

W.M. KECK OBSERVATORY Annual Report 2009

VISION

A world in which all humankind is inspired and united by the pursuit of knowledge of the infinite variety and richness of the Universe.

MISSION

To advance the frontiers of astronomy and share our discoveries, inspiring the imagination of all.

Observatory Groundbreaking:	198
First light Keck I telescope:	199
First light Keck II telescope:	199

Headquarters location: Kamuela, Hawai'i, USA Management: California Association for Research in Astronomy Partner Institutions: California Institute of Technology (CIT/Caltech), University of California (UC), National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA)

Observatory Director: Taft E. Armandroff

Deputy Director: Hilton A. Lewis

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FY2009

Number of Full Time Employees: 117 Number of Observing Astronomers: 469 Number of Keck Science Investigations: 405 Number of Refereed Articles: 260 Fiscal Year begins October 1 COVER: University of Hawai'i photographer R. David Beales won Best in Show at the University Photographers Association of America, or UPAA, competition for his December 2009 image, "Mauna Kea Summit," showing the W. M. Keck Observatory's laser piercing the Hawaiian night sky.

INSIDE COVER: Visiting astronomers in the remote operations facility at Waimea headquarters discuss details of their observing run.

3: Award winning architecture of Keck headquarters framed by early evening light and the pastoral beauty of Waimea.

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An Amazing Year of Discoveries THE DIRECTORS REPORT

Dr. Taft E. Armandroff

he year 2009 was the International Year of Astronomy, commemorating two major astronomical achievements that took place 400 years ago: Galileo Galilei first turned his simple refracting telescope toward the heavens, and in that same year Johannes Kepler published his book, <u>Astronomia Nova</u>, describing the first two laws of planetary motion.

How inspiring to consider what we have learned about the Universe since 1609 when the moons of Jupiter and the laws of physics came into focus. And how humbling to realize how many fundamental questions about the cosmos remain to be answered through the science of astronomy.

It is the W.M. Keck Observatory's role to answer these questions and over the past year we celebrated major milestones in both astronomical exploration and technology initiatives. It is my privilege to serve as the Director of the Keck Observatory and to introduce the chronicling of these achievements in the pages that follow.

One of the highlights of 2009 took place in January when a team of astronomers led by NASA's Mike Mumma reported the first definitive detection of methane in the atmosphere of Mars. Described in detail in the Discoveries section of the Report, their research indicates the Red Planet is either

biologically or geologically active, finding variations in the concentration of this organic molecule over both time and location. Mumma and his team continue to apply the Keck telescopes, particularly our world leading adaptive optics system and NIRSPEC, a near-infrared echelle spectrograph, to more precisely map these methane emissions and guide further research to determine their source.

Another highlight of the year occurred in June 2009 when the Low Resolution Imaging Spectrograph (LRIS), one of Keck's first instruments and still our most popular and productive one, completed a major upgrade to its capabilities. LRIS is a double spectrograph that obtains data in the red and blue regions of the electromagnetic spectrum simultaneously. The entire red-side detector, electronics, and software were replaced with state-of-the-art technology.

The red region upgrade has made LRIS the most sensitive optical spectrograph in the world. With greater sensitivity and lower noise, the instrument now gives Keck astronomers the capability to work on scientific problems that were previously impossible and surpass observations that we could undertake before. Astronomers can observe more targets per night and yield more statistically robust results. Private philanthropy was essential in realizing the success of the LRIS upgrade project. Over the past year, Keck Observatory made great progress on two other multi-year instrumentation initiatives: MOSFIRE, the Multi Object Spectrograph for Infrared Exploration and the next generation Laser Guide Star Adaptive Optics (LGS AO) system for the Keck I telescope. Both MOSFIRE and the new LGS AO system are scheduled for integration and commissioning in fiscal 2010 and are eagerly anticipated by our science community.

In this Annual Report you will meet some of the highly trained and dedicated staff members responsible for maintaining and operating the Keck telescopes as well as deploying these technological innovations. Alongside these and other Keck professionals you will also be introduced to leaders from our astronomy community who are contributing by developing new instrumentation or participating in Observatory governance.

And you will learn how in the International Year of Astronomy we continued the trend of increasing both the quality and quantity of our education and outreach activities and growing the number of our philanthropic supporters. We are encouraged by the significant interest in and support of our work by the public.

Modern astronomy is a highly competitive and constantly changing field, and Keck Observatory continues to be honed as a powerful discovery machine with additions to our telescope instrumentation and enhancements to our adaptive optics systems. These technological enhancements are complex and require significant resources to design and build. As a private-public partnership, we rely on grants from federal agencies and gifts from individuals and foundations to fund these pathfinding developments. The



ABOVE: Observatory Director Taft Armandroff and Deputy Director Hilton Lewis.

BELOW: A rare aerial view of majestic Mauna Kea and the Observatories.

new science enabled is dramatic and the results published over the past fiscal year by Keck's astronomers are also quantified in the Report.

In its short history, the twin ten-meter Keck telescopes have pushed Galileo's first concepts of astronomy to the extreme and brought the beauty, complexities and mysteries of the cosmos within reach. As an organization we are proud of what we have accomplished not only in cuttingedge discoveries but also in training and inspiring the next generation of explorers. I thank our professional staff, our governing board and advisors, our philanthropic supporters, and our volunteers for all their contributions and for their steadfast commitment to our continued leadership in this amazing scientific enterprise.



Welcome to the cutting edge of tomorrow...

The twin 10-meter Keck Telescopes are the leading optical/infrared telescopes in the world and are dedicated to astronomical research 365 days/nights per year.

Observing time on the Keck telescopes is highly prized and is divided each year among its partner institutions: the California Institute of Technology, the University of California and NASA, as well as the University of Hawai'i. The broader astronomical community has access to the telescopes through partnerships with the National Science Foundation and NASA.

Recognized as the most scientifically productive observatory in history, Keck Observatory has contributed to all areas of astronomy and astrophysics. Keck's legacy of exploration includes the discovery of exoplanets; the study of how planets, stars and galaxies form; the nature of black holes; and the chemical composition and evolution of the Universe.

