STATUS
The Committee on the Status of Women in Astronomy - American Astronomical Society
MAY 1991

Politically Correct?

by Geoffrey Clayton

In the last 6 months, we haven't received any letters from our readers. This is not a good sign. Either no one is reading STATUS, or it's incredibly boring, or we are too Politically Correct and everyone agrees with everything they read in STATUS. Which is it? There has been a storm of media coverage recently concerning the Political Correctness problem. On a recent Sunday, there was a front page story in the New York Times about President Bush's Commencement speech at Michigan on the evils of Political Correctness, William Safire devoted his language column to Political Correctness and "This Week with David Brinkley" was devoted to the subject.

For anyone who is not sure whether they are Politically Correct or not, it is defined by William Safire as "an adverbially premodified adjectival lexical unit used to attack liberal conformity on sexual, racial, environmental and other voguish issues." Some people feel that free speech is only acceptable now if the speaker has a Politically Correct point of view. It has been suggested that the students who demonstrated in the 60's are now tenured faculty and are imposing Political Correctness on the Universities. It is a very sticky problem. Should there be limits to free speech especially as applied to academic freedom? Where does free speech end, and insult and injury to others begin? Can you protect free speech and show respect and equality to others?

Here are some examples of recent incidents on campuses. A Harvard University Historian teaching a course used the words "Indian" to refer to Native Americans, and "Oriental" to refer to Asians. Students brought charges against him, and his right to teach was questioned. At U.C. Santa Barbara, a professor noted that "pet" was no longer an acceptable term. The Politically Correct term is "Animal Companions." He wondered facetiously whether Penthouse centerfolds would now be referred to as "Animal Companions." Fifteen women filed sexual harassment suits against the professor. At the State University at Binghampton, a meeting to promote free speech was crashed by 150 students some of whom were carrying sticks. Here in Colorado this week, it was felt necessary to send out a memo to everyone at JILA reminding them that profane language "can sometimes be construed as sexual harassment" and to "please make every effort to curtail use of profane language in JILA."

Are we too sensitive? Have we lost our sense of humor? Have we lost the feeling that everyone has a right to their opinion? I think this goes way beyond the college campus. One example is the widespread intolerance here in the United States of any criticism of the recent Gulf war. In his speech, George Bush said "We should all be alarmed at the rise of intolerance in our land, and by the growing tendency to use intimidation rather than reason to settle disputes."

I would like to hear from our readers about their experiences with Political Correctness. William Bennett on "This Week" said that the problem is very serious in the Humanities and Social Sciences but not in the Physical Sciences! Is this true?

Dorrit Hoffleit Does It Again

by Kathy DeGioia Eastwood

Our favorite astronomer/historian has written a fascinating article entitled, "The Evolution of the Henry Draper Memorial," published in *Vistas in Astronomy,vol.* 34, pp. 107-162, 1991. The article traces the scientific evolution of the Henry Draper catalog - which the reader comes to appreciate as far more than just a catalog - from its beginnings as the extension of Henry Draper's

own work to its final place as the cornerstone of the modem theories of stellar evolution and stellar populations. The emphasis is on the scientific aspects of the project, and how the modem art of spectral classification developed, but along the way we meet the real people who accomplished this Herculean task. Henry Draper himself, who was not merely "a doctor interested in astronomy" as I had always thought, but who was the first person to use photography as a method of recording stellar spectra, merely starts the story.

We discover that his wife, Anna Palmer Draper, not only financed the memorial but took a real scientific interest in the work as well. We see E. C. Pickering before the start of the photographic revolution, seated at the telescope night after night, fascinated by his visual observations of the spectra of planetary nebulae:' (This is so different from sitting in a warm-room running the computer!) And we meet the women who each developed their own spectral classification scheme, Williamina Fleming, Antonia Maury, and of course Annie J. Cannon. I highly recommend this article for both its value in understanding how modem spectral classification came into being, and for its human interest aspects as well.

