

Southern Skies

Volume 27, Number 4

Journal of the Southeastern Planetarium Association

Fall 2007



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Endeavour, August 8, 2007 Credit: Suresh Atapattu

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President's Message

Adam Thanz
Bays Mountain Planetarium
Kingsport, TN

The Triple Conference in Wheeling, WV is now just a fond memory. There were over 300 attendees and vendors present! As such, it was a spectacular example of organization and gracious hospitality. A huge thank you is in order for the intrepid staff of the Benedum Planetarium and Steve Mitch. This ten-year odyssey culminated in a successful event that will be remembered for a long time.

During the SEPA Business Meeting at the Triple Conference, two votes were held to see if the gen-

eral membership agreed to amend the SEPA By-Laws by adding a two-year membership level and to apply a 20% discount for the two-year level. The membership voted to accept both counts. Note, this only applies to full membership. And, there is still the single-year membership level. Due to the passing of these changes, SEPA members will be able to opt for a biennial payment for two years of coverage and benefit with a 20% discount. Our current one year full membership payment is \$25 and our new two year membership is \$40. Your annual anniversary is also based on the quarter you signed up, so you will receive a full year's worth of membership benefits.

Dave Hostetter acted as parliamentarian and I do thank him for his guidance. In addition to all the bedazzling Robert's Rules of Order to follow, a discussion commenced about the 2009 Conference site. It was a lively discourse, but the end result was that the attending membership and Council agreed to support the SEPA conference in Baton Rouge, LA for 2009.

(Continued on page 8)

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.



SEPA President Adam Thanz

IPS Report

John Hare
ASH Enterprises
Bradenton, FL

In case you haven't heard, Alexandria, Egypt was selected as the site of the 2010 Conference. Announced dates are 12-15 July but this is still subject to change. Projected costs are as follows:

- Registration- \$350-\$400 US, including banquet
- Accommodations
 - 4-star hotel- \$60-\$80 US
 - 5-star hotel- \$100-\$110 US

Pre or post conference tours will include the Pyramids and Sphinx in Giza and other tours to be announced.

Alexandria International Airport is 30 minutes from the Conference site.

You'll hear a lot more about this between now and 2010!

Chicago's Adler Planetarium will host the 2008

IPS Conference. Dates are June 27 to July 2. The Conference hotel is the Hyatt Regency McCormick Place. Hotel and Conference registration costs will be announced soon.

Preliminary schedule is as follows:

- 6/27- IPS Council meeting, registration, and welcoming reception.
- 6/28- Keynote speaker, papers, panels, and workshops.
- 6/29- Affiliate meetings, business meeting, vendor exhibits and vendor sessions in dome.
- 6/30- Papers, panels, and workshops in morning. Optional Fermilab tour or afternoon on your own.
- 7/1- Papers, panels, and workshops. Awards lunch. Dome sessions.
- 7/2- Papers, panels, and workshops. IPS Banquet cruise and fireworks with a backdrop of the Chicago skyline!

A new IPS Directory is in the final stages of preparation. You'll be too late to make any changes in the 2007 edition but please keep your personal and planetarium information current with IPS. You can e-mail information to Dale Smith, IPS Publications Committee chair <dsmith@newton.bgsu.edu>

The Directory is furnished on CD to all IPS mem-
(Continued on page 8)

Editor's Message

James Sullivan
Buehler Planetarium & Observatory
Davie, FL

Hi folks. You will notice that this issue is not as bulky as prior ones. We need you to contribute. I do not get articles from the same place the spider gets its web.

Please consider sending in an article or two. You may wish to consider heading up a regular column. If this interests you, please contact me.

As always, we are looking for good cover shots of interest to the planetarium community. Also, we love having more pictures to support articles. Any article can use some graphics, including your News From The States segment. Let's illustrate.

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).

