



Press Release – August 3, 2012

High Honours in Astronomy

German Astronomical Society (AG) publishes this year's award winners

During the yearly major fall meeting, the German Astronomical Society awards internationally renowned prizes to individuals who have made outstanding contributions in astronomy. The awards recognize both scientific activities and achievements in the field of public outreach and education.

Karl-Schwarzschild-Medal for Sandra Moore Faber

The highest honour in Germany for astronomical research, the Karl Schwarzschild Medal of the Astronomical Society will be awarded this year to the astrophysicist **Sandra Moore Faber** of the University of California, Santa Cruz.

"Sandy Faber has delivered in her more than four decades of research fundamental contributions to understanding the formation and evolution of galaxies, and she has significantly influenced observational cosmology" says Prof. Dr. Andreas Burkert, President of the German Astronomical Society. Of particular importance is her pioneering work on the mysterious cold dark matter, which is crucial for understanding the emergence of the large-scale structure in the universe and galaxy formation. Similarly fundamental has been her research on supermassive black holes at the centers of galaxies. Students of astronomy are familiar with her name through the well-known Faber-Jackson relation, which relates the orbital velocities of stars in galactic disks to the total luminosity of the galaxies. This relation is a useful tool to determine the distances of galaxies and to understand the structure of disk galaxies like our Milky Way.

In addition, Sandy Faber has made significant achievements in the development of new instruments for astronomical observations, including in particular important work for the famous Hubble Space Telescope and the first 10m-class telescope in the world, the Keck Telescope on Mauna Kea, Hawaii.

Awards for successful young scientists

Cecilia Scannapieco of the Leibniz-Institute for Astrophysics Potsdam (AIP) will receive the 2012 Biermann Prize. Since her PhD in 2006 at the University of Buenos Aires, the Argentinian astrophysicist has been working in Germany.

Her internationally acclaimed theoretical work and advanced modelling of the gas physics in high-resolution computer simulations have provided important new insights into the origin and evolution of spiral galaxies, and how these galaxies were able to form large, thin galactic disks like that in the Milky Way. Only six years after her PhD, Cecilia Scannapieco has already established herself as an international expert.

The Dissertation Award of the Astronomical Society goes this year to **Julius Donnert** from the Institute for Radio Astronomy in Bologna. The winner is honoured for his outstanding dissertation on magnetic fields and cosmic radiation in galaxy clusters. He completed his dissertation at the University Observatory Munich under the supervision of Harald Lesch. The publication of his scientific results has received a lot of attention in the scientific community.

Bürger-Prize goes to Hermann-Michael Hahn

The German Astronomical Society awards extend beyond active researchers. Media and outreach activities are also recognized regularly by the Society. For the first time since 2009, the AG will award the Bruno H. Bürger Prize for outstanding German-language popular depictions in the media. **Hermann Michael Hahn** from Cologne receives the award for his broad range of activities in particular in presenting basic skills in aerospace and astronomy to a wide audience. The award winner has been a journalist since 1968 and is known for his numerous books, articles for leading newspapers, public lectures and activities in radio and television.

The Astronomical Society also encourages students conducting research through a special prize for the national winners of *Jugend Forscht* in the field of Earth and Space Sciences. The 2012 award will go to **Fabian Kopel, Markus Hadwiger** and **Robert Maccsics** from the Dientzenhofer High School in Bamberg for their survey to find gamma ray bursts on earlier photographic plates of the southern sky.

All winners will be honoured at the fall meeting of the Astronomical Society in Hamburg (Germany), which will take place from September 24 to 28.
(see www.hs.uni-hamburg.de/AG2012).

Images (Photos with full resolution at www.astronomische-gesellschaft.org)

	<p>Image 1: Sandra Moore Faber of the University of California, Santa Cruz, will receive the Karl-Schwarzschild-Medal of the German Astronomical Society 2012.</p> <p>(Credit: S. Faber)</p>
	<p>Image 2: Cecilia Scannapieco from the Leibniz-Institute for Astrophysics Potsdam (AIP). She is the winner of this year's Biermann-Award.</p> <p>(Credit: AIP)</p>
	<p>Image 3: Julius Donnert will be honoured with the Dissertation Award of the German Astronomical Society for his outstanding PhD.</p> <p>(Credit: J. Donnert)</p>
	<p>Image 4: The winner of the Bruno H. Bürger-Prize 2012: The science journalist Hermann Michael Hahn.</p> <p>(Credit: H.-M- Hahn)</p>

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The German Astronomical Society (AG: www.astronomische-gesellschaft.de), founded in 1863, is a modern astronomical society with more than 800 members dedicated to the advancement of astronomy and astrophysics and the networking between astronomers. It represents German astronomers, organises scientific meetings, publishes journals, offers grants, recognises outstanding work through awards and places a high priority on the support of talented young scientists, public outreach and astronomy education in schools.

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