

# SOUTHERN SKIES

Volume 12 Number 4  
Fall 1992



## Table of Contents

Officers	i
President's Message <i>by Bob Tate</i>	1
Editor's Message <i>by D.H. Menke</i>	3
SEPA 1992 Conference	4
Article: A National Planetarium Organization <i>by D.H. Menke</i>	8
Article: Stanbeck Planetarium Gets Opportunity To Talk To Shuttle Astronauts <i>by James Brown</i>	9
Field of Review: Book Review <i>by Dave Hostetter</i>	14
State and Local News	15
Membership Application	22

*Journal of the Southeastern Planetarium Association*

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June 1 Summer Issue (#3)  
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# Southern Skies



Volume 12

Number 4

Fall 1992

## President's Message

*Robert C. Tate*

Astronomy is usually considered one of the pure sciences rather than one of the applied sciences, since it deals with fundamental concepts and has the advancement of knowledge, rather than the application of knowledge, as its primary goal. We must all remember that the bills must be paid, however, and this is usually done by the application of knowledge rather than by its acquisition.

The field we call "aerospace" is just the application end of our business. Most planetaria have programs which adequately cover the "space" part of "aerospace," but we should probably all do more in the "aero" end of the endeavor. When I was a child my three greatest loves were horses, astronomy, and airplanes, in no particular order. My spare time was spent riding horses, using my telescope, or building and flying model airplanes.

I got out of the horse business when I went to graduate school; my



interest in astronomy turned into a profession, and I forgot about airplanes until a couple of years ago. During a discussion with my doctor during a routine check up, it dawned on me that I no longer had any hobbies, and that like many of us, all my "spare time" was taken up with my work. This was all the excuse I needed to make a conscious decision to spend some time again building and flying radio-controlled airplanes.

Participation in this hobby has led me to believe planetaria need to do more education about flying -- we need to put more "aero" into our aerospace education. There is

a rich heritage of history in aviation, with many principles of physics to be explored by studying how flight happens. As a bonus, there are many people in every community who can lend support to your aeronautical/ educational efforts. In making contacts, start with the local model airplane clubs, hobby shops, aerospace industries, flight services, pilot organization, etc.

On the national level, the Academy of Model Aeronautics is an organization which promotes model aviation. If you write them on your letterhead stationery, they will send a packet of information about their education services. Write to: Academy of Model Aeronautics, 1810 Samuel Morse Dr., Weston, VA 22090.

At the Harper Planetarium, we are planning a display on World War II aviation, featuring the 99th flight Squadron, the first "experimental" black aviation group to be trained. Hopefully in putting this display together, local high school students can interview some of the surviving distinguished members of this group who now live in the Atlanta area. Also included in this exhibit will be a computer tutorial on the principles of flight, and a couple of flight simulators.

I know that many planetaria already have displays and programs on flight, and I know many

planetarium educators who are also pilots. I'm not suggesting flying for everyone, but more support could come to our planetaria by a stronger association with those who have an interest in flight. After all, our original plan was to fly an astronaut into space rather than blasting him there!

In conclusion, it would be refreshing to see future articles describing your efforts in aerospace.

*Editor's Note: This is Robert Tate's final President's Message. Robert Tate is the Director of the Harper Planetarium in Atlanta, Georgia. His term of office ends at midnight December 31, having served two years. Richard McColman of UNC's Morehead Planetarium assumes the office of President January 1, 1993.*



# Editor's Message

*David H. Menke*



Welcome to the fascinating world of planetarium journalism. When President Tate asked me to take on this assignment, it seemed like a wonderful challenge. It is. Both wonderful and a challenge. I hope you all enjoy reading Southern Skies as much as I enjoy putting it together.

My endeavors are assisted by many: all the contributors; the president; and my own staff. After all, this is our journal, not merely mine.

Bob Tate and I have called upon planetarians in each state, commonwealth, and territory within SEPA to send me information that

pertains to activities within those areas. Thus, we will be able to report news from each part of the SEPA region. I encourage planetarians in each state to organize in order to send me quarterly reports to be covered in this journal; organization will also benefit local planetaria. For example, if you read other regional journals, you notice that there are some with state planetarium "chairpersons" that report to their quarterly newsletters. If there is a preference for such a state spokesperson, please let me know.

The SEPA region includes Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Puerto Rico, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia.



Those planetarians willing to serve as state spokespersons are included in the section "State and Local News."

Thanks to all of you!

## 1992 SEPA CONFERENCE

This year's SEPA Conference was held June 9 - 13 at Roper Mountain Science Center's Hooper Planetarium in Greenville, South Carolina. The theme was "Frontiers." Its host was Rick Greenawald, director of the Hooper Planetarium. He did a great job.

There were 55 delegates in attendance out of the 98 SEPA members. Of the 11 states, 1 commonwealth, and 1 territory in SEPA, there were representatives from 10 states: Florida (9), Georgia (6), Kentucky (1), Louisiana (4), Mississippi (1), North Carolina (4), South Carolina (5), Tennessee (3), Virginia (5), West Virginia (1). There were also SEPA members from New Hampshire (2), Indiana (1), Pennsylvania (1), Utah (1), and Japan (1). There were also ten delegates of whom residence was not determined.

