

The background is a deep space image featuring a dense field of stars and a prominent galaxy with purple and blue hues. Two bright, multi-pointed starburst patterns are positioned on the left and right sides of the image.

SpaceFest 2026

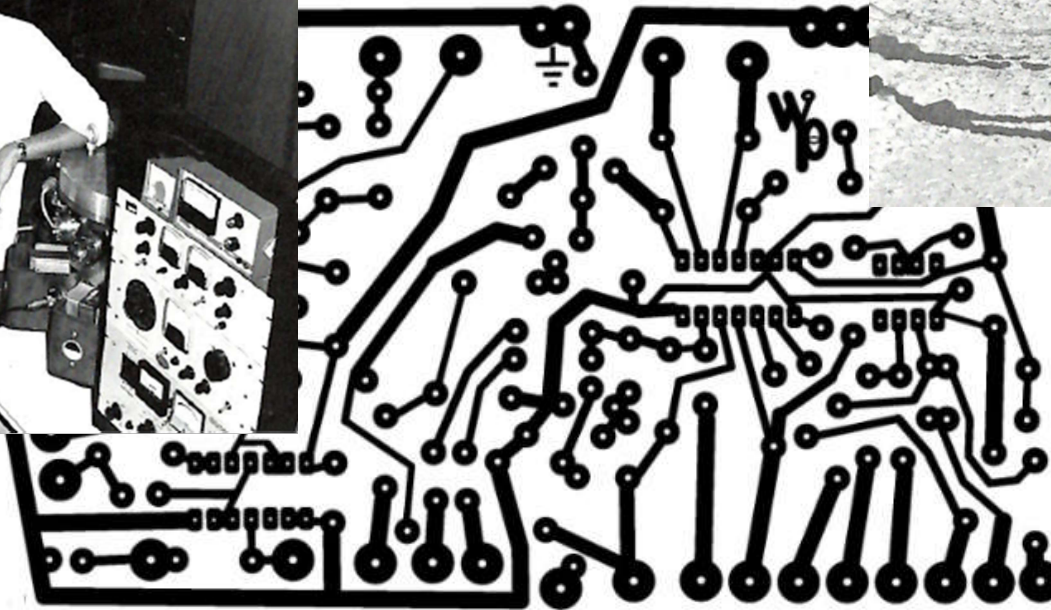
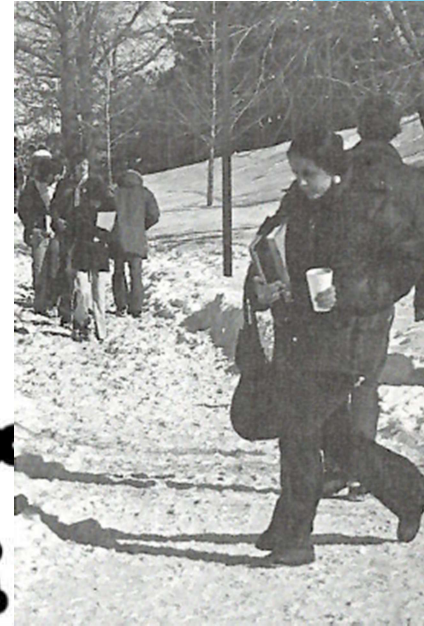
Physics Forward!

What a Long Strange Trip Its Been!



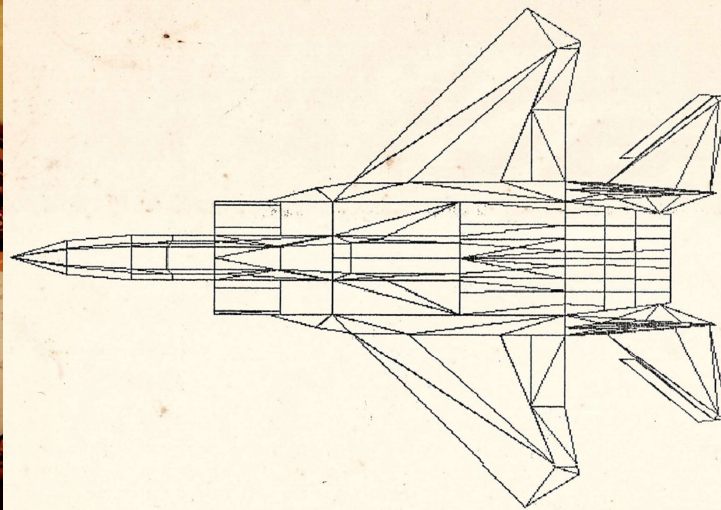
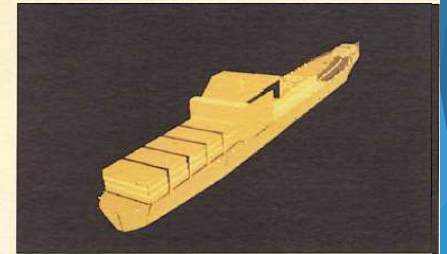
Work Study Student @ UMSL

