

Wolbach Library: CfA in the News ~ Week ending 28 September 2008

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Record - 1

DIALOG(R)

NZ probe into death hits icy wall,
Jarrod Booker South Island correspondent,
New Zealand Herald, p A02,
Thursday, September 25, 2008

Text:

New Zealand authorities hamstrung by a lack of co-operation from American agencies have been unable to solve the mystery of a man's death at the South Pole.

Australian astrophysicist Rodney David Marks, 32, died in May 2000 from acute methanol poisoning while working with 49 others at the Amundsen-Scott South Pole Station operated by the United States National Science Foundation (NSF).

His family do not believe they will ever know how their son was poisoned.

``And I don't think we are going to try to find out any more in regards to how Rodney died. I'd see that as a fruitless exercise," Dr Marks' father, Paul Marks, told the Herald from Australia.

Dr Marks was employed by the **Smithsonian** Astrophysical Observatory, working on the ``Antarctic Submillimetre Telescope and Remote Observatory" project.

Because his body was initially flown back to Christchurch, New Zealand took on the role of trying to find answers.

Coroner Richard McElrea yesterday released his findings on the death of Dr Marks, and highlighted the difficulties police investigators had in getting co-operation and reports from the NSF and American contractor, Raytheon Polar Services.

Mr Marks was disappointed neither organisation had made contact with him since his son's death and did not understand why it was so difficult for the authorities to get information out of them. "For heaven's sake, a man has died in your care. Why wouldn't you help the police?"

Suicide was ruled out in the case of Dr Marks _ a man who occasionally drank heavily, but was also described as "brilliant and witty".

It was considered possible Dr Marks, a binge drinker, had accidentally drunk the methanol _ a poisonous liquid used as a solvent or fuel, but his father found this "inconceivable".

It was also possible that someone else had a role in his consuming it, for a prank or a more sinister motive.

But Mr McElrea said: "There is no evidence before the coroner's court to support this theory."

At a coroner's hearing into the death in 2006, Detective Senior Sergeant Grant Wormald commented on the struggles police had to get American assistance in their inquiry.

Since 2002, police had tried to obtain a list of all people on the base when Dr Marks died, and had to find it themselves on the internet.

A questionnaire forwarded only after long negotiation to those at the base got few replies.

Police believed a full investigation into the events leading to Dr Marks' death had been carried out by the US agencies involved, but had been unable to get access to it.

"It is impossible to say how far that investigation went or to what end," Mr Wormald told the inquest.

A Raytheon spokesman in Christchurch would not comment to the Herald yesterday, while National Science Foundation spokesman Art Brown referred any questions to NSF staff in Washington DC.

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Record - 2

DIALOG(R)

Astronomers Discover Most Dark Matter-Dominated Galaxy In Universe,
Staff Writers,

UPI Space Daily,
Monday, September 22, 2008

Text:

A team led by a Yale University astronomer has discovered the least luminous, most dark matter-filled galaxy known to exist. The galaxy, called Segue 1, is one of about two dozen small satellite galaxies orbiting our own Milky Way galaxy.

The ultra-faint galaxy is a billion times less bright than the Milky Way, according to the team's results, to be published in an upcoming issue of The Astrophysical Journal (ApJ). But despite its small number of visible stars, Segue 1 is nearly a thousand times more massive than it appears, meaning most of its mass must come from dark matter.

"I'm excited about this object," said Marla Geha, an assistant professor of astronomy at Yale and the paper's lead author. "Segue 1 is the most extreme example of a galaxy that contains only a few hundred stars, yet has a relatively large mass."

Geha, along with her colleague Josh Simon at the California Institute of Technology, has observed about half of the dwarf satellite galaxies that orbit the Milky Way. These objects are so faint and contain so few stars that at first they were thought to be globular clusters - tightly bound star clusters that also orbit our host galaxy.

But by analyzing the light coming from the objects using the Keck telescope in Hawaii, Geha and Simon showed that these objects are actually galaxies themselves, albeit very dim ones.

