

Southern Skies

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Journal of the Southeastern Planetarium Association

Spring 2006

SEPA 2006

Back to the Future!

Astronaut Memorial Planetarium & Observatory

Cocoa, FL

June 20-24, 2006

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President's Message

Patsy Wilson
Margaret C. Woodson Planetarium
Salisbury, NC

I'm writing this column on a gorgeous spring day with temperatures in the eighties! I love this season and it is especially uplifting to me this year. Many of you know (especially if you read my last column) that I've been working on National Board Certification for Teaching. I completed my teaching assignment in mid-January. From early February until mid-March, I spent every free minute writing my portfolio of fifty plus pages. I've never done anything that required such reflection and analysis. It is an arduous, stressful and time-consuming process. Just ask anyone who's been through it or talk to any member of my family. I've heard from several SEPA members who have earned National Board certification (Ken Brandt and April Whitt). They offered encouragement and assistance in my process. That leads me to wonder how many of our ranks have this certification. I would be interested in hearing from you; perhaps we could have a gathering of sorts at conference this summer.

In my last column I talked about the leadership of SEPA that has provided a vision through which this organization has prospered. There have been so many examples of this over the last few months and I want to recognize the efforts of our members who've stepped up to accept challenges and fulfilled responsibilities.

First, many thanks to Mickey Jo Sorrell who has begun her work as our Secretary-Treasurer. She has had several obstacles (banks, understanding records, answering difficult questions, etc.) to overcome, but has proven her dedication and absolutely perfect set of qualifications for this job. Please remember

that she doesn't have all the answers, and in fact at this early stage of the game, may have very few answers, but she is willing to search for the necessary information. As always, any specific questions regarding policy should be brought to my attention for discussion among the elected council. Remember, dues may be paid with your registration for conference if you haven't already sent in your money.

Next, I want to thank April Whitt who agreed to serve as the chairperson of the nominating committee. She was ably assisted by Dave Hostetter, Kris McCall and Toby Click. They worked very efficiently and have produced a great slate of candidates for consideration. Their bios are printed in this edition of the journal. Please read them carefully and be prepared to make a choice when we vote at the business meeting in June. They will be introduced to you at the pre-business meeting and given an opportunity to speak for a few minutes about their vision for SEPA.

Also, I want to thank the members of our conference site committee led by George Fleenor. This group has worked behind the scenes over the last several years to seek out facilities to host our annual conference. It is not easy to convince someone to take on that responsibility. Hosting a conference is a major investment in time and resources, but we are fortunate to have many who will support our organization in this way. George's group will give their report in Cocoa which should include bids



SEPA President Patsy Wilson with the Apollo Boiler Plate at Meteor Crater

(Continued on page 5)

IPS Report

John Hare
ASH Enterprises
Bradenton, FL

The International Planetarium Society (IPS) provides services beyond what any regional organization can furnish. IPS focuses on the entire worldwide planetarium community through its conferences, publications, and special member services. These efforts are made possible by the large international membership of IPS that brings perspectives, ideas, and efforts to the forefront not possible with the parochial membership and limited resources of regional organizations.

One such effort is through the Armand Spitz Fund. Spitz passed away in 1971 about the time that IPS was formed. Due to the efforts of Von Del Chamberlain and other founders of IPS, the Spitz Fund was established shortly after his death. The fund was created to furnish support to projects that were

consistent with Spitz' lifelong dedication to bring astronomy education to the masses through the use of small inexpensive planetariums. It has been only recently that the Fund has had resources significant enough to underwrite projects.

The most notable project to date is a program administered by Professor Lars Broman. Many of you may recall that Broman was responsible for organizing and hosting the 1990 IPS Conference held in Borlange, Sweden. Broman has received Spitz funding on a continuing basis for a Masters Program in Science Communication. Interns are selected through agreements with about 20 science centers, planetariums, and museums in Europe and the Americas, where the students can do their internship. You can contact Professor Broman at lbr@du.se.

Tax deductible contributions to the Spitz Fund can be sent to IPS Treasurer, Shawn Laatsch laatschs@mail.ecu.edu.

(Continued from page 3) President's column

from several places. We will hear this information at the pre-business meeting and then vote on our site choice for the 2008 conference at the regular business meeting.

Finally, I received my registration packet from the Astronaut Memorial Planetarium and Observatory this week for Conference 2006, "Back to the Future". The event will be held June 20-24, 2006. The location sounds idyllic and inviting. The facilities seem to be comfortable and resourceful. It is obvious that Mark Howard and his crew have done a lot of work to plan for our arrival. This should be a great conference with interesting opportunities, but of course, it is only as good as we make it. Please consider submitting a proposal for a paper session or workshop. Sharing makes conference profitable for all of us. I always leave with new ideas and I know you do too. If you've never attended the conference, consider joining us this year. SEPA membership is so much more valuable when you have a network of professionals from which to draw.

Remember that submissions for our silent auction are needed. Dave Maness conducts this each year at conference to raise money for the scholarship fund. All manner of goods and services have been auctioned over the last several years just before the

banquet on Friday night of conference week. Please let Dave know what you will offer so that he can prepare a display location and don't forget to bring your money with which to bid!

You will hear about the latest developments regarding SEPA's latest show production, *The Planets*, in Cocoa. Jon Bell has been busy pulling together all the pieces necessary for creation of this ambitious project. We've been waiting anxiously and should be rewarded with a sneak preview this summer.

I look forward to seeing you in June. Until that time, best wishes to each of you for a successful spring.

Editor's Message

James Sullivan
Buehler Planetarium
& Observatory
Davie, FL



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

This space has been edited.

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: _____

SEPA Membership Form

Please send your check for \$25 (or \$15 if outside the SEPA geographical region) to SEPA, c/o Mickey Jo Sorrell, Morehead Planetarium & Science Center, CB#3480 UNC-CH, Chapel Hill, NC 27599.

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

You can tell it is springtime around here. As I write this, the weather is nice and sunny and the daffodils and forsythia are blooming. With spring usually comes an influx of field trips, you know the type. Teachers are tired of staying in the classroom, so the yellow buses come up to your door filled to the brim with students. Here I am feeling the pinch of higher gas prices and trips have slackened.

I feared the fear of all school planetaria, especially those in overcrowded schools who eye the planetarium as a potential classroom. I lost the room outside the planetarium that used to be a holding area to the art department in need of a classroom and I have to listen to them bitch all the time about the lights causing them a hard time to see colors. Yet, I never complained, and I get kicked out to roam. Go figure. Now that I have my gripes out of my system, here is what is happening in my small world.

Mea culpa, I hope James doesn't chastise me too much, but I waited to get this in with information about the Antieham Battlefield Star Party with the Tri-State Astronomers in Sharpsburg, MD. Despite our best planned efforts, the sky was clear only a half hour. This was only long enough for us to see one faint Pleiade to be covered by the dark edge of a crescent moon, and then the sky was history. It didn't stop people from coming, however. To entertain the waiting crowd I delighted them to views

of the red blinking light on a radio tower several miles away as well as the Washington Monument. Not the one in DC, but the one in Maryland that fellow Tri-Stater



Marsha Fuller says was the first monument in the world to honor George Washington. If you wish to see pictures of our almost non-event, go to www.tristateastronomers.org.

