MAPS 2021 Officer Elections

As a member of the Middle Atlantic Planetarium Society, you have the privilege to vote for colleagues who will serve as your representatives on the MAPS Board. MAPS encourages your participation in this key activity that has a lasting impact on our organization.

Please check your inbox in January for your online voting invitation. Voting will be open from January 15th through January 31st 2021. We thank you for your participation in this election and in MAPS overall.

President-Elect

Tim Collins

We have been through a very tough year, in many facets. Certainly, the way we live our lives has been involuntarily changed for a long time to come. I have found it amazing how we, as groups of regional, national, and international planetarians, have come together and persevered not just with each other, but for each other. While many of our individual organizations have suffered greatly, we have learned a great deal in a short time and have adapted to the circumstances the best we could.

Since 2010, I have enjoyed serving as a member and a committee chair in our incredible organization. I have been given so much valuable knowledge and assistance from all of you over the years, and I am so glad we have such a great network of not just colleagues, but lifelong friends. Now, more than ever, it would be my honor to help lead our organization as President during these challenging times, through our next North American total solar eclipse in 2024, and beyond.

Patrick McQuillan

My first experience with a planetarium occurred on a field trip to the Fels Planetarium at the Franklin Institute in third grade. It was the best part of that field trip (even beating out the giant walk through heart). My professional experience with planetariums includes seven planetariums and positions including Planetarium Lecturer, Planetarium Educator, Assistant Director of Astronomy, Planetarium Director, Challenger Learning Center Director, 1999 SEPA Conference Host, Astronomy Program Producer, NSTA NGSS Advisory Board Member, STEM Education Specialist, and Vice President of STEM Education. Most recently I helped design and open the largest planetarium in the Western Hemisphere. I have seen many trends in the planetarium field with
President’s Message

Post Solsticial greetings!

We’ve made it through the year, colleagues and friends. We’ve met virtually for a conference in late September, and many of us participate in the Dome Dialogues e-conferences and virtual hospitality suites. If you haven’t attended one of those yet, fear not. Check the Face Book listing at facebook.com/groups/domedialogues for the time and date of the next virtual meet-up. It’s important to stay in touch, maybe more than ever these days.

It wouldn’t be 2021 without even more elections. Check out the candidate bios in this issue, and think about who you’ll choose to lead MAPS in the future. These members have offered to go the extra mile for us, so please give them some thought and look for ballots in January.

We’re still teaching and sharing the universe with our audiences, virtually, masked or through some technology. Keep an eye out for resources to share as well. NASA has some excellent lessons that can be adapted to whatever forum we’re using:

informal.jpl.nasa.gov/museum/content/stories-space-digital-image-processing-lesson-plan

And please, please – take good care of yourself. Long, dark winter days can take a toll. Give yourself a good long break from social media. Spend a few minutes outside every day (weather permitting). Send someone a message – the post office still works (most of the time!). Listen to a song. Do ten jumping jacks. Take a deep breath. Stay sane. And best wishes for 2021.

Many thanks for all you do!

April Whitt, MAPS President

President’s Message

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April Whitt, MAPS President
MAPS 2021 Officer Elections

(Continued from page 1)

hardware going from totally manual to fully digital, and programming going from live to pre-recorded to virtual.

In these extraordinary times, planetariums are challenged more than ever to find ways to remain a relevant and trusted member of the community. They will need to find innovative ways to engage their diverse audience base, and to deliver those programs safely given the rapidly changing social distancing requirements. Now more than ever, school districts are going to be looking for leaders in educational program delivery to bridge the gap between in-person and online programs. The Planetarium should be seen as the go-to entity for consistently high quality programs and exhibits, not only by the local audience, but also across the state and nationwide.

I always strive to find the most innovative, scalable, and exciting way to develop programs. A program cannot just be good; it has to be outstanding!

I am honored to have been nominated, and I look forward to working with the Executive Committee to help make MAPS a valuable educational resource for MAPS members, schools, and the general public.

Noreen Grice

Thank you for nominating me for President-Elect of the Middle Atlantic Planetarium Society - MAPS. Hello! My name is Noreen Grice and I currently serve as Founder and President of You Can Do Astronomy LLC.

