

September/  
October  
2009  
Issue 148

# AAS Newsletter

A Publication for the members of the American Astronomical Society

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## President's Column

John Huchra, [president@as.org](mailto:president@as.org)

As the summer draws to a close, along with it the end of vacation season both for astronomers and Congress, we are once more into the breach. Astronomy and astrophysics continue to be interesting and important to the public at large but less well appreciated in the halls of government. Despite the fact that an extremely large number of undergraduates take astronomy as their gateway into the physical sciences, there is little recognition by the administration of the importance of our field. I urge you all to familiarize yourself with the relevant statistics and to continue to press this point with your elected representatives.

I also want to note several reports or preliminary reports from the National Research Council that are relevant to astronomy.

First is one very much related to my recent columns on ethics, "Ensuring the Integrity, Accessibility, and Stewardship of Research Data in the Digital Age" (see <http://www.nap.edu/catalog/12615.html>). This report discusses both the need to maintain (stewardship and curation) and to release data related to the dissemination (publication) of scientific results in a timely manner, the need to recognize and support the contributions of data professionals, and the need to develop and maintain professional conduct standards to ensure data integrity. These three issues are crucial to our field. Astronomy has progressed beyond the photographic plates kept in the drawers of the senior researchers. In the age of digital data and cheap storage, the development of archives and the curation of the data that are the basis for our published results is no longer an option. NASA already does an excellent job of archiving and curating space data, although there is always the threat that older mission data might not be supported and migrated to current data formats. The value of such data is well known—there are now more papers published each year based on the Hubble Space Telescope (HST) archives than based on new observations. However, with exceptions for data from large surveys, ground-based archives are woefully lacking. Solving the problem requires both resources and the will of observers and simulators. (Yes, simulations are a form of data, too!) Let us see if we can do something about this.

So far, there have been few if any reports of astronomers fabricating data, and I hope this never becomes a problem. P.S. We do get very good marks in the report for a "strong propensity to publish datasets." And one of my goals is to work with the AAS journals to improve the accessibility of data sets linked to publication in the *Astrophysical Journal (ApJ)* and *Astronomical Journal (AJ)*.

Second is the recently released report on "America's Future in Space: Aligning the Civil Space Program with National Needs" (<http://www.nap.edu/catalog/12701.html>). This report, produced by several of our colleagues as well as broadly constituted representatives of the U.S. science community, addresses the goals of NASA's civil space program. It is an eye opener and ties in to my introductory remarks on astronomy in the view of the administration. There are many positive statements in the report, but scientific inquiry is but one of seven national imperatives for NASA.

First published in 1989, "On Being a Scientist" is the simple textbook on mentoring, data treatment, intellectual property, conflict of interest and research conduct (see <http://www.nap.edu/catalog/12192.html> for the 2009 edition). This short tome is a must read for all astronomers, especially students. I hand out copies of this text to all the first year graduate students in astronomy at Harvard and urge you all to make copies available not only to your students and postdocs but also to senior researchers, and to read it yourselves for a view of the broader picture of research ethics.

One bright, although perplexing, note from the National Research Council (NRC) is the report chaired by one of our members, Claude Canizares, on "Gender Differences at Critical Transitions in the Careers of Science Engineering and Mathematics Faculty" (<http://www.nap.edu/catalog/12062.html>). This report found that there were no significant gender disparities in the promotion process at essentially every faculty career stage. Nonetheless, the fraction of female faculty drops well below

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

The \$141.00 annual membership dues for the American Astronomical Society include \$3.00 that is applied toward a subscription to the *AAS Newsletter*. Periodical postage paid at Washington, DC.

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

*Items of general interest* to be considered for publication in the *AAS Newsletter* should be sent to crystal@aas.org. Appropriate pictures are welcome. For information about deadlines and submitting articles, see [www.aas.org/publications/newsletter.php](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.

Judith M. Johnson, Editor  
Crystal M. Tinch, Associate Editor  
Jeff Linsky, U. Colorado, Associate Editor, Letters

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

## President's Column continued

the population mean at more advanced levels, to a degree that cannot be explained simply by field demographics. The institutional barriers appear to be down, but we still have a lot of work to do to achieve reasonable degree of parity. Is it a pipeline issue? Quality of life? And the problem with minorities in astronomy is even worse.

Last is the interim report on "Near-Earth Object Surveys and Hazard Mitigation Strategies" (<http://www.nap.edu/catalog/12738.html>), also chaired by an AAS member, Irwin Shapiro. This presents the rationale for one of the strongest national and international humanitarian reasons for large scale sky surveys, although I must admit that it fell short of the punch that "Deep Impact" and "Armageddon" had a decade ago (remind me sometime over a beer to tell you about the making of "A Fire in the Sky" a.k.a. "The Comet That Ate Phoenix," three decades ago). The new report is fun to read and I eagerly await the "mitigation" section.

To end this column, and as the public comment period has drawn to a close, I want to briefly remark on all the notes I have received since we announced the draft AAS Ethics statement. By far and away the bulk of the comments were related to the publication process. And the largest number of those were on the civility—or lack thereof—in the editorial and refereeing process. I cannot say this strongly enough: *there is no excuse for incivility in our professional interactions*, especially in the publication process. The anonymity of referees should not provide cover for abuse. Conversely authors should respect referees and realize that if a referee does not understand a statement or section there is a good chance that the exposition is unclear. Note that failure to provide reports in a timely manner can also constitute abuse. Students especially rely on the timely processing of their papers for career advancement. To repeat the already accepted AAS Journals ethics policy, "Personal attacks or verbal abuse, whether oral or written, are unacceptable under any circumstances, and the journals reserve the right to refuse submissions from individuals who repeatedly violate these guidelines or refuse to cooperate with editors and referees in the normal peer review and publication processes." I urge the editors, associate and scientific editors of AAS publications to apply these rules as necessary.

Until next time,  
John Huchra  
President, AAS

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## Secretary's Corner

### 2009 AAS Elections Final Slate

The following people have been nominated for office; most of the terms begin June 2010. Either an election ballot or details on voting electronically will be included in the December *AAS Newsletter*. The election will close 31 January 2010.

#### President

Nicholas B. Suntzeff  
Rosemary F. G. Wyse

#### USNC-IAU

Humberto Campins  
Jill C. Tarter

#### Secretary

G. Fritz Benedict

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Lori Allen  
Pamela L. Gay  
David L. Meier  
David R. Silva

#### Councilors

You-Hua Chu  
Edward F. Guinan  
Patricia Knezek  
Robert D. Mathieu  
Terry D. Oswalt  
Scott M. Ransom  
Mark V. Sykes

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# From the Executive Office

Kevin B. Marvel, Executive Officer, [marvel@ias.edu](mailto:marvel@ias.edu)

I am writing this column while attending the General Assembly of the International Astronomical Union (IAU) in Rio de Janeiro. Every three years the astronomers of the world gather to take care of business and get in a little science on the side. Many US astronomers may not know precisely what the role of the IAU is, how to join or, more importantly, how to participate.

I am always overwhelmed by the IAU General Assembly. The passion to pursue astronomy research knows no borders, but resources available vary widely. It is an emotional experience to sit in a session where an astronomer from a developing country presents their work and makes apologies that they could have done better if only they had access to journals, library resources or telescopes, when these resources are easy to access in the US. There is an energy here that does not exist at our own AAS meetings, a thrilling interaction of people from different cultures sharing a common avocation. The dynamic of approaching problems from different directions and backgrounds is exciting to experience and also enjoyable.

The IAU was formed in 1919 during a period of time when world science was becoming a more structured activity. Its mission is to promote and safeguard the science of astronomy in all its aspects through international cooperation. The world's scientific community came to the conclusion that for science to move forward, certain agreements as to nomenclature, constants, notation and so on had to be settled for the benefit of all. The concept of International Unions became the accepted way to settle these issues and they formed in nearly all areas of scientific endeavor.

The IAU has more than 9000 individual members and 89 countries that participate in the Union. The scientific and educational activities of the IAU are organized by its 12 Scientific Divisions and, through them, its 40 specialized Commissions covering the full spectrum of astronomy, along with its 71 Working and Program Groups. The long-term policy of the IAU is defined by the General Assembly and implemented by the Executive Committee, while day-to-day operations are directed by the IAU Officers. The focal point of its activities is the IAU Secretariat, hosted by the Institut d'Astrophysique de Paris, France.

