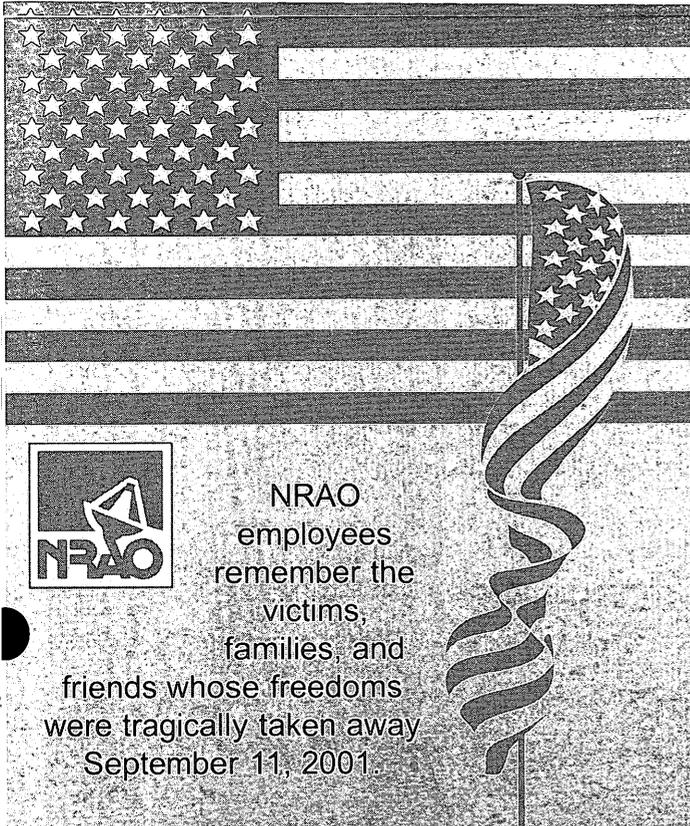




THE POINT SOURCE

Volume 7, No 2

Fall 2001



NRAO employees remember the victims, families, and friends whose freedoms were tragically taken away September 11, 2001.

variety of personal concerns such as depression, marital difficulties, concerns with children, substance abuse, and financial issues.

The EAP counselor, a licensed mental health professional, will listen to your concerns and identify key issues of your particular situation. The EAP counselor will then assist you in devising a plan of action. Your problem may be resolved through consultation, support, or information. However, if you need further assistance, you may be referred to a counselor, social service, consumer credit, or self-help groups.

Through the Employee Assistance Program, you can find productive solutions to personal problems and improve your health and well-being. **You and all household members** are welcome to set up appointments by simply calling (877) 622-4327. An EAP counselor can assist you in selecting a convenient time for a confidential, face-to-face meeting with regard to clinical services in your area.

Allen Lewis, of the Human Resources Office in Socorro, is leading the EAP roll-out which begins in October.

Human Resources Announces New Observatory Program

Created to help employees and their families

From time to time, the quality of our lives can be affected by personal problems that are difficult to cope with. Sometimes these problems can interfere with our professional lives. Because NRAO is committed to helping employees maintain an optimum quality of life, the Observatory is offering you an Employee Assistance Program (EAP).

The Employee Assistance Program is a **free, voluntary, confidential** service, providing employees with assessments, consultations, and referrals. It is designed to assist **employees and household members** in dealing with a

Supplemental Retirement Plan New Tax Law Benefits Employee Retirement Plans in 2002

The new law known as EGGTRRA or the Economic Growth and Tax Relief Reconciliation Act of 2001 effects all U.S. employees of U.S. employers in many ways, including income tax breaks, college savings incentives, estate tax changes, and retirement incentives. Important to your retirement is the change that increases the amount you can contribute via salary reduction to employer-sponsored retirement plans such as TIAA-CREF and Fidelity Supplemental Retirement Annuities. The current annual limit for contributions to employer-sponsored retirement plans is 25% of annual base salary (or \$10,500) for 403(b) plans (*see table below*). Contributions to these plans will increase each year until they reach \$15,000 for the 2006 tax year. Moreover, the law includes "catch-up" provisions that enable people age 50 and over to make additional contributions.