My planetarium career began at the Charles Hayden Planetarium in Boston, MA where I worked as Presenter, Education Coordinator and Operations Coordinator over a 26-year span. I served as Planetarium Manager of the Gengras Planetarium/Travelers Science Dome Theater in West Hartford, CT for almost 6 years and I have also presented weekly live planetarium programs at different points in my career at Boston University, San Diego State University, Central Connecticut State University and Western Connecticut State University. When I first began working at the Boston Museum of Science, a group of blind students came to one of my planetarium shows and I quickly learned how inaccessible the planetarium could be for visitors who are blind or visually impaired. I began working on strategies and materials to make the planetarium more accessible for visitors of all abilities. Over the years, I authored six books on accessible and tactile astronomy and founded You Can Do Astronomy LLC. I have graduate degrees in astronomy and in business administration and have been a MAPS member since 1988.

If elected as your MAPS President-Elect, I will work closely with the current MAPS President, Officers, Board and membership, to better understand how the organization operates and assist in completing identified goals, initiatives and responsibilities, including helping with the upcoming MAPS conference.

As MAPS President, I’d like to introduce a new focus on engagement, connection and communication, beginning within the planetarium community and extending to those we serve as learners. I suspect that there are some educators who have been teaching under the dome but have no personal connection with MAPS, even though they are located within the MAPS region. They simply may not know about MAPS. I’d

(Continued on page 16)
This past September, the Program Committee organized a virtual conference for MAPS members, and we are pleased to report that the gathering was a great success! For those of you who weren’t able to join us, here is a “by-the-numbers” summary of our 2020 Virtual Conference:

- We had 49 registered attendees from all over the region
- We received the generous support of 8 sponsors
- There were 9 delegate talks and 1 special workshop
- We attempted (and succeeded!) at our first ever “Virtual Banquet” which included a special Margaret Noble Address
- Adam Thanz from Bays Mountain Park & Planetarium gave a great update about the upcoming 2021 SEPA-MAPS-WAC gathering

The initial feedback we received about the virtual conference was that everyone really enjoyed being able to connect and share for a few days, even if the sharing needed to happen over computer screens! I want to thank my fellow Program Committee members who helped to plan this event – April Whitt, Kerri Kiker, and Mike McConville. From the initial concept to the event itself, this crew made all of the arrangements in about 5 weeks!

And now we can look ahead to 2021. Adam Thanz continues to plan a fantastic gathering for the members of SEPA, MAPS, and WAC to be held in Kingsport, TN on the dates of June 22-26, 2021. Information about registration, travel, and other details will surely arrive on the MAPS website early on in the New Year. Until then… on behalf of the Program Committee, I wish you all a safe and happy holiday season, and we hope to see everyone together again in Tennessee in 2021!

2021 Conference Host Adam Thanz provided the following update:

Like all of you, we are in a perpetual holding pattern waiting to see if we can land safely and proceed with this summer’s planetarium conference. The tricky bit is if we can hold the event safely. As I write this at the end of 2020 (sounds good, doesn’t it?) the vaccines for the COVID-19 virus are just being administered to health professionals and those in elderly healthcare in the US. What is not known at this time is how fast will the vaccines be distributed and to what point will it be safe for us to gather in close proximity. I’ve been working on this conference since the summer of 2018 and most of the details have been complete for a while. As such, we’ve “bought time” to wait and see if we can still meet. I am hopeful by this spring to know one way or another. The worst that will happen is that we will postpone the event until 2023 if we cannot gather. I know it is hard on everyone because you need to make plans. I will say this. Go ahead and make your hotel reservations now. You can cancel them if you need. Check the hotel’s website to make sure of their policy at that time. The link for the special rate follows. Since we expect families to join you to maximize your travel dollars, we’ve extended the date range for the special rates. The rate is $119 USD + tax per day from Wed. 6/16/21 to Wed. 6/30/21. The hotel is the four-star Marriot MeadowView Conference Center and Resort. It is the best hotel in all of East Tennessee and is the closest to Bays Mountain!

