



President's Message

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Dear Friends and Fellow Planetarians

This morning, a few hours before I started writing this message, I watched the final landing of the Space Shuttle Atlantis. The landing marked the end of an era and so I reflected on the accomplishments of the Space Age during the past 54 years since the launch of Sputnik.

Yesterday was the 42nd anniversary of the Apollo 11 moon landing. I wonder what will occur in the next 50 years of space exploration? Like many of you, my life has been greatly influenced by human space flight. I attribute my early interest in science to the television coverage of Alan Shepherd's and John Glenn's space missions. My memories of that magical July evening when humans first set foot on another world still inspire me.

After our recent IPS Council meeting in Russia, I toured the Museum of Cosmonautics in Moscow and was awed by the details of Yuri Gagarin's flight that I had never heard as an 8-year-old boy growing up in the United States. The achievements of Soviet spaceflight were not highly celebrated on American television.

What can we do in our theaters to awaken the dream of space exploration in new generations of children? How can we spark the curiosity of our visitors so that they will want to explore the world and the universe?

The meeting in Nizhny Novgorod

The 2011 IPS Council met in Nizhny Novgorod, Russia on July 1-2. I am sure that the IPS regional affiliate representatives and others in attendance will agree that it was a fruitful meeting.

I wish that all you could have been there with us to experience the closeness that we all felt with the Russian planetarians we met. The Council especially would like to thank our hosts, Dr. Alexander Serber, Zinaida Sitkova, Alexandra Timoshinova, and all of the staff of the Nizhny Novgorod Planetarium for helping to make it such a special meeting for us all.

Obviously, any meeting that gathers representative from around the world involves considerable expense for our Society. Some may wonder why we spend the money to have these meetings in this era of email, Skype and other internet services. Why don't we

hold all of our meetings on-line?

Much can be accomplished using modern communication, but there is still a need for personal meetings. Even Apple co-founder Steve Jobs, one of the principal players in the communication revolution of the last 40 years, places a high priority on meeting with his team leaders, recognizing that personal meetings are often the best venues for team-building and decisions.

Written words do not adequately convey the subtle nuances that we are able to detect

in personal gatherings. A 2009 study in the *Harvard Business Review* showed that 87% of business professionals think that face-to-face meetings are essential to sealing a business deal, while 95% said that they are key to successful, long-lasting business relationships.

It is highly advantageous for our IPS regional affiliate representatives, committee chairs and officers to gather in Council once a year. In even-numbered years, the Council meets two days prior to our biennial IPS Conference. Our treasury pays for hotel and food expenses, but not for travel expenses since it is expected that officers and Council members will attend the IPS conference.

On odd-numbered years, IPS pays for a portion of the travel expenses, the hotel, food and other costs associated with the meeting. In my opinion, it is money well spent.

In my March message, I described the process of choosing the Council site for the odd-numbered years. This is what I wrote Alexander Serber when I accepted the invitation to come to Nizhny Novgorod for the Council meeting:



IPS President Elect Thomas Kraupe (left) congratulates Dr. Jin Zhu, IPS 2014 Conference host. It was a double congratulations, as Dr. Zhu also represented the Chinese Planetarium Society, the newest IPS affiliate. Photo by Dave Weinrich

Welcome to the Chinese Planetarium Society

Our Society has a new regional affiliate! At the 2011 Council meeting in Nizhny Novgorod, Council voted to accept the Chinese Planetarium Society (CPS) as our 22nd affiliate.

The Chinese Planetarium Society, founded in 2007, currently has 58 members who represent schools, colleges, universities, museums, planetariums, and corporations.

Dr. Jin Zhu, president of the Chinese Planetarium Society and director of the Beijing Planetarium, wrote "the Society aims to encourage the sharing of ideas among its members through publications and conferences, and to make more communication with international planetarium organizations."

I know that several IPS presidents have encouraged our Chinese colleagues in this venture. Congratulations and best wishes to our new affiliate! ☆



Putting faces to the names: The IPS Council and our hosts at the Nizhny Novgorod Planetarium. Photo by Olesya Mityanina

"The Russian Planetarium Association (RPA) has not been officially represented at Council meetings for some time and I want you to know that you are a valued part of our community and that there is much that we can learn from each other.