(continued page 2)

The new tax law will enable you to invest more for retirement.

	Maximum Contributions						
	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
403(b)	\$11,000	\$12,000	\$13,000	\$14,000	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$15,000
Catch-up Provisions (employees 50+)	\$12,000	\$14,000	\$16,000	\$18,000	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$20,000

The limit will be indexed for inflation in \$500 increments after 2006.

If you wish to increase the amount you are currently contributing to the Supplemental Plan you must complete a

new salary reduction agreement. If you have questions, need a new form, or more information, contact your Human Resources office.

2001 AUI Trustee Scholarship Recipients

Following are the winners for the 2001 AUI Trustee Scholarship competition conducted by the Scholarship & Recognition Programs. Each of these students is receiving an award of \$3,000 per year to aid in defraying expenses at the college of their choice.

Kathleen Donahoe



Kate graduated from Paul VI Catholic High School in Fairfax, Virginia. She is a member of Amnesty International and *It's Academic*. Kate has been a volunteer for three years with Eddie's Club, a recreational group for children with special needs, and has also been a volunteer at the National Aquarium in Washington, DC. She is attending James Madison University and plans to

major in Special Education.

Kate is the daughter of Patrick and Ann Donahoe. Patrick is Vice President of AUI in Washington, DC.

to pursue a degree in Computer Science at the University of New Mexico.

Lisa is the daughter of Brian and Marie Glendenning of Socorro. Brian is a Scientist and Head of Computing for the ALMA Project, Marie is a Systems Support Analyst.

Peter Sowinski



Peter graduated from Socorro High School. He was a member of The National Honor Society, the German and French clubs, and the Drama group. He has been on the Science Olympiad team throughout his high school career. He attends Carleton College in Minnesota and has not yet chosen a major.

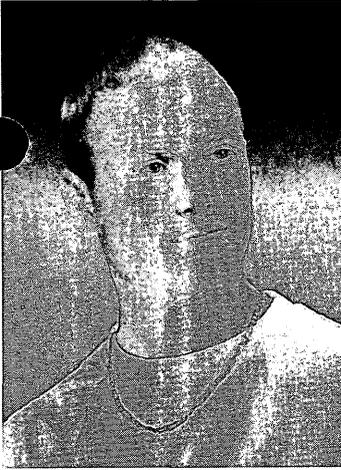
Peter is the son of Kenneth and Linda Sowinski of Socorro. Ken is a Senior Scientific Programmer Analyst.

Lisa Glendenning



Lisa is a graduate of Socorro High School. She is a member of the National Honor Society and the Key Club. She also participated in the French Club and Fencing Club. Lisa was involved with various activities such as the Science Olympiad, Big Brothers/Big Sisters, Track, and Soccer. She plans



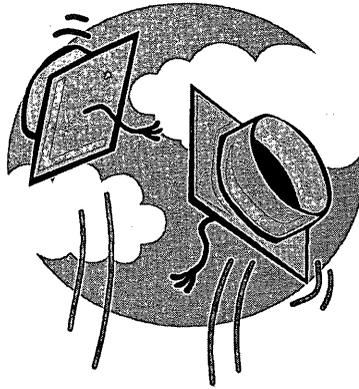


Christopher K. Sramek

Christopher is a graduate of Socorro High School. He was a member of the SHS. Jazz Band, Vice President of the National Honor Society, and a National Merit Finalist. He was a delegate to the New Mexico Boys State and is a three sport varsity athlete (soccer, basketball, and track) and was twice named to the New Mexico

All-State Soccer Team. Christopher attends Rice University where he intends to major in Electrical Engineering.

Christopher is the son of Richard and Janice Sramek of Socorro. Richard is a Deputy Assistant Director for the ALMA Project.



Congratulations to the 2001 AUI Trustee Scholarship Winners!

