



# Update

No. 3 (04/15/2005)

Dear Members and Supporters,

This is the third *Astrosociology.com Update* and hopefully far from the last. The intention of these updates is to keep members and supporters apprised of news and events related to the development of astrosociology as a new subdiscipline. To be honest, while the progress is far from rapid, we are further along at this juncture than I first envisioned. On this dreaded tax day, I offer this *Update* to distract your attention away from such unpleasant thoughts.

## **NEW DEVELOPMENTS AT ASTROSOCIOLOGY.COM**

1. Although the proposal for a special session focusing on astrosociology in 2006 was rejected by the program committee, my submitted paper, entitled *Invitation to Astrosociology: Why the Sociologist-Space Enthusiast Should Consider It*, was accepted for the Science, Knowledge and Technology (SKAT) roundtables at the 2005 ASA Annual Meeting in Philadelphia. I invite everyone, especially those in the eastern region of the U.S., to attend. As a second event, I reserved a room for an *Astrosociology Forum* currently slated as a free-flowing discussion of all astrosociological issues. (I await approval). Free and inexpensive promotional items will be available.
2. A new project begins this month. It is called the Astrosociology Curriculum Development Project (the ACDP). This ongoing project seeks to develop astrosociological course materials for (1) existing courses, (2) an *Introduction to Sociology* course, and eventually (3) an entire curriculum for an astrosociology major. The information will be added soon to the Submit Materials page. This project is the same one for which the ASA declined funding, so we will need to do this on our own!
3. *Astrosociology.com* will be named *Site of the Month* by the Amateur Astronomers Association of New York (<http://www.aaa.org/>). Members and supporters will be apprised when this occurs. Thank you AAA!

4. Following the CONTACT conference (see below), I was invited as a guest on *The Space Show* by the show's host Dr. David M. Livingston. I was seeking a reciprocal link from the *Space Show* site. Dr. Livingston asked me to call him following his review of *Astrosociology.com*. After a few minutes of conversation over the telephone, he asked me to discuss issues related to astrosociology. The show is scheduled to air live on June 12. The link to the show's site is <http://www.thespaceshow.com/>. Check out the other guests!

5. A multimedia section was added to *Virtual Library*. Your suggestions for additional materials and your contributions are welcome!

6. A new page now exists. It is called *Astrosociology.com's Calendar of Significant Events / History of Astrosociology*. New developments are posted in the significant events section first and the most substantial events are then transferred to the history section following their occurrence. Starting with this *Update*, many of the announcements appear on the calendar/history page before they are summarized in the *Update*.

The link is: [http://www.astrosociology.com/calendar\\_history.html](http://www.astrosociology.com/calendar_history.html). Check this page regularly for new developments.

## **CSA CALL FOR PAPERS**

I, along with Dr. Marilyn Dudley-Rowley and Thomas Gangale, am organizing an astrosociology session for inclusion in the California Sociological Association's program this winter. This includes selection of the papers for presentation. You should have received a *Preliminary Call for Papers* email message already. (If not, a copy is accessible on the calendar/history page in the "calendar" section. The direct link is: [http://www.astrosociology.com/calendar\\_history.html](http://www.astrosociology.com/calendar_history.html).)

I am pleased to announce that Dr. Albert A. Harrison will present a paper on astrosociology as part of our session. Join Dr. Harrison, the three organizers, and other supporters of astrosociology for an interesting and constructive experience.

To date, we have received too few submissions. Your participation is urgently needed! The link is <http://www.astrosociology.com/submit.html>). Here you can a list of potential topics for your papers.

## **CONTACT 2005**

A great opportunity took place recently to attend the CONTACT conference and speak before a diverse audience of space enthusiasts. The location was at NASA Ames Research Center (Mountain View, CA ) over the March 18-20 time frame. My paper was entitled "**The Sociology of SETI: An**

**Astrosociological Perspective.”** (The paper becomes available in the *Virtual Library* once I find the time to clean up the rough edges – very soon now).

The organizers of the conference (i.e., Reed Riner, Jim Funaro and Joel Hagen) were especially gracious and supportive. In fact, everyone was extremely supportive. Although I was the very last speaker of the conference, many people stayed to the bitter end. It was great! Everyone is encouraged to attend next year’s conference! It was great to meet people I have come to admire such as Allen Tough, Albert A. Harrison, Ben Finney, Seth Shostak, among many others. It was a great experience and I recommend that everyone attend next year’s conference! At CONTACT, the study of astrosocial phenomena as an important undertaking represents an assumption rather than a proposition requiring persuasion! (Needless to mention, I was one of only two sociologists in attendance).

## **(1) IAA SPACE AND SOCIETY CONFERENCE AND (2) IMPACT OF SPACE ACTIVITIES ON SOCIETY SITE**

The space community is taking great steps to address the relationship between space and society (astrosocial phenomena!) Below are two related events.

(1) The link for this site is <http://www.congrex.nl/05c04/main.html>. While this conference has concluded, you are encouraged to contact them to inquire about their proceedings. I will relay new information to you as I become aware of it.

