

AAS Newsletter

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CONTENTS

2

From the
Executive Office

3

Editor, The
Astrophysical
Journal Letters

4

Journals Update

6

New Worlds, New
Horizons in Astronomy
and Astrophysics

7

Astronomy Reigns
Supreme in Seattle

Back page

Washington
News

President's Column

Debra Meloy Elmegreen, president@aas.org

Congratulations to all of us in the astronomical community on the completion of the Decadal Survey! Two years after the National Research Council organized the Astro2010 Committee to begin its arduous process, the report “New Worlds, New Horizons in Astronomy and Astrophysics” is complete. In fact, as I write this article the public roll-out is underway at the Keck Center of the National Academies in Washington, DC. This was truly a community effort, and we should all be proud of it and feel ownership of it. The federal funding agencies and Congress widely view the astronomy decadal process as a model for other disciplines to emulate, and it is extremely important for us to embrace it.

We are embarking on a period of unprecedented opportunities for astronomical research, thanks to great advances in technology, theory, and observations, and the report presents an exciting and balanced set of science-driven priorities within the framework of realistic budget scenarios. The Astro2010 committee comprised 23 astronomers, selected by the National Academies based on community solicitation of suggested names, who were assisted by panels on different science disciplines, space- and ground-based activities, and study groups on the astronomical infrastructure; these subcommittees had a membership of nearly 200 astronomers from the US astronomical community. The Survey report and the panel reports are the culmination of a careful and deliberate consideration of science goals, projects and missions and on the whole astronomical enterprise, based in part on the distillation of over 450 community-submitted white papers, over 100 proposals for research activities, briefings from federal agencies, and 17 Town Halls, along with other federal and international reports. To give a sense of the process, there were over 100 telecons, six in-person full committee meetings, 27 panel meetings, endless drafts, and extensive email discussions that led to the final recommendations for astronomical endeavors over the next decade. Having had the privilege of serving on the committee, I think it is accurate to say that none of us had a clear initial idea of the colossal efforts that would be required to bring the Survey to fruition.

The community presented an order of magnitude more suggestions for initiatives than what could be supported by the highly constrained federal budget guidelines for astronomy, so obviously not every worthy goal could be included in the prioritizations. The committee weighed scientific merit, technical readiness, balance, and cost and risk assessment in considering various proposals and developing new ideas to meet science goals. The report includes small, medium, and large initiatives spanning the electromagnetic spectrum, from ground to space, from time variability to deep exposures, ranging from the Sun, to exoplanets, the ISM, stars, and galaxies, to dark energy, to the early universe, and including instruments, telescopes, labs, missions, observations, computations and theory. The recommendations maximize the science return while also highlighting the most urgently needed activities. Necessarily not everyone will agree on all of the details or the rankings. Nevertheless, it is imperative for the astronomical community to stand united in fully accepting the report as it stands, for it is that cohesiveness that will serve us best in furthering our common goals. The report is now in the hands of NASA, NSF, DOE, Congress, OSTP, and OMB; the agencies need clear prioritization to help them procure the funds we need to do our work. So let us agree, as we have with past decadal reports, to embrace the results and work together to achieve great science and improve our astronomical enterprise in the coming decade.

We owe a debt of gratitude to Roger Blandford, our indomitable chair of the committee, who covered the globe interacting with astronomers nationwide and internationally to get a better perspective on various endeavors (I hope he accumulated lots of frequent flyer miles for some much needed and deserved R&R!). Lynne Hillenbrand as Executive Officer was tireless in her efforts to coordinate

continued on page 3



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

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From the Executive Office

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

I am pleased to let you know in this column about three new activities enabled by charitable contributions to the Society this past year.

The first is the Kavli Foundation Plenary Lectureship. This new invited lecture at each of our AAS meetings will allow our vice-presidents to name a special invited lecturer to speak to the Society about recent research of great importance. The Kavli Foundation has graciously and generously arranged this new partnership with the Society and their support will allow us to cover the travel expenses and promotion of this special talk. I am pleased to announce here that the first lecturer will be Dr. Carolyn Porco of the Cassini Imaging Central Laboratory for Operations (CICLOPS).

The second partnership is with the New York Community Trust, who is the trustee for the estate of a New York lawyer, Lancelot Berkeley. Although Mr. Berkeley passed away many years ago, the New York Community Trust has worked diligently to fulfill a portion of his final wishes, which was the establishment of a prize in astronomy and astrophysics and contacted the AAS to consider establishing such a prize. The bequest was rather specific in stating the prize should be for very recent work and should not be given for lifetime achievement. Luckily, the suite of AAS prizes did not include a prize specific to these requests and after a subcommittee of the Council (chaired by Lee Hartmann) developed some guidelines for the prize, the Council approved the establishment of the prize at our recent meeting in Miami. The selection committee will include the editors-in-chief of our two research journals and members of the Executive Committee. The prize will be given to up to three individuals for highly meritorious work in advancing the science of astronomy during the previous year and will be given without respect to citizenship or country of residency. The prize comes with a cash award and the opportunity to give a talk at an AAS meeting in the next twelve months, travel expenses covered.

Finally I want to highlight the newly-established travel support award for students delivering their dissertation research talk at an AAS meeting. Through the generous contributions of the family and friends of Rodger Doxsey, the AAS will be able to award a small number of graduate students travel support grants to attend an AAS meeting and deliver their dissertation research talk. A committee will select the recipients based on the scientific merits of their dissertation abstracts. The AAS will also actively work to grow the endowment for this award so that more graduate students can receive support.

As we enter this membership renewal season, I ask that you consider the three projects above and the numerous other activities that the AAS and its Divisions support from charitable contributions. Our activities would only be half as effective without the significant added support such charitable contributions provide. Donations to our unrestricted fund allow us to support the programs or projects most in need, while contributions to a specific project or program strictly support that activity. All contributions to the AAS are tax deductible and donors receive special recognition in our *Newsletter* and in our (newly revised) *Annual Report*. This year we are seeking additional ways to provide benefit and recognition to our donors, from the donor reception at the winter AAS meeting to a special partnership with Galileoscope, LLC to deliver a telescope to a needy school near your home or place of work.

Our mission, to enhance and share humanity's understanding of the universe, is a tremendous challenge. By working together, through the support of our members and the engagement of our many hundreds of volunteers and the dedicated work of the Executive Office staff we can achieve this goal. As always, let me know what is on your mind, I am on facebook now, so you can 'fb' me or use old-fashioned email, which, as always, works just fine (kevin.marvel@aas.org).

the various subcommittees and panels. Vice-chairs Martha Haynes, Marcia Rieke, and John Huchra guided us wisely throughout the process, and Michael Moloney as the National Research Council Astro2010 study director was masterful in his handling of all the issues. Thanks to all of them, to the rest of the committee, to the NRC staff, and to all the panels, study groups, and contributors. I suspect most of us were no more than a step or two removed from some part of the Decadal process.

By the time you are reading this newsletter, we will already be in the midst of new Town Halls that will help spell out the details of the report and describe the rationale for the difficult and careful decisions. In addition to the regional meetings, there will be a Town Hall on the Decadal report at the AAS Seattle meeting in January, hosted by John Huchra and me in our AAS hats and presented by Roger Blandford.