At our pre-star party dinner buffet, Jack Rodderick, planetarium director emeritus for Shippensburg University in Shippensburg, PA brought along his giant 'scope in a trailer, even though he's got a romantic planetarium program for two at the planetarium on Sunday. Jack still does all the programs at Shippensburg because when he retired, they threatened to close the planetarium. Jack says, "Over my dead body" and now does all of the planetarium programs there gratis.

Other things happening included receiving the MAPS (Middle Atlantic Planetarium Society) conference registration material. Rod Martin of William Brish Planetarium in Hagerstown, Maryland said the planetarium it is being hosted at, The Novins Planetarium at Toms River, New Jersey will be closing right after the conference. That's kind of sad, but I guess it is nice that they are going out serving fellow planetarians. The conference theme is "The Best of All Worlds" and it will be May 17-20, 2006. For further information write to Robert J. Novins Planetarium, Ocean County College, P.O. Box 2001, College Drive, Toms River, NJ 08754-2001, phone is (732)-255-0400, ext. 2111, fax is (732) 255-0467 and the web site address is: www.ocean.edu/planet.htm.

Speaking of places closing, I read with sadness the famed planetarium in London next to Madame Tuseau's Wax Museum is closing. See <http://newsvote.bbc.co.uk/mpapps/pagetools/print/news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/london/4666848.stm> for more information. They hosted the International Planetarium Society's meeting in London. I don't understand how any planetarium person can feel happiness at the closing of a dome anywhere.

Did you or anyone visiting your dome participate in the "Globe at Night" program? This involved going outside to view the constellation Orion and determining its magnitude during the week of March 22nd to 31st, 2006 as it appeared in your backyard or observing site. See <http://www.globe.gov/GaN/>

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Back to the Future

SEPA 2006

Mark Howard
Astronaut Memorial Planetarium
& Observatory
Cocoa, FL

Greetings from sunny Florida! The Astronaut Memorial Planetarium & Observatory at Brevard Community College is pleased to be this year's host for the annual SEPA conference. The conference theme this year is *Back to the Future*.

The conference hotel is the Radisson Resort at the Port. It boasts a full-featured conference facility with excellent amenities and is a short drive from world famous Cocoa Beach. Much of this year's conference will take place at the hotel with paper sessions and generous amounts of vendor time clustered together in the conference center.

Wednesday evening, we'll visit our planetarium and observatory for dinner and an open house. The buffet dinner will be followed by an assortment of planetarium shows and demos. The planetarium features a 70' Astro-tec dome, two star projectors (a Minolta alpha-Infinium and a Digistar II), five ILDA standard laser projectors and an array of Barco video projectors. The Observatory houses a 24" Ritchey-Chretien and a 6" refractor.

Thursday, we'll return to the planetarium for an afternoon of vendor demos and paper presentations followed by a trip to the Kennedy Space Center for

a private dinner reception at the Saturn V complex. Russell Romanella, Director, International Space Station Processing/KSC will discuss NASA's vision for a return mission to the Moon using shuttle derived components.

Registration packets containing additional conference information were mailed the last week of March. If you did not receive a packet please contact us soon or visit our website at www.brevardcc.edu/planet/sepa2006. You can also contact us at the phone numbers and email addresses listed below.

Please note that the conference rate at the Radisson is only available through Monday, May 15. The early registration deadline is Friday, May 19. Paper submissions are due by this date also.

We look forward to seeing you soon in Cocoa!



If you have any questions please contact us at the numbers and email addresses listed below:

Mark Howard
321-433-7292
howardm@brevardcc.edu

Suzanne Leslie
321-433-7372
leslies@brevardcc.edu

Chuck Greenwood
321-433-7364
greenwoodc@brevardcc.edu

Dave Maness
Virginia Living Museum Planetarium
Newport News, VA

Friends and colleagues: let me remind you about a fun activity we do at the conference that gets us all involved in helping other planetarians. This is of course the Silent Auction to benefit the SEPA Scholarship fund. As some of you may know we have been doing this to raise money for a fund that will someday (hopefully soon) benefit some of our colleagues in the future by help them financially to attend a professional workshop or a SEPA conference. To all those who provided items in the past, I cannot thank you enough.

As of today the fund account stands at \$1,140.58. I think our ultimate goal should be to someday get this account up to a level from which we can provide a significant grant from the interest alone while leaving the principal intact. That all depends on us and (of course) interest rates. So, we still have a long way to go. As has been tradition for three years now, we will again hold a silent auction to benefit this fund.

What we need from the membership (as always) are your contributions of items or services that you would be willing to provide to the highest bidder. In the past we have offered books, games, artwork, crafts (including hand tooled, astronomy themed leather belts by me), musical CDs, and even an actual piece of space memorabilia. So think it over and let me know if you plan to bring something along to the conference in Cocoa. Knowing what to expect ahead of time will help me plan the space requirements. Also, let me know if you would like to help out on the SEPA Scholarship committee.

I have provided a form here to use for describing the item you bring for auction and for my records. As usual the auction will take place in the mingling time just before the banquet. Thanks again for your participation as an item provider, bidder, or both. I hope to see you in Cocoa, Florida, but if you have

an item and cannot make it, send it to me. If it is not too big for my car, I will try to get it there.

SEPA SILENT AUCTION ITEM

Place photo, draw a picture of item, or write a brief description in the space provided.

Item:

Description:

Offered by (Your name):

Preferred mode of contact information (Phone, Mail, Email, Fax, Telegram, Pony Express, or other)

April Whitt
Fernback Science Center
Atlanta, GA

The candidates for the SEPA elections taking place at the June meeting are:

Pres-Elect: Ken Brandt
Sec/Treasurer: Mickey Jo Sorrell
IPS Representative: John Hare

The ballots will have spaces for write-in candidates and nominations from the floor. Attached are the bios and photos of the three candidates listed above. John Hare and Mickey Jo Sorrell are incumbants.

Candidate for President Elect

Ken Brandt
Robeson Planetarium
Lumberton, NC

Thank you for having the confidence in me, and my love of the profession. I am a space nut! I believe that our future lies in our ability to 'leave the cradle', and explore the cosmos. I love to pass along my passion for space, and learning about it, as I know you do too. I would be honored to represent you as President of SEPA.

I am the current director of SEPA's 'mother dome', the Robeson Planetarium, in Lumberton, NC.

I am a NASA/JPL Solar System Educator and Ambassador. I'm also a member of the NASA Museum Alliance, and am a New Horizons (Pluto mission) Fellow. I'm also the President of the newly-formed Carolina Association of Planetarium Educators, and am a member of the National Science Teachers Association, the North Carolina Science Teachers Association, and an institutional member of the International Planetarium Society (IPS).

