

From: WARDLE1@BINAH.CC.BRANDEIS.EDU
To: abridle@nrao.edu, acr@astro.caltech.edu
Cc: t.v.cawthorne@uclan.ac.uk
Subject: Peter Scheuer
Date: Wed, 28 Aug 1996 14:14:04 -0500 (EST)

Dear Alan and Tony,

While I was an sabattical this past spring and summer at the real Cambridge, I visited Tim Cawthorne and he had the following idea. Peter Scheuer is going to retire in the next year or two, and we both consider him to be grossly under-recognised for the enormous contributions he has made to our field. Tim thought it would be highly appropriate to try and nominate him for a prize, and I concur.

The latest AAS newsletter contains requests for prize nominations, and the only one that seems to fit the bill is the Heineman prize. Tim suggested that I canvass both of you to see if you would like to join in the process.

At this point I am just asking if you think this is a good idea? If so, would you be prepared to write supporting letters, and who else might we ask to do likewise?

best wishes

john

From: Tony Readhead <acr@astro.caltech.edu>
To: WARDLE1@binah.cc.brandeis.edu
Cc: abridle@nrao.edu, t.v.cawthorne@uclan.ac.uk,
Tony Readhead <acr@deimos.caltech.edu>
Subject: Re: Peter Scheuer
Date: Wed, 28 Aug 1996 12:27:20 -0700 (PDT)

Dear John,

I wholeheartedly agree that Peter should have received more recognition for the many important ideas and the important work that he has contributed to astronomy. It would be a real shame for Peter to retire without some acknowledgement of these. Is it not possible to have some sort of "fest" for Peter - say like the one we held for Marshall at Big Bear? Might you be able to arrange something along those lines Tim (it really ought to be in the UK)? I think a small conference or workshop in Peter's honour which produced a volume would be the best way of thanking him. However, this takes time and a little money - I would guess ~\$2,000. I would certainly attend such a workshop, as would many others, and we could pay our own expenses.

As far as the Heinemann Prize is concerned - I don't have a list of the prizewinners, but from those I can remember they were generally better known than Peter in the US. So I think this is a bit of a long shot. What about the gold medal of the RAS? Althea Wilkinson used to be on the selection committee so I could ask her what she thinks Peter's chances might be. I'd like to hear your views on this.

Definitely a good idea to do something - thanks for bringing it up John.

Cheers,

Tony

From: BINAH::WARDLE1 28-AUG-1996 15:49:34.59
To: IN%"acr@astro.caltech.edu"
CC: IN%"abridle@nrao",IN%"t.v.cawthorne@uclan.ac.uk",WARDLE1
Subj: RE: Peter Scheuer

Dear Tony,

Yes, I had been wondering about that. There is a list on p13 of the current AAS directory, and the only non-US winners have been Martin Rees and Bohdan Paczynski. There are several honors the RAS can bestow, and it would be great if you got in touch with Anthea Wilkinson about that. I also think a Marshall-like fest would be absolutely wonderful. THAT book still makes some of the best reading available. It would be a tremendous amount of work, but perhaps one could cobble together some funds between Cambridge/NATO/EC etc. All of this, of course, will probably embarrass Peter to death.

cheers

From: abridle (Alan Bridle)
To: WARDLE1@BINAH.CC.BRANDEIS.EDU
Subject: Re: Peter Scheuer
Date: Thu, 29 Aug 1996 11:37:30 -0400

WARDLE1@binah.cc.brandeis.edu writes:

> Dear Alan and Tony,
>
> While I was an sabattical this past spring and summer at the real Cambridge,
> I visited Tim Cawthorne and he had the following idea. Peter Scheuer is going
> to retire in the next year or two, and we both consider him to be grossly
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> The latest AAS newsletter contains requests for prize nominations, and the
> only one that seems to fit the bill is the Heineman prize. Tim suggested
> that I canvass both of you to see if you would like to join in the process.
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> At this point I am just asking if you think this is a good idea? If
> so, would you be prepared to write supporting letters, and who else might
> we ask to do likewise?
>

I agree with you that Peter is enormously under-recognised outside those folks who have spent some time with him in person, either in meetings or as collaborators. Working more closely with him in recent years has been an unexpected bonus for me, and I would certainly be willing to lobby on behalf of an award for him.