Equal Employment Opportunity, Non-Discrimination and Harassment Statement

Director's Statement

The National Radio Astronomy Observatory is committed to a work environment in which all individuals are treated with respect and dignity. Each individual has the right to work in a professional atmosphere that promotes equal employment opportunities and prohibits discriminatory practices, including sexual harassment.

The Observatory will take affirmative action to ensure that applicants are employed, and that all employees are treated during employment, without regard to their race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, age, disability, marital status, citizenship, or any other characteristic protected by law. Further, the Observatory will take affirmative action to employ, advance in employment, and otherwise treat qualified handicapped individuals, qualified disabled veterans, and veterans of the Vietnam Era without discrimination based on their disability or veterans status in all employment practices. The Observatory will select the best qualified candidate to perform the duties of an available position and will give first consideration to present employees whenever practical.

The Observatory has developed a policy statement, training, and communications for the conveyance of its policies on affirmative action, non-discrimination, and harassment. Besides this posting, your Employee Handbook will provide general guidance on these matters. The complete policies are contained in the "Supervisors Manual", Sections 1 and 21; and are available for review in each of the Observatory libraries. Copies of the policies are available from the Observatory Human Resources Offices, your supervisor or any Ombuds representative.

The Observatory encourages the reporting of all perceived incidents of discrimination, harassment, or retaliation, regardless of the offender's identity or position. Individuals who believe that they have been the victim of such conduct should pursue their concerns through NRAO's formal or informal complaint procedures: with their immediate supervisor, any member of management, the Human Resources Manager, or any Ombuds representative.

Observatory Initiates Compensation Program Study

NRAO senior management has initiated many studies this year in preparation for entering the new era of research in the United States and keeping abreast with the ever-expanding international research scene. One of the studies currently being led by the Human Resources Division involves reviewing NRAO's compensation system. The current plan, estimated to be well over 20 years old, has served the Observatory well. However, internal pressures and external demands require that our plans and programs be reviewed periodically.

To assist the Human Resource Division in this task, William M. Mercer, Incorporated, a major HR consulting group, has been contracted to perform several important phases of this study. The review began this August and will take about four months to complete. The HR Division and senior management will review the results and modify the compensation system as needed. Mercer will provide the Observatory with a blueprint for policies and procedures that will allow us to maintain a competitive system.

The compensation study will focus on how we define our jobs; how these jobs compare with similar local, regional, national, and even international positions; and how NRAO

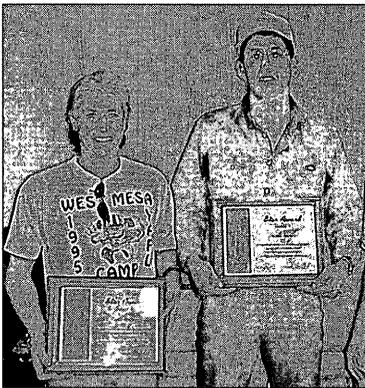
can slot the Observatory into this compensation structure. What this study won't do is look at the particular person or people fulfilling the duties of a particular job; nor will it evaluate employee performance.

The HR Division has assembled a diverse team of NRAO supervisors and managers to support Mercer and HR to provide Observatory job duty expertise, comparative job market indicators, and to act as liaisons at each major Observatory facility. Each major function of the Observatory is represented on the team. Members include Bill Porter, Bob D'Angio, Mike Holstine, Ken Kellerman, Jeff Kingsley, Allen Lewis, Clint Janes, Richard Prestage, Roy Norville, Jim Ulvestad, John Webber, Skip Lagoyda and Peggy Perley.

Star Award Recipients

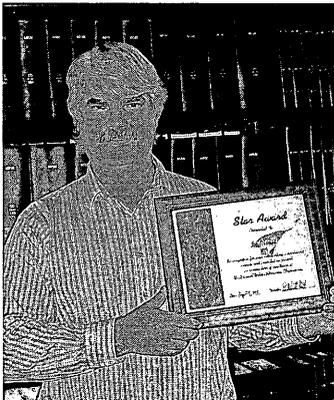
The following Star Award recipients are the first to be recognized for outstanding and unique performance. The variety of the achievements of these awardees exemplifies the infinite number of opportunities for all NRAO employees.