I believe in and am working to improve the use of

the planetarium as an educational tool, as well as an interactive and exciting way to show people what's up there, and how they can see it for themselves! We have the neatest 'job' in the world, and I am grateful every day that I get to do what I do where I get to do it-under the star-filled dome!



President Elect Candidate Ken Brandt at Kennedy Space Center. Credit: K. Brandt

Candidate for Secretary/Treasurer

Mickey Jo Sorrell
Morehead Planetarium & Science Center
Chapel Hill, NC

I am new to SEPA, becoming a member in 2005, and am pleased to serve as Secretary/Treasurer for the upcoming term.

Born and raised in Cary, North Carolina, I attended UNC-Chapel Hill, then raised my three children in the country, north of town. I moved back to the city when they were grown to get a degree in Geological Sciences and joined the team at Morehead Plan-

(Continued on page 10)



Secretary/Treasurer Candidate Mickey Jo Sorrell.
Credit: MJ Sorrell

etarium and Science Center five years ago.

At MPSC I train and mentor fifteen university students in planetarium presentations for school groups and general public, help keep the theater clean and functional, coordinate with educational and camp programming for the rest of the science center, and manage to give a few shows and classes myself.

I'm a board member of the Environmental Educators of North Carolina, an active member of my food co-op, a gardener, biker, reader, taiji player, traveler, and keeper of one spoiled chicken.



MJ and mamita. Credit: MJ Sorrell

Candidate for IPS Representative

John Hare

ASH Enterprises

Bradenton, FL

I have been involved in the planetarium profession since the early 1960s. I was on staff at Abrams Planetarium at Michigan State University when we played a key role in the formation of GLPA and was an integral part of the team that helped organize the founding meeting of IPS, the CAPE conference, held at Michigan State University. In the late '70s I left Michigan to direct the Bishop Planetarium in Bradenton where I hosted two SEPA conferences and served as president of SEPA in 1985-86. Since leaving my position as director of the Bishop Planetarium back in 1996, I have continued to be active in the business and professional aspects of a large number of planetarium organizations and the planetarium field in general. I continue to present talks, workshops, and papers that deal with a variety of topics of interest to the planetarium community and frequently attend regional planetarium conferences in North America and elsewhere. I travel extensively and have a worldwide network of planetarium friends and acquaintances.

I have been a participant in all SEPA Conferences since 1979 and all IPS Conferences since the initial conference in 1972. I am planning to attend this year's IPS conference in Melbourne, Australia.

Professional affiliations:

International Planetarium Society (IPS), member since 1971

IPS Historian, 1990 to present

Southeastern Planetarium Association (SEPA), member since 1979

President 1985-86

Conference host 1984 and 1993

IPS Council Representative 1984-86, 1993 to present

Middle Atlantic Planetarium Society (MAPS), member since 1996

Great Lakes Planetarium Association (GLPA), member since 1996

Great Plains Planetarium Association (GPPA), member since 1996

Rocky Mountain Planetarium Association (RMPA), member since 1997

Pacific Planetarium Association (PPA), member since 1998

Southwestern Planetarium Association (SWAP), member since 2002

Professional recognitions:

IPS Fellow, 1986-present

IPS Service Award, 2000

SEPA Paul Campbell Fellowship Award, 2001

GLPA Armand Spitz Lecturer 1996

GLPA Fellow, 2003-present

I feel that I can continue to play an important role as IPS Council Representative and would be honored to continue in that capacity for SEPA. Thank you for your vote!



IPS Representative Candidate John Hare. Credit: J. Hare

Where to next? SEPA 2008

George Fleenor
GeoGraphics Imaging & Consulting
Bradenton, FL

We have two facilities bidding for the SEPA 2008 conference. The two facilities are the Lafayette Natural History Museum & Planetarium in Louisiana and the Saunders Planetarium at MOSI in Tampa, Florida. Both potential hosts will present at Cocoa. To avoid a conflict with IPS in Chicago in mid-June that year, the SEPA conference would be scheduled from July 22-26.

From Lafayette:

The Lafayette Natural History Museum & Planetarium invites SEPA to Lafay-



ette, Louisiana, for the annual conference in 2008. Planetarium Curator Dave Hostetter will have more information at the conference in Cocoa, and we hope to see you in Cajun Country in 2008!

From Tampa:

After 14 years in its present location, The Saunders Planetarium is moving and changing -- again. The original star projector -- a Spitz A3P-R -- is going to be retired and replaced with the Goto Space Simulator Chronos. The rest of the \$1 million project -- which includes a new theater in Kids in Charge, a new projection dome, a new high-resolution video projection system, and new seating--will be completed for opening in Fall 2006. Director of Flight and Space Alan Peche will present their bid in Cocoa.

Astro Video Review

Priscilla Bernardo
Orlando Science Center Planetarium
Orlando, FL

The Big Space Shuttle

It is Friday night and the Crosby Observatory is opening up for viewing. Peering into the video library I hunt around for something of interest to play in the overhead monitors. With a large group of rather young campers arriving tonight, I try to find something they might find interesting as they wait their turn for a peek at Saturn. I realize I don't have much that is well suited for the very youngest of my public.

Hitting the internet I go searching for something to bulk up the library and happen upon "The Big Space Shuttle". With its childlike cartoon drawing on the cover it looks promising. Online reviews give it 5 stars and it seems well suited for the 4 to 6 years old range though several customer reviews mention how much even 2 year olds enjoyed watching the program. So I placed the order for the DVD and hoped that there would be no purple dinosaurs involved.

When it arrived, not only was the dinosaur missing but there were no cutesy cartoon characters at all. Only the occasional hand drawn cartoon picture of a space shuttle was used to highlight transitions. This program was all about using real images to take children (and adults) on a comprehensive look at the space shuttle program.

At 50 minutes in length I had my doubts but they

were quickly put aside. With a child's voice as the narrator, we went step by step discovering things like where the space shuttle program is located, what it takes to run the space program, how the space shuttle is built, and how it works. You go to training camp with the astronauts, learn what life is like on board and even ride along inside as the shuttle blasts off into space. What kid wouldn't like that!



The presentation does a very nice job explaining what NASA is, its purpose and some of the history of our quest for space exploration. Add to that a subtle sales pitch for Space Camp and it is easy to see why kids would love this program. What I found most refreshing was the lack of cartoon characters. Instead you got to follow along with the crew of the STS 83 and STS 94 as they prepared for flight. You got to actually see George Diller, "the voice of NASA" counting down to lift off. There was a little computer modeling used to explain a few topics but they blended well with the real life footage. There was no pandering to children to keep them interested. The script didn't talk down or dumb down

the topic. There were no cute jiggles and no purple dinosaurs. Just a well produced program to spark and feed a little tike's imagination.

