



NAAPO (North American AstroPhysical Observatory)

**"NAAPO News"
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KRAUS GIVES COLLOQUIUM

On 1 May, John Kraus spoke at the OSU Astronomy Colloquium on the topic "New Things in Radio Astronomy." He emphasized the nature of the growth of Radio Astronomy, the origin of Big Ear and the many lost opportunities associated with the optical astronomers disdain for the potential of radio techniques. Significant discoveries (e.g., optical variability of OE110 over three magnitudes) has been made using modest aperture (76-cm) in sea level locations (Florida).

COORDINATOR'S CORNER

Your coordinator took a month of R and R without finishing up the obvious tasks before leaving. While the month was relaxing -- as evidenced by lower blood pressure -- it has necessitated making this a combined issue of the newsletter. As you see this is Vol. I, Nos. 2 and 3. This may be the way things go as long as we are up to our necks in alligators . . .

While the main purpose of the trip west was scientific (I will summarize my crucial observations shortly) I can announce that a number of side benefits did occur. We met lots of nice people and camped in lots of nice places. I miss the sound of rushing mountain streams and the sweet sound of singing water ouzels as they feed along the creeks. The pungent snell of a pine log campfire has been replaced by the smell of my neighbor burning garbage. Ugh!

Scientific Observation: The sky over the Colorado mountains is different from the sky over central Ohio. How do I know? I saw it! I actually saw the sky with my eyes. It has more stars, though probably not many more radio sources. It is something that needs further investigation.

The big news (reported elsewhere in this issue) is the installation of our first student interns. Mark Eickhoff and Mark Johnston (referred to as Mark I and Mark II for identification purposes) have arrived and are at sort of loose ends while we establish some procedures, like housing and travel logistics. They are eager to work and it seems like all of us are on vacation.

As the summer progresses we will report on the experiences they and we have. In the words of Pogo Possum (or possibly Churchy LaFemme) ". . . as we grew some tooether . . .".

21 June Working Session -- AGENDA

The regular RADOBS working session will occur at 10:00 a. m. Saturday 21 June at the radio observatory. Meetings are regularly held the first and third Saturday mornings of each month. Items of concern to be discussed are:

1. Disposition of the Honda hulk after removal of the transmission. Where did the proceeds go?
2. Is the truck operational?
3. Board of Regents rejection.
4. West Recorder
5. Status of Horn Blinders
6. Job List Priority Setting
7. Begin Design of External Horn Equipment Housing -- Mark I and Mark II
8. Tasks for Student Interns in Absence of Direct Supervision.
9. Review of General Status of Program
10. General Concerns or Reports - - Additional Business.

CONSORTIUM VISITS

During the past month the NAAPO coordinator has visited two of our member institutions. The purpose of these visits has been to carry a bit of the message of where we stand and extend a personal invitation to interested students to consider us as an opportunity for summer activity.

It seems evident that many of the faculty at these institutions are still in the dark about the current status of Big Ear. Indeed, following the first news releases three years ago, very little word has made the rounds as to what has, and more especially,

what has not happened at the telescope.

More important than the faculty contacts, I find great interest on the part of students in these audiences. There is an active curiosity and a longing to take advantage of this kind of opportunity. We are looking forward to welcoming Cathy Langridge and Mark Eickhoff from Oberlin and Phil Zecher and Mike Pointer from Ohio U. at a working session. These people represent the kind of eager fascination and curiosity that is needed in a viable research atmosphere.

I have been a physics department chairman for far too many years, but I still enjoy the opportunity to tour the facilities and visit with the creatures housed therein every chance I get. We learn a lot on these trips.

SMALL RADIO TELESCOPE ----- Progress Report

For those interested in the small radio telescope project there is some hope. Earle Hunt at Ohio University built a version of the Swenson interferometer (Sky and Telescope May - October 1978) and had it operating from the roof of Clippinger Hall on the OU campus. He feigned loss of memory when I pressed him on possible schematics (he did a home-made IF string) but if you ask nicely I bet he can find some documentation.

