

VLA/VLBA NEWSLETTER

OCTOBER WEATHER STATS	
HIGH	LOW
76.6° (19 th)	19° (11 th)
Total Precipitation: .2"	

From the World's Premier Centimeter Wave Radio Synthesis Telescopes

AROUND THE VLA

Congratulations Jim Ulvested! Jim has been appointed NRAO Assistant Director of New Mexico Operations, starting December 15. Miller Goss will step down as Assistant Director after 14 years, but will remain with NRAO as Staff Scientist.

Farewell to Ellen Ary. Ellen resigned on October 15 after working 22 years at the VLA. She worked for many years in the Cafeteria, contributing much to the great meals it was known for. After the cafeteria closed, Ellen worked part time while taking care of the housekeeping, laundry, mending, cooking, and whatever else needed to be done in the Cafeteria and VSQs. We wish Ellen well as she leaves the VLA behind and is able to spend more time with her grandchildren.

NMPRA nomination ballots will be distributed soon. It is time to elect three new Personnel Recreation Association members. Members leaving after fulfilling their two year terms are Richard Murillo, Allen Lewis, and Mary Ellen Chavez. Lia Romero was recently appointed to fulfill the term of a departing employee (one year), and remaining on the Board for one more year are Ken Lakies, Emma Rice, and Tom Baldwin.

FLAG ACROSS AMERICA

NRAO hosted runners and support personnel of the "Americans United Flag Across America" run, a transcontinental memorial and fund-raising effort organized by employees of American and United Airlines. As a demonstration of American resolve, the run is to honor the flight crews lost in the September 11 terrorist attacks on New York and Washington, to show support for U.S. troops, and to raise funds to help the victims' families. An American flag is carried from Boston Logan Airport to Los Angeles International Airport, representing the intended journey of American Flight 11 and

United Flight 175, both of which were crashed into the World Trade Center.



Photo by K. Gatlin

The nonstop run arrived at the VLA just before midnight on November 4. Drivers, runners and support personnel stayed overnight at the VLA. During the night, a "VLA Night Owl Run" kept the flag moving around the VLA area until just after sunrise on November 5. Volunteer runners from the NRAO staff, Jim Ulvestad, Ramon Molina, Richard Murillo, Bob Broilo, and Steve Aragon, carried the flag along the east arm to Highway 52, then out to Highway 60 (about four miles) where it continued the journey west.



Photo by K. Gatlin

The flag carried by the runners was flown in a U.S. F-16 cockpit over Iraq in support of Operation Southern Watch on October 2, and was taken to Ground Zero in Manhattan. The flag is scheduled to arrive in Los Angeles on Veterans Day, November 11.

P. Lindsey

VLBA TECHS VISIT THE VLA

During the week of November 5 through 11, there will be a VLBA Station Technician Workshop at NRAO-NM. The visiting VLBA station techs will be at the VLA site on Thursday, November 8. After CPR training, the techs will visit the VLA shops. Shop visits are from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. In the past, ES Division and Cryo have conducted organized training sessions, but this time the techs will go to the shops with specific questions or other work needing follow-up.

C. Janes

ANTENNA PAINTING

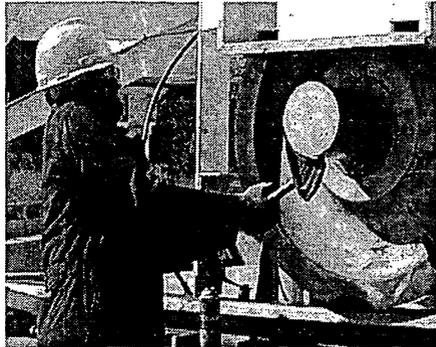
It is November and that means painting has come to a halt on the VLA antennas. Despite the high turnover we had this year, it has been a very productive summer. Jimmy Sanchez and a crew of five men completed the painting plan for this year. Five VLA antennas were completely painted. John Wall and two crewmen (painters) traveled to VLBA Kitt Peak and spot painted several bad areas on the antenna. We estimate that it will take two more trips to Kitt Peak to complete the job. In addition to the antenna painting, Jimmy Sanchez and crew painted the Control Building stairways.

Over 100,000 gallons of water was used to water blast the antennas and more than 1,700 gallons of paint with 100 gallons of thinner was used this summer. Of the five original temporary employees hired, only James Trujillo remained until the project was complete. Painting antennas is very hard work. These men worked fifty hours a week, most of their time spent high on the antennas waterblasting with a 4000 psi water blaster which can quickly wear a man down. Jimmy, James, John and the crew deserve a pat on the back and a "Buen Jale" for a job well done.