I think sometimes we in this industry too often get sidetracked by older visitors and quite unintentionally forget about the littlest members of our audience. More often when we do think of them, we underestimate them. We think that just because they try to look through the telescope with both eyes closed that they are not quite ready for astronomy and space topics. This DVD was a wonderful reminder to me that the wonder of space and the

(Continued from page 6) Small Talk

for more details. Then, you filled out a log sheet on-line at the "globe at night" web site and they placed your observations on a giant interactive map (see <http://www.globe.gov/GaN/analyze.html>) where you can see observations gathered from around the world. They also have some cool observing interactive stuff on their web site. When teaching astronomy with my high school students I tied in the "Orion in Different Wavelengths" interactive tutorial found at the National Radio Astronomy Observatory website at: <http://www.gb.nrao.edu/~rmaddale/Education/OrionTourCenter/index.htm>.

Did you participate in any of the Sun-Earth Connection activities on Sun-Earth Day on March 29th? (Go to: <http://sec.gsfc.nasa.gov/> for more information.) I heard of several planetariums being filled with people in the wee-hours of the morning to project on the dome the live feeds and web casts of the Exploratorium eclipse coverage in Turkey. (Go to <http://sunearthday.nasa.gov/2006/events/webcasts.php> for more information.) That rare place experienced another total solar eclipse in the space of, what, a few years or so. I tried hooking into the web cast which played for only a few minutes then told me the link to the server was unavailable. Perhaps it was swamped with too many folks trying to log on at one time. I ran a contest for Hedgsville High School students, the place where my planetarium is located. All week, students answered eclipse questions with the winners getting to see an eclipse program in the planetarium and getting sun chips, Capri-Sun juice and that southern favorite, moon pies, to take to lunch.

magic of space exploration are well within reach of young minds.

Video Stats

"The Big Space Shuttle" by Little Mammoth Media
www.littlemammoth.com
Produced by William Van DerKloot
Narrated by Bailey Blair
50 minutes in length
Amazon.com price
\$19.95 DVD



L: Totality - 1998 Solar Eclipse. R: E. Wasiluk on the beach showing the eclipse in the Sunspotter. Credit: E. Wasiluk

I did two repeat programs of the eclipse program for the public and hosted many teachers who received staff development credit for attending. Also a group of developmentally disabled adults attended this program as well and enjoyed the Exploratorium film, plugging the web coverage of the upcoming eclipse. I also got to show off pictures and video



With friends and native Arubans showing the eclipse. Credit: E. Wasiluk

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Digital Cosmos

Suresh Atapattu
Buehler Planetarium & Observatory
Davie, FL

LabVIEW

Our professional and personal world is rapidly affected by the ubiquitous use of computers running powerful software. While this trend is commonplace in our daily lives, the 21st century planetarium is particularly blessed by the advancement provided by these tools. One would be hard pressed to find a planetarium that has not utilized the power of computers to provide a better product to the audience. While some of the newer planetariums are entirely governed by computers, others still use a judicious blend of computers to produce their daily staple of shows and carry out support functions in the planetarium. The computer literate planetarian is matched with computer savvy planetarium visitors and aware of the force multiplier effect of computers.

Visitors arriving at the planetarium expect to be entertained from the moment they walk in through the front doors. Usually a judicious blend of architecture, exhibits and gallery space transport the visitor into the total planetarium experience. However, these exhibits have a shelf life and cost associated with them. A constant push for more interaction and more stimulation of the intellect of the visitor is expected. In this scenario, a cheap effective showcase to increase interaction and stimulation is very useful. Hence, the integration of computer displays into workshops, projects and visitor interaction areas is a quick, easy and cost effective methodology. A few strategically placed “computer kiosks” can effectively enhance the planetarium experience.

The acceptance of the general public to these devices and the educational benefits from their correct usage cannot be underestimated.

As in the past century, the modern planetarium is a busy place with the staff and equipment optimized to deliver the standard product at the cheapest price. Thus, the average planetarium staff may find they do not have the time and money to devote extraordinary resources to develop new cutting edge educational tools and information in-house. Stepping into this void is a software package that offers remarkable capability to the planetarian. This program is called LabVIEW (Laboratory Virtual Instrument Engineering Workbench) and is manufactured by National Instruments in Austin, Texas.

It is a very powerful program because it offers a battery of capability that can be useful in the planetarium setting. For example, it can be used for automation of telescopes and other machine driven equipment. It can act as image processing software. It can interface with data acquisition equipment and digitize real world data such as temperature and wind, thus allowing interactive educational modules to be developed. It can also run these programs on kiosks and other such stand-alone display devices, thus speeding up development time and capability for these items.

LabVIEW is a development environment based on graphical programming. LabVIEW uses terminology, icons, and ideas familiar to technicians, scientists, and engineers, and relies on graphical symbols rather than textual language to describe programming actions. However, the method of programming with its graphical interface can let even the non-scientist or engineer conquer this program. LabVIEW is integrated fully for communication with hardware such as GPIB, VXI, RS-232, RS-485, and plug-in data acquisition boards. LabVIEW also has built-in libraries for using software standards such as TCP/IP Networking and ActiveX.

LabVIEW is unique because it is a “graphical” language. This novel method of programming makes it very easy to learn and intuitive. This makes it a very powerful language that eliminates the steep learning curve of text-based programming languages such as C++.



Figure 1: LabVIEW start screen

Since it is a graphical language, icons are used for description of connections and relations between objects in block diagram. It is different than textual language in many ways. One big difference that makes this program easy to use and improves development time is the ability to incorporate a wide range of built-in library functions into one's development. These library functions may be as simple as ADD or SUBTRACT. Even more complex sub-routines such as FOR LOOPS are available in palettes as icons which can be dragged and dropped onto the development area.

Figure 2: LabVIEW source code adding two double precision numbers.

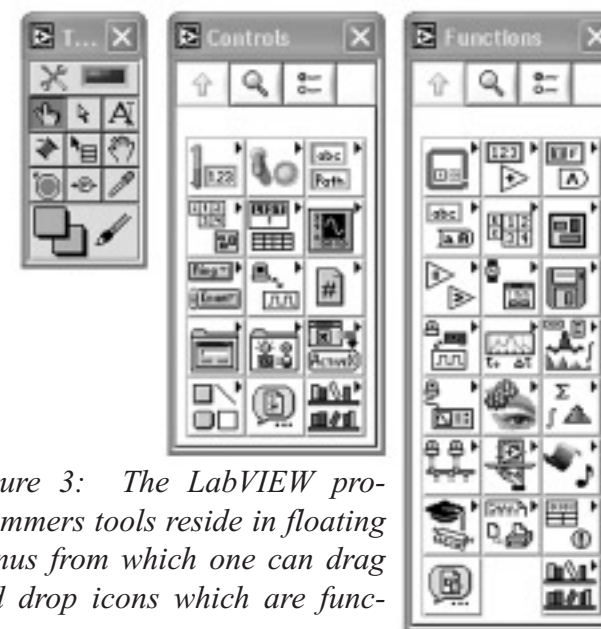
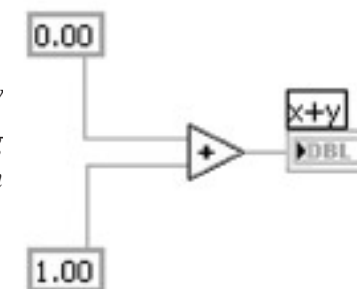


Figure 3: The LabVIEW programmers tools reside in floating menus from which one can drag and drop icons which are functions.

