

AAS Committee on the Status of Women

Issue of July 19, 2019

eds: Nicolle Zellner, Heather Flewelling, Maria Patterson, and JoEllen McBride

[AAS has migrated their email system to Microsoft Exchange, so please check your spam folder if you did not receive the newsletter this week. It is no longer possible to subscribe or unsubscribe to the *AASWomen* newsletter by means of Google Groups. We have updated our subscribe and unsubscribe instructions below. Please follow us on social media for updates and thank you for bearing with us as we work out all the kinks.

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1. Your Memories of Dr. Margaret Burbidge

From: JoEllen McBride via womeninastronomy.blogspot.com

In 1971, Margaret Burbidge refused to accept the AAS Council's Cannon Prize because "the prize, available only to women, was in itself discriminatory." The Council's response was to set up a committee, the "Special Committee on the Cannon Prize," which not only dealt with this issue but also recommended that the AAS review the status of women in astronomy. These events were the catalyst that started the Committee on the Status of Women in Astronomy (CSWA).

Read more at

<http://womeninastronomy.blogspot.com/2019/07/your-memories-of-dr-margaret-burbidge.html>

2. Margaret "Hap" Brennecke: The woman who welded Apollo's rockets

From: JoEllen McBride [joellen.mcbride_at_gmail.com]

"The first female welding engineer employed at NASA's Marshall Space Flight Center made critical contributions to the mighty Saturn V that put men on the Moon.

"By the time she arrived at NASA, Margaret Brennecke, who usually went by the

nickname "Hap," was an old hand at engineering. And when the the Saturn V rocket launched the astronauts of the Apollo program to the Moon, it was in part thanks to Brennecke's work."

Read more at

<https://astronomy.com/news/2019/07/margaret-hap-brennecke-the-woman-who-welded-apollos-rockets>

3. Women of Apollo

From: JoEllen McBride [joellen.mcbride_at_gmail.com]

The *LA Times* has some cool little video stories about women involved in the Apollo program.

Watch more at

<https://www.latimes.com/projects/women-apollo-mission-50-nasa/>

4. A Woman's Place is in Space: Meet Eight Asian American Women Reaching for the Stars

From: JoEllen McBride [joellen.mcbride_at_gmail.com]

By Teena Apeles

"For every person and vehicle that NASA has launched beyond Earth's atmosphere, there have been numerous women on the ground who made those journeys possible. Women of Asian descent are among them, some of whom made remarkable journeys themselves from across the globe to come to support these important missions. Their numbers at NASA continue to grow at an inspiring pace, doubling from 1992 to 2015. The following women are just a fraction of the Asian Americans whose remarkable work continues to impact the investigation of worlds beyond our own."

Read more at

<https://www.kcet.org/summer-of-space/a-womans-place-is-in-space-meet-eight-asian-american-women-reaching-for-the-stars>

5. The Black Women Food Scientists Who Created Meals For Astronauts

From: JoEllen McBride [joellen.mcbride_at_gmail.com]

By Charnell Chasten Long

"For the 50th anniversary of the Apollo 11 mission, Nestlé foods released a [replica menu](#) of the microwavable meals the astronauts ate during their [21-day quarantine](#) on Earth, which lasted from July 24 to August 14, 1969. These are the same menus that inspired the "Everyone who's been to the moon is eating Stouffer's" [ad campaign](#), printed in *Life Magazine* on August 8, 1969. The ad refers to NASA's contract with [Stouffer's Foods](#), an Ohio based food company owned by Nestlé since 1973 and known for its frozen macaroni and cheese, restaurants, and hotels. The NASA contract and the ads helped transform Stouffer's into a household name. But the company has failed to acknowledge the black women who made the meals possible."

[Stay tuned for our Apollo Anniversary blog post on July 24th for more interesting stories like these! --eds.]

Read more at

<https://www.ladyscience.com/essays/black-women-food-scientists-who-created-meals-for-astronauts>

6. To Make It to the Moon, Women Have to Escape Earth's Gender Bias

From: JoEllen McBride [joellen.mcbride_at_gmail.com]

By Mary Robinette Kowal

"As we celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Apollo 11 moon landing, NASA has started Artemis, a program that aims 'to return astronauts to the lunar surface by 2024, including the first woman and the next man.'

"Although both astronauts have enormous challenges ahead, the first woman will face added hurdles simply because everything in space carries the legacy of Apollo. It was designed by men, for men."