The Conference included the following papers: Rick Greenawald, "Digistar, the Traditional Star Projector;" Dave Hostetter, "International Frontiers: Twin Planetaria;" Kris McCall, "Sudekum Celebrates the Real Stars in Nashville;" George Fleenor,

"The Tonite Show;" Michael Maag, "Painting with Light;" Jon Frantz, "Watch Time Fly with the Aquila Time Code Controller;" George Reed, "Video in the Planetarium;" Joe Hopkins, "What's New with JHE and Other Stories;" David Dundee, "Performing Arts in Your Theatre;" Phil Groce, "New Product from Minolta;" Gary Lazich, "Space for Girls;" Paul Campbell, "Killed by a Meteor;" Joe Tucciarone, "Red Sky at Night;" and by John Hare, "It Beats Selling Insurance -- Perspective on the Planetarium Profession."

Workshops at the Conference included those by Mike Chesman, Charlie Ferguson, and Doug Gegen, "Video Astronomy;" Phil Groce, "New Frontiers in Video Technology;" Jon Bell, "Songs of Space and Time;" Jeff Bowen, "Soundtrack Production in the Year of Exploration;" and Drew Foster, "Preventative Maintenance Cleaning of Ektagraphic Projectors."

Planetarium shows given were Hubble Trouble: Yes or No?, Where on Earth is Christopher Columbus?, and Bear Tails and Other Grizzly Stories. A Cinema-360 promotion, including a 5-



minute video, was shown as well. Its title was Voyages: Extending Our Frontiers.

The Banquet speaker was Jan Ludwinski of JPL. This talk was "Galileo: A Mission at the Frontier."

At the Conference the following resolution was passed by SEPA members:

"Whereas American planetaria exist in diverse circumstances in association with museums and science centers, within public and private colleges and universities, as instruction units of education systems or institutions and as independent entities; and

"Whereas planetarians in various geographic regions have created professional organizations for the purpose of sharing information as a vehicle for promoting personal professional mutual encouragement and support; and

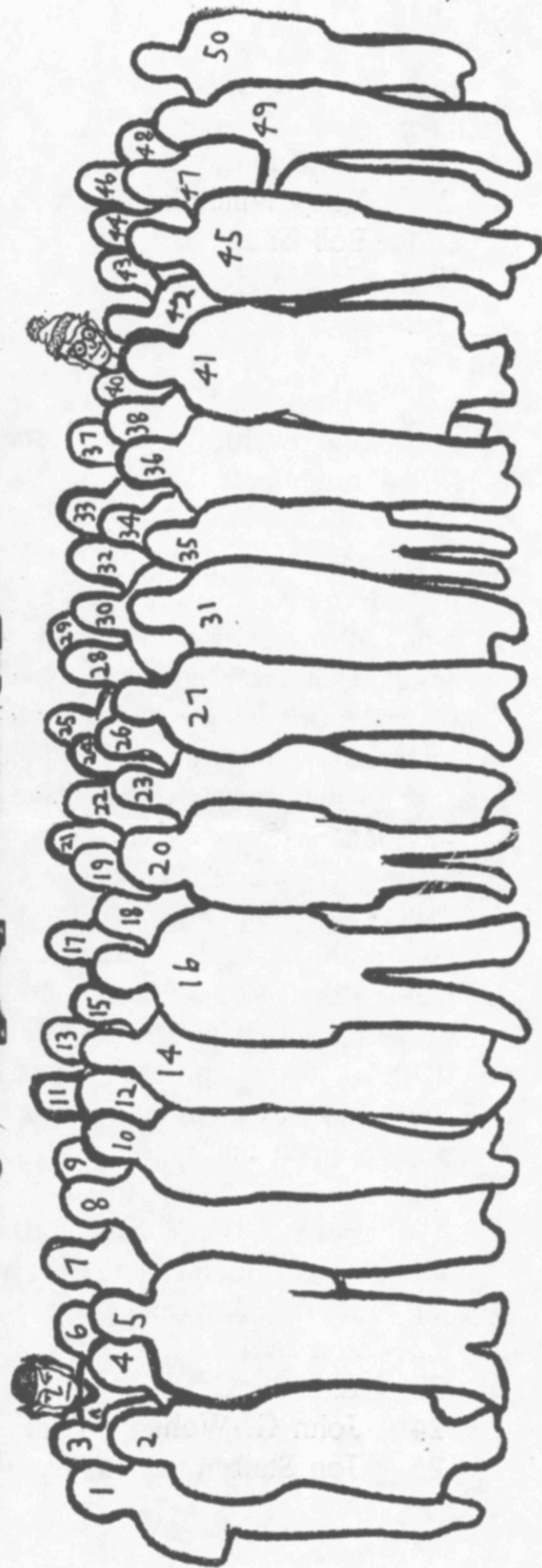
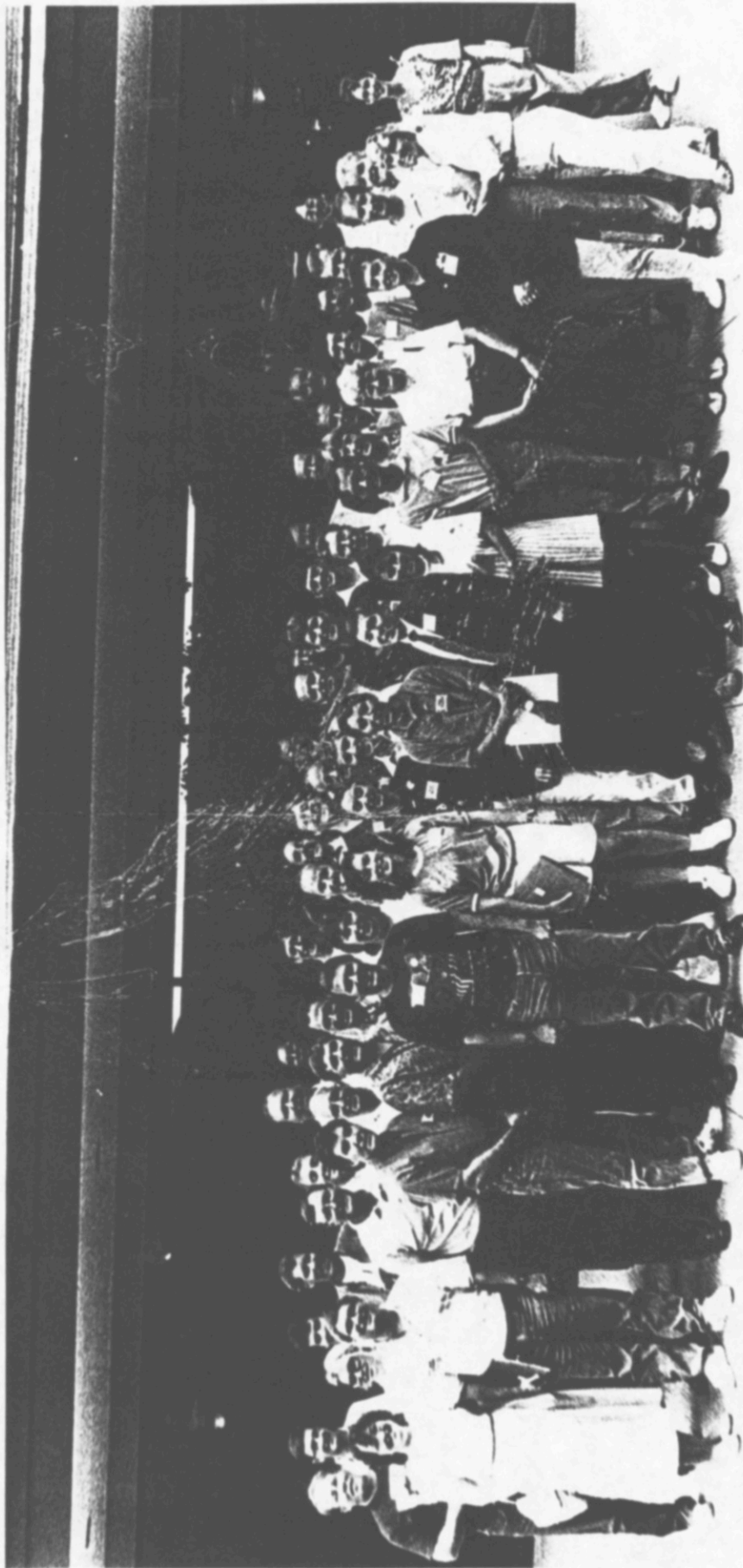
"Whereas the International Planetarium Society exists to serve the same function on a global scale; and