But I was on the Heineman prize committee for three years and as a result I'm a little dubious about its suitability here. When the prize was established, it was meant to be a "mid-career" award, though there were no explicit age restrictions; I recall the committee having some difficulty with this, as it implied foresight as to how long a career someone might be expected to have!

The current brief description of the award in the AAS Directory makes no mention of this, but I think we might have an uphill struggle as bunch of ex-pat anglos nominating someone whose career has been based in Britain and who is about to retire.

I think many of Peter's colleagues in the U.S. might be willing to support a nomination, but it's maybe just enough off-target for the original intention of the Heineman to hand the committee a bit of a dilemma. And committees do tend to drop dilemmas off to the side: it's entirely up to them and they can (and do) make their own nominations if they feel uncomfortable with those "from the field". Our likelihood of success might depend rather critically on whether one or two members of the committee know Peter well.

It would be worth asking Ken Kellermann, as former Warner prizewinner, to support a nomination if we do make one. But it might be more appropriate to try to start a movement for some recognition of Peter's career by the RAS. Perhaps Robert Laing or Jas Wall would have some ideas there?

A.

From: Robert Laing <rl@ast.cam.ac.uk>
To: WARDLE1@BINAH.CC.BRANDEIS.EDU
Cc: Alan Bridle <abridle@polaris.cv.nrao.edu>,
Tony Readhead <acr@deimos.caltech.edu>,
Tim Cawthorne <tvc@star.uclan.ac.uk>, Jasper Wall <jvw@ast.cam.ac.uk>
Subject: Re: Peter Scheuer
Date: Fri, 30 Aug 1996 11:42:46 +0100 (BST)

Dear John

I absolutely agree about recognition. I got as far as suggesting it for next year's Herstmonceux Conference, but unfortunately the topic had already been chosen.

I defer to those of you in the US about the AAS prizes. The best person to contact from various points of view in the UK is Malcolm Longair (President of the RAS, former student, and current MRAO). I'll see if I can get hold of him by phone, if not will e-mail. He will also know if anything is in the wind over the road.

On a practical note about conferences in Cambridge: college accommodation is probably booked solid for next summer by now.

Great idea, though.

Robert

P.S. Not sure whether Jas will get this - he's in Baltimore for a conference until ~now; then on holiday for 2 weeks.

From: Robert Laing <rl@ast.cam.ac.uk>
To: John Wardle <wardle1@binah.cc.brandeis.edu>,
Alan Bridle <abridle@polaris.cv.nrao.edu>,
Tim Cawthorne <tvc@star.uclan.ac.uk>,
Tony Readhead <acr@deimos.caltech.edu>,
Jasper Wall <jvw@ast.cam.ac.uk>
Subject: RAS Awards
Date: Fri, 30 Aug 1996 12:20:32 +0100 (BST)

The RAS has an Awards Committee, of which the current chair is Jocelyn Bell-Burnell. This is presumably the first stop for nominations.

Robert

From: Robert Laing <rl@ast.cam.ac.uk>
To: WARDLE1@BINAH.CC.BRANDEIS.EDU
Cc: Alan Bridle <abridle@polaris.cv.nrao.edu>,
Tim Cawthorne <tvc@star.uclan.ac.uk>,
Tony Readhead <acr@deimos.caltech.edu>
Subject: Re: Peter Scheuer
Date: Tue, 3 Sep 1996 17:18:20 +0100 (BST)

I have now spoken to Malcolm Longair. He also believes that Peter retires in October 1997 (but will check this). He is not aware of anything planned at MRAO, but will also check with John Baldwin.

He was guarded about the possibility of RAS prizes - I got the impression that he didn't expect success - but enthusiastic about a meeting.

I think that there is no chance of organizing a meeting in Cambridge during Summer 1997, unless participants want to stay in cardboard boxes on Parker's Piece. The Christmas vacation is possible, I suppose. I could almost certainly get the Herstmonceux Conference slot for 1998 (assuming that I and the RGO are still here). There is probably no requirement for it to be held during the summer vacation, other than people's disinclination to come to Cambridge in January (how are US university people placed?)

