

NOAO-NSO Newsletter

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“America’s space program will go on. This course of exploration and discovery is not an option we choose. It is a desire written in the human heart, where that part of creation seeks to understand all creation.”

--US President George W. Bush, speaking at a February 4 memorial service in Houston following the loss of Space Shuttle Columbia.

“In addition to confounding federal agencies and those who work with them, the stalemate over [FY2003] appropriations is a symptom of a larger breakdown in our lawmaking process. Increasing ideological rigidity and partisan gamesmanship, along with an electorate that is, paradoxically, both evenly divided and widely disengaged, have conspired to make it harder and harder to conduct the mundane but essential business of Congress. It’s hard to predict when this state of affairs is likely to improve.

“But it’s worth noting how science funding has largely stayed out of the partisan and ideological crossfire. The passage of our NSF [doubling] bill, while not guaranteeing linear growth, is a sign that both Congress and the Administration have come to understand that broadly based increases in science spending are overdue.”

--Excerpts from comments by House Science Committee Chairman Sherwood Boehlert (R-NY) during an address to the University Research Associates’ Annual Council of Presidents Meeting and Policy Forum on January 30.

For details on the NSF Fiscal 2004 budget request, see:

www.nsf.gov/od/lpa/news/03/pr0317.htm
www.nsf.gov/bfa/bud/fy2004/toc.htm

“We’re collecting the photo album of the life history of the universe for the first time: the baby pictures, the teenage pictures, the grown-up pictures.”

--Sandra Faber (University of California Santa Cruz) on current advances in galaxy formation studies, in Ron Cowan’s article “Galaxy Hunters: The Search for Cosmic Dawn,” National Geographic, February 2003.

Have you seen an interesting comment in the news or heard one during a NOAO-related meeting or workshop? Please share them with the Newsletter Editor (editor@noao.edu).

On the Cover

Astronomers from the University of Colorado (Nathan Smith, John Bally, Jacob Thiel and Jon A. Morse) used the Blanco 4-meter telescope at CTIO to discover dozens of potential stellar cocoons [inset] within the hostile environment of the Carina Nebula. Each of these objects may harbor disks of gas and dust that could one day form planetary systems.

This is the first large population of these so-called “proplyd” objects to be found outside of the Orion Nebula, the closest region to Earth known to be forming massive stars. The newly discovered proplyds located within the Carina Nebula (NGC 3372) are five times farther from Earth than Orion.

This photo was released on 8 January 2003 in Seattle at the 201st meeting of the American Astronomical Society. (See Science Highlight on page 3.)

Image Credit: University of Colorado/NOAO/AURA/NSF

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