

# Plasma Universe 2013

99.999%  
of the  
visible  
Universe

[www.plasma-universe.com](http://www.plasma-universe.com)

**Image:** Nebula M1-67 around Star W<sub>r</sub>124.

[http://hubblesite.org/gallery/album/star\\_collection/pr1998038a/](http://hubblesite.org/gallery/album/star_collection/pr1998038a/)

**Credit:** Yves Grosdidier (University of Montreal and Observatoire de Strasbourg), Anthony Moffat (Universit  de Montreal), Gilles Joncas (Universit  Laval), Agnes Acker (Observatoire de Strasbourg), and NASA



**COVER**

# Plasma Universe 2013

99.999% of the visible Universe

www.plasma-universe.com

Plasma Universe 2008

www.plasma-universe.com

**JANUARY**

99.999% Plasma

**FEBRUARY**

What is Plasma?

**MARCH**

Why is Plasma so...

**APRIL**

Electrified Plasma

The Heliospheric Current Circuit

**MAY**

Pinched Plasma filament

**JUNE**

Plasma focus

**JULY**

Plasma galaxy

**AUGUST**

Plasma beam

Sep. 24, 1994 WFPC2	Feb. 6, 1998 WFPC2	Mar. 23, 2001 WFPC2
Jan. 5, 2001 ACS49RC	Dec. 15, 2004 ACS49RC	Dec. 8, 2008 ACS49RC

**SEPTEMBER**

Plasma jets

**OCTOBER**

Plasma sun

**NOVEMBER**

Plasma rings

**DECEMBER**

Plasma generation

Plasma Universe pioneers

www.  
plasma-universe  
.com





# 99.999% Plasma



The Universe is 99.999% plasma

Our Sun is very hot and hence nearly entirely **plasma**,...as are all the stars.

The Sun's hot solar wind filling the interplanetary medium (the space between the planets), is a **plasma**.

The interstellar medium (the space between the stars), and the intergalactic medium (space between galaxies), are nearly all **plasma**.

The Earth's ionosphere, where we see

the aurora, is a **plasma**. Dust or gas inside a plasma, behaves as a **plasma**.

Asteroids, comets and planets, are not made of plasma, but solids, liquids and gases...the exception, not the rule.

