

Southern Skies

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Summer 2009



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STS125-4 Atlantis, May 12, 2009

Credit: George Fleenor

Officers of the Southeastern Planetarium Association

President

Jon Elvert
Irene W Pennington Planetarium
La. Art & Science Museum
100 South River Road
Baton Rouge, LA 70802
(225) 344-9478; Fax (225) 344-9477
Email: jelvert@lasm.org

President-Elect

April Whitt
Jim Cherry Mem. Planetarium
Fernbank Science Center
156 Heaton Park Drive, N.E.
Atlanta, GA 30307
(678) 874-7102, Fax: (678) 874-7110
Email: april.whitt@fernbank.edu

Past-President

Adam Thanz
Bays Mountain Planetarium
853 Bays Mountain Park Road
Kingsport, TN 37660
(423) 229-9447, Fax: (423) 224-2589
Email: thanz@ci.kingsport.tn.us

Secretary/Treasurer

Mickey Jo Sorrell
Morehead Planetarium & Science Center
CB#3480 UNC-CH
Chapel Hill, NC 27599
(919) 962-3300
Email: sorrell@email.unc.edu

IPS Council Representative

John Hare
3602 23rd Avenue West
Bradenton, FL 34205
(941) 746-3522, Fax: (941) 750-9497
Email: johnhare@earthlink.net

Editorial Staff of *Southern Skies*

Southern Skies Editor

James Sullivan
Buehler Planetarium & Observatory
Broward College
3501 Davie Road
Davie, FL 33314
(954) 201-6681, Fax: (954) 475-2858
Email: jsulliva@broward.edu

Associate Editors

Technical Column

Robert Cruz
Miami Space Transit Planetarium
Miami Science Museum
3280 South Miami Avenue
Miami, FL 33129
305-646-4200
Email: rcruz@miamisci.org

Small Talk

Elizabeth Wasiluk
Berkeley County Planetarium
109 Ridge Road North
Hedgesville, WV 25427
(304) 754-3354, Fax: (304) 754-7445
Email: isbeth4@hotmail.com

Archeoastronomy Column

Woodrow W. Grizzle III
Rt. 4 Box 4917
Jonesville, VA 24263
Email: woodrow.grizzle@gmail.com

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President's Message

Jon Elvert

Irene W Pennington Planetarium
Baton Rouge, LA

As I write this message, the 2009 SEPA-Western Alliance Conference has just come to a close. The four very long days and four very short nights were hosted by the Adventure Science Center in Nashville, Tennessee and by the Sudekum Planetarium's Director Kris McCall and her tireless staff Drew Gilmore and Theo Wellington, who provided a warm hospitality, good food, and a chance to connect again with good friends. There were more than 125 delegates from SEPA, PPA, RMPA, SWAP,

Rates and submission formats for advertising space in SEPA's quarterly journal *Southern Skies* are:

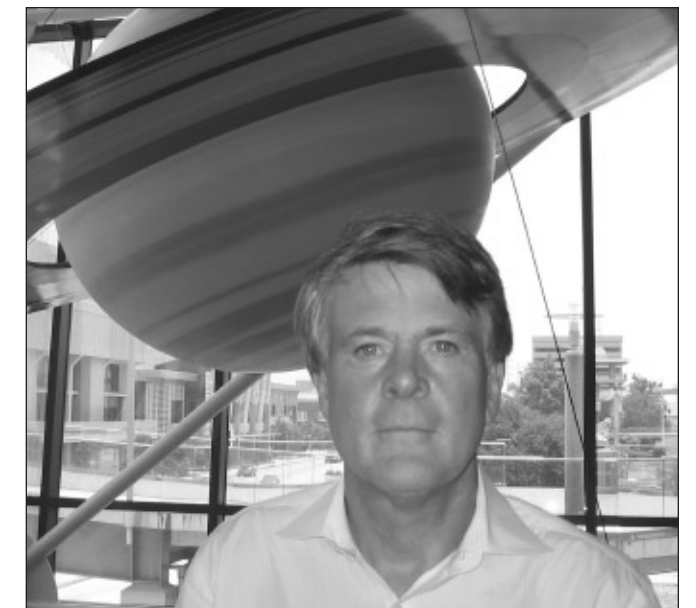
Rates	Dimensions
\$100.	Full-page 7" wide x 10" high
\$50.	Half-page 7" wide x 4.5" high
\$25.	Quarter-page 3" wide x 4" high

These rates are per issue and in B&W copy. The entire back cover of our journal is also available either in B&W for \$125, or in color for \$150. A 10% discount to any size ad can be offered only with a year's (four issues) commitment of advertising. Ads accepted on a space available basis. Ads must be camera ready and conform to dimensions listed. Payment must accompany advertisement order, made payable to the Southeastern Planetarium Association (send payment to Secretary/Treasurer Mickey Jo Sorrell). The underlying mission of our advertisements is to promote resources, products, and services related to the planetarium profession. SEPA reserves the right to refuse advertisements.

GPPA, GLPA, MAPS, and as far away as APS (Australasian Planetarium Society). If you haven't already seen the posted photos of the conference, go to the Sudekum web page and connect to the Flickr.com site.

The SEPA 2009 conference provided plenty of opportunities for informal professional exchange, a wealth of educational experiences, and a chance to meet vendors and see their latest technology, software and show products. I was especially pleased with the quantity and quality of the paper sessions, the workshops and the products and demonstrations in the vendor/exhibit area. I wish also to thank the SEPA Council for their work in supporting Kris and her staff whenever possible. Council met for three hours immediately after the opening reception, so Council members unfortunately missed several showings in the planetarium. Speaking of planetarium shows, I counted 34 shows and vendor demos that took place in the planetarium over four days - that's probably a SEPA record. This conference could not have been possible without all of you who attended and contributed to the exchange and sharing of ideas. Equally important are the vendors and sponsors whose financial support makes such a conference possible and who continue expanding the tools and ideas to help make our profession innovative and interesting for our planetarium audiences. Again, my sincere thanks to Kris and the entire

(Continued on page 14)



SEPA President Jon Elvert

IPS Report

John Hare
ASH Enterprises
Bradenton, FL

IPS 2012 will be in Baton Rouge!

The IPS Council voted on the conference site for 2012. Baton Rouge was selected over San Francisco after strong arguments were presented by both prospective hosts. Toulouse, France withdrew their invitation due to financial considerations. The dates for the Baton Rouge conference are July 22 - 26. This will mark the third time IPS has met within the SEPA region; the first being Richmond, VA in 1988 followed by Cocoa, FL in 1994.

Preliminary conference invitations were announced for the 2014 site. So far Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, Toulouse, France, and Athens, Greece have indicated they will submit formal bids. The deadline for receiving site bids is June 25, 2010. If you're site is interested in submitting an invitation please contact me for bidding details.

IPS 2010 will be held in Alexandria, Egypt next June 26-30. The conference Website is www.bibalex.org/ips2010/home/home.aspx. Visit the Website often for updates regarding the Conference as well as pre and post-conference tours.

The IPS Directory and Resource Guide will be published later this year and will be distributed to current members. The publication will be produced on CD with printed copies available on request. If possible, please review your current listing and furnish updates including equipment, personnel, and contact information, to Publications Chair, Dale Smith <dsmith@newton.bgsu.edu> no later than October 15th.

On a related topic, IPS is attempting to expand their data on portable planetariums, many of which exist under the radar. If you have a portable dome or know of one in your area please forward that information to Dale Smith!

IPS has established a committee to research and commemorate IPS members who are deceased. Committee members are Ian McClennan <ian@mclennan.com>, Dale Smith, and myself. Please forward any and all information you may have in this regard.

Editor's Message

James Sullivan
Buehler Planetarium & Observatory
Davie, FL

What a great conference! It was wonderful to see and visit with everyone. Thanks again for the contributions to the journal. Please keep them coming.

We can receive electronic files in most any format. Also, graphics can be received electronically or in hardcopy, including slides or photos, and will be converted to digital with sufficient resolution.



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

FOR SALE

MEDIAGLOBE  DIGITAL PLANETARIUM

This used projector is suitable for up to 30 ft. domes and is an excellent opportunity to upgrade to a digital, full-dome theater.

Further information about the projector can be found at <http://www.mediaglobepanetarium.com/mg1.html>

This is a bid-based sale, minimum bid \$35,000.

For further information contact:

Gary Meibaum, Planetarium Director
St. Charles Parish Library
PO 949
Luling, LA 70070
985-785-8471
gary.meibaum@stcharles.lib.la.us



Thanks to Broward College and its wonderful printing department for assistance.

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 to SEPA, c/o Mickey Jo Sorrell, Morehead Planetarium & Science Center, CB#3480 UNC-CH, Chapel Hill, NC 27599.