Looking only at the light emitted by these ultra-faint galaxies, Geha and her colleagues expected them to have correspondingly low masses. Instead, they discovered that they are between 100 and 1000 times more massive than they appear. Invisible dark matter, she said, must account for the difference.

Although dark matter doesn't emit or absorb light, scientists can measure its gravitational effect on ordinary matter and believe it makes up about 85 percent of the total mass in the universe. Finding ultra-faint galaxies like Segue 1, which is so rife with dark matter, provides clues as to how galaxies form and evolve, especially at the smallest scales.

"These dwarf galaxies tell us a great deal about galaxy formation," Geha said. "For example, different theories about how galaxies form predict different numbers of dwarf galaxies versus large galaxies. So just comparing numbers is significant."

It's only recently that astronomers have discovered just how prevalent these dwarf satellite galaxies are, thanks to projects like the Sloan Digital Sky Survey, which imaged large areas of the nighttime sky in greater detail than ever before.

In the past two years alone, the number of known dwarf galaxies orbiting the Milky Way has doubled from the dozen or so brightest that were discovered during the first half of the twentieth century.

Geha predicts astronomers will find even more as they continue to sift through new data. "The galaxies I now consider bright used to be the least luminous ones we knew about," she said. "It's a totally new regime. This is a story that's just unfolding."

The authors of the paper are Marla Geha (Yale University), Beth Willman (Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics), Joshua D. Simon (California Institute of Technology), Louis E. Strigari (University of California, Irvine), Evan N. Kirby (University of California, Santa Cruz and Lick Observatory), David R. Law (California Institute of Technology) and Jay Strader (Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics).
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Record - 3

DIALOG(R)

Notes from the editors.,

Mineralogical Record, v 39, n 4, p 260(3),

Tuesday, July 1, 2008

Text:

Benefactors & Fellows

Back in 1926, Washington Augustus Roebling (1837-1926), one of the leading mineral collectors of his day, donated \$45,000 (the equivalent of several million dollars today, depending on how you calculate inflation) to form an endowment to help publish the American Mineralogist. That endowment fund has grown substantially since then, and is still providing critical financial support for the journal. Likewise the Helen Dwight Reid Educational Foundation was established in 1956 to support worthy publications, and for many years has provided the financial and business support necessary for the continued publication of Rocks & Minerals. The Mineralogical Record has never enjoyed the luxury of an endowment or a supporting foundation to assure its continued survival, but it has received financial support from a number of individuals.
(ILLUSTRATION OMITTED)

Readers will have noticed already our redesigned title page, and the box at upper left recognizing some very important people. The "Benefactors" are those individuals who each have donated major cash support (well into six figures) to the Mineralogical Record over the years. Without the support of these great gentlemen, the Mineralogical Record would not exist as you see it today, and perhaps not at all. We can never thank them enough, but from now on, at least, they will be permanently recognized on our title page.

Some of our supporters have contributed smaller amounts, and we are very grateful to them as well. Beginning this year, we will recognize donors of \$1,000 or more on our title page as "Fellows" of the Mineralogical Record, for one year (six issues). Should they choose to donate again the following year, their name will be retained on the masthead for another six issues,

and the years will be noted in parentheses. There may be other benefits for Fellows established in the future--stay tuned.

Some of the donated funds (depending on the wishes of the donor) will be added to our fledgeling endowment fund, the interest from which will help to support the magazine in perpetuity. This is an important cause--imagine what the mineral world would be like without the Mineralogical Record! We invite all of our readers to consider joining this esteemed group in assuring the future of our favorite publication. The Mineralogical Record, Inc. is an official non-profit scientific-educational organization under IRS code 501c(3), and donations are fully tax deductible.