Thanks to BCC 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

This is a contribution from
Scott Kucera
Ingram Planetarium
Sunset Beach, NC

Engaging the Planetarium Visitor

Like many other planetariums in SEPA, the Ingram Planetarium has a small gallery with hands-on exhibits about astronomy and science. Ours is 2000 sq. ft. And like many other small planetariums we do not have enough staff or docents to remain in the Science Hall to interact with the visitors at all times. So the visitor is often left to figure out how to operate the exhibits on their own. When I get a spare minute I always try to stop in the gallery and interact with the visitors - even if only to say, "Hello, thanks for visiting us."



Museum and science center interpreters have a tough job - trying to get a visitor of any age to understand the content of the exhibit or artifact in about 30 seconds. But what is more important and satisfying is connecting the visitor with the exhibit. Try to make an association between the content and the visitor. They will find more value in something that relates to them personally.

For example, when a family group stands at the Orrery and presses the button, the earth-moon-sun system whirls around. I'll direct my question to the youngest of the group, "How many times have you been around the Sun?" The perplexed child turns and stares and I'll take that moment to begin explaining that they travel once around the sun between birthdays.



Planetarium docent Alex Tempsick connects the visitor with the stars on the constellation wheel.

Zodiacs relate the visitor to the constellation wheel. "What month were you born," I'll ask, then show "their" constellation on the wheel. The astronomy lesson happens in the next 15 seconds when they find out you can't easily see your zodiac during your birth month. Precession is only brought up if the attention span hasn't expired.

People visit museums and planetariums primarily to spend social time together. We try to make their experience enjoyable and educational. You only have a few seconds or perhaps minutes. So smile and make them feel welcomed, then try to find a connection between the planetarium components and the visitor.

Time and Tide and the Moon

Scott Kucera,
Ingram Planetarium
Sunset Beach, NC

The gravitational theory is used to explain the earth-moon system and the effect on the tides. In North Carolina third graders hear about this strange thing and again in sixth grade. The idea is that the moon tugs on the earth unequally and the result is a tidal bulge of water positioned on the imaginary line between earth's center and moon's center. There is another bulge on the opposite side of the earth also. The earth rotates and we pass into and out of these

tidal bulges. But you wouldn't know it if it wasn't for the rhythmic rise and fall of water at the edge of the sea. Ingram Planetarium is only 2 miles from Sunset Beach so we get to witness the tug-o-war between earth and moon on a daily basis.

You might expect that the moon would be overhead at high tide. We pass into the tidal bulge just as we rotate under the moon. But this is not so in North Carolina. If you look at a tide table (see www.noaa.gov) you will see that the tide is low when the full moon passes overhead - at midnight roughly. And the same is true at new moon - at solar noon. So what gives? I have not gotten a full explanation other than friction from the sea floor slowing the movement of the sea water. Let us know if you have the answer.

In the meantime we will accept the rule of thumb at the North Carolina coast; the tide is high whenever the moon is close to the horizon, even though that is opposite what the theory tells us. We will bring this topic up at the Full Moon Beach Walk scheduled for October 26th at our Museum of Coastal Carolina. On that day the tide will be extra high (and low) because the moon is full and at the year's closest approach to earth.



Blue Moon of May, 2007 over Ocean Isle Beach, NC.

Photo by Scott Kucera

bers and contains information about every known planetarium worldwide. There is also a large listing of vendors and suppliers of equipment. This resource alone justifies the cost of joining IPS.

Attention, Portable planetarium users! IPS needs Portable planetarium contact persons for all regions. If you're a Portable user in the SEPA region and would like to serve as the SEPA Portable regional coordinator to IPS, please contact Susan Button, IPS Portable Planetarium Committee <sbutton@ocmboces.org>

Last chance to save on IPS dues:
Current dues are \$50 for 1 year and \$90 for 2 years. The new rates will be \$65 and \$100 effective January 1, 2008.

