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NATIONAL RADIO ASTRONOMY OBSERVATORY
CHARLOTTESVILLE, VA

VLA/VLBA NEWSLETTER

JUNE WEATHER STATS	
HIGH	LOW
84.9° (26th)	27.1° (4th)
Total Precipitation: 0.5"	
VLA Operations	

From the World's Premier Centimeter Wave Radio Synthesis Telescopes

AROUND THE VLA

Welcome aboard: Adrian Zamora, Antenna Mechanic; Anthony Sanchez, Track Crew; Jason Sais, Grounds Crew; and Gerald O'Connell, Carpentry Shop. Andy Pino will continue to help out in the Machine Shop until August.

Students from the Socorro Youth Employment Program, Andrew Claussen and Ben Sramek, are working hard pulling weeds and picking up trash around the site.

On Thursday, May 31, Peter Napier and Rick Perley presented a plan for the organization and construction of the Expanded Very Large Array, or EVLA. Initial funding has been awarded for Phase I, and plans are swinging into high gear. VLA site employees will be very involved in this project.

TIPS FOR TOUR GUIDES

BEFORE YOU GO:

- Fill out an "After-hours or Weekend Tours Scheduled" notice (available at the AOC front desk or from Patty Lindsey at the VLA) and send it to Patty Lindsey at the VLA site. Be sure to do it early enough in the week so that the security guard will get it before you arrive. The guard will find you and have you sign in. He/she will also be the one to let you in the control building and the antenna building if you plan to go there.
- Call the VLA Array Operator or supervisor before you go to be sure it is okay for you to visit the VLA Control Room.
- Remember that no operational antenna will be taken out of service for tourist purposes, and nothing should happen that will disrupt the flow of operations.
- Cameras are welcome.

IF YOU PLAN TO TAKE YOUR TOUR UP AN ANTENNA:

- Call Ramon Molina or Ramon Gutierrez if you plan to go up the antenna in the AAB. Most of the time it shouldn't be a problem, but it is always a good idea to be certain.
- Be sure to observe hard hat and antenna lockout-tagout procedures. If you are unsure about these, ask someone! (Safety Officer) Lockout-tagout procedures are in your Safety Manual, B2-1. Hard hats must be worn in the Antenna Assembly Building and the Transporter Building even if no antenna or transporter is present.
- No more than ten people should be on the antenna at a time. If you have more than ten and decide to split your group, be sure that there will be someone to supervise those who stay at the bottom. This, of course, applies to groups with children.
- Walking in the dish destroys its accuracy. It is better (for the dish) to let people peek through the hatch and come down rather than to walk in the interior.
- It is not advisable to take those who:
 - cannot negotiate a vertical ladder (small children)
 - have heart or respiratory problems (the VLA itself is at 7,000')
 - anyone who is afraid of heights or has problems in places where they can see below their feet
 As a host, you are responsible for the conduct of your guests. They must obey all safety rules and not wander off. Be sure to ask them about their fears and their health as there is no EMT or first aid available on weekends!
- Watch out for grease on the bull gear!
- Be sure you are the last one off the antenna and remember that you must remove your lockout/tagout device.

(To be continued in the next issue...)

R. Harrison

SITE & WYE NEWS

The Track Crew has been getting the track tamped where ties have been replaced, in preparation for the moves. Tie delivery has been very sporadic; however, the vendor "promised" steady delivery after the holiday week. Ballast delivery is almost complete!

A temporary employee, Gerald O'Connell, has been hired to help Charley Chavez. The gazebo on the visitor path will be one of his first projects. Re-stucco of the Guest House in Socorro and the parapet wall of the Visitor Center are also high on the priority list.

Godin Otero and Johnny Gonzalez have been doing the earthwork in preparation for the waste hazardous material storage in the yard. Soon, they will be replacing the waveguide manhole at DE-1.

The Auto Shop has, as usual, been busy. The engine on our four yard concrete mixer is kaput, so Jim Rexrode will put the mixer on the spare 5,000 gallon tanker. Jimmy and Richard Murillo are scheduled to attend Transport class in June.

P. Lewis

DANGER! UV RADIATION

Sunlight that causes damage to the skin and eyes is called ultraviolet or UV radiation. Ultraviolet light is most intense when it is reflected off surfaces such as concrete, snow, sand or water. Damage to the eyes caused by the sunlight is cumulative with either immediate or long term consequences.

Sunscreen and sunglasses should be used year round. Special caution should be used in the summer, near water, and on the ski slopes.

NOTE: OSHA approved sunglasses must be worn wherever protective eye wear is required.

VLA EMS

FAREWELL TO JO HELEN CASON

A farewell party was held for Jo Helen Cason on May 25, 2001. Jo Helen resigned her position as ES Division Secretary on this day. She had been at the VLA since April 6, 1992, almost 10 years. As we all know, Jo and Ken have managed the Cat Mountain Ranch at the end of the East Arm for many years where they raise bulls.

