New Members

We've been joined by several new members since last issue. Most of them found us by browsing the web, which just shows how useful our website has become. Among them are Frank-M (for Michael) Lewecke and Ralf Schoofs, both from Germany, and Ernie Blair, (see cover) John Whatmough and William Hodgeson (USA).

REPORT ON THE PARIS MEETING
by Dr William K. Hartmann

In April this year several IAAA artists got together in Paris to discuss the future. This report by Bill Hartmann was reviewed and augmented by Arthur Woods.

General background comment:
Without being judgmental, one might say that the IAAA group on average represents more traditional art — paintings and other works inspired by astronomy and space exploration; a lot of us derived from the Rudaux/Bone illustration tradition — while the "European" group (for want of a better term), which has met several times, centered around Arthur Woods, the OURS Foundation, and Roger Malina of Leonardo Magazine, and their colleagues, on average represents somewhat more avant-garde and innovative approaches, including sculptures and other pieces designed to be flown into orbit or landed on other worlds, the medium of zero-G dance, etc.

Space Art Planning Meeting in Paris
On April 13-15, Paris was the site of a meeting that may affect the future of space art. The timing was to coincide with a larger meeting sponsored by the International Astronautical Federation (IAF) and the International Academy of Astronautics, to plan the program for their 1997 annual meeting, which will be held in Turin, Italy, and to make early plans for their 1998 meeting in Australia.

Arthur Woods, the Swiss artist and IAAA member, who has been one of the most active European supporters and promoters of space art, organized the art meeting in conjunction with Roger Malina, the US/France-based editor of Leonardo, the premier/journal on science/art relationships. Arthur, who also founded the OURS Foundation to promote space art in orbit, has been struggling for years to make exhibitions of space art a standard part of each annual meeting of the IAF.

A number of IAAA members participated in the show Arthur organized the 1992 Space Commerce Conference and Exhibition in Montreux, Switzerland.

At an initial meeting at the Malina family home in Paris, we discussed projects and ideas among an international group with a number of IAAA ties. Like one of the classic Paris salons, the home was fascinating: Roger's father is credited as being the inventor of kinetic art, and the walls hung with internally illuminated works, in which patterns of ever-cycling light patterns swirled behind our discussions. Among participants: Arthur, Roger, and myself; (and in alphabetical order) Michael Böhme, Germany, who participated in the IAAA Tenerife workshop; Annick Bureaud and Joel Boutteville, Paris, exhibition organizers who have been attempting to organize a large space exhibit in France; Richard Clar, California, who has carried out experiments with dance in weightlessness in the French zero-G aircraft; Jean-Marc Philippe, a French artist who has proposed a Mars sculpture project; Claudine Varesi, Swiss visionary artist who participated in the Montreux show; and others.

Turin Meeting
Arthur and Roger then negotiated with the IAF that there would be a pre-announced exhibit at the Turin meeting and made progress in getting such exhibits included as an official part of each future meeting planning procedures. Arthur and Roger also selected the program for papers to be presented in Turin; this program and abstracts will on the Ars Astronautical web site: www.spaceart.net.

If progress continues in this direction, there may routinely be an annual, large space art exhibit in an international forum attended by space professionals including larger aerospace company personnel, space technicians, and astronautics enthusiasts. Attendance is usually 1200-1500. The goal would be that after a few annual meetings with exhibits, attendees would come looking forward to the exhibits, with an idea of purchasing work.

Arthur himself has organized a number of such exhibitions at these meetings, but emphasizes the huge expense of time and money, when one artists takes it on his/her own shoulders. If the organization itself would take on the commitment to support a show each year, it would make the whole thing more practical.
Artists' Profiles

As promised on last issue's cover, for which he provided the illus, the first blog this time is of

John Plot
Actually, I'm originally from Liverpool, England. I grew up in the early sixties with a love of all things to do with space, both fact and fiction. During the American/Russian space race I followed all the missions and dreamed of being an astronaut (like most of us space buffs I guess). Drawing and painting has also been a long-time love of mine so it was only natural that I combined my two greatest interests.

However it was not until I came to Canada in the eighties that I began to take my artwork more seriously. In 1989 I was prompted by a friend to enter some of my science fiction and astronomical paintings into a Star Trek convention in Toronto. Imagine my surprise when I not only sold several of them but won awards as well. From there I was encouraged to do more shows and try my hand at the commercial art market. I'm still fairly new to this area but I've done some small magazine illustration, game book cover work, a Star Trek poster, and various other paid gigs.