You can join by e-mail. Go to <www.ips-planetarium.org> Or, contact Shawn Laatsch, IPS Membership Chairman:
Phone 808-969-9735
Fax 808-969-9748

President's Message (Continued from page 3)

The 2008 SEPA conference is going to be in Lafayette, LA with Dave Hostetter as our host. The dates are set for July 22-26, 2008. Details will follow as the date approaches. Leslie Bochenski reported that the digitizing of SEPA's historical documents is going well. It is quite a lot of work to compile and process all the paperwork and such. Thanks Leslie. Drew Gilmore, web guru extraordinaire, reported on the website and listed some recent updates. If you have an update to a link to your facility, let Drew know. Thanks Drew.

During the Triple Conference, I gave a presentation about the SEPA-produced planetarium show, "The Planets." The talk was well-received, especially the one-minute trailer played at the end. Let me re-list and thank those involved with the production of this program. "The Planets" was written by Jon Bell, featured narration by Kate Mulgrew, highlighted music by Jonn Serrie, and was capped off with original animation by Allen Davis. Additional artwork was by Richard McColman and Deborah Mann. Video & DVD production was by Jason Dorfman and myself. Voice editing was by Joe Lenartiene. Council members involved were Michael Sandras (who started

this project), John Hare, Patsy Wilson, Jon Elvert, Mickey Jo Sorrell, Duncan Teague, and myself.

During the conference, SEPA distributed "The Planets" to many planetarium facilities that includes a current SEPA member. In fact, there were many people that became SEPA members to acquire the program! Remember, if you are a current member of SEPA or are new to SEPA and join by the end of the 2007 calendar year, and your facility does not have a copy of "The Planets," then you can get a copy for your facility for free. Council has agreed to open this offer to organizations with SEPA membership as well with the same limitation of signing the release form prior to acquisition and only one per organization. Remember, the content is designed for planetarium theater use, not TV use. If your facility/organization needs a copy, then contact Mickey Jo Sorrell. When 2008 rolls around, it will be \$50 (which is still a great deal). SEPA produced this show kit and our pride in it really shows. We hope you, and your visitors, really enjoy the program.

It is that biennial (there's that word again) time of year that makes the current SEPA President ask for solicitations from the membership for those wanting to run for a SEPA Council office. For the position of President, it is a six-year commitment that includes two years as President-Elect, two as President, and two as Past-President. Elections will be held at the 2008 SEPA conference in Lafayette, LA in July, 2008. The elected will start as President-Elect on Jan. 1, 2009. There will be a Presidential Selection Committee set up to solicit candidates. You can also throw in your own name. Just let someone on Council know. It may be a lot of work, but it is rewarding by working at the behind-the-scenes level. Plus, you get to wear the pointy hat! Other positions that are open every other year are the Secretary-Treasurer and the IPS Representative. If you are interested in running for one of these two positions, please let the Presidential Selection Committee or Council know. Both of these two positions are not restricted to non-reelection. Biographies for all candidates should be ready and in the hands of the Presidential Selection Committee by the end of 2007 to be included with the Winter issue of this journal. Its due date is January 1, 2008.

Do good and think happy thoughts.

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KONICA MINOLTA

News From SEPA States

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Buehler Planetarium
Broward Community College
Davie, FL

Susan J. Barnett reports: The Buehler Planetarium & Observatory is busy running private and public shows, and producing publications.

LOUISIANA

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



St. Charles Parish Library Planetarium
St. Charles Parish Library
Luling, LA

Gary Meibaum reports: Through a special arrangement with AVI and Konica Minolta Planetariums, we have been able to look closely at the new generation MEDIAGLOBE II. Its new 3D features are amazing! I am looking forward to working with my administration and AVI/KMP to get a new MG II to replace out MG I. We have been using Loch Ness Productions' *Seasonal Stargazing* shorts as short filler programs in conjunction with our main features. I found that the 7-minute length is perfect for filling that need for a short constellation talk and the 14-minute version works well with school groups who need something more in depth. Once again this

year we will be presenting *Season of Light* from LNP for the holidays.

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

Jon Elvert reports: Our portable planetarium has seen an increase in demand this past summer and early fall for both teacher training and school visits. This marks a turning point for us in reaching out to those schools that have not yet considered a trip to the planetarium, as well as an opportunity to do teacher training.