"Whereas no national organization exists in the United States which

can represent the profession and the various facilities in their dealings with the Federal government and its various agencies and institutions, and with private foundations and other funding agencies for the purpose of obtaining financial and political support for planetaria and the accomplishment of their goals;

"Be it therefore resolved that the Southeastern Planetarium Association encourages and supports efforts to establish an organization of United States Planetaria and calls upon other regional planetarium association to lend their support to this effort which represents potential benefit and gain for all.

"Given by vote of the membership this 13th day of June, 1992".





## SEPA 1992 DELEGATES PHOTO

- 1 Jim Summers
- 2 Betty Wasiluk
- 3 Bob Tate
- 4 Carole Helper
- 5 Dave Hostetter
- 6 John Stoke
- 7 John Hare
- 8 Jim Hooks
- 9 Mike Sandras
- 10 Jeff Bowen
- 11 Gary Meibaum



FIND WALDO

- 12 Jim Borin
- 13 Arnold Pearlstein
- 14 Jon Frantz
- 15 Steve Nichol
- 16 Mark Trotter
- 17 Byron Easterling
- 18 Sue Griswold
- 19 Kirk Blevins
- 20 Casey Copp
- 21 David Dundee
- 22 Jon Bell
- 23 Kris McCall
- 24 John C. Wells
- 25 Jon Staib

- 26 Rick Greenawald
- 27 Clay Powers
- 28 John Serrie
- 29 Michael Maag
- 30 George Fleenor
- 31 Phil Groce
- 32 Charles Ferguson
- 33 Steve Savage
- 34 Mike Chesman
- 35 Stephanie Heintz
- 36 Joe Tucciarone
- 37 Paul Campbell
- 38 Jane Hastings
- 39 George Reed
- 40 Joe Hopkins
- 41 Rita Fairman
- 42 Gary M. Lazich
- 43 Richard McColman
- 44 Drew Foster
- 45 Linda Hare
- 46 Doug Oetter
- 47 Jeff Guill
- 48 Jeri Panek
- 49 Lani Guill
- 50 Jalie Phifer
- 51 Spock
- 52 Waldo

