

# Maria Mitchell Association Annual Report 2008





The Mission of the Nantucket Maria Mitchell Association is promotion of the legacy of Maria Mitchell and exploration, education and enjoyment of Nantucket's land, waters and skies beyond.

In fulfilling our mission we recognize the historic persona of Maria Mitchell, the foremost American woman scientist and educator of the 19th century, and her potential impact on contemporary thought by passing on her legacy of intellectual curiosity, respect for and love of nature, learning by doing, and the ideal of individualism.

Maria Mitchell's contributions to astronomy, science, and education are the basis for our continuing tradition of high quality research and teaching which inspires today's learners and tomorrow's scientists.

The NMMA provides scientific resources and educational programs for the community, uses Nantucket Island as an exceptional natural laboratory in which to study science and the environment, and maintains research and/or representative collections of Nantucket's biodiversity.

We strive to delight our members, supporters, and visitors by providing high quality programs, services, and facilities. We strive to ensure our financial viability and the preservation of our buildings and important collections so that current and future generations can share in this legacy. We strive to collaborate with other institutions (both on- and off-island) to share relevant organizational assets to accomplish these objectives, obtain cost efficiencies, and reduce our impact on the environment.

# Letter from the President

Dear Members and Friends:

The year 2008 has been a year of accomplishments and great challenges for the Maria Mitchell Association.

We continued to honor our history by celebrating the 100th anniversary of the Observatory on Vestal Street. And, we are now able to provide students and members new opportunities for research and education with the installation of a new 17-inch research telescope beneath its dome.

To follow up on the previous year's strategic planning process, the Facilities Committee of the Board created a "Request for Proposals" for a Master Plan for the revitalization of the Vestal Street Campus. Funding for the planning process has been raised by our board members in response to a challenge grant, and also from a generous gift from the Schmidt Family Foundation. Interviews with prospective architectural firms have begun.

However, the MMA has certainly not been immune to the current global fiscal crisis. We try to operate as close to a balanced budget as possible, with our traditional sources of income being our endowment, foundation support, and revenue from the Evening With the Stars Gala, the Fall Annual Appeal, membership, programs, admissions, and the museum shop. Needless to say, many of these income sources have been negatively affected by current financial conditions, causing us to implement a major effort of cost containment.

These conditions have challenged us to seek creative ways of fulfilling our mission, in the most fiscally prudent manner possible. Board and staff together remain committed to the MMA's role in the community: teaching the wonder and excitement of science, as well as preserving Maria Mitchell's legacy.

We are involved in more collaborative ventures with local and off-island organizations.

We have painstakingly reviewed our financial structure. The board and staff have been working together to set up stringent means for reducing expenses to work within our current financial parameters, and have been able to cut costs considerably.

Throughout this time of reduced salaries, curtailed travel, and tightened operating expenses, the quality of the staff's work has remained at its highest level, even with fewer resources. Their dedication and loyalty to the MMA and its community are great inspirations as we marshal our energies and talents to work together to keep the MMA, its legacy and its future, on course.

We invite you to share our pride in this wonderful organization with your family and friends. Take a class, sweep our dark skies at the observatory, revisit our campus to learn about our future plans, and absorb the energy of the staff and interns in our continued exploration of the beauty of Nantucket's natural world.

Sincerely yours,

Toni B. McKerrow, President

Toni B.  
McKerrow,  
President

# Letter from the Executive Director

Dear Members and Friends:

The Maria Mitchell Association's focus is to celebrate science and scientists. Rooted in the historical contributions and legacy of Maria Mitchell (1818-1889), MMA's mission is to promote the "exploration, education, and enjoyment of Nantucket's land, waters and skies beyond." From the first steps into the Mitchell birthplace, a visitor immediately captures the spirit of 19th century Nantucket and the excitement of discovery. This sense of discovery permeates the exhibits found in the Natural History Museum, the Aquarium, the Mitchell House, and the Vestal Street Observatory and is further nourished by participating in the ongoing research projects led by MMA's staff and interns. Workshops and classes on topics about Nantucket's natural world invite the curious participant to learn more about birds, bugs, flora and fishes that inhabit this island environment. An open night at Loines Observatory re-introduces the star-gazer into the wonder and majesty of the night sky. And, all are welcome to join the celebration of science and scientists through membership, attending one of the many events sponsored by MMA throughout the year, and through your generous gifts to our annual appeal and special development projects. This report of MMA's 2008 activities and list of our galaxy of support is a reflection of the myriad ways we fulfilled our mission to "explore, educate, and enjoy" the natural world of Nantucket.

Thank you for your continued support and interest in the Maria Mitchell Association!

Sincerely yours,

Janet E. Schulte, PhD

Executive Director

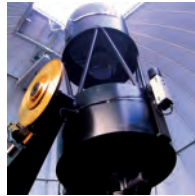
Janet E. Schulte,  
PhD  
Executive  
Director



## EXPLORE

### The research, preservation and publication activities of the MMA Staff

The Year 2008 marked the centennial of the Observatory on Vestal Street and the installation of a 17-inch research telescope in its dome. With the installation of this telescope, the **Astronomy Department** now operates two modern research telescopes for studying the night skies above. The 17-inch telescope and the 24-inch telescope, installed at the Loines Observatory a year before, generated exciting research projects and led to the development of new research techniques. One of the new methods, "Two Interference Filters" (TIF) is used to crack the puzzle of enigmatic stars called "UXORs." These stars demonstrate sudden, irregular drops of brightness by a factor of up to 3. Astronomers suspect that the process of new planet formation in the disk of gas and dust surrounding the star is involved with this dramatic dimming of the star light. The second method, "SysReMMO," considerably improves and simplifies the reductions of photometric observations, which, in particular, is important for observations of the transits of exosolar planets across the disks of their parent stars – one of the new directions of research at the Department.



