

# Southern Skies

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Summer 2005

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*Bradley Observatory at Agnes Scott College. Credit: Dave Maness*

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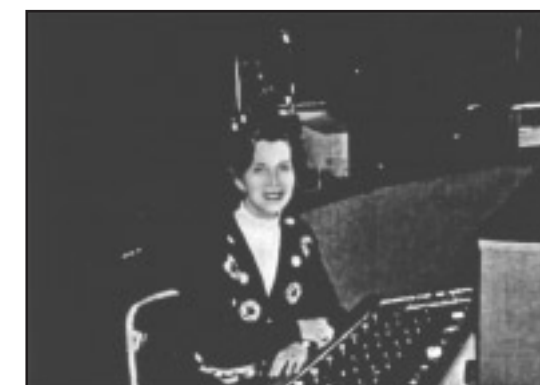
# President's Message

**Patsy Wilson**  
**Margaret C. Woodson Planetarium**  
**Salisbury, NC**

Greetings! As I write this column, I'm completing a busy month of conferences, planetarium openings and summer camps. Many of you are also involved in the busy cycle of summer activities at your facilities. In just five short days, I will embark on a journey across the United States (my first time west of the Mississippi). My family and I will be traveling by motorhome for the next five weeks enjoying the natural beauty and scenic diversity of our country. Planning a trip of this magnitude has involved a lot of compromise, but hopefully, I will get to visit some of the planetaria and science centers along the way and, most importantly, find time for some rest and rejuvenation.

One of the great benefits of SEPA membership is the annual conference. This year's conference held a surprise around every corner. Each day's step aboard our "magic school bus" took us to a new and different location with a new facility to explore and absorb. Dave Dundee and April Whitt of Fernbank Science Center orchestrated this event which utilized an amazing array of astronomy professionals and volunteers in the area. It would be impossible to list and personally thank each individual who worked to make this event a success, but I want to express a general heartfelt thank you to all the conference workers on behalf of everyone who attended.

If you didn't make it to Atlanta for this year's conference, start planning now to be in Cocoa, Florida next year. The conference, hosted by Mark Howard and staff, will be June 20-24. This is the best opportunity to meet and share with other SEPA members each of whom possess a wealth of experience and an interesting repertoire of "war stories".



At the annual business meeting, there was a vote to change the dues collection policy. Dues will now be due when you register for conference instead of in January. The dues invoice will be sent with the spring edition of the journal and you have until the conference to pay them. You must still pay dues in order to attend the conference. Following the policy established at the Richmond conference, there will be a one journal grace period for persons not paying dues on time. The executive council needs some time to work through the best way to successfully implement this vote. If you have any questions or comments, please email me.

In an effort to preserve important documents such as policy statements, minutes and other reports as well as conference proceedings and past journals, the Executive Council expressed a desire to have an active historian. Happily the perfect person, Leslie Bochenski, from Thomas Jefferson Planetarium in Richmond, Virginia volunteered to tackle the huge job of locating, organizing and preserving our SEPA heritage. Leslie is in the position once held by Jane Hastings who previously served as the SEPA historian, and thus, she has easy access to a charter member. In addition, she loves history, has a good background in technology and is very excited about this new opportunity. This is a plea to all SEPA members, but especially to those whose membership has spanned the past few decades, please contact Leslie if you have any materials that she can scan and add to our archives.

Once again, I'd like to thank James Sullivan for tackling the job of *Southern Skies* editor. This is his first edition of the journal and I'm sure he will do a great job. James will put his personal touch on the

(Continued on page 10)

# IPS Report

**John Hare**  
**IPS Representative**  
**ASH Enterprises**

### IPS Fellows

If you've been a member of IPS for at least 5 consecutive years and have made other contributions to the Organization then you may be in line for recognition as an IPS Fellow. In addition to these criteria you must be nominated by other IPS members. The IPS Awards Committee will then consider your credentials and determine if you are to receive the award. This process is normally initiated by the IPS Awards Committee but often qualified individuals are overlooked. Unlike before, IPS members cannot nominate themselves but should you feel that you qualify, do not hesitate to contact the Awards Committee to make them aware of your eligibility.

### IPS 2006 Conference <www.ips2006.com>

The next IPS Conference will be held in Melbourne, Australia, July 24-27. The conference theme is "Under the Southern Skies". More information will be available soon.

### IPS 2008 Conference

Three sites are competing for the 2008 IPS conference; Chicago, Oakland, and Morelia, Mexico. A summary of each site's invitation and proposed conference overview was published in last winter's issue of *Southern Skies*. Please note that Glasgow, Scotland has withdrawn their invitation. The site choice will be determined by a vote of the IPS Council at the Council meeting in Beijing. A discussion of the prospective sites took place in Atlanta at the SEPA business meeting. If you would like to engage in any further discussion regarding the site prior to the Beijing meeting, please contact me.

I'll try to send post-meeting information from the Council meeting in Beijing as soon as possible but since I'm scheduled to return after the *Southern Skies*' October 1st deadline, it may not make it in time. At the very least I will submit any critical news to the SEPA website.

The IPS website contains a wealth of information on IPS plus there are links to various other web sites of interest. One in particular is the Planetarium's Calendar [www.ips-planetarium.org/events/ips-calendar.html](http://www.ips-planetarium.org/events/ips-calendar.html). This site has information on planetarium and related conferences worldwide. There is also a member's-only area, so what are you waiting for? Don't hesitate to contact me for membership forms or anything else IPS-related.

## Paul Campbell Fellowship Award Nomination Form

Nominees must have been a member of SEPA for at least ten years, and they must display qualities in each of five areas, as represented by the five-pointed star shaped award: integrity, friendship, service, knowledge, and vision. Please submit this form to any SEPA Council member.

Nominee's Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Qualifications: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

# Editor's Message

**James Sullivan**  
**Buehler Planetarium & Observatory**  
**Davie, FL**

Well, I'm here and the chair feels a bit big, but I promise to do my best to grow into it.

The journal is the place for information that helps us. I do not think enough of us toot our own horns, describe what we have done, and then analyze it. This is the place for "hi, we put this together, we took these steps, and this is what we found effective or ineffective."

A major role of the editor is encouraging, cajoling, and begging for news and contributions. It is important to get people who see demos or new products to write a review. Let's learn from each others' mistakes and gain from each others' experiences. *Southern Skies* is our publication and that implies an opportunity for everyone to contribute.

We can receive electronic files in most any format. Also, graphics can be received electronically or in hardcopy, including slides or photos.

Submission deadlines: January 1 (Winter), April 1 (Spring), July 1 (Summer), October 1 (Fall).

I want to thank Travis Wright for his artwork on the back cover, and cleaning most pieces.

To those who have thanked me for becoming editor, you're welcome and thank you for this opportunity. I look forward to serving SEPA in this fashion.



## SEPA Membership Form

Please send your check for \$25 (or \$15 if outside the SEPA geographical region) to SEPA, c/o Craigmont Plantarium, 3333 Covington Pike, Memphis, TN 38128-3902

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Organization \_\_\_\_\_  
Planetarium \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_  
State / Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_  
Voice Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
Fax Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
Email Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Staff Position \_\_\_\_\_  
IPS Member? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_  
Contribution to Scholarship Award Account: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

# Small Talk

**Elizabeth Wasiluk**  
**Hedgesville High School Planetarium**  
**Hedgesville, WV**

If I did a poll of everyone in planetarium land, each and every one of you can probably name someone who absolutely drives you crazy as you work in your facility.