See: marriott.com/events/start.mi?id=1595526691128&key=GRP
News From the MAPS Education Committee

Lee Ann A. Hennig, Chair

We are hoping all of you are faring well during this unprecedented time, both personally and professionally. We have found a number ways to communicate with our audiences despite the restrictions placed on us by the pandemic, and as always, planetarians will rise to the occasion when things seem the bleakest - we truly know our way around the darkness! We would like for you to consider the following items and share any ideas with the Education Committee so that we may help other members.

Consider the following:

1. On-line courses, lessons, webpages that have been helpful to you, or that you find appropriate for audiences.
2. Experiences that fall under the COVID guidelines that still help spread our love of learning, teaching, and practicing Astronomy.
3. Best practices in dealing with making our planetariums safer for our audiences.
4. The greatest obstacles you have encountered.
5. The precious moments/experiences that have occurred in the midst of this unprecedented time.
6. What lessons have we learned that can help us in the future.

(Continued on page 6)
Below you will find a recommendation for a helpful website from April, and an update from Mark’s planetarium as he copes with the challenges of restrictions. We hope that 2021 ushers in a better year for all!!

From April Whitt:

Check out this website that offers free courses for learning all kinds of skills. I used it this past summer for a “Learning How To Learn” course that detailed how human brains work, best ways to learn new material (mostly from reading), excellent short videos from researchers, all around useful stuff. My office mate adapted parts of it for our ninth grade Science Tools and Techniques course to help students with their studying, either our science courses or their schoolwork in general. I’d recommend this site: https://www.coursera.org/

From Mark Percy:

The Williamsville Space Lab Planetarium is welcoming students in person again, but limited to 14 seats due to distancing. Furthermore, the only students allowed in are those at the high school to which the facility is attached. Therefore, most of my teaching has been online. Once the school year got underway, I have been as busy as ever teaching the kids about the sky. I even made some lemonade out of the giant lemons we have all been served. Some of the Williamsville schools have not attended program in the past because of busing logistics, but that is not a concern with virtual lessons. I have been able to work with teachers and classes that have never participated in the past.

Our public program schedule is all virtual as well. The overall number of classes has been reduced, but we are still offering our monthly programs. September featured Tim Collins discussing the Starlink program. In October, Jackie Baughman led a class on night sky basics. Steve Dubois will be explaining how destructive astronomical events can lead to rebirth in a class entitled Cataclysm! The semester finished up with Tim Collins explaining the great planetary conjunction in December. One special feature for the younger crowd will be Jackie Baughman’s program about Mythology.

News From the MAPS Education Committee

(Continued from page 5)
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Dr. Bill Haddon, President
Friends of Taylor Observatory-Norton Planetarium

“Firefall is a terrific program, blending good science, creative writing, and engaging visuals and audio to produce an entertaining and educational program. It is consistently one of our most popular programs for both the general public and school groups.”

Alex Mak, University of Toledo
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MAPS Business Meeting Minutes
Virtual Conference
September 26, 2020

Call to order was made at 12:36 pm. 21 members in attendance. Motion to accept 2019 minutes as printed was made by Paul Krupinski. Accepted: Sam Storch. Vote approved.

**Treasurer’s report**

Brian Koehler presented the Treasurer’s report in Talia Sepersky’s absence. This includes the MAPS/SEPA income since the check arrived on December 31, 2019.

We have less than $100 in conference expenses for this year since it’s virtual. Kerri Kiker was able to get us out of any reservations we’d had for the April 2020 conference.

A number of members paid their dues when registering for this conference, but had already paid 2020 dues earlier in the year, so those payments are going towards their 2021 dues.

Only one Constellation Newsletter was mailed out this year, so our postage costs are lower than usual.

Talia’s report said that conferences that MAPS holds alone tends to give us a loss in revenue. Conferences held with other organizations gives us a profit. $3,750 in sponsor revenue was collected for this conference. We plan to use this towards financial aid for people to attend the SEPA/MAPS/WAC conference in June 2021.

**Membership**

- 61 dues paid
- 25 Life members

Total: 86 members

**IPS Report – Patty Seaton**

IPS has been working on the Vision 2020 initiative. There is a move from an affiliate structure, where every representative had a vote, to a board structure, where representatives represent a region. Dayna Thompson and Michele Wistisen are the North America representatives. The affiliates are working as an "Advisory Council” with the Board members. Their input for decisions goes through the Board members, who will now have the rights to vote.