____ One Year, \$25 (\$15 outside SEPA geographical region)

____ Two Years, \$40

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: \$ _____

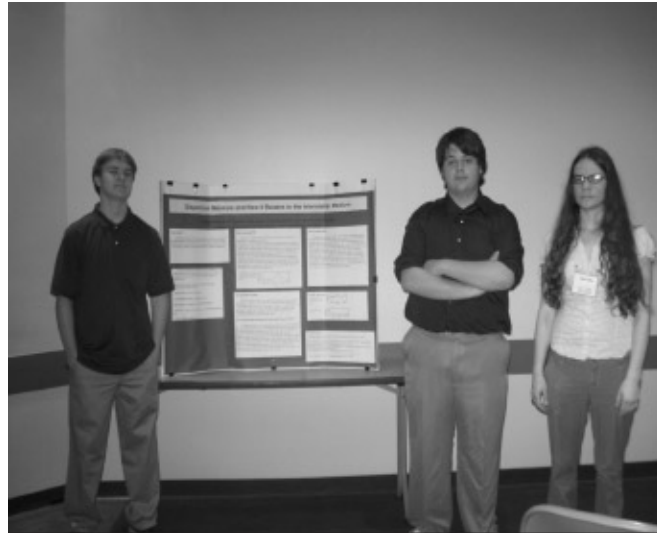
Small Talk

Elizabeth Wasiluk
Hedgesville High School Planetarium
Hedgesville, WV

Hey folks. Well the 2008-2009 school year is a wrap, here in Hedgesville, WV. I could have gone home at 1:00 p. m. and I probably will, but first I wanted to write up my reflections from the end of the school year.

On the 16th of April, I posted a sign for my astronomy students to meet in the science computer lab. I taught in "The Pod" a portable building outside of the school that contains 10 classrooms and has four bathrooms. There is both a stairway and a handicapped ramp leading up to the doors of "The Pod" and on this particular day, it had rained and then gotten cold and the water froze on the wood surface of the handicapped ramp and stairs leading to "The Pod." It was seven in the morning and the custodians had put salt on both the handicapped ramp and the stairs. Walking up the ramp, I noticed that it was slippery and made a mental note to try the stairs on the way down. But I had other things on my mind and coming down, I slipped and fell and either twisted my right arm and/or fell on it. I went on to teach and do hall duty, but it throbbed and hurt, so I put ice on it. I eventually made an appointment to get to see my doctor. She thought that it might be broken, so I drove for an X-ray and sure enough, ended up getting a splint and a cast on it. It just came off on June 4th. The month of May came and I suffered from both severe nosebleeds and

a kidney stone, yet I was able to take three of my students who have been searching data from the Robert C. Byrd Radio Telescope using an on-line data base at



Students at Capstone Event: My high school astronomy students at West Virginia University in May presenting a paper on "Dispersion Measurement". They are Cory LeMaster, April Whitt and Nathan Martin.



The Robert C. Byrd Radio Telescope

pulsarsearchcollaboratory.com, to a year end event at West Virginia University, (WVU) at Morgantown, WV along with other students their own age who have been searching for pulsars using the on-line data. They wrote and delivered a poster paper on one aspect of their work and showed it to many of their peers and the scientists from WVU. They also toured the physics, astronomy, engineering, and chemistry departments of the university to get an idea of the types of careers they could prepare for at the university. One thing came across loud and clear. Don't skimp on the math in high school.

Of course, once school let out, the very next week I was off to Nashville to the joint Southeastern Planetarium Association/Western Alliance Conference.

It was great to see everyone after having to miss last year's meeting in Lafayette, LA. Added to the excitement, was seeing old friends who live and work in the Western Alliance area. People like Mike



Sudekum Planetarium

know if there were any teachers in the workshop or not, but whatever people were doing in the workshop, they sounded like they were definitely having fun.

Me, I enjoyed attending a simple workshop given by Derek Demeter at Seminole Community College about "Hacking Planetarium Projectors: True Black with a \$3000.00 or less video projector." Great advice for the poor, small sized, small budgeted, small staffed planetarium like myself who can't yet afford to go full dome video, but wishing to upgrade their video projector.

Friends have been telling me that everyone has been praising the conference. It was fun, there was great food, plenty of Woodchuck, and much time to check out the vendor's area and crammed full of plenty of



Telescope at observatory: We had fun looking through this telescope at Saturn for the planetarium conference.

Murray from Clark Planetarium as well as Duke Johnson. It was fun oohing and ahing at Duke's wonderful pictures taken amongst the lovely Natural Bridge Scenery of Utah. And I must admit, I really did enjoy the people who were taking the workshop he gave called "Teachers Gone Wild." I don't

planetarium shows to view. There was also ample time to chit/chat with folks during breaks, meals and on the way to and from the awesome observatory trip. Speaking of the observatory trip, it was just icing on the conference to see the meteors, satellites and amazing view of the M51, the Whirlpool Nebula while there.

The sky of the Hybrid Chiron was truly breathtaking, as easily demonstrated during the constellation shootout. (What was I thinking entering with Robert Bonadour and Martin Radcliff and Adam Thanz anyway?) Heck I had fun in spite of it all.



Star Projector: The Chiron/Hybrid projector was literally the star of the conference.

Three sad notes did temper the joy of activities in Nashville. Carole Holmberg had her facility close and was unable to join us from Florida. Hurry and find another job, Carole, for despite us making our best attempts to welcome the newcomers at the conference, we did miss your welcoming message and smiling face.

Gary Meibaum, was too sick to attend the planetarium conference and Linda Hare had a card for people to sign. Gary hurry and get well.

The other was that news came to us from Phil Groce that planetarian Sue Grisward passed away on January 25 of this year. Sad news indeed for someone once so active in SEPA. Many of you have memories of going to the conference she hosted in Charleston, SC. I have many nice memories of joining her and her husband John on a sponsored eclipse cruise in 1991. What a wonderful time! I also learned what a gracious hostess and host they were. I later had went up to see her planetarium facility in Charleston and stayed with her and her husband over night on my way back from the planetarium conference in Roper Mountain. They introduced me to "Highlander," one strange movie. Sue, for those who don't know her, was fun-loving,

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Archeo-astronomy

North American Archaeoastronomy: Sites of the Eastern Woodlands, Hopewell Mounds of Ohio

Woodrow W. Grizzle III
Jonesville, VA

When we think of archaeoastronomy, we tend to think of far off places, with grand stone towers and megaliths stretching to the heavens. Yet, it turns out that there are places of archaeoastronomical interest here in North America. Teaching about them in the planetarium is a great way of getting audiences excited about indigenous american history and culture. What follows is a brief overview of studies published about the Hopewell mounds found in central Ohio, near Newark and Chillicothe.



Hand. Carved Mica, Hopewell. A.D. 100-400. Ohio. U.S. Department of the Interior 2005, public domain.

This mica carving is an example of the sorts of items traded along the "Hopewell Road," connecting Hopewell populations from the Great Lakes to the Gulf of Mexico.



Bird's Claw. Carved Mica, Hopewell, A.D. 100-400. Ohio. John Weinsten, © The Field Museum 2009

Another example of high Hopewell art and traded goods.

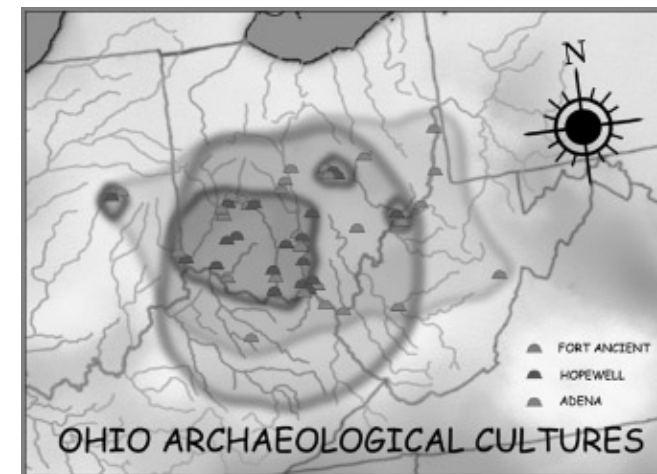
The Hopewell tradition spanned the Northeast and Midwest of North America from about 200 B.C. to A.D. 500. Hopewellian tradition, unlike many other indian populations, is not a single tribe, but a collection of populations connected by a network of trade routes. Through these routes, goods, services, and ideas flowed through a relatively large geographic area. These indian cultures represent centuries of advancement in art and mound building. It is Hopewell mounds that are of great archaeoastronomical interest.



Map showing the components of the Hopewell Interaction Sphere. Heironymous Roe, 2008.

This map shows the large geographic area inhabited by the various peoples of the Hopewell tradition of trade. This article discusses the earthworks of the Ohio Hopewell, formerly inhabiting the area of and around the present-day state of Ohio.

The Hopewell mounds are found in many areas, but the most interesting ones with regard to archaeoastronomy are found in the Ohio Valley. While the complete purpose of the mounds' construction is not currently understood, there has been great evidence uncovered that suggests that they have, at least, some astronomical alignment features. Geometric patterns, such as octagons and circles are common in Hopewell mounds. While no stellar alignments have been found, there are many scientists who feel that some mounds possess lunar and even solar alignments. Dr. John Eddy of the High Altitude Observatory in Boulder, Colorado, proposed such lunar alignments in an unpublished paper in 1978 for a large octagonal mound complex in Newark, Ohio. He and Dr. Bradley T. Lepper, Curator of Archaeology at Ohio Historical Society proposed that the octagonal mound at Newark was a lunar observatory of sorts, oriented to the 18.6 year lunar cycle of maximum and minimum risings and settings. Lepper stated in 1998 that indigenous peoples strongly incorporated astronomical markers into even the earliest earthworks. He concentrated on "pivotal horizon points" and lunar alignments, much as did Eddy.