The icons are dropped on to the “block diagram” component of the program. This acts as the location of the source code of the program and the “front panel” acts as the graphical user interface.

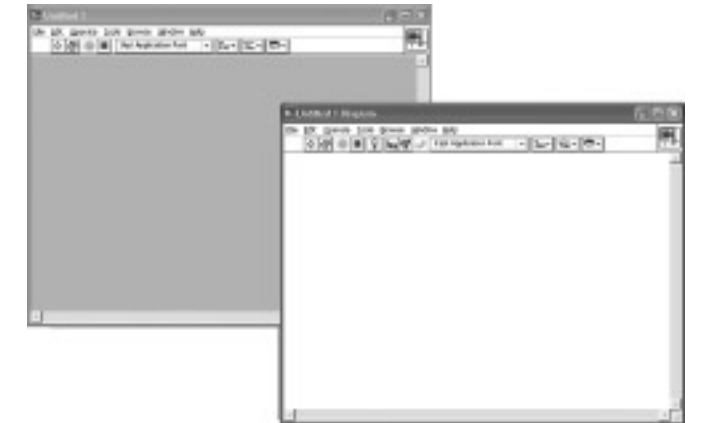


Figure 4: The Grey screen is the “front panel” that is seen by the user and the “block diagram” is the home for the source code.

Each program written in G programming language is called a virtual instrument. Drawing an icon creates a virtual instrument, including defining inputs and outputs. It can also be included in other virtual instruments simply by importing the icon into a program and connecting its inputs and outputs with other variables. That way, it becomes a sub-virtual instrument. Double click on that icon to open its front panel and block diagram.

Data types are presented with different colors and different shapes of connecting lines. Blue color presents integer, orange - float, purple - character, green - Boolean, etc. User defined types are presented with some other colors.

It is very important to notice that LabVIEW enables links with programs written in some other programming language. For example, you can always use C to program some “exotic” function.

The LabVIEW program comes with extensive and context sensitive help. A tutorial and extensive examples come on a standard Academic Resources CD. Some laboratories have comprehensive notes. These may need to be slimmed down for realistic handout sizes.

(Continued on page 16)

(Continued from page 15) *LabVIEW*

LabVIEW 8 is the newest release of the program. While it is a more capable and sophisticated version, the underlining concepts that make it a unique program are still front and center. The user of 8 or previous versions will not feel amiss by the version difference.

It is expected that planetariums may not have the luxury of changing computers on a yearly basis, hence a program that is demanding on technology can be too costly. However, LabVIEW can run on the major Platforms/operating systems such as Windows 95, Windows 98, Windows NT, Mac OS 7, Mac OS 8. The recommended minimum hardware requirement is for example: Windows 2000/XP/NT/Me/9x; For Windows NT, use Windows NT 4.0 Service Pack 3 or later; 32 MB RAM minimum, 64 MB recommended; 65 MB disk space for minimal LabVIEW installation, 200 MB for full installation; Pentium processor or equivalent recommended. On an Apple computer the recommended minimum hardware requirement is: Mac OS 7.6.1 or later; 32 MB RAM minimum, 64 MB recommended; 100 MB disk space for minimal LabVIEW installation, 225 MB for full installation; PowerPC processor.

LabVIEW has a lot of technical support including a self-teaching CD. The Academic Resources comes on a CD. As the LabVIEW program is so extensive, it takes time to become familiar with it. The Academic Resources CD/ NI education web site helps apply simulations to academic learning areas.

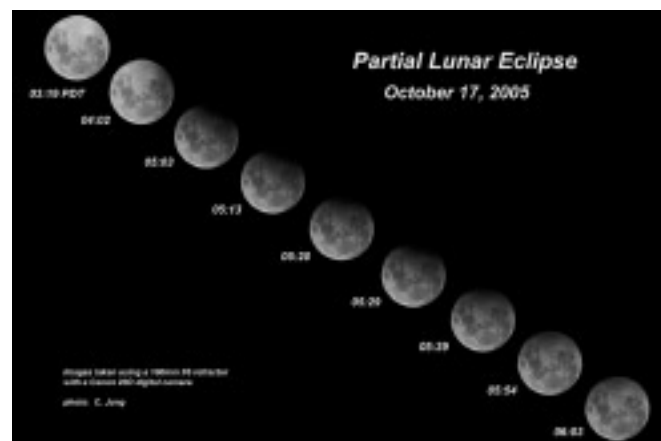
While one may not have heard of the manufacturer of LabVIEW before, National Instruments (www.ni.com) is a technology pioneer and leader in virtual instrumentation. This is a revolutionary concept that has changed the way engineers and scientists approach measurement and automation. Any fear that LabVIEW may be a transient phenomenon connected to the fortunes of National Instruments is misplaced as the source code for LabVIEW is placed in escrow to ensure its continued existence.



(Continued from page 13) *Small Talk*

footage of past eclipses I attempted to view in 1991, 1994 and 1998.

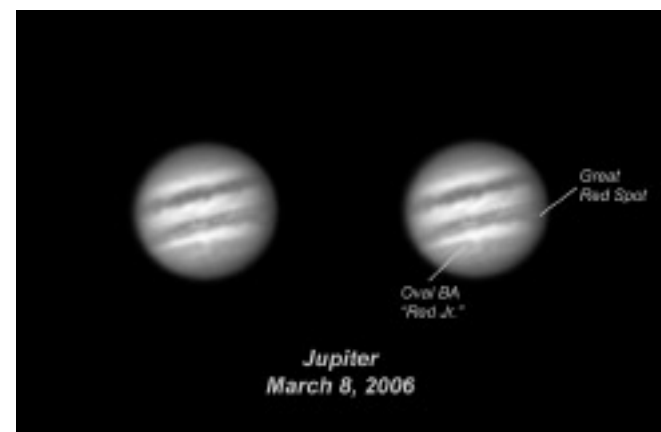
Students of my astronomy class at Hedgesville High School in Hedgesville, West Virginia did have clear skies to view a rising moon during a penumbral lunar eclipse.



Did the penumbral lunar eclipse on March 14, 2006 resemble the one captured on film last year from the west coast by Conrad Jung of Chabot Observatory?

Do smail mail, fax or e-mail me for info on what your "small planetarium" is up to?

Do you teach an astronomy class in your planetarium? If so, do you have a traditional classroom at your disposal or did you teach it right in the planetarium? Do you use any traditional classroom items, such as a desk or a blackboard or high tech items such as powerpoint, etc? Send me the information so I can tally it to see if I can regain my planetarium space outside the dome.



Welcome the new red spot on Jupiter affectionately called "red junior". Credit: Conrad Jung at Chabot Observatory.

News From SEPA States

FLORIDA

contact: George Fleenor
GeoGraphics Imaging and
Consulting, Bradenton, FL
Jetson1959@aol.com



Florida Planetarium Association (FLORPLAN)

Contact George Fleenor for details, or see column listing for Seminole Community College's Planetarium in Sanford, FL.