Beyond offering the largest light collection mirrors on the planet, the Keck telescopes host a complete suite of nine state-of-the-art observing instruments to collect and analyze astronomical data with unprecedented power and precision.

Keck is a world leader in the field of adaptive optics, a breakthrough technology that removes the distortions caused by the turbulence in the Earth's atmosphere and provides image clarity of cosmic targets that rivals those of the Hubble Space Telescope.

Made possible by grants from the W. M. Keck Foundation, the Observatory today is a private 501(c)3 non-profit organization and depends upon competitive grants and philanthropy to sustain its frontier research capabilities.



Cosmic Vision

W. M. Keck Observatory Board of Directors

George Blumenthal, *Chair* Edward Stolper, *Vice-Chair* Michael Bolte T. J. Keck, *liaison* Shrinivas Kulkarni Mario Perez, *liaison* Thomas Soifer Peter Taylor

Keck Observatory Advancement Advisory Council

Sanford Robertson, *Chair*, and Jeanne Robertson Taft Armandroff, *ex-officio* Marc and Lynne Benioff Michael Bolte, *ex-officio* Clive and Carol Davies C. Wallace and Bobbie Jean Hooser Shrinivas Kulkarni, *ex-officio* Art and Rita Levinson Gordon Moore Rob and Terry Ryan Doug and Deborah Troxel

BELOW: Keck Observatory's signature Evenings with Astronomers lecture series, sponsored by the Rob and Terry Ryan Foundation, continues to connect Friends of Keck Observatory to their philanthropic investments.

Keck Observatory Science Steering Committee

Jean Brodie, *Co-Chair* Chris Martin, *Co-Chair* Rachel Akeson Michael Bolte, *ex-officio* Judy Cohen Alex Filippenko Karl Glazebrook, *observer* Thomas Greene Richard Ellis Shrinivas Kulkarni, *ex-officio* Michael Liu Jerry Nelson, *ex-officio* Jason Prochaska Pieter van Dokkum, *observer*



Image of the Arches Cluster obtained with the Keck II Telescope, its laser guide star adaptive optics system, and NIRC2 instrument. The Arches is a cluster of massive stars located close to the Galactic Center. Note the diffraction pattern around the bright stars, which attests to this image approaching the fundamental resolution limit of the telescope. Image courtesy of Mark Morris, UCLA.

2009 Discoveries

Keck Observatory has had a major influence on astronomy during the first sixteen years of science operations, and the year 2009 reflected our continued worldwide dominance in ground-based astronomy. The following research highlights demonstrate the impressive reach Keck has had in expanding our knowledge of the Solar System, the Galaxy and the Universe.

METHANE ON MARS

On Earth, organisms release about 90 percent of our planet's methane as a by-product of digestion. Geological processes, like oxidation of iron, release the other ten percent. Despite the barren appearance of Mars, the first definitive detection of methane in the planet's atmosphere was announced in 2009, indicating the planet is alive in either a biologic or geologic sense. To obtain these exciting results, Michael Mumma of NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center and his colleagues used Keck's Near Infrared Spectrograph (NIRSPEC) and other facilities, particularly NASA's Infrared Telescope also on Mauna Kea, to



This image shows the parts per billion of methane released globally on Mars during summer in the planet's northern hemisphere. Image courtesy of NASA.

observe the Red Planet's atmosphere over a period of three Martian years—the equivalent of seven Earth years.

During the Northern mid-summer on Mars, measurements were made of a large plume that contained about 19,000 metric tons of methane. The plume's source was comparable to that of the massive hydrocarbon seep at Coal Oil Point in Santa Barbara, California. By the vernal equinox about half of that methane had been lost.

Because such a large proportion of the Earth's gas comes from living creatures, the discovery of methane suggests it could come from microbes living on the Red Planet. The search for clues to its origin, either biological or geochemical, continues and Keck's adaptive optics will lead the way in future observations, mapping regions of the methane's release to an unprecedented detail of 50 kilometers.

SUPER-EARTHS REVEALED

Before the 1990s the only planets known were those we all learned in school. Detecting and studying planets orbiting nearby stars is now one of the most exciting and dynamic areas of astronomy. "Exoplanet" research, a relatively new field of study, has developed beyond its



This artist's impression shows a "super Earth" orbiting a star similar to the Sun. Several low mass planets have been discovered around nearby stars suggesting that they are more common than previously thought. Credit: MicroFUN Collaboration, CfA, NSF

initial emphasis on proving whether or not planets exist beyond our own Solar System. With over 400 of these worlds identified within the last fifteen years, modern astronomers continue their hunt for the planets with the lowest possible mass.

The Keck I telescope has been the most prolific scientific instrument in the world for finding exoplanets, the majority of them being gas giants, like Jupiter. Even with that great success, we are still left with a glaring holy grail—detecting the first extrasolar Earth-like planets ever found by humanity. Over the past year, two teams have used Keck Observatory's powerful High Resolution Echelle Spectrometer (HIRES) to reveal a number of "super-Earths," defined as planets more massive than Earth and less massive than Neptune. Steven Vogt of the University of California, Santa Cruz, and Paul Butler of the Carnegie Institution of Washington led an international team that found two new planetary

systems by combining data gathered with the Keck I telescope and the Anglo-Australian telescope. These new systems orbit the bright stars 61 Virginis and HD 1461, with each hosting a super-Earth of five and 7.5 times that of our planet's mass, respectively. Separately, Andrew Howard and Geoff Marcy, both of the University of California, Berkeley, and colleagues identified an exoplanet with a mass just four times that of Earth orbiting its parent star HD 156668. It is the second-smallest exoplanet that has been found to date.

These super-Earth discoveries, combined with other recent data, suggest that planets orbiting the Sun's nearest neighbors are extremely common: about half of all nearby stars have a detectable planet with a mass equal to or less than the mass of Neptune. The data also tell us that lower mass planets form as a natural consequence of the same process that creates stars. With continued focus and innovation, the discovery of other potentially habitable worlds may be just a few years away.