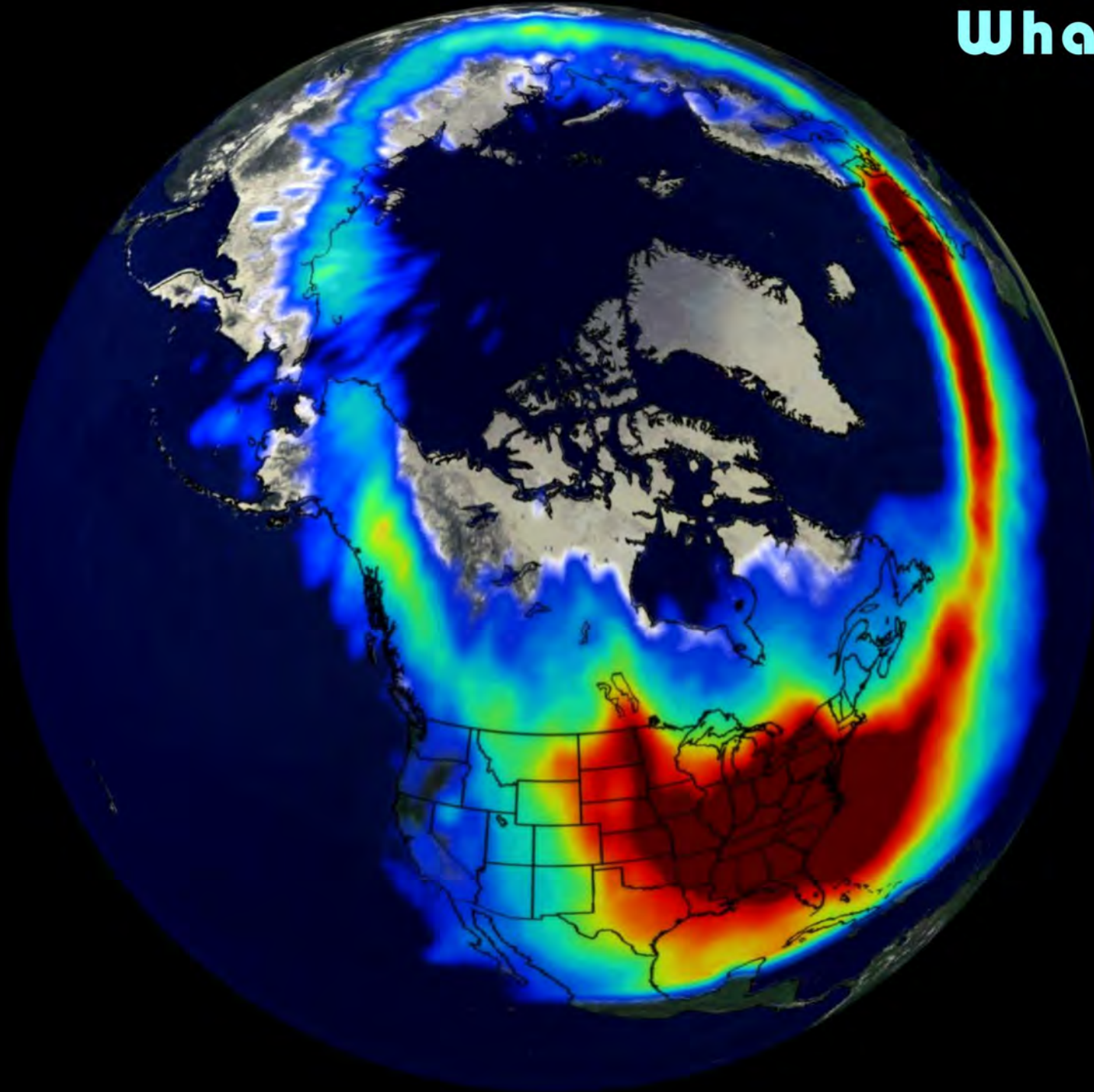
**Image:** COBE's Infrared View of the Universe. **Credit:** Michael Hauser (STScI), the COBE/DIRBE Science Team, and NASA. News Release Number: STcl-1998-01 <http://hubblesite.org>

# J A N U A R Y 2 0 1 3

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
30	31	New Year's Day New Year's Day	1 2nd January (Scotland)	2	3	4
The Epiphany 6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	1991: Winston H. Bostick, plasma pioneer dies
20	Martin Luther King, Jr. Day 21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	1881: Irving Langmuir, plasma pioneer born	31	1
3	4	5	6	7	<p>December</p> <p>1</p> <p>2 3 4 5 6 7 8</p> <p>9 10 11 12 13 14 15</p> <p>16 17 18 19 20 21 22</p> <p>23 24 25 26 27 28 29</p> <p>30 31</p>	<p>February</p> <p>1 2</p> <p>3 4 5 6 7 8 9</p> <p>10 11 12 13 14 15 16</p> <p>17 18 19 20 21 22 23</p> <p>24 25 26 27 28</p>



# What is Plasma?



Plasma is a form of matter.

For example, we're familiar with **solids**, such as Greenland's white arctic ice, with **liquids** such as the Earth's blue oceans, and **gases**, such as the windy atmosphere.

**Plasma** is a mixture of free-moving negatively charged electrons and positive ions (that make up atoms and molecules in other forms of matter). Plasma may also contain neutral atoms, molecules and dust, such as the Earth's ionosphere, in which we see the aurora.