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 *In My Backyard*, *Galaxies*, *Celestial Navigation*, *A Dozen Universe* and *Comets are Coming*.

We continue to rotate shows on Wednesdays, and these shows include *The People*, *2061: Secrets of Mars*, *To Worlds Unknown*, *Egyptian Skylore*, *Endless Horizon* and *The Secret of the Cardboard Rocket*.

Astronaut Memorial Planetarium and Observatory Brevard Community College Cocoa, FL

Mark Howard reports: The Astronaut Memorial Planetarium and Observatory in Cocoa, FL is currently running its full complement of school shows and weekend public shows including sky shows, Iwerks 8-70 large format movies, and laser shows.

We are pleased to announce that our facility will be hosting the 2006 SEPA conference June 20-24. The conference hotel is the Radisson Resort at the Port, a full featured conference center and resort in Cape Canaveral, FL. For more information about the SEPA conference visit our website at www.brevardcc.edu/planet/sepa2006

Aside from planning for this summer's conference, we are busy getting ready for a May opening of *BIG* from the National Space Centre in the UK. Also in production with tentative opening dates this summer and fall are *Oceans In Space*, *Light Years From Andromeda* and *More Than Meets the Eye* from Loch Ness Productions.

Hallstrom Planetarium Indian River Community College Fort Pierce, FL

Jon Bell reports: Let's see: we had Hurricanes Frances and Jeanne plow through Indian River Community College's Fort Pierce campus in 2004, and last fall we had Wilma walk right over our dome, so I guess that's a hurricane hat trick of sorts. This last storm did its share of damage, but the planetarium theater made it through okay: just a few leaks down the exterior corridor walls and some minor flooding in the science center lobbies due to hurricane-driven rain that got in when the automatic windows opened up during the power outage.

Wilma also left us with a couple of unexpected visitors to the planetarium - two very surprised fish that apparently were swept up from a nearby pond. I was checking out the grounds around the theater just after the storm when my boys pointed out the



fish swimming and fin-walking through the flooded parking lot. I was able to steer one of them into deeper water, and figured it would keep overnight; but unfortunately the water drained a lot faster than expected, leaving the poor critter high and dry.



Still enjoying the new console and automation installed by East Coast Control Systems, and am getting accustomed to operating things from the front of the theater. We reprised *The Mars Show* during the opposition last autumn, then, *Star of Wonder* in December. This past winter I installed an original production, *The Stars of the Pharaohs* which has been a great thing to run while the King Tut exhibit is at the Fort Lauderdale Art Museum. At last I get to show off precessional motion during a show (so folks can see Thuban as the north star, of course!) And *Bear Tales* opens again in late April.

In February I received a singular honor: The St. Lucie County School Board asked me to serve as master of ceremonies for their regional science fair awards. Not only that, they actually requested I sing a few space songs during the event! So I put together a Powerpoint sing-along program and as the *Singing Astronomer* I led the audience (many of whom are still recovering from the shock of it all) in, *What is Gravity?; Moon Crater; The Universe Song* and *Einstein the Genius*.

Work is progressing on *The Planets* show I'm producing for SEPA. By the time you get this, I should have recorded the voice master, (hoping to use the voice talents of a Star Trek actor - we'll see if everything works out,) and should be able to play the soundtrack or parts of it during the Cocoa conference. The plan is to make the show available to

members at no charge and I'm aiming for its inclusion with the December journal.

Miami Space Transit Planetarium Miami Museum of Science Miami, FL

Michael Camacho reports: The Miami Space Transit Planetarium at the Miami Museum of Science celebrates its 40th birthday this year and we are proud to be a part of it. Those of you who know us are well aware that the technology we use has been here since we opened, with minor upgrades along the way. While most of this original equipment remains in use, we've recently begun to achieve a beautiful balance with the addition of some very modern gadgets.

In September of 2005, our good friend Jon Frantz at East Coast Control installed the Pleiades LED cove lighting system and our dome was so happy for it had never been seen wearing green or purple; nor had such pinks or reds lit it up quite that way before. With a very nice blue and the ability to fully automate these lights in any way we want, we are more than pleased.

Shortly thereafter, a state of the art Gobo club lighting system was also installed. These lights are just beyond description! Six of them are strategically positioned along our cove and are used for special effects in public star shows and as walk-in creating a truly spectacular environment. In laser shows, these lights are taken to the limit and are used for what they were designed and that is to "knock your socks off". Because of this, more than ever, we have become the hotspot for premier live acts and rentals such as NBC and Boeing.

Then, there's Titanic.

'Titanic: The Artifact Exhibition' opened on March 25th and stays at the museum through October 15th and we already are having great crowds coming through our halls. Now this takes us back to the basics, which I believe is the theme for this year's SEPA conference. Along with the Titanic exhibit, director Jack Horkheimer has created an original production titled *Phantom Ships of the Titanic*. This is an extraordinary planetarium star show that is

not to be missed. This show along with *Vicious and Not-So-Vicious Cosmic Fishes* (another original production made in late 2005) was created using our old-school technology of splicing tape and running reel-to-reel audio with carousel projectors supplying the images and actual console operators running more than half the show, live. We have been blessed with a fine team that is currently a family of eight.

All attending this year's conference are invited to take a short trip down to the big yellow dome and visit us. We'll be looking for you. Also, as a reminder, please keep in mind that anyone who would like to use Star Gazer for a classroom or as a start to planetarium shows is more than welcome to do so without any special license or agreement. Simply go to www.jackstargazer.com and see our past, present and upcoming shows on streaming video. They're yours to use. Keep looking up~

Planetarium Seminole Community College Sanford, FL

Laurent Pellerin reports: The SCC Planetarium in Sanford, Florida (15 miles north of Orlando) will be hosting the Spring 2006 FlorPlan meeting on SATURDAY, APRIL 29, 2006, from 9:30 AM - 4/5 PM. I am still working on the schedule and awaiting confirmation of a couple of presenters but here's the plan, subject to change...

Breakfast and meet & greet from 9:30-10 AM

2 SCC Production presentations... "Seminole Space Science for 4th Grade" and "Port of Call: MARS!"

Software Bisque will demo their new software that will allow small planetaria with limited funds and personnel (but who have a video projector connected to a computer) to produce high quality QuickTime movie animations of PSolar System object flybys, etc. In fact, their new software will be used to create asteroid animations for an upcoming Nova episode! This software is very easy to use. (We are beta testing it for them for its use in planetaria and my assistant is working part-time on its development.)

Hopefully AVI will be giving a presentation...still awaiting confirmation.

Hopefully SEOS will be giving a presentation...still awaiting confirmation. (They are into planetaria from initial architectural planning right through to show content in real-time or playback.)