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Editors:
Kathy DeGioia Eastwood
Northern Arizona University,
Department of Physics and Astronomy,
Flagstaff, AZ 86011-60 10.
(e-mail address: Eastwood@NAUVAX.bitnet)

Geoffrey Clayton
Center for Astrophysics and Space Astronomy
Boulder, CO 80309
Campus Box 391, University of Colorado
(e-mail address: HYADES::CLAYTON)

Building Positive Attitudes: A Way to Increase the Number of Women Scientists

by Ana G. *Nash*

The environment of the January 1991 AAS meeting in Philadelphia was extremely encouraging, at least with regard to gender representation. A nagging, internal tension that I had usually experienced at professional meetings was softened. Why? Because what I observed was a representative slice of the general population, akin to what I encounter at the supermarket, except that all of the people at the AAS meeting were involved in astronomy!

The comfortable atmosphere of this recent AAS meeting is, however, generally not experienced by astronomers at their home institutions. Despite the fact that "...the number of women working as scientists in the U.S. has tripled during the past decade..." (4), 15% of all the physical scientists surveyed by the National Science Foundation (NSF) in 1988 were women and, in 1987, only 8% of the physical scientists holding doctorates were women (15). How do these percentages compare with U.S. population statistics? According to the 1980 Census Survey, 51 % of the population in the U.S. are women between the ages of 30 and 65 (8), the employment years. The percentages computed from the NSF survey do not reflect the gender representation of the general adult U.S. population which means that the number of women in the physical sciences is low.

Why aren't there more women in the physical sciences? The main reason that there are few women employed in the physical sciences is that most women do not have an attitude conducive to the pursuit of a career in this area "Many women students suffer from lower aspiration levels and have less self-confidence than do men with equivalent talent and accomplishment" (2). This negative attitude alone is sufficient cause for the low numbers of women in the physical sciences. Some of the reasons why women have such a negative view are family attitudes, peer pressure, lack of role models, and discrimination (14).

Probably the most annoying form of discouragement is discrimination. According to Dr. Eugenie Mielczarek who is a professor of physics at George Mason University in Fairfax, V A, women must work hard and be better than the average men in the field" (5). Often the few women in the physical sciences are viewed as representative of their entire gender Thus as tokens, we [women] are more noticed and so are our mistakes and uncertainties" (7) This is a reciprocal cause for the low numbers of women in the physical sciences The few women are seen as tokens, and any mistakes these women make ensures that they will remain tokens.

This problem of subtle discrimination can be addressed by raising awareness. An example was given by Dr. Roberta Humphreys, professor of astronomy at the University of Minnesota. She related that a new program is being started at U. of Minnesota where academic advisers and their advisees will both attend a workshop dealing with how gender issues impact on their professional scientific relationships.

As regards blatant forms of discrimination, "The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission of the federal government exists to investigate complaints of employment discrimination which are based on the individual's race, sex, color, religion, national origin, physical or mental disability or reprisal" (3). A couple of years ago, at the Naval Research Laboratory (NRL), all employees were required to attend a three hour training session, "Prevention of Sexual Harassment (POSH)." The session was conducted by an EEO Officer who successfully conveyed the importance of the issue and the government's sensitivity to the need of all employees to be able to work in an environment unencumbered by any form of sexual harassment. According to the federal government, "Sexual harassment is a form of sexual discrimination that involves unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and/or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:
(i) Submission to or rejection of such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of a person's job, pay, or career:
(ii) Submission to or rejection of such conduct by a person is used as a basis for career or employment decisions affecting that person:
(iii) Such conduct interferes with an individual's performance or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment" (9). Everyone's level of sensitivity is different and government officials are ready and willing to take every individual's ease very seriously. However, they emphasize that the more that an individual can do to improve his or her environment, the better.