In early January '08 we'll be installing a SXR D Sony full dome video system from Sky-Skan, which will replace our current Barco CRT system. Funding for this upgrade came from a supplemental appropriations bill, passed by the Louisiana legislature, and sponsored by the Senate Finance Committee. I wish all our funding were this easy.

At the triple conjunction conference in Wheeling, W VA in October, the Irene W. Pennington Planetarium will present an invitation for all U.S. planetarium affiliates to hold their annual conference in Baton Rouge in 2009. A similar presentation was made at the Western Alliance Conference (WAC) in Fairbanks, Alaska in September with their affiliates voting in favor of the septuplet conference.

Lafayette Planetarium
Lafayette Natural History Museum
Lafayette, LA

Dave Hostetter reports: We had a very good solar summer for International Heliophysical Year. The public program, *Our Star; the Sun*, compared the sun with other stars, helped visitors understand more about solar phenomena, and finished with current images of the sun. Meanwhile, each Wednesday at lunchtime a portable solar telescope on the sidewalk beside the museum showed the sun (and some very nice sunspots!) to passersby.

This year marks the 250th anniversary of the birth of the Marquis de Lafayette, and our Museum is hosting a major exhibit about his life (which will still be in place for next year's SEPA conference). Three

month-long planetarium programs during the year will feature not only the night's constellations but also some of the obsolete constellations created during the Marquis' lifetime. The current version, for instance, includes Custos Messium, the Keeper of the Harvest; Taurus Poniatovii, the Bull of Poniatowski; and Globus Aerostaticus, the Hot Air Balloon (an audience favorite because if you squint just right you can actually see it). A bulletin board display near the planetarium door, changing each month, will take a look at astronomy during the time of Lafayette.

Our autumn program will be *Mars Update*, based on Sudukum's 15-minute program with added material about the upcoming Mars opposition.

The planetarium's best news for the last few months, however, is that we have hired Ms. Charlotte Guillot to fill the position of Assistant Planetarium Curator. With that position filled, we have been able to resume our full schedule of school and public programs.

NORTH CAROLINA

contact: Patsy Wilson
Woodson Planetarium, Salisbury, NC
wilsonpk@rss.k12.nc.us



Morehead Planetarium and Science Center
University of North Carolina
Chapel Hill, NC

Mickey Jo Sorrell reports: The Morehead continues to grow! We had another successful summer of science camps with over 2000 campers. Camps included astronomy-focused "Astronomical Adventures", "My Place in Space", and "Sky Tales"; music-focused "Sounds of Science"; earth science-focused "Dig It!"; and biology-based "Bugs!", "Animal Addresses", and "Endangered."

We have also recently completed our first ever Bio-Blitz - a 24 hour species count to assess the biodiversity of a local natural area. Of course, we also had telescopes set-up for sky observing and took a Moon hike.

Another new activity is a monthly appearance of one of our educators on television with the Saturday morning local weather. *Carolina Skies* (also the name of our live planetarium program) informs viewers of current sky events and encourages them to attend our monthly observing sessions.

The biggest news of all is that we are approaching the long-awaited renovation of the Star Theater. If all goes as hoped, we will be replacing our dome, seats, and projection system next year this time. All the associated details of that transition are keeping us very busy as we gear up for a full year of field trips and fun.

Destination: Space, our newest planetarium program, narrated by Walter Cronkite, has just completed its first year run. With appearances by five astronauts (including moonwalkers Buzz Aldrin and Charlie Duke) as well as Bruce Murray (former director of JPL and co-founder of the Planetary Society), *Destination: Space* covers the history, science and technology, and the future of space exploration. The program has evoked good response from audience members of all ages who are interested in space exploration.