**Image:** Polar/VIS satellite image of the aurora over the USA, showing Greenland covered in ice, taken on July 16, 2000. Credit: NASA/Goddard Space Flight Center, Scientific Visualization Studio. <http://svs.gsfc.nasa.gov/>

# F E B R U A R Y 2 0 1 3

Sunday							Monday							Tuesday							Wednesday							Thursday							Friday							Saturday																																									
January 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31							March 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31							29							30							31							1							2																																									
1925: Oliver Heaviside dies. He reformulated Maxwell's equations							3							4							5							6							7							8							9																																		
Chinese New Year (Year of the Snake)							10							11							Lincoln's Birthday							12							Ash Wednesday Ash Wednesday							13							Valentine's Day Valentine's Day							14							1826: George Stoney is born; proposed existence of the electron							15							16						
1773: Captain James Cook 1st records & names the Aurora Australis							17							Washington's Birthday President's Day							18							19							1989: First Workshop on Plasma Cosmology, USA							20							21							22							23																				
Purim							24							25							26							27							28							1							2																																		
3							4							5							6							7							8							9																																									



# Why is Plasma so?

**Electro-magnetic forces** affect plasmas far more strongly than gravity. For example, solar flares (a plasma) loop, twist and spiral with the Sun's magnetic field, sometimes escaping the Sun's intense gravitational field altogether, and accelerating away as the Solar Wind.

Solar Wind charged particles approaching the Earth's gravitational field are readily deflected by its magnetic field; this magnetosphere helps protect the Earth. Plasma "leaking" into the poles appear as the aurora, but intense solar flares can knock out a city's electric power!

**Image:** Prediction of Solar Storms in Future, NIX #: MSFC-0201490. Date: 2002-06-01 **Credit:** Steele Hill, Marshall Space Flight Center, NASA  
URL: <http://mix.msfc.nasa.gov/abstracts.php?p=2302>