(ILLUSTRATION OMITTED)

Japanese Mineral Cabinet

We always like to direct our readers' attention to small cabinets that can be adapted for storing mineral specimens. The elegant chest shown here is advertised as a "Japanese Artisan's Chest," or ko-cho-tansu. Its clean lines are said to embody the Zen principles of simple beauty (shibui), subtlety and harmony. The four-drawer cabinet is made of kiri wood with a cherry finish, and measures 13 inches wide, 15 inches tall and 12 inches deep. The individual drawers look to be about 2 3/4 inches deep, so the chest can store specimens up to miniature size as well as some small-cabinet-size specimens. It can be ordered online from the Acorn Company in West Chester, Ohio; www.AcornOnline.com, item # 13783, \$110.

Giant Diamond Discovered

Travis Metcalfe of the Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics leads a team of researchers who have discovered an enormous diamond in space, measuring 4,000 km in diameter and weighing in at ten billion trillion trillion carats. The space diamond is located at a distance of 50 light years from Earth, in the Constellation Centaurus. Astronomers have dubbed it "Lucy" in a tribute to the Beatles song "Lucy In The Sky With Diamonds." Lucy, also known as BPM 37093., is actually a crystallized white dwarf. A white dwarf is the hot core of a star, left over after the star uses up its nuclear fuel and dies. It is made mostly of carbon and is coated by a thin layer of hydrogen and helium gases.

The white dwarf diamond is not only radiant but also harmonious. It rings like a gigantic gong, undergoing constant pulsations. "By measuring those pulsations, we were able to study the hidden interior of the white dwarf, in the same way that seismographic measurements of earthquakes allow geologists to study the interior of the Earth. We figured out that the carbon interior of this white dwarf has solidified to form the galaxy's largest diamond," Metcalfe said.

First Edition of A. M. T. Print Sold Out

As readers will recall, a complementary framing print by Wendell Wilson is being sent out with every copy of the American Mineral Treasures book purchased through the Mineralogical Record. These prints are available in no other way, and are exclusive to the sale of the book. The first print, entitled "The Mine with the Iron Door," depicts a fantasy underground collecting scene at the famous lost gold mine in the Catalina Mountains above Tucson. The print was produced in a signed and numbered edition of 300 copies, printed on 100% cotton paper. We recently sold our 300th copy

of the book, and consequently the supply of the prints is now exhausted.

However, the offer of a framing print is still open. Wendell has reproduced a new painting, depicting a fantasy underground collecting scene at the Old Yuma mine near Tucson (appropriate, inasmuch as he wrote the Old Yuma mine chapter in the book). This one also has been prepared in a signed and numbered edition of 300, available only to purchasers of the book from the Mineralogical Record. Orders can be placed through the "Bookstore" section at www.MineralogicalRecord.com, or through the Circulation Manager at minrec@aol.com.

New Mineral Museum

It is always a pleasure to hear of the opening of a new mineral museum! Most recently the Vermont Museum of Mining and Minerals opened in Grafton, Vermont, in a small cottage at 55 Pleasant Street. Displays include the minerals of Vermont (naturally), the history of mining in Vermont, special guest exhibits by members of the Brattleboro Mineralogical Society, specimens from the collection of the late Ernie Schlichter (1929-2007), a hands-on fluorescent minerals exhibit, uncut gem crystals, special children's exhibits, and fossils. The museum will be open weekends and major holidays from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. (except for the lunch hour, noon to 1 p.m.), from May 30 through October and at other times by appointment. For information or an appointment contact Sue Haddon (author of the "Eden Mills, Vermont" chapter in the American Mineral Treasures book) at 802-875-3562 or at 802-843-2300.

How to Avoid Embarrassment After You're Dead

Sadly, we all get old and die. So far, no approach for avoiding this has worked, not even Woody Allen's idea ("I was hoping not to be there at the time"). When it happens, we may very well publish an obituary notice for you, accompanied by a photo. Where will this photo come from? Will it be flattering? How do you wish to be remembered as looking?