Part of my motivation for serving on the Decadal committee was that, if I were elected AAS president, I wanted to be well-informed about our astronomical endeavors. Besides science-driven missions and observatory projects recommended in the Decadal report, there are many other important infrastructure issues that are highlighted, including demographics, training and employment, facilities, data handling, public policy, and partnerships. Two that particularly stand out in terms of AAS priorities are well known. The percentage of minority astronomers remains extremely low, less than four percent of the astronomical community, despite many efforts. The number of women astronomers has been steadily increasing since the last Decadal report, but we still have a long way to go before equity is achieved there too. As I mentioned in the last newsletter, the AAS will be initiating activities to help improve the balance of under-represented groups in astronomy, and we can all take small steps in this direction. The Committee on the Status of Women has noted in several recent CSWA newsletters and in this *AAS Newsletter* that there are still conferences and workshops where the list of invited speakers lacks a balance of under-represented groups. The National Science Foundation and the International Astronomical Union require a diverse list of speakers when providing funding for conferences and workshops; the astronomical community is urged to follow these guidelines, and Scientific Organizing Committees should work diligently to present a balanced speaker list. Remember that there are several AAS committees who can aid in identifying suitable speakers if SOCs ask for help. A Demographics committee, initiated under John Huchra's term, is also getting started, with representatives from CSWA, CSMA, and the Employment Committee, so that we can keep and track our own records on membership demographic statistics. An Ad Hoc Sustainability Committee is in the works. Down the pike, we are also considering some mentoring and outreach efforts, and may even join ranks with the Astronomical Society of the Pacific in some initiatives; details will follow as plans develop. You can help by persuading non-member colleagues and students to join the AAS and come to Seattle! Meanwhile, enjoy autumn and stay engaged in the Society; be sure to check the AAS website periodically for updates.

Editor, *The Astrophysical Journal Letters*

Richard Green and Paul Vanden Bout, Publications Board

Chris Sneden delighted the Publications Board and Council by informing us that he would extend his current three-year term to a full five-year term that ends with calendar year 2012. That delight is tempered by the fact that Chris will not continue beyond that term, which will mark his completion of ten years as Editor of the *Astrophysical Journal Letters*. The Publications Board noted in its recommendation for renewal to the current term that Chris handles the job with dedication, stunning efficiency, and exercise of sound scientific judgment.

Chris's position is a critical service to the astronomical community, and is both rewarding and challenging. The *ApJ Letters* office receives over 1200 short papers each year and works closely with the editorial office of the *Astrophysical Journal (Part I)*, EJPRESS, and IOP to rapidly process and publish the most important astronomical discoveries and ideas of our time. The Editor of the *ApJ Letters* receives manuscripts for publication, decides on their suitability for rapid publication, assures their brevity and conciseness, assigns them to referees and tracks the refereeing process for timeliness and fairness, makes judgments on the suitability of manuscripts for publication based on the referee's reports and on the authors' revisions, and submits the accepted papers to the publisher. The Editor is also required to report on the state of the *Journal* at AAS Council and Publications Board meetings. While the overall operation and editorial standards of the *ApJ* are the responsibility of the Editor-in-Chief, currently Ethan Vishniac, the *ApJ Letters* editor operates independently in accepting or declining *Letters* to the journal and in setting the requirements for style and length.

The AAS is now soliciting applications and nominations of candidates to become Editor of *The Astrophysical Journal Letters (ApJL)*. The Society seeks an individual with stature and achievement in the field of astronomy and with a reputation for fairness, honesty, and consistency. Previous editorial experience is an asset, but not required. Please see the *Job Register* posting for more details about the position and the materials needed in the application.

Nominators and candidates should send their materials, questions, or suggestions, either by regular mail or email to:

Paul Vanden Bout, Chair, ApJL Search Committee, American Astronomical Society, 2000 Florida Avenue NW, Suite 400, Washington, DC 20009-1231, USA

search@aaas.org

The final selection will be made by the Council. Applications and nominations received before 31 December 2010 will be given full consideration.

Journals Update - How we quantize author fees

Chris Biemesderfer, Director of Publishing, Chris.Biemesderfer@aas.org

The AAS journals rely on revenue from subscriptions and page charges, as do many other association-owned journals in the physical sciences. Page charges reduce the dependence on subscription revenue and help keep subscription rates low. Lower subscription rates help ensure a broader distribution, and that permits more people to read the journal.

Page charges have a long history in scholarly publishing, and they have served many journals well. In these digital times, however, they fall short in their effectiveness in several ways. Most importantly, the number of typeset pages is no longer a good proxy for the amount of material being published on an author's behalf. Today, authors want to publish more than words and graphs and pictures; they want to publish things that are inherently digital, and often it makes no sense at all to try and force representations of those things onto "pages." Another shortcoming of page charges is that they are difficult to compute from the raw materials supplied by the author.

Page charges can only be determined accurately after the author's article has been through several stages of the publication workflow. We live in times when there is more emphasis on lean budgeting and accountability, and authors (and the financial managers at their institutions) reasonably want to have cost estimates earlier in the process.

And from a philosophical perspective, print pages are so, you know, "last millennium."

Beginning in 2011, the Society will revise its calculation of author charges using an approach that counts units of information in the digital form that the author supplies. We are calling these units "digital quanta." For the most part, digital quanta are just what you think they are: a figure, a table, an animation, the number of words in your manuscript, etc. The important thing for you to know about our approach is that we are going to consider the semantic components of manuscripts, not their physical properties. That means we are not going to measure the size of the figure files or of the machine-readable tables, we are only going to count how many of them there are. There are

exceptions: some components have to be grouped before they are counted, notably words (which will be counted 350 at a time) and frames in figure sets (100 at a time).

Based on the analysis of 20k articles, we are confident that this new approach will yield roughly the same charges to authors as traditional page charges (modulo the amount of purely digital components in a manuscript), and will therefore generate in aggregate for the Society roughly the same amount of author fee revenue. The per-quantum fee in 2011 will be \$40; all quanta are regarded the same.

It is possible there is something a bit off in the model, in which case we will make revisions, but we think it is unlikely that we will have to change something fundamentally. In other words, you can expect the Society to levy author fees based on digital quanta in the future. That is what we have been doing all along, of course: charging by the page is also a form of quantizing

the amount of material in the article (so your financial administrator really should not have a fit about this). Pages are just quanta of a different nature. (I failed to come up with a "duality" joke here that was actually funny; if you can think of one, I'd like to hear it.)

As you are reading this, we are working with our partners at IOP Publishing to revise the procedures they follow to calculate fees and to produce invoices. And we are working on a fee estimator that authors can use when

they are submitting their manuscripts. As I said, we expect to have these systems up and running by the beginning of the new year. It will take a lot of work by many people to make this happen, but this is a significant (although mostly invisible) step we are taking to make the AAS journals fully digital.

