

AOC NEWS

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KUDOS ARE IN ORDER!

In Socorro, about 25 vehicles of all types are leased from GSA. As part of the lease arrangement, NRAO is required to maintain the vehicles and report on mileage, repairs, damage, and exchange them when they reach their maximum limits. GSA recently honored NRAO and Clifford Serna with a certificate of appreciation acknowledging the

- Skip Lagoyda

observed for one minute every two hours while the source was above 15 σ in elevation. After the first 24 hours, there was a first look at the data to look for short-term variability. Those sources were observed over the subsequent days. The major challenge presented to operations was managing the logistics of five subarrays, essentially taking the normal operator duties and multiplying by five. This type of observing also places a tremendous pressure on the software, which causes subtle effects that do not trigger any alarms but nonetheless are detrimental to the observations. This required the operators to be extremely vigilant for anything 'weird' and to respond quickly to correct. One of the more onerous of these issues would cause one of the subarrays, at random, to stop changing sources, which, given the criticality of maintaining simultaneous observing in the separate subarrays, would defeat the purpose of the experiment. The operators had to basically keep their eyes glued to the monitors the entire time, and limit their breaks to the shortest possible intervals. These observations have already begun to bear fruit. A preprint of the January 2002 result, has been published and a number of papers were presented at the most recent IAU meeting in Australia.



Skip Lagoyda accepts award on behalf of NRAO.



Clifford Serna accepts his award from GSA Representative.

achievement in excellence in maintaining their fleet vehicles. Clifford received an individual certificate for his work, presented by the GSA Fleet Management representative. It is not an easy task to keep up with all the issues involved in maintaining our GSA vehicles. Clifford has managed to do this while the fleet size increases each year, along with all his other duties assisting staff throughout our operation.

Congratulations to VLA Operations. Their teamwork and dedication to obtaining the best observational conditions for the astronomers make them unsung heroes at NRAO. We are pleased to be able to acknowledge their efforts with the Star Award to Larry, Sam, David, Sonja, Jim and Greg. We would also like to thank past and present VLA Operations' Supervisors, Terry Bartelt and J.C. Campbell, for their assistance with these observations.

STAR AWARDS

VLA operators, Larry Brothers, Sam Gilmore, David Midgett, Sonja Mendoza, Jim Nieri, and Greg Patterson, were presented Star Awards for their group effort on a complex set of observations that were taken in three observing sessions, each set spanning three contiguous 24 hour periods. The purpose of the project was to undertake a Northern Hemisphere Intra-Day Variable (IDV) survey to produce an extensive, unbiased catalogue of sources that will form the

- Peggy Perley

NOTES FROM THE A.D.

Although everyone knows that the end of the calendar year is three months away, we actually have arrived at the end of the Fiscal Year at the end of September. I would like to thank all the staff for being fiscally responsible throughout the year, so that we were able to come in within our budget while doing the highest priority work to keep the telescopes operational and safe, as well as keeping the new projects moving forward.

- Jim Ulvestad



Top Row: J. C. Campbell, Larry Brothers, David Midgett, Jim Nieri; Bottom Row: Sonja Mendoza, Greg Patterson; missing is Sam Gilmore

basis for a number of major astrophysical investigations. During these periods, the VLA was configured into five subarrays, the maximum currently possible. Each subarray was scheduled so that each of the sample sources was

Many of the Division Heads within Operations and ALMA are taking a training program on five Tuesdays between October and December. This program, entitled "Developing Your Managerial and Leadership Skills," is being given under contract with the Anderson School of Management at the University of New Mexico. Some of us are familiar with the instructors, who have taught sessions in classes that some of us have taken at the Anderson School, and who are engaging speakers and teachers. The program involves personnel from various NRAO sites, and is conducted by video conference between the AOC and Green Bank.

Topics for this training program include the following: (1) Understanding your Management Style and Developing your Leadership Skills; (2) Interpersonal Communication Skills and Conflict Resolution; (3) Improving Productivity Through Effective Planning, Delegating and Motivating; (4) Developing High Performance Work Teams; and (5) Human Resource Skills for Organizational Leaders.

To some of you, "management" may be a word that you take to represent "non-productive work." However, the purpose of this training

program is to enable the Division Heads to work with all of you more effectively, so that we can do the most productive job possible for NRAO and for the astronomers using our telescopes. Over the next several months, I encourage dialog with the Division Heads about what they are learning. If the program is considered successful, it may be repeated for other members of NRAO in the future.

WELCOME ABOARD

Jeffrey Kern, Dongshan Guo, ALMA; Linda Ridgeway, EPO; Christopher Durand, Elwood Downey, EVLA; Shami Chatterjee, Basic Research

VLA MILESTONE

- Gene Cole

Starting with antenna 18, the VLA will begin its sixth overhaul cycle, which goes all the way back to 1980, when overhauls began. The last overhaul term began in December 1998, which involved a number of updates that went along with the cyclic maintenance on all 28 antennas. To name a few of the many changes made: (1) the feed cone section called the "Wedge" that houses the current K and Q-band receivers; (2) the apex guard rail and fall protection at the FRM; (3) the encoder electronics upgrade and elevation encoder mount axial alignment; (4) the elevation hard stops put in place to prevent antennas from free falling in the event of motor brake failures; (5) relocation of the azimuth limit switches; and (6) the dish access grab bar that many have grown to appreciate.