A DISK OF YOUNG STARS AT THE GALACTIC CENTER

The center of our Galaxy harbors not only a supermassive black hole with a mass four million times the mass of the Sun, it also harbors an unexpected population of young, massive stars. The existence of these stars is an enigma because at the present time there is no observational evidence to suggest that sufficient gas exists at the Galactic Center to have allowed them to form. Moreover, the tidal force from the supermassive black hole should make it difficult for nearby gas to condense into stars. As a result, astronomers have debated the origin of these young stars extensively over the past several years.



Led by Jessica Lu at the California Institute of Technology, astronomers from the UCLA/Keck Galactic Center Group are investigating the orbits of the young, massive stars to better understand their origins in this extreme environment. The advent of the Keck laser guide star adaptive optics system has allowed the team to retroactively improve their 11-year Keck data set of the Galactic Center, increasing the precision with which stellar orbits can be determined. The movements of the young stars, or astrometry, imply they are rotating in a single disk at a high inclination and in a clockwise direction. These new measurements suggest that this group of stars, which orbit close to the black hole, may have formed in situ in a single event.



The stars in the central part of our Galaxy, the Milky Way, as seen at near-infrared wavelengths. By following the motions of the stars over more than 16 years, astronomers were able to determine the mass of the supermassive black hole that lurks there.

Credit: ESO / S. Gillessen et al.

DISCOVERY AND CHARACTERIZATION OF MOST DISTANT SUPERNOVAE

Supernovae are stellar explosions that can outshine an entire galaxy, such as the Milky Way, for a brief interval. As such, they are bright beacons that can be observed at very great distances from Earth. Astronomers have yet again rewritten the record books for discovering the most distant supernovae.

In 2009, using Keck Observatory and the Canada-France-Hawaii Telescope (CFHT), a team, led by Jeff Cooke, then of the University of California, Irvine, used a novel technique to identify explosions of two massive stars that occurred roughly 11 billion years ago. Studying the deaths of such early stars is essential to understanding the evolution of the Universe and how its elements were formed and distributed to later create stars and planets. To find the most distant of these supernovae, the team examined archival data from the CFHT Legacy Survey and identified four faint objects that appeared to brighten and then fade over time, suggesting they were distant supernovae candidates.



This artist's impression shows the deadly explosion of one of the Universe's most massive stars. After it exhausts its supply of nuclear fuel and collapses violently, the stellar core rebounds in a cataclysmic blast that spews most of its material into interstellar space.

Credit: G. Arguner

The astronomers then used the Low Resolution Imaging Spectrograph (LRIS) on the Keck I telescope and the Deep Imaging Multi-Object Spectrograph (DEIMOS) on the Keck II telescope to measure the spectrum of light emitted by each object to determine their composition and distance. The Keck spectra showed that the light from the supernovae traveled nearly 11 billion light years to reach Earth. Prior to this discovery, the astronomical literature showed that the most distant supernova of this type exploded roughly six billion years ago and that the most distant supernova of any type exploded roughly nine billion years ago. These early explosions give astronomers a glimpse of how the elements essential to planet formation and to the existence of life were created, since stars form heavier and heavier elements in their core. Cooke's novel technique may reveal even more distant explosions, which could provide additional clues of how some of the earliest elements were initially created and distributed throughout the cosmos.





This image shows a group of luminous galaxies near the radio galaxy TXS 2332+154, which has been identified with the galaxy at the upper right corner of the group at a distance of roughly 11 billion light years from Earth. The Keck II LGSAO image is shown in the upper-left panel. The best-fit model for the five galaxies is shown in the upper-right. Of special interest is the tidal tail between the lower galaxies and the galaxy at the lower left of the group: it appears to be a galaxy more massive than our own Milky Way, yet it packs most of its light within a radius of 1500 light years.

Credit: Alan Stockton, UH/WMKO

THE NATURE OF MASSIVE GALAXIES IN THE EARLY UNIVERSE

How galaxies form over time from the Big Bang to the present is one of the fundamental questions of astronomy. How have phenomena such as mergers and collisions changed the distribution of mass and the size of galaxies over cosmic time? The ability of astronomers to isolate samples of galaxies dating from the early Universe and to determine their properties is fundamental to addressing this issue.

Alan Stockton of the University of Hawai'i, Gabriela Canalizo of the University of California, Riverside, and Elizabeth McGrath of the University of California, Santa Cruz, used the Keck II telescope and its laser guide star adaptive optics system to image radio galaxies and quasars that are roughly 11 billion light years from Earth.

Stockton and his team obtained near-infrared images from Keck that were nearly twice as sharp as those they could obtain with the Hubble Space Telescope at similar wavelengths. From these images, Stockton and colleagues discovered that the structures of these early galaxies are quite unlike those of today's massive galaxies. The team found the objects had masses that were one hundred billion times the mass of the Sun, yet were small in size, with diameters of roughly 3,000 to 15,000 light years across. By comparison, the diameter of the Milky Way Galaxy is 100,000 light years, yet it has a mass of about 500 billion solar masses. The early galaxies are ten to 1000 times more compact. Stockton has speculated that these early disk galaxies may have become, over time, the cores of present day galaxies.

GRAVITATIONAL LENSING AND ADAPTIVE OPTICS RESOLVE EARLY STAR-FORMING GALAXY

Astronomers at the California Institute of Technology, led by Richard Ellis, and their colleagues have provided unique insight into the nature of a young, star-forming galaxy as it appeared only two billion years after the Big Bang. The team made their observations by coupling two frontier techniques: laser guide star adaptive optics on the Keck II Telescope and gravitational lensing. The latter makes use of an effect, first predicted by Albert Einstein, in which the gravitational field of massive objects such as foreground galaxies bends light rays from objects located a distance behind, thus magnifying the appearance of the distant sources.

Gravitational lensing enlarges the distant object in angular size by a factor of about eight in each direction. Together with the enhanced resolution obtained through adaptive optics, this allowed the team to observe with dramatically finer detail than previously possible. For the first time, the astronomers were able to determine the internal velocity structure of a galaxy located 11 billion light years from Earth. The researchers found that the distant galaxy, which is typical in many respects to others of that epoch, shows clear signs of orderly rotation.