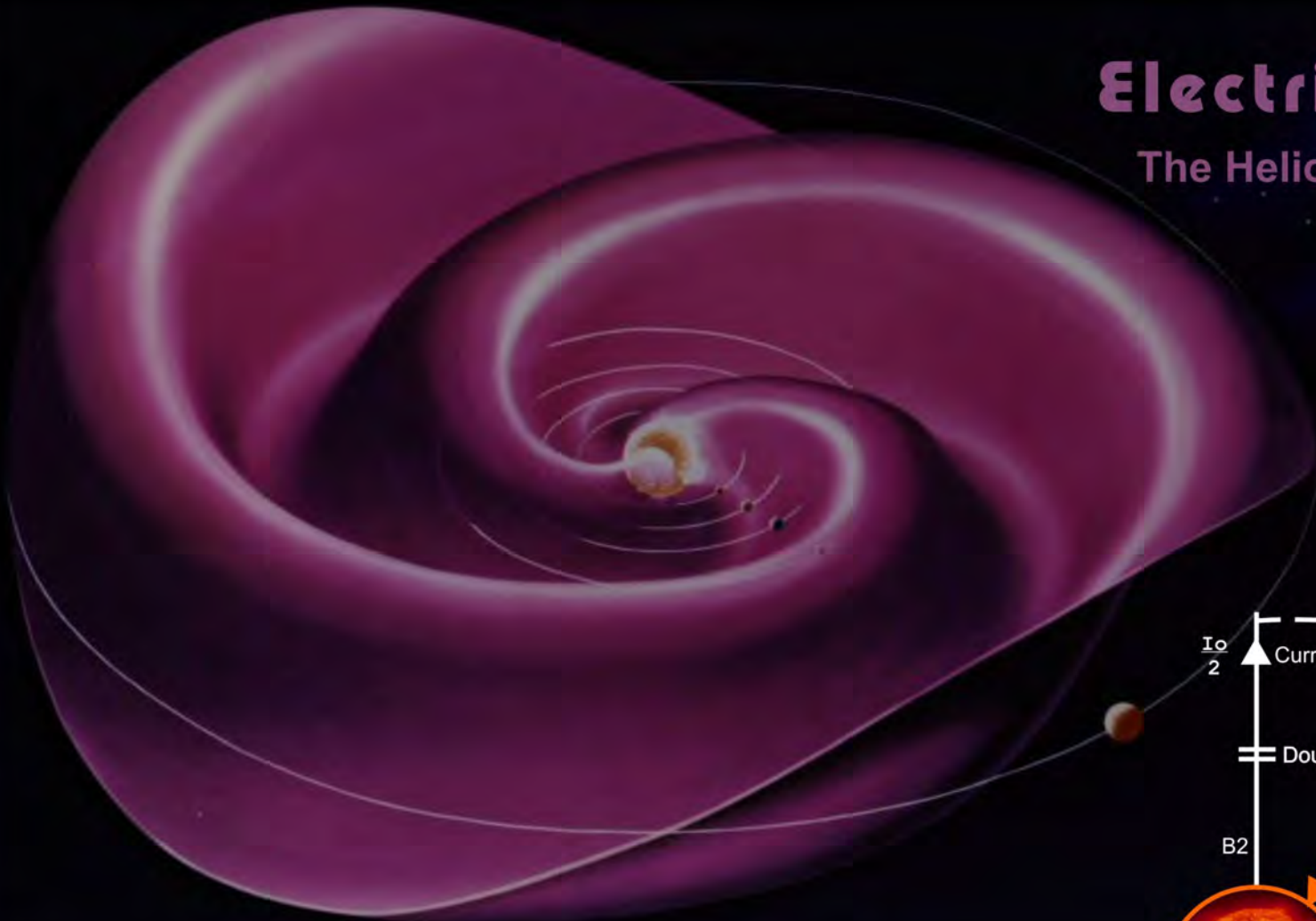


# M A R C H 2 0 1 3

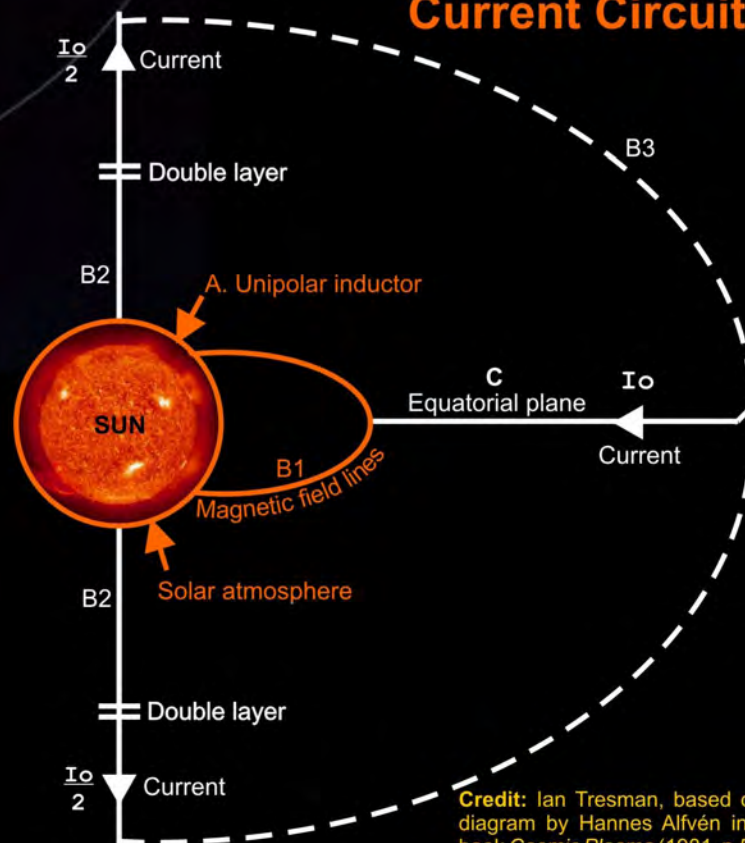
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday			
February 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28	April 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30	26	27	28	St. David's Day 1	2			
3	4	1916: Winston H. Bostick, pioneer born	5	6	7	8	9		
Mother's Day Daylight Savings Time Begins	10	11	12	13	14	15	16		
St. Patrick's Day St. Patrick's Day (N. Ireland)	17	18	19	11:02 Spring Equinox Spring Equinox	20	21	22	23	
Palm Sunday	24	25	Passover	26	27	28	Good Friday Good Friday	29	30
British Summertime Begins Palm Sunday Easter Easter	31	1	2	3	4	5	6		

# Electrified Plasma

## The Heliospheric Current Sheet



### The Heliospheric Current Circuit



The heliospheric current sheet is the largest structure in the Solar System extending from the Sun and out to the heliopause, through the ecliptic in the plane of the Solar System.