One does not have to work at a government agency to be exposed to this sort of prevention training. Dr. Bruce Elmegreen, an astrophysicist working at IBM/Watson Research Center, related that all employees where he works are required to attend classes in how to avoid sexual harassment. Many people at the CSWA session expressed that this sort of training was unavailable at their academic institutions. According to Mr. W. H. Williams who is the deputy EEO officer at NRL, "Any academic institution receiving federal funds is required by federal law to provide POSH-type training in addition to establishing a procedure for handling complaints of this nature. Also required is a policy statement prohibiting sexual harassment and identifying an official responsible for training employees and students" (13).

Another reason why there aren't many women scientists is that women receive a hidden message that science is not for them by the lack of female role models at all levels of education Dr. Jill S. Price al Bentley College, conducted a survey and reported her findings at the AAS meeting in

a paper, "Gender Issues in Astronomy: Results of a Survey of Women AAS Member:;" (10). One woman surveyed wrote, "Some means (is needed)...of demonstrating to female college and graduate students that it is possible to be female and an astronomer...Role models demonstrating a range of personal and professional lifestyles exist but they are too few and seen by far too few students." Another woman commented, "Mentor and role models for female astronomers are desperately needed. It would have helped immensely during my own difficult time to have had a successful woman to talk with." The books, *Women & Success: The Anatomy of Achievement* and *Women in Science,* contain personal accounts by successful women scientists such as Dr. Isabelle Karle, crystallographer at NRL, Dr. Eugenie Mielczarek, physics professor at GMU and Dr. Vera Rubin, astrophysicist at Carnegie Institute-DTM. Their accounts may be able to provide some inspiration and concrete ideas to aspiring women scientists who do not have female role models in their school or work environment.

The remaining two reasons, family attitudes and peer pressure, for the low numbers of women scientists appear, at first, to be insurmountable. According to Dr. Margaret Geller, a cosmologist and professor of astronomy at Harvard University who is not only an astute observer of galactic structure but of life as well, said, "There are subtle social pressures which often steer young girls away from science, and even steer women who made it farther along away from science. I think it takes a lot of stamina and strength to be a scientist, whether you are a man or a woman. I think what happens is that there are a few more pressures on women that are not positive, that steer them out. But I don't think women are less able. There are plenty of women who have shown that. There's not a genuine issue of whether women can do it. It's a question of whether society is ready to allow it" (6).

Our society's social structure is not likely to change very rapidly to make it easier for women to pursue careers in science. However, by focusing, not on one's family or one's peers or on other societal pressures, the individual can realize that what *can* be changed is one's own attitude. What is an attitude? It is "a manner of acting, feeling, or thinking that shows one's disposition, opinion, etc." (12). How does one form an attitude? I propose that an attitude is formed by having developed "a pattern of action that...has become so automatic that it is difficult to break," and *this* is merely a definition of the word, "habit" (12). That is the key to making a change.

By building a healthy, positive attitude toward the pursuit of a career in the physical sciences in her teen or later years, a woman will be better equipped to handle any discrimination she may encounter on her path to becoming a professional scientist: "When a junior high school student went to her guidance counselor in Wilmington, Delaware several years ago to sign up for a mechanical drawing course, she was told that the class was no place for a woman...'Well maybe I want to be a civil engineer,' the girl replied quietly... 'Who ever heard of a woman engineer? That's a man's job.' But Diane Redgate had a good answer for him. 'My mom's a civil engineer,' she said proudly" (I).

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Parenthood and the Planetary Scientist: Living with Two Professions

by Nadine G. *Barlow and Faith Vilas*

The Division for Planetary Sciences subcommittee on the Status of Women in Astronomy held a panel discussion entitled "Parenthood and the Planetary Scientist: Living with Two Professions" at the 21st meeting of the DPS in Providence. Rhode Island, on October 30, 1989. Four panelists whose children ranged in age from 13 months to 19 years at the time of the workshop discussed how their professional lives have been affected by parenthood. The panelists were:

Richard Binzel, MIT: Rick has one son (13 months) and his wife is a graduate student working on her dissertation.

Nicole Borderies, JPL: Nicole has two children, a 9 year old girl and a 4-1{2 year old boy. She is divorced.

