids to Cosmology

15-18 August, Chicago, IL  
Contact: David Weinberg (dhw@  
astronomy.ohio-state.edu)  
sds2008.uchicago.edu/

### Characteristics and Habitability of Super Earths

17 Aug-7 Sept 2008, Aspen, CO  
Contact: Fred Rasio  
(rasio@northwestern.edu)  
aspenphys.org/documents/program/  
summer08.html

### \*CALCON Technical Conference (Conference on Characterization and Radiometric Calibration for Remote Sensing)

25-28 August 2008, Logan, UT  
Contact: Sonya Warner  
(sonya.warner@usurf.usu.edu)  
www.spacedynamics.org/conferences/  
calcon/

### \*Challenges to Consensus Cosmology and the Quest for a New Picture of the Universe

7-11 Sept 2008, Port Angeles, WA  
www.cosmology.info/2008conference/

### \*Star Formation from Spitzer (Lyman) to Spitzer (Telescope) and Beyond

10-12 Sept 2008, Vienna, Austria  
Contacts, J. Alves & V. Trimble  
(chairs@spitzer2spitzer.org)  
www.spitzer2spitzer.org

### \*Transformational Science with ALMA: The Birth and Feedback of Massive Stars, Within and Beyond the Galaxy

25-27 Sept 2008, Charlottesville, VA  
Contact: Rémy Indebetouw  
(alma08@nrao.edu)

### Back to the Galaxy II

29 Sept-3 Oct 2008, UC Santa Barbara  
www.ctcp.caltech.edu/BTMW/

### \*Second Hinode Science Meeting

29 Sept-3 Oct 2008, Boulder, CO  
Contact: Bruce Lites (lites@ucar.edu)  
www.hao.ucar.edu/partnerships/  
hinode/conference-2008/index.html

### \*Hot Massive Stars: A Lifetime of Influence

12-15 October 2008, Flagstaff, AZ  
Contact: Phil Massey  
(phil.massey@lowell.edu)  
www.lowell.edu/workshops/Contifest/

### The Ages of Stars

13-17 October 2008, Baltimore, MD  
Contact: David Soderblom  
(drs@stsci.edu)  
www.stsci.edu/institute/conference/  
iau258

### \*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@as.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.



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## Washington News

Marcos Huerta, John Bahcall Public Policy Fellow  
[huerta@aaas.org](mailto:huerta@aaas.org)



The arrival of spring in Washington this year brings tourists to the Cherry Blossom Festival, fans to the Washington Nationals brand new ballpark, and arrival of the President's Fiscal Year 2009 Budget to Capitol Hill.

The science community remains disappointed with results of last year's Omnibus Budget Bill, which failed to deliver on the America Competes Act's promise to increase funding for basic research at NSF, DOE, and NIST; the consequences of which were documented in last month's newsletter.

The good news is that in terms of these agencies, the President's FY 2009 Budget request asks for increases consistent with the American Competitiveness Initiative. NSF would see a 13.6% increase over the enacted FY 2008 levels, and DOE Office of Science would see a 20.7% increase, and funding is implemented in DOE for the Joint Dark Energy Mission.

These amounts represent a return to the doubling path for these agencies originally planned to start in FY 2008 before the increases were lost in the budget negotiations between Congress and the White House.

NASA's proposed FY 2009 budget sees a small 1.2% increase overall, with the Science Mission Directorate (SMD) receiving a 0.3% decrease, excluding the transfer of the Deep Space Network to Space & Flight Support. The Earth Sciences community has recently completed their first decadal survey, and NASA has responded to the survey by funding three new Earth Science missions to be completed by 2013.

NASA Astrophysics decreases by 13.1% to \$1.162 billion overall. By far the largest item within Astrophysics continues to be the James Web Space Telescope. While there are significant increases to Research and Analysis, both here and throughout SMD, many other programs within Astrophysics faces cuts. Some of these decreases are due to missions moving from preparation to launch. Similarly, the budget calls for greater spending in sounding rockets and balloon missions, to increase the availability for training for younger scientists. However, the budget years after FY 2009 look especially flat, if not shrinking, for Astrophysics. Taking inflation into account, the NASA astrophysics budget falls in actual buying power by 31% over the next five years. In such a budget environment, responding to any new priorities outlined in the next Decadal Survey will be next to impossible. We must work to change this situation for the better.

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