Lunch is scheduled to be catered here on campus by Sonny's Real Pit BBQ. Software Bisque and Bowen Productions will each be making a donation towards the cost of this lunch. I'm still waiting to hear back from a couple of others for the remainder of the cost. The cost is based on the number of people attending so I need a headcount ASAP, please! Anyone wishing to make a donation to sponsor lunch please contact me. Hopefully some of you will have some presentations as well...let me know.

See you here.

Planetarium Science Center of Pinellas County St. Petersburg, FL

Marie Stempinski reports: Our next event that includes the Planetarium is Astronomy Day, May 6. The St. Petersburg Astronomy Club will hold a daytime solar viewing from 12-3 and there will be a presentation and all Science Center Activities including Planetarium Shows. Fee: \$5 per person.

That evening there will be a free nighttime viewing from 6:30-11 p.m.

GEORGIA
contact: David Dundee
Fernbank Science Center
Atlanta, GA
david.dundee@fernbank.edu



Georgia Southern Planetarium Statesboro, GA

Becky Lowder reports: We have had another great year so far bringing the excitement and wonders of astronomy and space science to the public through our many shows and events. January brought another

Hubble unveiling, this time of the Orion Nebula we have now on permanent display. We celebrated the return of Stardust along with a wonderful presentation, *Comets And Asteroids: Collision Course With Earth*, by one of our interns, Zach Whigham. Dr. Clayton Heller presented a public evening on *Interstellar Space Travel*.

We are testing a wonderful show on the Sun for the William K. Holt Planetarium called *Our Very Own Star* that engages the audience with questions and hands-on demos. *Sun-Earth Day* was a big success, even though the clouds prevented us from seeing the Sun with our solar telescopes. Planetarium Intern, Ronni Watson, will be giving her presentation on mythology of the constellations and planets. We will have our largest event of the year, *Astronomy And Space Day*, coming up in about a week with lunar and meteorite samples, hand-on activities, displays, solar system walk, star shows, and more.

We also offer school shows during the weekdays. Clear skies!



**Russell C. Davis Planetarium
Jackson, MS**

Gary Lazich reports: From May through August, the Planetarium's McNair Space Theater includes the films *Forces of Nature* (earthquakes, volcanoes, tornadoes, and hurricanes) and *Ocean Oasis* (Baja California and the Sea of Cortes). *Forces of Nature*, the Planetarium's newest film, should prove especially appealing as Mississippi enters this year's tornado and hurricane season. The film profiles the work of several scientists seeking to understand, predict, and minimize damage and injury from natural disasters.

The schedule also includes multimedia sky features *Ocean Oasis* (from Loch Ness Productions) and *Solar System Adventure* (from the Great Lakes Planetarium Association). Assistant Manager Lane Smiley and Production Supervisor John Williams managed to convert many of the slide images into video images or sequences to increase the program's visual appeal. A "scanner" special effect reads three kinds of data cards held up by audience members and displays the results on the screen.

In April, Manager Gary Lazich accepted an invitation to help present a children's workshop for Jackson's annual Crossroads Film Festival. He shared the stage with Theo from the locally produced PBS program *Between the Lions*. Gary dressed in his *Star Trek:TNG* uniform and led the children in an interactive reading of *Here Come the Aliens!* Puppeteer Peter Minz and Executive Producer Christopher Cerf will return to Jackson next February to tape another season and would like to involve the Planetarium in some way.

Assistant Manager Lane Smiley left the Planetarium at the end of February to direct the new large-format film theater housed within Aztec on the River in San Antonio's Riverwalk district. He leaves behind a legacy of partnerships with other organizations, new digital production equipment and techniques, popular large-format films and sky features, a weekly family sky show, revival of an annual Space Day celebration, Lobby renovation, and weekly advertising. The Planetarium has benefited greatly from his contributions.

Cheers!

**Rainwater Observatory & Planetarium
French Camp, MS**

James Hill reports: In February, Dr. Martin Horejsi from Idaho State University conducted a *Meteorite Mysteries* workshop. A *Backyard Astronomy* course in March featured David Teske sharing tales of the winter and spring constellations with Jim Hill sharing news about the Cassini mission to Saturn and the new experimental science of cosmology.

Progress continues on the Sangre telescope facility, which will house a 25" research-grade Ritchey-

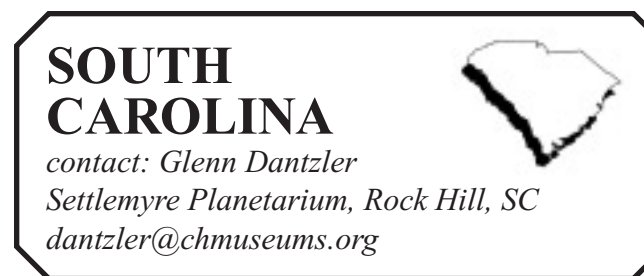
Chretien telescope. Lee Cole, a metal artist from Memphis, fabricated artistic hand rails for the inside and outside stairwells with an astronomical railing for the observing floor to keep folks from falling down. MMAP, a group of travelling missionaries at French Camp for a project hampered by weather, instead spent time framing the doors. Former French Camp student Kevin Cannon built a beautiful deck to surround the dome.

Director Jim Hill is amazed when he looks at the facility. "If we had known what a job it was going to be, we may never have started. Thanks to everyone who pitched in during the past year. Soon we should be ready for the refurbished scope to return from California." The latest image is at <http://www.rainwater.us82.net/gallery/?display=deck%20up%20low%204.JPG>. (Thanks to Craig Hodges for setting up this photo gallery and for resurrecting part of the Observatory's Web site.)

In March, Jim heard NASA Administrator Michael Griffin speak at Mississippi State University and was "impressed with his candor." NASA's budget for Space Science has been cut from a 7% increase to 1% (less than inflation). The cutting-edge Astrobiology Institute took a 50% cut. SOFIA wasn't even mentioned. However, the cancelled Dawn mission, to orbit two asteroids using an ion drive, has been appealed and reinstated for a later launch.

According to Griffin, all the important space science missions will be taking place, just later for financial reasons. NASA will spend most of its money keeping the manned missions on schedule. The New Horizons mission to the Kuiper Belt is well on its way to Jupiter and is performing well.

Registrations for late April's Mid-South Star Gaze came in from at least 11 states but lagged behind last year's, possibly because of Katrina's aftermath. The program included a Stardust Educators' Conference update by Solar System Ambassador Jim Hill, sky lore talks by Davis Planetarium Manager Gary Lazich, and a hands-on astronomy activities workshop conducted by Memphis schoolteacher John Frassinelli.



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

News from the DuPont Planetarium: We are pleased to announce that the newly elected president of the Digistar Users Group (DUG) is our very own director, Dr. Gary J. Senn. He was elected to the office during the 2005 meeting of DUG and follows in the footsteps of longstanding president, Jim Manning, who accepted a position with the Space Telescope Science Institute.

In March, we launched the newest show in our collection, *Blown Away: The Wild World of Weather*. The show was produced by The New Detroit Science Center and has been a welcome addition for the many school visitors to the planetarium. The show was also presented to the public during March. In April, *Larry Cat in Space* from Loch Ness Productions was available as the public show. During the month of May, the planetarium will present the locally produced show, *Dark Shadows*. *Dark Shadows* is a show about how shadows in space cause phases of the moon and eclipses.

