

# VLA SITE NEWSLETTER

## CONGRATULATIONS

Pat and Denise Trujillo welcomed new baby Patrick David on May 11.

Two new granddaughters were added to Ramon Molina's family in the same week. Dominique was born on May 8 and Tionne on May 10.

Garry Morris recently received his license as EMT-basic.

## WHAT IS AUI?

AUI, or Associated Universities, Inc., is a not-for-profit corporation, organized under the sponsorship of nine major universities: Columbia, Cornell, Harvard, Johns Hopkins, MIT, Pennsylvania, Princeton, Rochester and Yale. Thirteen or more of AUI's 24 unpaid board members are drawn from these universities. AUI was formed to establish and operate major research facilities that one single university could not afford to do, for the benefit of the entire research community. AUI's operating money for NRAO comes from the National Science Foundation.

AUI may lose its contract to operate Brookhaven National Lab for the Department of Energy, but NRAO retirement and insurance are separate so the lost contract should have no effect on us.

A. Patrick

## ST. CROIX REPAIR

During the maintenance team visit to St. Croix in April 1997, the maintenance team found that both bearings on one of the azimuth drive wheels were broken. A new wheel was installed on the antenna on May 20 - 24 by Ramon Gutierrez, Jon Thunborg, and John Wall. The site techs,

John Williams and Herb Winchell also assisted with the task. 100 ton jacks were used to lift the antenna, so that the wheel could be changed. The new wheel and drive shaft had to be very precisely aligned with the gearbox to avoid damage to the new bearings.

J. Thunborg

## SAFETY

Jon Spargo and Gene Cole conducted a safety inspection of the site on May 1. Items noted are being corrected, and we thank them for stepping back to look at the overall operation to see where we can do things more safely. None of us wants to be injured on the job. The report notes that housekeeping was notably good!

Two minor auto accidents and a major one point out the need to drive defensively. Also, accident costs mean that there is less money for other productive uses. Also, please remember that the use of seat belts in NRAO vehicles (where provided) is required by state law, federal regulation, and the NRAO Safety policy.

C. Janes

## CATTLE DRIVE

The cattle drive through the VLA which had been scheduled for June has been canceled. The July and August drives have not been canceled at this time.

J. Cason

## VLBA E-MAIL

When e-mailing VLBA sites for official business, use the address "vlbaxx" where xx is the site name. This way, if one site tech is out for the day, the other will be able to cover the request, and in any case will be kept informed. Pneumonics are pt for Pictown, nl for North Liberty, kp for Kitt Peak, fd for Fort Davis, hn for Hancock, sc

for St. Croix, br for Brewster, ov for Owens Valley, and mk for Mauna Kea. Of course if your message is of a personal nature, you should address the site tech by name. To e-mail all sites at the same time, use "vibasites."

C. Janes

## JURY DUTY

Since the Site is such a remote location from where a jury might be sitting, it has caused some concern when jurors are dismissed early. If you are excused or released early, you are expected to return to work, but at some point, it does not make sense to return to the VLA. One solution is to arrange with your supervisor ahead of time for something to do at the AOC until quitting time. Maybe watch a training or safety video, or you can make the time up later in the week. When in doubt, check with your supervisor.

By paying for jury time, NRAO counts jury time as time worked and encourages you to serve when called.

A. Patrick

## WASTE OIL FACILITY

The new waste oil stations will be operational the first week of June. Shane Baca, Ed Gray, Steve Aragon, Mel Peralta, and Charley Chavez have all helped to bring this job to a speedy conclusion. Steve and Mel fabricated an access platform, dump chests and steps. Shane and Ed plumbed the tanks at each location, and Charley poured two leveling concrete slabs for the tanks.

A waste oil tank has been placed at the Auto Shop and the Transporter Building. Waste oil will be collected at each of these tanks. When full, the oil will be transferred into the

large collection tanks behind the Generator Building. G. Stanzione

## PAINT BOOTH

The Paint Booth has been ordered. The location of the booth will be in the storage building west of the AAB. This building will be expanded to allow for a work space as well. Completion is scheduled for September, 1997. G. Stanzione

## CLEAN-UP DAY

The VLA Site is dusting off its old policy on Housekeeping. One half hour is set aside on every Thursday for housekeeping. All personnel knock off work at 3:45 p.m. and devote at least 30 minutes exclusively to housekeeping activities in their areas.