The 2008 Astronomy research team included six undergraduate students who participated in the NSF- Research Experiences for Undergraduates (REU) program. Two new slots for Nantucket public school teachers were added through the NSF-Research Experiences for Teachers (RET) program. As they have for the past decade, all participants presented the results of their summer research projects at the annual meeting of the American Astronomical Society. This year, MMO brought home the prestigious Chambliss Award for the best student poster at the AAS meeting. This poster, based on the observations of an "UXOR" star with the 24-inch telescope using the new "TIF" method was co-authored by the REU intern Lauren Weiss (a junior from Harvard University) and the RET intern Peg Davidson (an 8th grade teacher at the Cyrus Peirce Middle School). To receive the Chambliss Award is even sweeter for the relatively small Observatory on Nantucket considering that large and well-endowed national college and university observatories are in competition for the prize.

Astronomers from around the country traveled to Nantucket in October 2008 for the joint scientific meeting of the American Association of Variable Star Observers (AAVSO) and the Maria Mitchell Observatory (MMO) dedicated to the MMO Centennial. This was the 8th joint meeting on Nantucket for the two organizations including two meetings dedicated to the MMO's 50th and 75th anniversaries. The presenters highlighted successes of both organizations in the studies of variable astronomical objects. To the traditional focus on variable stars, two new classes of variable objects have recently been added to both the AAVSO's and MMO's research agenda: active nuclei of galaxies ("blazars") and stars having planets (astronomers measure the drop of star light due to its occultation by the planet that "transits" between the star and the observer). A highlight of the conference was the announcement that the AAVSO awarded the MMA Director of Astronomy, Dr. Vladimir Strel'nitski, with the prestigious William Tyler Olcott Distinguished Service Award "for his tireless promotion of astronomy to the public and his keen mentorship of future astronomers through the Maria Mitchell Observatory REU Program."

Beetles, earthworms, pillbugs, snakes, and spiders as well as Barn Owls and Osprey topped the research agenda for the **Natural Science Museum** staff in 2008. Much of this work adds to the knowledge of the population density of the various species and provides data for determining when and how the different species may have arrived on Nantucket.

The American Burying Beetle (ABB) survey project had the most successful sampling effort in the last four years with the trapping of 112 beetles in 1348 trap nights in June, July and

August 2008. The team measured the mass and pronotal width of all captured beetles and tracked weather conditions during the summer trapping period. The ABB research project is done in collaboration with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, the Roger Williams Park Zoo, Philadelphia Zoo, and Pittsburg Zoo and PPG Aquarium.

Spider studies focused on documenting the population density and feeding habits of the Red-legged Purseweb Spider (native tarantula) on Tuckernuck; recording the natural history and biology of the Northern Black Widow on Tuckernuck, and investigating the impact of burning and mowing of the sandplain grasslands on spider communities living there. Support for the spider research came from the MMA Natural Science Museum, the Nantucket Biodiversity Initiative, the Nantucket Land Bank, and the Nantucket Land Council. The spider research provides data for a master's thesis and an article in preparation for the *Journal of Arachnology*.



The second year of the snake survey concluded in 2008, a collaborative effort with herpetologist Scott Smyers of Oxbow Inc. This study collected baseline data on activity periods, habitat use, life history traits, and approximate densities for the snakes of Nantucket. Tissue samples collected during this study will be delivered to molecular biologists to compare the DNA of the Nantucket populations to other populations in the species' respective ranges. These analyses may be able to address the question of whether some populations have been stranded on the island since sea level rise six to eight thousands years ago, or if there have been more recent colonization events to the island.

The species inventory of earthworms identified five species of worms, all thought to be introduced from Europe. As "ecosystem engineers," earthworms can be very beneficial in gardens but extremely detrimental in ecosystems that have evolved without their presence. It is anticipated that the results of the study, to be continued in 2009, will add to the understanding of nutrient cycling in the island's ecosystems and add data to the major effort in the US Great Lakes region and Canada to map earthworm populations.

Eighteen thousand, seven hundred and thirty-three (18,733) pillbugs were caught in 231 pitfall traps set in Nantucket's heathlands in the summer of 2008. The pillbugs were all caught in the traps set for the spider surveys. Considered to be of European origin, the pillbug's effect on Nantucket's ecosystem is not known. Determining their abundance is a first step to understanding their importance, especially in imperiled habitats like Nantucket's sandplain grassland.

Several MMA members and Nantucket conservation organizations are the proud stewards of Osprey poles and Barn Owls boxes on their Nantucket properties. Documenting the success of the nesting Osprey and Barn Owls is an indicator of the health of the two species. For those who join MMA staff on banding trips or observe and record the comings and goings of the birds, these ongoing surveys are an exciting citizen science activity.

Nantucket harbor is a rich site for scientific research. Since 2003, MMA scientists and **Aquarium Staff** have researched various aspects of the Nantucket Bay Scallop in collaboration with the Nantucket Shellfish Association, Nantucket High School, the Marine and Coastal Resources Department of Nantucket, and School of Marine Science and Technology at U Mass Dartmouth. MMA continued studies of the wild population of Bay Scallops and the factors that affect their distribution, survival and reproduction in Nantucket waters, including Nantucket and Madaket Harbors, Chord of the Bay, and the waters around Muskeget and Tuckernuck. Understanding the wild population is an essential part of any plan to manage this historic resource, especially in the development of a bay scallop aquaculture program.