Page Charges out, Piece Count in

In 2011 AAS journal authors will be charged \$40 per digital quanta unit in their manuscript. The following will be considered a unit regardless of file size.

- a figure
- a table
- any digital-only component,
 - e.g., an animation or an MRT
- 350 words of text
- 100 frames in a figure set

25 Things About Patricia Knezek, AAS Councilor



1. My favorite celebrity as a child was ... Carol Burnett
2. My favorite ice cream is ... Ben & Jerry's vanilla caramel fudge
3. Is it easier to forgive or forget ... I try to forgive, then forget.
4. I sleep with my closet doors open or closed ... Closed, so I can't see the mess!
5. When I get home, I like to wear ... no shoes.
6. The most important thing I learned from my mother was ... to think for myself.
7. The most important thing I learned from my father was ... treat others as I would like to be treated.
8. Where do you want to retire ... If I had my choice, Kauai. I need to strike it rich first.
9. My favorite color is ... sage green.
10. The last book I read was ... I'm usually reading 3-4 at a time, but the last one I finished was Bill Bryson's "the mother tongue - english and how it got that way."
11. My favorite sport is ... sleep. After that, hiking.
12. My first real job was ... babysitting, at age 11. I made \$0.75 an hour!
13. My motto is ... It's always five o'clock somewhere.
14. I make the best ... Jamaican jerk chicken.
15. I was born in ... Tucson, AZ. Not many people were back then!
16. My favorite place to travel... Hawaii.
17. My favorite animal is.. cats, but I pretty much love them all except cockroaches and mosquitoes.
18. My name means... Patricia means "noble," and "Knezek" apparently means "well digger." So I'm a noble well digger! (My grandfather actually did dig wells to supplement his farming income.)
19. My dream car is... a bike. Okay, I'd love a 1963 corvette convertible. In my dreams!
20. My favorite city is ... the Grand Canyon. I know, it's not a city. I love many cities, but I love getting away from them even more.
21. My favorite actress is ... Betty White, 88, and still going strong!
22. My favorite athlete is ... Magic Johnson. He used to come eat at the McDonald's I worked at near Michigan State when I was in high school, and he was always nice and polite, unlike many of the other athletes. Incredibly talented and courteous!
23. I used to play ... the piano.
24. I like my coffee ... strong with milk and a touch of sweetener.
25. I love to ... curl up and read a good book.

Member Deaths

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

Donald Backer
Leonard Searle

Letters to the Editor

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

Opting In and 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@as.org or log into your member record at as.org.

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

For address changes, email address@as.org

New Worlds, New Horizons in Astronomy and Astrophysics

Roger Blandford, Stanford University

On 13 August, the fruits of two years of the labor of over two hundred astronomers formally associated with “Astro2010” and thousands who worked on white papers and responses to the “requests for information,” were made public. This is the sixth decadal survey and every one of them repays reading for the mounting excitement for astronomy and astrophysics that they convey, the wise choices they made and the prescient concerns that they contain. I have connections to the chairs of the previous four. Jesse Greenstein and George Field were my colleagues at Caltech and during a sabbatical at CFA, respectively. John Bahcall hired me as a postdoc in 1974 and was a wise mentor thereafter until his untimely death. Chris McKee is a generous collaborator who has taught me much and I shall always be grateful to Joe Taylor for the help and encouragement he gave my fellow postdocs and me as we were trying to make sense of the first binary pulsar. My personal regard for each of these scientists and the reports they led meant that I had to overcome considerable personal skepticism to accept the invitation to chair Astro2010. However I am glad that I did and hope that “New Worlds, New Horizons” will be as influential as its predecessors.

Despite this impressive heritage, the current survey has been forced by circumstance to break with tradition in many ways. The coming of the Internet age has facilitated and required an unprecedented degree of inclusion and transparency. The globalization of astronomical research has necessitated making recommendations that can be coordinated with the actions of potential international and private partners. The increasing ambition, complexity and cost of major facilities has required that the committee develop an independent view of the technical challenge and risk of candidate activities together with an appraisal of their cost.

Overshadowing all of this has been the current financial situation. The three agencies have immense obligations at a time when there are many other calls on the nation’s resources. The cost of NASA’s James Webb Space Telescope has grown along with the expectations for the fundamental scientific contributions that it will deliver. Ground-based observatories have long lives and the combined cost of running them now accounts for almost all of the “free energy” in the NSF astronomy budget. DOE, a welcome new supporter of astrophysics projects that align with its mission, has limited resources. These are the challenges that the committee has confronted and it has made tough choices as a consequence. Had it ducked this responsibility, I would not have the optimism and confidence that I have in the proposed program.

All plans must start from principles. From the start, my

continued next page



colleagues and I wanted Astro2010 to be driven by the logic of a prioritized science-led strategy as opposed to the perceived needs of communities, observatories or geographical areas. However, making a science plan is complicated by the knowledge that many of the discoveries of the coming decade, like those of the last, will be unscripted. This is the essence of research. Balance was also important—among astronomical subfields, within cost categories, relating observation and theory and between today’s telescopes and the technology for tomorrow’s. These are fine principles to which most of us subscribe and they have been stated before. However, it has been too easy to set them aside when the next budget crisis hits. Accordingly, the committee has tried harder than ever before to build protections into its recommendations that can last a decade. Many of you will be called upon in the years ahead to advise the agencies. Please do recall these ideals and try to keep faith with them.

How do I see the report being received? I believe that the agencies (including foreign agencies), the OMB and OSTP do recognize that once again the astronomical community has broken new ground in strategic planning and demonstrated that it can come together and face up to its responsibilities. I think the public will resonate with our program. The compelling and accessible nature of the major questions that we are poised to answer will carry the day.

This leaves you, the membership of the AAS. Yes, there are winners and losers and there will be more when deferred choices are made later in the decade. Independent of the group to which you feel you belong, please do read the report as carefully as my colleagues and I read and considered the avalanche of extremely thoughtful white papers we studied at the start of the survey. In particular, wait for the panel reports,

which will be on the street as soon as we can make this happen and for the Town Halls that the AAS is already setting up. Do not react hastily. Explore ways that past competitors can work together to the benefit of all. How “New Worlds, New Horizons,” is received in political circles depends crucially upon what we all say and do. Think about it.

I will finish where I began. This is your survey. You made this clear from the start with words and deeds. The nine panels and six study groups—each with outstanding leaders - debated passionately and reconciled differences to set an example for the committee to follow. Every committee member worked hard yet cheerfully and listened carefully. We all learned a lot from each other. The NRC staff rose magnificently to an unprecedented managerial challenge. The AAS and APS have supported us unfailingly. Presidents John Huchra and Debra Elmegreen have worked instinctively on the committee despite their other responsibilities. The results are now public and I am proud of what we have all produced. The opportunities before us—to study nearby Earths, to finish writing the book on observational and physical cosmology, to explain the magical properties of galaxies, to explore great volumes of discovery space—can be grasped. The time is right and the means is at hand. Let us all make it happen.