Map showing earthwork sites of the indigenous peoples of Ohio. Heironymous Roe, 2008.

Owing to the Hopewell tradition of trade, Lepper further suggested that a "Great Hopewell Road" once joined Newark's astronomical center with similar structures 60 miles away in Chillicothe, Ohio. Common measurement units used in both locations form the backbone of his hypothesis. Notably, the two structures are exactly the same size, but are rotated 90° with respect to each other.

While most potential alignments appear to be lunar,



Mound Complex. Chillicothe, OH. Heironymous Roe, 2008.

there does appear to be scant evidence of at least some solar alignment. Christopher Turner noted that the Fairground Circle, part of the Newark complex, aligns to sunrise on May 4, corresponding to Beltane cross quarter. Further exact solar alignments are hard to discover, as many mound sites have been flattened or otherwise altered over the years by plowing and the development of an on-site golf course. Despite this misfortune, with greater measurement, Turner was able to hypothesize that many of these earthworks contain markers not just of the Beltane cross quarter, but for all the points of the Grand Octal, including equinoxes, solstices, and the other three cross quarters of Lughnasadh, Samhain, and Imbolc.

Through the work of Eddy, Lepper, and Turner, it seems that the Hopewell showed great advancement in their knowledge of celestial motions. It remains

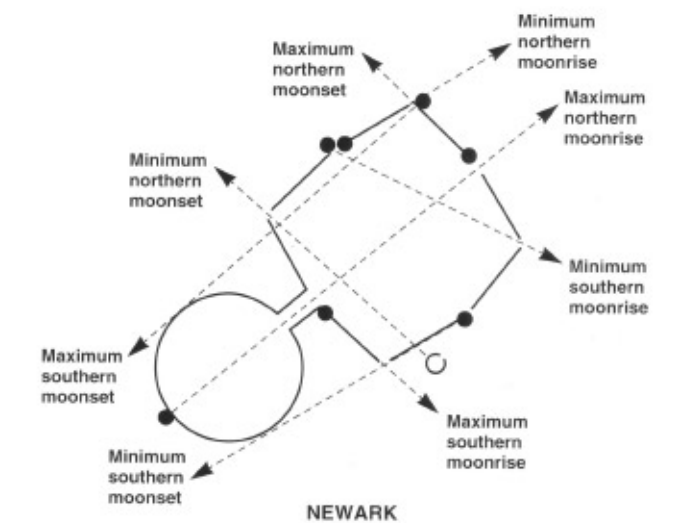


Diagram of Newark Octagon site, showing the various lunar alignment points. Octagon Moonrise, 2005

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Newark Mound Complex. Center for Electronic Reconstruction of Historical and Archaeological Sites, University of Cincinnati. 2009.

unclear how these mounds and this knowledge were used. One can easily speculate that it must have had something to do with agriculture or religious rites. Notably, many of the mounds contain burials of various sorts, which may allude to their spiritual use. Some things may never be known for sure, but the fact remains that, wherever and whenever we look, we find people looking up and seeking answers in a world that, without the heavens' external reference frame, can seem quite chaotic.

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Recommended Reading:

Romain, William F. Mysteries of the Hopewell: Astronomers, Geometers, and Magicians of the Eastern Woodlands. Akron, OH: Univ. of Akron Press, 2000.

Green Flash of the Sun

James Hook
Lumberton, NC

The clear skies and evening sunsets over the ocean were to make a wedding-to-be, one to remember. The dates were April 21, 22, and 23, 2009 in Redington Beach, Florida. A host of individuals were in attendance for a wedding party on the 23rd, for Marianne Beitelshes and Joe Morgan's marriage on the 25th., and I observed the evening sky and it was again exceptionally clear as it had been the previous two evening when I observed the green flash as the sunset over the gulf. I hoped the setting sun might show off its colors again at the proper time and if it did, this would be a rare event on three consecutive evenings. I told two or three people about the possibility of seeing a green flash at sunset and the message spread throughout the guests on the Redington Beach Strand like wild fire.

The time of reckoning was beginning when the sun started its majestic slide down the vault of the sky. It was known in eons past as the dying of the day, and now the Sun was etching its way down. All eyes were looking at the setting sun as its rim began to touch the distant horizon over an ocean; the Gulf of Mexico.



Seconds before the Green flash! Over the Gulf.

The sun slowly began to touch the distant horizon. It appeared to flatten out on the bottom edge,

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Bookends

Robin Byrne
Northeast State Community College
Blountville, TN

A Traveler's Guide to Mars by William K. Hartmann

I'd like to continue to contribute to the SEPA journal by writing about another book I recently read: "A Traveler's Guide to Mars: The Mysterious Landscapes of the Red Planet" by William K. Hartmann. If you are interested in Mars or planetary geology, this book is for you. The author was one of the participating scientists for the U.S. Mars Global Surveyor Mission, and has a long history in Mars research. He shares not only the historical progression of discoveries (including his own) about the nature of Mars, but also recent findings from Global Surveyor.

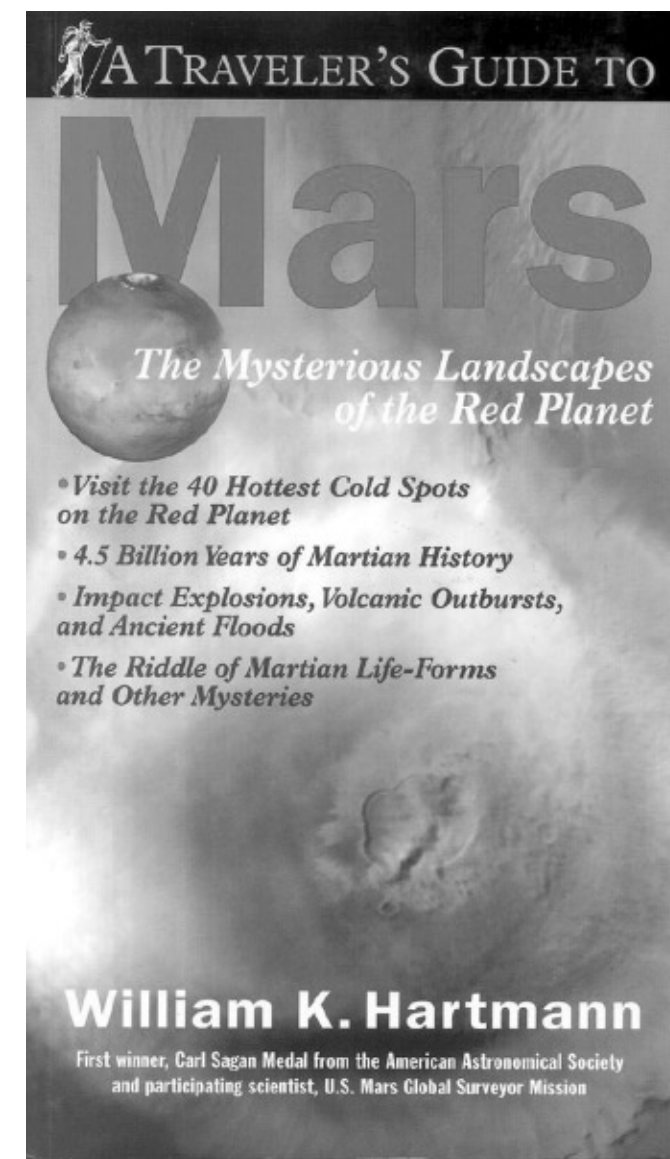
He begins with a brief overview of the historical ideas and discoveries, including notions of canals on Mars. This then leads to the bulk of the book, which is divided into three main sections, divided by major geologic eras of Mars. It begins with the Noachian era, which encompassed the first billion years of Mars' existence. This era was dominated by very active geology, a denser atmosphere and, potentially, significant amounts of running water on the surface. We next enter the Hesperian era, which lasted up to about 2 billion years ago (give or take a few hundred million years). During this era, water activity on Mars declined, with less and less frequent water flows occurring. The last era is the Amazonian, which brings us to present-day Mars. This is the Mars we recognize, with little to no geologic activity, very few cratering events, and hardly any evidence of liquid water.

For each geologic era, Hartmann focuses on regions of Mars that give clues to the Martian conditions at each time, making excellent use of Global Surveyor imagery throughout. There may be an entire chapter devoted to a single crater, volcano or other feature



and what it can tell us about what has occurred, with particular emphasis placed on water evidence. Other chapters look at larger regions, but still finely focused on the details revealed by Global Surveyor. Interspersed are Hartmann's personal reflections and experiences. He has been involved with Mars probes since Mariner 9, and almost every chapter includes

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SEPA

SEPA Business Meeting Nashville, TN June 18, 2009 1:45 pm Minutes by Mickey Jo Sorrell

President Jon Elvert introduced the SEPA Council, Journal Editor James Sullivan, Webmaster Drew Gilmore, and Parliamentarian Dave Hostetter. Secretary/Treasurer Mickey Jo Sorrell established that a quorum was present.