Not shown: Jack Donald,  
Lisa DuFur, Jim Hashimoto,  
Patrick Murphy, Cynthia Zeger

# **A National Planetarium Organization: Stronger State Planetarium Organizations**

*David H. Menke*

In a previous issue of Southern Skies, SEPA President Bob Tate wrote an article calling for the creation of a national planetarium organization. (See Autumn 1991-Winter 1992 Issue.) Since that time several regional planetarium associations have supported such a concept; including SEPA in June 1992, and PPA in October. We call upon the other regions to support a National Planetarium Organization. Both the Mid-Atlantic Planetarium Society and the Great Lakes Planetarium Association have expressed support for a national planetarium organization, but have yet to have a formal vote on the issue.

Much like a national planetarium organization can have influence in Washington, D.C. (whereas the I.P.S. cannot), we realize also that regional associations have virtually no clout in state capitals. For example, SEPA cannot influence state legislators or state agencies in

Tallahassee, FL; Columbia, SC; Richmond, VA; Baton Rouge, LA; or any other capital. However, state organizations can.

Within Florida there are some 25 planetaria. The Florida Planetarium Association (FlorPlan) has been meeting twice annually for at least five years. With additional unity and formality, it can be a strong force in the Sunshine State. Meanwhile, as reported elsewhere, the Georgia Association of Planetariums (GAP) formed on August 31 and will have influence in Atlanta.

Over the years it has been observed that many state planetarium associations have proven to be ineffective or perhaps not useful. This is no longer true. If we can convince planetarians within each state that such organizing can be both politically and fiscally beneficial, the groups will grow.

If it is possible for one science center, Chabot, to hire a lobbyist to help get a \$17.5 million grant (which they got), perhaps state planetarium agencies can send a representative (if they cannot afford a lobbyist) to their state capitals to seek additional support for planetaria within the state. Let us make SEPA strong.

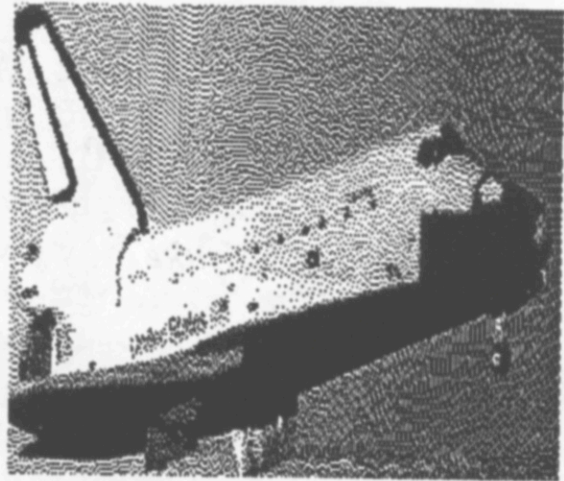


# STANBACK PLANETARIUM GETS OPPORTUNITY TO TALK TO SHUTTLE ASTRONAUTS

*James Brown*

The Stanback Planetarium of South Carolina State College was selected as a receive site for amateur radio communications with astronauts aboard the March Space Shuttle flight.

When Space Shuttle mission STS-45 launched in March, amateur radio operators around the world had the best opportunity ever offered to communicate with the astronauts during a space flight. STS-45 was the fifth mission to carry the capability for transmissions between ground-based and Shuttle-based amateur radio operators during flight. The unique part of this mission was the 57 degree of inclination of the flight plan. During STS-45, the Shuttle Orbiter flew over a much larger portion of the world than in previous missions when the Shuttle Amateur Radio Experiment (SAREX) was aboard. Countries covered during this flight included the U.S., Canada, Japan, Russia,



European nations, South America, Asia, Australia, Africa -- the list includes practically the whole world.

Adding to the distinctive international character of STS-45 were crew members who can communicate in several languages. During the mission, SAREX was operated by mission specialist David Leestma and pilot Brian Duffy, both licensed operators. Leestma's call sign is N5WQC and Duffy's is N5WQW. Other crew members who communicated alongside Leestma and Duffy were mission commander Charles Bolden; mission specialists C. Michael Foale and Kathy Sullivan, who is fluent in French and Norwegian; and payload specialists Byron Lichtenberg, and Dirk Frimout, who speaks French as well as Dutch, and has the call sign ON1AFD.

NASA approved the use of



amateur radio experiments during Shuttle flights for two reasons: (1) to encourage public participation in the space program and (2) to support educational opportunities offered by amateur radio. SAREX has flown previously in various hardware configurations on Space Shuttle missions STS-9, STS-51F, STS-35 and STS-37. As in the past, the crew communicated with students at various schools worldwide. SAREX crew-tended operating times were dictated by the time of launch. As a secondary payload, SAREX was operated by Leestma and Duffy whenever their work activities allowed them time and when appropriate geographically for transmission. Most transmissions were spontaneous open contacts or QSO's as the amateur radio operators call them. The SAREX communicated with amateur stations in line-of-sight of the orbiter in a 2-meter voice transmission mode. All on-orbit SAREX operations are conducted in the 2-meter Amateur Satellite Service band utilizing FM with a nominal frequency deviation of 3 kHz.