The rollout of the Astro2010 New Worlds New Horizons report at the Keck Building of the National Academy of Sciences in Washington on 13 August. First photo: Roger Blandford, chair of the Decadal Survey, presenting the summary. Second photo: Panelists Roger Blandford, Neil deGrasse Tyson, Michael Turner, Debra Elmegreen (AAS President), Martha Haynes, and Fiona Harrison. Third photo: Debra Elmegreen and Martha Haynes responding to questions. Fourth photo: Audience members during the webcast event.

Astronomy Rains Supreme in Seattle

Grab your umbrella and coffee mug and make your travel plans for the 217th AAS meeting, when the Society returns to Seattle, Washington, as it does every fourth winter. The conference takes place 9-13 January 2011 at the Washington State Convention & Trade Center, a stone’s throw from picturesque Puget Sound and a short drive from the magnificent Cascade Range, backbone of the American Northwest. Gathering with us this time are the Historical Astronomy Division (HAD) and the High Energy Astrophysics Division (HEAD).

The Seattle meeting offers a rich assortment of prize and invited talks by some of our most distinguished peers. We kick

off with the inaugural AAS Kavli Lecture, in which Carolyn Porco (CICLOPS) reviews highlights from the Cassini orbiter’s ongoing exploration of Saturn, its resplendent rings, and its many moons. Two space missions looking deeper into the universe will also be featured in invited talks. Harvey Tananbaum (Harvard-Smithsonian CfA) considers the impact of key discoveries from the Chandra X-ray Observatory’s first decade-plus in space, and Charles R. Lawrence (JPL) tells us what Planck has found during its first year-plus of looking through the galactic foreground to characterize the cosmic microwave background.

continued next page

In his Pierce Prize lecture, Tommaso Treu (UCSB) will tell the story of dark matter and black holes over cosmic time. Scott Ransom (NRAO) has entitled his Warner Prize lecture “Millisecond Pulsars: The Gifts that Keep on Giving.” Edward “Rocky” Kolb and Michael S. Turner (both Univ. of Chicago) will give their Heineman Prize lecture on how the marriage of particle physics and cosmology has improved our understanding of the very early universe. Anna Frebel (CfA), winner of the 2010 Cannon Prize, will describe her work in stellar archaeology and explain how she squeezes new science out of old stars. And three leaders of the H.E.S.S. team— Felix Aharonian (Dublin Inst. for Advanced Studies), Werner Hofman (MPI for Nuclear Physics), and Heinrich J. Voelk (MPI for Nuclear Physics)—will, in their HEAD Rossi Prize lecture, describe their pioneering observations of very-high-energy gamma rays.

Among the other plenary talks will be one from the winner(s) of the Lancelot M. Berkeley – N.Y. Community Trust Prize for highly meritorious work in advancing the science of astronomy. The Society expects to announce the first awardee(s) of this important new prize in November.

The Seattle program is chock-full of Town Hall meetings on astronomy and public policy. Perhaps the most eagerly awaited will be the one hosted by chair Roger Blandford (Stanford Univ.) and other members of the Astro2010 decadal survey committee, which recently released its report *New Worlds, New Horizons in Astronomy and Astrophysics*. In addition to a review and discussion of the Astro2010 recommendations, attendees will have the opportunity to ask questions. Town Halls sponsored by NSF and NASA will also feature plenty of dialogue about the decadal survey report.

If you want to learn about the capabilities offered by major new and forthcoming observatories on the ground, in the air, and in space—or if you are just curious what all the acronyms mean—you will not want to miss the NRAO, NOAO, SOFIA, and JWST Town Halls and the LSST, ALMA, HERA, and EVLA special sessions. And are you wondering what the IAU plans to do next, now that the International Year of Astronomy 2009 is behind us? Then come to the IAU Town Hall!

The Society is committed to astronomers’ professional development in areas beyond pure science, and this is amply reflected in the Seattle meeting program. The AAS Committee

on the Status of Women in Astronomy (CSWA) is convening a Town Hall discussion entitled “What Can Men Do to Help Women Succeed in Astronomy?” Together with the AAS Committee on the Status of Minorities in Astronomy (CSMA), the CSWA is also sponsoring a special session on strategies for dealing with harassment and prejudice. The AAS Committee on Employment has a special session on the “two-body problem,” specifically, on balancing work and family life. And job-seekers and early-career astronomers, especially, will want to attend the workshop titled “Advancing Your Career in Astronomy: Identifying and Seizing Opportunities and Honing Professional Skills.”

Those who teach Astro 101, do astronomy-education research, or are otherwise involved in preparing the next generation for life in the 21st century will appreciate the special session organized by the Center

for Astronomy Education (CAE) and the Collaboration of Astronomy Teaching Scholars (CATS). And if you really want to roll up your sleeves and learn some practical skills that you can start using right away, come to Seattle early and participate in some of the many education workshops being offered on Saturday and Sunday, January 8th and 9th.

If reading about all these sessions is making you hungry and thirsty, rest assured there will be plenty to eat and drink in Seattle. In addition to the giant opening reception for all attendees, there is an orientation reception for undergraduates, a networking reception for grad students, and two gatherings for educators. And, after taking a vacation for the Miami summer meeting, the Society Banquet is back—don’t forget to sign up for it when you register!

Of course, science takes center stage at every AAS meeting, and there will be plenty of it in the Pacific Northwest in January. Highlights include new results from the WISE, Kepler, and Hubble space telescopes; reports from the once-per-generation eclipse of Epsilon Aurigae; and scientific gems mined from archival research supported by the NASA Astrophysics Data Analysis Program. On top of all that, there will be more invited talks, at least 1,000 oral and poster papers, and a bustling exhibit hall. So if you find yourself sleepless in Seattle, at least you know there will always be something interesting to do. Check the AAS website (aas.org/meetings/aas217) for more program information as it becomes available.



Committee on Employment

Liam McDaid (McDaidL@scc.losrios.edu)

Future Trends and Careers

We are presently living in the worst (global) economy of our lifetimes. Most of the people reading this belong to a field where getting work has always been hard. This makes job searches now more grim than ever. Whether you think the future will improve or decline greatly, it's hard to be an astronomer today. Now, it's hard just to be employed as the distinctions between hard and soft money start blurring. Some in the physical sciences always thought it odd that economics is considered a science by most when the number of variables involved in econometric models is enough to preclude specific predictions. Not surprisingly, recent economic projections reveal more about the projector than the economy. Still, the present grim outlook seems likely to continue for sometime, possibly years. The long term effects of this will likely be dramatic if the non-sustainability arguments being thrown around like brickbats lately are credible. It's enough to drive any prospective jobseeker to drink, but some help is on the way.

At the January 2010 AAS meeting, some very popular career workshops were held (thanks to Kelle Cruz) to increase the skills and marketability of our membership. This is a good thing, but many who have labored long and hard for their PhD may feel that their goalposts are moving. Yet those of us who came of age in the eighties or later have been part of the "resume generation" for some time. Staying in one job for an entire career is now almost impossible outside of government or academe. I'm not arguing the merits of the situation, but refusing to acknowledge it is pointless. Astronomers need to be flexible and trained for multiple tasks. Hopefully the career workshops will continue at future AAS meetings so that more members can gain benefits from them.