Each country defines how individual members are elected to the Union through its National Committee. The U.S. National Committee (USNC) circulates applications for membership on a regular basis. There are no fees for membership application and no dues for membership either. The U.S. has just about 2,500 individual members in the IAU, which is significantly smaller than the membership in the AAS or any sensible estimate of the number of astronomers working and living in the U.S. Many other countries have a larger fraction of members in the IAU than the U.S. One need not be an AAS member to be an individual member of the IAU.

Although the main activity of the IAU is to approve and sponsor symposia (six to nine per year and the General Assembly) while also coordinating the work of volunteers to fulfill the goals of the Divisions and Commissions, a new and expanding direction for the Union is to undertake educational activities, especially in the developing world. A major new initiative has just been approved at this meeting enhancing the IAU's activities in this area. The plan for development will be made available online at [www.iau.org](http://www.iau.org) and I encourage those interested to read it. The plan represents an exciting new future for the IAU, which will be achieved only through participation by astronomers worldwide and by securing adequate resources to accomplish the plan's goals. I think the U.S. has a role to play here due to our expertise, resources and experience.

I am also happy to let all AAS members know that the U.S. proposal to host the 2015 IAU General Assembly in Honolulu, Hawaii, was approved at this meeting. By 2015, it will have been 30 years since the last IAU General Assembly was held in the U.S.. The AAS, working with the Institute for Astronomy) IfA and the astronomy facilities in Hawaii have already begun planning for this important meeting. For the meeting to be truly successful, we will need broad support from the U.S. community, including encouraging more U.S. astronomers to join and participate in the IAU. The application process is straightforward and acceptance as a member is generally guaranteed for any working astronomy researcher holding a Ph.D., although final approval is given through the USNC.

I have a challenge for all US astronomers. By 2015, let's participate more in the IAU than we have in the past. Let's increase the number of our national members from just about 2,500, to closer to 5,000. Let's truly engage with our international colleagues through the IAU. Let's carry the knowledge, resources, excitement and wisdom we have in the US to those elsewhere and let's learn from them as well, for not everything done in US astronomy is the best or most sensible solution.

Finally, I am pleased to announce that we made three critical hires this August. First, Dr. Rick Fienberg has been hired as our Press Officer and Education and Outreach Coordinator. He is featured elsewhere in this newsletter. Second, Dr. Anita Krishnamurthi will begin in late September as our third John Bahcall Public Policy Fellow. Anita succeeds Marcos Huerta, who has served admirably the last year and a half or so and begins a Congressional Fellowship this fall sponsored by the (American Institute of Physics) AIP. Finally, Roger Bilinda has begun as our IT Assistant and Web Applications Developer. I look forward to having these capable people serving the AAS and you will quickly notice their inputs to our activities.

Cheers from Rio!

### Committee Vacancies need to be Filled

Vacancies for several AAS committees will be filled by Council at its meeting in Washington, DC in January 2010. Current committee members are listed under "Council/Committees" on the AAS homepage, [aas.org](http://aas.org). Committees that have vacancies are:

Russell Lectureship Committee  
Heineman Prize Committee  
Annie J. Cannon Prize Committee  
Tinsley Award Committee  
Weber Award Committee  
Henri Chrétien Grant Committee  
Chambliss Amateur Achievement Committee  
Chambliss Astronomical Writing Award Committee

The Council takes advice from the Committee on Appointments for committee posts, AAS members may themselves volunteer to serve on a committee, or suggest other members for one of the vacancies. To be most useful to the Committee on Appointments, who may not know everyone, please include the date of Ph.D., as well as a few sentences conveying to the Committee the background and area of expertise of the named individual. Your help will be very much appreciated. We truly need to have both quality and breadth on our committees in order to help them make wise and fair recommendations to the Council.

Input must be received in the Office of the Secretary no later than 1 December 2009. Submit suggestions to John A. Graham, AAS Secretary, by email to [aassec@aas.org](mailto:aassec@aas.org) or at the Dept. of Terrestrial Magnetism, Carnegie Institution of Washington, 5241 Broad Branch Rd., NW, Washington, DC 20015, Fax: (202) 478-8821.

### Message to Associate Members

Only (Full) AAS Members have the right to hold office or to chair committees of the Society. Many Associate members who are eligible to upgrade to Full Membership and whose expertise could benefit the Society, cannot serve. Associate members, please consider upgrading, and becoming more involved with Society activities! There is no increase in dues! (See a description of the different membership classes in the Bylaws, Article I.1, or on the membership application form.) If any of you have questions, please contact me at [aassec@aas.org](mailto:aassec@aas.org).

### 2010 Membership Invoices

AAS members will be receiving their 2010 Membership Invoices soon after this issue of the *AAS Newsletter*. Since virtually everyone eventually does pay their dues, please consider prompt payment! Prompt payment saves the Society staff considerable effort and time in reminders, which translates into saving money for all of us!

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## 2010 Membership Dues

### AAS Membership Rates

\$141 Full  
\$141 Associate  
\$ 48 Junior  
\$ 69 Emeritus  
\$ 69 International Affiliate  
\$ 69 Education Affiliate

### Division Dues

Division on Dynamical Astronomy (DDA)  
*AAS Member: \$10, Division Affiliate: \$15*

Division for Planetary Sciences (DPS)  
*AAS Member: \$15, Division Affiliate: \$20*

Division for Planetary Sciences (DPS) - Junior  
(for first two years)  
*AAS Member: \$10, Division Affiliate: n/a*

High Energy Astrophysics Division (HEAD)  
*AAS Member: \$10, Division Affiliate: n/a*

Historical Astronomy Division (HAD)  
*AAS Member: \$8, Division Affiliate: \$10*

Solar Physics Division (SPD)  
*AAS Member: \$8, Division Affiliate: \$10*

## 2010 AAS Renewals

The 2010 renewal period is here! With almost fifty percent of the membership renewing online during the 2009 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](http://members.aas.org).
- Select "e-Billing Reminder."
- Your 2010 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](http://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](mailto:membership@aas.org) or by calling us at 202-328-2010.



## New Press Officer & Outreach Coordinator



Richard T. Fienberg has accepted the new position of Press Officer and Education & Outreach Coordinator for the AAS, effective 1 September 2009. He replaces Press Officer Steve Maran, who retired from his position on August 31 after 25 years on the job. Fienberg aided AAS as a Deputy Press Officer during the past year. His new position, but will have significant additional responsibilities in educational outreach.

Rick Fienberg is perhaps best known from his 22 years at *Sky & Telescope* magazine, where he was Editor-in-Chief during 2001-2008. He is a Rice University graduate

who went on to earn the Ph.D. in Astronomy at Harvard University and to work on the Infrared Array Camera that later was launched on the Spitzer Space Telescope.

Rick has taught as a Teaching Fellow at Harvard and most recently, as a full-time instructor with the title Visiting Scientist in Astronomy at Phillips Academy, Andover, MA. He's been very active in outreach, including multiple roles in the US IYA2009 program, chairing NASA's outreach committee for the Stratospheric Observatory for Infrared Astronomy, and serving as a consultant to the Education and Public Outreach Study Group for the Astro2010 Decadal Study. He's been honored with the naming of Minor Planet 9983 (Rickfienberg) and by selection as a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

We are fortunate to have attracted such an able and experienced person to work in our media and educational outreach programs. Contact Rick at [Rick.Fienberg@aaas.org](mailto:Rick.Fienberg@aaas.org) with your suggestions for press briefings at the January AAS meeting in Washington, DC.

## John P. Wisniewski Secures Chrétien International Research Grant for 2009



John P. Wisniewski has been selected to receive the 2009 Chrétien Grant Award for International Research. His project is to establish a long-term collaboration with the Subaru Strategic Exploration of Exoplanets and Disks (SEEDS) project, focusing on the imaging of disks, a key program within the SEEDS project. The Chrétien grant will fund a working visit for Wisniewski at Osaka University to collaborate with SEEDS YSO co-leader Dr. Misato Fukagawa as well as other collaborative and meeting travel. The project will use the HiCIAO coronagraph to image about 200 protoplanetary disks

over a five-year period. The Chretien grant is made possible through a generous contribution from an anonymous donor more than 25 years ago to honor the memory of Henri Chrétien, French Professor of Optics and co-originator of the Ritchey-Chrétien telescope design.