The Histology Lab at Nantucket High School and Brant Point Boat House were used to monitor environmental effects on the scallops and to assess the timing and level of reproduction.

A new scallop research project emerged in Fall 2008 when the fall-spawned or Nub scallop controversy reached a new high because of the abundance of seed and nub scallops with a growth ring of less than 10mm (the regulation size of an adult scallop). An alternative regulation of 2.5 inches (63.5mm) was proposed when the Town Shellfish Biologist suggested that the majority of the scallops below 2.5 inches had not spawned while those larger than 2.5 inches had spawned, thus making them less likely to survive to spawn again in summer 2009. In response to this regulation, MMA and the Marine and Coastal Resources Department initiated a study to determine the survivorship and reproduction of Year 1 nub scallops in four different size classes 55 mm, 60 mm 65 mm and 70 mm. These four size classes and seed scallops were collected from the Harbor on 2 and 3 December, measured (height, length, depth or thickness, and growth ring height) and placed in cages at the MMA research site off Pocomo Point on 9 December. They will form the basis for further studies on their spawning in 2009. The findings from these studies will contribute to MMA's ongoing Nub scallop research and will be shared with shellfish biologists and managers in Massachusetts and beyond so that effective management practices can be developed for the Bay Scallop.



The Aquarium's daily (during the summer) Marine Ecology walks are a classic example of a citizen science research program. From June to early September, through regularly scheduled Marine Ecology Walks and by staff field trips, participants on the walk assist in collecting and counting the marine fishes and invertebrates found in the waters off Nantucket's shores. In 2008, 58 species of vertebrates and 79 species of Invertebrates were collected including a moderate invasion of tropical fish.

The staff of the Natural Science Department presented the results of various research projects at conference and meetings in the United States and in two publications. Results of scallop work were presented at the 28th Milford Aquaculture Seminar in February 2008, the 100th annual meeting of the National Shellfisheries Association in April 2008, and at monthly research updates to the Nantucket Shellfish Association. In addition, Dr. Bob Kennedy co-authored an article on the Island Thrush in the Philippines in *The Condor*, and a book chapter in *Handbook of the Birds of the World* (Vol. 13).

Maria Mitchell's and her Nantucket sisters' contributions to women's roles on Nantucket and in the broader United States are the research focus of the master's degree work of the **Mitchell House** curator. Material from her studies and interpretations will inform future exhibitions, Mitchell House projects, and future classes and talks.

The 2008 Mitchell House intern researched the history of MMA's gardens and the contents of William Mitchell's garden with an eye toward creating a plan to renovate and restore the gardens in the future.

Preservation projects in 2008 included the cataloging and organizing the Maria Mitchell Papers, the Mitchell Family Papers, and about half of the institutional records of the Maria Mitchell Association including the papers of Margaret Harwood, Dorrit Hoffleit, and the early papers associated with the founding of MMA. Funded by a grant from the M.S. Worthington Foundation, Adrianna Darden joined the MMA staff for a five-month period in 2008 to work on the archive project. In addition, the proper cataloging of the rare books in Maria Mitchell's personal library continued in 2008 guided by the able hand of volunteer Maris Humphreys. The finding aids for these papers, books and historic photographs will be placed on line to make the holdings more accessible to researchers to understand the breadth and depth of the

MMA Archives and Special Collections. The Community Preservation Act has also assisted with work in the Archives and Special Collections.

Funds from the Community Preservation Act supported the restoration of the lime wash in the root cellar of the Mitchell House in September 2008. The project involved the removal of biological growth, re-pointing, and re-liming the interior of the 1790 root cellar to better protect the House against moisture. It is now restored to its original appearance.

The Mitchell House curator, Jascin Leonardo Finger, found several opportunities to present her research and preservation experiences to the general public including a presentation at the AAVSO meeting in October 2008, two spots on NPR's "Maritime Minutes," and in a conference panel at the New England Museum Association annual meeting in November 2008.

The staff of the **Education department** are outstanding at translating the high quality research activities of the MMA staff into education programs that meet the needs and interests of students of all ages. From the summer Discovery class programs for children aged 4-14, to workshops for adults on birds, scallops, and telescopes, and in professional development programs for Nantucket teachers, the department has a remarkable ability to translate the scientific content into educational programs and workshops that are age appropriate and fun! One of the key ways in which the department is especially skilled is in the use of art to learn about the natural world, especially for younger students. The staff presented a "Natural Art Seminar" at the March 2008 Massachusetts Environmental Education Society Conference.



The Executive Director presented her research and interpretation of the educational philosophy of Maria Mitchell at a two-day Women's History program at Rowan University in Glassboro, New Jersey in March 2008. She also joined the NEMA panel with the Mitchell House curator and the executive director of the Egan Maritime Institute to address the opportunities and challenges when two non-profits collaborate on shared staff positions. Dr. Schulte served as a committee member for a master's degree student at Lesley University who examined the ways regional museums in Concord, Massachusetts and Nantucket interpret and present their stories.

## EDUCATE

### The educational programs and learning resources at the MMA

MMA's members and friends learn about Nantucket's natural history in a variety of ways. Most notable is the summer Discovery program for children aged 4-14. This hallmark of the MMA Education Department served 478 students in 2008. The summer program expanded to offer more family-oriented programs including a Family Fun Friday, Family Night Walks, and family programs at the observatory (Kid's Open Nights) and the aquarium. Private Discovery classes, introduced in 2007, were created for families seeking a unique environmental education experience for their children.