I also do quite well at the S/F cons ( 52 awards so far) and I've had several paintings sell at the Space Memorabilia Auction in Beverly Hills CA. My biggest thrill so far was meeting Buzz Aldrin at one of the Space Development Conferences a couple years ago. He was quite complimentary about my work and even requested one of my photo-prints. For a lad from Liverpool this was a real kick for me I can tell you. He also owns one of my original paintings as well. My hope is to establish myself in the Space art market, maybe even make a living at it, you never know!

Martin Dexter
I am a 39 year-old self-taught watercolourist, a joiner by trade but now a Gallery Technician at Manchester Metropolitan University. Most of my work is done at home and I am very much a self-taught artist. I have a degree in Fine Art from the University of Manchester and have been painting seriously for two years now. Up until the end of 1996 I painted landscapes, with a 'jet phase' [planes]. At this time I started to paint fantasy and was very pleased to sell my first three very encouraging!

All my life I have really admired astronomical and fantasy arts and am very enthusiastic/excited and serious in pursuing this line of work. So you can see that I am at the very start of my astro art paintings. Since showing my work two years ago at a Canal Festival Craft Fair (here I was approached by the Curator of Tameside Galleries for a show in 1996) I have done pretty well, with numerous commissions.

I had a one-man show of 93 paintings in June of 1996, which was a fantastic success for me. I am also a Companion of the International Guild of Artists, in which I put six pieces of work four times a year at Ildleby; here I have been 'highly commended' and my jet paintings won a prize.

I'm sure you can see that I take my painting very seriously, and I hope that one day I will be able to do this full-time.

Lynette Cook
My interest in art started as a child when I began painting birds, mushrooms, and flowers on smooth stones collected on a family vacation to Lake Michigan. I sold a number of these in the Illinois County Fair, which gave me both some income and a sense of pride in my work. I started taking art classes in high school, but I also enjoyed music and biology and had some difficulty choosing among them.

I started college at the University of Minnesota, but switched majors after a couple years to become a fine artist. I have done some small magazine illustration, game book cover work, and various other paid gigs.

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Don Durda

Time to introduce myself to the rest of the IAAA. I come to space art from the world of planetary science. I am a Research Associate at the University of Arizona's Lunar and Planetary Laboratory, where I study the collisional and dynamical evolution of asteroids. If it has to do with rocks in space, I'm interested! As a Galileo Solid State Imaging Team Associate, I've been very fortunate to be involved in interpreting the first images of asteroids (Gaspra and Ida) returned by spacecraft. With NEAR on its way and Deep Space One in the works, there are a lot of good images yet to come!

I have been interested in things scientific since my earliest days. My parents were always very supportive of my interests and kept a steady supply of books and other materials around for me to gobble up. I gave my first scientific lecture in the first grade when my teacher (probably tired of me!) sent me to the sixth grade classroom to talk to them about dinosaurs! I remember about that time hearing that you could see the moons of Jupiter with binoculars, so, with my father's encouragement, many of you (unbeknownst to you) provided much inspiration, and here I am. I have sold some of my originals, I've had pieces exhibited in several shows, and I've had works published in Sky & Telescope, The Planetary Report, Final Frontier, and Alan Hale's book Everybody's Comet.

And I have all of you to thank for bringing me into the world of art. It literally has changed the way I look at the world. I've been fortunate enough to meet some of you in person now and I want to remind us all of how fortunate we are to be a part of the IAAA — you all are some of the nicest people I've ever met!

When I'm not doing planetary science or teaching, I'm usually either flying or scuba diving. I've been for the past five years in the military and now am about a third of the way through training for my instrument rating. I always wanted to learn to fly and was finally able to afford to start last year. Just as fun as I always knew it would be! The only place I'd rather be than underwater is the cockpit.

Flying and diving

When I was in graduate school in Gainesville, Florida, I talked a friend of mine into learning to scuba dive so I would have someone to dive with (sneaky, I know, but it worked!). Northern Florida is one of the top three sites in the world for cave diving, and we both love to learn and explore, so we eventually worked our way up to full cave certification. I wish I could take you all down there to see the incredible blues and greens filtering through the crystal clear water into the cave! Blue has always been my favorite color — I think my diving experiences have only re-enforced that. Hmmm, probably why all my paintings are blue...