"The other officers and I believe that it is important for the Council to meet planetarians from many parts of Russia during our visit. One way to facilitate that would be to schedule a RPA meeting right after the Council meeting finishes, e.g. starting on Saturday evening."

Those words proved to be very true. Our Council meeting in Russia re-established ties with the Russian Planetarium Association (RPA) and built many bridges with our colleagues from that part of the world. I feel that this meeting will lead to collaborative projects with planetarians worldwide and greater participation of our Russian colleagues.

Meeting the RPA

The highlight of our meeting was the opportunity to get to know so many planetarians gathered together at the Nizhny Novgorod Planetarium for a RPA meeting. There were more than 50 representatives from Russia, Kazakhstan, Ukraine and other countries. They met for two days, concurrent with the Council

meeting, and we had a joint meeting during our last day in Nizhny Novgorod.

Papers in Russian and English, fulldome presentations, and planetarium shows filled the day. One interesting note that several Council members commented on was the fact that the majority of the Russian planetarians at the meeting were female.

We were happy to hear from our Japanese Council representative, Kaoru Kimura, that our planetarium colleagues in Japan are recovering from the damage caused by the devastating March earthquake. They really appreciate the messages of concern that they received from planetarians around the world at the time of this national tragedy.

And then there was the karaoke

That evening we had a banquet in a karaoke restaurant. There was much conversation, many toasts, and once the ice was broken, considerable singing. I was on an emotional high as a large group of us, from many nations, linked arms and sang our hearts out. I realized that we are all, regardless of where we live in the world, united by our passion for astronomy. We do "all live under one sky!"

The minutes of the 2011 Council meeting will appear in a future issue of the *Planetarian* and most of the affiliate and committee re-

ports will be on the IPS website, but I do want to mention some highlights.

One of the major tasks of the Council is the selection of future IPS conference sites. This year we had 2014 conference bids from Brazil, Canada, and China. All were good, solid bids and we knew that each of the three sites would host a wonderful conference. We really appreciate the hard work that went into each bid.

It was a difficult choice, but Council, after much deliberation, made the decision to accept the bid by the Beijing Planetarium. The 2014 IPS Conference will take place June 23-27 in Beijing, China. Look for updates in the *Planetarian* and in the conference section of the IPS website.

Again, I want to thank our friends in Rio de Janeiro and Vancouver and I hope that they will consider bidding for a future IPS conference.

As I was writing this message, I received a Facebook alert reminding us that we are only one year from the beginning of the IPS 2012 conference on July 22, 2012. How quickly time passes! It doesn't seem that long since Baton Rouge was selected as the 2012 conference site at our Council meeting in Toulouse, France. In March, I made a site visit to Baton

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Letters to the Editor

To the Editor:

I sent the following letter to the Board of Directors of the Europlanetarium in Genk, Belgium. I would like to share this letter with the planetarium community.

To the Board of Directors, Kattevennen-Europlanetarium vzw:

With uttermost dismay, we receive the news that M. Chris Janssen has been dismissed as director of the Europlanetarium in Genk.

In the last thirteen years, Chris Janssen, as director of the Europlanetarium, has done his uttermost in the promotion and popularisation of astronomy and linked sciences to the lay public and to schoolchildren.

Together with M. Lode Vanhoutte, he was one of the founders of the Limburgse Volksterrenwacht (public observatory of Limburg, Belgium). In this same public observatory he served for years as a volunteer to guide visitors into the realm of stars and planets and to share his enthusiasm for the starry sky.

On top of this, Chris Janssen is co-founder of PLANed, the International Planetarium Society affiliate for the Dutch-speaking planetaria. This is a very useful means of sharing ideas, exchanging experiences and formally/informally talking with colleagues from planetaria in our little part of the world.

Chris was honored during the last IPS conference in Alaxandria by being named a Fellow of IPS, one of the highest honors that IPS bestows. This award is an appreciation given by planetarium professionals from around the world to people who, by means of planetarium techniques, have distinguished themselves in the popularisation of astronomy and related sciences. This is an honour that could have been used by the city council of Genk to promote the city.

We, as PLANed (ADSP- Association of Dutch Speaking Planetaria), consider the decision of the Board of Directors of Kattevennen-Euro-

planetarium vzw as extremely painful, because the board has jettisoned decennia of years of experience in education and the popularisation of astronomy and linked sciences. We fear that this experience will be lost.