Read more at

<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/07/17/science/women-astronauts-nasa.html>

7. While NASA Was Landing on the Moon, Many African-Americans Sought Economic Justice Instead

From: JoEllen McBride [joellen.mcbride_at_gmail.com]

By Bryan Greene

'The reception in Harlem reflects a broader truth about the Apollo 11 mission and how many black communities viewed it. NASA's moonshot was costly; author Charles Fishman called it "the largest non-military effort in human history" [in a recent interview with NPR](#). Black publications like the *New York Amsterdam News* and civil rights activists like Ralph Abernathy argued that such funds -- [\\$25.4 billion, in 1973 dollars](#) -- would be better spent alleviating the poverty facing millions of African-Americans. Spoken word artist Gil Scott-Heron's memorable poem "[Whitey on the Moon](#)" catalogued a host of genuine hazards and deprivations earthbound African-Americans endured while Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin hopped about on the moonscape. "No hot water, no toilets, no lights, while whitey's on the moon" he rapped, adding that "all that money I made last year" went to the race to beat the Soviets to the moon.'

Read more at

<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/nasa-landing-moon-many-african-americans-sought-economic-justice-instead-180972622/>

8. Three generations of space experts react to the Moon landings

From: Heather Flewelling [heather_at_ifa.hawaii.edu]

By Adam Levy

"Half a century ago, a human set foot on the moon for the first time. *Nature* invited three experts to rewatch the highlights of the landing, reflecting on the Apollo missions' huge significance to humanity and to science. Sara Russell and Marissa Lo are researchers who study the moon, and Wally Funk was the youngest of the 'Mercury 13' women who underwent -- and passed -- many of the same tests as the Apollo 11 astronauts."

Read more at

<https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-019-02134-1>

9. SETI Institute Collaborates with Girl Scouts to Develop New Space Science Badges

From: Rick Fienberg [rick.fienberg_at_aas.org]

"Girl Scouts of the USA (GSUSA) announced the release of 42 new badges for girls in grades K-12 in outdoor adventure and science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM). Among these new badges are the Space Science badges for Girl Scout Cadettes (grades 6-8), Seniors (grades 9-10), and Ambassadors (grades 11-12) which were developed as part of the SETI Institute's Reaching for the Stars: NASA Science for Girl Scouts program (also known as Girl Scouts Stars). These badges follow the Space Science badges for Girl Scouts in grades K-5, which were released in 2018."

Read more at

<https://www.seti.org/press-release/seti-institute-collaborates-girl-scouts-develop-new-space-science-badges>

10. Science history: Esther Conwell 'jump-started the computer age'
From: JoEllen McBride [joellen.mcbride_at_gmail.com]

By Jeff Glorfeld

"In November 2002, *Discover* magazine published its list of 'The 50 Most Important Women in Science'. Included was [Esther Conwell](#), an American professor of chemistry at the University of Rochester, in New York.

"In a career packed with achievements, the magazine settles on one in particular. 'Half a century ago,' it says, 'Conwell's research on how electrons course through silicon and other semiconducting materials jump-started the computer age.'"

Read more at

<https://cosmosmagazine.com/physics/science-history-esther-conwell-jump-started-the-computer-age>

11. The universal Universe or making astronomy inclusive
From: JoEllen McBride [joellen.mcbride_at_gmail.com]

By Mario A. De Leo Winkler

[Editors note: The link to this article was provided by the author to share with our readers.]

"Astronomy is a gateway into science. The concepts it discusses and questions it raises create a sense of grandeur and awe, while offering answers to our origin and destiny. Its riveting images universally electrify people and ignite their imagination. Due to this widespread appeal, it should be accessible to all, independent of age, nationality, socioeconomic status, location, educational level, or mental or physical ability."

Read more at

<https://t.co/pTyJZL1kvE?amp=1>

12. Jeffrey Epstein liked palling around with scientists - What do they think now?
From: JoEllen McBride [joellen.mcbride_at_gmail.com]

By Neel V. Patel

"Jeffrey Epstein's presence has loomed large over the scientific community for several decades. To some of the most high-profile scientists around the world, Epstein was a generous benefactor, a strong supporter of their research, and even a personal friend. He's also [a convicted sex offender](#), who was [recently](#)

[arrested and charged](#) with allegedly [sex trafficking](#) young girls in New York. *The Verge* reached out to over a dozen different scientists and institutions who have been publicly linked to Epstein, with questions about their history with the multimillionaire and their reactions to his recent arrest. Some have themselves been accused of sexual harassment and assault. Only a handful chose to respond. Epstein's lawyers also did not respond to a request for comment."

Read more at

<https://www.theverge.com/2019/7/13/20692415/jeffrey-epstein-scientists-sexual-harassment>

13. How Coding Has Changed (And Not) For Women In The Past 30 Years

From: Alessandra Aloisi [aloisi_at_stsci.edu]

"From discussions on gender bias in artificial intelligence, to Python's founder commenting that the programming community has a serious diversity problem, improving gender diversity in coding is clearly imperative. And this starts with education."

Read more at

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/bonniechiu/2019/07/12/how-coding-has-changed-and-not-for-women-in-the-past-30-years/#292cfae23498>

14. Girls' superb verbal skills may contribute to the gender gap in math

From: Alessandra Aloisi [aloisi_at_stsci.edu]

"There's no two ways about it: From a young age, girls are [just as good at math](#) as boys. Even so, a [gender gap](#) in math-focused fields persists, as women remain [less likely](#) than men to pursue [high-level studies](#) and careers in these areas.