Me, I try to get along, but because my planetarium is shoved into a high school that is overcrowded and placed in there as an afterthought, my biggest problem is lack of space. When I get to see other planetaria all over the country, I drool over the places where people have space to work with a darkroom and a place to fix and repair projectors. I don't have that luxury.

My planetarium is so poorly designed that I open my door right into an art classroom. On top of it, the art teacher, Ms. Van Evil, as her name suggests, is very mean. It is hard to do my job effectively. I think she is psychotic. She keeps rearranging the furniture in the room so I am constantly walking into it. She claimed she once had a blind dog and kept rearranging the furniture at home and laughed everytime the dog bumped into it. Picture the villainess of *101 Dalmatians* and you've got a good image of her.

She also loves astrology and gets her charts done and swears she found her husband that way.

However, like Darth Vader, if you search hard enough, you might just find some good mixed in with all that evil. She is a good artist and she once did this mural that everyone admires, outside the planetarium. It is an accurate painting of a NASA mural, but this year she ruined it by drawing in aliens and putting in an ugly bridge between craters on the



moon.

There is a successful conclusion to this story and it is that next year she is leaving and will be placed someplace different; however, she will be mentoring the art teacher who takes up her place. After two years of absolute hell, maybe the new person will be easier to get along with.

All right, a show of hands, how many people out there remember using a flashlight arrow pointer to do live star shows? Goes to show I am old. They never seemed to work right and now it is nearly impossible to get the bulbs for these things. So everyone uses laser pointers, right? They work better, are brighter and heck they are red, so they won't hurt your eyes, if you use them carefully. Some folks use the green ones as well; they are more expensive, but are great outside to do a star talk under the real sky. Nevertheless, well, you have heard those stories about homeland security being very concerned about the green lasers. Could planetarium people be considered subversive for using them? Read the headlines now, "Planetarium people considered homeland security risk". Could they take our laser pointers away from us?

The reason I bring this up is that I had a favorite laser pointer and set it down for just an instant on the council board and somebody made off with it. I had only set it down for a second and poof, it vanished. Therefore, I went shopping around for a new one. While I went looking around, I came up with some great laser resources, so if you are shopping around for a new laser pointer, or have some general questions about lasers in general, check them out. I'll list them at the end of the article.

By the way, at the recent pre-SEPA trip to see the Chronos machine, I found a solution to this problem. The people there had a long, about 18-inch dowel of wood duct taped to the laser pointer so we could point out stars in the planetarium. That was worth going to the conference right there.

Planning anything special when the Deep Impact hits? If so, you might like to make your prediction now at the Planetary Society's website at <http://www.planetary.org/deepimpact/index.html>. If you are doing a Deep Impact show, maybe you can rig

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# Astro Video Review

**Priscilla Bernardo**  
**Orlando Science Center Planetarium**  
**Orlando, FL**

## Elegant Universe

It isn't often that my work can double as a date night with my husband but when I came home with "The Elegant Universe" in tow, he actually emerged from his computer cave and joined me for this 3-hour journey. A NOVA 2003 production, this two DVD set takes even the physics novice to places that are usually relegated to those with far-fetched imaginations.

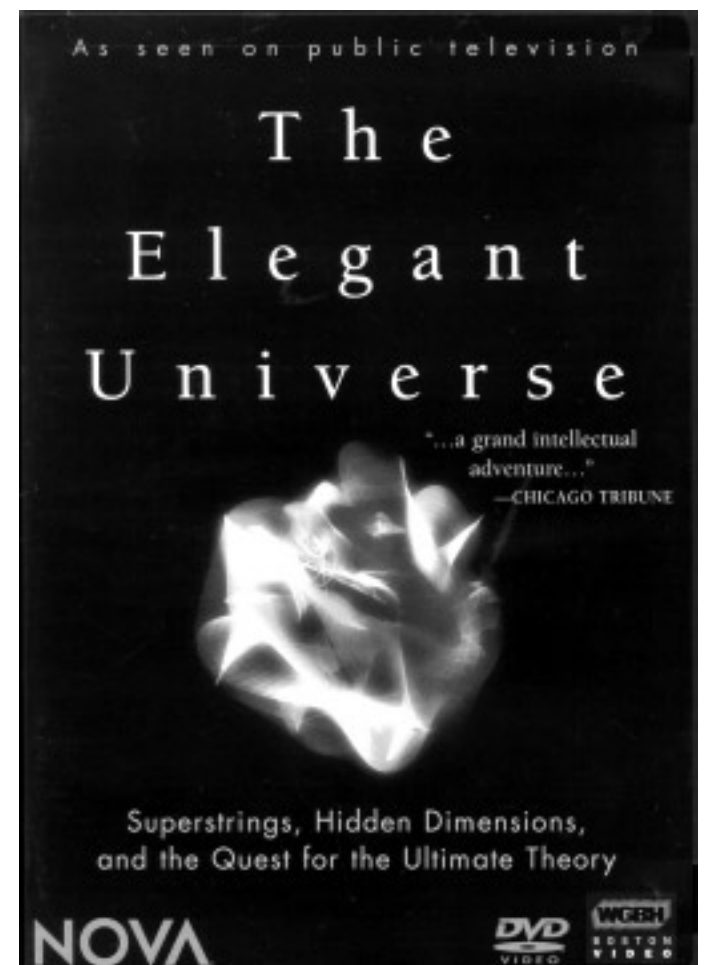
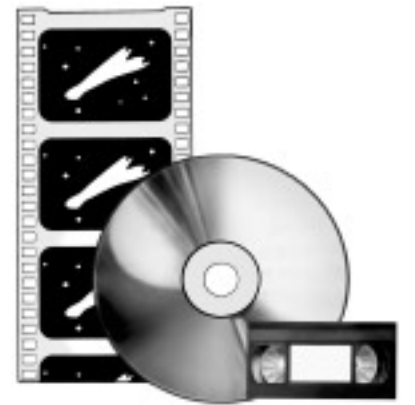
Host Brian Greene deftly takes you by the hand and leads you on a walk not only through history but through time and space as well. He launches you on a quest in search of the holy grail of physics, a single theory that would explain everything, everywhere at every moment in time.

In this search for ultimate unification, we begin at the time of Newton and journey forward to present day. We wrestle in frustration along with Einstein in an attempt to make the fabric of space work at all levels of our world. As experiments begin to prove that the theories of quantum mechanics can hold their own at the atomic level, Einstein slips into the hereafter and we are left to wonder what could have been had he embraced this new view of our world.

Thirty years in the making, string theory rises up from the fringes of physics to become one of the most intriguing theories of our time; a total unifica-

tion of forces at all levels of our universe, or should I say universes. It is a mind-bending trip that leaves you feeling as if everything and anything is possible. Though string theory has yet to be put to the test, this presentation

certainly passed mine. I drove to work the next morning looking at the world around me with a whole new perspective and pleasantly smiling at the thought that another universe might just exist right around the bend. To feel even better pick up the DVD set and book for \$32.70 at [shop.wgbh.org](http://shop.wgbh.org) and help support the Public Broadcasting Service. Without support, PBS has a rough future ahead and fabulous shows like this one will find it hard to reach a broad audience.



# SEPA Conference

Dave Maness  
Virginia Living Museum  
Newport News, VA

## Silent Auction 2005

We had a great time in Atlanta and one of the high points for me was visiting the campus of Agnes Scott College on the day of the banquet. We all looked great in the "Aloha" shirts that Ken Miller of GOTO provided for the day. From the hill near the observatory we watched model rockets launched

from the playing field below.