John Caldwell, York University: John has two sons (19 and 16 years) and one daughter (16 years). His wife is currently a homemaker.

Lucy McFadden, California Space Institute, UCSD: Lucy is married to a psychiatrist and has two daughters ages 3-1/2 and *1-3/4* years.

Nadine Barlow (JSC) moderated the session and Faith Vilas (JSC) recorded the panelists' comments.

Question 1: How has parenthood affected your career as a planetary scientist and how do you divide your time between parenthood and professional responsibilities?

All panelists agreed that when you are a parent, especially a parent of young children, you get very little sleep! Borderies noted that exercise and good nutrition are important when trying to maintain your energy, but when she is tired she tries to concentrate on tasks which do not require peak mental capabilities. Parenthood changes your perspective of yourself and of life in general. McFadden noted that she developed more self-assurance when she became a parent and Binzel said parenthood has changed how he allocates his time and what he deems important. Parenthood affected Caldwell in a large scale life decision since he took a job which guaranteed that his children could obtain a college education.

Becoming more efficient and eliminating unnecessary activities are the major professional consequences of parenthood. McFadden has eliminated all unnecessary out-of-town travel. Borderies has learned to be more efficient at work by establishing both short-term (daily or hourly) and long-

term goals for herself. She also noted that she avoids becoming sidetracked at work and looks for more collaboration with her colleagues. She feels that she accomplishes as much work now as she did before she became a parent because she is working more efficiently. Most panelists noted that working evening and weekend hours were dramatically reduced or completely eliminated when they became parents, so managing your time efficiently becomes extremely important in maintaining your professional reputation.

Question 2: What arrangements have you made for child care, both on a daily basis and during travel to conferences/workshops/observing, etc?

A variety of child care options are employed by the panelists. Flexible schedules allow Binzel and his wife to care for their son since day care is not affordable for them. In general, any time Rick is home, he has responsibility for their son. He and his wife divide the household chores and neighbors, relatives, and friends help by baby-sitting at times when Rick and his wife need some time to themselves. McFadden has hired a live-in maid who gets room and board, is paid some salary, and gets weekends off. This costs Lucy approximately one-third of her take-home salary. Lucy noted that at UCSD, $5000 of your salary is tax-free if you can prove this money was spent on child care, so the tax break helps justify the expense of the maid/nanny.

Caldwell's wife organized the child care when their children were young and much of the time she wanted to provide the child care responsibilities herself. He noted that child care responsibilities change as the children grow up and that having a stay-at-home parent is not a quick and easy answer to the child care issue.

Most of the panelists rely on their spouses to take care of the children when they are out of town on business, although several have brought spouses or "nannies" to take care of their children while at conferences. Borderies, being a single parent, has come to depend on a large network of friends and relatives to help her with child care. For daily child care, she has used professional licensed baby-sitters and JPL daycare. Her daughter is in school during the day, then goes to the YMCA or to daycare until Nicole leaves work at 5. Nicole maintains a large list of potential baby-sitters (usually between the ages of 11 and 14 years) which she cycles through whenever she needs evening care-alternating among sitters keeps the children from wearing out one sitter and prevents bad feelings from developing. She also has a large family with whom she can leave the children.

Question 3: Do you have any suggestions for improvements that could be made by employers to alleviate some of the hassles experienced by scientists trying to combine a full-time professional career with parenthood?

Flexibility and understanding were the major things that the panelists request of their employers. Binzel noted that no one has a 40-hr per week job today and feels that it is the current generation's responsibility to educate the system that family life is important. He pointed out that parents can never recover the time that they may miss with their child when he or she is growing up. He urged people to make the 40-hr work-week respectable so that no one has to feel guilty about choosing to spend time with her/his family instead of working long hours like everyone else.

Borderies has not experienced any problems at work because of her children. However, she has a computer with a modem at home so a sick child can sleep all day and she can work as if she were at JPL. When asked to attend a meeting near the end of the day, Nicole insists on knowing how long the meeting is to last so she can make arrangements for child care if the meeting runs past 5. She also has left meetings in order to care for her children, then returned to the meeting later after she was able to get a baby-sitter.