Bird walks, nature walks, marine ecology walks, open nights, are all key learning opportunities for summer visitors to Nantucket as well as visits to the Aquarium (7799 in 2008), the Natural Science Museum (1413), Mitchell House (755) . the Vestal Street Observatory (370) and Loines Observatory (1380). Each facility introduced new elements and upgrades to the visitors' experience including the acquisition of an octopus at the Aquarium, an expanded spider exhibit at the museum, a display on the research contributions of the MMA Astronomers, and a timeline of the historic development of the Maria Mitchell Observatory. The Mitchell House

collaborated with the Nantucket Preservation Trust on a discounted admission ticket which allowed those taking the NPT's Main Street walking tour to visit the Mitchell House. The discount was reciprocal for those visiting Mitchell House who were eager to learn more about Nantucket's architecture on the NPT tour.

In Fall 2008, MMA welcomed three students from Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI) who came to Nantucket as part of their junior year program of study. The students' project was to review the Natural Science Museum and prepare a report and recommendations on ways to enhance the museum experience for school-aged children. During their six weeks at MMA, the WPI students welcomed a dozen classes from the island's elementary schools to the museum where they observed and recorded the students' interactions with existing exhibits and proto-type hands-on exhibits. Their final report, "Updating the Natural Science Exhibits at the Maria Mitchell Association" (December 2008) will be used to institute upgrades and add more interactive displays at the Museum in 2009.



MMA's educational outreach expanded in Fall 2008 in the form of the ACKtive learning series – a schedule of workshops, lectures, and field trips designed to introduce the year-round resident and off-season visitor to the wonders of Nantucket outside the traditional summer season. Program attendance grew over time as enthusiastic participants spread the word about the hands-on learning they enjoyed while working side-by-side with MMA Staff. Topics included backyard telescopes and celestial navigation, the "secrets of scallop sex" and how-to scallop workshops, the inner workings of the Mitchell House in winter, a Nantucket women's history walking tour, three ornithology workshops and two night bird walks (owls and woodcocks). A Nature Explorer's Club for children in grades 1 to 5 offered a series of explorations and activities about Nantucket's natural world culminating in earning the MMA's Nature Explorer Patch.

The Education Department completed work on "Unique Nantucket," a program funded by the Nantucket Golf Club Foundation in which MMA staff and island scientists assisted Nantucket Public School teachers in designing field trips and hands-on learning that linked to the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks. Eleven units were completed (grades K-8) and 39 field trips took place. Other professional development opportunities for Nantucket teachers included Project WILD and Project Aquatic workshops where teachers participated in a full day of activities for teachers to bring the study of local wildlife into their classrooms. School programs about Nantucket's natural world were also held at the island's private schools and pre-schools, as well as special offerings for several off-island groups.

After school programs were held at the Nantucket Boys and Girls Club and the Community Network for Children as well as a twice-a-week After School Science "drop-in" Series at the Natural Science Museum. The drop-in program was funded with the generous support of the Cape and Islands United Way.

MMA Director of Education, Darcie Vallant, organized the first "Nantucket Family Adventure" with several other Nantucket conservation and nature organizations. This collaboration featured family-centered outdoor activities including scavenger hunts, geocaching, insect collection, birding, field games, and plant identifications. Families organized themselves into team to participate in the month-long event in June 2008. The Flegg ("Beetle Club") family won first place by visiting all four conservation sites and participating in over ten scheduled activities.

MMA members and friends enjoyed several opportunities to become active researchers by joining the MMA's ongoing research projects. Dr. Kennedy led several trips to band young osprey and barn owls in the company of MMA members. The Natural Science Museum staff were accompanied by visitors on several successful spider and insect ecology programs where participants joined the "expeditions" to collect and identify species in parks near the Vestal Street Campus. Several individuals joined the Scallop research team in their bi-weekly trips to collect and count specimens on spat bags located around Nantucket Harbor.

In collaboration with Shearwater Excursions, MMA led several whale watch and seal trips from Nantucket Harbor to the open Atlantic (whales) and Muskeget Island (seals). MMA staff served as onboard naturalists assisting with explanations about the biology and ecology of the animals and answering passengers' questions about their behaviors.

The weather cooperated in making this anniversary year a special one for the Astronomy Department's outreach and educational programs as well. In addition to regular Open Nights, the Department offered an "Open Morning" for observations of a meteor shower and a special Open Night for observations of a lunar eclipse. The Wednesday evening astronomy lectures held throughout the summer were broad in the subject matter – the nature (and the potential danger) of comets and asteroids; the miracle of giant pulsating stars and other variable stars; the modern methods of "measuring the Universe"; the history of astronomy in the U.S.; the astronomical backgrounds of celestial navigation; and the use of the GPS system for the science of the Earth. The lectures were presented by the Department's staff and by visiting scholars from universities across the U.S. and Canada.



The Mitchell House, Special Collections and Archives accepted three important gifts to augment the collection and further enhance our efforts to tell the story of Maria Mitchell:

1. Michelle Soverino, book: *Maria Mitchell: Stargazer*.
2. Henry Kehlenbeck, pamphlet titled "1804 – 1979: A Remarkable Bank Account;" photograph of Pacific National Bank, ca. 1880; glass negative of Pacific National Bank, ca. 1880.
3. Heidi Kunz, Ph. D., *American Women of Letters and the Nineteenth Century Sciences: Styles of Affiliation* by Nina Baym; *Macaria: Altars of Sacrifice* by Augusta Jane Evans

Members and friends were generous in sharing their ideas for programs, walks, or events, and, occasionally leading them on behalf of MMA. As an active learning organization, MMA staff is always eager to promote new ways to generate excitement about science and scientists.