The strip-chart records he showed me did look like the sun was easily detected and they had evidence of a good pattern on Cyg-A, even though it was along the edge of the beam. At least we know a monitor can be made to work.

Invite yourself down. Earle might not be happy to see you, but he will never let on.

WORKING SESSION -- JUNE 7, 1986 at Big Ear

In attendance: Dixon, Bolinger, Mikesell, Mitchell, Helwig, Houk, Abbot, Ave.

Agenda:

1. Observatory Break-in: Some people attempted to break into the observatory on or around June 4th. Although there appears to be no damage, development of a security system was discussed. We all know the problems which might arise from someone else's carelessness toward any of the equipment. Discussion centers around bringing in a system similar to the one Perkins has just installed -- cost figures are being compared and a decision must be made as to how much of the grounds we want secured.
2. Air Conditioner update: The air conditioner for Big Ear has been ordered. The funding change with NASA did go through and we should receive the equipment in the next couple of weeks. Until that time Big Ear remains relatively silent.
3. Telephone update: GTE is giving us a hard time about our telephone systems again. They would like us to purchase all the underground cable, which is a cost venture we really don't need. Further examination of our present system will be done as well as examination of possible alternatives to their system.
4. Do list additions: Possible tasks to be completed at the observatory were discussed. Several additions were made to the list which has been developed. They include; patching the focus room roof, installing the AC isolation transmitter on the telescope, and hooking up the Heathkit clock to the main computer and activating it.

Announcements:

Dixon reported that numerous discrepancies have been found in one of the funds at the college. He is investigating and intends to get to the very bottom of the matter.

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WORKING SESSION -- MAY 17, 1986 at Big Ear

In attendance: Kraus, Dixon, Mitchell, Bolinger, Mikesell, Helwig, (from Oberlin) Langridge, Eickhoff, Snider, Johnston, Beige.

Agenda:

1. Focus room air conditioner: Dixon contacted numerous companies and is working on finding the best deal for our money. He will put the order through within the next couple of weeks provided the college bureaucracy does not get the best of him. The order will be placed through the college and supported by NASA funds.
2. Horn car drive gears: Mikesell is working on the transformation but requested some funding for the purchase of various parts.
3. Disposition of Honda: The Honda will be sold as either a car, or if that is not possible it will be scrapped and sold for parts.
4. Status of West Recorder: Bolinger is making progress and without any administrative hassles he should have all hardware done by the end of June. This will ultimately lead to its location at Big Ear in July.
5. Electronics personnel: Notice has been posted at OSU for the hiring of a new technician to work specifically with the electronics of the project, and to lighten the work load of some already working on the project.

Announcements:

Consortium meeting -- July 11 - 12. Helwig-B will field questions while Barnhart-P is away. Barnhart-P will be back 13 June.

Four Oberlin students joined us at the meeting -- welcome! It is great to see such enthusiasm. Oberlin is also interested in joining us on the Dec Writer system and would like to come on sometime in the fall.

Dixon reported of an interesting afternoon he spent with Dr. Subotowicz from Poland. Subotowicz talked of his own theory of fusion reaction which gets its base from how fusion can be used in more practical means.

COORDINATOR'S CORNER REFLECTIONS

What does it mean to volunteer? Like allergies, it affects all of us differently.

I began a volunteer stint with NAAPO a little over a year ago. and I still don't know what it means. In the first place, I guess the most obvious benefit I have seen is that I have gotten an education without having to pay tuition. Much of what I have learned is not the pretty, well organized stuff we throw out to our students. There are some distinctly ragged edges on our world of science and technology.

I am getting to use some skills I have accumulated over the years. That is a good feeling. Some of that pretty, well organized stuff comes in mighty handy at times. I'm also getting to develop some new skills. I didn't realize just how poorly my organizational skills were developed. I understand a little better now why I have been such a slow learner, (quite apart from my limited brain capacity).

I have also discovered that when one volunteers, there is the golden opportunity to work and accomplish with the greatest group of dedicated persons - - other volunteers. I highly recommend the activity for personal growth and service. NAAPO needs you.

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