McFadden argued that daycare provided by the institution would be to the employer's

advantage. She has had few problems at work because of the flexible attitude of her boss, the emotional support of her co-workers, institutional support, and the child care tax break noted earlier.

Caldwell spoke from the perspective of being a supervisor. He noted that sometimes when the institution makes an exception for one person, that action affects others as well as the employee who made the request. Hence, individuals cannot always expect the institution to support all requests. John emphasized that an organization cannot cease to function. However, there are always emergencies and he hopes that institutions will be understanding enough to accommodate such emergencies. He urges people to be reasonable in their requests and notes that astronomers/planetary scientists are fortunate because their schedules are usually more flexible than those of people in many other careers.

The general consensus of the panel was that there is no "best" time for a planetary scientist to have children. Time management and learning to work efficiently are the keys to combining a career with parenthood. There are no easy or unique solutions to the problems confronting the scientist-parent, but each panelist agreed that the experience was extremely rewarding.

Following the end of the panel discussion, William Hartmann (PSI) discussed some of the perceptions of the planetary community to scientists who choose to work part time. People with young children, scientists working on books, and people considering career options sometimes prefer to do part-time science, but are haunted by the stigma that they are somehow less of a scientist for doing so. Bill encouraged organizations to provide more part-time positions and to make these positions professionally more acceptable. He suggested that organizations adopt a more flexible career track, such that a person can choose the number of hours she or he wishes to work per week during certain periods of her/his career and not be penalized for doing so.

The CSWA organizing committee would like to thank the panelists for their time and efforts in helping to make the workshop such a success. In addition, we thank Cindy Cunningham, Linda French, and Padma Yanamandra-Fisher for their workshop suggestions and Carle Pieters for her assistance in the local arrangements.

Improving Science Education in America: The Role of Planetary Science

by Nadine G. *Barlow*

A discussion on the use of planetary science as a means to encourage interest in science education was the focus of a workshop held on October 21, 1990, at the start of the 22nd Division for Planetary Sciences (DPS) Meeting in Charlottesville, Virginia. The session was organized by the DPS subcommittee for the AAS Committee on the Status of Women in Astronomy. The improvement of scientific literacy in America is a topic which has received much media attention recently.

Students complain that science courses emphasize the memorization of scientific facts over the teaching of creative thinking, which makes science boring and useless to them. The AAS and DPS recognize that astronomy and planetary science, partly because of the very visual nature of these fields, hold great public appeal and can be used to stimulate science interest among today's students if taught in an interesting way. This workshop was convened to discuss how planetary science is being used to improve science education in the schools. The workshop presenters were Robert A. Brown (Space Telescope Science Institute), Larry Lebofsky (Univ. *AZ),* Linda French (The Park School, Brookline, MA), and Pat Dasch (NASA HQ's). It is hoped that readers of this article will encourage the initiation of similar programs in their communities.

Bob Brown has discussed the idea of using astronomy to initiate changes in science teaching in numerous presentations and in his report "An Educational Initiative in Astronomy." Brown points to

a number of basic problems in the teaching of science, problems which demand a change in the emphasis of the curriculum. Until recently, there has been little acknowledgment of the difference between the learning of facts and the ability to turn those facts into useful information that can aid decision-making processes. Brown argues that we must concentrate on stimulating the thinking process in students rather than inundating them with science facts to be memorized. The interdisciplinary nature of science can be easily exemplified using planetary science and Brown suggests that the Space Exploration Initiative may serve as a stimulus to encourage critical scientific thought processes among teachers and students alike.

