

# President's Message



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It is difficult for me to believe that my presidency is almost over! So much to do and so little time! The officers and I have accomplished a great deal and continue to prepare for further improvements in member services and adjustments in the Standing Rules that will assure that the business of IPS runs smoothly. During my president's report at council I mentioned the following items as a review of progress to date:

## IPS Officers' Meetings

IPS officers held two meetings during the last two years on their own initiative and with their own funding. These meetings were held outside of, and to prepare for, the 2007 and 2008 Council meetings.

The first meeting was held in Hilo, Hawai'i, where we also met with the Mauna Kea Observatories Outreach Committee. One of the fruits of meeting with this group was another networking opportunity.

IPS was asked to participate in an Astronomy Roundtable for the Physics-Astronomy-Math (PAM) division of the Special Libraries Association (SLA) at their annual conference in June 2008 in Seattle, Washington. Karrie Berglund served as our representative and gave a brief presentation about the IPS; her comments appear later in this column.

The second officer's meeting was held in conjunction with the Middle Atlantic Plan-

etarium Society's annual conference in Schenectady, New York. MAPS members were pleased to get a bit more of an international flavor to their conference. With Past President Martin George and President-Elect Tom Mason attending there was never a dull moment! IPS officers spent many late evenings after conference activities working on IPS business and we accomplished a great deal. Lee Ann Henning and Shawn Laatch Skyped in to round out the team.

## President's Message Video

The creation of a video of the president's message, produced for IPS affiliate meetings, proved to be quite a challenge for me because my home video camera was not up to the task! With the help of a local videographer and Jack Dunn, council representative for the Great Plains Planetarium Association, a miracle happened and a nice video was produced.

Then another miracle happened when Jack and Agnès Acker, council representative for the Association of French-Speaking Planetariums, created a version of the video where I was speaking perfect French! They made it look so easy to work long distance over the Internet that it made me think that similar videos could be done for all of the languages representing IPS! It has been suggested that, for the next video, perhaps a low-resolution version could also be placed on the IPS website.

## 2012 Conference Sites

Finding Conference 2012 sites was another challenge and I am very pleased to report that we have three fine bids again this year: the Irene W. Pennington Planetarium in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, represented by Jon Elvert; the Morrison Planetarium in San Francisco, California, represented by Ryan Wyatt; and the Astronof Planetarium in Saint-Etienne, France, represented by Jacques Guarinos. Soon you will be hearing more about these bids from articles in the *Planetarian*.

## IPS Committees

Most IPS committees have been hard at work, some more than others!

Jon Elvert, chair of the **Outreach Committee**, was selected to serve as our institutional "single point of contact" for communication between the IPS and the International Astronomical Union for International Year of Astronomy 2009. Jon is doing a fantastic job of keeping his committee's web page updated with all the latest results of this committee's efforts; see [www.ips-planetarium.org/or/comms/outreachcom.html](http://www.ips-planetarium.org/or/comms/outreachcom.html).

As part of the Outreach Committee's efforts to assist planetariums in developing countries, Jon and David Weinrich have worked closely to orchestrate the "Ghana Project" of building the first planetarium in Ghana. You will be amazed to read more about that in an article in this journal in the future.

Speaking of promoting planetariums, we can now raise the status of planetariums in



One of the special perks of going to the MAPS meeting was visiting Williams College's planetarium and the Hopkins Observatory 1842 Clark refractor with Physicist Jay Pasachoff! From left: Susan Button, Jay Pasachoff, Martin George, Tom Mason. Photo by Tom Button

general through our new **IPS Publicity Coordinator** Jacques Guarinos. He is working closely with me to increase visibility of your initiatives and we are, in the light of the recent rash of closings, trying to list proactive steps for keeping planetariums viable and also produce a document with a list of points explaining the importance of planetariums that can be attached to IPS president letters of support for planetariums under the threat of closing.



The **Fulldome Committee** has been revitalized and is extremely important to IPS as we strive to be inclusive in our services to facilities going to digital fulldome. It is imperative that we examine the latest research in digital projection in the fields of education as well as entertainment to enhance our understanding of the full capabilities of this technology. A new IPS partner organization, the association of Immersive Media Entertainment, Research, Science and Art (IMERSA), was announced at the Fulldome Summit during this year's conference. IPS members can benefit from the research, development and resources of this group. See more in Ed Lantz's Digital Frontiers column on page 57.

Jon Bell stepped down, after many years service, as chair of the **Awards Committee** and Lars Broman volunteered to fill this position. He is doing an admirable job, as you will see. Thank you Lars for volunteering for yet another vital service to IPS! See the 2008 IPS Awards announcement at the end of this column, and don't forget to send Lars nominations for future awards at [Lbr@teknoland.se](mailto:Lbr@teknoland.se).

International Relations Committee: Martin George is a marvelous ambassador for IPS during his world travels as past president and chair of this committee. I am grateful for his continued hard work on this front. He has promised to continue contributing news of his travels and outreach efforts in this journal in the future.

Education Committee: Brock Schroeder has changed jobs and stepped down as chair of this committee. I am delighted, however, to announce that Jack L. Northrup, director of the Martin Luther King Jr. Planetarium, Omaha, Nebraska, has volunteered to "step up to the plate" as the new chair of this committee and is already making progress in getting committee members motivated about the vital work of this committee. Look for news on

that committee's web page soon, and see an interview with Jack in the Education Horizons column on page 60.

### Face to Face Gets Work Done

Communication with affiliates and committees can be a bit shaky at times. Conclusion: There is nothing like face-to-face meetings for getting work done!