There is no need to leave this to chance. Simply send us a good photo print of yourself now, one you really like, taken at any time in your life, and we will add it to our extensive portrait archive for possible future use some day. You might as well make your own choice now, while the opportunity is available. Send it to the editors at 4631 Paseo Tubutama, Tucson, AZ 85750.

2,675 Biographies!

The Biographical Archive on our website currently contains 1,127 biographical entries, and Curtis Schuh's recently posted Biobibliography of mineralogy and crystallography contains another 1,548 entries. That's a grand total, so far, of 2,675 biographies! Although no more will be added to Curtis's work, the Biographical Archive is constantly growing. If readers should come across labels or information, or should they need information on someone in particular, please contact the editor and we will research it for you. We have many historical research tools and resources at hand.

The Bad Old Days

In 1946 an early California mineral dealer, Albert Everitt (1881-1950),

wrote as follows in a grateful letter to Peter Zodac, who had founded Rocks & Minerals magazine 20 years before:

A few of us remember away back when there wasn't as much as a pamphlet published, or any information obtainable, regarding mineral collecting. The present-day collector will never know what efforts we put into getting together those early collections. The few dealers were of little help in giving away any information; their lists of customers were locked in the strongbox and exchanges were practically unknown. Today members of the various mineral societies are scattered throughout the length and breadth of the United States--thanks to the untiring efforts of Peter Zodac.

Died, George S. Switzer, 92

George Shirley Switzer, former Smithsonian Curator of Minerals, was born in Petaluma, California on June 11, 1915, the son of Charlotte Elizabeth Ryan and Albert "Bud" James Switzer, a mechanic. He graduated from Santa Rosa Junior College in 1935, received his B.A. from the University of California Berkeley in 1937, his M.A. from Harvard in 1939, and his Ph.D. from Harvard in 1942.

Dr. Switzer was an instructor at Stanford University in 1939-1940 and at Harvard University in 1940-1945. He worked as a crystallographer for the Majestic Radio and TV Corporation in 1945-1946, then served as director of research for the Gemological Institute of America in 1946-1947. He joined the US Geological Survey as a mineralogist in 1947-1948, after which he took a position as associate curator in the Division of Mineralogy and Petrology at the National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution, where he served for 16 years (1948-1964), including a stint as Chairman of the Department of Mineral Sciences (1964-1969). He stayed on as Curator Emeritus from 1969 until his retirement from the Smithsonian in 1975.

Switzer was elected a Fellow of the Geological Society of America and the Mineralogical Society of America, and served as Secretary of the Geological Society of America (1960-1966). He was a member of the American Gem Society and past Secretary of the Examinations Board for the Gemological Institute of America. He was also the author of three articles for the National Geographic Magazine, (in November 1951, April 1958 and December 1968), of entries for the Encyclopedia Britannica and of the book Diamonds in Pictures (1967), and he co-authored Gemology (1979) with Cornelius S. Hurlbut, Jr. Additionally, Switzer taught undergraduate evening classes at American University for many years.

Switzer was involved in the description and naming of five new mineral species during his career: veatchite (1950), ordonezite (1955), paradamite (1956), paratellurite (1960) and galeite (1963). In 1967, John S. White and Peter B. Leavens described and named the new mineral switzerite,

(Mn.sub.3)((PO.sub.4)).sub.2).4(H.sub.2)O, in his honor. In 1986, Pier F. Zanazzi redefined switzerite as (Mn.sub.3)((PO.sub.4)) (sub.2) -(7H.sub.2.O) and renamed the original type material as metaswitzerite (Mn.sub.3)((PO.sub.4)).sub.2).4(H.sub.2)O.

During 1972 and 1973, Switzer, his staff and colleagues at the Smithsonian Institution worked on lunar samples from the Apollo 15 and Apollo 16 missions.