Pat Dasch described an example of how a NASA space mission is being used to rouse science interest among teachers and students. NASA is concerned about the reports of a projected shortfall of scientists by the year 2000, and has initiated the CRAF/Cassini Educational Workshop Model in an attempt to encourage more students to pursue scientific or engineering careers. The idea of this workshop is to get teachers and students involved in upcoming space missions early in the mission planning. CRAF/Cassini was selected for the first of these workshops because the mission is still in the design phase. The participants were evenly split between teachers and students. Students selected were those who indicated an interest in scientific careers. The participants had the opportunity to interact with scientists and engineers involved in the CRAF/Cassini project and to question them about the decisions made regarding ~lection of scientific instrumentation, power requirements, launch trajectories, etc. All the participants were impressed by the devotion and enthusiasm of the scientists and engineers to their jobs and to the mission goals. NASA plans to track the student participants over the next few years to determine whether the workshop influenced the students' career choices.

Larry Lebofsky and Linda French described astronomy- and planetary-based programs which they are using to interest teachers and students in science. Lebofsky has begun a program in the Tucson Unified School District to provide teachers from six elementary schools with hands-on activities that can be used in the classroom. Lebofsky began the program after observing a general lack of knowledge among elementary school teachers about basic scientific principles and an inability of the students to be able to coherently utilize the facts they learned. The teachers are taught a number of activities which can be reproduced in the classroom environment with everyday objects. For example, students learn how to design a solar oven which can cook hot dogs using solar energy. Scaling exercises allow students to reproduce the solar system using fruits and vegetables placed around the school. Comets were discussed using dry ice as an analog. The final project consisted of teachers designing and launching model rockets (which prompted local media coverage of the event). The general result of the workshop is that elementary school is not too early to introduce the concepts of basic physics and math to students.

Linda French also emphasized that it is important to start challenging students in science early on. She noted the current emphasis on science in high school and college comes too late-by fifth grade students already have certain stereotypes about science ingrained in them. One reason as to why science is not emphasized in lower grades is that teachers' educational requirements go down as the grade level at which they teach decreases. Many of the teachers in lower grades simply do not have a solid science background and thus feel uncomfortable teaching the subject. French suggested that teachers need more opportunities to interact with scientists on a personal level so they can develop a more "human view" of science. In addition, French emphasized that we need ways to turn kids on to science. She has found that astronomy using small telescopes and images from planetary missions are the types of things which can spark kids' interest in science. Hands-on type activities are also needed for a variety of grade levels. She has successfully adapted ideas from Project Star, an ongoing curriculum designed for high school students who have opted out of the traditional science sequence. Project Star uses activities which stress the thinking process and what can be done with only a few basic concepts.

In summary, all the presenters agreed that more interaction between scientists and educators is needed to improve science education and interest more students in technical careers. Teacher workshops, design of hands-on activities, and the willingness of the scientific community to work with teachers on joint projects are just a few ways in which we can achieve our goal improved scientific preparation for all students.

1991 Report of the Committee on the Status of Women in Astronomy

by Debra Elmegreen

COMMITIEE MEMBERS: Debra Elmegreen (newly elected chair), Kathleen DeGioia-Eastwood, Charles Lada, Geoffrey Marcy, Jean Turner, Beverley Wills(outgoing), and newly elected Jay Gallagher and Jill Price Mason.

GOALS AND ACTIONS: Our goals are to improve the status of women in astronomy and to encourage their entry into and continuation in this field. We have begun work on four areas pertaining to women in astronomy, following a successful and well-attended impromptu meeting at the January 1991 AAS in Philadelphia.

(1) We are obtaining specific legal wording of harassment and abuse, for circulation to astronomy departments and in the CSWA newsletter.
(2) We are investigating sources of funding for women astronomers at all levels, to be published in the CSWA newsletter.
(3) We are beginning a survey regarding graduate schools to identify "women-friendly" atmospheres.
(4) We are planning to organize an electronic bulletin board so that interested astronomers can share ideas, complaints, etc.

We will plan a large meeting at the January 1992 AAS meeting, possibly with guest speakers who can address specific women's issues in astronomy. There is clearly a lot of interest and support for our activities among our AAS membership, and we welcome all input.