The Stanback Planetarium at South Carolina State College was chosen by the Amateur Radio Relay League to be one of the scheduled

contact sites. Lucky for me, I hold an Extra Class Amateur License and used my call sign, WM30 for the contact. Approximately ten middle school students from the Orangeburg School District participated and talked directly to the astronauts. Students were selected through an application process conducted by the school district.

The Edisto Amateur Radio Society (EARS) and the Southern Bell Telephone Pioneer Amateur Radio Society (SBTPARS) of South Carolina also participated. EARS sponsored an information talk about amateur radio and SBTPARS by providing the radio, antenna, and hardware necessary to make the contact successful.

The primary payload for the STS-45 mission was the Atmospheric Laboratory for Applications and Science (ATLAS). The laboratory was mounted on a Spacelab pallet in the Shuttle cargo bay. Long-term changes in the total energy radiated by the sun were measured and auroras from the polar regions studied. Mission duration was eight days.

As Director for the Stanback Planetarium at South Carolina State University in Orangeburg, South Carolina, and, as an amateur radio



operator (WM30), the connection with SAREX seemed to be a very logical one. Since one of the goals of planetariums's is to promote astronomy and space science education, what better location to establish a SAREX contact from than from my very work QTH?

I applied to the American Radio Relay League (ARRL) for permission to participate in an upcoming SAREX flight in the Summer of 1991 and on December 20, 1991 was notified that there would be a good chance that we would be chosen to participate in the upcoming STS-45 SAREX flight.

With this in mind, I approached Mr. Heyward Bozard, N4VFK, Computer Analyst for the Orangeburg County School District and presented the information. Together with Ms. Anne Neeley, Public Relations officer for the District, we made contact with the middle schools and set up a theme contest to select 10 students from within the District's middle schools.

While this process was underway, I approached the Edisto Amateur Radio Society (EARS) and solicited the help of a number of club members. Mr. Boby Mixson, N4WPJ, Mr. Marty Digins,

KD4BR, Mr. Gary Blankenship, N4MCF, Mr. George Cone, WB4TGK, Mr. Mike cone, KB4REI, Mr. Harry Shroat, N4XMY all volunteered to help with the project. Marty, KD4BR, and George, WB4TGK are both members of the Southern Bell Telephone Pioneer Amateur Radio Society and suggested that perhaps the Pioneers would be able to help.

A few weeks later, Marty, KD4BR came back from a meeting with Mr. Jim Reeves, WX4M of the Pioneers with the promise of a complete Oscar satellite station, including a brand new Kenwood TS-790A, a brand new Hygain 218S complete Oscar antenna system, a brand new Yaesu G-5400B Azimuth/elevation rotor, hardline, power supply, amplifier/pre-amplifier, in short ... the works!

I can't begin to express my appreciation for the work and effort all these people did to make our SAREX contact a success. When the day of contact was upon us, the students had been selected, rehearsals completed, and the media informed. We all listened in to the orbit before ours, to check for signal strength and to practice tracking the Orbiter with our Oscar system. We heard N5WQC contact



a school somewhere in the New England States and we had perfect reception. Their signal was S9 10, and audio was clear and solid. Our tracking was made simple as we had STS-Plus software running on a PC-clone that I use to run the Planetarium. Its output can be given in altitude and azimuth as well as a graphic display of the Orbiter in relation to our ground location.

About 4:00 PM EST, 24 minutes before the contact, everyone began to show up. TV crews, newspaper reporters and photographers, radio crews and of course, the students, family members, representatives from Orangeburg School District, University staff, and club members. In a short while, we would be attempting to make the first successful contact with the Space Shuttle from South Carolina.

About fifteen minutes before the contact the Johnson Spaceflight Center called to make sure everything was on track and to tell us that they would stay on the phone throughout the pass. The kids were anxious and the atmosphere in the theater was tense. As we counted down from T-30 seconds, I opened up the squelch on the radio and on the

directions from JSC began calling them. "N5WQC, N5WQC, N5WQC this is WM30 at South Carolina State University, Over ...". Nothing, no answer, only static. Again, "N5WQC, N5WQC, N5WQC this is WM30 at South Carolina State University, over ...". Nothing, no answer, only static. Again, and again, and by now we were fully 2 minutes into our pass and still nothing. Then finally, out of the static, "WM30, this is N5WQC." But what had happened to the beautiful signal that we had heard on the previous orbit? No time to ponder this, I had to hope that the people manning the antenna controls had us on track. Quickly, I confirmed contact and got the first student up for his question. The answer came back, but while the signal was strong, the audio was so weak that it was difficult to understand. Another student and another answer. As the third student finished his question, the signal had dropped noticeably and I had the volume of the TS-790A wide open. But the noise was overpowering the audio from the Shuttle and it finally faded into nothing. Then, it was over. TV interviewers swarmed in quickly to get their interviews and make it back to the station for the 6 o'clock



news. I kept hearing questions being asked to the kids, "...were you disappointed?" And to my surprise, most of the answers were to the effect of yes, but it was exciting to be a part of the project, and they did, after all, get to hear the astronaut live and in person, something that they had never done before.

The 6 o'clock news was mixed, one station praising our efforts and another playing up the static and poor reception. The newspapers were kinder and also praised our efforts.

