American Astronomical Society Names New Executive Officer

Kevin B. Marvel, a research astronomer who specializes in stellar radio astronomy, has been named executive officer of the American Astronomical Society. He succeeds **Robert Milkey**, who will retire in July after 11 years of service.

A search committee's recommendation to select Marvel as head of the society was approved unanimously by the council of the society at a conference-call meeting last December. He will take office on 8 June during the AAS summer meeting in Calgary, Canada.


Marvel

Marvel, 38, joined the AAS executive office in 1998 as the head of policy programs and subsequently undertook additional responsibility as deputy executive officer and manager of AAS-printed publications. In a recent interview with PHYSICS TODAY, Marvel said his first priority as executive officer of the society will be to continue to seek, sustain, and increase federal funding for astronomical research. The AAS has a well-coordinated grass-roots coalition that springs into action whenever funding is threatened by legislation, Marvel said, and he will work to ensure that the coalition remains strong. Marvel said he also wants to make sure the AAS newsletter continues to inform and advise society members on such issues.

"Sometimes Congress needs to be reminded to support research in astronomy, and that's what the AAS is here to do," Marvel said.

Robert Kirshner, AAS president and search committee chair, lauded the committee's selection of Marvel as the society's new chief.

"Kevin has been a terrific addition to the AAS Washington office, energizing our public policy work," said Kirshner in a prepared statement. "He has the energy and drive to make sure the American Astronomical Society succeeds in all parts of its mission. I'm sure he will be an excellent executive officer for the AAS."

Marvel said continuing to manage the AAS's five journals is another important aspect of his new post.

"We're trying to improve them to make it easier for members to submit, easier for readers to use," he said, "and we're actively trying to continue decreasing page charges."

With 5500 US members and 1000 from other countries, the AAS still needs to boost its membership, Marvel said, adding that he will work to build it. Under his direction the society just created a new class of membership that he says will be especially attractive to potential members from outside the US.

Prior to joining the AAS staff, Marvel graduated from the University of Arizona, obtained a PhD at New Mexico State University, and was a postdoctoral researcher under Anneila Sargent at the Owens Valley Radio Observatory of the California Institute of Technology.

Marvel praised the work of his predecessor and said he hopes to follow up on Milkey's accomplishments.

"Bob Milkey got the society finances in fantastic shape and developed new systems that generated big savings for our members," Marvel said. "I hope to keep all that in good running order. There's a good stable foundation."

Shinn Is New AVS President-Elect

Neal D. Shinn, a manager at the US Department of Energy Center for Integrated Nanotechnologies, is president-elect of AVS, the Science and Technology Society, for 2006. He succeeds **Christie Marrian** (see PHYSICS TODAY, March 2005, page 82), who is now the society's president. Shinn will become president in 2007.


Shinn

In a prepared statement, Shinn said AVS sets itself apart from other scientific societies and must continue to do so by creating and nurturing professional communities for interdisciplinary science and emerging technologies.

"To remain a vibrant society, [we] must stimulate and challenge attendees [in our symposia] . . . and also be a vehicle for AVS members to establish technical leadership with international impact," Shinn said in his statement. "AVS is well positioned to champion the opportunities for science and technology to solve global challenges in energy, water and health care."

The user program manager at the DOE center, a new national user facility jointly operated by Sandia and Los Alamos national laboratories, Shinn earned his BS in chemistry and mathematics from the Pennsylvania State University in 1978 and his PhD in chemical physics from MIT in 1983. He was a National Research Council postdoctoral fellow at NIST, where his research involved the elucidation of molecular adsorbate structure and identification of reaction intermediates on metal surfaces using vibrational spectroscopies. He joined Sandia in 1985 as a senior member of the technical staff and led the lab's research and mission-related programs at the National Synchrotron Light Source.

Shinn is also an adjunct physics professor at Utah State University and serves on external advisory committees for the College of Engineering at Penn State, the biomedical engineering department at the Ohio State University, and the physics department of New Mexico State University. His research interests include using acoustic techniques to understand how molecular structure and ensemble ordering determine the visoelastic mechanical properties of self-assembled molecular monolayers on solid surfaces.

In other AVS election news, **Joe Greene** (University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign) remains the society's clerk/secretary and **John Coburn** (University of California, Berkeley) retains his position as treasurer. The new AVS directors are **Bridget R. Rogers** (Vanderbilt University, Nashville, Tennessee), **Peter Sheldon** (National Renewable Energy Laboratory, Golden, Colorado), and **Robert A. Langley** (retired from Oak Ridge National Laboratory and Sandia). The society's newly elected trustees are **Susan B. Sinnott**