## ENJOY

### The special events that celebrate our work

Throughout the 2008 calendar, MMA sponsored several special events to celebrate and highlight our activities and programs.

**What's Your Sign?** (April 2008) The Rose and Crown Restaurant in downtown Nantucket was transformed into a Celebration of the Zodiac on April 5, 2008. A welcomed night out for Nantucketers, the event featured a penny raffle for donated items ranging from an Open Night at Loines Observatory to an evening cruise aboard the *Endeavor*, to a signed Red Sox baseball.

**Cambridge Birding:** For the past three years, MMA has offered a birding experience off-island during the second weekend in May. On Saturday, May 10, 2008, Dr. Bob Kennedy, Director of Natural Sciences, and Dr. Janet Schulte, MMA's Executive Director, traveled to Mount Auburn Cemetery in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Dr. Kennedy led a group of 27 birders through the park-like setting of the cemetery viewing hundreds of songbirds in migration. Among the 40 plus species counted were dozens of warblers "dripping from the trees," Barn Swallows, Rose-breasted Grosbeaks, Northern Cardinals, and Purple Finches. A brunch at the Cambridge home of MMA board member and clerk, Bebe Poor, followed the walk.

**The 2008 Bird-a-thon** raised over six thousand dollars to fund the purchase of collections storage equipment for the Edith F. Andrews Ornithological Collection. Four teams participated in the 24-hour event, culminating with a celebratory supper and the counting of species. A record number of species – 136 – were observed by the various teams during the event, including a Pacific Loon. The bird-a-thon is a wonderful way to celebrate spring on Nantucket; for the experienced birder, it's a chance to put all of one's birding talents to use for a good cause, and for the novice birder, it's an exciting way to learn some of the tricks of the birders' world.

**The 2008 Annual Meeting** was held on the Vestal Street campus on the afternoon of Tuesday, June 10, 2008. In Celebration of the Centennial of the Observatory on Vestal Street, MMA's Director of Astronomy, Dr. Vladimir Strelnitski was the featured speaker. His talk focused on the changing research and education agenda of the different MMA Directors of Astronomy throughout the Observatory's one-hundred year history. Just two weeks earlier, MMA installed a 17-inch research telescope into the historic dome on Vestal Street, returning that facility to the world of astronomical research. The Annual Meeting also featured the election of five new members to the MMA Board of Managers: Howard L. Blitman, Dennis Cross, Peggy Gilfoy, Malcolm W. MacNab MD, PhD, and Eileen Rudden. Two current members were re-elected to three-year terms: Judith G. Belash and Margaret B. Goldman, PhD.

**The Centennial Celebration of the Maria Mitchell Observatory (1908-2008)** featured a series of "Dome Parties" on the Vestal Street Campus. Members and friends joined MMA board members, staff and interns for tours of the dome and its updated exhibits and new telescope. Guests also heard presentations on research projects in the Natural Science Museum, including the surveys on the American Burying Beetle and the Black Widow Spiders, enjoyed behind-the-scenes tours of the Mitchell House, and had a peek at some of the interesting documents from the Maria Mitchell Papers. Dome Parties were the name of the events held by Professor Mitchell in the Vassar Observatory at the end of the academic year. These annual celebrations highlighted the work and achievements of her students through poetry readings written by the students and Miss Mitchell. In the true spirit of the Dome Party, MMA friend and Vassar Alumna, Barbara Duffy, prepared and read a poem at the June Dome Party at MMA. It was a lovely connection between MMA and Vassar, and a touching recollection of Professor Mitchell's connections with her students.



**Sconset Walks** led by Dr. Bob Kennedy continued into the third season. In partnership with The Sconset Trust, the walk included two birds walks and two geology walks in Sconset in July and August. About 45 Sconseters joined Dr. Kennedy on the walks.

**An Evening with the Stars**, MMA's annual fundraising gala, moved to a Saturday night this year. On July 12, 2008, 175 gathered at the Loines Observatory to celebrate the different "stars" of MMA: Celestial Stars – an opportunity to visit Loines Observatory and stargaze through the telescope; Terrestrial Stars – a celebration of MMA's research, education and exploration of Nantucket's land and waters; and Maria Mitchell Stars – a chance to meet the MMA board,

staff, interns and volunteers. A silent auction featuring items donated by local artisans and shopkeepers and a raffle of a Diana Kim England necklace, helped strengthen the MMA coffers. Susan Warner provided the delicious catering, Spanky's Raw Bar provided its special festive flair, and Ecliff & the Swingdogs kept the music playing. The gala raised \$125,000; funds which are used to support MMA's research, education and public outreach activities. A special thanks to the many Gala Sponsors whose financial support makes the Gala such a celebratory and outstanding evening, and to all who joined us for a delightful evening under the stars.

**Maria Mitchell's Birthday Celebration: August 1st** The annual celebration of Maria Mitchell's birthday provided a unique opportunity for a discussion with author Renee Bergland about her 2008 book on *Maria Mitchell, Maria Mitchell and the Sexing of Science: An Astronomer among the American Romantics*, (Beacon Press, 2008). The discussion was preceded by the reading of an original poem about Maria Mitchell written and rendered by Nantucket Poet, Frank Cunningham. Dozens of children were delighted with the annual appearance of The Martian Cat (Dr. V. Strelnitski). Children and families enjoyed the various games and activities provided by the MMA Environmental Education interns, the REU-Astronomy interns, and the staff at the Natural Science Museum.



