

# Past President's Message



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While on a visit to California in March, I had the great pleasure of visiting the Griffith Observatory in Los Angeles, back for the first time since its reopening in 2006. The exhibits are excellent, and it was great of course, to meet up with Dr. Ed Krupp and the Griffith staff and take in the famous views of downtown Los Angeles in one direction and the "Hollywood" sign in another.

While there, I took in—of course—a show at the Samuel Oschin Planetarium and had

the pleasure of meeting up with presenters David Nakamoto, Julie Silverman, and Nicholas Read. I was impressed by the entirely live presentation, narrated excellently by Nicholas.

Such experiences never fail to remind me of the value of a live presenter for at least part of the show. At Griffith, their shows have always been entirely live. Of course, most of us use at least a partly recorded show—myself included—but I have always felt that the staff are a planetarium's main asset. One of the best uses of that asset is to interact with the audience!

Some people have commented that a live presentation is traditional but old-fashioned. They liken this style to describing the narrator as the "lecturer," and so on, which was common a long time ago. We certainly wouldn't use the term "lecturer" to describe planetarium staff today—I agree that this would not be the best way to attract audiences! However, what Griffith is doing is good, and it works. I admire their resolve to continue with live presentations.

## Congratulations

Speaking of California, congratulations to former IPS President Jim Manning on recently being appointed to the role of chief executive officer of the Astronomical Society of the Pacific, which is based in San Francisco. IPS members will be aware of the close association we have had with the ASP over the years, and I am sure we can look forward to this continuing with Jim at the helm. Not long before my visit to Los Angeles, I also paid a visit to San Francisco and dropped in to see outgoing CEO Mike Bennett. I also had a delightful meeting with Anna Hurst, who is keen for IPS members to contribute to *The Universe in the Classroom*. A message from Anna appears elsewhere in this issue of the *Planetarian*.

In the first few months of 2007, my IPS activities, apart from the usual constant commu-

nication amongst the officers, have included a continuation of my role as chair of the International Relations Committee (formerly the Language Committee).

Firstly, I am pleased to report that progress is still being made with the formation of a national planetarium group in China. In early April, the China Association for Science and Technology (CAST) approved the formation of the Chinese Planetarium Professional Committee, which would become effective when placed on the records of the Chinese Ministry of Civil Affairs. At the time of writing this message, it was expected that there would be a preliminary meeting of the Committee on April 27-28, followed by a general meeting in September. It appears that they are well on track towards a national association, which I hope will be able to affiliate very soon. Thanks once again to Dr. Jin Zhu and to Ms Guo Xia of the Beijing planetarium for their assistance and enthusiasm in this matter and towards the IPS.

Secondly, I am also still optimistic about the possible formation of a Brazilian group, and I feel especially positive about this owing to the fact that the next IPS Council meeting will be held in Rio de Janeiro. I have continued to discuss the issue with Alexandre Cherman, especially, and I look forward to having more to report on this topic in the next issue of the *Planetarian*.

I rarely talk about what is happening with me on the home front, but it's time I gave you all an update. My planetarium—the Launceston Planetarium in Tasmania, Australia—has faced a very uncertain future of late. The institution in which it is housed, the Queen Victoria Museum, suffered a considerable loss during March 2007, with 18% of its workforce being made redundant owing to budget cuts imposed by the local City Council. The building containing the Planetarium will be converted into a visual arts centre, but it appears, if all goes well, that the Planetarium will be moved to the Museum's "second" site, which

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Left: Staff at the Samuel Oschin Planetarium at the Griffith Observatory. From left to right: David Nakamoto, Julie Silverman and Nicholas Read. Right: A view of the impressive Griffith Observatory. All photos by Martin George.

# Planetarians' Calendar of Events

## 2007

16-20 July. Spitz Digital Institute, Chadds Ford, Pennsylvania, USA, Contact: Joyce Towne at [jtowne@spitzinc.com](mailto:jtowne@spitzinc.com) or [www.spitzinc.com/institute](http://www.spitzinc.com/institute)

16-20 July. STARLAB Digital Institute, Chadds Ford, PA, USA, Trish Adamo at [tadamo@starlab.com](mailto:tadamo@starlab.com) or [www.starlab.com/slds](http://www.starlab.com/slds)

20-22 July. DomeFest, Albuquerque, New Mexico, USA. Showcase of world's best and innovative fulldome productions. More information at [www.domefest.com](http://www.domefest.com)

23 July. PIPS meeting for small and portable planetarium directors in Schenectady, New York. Contact Steve Russo at [russo@schenectadymuseum.org](mailto:russo@schenectadymuseum.org).