Looking beyond the present morbid economy, what can be done by our members to find work? Learn to sell yourself. This is not something scientists are trained to do and it is a hassle, yet it is absolutely vital to stand out from the sea of applicants for any job. Many talents from formal science are transferrable to other career fields. Not all of them lead to such dubious results as financial derivatives. Many of the green jobs that will be expanding globally – in spite of current conditions – will require skills that many reading this possess.

Another idea is to invent your own career. This sounds outlandish, yet I've met or interacted with enough astronomers who have actually pulled this off that it must be more common than usually thought. This implies that it isn't outrageously hard, or less people would be successful at it. Statistician by day, astronomy instructor by night. Systems analyst by

day, planetarium operator by night. Observatory operator by night and sommelier/stock broker by day. Networking expert by day, astronomy outreach in dangerous city parks by night (I actually know someone in this last situation... he likes adventure). If this trend continues, more people in our field will describe their careers with hyphens or multiple titles. Is it easy? No. But the many people I've seen that have done this and continue to do this are testimony to the possibility. More importantly, they often enjoy what they do.

We are a group of very talented and skilled people who by the very nature of what we do must constantly retrain ourselves to keep up. Is there a field in our vast global economy where such people are not desirable colleagues? Why are we limited at all in the path of our careers? I know in the past I often limited myself because what I thought was possible was a tiny subset of the real possibilities that existed. How many of us are limited by the (often only) path that was but before us when we started in astronomy? I know the prospect can be frightening to many who focus on the traditional path, but another life is possible. Perhaps even a better one.

Recently, I received a suggestion that the AAS website have a section with stories about astronomers who are employed in non-"traditional" jobs. It is a great idea and it can be found at the Non-Academic Astronomers Network. It is available online at: www.aas.org/careers/nonacademic.php. The AAS hopes this will eventually prove useful to our members struggling to find their way. You can help if you are a non-academic astronomer by contributing your own tale. The best part is it costs you only some time. That is something I don't think any of us want to have too much of in the present economy.

The AAS committee on employment exists to help our members with their careers. Your ideas are important, so let's hear them!

The AAS Committee on Employment is pleased to highlight useful resources for astronomers, and welcomes your comments and responses to this and previous columns. Check out our website (www.aas.org/career/) for additional resources and contact information for the committee members. If you have an idea for this column, please contact the Employment Column Editor, Liam McDaid (mcdaidl@scc.losrios.edu).

High Energy Astrophysics Division (HEAD)

Ann Hornschemeier, Secretary-Treasurer, (headsec@aaas.org)

HEAD currently has approximately 900 members and remains the second largest division of the AAS after DPS. In 2010, the Chair changed from Mitch Begelman (now past chair) to Chryssa Kouveliotou. The new Vice-Chair elect is Joel Bregman and the Secretary-Treasurer is Ann Hornschemeier. Megan Watzke is serving as HEAD Press Officer. The current HEAD executive committee members are Julia Lee, Scott Ransom, Paul Ray, Jack Hughes, Frits Paerels, and Belinda Wilkes.

The HEAD Executive Committee has set a goal to have our expenditures at approximately 4% of our financial reserves within the next 5-10 years. To achieve this goal, the Executive Committee voted to increase returns from our HEAD meetings (already in effect from the Hawaii meeting) and to increase the Division membership fees from \$10 to \$15 starting next year for the regular members only (Emeritus and Junior Member fees will remain the same).

There are a number of HEAD sessions of interest at the Seattle AAS meeting. First and foremost is the Rossi prize lecture, which will be given by three scientists in Seattle. The 2010 Rossi prize was awarded to three scientists and the High Energy Stereoscopic System (HESS) collaboration for their outstanding contributions to imaging of very high-energy (TeV) gamma rays. The individual awardees are Felix Aharonian of the Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies in Ireland and Werner Hofmann and Heinz Voelk of the Max Planck Institute for Nuclear Physics in Heidelberg, Germany. HESS is a system of Imaging Atmospheric Cherenkov Telescopes that investigates cosmic gamma rays in the 100 GeV to 100 TeV energy range located in Namibia. Germany and France are the major financial contributors in the H.E.S.S. collaboration.

In addition to the Rossi prize lecture, there are two HEAD special sessions organized at the 217th AAS Meeting in Seattle, Washington:

- 1) "HEAD: High Energy Processes in Star Formation"
10 Jan 2011, 10:00am-11:30am
- 2) "HEAD: New Radio Insights in High Energy Phenomena"
11 January 2011, 2:00pm-3:30pm

The format is a series of invited talks on forefront topics; the speakers will be finalized by late August. We encourage you to attend.

The HEAD Executive Committee is considering having a reception during the HEAD business meeting at the Seattle AAS. As soon as this is confirmed, we will send information on the date, time and place to our membership.

HEAD is pleased to announce the location and dates of the next HEAD meeting: Newport, Rhode Island on 7-10 September 2011. Newport is a terrific destination, especially at that time of year, with excellent beaches, and two major historical attractions. The town was the summer playground of the super-rich of the 19th century, who built the grandest mansions of the Gilded Age, set on the cliffs above the ocean (open to the public; also, there are walking paths along the cliffs). Our banquet will be at the impressive and historic Rosecliff Mansion. The other attraction is that "old" Newport is one of the best-preserved (and authentic) colonial towns in the US, dating back to the 17th century. The conference hotel has all the amenities that we expect that this will be another in a series of happily memorable HEAD meetings. The conference website, which will be updated regularly, is at <https://www.confcon.com/head2011/>.

HEAD would like to encourage more nominations for the Rossi prize. Please send in your nominations by 15 October (the cutoff date).

News from NSF Division of Astronomical Sciences (AST)

Jim Ulvestad, Division Director, julvesta@nsf.gov

Astro2010

We thank the many contributors to the Astro2010 decadal survey report, which is becoming public on the same day as the submission deadline for this newsletter item. The Astro2010 committee was faced with a difficult set of choices, and worked very hard to provide recommendations that might be realizable within the budget envelope expected for the coming decade. We at AST have been planning for various possible scenarios during the summer, and hope to begin responding to the Astro2010 recommendations as soon as practicable.

Community members should bear in mind that nothing ever happens immediately. In particular, we remind readers that any large construction project must go through numerous steps, including design review(s), proposal submission and evaluation, and internal competition with many other possible projects throughout the NSF. The NSF Director then may choose to propose a project to the National Science Board for approval as a possible new start, which would enable the project to be included in the President's Budget Request to Congress for a future fiscal year.

continued next page

Proposal News

In the last *AAS Newsletter*, we reported on upcoming requirements for all proposals to include a supplementary Data Management Plan. The timing for this requirement has been changed, and it now is likely to be required starting near January 2011 rather than October 2010. Among other things, this means that the proposals for Astronomy and Astrophysics Research Grants (AAG), with a 15 November deadline, probably will not need this supplementary material. However, given the increasing visibility and importance of data management, it will be on the minds of the merit reviewers, and it may be a good idea for proposers to include their data management concept in the body of their upcoming AAG proposals.