The result, in association with observations conducted at millimeter wavelengths sensitive to cold molecular gas, suggests that this distant galaxy is in the early stages of assembling a spiral disk. It even appears to have a central nucleus similar to those seen in spiral galaxies, like the Milky Way, of the present day.



From the AO image and spectrum of this galaxy, which sits 11 billion light years from Earth, Ellis and his colleagues were able to determine that the disk is rotating and could be in the early stages of developing into the spiral galaxies seen today.

Credit: Richard Ellis, Caltech/WMKO







Carol and Clive Davies, members of the Keck Observatory Advancement Advisory Council, celebrate the success of "first light" of the enhancements to Keck Observatory's LRIS instrument. Donor events took place in Hawai'i, southern California, and northern California.

W.M. KECK Observatory Annual Report 2009

Finances

The W. M. Keck Observatory is managed by the California Association for Research in Astronomy (CARA), a tax-exempt, private, nonprofit organization dedicated to astronomical research and education. Established in 1985 by the California Institute of Technology (Caltech) and the University of California (UC), CARA's founding mission was to build and operate the world's two largest optical/infrared telescopes on Mauna Kea. The capital costs of the highly ambitious project were borne by Caltech, and the majority was funded by grants from the W. M. Keck Foundation. The Foundation's namesake, William Myron Keck, was an entrepreneur and founder of Superior Oil Company of California, and his heirs recognized the potential breakthrough in astronomical research promised by the revolutionary segmented design of the 10-meter telescope mirrors. The total funding of \$138 million represented 25% of the Foundation's assets, and, at the time, was the largest charitable contribution of its kind. The Keck Foundation also helped fund the development of the adaptive optics system on the telescopes and today considers its capital investment in the Observatory an undisputed "home run."

The agreement between its founding partners, Caltech and UC, ensures an annual base of operating support for Keck Observatory through 2018. In fiscal year 2009, this amount was \$12.2 million. As a one-sixth partner in the Observatory, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) provided \$3.2 million in operating support in 2009. In addition, \$1.7 million in new federal grants and contracts was awarded in fiscal year 2009 for the Observatory's development projects. A total of \$533,974 in new charitable gifts and pledges from the private sector provided additional resources for new instrumentation and capabilities. The total budget for Keck Observatory in fiscal year 2010 is \$24.8 million. Audited financial statements are available upon request and at the Observatory website.

With the world's most accomplished astronomers, Keck Observatory has generated the greatest quality and quantity of astronomical discoveries of any ground-based observatory in history. A comprehensive strategic



planning process has identified a prioritized list of investments to energize existing capabilities and develop new ones.

In 2009 the Keck Observatory completed a successful multi-year fundraising campaign to support an important new capability for the Keck I telescope. The Low Resolution Imaging Spectrograph, one of original and most productive instruments behind the Keck telescopes, was strengthened and revitalized into what is now the world's most sensitive optical spectrograph. Representative of most development projects at Keck, the work was a collaboration of its partner institutions. The University of California at Santa Cruz designed, built and integrated the upgrade components. Caltech, the original LRIS developers, contributed detailed knowledge and counsel. Lawrence Berkeley National Labs developed the detector technology. The Observatory contributed overall management, infrastructure, and along with UCSC, commissioning, and secured \$616,155 in private philanthropy towards the total project budget of \$1.6 million.

Major contributors to the multi-year campaign were the Change Happens Foundation, the Mt. Cuba Astronomical Foundation, the William J. and Dorothy K. O'Neill Foundation and Keck Observatory Advancement Advisory Council members Carol and Clive Davies, and Jeanne and Sanford Robertson.

The upgrade of the next generation instrument took place in a single five week period and in its first month back in science operation LRIS collected astonishing new data for four of the top astronomers in the world: Richard Ellis, Alex Filippenko, Shri Kulkarni and Chuck Steidel.

Special receptions called "A New View of the Universe," were held at hosts Henk and Akemi Rogers' Pu'u Wa'a Wa'a Ranch, at the Huntington Library, Art Collections and Botanical Gardens in Pasadena, and at hosts David and Nathalie Cowan's residence in Atherton, California, and honored the LRIS upgrade milestone.



Friends of Keck Observatory Jack and Ellen Toigo enjoy "A New View of the Universe" and the ambiance of Pu'u Wa'a Wa'a Ranch with Advancement Director Debbie Goodwin (center).

"I give to many organizations, most of them as short term bets. Keck Observatory is my long term bet, my gift to future generations. In 500 years children will learn about the Keck Observatory like kids today learn about Christopher Columbus."

-Dr. C. Wallace Hooser, Keck Observatory Advancement Advisory Council

Fueling Discovery

2009 PATRONS October 1, 2008 – September 30, 2009

UNIVERSAL BENEFACTORS > \$100,000 Betty and Gordon Moore Mt. Cuba Astronomical Foundation

COSMIC CONTRIBUTORS

> \$10,000 The Annenberg Foundation Fairmont Orchid Hawaii Jeanne and Sanford Robertson Terry and Rob Ryan Sun Microsystems, Inc. Xirrus

GALACTIC ASSOCIATES Annual Gift of \$10,000

Carol and Clive Davies Ping and Fritz Faulhaber Anne Barasch Ryan and John Cutler Ryan

Public Funding Sources

Association of Universities for Research in Astronomy Center for Adaptive Optics Jet Propulsion Laboratory National Aeronautics and Space Administration National Science Foundation University of California

STELLAR ASSOCIATES Annual Gift of \$3,000

Blue Hawaiian Helicopters Sharlee and Peter Eising Laurie and Jack Goldstein Pam and Gary Jaffe Janet Gimbel Rogers and Stephen Rogers Kathy and Charles Vasilius

PLANETARY ASSOCIATES

Annual Gift of \$1,500 Liz and Taft Armandroff Doris and Earl Bakken Thomas Blackburn Polly and Tom Bredt Nathalie and David Cowan David DeSante Marilyn and Patrick Fitzgerald Deborah Goodwin and James Fritz Suzanne Hill and Mike Luce Hualalai Resort Milly and Mac Morris William J. and Dorothy K. O'Neill Foundation Joan Morgan and Richard Schleiche Liz and Dave Sonne

