

NRAO NM NEWS

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NOTES FROM THE AD

Jim Ulvestad

I've been traveling quite frequently over the past month or two, mostly in connection with maintaining or building the customer base for our telescopes. Maintenance of the relationship with all our customers is a big part of my job, one that I progressively have seen as more important than I imagined when I first became A.D. Therefore, it occurred to me that it might be useful to identify the people or groups that I identify as "customers," whom I/we need to support. Below, I give a partial list of some of my most important customers and the products I seek to deliver to them.

- NRAO/AUI management: operational telescopes and projects, science, new ideas, plus lots of reports
- National Science Foundation: operational telescopes and projects, scientific discovery
- Telescope user community: operational telescopes, software/hardware/interfaces that enable them to make optimum scientific use of those telescopes, fair treatment in the allocation of telescope observing time, input in the determination of our priorities
- NRAO employees: safe work environment, reasonable pay and benefits, equitable treatment, the tools to do their jobs
- General public: scientific discovery and its communication
- Educators: tools to teach astronomy and science
- Other funding entities (e.g., NASA): deliverables for specific projects
- General astronomical community: scientific discovery, new capabilities that attract them to our telescopes, participation in non-NRAO-specific endeavors for the scientific community

Note that two products required for virtually all the customers listed above are scientific discovery and operational telescope capabilities; therefore these generally are given very high priority. I invite other employees of NRAO/New Mexico to make a list of their specific customers and the products they are committed to delivering, and ask themselves how they can satisfy their customers' needs as well as possible.

STAR AWARDS

On May 18, 2004, David Midgett received a Star Award, for his exceptional work in developing and implementing a logging application used by array operators to report weather and equipment anomalies and conditions during astronomical observations.

When Array Operations' aging Macintosh computer began showing signs of failing, David took it upon himself to develop a new PC-based logging tool that not only duplicated the capabilities of the old tool, but also expanded the existing features which resulted in a 75% reduction in paper usage from the old tool. His innovations also enabled Operations to set up, with the help of the Computing Division, a web-based, searchable online archive of all Operators' Logs in Adobe PDF format. This eliminated the need for local scientists



Peggy Perley and David Midgett

technicians to wade through the archived paper logs and permits access to the logs by anyone with a web browser and an internet connection!

We congratulate David, and thank him for his outstanding contributions to Array Operations.

James Campbell

Meri Stanley, Jason Wurning, Ken Hartley and Lisa Foley - all Data Analysts in the VLA/VLBA Array Operations Division - received Star awards for their work in developing, testing and implementing new procedures for the VLBA that enables a faster release of tapes after correlation. These new procedures have also provided the VLBA with a better method for routine checking of overall VLBA data quality.



Peggy Perley

Pete Whiteis was awarded a star award for his contribution in achieving first fringes with the EVLA test antenna. When Pete took over as leader of the MIB (Modular Interface Board) team in December 2003, he was faced with a clear and very visible target: obtain first fringes with the EVLA test antenna, in the Spring of 2004. It was the responsibility of his team to provide the necessary software to run the modules allowing these first fringes.





Gustaaf van Moorsel looks on as Pete White accepts his Star Award.

Pete did an outstanding job both as a front-line software developer and as a team leader directing the programming efforts and coordinating with the hardware engineers. Pete, along with many others, deserves credit for playing a crucial role in meeting this key EVLA target.

Gustaaf van Moorsel

VLA maintenance items and the EVLA outfitting.

This summer, ES Division proposes to make four tiger team visits to VLBA sites: PieTown, Fort Davis, Brewster and Owens Valley, as well as VLBA rail maintenance visits to PieTown and Mauna Kea.

VLA maintenance will include the installation of a new control building transformer, water tank repairs, two azimuth bearing replacements (antennas 14 and 16), AOC office space remodels and two antenna overhauls. Other major EVLA related work will include the construction of a fiber lab, a EVLA storage warehouse, modcomp room, computer lab relocation and outfitting two EVLA antennas (14 and 16). Of course all this work must be done in addition to keeping up with operational commitments.