Later in the day, during the socialization before the banquet, we conducted the silent auction to benefit the SEPA Scholarship Fund. We set it up in the foyer of the Agnes Scott College's Bradley Observatory. There were a dozen items or services donated. One high point was when Jonn Serrie decided to boost the value of his donation of a CD by autographing it. After that, there was a frenzy of scribbling bids until time was up.

The take for the auction was \$215. This will be added to the SEPA Scholarship Fund Account. I hope the list below accounts for all the activity. For those of you who donated or won an item, maybe it can serve as proof of participation, but if you need a separate receipt for taxes, etc., please contact SEPA Secretary/Treasurer Duncan Teague, whose address and phone number appear in this journal. Thank you to all for your contributions of items, services, and bids. Let's do it again next year.

| Item                                    | Provider                | Winning bidder and bid   |      |
|---|-------------------------|--------------------------|------|
| 1. Custom woman's belt                  | Dave Maness             | Leslie Bochenski         | \$20 |
| 2. Custom man's belt                    | Dave Maness             | Bob Hayward              | \$30 |
| 3. Deely Bobbers                        | Kris McCall             | Carole (Helper) Holmberg | \$5  |
| 4. Our Universe (Space Kit)             | Kris McCall             | Ken Brandt               | \$15 |
| 5. Reach for the Stars (CD)             | Kris McCall             | Dave Maness              | \$5  |
| 6. Space Trooper Robot                  | Adam Thanz              | Becky Lowder             | \$16 |
| 7. Friction Rocket Ship                 | Adam Thanz              | Becky Lowder             | \$13 |
| 8. X-27 Explorer Robot                  | Adam Thanz              | Rick Williamon           | \$16 |
| 9. Set of records (LPs)                 | Fernbank Science Center | Lawrence Krumenaker      | \$45 |
| 10. Stargazer's Journey (CD)            | Jonn Serrie             | Lawrence Krumenaker      | \$35 |
| 11. Slide Scanning/digitizing (Service) | Mike Smail              | Arnie Nelson             | \$10 |
| 12. Crabtree Emerald Matrix             | Ken Brandt              | Mickey Jo Sorrell        | \$8  |



Rocket launches at Agnes Scott College.

Credit: Dave Maness

## SEPA Images



Agnes Scott College, near the Bradley Observatory. Design reflects the Solar System, the Galaxy, planetary orbits and sizes, as indicated in the sign below.

Credits: Dave Maness (above), Suresh Atapattu (below)



SEPA's enjoying each other's company outside the Bradley Observatory at Agnes Scott College. Credit: Suresh Atapattu



Three amigos: Jon Bell, Gary Meibaum, David Dundee.

Credit: Suresh Atapattu



SEPA's at Bradley Observatory.

Credit: Dave Maness

up a kiosk where visitors can make their own predictions and compare them with what really happens. That along with Saturn, Mercury and Venus grouping together in the late June sky appear to be the events of the summer. Speaking of which, most of us would say that would be the Southeastern Planetarium Meeting in Atlanta at the Fernbank Science Center. I am sure that if you went, you had a splendid time. A great thanks to Ken for bringing the Aloha shirts and making us all look spiffy. My project CLEA workshop went well and those of you using the software don't hesitate to ask questions. Even people, who couldn't attend like Drew from Nashville, had a great time. Why he had a better time than I did when he wasn't even there is beyond me. Enjoy your summer and drop a line if you have any burning issues regarding small planetaria. I'll see what I can do to discuss them here.



CLEA Workshop.  
Credit: Conrad Jung

*A Helpful Guide To Laser Websites and Articles:*

Fienberg, Rick, "Watts Up With Laser Pointers?", Sky and Telescope, June 2005, page 8

Fienberg, Rick Tresch "Some Pointers on the Use of Laser Pointers" SkyandTelescope.com, June 9, 2005, [http://skyandtelescope.com/observing/article\\_1429\\_1.asp](http://skyandtelescope.com/observing/article_1429_1.asp) (This has a nice section in it I hope to use next year when training new astronomy students in the fine use of the laser pointer for "Pass Around The Pointer Sessions" a student version of our constellation shoot out.)

"5 Head Disco Keychain Laser Pointers", [www.wvmall.com](http://www.wvmall.com), June 9, 2005, [http://www.wvmall.com/product\\_info.php?products\\_id=165](http://www.wvmall.com/product_info.php?products_id=165) (By far the cheapest laser pointer I found.)

Goldwasser, Samuel M., "Sam's Laser FAQ", [repairfaq.ece.drexel.edu](http://repairfaq.ece.drexel.edu), June 9, 2005, <http://repairfaq.ece.drexel.edu/sam/lasersam.htm>

"It's Your Health", [www.hc-sc.gc.ca](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/english/iyh/products/laser.html), June 9, 2005, <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/english/iyh/products/laser.html>

"Lasers", WholesaleForEveryone.com, June 9, 2005, <http://www.wholesaleforeveryone.com/Merchant2/merchant.mv?> (Where I found the most available laser pointers at the best price.)



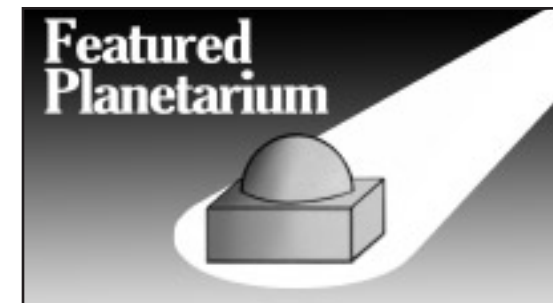
Happy SEPAns at the Bradley Observatory, June 2005.  
Credit: Conrad Jung

*(Continued from page 3)*

journal so you may notice a few changes in appearance. As always, I encourage all of you to participate by submitting articles and news. Many of you have indicated that you read your journal from cover to cover as soon as it arrives. This tells us that it is an important source of news and information about facilities in our region. Sharing your ideas about improvements and changes plus contributing your best practices, humorous encounters, profitable fundraisers, and helpful resources benefit all of our members. Resolve to submit something for the journal at least once during this year.

With Deep Impact, Space Shuttle Return to Flight and launch of Mars Reconnaissance Orbiter the next few weeks will be full of excitement. I hope each of you has a pleasant summer.

# Featured Planetarium



James G. Hill  
Rainwater Observatory & Planetarium  
French Camp, MS

## Rainwater Observatory & Planetarium

The Rainwater Observatory and Planetarium is an educational ministry of French Camp Academy. Even though we do have some research-grade equipment, the facility's mission is primarily educational. We share this facility with interested amateur astron-

omers, school science classes, scout, church, or civic groups. The observatory site is located on State Highway 413 just off of the Natchez Trace Parkway in central Mississippi, near the village of French Camp (halfway between Jackson and Tupelo).

The Observatory, the largest in the state, has 16 telescopes plus other optical instruments. These instruments are spread out on our fenced-in hilltop site, which is open, by appointment, to both individuals and groups. The instruments are housed in nine small buildings and on five outdoor piers. Our largest telescope is a 32 inch Tectron with Starport computer assist. We also have a 20.5 inch Dobsonian with computer. Next in size are a Meade DS-16, a Celestron C-14, a 12.5 inch Ritchey-Cretien Cassegrain, a 12 inch LX-200 Schmidt-Cassegrain, a 12 inch fork-mounted Newtonian, a 6 inch D & G refractor, 10 inch and 8 inch Schmidt-Casseg-



32 inch Tectron.  
Credit: Rainwater Observatory



6 inch Astrophysics refractor.  
Credit: Rainwater Observatory

rains, three 6 inch Newtonians, a 6 inch Astrophysics refractor, a 4 inch Unitron refractor, a 4 inch SCT, an 80mm refractor, 50, 70, and 80mm

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binoculars, and a 9.5 inch Maksutov Cassegrain. Two loaner telescopes, an 8 inch Dobsonian and a 4.5 inch Newtonian can be borrowed. For daytime viewing, we have five telescopes with three different kinds of Solar filters (H-alpha, glass, and mylar) as well as solar projection.