**Maria Mitchell Women in Science Award** (MM-WISA) Between 1997 and 2008, the Maria Mitchell Association received funding from national foundations and individuals to present an award to an individual in recognition of that person's contributions to mentoring women in the fields of science, engineering, technology, and mathematics. In 2008, the Henry B. Luce Foundation funded the award prize.

Margaret B. Bailey, Ph.D., PE, Kate Gleason Endowed Chair and Associate Professor in Mechanical Engineering, Rochester Institute of Technology received the 2008 Maria Mitchell Women in Science Award on Friday, September 19, 2008. The award was presented at a ceremony at the Coffin School by MM-WISA Committee Chair, Margaret B. Goldman, Ph.D. and MMA Board President, Toni B. McKerrow. Dr. Bailey was selected by a panel of distinguished jurors: Karen Kashmanian Oates, Ph.D., Deputy Division Director, Division of Undergraduate Education, National Science Foundation; Robert S. Fujinami, Ph.D., Professor of Pathology, University of Utah School of Medicine; and Cynthia A. Brossman, Director of LERNet Center, Boston University.

Dr. Bailey is the founder and executive director of WE@RIT (Women in Engineering at Rochester Institute of Technology) where she leads a dynamic organization that aims to improve the retention of current women engineering students, as well as to expand the pipeline of future women engineers through the delivery of a series of outreach programs for girls and women in K-12 grades. Mentoring is at the core of the WE@RIT which links first-year and upper-level engineering students, utilizes undergraduate engineering students in the K-12 outreach programs, and holds a bi-weekly workshop series for RIT female engineering students. Dr. Bailey has also created a program where RIT undergraduates shadow professional engineers and a two week engineering camp for 4th-9th graders, "Everyday Engineering," led by RIT women engineering students.

A celebratory dinner hosted by Margaret and John Goldman at their Nantucket home followed the award ceremony.

**Haunted Hinchman House** As part of a community-wide program among non-profit organizations to sponsor safe Halloween activities, the MMA Education and Natural Museum staff sponsored a special Halloween Haunted Hinchman House. Guests were welcomed to walk through the haunted museum, have their fortunes told, feel creepy things in touch

boxes, and play haunted games in the courtyard. The balmy October evening helped to encourage 150 Nantucket residents to visit the Museum.

**Christmas Stroll at MMA:** For the third consecutive year, an intrepid group of birders spent the Saturday afternoon of Christmas Stroll weekend observing the Long-Tailed Duck diurnal migration. The group of 25 ventured to Madaket to observe this world-class birding event while enjoying wine and cheese on the windy beach. Streams of ducks flew directly overhead with the setting sun set behind them making this another spectacular birding experience.

## IN MEMORIAM

### Henry Albers, Ph.D.

The MMA has lost a dear friend, a life member, and one of the first recipients of the Maria Mitchell Women in Science Award.

Henry Albers, Ph.D. served as an astronomy professor at Vassar College for thirty-two years where he occupied the Maria Mitchell Chair. A graduate of Harvard College in 1950, Professor Albers earned advance degrees from the University of Minnesota and Case Institute of Technology where he earned the first Ph.D. from Warner Swasey Observatory in 1956. In 1958 he began his work of teaching and astronomical observation at Vassar College and his in-depth knowledge of and love and respect for Maria Mitchell began to grow. Professor Albers traveled to research and lecture and was an observational astronomer primarily at the Interamerican Observatory in Chile. Many remember Professor Albers as he spent countless hours in the Maria Mitchell Science Library transcribing the letters, journals, and notes of Maria Mitchell. His long work culminated in *Maria Mitchell: A Life in Journals and Letters*. This book was the first in-depth look at Maria Mitchell since Helen Wright's *Sweeper in the Sky* and helped to pave the way for other biographies of Maria Mitchell, including the recent publications by Margaret Moore Booker in 2007 titled *Among the Stars* (Mill Hill Press) and Renee Bergland in 2008 titled *Maria Mitchell and The Sexing of Science* (Beacon Press). Professor Albers was well-known among Maria Mitchell fans and was a friendly presence on Vestal Street. In 1997, Henry Albers along with Edith Andrews, Eileen McGrath, and Dorrit Hoffleit was awarded the first Maria Mitchell Women in Science Award for his inspiring work mentoring women in astronomy.

Professor Albers passed away on March 29, 2009 in Fairhope, Alabama where he lived with his wife, Wilma. He was eighty-three years old.