Tommy Montoya and Michael Zamora



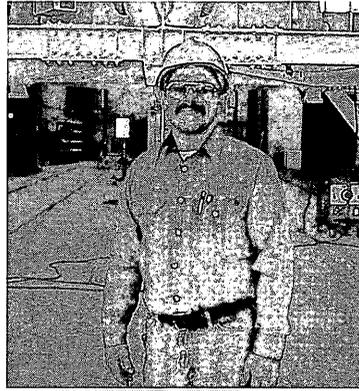
For the development of a fabrication system at the VLA that enables the Observatory to save more than \$20,000 per year.

Joe Brandt and Stephan Witz



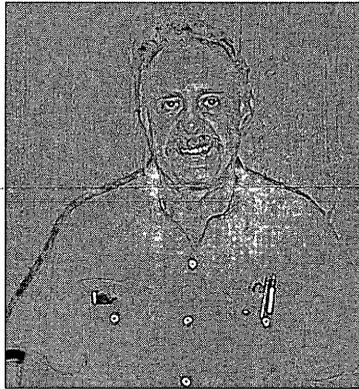
For their extraordinary work on the upgrade of Green Bank Solaris machines needed before the GBT came into routine operation.

Melcolm Peralta



For the development of production techniques and tools to manufacture handrails faster and less cost than from outside vendors.

James Rexrode



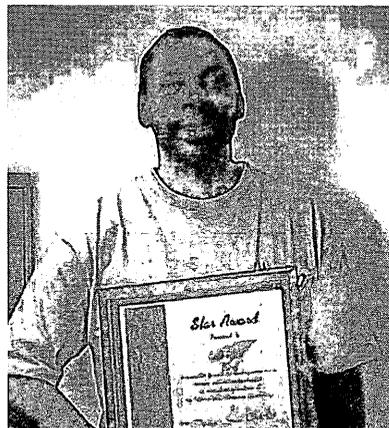
For the development of a piece of track repair equipment that saved the Observatory hours and material costs.

Christine Plumley



For an extraordinary effort in the GB Fiscal office this Spring when they were understaffed by two full-time positions.

Eugene Cole



For efforts as Deputy Safety Officer that resulted in dramatic reduction of recordable accidents at the VLA.

Robert Simon, Tim Weadon, John Shelton



John Shelton

For his initiative, intuition and leadership in the measurement program for the GBT azimuth track upgrade program.

Robert Simon

For his outstanding work on the GBT outfitting.

Tim Weadon

For his current extraordinary efforts serving as the primary liaison between the Observatory and the GBT contractor.

The NRAO Star Award

Program Objective and Administration. The Star Award Program enables NRAO supervisors to recognize exceptional contributions and noteworthy achievements of their employees or groups of employees in a timely manner.

The objectives of this program are:

- 1) To reward specific one-time achievements (event driven).
- 2) To provide an incentive for continued excellence through the recognition and reward of exceptional performance.

The Human Resources Office on behalf of the Director administers the Star Award Program.

Eligibility. Eligibility for the award includes all current employees EXCEPT:

- 1) Division Heads, Deputy Assistant Directors, Assistant/Associate Directors, the Deputy Director and the Director
- 2) Other employees in ungraded salary classifications

Award Amount. Award amounts are determined by the Assistant/Associate Director and may be granted in \$50 increments. The individual gross award amount may range from \$50 to \$900 before mandatory taxes.

Award Conferral. Awards are presented by the Observatory organizations at the completion of the extraordinary accomplishment and after the required approvals are obtained. Awards may be granted at any time during a fiscal year as long as funds are available.

Criteria for Selection. Supervisors may nominate an employee or team of employees who have demonstrated short-term performance of an extraordinary nature. The

performance may be related to a particular assignment given by a supervisor, or be an accomplishment initiated by the individual or the group. In either case, the activity must have been of significant benefit to the Site, Division, Group or Observatory.

In general, the award is intended to recognize short-term performance of a period from several weeks to several months. It should not replace recognition by promotion for significant permanent changes in responsibility or salary increase for sustained performance levels.