Millholland Planetarium
Catawba Science Center
Hickory, NC

Patsy Wilson reports: Welcome to our "New Kid on the Block"! Curt Spivey has moved down from Charleston, West Virginia (arriving approximately one month before the grand opening) to take charge of this beautiful new facility. Housed in part of a high school built in the 1950s, the planetarium has a 30-foot dome, 65 seats, a Minolta MediaGlobe 2 and AVI's new full-dome, full-color Skylase system. This visually appealing building looks like a new construction and has floor space for exhibits, a large ticketing area and a multi-purpose room for school lunches, small receptions, etc. Also housed in the building is an awesome, aquarium area with fresh and salt water tanks, touch tanks, and marine displays.

Currently he is the planetarium staff, but an amazing crew of exhibit fabricators, technicians, and volunteers support him. Curt eventually plans to work closely with the local astronomy club and a network



Millholland Planetarium

of trained volunteer show operators to help relieve him, especially on weekends.

The VIP opening event will be October 5th followed by a Members Only event on October 6th and the first general public shows will be on October 7th. His first two full-dome presentations will be *Black Holes: The Other Side of Infinity* from the Denver Museum of Nature and Science and *Kalouka' Hina: The Enchanted Reef*, a show produced in Europe which has no astronomy, but ties in well with the aquarium exhibits and lends itself well to family audiences.

His school schedule includes: *Up in the Sky* for K-2; *Sun, Moon and Stars* for 3-5; *Solar System 101* for 6-8; and *Black Holes* for 9-12. The planetarium will be open to the public for five shows each weekend and one afternoon show through the week.



Curt Spivey at the controls of the Millholland Planetarium.

There is no set schedule for laser shows, but the current plan calls for at least one shown per month.

Curt brings a wealth of experience with him to North Carolina having worked at the Center of Science and Industry (COSI) in Columbus, Ohio as an Outreach Demonstrator and the Sunrise Museum (now The Clay Center for Arts and Science) in Charleston, West Virginia as Planetarium Coordinator/Educator.

The people in Hickory and surrounding areas have a special treat awaiting them with the state of the art planetarium. If you find yourself in the area, stop and have a look - Curt gives a great tour!

**PARI StarLab
Pisgah Astronomical Research Institute
Rosman, NC**

Bob Hayward reports: It was a busy summer at PARI. High school students were in residence for another two-week session of the Duke TIP (Talent Identification Program) and for two week-long sessions of the Burroughs-Wellcome supported Space Science Lab. Both programs were very successful.

The School for Galactic Radio Astronomy, i.e., Smiley Workshops, continue to be popular. Workshops funded by the Rudnick Foundation are planned with teachers from Buncombe, Henderson and Transylvania Counties. Other workshops funded by the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation are on line for the Schiele Museum of Natural History and Planetarium in Gastonia in November and the Museum of Natural Science in Raleigh in February. Anyone who is interested in attending either of these workshops should contact Beth Harris bharris@par.edu.

ROBOTS (Robotics: Opportunities for Building Outstanding Science Talent in the Sciences) professional development workshops for teachers were held in September. The topic for the teachers this fall is the Moon. Workshops have been held this fall and previously in Raleigh, Fayetteville, Winston-Salem, Charlotte, Elizabeth City and Chapel Hill. Christi Whitworth is becoming famous throughout the state of North Carolina for what we have dubbed "Moon Tai Chi."

Under a grant from the United Way, PARI's STAR-



Christi Whitworth doing "Moon Tai Chi."

LAB is scheduled for community programs in September, October and December in Brevard at the Boys and Girls' Club of Transylvania County.

PARI is located on a campus of just over 200 acres with more than 30 buildings. Formerly it was a NASA tracking station. One thing we have in abundance at PARI is space. Because of this we have been working with the AAS, the IAU and other professional organizations to establish a Center for Astronomical Photographic Plate Preservation at PARI. Observatories from around the world will eventually be able to send valuable historical plates to PARI for storage and preservation. In fact, some have already done so. Eventually, these plates will be scanned and digitized for worldwide access via the Internet. The first weekend in November a number of astronomers from around the world who are interested in this project will be at PARI for a Plate Preservation Conference.