(2) The website *Impact of Space Activities on Society* continues to solicit submissions related to the opening statement "***I believe that space activities are impacting society through...***" My (possibly overly optimistic) submission was accepted a short while ago. I encourage you to add your comments as well. Mention astrosociology in your comments and we can demonstrate its growing presence. The link for this site is <http://www.spaceandsociety.org/>.

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## **ONGOING UPDATE ITEMS**

**Astrosociology Section-in-Formation Petition.** Creation of an ASA section devoted to astrosociology represents a critical step toward establishing astrosociology as a new subdiscipline. If you have not done so already, please fill out the petition form at the following URL: <https://www.astrosociology.com/sectinform.html>. Instructions are located on this page along with a link to the ASA’s website for those who need to join or renew their ASA memberships. Additionally, please contact any of your colleagues who may be interested and encourage them to sign the petition as well. Finally, those who are not sociologists per se, but see the value of astrosociology and possess even a slight interest in the social sciences, are encouraged

to join the ASA and sign the petition in order to assist us in meeting the overall goal of establishing astrosociology as a mainstream, legitimate subfield.

**Submit Your Astrosociology Papers!** These papers must be original compositions written exclusively for *Astrosociology.com* initially, though you may seek publication after your paper is posted on the site. (Part One of my *Inaugural Essay* was accepted by ASA referees after I posted it with their knowledge). You retain full copyright ownership. We must take purposive steps to create this new body of knowledge and literature related to astrosociological issues. While I encourage you to attempt publication in established journals, *Astrosociology.com* provides another avenue to make your ideas known to others. At some point, I expect that the best papers to be published in an anthology of articles in a refereed astrosociological journal or perhaps a book. In the meanwhile, the best thing we can do is to get our ideas “out there” on the World Wide Web. The submission page contains a new listing of many topics from which to choose. Acceptance or rejection of papers for posting at the site is based on majority rule of a committee consisting of three individuals. The link is <http://www.astrosociology.com/submit.html>. Accepted papers are posted on the Virtual Library page.

**Astrosociology.com Directory / Contact Your Colleagues.** The *Membership / Supporter Directory* lists those brave souls who formally announce their membership and support for astrosociology. If you have not yet done so, I encourage you to demonstrate your support by submitting your name and information. This represents a very good way to show potential supporters, and even detractors, that a viable astrosociological community exists. As more members and supporters add their entries, the growth of the astrosociological community becomes obvious for all to see.

Here is the URL for your convenience: <http://www.astrosociology.com/directory.html> (use the online form). Those who add their entries through the end of July 2005 will be designated as *charter* members or supporters.

**Membership Dues.** This appeal is included again because members have not responded in great numbers. Please assist the effort to develop astrosociology!

**New incentive:** members who pay dues will receive an *Astrosociology.com* “Member” coffee mug at no additional cost. For those who have paid dues or donations already this year, your appropriate mug will be sent out today. (Supporters may purchase “Supporter” coffee mugs for \$12.99 each and member can buy additional “Member” mugs for the same price). (Shipping is extra as customary).

As you can probably guess, running a website and paying all the promotional and conference-related costs to promote astrosociology becomes expensive over time. This effort to establish astrosociology has been free to members and supporters since the creation of *Astrosociology.com* on July 15, 2003.

Starting in 2005, members are required to pay dues at the rate of \$20.00 per calendar year (\$15.00 for students – at any level). Current members are strongly encouraged to pay membership dues, of course. However, supporters are not required to pay dues, so members may change their status to “supporter” so as to avoid paying membership dues. “Supporters” will continue to receive updates and other benefits. However, I urge all supporters to change their statuses to “member” and pay dues so we can improve our ability to promote this new subfield. **Either way, please be assured that your support is highly valued, and no repercussions exist for any action you take related to payment or nonpayment of dues!**

Please keep in mind that membership dues and donations do not cover all expenses, but they contribute to paying for ongoing expenses related to my enduring promotion of astrosociology. **(No funds go toward a salary or any form of personal compensation unrelated to the promotion of astrosociology).**

**Contribute to the Virtual Library and Links Pages.** Please help the astrosociological community move forward. Its development requires all of us to participate. Keep checking these two pages to discover new entries. For example, a newly published article by James Ormrod, entitled *Comment: The Case for Astrosociology*, was recently added to the *Astrosociological References* section of the Virtual Library. My 2005 ASA paper is available there as well.

**As Always, Your Great Ideas Invited.** Please send any ideas you may have for the promotion of astrosociology to (“jpass at astrosociology dot com”); including any strategies for encouraging reluctant though interested sociologists to join the cause. Potentially interested colleagues from other disciplines should also be invited. In order to prosper, astrosociology must become a multidisciplinary effort! Collaboration remains the best way to make astrosociology a dynamic and relevant subdiscipline. ***Your participation is vital to our success!***

Best regards to all,

Jim Pass