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The Archibald Family Foundation  
Brenda Bragdon  
John & Cynthia Gallagher  
Tom & Kim Griswold  
Carol Hausner  
Ms. Pauline Houghton  
Harry & Fran Ostrander  
Mr. & Mrs. Edward E. Phillips  
Josh Posner & Ms. Eileen Rudden  
Clint & Michele Schuckel  
Ms. Susan Strang  
Ms. Judy Summersby  
Mr. & Mrs. Jonathan F. Swain

## OTHER CONTRIBUTIONS

Mr. & Mrs. Mitchell Coffin  
Mr. Gordon Kiddoo  
Charles S. Kline  
Dr. R. Fredric Knauff  
Bob & Diane Lang  
Mr & Mrs. Hampton S. Lynch, Jr.  
Steven & Mary Meadow  
Nantucket Bank  
James & Ellen Reinig  
Mr. Ben Sonnonstine  
Mr. & Mrs. Philip H. Templeton  
Mr. & Mrs. Stuart H. Whitlock

# Financial Report

The Nantucket Maria Mitchell Association  
Statement of Financial Position  
December 31, 2008  
(With summarized Financial Information for 2007)

<b>Assets</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2007</b>
Cash and cash equivalents	\$289,739	\$263,478
Inventories	5,470	7,080
Pledges receivable	10,750	15,750
Grants receivable		35,250
Other receivables	2,608	18,225
Employee receivable	30,000	40,000
Investments	2,376,501	4,280,494
Beneficial interest in real estate trust	333,000	333,000
Remainder interest in property	389,100	381,610
Property, plant, and equipment, net	3,245,951	3,288,651
	<u>\$6,683,119</u>	<u>\$8,663,538</u>
<b>Liabilities and Net Assets</b>		
Note payable, bank	-	23,000
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	26,889	46,542
	<u>\$26,889</u>	<u>\$69,542</u>
<b>Net assets</b>		
Unrestricted	4,094,452	5,955,175
Temporarily restricted	633,139	710,182
Permanently restricted	1,928,639	1,928,639
Total net assets	<u>6,656,230</u>	<u>8,593,996</u>
	<u>\$6,683,119</u>	<u>\$8,663,538</u>

The Nantucket Maria Mitchell Association  
Statement of Activities  
Year ended December 31, 2008  
(With Summarized Financial Information for 2007)

<b>Operating activities:</b>	Unrestricted	Temporarily Restricted	Permanently Restricted	Total 2008	Total 2007
<b>Revenue and support</b>					
Programs	\$136,014	-	-	\$136,014	\$122,531
Admissions	40,411	-	-	40,411	34,372
Museum Shop	25,051	-	-	25,051	31,767
Memberships	120,023	-	-	120,023	109,141
Grants	79,703	131,528	-	211,231	197,726
Contributions	126,881	53,697	-	180,578	177,443
Special events	157,042	-	-	157,042	126,477
Investment return designated for operations	370,000	-	-	370,000	380,000
Rental income	18,807	-	-	18,807	18,923
Interest income	4,868	-	-	4,868	1,615
Net assets released from restriction - Satisfaction of program restrictions	\$227,912	(227,912)	-	-	-
<b>Total revenue and support</b>	<u>1,306,712</u>	<u>(42,687)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>1,264,025</u>	<u>1,199,995</u>
<b>Expenses</b>					
Program services	1,051,753	-	-	\$1,051,753	\$1,075,515
Management and general	163,886	-	-	\$163,886	\$169,783
Fundraising and capital campaign	107,322	-	-	\$107,322	\$109,340
<b>Total expenses</b>	<u>1,322,961</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>1,322,961</u>	<u>1,354,638</u>
Change in net assets from operating activities	(16,249)	(42,687)	-	(58,936)	(154,643)
<b>Non-operating activities:</b>					
Investment return, less amounts designated for operations	(1,913,520)	-	-	(1,913,520)	(74,085)
Contributions and grants restricted for capital activities	-	27,200	-	27,200	123,855
Donation of remainder interest in property	-	7,490	-	7,490	7,650
Net assets released from restriction - Satisfaction of capital restrictions	69,046	(69,046)	-	-	-
Change in net assets from non-operating activities	(1,844,474)	(34,356)	-	(1,878,830)	57,420
Change in net assets	(1,860,723)	(77,043)	-	(1,937,766)	(97,223)
Net assets, beginning of year	5,955,175	710,182	1,928,639	8,593,996	8,691,219
Net assets, end of year	<u>\$4,094,452</u>	<u>\$633,139</u>	<u>\$1,928,639</u>	<u>\$6,656,230</u>	<u>\$8,593,996</u>

The financial statements for 2008 have been audited by Bollus & Lynch, LLP, who have rendered an unqualified opinion on them. Complete financial statements are available on request.

## MMA BOARD OF MANAGERS

### Officers:

Toni B. McKerrow, President  
Judith G. Belash, First Vice President  
John L. Daniels, Second Vice President  
Mary Archibald Poor, DVM, Clerk  
Dennis Cross, Treasurer

### Honorary Vice Presidents:

Eileen McGrath  
Robert W. Noyes, PhD

### Managers:

#### Term Expires

2008	Heather Tausig Derek E. Till Bruce W. Perry
2009	Brian Donovan
2010	John L. Daniels Bebe Archibald Poor, DVM Toni B. McKerrow
2011	Judith G. Belash Howard N. Blitman Dennis Cross Peggy Gilfoy Margaret B. Goldman, PhD Malcolm W. MacNab, MD, PhD Eileen Rudden

## MMA STAFF

### Administration

Janet E. Schulte, PhD, Executive Director  
Amy Hunt England, Communications & Design Coordinator  
Rachel Rasfeld, Public Relations & Events Coordinator  
Joan Alison Stockman, Financial Administrator

### Astronomy

Vladimir Strel'nitski, PhD, Director of Astronomy  
Nan Strel'nitski, Observatory Assistant  
Gary Walker, Engineer-Astronomer

### Education

Darcie E. Vallant, MS, Director of Education  
Marjorie Thomas, BA, Lead Teacher, Summer 2008 and Fall 2008 Intern

### Mitchell House

Jascin Leonardo Finger, AB, Curator  
Adrianna Darden, MLS, Processing Archivist,  
Winter -Spring 2008

