

Vol. 7 - Issue 3 - JUNE 2005

NOTES FROM THE AD

In a short article in the April newsletter, I mentioned the NSF review of its operating facilities, known generally as the "NSF Senior Review." An initial NRAO and AUI reaction to the NSF request, as well as a copy of the NRAO letter to AUI, are available at <http://www.nrao.edu/epo/users/user.html>. This letter, and the NRAO/AUI formal response, have been primary topics of discussion at many events I have attended over the last few months, such as the meetings of the NRAO Visiting Committee, the NRAO Users Committee, and the AUI Board.

NRAO management and scientific staff are engaged in a process of developing a formal response to the NSF, which is due by July 31. This response will include definition of the highest scientific priorities for our facilities over the next decade or more, a clear description of the operational costs of all components of NRAO, and a well-defined set of metrics that show the cost-effectiveness and scientific productivity of our telescopes. As part of this process, we have determined that the typical operating costs of the VLA, VLBA, and GBT are each between \$2000 and \$2500 per hour of scientific observing, including all personnel and facility costs for NRAO. When you consider that the VLBA includes 10 remote sites, the VLA requires maintenance and operation of 28 antennas, and the GBT is an extremely large aperture with a design that is unique in the world, the relatively low cost of operations is a tribute to the professionalism and productivity of all NRAO staff.

We expect that NRAO will do very well in the NSF review of operating facilities. Each of our telescopes is unique, and thanks largely to our staff, each produces science that is unmatched by any other telescopes in the world.

On another note, I would like to congratulate Betty Trujillo and Pat Lewis on their well-deserved retirements; their combined service to NRAO totaled more than 50 years. Betty played a critical role as Administrative Assistant to two Assistant Directors, and Pat has made many vital contributions over the years, most recently as the leader of the Site and Wye Group at the VLA. We appreciate all their efforts, and wish them well in learning how to relax away from the job!

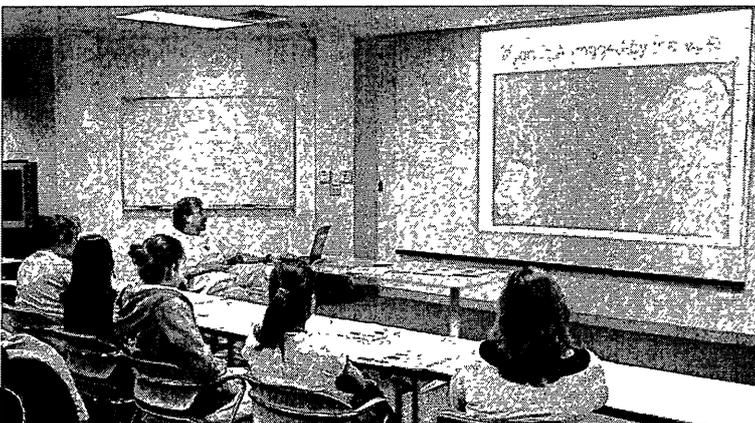
Jim Ulvestad

WELCOME

Jason Candelaria, Thomas Juerges, ALMA; Jimmie Stuteville, EH&S; Keith Morris, Robert Simpson and Lisa Wray, EVLA; John Jordan, VLBA-Fort Davis.

WISE VISITS SOCORRO AOC

On April 27, 2005, five students from the Women In Science and Engineering program (WISE) at UNM spent a morning at the AOC, shadowing some NRAO staff (from the Scientific and Electronics



Assistant Director Jim Ulvestad and UNM Students with WISE Program

Divisions). Assistant Director Jim Ulvestad welcomed the group by providing an overview of NRAO. He addressed issues and challenges facing women in the realm of astronomy and science management as well as issues and challenges facing NRAO and its hiring of women.

The students represented a variety of majors, including astrophysics, biology, biochemistry, computer science, and civil, chemical, mechanical/manufacturing and nuclear engineering.

NRAO staff members hosting students were: Everett Callan, Gene DuVall, Troy Jenson, Chris Langley, Laura Newton, Rick Perley and Debra Shepherd. The students, divided up by their area of study were shown how imaging software is used, provided with explanations on current areas of observation and study and, were given overviews of activities in the Electronics Lab.

A big 'thank-you,' to everyone who helped make this possible.

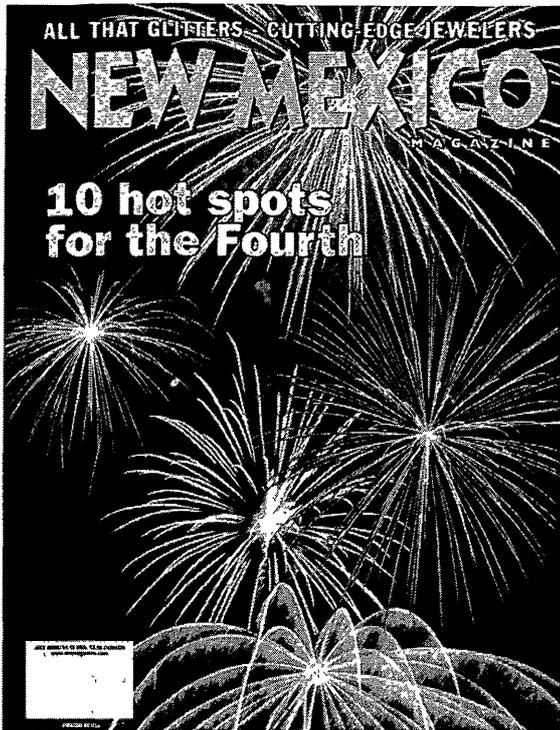
Robyn Harrison

CONGRATULATIONS ARE IN ORDER:

Brent Avery has achieved the second level of certification in the National Property Management Association's curriculum of Federal Property. Brent is a member of NPMA and is now a Certified Professional Property Administrator.