In 1958, Switzer's ongoing efforts to develop a major national gem collection were rewarded with the gift of the Hope Diamond by the famed New York jeweler Harry Winston. The Hope Diamond is the single most popular item in the entire Smithsonian Institution. On April 27, 1962, Switzer, unarmed and traveling alone, hand-carried the Hope Diamond to Paris for a special exhibition, "Ten Centuries of French Jewelry." As with all stories about the Hope Diamond and its purported curse, things soon started going wrong. Pan Am flight 116 departed Friendship Airport on time but on its first scheduled stop at Philadelphia a bad landing damaged the plane and caused the remainder of the flight to be cancelled. Forced to maintain secrecy and improvise, Switzer caught a flight to New York and then Pan Am flight 72 to Frankfurt, Germany. He cabled his French contacts of the situation and worried about the German customs officials. Would he be guilty of smuggling? Fortunately, he was able to remain in the transit lounge and wait for his Air Maroc flight to Paris which arrived nine hours behind his original schedule. Greeted by two frantic Louvre museum staff, he was whisked away by car. Just a block from his destination the car was involved in a minor auto accident.

(ILLUSTRATION OMITTED)

Retiring from the Smithsonian Institution in 1975 to pursue his decades-long hobby of Azalea propagation, he enjoyed 30+ years of active and productive retirement, including the describing and naming of a new Azalea cultivar, Nannie Angell, in 1992. In 1999, he received a Certificate of Recognition for his years of service as a Director of the Azalea Society of America and as the Assistant Editor of the Azalean, as well as his Charter Membership and many years service as President of the Ben Morrison Chapter of the Azalea Society of America.

George Switzer died on March 23, 2008. He is survived by his wife of 68 years, Sue Joan Bowden Switzer, sons James R. Switzer and J. Mark Switzer, eight grandchildren and 12 great-grandchildren. He was preceded in death by his sister Dorothy N. Parr and daughter Patricia Sue Sengstack. He was a Charter Member of the American Chestnut Land Trust, and gifts in lieu of flowers can be sent to ACLT, P.O. Box 2363, Prince Frederick, MD 20678.

Note: Email address for Wendell Wilson is now minrecord@comcast.net
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DIALOG(R)

Press Conference Schedule, Call-Ins Now With Visuals,

US Federal News,
Thursday, May 22, 2008

Text:

WASHINGTON, May 22 -- The American Geophysical Union issued the following news release:

Contents of this message:

1. Press Conference Schedule
2. NEW! Press-conference visuals available to call-ins
3. Press Rooms
4. Attention PIOs: Sending press releases to Joint Assembly
5. AGU journalism awards to be presented
6. News Media Registration Information

7. Who's coming

Note: For links to previous media advisories about the 2008 Joint Assembly, please go to <http://www.agu.org/meetings/ja08/?content=media>

1. Press Conferences

The following schedule of press conferences is subject to change, before or during Joint Assembly. Press conferences may be added or dropped, their titles and emphases may change, and participants may change. All updates to this schedule will be announced in the Press Room (Room 302, Level 3). Press conferences take place in the Press Conference Room (Room 301), which is adjacent.

Times for press conferences are Eastern Daylight Time. Session numbers at the end of each press conference listing may show only the first in a series of related sessions on the topic.

Press Conference TUE10

Solar Tornadoes?

Tuesday, 27 May

1000h

Thanks to satellites that can now see the Sun as never before, researchers have detected short-lived swirls at the solar surface that are associated with releases of solar matter into space. Some of the swirls resemble terrestrial tornadoes, but they're supersized--taller than 10,000 kilometers and nearly half as wide as the Earth. Sightings of the newfound twisters and other unprecedented features are helping scientists understand how jets of particles spew from the solar surface and other aspects of the fiery turmoil that roils the face of our stellar neighbor.