To assist in ensuring consistency throughout the Observatory in granting awards, two criteria are used to choose individual accomplishments appropriate for an award. The criteria definitions are:

- 1) *Benefit to the Observatory* - The Observatory or some subunit should have benefitted in a significant way through either cost savings, efficiency of operations, satisfaction of some work requirement, or some similar gain; and
- 2) *Exceptional Nature of Effort Required* - It is expected that award recipients will have overcome problems which would be considered the most difficult for their classification or even beyond the expectations for employees in their classification.

Tax Withholding. Star awards are taxable as earned income and subject to Federal, State, local and Social Security taxes. Awards do not increase an employee's base pay rate; therefore, an award will not be included in the calculation of benefits. The Fair Labor Standards Act considers awards as a discretionary bonus. An award to nonexempt employees will NOT be included in the regular pay for calculation of overtime.

Note: For more complete information regarding the STAR AWARD PROGRAM consult the Spring 2001 edition of the POINT SOURCE on the Human Resources web page at http://www.nrao.edu/administration/personnel_office/points_ource.shtml

Summer Distractions in Green Bank *Summer Students, Teachers and NRAO Staff Find Time for Earthly Nature*

As an opportunity to break-up the routine of the summer research programs in Green Bank several members of the NRAO staff have created a hiking tradition. Frank Ghigo, one of the organizers says, "We arrange several activities during the summer for the summer students and the RARECATS teachers. During the month of June, we hike a trail from Green Bank to Cass along a portion of what is known as the Allegheny Trail. The hike is about 7 miles and starts just west of the NRAO property where the Slaven Hollow road intersects the Allegheny trail.

During the first 2 hours or so the trail follows the mountain ridge west of the Observatory. In several places there are spectacular views of the telescopes down in the Deer Creek valley, glimpsed through the trees. Later the trail



A group of hikers take a break during the hike in a lush forested area along the Allegheny Trail.



The expedition crew at the final destination, the General Store at the Cass Scenic Railroad station.

follows a stream and an old railroad grade as it descends towards Cass, WV. The flora is varied, from mosses and blueberry bushes on the ridge to rhododendron and laurels lower down. Oaks, maples, and hickory trees are abundant throughout the route.”

by Frank Ghigo

Benefits - Open Enrollment Periods November 19 through December 18, 2001

Health Care and Dependent Care Flexible Spending Accounts

The open enrollment period for the Health Care and Dependent Care “Flex Plans” begins November 19 and runs through December 18, 2001. This plan allows employees to deposit a portion of their salary into an account which can be used to cover out-of-pocket health care or dependent care expenses. A savings is realized by avoiding both income and social security taxes on salary amounts set aside for such purposes.

You may contribute any amount ranging from \$300 to \$2,500 to your Health Care Reimbursement Account and from \$300 to \$5,000 to the Dependent Care Reimbursement Account. For more information about

these flexible spending accounts, contact your local Human Resources Office. You can now download and complete the flexible spending account enrollment form on the NRAO Human Resources Office web page entitled “Flex Enrollment Form.”

Medical Insurance

The annual Medical Insurance open enrollment period begins November 19 and will run through December 18, 2001. If you are not presently enrolled in the program or if you have an eligible dependent who is not enrolled, you may apply during this 30-day period. Coverage will become effective January 1, 2002. Employees or dependents who do not join the plan during the open enrollment period will be ineligible to enroll until the next open enrollment period.

The premiums for the medical program, effective January 1, are as follows:

	Bi-Weekly	Monthly
Employee Only	\$20.31	\$44.00
Employee + One	35.54	77.00
Family	51.23	111.00

Please note: The Dental Insurance Open Enrollment is a bi-annual event. The next Dental Open Enrollment will be held in December, 2002.