Its shape results from the interaction of the Sun's rotating magnetic field with the moving Solar Wind plasma (interplanetary medium), and is sometimes likened to a ballerina's skirt.

Carrying three trillion Amps, the sheet has been described by an electric circuit (right).

**Credit:** From an original painting by Werner Heil, NASA, 1977. Image developed by Prof. John Wilcox to help visualize the surface that separates the Sun's two magnetic polarities. Source: Wilcox Solar Observatory, <http://wso.stanford.edu/>

**Credit:** Ian Tresman, based on a diagram by Hannes Alfvén in his book *Cosmic Plasma* (1981, p.55).



# A P R I L 2 0 1 3

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday																																																																																												
31	Easter Monday April Fool's Day April Fool's Day	1 1995: Hannes Alfvén, pioneer dies	2	3	4 1919: Sir William Crookes, pioneer dies	5																																																																																												
7	8	9	10	11	12	13																																																																																												
14	Tax Day	15	16	17	18	19																																																																																												
21	Earth Day	22 St. George's Day	23	24	25	26																																																																																												
28	29	1897: J.J. Thomson identifies "radiant matter"	30	1	2	3																																																																																												
5	6	7	8	9	<table border="0" style="width: 100%; text-align: center;"> <tr> <td colspan="7">March</td> <td colspan="4">May</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>1</td><td>2</td> <td></td><td></td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3</td><td>4</td><td>5</td><td>6</td><td>7</td><td>8</td><td>9</td> <td>5</td><td>6</td><td>7</td><td>8</td><td>9</td><td>10</td><td>11</td> </tr> <tr> <td>10</td><td>11</td><td>12</td><td>13</td><td>14</td><td>15</td><td>16</td> <td>12</td><td>13</td><td>14</td><td>15</td><td>16</td><td>17</td><td>18</td> </tr> <tr> <td>17</td><td>18</td><td>19</td><td>20</td><td>21</td><td>22</td><td>23</td> <td>19</td><td>20</td><td>21</td><td>22</td><td>23</td><td>24</td><td>25</td> </tr> <tr> <td>24</td><td>25</td><td>26</td><td>27</td><td>28</td><td>29</td><td>30</td> <td>26</td><td>27</td><td>28</td><td>29</td><td>30</td><td>31</td> </tr> <tr> <td>31</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td> <td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td> </tr> </table>		March							May									1	2			1	2	3	4	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	26	27	28	29	30	31	31												
March							May																																																																																											
					1	2			1	2	3	4																																																																																						
3	4	5	6	7	8	9	5	6	7	8	9	10	11																																																																																					
10	11	12	13	14	15	16	12	13	14	15	16	17	18																																																																																					
17	18	19	20	21	22	23	19	20	21	22	23	24	25																																																																																					
24	25	26	27	28	29	30	26	27	28	29	30	31																																																																																						
31																																																																																																		
Queen's Birthday																																																																																																		

# Pinched Plasma filaments

**Middle image:** The Ant nebula (Mz3), NASA, Space Telescope Science Institute, <http://photojournal.jpl.nasa.gov/catalog/pia04216>

**Lower image:** Pinched aluminium can, produced from a pulsed magnetic field created by rapidly discharging 2 kilojoules from a high voltage capacitor bank into a 3-turn coil of heavy gauge wire. Credit: Bert Hickman, Stoneridge Engineering; [www.teslamania.com](http://www.teslamania.com)



**Filamentary structure** is one of the main characteristics of electrified plasma, which is produced by constricting magnetic fields. They are seen in lightning bolts, the aurora, the Sun and nebulae (eg. the Ant Nebula above)

If the magnetic field becomes much stronger along one part of the filament than another, it **pinches** producing a characteristic hour-glass shape. The drinks can (left) was made this way.

