



NRAO NM NEWS

Vol. 7 - Issue 2 - APRIL 2005

NOTES FROM THE AD

As most of you know, we have made a call for early retirements as a way to attempt to reduce the personnel spending in the NRAO budget by as much as 5%. This call is aimed at saving money in Fiscal Year 2006, and motivated by the fact that the budget request of the US President for that year is at essentially the same level as our 2005 budget. During this period, we have additional costs for employee raises, ALMA Operations, and general inflationary increases. In addition, we expect a significant increase in the power costs for the AOC and for running our telescopes, in light of increasing energy prices.

In addition to the early retirements, we are making significant efforts to reduce personnel costs by attrition, taking actions such as combining positions, moving some personnel into existing open positions, and declining to replace some employees who have left in the last few months. By taking these actions, I believe that we are in a strong position to eliminate or minimize the possibility of involuntary layoffs in order to balance our budget.

Throughout NRAO, some individuals who have performed long and distinguished service to the Observatory will be taking advantage of early retirement. Whether these people are based in Socorro, Green Bank, or Charlottesville, we all appreciate their great contributions to NRAO over the years, and wish them the best in their future activities.

Jim Ulvestad

REPORTS ON THE FUTURE OF RADIO ASTRONOMY

The National Science Foundation (NSF) is making an effort to cut costs in order to free up money for new initiatives in both optical and radio astronomy. As part of that process, they are convening a high-level review of their facilities, and have solicited input from the astronomy community. Martha Haynes, an AUI Trustee, has reconvened the radio astronomy panel that was appointed under the auspices of the National Academy of Sciences in 1999, in order to provide information and an assessment to the NSF. This committee is now known as the "Radio, Millimeter, and Submillimeter Planning Group", or RMSPG.

For those who are interested in the activities of the RMSPG, they maintain an extensive web page at: <http://www.astro.cornell.edu/~haynes/rmspg/>. Items of particular interest on this site include a compilation of facilities and projects, posted on February 14, a recent draft report for the NSF, posted on April 4, and the report of the Ad Hoc Radio Planning Group that was submitted, and also posted on April 4. The efforts of the RMSPG and others are important for maintaining the scientific profile of our telescopes, so I invite all employees to take a look at the above web site if they are interested in the important long-term planning activities for radio astronomy.

Jim Ulvestad

VLA TRANSPORTERS GET NEW GENERATORS

When an antenna is being transported to a new location along the arms of the VLA array, the receivers must remain cooled and the electronics stable during transit. When a receiver warms up it takes several hours to cool back down and stabilize. With new EVLA Antenna power loads, the transporters need generators with greater capacity to accommodate the new load. The original generators used for transporter power were 40 kW Detroit generators. A 30 kW Onan generator was

originally used to power the Antennas during transit.

Two very quiet John Deere 70 kW generators were ordered to replace the existing 40 kW Detroit generators on the transporters. The new generators have close to the same footprint as the old generators and fit nicely where the old generators were located. The new generator will carry both the transporter load and the new EVLA antenna load simultaneously. The Onan remains where it was as a standby generator, for limp-in mode only, should the primary generator fail. The old Detroit generator engines will be kept as spares for the auto shop. Miscellaneous track equipment such as the tamper, spiker and tie extractor, use the same Detroit engine.

The new John Deere generators arrived on February 28, 2005. Martin Lopez, Tom Olney and Marlin Smith (Transporter Shop) had the generators completely installed on both transporters by March 15, 2005. Buen Jale!

Lea Serna

CONGRATULATIONS

AUI Scholarship: Best wishes to Megan Willoughby, recipient of the 2005-2006 AUI Trustee Scholarship. Megan is the daughter of Brent Willoughby and Margaret Sanchez. Brent Willoughby is a Technical Specialist in the Electronics Division.

Service Awards: Each year the NRAO recognizes Service Award Recipients at an annual Award Banquet. Guests of honor for 2005 are:

10 years: Tom Briscoe, Bryan Butler, Garry Morris, Richard Murillo, Betty Ragan, Kevin Ryan, Stephan Witz

20 years: Kelly Gatlin, Stella Gutierrez, Theresa McBride, Robert Peralta, Bob Smith, Mack Stephenson

30 years: Skip Lagoyda, Pat Lewis

40 years: Barry Clark



WELCOME

Matthew Martin, ES; Paula Metzner, ALMA; and, NRAO Summer Students who start arriving in late May.

Student	Affiliation	Advisor
Wendy Bennett	Drake University	J. P. Macquart
Kyle Borg	Austin College	C. Chandler
Joanna Johnston	New Mexico Tech	B. Butler
Kassandra Jorgensen	Lewis & Clark College	Y. Shirley
Emily Levesque	MIT	V. Fish
Tyson Mao	CalTech	B. Butler
Kassandra Wells	Carleton College	S. Myers
Abhirup Datta	New Mexico Tech	S. Bhatnager
Nicole Gugliucci	Lycoming College	G. Taylor
Urvashi Rao Venkata	New Mexico Tech	S. Myers
Riccardo Sánchez	Rutgers	G. Van Moorsel
	The State University of NJ	
*Kurt Voss	Zuni High School	M. Claussen

*Participant of the RET (Research Experiences for Teachers) program

WELLNESS PROGRAM

The NRAO-NM Wellness Committee recently held meetings at the AOC and the VLA to get staff feedback on the proposed Wellness Program. The meetings were well attended and the feedback was mainly positive; most were in favor of starting a Wellness Program.

