



NOAO Public Affairs & Educational Outreach

Energized Team Effort Begins With Strong Impact at AAS

Doug Isbell

NOAO's educational and public outreach activities, and its interactions with the news media, have been brought together under a new manager, Doug Isbell, and a new organizational name—the Office of Public Affairs and Educational Outreach.

Suzanne Jacoby and Jane Price will continue their effective day-to-day management of our generally excellent outreach programs, and the scope of these programs will not change immediately. The goal is simply a more cohesive unit that shares its capabilities more effectively, and is more able to “speak with one voice” about NOAO's accomplishments and priorities, in outlets ranging from electronic press conferences to updated Kitt Peak visitor center exhibits.

With this spirit in mind, the office's staff took advantage of the 7–11 January 2001 meeting of the American Astronomical Society in San Diego to get off to an aggressive start for the year.

An entirely new display was developed for the exhibit area, featuring the first release of data from the NOAO Deep Wide-Field Survey (NDWFS). The seven foot-by-seven foot optical

image which served as the exhibit's focal point demonstrated the potential of the NDWFS to the astronomical user community in advance of the formal release of scientific data two weeks later, resulting in heavier-than-normal foot traffic in the NOAO exhibit. The display can be updated easily as research proceeds with NDWFS data, and it will likely be used as a backdrop for future public events, including Internet webcasting.

Two major new visual products were also distributed at the AAS meeting—a colorful educational poster about the solar spectrum and a bookmark featuring ten photos of NOAO facilities and related scientific imagery. The poster, in particular, was extremely popular with meeting attendees and educators from the American Association of Physics Teachers.

NOAO issued four press releases at the AAS meeting and helped support several press conferences, including a popular briefing on the first morning of the meeting by Gerry Williger of NOAO/NASA Goddard Space Flight Center regarding the discovery of a vast cluster of galaxies in the ancient Universe that produced

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These six images cover one side of a new color bookmark developed by the NOAO Educational Outreach office as a handout for the public and for meetings and special events.



OUTREACH

Impact at AAS continued

wide media coverage in print (*Newsweek*, *USA TODAY*), radio (NPR, Voice of America), and television (CNN, ABC "Good Morning America"). The first Reuters news wire story of the meeting, on emerging plans for the National Virtual Observatory, featured two interviewees from NOAO.

Later that afternoon, National Solar Observatory Director Steve Keil and Gemini Project Director Matt Mountain participated in a well-attended media seminar on adaptive optics, organized by the National Science Foundation.

Looking ahead to the June 2001 AAS meeting, plans are underway for a major focus on early science from Gemini North.

MORE ON PUBLIC PRESENTATION OF NOAO NEWS, IMAGES AND SCIENCE

- AURA issued a news release on January 18 announcing the selection of Dr. Jeremy Mould as the next director of NOAO. This news was reported by the local *Arizona Daily Star* newspaper on Sunday, January 21, and later by *Nature* magazine. Media interviews with Dr. Mould are being planned for shortly after his arrival in Tucson.
- More than two dozen images have been added to the NOAO Image Gallery, including the NOAO DWFS exhibit image discussed above, other AAS-related images of planetary nebula Abell 39 [see photo caption] and a portion of M31 (from the NOAO survey program "Resolved Stellar Content of Local Group Galaxies Currently Forming Stars"), an image of M17 from the newly enhanced SQUID detector, the irregular star cluster M103 in the constellation Cassiopeia, and Supernova 1991N.

For more details, see:

http://www.noao.edu/image_gallery/new_additions.html



Planetary nebula Abell 39 was chosen for study by George Jacoby (WIYN Observatory), Gary Ferland (U. Kentucky), and Kirk Korista (Western Michigan U.) because of its beautiful and rare spherical symmetry. This picture was taken at the WIYN Observatory's 3.5-m (138-inch) telescope at Kitt Peak National Observatory, Tucson, AZ, in 1997 through a blue-green filter that isolates the light emitted by oxygen atoms in the nebula. This image was the subject of an NOAO press release during the January 2001 meeting of the American Astronomical Society, and it later received coverage by the Dallas Morning News, BBC On-Line, and space.com.

- Nick Suntzeff of CTIO appeared on the nightly Tucson KUAT-TV magazine show "Arizona Illustrated," on the evening before the premiere of a related PBS NOVA documentary episode titled "Runaway Universe," which featured footage and NOAO personnel from Cerro Tololo.