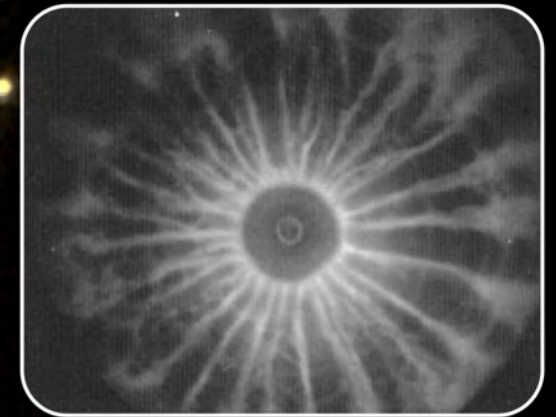
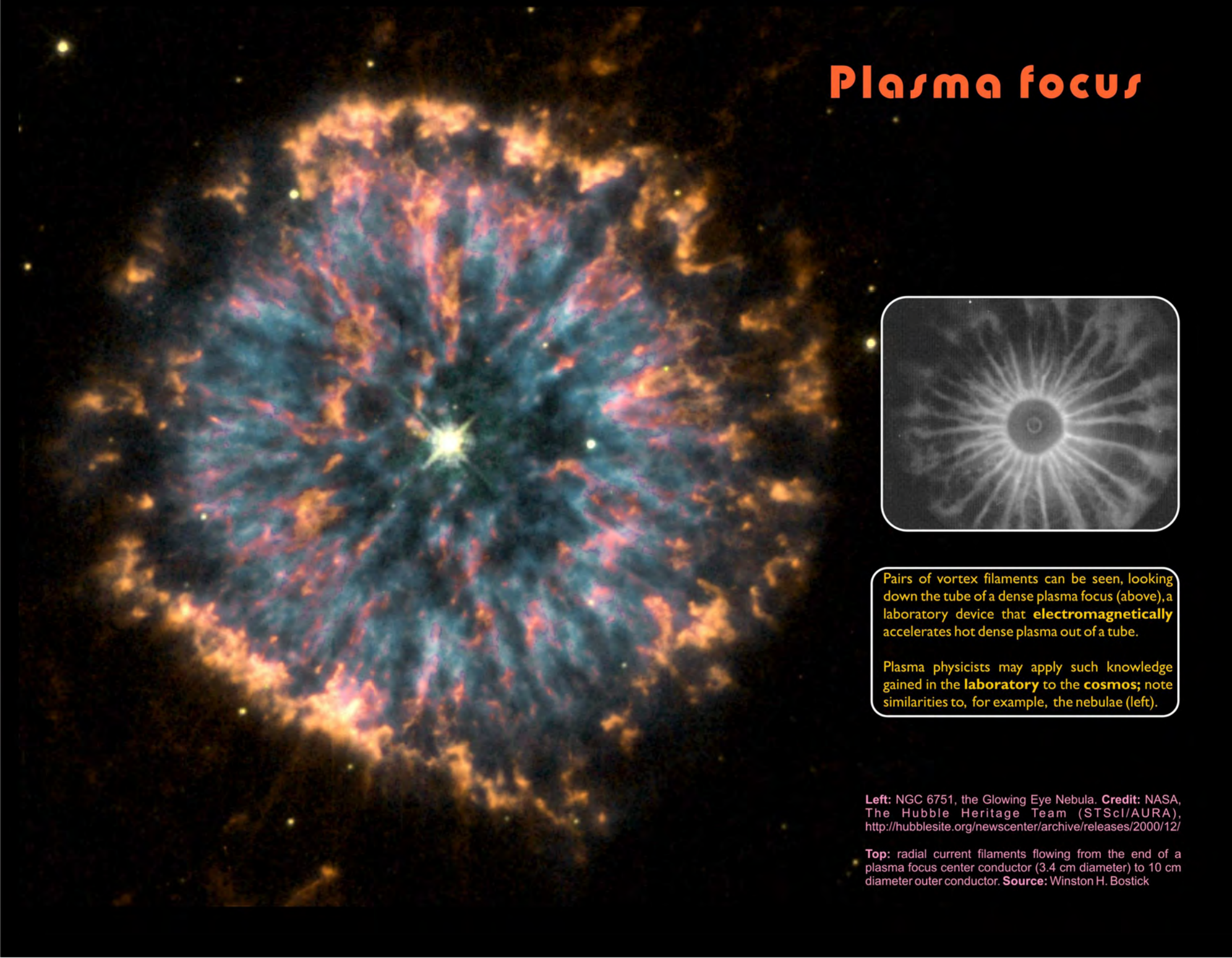
Filaments often twist into helical shapes, and are sometimes called **Birkeland currents**.