Through my attendance at three conferences (the Western Alliance, Triple Conjunction, and Canadian Association of Science Centers), I was able to meet with members from most of the North American affiliates. I was especially delighted to meet with Western Alliance and Canadian Association members because I had not met with them before.

The CASC meeting was quite different in that it was not centered on planetariums. The exciting part was that there was a huge focus on interactive sessions with conference participants actively involved in problem solving. However, I could also see that it is important that the profile of IPS and planetariums be raised in that organization. There are few stationary planetariums in Canada but many portable domes; both venues are doing good work.

As you know from previous columns, European meetings for small and portable planetariums will be held in 2008 (Portugal) and 2009 (Poland) due to the success of the 2007



At the Canadian Association of Science Centers Banquet; from left: Scott Langen, CASC President, Susan Button, and Ian McLennan, CASC IPS Representative. Langen is also executive director of the Saskatchewan Science Centre in Regina, which is the site of the next CASC Annual Conference. Photo provided by Ian McLennan. Photo of Jacques Guarinos (left) by Martin Ratcliffe, Sky-Skan, Inc.

meeting in Bratislava.

All in all, aside from regular housekeeping items (revision of documents and updates on the website), your officers, affiliate representatives and committee members have continued to served IPS members well.

### Into the Library World

An Astronomy Roundtable for the Physics-Astronomy-Math (PAM) division of the Special Libraries Association (SLA) was held during the association's conference June 15-18 2008 in Seattle, Washington.

Karrie Berglund reported on this roundtable with the following comments.

"I'd say there were about 60 people total at the roundtable, and they were a really nice group. At the end each person stated his/her name and affiliation. I didn't write down every institution represented, but here's a smattering: European Southern Observatory, National Radio Astronomy Observatory, National Optical Astronomy Observatory, United States Naval Observatory, the Adler Planetarium, Space Telescope Science Institute, Lowell Observatory, and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology/Haystack Observatory.

"My talk went well. I spoke about IPS and our goals and objectives for about 10 minutes, then took some questions and comments for another five minutes. At the very beginning I asked how many folks were familiar with IPS, and about 1/4 of the people raised their hands. No one besides me is an IPS member."



A moderator closes the Astronomy Roundtable at the SLA Conference after spirited discussion amongst 60 participants. Photo provided by Karrie Berglund



A beautiful sunset over the Chicago skyline with the Adler Planetarium sundial in the foreground. Photo contributed by Denis James

Karrie listed interesting items that came from that meeting:

- MIT/Haystack Observatory Librarian Madeline Needles mentioned that she collaborated with Loch Ness Productions on a successful project.
- There were several questions asked about digital projection products and techniques.
- Karrie encourage the attendees to download Stellarium and experiment with it, since one of the ESO folks had mentioned it and Fabien Chereau, the original Stellarium developer, is now working on Stellarium fulltime for the ESO.

A brief discussion took place about what the libraries are planning to do for IYA, aside from posters. Most do not have firm plans yet. The USNO will be open to the public for some special observing sessions, and Liz Bryson said they'll be doing some special activities, but the exact activities have not yet been determined. Liz said that she'd contacted John Stoke at STScI about helping with library activities for IYA, as the SLA had not been contacted about participating. Apparently the IYA working group is working with the American Library Association on this. Liz will be able to give us more details; her email address is [Bryson@CFHT.Hawaii.edu](mailto:Bryson@CFHT.Hawaii.edu).

Bruce Mason from the University of Oklahoma and the American Association of Phys-

ics Teachers is the director of compADRE, a digital resource for astronomy and physics education ([www.compadre.org/portal](http://www.compadre.org/portal)). He was familiar with Stellarium and asked me about resources for teaching with it. He'd like to get other astronomy education activities to post on compADRE as well. Bruce's email address is: [bmason@ou.edu](mailto:bmason@ou.edu).

One of the attendees suggested that an IPS board member or committee member should sign up for the PAM listserv. Ruth Kneale could put an IPS representative in touch with the correct contact person.

A Library and Information Services in Astronomy (LISA) conference will be held in February 2010. See [www.ncra.tifr.res.in/~library/forsaweb/lisavi.htm](http://www.ncra.tifr.res.in/~library/forsaweb/lisavi.htm).

Thank you, Karrie, for a job well done, both in reporting to the Special Libraries Association about IPS and in reporting back to IPS with such detail. It seems especially advantageous to initiate some IYA activities with these libraries; I will try to work on that.

### Thanks for the Memories

As the sun set on another fine IPS conference, we were all very sad to leave Chicago and our friends new and old. We could not express enough gratitude for the amount of time and energy that the Adler Planetarium staff and the Local Conference Planning Commit-

tee dedicated over the last four years. Their efforts came beautifully to fruition; an extremely high quality experience for IPS members was delivered.

This year's conference attracted the largest number of delegates in IPS history and provided a unique opportunity for participants not only to "Explore the Edge," but also to become fully engaged and broaden their horizons through excellent speakers, sessions and papers!

We left this conference with concrete plans and steps that we can implement so that our communities, now and in the future, view planetariums as the vital institutions we know they are.

Thank you to all those individuals on the local planning committee who were involved in making this conference possible, but especially to the Adler folks: Paul Knappenberger, Larry Ciupik, Mark Webb, Beth Azuma, Julie Bishop, Karen Donnelly, Michelle Nichols and the rest of the dedicated staff at the Adler. You have provided a remarkable professional development opportunity and a great "party" (similar to a family reunion!) for your colleagues.

Don't forget to check the conference website again for a list of the participants and to both take and see the results of the innovation survey; go to [ips2008.org](http://ips2008.org). ☆