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## **ASTRONOMY JOURNALISM PRIZE AWARDED FOR SPACETIME RIPPLE ARTICLES**

Science writer Trudy E. Bell has won the 2006 David N. Schramm Award for high-energy astrophysics science journalism for two articles about gravitational radiation, a form of non-electromagnetic energy predicted by Albert Einstein but not yet detected directly.

The David N. Schramm award is offered by the High Energy Astrophysics Division (HEAD) of the American Astronomical Society. Bell, a freelance writer, will receive the \$1,500 cash prize and travel expenses to the HEAD scientific meeting in San Francisco in October. She will be presented a plaque and, for the publishers of her articles, a certificate honoring the work.

One article, called "When Stars Collide," in the August-September 2005 issue of *Air & Space*, introduces the reader to the world of gravitational radiation, in which massive objects churn the fabric of space and distort otherwise fixed points in space and time. The other, called "Engineering Gutsy Science on a Shoestring---Testing Einstein," in the summer 2005 issue of *The Bent*, captures the nitty-gritty engineering challenges of building an instrument to detect something that's never been detected before.

"I want to thank *Air & Space* Senior Editor Tony Reichhardt and Executive Editor Linda Shiner, who first approached me about doing an article on the exotic astronomy of gravitational waves," said Bell, who is also managing editor for the *Journal of the Antique Telescope Society*. "I also want to thank James D. Froula, Editor of *The Bent*, for agreeing that there was a fantastic adventure engineering story behind the building of LIGO's beam tube. Most of all, I want to express my gratitude to some two dozen ALLEGRO, LIGO, and LISA scientists and engineers who gave so generously of their time and expertise in telephone interviews, personal tours, and help during the manuscript stages."

The HEAD journalism award is named in memory of David Schramm of the University of Chicago, a world leader in theoretical astrophysics and a leading authority on the Big Bang model of the formation of the universe. He was killed in 1997 when the twin-engine plane he was piloting crashed outside of Denver. Schramm was dedicated to public outreach, and the writing award that bears his name recognizes distinguished writing on high-energy astrophysics that improves the general public's understanding in and appreciation of this exciting field of research.

The Bent is a publication of Tau Beta Pi society, the nation's oldest engineering honor society, founded in 1885 at Lehigh University in Pennsylvania. Bell's article is available to download under the link "Testing Einstein" at <http://www.tbp.org/pages/publications/features.cfm>. Air & Space is the magazine of the Smithsonian's National Air and Space Museum. The article "When Star Collide" is available on the magazine website at [http:// www.airspacemag.com](http://www.airspacemag.com)

Bell recently joined the National Coordinating Office of the Federal government's multi-agency Networking and Information Technology Research and Development (NITRD) program as a technical writer.

HEAD presents the Schramm award at its division meetings. Entries are judged by a committee of distinguished scientists and journalists. Information about the prize is available at <http://www.aas.org/head/schramm/schramm.prize.html>.

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