The decision taken by that board of directors not only has repercussions on the daily work of Kattevennen-Europlanetarium vzw, but also on PLANed, as Chris is the financial representative of ADSP. Our association has always relied on his years of experience.

We can't judge an internal decision on matters concerning employees. But we still have the impression that this is a serious threat to the popularisation of astronomy and related sciences in Genk. Keep in mind that the Europlanetarium is a site that has always been regarded as top notch in astronomy education in Europe.

Eddy Pirotte, President ADSP (PLANed)
Beisbroek Planetarium, Brugge, Belgium

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Rouge to meet our hosts and see the conference site. The Louisiana Art & Science Museum, the Irene W. Pennington Planetarium and the Baton Rouge Area Convention and Visitors Bureau really rolled out the red carpet. They are extremely excited and eager to welcome all of us to the city next year.

The theme of the conference is "Bridge to New Beginnings." Host Jon Elvert writes that it will "showcase the latest advances in astronomy, planetarium technologies, data visualization, and education." Visit the conference website at ips2012.com to find more information about the venues, hotels, and schedule.

Our Society can certainly be proud of the quality of our journal, the *Planetarian*. We thank our editor, Sharon Shanks, for all of the work that she does to produce such a professional publication. She has built on the work

of previous editors to make the *Planetarian* what it is today.

Please remember that it is your journal. I encourage each member of IPS to work on making it even better. One way you can do so is to share news of what's going on in your facility with your regional news editor.

Another very important way to contribute is to write an article for the journal. You may not think that what you are doing is worth writing about, but you'd be surprised to find how much others could learn from your experience.

For the love of aurora

As I conclude, I want to write about Andy Keen, a resident of Wales, who passionately pursues his love for the aurora borealis. That passion helped him recover and gave mean-

ing to his life after he was afflicted with peripheral neuropathy and had to learn how to walk again at age 21.

Andy realized that he needed to appreciate the simple things of life and to give back to people. He organized a charity for people afflicted with that condition and raised 1.2 million pounds.

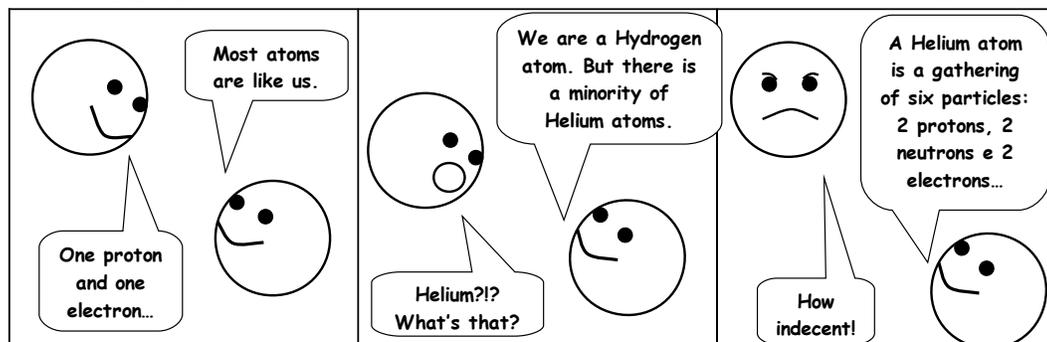
Three years ago, after watching a documentary about the aurora borealis on the BBC, he traveled to Norway to photograph what he calls "the children of the night." He writes:

"Photography really did help me to get through everything. In essence, it provided a safe harbor in a very stormy sea and, without doubt, it provided a very positive distraction, which, in turn, aided my recovery. I am extremely passionate about the aurora borealis, so much so that I would go as far as to say that I don't think that I could live without them."

You can read more about his inspiring work and see some of his wonderful pictures in a recent article published in *Asian Photography and Imaging*, aurorahunters.com/wp-content/uploads/2009/12/aurora.pdf and at the Aurora Hunters website aurorahunters.com.

I plan to see some of you at regional conferences, either in person or through a Skype session, and hopefully at our meeting next year in Baton Rouge. Until then, as Andy Keen would say, Carpe Diem-Seize the Day! ☆

PARTYcles



Alex Cherman