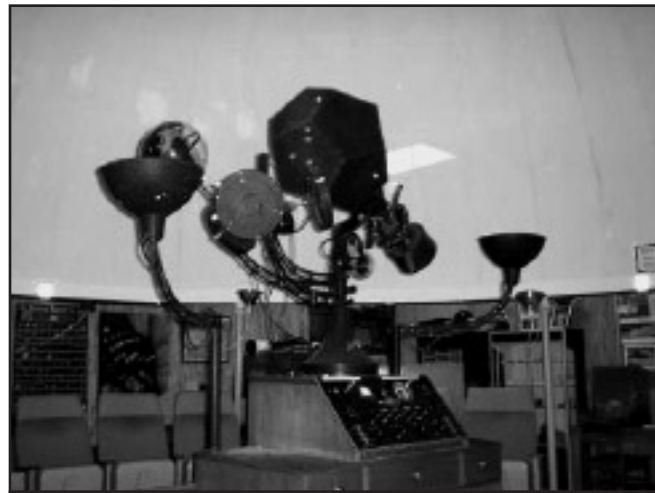
We are currently in the process of relocating a 25.5 inch Ritchey telescope and 18.5 foot Ash dome from Colorado. This scope will be available for research and will be remotely accessible through the internet. We also have 4 portable telescopes that we use in away outreach programs. We average about 50 of these "Backyard Astronomy" programs in a variety of venues per year.

We strive to have something for everyone. Our educational exhibits really help to explain concepts to visiting groups. From a scale Solar System model to Posthenge, we have a little of everything. Our daytime exhibits include a 300 foot scale model Solar System, a large wall-mounted solar projection Analema/Calendar, sun clock, sundials, an 80' circumference celestial sphere, and a full-sized Stonehenge model that shows solstice and equinox sunrise and sunset points. These exhibits are used to demonstrate the Earth's motion and axial tilt, the eccentricity of the Earth's orbit and how the ancients predicted eclipses. Narrated slide presentations and talks on selected astronomical topics are available to visiting groups on request. An outdoor amphitheater and picnic/camping area are just down the hill from the Observatory.



*Outdoor exhibits*  
Credit: Rainwater Observatory

For more serious observers, we have a small warm-



*Spitz A-2 at the Rainwater Planetarium*  
Credit: Rainwater Observatory

up/library building with a stove, refrigerator, cot, SSP-3 photometer, an array of nebular and color filters, and access to the school's darkroom. A closed circuit TV system is available for occultation studies and recording. There is a small spectroscope on-site and a CCD camera. The French Camp Bed & Breakfast can serve housing needs.

Our 6 meter Planetarium dome, a gift from Observa-DOME Laboratories, Inc. of Jackson Mississippi, and Spitz A-2 projector, obtained from the University of Wisconsin at Madison, are located in our Astronomy Education Center. The Planetarium is used regularly with visiting groups. We seat 31 seats salvaged from the Pink Palace in Memphis.

Through NASA grants, we have 3 weekend teacher workshops per year and a summer "Astronomy for Teachers" course through the University of Mississippi. We hold the classes and workshops in a separate classroom. We also have a picnic pavilion, a shower house/bunk house for overnight groups and observers. Just completed is an exhibit/meeting area seating 100. We host the Mid-South Star Gaze Astronomy Conference each April (April 26-29, 2006) with speakers, vendors, and observing.

The hilltop observatory is open year round to the public providing a casual site for personal or group observing. Telescopes are available for visual or photographic use day or night. A selection of binoculars is also available for solar or night sky viewing. Feel free to stop by and try a few out.

# AstroWeb Review

## Roaming the Web: NASA reaches out for Education

**Susan Barnett**  
**Buehler Planetarium & Observatory**

In this age of high-stakes testing, teachers must make choices. They are expected to "teach to the standards," and thereby prepare student for yearly assessment tests. The "No Child Left Behind" Act of January, 2002 has increased school accountability. (<http://www.ed.gov/nclb/landing.jhtml?src=pb>) Yearly progress is expected to be shown, and yearly tests are required to develop school report cards. Teachers have become very selective of activities, based on what helps them achieve results on these tests. For most planetaria, school shows are the bread and butter. We need to promote our offerings to them in their language of standards and activities. NASA has many web-based resources to help. These are available for our use, and for us to offer to our primary consumers, the teachers.

The importance of education to NASA is best represented on its education website (<http://education.nasa.gov/home/index.html>). This is a collection of resources suitable for educators in any level. The Chief Education Officer reports directly to the NASA administrator. Her statement of purpose on this website explains that "the primary goals of the NASA Education Program are to motivate students to pursue careers in science, math, and engineering; provide educators with unique teaching tools and compelling teaching experiences; improve our Nation's scientific literacy; and engage the public in shaping and sharing the experience of exploration and discovery."



The National Science Standards emphasize science as inquiry. (<http://www.nap.edu/books/0309053269/html/index.html>) By watching and working with active scientists, students can be engaged and inspired. By "adopting" a particular mission, students can appreciate the wide-ranging influence of science and technology. By utilizing NASA missions, students can participate in the realtime excitement as well as watch and work with scientists. The Deep Impact Mission to Comet Tempel I came to fruition on July 4, 2005. This was a prime example of an engaging opportunity to extend science into the classroom.

This mission provided a wonderful opportunity to bring science into the classroom. There are many activities that can be done relating to comets. Modeling impacts by dropping projectiles into a layered substrate (such as rocks into flour or powdered paint) can illustrate the physics of motion and matter as well as some geological concepts. Making a 'comet' out of ice cream and crumbled cookies can bring fun and calories to younger students. NASA's 'Comet on a Stick' activity demonstrates the use of modeling concepts, and allows students to realize the benefit of continuous modeling when designing missions. Websites such as the Jet Propulsion Laboratory's Space Place, NASA StarChild and NASA Kids have many such activities posted.

NASA missions now have a requirement that a certain percentage of their budget must go toward education and public outreach. As a result, it is commonplace to find extensive websites for each mission, complete with sections for educators and for students. The Deep Impact mission has such a website (<http://deepimpact.jpl.nasa.gov/educ/index.html>). Through this site, students and educators can monitor the mission, explore the design and development, contact the scientists, and share activities. One such example is the Pennies for Education project by the Meadow Creek School in Minnesota.



(Continued on page 14)

The seventh grade math class collected pennies to equal the copper deadmass in the impactor. They learned about the technology of the spacecraft, and utilized math such as measurement, using scales, and organizing data. In addition, they contributed the collected money to a sister school in the Ukraine. By this class project, they explored science, math, and humanities in a global fashion.

NASA Quest is a website (<http://quest.arc.nasa.gov/>) full of challenges. These challenges are web-based interactive explorations designed to engage students in authentic scientific and engineering processes. The questions relate to actual situations faced by NASA scientists and engineers.