Conference Host Kris McCall offered announcements.

OLD BUSINESS:

The minutes of the 2008 Business Meeting were distributed and approved. (Linda Hare/Groce) The Treasurer's Report (July '08-June '09) was distributed and approved. (Fleenor/Whitt)

Mickey Jo Sorrell gave an update on the committee to establish a conference scholarship fund. Scholarships will be available for the 2010 conference. Dave Maness announced the scholarship fundraising auction for Friday night during the cocktail hour before the banquet. WAC members were invited to attend. Items for auction should be given to Dave. Phil Groce urged the Council to move forward with scholarship fund raising, encouraging vendor participation. George Fleenor suggested that a transfer from the SEPA savings account could jumpstart the availability of funds.

James Sullivan offered a journal update, asking members to continue to send in articles and photos, consider writing an occasional column, and provide information to the state coordinators. Online availability of journal issues was discussed, not to replace hard copies, but for accessibility. Past journal issues are already available on the SEPA website. Discussion included gauging member interest and protection of this member benefit. If the current issue is available online, should it be password protected? The current system seems to be working for now, so no plans were made for a change.

Drew Gilmore offered a website update. Thanks to Duncan Teague, journals back to the 90s are available on the SEPA website. John Hare offered to contribute journals back to the 70s. Drew reported that it is possible for SEPA to take payments online through the website if desired.

NEW BUSINESS:

Adam Thanz updated the membership on plans for the 2010 conference at Bays Mountain Park, Kingsport, Tennessee. The keynote speaker will be Dava Sobel and Chuck Brodsky will provide entertainment.

Two attractive and generous bids were offered for the 2011 conference:

* Steve Morgan invited SEPA to Rollins Planetarium at Young Harris College in the mountains of north Georgia, June 21-25.

* Chuck Rao of Mayborn Planetarium in Killeen, TX, invited SEPA to join the WAC conference the third week of June, 2011, on the campus of Central Texas College.

After some discussion about the dates and a possible conflict if SEPA chose Young Harris (especially for vendor support), SEPA members took a straw vote (YH 15, TX 10, Abstaining 5), and Council agreed to discuss this further and announce a decision at the Friday night banquet.

John Hare offered an IPS report. Currently 60% of SEPA's members are also IPS members. 80% of the new members are IPS members. An updated IPS directory will be published this fall. The next IPS conference will be June 26-30, 2010, in Alexandria, Egypt. At the upcoming IPS Council meeting, the 2012 conference site will be selected. Two bids are active: Baton Rouge and San Francisco. SEPA members took a straw vote, strongly supporting Baton Rouge as the site of the 2012 conference.

Linda Hare gave an update on Gary Meibbaum who was absent - and missed - at this year's conference.

Jon Elvert recognized WAC for their attendance at SEPA's 2009 conference.

The business meeting was adjourned. (Bell/Talley)

SEPA

2009 Treasurer's Report for the Southeastern Planetarium Association Submitted by Mickey Jo Sorrell June 18, 2009

All funds held at Branch Banking and Trust Company, Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

Balances as of 6/1/09:

Operating	1,138.27
Savings	24,380.73
Scholarship	<u>2,153.58</u>
Total	27,672.58

Operating Account

Balance (07/1/08)	3,474.29
Income:	
Memberships	4300.00
Journal Ads	1280.00
"The Planets"	260.00
Transferred from savings	2000.00
Total Income	<u>7,840.00</u>
Total credits	11,314.29

Expenses paid:

Journal (five issues)	2,301.86
Copying/Mailing/Office	122.46
Plaques	129.82
'10 Conference seed money	5,750.00
Let There Be Night DVDs	409.65
2008 Conference	1,295.43
Web host	166.80
Total Debits	<u>(10,176.02)</u>
Balance	1,138.27

Savings Account (7/1/08)	26,065.03
Interest earned	315.70
Transferred to Checking	<u>(2,000.00)</u>
Balance	24,380.73

Scholarship Account (7/1/08)	1,656.58
Auction	162.00
Donations	<u>335.00</u>
Balance	2,153.58

Green Flash (Continued from page 10)

"going down fast," I said. It then seemed to go in slow motion, half of the sun was now gone. All eyes were peering at the distant scene, the sun then finally, swiftly, slipped below the ocean and in a micro second the brilliant Green Flash appeared and was gone. The event was over!

Individuals that saw the flash were ecstatic and expressed a joy for having witnessed such a spectacular event. Someone indicated this event would be the beginning of an excellent marriage for Marianne and Joe. Scott Beitelshes, Linda Beitelshes, (Mother of Bride-to-be) Elizabeth Andrews, Heather Halford, and Susan Hooks were elated at what they had witnessed. One or two people questioned out loud - "it was the retina of the eye that caused the green flash."

I have looked for this event over a period of fifty (50) years without success, and it is astonishing that I finally observed it three evenings in consecutive order. I am indeed overjoyed for such an astronomical occurrence. I have looked for this special show of the sun in Mykonos, Greece; Key West, Florida; Ocean Isle Beach, and over the broad waters of the Pamlico Sound, North Carolina. The individuals that observed this special sunset saw it the first time they were aware of the Green Flash. This gave me a feeling of pleasure, and something to remember.

Bookends (Continued from page 11)

some of his memories of his earlier studies, discoveries, and how they relate to what we now know about Mars. Additionally, Hartmann is an accomplished space artist, with many of his illustrations gracing the pages of the book.

After reading this book, I felt like I had just completed a semester course dealing solely with Mars. It took me a couple months to finish. There's so much information, I needed time to digest what I had read before moving on. It's not a light read, or one for the beach, but "A Traveler's Guide to Mars" is an excellent way to learn almost everything we currently know about Mars, without having to pay the cost of tuition.

Adventure Science Center organization, as well as to the vendor support.

The SEPA business meeting is an important component to our conferences, but since this is not an election year and that we had no changes to our By-Laws our business meeting was consequently short. Adam Thanz reported extensively on how his facility is preparing for SEPA 2010 at Bays Mountain Park & Planetarium in Kingsport, TN. Mark your calendars for 8-12 June of next year for what looks like an incredible conference. *The Art of Storytelling* is the conference's theme and Dava Sobel will be the keynote speaker. The Bays Mountain Planetarium recently completed a \$1.3 million upgrade that included a Zeiss Skymaster ZKP 4 projector with a Zeiss Spacegate Quinto full-dome video projection system along with the Uniview 3-D database/interface. The MeadowView Marriott resort is our conference hotel and is located in the rolling foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains. For further details go to www.sepadomes.org and click on the link to the Bays Mountain SEPA 2010 link.

In other business, Dave Hostetter from Lafayette, LA was reappointed as our parliamentarian. And after much debate, Council members decided upon the Rollins Planetarium at the Young Harris College in Young Harris, Georgia as our SEPA 2011 conference site. Steve Morgan will be our conference host. SEPA members declined a conference invitation for 2011 from the Mayborn Planetarium in Killeen, TX and I wish to thank Chuck Rau and the WAC affiliates for extending the invitation to SEPA. To review the business meeting's details, as well as other old and new business proceedings, read the minutes taken by Mickey Jo Sorrell posted in this issue, along with her Treasury's report.

Kris reported that over \$800.00 was raised in our conference silent auction! Again, these revenues directly support our Scholarship fund, so thank you to those who purchased items from the auction. Finally, during the conference banquet, two award plaques were given: one to our conference host the Sudekum Planetarium, and the other to our Past-president Adam Thanz. On behalf of the SEPA membership, thank you Adam for serving as 2007 - '08 SEPA President. And a big thanks to Drew Gilmore for maintaining both this year's confer-

ence web site and his continued work on keeping up SEPA's web site.

There's been a noticeable increase in submissions to the *News from SEPA States* section in the past couple *Southern Skies* journal. Please continue sharing updates on what's happening at your planetarium.

Since moving to Louisiana, I've been waiting for an opportunity to finally make the trip over to Cocoa Beach to see a shuttle launch. In late April I decided the opportunity had come and I needed to see the STS-125 launch on 11 May. This mission, of course, was to the Hubble Space Telescope for its final refurbishing. For those of you who have witnessed a shuttle or rocket launch you know just how incredible and inspiring the moment of launch really is. The experience is similar, but not quite as revered, as witnessing a total solar eclipse. Both experiences, however, are addictive and I'm already planning on seeing one of the remaining shuttle launches.

Remember your State Coordinator!