The Wellness Program is intended to make health-related resources easily accessible, especially the free or low cost resources that are already available, and to encourage the staff to be healthy.

Elements of this program include a general health and fitness assessment phase, fitness classes and group exercise activities, onsite Weight Watchers meetings, an overview of Cigna/EAP resources, onsite education, and more.

The committee has the beginnings of a website for the Wellness Program at <http://www.nrao.edu/wellness/>. Currently it contains a list of the committee members along with the proposed Wellness Program outline. More content will be added in the next few weeks.

Sections of the proposed program have been approved by Bob D'Angio; the rest of the program is under review. All schedules are tentative at this point but the fitness assessments should be available during April 2005, and the AOC fitness classes should be held during this summer. The Health Fair is actively being worked on; if all goes well, it should take place in the next few months.

Special thanks go to all the committee members but especially to Jan Sramek and Lynette Napier. Jan and Lynette have years of experience in the healthcare field and serve on a volunteer basis – their contributions have been irreplaceable.

Marc Glendenning, Chair - Wellness Program Committee

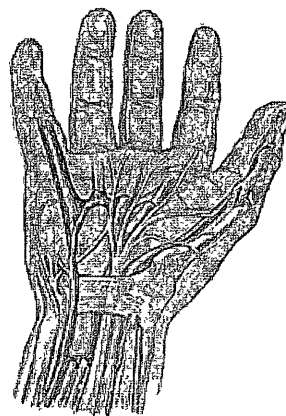
SAFETY CORNER: Making Our Work Areas Safer

Be kind to your hands, your hands are remarkable instruments which can serve you well throughout life, but it is important that you take good care of them.

Tips: Preventing carpal tunnel syndrome

Carpal tunnel syndrome affects thousands of Americans and costs employers billions of dollars a year, according to the American Academy of Orthopedic Surgeons. The best cure for the problem remains prevention.

One of the most common causes of hand and wrist pain, carpal tunnel occurs when there is pressure on the median nerve, one of the nerves that supply sensation to the thumb, index, middle and ring fingers of the hand. The carpal tunnel is a narrow passageway in the wrist created by bones and ligaments that protects the nerves and tendons that extend into the hand. When tissues in the carpal tunnel become inflamed and swollen from overuse or other causes, they press on the median nerve, producing pain and numbness in the hand.



According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, repetitive stress injuries, including CTS, are the fastest growing occupational illness. The disorder afflicts computer users, children who play computer games, cash assembly line workers, meat packers, musicians, writers, surgeons and others whose jobs involve using their hands in repetitive motions that strain the wrist tendons.

"To prevent serious injury and may be permanent damage, you should pay prompt attention to the first twinges of pain or discomfort," advises James Herndon, MD, president of the American Academy of Orthopedic surgeons. "However, wrist pain may not necessarily mean carpal tunnel syndrome," warns Herndon. "There are other conditions that may cause these symptoms, and it is important that an orthopedic surgeon evaluate any wrist pain to rule out other causes."

As part of the Prevent Injuries America Program, the American Academy of Orthopedic Surgeons offers these hints to prevent carpal tunnel syndrome:

- Avoid activities requiring excessive up-and-down and side-to-side movements of the wrist.
- Position your hands properly while working. The arm, wrist and hand must remain in a straight line; bending can cause friction that can lead to inflammation. In other words, wrists should be parallel, and elbows should be at a 90 degree angle to your desk, keyboard or work table.
- Take frequent, short breaks from your activity; stand up, walk around, stretch.
- Ask your orthopedic surgeon about wrist splints to limit wrist movements.
- Avoid direct pressure on the heel of the hand, such as pushups or pressing hard on a seat surface to rise from a chair.
- Do not wear restrictive watchbands or jewelry or clothes with tight elastic sleeves.

Learn to use the computer mouse sensibly:

- Choose a mouse that allows you to work with an open, relaxed hand posture.
- Don't squeeze or grip the mouse between your thumb and little finger.
- Don't twist the mouse side to side; move the mouse with the entire arm.
- Don't use a wrist rest, this doubles the pressure inside the carpal tunnel.
- Keep the mouse close to the keyboard; don't stretch out to the side of the desk.

Source: American Academy of Orthopedic Surgeons. For more information about carpal tunnel syndrome, visit the academy's Web site, www.orthoinfo.org.

James B. Sullivan, NRAO Safety Officer

Note: The article on "April 2005 Skies," will be posted on bulletin boards at the AOC, AOC West and VLA Site.