How to Contact NOAO Public Affairs

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| The Web Questions | http://www.noao.edu/outreach/press disbell@noao.edu Doug Isbell, Press Officer (520) 318-8214 |
| E-mail a Staff Member | first initial+last name@noao.edu |



PROJECT ASTRO NEWS

Suzanne Jacoby



Project ASTRO is a program that pairs professional and amateur astronomers with educators throughout the country to enhance astronomy education and increase students' interest in science. The fifth annual Project ASTRO-Tucson workshop held in October of 2000 brings to 250 the total number of ASTRO partners trained through NOAO's efforts.

For the 2001-02 school year, NOAO education programs will benefit from the University of Arizona fellowship program *Collaboration to Advance Teaching of Technology and Science* (CATTs), an NSF program for Graduate Teaching Fellows in K-12 Education (GK-12). Two graduate students (one astronomy, one computer science) funded by the CATTs program will work with staff in the NOAO Educational Outreach office to assist with the RBSE and ASTRO programs. During Spring 2001, they will observe and teach lessons in an ASTRO class, preparing them to assist with the Fall ASTRO workshop and to work as ASTRO partners for the 2001-02 school year. In Summer 2001 they will support our efforts to promote research-based science education, and prepare for presenting activities at the Fall 2001 ASTRO workshop.

Ginny Beal, Project ASTRO Site Coordinator, departed NOAO on January 31. Ginny has been an integral part of

the Educational Outreach efforts at NOAO since 1996. She has helped with all aspects of our program, including RBSE, ASTRO, REU, RET, information requests, image requests, and *everything else*. Her work with Project ASTRO-Tucson resulted in NOAO being a leader in the National Network of ASTRO sites, and in help for hundreds of ASTRO partners and thousands of students in the Tucson area. She has made valuable contributions to the EO program at NOAO and will be missed tremendously. Please join me in wishing Ginny well as she continues on life's journey.

Responsibilities for National Network Chair were transferred from NOAO-Tucson to the Boston Project ASTRO site at the beginning of 2001. You are encouraged to contact any of the ASTRO sites to get involved in science education through Project ASTRO, Educational and Public Outreach, and other opportunities.

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The Project ASTRO National Network exhibit featured student work as well as pictures of astronomers and educators working in the classroom. Central to the exhibit was a map showing the location and contact information for all eleven Project ASTRO sites in the network.



OUTREACH

ASTRO News continued

Contact information for the 11 Project ASTRO sites and National Project staff:

Boston, Massachusetts

Lead Institutions: Harvard-Smithsonian
Center for Astrophysics
& Boston Museum of Science
Tel: (617) 496-7867
Web site: <http://hea-www.harvard.edu/astro/>

New Jersey

Lead Institution: Raritan Valley Community
College
Tel: (908) 231-8805
Web site: <http://www.raritanval.edu/planetarium/astronova.html>

Chicago, Illinois

Lead Institution: Adler Planetarium &
Astronomy Museum
Tel: (312) 294-0343
Web site: <http://www.adlerplanetarium.org>

Connecticut

Lead Institution: Wesleyan University
Tel: (860) 685-3657
Web site: <http://www.astro.wesleyan.edu/~pastrol/>

Michigan

Lead Institution: Northwestern Michigan
College
Tel: (231) 946-1787
Web site: <http://www.nmc.edu/~rogers>

Ohio

Lead Institution: Ohio Space Grant
Consortium
Tel: (440) 962-3033
Web site: <http://www.osgc.org/page/ProjectASTRO.html>

Salt Lake City, Utah

Lead Institution: Hansen Planetarium
Tel: (801) 538-2104
Web site: <http://www.clarkfoundation.org/astro-utah/>

San Francisco, California

Lead Institution: Astronomical Society of the
Pacific
Tel: (415) 337-1100 x 101
Web site: <http://www.aspsky.org/astro/bay.html>

Seattle, Washington

Lead Institution: University of Washington
Tel: (206) 543-9541
Web site: <http://www.astro.washington.edu/projastro/>

New Mexico

Lead Institution: The Space Center, Alamogordo
Tel: (877) 333-6589
Web site: <http://www.nfo.edu/astro/>

Tucson, Arizona

Lead Institution: National Optical Astronomy
Observatory
Tel: (520) 318-8535
Web site: <http://www.noao.edu/outreach/astro>

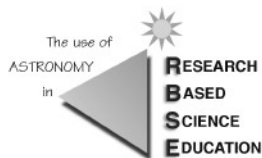
National Project Staff

Andrew Fraknoi, Project Director
Erica Howson, National Project Coordinator
Project ASTRO National Office
Astronomical Society of the Pacific
390 Ashton Ave.
San Francisco, CA 94112
Tel: 415-337-1100 x 121
FAX: 415-337-5205
Web site: http://www.aspsky.org/project_astro.html



THE USE OF ASTRONOMY IN RESEARCH-BASED SCIENCE EDUCATION

Suzanne Jacoby



The NOAO Teacher Enhancement Program, the Use of Astronomy in Research-Based Science Education (RBSE), features a summer workshop and year-round support for middle and high school teachers who are interested in incorporating astronomy research within their science classes. RBSE extends the experience to the classroom with materials, data sets, support, and mentors during the academic year.