ALABAMA: Mitzi Adams,
mitzi.adams@nasa.gov
GEORGIA: David Dundee,
DavidD@telluseum.org
KENTUCKY: Rachel Connolly,
rachel.connolly@louisville.edu
FLORIDA: George Fleenor,
Jetson1959@aol.com
LOUISIANA: Jon Elvert,
jelvert@lasm.org
MISSISSIPPI: James Hill,
jhill@rainwaterobservatory.org
NORTH CAROLINA: Patsy Wilson,
wilsonpk@rss.k12.nc.us
PUERTO RICO: James Sullivan,
jsulliva@broward.edu
SOUTH CAROLINA: Gary Senn,
SennG@sc.edu
TENNESSEE: Kris McCall,
krimccall@adventuresci.com
VIRGIN ISLANDS: James Sullivan,
jsulliva@broward.edu
VIRGINIA: Kelly Herbst,
Kelly.Herbst@thevlm.org
WEST VIRGINIA: Andrea Anderson,
aanderso@access.k12.wv.us

entertaining and a great lover of astronomy and the planetarium field and just an overall terrific person. My sympathies to John and her extensive family. Feel free to share with me any thoughts you might have about Sue here in the column. Sue taught me, never to get off the ship on an eclipse cruise.

Finally, I would be amiss if I didn't put in writing my apologies to Cristi Whitworth. She did a tremendous job with a cool project that the Pisgah Astronomical Research Institute (PARI) near Rosman, NC of getting people to classify spectra from an archive of glass plates from their Astronomical Plate Data Archive a la Annie Jump Cannon. This is another of the new trend to citizen science similar to galaxy zoo, SETI at home, classifying dust particles from Stardust and many more that I am sure you can name. I had a comment that after working the past year on the pulsar project with high school students, I would have trouble having students get involved with the pulsar project. Even though I would require students in my astronomy to do work on the pulsar project, my concern was that it took up way too much class time and it took time away from other topics in astronomy. Students were very

unmotivated to work on their own, and felt they should be paid to do what they called "astronomers' dirty work." My concern is that when introducing students to astronomy, they can get very turned off to it by forcing them to do on-line citizen science projects. I seem to get more students turned on by going to star parties and looking through telescopes and visiting the planetarium. That seems to have more of a "wow factor" and a turn-on factor. They seem puzzled why anyone would want to wade through piles of data to make discoveries that way. I am not against "citizen science" projects like the one at PARI, in fact, I hope to use it with my students. I am just having a hard sell with it to my high school astronomy students. How do I get the point across that these projects are great, without turning off my students to astronomy?

Your comments on any matters discussed here are always welcome, however, you are also welcome to submit information about any other matter you feel might be of importance to people in small planetaria. If you don't share your thoughts, then, I am just talking to myself, so please share your thoughts!

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Sometimes, when it comes to planetarium systems, it's best to be single-minded!

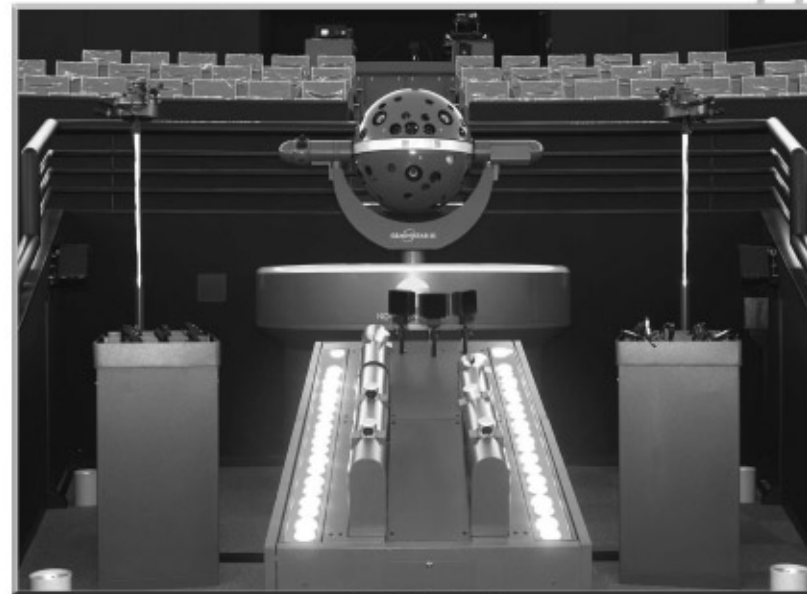
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<http://www.av-imagineering.com>

All Other Inquiries Contact:

Konica Minolta Planetarium Co., Ltd.
2-3-10 Nishihonmachi, Nishi-ku
Osaka, 550-0005 Japan
Tel: +81.6.6110.0570
Fax: +81.6.6110.0572
<http://www.mediglobepanetarium.com>
<http://www.konicaminolta.com/planetarium/index.html>

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.

Bishop Planetarium South Florida Museum Bradenton, FL

George Fleenor reports: The Bishop Planetarium is a multipurpose, "state of the art" domed theater, boasting one of the most advanced all-digital projection systems in the world. Incorporating unidirectional stadium style seating, high definition DVD, TV, and PowerPoint projection, and a digital 25,000 watt Dolby 5.1 surround sound system, the Bishop is capable of accommodating a wide range of programs. The planetarium is a remarkable astronomy education resource, allowing visitors to explore their universe through traditional live star talks and immersive virtual journeys to the far reaches of the cosmos.

Current shows include: *Extreme Planets*, *The Ultimate Universe*, *Secret of the Cardboard Rocket*, *Two Small Pieces of Glass*, a Live Star Talk and *Rock Hall of Fame*.

The planetarium dome is also used for an "American Music" film series.

July 9 - *Elvis: That's the Way It Is* (1970), showcase artist: Eddy Rivers
July 16 - *Les Paul: Chasing Sound* (2007); showcase artist: Preston Whaley, Jr.
July 23 - *Pete Seeger: The Power of Song* (2007); showcase artist: James Gromko
July 30 - *Standing in the Shadows of Motown* (2002); showcase artist: Tbone Rhodes
August 6 - *Leonard Cohen: I'm Your Man* (2005); showcase artist: Dennis Brock
August 13 - *Joni Mitchell: Woman of Heart and Mind* (2003); showcase artist: Mindy Simmons
August 20 - *Don't Look Back* (Bob Dylan 1967); showcase artist: Ishmael Katz
August 27 - *Mayor of the Sunset Strip* (2003); showcase artist: Electric Myakka

The museum is also getting ready to celebrate Snooty the manatee's 61st birthday with a Bash and Wildlife Awareness Festival. This annual event will celebrate Snooty's 61th birthday and promote wildlife awareness. The event held in the Spanish Plaza on July 18th and is free from 10 am to 2 pm for all Snooty's friends and fans.

The celebration will feature children's games and art activities; free cookies and juice for the children, a display of Snooty's birthday cards submitted for the card contest plus much, much more!!!

Buehler Planetarium Broward 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*, *The Endless Horizon*, *Footsteps*, *Explorers of Mauna Kea* and *Skywatchers of Ancient Mexica*.

We continue to rotate shows on Wednesdays, and these shows include *The People*, *The Dawn of Astronomy*, *Astrology: Fact or Fiction*, *2061: Secrets of Mars*, *To Worlds Unknown* and *A Dozen Universes*.

The Buehler Observatory has viewing four times a week. It has free public observing Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday evenings. In addition, we observe the Sun on Wednesday afternoons. We usually have one

(Continued on page 18)

telescope set up to view sunspots, and watch flares through a Hydrogen-Alpha filter on another.

**Astronaut Memorial Planetarium and Observatory
Brevard Community College
Cocoa, FL**

Mark Howard reports: On Saturday June 13th, the Astronaut Memorial Planetarium and Observatory hosted a lecture by Brian Day, Education Outreach Specialist for the LCROSS mission. In July, we will be running our seasonal holiday favorite *Star-Span-gled Spectacular* laser show along with *The Doors* and *Pink Floyd - The Wall*. Loch Ness Productions' *The Cowboy Astronomer* is showing Wednesdays at 2pm. SEPA's collaborative show *The Planets* and our original production *Amazing Universe* run on Fridays and Saturdays at 7pm.

Find us on Facebook! The BCC planetarium now maintains a Facebook page. If you have an account, visit our website and click on the Facebook to become a fan.

**Planetarium
Calusa Nature Center
Fort Myers, FL**

Carole Holmburg reports: Life at the facility keeps on going. I liked the two pictures attached, of Grace Perkins (Carrie Nameth, photographer), because sometimes it's those enthusiastic kids that remind us how important the Nature Center is.

Meet Grace Perkins, (age 4) who aspires to be an



Grace Perkins, aspiring astronaut



Grace Perkins, aspiring astronaut

astronaut someday. She came all dressed up to the Planetarium to see the shows. She was adorable!

GEORGIA
*contact: David Dundee
 Tellus Museum
 Cartersville, GA
 DavidD@tellusmuseum.org*



**Planetarium
Fernbank Science Center
Atlanta, GA**

April Whitt reports: Astronaut Shane Kimbrough visited Fernbank Thursday evening, June 25th, describing his shuttle flight activities. Two weeks of Lockheed Summer Camp finished with campers competing to design and fly model aircraft.

Two planetarium programs ran during the summer: "More Than Meets the Eye" from Loch Ness adapted for the general public, and the in-house production of "Adventures in Starland" for the family

show. "New Horizons: Bridge to the Future" continues to be offered with our "Sky Tonight" program on Saturday mornings.