# M A Y 2 0 1 3

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday																																																																																		
28	29	30	1	2	3	4 1937: Hannes Alfvén predicts intergalactic magnetic field																																																																																		
Cinco de Mayo 5	Early May Bank Holiday 6	7	8	9	10 1993: 2nd Plasma Astrophysics and Cosmology Workshop	11																																																																																		
Mother's Day 12	13	14 1937: Hannes Alfvén predicts an interstellar and intergalactic magnetic field	15	16	17	18 Armed Forces Day 1850: Oliver Heaviside born. He reformulated Maxwell's equations																																																																																		
19	20	21	22 1960: Georges Claude dies. In 1910 he displayed the first neon lamp	23	24	25																																																																																		
1814: Johann Geissler born, inventor discharge tube 26	Spring Bank Holiday Memorial Day 27	28	John F. Kennedy's Birthday 29	1908: Hannes Alfvén, pioneer born 30	31	1																																																																																		
2	3	4	5	6	<table border="1"> <tr> <td colspan="6"></td> <td colspan="7">April</td> <td colspan="7">June</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>5</td><td>6</td> <td>7</td><td>8</td><td>9</td><td>10</td><td>11</td><td>12</td><td>13</td> <td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>5</td><td>6</td><td>7</td><td>8</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td><td>14</td><td>15</td><td>16</td><td>17</td><td>18</td><td>19</td><td>20</td> <td>9</td><td>10</td><td>11</td><td>12</td><td>13</td><td>14</td><td>15</td> <td>16</td><td>17</td><td>18</td><td>19</td><td>20</td><td>21</td><td>22</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td><td>21</td><td>22</td><td>23</td><td>24</td><td>25</td><td>26</td><td>27</td> <td>28</td><td>29</td><td>30</td> <td>23</td><td>24</td><td>25</td><td>26</td><td>27</td><td>28</td><td>29</td><td>30</td> </tr> </table>								April							June								1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	2	3	4	5	6	7	8		14	15	16	17	18	19	20	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22		21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
						April							June																																																																											
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	2	3	4	5	6	7	8																																																																				
	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22																																																																			
	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30																																																																						

# Plasma focus



Pairs of vortex filaments can be seen, looking down the tube of a dense plasma focus (above), a laboratory device that **electromagnetically** accelerates hot dense plasma out of a tube.

Plasma physicists may apply such knowledge gained in the **laboratory** to the **cosmos**; note similarities to, for example, the nebulae (left).

**Left:** NGC 6751, the Glowing Eye Nebula. **Credit:** NASA, The Hubble Heritage Team (STScI/AURA), <http://hubblesite.org/newscenter/archive/releases/2000/12/>

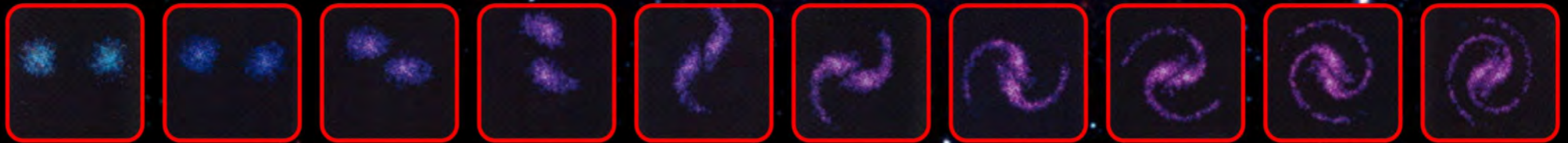
**Top:** radial current filaments flowing from the end of a plasma focus center conductor (3.4 cm diameter) to 10 cm diameter outer conductor. **Source:** Winston H. Bostick