Participants

Edward DeLuca

Supervisory Astrophysicist, Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics,
Cambridge, Massachusetts, USA

Spiros Patsourakos

Research Assistant Professor, George Mason University, Fairfax, Virginia,
USA Etienne Pariat

Research Assistant, CEOSR, George Mason University, Fairfax, Virginia, USA

Sessions SH24A/SH51C/SP51B/U22A
Press Conference TUE13

Climate change vs. the Everglades

Tuesday, 27 May

1300h

As climate changes and sea level rises, what do scientists foresee for the fragile Everglades ecosystem, and for the huge wetland restoration effort--the largest and most expensive yet attempted--that aims to rescue it? Researchers will discuss these newly recognized threats to this unique hydrological and ecological environment, as well as consequences of prolonged drying out of habitats from annual human diversion of water to agriculture at the end of the Southern Florida wet season. The annual drawdown imperils estuarine fish and shellfish and wading birds, and encourages encroachment by exotic plants.

Participants

Hal Wanless

Department of Geological Sciences, University of Miami Coral Gables,
Florida, USA Jayantha Obeysekera
Department Director, Hydrologic & Environmental Systems Modeling, South
Florida Water Management District, West Palm Beach, Florida, USA

Edward J. Kearns

Physical Oceanographer, South Florida Natural Resources Center, National
Park Service, US Department of the Interior, Homestead, Florida, USA

Sessions SH24A/SH51C/SP51B/U22A

Press Conference TUE14

What a science-literate person should know

Tuesday, 27 May

1400h

Skeptics of climate-change evidence and evolution theory make much of the uncertainties in science. But what is really known to science in those and other areas? A meteorologist will discuss his recent experiences as a framer and writer of Florida's new kindergarten-12th grade science education standards, which were hotly contested by anti-evolutionists. And, an Earth-science education specialist will tell the story of a nationwide effort to define what's known in climate science for the benefit of educators, schools, and students.

Participants

Frank Niepold

Climate Education Coordinator (UCAR), NOAA Climate Program Office, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Silver Spring, Maryland, USA

Paul Ruscher

Associate Professor and Associate Chair, Department of Meteorology, Florida State University, Tallahassee, Florida, USA

Session ED24A

Press Conference TUE16

Predicting "killer bee" expansion beyond south Florida

Tuesday, 27 May

1600h

An oceanographer and amateur beekeeper will speak about mounting evidence of honeybees gathering nectar earlier due to climate change and about a new NASA program to see if satellite observations can be used to track and predict such biological changes. The satellite approach, if it works, could yield improved predictions of how far north and where Africanized honeybees (widely known as "killer bees") will spread beyond their current foothold in South Florida. The scientist will discuss this research also in a plenary lecture.

Participants

Wayne Esaias

Research Scientist/Oceanographer, Goddard Space Flight Center, Greenbelt, Maryland, USA

EAS Master Beekeeper, Howard County, Maryland, USA

Session U32A

Press Conference WED10

How the Sun's corona gets so hot
Wednesday, 28 May

1000h

Recent observations and computer simulations are helping scientists chip away at a major mystery of solar science: how the Sun's outer atmosphere, or corona, blazes at millions of degrees while the solar surface remains at just thousands. The new insights could lead to better forecasting of solar radiation effects on telecommunications, navigation, and satellites, and may also prove useful for explaining characteristics of more distant stars. While the long-held view of steady and uniform coronal heating conflicts with observations, new data suggest that heating occurs fitfully and close to the solar surface.

Participants

James A. Klimchuk

Astrophysicist, Solar Physics Lab, NASA Goddard Space Flight Center, Greenbelt, Maryland, USA

Ignacio Ugarte-Urra

Research Assistant Professor, George Mason University, Fairfax, Virginia, USA Harry P. Warren

Astrophysicist, Space Science Division, Naval Research Laboratory, Washington, D.C., USA

Sessions SP31C/SP41C

Press Conference WED11

Solar Wind Challenge

Wednesday, 28 May

1100h

A debate has recently flared among solar scientists about what fuels the solar wind--the great outflowing of matter from Sun that fires up auroras, disrupts satellites, and shields the solar system from galactic cosmic radiation. Does the energy come from the churning of the Sun's surface or from its hot, bright magnetic loops? Resolving this question is vital to improving forecasts of solar wind-induced hazards and to deepening our understanding of stellar winds in general. In addition to speakers representing each side of the debate, Eugene Parker, who in 1958 was first to propose the solar wind's existence, will offer perspective and commentary on solar wind research and the current debate.