The 40th anniversary of the Apollo 11 moon landing was celebrated with "To the Moon and Beyond," from USC - Aiken's Ruth Patrick planetarium. "Two Small Pieces of Glass" runs as the fall program for the general public. Thanks to Jim Craig and Dave Hostetter for production help!

Star Lab traveled to branches of the DeKalb County library system, and the observatory was busy with visitors (looking for Mars as big as the full moon?).

International Year of Astronomy activities continued, with the opening of the "Earth from Space" exhibit at the central branch of Atlanta's public library, one of our IYA partners.

New programs for school groups, aligned with Georgia science standards, are in production and will be offered during the 2009-2010 school year.

**Planetarium
Tellus NW GA Science Museum
Cartersville, GA**

David Dundee reports: Well the hot news from our planetarium is that we've been open about 5 months and we have had over 60,000 visitors so far. We have been playing "Oasis in Space" and "Black Holes," plus running two live tours of the sky a day, and also "Wilbear." We run 63 shows a week just to keep up with demand. It's been great. The summer has already started to be busy with two or three sell outs per day on average.

Our observatory opened this past spring with a brand new 20" Planewave telescope. We have already been putting some of the images taken through the telescope into the planetarium. We had over 1,000 people turn out for astronomy day, even though the weather was not the best until night fall. The Atlanta Astronomy Club and the Northwest Georgia Astronomy Association have helped us with three big observing events, by bringing their telescopes.

July 11 we open a special temporary exhibition of

model trains at Tellus. This will be a 120 feet of track through a highly detailed layout of city, rural and seaside scenery. This will be at Tellus through the first week of January.

We are planning to have special events July 18 - 20 in honor of the anniversary of the Moon landing. We will be playing "Dawn of the Space Age" and have special demonstrations in the exhibit hall with our Apollo models.

In August "A night at the Museum" will happen on the night of the 8th with a number of historical figures will come to life in the museum, including Galileo conducting tours in the planetarium.

**Georgia Southern Planetarium
Georgia Southern University
Statesboro, GA**

Becky Lowder reports: I'd like to share some of the renovations in our planetarium that have taken place over the last 2 years: a newly cleaned/painted dome and new seating, all done in-house.

Our dome was cleaned and painted by physics staff and student volunteers in the summer of 2007, looks so much better! This was the first time this had been done since it was installed in the early 70's, so it REALLY needed it.



Painting the dome

During December '08 - Jan '09, our physics staff and student volunteers came together again for the seating renovations. All the old original "gold harvest" hard fiberglass bucket chairs with baskets underneath for books were taken out along with the old carpet, and brand new reclining padded bench seating was put in. Our electronic engineer in the physics



Old Seating

department, Mr. Robbie Deal, is the genius inventor, designer, and builder of this new and comfortable seating. Our visitors and students finally have a place to rest their heads during a star show, and the seats recline at the push of a lever on our console!

After everything was taken out of the planetarium, we had to go around with a hammer to knock out the hundreds of old chair bolts coming up out of the bare concrete flooring. All the old wiring was pulled out of the floor and new wiring installed to control the motors for reclining. Long pieces of metal were cut and welded to form the frames of the seating. All had to be painted with primer and were then installed with the motors in the planetarium along with new carpeting. Next all the plywood was cut, painted and installed. Another brilliant idea Robbie had was to enclose the bases with folding down doors and use the interior for storage. This also safely enclosed the motors, but we didn't think about little feet kicking and making a bit of noise at first during each show. Asking the kids to sit with their legs criss-crossed on the seats solved that problem.



Almost done!

We sewed and stapled/screwed vinyl material to fit the bottoms and backs of each row of seats with fire retardant foam cushioning inside. Touch up painting where the metal frame was showing and voila, brand new comfortable and affordable seating for the planetarium! Without Robbie, all the wonderful staff, and students volunteering many long hours into the night this never would have been possible and we can't thank them enough! Now ALL the seats in the planetarium are great seats for seeing the stars!

**Rollins Planetarium
Young Harris College
Young Harris, GA**

Steve Morgan reports: The Rollins Planetarium celebrates its 30th year of operation in 2009. The International Year of Astronomy will be coming to Young Harris this fall as we begin running the full-dome version of "Two Small Pieces of Glass" as our Friday evening public show. A free public observing session at the YHC Observatory will follow each showing, weather permitting.

The big news from Rollins is that we were recently selected to host the 2011 SEPA conference here in Young Harris! Proposed dates are Tuesday June 21 - Saturday June 25, 2011. Young Harris is nestled in the midst of the north Georgia mountains, just a few miles from Brasstown Bald, the tallest peak in the state with an elevation of 4,784 feet. The conference hotel will be the Brasstown Valley Resort <www.brasstownvalley.com>, a spectacular mountain lodge resort located just a mile or so from our campus.

We will also make some of our college dorm rooms available as a low cost lodging option for the more budget-conscious SEPA members.

FYI, Young Harris College is a private, liberal arts college with a current enrollment of about 700 students. Traditionally a two-year school, YHC became a four-year college in 2008, and enrollment is expected to nearly double in the next few years. The Rollins Planetarium presents public and school programs under a 40 foot dome with a seating capacity of 109. One of our claims to fame is that in 2002, we became the site of the world's first installation of the GOTO CHRONOS star projec-

tor. In 2008, we added a Sky-Skan Definiti DLP 6-PLUS full-dome digital system, giving us the "best of both worlds" in terms of projection technology.

Mark your calendars now to join us in the beautiful north Georgia mountains for SEPA 2011!

LOUISIANA

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



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

Jon Elvert reports: We had a few days of so called down time between the end of the school year and the beginning of summer camps and the start up of new shows. Our annual astronomy camp exceeded our attendance expectations. We've been fortunate to have had really strong support from schools this past year, giving us our second best annual attendance since opening in 2003. We hope to continue seeing these numbers climb beginning in the fall.

We opened our summer public show, *Probing the Heavens with Galileo*, and a new visual music show *Voices in the Dark*. Both shows are North American premiers and we're hoping our summer tourist enjoy them. We offered another Mississippi *Star Party on the Levee*, but inclement weather prevented us from observing. Our portable e-Planetarium set a new record for attendance this past year and its summer schedule promises to remain busy. It's still the International Year of Astronomy and we continue to remind our visitors during every show to get involved in astronomy events throughout the remaining year.

**Lafayette Planetarium
Lafayette Natural History Museum
Lafayette, LA**

Dave Hostetter reports: The Lafayette Natural His-

tory Museum & Planetarium opened the IPS program *Two Small Pieces of Glass* in its traditional format on June 6. It will run through the end of August, to be followed by our live program, *Our Star, the Sun*. Planning is beginning for an updated version of *Moons of the Solar System* in the fall. In addition to *Two Small Pieces of Glass* on the weekends, there are presentations of *The Sky Tonight* daily except Mondays and a live program entitled *Space Flight for Kids* on Tuesday mornings, as well as morning presentations for day cares, summer schools, rec centers, and other youth groups.

Planetarium staff will also assist Education Curator Dawn Edelen with a week-long space themed *Cosmic Camp* during July.

IYA summer activities include weekly lunchtime solar viewing from the sidewalk beside the Museum on Wednesdays and sidewalk solar astronomy during downtown Art Walks on the evenings of the second Saturday of each month.

Since Lafayette's next school year begins as early as August 11, plans are being made for our regular school shows as well as for the introduction of French language programming during the school year.

**Sawyer SPACE DOME Planetarium
Sci-Port: LOUISIANA'S Science Center
Shreveport, LA**

Greg Andrews reports: There is much to do with the coming of summer. IYA2009 continues to provide golden opportunities to promote astronomy. We received *Two Small Pieces of Small Glass* and added it to our repertoire of Space Dome Programs. We've developed several astronomy programs for school groups. Recently, we sponsored "Sun Cookie Sundays" during the month of June. Every Sunday in June, we spent an hour on the Windham Family Rooftop Terrace making models of the sun using cookies. We complimented the program with solar observing using an H-alpha telescope. The temperature reached 90°F or more, and there were hardly any clouds in the sky when we hosted the program. We did provide water and we set up a pavilion for shade, but if you've ever experienced a full summer in the South, you'll know the shade isn't as helpful as you'd like it to be. Despite these conditions, the

News from SEPA States (Continued from page 21)

influx of visitors was astounding! Our young visitors were interested in the cookies and our older visitors were intrigued by the solar viewing. Hopefully this leads to more rooftop activities.

July marks one of our biggest months for celebrating IYA2009. We will be celebrating the 40th Anniversary of the Moon Landing on July 20th. We will host Solar System Saturdays with Dr. Laura Whitlock, a resident Astrophysicist at one of our local colleges. Our Summer Space Series consists of several programs throughout the month of July. July 4th translates to *carpe diem* - the festivities offer a chance for Sidewalk Astronomy activities and solar observing. Truly, 2009 is an exciting year and we look forward to building on the momentum gained from this year

MISSISSIPPI

contact: James Hill

Rainwater Observatory & Planetarium

French Camp, MS

jhill@rainwaterobservatory.org



Rainwater Observatory & Planetarium French Camp, MS

James Hill reports: We are planning to have live internet images from the .65m Ritchey research telescope available on line in the fall. DVD images of requested objects will be available on request.