## Member Deaths

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

**Julius H. Cahn**  
**Richard F. Donnelly**  
**Robert J. Gould**  
**Paolo Maffei**

## 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.

## 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@aaas.org](mailto:address@aaas.org) or log into your member record at [aaas.org](http://aaas.org).

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# Committee on Employment

Postdoc Decision Deadline: Point-Counterpoint

*President's and Executive Officer's Note: At the last AAS Council meeting the AAS Employment Committee proposed a shift in the AAS supported Postdoctoral Decision date from February 15th to the end of March based on the poll described below. Several long standing postdoctoral fellowship programs, named observatory programs as well as the NASA fellowship programs, registered objections to this shift, primarily based on the timing of fall deadlines, other observatory functions and the January AAS meeting. The AAS Council tabled the decision until the Employment Committee more broadly considered the impact of changing deadlines for both applications and decisions, not only on astronomy fellowship applicants but also on program committees and on the process as a whole, including deadlines for faculty jobs and postdoctoral deadlines in the related physical sciences. We urge all AAS members to transmit their views on this to the Employment Committee and to their AAS Council members.*

## What Do Postdocs Want?

Travis Metcalfe, Rolf Danner, Fred Rasio  
(*Employment Committee*)

For more than 20 years, February 15th has been an important date for astrophysics postdocs. Why? It's the earliest day that decisions can be required for postdoc positions that have been advertised on the AAS *Job Register*. In the words of the original AAS Council recommendation, the idea is to "ensure an orderly and fair postdoctoral appointment procedure," and it has worked pretty well. But the job market has changed substantially in the past 20 years, and fellowship application deadlines are now threatening to creep as early as September—a full year before the position would begin.

Motivated by this primary concern, the AAS Committee on Employment sought to answer a very simple question: what is the optimal date for the postdoc decision deadline? Rather than just speculate about what would be best for postdocs, we took an unorthodox approach: we asked them. We identified several possible benefits of shifting the decision deadline later in the spring: (1) an opportunity for later application deadlines in the fall, (2) a better synchronization with the faculty hiring timeline, and (3) a greater potential for some grant-funded positions to be filled more quickly.

With these intended benefits as the context, last spring we emailed a short web-based survey to Junior AAS members and to Full members who had received their PhD in the past 15 years. More than 500 people responded, including current graduate students (22%), postdocs (28%), junior faculty (21%), tenured faculty (11%), and other senior astronomers (18%). The options for changing the decision deadline were: (A) keep it the same [February 15], (B) shift it by two weeks to avoid earlier application deadlines [March 1], (C) shift it by four weeks to allow later application deadlines [March 15], and (D) shift it by six weeks for later deadlines and better synchronization [March 31]. The results were unambiguous: only 13% favored keeping the deadline the same, while 60% wanted the full six week shift, an additional 17% favored a four week shift, and 9% preferred a more modest 2 week shift.

Some people argue that the survey was biased because it associated each choice with a specific intended benefit, and because it failed to cite potential concerns. However,

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## Considering the Entire Community

Dawn Gelino, Ron Allen, Nancy Evans  
(*NASA Fellowship Administrators*)

The advisory date selected many years ago by the AAS Council should be discussed thoroughly from all points of view in the community (students, postdocs, fellowship programs, scientists or labs wanting to hire postdocs, etc.) before making a serious change to a system which is currently working.

As fellowship program administrators for the three NASA-sponsored Astrophysics Postdoctoral Fellowships (Hubble, Einstein, and Sagan), our primary concern is to establish the best process for young scientists at this important juncture in their career. These three fellowship programs had over 400 applicants and awarded 32 postdoctoral fellowships in 2009 and expect similar statistics in the future. With the entire process taking about 2 months, our main priority in this discussion is to have the applications thoroughly and competently evaluated with responses sent to applicants in a timely manner.

In a poll of Chandra, Fermi and Einstein Fellows conducted by N. Evans, citing neither benefits nor concerns of moving the date, 70% of the 23 participants were in favor of keeping the February 15th deadline, 8% favored a later date, and 22% were undecided. Here we mention just a few of the points from the broader community, including postdocs, which were not included in the poll conducted by the Employment Committee.

(1) A delayed decision deadline will significantly shorten the period which postdocs will have to make necessary logistical arrangements for a major move. Many applicants today need to consider partner employment (2-body problem) and child care, as well as the move itself.

(2) The January AAS meeting is the main vehicle for students to present results and meet people from many institutions where they are interested in working. The current AAS deadline for postdoc fellowships occurs one month after this. Other applicants and potential employers often delay serious discussions until this deadline. Delaying this step until nearly three months after the AAS meeting will lose the momentum from discussions at the AAS and prolong the unsettling period for applicants.

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the survey also requested comments from participants, and many cited a broad spectrum of concerns as well as additional benefits. For example, beyond endorsing the intended benefits mentioned above, participants also noted that a later deadline would allow more time for negotiation to solve the two-body problem prior to accepting a postdoc offer. It would also provide more time to decide for applicants who needed it; while anyone would be free to make a decision before the deadline if that was better for their situation. They also identified, and in many cases rejected, every concern cited by those who oppose any shift.

Perhaps the most discerning observation that was submitted as a survey comment framed the issue quite succinctly: "Synchronization restores power to job applicants. De-synchronization removes power from job applicants. Who do we want to empower?" With your help, this is the question that we hope to answer in the next survey later this fall.

*The AAS Committee on Employment facilitates the professional development and employment of astronomers at all career stages and on all career paths, and promotes balance and fairness in the job market. Check out our webpage ([aas.org/career/](http://aas.org/career/)) and contact the committee chair with any comments or questions ([travis@ucar.edu](mailto:travis@ucar.edu)). Please participate in our survey of the broader community on the postdoc decision deadline issue later this fall.*

(3) The application deadline for the NASA fellowships is the beginning of November. For a number of reasons, the near-term fellowship submission deadlines will not be able to move. Thus, without the benefit of a later application deadline, delaying the decision deadline would lengthen the whole process for the ~400 named NASA Fellowship applicants.

(4) Since ~40-60% of the prospective NASA Fellows do not confirm their acceptance until within 2-3 days of the decision date, a delay of the decision deadline will leave the future of 10-15 fellowship "alternates" in limbo until at least April, delaying other employment decisions.

(5) Finally, most physics fellowships have deadlines in early January; gravitational physics is considering moving the deadline for astrophysics-related postdocs to align with the current AAS deadline but is unlikely to move to March 31st. Furthermore, it is not clear what fraction of faculty positions are decided by March 31st, or whether university departments are capable or willing to support the realignment. The proposed move will therefore result in a larger de-synchronization between physics and astrophysics hiring while not necessarily helping the synchronization issue with faculty hires.

All of the benefits and pitfalls of this issue need to be fully considered by a wide segment of our community before taking action to move this decision deadline.

## Division on Dynamical Astronomy (DDA)

Philip Nicholson, Chair, [nicholso@astro.cornell.edu](mailto:nicholso@astro.cornell.edu)

### 40th Annual Meeting

The DDA held its 40th annual meeting in Virginia Beach on 2-5 May. This time, the meeting was held back-to-back and at the same location with a kindred conference, a Symposium of the International Astronomical Union, "Relativity in Fundamental Astronomy: Dynamics, Reference Frames, and Data Analysis." A few astronomers took advantage of this juxtaposition and attended both meetings, but they were, for the most part, entirely independent. Just over 90 astronomers registered for the DDA meeting, and sessions were held on the usual wide range of dynamical topics, including planet formation, rings, and extra-solar planets, galaxies, black holes, and disk dynamics. Multiple sessions were devoted to celestial mechanics and astrometry, and the final session focused on the finer points of time scales.

### 2009 Brouwer Award

Each year, the DDA selects an outstanding dynamical astronomer to receive the Dirk Brouwer Award. The 2009 award will go to Tim de Zeeuw, Director General of the European Southern Observatory. The citation for this year's winner is posted on the DDA website, <http://dda.harvard.edu/>.