As I write, we are finishing the last award decisions for FY 2010 proposals, to be followed soon by official notifications of proposal awards and declinations. We did not quite meet the July target we set out in the last *AAS Newsletter*, but will continue to work diligently to make notifications to the community as soon as possible.

AST Staffing

We recently received approval for two new “rotator” staff members in AST. They will begin at NSF in FY 2011 and will focus on the individual grants program. Depending on the timing of release of this newsletter, the application window for these rotator positions may still be open when the newsletter arrives. We encourage prospective applicants to contact us for additional information.

News from the Astronomical Society of the Pacific (ASP)

James Manning, Executive Director

Standards

The nicest thing about standards is that there are so many of them to choose from. - Andres S. Tannenbaum

I have my standards, you know.

And so do you.

So do most people, but what prevents Tannenbaum’s “anything goes” world is that fact that we often reach group consensus on ritual, custom, modes of behavior and performance—even taste—that end up giving us culture, Society, law, curriculum goals, graduation requirements, and national science education standards.

And presently, those national science education standards are in the process of being updated.

The U.S.’s National Research Council’s (NRC) Board on Science Education (BOSE) is developing a conceptual framework to guide the updating of the original set of national science education standards introduced more than 15 years ago. Those standards, together with the AAAS’s *Science for All Americans* and *Benchmarks for Science Literacy* have been standard references for guiding curriculum-setters since the mid-90’s. But a decade and a half of education research, and experience in implementing existing standards, have offered new insights that the NRC plans to incorporate into an updated set. With funding from the Carnegie Corporation of New York and input from a variety of organizations and individuals, the NRC’s BOSE plans to develop the framework to serve as a basis for writing the updated standards in a process lead by an organization called Achieve.

At the ASP’s annual conference in Boulder, Colorado in early August, the design task force for the Earth and Space Science portion of the conceptual framework conducted a session to gather input from the assembled education and

public outreach professions and educators of many stripes just as the comment period on the draft framework was coming to a close. Design Team Lead Michael Wysession from Washington University in St. Louis, together with his group (Dennis Schatz, Pacific Science Center, Seattle, Washington; Don Duggan-Haas, Paleontological Research Institution/Museum of the Earth, Ithaca, New York; Scott Linneman, Western Washington University, Bellingham, Washington; and Eric Pyle, James Madison University, Harrisonburg, Virginia) collected ideas and comments that will help to tweak the draft that will ultimately be the basis for the drawing-up of a revised set of national standards.

Exactly how they will differ from the current standards remains to be seen, but the conceptual framework will focus on core concepts, and will doubtlessly address a growing consensus that curricula and textbooks contain too many topics presented in too little depth—as is suggested on the web site at http://www7.nationalacademies.org/bose/Standards_Framework_Homepage.html.

The final framework is expected to be unveiled early next year, and bears paying attention to. For with the nation’s governors trolling for a common set of standards with which to teach, the new framework and resulting standards may well govern how the next generation of school kids learns science, and how the next generation of scientists will begin their preparation.

We can keep track at the web site given above. And we should, for as the NRC states on its site, its “development of a new conceptual framework is the first step in a process that can inform state level decisions and achieve a research-grounded basis for improving science instruction and learning across the country.”

We have our standards, after all!

Honored Elsewhere

Shao Wins Michelson Prize

The International Astronomical Union Commission 54, Optical and Infrared Interferometry, is pleased to announce the first award of the Michelson Prize for 2010.

The Michelson Prize for 2010 is awarded for lifetime achievement to Michael Shao for his pioneering work on ground-based and space-based interferometers, including the Mark I, Mark II, Mark III, Palomar Testbed Interferometer, Keck Interferometer, and Space Interferometry Mission. Shao has been a prominent leader in the interferometry community, developing new avenues of research, including narrow-angle astrometry and nulling.

Kaspi Among Fellows of the Royal Society (FRS)

Victoria Kaspi's (Professor of Physics, Department of Physics, McGill University) research is focused on the observational study of neutron stars. She and her collaborators showed that anomalous X-ray pulsars exhibit glitches, stable spin properties, and X-ray bursts, thereby strongly suggesting that they are magnetars (neutron stars powered by magnetic fields of up to a petagauss). She used magnetospheric eclipses in a double pulsar to detect spin precession at the rate predicted by general relativity (to within 13%), one of the few tests of relativity in strong fields. Kaspi has discovered novel phenomena in binaries containing neutron stars, including the first millisecond pulsar in an eccentric orbit, the first pulsar to exhibit spin-orbit coupling, and emission from the colliding winds between a neutron star and a Be star companion. Kaspi and collaborators also introduced phase-coherent timing of pulsars in X-rays, derived strong upper limits on the cosmological density of gravitational waves and the rate of change of Newton's gravitational constant from pulsar timing, found the fastest rotating pulsar (716 Hz), and discovered many new pulsars. Most of these projects were led by Kaspi or her students or postdocs at McGill, where she has led the development of a strong astrophysics group.

The Society's foundation is its Fellowship, which is made up of the most eminent scientists, engineers and technologists from the UK and the Commonwealth. Each year, the Fellows elect 44 new Fellows and eight new Foreign Members, chosen for their scientific achievements.

2010 Grote Reber Medal awarded to Rogers

The 2010 Grote Reber Gold Medal for outstanding and innovative contributions to radio astronomy has been awarded to Alan Rogers, a Research Affiliate at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology Haystack Observatory. Rogers is being honored for his many pioneering developments in radio and radar interferometry, radio spectroscopy, and for his application of radio astronomy techniques to society.

The Medal was presented this past July in Hobart, Tasmania, at the annual meeting of the Astronomical Society of Australia.

The Reber Medal was established by the Trustees of the Grote Reber Foundation to honor the achievements of Grote Reber and is administered by the Queen Victoria Museum in Launceston, Tasmania.

AAS Members Among 2010 Sloan Fellowships

The Sloan Research Fellowships seek to stimulate fundamental research by early-career scientists and scholars of outstanding promise. These two-year fellowships are awarded yearly to 118 researchers in recognition of distinguished performance and a unique potential to make substantial contributions to their field. Congrats to the following members:

Andreas Berlind (Vanderbilt)
Allison Coil (UCSD)
Jonathan Fortney (UCSC)
Steven Furlanetto (UCLA)

2011 AAS Renewals

The 2011 renewal period is here! With almost fifty percent of the membership renewing online during the 2010 renewal period we considered it a success and look forward to additional member participation this year. Renewing early saves the AAS substantial cost and increases the funding available for our programs.

To renew online:

- Login to members.aas.org.
- Select "e-Billing Reminder."
- Your 2011 invoice and instructions will appear.

Additionally you will be able to support the Society's activities and prizes with an online contribution.

- Go to: members.aas.org/contributions
- Select a prize or activity by checking the donate box and filling in the amount.
- If you are a member, type your last name, first name, email address, and then click "Search."
- Your name should show up. Click "This is me."
- Type your name and credit card payment information.
- If you are not a member, just click "Skip Search" and type your name and credit card payment information.
- Click "Submit Credit Card Information."

