

VLA/VLBA NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER WEATHER STATS	
HIGH	LOW
59.2° (3 rd)	-8.9° (25 th)
Total Precipitation: 0.61"	

From the World's Premier Centimeter Wave Radio Synthesis Telescopes

AROUND THE VLA

Congratulations! John Wall, a 20 year veteran employee at the VLA, has accepted an EVLA funded position as a Tech Spec Antenna Mechanic. Adrian Zamora has accepted a new ALMA funded position as an Antenna Mechanic II. Gerald O'Connell, who has worked at the VLA since June of 2000 as a temporary employee, has accepted an EVLA funded position as a Carpenter.

Welcome James Sullivan, who has been hired as the new VLA Safety Officer.

NOTES FROM THE A. D.

Starting this month, I will be writing a monthly note to employees, which will appear as a column alternating between the VLA/VLBA Newsletter and the AOC News. The purpose of this item will be to communicate to VLA/VLBA employees about NRAO management activities and plans, as well as relevant activities in organizations such as the National Science Foundation. Since this is meant to be a service to all the readers of the newsletters, it would be best if what I write actually corresponds to what people are interested in. Therefore, comments and suggestions about the content of the column are encouraged.

As another means of communication, I have created an Assistant Director's world-wide web site, where the monthly notes will be archived. In addition, this web site includes items such as my own goals (submitted to the NRAO director) for 2002 and 2003, and relevant recommendations of external committees. Please set your web browser to <http://www.aoc.nrao.edu/AOC/AD> to access this page.

On Thursday, January 17, Mark McKinnon and I will hold town meetings at the AOC and at the VLA site where we discuss items that

are currently of concern or interest to all of us. Please come to those meetings prepared with questions and/or suggestions. I expect to hold a similar discussion with the VLBA station technicians, possibly at their monthly teleconference in January or February.

J. Ulvestad

ARRAY GATE REMINDER!

Now that we will reconfigure to the A Array, people who travel along the arms to visit Antennas will probably forget many things like their tools, their lunch, calling operations before they go out, or to close all gates behind them while traveling. Closing road and station gates is very important. Cattle can do damage to waveguide and other components at the station when they get an itch and need something to scratch on. If the wrong bull gets into the wrong pasture the result could be devastating to a rancher. Damaged fences and gates that allow a cow or calf to pass through can also cause problems. Calves can get trapped inside the station fences and will die of thirst or starvation if not discovered in time. Please be sure to close all gates behind you and report all problems with fences and gates to operations. Remember, it is safer to close an open gate even when you do not open it. Don't forget your tools or lunch either!

L. Serna

WEST ARM COMMUNICATION CABLE

The west arm communication cable by AW-9 was accidentally cut when Socorro Electric's contractor was trenching to install the new underground power cable.

In mid December, the Cryo Group, along with the help of Godin Otero and his trusty back hoe took on the task of splicing the cable break. Godin dug a 10 foot ditch on each side of the

cable break, so that the new punch down boxes, which were assembled by Jamie Montero, could be installed. The existing cable was exposed, inspected for hidden damage and pulled into the new punch down boxes. The splice cable was then installed, pulled into the box and the ditch covered up. When Godin got through back filling and dragging you could hardly tell that the earth had been disturbed.

The task of peeling back the insulation, cleaning the coating gel on the existing cable and doing the 200 pair punch down takes time and a great deal of a patience. By this time the winds were getting up between 25-30 mph and the cold morning temperature started to get even colder with the winds. The total amount of time spent on this little mishap was three men working for 16 hours.

R. Latasa

RFI CHAMBER

When it comes to radio frequency interference (RFI), sometimes we can be our own worst enemy. To make sure that the electronic equipment we build for EVLA and ALMA does not interfere with radio astronomy observations, we are assembling an RFI chamber at the VLA site for measuring the equipment's RFI emissions.

The RFI chamber is 36 feet long, 16 feet wide, and 10 feet high. The panels that make up the chamber's floor, ceiling, and walls are made of plywood with galvanized sheet metal laminated on both sides. Since the interior surfaces of the chamber are metal, the chamber will provide a radio-quiet environment for the sensitive RFI measurements that will be made inside it. The chamber will be located in the northeast corner of the site Warehouse, and will be assembled over the next couple of months. The chamber was acquired from Green Bank at the cost of shipping it to the VLA.

Many people at the site have already invested significant effort to the RFI chamber project. Brent Avery arranged for the shipping of the chamber from Green Bank to the VLA. Antenna Mechanics, Track Crew, Auto Mechanics, Warehouse Clerks, and members of the Electrical Group have been relocating equipment and rearranging material in the Warehouse to make room for the chamber. Thanks guys!