### Student Stipend Awards

Every year, the DDA recognizes the talents of outstanding graduate students and recognizes their scientific contributions to dynamical astronomy by providing two "Student Stipend Awards". Each award covers the cost of the registration fee and banquet fee, and contributes significantly to the students' travel expenses. The awards are meant to ease the financial burden of attending the DDA conference and to encourage participation by talented potential future leaders in the field. In 2009, the two winners were Julia (Julie) Comerford from UC Berkeley (advisor: Marc Davis), who presented "The Dynamics of Black Holes in Galaxy Mergers: A New Observational Technique for Identifying Mergers," and Ashley Espy from University of Florida (advisor: Stanley Dermott), who presented "A Dynamical Model of a Still-Forming Zodiacal Dust Band as Constrained by IRAS Data." We will solicit applications for the next awards at the beginning of 2010. Please direct any questions to Dr. Dimitri Veras, [veras@astro.ufl.edu](mailto:veras@astro.ufl.edu).

# January Meeting Could Be Largest Ever

The 215th AAS meeting, 3-7 January in Washington, DC may be our largest yet. In recent years, each successive DC AAS meeting has set a new attendance record, with the current record, 3,121 registrants, dating to January 2006. A larger tally at the 215th meeting might be a record holder for all meetings of professional astronomers anywhere.

When we meet in Washington, a major government official, such as an agency head, presidential science advisor or (in one case), the Vice President of the U.S., has often been available to speak to us. Watch our electronic notices and meeting website for information on the public policy speaker at the 215th meeting, as it becomes available.

The January meeting returns to its last site in Washington, the Marriott Wardman Park Hotel, strategically located next to a Metro subway station (you can take Metro to the hotel from Reagan National Airport and from Union Station). The Wardman Park is near the popular Dupont Circle and Adams-Morgan sections and a short walk from the Smithsonian Institution's National Zoo. You can also take Metro to the Smithsonian's National Air & Space Museum and other attractions on the national mall.

The High Energy Astrophysics (HEAD) and Historical Astronomy (HAD) Divisions will meet together with AAS in January, offering prize lectures and sessions.

Town Halls, providing the latest information on national facilities and agency programs and the opportunity to have your questions answered and make your views known, will be held for NSF, NASA, NRAO, NOAO, JWST and the U.S. Gemini project. There will also be a Town Hall/Reception of the Center for Astronomy Education and Association for Astronomy Education.

Workshops will begin one day before the meeting proper, on Saturday, 2 January and run through the next day. They feature astronomy education and outreach and education research and also include a two-day NSF Postdoctoral Fellows Symposium.

There will be Prize Lectures, Invited Talks, and Special Sessions galore at this large meeting, too many to mention here in full. But look for the Russell Lecture by George Preston, on RR Lyrae Atmospheres. Gamma-ray burst investigator Joshua Bloom and supernova specialist Alicia Soderberg will present the Pierce Prize and Cannon Award lectures, respectively.

Other prize winners who will address the meeting include distant-galaxies observer Lennox Cowie, recipient of the 2009 Dannie Heineman Prize for Astrophysics and exoplanet researcher Scott Gaudi, named to the Warner Prize.

What AAS meeting would be complete without black holes? There will be an invited talk on the formation of massive black hole "seeds" in the first galaxies by Marta Volonteri, known to a wider public for her video lecture on "iTunes U."

Many astronomers come from overseas for our January meetings. At DC, they will include invited speaker Eugene Churazov, high-energy astrophysicist at the Max Planck Institute for Astrophysics in Garching, Germany.

Two dozen special sessions are slated at the DC meeting on compelling issues like astronomy employment and on science frontiers, including two sessions on the first science results from ESA's Herschel Space Observatory and on science with the recently serviced and newly instrumented Hubble Space Telescope. Less common topics are also featured in special sessions, including "Astronomy Visualization: Where Science Meets Art" and "Planetary Cosmetology," relating to the latest trends in what the organizer calls "the beauty of planetary discovery and formation."

For additional information on prize and other invited speakers, special sessions, and Divisional programs at the meeting, watch our electronic updates to members and our meeting website.

Register soon, reserve a room before the conference hotel fills up, and come early to get good seats. We'll see you in Washington!

**Early Registration Deadline: 30 September**  
**Abstract Due: 1 October**

## AAS on Facebook

The AAS is now on Facebook! You can become a "fan" of the AAS and receive occasional updates and news via our Facebook page. In just a few weeks, we've reached over 1,000 fans. You can find us by simply searching for the American Astronomical Society.





# News from NSF Division of Astronomical Sciences

Nigel Sharp, Acting Executive Officer, Division of Astronomical Sciences, nsharp@nsf.gov

## Staff Changes in AST

Dr. Linda Sparke will leave us on 23 October to join NASA headquarters as a Physical Scientist in the Astrophysics Division, Science Mission Directorate. We are grateful for Linda's excellent service at NSF and look forward to working with her in her new role at NASA.

As of this writing, recruitment for the positions of Division Director and Deputy Division Director (formerly called the Executive Officer) has closed and assessment is under way. The process will not have completed by the time this newsletter appears, but we are hopeful that these important roles may soon be filled on a more permanent basis.

We are always looking for capable researchers from our community to come and work at NSF to bring in a fresh perspective and to learn more about the ins and outs of the agency, and we urge everyone to keep an eye out for job advertisements for both permanent and rotator positions.

## National Astronomy and Ionosphere Center

In November 2008, NSF published a Dear Colleague Letter (NSF-09-14) to announce its intention to compete the next award for the management and operation of NAIC. Resolution of a number of complex issues has prolonged the development of the program solicitation beyond the timeframe identified in the Dear Colleague Letter. We anticipate, however, that the solicitation will be available in early Fall at the division website, <http://www.nsf.gov/div/index.jsp?div=AST>. As stated in the aforementioned Dear Colleague Letter, NSF expects to provide support below the historical level, but sufficient to sustain a viable fraction of current science operations. The program solicitation will ask proposers to describe plans to maintain NAIC as a competitive scientific and educational facility, potentially through novel models of operations and governance, revisions to programmatic scope, and/or sources of additional funding.

## Advanced Technology Solar Telescope

On 6 August 2009, the National Science Board approved the issuance of an award, at the discretion of the NSF Director, for the construction of the Advanced Technology Solar Telescope (ATST). AST has supported the design and development of the ATST at the National Solar Observatory since 2001. While the Science Board's approval represents a major milestone in the proposed project's planning and development, it does not constitute a decision to begin construction since the award is contingent upon the issuance of a record of decision authorizing construction pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act and the National Historic Preservation Act. If an award is issued, funding will be derived in part from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 and the NSF's Major Research Equipment and Facility Construction funding line.

The Science Board's decision followed a comprehensive Final Design Review in May 2009 that assessed the project's readiness for construction and validated the basis of estimate

for cost and contingency. The review panel was enthusiastic in unanimously recommending the project for a new start. More information on the ATST can be found at <http://atst.nso.edu>.

## Upcoming Deadlines for AST FY2010 funding

**14 October 2009:** NSF Astronomy and Astrophysics Postdoctoral Fellowships (AAPF) Program (NSF 08-581; [http://www.nsf.gov/funding/pgm\\_summ.jsp?pims\\_id=5291&org=AST&from=home](http://www.nsf.gov/funding/pgm_summ.jsp?pims_id=5291&org=AST&from=home)).

**20 October 2009:** NSF/DOE Partnership in Basic Plasma Science and Engineering. (NSF 09-596; [http://www.nsf.gov/funding/pgm\\_summ.jsp?pims\\_id=5602&org=AST&from=home](http://www.nsf.gov/funding/pgm_summ.jsp?pims_id=5602&org=AST&from=home)). The goal of this initiative is to enhance plasma research and education in this broad, multidisciplinary field by coordinating efforts and combining resources of the two agencies. Although the initiative was originally planned to run for the three years FY09-FY11, we currently anticipate that it will be renewed in future years, but perhaps with modified conditions.