IPS 2020 was virtual. During that meeting, the “power” transferred from affiliates to regionals. April Whitt, as MAPS President, reports to the IPS Regional Representatives rather than to the IPS Officers directly. In the past, the Officers would wind up often making decisions on their own because of the challenge of contacting all the affiliate reps. This new structure will have more people able to be part of the voting and decision-making process.

Saying that they can’t report to the IPS Officers makes it sound like they no longer have access to the officers, which they do. They just can't vote any more.

This Fall, IPS is running officer elections. Patty Seaton is running unopposed for Secretary. Mike McConville is running unopposed for President-Elect. Three people are running for Treasurer.

The 2020 IPS Conference was scheduled to take place in Edmonton, Canada. Edmonton incurred lots of expenses when the conference was cancelled. Members and Sponsors were reimbursed directly by Edmonton. Sponsor fees from the virtual conference were distributed thus: ½ went to reimburse Edmonton for un-reimbursable fees and ½ went to resupply Armand Spitz sponsor fund and star partners fund.

Shawn Laatsch is stepping down after 23 years on IPS board. He thinks it’s important to have an elected Board since they will represent the membership better than the many affiliates.
Patty Seaton shared that the Equity-Diversity-Inclusion Committee has laid out a toolkit for conference site selections.

Shawn: IPS is only as strong as its member participation. Present papers, run for office.

**Committee Reports**

**Audit** Paul Krupinski. Thanks to the candidates who ran for the Board. We had 6 people who ran. Ultimately, the incumbents won: Lee Ann Hennig, Paul Krupinski, and Patty Seaton. There were ties, and two run-off elections were held before we had clear winners.

We do have another election coming up soon for President, Treasurer, and Secretary. Amie Gallagher will run for Secretary again. Please nominate, and second (via email) to Paul or Steve Shipley. A slate needs to get to the Board by November 15.

Patty noted that Paul recused himself from the Audit committee while he was running. Janet Sterns, our webmaster, counted the votes.

**Awards** Kerri Kiker. She presented awards last night at the banquet. Kerri reviewed the different awards that are available. They are all listed on the website, along with applications. A new one this year is the Twinkle Award, which is from one member to another to give kudos for helping each other out or being an inspiration. Twinkle Awards will be added to the website. The deadline for an award to be handed out at the June 2021 conference is March 2021, so that the Board has time to check and vote on them.

**Constitution** April Whitt reported for Steve Russo. The committee needs to have 3 people. Steve is the chair. Megan Norris is on the committee. They need an additional person. As Steve retires this spring, he will step down from the Chair and Committee, so we’ll need to replace him. Megan may not be an active member at this time. Brian / April will follow up with her.

**Education** Amie Gallagher reported for Lee Ann Hennig. Education Committee is still active although people are doing things online and virtually. School planetariums are at risk because of the pandemic and subsequent shutdowns. Report and articles will follow in the next Constellation.

**Historian:** John Meader sent in a report. There was a desire expressed by some of the officers last winter to do more oral history, then COVID hit and everything got put on the backburner. Though he’s been thinking it might actually be easier now that he could meeting over Zoom, what he might ask is to see if anyone would be interested in being recorded that way, it could be any of the old-timers and retirees, though it doesn’t have to be the elders of our profession, just folks who’ve been in the field for a while and have good tales to tell.

Sam Storch said his files are still in a DropBox. Sam will send the link to John Meader, Paul Krupinski and Tim Collins for publication on website. Brian Koehler shared that Executive Board is looking into an external hard drive and/or cloud drive. Patty Seaton reassured that we want to save all this information in multiple formats. (cloud, hard drive, print)

Shawn Laatsch: IPS saved everything to a number of CDs and on the website. Electronic storage is physically smaller, though paper lasts a long time. It just takes up lots of space.

**Memorial** Brian Koehler did a really nice presentation yesterday about Larry Krozel. April Whitt reminded us to send obituaries and articles to Paul Krupinski. Noreen Grice shared that Matt Stein, who worked at the Boston Museum of Science, passed away. She sent something in to The Planetarian and Constellation. Ian McClennan and John Hare lead the Memorial Committee for IPS.