I'd be happy to take the lead on this (step 1 being to talk to Peter). Is the world ready for another meeting on jets, or should we try to broaden things somewhat?

Robert

From: Tony Readhead <acr@astro.caltech.edu>
To: Robert Laing <rl@ast.cam.ac.uk>
Cc: WARDLE1@binah.cc.brandeis.edu, Alan Bridle <abridle@polaris.cv.nrao.edu>,
Tim Cawthorne <tvc@star.uclan.ac.uk>,
Tony Readhead <acr@deimos.caltech.edu>
Subject: Re: Peter Scheuer
Date: Tue, 3 Sep 1996 10:32:03 -0700 (PDT)

Dear Robert,

Herstmonceux in January '98 may be fine, but I would suggest something like what was done for Hanbury Brown about ten years ago. Jas Wall organized that as far as I remember. A fairly succesful attempt was made to cover the areas that he had influenced (see the memorial volume). In that case various pundits were asked to review the latest developments in their areas (this was HB's request - he wanted the future, not history - and I'm sure that Peter would prefer that too).

The areas to be covered could include, but not be limited to (with some suggested possible pundits in brackets):

Number flux counts (Jas Wall/John Peacock)

Supernovae (David Green/Steve Gull)

Cosmological Evolution of radio sources (Malcolm Longair/Jas Wall)

Large-scale Jets (Robert Laing/Alan Bridle)

Small-scale jets (Peter Wilkinson/Mark Reid)

Superluminal sources (Marshall Cohen/Toni Zensus)

Numerical Simulations (Mike Norman/Steve Gull)

etc.

It would be particularly nice if we could try to get as many as possible of Peter's research students to attend - and - for those still active in astronomy - to talk.

Cheers,

Tony

From: Robert Laing <rl@ast.cam.ac.uk>
To: Tony Readhead <acr@astro.caltech.edu>
Cc: WARDLE1@binah.cc.brandeis.edu, Alan Bridle <abridle@polaris.cv.nrao.edu>,
Tim Cawthorne <tvc@star.uclan.ac.uk>,
Tony Readhead <acr@deimos.caltech.edu>
Subject: Re: Peter Scheuer
Date: Tue, 3 Sep 1996 20:52:56 +0100 (BST)

Just to avoid any confusion: Herstmonceux Conferences are (currently) held in Cambridge. The early ones were held in April; there is also a precedent for January; recent ones have been in the summer. I will investigate the funding situation, as it may be unwise to have two conferences in the same financial year. They are joint RGO/Cambridge U affairs, but so far MRAO has not been involved very much; it would be good to change this anyway.

I am basically in agreement with Tony over the format, although I would want to keep the meeting a bit more focused (the HB meeting was obviously good at the time, but I'm not sure how valuable the proceedings have been - I defer to Tony's views since he was there, and I only got to half a day; likewise the meeting in honour of Leon Mestel, published as Cosmical Magnetism). The Cohen meeting managed the best of both worlds by being a focused scientific meeting and a celebration. So, I might suggest making particle acceleration rather than SN a major topic, especially as this subject has been underplayed at recent meetings and perhaps also introducing a more theoretical bias.

Is everybody in agreement that I should approach Peter, if indeed it turns out that he does retire in 1997? And can anyone suggest any persuasive arguments to overcome his natural embarrassment?

Regards, Robert

From: abridle (Alan Bridle)
To: Robert Laing <rl@ast.cam.ac.uk>
Subject: Re: Peter Scheuer
Date: Tue, 3 Sep 1996 16:24:49 -0400

Robert Laing writes:

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- > in Cambridge. The early ones were held in April; there is also a
- > precedent for January; recent ones have been in the summer. I will
- > investigate the funding situation, as it may be unwise to have two
- > conferences in the same financial year. They are joint RGO/Cambridge U
- > affairs, but so far MRAO has not been involved very much; it would be good
- > to change this anyway.

I think April would be better than January for most people.

- >
- > I am basically in agreement with Tony over the format, although I would
- > want to keep the meeting a bit more focused (the HB meeting was obviously
- > good at the time, but I'm not sure how valuable the proceedings have been

I think the principle of a forward-looking meeting covering areas that Peter has worked, and inviting as many of his past students as possible, is excellent.