As NASA transforms itself, it recognizes that planetariums, science centers and museums are vital venues for astronomy and space science education. The informal education community is critical to NASA's future. Many resources, including websites, are available and supported.

If you haven't done so recently, spend some quality time online with NASA. You will be amazed at how much is out there for your use.

*Interesting websites:*

<http://www.nap.edu/books/0309053269/html/index.html>

- National Science Education Standards

<http://www.ed.gov/nclb/landing.jhtml?src=pb>

- No Child Left Behind

<http://education.nasa.gov/home/index.html>

- NASA Education

<http://www.nasa.gov/audience/foreducators/informal/features/index.html>

- NASA for Informal Educators

*Mission Websites:*

<http://deepimpact.jpl.nasa.gov/educ/index.html>

[http://www.nasa.gov/mission\\_pages/deepimpact/main/index.html](http://www.nasa.gov/mission_pages/deepimpact/main/index.html)

*Websites for Kids:*

<http://starchild.gsfc.nasa.gov/docs/StarChild/StarChild.html>

<http://www.nasa.gov/audience/forkids/home/index.html>

<http://spaceplace.nasa.gov/en/kids/>

<http://quest.arc.nasa.gov/>

<http://ksnn.larc.nasa.gov/home.html>

# News From SEPA States

## FLORIDA

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### Bishop Planetarium South Florida Museum Bradenton, FL

It is reported that the recently hired director of the rebuilt Bishop Planetarium quit shortly after the attraction's successful premiere. Pete Hill, who was hired April 1, oversaw the recent reopening of the South Florida Museum's planetarium nearly four years after it was ravaged by an electrical fire. But shortly after the planetarium's June 26 debut, Hill decided to leave his new post.

### Buehler Planetarium Broward Community College Davie, FL

Susan J. Barnett reports: The Buehler Planetarium & Observatory is running public shows four days a week. The weekend shows and monthly specials include *Our Place In Space*, *In Search of New Worlds*, *Footsteps*, *The New Cosmos* and *The Cowboy Astronomer*. We continue to rotate shows on Wednesdays, and these shows include *The People*, *The Mars Show*, *The Voyager Encounters*, *Astrology: Fact or Fiction?*, *Endless Horizon* and *The Secret of the Cardboard Rocket*.

### Dr. Phillips CineDome Orlando Science Center Orlando, FL

Paul Trembly reports: There have been a few

changes under the dome as of late. Long time staffers Priscilla Bernardo and Paul Trembly have recently taken on new jobs and responsibilities. Priscilla is now the new Assistant Manager of Theatre and Observatory Operations. She is in charge of all day to day activities in the planetarium, film theatre, and observatory. She will be handling all staffing and operational needs. Paul is now the new Technical Director of Exhibits and Theatres. While still responsible for the technical support of the planetarium, film theatre and observatory, he now also oversees all multi-media production for exhibits as well as the planetarium. In addition, he is responsible for high end special projects such as the installation of a new HD video theatre and the upcoming Halo 2 gaming finals that will be held at OSC. Our current shows are *The Voyager Encounters*, *Mystery of the Nile* and *Ultimate X*. We are making plans for the Halloween appearance of Mars (despite the high volume of calls we have been getting from people who think it is Aug. 27th). Our observing program continues to grow. We have added a Coronado PST to our inventory and have been offering daily H-Alpha viewing all summer. Plans are underway to restart our astronomy outreach program for schools and groups.

## GEORGIA

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Atlanta, GA  
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### Mark Smith Planetarium Museum of Arts and Sciences Macon, GA

Toby Click reports: I want to thank the SEPA conference attendees who joined us for the post-conference trip to Mark Smith Planetarium in Macon on June 18. They were able to see a program about the history of our planetarium, as well as tour the Leonardo da Vinci exhibit at the Museum of Arts and Sciences.

At the SEPA conference, there were whispered hints that we may try to reorganize the Georgia Associ-

ation of Planetariums (GAP) and have a one-day meeting in Macon. Anyone who is interested in this should contact me at [tclick@masmacon.com](mailto:tclick@masmacon.com).

For our public, Mars will be a big deal this fall as it makes another close approach. People are already talking it up, helped in part by the still-circulating email about the 2003 opposition. I hope I don't spend August 27 getting chased by angry mobs seeing red over Mars' failure to swell to the size of the full Moon, but we do plan to have an observing event in October.

Two years ago, we introduced the Lounge Planet experience with "Martinis on Mars". We brought a cash bar into the planetarium, and treated visitors to downtempo lounge music alternated with 10-12 minute star show segments. Since then, we've had "Swizzlesticks on Saturn," and plenty of other alliterations remain.

But now, dry martinis are old news. Since we now know there was water on Mars, we thought, "Hey! Let's blend in some Irish creme, some coffee liqueur, chill it outside the airlock 'til it reaches -80°F, and we'll have quite a party!" So on September 30, our next Lounge Planet event will be... "Mudslides on Mars".

## KENTUCKY



### Arnim D. Hummel Planetarium Eastern Kentucky University Richmond, KY

It is reported that Jack Fletcher is newly retired from the Hummel Planetarium in Richmond, KY. He is moving to North Carolina. Good luck, Jack.



## LOUISIANA

contact: Jon Elvert  
Pennington Planetarium  
Baton Rouge, LA  
jelvert@lasm.org



### St. Charles Parish Library Planetarium Luling, LA

Gary Meibaum reports: The Saint Charles Parish Library Planetarium in Luling, LA is continuing its lengthy process of converting old traditional format programs to digital form for our MEDIAGLOBE full dome theater. This fisheye transformation of all those rectangular images makes me wish I had stayed awake long ago during that chapter on polar coordinates in my math class. Presently, I am working on *Blown Away*, *The Wild World of Weather* produced by the Dassault Systèmes Planetarium in Detroit. We are showing *The Cowboy Astronomer* from Loch Ness as our main nighttime show, *Don't Duck, Look UP!* from Davis Planetarium for our "K" level show and *Saturday Surprises* - a pot-pourri of different shows on Saturday afternoons. This show gives me the capability of selecting a show when I am standing in front of the audience. (How many times have you wished you could have easily run a different show when a totally inappropriate age group showed up for one of your public shows?) During our summer reading program, we are also showing *Sky Quest* from Loch Ness on Tuesday afternoons.

### Irene W. Pennington Planetarium La. Art & Science Museum Baton Rouge, LA

Jon Elvert reports: We've just completed our second full year since opening our theater and overall attendance for this year is comparable to our first, so we're pretty pleased. Our summer public program is *The Secret of the Cardboard Rocket*, produced in fulldome digital format and accompanied with a live sky tonight. The current large format film being presented from now through February 2006 is *Journey Into Amazing Caves*. We continue to offer a family show on the weekends in addition to our

public show and film. Our MediaGlobe projector, located just outside of the theater entrance, continuously runs a series of trailers highlighting our programs, upcoming events and museum exhibitions. The MediaGlobe is also programmed for displaying a *What's up* in the current sky.

Last spring we hired a new program animator/producer and many of you attending SEPA in Atlanta may have met Mike Smail, formally from COSI in Columbus, OH.

We offered an astronomy camp this summer, hosted educator workshops, and a special Perseid Meteor Shower presentation. We're now busy updating and creating content for upcoming school shows.

The Irene W. Pennington Planetarium was one of six planetarium participants in a NASA-funded project called Immersive Earth, which funded a series of fully inflatable, portable domes using a single digital video projector. We'll be hosting teacher in-services in the portable throughout the fall and eventually take the unit into schools.