Our proposal to support the continued development of the RBSE Teacher Enhancement Program was submitted to the NSF Education and Human Resources Teacher Retention and Renewal Program in October. The new program would include development of a RBSE Distance Learning course, which would allow teachers who do not attend the summer workshop to use effectively the materials and pedagogy in the classroom. We have been contacted by the NSF/EHR Program Director and submitted revised budget sheets, often a sign that the proposal has done well in review and will be funded at some level. Updates to this situation will be posted at the RBSE Web site <http://www.noao.edu/outreach/rbse/> and in next quarter's newsletter article.



A group of participants in NOAO Educational Outreach programs is shown in front of a new exhibit on the NOAO Deep Wide-Field Survey, which was the featured element of NOAO's booths at the January AAS/AAPT meeting. From left to right (front): Travis Rector and Suzanne Jacoby (NOAO); (back) Travis Stagg (Girard College, PA; RBSE/NSO RET), Howard Chun (Cranston High School, RI; RBSE/KPNO RET), Ardis Maciolek (Grosse Pointe North High School, MI; RBSE/NRAO RET), Stan Hart (Pinson Valley High School, AL; RBSE/KPNO RET), Rob Welsh (Carver High School of Science & Engineering, PA; RBSE/NRAO RET), Rick Donahue (Eastchester Middle School, NY; RBSE/KPNO RET), Cindy Weehler (San Antonio, TX; RBSE/KPNO RET), and Wayne Sukow (NSF/EHR Program Director).

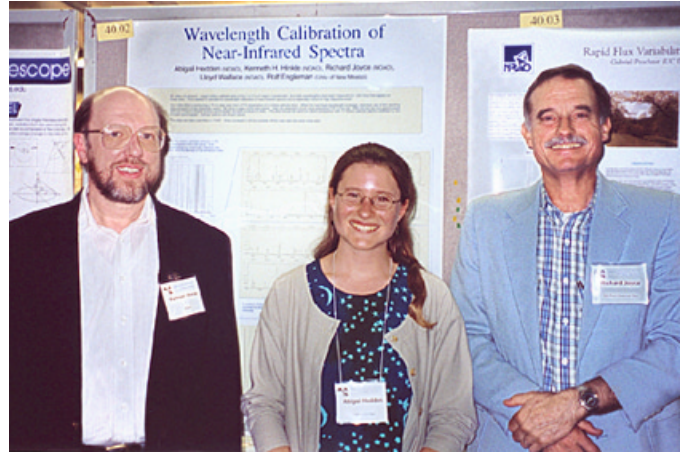


KPNO REU 2000 STUDENTS AT THE AAS WINTER MEETING

Kenneth Mighell

Seven of last summer's participants in the National Science Foundation's Research Experiences for Undergraduates (REU) program at Kitt Peak National Observatory attended the 197th meeting of the American Astronomical Society in San Diego, 7–11 January 2001, thanks to the generous support of the NSF.

The students presented posters on the various research projects they conducted during their 12-week stay at KPNO during the summer of 2000. Michael Cooper (Grinnell), Stuart Corder (Kansas), Heather Groch (Brown), Abigail Hedden (Carleton), Karin Sandstrom (Harvard), and Virginia Ponce (Virginia) were the first authors of six posters; Christopher Greer (Northwestern) and Abigail Hedden were co-authors on an additional three posters. The students attended the AAS Undergraduate Reception, as well as the opening reception on the night before the main part of the meeting started. They also listened to the oral sessions



Ken Hinkle and Dick Joyce of NOAO are shown with KPNO REU student Abigail Hedden of Carleton College at the AAS meeting in San Diego. Hedden is currently a senior planning to attend graduate school in astronomy. The results of her REU project on wavelength calibration for near-infrared spectra have been accepted for publication by the Astronomical Society of the Pacific.

and the various town meetings, and participated in social events such as the banquet and the special lunch in honor of Margaret Burbidge on Thursday.

We hope to see our KPNO 2000 REU students presenting the results of their graduate studies at future AAS meetings.

| How to Contact Educational Outreach | |
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