**22 October 2009:** Research Experiences for Undergraduates (REU) Sites. Program solicitation NSF 09-598 is now out for the REU sites competition for this year. Please see [http://www.nsf.gov/funding/pgm\\_summ.jsp?pims\\_id=5517&org=AST&from=home](http://www.nsf.gov/funding/pgm_summ.jsp?pims_id=5517&org=AST&from=home) for details.

**2 November 2009:** Advanced Technologies and Instrumentation (ATI). The ATI program provides grants to support the development and construction of state-of-the-art detectors and instruments for the visible, infrared, and radio regions of the spectrum. See [http://www.nsf.gov/funding/pgm\\_summ.jsp?pims\\_id=5660&org=AST&from=home](http://www.nsf.gov/funding/pgm_summ.jsp?pims_id=5660&org=AST&from=home) for details. NOTE: in accordance with standard NSF policy ([http://www.nsf.gov/pubs/policydocs/pappguide/nsf09\\_29/gpg\\_1.jsp#IF2](http://www.nsf.gov/pubs/policydocs/pappguide/nsf09_29/gpg_1.jsp#IF2)), because 1 November 2009 is a Sunday, the ATI deadline moves, for 2009 only, to 2 November.

**16 November 2009:** Astronomy & Astrophysics Research Grants (AAG). The AAG program (NSF 05-608) provides individual investigator and collaborative research grants for observational, theoretical, laboratory, computational, and archival data studies in all areas of astronomy and astrophysics. See [http://www.nsf.gov/funding/pgm\\_summ.jsp?pims\\_id=13630&org=AST&from=home](http://www.nsf.gov/funding/pgm_summ.jsp?pims_id=13630&org=AST&from=home) for more details, and please feel free to contact any of the listed Program Officers if you have questions. The 15 November deadline also applies to proposals that qualify under the Research in Undergraduate Institutions (RUI) program. See [http://www.nsf.gov/funding/pgm\\_summ.jsp?pims\\_id=5518&org=NSF&sel\\_org=XCUT&from=fund](http://www.nsf.gov/funding/pgm_summ.jsp?pims_id=5518&org=NSF&sel_org=XCUT&from=fund). NOTE: in accordance with standard NSF policy ([http://www.nsf.gov/pubs/policydocs/pappguide/nsf09\\_29/gpg\\_1.jsp#IF2](http://www.nsf.gov/pubs/policydocs/pappguide/nsf09_29/gpg_1.jsp#IF2)), because 15 November 2009 is a Sunday, the AAG deadline moves, for 2009 only, to 16 November.

# AAS 2008 Financial Report

The Annual Audit for 2008 has been completed by Tate & Tryon. As with past years, the audit report received an unqualified opinion.

While the AAS maintains our financial data based on programmatic cost centers, the audited financial statements combine all of the cost centers together for the presentation of the Balance Sheet.

In 2008, there was an overall decrease in net assets of \$2.9 million dollars; resulting in total net assets of \$11,146,696 as of December 31, 2008. The market value loss on our portfolio reached \$2,572,076 by the end of 2008; representing 87% of the total loss. In addition to the investment loss, we spent \$91,515 of our reserves on the IYA effort; as approved by Council. The balance of the loss comes from the General Fund shortfall of \$44,433 and the journal transition costs paid out of the journal reserves. The Balance Sheet is shown in Figure 1.

Overall, the Society's finances can be segregated into six programmatic activities. The Statement of Activities, as shown in Figure 2, contains the revenues and expenses by programmatic activity for 2008 as compared to 2007.

Overall, the 2008 Net Assets incurred a loss of \$3,512,837. The majority of this loss (73%) is attributed to the decreased market value of our investment portfolio. The additional loss is attributed to the journal transition costs and funding of the IYA effort as previously stated.

The 2008 revenue collected by the Society is shown in Figure 3. As shown below, 62 percent of the society's revenue is produced by our scientific journals. The second highest source of revenue is generated through our meetings.

The 2008 programmatic expenses are shown in Figure 4. The expenses of our scientific journals represent the largest expense of the society; 64.9%. The second largest expense category is meeting expenses at 12.6%.

## 2008 Operational Highlights

- Published 6,547 pages of research results in the *Astronomical Journal* at a cost of \$172 per page.
- Published 34,925 pages of research in the *Astrophysical Journals* at a cost of \$186 per page.
- Secured \$854,000 in Grant Funding from NSF and NASA

Figure 1. 2008 AAS Balance Sheet

| December 31                             | 2008                | 2007                |
|---|---------------------|---------------------|
| <b>Assets</b>                           |                     |                     |
| Cash and Cash Equivalents               | 1,048,280           | 1,647,713           |
| Accounts Receivable                     | 1,735,078           | 1,354,587           |
| Promises to Give                        | 75,000              | 5,000               |
| Prepaid Expenses                        | 290,804             | 118,244             |
| Investments                             | 7,903,730           | 10,865,047          |
| Deposits                                | 82,681              | 82,681              |
| Property and Equipment                  | 11,123              | 29,562              |
| <b>Total Assets</b>                     | <b>\$11,146,696</b> | <b>\$14,102,834</b> |
| <b>Liabilities and Net Assets</b>       |                     |                     |
| Accounts Payable and Accrued Expenses   | 1,223,421           | 946,732             |
| Deferred Revenue                        | 2,530,162           | 2,250,152           |
| <b>Total Liabilities</b>                | <b>\$3,753,583</b>  | <b>\$3,196,884</b>  |
| <b>Net Assets</b>                       |                     |                     |
| Unrestricted                            | 5,392,086           | 8,550,990           |
| Temporarily Restricted                  | 1,513,254           | 1,943,816           |
| Permanently Restricted                  | 487,773             | 411,144             |
| <b>Total Net Assets</b>                 | <b>\$7,393,113</b>  | <b>\$10,905,950</b> |
| <b>Total Liabilities and Net Assets</b> | <b>\$11,146,696</b> | <b>\$14,102,834</b> |

- Collected Donations in the Amount of \$227,377
- Created a Public Policy Blog
- Continued to expand the level of service provided to our Divisions
- Through the NSF, we funded IYA projects in the amount of \$139,629. The NSF support was used primarily to fund a Project Director and a Project Manager as well as travel for these people as well as some volunteers.
- Through NASA, we funded 15 individuals through the Small Research Grant; a total of \$60,711 was awarded.
- Through NASA, we awarded \$81,976 to 57 individuals under the International Travel Grant program.
- Through the Bok and Lines Grant we funded one individual in the amount of \$3,000.
- 22 members participated in the Harlow Shapley Visiting Lecturer Program; for a total of 25 separate lectures.

The overall financial picture for the Society remains stable. Like all other non-profits, we did sustain a substantial loss in the market value of our investment portfolio. In 2008, there was an overall decrease in net assets in the amount of \$2.9 million dollars; resulting in a total net assets of \$11,146,696 as of 31 December 2008.

AAS bylaws, Article VIII.3, mandate that each Journal maintain a reserve fund equal or above the level of one-half of the annual operating expenses. In addition to the journal reserve funds, we have a segregated journal archive reserve fund to ensure the long-term maintenance of the electronic journals. As of 31 December 2008, the journal reserve fund balances reached \$3,945,004 representing 53 % of the 2008 expenses.

Over the past two years, we have utilized over \$1.5 million of the journal reserves to fund the costs associated with the transition to the new publisher. While the journal reserves are extremely close to the minimum requirement, we are anticipating the reserves will build up over the next two fiscal years due to the decrease in production costs experienced through the new publisher.

The General Fund experienced a slight deficit of \$44,433;

representing the lowest deficit since 2002. This deficit is mainly attributable to increased meeting costs. It is important to note that over the past 10year period, the General Fund produced deficits in all years except 2000 and 2001. Overall, the average annual deficit was \$146,649 throughout the 10year review period. In years where there were operational deficits, transfers were made from the Operating Reserve Fund to offset the loss.

Due to the deficits over the years combined with the recent market value decline, the Operating Reserve Fund Balance has decreased by approximately \$900,000 over the 10year review period; representing 14.4 percent of the annual expenses. Council have adopted a plan to bring the Operating Reserve Fund Balance to \$1,835,000 or 46 percent of the annual General Fund Expenses by 31 December 2010. The original plan was adjusted due to the current financial environment and the journal transition expenses incurred in 2008.