Rainwater Observatory & Planetarium was one of 20 planetariums to receive a grant of 100 IYA Galilean telescopes from the ASP. We will be having a NASA Space Grant funded educator workshop November 6-7. All participants in this 10 hour event will go home with one of these telescopes to use in the classroom.

The dates for the 2010 Mid-South Star Gaze and Astronomy conference to be held at Rainwater Observatory & Planetarium will be April 12-15, 2010.



Helen at the Sangre Telescope

NORTH CAROLINA

contact: Patsy Wilson

Woodson Planetarium, Salisbury, NC

wilsonpk@rss.k12.nc.us



Carolina Association of Planetarium Educators (CAPE)

Curt Spivey reports: The Catawba Science Center in Hickory, NC is hosted this year's CAPE Conference, with generous sponsorship from KMP/AVI. The Conference was held on Monday, June 29th and Tuesday, June 30th with a total of 16 participants, including 2 vendors. Participants were from North Carolina and South Carolina, from developed and functioning planetariums and astronomy facilities to those in planning and development stages.

Featured speakers included: the PARI Institute talking about the SCOPE Program, Darlene Smalley and Gary Senn of USC-Aiken discussing "Glean-

ings From Galileo's Notebook," Curt Spivey of CSC sharing the history of constellations, and a demonstration of the Millholland Planetarium Konica Minolta MediaGlobe II system. On Monday night the group traveled to the Lucille Miller Observatory for stargazing with the Catawba Valley Astronomy Club. They were treated to a rare clear, summer night with optimal viewing conditions.

PARI StarLab Pisgah Astronomical Research Institute Rosman, NC

Christi Whitworth reports: Pisgah Astronomical Research Institute (PARI) has a full schedule planned for the summer and early fall. Education Director Christi Whitworth presented SCOPE (Stellar Classification Online - Public Exploration) in a workshop at SEPA, in Nashville mid-June. Christi and Astronomer/Educator Bob Hayward presented SCOPE to CAPE in Hickory, North Carolina at the end of June. PARI invites all SEPA members to join in the citizen science effort to classify stars at <http://scope.pari.edu>. SCOPE allows users to classify spectral data from the Astronomical Photographic Data Archive for future use by scientists when needed.

Burroughs-Wellcome Fund renewed funding for Space Science Lab which will lead over thirty Western North Carolina high school students in a study of the moon over the next year. The first half of this group has completed building their optical telescopes and is beginning their observations. The second group arrives at on July 27. In the meantime, thirty high school age students from around the world will be at PARI for "Above and Beyond: Duke TIP Field Study in Astronomy, Astrophysics, and Astrobiology." To help support so many student endeavors and PARI'S research efforts, five undergraduate interns (see photo) will be assisting during the summer along with the CISCO/PARI Kenan Fellow Derek Dennis and Science Educator Matt Kinnaird.

On the public front, our popular Evening at PARI sessions will feature an Evening Light Photography Workshop in July and Near Earth Objects in August. Evening at PARI is held on the second Friday of each month. Other public outreach oppor-



2009 PARI Interns

tunities coming up in 2009 include the PARI Star Party (September 18-20), a Radio Jove Workshop (October 9-11), and a School of Galactic Radio Astronomy Workshop, a.k.a. Smiley Workshop (November 14). For more information on any programs mentioned, go to www.pari.edu <<http://www.pari.edu>> or email cwhitworth@pari.edu.

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

Patsy Wilson reports: Summer day camp groups are being scheduled to view a combination program that showcases the AVI SkyLase system and the current night sky, "Lasers and Stars." In addition to groups of children, we are also hosting the local Rotary Club's breakfast meeting and doing a special presentation for a local church's Vacation Bible School.

The regular 3rd Saturday planetarium shows will resume in August as school begins again with a different program scheduled each month. The shows will alternate between traditional planetarium presentations and featured laser shows.

"Astronomy's Awesome" camp for rising 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade students is set to kick off on July 20th. Participants will be doing hands-on astronomy

activities from the Astronomy From the Ground Up Workshop sponsored by the Astronomy Society of the Pacific. Of course, the first day, we will be commemorating the 40th anniversary of Apollo 11 and the Neil Armstrong's first footsteps on the Moon. Throughout the Spring we did "Planetarium Pot-pourri" for numerous special groups. This hour-long show incorporated a 20 minute live sky, 20 minute laser segment and "Two Small Pieces of Glass."

In August, Patsy will travel to Huntsville, Alabama with 25 students from the local school system for a week of Space Camp. This trip is taken every 2 years and is always anticipated by local families.

SOUTH CAROLINA

contact: Gary Senn
DuPont Planetarium, Aiken, SC
SennG@sc.edu



The Editor thanks Glenn Dantzler for his valued contributions as State Coordinator, and welcomes Gary Senn in that role.

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

Gary Senn reports: The DuPont Planetarium at the Ruth Patrick Science Education Center (RPSEC) on the campus of the University of South Carolina Aiken released its first planetarium production for distribution to other planetariums called, *To the Moon and Beyond*. Please check our webpage, <http://rpsec.usca.edu/planetarium/MoonBeyondShowKit.html> for more information. The show featured our fantastic scriptwriter, Darlene Smalley and some local media talent for voices. A local television news celebrity from WJBF TV in Augusta, GA, Mary Morrison, was the narrator for the show. A local radio celebrity from WKSX, Tony Baughman, read the parts of two of the main characters. The characters of a mother and daughter were read by mother/daughter team, Laura and Moriah Melvin.

The planetarium partnered with the Astronomy Club of Augusta to sponsor Earth and Sky Night on National Astronomy Day, which was on May 2. Unfortunately, it was a bit cloudy and there was a little rain during the event. In spite of this, there was some opportunity for patrons to get glimpses of the Moon and Saturn. Members of the club set up telescopes on the lawn in front of our facility and we had the Bechtel Telescope housed in the RPSEC Observatory open. In addition to the telescope viewing, we also provided a number of hands-on activities about the Earth and sky.

A new initiative for us concluded on National Astronomy Day with the announcement of winners of our youth art competition. We received 216 entries reflecting an astronomy theme with overall dimensions not exceeding 15"X18"X4". Student prizes included ribbons for 1st, 2nd, 3rd place and honorable mention. Artists from the university art department and the community judged the competition. The winners were invited back On June 16 for a free planetarium show and ice cream party. The ice cream came first, and the students were escorted to the show after consumption and cleanup. In addition, the teacher with the most student entries earned a gift certificate to the Science Store.

On the same evening, we debuted our presentation of *Two Small Pieces of Glass* (TSPOG). We presented content from the DVD, which has garnered much discussion from the planetarium community. We augmented the show with slides and Digistar sequences. Some of the sections that looked somewhat awkward through our single video projector system were replaced with other visuals. The show was well received, and we plan to present it again this fall. A few hands-on activities were included as part of the presentation to allow the patrons to explore phases of the Moon, phases of Venus and the Galilean moons. We plan to update the show using some other Digistar sequences made available to the Digistar Users Group (DUG) by the fine folks at the Faulkner Planetarium in Twin Falls, Idaho.

On a related note, Darlene Smalley and Gary Senn presented *Gleaning Insights from Galileo's Notebook* at the annual Carolina Association of Planetarium Educators (CAPE) held at the Millholland

Planetarium at the Catawba Science Center in Hickory, NC. The presentation included information about the hands-on activities used during the presentation of TSPOG. The staff at the Catawba Science Center were wonderful hosts of the CAPE conference. We encourage other planetarians from the Carolinas to attend the next CAPE conference that will be held on August 2 and 3, 2010 at the OmniSphere at the Natural Science Center in Greensboro, NC. CAPE is a wonderful organization that provides Carolina planetarians the opportunity to share and network.

Our big news in June was that the RPSEC acted as a nice, large lightning rod during a severe thunderstorm. The storm damaged all of the network routers in the building. None of our essential planetarium equipment was connected to the network, but the lightning found its way to the planetarium equipment anyway. Five slide projectors, the automation computer, a portion of the cove lighting system and six assorted controller boxes were damaged during the storm. It took some time and expense to get the planetarium back into normal operating condition, but we were able to resume shows fairly quickly without too much inconvenience for our patrons.

In June, the planetarium presented *In My Backyard* from the Calgary Science Centre and *Digistar "Laser" Fantasy*, which is a local production. In July, our local production now available for distribution, *To the Moon and Beyond*, was shown to the public. In August, the planetarium will present *Mission to Mars* and *Digistar Virtual Journey*, two local productions.