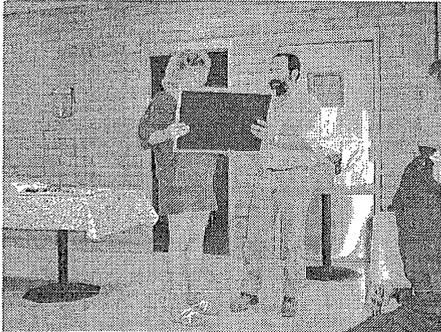


Photo by T. Frost

Jo Helen wanted a chance to stay home to be with her family before they all grow up and leave home. Jo promises she will still be dropping by to say hello on occasion, so we can look forward to visiting with her then.

L. Serna

JUNE SKIES

The unquestioned night sky showstopper for the month of June will be the red planet Mars! It will be bigger and brighter this month than it has been for the past 13 years! Because of its non-circular orbit it will be closest to Earth on June 21st, a week after opposition. On that date it will be a mere 42 million miles from Earth, 12 million miles closer than its closest approach in 1999!

By mid month Mars will rise in the southeastern sky just after sunset and will be a truly imposing sight at magnitude -2.4. Nearby, the normally brilliant red star Antares, in the constellation Scorpius, will pale by comparison. Just north of the tail of Scorpius, Mars will be framed by the star clouds of our Milky Way Galaxy and should offer all viewers, whether by naked eye, binocular or telescope, a summer treat to remember.

While Mars will try to steal the show, June also offers many other deep sky viewing opportunities. An hour or so after sunset the giant globular cluster, M-13, will be a great

telescopic site in the constellation Hercules. Not far behind is the bright star Vega (of Contact fame) in the constellation Lyra (the Harp) and the beautiful planetary nebula M-57, known to many kids as the "Cheerio Nebula."

The NM Tech Astronomy club will host two star parties this month at the Etscorn Campus Observatory. The first will be on June 22nd and the second will be on the 29th. Come join us and we'll show you how to find the objects described above plus many more. Summer skies are rich with interesting sights for telescopic viewing and warm Summer nights are great for getting out and enjoying the night sky!

J. Spargo

YOU DON'T KNOW JACK!

You humans, you like to think you know it all. But do you know me? I think not. And if you don't know me, you don't know Jack! So allow me to educate you by dispelling the top ten leporid myths.

1. I am not trying to engage you in a game of tag when I dart in front of your truck, I'm merely trying to cross the road. This being the case, I'd appreciate it if you'd slow down, because even at my top speed of 35 mph I can't outrun your truck.
2. I cannot leap over tall buildings in a single bound, I can only leap 6' feet straight up into the air. I can, however, leap 20 feet forward in a single bound, changing directions with every leap.
3. My fur is not exceedingly soft or plush, and my flesh is not particularly tender or tasty. In other words, if you were planning to wear me or eat me you'd be sorely disappointed. So don't bother.
4. My feet will not bring you luck - on the contrary, get too close and my back feet will pummel you senseless. And measuring in at five inches, they are far too unwieldy for a key chain. So leave my feet alone.
5. I do not deliver baskets of colored eggs on Easter Sunday or on any other day. I don't even like eggs. I eat grasses, shrubs, and the occasional cactus. But never eggs.

6. I spend less time engaging in activities that result in pregnancy than I spend actually being pregnant. I am nearly always pregnant; I have four or five litters of one to six leverets a year. So many leverets, so little fun.
7. It is a misnomer to refer to "eating like a rabbit" as eating just a little. We black-tailed jackrabbits eat a lot. I can eat as much grass in 15 days as a big dumb cow eats in a day. A cow is certainly 15 times bigger than little ol' me, who only weighs six pounds or so. One more reason to eat cows, not jackrabbits (see #3 above).
8. When you see someone pull a rabbit out of a hat, it is just a trick, not magic. There is no such thing as magic! And rabbits don't live in hats, we dig shallow ditches in the dirt and line them with fur and leaves. You'd find me sleeping under a bush before you'd find me in a hat!

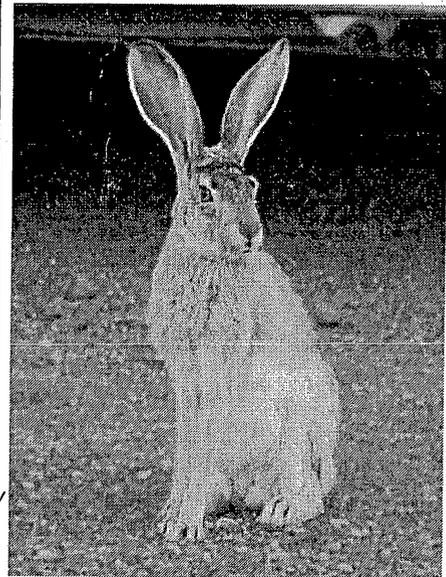


Photo by C. Gino

9. Insert your favorite leporid myth here. Trust me, it is simply not true.
10. I don't stand motionless in an effort to become invisible. I know I can't turn invisible! At such times I am merely pondering the nature of the universe, the meaning of life, or perhaps where my next meal can be had. So leave me be!

There, don't you feel smarter already? Now, regardless of what anyone says, you do know Jack. And remember, bunnies aren't dumb...

C. Gino