Participants

Nathan Schwadron

Associate Professor of Astronomy, Boston University, Boston, Massachusetts, USA Nancy Crooker

Research Professor, Center for Space Physics, Boston University, Boston, Massachusetts, USA

Eugene Parker

Distinguished Service Professor Emeritus, Departments of Physics and Astronomy & Astrophysics, Enrico Fermi Institute, University of Chicago, Chicago, Illinois, USA

Session SH34B

2. NEW! Press-conference visuals available to call-ins

Call-ins by reporters to the press conferences are welcome. As a new service to be introduced and evaluated at this meeting, members of the news media may also log on to a web site to view the slides that accompany the talks, as those slides are presented. Although audio of the press conference remains accessible only by phone, the quality of the sound should significantly improve compared to previous AGU meetings.

A. Call-in information:

Here are the phone numbers and access code for doing so:

*From USA and Canada, call (toll free): +1 888 481 3032

*From other locations, call: +1 617 801 9600

When prompted, please enter this access code: 115139 (Note: This code remains the same for all press conferences. However, you must place a separate call for each one, even in consecutive hours.)

B. Remote access to press-conference visuals (NEW!):

To view the slides shown by press-conference speakers, as those slides are presented, go to this website:

<http://www.visualwebcaster.com/event.asp?id=48707>

Type in your name, name of employer, and email address. Then click "Register". At the new web page that appears, click on the "Slides Only" button. When another web page then opens (the 'player' window), please click on its "Ask A Question" button, type in your name and the press-conference code (e.g. Jane Smith TUE10), and click "Submit". (The press-conference code is the first three letters of the day of the week plus a two digit time--see list of press conferences above.)

On the player window, press-conference slides will appear at the same time as they are shown at the meeting. By means of this window, you can also type in questions during press conferences. In addition, you can access electronic copies of supporting materials, such as press releases, preprints of scientific papers, and other handouts provided by speakers. Press-conference speakers may also use this system to cause other relevant web pages to appear on your screen.

Note: Reporters are required to register only once at the website. Each subsequent time you call up the above web address, you will be taken

directly to the player window.

IMPORTANT: To insure that the supporting material and other features available on the player window get updated properly, please close the window at the end of each press conference. Then, reopen it about 5 minutes before the next press conference of interest. Also, each time you open the player window, please click on the "Ask A Question" button, type in your name and the press conference code (e.g. John Jones TUE10), and click "Submit". (Reminder: The press conference code is the first three letters of the day of the week plus a two digit time--see list of press conferences above.) Typing in your name and the code alerts AGU that you are viewing the press conference.

Regrettably, the website cannot display dynamic content, such as videos or animations, which may be shown during press conferences. 3. Press Rooms

The Press Room for the meeting is Room 302, on Level 3 of the convention center. Its phone number is +1 954-765-5470; give this number to anyone who may have to call you there. There are additional phones for outgoing calls, at no charge to you for business calls.

The Press Conference Room, Room 301, is adjacent to the Press Room.

If you preregistered, your Press/News Media badge will be waiting for you in the Press Room (Room 302). However, preregistration has closed. You may register onsite in the Press Room (not at the main registration booths in the lobby).

Both the Press Room and Press Conference Room are equipped with wi-fi for use with your own laptop. The Press Room also has one Internet-connected computer for shared use, with a shared printer.

The Press Room (Room 302) hours are:

Mon., 26 May 1430h-1830h

Tue., 27 May 0700h-1800h

Wed., 28 May 0730h-1800h

Thu., 29 May 0730h-1800h

Fri., 30 May 0730h-1400h

Breakfast and lunch are served in the Press Room daily, Tuesday-Friday, for News Media registrants. Breakfast is at 0730h. Lunch is at noon. 4.