**Figure 2: 2008 AAS Statement of Activities**

| <b>December 31</b>                          | <b>2008</b>          | <b>2007</b>         |
|---|----------------------|---------------------|
| <b>Unrestricted Activities</b>              |                      |                     |
| Revenue                                     |                      |                     |
| Journals                                    | 5,659,653            | 7,375,793           |
| General Programs                            | 2,098,203            | 2,134,850           |
| Grants and Contracts                        | 373,900              | 287,144             |
| Divisions                                   | 229,972              | 224,113             |
| Other                                       | (222,690)            | 80,366              |
| Bequests and Memorials                      | (47,840)             | 17,674              |
| Net Assets Released from Restrictions       | 43,723               | 311,915             |
| <b>Total Unrestricted Income</b>            | <b>\$8,134,921</b>   | <b>\$10,431,855</b> |
| Expenses                                    |                      |                     |
| Jouranls                                    | 8,028,261            | 7,079,819           |
| General Programs                            | 2,627,166            | 2,752,167           |
| Grants and Contracts                        | 344,316              | 313,434             |
| Divisions                                   | 100,918              | 102,896             |
| Other                                       | 167,306              | 40,843              |
| Bequests and Memorials                      | 25,858               | 34,595              |
| <b>Total Expenses</b>                       | <b>\$11,293,825</b>  | <b>\$10,323,754</b> |
| Change in Unerstricted Net Assets           | (\$3,158,904)        | \$108,101           |
| <b>Temporary Restricted Net Assets</b>      |                      |                     |
| Divisions                                   | (79,533)             | 175,697             |
| Bequests and Memorials                      | (188,565)            | 32,753              |
| Contributions and Other                     | (118,741)            | 37,092              |
| Net Assets Released from Restrictions       | (43,723)             | (311,915)           |
| Change in Temporarily Restricted Net Assets | (\$430,562)          | (\$66,373)          |
| <b>Permanently Restricted Net Assets</b>    |                      |                     |
| Contributions and Other                     | 76,629               | 540                 |
| Change in Permanently Restricted Net Assets | \$76,629             | \$540               |
| <b>Change in Net Assets</b>                 | <b>(\$3,512,837)</b> | <b>\$42,268</b>     |
| <b>Net Assets Beginning of Year</b>         | <b>10,905,950</b>    | <b>10,863,682</b>   |
| <b>Net Assets End of Year</b>               | <b>\$7,393,113</b>   | <b>\$10,905,950</b> |

*continued on page 14*

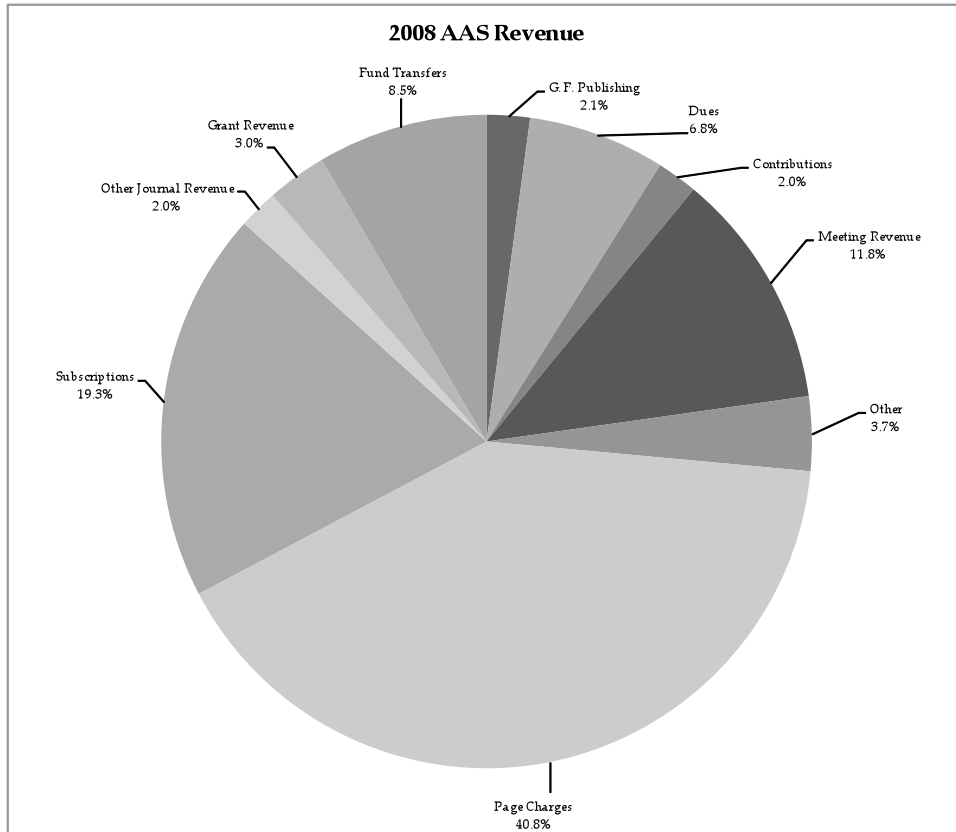
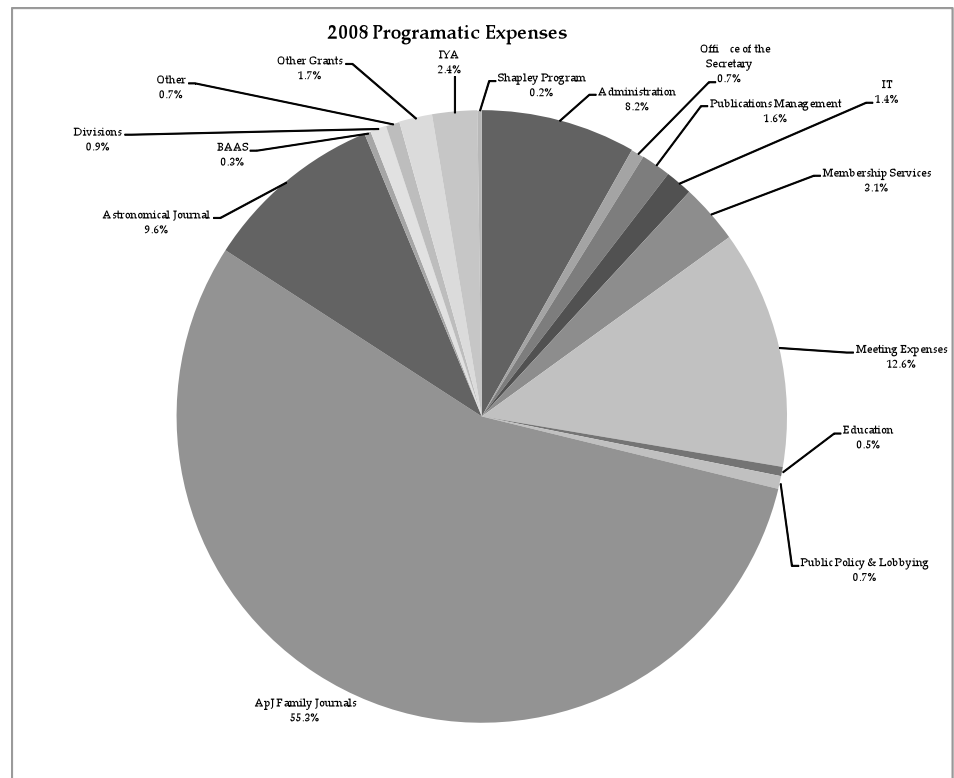


Figure 3: 2008 AAS Revenue

Figure 4: 2008 AAS Expenses





## **Farewell**

This is my final column as the Bahcall fellow. I will be leaving the AAS to begin a year as the American Institute of Physics/AVS Congressional Science Fellow. I will spend a year working on a congressional committee or for a member of Congress. The congressional fellowship is part of the broader AAAS Science and Technology Fellowship program.