Memo to: All Employees From: Robert D’Angio

Even with this previously planned increase in employee premiums, Observatory employees will be paying less than 15% of the total cost for their medical insurance compared to a national average of almost 30% for larger corporations. As most employees are aware, the cost of medical care in the United States has been skyrocketing and the situation at the Observatory is no different. During the past year, medical claims costs have increased by more than \$625,000, an increase of more than 20%. A number of factors contribute to this kind of increase. Doctors and hospitals are charging higher fees, the discounts negotiated by insurance companies are not as great and there is an increased use of expensive diagnostic tools and tests such as MRI’s. In addition, we have an aging population and an increased number of retirees who historically make greater use of the health care system. The largest impact on the cost of medical care has been for prescription drugs. The cost of prescription drugs has increased by more than 30% compared to the first nine months of last year and we expect this trend to continue.

The Observatory must take action to control these escalating costs if we wish to continue these benefits

(continued)

for employees and retirees. NRAO is proud of our excellent benefit package and any lessening of the benefits is a serious matter and we recognize the impact of any change on our employees. We are currently reviewing a number of options, including the raising of deductibles and increasing copays for services and prescriptions. Regrettably, all of these require additional cost sharing by the employees. In addition, the gradual increase in employee premiums must continue for the next few years. Full details about the changes will be provided by the Human Resources staff in the very near future.

Meanwhile, there are some steps employees can take right now. If you take prescription medication that requires a 90 day or more supply, please use the Tele-Drug feature of our plan. This saves you and the Observatory money. Also, consider asking your doctor to prescribe generic drugs when possible. Generic drugs are considerably less expensive than brand name drugs, but provide the same benefit.

Again, we recognize the burden this increased cost sharing and higher premiums will have on our employees but if we are to remain a viable organization we must take prudent steps to control these costs. The changes to our plan that are being considered are similar to the changes being made in health insurance by most other major employers in the country.

Charlottesville, VA Gets New Area Code 434 Starts June 1

Beginning June 1, 2001 the Charlottesville area, in addition to 17 neighboring counties, began using a new area code—434. There will be a six-month grace period, until mid-January 2002, for the changeover, but now is the time to begin making the necessary changes at the Observatory. Offices and departments will need to change phone numbers on all printed materials, such as stationary, letterhead, envelopes, business cards, checks and banking forms. In addition, email signatures, fax machines, Web sites and voice-mail recordings with area codes should also be changed.

Direct Deposit Payroll protection you can count on

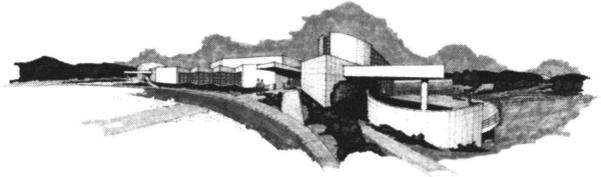
In light of the recent tragedy (which had the affect of severely delaying and even halting mail and parcel deliveries) we urge you to sign up for Direct Deposit. This is a FREE benefit offered by NRAO. Your earnings are automatically transferred to your bank account on the scheduled pay day. It is fast, easy, convenient and best of all, it minimizes the possibility of late payment. Your money can, if you so desire, be split among three different accounts (e.g., checking, savings, vacation fund, etc.).

To initiate direct deposit of your payroll, complete a Direct Deposit Authorization form and return it to the Human Resources office immediately. You may download the form from <http://www.nrao.edu/internal/fiscal/forms.shtml>. If you have questions, please contact your local HR representative or a Fiscal Office staff member.



SOUTH ELEVATION

SECTION AT LOBBY



Schematic Design Astronomy Education Center

The recently approved architectural elevations of the future Astronomy Education Center to be located at the NRAO Green Bank, West Virginia facility. You can read more about the Education Center on the NRAO web page.