Jerry Armstrong

About myself, let's see, I really don't know where to begin. I've been interested in astronomy for as long as I can remember. Currently I'm serving in my third year as the Vice President of the Northern Michigan Astronomy Club (over 25 members). My job is to secure speakers for our organization, and they felt that with all the astronomers both professional and amateur alike that I knew I might be able to do a decent job. I suppose they like what I'm doing for as I've told you in my third year, but on the other hand maybe one else wants the job!

I am a self-taught painter, no schooling, just hard knocks. I have one painting that is readily accessible to the general public for viewing. That is the one that appears in David Levy's book Impact Jupiter and it is of the comet P/Shoemaker-Levy 9. Mine and Jim Scott's appear on the same page.

I'm 48 years old, Judy is my better half and I have five kids ages 3 to 25. My main interest in astronomy concerns comets and asteroids. Currently I have observed 170 comets and over 500 asteroids. The Earth Approach Objects intrigue me the most. Most of my art deals with comets and I try to depict them as faithfully as possible. Of course I do take the liberty to use artistic licence occasionally in order to get across an idea.

The project that I am working on now is to go back and re-create comets of the past before the advent of photography. We can re-create dinosaurs from the fossil record so why not do the same for comets. We have at our disposal a fossil record of sorts. The woodcuts, fanciful drawings, and broadsides, plus verbal descriptions all help in doing this. There have been some truly great comets in the past and I wish to illustrate these to the same scale along with a recent comet such as Hyakutake or Hale-Bopp for comparison. Some surprises are in store for all of you who paint these paintings. The medium is oils and brushes only.

Jerry Armstrong is probably the only member who has discovered a supernova — in M51, the 'Whirlpool Galaxy' — in 1994. In a later issue I'll print the story of this discovery. Meanwhile...

EXHIBITION OF ASTRO PHOTOS

David Main - UK Exhibition. Sponsored by The British Council:

16 June - 23 July 1998 Exploratory Science Centre, Temple Meads, Bristol
27 July - 23 August Ormeau Baths Gallery, 13 Ormeau Avenue, Belfast
7-12 September Leeds University
October-December Liverpool Museum and Planetarium

There's Hope for Space Art!

A note from Lynnette Cook

My recent experience in Oregon at the Mt. Hood Community College gives me hope for space art. Last week as I packed up my art to bring it back home I was told by both the Associate Dean and his assistant that my exhibit had been one of the College's most popular shows. This is in terms of the number of people (public, instructors, and students) who went to see it as well as the response to my gallery talk.

There were a little over 100 people at the talk, mostly art and astronomy students, but also some people not associated with the college. I was delighted to meet IAAA member Joy Day and another illustrator named Cindy Shaw who came from southeastern Washington. Additionally, the Oregonian (the Portland newspaper) did a very nice article about me with color reproductions of some of my art work.

I admitted to the woman I'd worked with setting up my show that I hadn't known what to expect when I sent my slides in for consideration: that many people view illustration and fine art differently. Her response, "Your work is exactly what colleges up here want to see." Surprising, isn't it? She said they might want me back up there in a couple years once the student body changes.

Even though space art remains something of a "black sheep" in the community, I do think there's hope. There are at least some people out there who are very receptive and appreciative of what we IAAA-ers do.

And speaking of Portland... Just in case anyone has missed it (lost mail, or whatever), the next major IAAA Workshop is being held from 10 - 14 August 1998 at Mt. St. Helens: "three full days of hiking and sketching amazing volcanic destruction and debris fields, beautiful canyons, cliffs and craters." A number of members have already signed up, including two British (not me, sad!) and the cost is only $20 per person, plus your individual travel and food expenses.

Contact Joy Day, P.O.Box 272, Dundee OR 97115, USA; phone (503)538-1617; e-mail joydayart@aol.com, by 26 July (but don't leave it that late).
How to sell your art

Mailing Lists - the Key to Success
by Kim Poor

No matter where you sell your works, the MOST IMPORTANT thing in your art career will be to establish and maintain a mailing list. This is so basic as to be unmentionable, yet so many artists don't or won't, and so it bears a discussion.