Good housekeeping is an essential part of accident prevention and is encouraged as a routine daily activity, however, with all the summer work to be accomplished, there is a tendency to neglect housekeeping in order to complete work assignments. Every employee must share the responsibility. In addition to keeping vehicles, equipment and work spaces clean, housekeeping should include the elimination of hazards such as: accumulation of paper, wood, rags or other flammable or combustible materials; the laying of tools or other objects in elevated places from which they may fall and cause injury; accumulation of junk parts where they may become a falling or tripping hazard; the careless scattering of tools or material around a job where they become tripping hazards; the failure to clean up oil or other liquid spills which may become slipping or environmental hazards - including coffee, tea or liquid spills in the break room areas; the failure to clean up a job site after the work is completed, including all wastes, equipment, tools, leftover materials or any other discarded items; entrances and/or exits to buildings or rooms should not be blocked - make sure electrical panels, fire fighting equipment and other emergency materials are not blocked.

Everyone must participate to keep our workplace safe. L. Serna

## L-BAND MOISTURE COVERS

Recent testing done by Greg Taylor indicates that L-Band observations are degraded when water collects in the feed lenses. To prevent this, we're installing covers on the lenses. About half the antennas have covers installed. The rest should be finished early in June. J. Ruff

## SITE & WYE

As of this date, four waveguide manholes have been replaced and work will begin on #5 today. This crew also cleaned up the Pietown VLBA Site, bladed the road and built a loading dock in time for the IAU visit. The Track Crew has aligned and leveled mainline track and intersections from CE-7 to CE-8 and will continue to BE-5 after the antenna moves. During the moves, they are aligning and leveling mainline from DN-8 to DN-9. They built a crossing at CE-8 and will build on at DN-9. Work has begun on the machine shop storage expansion and Charley has poured one floor in the HVAC storage lean-to and will pour another next week. The Auto Shop has been very busy with repairs, PMs and projects. The Drott crane should be ready in two or three weeks. The rail plow and sweeper will be ready in the late summer or early fall. Vehicle check sheets are not being turned in by the drivers. Supervisors, please remind the people in your areas to use the sheets and turn them in! P. Lewis

## CRANE/HOIST LICENSING

The State of New Mexico starting this year requires a state license for operating a crane or hoist with a capacity of 2 tons or greater. NRAO is exempt from the new act, but the licensing requirement points out the need for an internal certification procedure for hoisting equipment. Gene Cole has already put into place a program for the man hoists and no one is permitted to operate either the National or the Hi-Ranger without NRAO certification.

NRAO plans to license three ES Division

employees under the grand fathering provisions of the NM Hoisting Act. These three have agreed to participate in a certification program for other NRAO hoisting equipment. Employees not selected to be licensed by NRAO may take advantage of the grand fathering provisions at their own expense, estimated at \$150. The deadline for taking the test is June 30. See Gene Cole for details. C. Janes

## TRANSPORTER #2

Due to Transporter #2's cracked frame (incident of 1/15/97), the transporter Extend/Retract hydraulic controls have been modified. A simpler On/Off valve has replaced a more complex variable pilot operated valve. The original variable pilot operated valves seem to be the crux of the problem which caused the frame to crack. Valve selection was done by Jim Ruff and modifications were installed by the Transporter Crew.

Subsequent tests performed by Martin Lopez, Nick Montoya and Tom Olney (Transporter Crew) revealed flow problems with the new valve and a solution is in the works at this time. It appears that during "Retract" (lowering the antenna), the new valve would not return to off position due to excessive hydraulic flow through the valve. Jim Ruff (project engineer) is looking into regulating the fluid flow. As a temporary measure the flow has been restricted with existing manual valves and during the last antenna moves the valves performed flawlessly.

Additionally, an attempt was made to enlarge the Antenna pad bolt holes. This attempt failed. The purpose of this experiment was to alleviate the troublesome but necessary jockeying of antennas to match foundation bolt holes with antenna pad bolt holes. Alternative methods of boring bolt holes prove to be too labor extensive and time consuming. A study is being made by ES Engineering for possible use of a smaller bolt size with appropriate inserts. Meanwhile, we continue to adjust those foundation mating plates when they measure out of spec. (Measurements are made by the Track Crew) L. Serna

**PLEASE RECYCLE!**