It has been a great experience serving the AAS and its members these last 18 months. The Bahcall Fellowship has been an excellent introduction to the world of science policy, and I believe enabled my successful congressional fellowship application. I applied for this position as a first step into Washington and the world of public policy. In that, it has exceeded my expectations. I have been able to meet many people in science policy, at other societies and within the government. All of this has given me invaluable experience

## **Honored Elsewhere**

### **Shaw Prize Awarded to Shu**

Frank H. Shu, a professor of physics UC San Diego, received the 2009 Shaw Prize “in recognition of his outstanding lifetime contributions in theoretical astronomy” by the Shaw Prize Foundation in Hong Kong.

Shu’s work on the origins of stars over a span of 30 years generated a comprehensive and widely accepted theory that explains the main events in the birth and evolution of a star from the collapse of a cloud of molecules, to the accretion of a magnetized disk of material from which planets form to the appearance of jets and other outflows from a star system.

The foundation’s award, which includes a medal of the philanthropist Sir Run Run Shaw, is annually bestowed on individuals who have made “distinguished and significant” achievements in three categories: astronomy, life science and medicine, and the mathematical sciences. First awarded in 2004, it is sometimes referred to as the “Nobel Prize of the East.”

### **Sunyaev Receives International Prize for Science**

Rashid Alievich Sunyaev (AAS honorary member and Chief Scientist, Space Research Institute, Russian Academy of Science and Director, Max-Planck Institute for Astrophysics, Germany) received the 2009 King Faisal International Prize for Science from the King Faisal Foundation in Saudi Arabia. He will share a prize of Saudi Riyal 750,000 (about \$200,000) with co-winner physicist Sir Richard Henry Friend.

### **Stassun Awarded Fletcher Foundation Fellowship**

Associate Professor of Physics and Astronomy Keivan G. Stassun (Vanderbilt University) has been awarded a \$50,000 fellowship from the Fletcher Foundation to support his

in a myriad of policy topics—both in astronomy and in other fields.

The position also allowed me to meet a wide cross-section of the astronomical community, from members of the council and committee on astronomy and public policy, to students interested in science policy, to the amazing and hardworking staff here in the AAS Executive Office. As an AAS member it was easy for me to overlook the amount of work that goes into putting on a meeting. After working for the AAS, I will never look at an AAS meeting the same way again.

For those of you with an interest in public policy or science policy, I can think of no better introduction to the policy world than the Bahcall Fellowship. I would encourage anyone with interest in policy to apply to be one of the future John Bahcall Public Policy fellows.

efforts to increase the number of underrepresented minorities pursuing scientific careers.

Stassun will apply the award to develop a model of the Fisk-Vanderbilt Masters-to-PhD Bridge program in collaboration with researchers at Columbia Law Schools Center for Institutional and Social Change. In just five years the program has attracted 30 underrepresented minorities, 60 percent of whom are women. The program is poised to become the top awarder of doctoral degrees to underrepresented minorities in physics, astronomy and materials science in 2010-11.

### **Fraknoi Among Winners in NASA ‘Top Stars’ Contest**

An entry by Andrew Fraknoi is one of the first to be selected as “Top Stars” in a new NASA-sponsored contest that invites U.S. formal (K-12 and college) and informal educators to submit their best examples of using Hubble in science, technology, engineering or mathematics education.

Fraknoi, chair of the astronomy department at Foothill College in Los Altos Hills, Calif., earned Top Stars honors for his activity in which undergraduate students pretend to be travel agents and use Hubble images to plan a honeymoon to 10 “visually and astronomically interesting places.”

The Top Stars contest continues through January 2010 and is conducted by the Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES) in cooperation with the Space Telescope Science Institute. Submissions are accepted from individuals and from teams of up to four members, and may include any combination of text, graphics, video and photos.

For more information, including submission guidelines, please visit: <http://topstars.strategies.org>.

# Announcements

## 2010 Online Membership Renewals

The 2010 renewal period is here! Be an early bird and renew online today. Renewing early saves the AAS substantial cost and increases the funding available for our programs. Renew online today at [members.aas.org](http://members.aas.org). If you need assistance, please email [membership@aas.org](mailto:membership@aas.org), or call 202-328-2010 ext. 101.

## Women in Astronomy and Space Science

Don't forget to mark your calendars for the upcoming "Women in Astronomy and Space Science meeting, which is subtitled "Meeting the Challenges of an Increasingly Diverse Workplace," with sponsorship from NASA and NSF as well as STScI, UMD, USRA, AURA, AIU, APL, JPL, and NGST.

Note that there are grants available to early career scientists (Graduate Students and Post Doctoral Fellows within three years of PhD) to cover the hotel and the registration including meals. Matching funds will be needed to cover airfare or other travel expenses. We very much hope that Departments will support their early career scientists in attending this meeting!

The meeting takes place at the Inn and Conference Center, University of Maryland University College from 21-23 October.

While the first word in the title is "Women," there is also a strong emphasis on minorities, and generational differences as well as women in the workforce, with a great line-up of speakers, panels, and networking events. The meeting emphasizes best practices for success and is meant to be useful to women and men, to early career, mid-career, and senior career scientists.

We hope you will plan to attend! See agenda, poster submissions, etc. at <http://wia2009.gsfc.nasa.gov>. The deadline for early registration and poster submission is 21 September.

## Hubble Space Telescope Multi-Cycle Treasury (MCT) Programs Call for Proposals

NASA and the Space Telescope Science Institute (STScI) are pleased to announce the Multi-Cycle Treasury Programs Call for Proposals for Hubble Space Telescope (HST) Observations. Participation in this program is open to all categories of organizations, both domestic and foreign, including educational institutions, profit and nonprofit organizations, NASA Centers, and other Government agencies.

This solicitation for proposals will be open through 18 November 2009 5:00pm EST. The Astronomer's Proposal Tools (APT) version 17.4.3, which is required for Phase I Proposal Submission, has been released. Results of the

selection will be announced in late January 2010, 6-7 weeks before the Cycle 18 Phase I Deadline.

All programmatic and technical information, as well as specific guidelines for proposal preparation, are available electronically from the STScI Announcement Web Page: <http://www.stsci.edu/institute/org/spd/mctp.html/>.

Questions can be addressed to the STScI Help Desk mail: [help@stsci.edu](mailto:help@stsci.edu); phone: 410-338-1082.

## NSO Observing Proposal Deadline

The current deadline for submitting observing proposals to the National Solar Observatory is 15 November 2009 for the first quarter of 2010. Information is available from the NSO Telescope Allocation Committee at P.O. Box 62, Sunspot, NM 88349 for Sacramento Peak facilities ([sp@nso.edu](mailto:sp@nso.edu)) or P.O. Box 26732, Tucson, AZ 85726 for Kitt Peak facilities ([nsokp@nso.edu](mailto:nsokp@nso.edu)). Instructions may be found at <http://www.nso.edu/general/observe/>. A web-based observing-request form is at <http://www2.nso.edu/cgi-bin/nsoforms/obsreq/obsreq.cgi>. Users' Manuals are available at <http://nsosp.nso.edu/dst/> for the SP facilities and <http://nsokp.nso.edu/> for the KP facilities. An observing-run evaluation form can be obtained at [ftp://ftp.nso.edu/observing\\_templates/evaluation.form.txt](ftp://ftp.nso.edu/observing_templates/evaluation.form.txt).

Proposers are reminded that each quarter is typically oversubscribed, and it is to the proposer's advantage to provide all information requested to the greatest possible extent no later than the official deadline. Observing time at National Observatories is provided as support to the astronomical community by the National Science Foundation.

## Seeking Nominees for COSPAR Awards and Medals

COSPAR, the Committee on Space Research of the International Council for Science, is seeking candidates to be nominated for COSPAR awards and medals, which recognize the outstanding achievements of space scientists throughout the world.

It is important to honor the contributions of your colleagues. Please take a moment to consider nominees for the COSPAR awards and medals. Additional details concerning the awards, together with instructions and nomination forms, can be found at <http://cosparhq.cnes.fr/Awards/awards.htm>. Completed nominations forms must be received by the COSPAR Secretariat in Paris no later than 30 November 2009. Questions can be addressed to David H. Smith, executive secretary of the U.S. National Committee for COSPAR, at [dhsmith@nas.edu](mailto:dhsmith@nas.edu).