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

Patsy Wilson reports: The Woodson Planetarium is the proud owner of a full-dome, full-color AVI Sky-lase system. Only a handful of these new systems have been installed in the US and two of them are in North Carolina - ours and one in Hickory, just about sixty miles away! Paul Stearns of AVI installed the system in early September and the first public viewing will be *Fright Lights* shown on October 20th. Plans for the laser system include public shows at Christmas and various times throughout the year on

our third Saturday evening openings. In addition, school groups and special requests will be scheduled during the week in the afternoons.

In late October, I will be participating in an "Astronomy From the Ground Up" workshop sponsored by the Astronomical Society of the Pacific, the National Optical Astronomy Observatory and the Association of Science-Technology Centers. This three-day professional development opportunity will be held at the NC Museum of Life & Science in Durham. This collaborative effort is aimed to extend and enhance informal astronomy education in small to medium size science centers.

Finally, due to staff transfers and retirement at Horizons Unlimited that have temporarily depleted our available teaching personnel, I find myself "subbing" in other areas of the center. I've been kept on my toes trying to teach physical science lessons about sound, magnetism, and Newton's laws of motion. In addition I'm also leading classes on health, nutrition and fitness. Flexibility is always important!

**Ingram Planetarium
Sunset Beach, NC**

Mark Jankowski reports: Finally, we can breathe here at Ingram Planetarium now the crowds of summer are gone. Well, we could breathe if it was not for that forest fire a couple of miles down the road near Ocean Isle Beach. Luckily there are no injuries or property damages. Maybe we can take a breath in October right before the school groups start pouring in.

Since the crowds are less this time of year we start working on our programs. This year's first job is to make a new *Earth/Moon/Sun* program for school groups. After the *Earth/Moon/Sun* program is done, the next job is finding a new show for the general public that will work with our system. Anyone have a good show for a basic Spitz theater/ Please give me a call if you do.

For our public show, we will have an explorers theme in honor of the Voyagers 30th anniversary and Sputniks 50th. We are showing an old favorite, *Endless Horizon*, and keeping our newest show in the line up, *Hubble Vision 2*.



I would say in closing, hope to see you at the Triple Conjunction Conference but when you read this, we will all be talking about the great time we had at the conference.

SOUTH CAROLINA

contact: Glenn Dantzer
Settlemyre Planetarium, Rock Hill, SC
dantzer@chmuseums.org



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

News from the DuPont Planetarium: The DuPont Planetarium at the Ruth Patrick Science Education Center on the campus of the University of South Carolina Aiken is pleased to announce that our director, Dr. Gary J. Senn was re-elected as president of the Digistar Users Group (DUG) during their annual conference that met in Arlington, Texas. Evans & Sutherland's Digital Theater Division announced that they had signed the 100th contract for their Digistar 3 system. DUG is a group organized, comprised and managed by users of Digistar systems around the world. The next DUG conference will be at the Adler Planetarium in Chicago, and will immediately precede next year's International Planetarium Society meeting in June.

On November 29, 2007, the planetarium will host the 2nd annual Galaxy Gala. This Gala is a fund raising event that provides supporters with an opportunity to "adopt" a heavenly body at the DuPont Planetarium. Supporters will be provided with a certificate and have

their name posted at the planetarium in recognition of their support. Sponsors of \$250 or more will have their names appear in the Digistar star field during 2008.

In September, the DuPont Planetarium celebrated the 30th anniversary of the launch of the Voyager Probes by presenting *The Voyager Encounters* from Lochness Productions. In October, *Blown Away* from The New Detroit Science Center was the feature presentation. During November in the planetarium, visitors will find *Mission to Mars*, a local production. Throughout the Christmas season, the planetarium will once again present *Tis the Season*, also from Lochness Productions, which has become an annual favorite.

Settlemyre Planetarium Museum of York County Rock Hill, SC

Glenn Dantzer reports: Well you sure can tell the kids are back in school. The planetarium is humming with visitors and the classes and tours are full as well. We are planning our first sleepover for the 5th grade in late winter and I will be doing shows and if it's clear a moon watch as well.