Staff Changes

****Note: These lists do not reflect former Temporary/Summer Student employees.**

NEW EMPLOYEES

CHARLOTTESVILLE

Charles Blue, Public Education Officer
Daniel Homan, Research Associate
Alok Singhal, Research Associate, Junior

GREEN BANK

Jeffrey Cromer, Designer, Senior
Edgar Friel, Telescope Mechanic III
Robert Goldizen, Maintenance Electrician
Howard Guthrie, Technician, Advanced
Melissa Hill, Housekeeper/Foodhandler
Randy McCullough, Electronics Engineer I
Larry Price, HVAC Plumbing Mechanic I
Gina Pulliam, Accounting Assistant
Jason Ray, Electronics Engineer III
Phillip Rittenhouse, Maintenance Painter
Nathan Sharp, Technician, Senior
Elijah Sharp, Tour Services Representative
Amanda Shinaberry, Tour Services Representative
Donald Wirt Jr., Facilities Engineer I

SOCORRO

Walter Brisken, Electronics Engineer I
Hollis Dinwiddie, Drafter II
Kristy Dyer, Research Associate
Jeffrey Kern, Junior Research Associate
Christopher Langley, Electronics Engineer II

Prescilla Mauldin, Secretary B
Sonja Mendoza, Array Operator III
Patrick Palmer, Visiting Scientist
James Patterson, Array Operator III
Nick Peereboom, Electronics Engineer I
Eric Reynolds, Engineering Associate, Junior
Carlos Rodriguez-Rico, Research Assistant, Visiting
Lia Romero, Secretary B

Edward Szpindor, Electronics Engineer III
Patricia Van Buskirk, Scientific Programming Analyst
Adrian Zamora, Telescope Mechanic III

TUCSON

Juana Banda, Junior Research Engineering Associate
Rodrigo Andres Brito Cuadra, Junior Research
Engineering Associate
Stacy Oliver, Documentation Specialist
Philipp Spuhler, Junior Research Engineering
Associate
Denis Urbain, Electronics Engineer II

DEPARTURES

CHARLOTTESVILLE

Lynn Matthews
Lisa Ulrich

GREEN BANK

Karen Bickford
Aaron Boley
Jo Helen Cason
Charles Van Tilburg

SOCORRO

Raul Armendariz
Patrick Palmer
Nathan Thomas
Christine Wingenter

TUCSON

Graham Moorey

HAWAII

Janis Hamersma

RETIREES

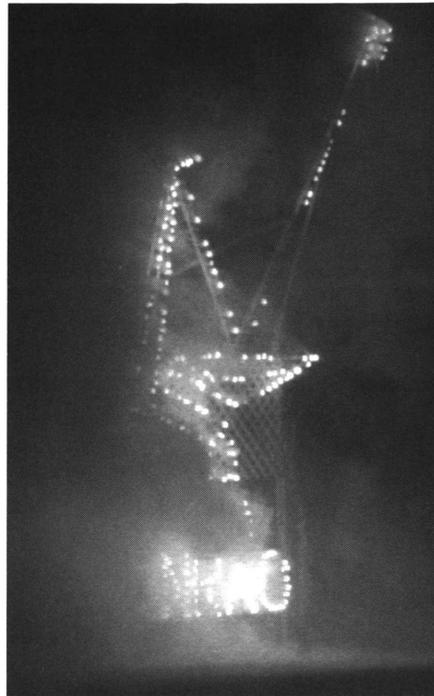
GREEN BANK

Martin Barkley
Dwayne Schiebel

PROPERTY OF
THE U.S. GOVERNMENT

NOV 08 2001

NATIONAL RADIO ASTRONOMY OBSERVATORY
CHARLOTTESVILLE, VA



Green Bank and Charlottesville families attending the annual Green Bank Summer Picnic couldn't decide how to dress for the day. The weather did not cooperate, with rain and chilled winds most of the day, so rain gear above shorts was preferred! But the weather did not deter the fireworks crew from putting on a great show that ended with a fireworks replica of the Green Bank Telescope.



This year the Charlottesville employees were invited to attend by the Green Bank Recreation Association, in lieu of a separate Charlottesville picnic.

A Note from the Editor:

Articles or ideas for the Point Source newsletter are welcomed. If you would like to submit an article, please contact the editor at phone (434) 296-0265 or by email to: norvill@nrao.edu.

Deadline for article submission for the upcoming Winter Issue is January 10, 2002.

NRAO is an Equal Opportunity - Affirmative Action Employer.

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Patricia Smiley, Layout and Design

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