4-5 August. International Planetarium Society Council Meeting, Rio de Janeiro Planetarium, Brazil. Host: Alexandre Cherman.

6-8 September. Forth European Meeting for Itinerant Planetaria: Bratislava, Slovakia. Contact Vidovenec Marian at emails [marianvidovenec@orangemail.sk](mailto:marianvidovenec@orangemail.sk) and [marianvidovenec@orangemail.sk](mailto:marianvidovenec@orangemail.sk); see also [www.suh.sk/ips2007](http://www.suh.sk/ips2007)

7-9 September. Nordic Planetarium Association Biennial Conference in Orsa, Sweden. Information from Per Broman at [pbr@planetarium.se](mailto:pbr@planetarium.se).

20-22 September. Western Alliance Con-

ference (all planetariums west of the Mississippi River), Fairbanks, Alaska. Contact: Gail Chaid [chaidg@esuhsd.org](mailto:chaidg@esuhsd.org)

7 October. XXII National Meeting of Italian Planetaria, Ulrico Hoepli Planetarium, Milan, Italy, [www.planetaritaliani.it](http://www.planetaritaliani.it)

9-13 October. Triple Conjunction Planetarium Conference with the Mid-Atlantic Planetarium Society (MAPS), Southeastern Planetarium Association (SEPA), and Great Lakes Planetarium Association (GLPA). Host: Benedum Planetarium, Benedum Natural Science Center, Oglebay Resort, Wheeling, West Virginia USA. Contact: Steve Mitch, [smitch@oglebay-resort.com](mailto:smitch@oglebay-resort.com), [www.oglebay-resort.com/goodzoo/planetarium.htm](http://www.oglebay-resort.com/goodzoo/planetarium.htm)

13-16 October. Association of Science-Technology Centers (ASTC) Annual Conference, California Science Center, Los Angeles, California, USA. [www.astc.org](http://www.astc.org)

15 October. ASTC Fulldome Showcase, Griffith Planetarium, Los Angeles

31 December. Deadline for entries for the 2007 IPS/Eugenides Foundation Scriptwriting Competition.

## 2008

January. Nordic Planetarium Conference, Jaermuseet, Stavanger, Norway. Host Ivar Nakken, [ivar.nakken@mail.no](mailto:ivar.nakken@mail.no).

23 March. **International Day of Planetaria**

15-19 June. 5th Science Centre World Congress, Toronto, Ontario, Canada.

15-20 June. 19th International Planetarium Society Conference, Adler Planetarium, Chicago.

22-26 July. Southeastern Planetarium Association (SEPA) annual conference, The Lafayette Natural History Museum & Planetarium, Lafayette, Louisiana, USA. Contact: [dhostetter@lafayettegov.net](mailto:dhostetter@lafayettegov.net).

18-21 October. Association of Science-Technology Centers (ASTC) Annual Conference, The Franklin Institute, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA. [www.astc.org](http://www.astc.org)

## Deadlines for "A Week in Italy"

31 August 2007, planetarians from France

30 September 2007, planetarians from Spain

For more information on the "Week in Italy", go to: [www.astrofilibresciani.it/Planetari/Week\\_in\\_Italy/-Week\\_Italy.htm](http://www.astrofilibresciani.it/Planetari/Week_in_Italy/-Week_Italy.htm)

For corrections and new information for the Calendar of Events, please send a message to Loris Ramponi at [info@serafinozani.it](mailto:info@serafinozani.it). ☆



Left: The Zeiss IX projector at the Samuel Oschin Planetarium at Griffith. The Planetarium also uses an Evans and Sutherland D3 system. Right: Exhibits inside the Griffith Observatory.

(George, continued from page 49)

will also see the installation of a new interactive science centre. More later, but for now the Planetarium is continuing to operate in its original location. So, if any of you are planning a visit to Tasmania, do let me know! At a latitude of 41.5 degrees south, ours is one of the southernmost planetariums in the world. ☆

## Coming Up:

119th Annual Meeting of the Astronomical Society of the Pacific and ASP EPO Conference

September 5-7, 2007 at the Holiday Inn Chicago Mart Plaza, Chicago, IL  
Co-hosted with the Adler Planetarium

For complete details:

[www.astrosociety.org/events/meeting.html](http://www.astrosociety.org/events/meeting.html)