Paul Krupinski also found an obit for Frances D. That’s on the web. Paul is looking for dates for George Reed. Sam Storch will talk to Paul.

**Program** Brian Koehler said the committee will debrief later this week. Brian will stay in touch with Adam Thanz in planning for 2021. Brian will have an article for every Constellation between now and then.

The Program Committee is happy to talk to people about future conferences. Shawn Laatsch, if you are interested in 2022, please send in an official proposal. We have a few potential sites for future years as well. The MAPS President-Elect will be the Program Committee chair.

*(Continued on page 14)*
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Michael McConville said Buhl is talking about hosting a MAPS or MAPS/GLPA in 2023.

Kerri Kiker is planning to send out a little goody-bag to everyone who registered for this conference. That’s about the extent of our expenses for this conference.

**Publications**  
Kevin Conod. We skipped a Summer 2020 issue because of COVID. Fall went out electronically only. December issue will be print and electronic, as usual. Please send your paper and committee reports to Kevin Conod.

Patty asked that submission reminders go out via eBlast, not just MAPS-L.

Kevin Conod: the MAPS-L list is probably very out of date. Lots of people don’t use Yahoo groups anymore. Some groups have moved to Groups.io.

Brian: are the deadlines posted on our website?  
Kevin: yes, under sponsor information (Advertise with Us).

Deadline for December 2020 issue is December 4th.

The Executive Handbook lists the December issue deadline to be October 31. Kevin Conod moved it to the first Friday of the month. In the electronic age, things can be arranged much faster. Paul asked Kevin to send Paul and Tim updated submission deadlines.

**Website**  
Tim Collins: Janet wants to start to upgrade the site soon. GoDaddy as a host is getting antiquated. Janet has other suggestions. We were concerned that our site got hijacked. It’s the search engine that was redirected, not the site being hijacked.

Alan Davenport has retired from the Committee. April Whitt has joined the group. Tim asks that Committee chairs please send updates at least once a year. Paul sent Tim all sorts of updates that will be posted soon.

**Old or Unfinished Business**  
None

**New Business**

April Whitt shared: Sally Brummell put together a grant to NASA to build a show and activities about Moon to Mars missions. They plan to do surveys of audiences asking what they want from a planetarium show. Audience members would answer questions on an iPad. Sally wants this participation by the end of November. Also not looking for large facilities, like NY or Chicago. Sally is looking for audience emails too. Our discussion included: Can this be done with planetariums doing virtual programs rather than in-person programs?  What if we don’t really do data collection of visitor email addresses?  Check Dome Dialogues for Sally’s post.

Brian Koehler: when we conduct our elections, we will be putting a vote out to separate the Treasurer/Membership Chair. It used to be separate, then combined in a By-Laws change. We’d need to change the By-Laws again to separate them. Most membership money goes through electronically, so Talia (Treasurer) doesn’t have access to the most up to date membership numbers.

A motion to adjourn was made at 1:42 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Amie Gallagher, MAPS Secretary
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like to connect with all of them and bring them into the MAPS community to help grow our organization. Aside from the current COVID situation, if a planetarium is closed, we can find out why, find out what resources they need, and see if and how we might help. A situation may be as simple as a teacher who has been assigned to teach science in the planetarium with no planetarium training and needs some guidance or an administrator who is unsure of the value of maintaining their planetarium in the budget. Until we can meet in person, we can connect with planetarium instructors including those who use portables, virtually, and begin building relationships.

I’d also like to increase communication among MAPS members by hosting virtual gatherings several times a year in addition to the annual conference. The Dome Dialogues have been a great role model of how important social interaction is, especially during these isolating times. Let’s plan to meet 2-4 times a year virtually and learn how and what everyone is doing and if anyone needs help. Let’s cross-promote programs to get visitors excited about their local planetarium as a destination for a variety of unique experiences. Then, as MAPS Past-President, I will share learned experiences during my term with the new President-Elect, mentoring and helping that person get “up to speed” while encouraging and supporting new creative initiatives.

We are connected through the planetarium field and I think we can create solutions together to make the Middle Atlantic Planetarium Society even stronger. Thank you for your consideration.