M. McKinnon

REVISED SAFETY MANUAL ON THE NRAO WEB PAGE

The newly revised NRAO-NM Environmental Health & Safety Manual is now on the NRAO web page. A number of web page changes have been made to better organize safety related information. From the home page, you should click on the gold bar at the bottom that says "NRAO Intranet." At the bottom of that page you will see a new bold heading for "Safety."

Under that heading you'll currently find three listings. The first is for **Safety Manuals** and clicking on that will give you a list of all the NRAO Environmental Health & Safety Manuals. You are reminded that all employees are responsible to know the contents of the **NRAO Corporate Manual**.

Another item is the NRAO-NM Safety Requirements. Clicking here will display the "Table of Contents" for the manual. To view a section, simply click on the text. A menu item titled "Safety Forms" is a listing of all Safety Forms, Certifications, Authorizations and Permits. These are the latest versions of the forms and can be used by simply printing them from the screen. You must have **Adobe Acrobat Reader** available to view each section. If this is not available on your computer, please contact the Computer Division Help Desk to have it installed.

There will be two Safety Manual Review Sessions coming up soon. The first will be for the AOC on January 16th, at 3 p.m. in the AOC Auditorium. The second will be at the VLA on January 24th at 9 a.m. in the Cafeteria Conference Room. Since much of the content of the manual has been changed, you are urged to attend. To comply with OSHA training regulations, attendance will be taken.

J. Spargo

CHRISTMAS PARTIES

The kids' Christmas party was a huge success again this year. We had some new games as well as the old favorites (all of which had excellent prizes), cookies with punch, and don't forget the pictures with Santa! A very special thank you goes out to all of Santa's Helpers: Rey Serna (our very own Saint Nick), Mark McKinnon, Tami Hale, Ken Lakies, Lia Romero, Rob Long, Richard Murillo & Son, Allen Lewis, Tom Baldwin, Emma Rice, Greg Taylor, Pat Van Buskirk, Mary Ellen Chavez, and Kathy Tate.



Having a Good Time!

We had an awesome turnout for the adults' Christmas Party at the Garcia Opera House. And the feedback that we've had from you has been wonderful. I'd like to say a huge thank you to all of the decorating team: Lia Romero and her Mom-without them we would have been lost, Greg Chavez and Mario Torres for the beautifully decorated tree, Mary Ellen Chavez, Emma Rice, Glen Mauger, Tami Hale, Tom Baldwin, and an extra special thank you to Ken Lakies and Richard Murillo for tearing everything down the next day.



NMPRA Board Members (l-r) Pat Van Buskirk, Phillip Sanchez, Ken Lakies, Mary Ellen Chavez, Richard Murillo, Tom Baldwin, and Lia Romero.

We ask for RSVP's in the invitations for a reason, people! We had an awesome turn out this year-but we were getting very close to not having enough room. Luckily we had planned for extra people but we were cutting it awfully close. So here are some tips for next year:

- ▶ RSVP on time!! If you are not 100% sure you can make it just get your name on the list with the number of guests you are taking and you can pay at the door if necessary.
- ▶ Come a little earlier to make sure you get a table and can sit with your friends.
- ▶ Please be honest about guests. It costs the PRA over \$70 per person to put on the party; even an outside guest at \$45 is getting a great deal.
- ▶ See first tip
- ▶ Have a great time!



Mary Ellen Chavez, Tami Hale, and Emma Rice

The PRA enjoys planning the parties and is always happy to hear from you if you have suggestions to make them better. We hope to see you all at the great picnic and parties we have planned for 2002. Have a wonderful New Year!

E. Rice

JANUARY SKIES

The first half of January will be a good opportunity to view the elusive planet Mercury. Mercury will be visible low in the southwest just after sunset and will reach greatest elongation on the 11th. From the 14th through the 18th the Moon, Mercury and Mars will all be visible in the early evening sky.

Jupiter and Saturn will continue to dominate planetary viewing throughout the month. Jupiter reached opposition on January 1, while Saturn is passed that point in early December. Nevertheless, it is worth repeating that this winter will offer some of the best observing opportunities for both of these gas giants for many years to come. Don't miss this exciting opportunity.

The New Mexico Tech Astronomy Club will be having a public star party on Friday, January 18th beginning at 7 PM. Come join us for some good winter viewing. In addition to Jupiter and Saturn, many other interesting objects such as the beautiful star forming region known as the Orion Nebula will be visible.

J. Spargo