The Dupont Planetarium, the Ruth Patrick Science Education Center, the University of South Carolina Aiken and the Astronomy Club of Augusta will be sponsoring "Earth and Sky Night" on National Astronomy Day, May 6, 2006. On this night the planetarium will be showing *Dark Shadows* and Loch Ness Productions', *The Voyager Encounters*. There will be a variety of hands-on activities available inside the Ruth Patrick Science Education Center covering topics in astronomy and Earth science. Our featured speaker will be Bobby Thompson, who will speak on dark sky observing and how to save the night sky. The Bechtel Telescope in the RPSEC Observatory will be open for public viewing. Members of the Astronomy Club of Augusta will have their telescopes set up on the lawn of

the science center to attract the gazing eyes of the myriad of visitors who will attend.

**Settlemyre Planetarium
Museum of York County
Rock Hill, SC**

Glenn Dantzler reports: We here have enjoyed a great winter season. The school groups are visiting in full force and public weekend shows are doing well also. This spring we will be running *Carolina Skies*, *Campfire Stories*, and *Bear Tales* as our weekend public shows. We had the pleasure of hosting a MediaGlobe presentation for a proposed planetarium in Hickory N.C. and enjoyed every minute of the day-long demo.

As a special note for other S.C. planetariums: please submit details of your season to me. I have emailed and talked to a number of other facilities but never seem to get any submissions. Please email me at dantzler@chmuseums.org and I will notify you of the due date. Only a paragraph or two is necessary.

That's from S.C. and here is wishing you a great spring.

TENNESSEE

contact: Kris McCall
Sudekum Planetarium
Nashville, TN
krisccall@adventuresci.com



Photo: Adam Thanz

Tennessee Organization of Planetariums (TOP)

The 2006 Tennessee planetarium meeting was “out of the world.” It was held at the Sudekum Planetarium in Nashville, TN. In attendance were, from left to right, Drew Gilmore, Deborah Mann, Allen Davis, Kris McCall, Mike Chesman, Jeri Panek, and Adam Thanz. Attendee not present in photo: Jana-Ruth Ford.

The Tennessee Organization of Planetariums (TOP) is held in January each year as an excuse for us to get together between SEPA conferences. For the last few years it has been held in Nashville because it is centrally located in the state, but plans are underway to meet in East Tennessee, especially while Nashville is undergoing construction.

The format of the meeting is extremely informal while the fellowship is paramount. Registration is kept minimal to cover the cost of snacks and beverages. Presentations have ranged from 10 minutes to more than an hour on a wide variety of topics. While it is called a Tennessee meeting, anyone and everyone is welcome. We've even had vendors join us from Konica-Minolta, Evans and Sutherland, and Spitz.

The 2006 meeting featured a variety of presentations. Mike Chesman gave us “Tales from the Dark Side”, a historical look at the development and changing technologies of the planetarium. Adam Thanz presented a complete program on the solar system. Allen Davis, Exhibit Artist from Kingsport, demonstrated “The Art of 3-D Animation: Pure and Simple”. It was amazing what he has accomplished using basic tools and his own creativity. Jeri Panek of E&S brought us up to date on the latest news regarding projector developments and new installations.

Kris and Drew not only hosted the event but presented their adaptation of the Detroit Science Center's *BLOWN AWAY: the Wild World of Weather*, complete with wind and rain. They also ran an excerpt from *MARS UPDATE*, a program that combines taped and live segments to offer the latest perspectives on Mars. The show was designed to be adaptable and versatile without giving the audience information overload or becoming dated. The show

is now ready for sale to other facilities so you can be ready for the next launch, landing, or groundbreaking discovery from the Red Planet.

Dates and location have not been set for 2007. This is a great way to get a new year off to a great start.

Bays Mountain Planetarium Kingsport, TN

Mike Chesman reports: Through Spring we are running an in-house production *Secrets of Taurus*. This is a program we produced back in 2001 that's been greatly improved by replacing most of the slides with video. Our next production will be a planetarium show using the package *Sky Tellers* from the Lunar and Planetary Institute. The program combines Native American skylore with modern scientific research. If you don't have the materials try contacting them at www.lpi.usra.edu/education/skytellers.

Big news, at least for me! After 30 years of service, I've announced my retirement from the City of Kingsport, effective March of 2006. I've observed a lot of changes at Bays Mountain over all those years. Also, I'm happy to have worked with some very talented people at this planetarium. In particular, I owe a debt of thanks to Charles Ferguson, George Fleenor and Adam Thanz for their contributions to the facility's success. Currently, I'm pursuing some personal business interests and I hope that some of the projects I'll be involved with will relate directly to the planetarium field.

My heartfelt thanks to all the folks in SEPA I have come to call friends and not just colleagues over the years. I hope our paths will continue to cross from time to time. No doubt, Adam will be diligently searching for candidates to fill a staff opening at the planetarium soon and I expect that you'll hear good things about Bays Mountain Planetarium for many years to come.

Bays Mountain Planetarium, part II

Adam Thanz writes: It is a busy time. If you don't already know, Mike Chesman retired from Bays Mountain at the beginning of March. After 30 years of service, he is venturing toward a more leisurely

lifestyle of dealing with space art prints. He is selling prints from many well-known artists and is wanting to provide space art for museums/planetaria to be on display. He is also working on producing his own shows. We wish him well in his future endeavors.

Back on the mountain, Adam is now the Planetarium Director and has the spring school rush to handle. As of this writing, there is the desire to hire an assistant, but the “make-it-so” has not yet been declared. In the meantime, the intrepid exhibits staff (Allen Davis and Deborah Mann) are helping out by covering the alternate weekends I don't work to do the public shows. Many thanks to them!

We are also working on an illustrated version of the *Sky Tellers* show from LPI. The audio track is excellent and I recommend it to anyone out there. The original production was intended for a classroom or small StarLab environment. Therefore, there are no visuals for the sky story part. The following science stories do have visuals, though. But, since our theater and visitors comprise a different environment, it was decided to create visuals in-house for the sky story parts. Therefore, the aforementioned exhibit staff, crack artists that they are, are creating stunning visuals for two of the sky stories. Their work, unique styles each, will compliment each other to make a great show for our summertime visitations. I feel that it will be quite successful.

The Bays Mountain Astronomy Club is also gearing up for Astronomy Day on May 6. Many activities are planned including special solar and nighttime viewing, displays and presentations, and the premier of the *Sky Tellers* program. A guest appearance by Paul Lewis from UT Knoxville will also grace our slate. Being a JPL Solar System Ambassador and a great presenter, he'll do a grand job.

To finish, I will see you at the conference in Cocoa, FL and will again do the archive. If you present something, please give me a digital version of your presentation and any handouts, documents, etc. I will also want digital photos from you. The 2005 archive had over 1000 photos and it was great to peruse them and relive the excitement!

May the Woodchucks be with you!