Secretary

Amie Gallagher

I remember my first trip to a planetarium. I was about eight years old. My mother took my sister and I to the Newark Museum. All I remember from that visit is that it was dark. Fast forward to senior year of high school, and my church youth group went to the Hayden Planetarium in NYC to see Laser Beatles. I had no idea at the time that soon, I would work in both of these facilities. After college, I got a part-time job at the Newark Museum’s planetarium. Part of the job included taking out Starlab to do shows. That was a great way to learn all the highways not right next to my house! From Newark, I got an internship at the Hayden Planetarium, which turned into eight years of education and production work, teaching thousands of visitors each week about the sky. While the Hayden was undergoing renovations, I spent my “free” time getting a Masters in Elementary Education. I left the Hayden and taught 5th grade in New Jersey for a year. I soon realized that my true passion was informal education, not being in a classroom every day. I was lucky enough to have a job come available at Raritan Valley Community College Planetarium just then. I’ve been at RVCC for the past 17 years. I’ve coordinated Project ASTRO and Family ASTRO, led MANY teacher workshops through the years, and am now Director of the Planetarium.

I’ve been a member of MAPS since 1993, and Secretary of our organization for the past four years. I was excited to become a MAPS Fellow in 2016. I enjoy attending MAPS conferences to meet up with friends and colleagues. I always walk away from these gatherings with new information and ideas that I can incorporate into my planetarium immediately. Being part of the Executive Committee has allowed me to be part of the inner workings of MAPS. I love being able to help bring us forward as an organization. Our global society is in a state of transition right now. Our professional field is in a state of transition. Temporary (hopefully they are temporary!) closures of our buildings have forced us to become creative in how we

(Continued on page 17)
continue to reach our audiences. Our MAPS region has some planetariums that have been able to reopen while others are still dark. I have found that the virtual environments we’ve shifted to have expanded our professional and educational horizons. I look forward to working with MAPS members near and far, as well as the Executive Committee, to keep lines of communication open and moving. We need to be in touch with each other more than once a year at conferences. After all, we are a community.

Treasurer

Cara Muscio

Cara Muscio is currently overseeing all operations at the Novins Planetarium in Toms River, NJ. Cara began at the Planetarium as an on-call Presenter in 2013, eventually becoming the site’s first part – time Education Coordinator. In 2019, she took over management responsibilities, and has drawn new folks to astronomy by focusing on engaging interactive events. Originally trained as a phytoplankton taxonomist, Cara spent nearly 20 years in watershed management and water quality, from ecological research, to volunteer management and environmental education. In addition, she has taught a variety Environmental, Biological, and Earth science courses at local colleges, specializing in inspiring wonder and interest in science in non-majors. Cara ‘moonlights’ as a certified yoga instructor and singer/songwriter, and is always looking for opportunities to bring these skills into the dome.

Mike Francis

Mike Francis (MS, Ohio University, Interdisciplinary Studies, MA, Ohio University, Physics, BS Ed, Fitchburg State College, Physics) has been bringing Astronomy to schools, libraries and museums throughout New England and across the country for over thirty years. After ten years as a lecturer, photographer and writer at the Charles Hayden Planetarium at Boston’s Museum of Science, he branched out on his own with his Galileo Galilei the Starry Messenger, The Stargazer’s Apprentice and Night Skies programs. By combining science and theatre, Mike has been able to reach students who previously had no interest in the wonders of our Universe. In addition to his programs in schools, he has visited the Space Telescope Science Institute, Carnegie Science Center, the Franklin Institute, the National Air and Space Museum, astronomical conventions and numerous events during the International Year of Astronomy, a celebration of the 400th anniversary of Galileo’s use of the telescope.

Mike is also a professional actor on stage, screen and television and a member of the Screen Actors Guild - American Federation of Television and Radio Artists and Actors Equity Association. As an actor educator he belongs to the International Museum Theatre Alliance, the International Planetarium Society, the Middle Atlantic Planetarium Society and SoloTogether (the organization of New England historical performers).

Voting will be open from January 15th through January 31st 2021. For more info see: mapsplanetarium.org/maps-2021-officer-elections/
Development Ideas for Planetariums and Museums
by JT Towne, Spitz, Inc.