TENNESSEE

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



Bays Mountain Planetarium Kingsport, TN

Adam Thanz reports: As I write this, it is just two

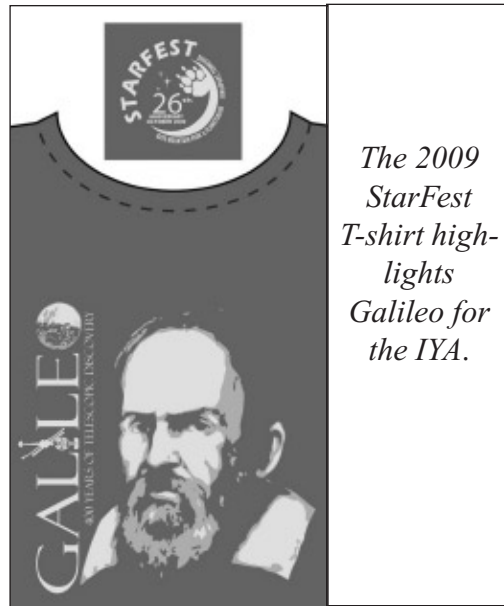
weeks of anticipation to the 2009 conference in Nashville, TN. Kris McCall, Drew Gilmore, and Theo Wellington of the Sudekum Planetarium, and the rest of the staff of the Adventure Science Center are busily getting ready for their big event. I know this is not about Bays Mountain, but they are our planetarium neighbors and we know they are going to do a great job. I can't wait to see them and all of our colleagues in this rarified career. At the event, we will be showing 10 minutes worth of our premier full-dome program called "Connections." Produced totally in-house, we are proud to present this production to you.

We at Bays Mountain are also getting ready, but for the 2010 conference. It is set for June 8-12, 2010. We will be your host and already have an exciting agenda set. I have been keeping mum about the details as I didn't want to detract from the glory of the Nashville bash. But, all will be revealed at the Business Meeting at the 2009 conference. By the time you read this, the details should be posted on our website. We are very excited about the schedule of events. The theme is "The Art of Storytelling" and you don't want to miss it. That's all I'll say at this time.

Since we reopened in early March, we have had about 20,000 visitors to our theater. That's in three months! Our annual visitation used to be about 25,000. We have been averaging about five shows every day. We know it will taper off, but it hasn't yet. Since we have been so busy, we have hired a student intern. Her name is Heather Fries and is majoring in science writing and minoring in physics/astronomy. She is very excited about working in the theater and learning about the field. A benefit of her help is that it will free Jason & me to do show production. We are currently working on a new full-dome program that will open next summer. This August, we will start showing the IYA program "Two Small Pieces of Glass."

We are also getting ready for StarFest. It will be held October 24-25, 2009. It's a mix of a mini astronomy conference and star party. This will be our 26th annual event and is always lots of fun. Our main speaker is Dean Regas. He is the Outreach Astronomer for the Cincinnati Observatory Center and we are happy to have him visit us. We also

have a great T-shirt planned designed by the Park's senior artist, Allen Davis. It features Galileo as part of our celebration of IYA. I recommend that you attend. Registrations should be sent out in August.



VIRGINIA

contact: Kelly Herbst
Virginia Living Museum
Newport News, VA
Kelly.Herbst@thevlm.org



Abbitt Planetarium Virginia Living Museum Newport News

Kelly Herbst reports: Summer is here with all its usual craziness. The economic woes are taking their toll, with attendance down significantly from where we hoped it would be, but nonetheless we have many happy visitors enjoying the variety of programming we are offering this summer. Our first summer class runs next week, and features a great deal of explosives. Yep, John Wright is teaching 4th and 5th graders about rocket science. Devastation is almost guaranteed to ensue, and we're looking forward to it! Summer has also brought us John Moorman, a returning summer employee and fantastic idea man. He's been a great help, working on numerous problems that had been shelved for lack of time to deal with them. I'm waging the war to try to get his job

extended beyond summer...wish me luck!

We'll close after Labor Day weekend to perform some much-needed physical maintenance...seat repairs, cleaning, and such-like, plus the now-mandatory computer maintenance (can you say back up? I knew you could!). October will bring us a new changing exhibit called Megalodon (Woo! Big dead sharks!) and a new slate of shows. *Kaluoka'hina*, with its sharks, moves to the preschool slot, while we are hoping to have *The Future Is Wild* from E&S Spitz as our featured program to partner with Megalodon. We'll also begin running *Two Small Pieces of Glass* in celebration of IYA 2009.

Before we get into Fall, however, we've got the 40th anniversary of Apollo 11 to celebrate! We'll be running a special slate of shows during Exploration Weekend, July 18-20, and NASA Langley will be coming out with lots of exciting stuff about their planned missions to the Moon and Mars. It should be a great time, as NASA did an amazing job for our grand opening in May. We're really looking forward to working with them again.

Any Virginia planetarian with news to share with SEPA should contact Kelly Herbst at kelly.herbst@thevlm.org or 757-595-1900 ext. 256

Thomas Jefferson HS Planetarium Richmond, VA

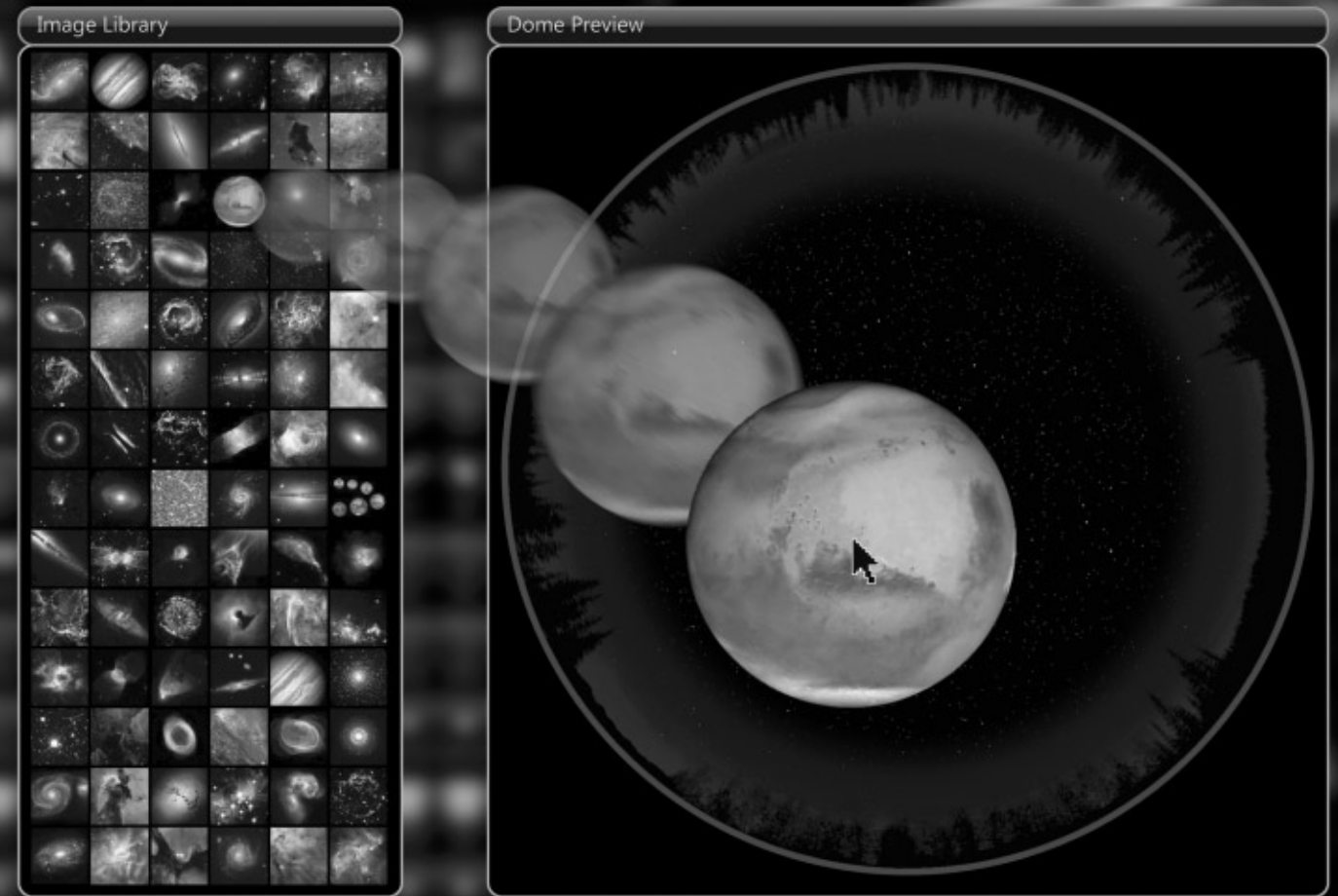
Leslie Bochenski reports: TJ Planetarium survived the School Board's budget axe, and closed out a successful year. I served over 1700 students throughout the 2008-09 school year, and performed 134 programs.

In May, ASH Enterprise's Eric Melenbrink installed a new receiver, LCD projector and laptop computer so the old place has finally gone digital. Anyone want a few Ektachrome projectors, trays, and a lot of slides?

Unfortunately, budget cuts did cancel all travel for the year, so I was not able to attend the SEPA conference. I'm going to ration my budget next year so I'll definitely be able to attend.

Have a great summer, everyone!

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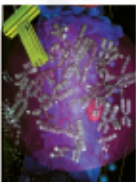
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