### Lafayette Planetarium Lafayette Natural History Museum Lafayette, LA

Dave Hostetter reports: In Lafayette, our summer public program is *Fingerprinting the Stars*, an interactive program about spectroscopy in astronomy. For the fall, we'll be running Loch Ness' *Hubble Vision 2* in conjunction with the big Cosmic Questions exhibit. Meanwhile, our Saturday morning children's programs are doing well, with JHE's *Bear Tales* through September and Loch Ness' *Larry Cat in Space* beginning in November.

Children's workshops, model rocket demos, and a field trip to Stennis Space Center are all being planned for the summer.

Many delegates to the SEPA conference may remember signing our banner wishing the Shuttle astronauts a good flight. That has been picked up by Stennis' employees and will be on display at that space center (along with several banners from other places) during the first part of July. Stennis was so happy that we were still collecting signatures that

when they took the banner, they left us a new one. We hope to get a lot of signatures on that one as well. Thanks to the SEPA delegates who signed!

## MISSISSIPPI



### Russell C. Davis Planetarium Jackson, MS

Gary Lazich reports: I can tell you that City administration is undergoing a complete overhaul in the wake of the last election and keeping us even busier than usual with meetings and reports. So far, the Planetarium has been benefiting from new Department Director (and former First Lady of Mississippi) Pat Fordice and her stated intention to support the City's cultural divisions.

I did receive a much-needed education when I first met her in her role as Director. I remembered she had had to "sit out" because of vertigo while two grandsons watched a star show several years ago. "You probably won't want to watch our newest film \*Adrenaline Rush.\*" I cautioned. "It will have you jumping out of airplanes and jumping off cliffs." "Why would you think I wouldn't like that?" she replied. "I \*have\* jumped out of an airplane." Only then did I remember she had done so to promote one of her causes. Never take anyone for granted!

Another of her campaigns, an award-winning one for Keep Mississippi Beautiful, had her chasing after litterers with state troopers and telling them to pick up after themselves because "I'm not your momma!" During our first Department meeting, she reassured us that, although she expected us to do our best, she would not micromanage us. "Why?" she asked, pausing for effect. "Because I'm not your momma!"

### Rainwater Observatory & Planetarium French Camp, MS

James Hill reports: We've been to Colorado to pick

up the 18.5 foot Ash Dome for the new telescope. We got it into pieces, but putting it back together is going to take help. An Ash Dome person will come help us reassemble it when we get ready later in the fall. [Editor's Note: See the Featured Planetarium Column for more information.]

## NORTH CAROLINA

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### Carolina Association of Planetarium Educators (CAPE)

The biggest news from North Carolina is CAPE! The inaugural meeting was held June 24th and 25th at the Robeson Planetarium and Science Center in Lumberton, North Carolina. Thirteen people from North and South Carolina enjoyed a full range of activities including several telecons with JPL staff, April Whitt, Mercury Messenger Fellow and Alan Gould of the Lawrence Hall of Science. Jim and Shirley Smith, representatives from Learning Technologies, Inc., brought a large Starlab and demonstrated the new fiber optic system. Presenters taught hands-on education activities and focused on ways to overcome misconceptions. Ken Brant did a great job of hosting and coordinating the event with help from Rik Zawadzki of Stuart Ingram Planetarium in Sunset Beach and Patsy Wilson of Margaret C. Woodson Planetarium in Salisbury. The impetus and grant funding for this initial meeting was a direct result of the WIES program at Kennedy Space Center last November. The group voted to meet again next May at the Ingram Planetarium. All persons involved in Astronomy education, whether in the classroom, a planetarium or a science center, are invited to participate in CAPE. Ken Brandt is serving as coordinator of the organization.

### PARI StarLab Pisgah Astronomical Research Institute Rosman, NC

Bob Hayward reports: Things haven't slowed down

for the summer. June was busy with two groups of students in residence. First were six undergraduate college students from UNC-Asheville and Furman University who are working on a project under an NSF IPSE (Internships in Public Science Education) grant to produce a radio sky STARLAB cylinder and associated materials. These students are a mix of physics and multimedia majors and it's very interesting to watch the synergism in the group as they work together on the project.

Also for two weeks in June, a group of outstanding high school students participating in the Duke University TIP (Talent Identification Program) were in residence. They received some basic instruction in PARI's STARLAB as well as elsewhere and completed a number of projects in both optical and radio astronomy.

Mel Blake and Bob are also presenting programs in the STARLAB both at PARI and as outreach to other groups in Western North Carolina and Upstate South Carolina.

**SciWorks Planetarium  
Science Ctr. & Envir. Park/Forsyth Co.  
Winston-Salem, NC**

Ralph White reports: The SciWorks Planetarium is wearing a smile. A few recent upgrades have put a real dent in the gremlin population - most notable of which was switching to a digital ADAT.

We're also happy to have the full use of our laser system again. About a year ago, our tube outgassed and our laser was, of course, gone. We had an emergency repair done, but it failed. We eventually wound up paying twice for the same repair. (Fair warning for those of you who modify your water supply to PROTECT your system - that too voids the warranty!) On a positive note, thanks go to Jeff Perryman and Justin Nichols for their "in house" hard work making the system look awesome.

Summer camps are in full swing at the museum, however despite the interior traffic, the absence of school groups provides an opportunity to catch up on some maintenance.

Ralph White has returned to SciWorks after a year of public school outreach in Virginia. His responsibilities include running the planetarium, hosting the local astronomy club and teaching astronomy at a local community college. While he views his public school experience as a positive one, he is very happy to be back in astronomy education.

**Margaret C. Woodson Planetarium  
Horizons Unlimited, Rowan-Salisbury Schools  
Salisbury, NC**

Patsy Wilson reports: One hundred and twelve students and fifteen chaperones from the Rowan-Salisbury Schools spent the week of May 29 - June 3rd in Huntsville at U. S. Space Camp. Students participated in Space Camp, Space Academy and Aviation Challenge. Patsy was the lead chaperone and coordinator of this trip which is repeated every other year.

"Starry Summer" at the Woodson Planetarium was held every Tuesday morning during the month of June. Shows were presented at 9:00 and 10:30 to the community. Over 400 families, day campers, special needs groups and others attended. Shows included: *Bear Tales and Other Grizzly Stories*, *Larry Cat in Space*, *Dinosaurs* and *Starlit Nights*.

July 1st marked the end of a packed week of activity and adventure for 25 rising 3rd and 4th graders who attended Space Explorers camp. The week included lots of planetarium time, activities relating to Return to Flight, Deep Impact and the Mars missions. Students built and launched rockets on a very hot football field as the culminating event.

**SOUTH  
CAROLINA**

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dantzler@chmuseums.org



**DuPont Planetarium  
Ruth Patrick Science Ed. Ctr. , USC  
Aiken, SC**

News from the DuPont Planetarium: The 2005

we did in 2003, we hope to have a good turnout.

The public shows in June were *Larry Cat in Space* from Loch Ness Productions and *Digistar Virtual Journey*, which is a local production. In July, we showed *In My Backyard* from the Calgary Science Centre and *Digistar "Laser" Fantasy*, which is also a local production. During the summer we offer special programs to local summer camp groups. This is analogous to the school shows that we offer during the academic year. In addition to the shows listed above, we offered the summer camp people *More than Meets the Eye* in June. In August, we will be showing *The Voyager Encounters* from Loch Ness Productions and *Digistar Virtual Journey*.