# Calendar

## AAS & AAS Division Meetings

### DPS 41st Annual Meeting

4-9 October 2009  
Fajardo, Puerto Rico  
<http://dps09.naic.edu>

### AAS 215th Meeting

3-7 January 2010, Washington, DC  
Contact: Kelli Gilmore ([gilmore@as.org](mailto:gilmore@as.org))  
[aas.org/meetings](http://aas.org/meetings)

### HAD Meeting

3-4 January 2010, Washington DC

### HEAD Meeting

1-4 March 2010, Waikaloa, HI  
Contact: John Vallerga  
([info@eurekasci.com](mailto:info@eurekasci.com))  
[www.confcon.com/head2010](http://www.confcon.com/head2010)

### DDA Meeting

25-29 April 2010, Brookline, MA  
LOC Chair: Matija Cuk  
([cuk@eps.harvard.edu](mailto:cuk@eps.harvard.edu))

## Other Events

### 2009 IAU Symposia, Special Sessions and Joint Discussions

<http://www.astronomy2009.com.br/>

### \*Reionization to Exoplanets: Spitzer's Growing Legacy

26-28 Oct 2009, Pasadena CA  
<http://ssc.spitzer.caltech.edu/mtgs/spitzer2009>

### 2009 Fermi Symposium

2-5 November 2009, Washington, DC  
Contact: David Thompson  
([David.J.Thompson@nasa.gov](mailto:David.J.Thompson@nasa.gov))  
<http://fermi.gsfc.nasa.gov/science/symposium/2009/>

### IAU Symposium No. 268

Light Elements in the Universe  
9- 13 Nov 2009, Geneva, Switzerland  
Contact: Corinne Charbonnel  
([corinne.charbonnel@obs.unige.ch](mailto:corinne.charbonnel@obs.unige.ch))  
[obswww.unige.ch/iau268](http://obswww.unige.ch/iau268)

### \*The 3rd Magnetism in Massive Stars (MiMeS) Workshop

16-20 November 2009, Waimea, Big Island of Hawaii  
Contact: Gregg Wade ([wade-g@rmc.ca](mailto:wade-g@rmc.ca))  
[www.physics.queensu.ca/~wade/mimes](http://www.physics.queensu.ca/~wade/mimes)

### \*UCF Winter School 2010: Exoplanets for Planetary Scientists

6-8 January 2010, Orlando, FL  
Contact: Teresa Jeffcott  
([winterschool@physics.ucf.edu](mailto:winterschool@physics.ucf.edu))  
<http://planets.ucf.edu/winterschool2010>

### \*Essential Cosmology for the Next Generation

11-15 Jan 2010, Playa del Carmen, Mexico  
Contact: Eric Linder ([bccpctb@lbl.gov](mailto:bccpctb@lbl.gov))  
[http://bccp.lbl.gov/beach\\_program](http://bccp.lbl.gov/beach_program)

### \*KPNO@50: Celebrating the 50th Anniversary of the Dedication of our National Observatory

<http://www.noao.edu/kp50>

### \*Workshop 1: From First Light to Newborn Stars

14-17 Mar 2010  
Contact: Lori Allen  
([lallen@noao.edu](mailto:lallen@noao.edu))

### \*Symposium: Looking to the Next 50 Years of NOAO and NSO

17 Mar 2010  
Contact: Buell Jannuzi  
([jannuzi@noao.edu](mailto:jannuzi@noao.edu))

### \*Workshop 2: An Eventful Universe

17-20 Mar 2010  
Contact: Tod Lauer  
([tlauer@noao.edu](mailto:tlauer@noao.edu))

### From Stars to Galaxies: Connecting Our Understanding of Star and Galaxy Formation

7-10 April 2010, Gainesville, FL  
Contact Person Jonathan Tan  
([starstogalaxies@astro.ufl.edu](mailto:starstogalaxies@astro.ufl.edu))  
<http://conference.astro.ufl.edu/STARSTOGALAXIES/index.html>

### \*IAU Symposium 271 Astrophysical Dynamics: From Stars to Galaxies

21-25 June, 2010, Nice, France  
Contact: Allan Sacha Brun  
([sacha.brun@cea.fr](mailto:sacha.brun@cea.fr))  
<http://irfu.cea.fr/Projets/IAUSymp271>

### SPIE Astronomical Telescopes and Instrumentation 2010

27 June – 2 July 2010, San Diego, CA  
Contact: [customerservice@spie.org](mailto:customerservice@spie.org)  
[http://electronicimaging.org/?WT.mc\\_id=Cal-EI](http://electronicimaging.org/?WT.mc_id=Cal-EI)

### \*Chandra Science Workshop

12-15 July 2010, Boston, MA  
Contact: Pail Green  
([pgreen@cfa.harvard.edu](mailto:pgreen@cfa.harvard.edu))  
<http://cxc.harvard.edu>

### \*2010 Sagan Summer Workshop

26-30 July 2010, Pasadena, CA  
Contact: Dawn Gelino  
([sagan\\_workshop@ipac.caltech.edu](mailto:sagan_workshop@ipac.caltech.edu))  
<http://nexsci.caltech.edu/workshop/2010/index.shtml>

### \*Cosmos in the Classroom 2010

1-4 August 2010, University of Colorado, Boulder  
[www.astrosociety.org/events.html](http://www.astrosociety.org/events.html)

### 10th International Colloquium on Atomic Spectra and Oscillator Strengths for Astrophysical and Laboratory Plasmas

3-7 August 2010, Berkeley, CA  
Contact: Jaan Lepson  
([lepson@ssl.berkeley.edu](mailto:lepson@ssl.berkeley.edu))  
<http://sprg.ssl.berkeley.edu/labastro/ASOS10/>

### The 8th INTEGRAL Workshop

27-30 Sept 2010, Dublin, Ireland  
Contact: Lorraine Hanlon ([lorraine.hanlon@ucd.ie](mailto:lorraine.hanlon@ucd.ie))

### \*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](mailto: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 [cadwww.hia.nrc.ca/meetings](http://cadwww.hia.nrc.ca/meetings).



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Washington, DC 20009-1231

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Newsletter 148 September/October 2009

## Washington News

Marcos Huerta, John Bahcall Public Policy Fellow, [blog.aas.org](http://blog.aas.org)



The relatively mild summer is winding down here in Washington. Congress has left town for their month-long “district work period,” to more than a few raucous meetings on health care reform. With the capitol quiet and the members on recess, DC is a relatively quiet place in August—though tourist season is still well underway.

### Local Visits

With members of Congress back in their districts and states, the AAS has been coordinating its second “Local Visits Day.” This event is not really confined to one day, but a process in which we encourage and facilitate AAS members to visit local Senate and House offices near their homes during the August recess. About 50 astronomers volunteered to participate, and several meetings have occurred as of this writing. AAS members discuss the NASA and NSF budget, and use the time to establish a connection with the staff of the local office, to inform on space and science issues, and to let the office know the issues that are of concern to the astronomical community. This will be an annual event, so if you would like to participate next year, stay tuned to this column and AAS Informational Emails. If you want to commit now, email the new John Bahcall Public Policy Fellow, Anita Krishnamurthi ([anitak@aas.org](mailto:anitak@aas.org)).

### NASA Human Spaceflight Review

With the Congress’s attention firmly on terrestrial issues at the present, the main arena of deliberation on matters in space has been the NASA Human Spaceflight review, chaired by Norman Augustine. The commission had its final public meeting on 12 August. While the panel was eager to move beyond low-earth orbit as a destination for human spaceflight, budgetary realities made the options very difficult. As reported in various media outlets (see [blog.aas.org](http://blog.aas.org) for links), the consensus was that NASA’s current budget forecast is simply too small for any robust exploration option. The panel could only see exploration options in enhanced budget scenarios of at least \$3 billion per year more than what is currently projected, with inflationary growth after the \$3 billion ramp-up.

Other challenges facing the commission include how long to fund the International Space Station, and the future of the shuttle. These problems are related; for example in the current budget, in a scenario that funds Ares I as a replacement for the shuttle, there’s then no money to keep the ISS in orbit, and a few years after Ares I comes online, the craft has no destination. Similar problems occur in light of the tight fiscal constraints imposed on the panel. The final report is due at the end of August.

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