

**Minutes for Fermi Users Group Meeting
November 4, 2009, face-to-face at Fermi Symposium**

In attendance:

FUG Members: Matthew Baring, Don Kniffen, Alan Marscher, Scott Ransom, Luigi Piro

Others: Julie McEnery, Peter Michaelson, Chris Shrader, Bill Paciesas, Lynn Cominsky, Steve Ritz, Elizabeth Ferrara

Alan: Purpose of these telecons and meetings in between the main, face-to-face meetings is to see if there is a handful of issues where advice from the FUG would be useful.

Julie: Follow-up from last meeting.

1) Plans to change to 50 deg rocking angle. Observatory response is spectacular. Operating stably. Small decreases in pressure, but this has stabilized the battery. Battery group monitoring performance. Meeting Friday to see how things stand. Will continue to look to see if there is a way to optimize performance.

2) Cycle 2 GI grants. Had to split funds cross FY boundary. Email sent to those affected. NASA is currently operating under a continuing resolution. There is very little FY10 money at this point, only critical disbursements. Expressed concern to HQ. They will give a large fraction of Cycle 2 funds in the next week. We will get money to remaining GIs by the end of November. We will end up in the same situation next year. HQ agreed that by FY 11 we will get back in phase.

Chris: Words will go in the solicitation letters stating this may happen.

Peter: Can we just do this incrementally?

Julie: We asked who really needed the money. At NASA centers they actually do want the delay.

Chris: NRA is out on the streets. Implemented language changes we discussed at the FUG meeting on August 28. Deadline is 1 month earlier. Makes the job easier for review process and getting grants ready.

Data has been released. Has gone very smoothly. Software was released in tandem. Seems to be going well. 1/2 dozen helpdesk questions/day, mostly growing pains. Starting to get evidence people are delving more deeply into the data. Next release will be in the Dec/Jan time frame. Implement fixes well before prop deadline.

Had a hands-on analysis workshop at Goddard. Sent an email querying future locations. About 20 responses. Currently for those who are just learning to use the tools. That will change over time and we'll go more deeply.

Julie: A lot of the time was spent with people working and the staff circulating to answer questions 1-on-1.

Chris: We're thinking of doing 3 more very soon. Want them to occur as far as possible in

advance of the proposal deadline. East/West coasts and Midwest.

Bill: India workshop?

Julie: Neil Gehrels is working that. Another in Australia, not directly associated with the FSSC.

Steve: Workshop on the web?

Chris: Yes, desire was to do a few in person, and then try some on the web.

Julie: May work well for general workshop, but not good for more detailed analysis.

Steve: Could record one of the workshops.

Julie: Ratio of presentations to hands-on is very small.

Steve: We should try to increase the proposal pressure. Anything this group can do to get the word out would be helpful. Have the workshops earlier. Also, kudos for getting this out. We're months past the data release and it's not crazy. That's great.

Lynn: What is the plan for AAS? Booth is perfect opportunity to reach 3000 people.

Chris: Yes plan to have a booth there.

Chris: Recruiting a replacement for David. Job just closed. Half a dozen applicants a week before the deadline. Some strong candidates.

Lynn: Hard to keep up with HQ changes. Under previous administrator, main interest was in future NASA engineers. Now more generalized. Putting together an online workshop next week. Two press events this week. Teacher's workshops last week. Been very active.

Peter: How much is the Science on a Sphere?

Steve: Can't have been that expensive.

Lynn: Don't know, but it was amazingly effective with the teachers.

Peter: We should see about getting a semi-permanent installation at Air and Space museum. They have all kinds of rules, but it's worth putting some effort in.

Julie: I had a meeting with them...it was encouraging.

Steve: It seems to start and stop.

Lynn: Museum exhibits are usually several million dollars.

Peter: Perhaps some private donors could be found.

Question: How many people at the Fermi Symposium?

Lynn: 420 registered as of Tuesday.

Steve: Proposal funding.

Peter: Is there a sense of how far the proposal pressure is under the expected rate?

Alan: 40% success rate. Usually ~25%.

Chris: 200 proposals, 80 funded.

Julie: Heard several people say they didn't want to do something because they assumed the instrument team was already doing it. Now they will know what the instrument team is doing.

Peter: We need to start waving the flag.

Steve: At AAS.

Chris: Last time we were a week separated from Chandra. That's one reason we moved the deadline.

Alan: There is confusion in AGN community for what the LAT team will produce.

Peter: Foreign proposers cannot get funding anyway, so they have no reason to write a proposal.

Alan: Exactly what the LAT team is going to produce needs to be communicated to the community.

Peter: Need to tell them what we are obligated to do.

Julie: Need to make clear that the ASP light curves are not the best analysis.

Alan: Rumor is that there's no point doing a light curve themselves because the LAT team will do it. I know it's wrong, but...

Peter: Last time, there was an undersubscription for NOAO time. Is there a lack of awareness?

Julie: I suspect a lot of these people already have time at other observatories.

Action item: have Julie/Chris and Buell write something to go into the NRAO/NOAO newsletters.

Steve: HEAD meeting special session on Fermi catalog. 90 min session. How to use that? Solicit/allow/contributed to the session?

Luigi: If you want to engage the community, you should allow them, even for a short period.

Julie: 15 min for LAT catalog, 15 min for GBM, rest for other wavelengths. Should we see what emerges from contributions or solicit topics?

Matthew: See what comes in and then pick.

Steve: So don't define the session?

Peter: We should make that an option. We're allowed to solicit invited talks after the deadline?

Don: Who will do the selecting?

Steve: My name is down as the organizer.

Don: It would be good if Alan were a part of that.

Steve: I agree

Luigi : A number of users who want to collaborate with the team. We need to clarify the rules of the team.

Peter: Reasonable request. We'll talk later.

Steve: People need to come to us and we can work that out. Don't want to state publicly to try to define that for the outside world. If someone is interested in collaborating they should talk with Peter.

Luigi : Last burst is giving us so much because we released the data so quickly after the burst. If you can tune the trigger time window for the LAT.

Julie: We look at the burst data on the ground and see if there's a way to detect that on board. Just not sensitive to many of these bursts. They're found later in ground analysis.

Alan: As a user, the missing factor was getting upper limits. It seems to be hard. Some statement should be made.

Julie: Code is there. Next version of the tools will contain a helper library to make python more accessible. Need to update the documentation to make that clearer.

Alan: Next meeting in February. Will have to coordinate the actual date by email.