Campus Watch

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Stellar salutes are in order for two Iowa State University professors and astronomers who have been making new discoveries about the night sky.

Curt Struck and Philip N. Appleton, along with other scientists, have been observing a peculiar-looking wagon-wheel shaped galaxy by using NASA’s Hubble Space Telescope. The Cartwheel galaxy, found in 1941, was formed when it collided with another galaxy. Appleton said the Cartwheel galaxy is characterized by an outer ring, inner ring, a nucleus-like part and strange things that have been dubbed “spokes,” which extend outward from the inner ring to the outer ring.

Appleton and Struck have been studying ring galaxies for years. The Cartwheel galaxy, however, is different.

“We truly don’t see many galaxies like this,” Appleton said, “but when we do see them, we try to use them to understand what’s happening.

“It doesn’t look like a normal galaxy at all. The comet-like things we’re talking about are occurring in the center—sort of like little trails with very compact heads embedded in the inner ring. These things may be evidence for something flowing toward the center of the galaxy, creating a kind of a wake in the galaxies,” he said.

There does not appear to be any star formation or activity in the middle of the Cartwheel galaxy, which is quite unusual, Appleton said.

Yet, through recent discoveries using the Hubble Space Telescope, Struck and Appleton found at least “a few little places” where this star formation is probably happening. The two researchers believe they’ve discovered clusters in the comet-like structures.

“I think the discovery of these funny little comet-like objects in the center of the stars is telling us that when galaxies collide, debris is scattered around throughout space,” Appleton said, “and that galaxies do not just sit there in isolation; things are happening to them.”

The two astronomers speculate that many unknown and interesting things are occurring in the Cartwheel galaxy.

Struck said big gas clouds exist to varying degrees in all galaxies. However, most galaxies don’t usually get “sloshed” around at high speeds relative to their neighbors, which is what’s happening in the Cartwheel galaxy. In this galaxy, among supersonic comet clouds, debris is falling at extremely high speeds, some with velocities of up to 700,000 mph. “We think this fallback—if it’s that—probably happens in a lot of galaxies, only we haven’t seen it because we haven’t had the detailed view the space telescope gives us. That’s what’s new; we hope it’s not uncommon,” Struck said.

Struck and Appleton’s results were published last November in the Astronomical Journal. Currently, they are in the process of trying to get more observing time with NASA’s Hubble Space Telescope so they may continue their research.

by Melissa Swingle
When the Clock Talks
Professors defend their research time in the face of state criticism

“Even when I’m in the 50 percent...that’s research, I’m still a teacher,” Dennis Johnson, professor of chemistry, said in response to Charles Larson’s accusations that professors are not spending enough time in the classrooms.

Larson, a Cedar Rapids state representative, recently voiced concerns that mandated research projects at state universities conflict with the amount of time professors devote to teaching. Research overload, he said, is wasting taxpayers’ money.

“My own personal understanding of who I am is 100 percent teacher,” said Johnson, who has had a 50 percent teaching, 50 percent research appointment with Iowa State for more than 20 years.

Johnson stressed that there are more dimensions to teaching than just being in the traditional classroom. Research is an important complement to teaching, he said, which requires professors to be in a concentrated education mode. Without research, many believe teaching would become stagnant and outdated.

“So, while I’m busy doing what many critics think is a very introverted, very self-centered activity [research], I’m a fund-raiser for the university. I’m educating graduate students, and I’m also generating knowledge which is translated through publications. It’s also the basis of information I bring down to freshman chemistry,” Johnson said.

Research is to a professor as required continuing education is to a doctor, said Sociology Professor Brent Bruton, who has a 100 percent teaching appointment at ISU. He said publishing is part of the “demonstration of scholarship” professors must provide for each other.

“Teaching, research and service — these are the three main areas,” Bruton said. The professors’ roles are more complex than that, however, and vary with their university appointments.

For example, in addition to teaching 400-500 students in his introductory sociology class (which gives him about 1,500 hours of student contact per week, not including preparation time), Bruton spends about 20 hours per semester serving on nearly 20 graduate committees.

Additionally, he is an associate editor of Teaching Sociology Journal, a trade publication that addresses pedagogical issues in sociology.

But Bruton’s responsibilities don’t stop there. He also holds a position on the Honors Committee and is the current chair-elect and program chair for the American Sociological Association, which is a program that teaches teachers to be more effective.

These and other duties included in a professor’s career are not mentioned in Larson’s study. In fact, an all-inclusive measure as to everything a professor’s job entails has not yet been established.

While it is unclear exactly what the balance should be between research and teaching, there is little doubt that one should not exist to the exclusion of the other.

“Ideally, what I call ‘matters taught, matters sought,’ complement each other,” Bruton said. “So, research and teaching certainly can complement each other. We are doing competitive research, and that does not take away from our undergraduate teaching because professors who are on the cutting edge of research in their fields are better teachers.”

Bruton added that “when we hear something like what the legislature said, a lot of people find that hurtful. A lot of faculty probably work 60-hour weeks, and a lot of people feel stretched beyond limits.”

Marcia Prior-Miller, who has been a journalism professor for 18 years, agrees there is pressure to conduct research and publish, but thinks “that pressure is not just a pressure, it’s why you’re here.”