**TENNESSEE**

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**Clarence T. Jones Observatory and  
Planetarium, Univ. of Tenn. at Chattanooga  
Chattanooga, TN**

Bobby Thompson and Jack Pitkin report: There will be no public planetarium shows in August. We will be having shows starting in September one Sunday per month. Check web page for updates: <http://www.utc.edu/Academic/JonesObservatory/>

The 20 inch telescope is inoperable because of a dome motor outage that we hope to have fixed soon.

**Bays Mountain Planetarium  
Kingsport, TN**

Mike Chesman reports: Summer is turning out to be as busy as the school year with lots of camp and summer school groups visiting the planetarium. We are currently presenting a production entitled *What is a Solar System?* The program, scripted by Adam Thanz, breaks our Solar System down into various regions and explores objects within those regions in

SEPA meeting saw the arrival of a new member into the fold, Darlene Smalley. Darlene has responsibility as the Assistant Director of Dupont Planetarium at the University of Aiken. She enjoyed her time at SEPA and felt welcomed by the people she met there. Darlene has been working at the planetarium for six years, but this was the first opportunity that she has had to attend SEPA.

In related news, our Director, Dr. Gary J. Senn, attended the inaugural meeting of the Carolina Association of Planetarium Educators (CAPE) at the Robeson Planetarium in Lumberton, NC. The host, Ken Brandt, did a wonderful job and set a high standard for future CAPE conferences. There was some discussion about selecting a theme or some special icon to represent the group. Woodchuck was discussed but was already taken. The group thought about selecting an emperor and donning that person with a special CAPE cape. Those present thought that an emperor's cape was a good idea but no actual plan was solidified. It will be interesting to see if the first president, Ken Brandt, will have a cape at the next CAPE meeting in 2006.

On July 4, 2005, we celebrated the Deep Impact probe crashing into the surface of comet Tempel 1. Months earlier, a patron of the Dupont Planetarium and Ruth Patrick Science Education Center Observatory came up with the idea of a fund raiser. He was raising funds for a local charity and decided that he would donate a prize to watch the Deep Impact probe collide with the comet. He paid to use the observatory and wanted his 18 guests to watch the impact. Arrangements were made to view the comet on the evening of July 3 and to watch a web-cast of the event early on July 4.

The planetarium staff has received a number of calls inquiring about a close encounter with Mars on August 27, 2005. Evidently, old stories from the close encounter in 2003 are floating around the Internet. Some of these stories even state that the date is August 27, 2005. In response, we have begun to invite people to a special Mars viewing in November 2005 when Mars will come close to Earth again. We explain that Mars and Earth will not be as close as they were in 2003 but views through the telescope will be very similar. While we don't expect to have the crowd of over 2000 people like

groups. There's also a segment on Solar System formation and the discovery of extrasolar planets. The program features some nice fully animated planetary images that were generated in-house using NASA imagery. Adam worked hard to make these images quite spectacular and audiences are appreciating the results.

Our department has just completed some attractive rock and mineral displays thanks to some outside help from the Kingsport Gems and Minerals Society. Over 100 items are now housed at our facility. Mike Chesman and our artists Allen Davis and Deborah Mann have been presenting weekly programs on Mars Exploration. These classroom oriented programs feature an overview of Mars history and a craft activity that has the kids building small take-home models of Mars Exploration Rovers from styrofoam, paper, soda-straws, etc.

In other areas, our astronomy club is gearing up for their annual picnic which we plan to coincide with a Deep Impact stargaze.

**Akima Planetarium**  
**E. Tennessee Discovery Center**  
**Knoxville TN**

Charles R. Ferguson reports: I can't say that I have a great deal to offer in the way of S.E.P.A. news. Though I do as much as I can at the Discovery Center, very little good seems to result. People really don't know that we exist! I have programmed a number of shows in the planetarium, but many of them have never been seen. My facility seems to be content with me just doing *The Sky Tonight*. That, of course, is easy for me to do, but it isn't very challenging! It IS easy to keep it up-to-date!

There may be "big" plans in the future for the planetarium in Knoxville, but such things have been talked about before resulting in very little action. Clear Skies!

**The Warp Factor Five Planetarium at Heritage High School , Blount County School System**  
**Maryville, TN**

Thomas R. Webber reports: We hit record atten-

dance this year, 33,600! We have 16 planetarium shows and 9 laser shows in our library. We are in the process of changing out our flooring and chairs. Shooting to add the Minolta MediaGlobe Lite in 2007 and keep the MS10.

**Sharpe Planetarium**  
**Memphis Pink Palace Museum**  
**Memphis, TN**

All too often, the news is of another theatre closing. In the spring, the Sharpe Planetarium at the Memphis Pink Palace Museum closed due to budget cuts. The museum and IMAX were also closed.

However, the Sharpe Planetarium has risen from the ashes. It has reopened, with programs only on Saturdays. The price was raised by a quarter to \$4.50.

The museum and IMAX have also reopened, reversing another decision prompted by the budget cuts. They will be open on Mondays.

Diana Heaton, a volunteer for several years, will now be the paid staff.

Steve Pike, director of the Pink Palace Family of Museums, said that with increased fund raising and a possible corporate sponsor, the planetarium could expand to have shows on two or three days, particularly weekdays, to attract schoolchildren.

It is reported that the programs currently being presented at the Sharpe Planetarium include *Under African Skies*, *The Cowboy Astronomer*, and a *Seasonal Star Show*.

**Sudekum Planetarium**  
**Adventure Science Center**  
**Nashville, TN**

Kris McCall and Drew Gilmore report: The Design Development phase of our proposed expansion continues to move forward and should be complete by the time you receive this journal. It has taken a lot of wrangling to bring all the components of architecture, exhibit concept, design, and arrange-

ment, and the planetarium core into line. Meanwhile, our request for capital funds from the City of Nashville should be voted by the end of July. If that is approved and several other pieces fall into place, we might start on construction documents before the end of the year. Groundbreaking could take place in the fall of 2006 with opening in summer 2008. Yikes!

For two weeks in April 2005, Kris and Drew demonstrated the Magic Planet from Global Imaginations and MediaGlobe from Konica-Minolta as part of a series of awareness tours for civic leaders and other influential people. The development department was very pleased with the results. Plans are underway to offer a similar program during the first two weeks of October 2005. If you would like to visit to see these exciting technologies, do not hesitate to give us a call.

The Science Center is open 363 days a year, so Drew and Kris are busy giving shows for schools, public, summer camp, and camp-ins. This does not include time spent coordinating star parties and Astronomy Day and participating in other events organized by the Science Center.

With Mars at opposition in late October, Kris and Drew are also developing a new show called *Mars Update*. It will feature a ten minute historical overview of the Red Planet and its exploration. This will be followed by a live presentation of current Mars news highlights and where visitors can find Mars in the current night sky. This show is available for purchase - starting in August.

Yet, Mars is only one member of the Solar System, and like everyone else under a dome, we need a good Solar System show. "I heard they found a tenth planet!" How many times have you heard THAT one lately? This new show introduces your audiences to planets in both our Solar System and beyond, and explores that tricky question, "Just what IS a planet, anyway?" Ask for *The Planet Show*. It's so new, we don't even have a name for it yet! The show should be ready for distribution in June 2006.



**Virginia Living Museum Planetarium**  
**Newport News, VA**

Dave Maness reports: In the planetarium theater we are running *The Great Dinosaur Caper: a Mesozoic Murder Mystery*. This is a creative program from the (sadly) closed McLaughlin Planetarium in Toronto, Canada. It follows two human characters Sarah Topps and private investigator Tyrone Rex as they uncover clues to the death of the dinosaurs.