The pandemic may have caused your facility to close for a while and cancel indoor galas or lectures which may have generated ticket revenue in the past. But don’t put off development campaigns and fundraising events, or miss opportunities for PR. Let your donors, potential supporters, and regular audiences know you are still there, pursuing your mission, and planning well for the future.

Individual (and family) giving is paramount this year.

Can you host (and pre-sell tickets for) an on-line astronomy trivia night aimed at families? Spring is coming…can your org hold an outdoor fundraising event timed with the “Supermoon” of April 27th (the Full Pink Moon), or around some other nature or sky occurrence? Perhaps a nearby school, institution or business would like to assist, act as sponsors, or provide and set up patio heaters for the evening; it’s a good time to leverage collaborations.

Don’t underestimate the resources of your supporters and neighbors; you may be able to make successful connections such as in the following example:

Museum Foundation Holds Car Raffle to Offset Lost Revenue

Raising money through raffles is not out of the ordinary for the Museum of Coastal Carolina and Ingram Planetarium in Ocean Isle Beach. Executive Director of the Foundation, Terry Bryant, explains that they have raffled off 5 golf carts in the past, and intend to do that again this spring. But in time for the winter holidays, the Foundation came up with a RAV4 car raffle fundraiser, to support their facilities located across town from each other.

“A supporter of ours, with a vacation home near the museum, owns a car dealership in Michigan”, she explained, “so I asked if they could offer assistance.” They offered a new compact crossover SUV at the lowest possible cost to the museum. So, the Museum Foundation put a plan in place to sell enough tickets to pay for the car and provide revenue to offset other fundraising efforts that were cancelled due to COVID-19. The drawing was set to occur whenever all of the 600 tickets (at $100 each) were sold. The fundraising committee knew this campaign would need a big PR push so the Foundation sent press releases to local news outlets to help spread the word, posted flyers, sent electronic email blasts to prior raffle supporters, made Facebook posts and reached out in our member newsletters, all to help boost ticket sales.

The drawing occurred on January 8th, streamed live on Facebook. Obviously, participants didn’t need to be present to win.

Dunning Toyota/Subaru dealership of Ann Arbor will also deliver the new car to the winner at the museum or if desired by the winner make other delivery arrangements.

Terry says the revenue, along with additional grants this year, will be a big help towards keeping their museum and planetarium afloat.

Katherine Hunt, planetarium manager, states, “Planetarium operators are often in a unique position to support fundraising by bringing their visual skills to the task. My role specifically as part of the fundraising committee was in creating visuals both video and graphic that were utilized in the marketing of our raffle. Being presenters by trade we often aid our facilities in astronomy or other news interviews with press agencies, but we can be equally helpful in communicating organizational need. While crafting compelling narratives around science is old hat for us in the planetarium profession, now more than ever before, we have to tell impactful stories about ourselves/our organization so we may be able to light our domes for years to come.”

The Museum of Coastal Carolina and Ingram Planetarium are closed for the month of January but hopes to open this winter.
Dr. Eileen M. Starr died on Wednesday, September 30, 2020 from cardiac arrest after bouts with COVID and a broken leg. She was a Spokane resident since 1979.

Eileen, originally from Lakewood, Ohio, graduated from Lakewood High School where she received the Selzer Award for Biology. She earned a B.S. and A.M. from the University of Michigan in Science Education and a Ph.D. from Washington State University. She was a member of the Phi Kappa Phi academic fraternity.

During her University of Michigan freshman orientation in 1958, Eileen discovered the “Exhibit Museum,” and immediately asked for a job. The only student position that offered enough hours was as a student operator of the soon-to-be-installed Spitz A-1 planetarium. She accepted it and became the museum’s first student planetarium operator.

Eileen credits her tenure as a U-M Museum of Natural History student docent for directing her life course, which included working as either a planetarium director or a teacher of Earth Science classes in cities across the country. Eileen was a gifted and passionate teacher who infused her lessons with humor. She had the ability to draw her students into subjects they never expected to find interesting. Eileen taught junior and senior high science classes in Richmond, Indiana; Hershey, Pennsylvania; and Rockwood, Maryland. She was planetarium director at the William Penn Memorial Museum in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania; for the Milwaukee, Wisconsin public schools; the Jacksonville Museum of Arts and Sciences in Jacksonville, Florida; at Eastern Washington University in Cheney, Washington; and at Valley City State University, in Valley City, North Dakota. She was director of the Eastern Washington Science Center in Spokane’s Riverfront Park in the 1980’s. She also taught classes at Eastern Washington University, Valley City State University, and for North Dakota State University. She retired in 2002 as Professor Emeritus for Science from Valley City State University.