Other Individuals, **Corporations and Foundations** Naomi Ahuna BB Embroidery, Ltd. Astrid and Greg Bear Ruth and Jerry Bentley **Big Island Tents** Diana and Andrew Bonnici Rosalind and Stephen Butterfield Peggy and William Cameron Diana and Fred Chaffee Chester Woodruff Foundation Linda and James Clifford AJ Clifford Ginny and Hal Cogger Karri and Mark Copman Linda Copman Sue and Richard Dekany Patricia Dilworth and Bruce Miller Paul A. Dolinsky Marilyn and John Dougery Marilyn and Thomas Elias Carl Feinberg Carolyn Zecca-Ferris and

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The People of Keck

Keck Observatory is one of the largest employers in Waimea. Its professional staff reflect both local and global roots. A potent combination of dedicated and driven engineers, technicians, scientists, and administrators, together they represent the very best team in executing cutting-edge astronomy research.



Constance Rockosi

ASTRONOMER

Constance Rockosi, a leading astronomer and frequent observer at Keck, has an unwavering passion for the stars. She is a Professor of Astronomy and Astrophysics at the University of California at Santa Cruz and, even while sitting in traffic on her way to campus, her thoughts are always on her favorite subject.

"My mind just starts thinking about things I work on, like the origins of the Universe and how planets form," she says. "We deal with such fascinating questions."

A New Jersey native, Rockosi earned her B.S.E. in Electrical Engineering at Princeton University then obtained a Ph.D. in her chosen fields at the University of Chicago. She is an instrument-builder by training and a world expert on CCDs and CCD cameras. Rockosi was deeply involved in a multi-year, multi-million dollar upgrade to improve Keck Observatory's Low Resolution Imaging Spectrograph, or LRIS. She joined many in celebrating the successful first light of the modified science instrument in June, 2009.

Rockosi was in Hawai'i for the final commissioning of LRIS. It was snowing the day the instrument was delivered to the summit, and the snow was deep enough to block the entrance to Keck. "There was Bill Bates, the summit lead, greeting us at the Observatory door with shovel in hand, ready to dig a path and help bring LRIS inside," Rockosi says. "This 'can-do' spirit of cooperation happens all the time at Keck."

The "next generation" LRIS, now the most sensitive spectrograph of its kind, allows astronomers to probe extremely faint and distant cosmic targets. For the first time, the new LRIS detectors are able to capture photons from galaxies in the "redshift desert." Some of this light has traveled over nine billion years to give astronomers more clues about how galaxies form and mature.

Rockosi's own current research seeks to understand how the outer edges of our Milky Way Galaxy evolved. With Keck she is able to study the oldest stars in our Galaxy, some almost as old as the Universe itself.

For most of us, pondering "galactic archeology" is beyond our reach. For Rockosi, it is just another day at the office.



W.M. KECK Observatory Annual Report 2009 Tom Soifer

KECK OBSERVATORY BOARD MEMBER

In the economic sag of 2009, nonprofit organizations that thrive do so because they are entrepreneurial. They understand they must provide excellent value and must constantly innovate. "Keck Observatory's greatest value is its scientific vitality, and, as a privately funded facility, it is able to respond quickly to changing opportunities," says Tom Soifer, Chair of the Division of Physics, Mathematics and Astronomy at the California Institute of Technology and former Co-Chair of Keck's advisory group, the Science Steering Committee. He currently serves on the Observatory Board of Directors.

Soifer explains that every other eight-to-ten-meter class observatory is a publicly funded national or international facility, where, because of bureaucracy, both planning and execution take much longer. The Observatory's ability to capitalize on emerging scientific priorities is a tribute to the quality of its staff in Waimea and its tremendously creative scientific user community, Soifer says.

Earning his B.S. degree in physics from Caltech, Soifer went on to earn his Ph.D. in astronomy at Cornell University. He returned to teach and do research at his undergraduate alma mater in 1978. Soifer has both witnessed and helped foster all of the technical capabilities that have been responsible for making Keck's legacy discoveries. In 1993, Soifer had the first-ever science run with The Observatory's debut instrument, the Near Infrared Camera. Since then he has also used NIRC2, DEIMOS, OSIRIS, and LRIS —both before and after its 2009 upgrade.

Soifer's research focuses on dusty, "adolescent" galaxies and he obtains data from both spacebased telescopes and Keck. He directs the Spitzer Science Center, which operates NASA's Spitzer Space Telescope out of Caltech. The orbiting telescopes drive his observing program, but "it's the ground-based telescopes like Keck that are essential to developing a more complete understanding of what one is seeing from space," Soifer says.

"What is wonderful about astronomy is that we can describe these discoveries in pretty simple language, and there's a solid outreach program at Keck, which I hope is inspiring the youth of Hawai'i to take advantage of the opportunities in science, math and engineering taking place in their backyard," Soifer says.

Gregory Wirth

SUPPORT ASTRONOMER

In Keck Observatory's early days, astronomers would observe from the summit of Mauna Kea, where although they could walk outside to admire the brilliantly clear Hawaiian night skies, the high elevation conditions were arduous. Today they operate under much milder circumstances from the remote observing rooms in Waimea or from dedicated facilities at their universities. Wherever they observe, Gregory Wirth is there to greet them as each observing team's "deluxe customer service representative."

Wirth is one of six Support Astronomers on staff at Keck Observatory who are both scientists and instrument specialists. Their primary responsibility is to make sure visiting astronomers have everything they need to achieve their science proposal goals. In their position at Keck, Support Astronomers also enjoy the exceptional privilege of having access to the Keck telescopes for their own research.

Wirth first experienced Keck Observatory in 1994 as a doctoral candidate in astrophysics. In 1998, after earning his PhD in astronomy at UC Santa Cruz, he joined the Keck staff and became the "instrument master" first of LRIS, the Low-Resolution Imaging Spectrometer, and then of DEIMOS, the Deep Imaging Multi-Object Spectrograph. DEIMOS is a world leading wide-field multi-object spectrograph that has been key to understanding large scale structure in the Universe.