R. Molina

TIGER TEAM

The Tiger Team will continue to work at the Pie Town VLBA Site for the next month or two to complete the Tiger Team Task List.



Steve Aragon Shows the Pie Town Antenna Who's Boss

Servo finished their part last summer. The Antenna Mechanics and HVAC are about half done. Electronics expects to start soon and finish this year. Next year will involve lots of travel as we hit the three farthest sites, SC, HI, and HN.

J. Ruff

NMPRA MERCHANDISING

The NMPRA and Education and Public Outreach Office (EPO) have come to an agreement whereby NRAO merchandising that was previously handled by the NMPRA, will now be done by the EPO. All proceeds now go to the Visitor Center and NRAO is making an annual contribution to NMPRA in lieu of their merchandising activities. If anyone needs to purchase merchandise, they should call Robyn Harrison or Tami Hale until the new Visitor Center gift shop opens.

The VLA candy machines and lunch snacks still belong to and are still restocked by NMPRA. The coke machines have been turned over to the Coca Cola Company for restocking. Any problems with the VLA Coke machines or the VLA candy machines should be reported to Emma Rice (NMPRA). The NMPRA still provides the monthly birthday cake and are primarily responsible for putting on social events for NRAONM.

L. Serna

THE EMPLOYEE COMMITTEE

The Employee Committee was originally formed to review the first Performance Evaluations and suggest ways to improve the forms and the process. The Committee

remained active and usually meets quarterly to discuss items brought to them by employees and try to get changes implemented in areas agreed upon. Employees should let a committee member know about concerns, questions, problems or ideas to make NRAO a better place to work.

Current Employee Committee members are: Tom Baldwin, Marie Glendenning, Ginny Goret (on disability leave), Bill Hancock, Wayne, Koski, Patty Lindsey, Godin Otero, Melcolm Peralta, Peggy Perley, Sheila Reasner, Paul Savedra, Greg Taylor, Boyd Waters and Brent Willoughby.

P. Lindsey

NOVEMBER SKIES

The best chances for a storm in November this year will likely not be related to the weather! On November 18, the Earth will encounter several debris trails left by the passing of comet Temple-Tuttle, producing the Leonid Meteor shower. This year the peak of the shower will occur for us in the early morning hours of November 18.

In recent years the science of predicting the peaks of meteor showers has improved dramatically. This year there are two peaks predicted and several experts have also predicted that we will be treated to a meteor storm with rates as high as hundreds per hour! The first will occur around 10 hours Universal Time (UT) and the second around 18 hours UT.

Those in Socorro will be well situated for the first peak, which will hit about 3 a.m. local time on Sunday, November 18. The new moon will have set and if the weather cooperates, we should have some really nice dark skies to see the storm! The action should actually start to pick up around midnight Sat/Sun as Earth begins its encounter of the debris trail left over from the 1766 passing of the comet with some help from debris in the 1799 trail.

The meteors will appear to originate from the constellation of Leo the Lion. Leo rises a couple of hours after Orion and can be seen in the shape of a sickle or a backwards question mark with the bright star Regulus marking the handle.

The New Mexico Tech Astronomy Club will have an open house at the Etscorn Campus Observatory for the meteor shower beginning on the evening of the 17th and lasting until the wee hours of the morning of the 18th. There will also be a star party at the Observatory on Thursday the 15th for the Festival of the Cranes and again on Friday the 16th when several

school groups will be hosted. This means you have plenty of opportunities for some good dark night sky viewing this month!

While Jupiter and Saturn continue to dominate the night sky rising earlier and earlier throughout the month, there will be yet another spectacular event later in the month. On November 30, the Planet Saturn will be occulted by the full Moon. This astronomical "cover up" should begin just after the moon rises and will be easy to follow with a pair of binoculars.

J. Spargo

THE WHEELS ON THE BUS...

With all the mechanical troubles we have had with buses this year, other transportation options are being explored. A re-manufactured engine was purchased for the blue MC9 bus which has been underpowered since we received it. The yellow MC9 engine had water leaking into the oil and needed to be rebuilt. The Business office leased the bus pictured below from GSA. It was fondly named and decorated by its passengers who were not sad to see it go. It had serious steering problems.



VLA "Head Start" Bus

A NOVA bus was used for three days on a trial basis. NOVA has a lease-to-purchase option which is attractive but the NOVA bus is a transit bus and does not have many of the features of a highway bus. Leasing a 60 passenger bus through the GSA is being considered.

The MC9 yellow bus should be up and running by November 16. The engine was rebuilt by Richard Murillo and Tony Guerro and is being installed at this time. After the yellow MC9 bus is running we will take the blue MC9 to Albuquerque for warranty work.

P. Lindsey