We were in the right place with the right equipment. We had the best equipment that money could buy and it didn't help. What happened? I placed a call to JSC and spoke with Roy Neil, K6DUE. He told me that they had monitored our amateur gear there, every SAREX pass of the mission to that point and had not had any trouble hearing the astronauts ... until our pass. He told me that they heard nothing from the Shuttle. Whether it was a faulty connection between the mike plug and the SAREX transmitter or whether it was the orientation of the orbiter, I have not been able to find out. Everyone has been sympathetic, especially Ray, K6DUE who

suggested that we try again in the near future.

All in all, many people put quite a few hours into this project. We would not have been as successful as we were without the help and support of the Southern Bell Telephone Pioneer Amateur Radio Society, the Edisto Amateur Radio Society, Orangeburg County School District and South Carolina State University. Was it a success? In our opinion, yes. Were the kids excited? Yes. We even planted the idea of an amateur radio class being taught in the Gifted and Talented classes. Did we promote amateur radio to the public? Yes, and more so, since it made Statewide coverage in newspapers, TV and radio. Would we do it over? Probably, but give us time to catch our breath from this one, ok?

## FIELD OF REVIEW

*Dave Hostetter*

**Many Moons**, by Diana Brueton  
Prentice Hall Press, New York,  
1991. 256 Pages. Hardback.  
ISBN 0-13-553322-X

**Many Moons** is a bizarre, but interesting, little book. Parts are excellent and parts are, well, a bit strange.

The book concentrates on lunar fact, legend, and lore. Lunar mythology and folklore are especially well-covered, much of which is rather obscure and may be new to the reader. It's interesting material, and worth reviewing by the planetarian developing a program involving lunar mythology. There's a nice chapter on lunar phrases in our language, from "moonlighting" to "To the moon, Alice," and yes, "mooning" is included. Another involves moon-related recipes such as Chinese mooncakes, Moon-Shine (not what you think), and Moon Biscuits. No Moon pies, though. The second section of the book also includes a sampling of literary illusions involving the moon.

On the other hand, I felt there were some problems in Many Moons. Since I am pretty skeptical

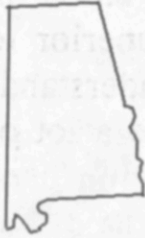
of New Age claims of knowledge, it bothered me, a lot, to find a chapter with claims that past ideas about the moon's phases, based on feeling, are essentially superior to our modern scientific understanding; that science has done a lot of harm recently; and that we need ritual and legend to regain confidence that has been subdued by the old New Age devil, reason. I suspect that the author and I would disagree about whether trading magic and myths for science and reason is a fair trade or not.

To be fair, the last part of the book does look at modern scientific knowledge of the moon. Unfortunately, it is full of errors and outdated information. James Irwin took the first steps on the moon? The full moon is in the east from the time it rises until the time it sets? This type of thing is only capped off when an Apollo lunar surface close-up is labeled as an image from a radio telescope. Whew!

In essence, this is a good book if you are looking for lunar mythology and folklore; but not if you are looking for the latest scientific knowledge of the moon, and I wouldn't recommend the book to someone who wasn't knowledgeable enough to catch the errors.



## State and Local News



### ALABAMA

*Jayne Ray,  
High School  
Planetarium,  
Muscle Shoals*

Of the 9 planetaria in the state, few have active programs. However, one of the more interesting ones is the StarLab Planetarium in Dothan. Opened in 1985, this permanent-dome StarLab is part of 60-acre Landmark Park, a recreational facility dedicated to public heritage and outdoor education. The planetarium gives school shows during the week and public programs on weekends. Director William Holman is interested in communicating with other small planetaria for ideas and programs.



### FLORIDA

*John Hare,  
Bishop  
Planetarium  
Bradenton*

The Florida Planetarium Association (FlorPlan) has scheduled its fall meeting in

Ft. Myers on November 14.

Hurricane Andrew's destructive force wreaked havoc in much of South Florida, especially in South Dade County. Fortunately, none of the planetaria were seriously damaged (Miami Space Transit, the Space Place, Miami Lakes-Hialeah, Buehler, Aldrin). There were no injuries to planetarians; however, Jack Horkheimer of Miami Space Transit, reported that his home sustained major damage.

Indian River Community College in Ft. Pierce is constructing a new 40-foot tilted dome planetarium with a Spitz 512. The planetarium is part of a three-story science building that includes classrooms and labs. A new director is scheduled to begin in November with a scheduled opening in January.

Frank Palma reports that Pensacola's Owens Planetarium has installed a new Digistar. The 40-foot dome also has ScreenMaster automation, panorama and all-sky system, and a high-powered audio system. The first shows are scheduled for early 1993.

Mike Hutton is making plans

for hosting IPS in 1994, and is also working hard to complete a Minolta Infinium/Digistar planetarium complex. Construction begins in January and should take a year to complete.

Al Peche, formerly of Baton Rouge's Planetarium, is the new director at the Museum of Science and Industry (MOSI) planetarium in Tampa. The Spitz A3P is in a 30-foot dome, and had been recently moved from the University of South Florida. With Al is Tony Butterfield, formerly of the John Young Planetarium in Orlando.

Riverview High School in Sarasota has undergone renovation of their Spitz A4 planetarium, and added automation, pans, and video.