"It is never boring. One night I'll be with a new astronomer explaining how to calibrate and interpret DEIMOS data, the next day at the summit troubleshooting an instrument problem, the next day writing software," he says.

Wirth also collects his own data on galaxy clusters. "Galaxy clusters are the largest selfgravitating objects in the Universe that we can study as they form and evolve," he says.

In addition to his observing support, instrument work and personal research, Wirth also participates in Keck's outreach programs. The Observatory encourages all employees to dedicate two percent of their work time benefitting the community. Many, like Wirth, are active in education, encouraging children to learn more about science through "hands-on" astronomy activities. "Kids here may never visit New York City or the Eiffel Tower, but we can take them into a world many others will never see," he says.







Tason Chin

SENIOR ELECTRONICS ENGINEER

Jason Chin has ridden the information technology tidal wave from aerospace to outer space. Born in Hong Kong, Chin's family moved to Honolulu in 1973, and as a teenager at Damien Memorial High School, he learned to use the first crude personal computers. When the Radio Shack TRS-80 came out in the late '70s, Chin saw its world-changing potential and enrolled in electrical engineering at the University of Southern California. He received both his bachelor's and a master's degree in four and a half years.

After graduation, Chin was hired by Hughes Aircraft outside Los Angeles as a software systems engineer for projects including high flying reconnaissance missions. "But I vowed that I would return to Hawai'i by the time I was 30," he says. "Besides my family being here, Hawai'i just gets into your blood."

Chin joined Keck in 1995. He is currently Project Manager for both the Keck I Laser Guide Star Adaptive Optics (LGS AO) System and the Keck II Laser Center Launch Project, and lead engineer for the Next Generation LGS AO Facility.

After years of planning, the arrival of the Keck I Laser at Observatory headquarters in 2009 was a gratifying moment for Chin. Keck was the first observatory to exploit natural guide star adaptive optics systems in the late 1990's. In 2004, the Keck II telescope began science operations with the first laser guide star system on a large telescope. Driven by the high demand for LGS AO observing time and the goal to use LGS AO with the Keck Interferometer, the new laser system was another milestone in extending this groundbreaking capability for modern astronomy.

Weeks of tests at headquarters proved the new laser performed well in several key areas: power, spectral content, wavefront quality and stability. The laser and subsystems were taken to the summit and, after more tweaks and adjustments, Chin and his team celebrated its first light propagation on January 28, 2010.

"Keck is not your run-of-the-mill non-profit organization," Chin says. "The Observatory pursues goals with a vengeance. The challenge of the work here is far greater than anywhere else, and I love it."

F Mader

SOFTWARE ENGINEER

Koa is the name of a native Hawaiian hardwood. It is also the acronym for the Keck Observatory Archive, a database of all spectral observations taken by Keck's High Resolution Echelle Spectrograph, or HIRES. Funded by NASA, KOA is housed at Caltech's Exoplanet Science Institute in Pasadena. Mader helped develop the software for the HIRES archive and is now developing a database for another Observatory instrument, the Near-Infrared Echelle Spectrograph, or NIRSPEC.

While his specialty is software programming, Mader is an astronomer. He received his master's degree from San Diego State University and his first job was at the Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics in Cambridge, Massachusetts. "But I've always been into archives," he says. "I like the creativity in writing programs to give the world access to these remarkable findings."

Mader's work isn't just archival. One piece of software he wrote analyzed a recent night's findings concerning the light curves of binary stars, that is, the change in the orbital period of these star duos which helped reveal their gravitational pull on each other.



Mader thinks of himself as a "software programmer on call." He is available 24/7 to deal with a variety of problems expected in the computer driven environment of modern astronomy. It can be as minor as an internet browser not working for a visiting astronomer or as immediate as a guider camera not functioning at the summit during an observing run.

Beyond the technological prowess of the Observatory, Mader believes it is the 'ohana, or family, connection that makes Keck a very special place to work. "At Keck, we are not just co-workers or neighbors, we're friends. We bring that connection into our work. It makes a difference," he says.

One way to strengthen friendships at Keck can be seen on Friday during the lunch hour when Mader and many of his colleagues play Ultimate Frisbee at Waimea's community park. Mader also leads a youth group and manages the little league baseball team his sons, Jake and Zack, play on. He is married to his high school sweetheart and wife of thirteen years, Christine.

Naomi Ahuna

HUMAN RESOURCES AND ADMINISTRATION MANAGER

Growing up in Kahalu'u on the island of Oahu, Naomi Ahuna remembers travelling to Kohala to visit her father's family and during those visits, she was moved by the beauty of Mauna Kea. In late 2004, during her interview process, Ahuna travelled to the summit to tour the Observatory and experienced both the magnificence of Hawaii's sacred mountain and the awe-inspiring power of the telescopes. "This was more than a job. It was a calling," she recalls.

Today, as the head of Human Resources and Administration, Ahuna believes communication is the most important aspect of her job. She is the lead administrator for approximately 120 employees, and has initiated a number of activities that ensure camaraderie. "We have a wide span of credentials, from high school graduates to multi-degree academics." At Keck the theme is, "Embrace diversity." "Staff really care about staff," she says.

Ahuna oversees all recruitment efforts, with as many as 200 people applying annually from all over the world for jobs posted on Keck's web site. Last year, her staff of six also started the WMKO Employee Newsletter, a first, to share news, awards, outside activities and social events. "This is an active group of people – from scuba diving and triathlons to coaching soccer and science teams."

"Our employees are passionate about acknowledging the cultural importance of Mauna Kea and about our contributions to astronomy and to mankind as a whole," she says. In celebration of the International Year of Astronomy, Hilo hosted a Galileo Block Party. Ahuna attended the community event to represent Keck Observatory and share her enthusiasm for science and culture.

Typical of the Islands' ethnic mix – part Japanese, part Chinese and part Hawaiian, Ahuna is a graduate of the prestigious Kamehameha Schools and she earned her bachelor's degree from the University of Hawai'i at Manoa.

Aside from her work at the Observatory, Ahuna teaches a financial management class at her church and travels the world with her daughter. To date they have visited 30 states, climbed the Great Wall in China, ridden elephants in South East Asia and toured the classic empires of Europe.





