

12 Meter. The enormous collecting area of the GBT will be of great advantage to many VLBA projects requiring the highest sensitivities.

P. R. Jewell

Green Bank Computing News

The major new piece of equipment installed in the last few months is a Hewlett-Packard printer capable of printing D, E, and A0 formats. It has already revolutionized the preparation of poster papers for scientific and technical conferences. It is also used for engineering drawings by the drafting and technical staff.

Because of lack of manpower, we had fallen behind on upgrades to the Unix operating systems. We embarked on a program to address this aggressively. With two exceptions, all Suns now operate Solaris 2.6 and all PCs running Linux have been upgraded to RedHat 6.0. One of the exceptions is the machine at the 140 Foot Telescope, fahd, which will be left at Solaris 2.5 in the near term in case we need to resuscitate the telescope. The other (arcturus) will remain at 2.5.1 until it is clear that we have successfully migrated all third party software. AIPS and AIPS++ users are encouraged to run on the Sun Ultra60 (presently known as arcturus2), which has many times (10x) the performance of the other Sun machines.

To provide a more uniform environment for our Windows users, we embarked on a program to upgrade all of the Windows 95 computers to Windows NT. This is now essentially complete.

Despite the fact that Green Bank has very clean and reliable power, it still suffers occasional interruptions. We now have all of the servers (Unix and Windows NT) and the essential computers to operate the GBT on modern uninterruptible power supplies.

G. C. Hunt

VLA

Changes to Policy for the Review of Large VLA Proposals

A little over three years ago, the NRAO adopted a policy for the review of proposals for large amounts of observing time. That policy was recommended by the Large Proposals Committee, chaired by A. Bridle. Since then, proposals requesting more than 300 hours of observing time on the VLA have been subjected to the "skeptical review" defined by the Committee. (A higher threshold of 1000 hours applies to the single dishes; no large proposal has yet been received for any telescope other than the VLA.) A skeptical review panel was convened recently to review a

number of large VLA proposals. The panel has made several recommendations, all of which are being adopted by the Observatory as policy for the future:

- Large proposals to the VLA and VLBA will be reviewed once per full configuration cycle, roughly once every 16 months. The deadline for such proposals will be announced. Proposals for special targets of opportunity are welcome at any time. These announcements and deadlines should not be interpreted as a commitment by the Observatory to schedule large projects as a routine part of every review cycle.

- Large proposals will be categorized as either a "survey" or a "large project" and will receive particularly close scrutiny with respect to their impact on the standard "small projects" that constitute the bulk of VLA and VLBA observing. Authors of large proposals should bear this categorization in mind when writing the justification for their proposal.

- Large proposals are allowed to exceed the page limit imposed on standard VLA and VLBA proposals. This allows for a request justification commensurate with the time requested and for an appeal to be made to the broader range of astronomical interest and expertise present in the skeptical review panels.

- Surveys should necessarily yield data products that are of use to the general astronomical community, such data being made public as soon as possible, both raw data and refined data products. Principal investigators will be required to produce a brief intermediate report for projects that go beyond one configuration cycle as well as a final report and final set of data products, all of which will be made public.

- Overall, no more than 10-20 percent of the VLA or VLBA observing time will be made available to large projects, with a limit of 50 percent of the observing time at any LST range for any configuration.

- Large proposals will be refereed by the standard set of VLA or VLBA referees before being sent to the skeptical review panel.

- The skeptical review panel will be responsible for both making recommendations regarding the scheduling of large proposals for observing time and monitoring the progress of successful proposals.

- The policy stated here applies to the VLA and VLBA. Rules of procedure beyond those stated in the report of the Bridle Committee will be generated for the GBT when it becomes necessary.

- The results of skeptical reviews will be announced and publicized in the *NRAO Newsletter* and on the NRAO web site, as will results from large projects underway.

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