- Circuit card layout and construction
- Lab plumbing and electrical
- Leroy drawings for publication



Assistant Engineer @ McDonnell Douglas

- Flight simulation graphics
- F-18 cockpit display prototypes and other flight software



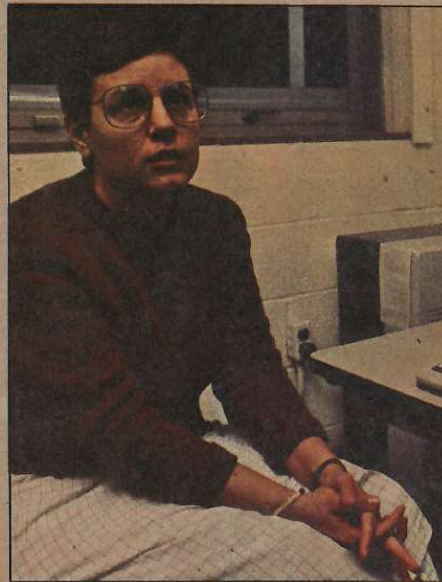
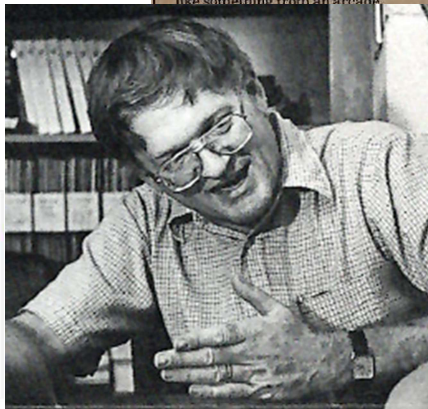
Research Assistant @ KU



KU's Merlin is a wizard problem solver

By DOUG HITCHCOCK
J-W Staff Writer

To the casual observer, the device looks like a sophisticated video game. A colorful, geometric image turns slowly on the computer screen. There is a "joystick" lever standing ready, like something from an arcade.



Colleen McKee, a Kansas University senior in physics and astronomy, is one of several researchers using th

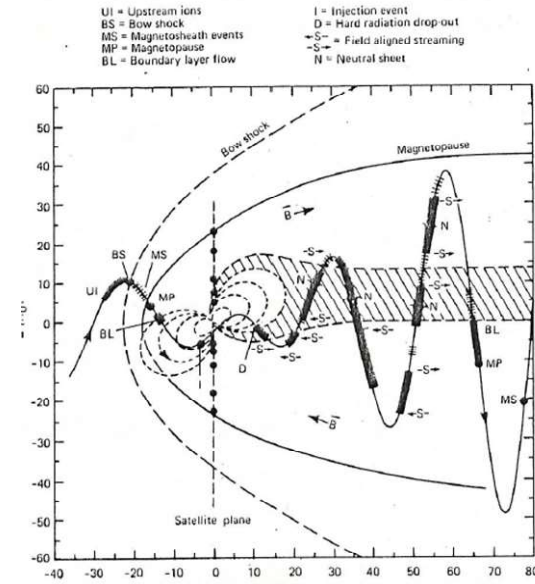
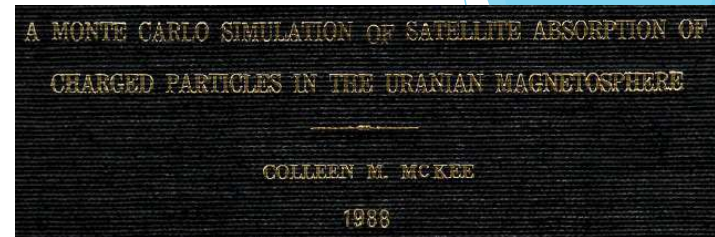


Figure 2.2. Selected LECP observations and the Voyager 2 trajectory at Uranus are displayed in a rotating, solar magnetospheric coordinate system. The X-axis is parallel to the Sun-Uranus line, and the magnetic moment vector for Uranus is in the X-Z plane. Dipole magnetic field line shapes are shown for $L = 5, 10, 15, 20 R_U$. Cylindrical symmetry assumed for the bow shock and magnetopause shapes. The shaded region is the average plasma sheet structure for < 6 keV plasmas.

Contractor @ NASA EOS Terra



ACS/Propulsion/FSW @ SES



Gifts of a physics education...

- ❖ Interesting work.
- ❖ Exciting travel and opportunities to forge relationships with people on 4 continents.
- ❖ Excellent peer groups along the way.
 - Importance of maintaining professional relationships.
 - Importance of building/maintaining communities.



Physics Forward!



Physics and Astronomy Alumni Board (PAAB)

- Formed in 2007
- Met “annually” in Lawrence until Covid
- Met “quarterly” via Zoom until December 2024
- Some fundraising and advocacy activities in early 2025.