The Buehler Planetarium in Davie (near Ft. Lauderdale) is currently running its winter holiday shows: Star of Wonder and a double feature children's program: The Alien Who Stole Christmas and Star for Santa's Tree. The Planetarium's laser light shows are slated to begin in January.

The Bishop Planetarium in Bradenton will be hosting the SEPA '93 Conference from June 15-19, 1993. For more information, contact director John Hare, 201 10th Street West, Bradenton, 34205, (813) 746-4132.



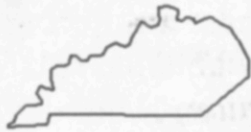
*Carole Helper,  
Mark Smith  
Planetarium,  
Macon*

## GEORGIA

On August 31, there was a meeting of the Georgia Association of Planetariums (GAP), held at Macon's Mark Smith Planetarium. There were 19 planetariums representing Albany, Atlanta, Chickamauga, Columbus, Dahlonega, Decatur, Macon, and Savannah. There was also a member of Florida Planetarium Association (FlorPlan), Frank Palma from Pensacola.

After a morning of planning and discussion among GAP members, a luncheon was served. The speaker for the luncheon was Sam Lawson, a park ranger at Ocmulgee National Monument, who spoke about the "Astronomical Significance of local Native American Monuments." Following lunch, GAP members enjoyed a tour of Macon's Museum of Arts and Sciences and were treated to the Planetarium's current show, A Planet Called Earth. The Mark Smith is currently running Space Bus.





*Jack Fletcher,  
Hummel  
Planetarium,  
Richmond*

**KENTUCKY**

There isn't much going on in the state. Of the 9 planetaria, 4 are not very active. However, a once-thought-defunct planetarium, Golden Pond (Tennessee Valley Authority) is rumored to be operating again.

We at the Hummel are making money, and in fact we must. Our university president told us that as long as we make money we are in business. The first year we are in the red, we will be closed down.



*Dave Hostetter,  
Natural History  
Museum, Lafayette*

**LOUISIANA**

We got blasted by Hurricane Andrew in August, but none of the state's planetaria (or planetarians!) suffered severely.

The Louisiana Arts and Science Center Planetarium in Baton Rouge remains closed. Al Peche, former curator, has left to become director at the MOSI Planetarium in Tampa, Florida.

Remember that the instrument here is a Zeiss model IV projector (a refurbished Zeiss II from Los Angeles' Griffith Observatory) that was installed in 1967. There are tentative plans to build a new facility, but not before 1994. Currently, there are astronomy presentations in a museum classroom done by David Mayeux.

Mike Sandras at Kenner's Daily Living Science Center has developed a high school show using both the planetarium and observatory.

Six hundred girl scouts camp in each weekend at Mark Trotter's planetarium (Louisiana Nature and Science Center) in New Orleans.

During this school year, the Lafayette Museum and Planetarium will be closed for repairs and renovation. Presentations will be done in school classrooms and using StarLab. Most of the \$825,000 allocated will be used to increase safety and accessibility. Little or no modernization of the planetarium is expected.



*Gary M. Lazich,  
Davis Planetarium,  
Jackson*

**MISSISSIPPI**

There are only three planetaria in our state: Wiley in Cleveland, Stars in Vancleave, and Davis in Jackson. The first two are at a university and public school respectively. The last is an 18-m dome public planetarium with full service, including a Cinema 360 projection system.



**NORTH  
CAROLINA**

*Cynthia  
Zeger,  
Woodson  
Planetarium,  
Salisbury*

Sue Griswold of Charlotte's Discovery Place reports that the Kelly Planetarium will open its new production, Star Seekers on Friday October 30 and plans to install the show at the planetarium at the Singapore Science Center in December. After a year of operation, Sue says attendance at the planetarium was 120,000 and 300,000 in the Omnimax.

Lisa Canada of Morehead Planetarium in Chapel Hill reports that The Travels of Terry Trasher will continue through November

15. This show takes a littering tyke through the uninhabitable solar system. A new children's holiday production, Follow That Star, will premier in December. Morehead also sponsors adult-child educational programs, such as one in model rockets.

Scott Niskach of SCIWORKS (formerly the Nature and Science Center) in Winston-Salem says the new planetarium will open November 21. The 50-foot tilted dome 120-seat theater with a Spitz 512 will run two shows upon opening: Lifestyles of the Stars and More Than Meets the Eye. The first is from Bowen Musical (with script by Sharon Parker of Florida's Buehler Planetarium), and the latter is from Loch Ness.

The Woodson Planetarium in Salisbury opens a special fall exhibit November 8, called Images Past and Present. This exhibition includes many sepia tone photographs of plains Indians as well as photos of Shuttle launches and landings. Daughters of the Stars is the planetarium show that will run concurrently with the exhibition. This show was written by Jon Bell of Virginia's Peninsula Planetarium, and produced by Joe Hopkins Engineering. Well, Ellen is outta here.





**SOUTH  
CAROLINA**

*Rick Greenawald,  
Hooper  
Planetarium,  
Greenville*

The Ruth Patrick Science Education Center at the University of South Carolina in Aiken is installing a new 30-foot dome planetarium theatre with 54 seats. Special effects, including video and slide projectors, are included. No planetarium projector has been ordered. They would like a Digistar. Director Jeff Priest says that it will be at least three years before funds are available.

