

In February, NASA's Curiosity rover successfully extracted the first sample of Martian rock from a hole drilled into the planet's surface. The diminutive size of the hole — only 1.6 centimetres in diameter and 6.4 centimetres deep — belies the significance of this historic moment in space exploration and the impact that it made in the media around the world.

Credit: NASA/JPL-Caltech/Malin Space Science Systems





Credit: Kevin Govender

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This first issue of *CAPjournal* in 2013 ushers in a new era for the publication, as I take over the reins as Editor-in-Chief from Pedro Russo. While I hope to bring lots of fresh ideas to *CAPjournal*, there are no plans for any major changes to the format. As the saying goes, "if it ain't broke, don't fix it". Pedro will continue to contribute to *CAPjournal* in an advisory role in his capacity as Vice-President of the IAU's Commission 55 (C55), *Communicating Astronomy with the Public*.

In my role as International Outreach Coordinator for the newly established IAU Office for Astronomy Outreach (OAO), I intend to build on the momentum of the International Year of Astronomy 2009 (IYA2009). Therefore, *CAPjournal* will continue to promote outreach activities that are some of the fruits of IYA2009. In this issue, for example, there are articles concerning three IYA2009 Cornerstone projects: Dark Sky Awareness (page 9); From Earth to the Universe, under the guise of a follow-up project called From Earth to the Solar System (page 20); and Universe Awareness (page 12).

Many readers will be familiar with the IAU Office of Astronomy for Development (OAD). Last December, I had the pleasure of visiting the OAD team in South Africa to discuss synergies between our offices. The picture shown in the top left of this page was taken during that trip, at the South African Astronomical Observatory's observing site in Sutherland, which is roughly a four-hour drive from the OAD's office in Cape Town. After a run of cloudy nights, I was lucky with the weather during my one-night stay in Sutherland, and able to enjoy this wonderful dark-sky site in all its glory — my first ever observing session in the southern hemisphere.

The visit was also a valuable learning experience, as I gained a greater understanding of the societal impact of astronomy in Africa and various public outreach activities in Cape Town and Sutherland. I would encourage anyone working on outreach projects that have a developmental impact to contact me about writing an article for *CAPjournal*.

Looking forward, the next issue of *CAPjournal* will feature an article that will address the future of C55 in light of changes to the organisational structure of the IAU and the founding of the OAD and OAO. This will be the first in a series of articles that will take an in-depth look at the IAU's education, outreach and development activities.

I look forward to working with you all to promote and advance astronomy communication. Please send me an email at editor@capjournal.org if you would like to submit an article. Full submission guidelines are available on the website (www.capjournal.org).

Clear skies,

Sarah Reed

Sarah Reed

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Cover: This starry night at the shores of Dal River in Sweden was an opportunity for TWAN photographer P.-M. Hedén to give some lessons about the sky to his 8 year old son. The summer Milky Way from Scorpius (lower right) to Cygnus (upper left) is captured in this wide-field view. Credit: P.-M. Hedén/TWAN