The AAS Membership Department will be available to help with any problems at membership@aas.org or by calling us at 202-328-2010.

and request together what we want the Government to support. Will this mean we will succeed in implementing all the report's recommendations? Only with significant leadership from across the astronomy and astrophysics community. Some recommendations call for international partnership, some for combining multiple similar missions into single multi-functional missions, some call for investment in a broad program of activities, some in areas of narrow focus. This is not unique to this report, but without leadership from everyone involved, we are unlikely to achieve the vision of this Decadal Survey.

We will need leadership from the funding agencies at all levels of management and oversight. We will need leadership from the OMB and OSTP. We will need leadership in Congress. We will need leadership from your elected AAS leaders. We will need leadership from within our community here in the US and more broadly overseas. But most importantly, we will need cooperation and support from ourselves. As Roger Blandford said in his opening remarks at the Decadal Survey rollout, "This is your report." This is certainly true and we need to use it properly and support its recommendations uniformly as a community in order to be successful.

So how will things play out over the coming years. First off, I hope that the report's recommendations will be included in the President's budget request for 2012, being prepared now at the agencies and to be reviewed by OMB later this fall. If some of the requests are recognized in the President's budget request (released in the first week of February each year), we stand some chance of making early headway on the report's recommendations. As the AAS (and others) go to the hill to seek support in the coming years, we will use the Decadal Survey as our fundamental outline for meetings. Those staffers who don't know about the report,

will receive a mini-tutorial on its history, importance and specific current recommendations. The AAS has always carried out this educational role and everyone should expect their Congressional office to have heard from us about the Decadal Survey. This has an additional effect, in that any requests received by Congressional offices are usually held up against the Decadal Survey recommendations and it is not uncommon for an informed staffer to specifically ask an office visitor where their project or program falls in the Decadal Survey priority list. Be forewarned and prepared!

I hope that one key recommendation of the report is supported by the National Academy, the support of a committee to monitor the implementation and progress of the recommendations. With a single committee watching carefully as the decade wears on, we can be more confident that the recommendations will be implemented in priority order. Additionally, I strongly hope that the cognizant committee can review the recommendations in five years or so and adjust or re-verify the recommendations in light of new knowledge or even new scientific opportunity. This did fall to the Committee on Astronomy and Astrophysics in the last decade, so I am sure it will be implemented in some form for the current decade.

Finally, especially once the subcommittee reports become available, I encourage all educators to utilize the Decadal Survey in their education efforts, not just at the graduate level, but the undergraduate as well. The survey represents a very real-world example of how science moves forward. It also can serve as a substantial lesson in Civics. Utilize the report as you educate and train the next generation of astronomers and don't be shy sharing it with your friends and scientific colleagues in other disciplines. The Decadal Survey is a process we can be proud of and we should not be timid in sharing it broadly and setting an effective example for other disciplines.

Enhancing Views of the Universe

The 2011 Membership Renewal period is now open and available online at members.aas.org.

During this renewal period the AAS asks you to give a new generation of students their first look through a telescope. In partnership with the Galileoscope project, we are pleased to offer an exciting opportunity to inspire children by connecting them with the Universe.

When you donate \$150 or more to the General Fund, the AAS will provide a free Galileoscope to a school or other educational organization of your choosing.

If you donate \$250 to any AAS program, you will have access to the

Donors Lounge at the winter and summer meeting. Members who donate \$50 or more will receive an invitation to our 3rd Annual Donor's Reception at the winter meeting; and as a special incentive, the first 50 people who donate \$100 or more to any category will receive a Galileoscope of their own.

Help the Society save money and renew online today at members.aas.org.

Announcements

AJ and ApJ Now Using New Peer Review System

Over the last several months, the editorial operations of the *Astronomical Journal* and the *Astrophysical Journal* have started to use the EJPRESS system. The system is used by the editorial offices for managing manuscripts during peer review cycles. It is the system you should use to submit new manuscripts to these journals. Each editorial office has its own web address.

<http://aj.msubmit.net> (for the *AJ*)
<http://apj.msubmit.net> (for the *ApJ* and *ApJS*)
<http://apjl.msubmit.net> (for the *ApJL*)

Fall Round of Small Research Grant Proposals Due

The NASA funded AAS Small Research Program (SmRG) has funds available to cover costs associated with any type of astronomical research. Awards range from \$1,000 to a maximum of \$7,000 (US dollars).

The SmRG Program is open to astronomers with a PhD or equivalent; graduate students are not eligible. Astronomers from smaller, less endowed institutions will be given priority. Proposals are welcome from individuals not associated with an institution.

Acceptable expenses are those normally associated with research: computing costs; equipment purchases, upgrades, and repairs; equipment transport/shipping; travel (including student travel) to observatories and/or scientific meetings, but not AAS meetings; and not prospective page charges. Requests to fund page charges should be made only when papers are written and ready for publication.

Proposals of six pages or less are due 29 November 2010 for funds to be awarded in early 2011.

See: aas.org/grants/smrg.php for proposal requirements.

IAU 2010 General Assembly Proposals Due

The XXVIII International Astronomical Union General Assembly (IAU GA) will be held 20-31 August 2012 in Beijing China. Proposals for Symposia, Joint Discussions and Special Sessions at the 2012 GA are due 1 December 2010.

An IAU Symposium can be proposed by individual members of the IAU, by an IAU Working Group, or by an IAU Commission.

Nine IAU Symposia proposals will be approved for 2012. Six of the nine IAU Symposia in 2012 will be scheduled as GA Symposia within the scientific program of the GA and in the Beijing GA venue. A GA Symposium normally lasts three and a half days. The three IAU Symposia not associated with the GA normally last five days and may not be scheduled within three months before or after the GA.

A Joint Discussion (JD) held at an IAU GA addresses scientific themes of interest to two or more IAU Commissions. A JD normally lasts a half to one and a half days during the GA.

A Special Session (SpS) held at IAU General Assemblies addresses important topics that concern the IAU, and is more specialized than a JD. A SpS may focus on timely issues ranging from recent scientific events to educational activities. A SpS normally lasts a half to three days during the GA.

JDs and SpSs may be proposed by individual IAU members through two or more IAU Commissions.

Rules and a proposal submission form are available on the IAU website: www.iau.org/science/meetings/rules/.

Chandra Source Catalog Release 1.1

The Chandra X-ray Center is pleased to announce that release 1.1 of the Chandra Source Catalog (CSC) is now available for use by the astronomical community.

The CSC is a general purpose catalog of X-ray sources detected by the Chandra X-ray Observatory, and is being released to the user community in a series of increments with increasing capability. Release 1.1 of the CSC includes 106,586 point and compact sources detected in a subset of ACIS and HRC-I imaging observations released publicly prior to the start of 2010. Observations that include significantly extended sources in the field of view are not part of this release.

The CSC provides simple access to Chandra data for individual sources or sets of sources matching user-specified search criteria. For each X-ray source, the catalog includes directly measured properties such as positions and multi-band count rates, together with numerous commonly used derived quantities such as source extent estimates, multi-band aperture fluxes, hardness ratios, and temporal variability information. In addition, the catalog includes associated file-based data products such as images, photon event lists, light curves, and spectra for each source observation. These data products are suitable for further interactive analysis by the user.