George Wall ORTICS TECHNICIAN

George Wall moved to Hawai'i in 2003 to get away from the long winters in his native New England. Today he spends four days a week atop Mauna Kea where inside the Keck Observatory domes the temperatures are kept near freezing to match the night time conditions at the summit.

"That wasn't Plan A," he says. But, besides warm weather, the former technical director of the famous Music Hall Theatre in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, and his wife were seeking a new adventure. "That part worked."

At Keck, Wall has a role in the Operations and Infrastructure Department and he often takes part in some unusual scenarios, particularly cold and high ones. As an example, Wall periodically finds himself suspended "mid-dome" in a crane's bucket, cleaning the telescope mirrors "in situ" by dusting their surfaces with carbon dioxide snow. The carbon dioxide spray loosens dirt and debris which is then swept away by sublimation, the process of changing directly from a solid to a gas.

Wall and his colleagues are also responsible for recoating the 36 segments of each of the two ten-meter primary mirrors. Twelve spare segments are kept in reserve in the room aptly named the mirror barn. The hexagonal segments have to be stripped and resurfaced periodically due to wear and tear caused by the nightly exposure to the elements. With hydrochloric acid, the old aluminum coating is removed, and new metal is applied in an eightfoot high vacuum chamber. The vacuum has to be greater than that found in space to keep it uncontaminated by the atmosphere so that 45 tungsten filaments heat the new aluminum into a mist to evenly coat the segment.

After work, Wall reverts to his first loves: writing short fiction (B.A., University of New Hampshire) and painting and sculpture (M.F.A. from the Rhode Island School of Design). "As humans, we are naturally curious about the world around us. Each day I am surrounded by some of the smartest and hardest working people I've ever known," he says, "and I love being a part of the exploration of who we are and where we come from."



W.M. KECK Observatory Annual Report 2009

Drew Medeiros

MECHANICAL ENGINEER

By education and experience Drew Medeiros is a mechanical engineer, but a better description of his professional career is "explorer." Before coming to Keck Observatory 13 years ago, he helped build robotic submarines that could dive to a record depth of 20,000 feet to explore the origin, content and limits of the world's oceans. At Keck, he is involved in exploring the origin, content and limits of the Universe.

"The Keck telescopes give a broad perspective of our planet within the cosmos, constantly breaking the frontiers of knowledge," he says. "So too does undersea exploration." Both fields demand high level achievers from science and engineering fields.

A graduate of the University of Hawai'i at Manoa, Medeiros specializes in optical mechanics, especially integration of new systems like the Adaptive Optics (AO) laser guide star system recently installed on Keck I and the next generation adaptive optics system in development on Keck II. "The new laser will have multiple beams to measure atmospheric turbulence, significantly increasing the capability of AO to view what is currently not yet observable," he says.

Medeiros also deals with the mechanical operation of the telescopes on Mauna Kea. The 300ton machines, rotating on a thin film of hydraulic oil, have to be precise – within 1/1000th of an inch – to be able to track cosmic targets billions of light years away. "That's the confidence we operate with and what makes Keck so productive," he says.

"Everyone at Keck is clever with amazing ingenuity to solve problems," Medeiros says. "The Observatory is also one of the few places engineers have the opportunity to do cutting-edge work in Hawai'i."

Medeiros is equally proud of his unmanned submarine's work and records. "I worked on a team that developed the submarine for the Navy which later dove on the U.S.S. Yorktown," he says. "There was as much science and computation there as we do at Keck, just looking the other way."

For relaxation Medeiros explores still another realm: music. He plays bass guitar and performs from time to time with "Solar Wind," a local rock band that entertains at venues across Hawai'i Island.

Craig Nance

OPERATIONS ENGINEERING MANAGER

There is no doubt that Keck Observatory is the premiere astronomy center in the world, attracting outstanding astronomers and breakthrough research. But without its engineering staff, there would be no astronomy.

"We are like a NASCAR race team," says Craig Nance. "The drivers are the stars, the best, but without the support crew they can't compete."

Nance manages a staff of 12 mechanical, electrical, and software engineers to make sure the telescopes and their facilities are operational one hundred percent of the time. "It's tough enough for the astronomers to get their night's work done without the dome not opening or the telescope not turning." Yet breakdowns and problems occur almost daily. "What the engineering staff does is mostly invisible," he says. "For instance, when one of the three large drives turning the telescopes failed we immediately put in the spare, and then scrambled to make sure the failed drive got repaired as soon as possible."

Nance was destined to be in astronomy. As a youngster in the 1980s he watched Halley's Comet pass over his Florida home and was hooked. He took his small telescope apart to see how it worked and put it back together. He then started to build his own telescopes.

Earning an electrical engineering degree from Florida State University, he served as an engineer in the U.S. Air Force and afterward joined the McDonald Observatory in West Texas.

Nance joined Keck in 2001. One of his first tasks was to help install the laser guide star system on Keck II. Later he took responsibility for maintenance of the Observatory's optics systems, including the coating laboratory where the mirror segments are applied with a layer of aluminum 1/1000th the width of a human hair, no less, no more. In 2009, as part of the Observatory's infrastructure renewal program, Nance, along with George Wall and Anthony Jaramillo, successfully redesigned and reconstructed the coating chamber to improve its performance.

Away from Keck, Nance can be found tinkering with three new 20-inch amateur telescopes, swinging his golf clubs on the greens of Waikoloa, and enjoying sunset vistas with his wife Laura.



Education and Outreach

Astronomy is a story of receding horizons. With each breakthrough in telescope technology, the edges of our knowledge about the cosmos dissolve and extend. The purpose of the W. M. Keck Observatory is to keep pushing back these horizons of understanding and our mission above all is to inspire a sense of wonder and curiosity for learners young and old.

To communicate the impact of astronomy and 400 years of the telescope, Keck Observatory kicked off the International Year of Astronomy with a spectacular Open House celebration. The event involved the entire Observatory staff and welcomed more than 1,800 people to the organization's Waimea campus. Throughout the day, 37 hands-on activities, exhibits and displays about science, technology and astronomy gave credence to the theme, Welcome to the Edge of Discovery. Residents of North Hawaii and from across the state and visitors all gained a better appreciation of the world-class research taking place on Hawai'i Island.