Vision to recast/modernize/energize the PAAB


- Structure consistent with common practices at other institutions
- Friends of the Department of Physics & Astronomy (FoPAB) - local body, inclusive of alumni as well as other friends and supporters.
- Physics & Astronomy Advisory Board (PAAB) - function as the national and international board, composed primarily of alumni.
- (August 2025) Delays getting necessary data...

- Move forward with some mechanism for alumni engagement and, as a courtesy, bring closure to existing PAAB members.




◆ AI Overview

community /kəˈmyʊnədē/


A community is a group of people connected by shared values, interests, location, or goals, fostering a sense of belonging and mutual support. It acts as a cohesive unit where members often work together, providing support, managing, or navigating life's challenges collectively.  Study.com +3




Key Elements of a Community

- **Shared Identity:** Individuals often share backgrounds, norms, values, or interests (e.g., professional, ethnic, or hobby-based).
- **Interaction & Cohesion:** Members actively engage, collaborate, and support each other, creating a sense of belonging.
- **Shared Goals:** A common purpose, such as improving local literacy or achieving a project, often defines the community.
- **Relationship Networks:** It is characterized by relationships rather than just a physical place.  Study.com +5

◆ AI Overview

Building community involves fostering authentic connections through shared interests, consistent, in-person, or online, and active, participatory engagement. Key steps include identifying a shared purpose, establishing trust, creating a welcoming environment with clear boundaries, and nurturing a supportive, inclusive atmosphere that encourages members to connect and collaborate, not just consume content.  CMX Community +4

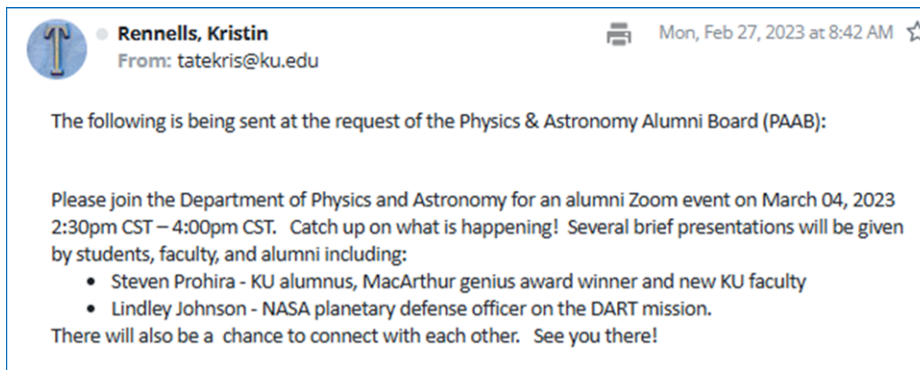
Steps to Build Community

- **Start Small & Local:** Begin with 10 people who share a common interest. Start by inviting a few friends to gather for activities like crafting, a potluck, or a shared hobby, then invite others.
- **Establish Core Purpose:** Define what brings you together (e.g., a shared passion, goal, or location).
- **Create Shared Experiences:** Use tools like Meetup or simply start a local club, or, for online communities, platforms like Discord or Slack.
- **Gather Consistently:** Schedule recurring meetings, such as monthly game nights or, as suggested in this video, weekly hiking groups, to build trust through shared experience over time.  CMX Community +4



Alumni Zoom Events

- Convened in 2023 and 2024
- Reasonably well-attended given that communication was awkward.



- Convene annual virtual events for Department students & faculty and for Alumni
- Resume publication of the Department newsletter



Online PAAB event
Department of Physics and Astronomy - The University of Kansas
Saturday, March 23, 2024
2:00 - 3:30 PM Central Time

2:00 PM	→ 2:10 PM	Welcome and words from the PAAB Chair Speaker: Colleen McKee
2:10 PM	→ 2:20 PM	Department news and upcoming events Speaker: Prof. Chris Fischer
2:20 PM	→ 2:30 PM	Alumnus talk Speaker: Joe Shields
2:30 PM	→ 2:40 PM	Faculty talk Speaker: Prof. Alice Bean
2:40 PM	→ 2:50 PM	Faculty talk Speaker: Prof. Michael Murray
2:50 PM	→ 3:00 PM	Undergraduate student talk Speaker: Parker Wise
3:00 PM	→ 3:10 PM	Words from KUEA Speaker: Sheri Hamilton
3:10 PM	→ 3:15 PM	Fund campaign: summer research for undergrads Speaker: Prof. Allison Kirkpatrick
3:15 PM	→ 3:20 PM	Supporting International graduate students Speaker: Prof. Daniel Tapia Takaki (University of Kansas)
3:20 PM	→ 3:25 PM	Alumni network-type event Speaker: Prof. Daniel Tapia Takaki (University of Kansas)
3:25 PM	→ 3:30 PM	Comments and Closing remarks Speakers: Colleen McKee, Prof. Daniel Tapia Takaki (University of Kansas)

Thank you!

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