Lew Serna

SAFETY CORNER DRIVING IN THE DARK

Only one-third of all driving is done after dark, but two-thirds of all fatal accidents happen in the dark. As a driver, what particular problems do you face when darkness falls?

The most obvious is limited vision. Out on the road with just your headlights to light your way, you are boxed into a visual area that extends only about 300 feet ahead of you. You depend on your headlights and the reflected light to see your way.

When an object appears that does not have a light or does not reflect yours, you can be in for trouble. Studies show that drivers see unexpected objects only half-as-far-away as expected objects.

The fact that your vision is limited to about 300 feet means that if you are traveling faster than 55 miles per hour in the dark, you cannot possibly stop in time to avoid an object, even if you see it. Forty five miles per hour is the maximum speed for stopping within 300 feet on wet pavement. If the road is icy, 25 miles per hour is the fastest you can afford to go in order to stop in time.

Because vision is so tricky at night, it's essential that you keep your windshield as spotless as possible. Distance is very hard to judge, and what may look far away suddenly is a dangerous obstacle in the road. Even a light film of dirt can reduce your visibility as much as 40 percent without you being aware of it.

Some other studies show that the faster you travel at night, the shorter the distance you can see ahead. This is referred to as "over-driving your lights." This is because your eyes get confused from constantly trying to adjust themselves to changing distances and road conditions. If you are traveling at 20 miles per hour, you may see an object 80 feet away and identify it faster than a driver traveling 60 miles per hour.

Always lower your headlights when an oncoming vehicle is about 1,000 feet away. Your headlights may blind the driver of the approaching vehicle. If the other driver does not lower his lights, do not put your lights back on high to teach him/her a lesson. You only put yourself in danger. It is always possible that mechanical failure rather than lack of courtesy keeps him/her from lowering his/her headlights. To avoid being blinded by an approaching vehicle, look at the right side of the road but don't lose track of where the other vehicle is or where the road goes.

Take extra care during the half-light of dawn and dusk. Neither headlights nor daylight may be enough to give you a clear view. Shadows make things look bigger and give a false idea of how fast other vehicles or objects are moving. The glare of the setting or rising sun may blind you or other drivers. So always be careful when driving and always use your seatbelt.

See the Site Safety Officers for additional safety training on this topic.

James B. Sullivan, Safety Officer

WELCOME

James Balfour, Steve Harrington, Laura Leyba-Newton, Bill Holmes, ALMA; Natti Gonzales, Administrative Services; Joel Abdullah, Electronics; Colton Dunlap, DSAA-Coop Student; David DeBonis, Interferometry Software; Helen Walker, EPO.

CONGRATULATIONS to recipients of the 2003-2004 AUI Trustee Scholarship. This year's winners from New Mexico are: Lindsay Rae Cryer, daughter of Liz and Calvin Cryer; and Tristine Hayward, daughter of Bob and Liz Hayward.

REMINDER

Now that summer is finally here, be sure to plan your vacations accordingly. Remember, you may carry over a maximum of 36 days (288 hours) of vacation onto the following year.

Human Resources Personnel

WHAT'S UP AT THE VLA

On Wednesday, June 2, 2004, a new high-voltage transformer was installed for the VLA control building. This transformer has a higher capacity to accommodate the new EVLA correlator. Jaime Montero and Lonnie Guin disconnected the old transformer. Martin Lopez and Tom Olney removed the old transformer and set the new one in place. Jaime and Lonnie connected the new one while Dave Alderman assisted in removing old equipment while the power was shut off. The Servo group did some maintenance to the two large UPSs and Shane Baca replaced all the building air filters.

Bob Broilo



Jaime Montero fabricating high voltage connectors with Lonnie Guin

As you all know Ramon Molina, long time Antenna Mechanic Supervisor, has retired. We wish him the best and we will miss him. The new Antenna Mechanic Supervisor is Ramon Gutierrez. Other reorganization has occurred within the group where Steve Aragon has assumed lead mechanic duties in addition to his lead weld shop duties. We wish them good luck since the antenna mechanics have plenty on their plate this year with several planned VLBA maintenance trips,

Note: "June Skies," is available on bulletin boards at the AOC, AOC West and VLA site, due to lack of space in this newsletter.