Attention PIOs: Sending press releases to Joint Assembly

Public information officers are urged to work with scientists from their institutions to produce press releases and other materials for the media, related to their research, regardless of whether the scientists will be participating in press conferences. We suggest around 20 copies of printed materials and three copies of any video for broadcast.

The simplest way to send such materials is with the scientists themselves, asking them to drop them off in the Press Room (Room 302, Level 3, of the convention center). If that is not feasible, please ship them to:

Peter Weiss

Guest (Arriving 5/25/08)

c/o Bahia Mar Beach Resort and Yachting Center

801 Seabreeze Boulevard

Fort Lauderdale, Florida 33316

(Phone: +1 (954) 764-2233)

Remaining copies of press materials may be collected up to 1300h on Friday, 30 May, after which they will be scrapped.. 5. AGU journalism awards to be presented

AGU will present two journalism awards at Joint Assembly, as part of the Honors Evening on Thursday, 29 May:

*David Perlman Award for Excellence in Science Journalism--News to Margaret Munro, CanWest News Service *Walter Sullivan Award for Excellence in Science Journalism--Features to Dr. Richard Smith, Australian Broadcasting Corporation

News Media registrants are encouraged to attend the awards ceremony, which begins at 1830h in the Convention Center's Floridian Ballroom, on Level 3.

After the awards ceremony, an Honors Banquet will take place in the Ft. Lauderdale Grande Hotel, Grande Ballroom, beginning at 2030h. The banquet costs \$55 per person. Members of the news media who wish to attend, please call the AGU Member Service Center at +1 800 966 2481 (toll free) or +1 202 462 6900, and request seating at the press table. For further information, contact Peter Weiss (pweiss@agu.org, 202-777-7507). The Ft. Lauderdale Grande Hotel is a short walk from the convention center.

6. News Media Registration Information

International reporters: If you are neither a citizen nor a permanent resident of the United States, you need a visa to cover meetings in the U.S. This applies also to reporters from countries in the Visa Waiver Program, who do not need visas to visit the U.S. as tourists. For current information, see the official State Department web site: http://travel.state.gov/visa/temp/types/types_1276.html.

News Media registrants receive a badge that provides access to any of the scientific sessions of the meeting, as well as to the Press Room and Press Conference Room. No one will be admitted to press conferences, sessions, or the exhibition hall without a valid badge.

To enter the Convention Center, you will need to show a government-issued picture ID (passport or driver's license). Please proceed next to the Press Room (Room 302) to receive your badge. Preprinted badges will be waiting there for News Media registrants who have preregistered. Be prepared to show professional identification (see below).

If you have not preregistered, you may fill out a News Media Registration Form in the Press Room (Room 302), presenting appropriate identification (see below). Your badge will be made while you wait.

Eligibility for press registration is limited to the following persons:

*Working press employed by bona fide news media: must present a press card, business card, or letter of introduction from an editor of a recognized publication.

*Freelance science writers: must present a current membership card from NASW, a regional affiliate of NASW, CSWA, ISWA, or SEJ; or evidence of by lined work pertaining to science intended for the general public and published in 2007 or 2008; or a letter from the editor of a recognized publication assigning you to cover 2008 Joint Assembly.

*Public information officers of scientific societies, educational institutions, and government agencies: must present a business card.

Note: Representatives of publishing houses, for profit corporations, and the business side of news media must register at the main registration desk at the meeting and pay the appropriate fees, regardless of possession of any of the above documents. They are not accredited as News Media at the meeting.

Scientists who are also reporters and who are presenting at this meeting (oral or poster session) may receive News Media credentials if they qualify (see above), but must also register for the meeting and pay the appropriate fee as a presenter.

7. Who's Coming

The online list of journalists who preregistered for the meeting may be seen at <http://www.agu.org/meetings/ja08/?content=media> (Scroll down to see list.)

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