### Natural Sciences

Robert S. Kennedy, PhD, Director of Natural Sciences  
Edith F. Andrews, MS, Ornithologist Emeritus  
Valerie A. Hall, Research Associate  
Peter B. Boyce, PhD, Research Associate  
Cheryl Comeau Beaton, Assistant Director, Natural Science Museum  
Andrew McKenna-Foster, Graduate Student, University of Wisconsin at Green Bay, Director of Natural Science Museum  
Robert Kessler, Aquarium Director  
W. Forrest Kennedy, BS, Aquarium Advisor

## 2008 INTERNS

### Astronomy

Alice Olmstead, Boston University  
Ilse Cleeves, Rice University  
Lauren Weiss, Harvard University  
Elissa Sperling, Wesleyan University  
Michi Baubock, Boston University  
Stephen Messenger, University of Missouri

### Environmental Education

Nick Matisse, Whitman College  
Caitlin Domagal, SUNY Geneseo  
Courtney Nemeth, Ohio University  
Dorthea Gudonis, Bucknell University  
Macy Kozar, Swarthmore College  
Jennifer Priesing, BS, Framingham College

### Mitchell House

Hannah Perham, Dartmouth College

### Aquarium

Margaret Baker, Senior, University of Notre Dame  
Lee Cronin-Fine, Senior, Brown University  
Nicholas Hasbrouck, BA, Niagara University  
Ariadne Prior-Grosch, BS, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

### MMA Marine Science Intern

Jessica Sayles West, Graduate, Phillips Exeter Academy

### Natural Science Museum

Julianna Marie Arntzen, Ornithology Intern, BA University of Wisconsin  
Jonathan Shuster, Entomology Intern, BA Brandeis University

## VOLUNTEERS

### Astronomy

Roger Seitz

### Mitchell House

Alana Zola, docent, Cambridge School of Weston  
Judith Drake, docent  
Susan Dupree, docent  
Maris Humphreys, rare book cataloger

### Education

Erica Lang  
Diane Lang  
Emily Etheridge  
Sara Mack  
Jacob Hallett  
Kelly Connelly  
Keaton Goddard  
Christopher Coomey  
Laura Recoder

### Natural Science Volunteers

Marcia Aguiar - Ornithology  
Ginger Andrews - Ornithology  
Liz Asch - Scallops  
David Berry - Ornithology/Scallops  
Kenneth T. Blackshaw - Ornithology  
Barbara Carr - Ornithology  
John Daniels - Scallops  
Lou Gennaro - Scallops  
Tamzin Hutchinson - Ospreys  
Bob Lang - Scallops  
Diane Lang - Ornithology/Scallops  
Robert Kessler - Ornithology  
Martin McKerrow - Scallops  
Charlotte Maison Kastner - Ospreys  
Justin Paradis - Barn Owls  
Trish Pastuszak - Ospreys  
Hannah Perham - Entomology  
Sandy Spencer - Scallops  
Bill Untereker - Barn Owls

### Youth Volunteers (Volunteer Hours)

Matthew Abate (30 hrs) - Aquarium  
Mark Abate (21 hrs) - Aquarium  
Sarah Banbury (19.5 hrs) - Aquarium  
Oliver Bender (159 hrs) - Aquarium  
Jack Dubinsky (72 hrs) - Aquarium  
Eliot Frost (4 hrs) - Aquarium  
Riley Fusaro (15.5 hrs) - Aquarium  
Keaton Goddard (21 hrs) - Aquarium  
Sarah Gutman (39 hrs) - Aquarium  
Andrew Matarese - Entomology/ Ichthyology  
Mercy Paine (183 hrs) - Aquarium  
Nicholas Panchy (155 hrs) - Aquarium

John Papadopoulos - Entomology/Ichthyology  
Krysti Papadopoulos - Entomology/Ichthyology  
Stavros Papadopoulos - Entomology/Ichthyology  
Crawford Patton (14.5 hrs) - Aquarium  
Morgan Ravenscroft (121.5 hrs) - Aquarium  
John Stavros - Entomology  
James Sternlicht (41 hrs) - Aquarium  
Arianna Tausig-Edwards (10 hrs) - Aquarium

### Administration

Marcia Aguiar  
Cheryl Comeau Beaton  
John Belash  
Kenneth Blackshaw  
Evan Brownlee  
Lisa Clarey-Lawler  
Mary Ann Dober  
Ronnie M. Elwell  
Barbara Kates-Garnick  
Elvira Harden  
Dolly Howell  
Charlotte Maison Kastner  
Jack Kennedy  
Judith Lee  
Scott Leonard  
Tricia Lowe  
Karen MacNab  
Martin McKerrow  
Greg Maskell  
Michelle Perkins  
Ann Radding  
Sandy Spencer  
Jo Zschau

## ASSOCIATION PRESIDENTS

1902-1911	Mary W. Whitney
1912-1914	Mrs. Wilfred Lewis
1915-1926	Ellen Folsom
1927-1929	Alice M. Howland
1930-1946	Margaret U. Davis
1947-1948	Charles Neal Barney
1949-1953	Margaret U. Davis
1954-1959	Charles G. Snow
1960-1962	Edouard A. Stackpole
1963-1973	B.F.D. Runk, PhD
1974-1980	Alfred Bornemann, DEng
1981-1989	Jane W. Merrill
1990-1991	Robert K. Noyes
1992-1994	Robert W. Noyes, PhD
1995-2000	Daniel W. Drake
2001-2007	Judith F. Lee
2007-	Toni B. McKerrow