Skip Lagoyda





Kelly Gatlin, recently retired from NRAO, has been a contributor of photos to the *New Mexico Magazine* over the last 10 years.

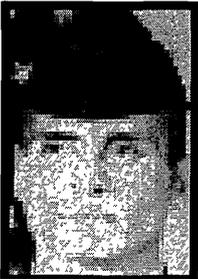
Shown here is a photo of Kelly's most recent milestone. His first *New Mexico Magazine* cover! The images on the cover are from the annual Fourth of July show in Quemado, N.M. The July issue of the magazine should be out on the stands.

Best wishes to

Kelly with his career in photography.

Terry Romero

VLA SITE NEWS



Remember Steve Tenorio? Of course you do. He is the VLA Servo Tech, wielding the magic marker, looking for a hardhat to deliver a message. Steve is currently on Military Leave from the NRAO, at the VLA.

These days Steve is more likely to be wielding a rifle in defense of his country than the magic marker. Steve is a First Sgt. serving in the U.S. Army National Guard and is deployed to Washington, D.C., for Homeland Defense.

A few of Steve's coworkers have been in touch with him via e-mail since he left in September of 2004. We recently queried Steve about a servo problem we were having. Steve in his usual manner was glad to help out. Steve says he misses working with his hands at his old job at the VLA.

Steve's son, Jude Tenorio is also deployed to Washington.

A very nice article about Steve's military family history appeared in the Socorro *El Defensor Chieftain*, on April 20, 2005. The history goes all the way back to the Conquest of Mexico, by Hernan Cortez.

We all miss Steve's humor and wit. Hopefully, he will return to work by the end of this year. Hide your hardhat!

Lew Serna

TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS TO ALBUQUERQUE AIRPORT

Employees have a number of options when traveling on business for the Observatory requiring air travel out of Albuquerque.

1. Use your personal vehicle and obtain mileage reimbursement for 75 miles each way from Socorro (currently \$30.38) or, 150 miles round trip at \$60.75.

2. Travelers that are gone more than five days may be reimbursed for two round trips, as this saves the Observatory the parking lot expense.

3. Use the local shuttle service, currently American Transportation (Socorro Taxi). Advance reservations are recommended. Advance payment is required by the company unless the reservation is made through NRAO.

Current fees are \$59.78 from Socorro to Albuquerque Airport and \$61.67 from Albuquerque Airport to Socorro.

Plan to depart from Socorro at least three and one half hours before flight time. Also, the return trip may exceed 90 minutes because this service is a ride share service. You may not be the only passenger in the vehicle and delays occur as a result of delayed flights, and additional stops along the route. We have control over this practice.

4. Use an NRAO company vehicle by advance reservation with the Socorro Reservationist. This is the least preferred option because the company vehicles are in great demand on a daily basis. NRAO would rather they not be parked at the airport during your trip as they would not be available for daily use.

Skip Lagoyda

SAFETY CORNER:

The Safety Committee invites all employees to visit their Web site at:

<http://www.nrao.edu/internal/safety/SocSafetyComm/index.shtml>

The Email address for the committee is:

soc-safety@aoc.nrao.edu

Kathleen Le Febvre

JUNE 2005 SKIES

Late this month three planets, Venus, Saturn and Mercury, will put on a spectacular show in the early evening west northwestern sky. Saturn and Venus will be seen at mid-month drawing ever nearer together. Just after mid-month, Mercury joins the party slowly rising above the horizon. All three will be visible at about 45 minutes after sunset from the 18th through the 29th of the month. On the 26th they will have their most compact grouping that will fit them all into a 1.37 degree wide telescope field. This should be a great naked eye sight or when viewed through binoculars or a small telescope.

Jupiter is still the brightest object high in the evening sky. Well placed for telescopic viewing it does not set until well after midnight.

By the end of the month Mars appears around 1:00 a.m. at about the same time that Jupiter sets. With its disk growing ever larger, it will brighten to magnitude -0.1 outshining all of the summer stars.

The Moon will be new on the 6th, first quarter on the 14th and full on the 22nd and last quarter on the 28th. On the night of June 15-16, you can watch as the Moon creeps ever nearer to Jupiter. Alas, we will not be able to witness the occultation of Jupiter as the pair will set before the encounter. Folks in northern New Zealand and Australia will be treated to the occultation during the afternoon of the 16th.

During the evening of the 16th use the moon to locate the bright star, Spica. Mark the position of Spica well because next month on the 4th, you can use it to help find the comet Temple 1. At midnight local time on July 3-4, part of the Deep Impact spacecraft will crash into the comet's nucleus. This collision may brighten the comet to the point where it will be visible with the naked eye! More about this 4th of July spectacular event in next month's column.

The summer solstice arrives at 12:46 a.m. MDT on the 2nd. This year, sunscreen will not be needed to mark the beginning the first day of summer!

Jon Spargo, New Mexico Tech Astronomy Club