Prior-Miller said several of Larson’s accusations are troublesome.

One reason that Larson’s study concerns Prior-Miller is the thinking that the only way a professor is considered productive is if he or she reaps off facts while standing in front of a classroom 25 hours a week. With this type of thinking, “research will go down the tubes,” she said.

“Our hiring contract includes teaching, but it also includes doing scholarly work on the side and providing service to our profession. When I go into the classroom, I’m not going in there assuming that all of the learning in the minds of my students takes place in that classroom. My job in that classroom is to try to take the approach to teaching my subject that will send [the student] out to learn to become a learner, but I think that particular perspective is unique to the education you get in a research institution,” Prior-Miller said.

Many say teaching is helping students create their own views and develop their own questions — both inside and outside the classroom.

Johnson said teaching is “developing respect for one another, and helping [students] realize that you care about what happens to them.”

Can Larson measure that in a study of classroom hours?

by Melissa Swingle
Today's Java...

So, you've decided to move beyond basic coffee...now what? How does one go from freeze-dried Nescafe to the richly flavored coffee drinks of Italy? Even in Ames, your coffee options are limitless. To help you java novices, here's a quick and dirty cheat sheet:

- **Café au Lait** is regular coffee and heated milk.
- **Cafecito** is a Cuban coffee drink of espresso and caramelized sugar.
- **Café Americano** is espresso diluted with an equal portion of hot water.
- **Café Royal** is regular coffee with sugar and brandy.
- **Café Mexicano** is regular coffee mixed with heavy cream, spices, sugar, chocolate sauce, and topped with whipped cream.
- **Café Mocha** is latez or cappuccino with chocolate syrup.
- **Cappuccino** is similar to espresso, except steamed milk and milk froth are added.
- **Espresso** is made by brewing beans with a specialized coffee machine that forces pressure and water through the bean quickly so only the best of the coffee is filtered. This forms krema, a highly concentrated coffee.
- **Espresso Con Panna** is espresso with a dollop of whipped cream.
- **Iced Cappuccino** is a single or double shot of espresso mixed with cold milk and milk froth poured over ice.
- **Iced Espresso** is a double shot of espresso poured over ice and served with a dollop of whipped cream.
- **Irish coffee** is regular coffee with sugar, Irish whiskey and whipped cream.
- **Latte** is an espresso with steamed milk. It has less foam than cappuccino.
- **Mocha Latte** is a milkier version of the Cafe Mocha.
- **Thai iced coffee** is extra strong coffee mixed with condensed milk and poured over ice.

It helps you stumble to your dreaded 8 o'clock everyday (or whenever you actually go) and it helps you study throughout the night. The “stuff to get you by” can be bought from campus vending machines, the gas station and the local Chat'n'Chew. What is this miracle drug of the '90s? Coffee—and it's not pure and black anymore.

Although this highly caffeinated beverage is nothing new, it has had a face-lift. It's been rediscovered and deemed swank and sophisticated, especially among college students. But why?

"Coffee is an alternative to soda and alcohol," said Andy Finney, owner of Stomping Grounds. "People also view coffee as having a healthier image in that it is probably healthier than drinking a Mountain Dew."

"I believe TV has helped also," he said.

"Shows such as Frasier and Friends show coffee can be sophisticated and even fun."

There is also a social aspect, said Claudio Gianello, owner of Café Beaudelaire.

"People study, smoke, read and talk over coffee," he said.

"I go out for coffee about once a week, which isn't as often as I like. I go because it's relaxing, good for socializing, good atmosphere and something to do. I also like that [coffee houses] are open late," said Sandy Campbell, a sophomore in graphic design.

Americans see coffee as representing a more sophisticated lifestyle, similar to a European lifestyle. Different and new brewing techniques are making coffee better, more than just water and powder. Americans are realizing coffee can be pleasing and tasteful, Gianello said.

According to reports, many people in the Midwest—where more coffee is consumed daily than in any other region—are finding it more enjoyable to go to coffee shops and cafés. Atmosphere has been the biggest reason for the development of cafes and coffee houses throughout cities, including Ames.

"People gather in cafés partly for java and partly for relaxation. This time, a crowded population is also searching for a sense of community, a connection with others and a slower pace in an otherwise frantic life.

"A café is a retreat or escape from the office, kids and chores. You can have an exotic coffee from a far-off land and better than the best hotel in the world. It's a nice treat for yourself," Finney said.

People enjoy a quiet atmosphere where they are able to talk quietly, study or just look out the window and relax, Gianello said.

Café owners, food specialists and researchers believe gourmet coffee is not a phase, but a new lifestyle. And with the increase of coffee sales, cafés are expected to change with consumers' growing needs.

"Cafés will probably be like bars. Who knows? There may be a sports espresso bar," Finney said.

However, this "caffeine sensation" apparently has not taken hold of all of ISU yet. Finney said he usually gets faculty, staff and graduate students as customers, but not too many undergraduates.

"I wish more people would be willing to try new things. A lot of people walk by and look through the windows but don't stop in," Finney said. "Maybe they don't know what we are doing here or maybe they don't like coffee. However, they would enjoy the experience of simply relaxing and reading the paper while escaping the outside world."

by Heather McClure