Eileen was recently described by an EWU student employee who worked with her years ago as, “...a terrific lady and a wonderful boss with a great sense of humor. To this day, when I look at the stars at night, I recall what I learned while working with her at the EWU planetarium. She had a bright and funny way of teaching the names of the stars and constellations. It stuck with me all these years.” A friend who was a generation younger than Eileen described her as someone, “...who played an important role in shaping who I am today. She was such a great model as a strong, intelligent, free-thinking, generous, and fiercely independent woman.”

Due to COVID restrictions, there will not be a memorial service at this time. Please email Eileen’s daughter, Kimberly, at StarrBrightConsulting@gmail.com to be added to a contact list for a potential future service. In lieu of flowers, please consider making a gift to honor Eileen’s memory to the organization which inspired her career path: University of Michigan Museum of Natural History, 2291 Biological Sciences Building, 1105 North University Avenue, Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1085.

Matt Stein (August 13, 1956 – August 5, 2019)
By Noreen Grice

How many of us have been inspired by someone who seems larger than life, almost a superhero of sorts, and who made anything seem possible? I remember visiting the planetarium at the Boston Museum of Science as a kid on school field trips and later with family or friends. One particular man would step into the console, turn on the microphone and like the ringmaster in a circus (but in a serious way) he would bellow “Ladies and Gentlemen Boys and Girls! Welcome to the Charles Hayden Planetarium!” I would get chills every time I heard that voice. The lights dimmed and the stars appeared and that man guided us on a journey of discovery to learn all about constellations so we could find them on our own at home. I never forgot that voice and years later, I would work with him, presenting shows myself in that same planetarium. His name was Matthew Stein.
Matt had told me years ago that he began his career at the Museum of Science as a volunteer at age 13, helping at the Information Desk. By the 1970’s he had joined the planetarium staff as a planetarium presenter. He also organized a Saturday morning astronomy and aeronautics club for kids called “Junior Astronauts.” In 1982, Matt and the club members simulated an Apollo mission in the museum, complete with Apollo capsule and lunar module, while all wearing simulated astronaut suits. One of club members was so inspired by Matt that he combined new interests in science and the military and became an army doctor. Another went on to study engineering and came back to work in the planetarium for a time. But I think there are countless people who were inspired to learn more and become life-long astronomy enthusiasts.

Each year the Museum of Science hosted a Member’s Halloween party. And each year, Matt organized all the costumed children into a parade formation and enthusiastically led that parade up and down the exhibit halls while dressed in a police uniform.

In addition to his planetarium duties, Matt also became the Theater Operations Manager for the Omni Theater in the late 1980’s. Fortunately, the Planetarium and Omni Theaters share a lobby so the commute was quick.

You’d think that Matt must have been pretty tired with all of his museum activities, but he had another job. On his time off, Matt was a member of the Brookline Massachusetts Auxiliary Police. He assisted the community and citizens in need, always with a smile and always with a lending hand. Another planetarium presenter served on the Brookline Auxiliary Police and shared a story with me. She recalled that Matt was on duty one evening and announced over the car radio “the body has been removed from the middle of the street.” This caused a dash of other Auxiliary Police to immediately drive to the scene to assist. Much to everyone’s relief, “the body” was that of a squirrel.

Always enthused, always serious, always larger than life, Matt Stein was one of those people who grabbed your attention. He was kind, polite, charismatic and definitely a character (in a very good way). He inspired children and adults and made the impossible seem possible. We should all be lucky enough to have someone like Matt come into our lives to remind us of the gift we have in inspiring others to reach for the stars and want to learn more.

This painting by John Meader was inspired by Guy Ottewell who did an original sky-oriented painting for the cover of each of his annual "Astronomical Calendars" which finished paper publication with the 2016 issue.

This painting is of M42, the Great Nebula in Orion, it was primarily painted from memory first, then I added stars and a few details to their approximate locations by consulting photos.