Data access is provided by the CSCview GUI, which may be accessed from the catalog web site: <http://cxc.cfa.harvard.edu/csc/>.

Extensive user documentation, including a detailed description of the catalog contents and their statistical properties, may also be found on the catalog web site.

Calendar of Events

AAS & AAS Division Meetings

DPS Annual Meeting

3-8 October 2010, Pasadena, CA
dps.aas.org/meetings/

12th Divisional HEAD Meeting

7-11 September 2011, Newport, RI
John Vallerga (info@eurekasci.com)
<https://www.confcon.com/head2011/>

Other Events

Stormy Cosmos: The Evolving ISM from Spitzer to Herschel and Beyond

1-4 November 2010, Pasadena, CA
Roberta Paladini and David Shupe (ism2010@ipac.caltech.edu)
<http://www.ipac.caltech.edu/ism2010>

Gamma Ray Bursts 2010

1-4 November 2010, Annapolis, MD
Neil Gehrels (neil.gehrels@nasa.gov)
<http://fermi.gsfc.nasa.gov/science/grb2010/>

Midwest Astrochemistry Meeting (MWAM10)

5-6 November 2010, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
<http://midwest.astrochemistry.us/MWAM10/>

Astronomical Data Analysis Software and Systems

7-11 November 2010, Boston, MA
Doug Mink (dmink@cfa.harvard.edu)
<http://adass2010.cfa.harvard.edu>

Massive Galaxies Over Cosmic Time 3: The Role of Gas and Dust

8-10 November 2010, Tucson, AZ
Jeyhan Kartaltepe (jeyhan@noao.edu)
<http://www.noao.edu/meetings/mgct3/>

XIII Latin American Regional IAU Meeting (LARIM-2010)

8-12 November 2010, Morelia, Mexico
Luis F. Rodriguez (l.rodriguez@crya.unam.mx)
<http://larim2010.crya.unam.mx>

* Texas 2010: 25th Symposium on Relativistic Astrophysics

6-10 Dec 2010, Heidelberg, Germany
www.mpi-hd.mpg.de/texas2010/

*Essential Cosmology for the Next Generation

10-14 Jan 2011, Puerto Vallarta, Mexico
Eric Linder (bccpctb@lbl.gov)
http://bccp.lbl.gov/beach_program/index2011.html

*ALMA: Extending the Limits of Astrophysical Spectroscopy

15-17 Jan 2011, Victoria, British Columbia
Gerald Schieven (gerald.schieven@nrc-cnrc.gc.ca)
www.almatelescope.ca/Spectroscopy2011

Galaxy Clusters: the Crossroads of Astrophysics and Cosmology

31 Jan-22 April 2011, Santa Barbara, CA
Dan Marrone (dmarrone@oddjob.uchicago.edu)
<http://www.kitp.ucsb.edu/activities/dbdetails?acro=gclusters11>

*The Prompt Activity of Gamma-Ray Bursts: their Progenitors, Engines, and Radiation Mechanisms

5-7 March 2011, Raleigh, NC
Davide Lazzati (davide_lazzati@ncsu.edu)
http://grb.physics.ncsu.edu/GRB_2011/WEB/

*Signposts of Planets

12-14 April 2011, Greenbelt, MD
Marc Kuchner (Marc.Kuchner@nasa.gov)
<http://science.gsfc.nasa.gov/667/conferences/signposts.html>

*42nd Canadian Astronomical Society Meeting

30 May-2 June 2011, London, Ontario
Dr. Sarah Gallagher (sgalla4@uwo.ca)

Exploring Strange New Worlds: Gas Giants to Super Earths

1-6 May 2011, Flagstaff, AZ
Charles Beichman (Charles.A.Beichman@jpl.nasa.gov)

Frontier Science Opportunities with the James Webb Space Telescope

5-7 June 2011, Jackson Lake Lodge, Grand Teton National Park
Massimo Stiavelli (mstiavel@stsci.edu)

*4th Kepler Asteroseismic Science Consortium Workshop

11-15 July 2011, Boulder, CO
Travis Metcalfe (travis@hao.uar.edu)
<http://kepler.asteroseismology.org/>

Accretion Processes in X-Rays: From White Dwarfs to Quasars

13-15 July 2011, Boston, MA
Paul Green (accr10@cfa.harvard.edu)
cxc.harvard.edu/cdo/accr10

Extreme Solar Systems II

11-17 Sept 2011, Jackson Hole, WY
Fred Rasio (rasio@northwestern.edu)
<http://ciera.northwestern.edu/Jackson2011/>

*Archean to Anthropocene - the past is the key to the future

9-12 October 2011, Minneapolis, MN
Pamela Fistell (pfistell@geosociety.org)
<http://www.geosociety.org/meetings/2011/>

*First Kepler Science Conference

5-7 December 2011, Moffett Field, CA
Alan Boss (boss@dtm.ciw.edu)
<http://kepler.nasa.gov/Science/keplerconference/>

*New or revised listings

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

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



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

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Newsletter 154 September/October 2010

Washington News

Kevin B. Marvel, Executive Officer, marvel@aa.s.org



their policy experience.

The big news in astronomy policy this month is, as highlighted elsewhere in this *Newsletter*, the release of the Astro 2010 Astronomy and Astrophysics Decadal Survey. If you are reading this column, I will assume you have not been hiding under a rock or vacationing on a remote desert atoll for the past two years and know the basics of this report. What I want to discuss is how it will likely be used by policy makers in the coming few years.

First of all, this report has a lot going for it. Significant levels of community input were used by the committee to expand and enhance their recommendations. It is fairly easy to spot recommendations mentioned in the many submitted white papers (available online) in the final report in one shape or form. This is important and I think the committee deserves extra praise for taking this so seriously as they did their

Our new John Bahcall Public Policy fellow, Bethany Johns, takes up her position on 20 September, so I am writing the Washington News as a guest columnist this Newsletter. Bethany will be the fourth Bahcall fellow. Prior fellows have told me I need to now take them all out for a group lunch to gain insight from

challenging work. By recruiting the astronomy community to contribute and utilizing their input, the committee has made their report our report. This is significant and enhances the impact of the report as well.

Second, honest and credible attempts were made to uniformly assess cost and risk of missions. This too is critical and was a stumbling block for the last report's effectiveness. This time around, at least a uniform attempt was made to truly estimate the costs of the proposed missions. This fact, combined with the 'tripwire' recommendations will enable policy makers to implement the report's proposed projects for many years, knowing fully (or nearly so) what they are getting into financially and from a risk perspective as well.

Finally, the recommendations are affordable. The funding agencies can afford the projects outlined in the recommendations. Granted, some won't receive significant support until late in the decade or even into the next, but the US can afford to accomplish the goals laid out in the report. This has not always been true and sets this report apart from its predecessors.

So how will Washington policy wonks receive the report? I think very favorably. We remain a nearly unique community in Washington's eyes. A community willing to review our priorities

continued on page 13