While reviewing the overhaul history, a very peculiar discovery became known. The EVLA designated test antenna (13) is the only antenna to go through every overhaul. It is pure irony that it became the chosen "ONE."

An overhaul cycle is defined by the level of work involved. For example, several changes were made to the telescopes during initial construction. The first overhaul was to catch up on the latest changes. A few years later the Neptune/Voyager venture involved many things such as adding X-band receivers and a major revamp of the FRM. Of course, the latest mission is to outfit antennas with EVLA designs.

So, working behind the scene of all the wonderful science the VLA produces is the great workforce responsible for making it happen year after year. A 'Buen Jale,' / 'Good Job,' goes out to everyone!

OCTOBER SKIES

- Jon Spargo, New Mexico Tech Astronomy Club

October is one of my favorite months for stargazing. Many of the summer constellations are still visible in the early evening hours and

staying up just a little late rewards me with the appearance of many of the familiar winter constellations. Throw in a few well-placed planets and our usually clear autumn skies and you can't go wrong.

Mars will continue to put on a show but this season's ideal viewing of the "Red Planet" will soon come to an end. The planet's disk is rapidly dwindling as the Earth begins to pull away from Mars. By the end of the month, Mars' disk will only be 20 arc seconds wide and will only be that wide again once during the next 15 years! If you've been putting off an observing session for Mars you should be making plans!

Saturn is making its way into the winter sky and now rises around midnight (daylight time) but will rise by 9:00 p.m. (standard time) by the end of the month. Because of its current orientation, 90 degrees west of the sun, small telescope owners will find this an excellent time to see the shadow of the planet cast onto the ring system. Jupiter now rises at about the time Mars sets which will be around 2:00 a.m., by the end of the month. Mars must now take second place as this large planet out shines it.

The moon will be first quarter on the 2nd, full on the 10th, last quarter on the 18th., new on the 25th, and first quarter again on the 31st. On the evenings of the 5th and 6th the waxing moon will nicely bracket Mars. One hour before sunrise on the 21st and 22nd the moon will bracket Jupiter. Early risers on the 21st may get a glimpse of the Orionid meteor shower just before dawn.

Good news if you've been losing sleep to view Mars. You'll be able to snooze for an extra hour on the 26th as we set our clocks back to standard time.

FISCAL / QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

- Nancy Ortiz and Don Welty

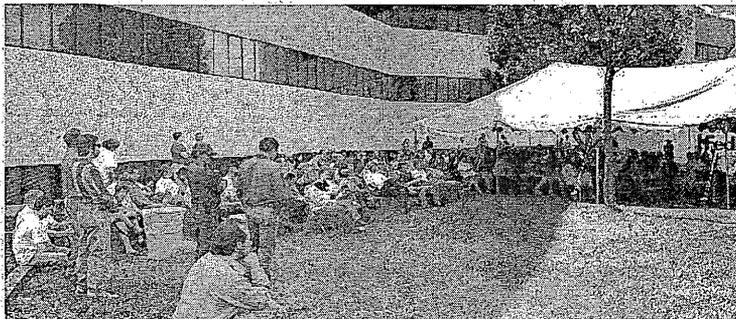
Jury Duty: From time to time, the Fiscal and HR offices get questions about Jury Duty and sick leave. The procedure for reporting your time is straightforward. To help clarify the process, we've put together a short Q&A dialogue. (Q.) I've been summoned to show up for jury duty selection. What do I need to attach to my time/leave report?

(A.) Mark JD for the hours you were required to be there (including time to go to and from) and attach a copy of the letter that stated that you needed to be there that day. (Q.) I was selected for jury duty and served for more than one day. What do I need to attach to my time/leave report? (A.) Request a letter from the court clerk certifying the date/s and time you were required to serve. The Supervisors' Manual states, in Section 10 (<http://www.nrao.edu/internal/hr/sm/Section10.pdf>), "If the certification is not attached to the time record, the Fiscal Division will charge the employee's absence to vacation credit. Upon receipt of the certification, the days charged to vacation will be reinstated to the employee's vacation balance." Please submit the certification with your time/leave report.

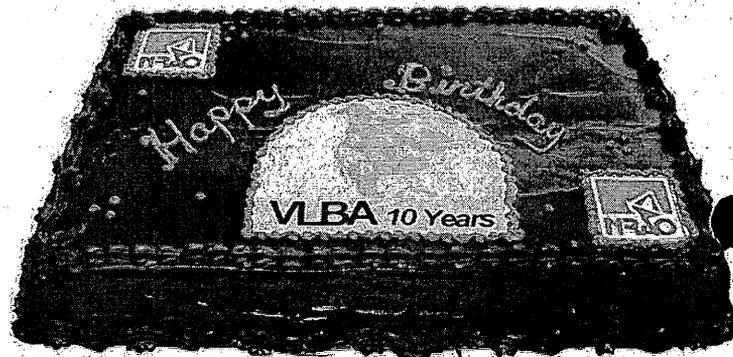
Payroll Codes Location: Please refer to the time/leave report for the proper codes to use in order to record leave. Always write the number of hours next to the leave symbol on the front of the card.

MEMORIES OF THE VLBA 10TH ANNIVERSARY STAFF CELEBRATION

A couple of photos (courtesy of Kelly Gatlin) taken at the VLBA 10th Anniversary Staff celebration, August 21, 2003.



NRAO Employees gather for festivities



A BEFORE photo of the celebration cake, forget the AFTER photo!