We are now in our full summer schedule of workshops. If all of them fill, we will run about 18 week long sessions for many different grade levels. For the first time, I will be teaching two sessions of my popular Beginning Model Rocketry, instead of the usual one session.

In order to help with the frenetic summer pace, we have added a part time staff for the summer. Our new planetarium assistant is John Moorman, a former Governor's school mentorship student of mine. We have had very good luck with mentorship students in the past and he seems to be filling the role very well.

Since the Sun sets too late for families with children to enjoy views through our telescopes, we have suspended our *Starry Night Thursdays* for the summer. On August 12, however, we will take a chance on the weather and hold a night of *Meteors, Monsters, and Mars*. We are exhibiting some lifelike robotic dinosaurs for the summer, giving us an added attraction, just in case the weather prevents us from seeing meteors later in the evening. Finally, with luck the weather will be good and Mars will clear the tree tops before we close in the early morning.

Renovations in the old exhibit building, which will soon be the new Harry Wasson Education Center, are continuing at a ploddingly slow pace. We hope it will be finished by autumn.

I still have lots of 30 watt Lumiline lamps left over from our lighting conversion. Some are white with the colored sleeves and others are the original yellow and blue type. If anyone out there could use them, please contact me to arrange shipping.

I recently converted our best copy of the original *Star of Wonder* soundtrack produced by Virginia Living Museum and Bishop Planetarium to digital CD format. So if you already own the program and want to have a CD version (for the small fee of \$30), please contact me and I will see about sending you a new CD copy.

**Hopkins Planetarium & MegaDome Theater,  
Science Museum of Western Virginia  
Roanoke, VA**

Mark Hodges reports: Hopkins Planetarium/Megadome Theatre is showing *Pulse: a Stomp Odyssey*. This is a 'round the world rhythmic adventure featuring the sights and sounds of the popular percussion group Stomp. Also showing is *A Rainforest Adventure: Bugs*.

In the Planetarium, the seasonal star show is *Starlit Nights*, featuring the summer skies over Roanoke. This runs through September 2, 2005.

**Chesapeake Planetarium  
Chesapeake Public Schools  
Chesapeake, VA**

David Maness reports: His school is on summer break now, so I suspect Bob (Dr. Robert Hitt) is as well. The last I heard from Dr. Hitt was that he was "making plans for the next solar eclipse off the coast of Tahiti. Tough work but someone has to do it!"

**Falls Church High School Planetarium  
Falls Church, VA And  
Oakton High School Planetarium  
Vienna, VA**

Gary Purinton reports from northern Virginia that:

I am retiring from Fairfax County Public Schools after 25 years in the Falls Church High School planetarium. Jack Steiffer is also retiring from Oakton High School, where he has been the planetarium teacher since October of 1982. Between us, we had 48 years of planetarium experience. Two Fairfax County teachers have been assigned to replace us. Rebecca Pifer, a physics teacher at Woodson High School, will be taking over for Jack at Oakton. She will also be teaching physics half time. Dave Fowler, a Geosystems teacher at Hayfield Secondary School, will be replacing me at Falls Church High School, where he will also teach Geosystems half time. Jack is staying in Fairfax County, but I'll be moving back to my home town of Clarion, Pennsylvania. I may find a way to help out a little in the planetarium at Clarion University, but am not anticipating a job there anytime soon. My last day was Friday, June 10. Jack's will be this Friday. The science department at Falls Church took me out to lunch at an oriental restaurant the last week of school. We all broke our fortune cookies open and read our fortunes at the end of the meal. Mine read, "You will be free of the heavy burdens you have been carrying." We all got a good laugh out of that. Rebecca's email address is: Rebecca.Pifer@fcps.edu. Dave's is David.Fowler@fcps.edu. Also, I am moving to Pennsylvania on June 30, 2005. My new address will be Gary Purinton, 427 Tippin Drive, Clarion, PA 16214.

My new telephone number will be 814-902-1019, although the Virginia number, 703-264-8826, will ring at the new location for the time being.

My current email addresses (gpurinton@cox.net and gpurinto@pen.k12.va.us) will lapse on July 5. My new email address is gpurinton@verizon.net.

There may be a few days during the transition when I don't have time or access to check my email. Please be patient if you send a message that requires a reply. Thank you.

**Planetarium  
Children's Museum of Virginia  
Portsmouth, VA**

Dan Borick reports: We are currently showing

(public show) an updated version of *Worlds of Wonder*. As you know this is a Solar System show. New information from the Cassini-Huygens project, Mars Rovers project, and location of planets in the sky tonight have been introduced into this show. We have added images and animation via eMedia computer from Spitz Inc. This show will remain until the second week of July. The next show is *Sky Quest* from Loch Ness Productions. The show focuses on the path of a young girl from playing astronaut to her future role as an astronomer. I am trying to get a new show for us in the planetarium for mid-August to mid-September. *WSKY* is our show for the slot. I am currently programming it into our ATM4 automation system and since it is just lil' ol me, it may or may not be ready for the mid August time frame. Barring unforeseen commitment etc (and an actual vacation - woohoo) it will be done by then.

**Thomas Jefferson HS Planetarium  
Richmond, VA**

Leslie Bochenski reports: After being closed for a year to repair the roof and take care of some flood damage, the Planetarium was back in business by mid-November, 2004. During the 2004-05 school year, more than 100 classes of 3rd, 4th, 6th and 9th grade students climbed the stairs to participate in classes under the dome. All the students experienced a hands-on program based on Virginia Standards of Learning: 3rd grade *The Moon's Changing Face*, 4th grade *Spinning in Space*, 6th grade *On the Lookout for Planets* and 9th grade *Astronomy Connections*.

At the end of the year I gave awards to each grade level (except 9th) to the classes that were the 'Best Prepared' for the program, and the classes that exhibited the 'Best Conduct' in the planetarium. I sent a certificate and a set of NASA lithographs to each class, enough for each student. I received some good feedback from the teachers for this.

I have just started my summer break, and I am looking forward to next year. I'm planning to implement some of the ideas I picked up at the great SEPA meeting in Atlanta! I also volunteered to be the SEPA Historian at that meeting, so if you are a past officer, have old journals or other information

that should be included in the archive, please contact me at Bochenski@verizon.net.



**Avampato Discovery Museum  
ElectricSky™ Theater  
Charleston, WV**

Curt Spivey reports: Summer is here again, so we are taking a breather after a very brisk tour season. I'm also happy to report a new member of the Electric-Sky team. Kate Zylstra joined the staff in May. Kate was an Applied Physics Major at Western Washington University in Bellingham, where she helped run the planetarium with its ancient Spitz A1! After two years in the Peace Corps, she is quickly catching up on current astronomical events and learning a rather more complicated set up here in Charleston. Welcome!

Summer also means a round of visits from our friends at Spitz, making our eSky I system both hunky and dory. We are very happy to see them -- our Space Voyager has had a drive motor problem since February, forcing us to set the current night sky by hand throughout the spring! We are hoping to be 100% for our 2nd anniversary party on July 17 -- all museum visitors get in free that day to help us celebrate.

Our current planetarium show is the excellent *Mars* from the National Space Centre in England. Kate and I are working on a new black hole show in honor of the 100th anniversary of Einstein's revolutionary theories about space and time. We hope to have it ready to go over the next few months.

On the film front, *Dolphins* will be swimming away on July 29 to be replaced by *Pulse: A Stomp Odyssey*. Great film, but it really drives our six sub-woofers. Pass the aspirin!



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