I managed to locate a back up slew for the planetarium and now we have everything we need to operate for the next three years. The museum is planning to move to a river front site and I have been promised a 40 foot full dome planetarium, but I am not holding my breath as yet.

Our fall shows on weekends have been poorly attended since the weather finally broke in SC and the 100+ temps are now a thing of the past. Our Christmas offering will be the perennial favorite from Loch Ness *Season of Light*. During January and February we plan to offer *Follow the Drinking Gourd* for our weekend audiences. Of course the live sky show *Carolina Skies* will always be on the docket.

Hope you all have a great autumn and holiday season. That's it from South Carolina!

Bays Mountain Planetarium Kingsport, TN

Adam Thanz reports: Greetings from East TN! The

action just keeps on going here at Bays Mountain. We have finalized the steps by which we can distribute our original planetarium show *The Case of the Disappearing Planet*. It is exciting for us to do this as we get to share our hard work for a low cost to other facilities.

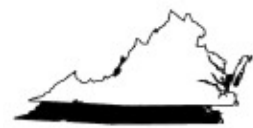
We are currently showing *The Planets*. This is the SEPA-produced program about our Solar System. By the time you read this, many of you will also be showing or plan on showing the program in your theater. It is the culmination of thousands of hours of labor. Bays Mountain was proud to create the original visuals for this program.

As I write this, I will be working with a local orchestra called the Symphony of the Mountains. I will be providing video graphics of the Solar System to be played in association with a live performance of Gustov Holst's "The Planets." It should be a lot of fun.

By the time you read this, we will have just finished our Fall public star viewings. Our annual StarFest event will also be a memory as we hosted around 75 amateur astronomers from the southeast US. Lots of activities, fun, and gastronomy were slated with some extra surprises that are sure to please. Our main speaker for StarFest may be known by some of you, Doug Gegen. He runs the observatory at Roper Mountain in Greenville, SC and has been to SEPA conferences in the past. He'll have talked about the history of their 23" Alvan Clark refractor.

VIRGINIA

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Virginia Living Museum Planetarium Newport News, VA

Kelly Herbst reports: With summer behind us at last, we are getting ready for the onslaught of school children once again. As I write this we are almost finished with a reproduction of our popular weather-related school program *Stacey Stormtracker*. One

down, eight more to go. We hope to reproduce at least one more program before the end of the year.

I am now becoming immersed in the process of investigating digital upgrades for our 40-plus-year-old theater. It's exciting, but a bit scary, as I never thought I would be the one trying to make decisions about this kind of stuff. I've got a vision for our theater, however, and I am hopeful that I'll have the chance to bring it to life in the coming years.

Public programming is still on a very minimal basis. We will of course have *Star of Wonder* for the holiday season, but only for a very limited run around the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays. Other than that, we have only two special event programs coming up...a special Harry Potter themed program for our popular Night of the Living Museum Halloween event, and a collection of Native American stories for our Native American Traditions day in November.

The Triple Conjunction Conference will be a memory by the time you read this...and I bet I'll still be sorting through all the stuff I'll bring home! I'm hoping to hit the IPS conference in Chicago next year, maybe I'll see you there!

Thomas Jefferson HS Planetarium Richmond, VA

Leslie Bochenski reports: School is off and running, and I'm busy scheduling programs for 3rd, 4th, 6th and 9th grade classes from all over Richmond. I'm also working a new program for High School Chemistry classes about identifying elements from their spectra.

I decided to develop this after our Chemistry teacher said her students were having a hard time seeing the emission lines from element tubes with the Project STAR spectroscopes. It turned out that there was too much ambient light in her classroom, even with the blinds closed. That's not a problem in the Planetarium.

I'm looking forward to seeing everyone in West Virginia!

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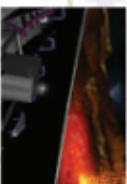
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