"Now, the findings of a [new analysis](#) might help explain a crucial piece of this longstanding discrepancy. According to a study published [Monday] in the journal PNAS, many girls who do every bit as well as their male peers in mathematics may still decide on more humanities-centric careers -- because their verbal skills outshine their already high marks in math."

Read more at

<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/article/gender-gap-math-comparative-advantage/>

Find the original article at

<https://www.pnas.org/content/early/2019/07/09/1905779116>

15. At STEM Competitions, Gender Norms Still Hold Girls Back

From: JoEllen McBride [joellen.mcbride_at_gmail.com] and Alessandra Aloisi [aloisi_at_stsci.edu]

By Sarah White

"Seventeen-year-old Rachel Seevers waited nervously at the 2019 [International Science and Engineering Fair \(ISEF\)](#). The high school senior was about to demonstrate to the public a new kind of underwater propulsion system she'd created and tested in her parents' basement. But no one came to talk to her. So, Seevers tried an experiment. She and a nearby male participant, who'd been getting lots of attention, switched spots, presenting each other's research. Lo and behold, his project became much less popular with her standing in front of it, while hers suddenly attracted more interest.

"But Seevers triumphed anyway. She went on to become the first-ever top winner

from Kentucky, earning \$50,000 to help her pay tuition at Harvard University in the fall."

Read more at

<http://blogs.discovermagazine.com/d-brief/2019/07/16/stem-competitions-science-fair-olympiad-gender-disparities/#.XS8ksehKhPY>

16. Astronomy Club Sets Netflix Sketch Comedy Series With Kenya Barris Producing
From: JoEllen McBride [joellen.mcbride_at_gmail.com]

By Anna Tingley

"The sketch and improv group [Astronomy Club](#) has landed a self-titled variety sketch series at [Netflix](#), *Variety* has learned exclusively.

"The streamer has given the half-hour series a six episode order. [Kenya Barris](#) will executive produce under his Khalabo Ink Society banner at [Netflix](#), with the show falling under the 'Black-ish' creator's overall deal. Daniel Powell of Irony Point will also executive produce. According to the official description, the series will use comedy to discuss real-world topics. Sketches will explore an array of topics ranging from pop culture and social issues to the black experience."

Read more at

<https://variety.com/2019/tv/news/astronomy-club-netflix-kenya-barris-1203268359/>

See the team's website at

<https://www.astronomyclubcomedy.com/>

17. Job Opportunities

For those interested in increasing excellence and diversity in their organizations, a list of resources and advice is here:

<https://cswa.aas.org/diversity.html#howtoincrease>

- On-line Education Coordinator, Sante Fe Institute

<https://www.santafe.edu/jobs/Online-Education-Coordinator>

- Assistant, Associate, or Full Project Scientists, various disciplines, UC San Diego

<https://apol-recruit.ucsd.edu/JPF02123>

- Assistant, Associate, or Full Research Scientists, various disciplines, UC San Diego

<https://apol-recruit.ucsd.edu/JPF01842>

- Postdoctoral Scholars, UCSD Research Affairs - Multi-Disciplinary, UC San Diego

<https://apol-recruit.ucsd.edu/JPF02175>

18. How to Submit to the *AASWOMEN* newsletter

To submit an item to the *AASWOMEN* newsletter, including replies to topics, send email to aaswomen_at_aas.org

All material will be posted unless you tell us otherwise, including your email address.

When submitting a job posting for inclusion in the newsletter, please include a one-line description and a link to the full job posting.

Please remember to replace "_at_" in the e-mail address above.

19. How to Subscribe or Unsubscribe to the *AASWOMEN* newsletter

Join AAS Women List by email:

Send an email to aaswomen_at_aas.org. A list moderator will add your email to the list. They will reply to your message to confirm that they have added you.

Join AAS Women List through the online portal:

Go to <https://lists.aas.org/postorius/lists/aaswlist.lists.aas.org> and enter the email address you wish to subscribe in the 'Your email address' field. You will receive an email from 'aaswlist-confirm' that you must reply to. There may be a delay between entering your email and receiving the confirmation message. Check your Spam or Junk mail folders for the message if you have not received it after 2 hours.

To unsubscribe from AAS Women by email:

Send an email to aaswlist-leave_at_lists.aas.org from the email address you wish to remove from the list. You will receive an email from 'aaswlist-confirm' that you must reply to which will complete the unsubscribe.

Leave AAS Women or change your membership settings through the online portal:

Go to <https://lists.aas.org/accounts/signup> to create an account with the online portal. After confirming your account you can see the lists you are subscribed to and update your settings.

20. Access to Past Issues

<https://cswa.aas.org/AASWOMEN.html>

Each annual summary includes an index of topics covered.

AASWomen Newsletter mailing list -- aaswlist@lists.aas.org

To unsubscribe send an email to aaswlist-leave@lists.aas.org