It's especially important to maintain a list of real buyers, that is, people who have actually purchased your work. However, you should also maintain a list of interested prospects. You will always have more prospects than buyers. Anyone you talk to at length or give a business card to are prospects.

Take care of your real buyers and never lose touch. If at all possible, codify your prospects until you're convinced they're never going to buy. Give them a few years. Everyone goes through cycles of good and bad times, and allow for that.

At shows and exhibits, I put out a legal pad that says "MAILING LIST," and watch people sign it. I use a secret code to mark beside the name depending on prospectability (is that a word?) Sometimes a person will come into my booth, make a beeline for the mailing list, sign it, never look at my art or even speak to me. These are lonely people who just want mail. I just delete them, or never put them on the computer. Sometimes at a busy show, too many people are signing the list. In that case I put it away, and just ask people who seem interested if they'd like to receive an invitation to my next show. Then I'll pull it out for them to sign.

A trick: "seed" your list with a couple of fake names to get things started. People hate to be the first to sign a blank list.

A must: keep your mailing list "well groomed"; that is, make sure the addresses are always good. 20% of any list will move away every year, so a list must be constantly groomed or it will completely deteriorate. Typically you will want to maintain contact with prospects and clients more than they will feel the same need to contact you. Artists move too, so you've got two "moving" targets.

A forwarding address for your mail carrier is only good for six months, and in reality sometimes less.

Here's another trick: mail to the address at least every four-five months. A Christmas card, birthday card, or better yet, announcements of exhibits, shows, or new works, and if the customer or prospect has moved, it will be forwarded (if the customer has left a forwarding address and it's still good) BUT in order to receive any new address yourself, you must do this: add the words

address correction requested forwarding postage guaranteed

on the envelope or postcard. Have it printed on your business envelope, or make it a rubber stamp. This will make sure the postal service gives you the new address, and forwards the piece. It will cost you 50 cents [US] for each address correction, but it will also make sure you receive a hard copy of the current address. Don't count on the customer to keep you informed of their whereabouts. It happens, but seldom.

Again, the address correction will only work if there's been a forwarding address filed by the customer, and for only six months. So mail often enough.

Computers are made for mailing lists

This is where a computer comes in handy. When your list is only a couple of hundred people, you can keep it on 3x5 cards and hand address everything. Alternatively, you can type up a master set of 8 1/2x11 sheets of labels and white-out any address corrections. Simply copy the labels at a quick-copy store when you need to mail.

However, even an old, slow computer and a basic database program will save an incredible amount of time. Each piece of data (Last name, zip code, purchases, etc.) is put into a separate "field" and the database is sortable on any or a combination of fields. You can easily pull out all big-spenders in a certain city, whereas it might take a while to do that with 3x5 cards. If you have the data, you can find all left-handed suntans in Cincinnati with the letter "D" in their names.

Here are the fields that are most useful:

Name & address, of course, everywhere in a separate field
Source data - when was this person signed up?
Source where did you find this person?
Telephone, fax
Amount purchased (in some database program you may have to add this up yourself)
Date of last purchase
What was purchased
E-mail address
Purchase Profile - active, inactive, originals, prints, etc.
Comments (colors preferred, birthday, wife's husband's name, any detail)

Once you get a large enough mailing list, work it. If you're having an exhibit or show, send an announcement to this list. I give my list patrons 10% off if they come to the show. Only about 5% ever show up, but this is more than enough to pay for the mailing, make some money, and even those invitees that don't show up will know you're still alive and painting. Black and white postcards are inexpensive and good for announcements like this. Put one of your new images on the postcard.

If you become agoraphobic and decide to sever all public appearances to sell strictly through a gallery, you are more likely to be accepted if you have a viable mailing list. Galleries often care less about your quality than your following.

A mailing list or database is the key to marketing anything. In big business, mailing lists are bought, sold, rented, and traded. Everything that is known about your buying preferences, habits, income, credit history, etc. is in some computer somewhere (usually at Visa and Mastercard).

Those of you who know my 'Bhen' (the benevolent BRM series of covers for F&SF - ten at the last count - will be aware that I have no objection to a bit of humour in space art!

So this slide of "Messier 110 or NGC 3993" by Arthur C. Clarke appealed to me. Arthur says that "it's of course a parody" as there are no such nebulae. He has been painting astro subjects for two years, and has an 8-inch Dobsonian telescope which serves as a "talking off point for his work."