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- > day; likewise the meeting in honour of Leon Mestel, published as Cosmical
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- > particle acceleration rather than SN a major topic, especially as this
- > subject has been underplayed at recent meetings and perhaps also
- > introducing a more theoretical bias.
- >

One might generalize to plasma astrophysics in fact. he has also had a special interest in hot spots.

- > Is everybody in agreement that I should approach Peter, if indeed it turns
- > out that he does retire in 1997? And can anyone suggest any persuasive
- > arguments to overcome his natural embarrassment?
- >

I guess the main thing is simply to establish that if a meeting is arranged in his honor, he won't be too embarrassed to come!

Perhaps one tack would be not to ask but to assert that you want to organize a Herstmonceux conference around this topic list. And confine the asking part to whether he'd be scared away if it's publicly dedicated to honoring his retirement? That way he's presented with the conference on his doorstep anyway and can figure in into his plans. So long as he'd agree to be there, the scale on which it is dedicated to him could be adjusted to suit as his reaction emerges.

A.

From: Robert Laing <rl@ast.cam.ac.uk>
To: Alan Bridle <abridle@polaris.cv.n.a.o.edu>,
Tony Readhead <acr@deimos.caltech.edu>,
John Wardle <wardle1@binah.cc.brandeis.edu>,
Tim Cawthorne <tvc@star.uclan.ac.uk>, Jasper Wall <jvw@ast.cam.ac.uk>
Subject: PAGS
Date: Thu, 5 Sep 1996 17:07:02 +0100 (BST)

I have now confirmed that Peter retires on or about Sept 30 1997 (as does John Shakeshaft, incidentally). As a number of you have pointed out, persuading Peter to allow his name to be attached to a meeting will be tricky. Malcolm Longair and John Baldwin have promised to help, and I have provisionally arranged to draft something and run over it with Malcolm in a couple of weeks time.

There should be no problem getting the 1998 Herstmonceux Conference slot. IoA have access to some EU funds for European astronomers; we are willing to put in up to 5k pounds and I hope that the Cavendish will waive the lecture room charges (they didn't this year). The Easter vacation is possible; otherwise it will have to be the summer (it really has to be in the financial year starting April 1 1998). So logistics should be straightforward.

Regards, Robert

From: abridle (Alan Bridle)
To: Robert Laing <rl@ast.cam.ac.uk>
Subject: Re: PAGS
Date: Thu, 5 Sep 1996 15:48:26 -0400

Robert Laing writes:

- > I have now confirmed that Peter retires on or about Sept 30 1997 (as does
- > John Shakeshaft, incidentally). As a number of you have pointed out,
- > persuading Peter to allow his name to be attached to a meeting will be
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- > possible; otherwise it will have to be the summer (it really has to be in
- > the financial year starting April 1 1998). So logistics should be
- > straightforward.
- >

Sounds good, hope P doesn't veto it now!

A.

From: Jasper Wall <jvw@ast.cam.ac.uk>
To: Robert Laing <rl@ast.cam.ac.uk>
Cc: Alan Bridle <abridle@polaris.cv.nrao.edu>,
Tony Readhead <acr@deimos.caltech.edu>,
John Wardle <wardle1@binah.cc.brandeis.edu>,
Tim Cawthorne <tvc@star.uclan.ac.uk>
Subject: Re: PAGS
Date: Thu, 5 Sep 1996 21:09:44 +0100 (BST)

Robert,

Apologies for having contributed nothing to this issue to now.

I am delighted that there is a move to recognize Peter's amazing contributions; long overdue, but we're here and it's now.

I have some first-hand knowledge of how the RAS awards work. There is a backlog for the Gold Medal, the medal for lifetime's work - I am not optimistic that we would get anywhere with a nomination for Peter. The Eddington medal is awarded for specific discoveries or pieces of work, and nomination needs to be timely, ie not too many years afterwards. Rel jets and unified models? This might be a possibility. I would be happy to draft something if it was deemed to be a good idea.

Have you bid for the 1998 Hx Conf to Max Pettini, Robert? I know that 1997 is decided; sometimes they are decided two years hence. Unless it has been decided already - which I think unlikely as I certainly haven't been asked - it seems a great idea to me. As you say, getting Peter to agree might be the hardest part.

Cheers,
Jas

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