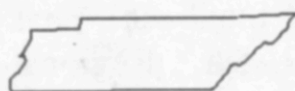
The Mars Show elicited outstanding attendance at the Gibbes Planetarium in Columbia this past summer. Director Jeff Guill says the boost came from a local television station that produced and ran a promotional ad. They were even turning people away! Wouldn't we all like to have that problem? The Gibbes is also preparing for the December lunar eclipse, with activities planned at Ft. Jackson. Finally, there will be a meteorite exhibition using specimens from University of South Carolina's McKissick Museum.

Jim Brown of the Stanback Planetarium, Orangeburg, reports

much success. First of all, Jim received a NASA grant three years ago to purchase supplies and equipment to host NASA educational video conferences, and he has been quite busy with these. Secondly, the Stanback has established a NASA Regional Teacher Resource Room which will open soon. Media materials from NASA CORE are included. South Carolina State received a grant to upgrade the Planetarium, and now it is fully automated using SPICE. The Stanback also has been participating in the NASA SAREX project, and you can read about that in the most recent issue of The Planetarian.

The Hooper Planetarium in Greenville has purchased a HyperSpace 3-D digitizing system to help create images for the E Digistar. Director Rick Greenawald says it's fun to play with. The Planetarium's long-running feud with the theatre seat company may have been resolved; new fabric will be placed on the seats at the company's expense. Rick has finally found a production specialist: Rex Smith. Mr. Smith was a high school earth science teacher with 8 years experience. He began November 9. Rick says that if you want to get some special

effects projectors cheap, attend local school auctions where projectors and the like are plentiful and inexpensive. He got 30 from his school district for nothing.



TENNESSEE

*Kris McCall,  
Sudekum  
Planetarium,  
Nashville*

(Written on a bus outside Seiler Instruments in Kirkwood, Missouri, during the GLPA/GPPA fall 1993 Conference) This has been a tremendous year for the Sudekum Planetarium (Cumberland Science Museum; 12.2-meter dome, Spitz 512, StarLab, five dome dwellers, an occasional rodent). The year began warm outside and heated inside as we furiously labored over Planet Patrol: Solar System Stake Out. It opened March 1 after ten months of production. On March 3, the planetarium was re-dedicated as part of a fortieth year anniversary celebration.

Planet Patrol has drawn huge crowds, setting records for our facility. By June 30 it was apparent the Sudekum has just enjoyed its best year ever, with 75,000 attending (48,000 public visitors and 27,000 school pupils).

[The planetarium has 127 seats.] July did not slow down with 11,000 coming to our 120 presentations, giving us a 75% occupancy rate (or 87 per show).

Our two educators, Robin Levine-Fields and Sharon Mendonsa, attended a regional workshop on teaching methods in astronomy held in Oak Ridge. Meanwhile, Robin is expecting to expand the universe by giving birth in the spring. Our artist, Jim Chapman, opened a one-man art show featuring a satirical look at society.

In addition to entertaining thousands of school kids ('perihellions') and handling routine crises, we are involved in the production of several new shows, including Star Stealers and Our Place in Space. Please remember that we lost a full-time position about a year ago, and Richard Shores had to leave us. So the concept 'busy' does not begin to describe what is happening here. The universe is truly an amazing place.

Also to be noted: Charles Ferguson left Bays Mountain to take the position of director at Wells Planetarium, Harrisonburg, Virginia.





VIRGINIA

*Jon Bell,  
Peninsula  
Planetarium,  
Newport News*

Charles Ferguson is the new director of the John C. Wells Planetarium, James Madison University, Harrisonburg. A 17-year-old Goto GX is there, under a 9.1-meter dome with 72 seats.

The NASA Langley Research Center in Poquoson recently hosted a planetarium directors workshop. Attendants included Jack Moyer (Washington, D.C.), John Dieringer (Washington, D.C.), Gary Purinton (Falls Church), Janes Hastings (Richmond), Ken Wilson (Richmond), Herb Teuscher (Virginia Beach), and Jon Bell (Newport News). Participants visited the Research Center, heard talks by NASA experts, toured the Virginia Air and Space Center, and saw the Columbus quincentennial program, A Star to Steer By, at the Virginia Living Museum, Newport News.

Jon Bell is now running two planetaria: the Peninsula Planetarium in Newport News (Spitz A3P, 30-foot dome, 75-seat unidirectional) at the Virginia Living Museum, and the Hampton

City Schools Planetarium (Viewlex/Minolta MS8, 30-foot dome, 60-seat concentric). Jon submitted a proposal, on behalf of the Virginia Living Museum, to run the second planetarium. The Hampton Planetarium will be giving school shows to third graders and in the Spring will offer public shows. Jon Bell says, "So far it has been a lot of fun, but those gear shift levers for the planetarium motions on the Minolta drive me nuts!"



WEST VIRGINIA

*Steve Mitch,  
Benedum Natural  
Science Center,  
Wheeling*

The Benedum Natural Science Theatre in Wheeling is once again offering Winter Fantasies, a highly popular seasonal laser show. Last year's program was visited by more than 73,000 persons during November, December, and January. This year's program, featuring music by Mannheim Steamroller, is expected to attract more than 75,000 persons (which includes over 2,000 motor coaches). Our regular planetarium programming and Cinema 360 films will resume in March.