

The International Geophysical Year Plus Fifty (IGY+50)

The author proposes the following amateur science event to coincide with the fiftieth anniversary of International Geophysical Year. IGY + 50 would take place from 1 July 2007 to 31 December 2008 (corresponding to the fiftieth anniversary of IGY). Its purpose is to encourage the exploration of the Earth, from pole to pole, and from the bottom of the oceans to the top of the atmosphere, by amateur scientists from around the world in the spirit of IGY. The origins of IGY can be traced back to the spring of 1950, when Dr. James Van Allen (University of Iowa) began leading discussions with American researchers, and eventually European researchers, to create a coordinated, worldwide research program in order to better understand the Earth's upper atmosphere and outer space. Together they declared the 18 months between July 1957 and December 1958 to be the International Geophysical Year.

As a part of IGY, the Eisenhower administration declared America's intention to launch an earth-orbiting satellite. Later the Soviet Union also announced their intention to do the same. The opening of the Space Age is due in part to IGY. IGY was the last time a peaceful and professional worldwide effort was made to scientifically explore new and poorly understood regions of the Earth (the two prior times were the International Polar Years in 1883 and 1933). I'd like to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of IGY with what will essentially be an amateur reenactment. But this time it will be an effort of amateurs exploring and experimenting the Earth.

The Overall Goals of IGY+50 would be the following.

- A. To create as many amateur science programs as possible
- B. To encourage amateur science activities
- C. To give guidance to these groups
- D. To collect as much data and stories of amateur science as possible and in an organized fashion
- E. To host a symposium at the conclusion of the program
- F. To publish a book of the results at the conclusion of the program

To make this a reality, I believe at least five committees are needed

- A. A Board of Directors to oversee all other committees
- B. Membership Committee to register and track all participating groups or individuals
- C. Public Relations Committee to spread the word and line up supporting organizations or donors
- D. Standards Committee to develop a standard for terminology and a format for experimental results
- E. Publications Committee to see to the publication of a final book, symposium, and webpage

To begin IGY+50, I believe the following objectives must first be met.

- A. Get sufficient agreement to begin the program
- B. Develop an organizational chart for the committees and define their responsibilities
- C. Develop a website for the program
- D. Develop an email list for the program

The IGY+50 website should have at least three sections.

- A. The Groups Section which is a series of links to those groups that have been formed and are planning to take measurements. Interested individuals can use this section to locate groups in his or her area and the particular projects they plan to accomplish.
- B. The Help Section which is a section for those giving or needing help. If a group needs help, they can list their requirements there. If a group can lend help, they list the specifics. Finally, if there are any donors or mass-purchases available to groups, then they are listed in this section along with how to participate.
- C. The Events Section which lists individual, regional, and global events of interest. The list encompasses projects, scheduled events, tours, or nice to know events.

The IGY+50 email list doesn't replace those email lists now in, or planned to be in, existence. I would like to see amateur science groups include messages from the IGY+50 list in their program's emails. This way we can all share information.

In conclusion, please share this idea with anyone who may be interested in being a part or supporting those getting involved. We have a few years to get new groups up to speed in designing their programs. I believe we need to develop a recruitment video and a series of posters to help spread the word. I'd like to see some early media coverage of the program. Opportunities to have amateur experiments be a part or performed in conjunction with professional experiments should be explored.

IGY + 50 won't work unless many people make an effort to get involved. Please discuss this issue with me so that I can gauge the level of support and further refine the concept. If you are interested in participating and can help organize IGY+50, please contact the author at the email address below.

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