The Observatory was also proud to host a three-part lecture series called "Sharing Astronomy with Kupuna" to strengthen the connections between science and the Hawaiian culture. The 2009 Mauna Kea Lecture Series followed. For this special commemorative program held monthly in the Observatory's Hualalai Learning Theater as well as in Hilo, the directors of each of the Mauna Kea Observatories shared with audience members highlights of their particular facility and its scientific achievements. All Keck Astronomy lectures are recorded and available on the website.

Nearly 400 Island families and Hawai'i visitors got a more direct experience of the local cosmos during the first "Waimea Solar System Walk," an interactive planetary journey by foot sponsored by the Observatory in partnership with the Canada-France-Hawai'i Telescope. In addition, 30 children ages eight through 12 spent three days at the Observatory during its first-ever "Keiki Cosmic Camp" held in August 2009. Both events were organized by Keck's education and outreach team, a small group of Keck astronomers and engineers who all share a passion for education. The outreach group also led tours of the telescopes, organized star-gazing parties, and presented astronomy lessons in island schools to answer children's questions about the stars.

> "We work at the greatest observatory in the world and reaching out to the community, especially the schools, is a way to show off our discoveries and inspire future scientists and engineers," says Keck Support Astronomer Randy Campbell, a member of the outreach group.





NEW GUIDE STAR DOCENT PROGRAM LAUNCHES IN 2009

In September 2009, the Observatory launched a pilot volunteer program. Ten "Guide Stars" were selected to serve as docents for a new interactive visitor's center to educate the public about Keck Observatory and Hawai'i astronomy. With the pilot's success, the Visitor Center is open for business at Keck's Waimea headquarters Tuesday through Friday from 10 am to 2 pm.

Rosalind Butterfield Carol Davies Sue and Dick Humphries Jan Morgan Dave and Liz Sonne Jack Toigo Marcia and Stanley Wishnick

All staff members at Keck are encouraged to dedicate two percent of their work time to community service projects of their choice and a wide variety of local organizations benefit from their time and talents.

For example, Team Keck took to the track at the annual "Waimea Relay for Life" and was the top Waimea fundraiser, donating \$6,000 to the charity. In May 2009 a group of the Observatory's avid scuba divers traveled to Hilo to judge the regional "MATE" (Marine Advanced Technology Education) robotics competition. Staff also served as mentors in "GEMS" (Girls Exploring Math and Science) program, and judged school science fairs across the state, including the Parker School's eighth-grade fair which took place at Keck headquarters. Keck also welcomed island college students to learn first hand the basics of cutting edge science and technology as mentors in the Akamai Internship Program held in the summer in cooperation with the other Observatories on Mauna Kea.

Finally, at the annual Waimea Christmas Parade in December, the Keck float wowed crowds reflecting the theme of "Sharing our Blessings" with three generations of cosmic explorers: Polynesian navigators, Galileo and Keck, represented by original Hokule'a crew member Francis Lee, Keck senior engineer Jim Bell, and Keck philanthropic supporter and volunteer Jack Toigo, respectively.

> Across the world, people learned of the Observatory's current research through several quality documentaries released in 2009, including the Discovery Channel's

"Engineering the Universe: Black Holes" and the internationally distributed planetarium show "Awesome Light." New York's Moey Inc. also produced the "Welcome to Keck Observatory" documentary, along with a detailed model of the telescopes, now on permanent display at the National Academies of Science Keck Center in Washington D.C. Dr. Andrea Ghez was a featured speaker at the international ideas conference, TEDGlobal, held in Oxford, England in July and Observatory Director Dr. Taft Armandroff was featured on the SETI Institute's radio show "Are We Alone?" in September discussing the discovery of extrasolar planets and plans for the future of Keck astronomy.

The best science magazines—Nature, Science News, Sky and Telescope and Astronomy—

all highlighted Keck's scientific breakthroughs throughout the year. Cosmic Matters, Keck's in-house, electronic magazine, featured discoveries, technological

It is Keck's policy that staff dedicate two percent of their work time for community service projects.

advancements and other news, sharing these achievements with the Observatory's 3,300 Keck Nation enthusiasts.

Through this broad spectrum of outreach efforts, Keck Observatory endeavors to realize its vision of a world in which all humankind is inspired and united by the pursuit of knowledge of the infinite variety of the universe. And, although the International Year of Astronomy has ended, Keck Observatory will continue its educational efforts in 2010 and beyond.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: The Keck II laser seen from inside the telescope dome. RIGHT: To a rapt audience at the 2009 TEDGlobal conference, astronomer Andrea Ghez explains how Keck Observatory has helped advance her research. BELOW: The spiral galaxy UGC 2847, located 10 million light years from Earth in the direction of the constellation Camelopardalis, was captured in this image taken by the next generation Low Resolution Imaging Spectrograph on Keck I.



Science Bibliography

A magnificent milestone: This is the very first direct image taken of three exoplanets orbiting a young star, HR 8799, located 140 light years from Earth, captured using Keck Observatory's near-infrared adaptive optics.



The number of refereed publications per year based on data from W. M. Keck Observatory is plotted against the year of publication. Note the increase in scientific productivity with time. This growth is attributed to the cutting-edge instruments and adaptive optics systems that have been installed on the Keck telescopes over the period between first light and today.

Refereed publications FY2009

Nature

JPhCS: Journal of Physics Conference Series

NewAR: New Astronomy Review

JQSRT: Journal of Quantitative Spectroscopy and Radiative Transfer

MNRAS: Monthly Notices of the Royal Astronomical Society

Key to Publications:

A&A: Astronomy and Astrophysics AdSpR: Advances in Space Research AJ: Astronomical Journal ApJ: Astrophysical Journal ApJL: Astrophysical Journal Letters ApJS: Astrophysical Journal Supplement Series Ap&SS: Astrophysics and Space Science ARA&A: Annual Review of Astronomy and Astrophysics CoAst : Communications in Asteroseismology EM&P: Earth, Moon, and Planets Icarus

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