# J U N E 2 0 1 3

Sunday							Monday						Tuesday	Wednesday					Thursday				Friday			Saturday	
May 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31							July 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31						28	29					30				31			1	
2							3						4	5					6				7			8	
9							10						11	12					13				14			15	
ICOPS 2013 Conference San Francisco Father's Day Father's Day							1832: Sir William Crookes, pioneer born						18	19					20				21			22	
23							24						25	26					27				28			29	
30							1						2	3					4				5			6	
																			1903: Willard Harrison Bennett, plasma pioneer born 1831: James Clerk Maxwell born				Flag Day			1917: Kristian Birkeland, pioneer dies	
																			Summer Solstice (05:45) Summer Solstice 5:04 Summer Solstice								

# Plasma galaxy



A galaxy's stars are all plasma, and much of the interstellar space between them. Several theories describe their shape, such as spiral galaxy M81 above.

Plasma physicists have simulated galaxy formation as plasma clouds inside interacting parallel current-carrying magnetic filaments (bottom row).

**Top:** M81 spiral galaxy taken with the Spitzer Space Telescope **Credit:** NASA/JPL-Caltech/S. Willner. <http://www.spitzer.caltech.edu/Media/releases/ssc2003-06/ssc2003-06c.shtml>

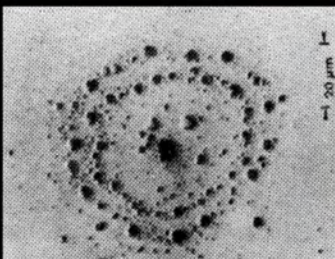
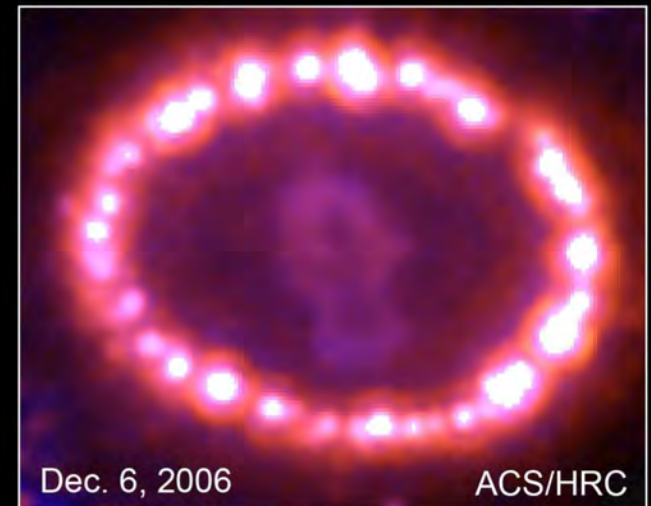
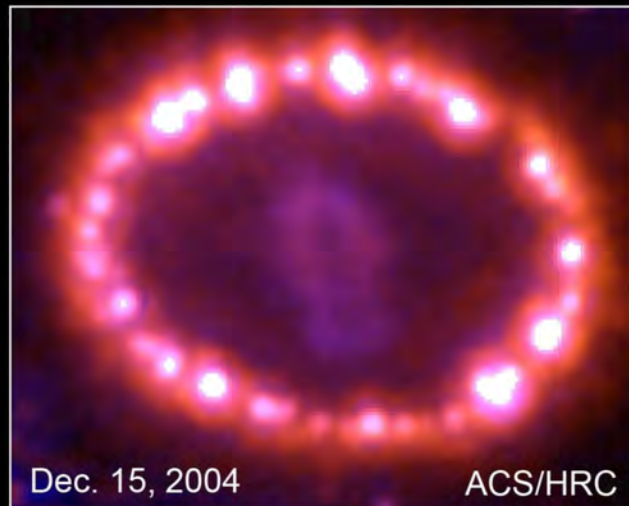
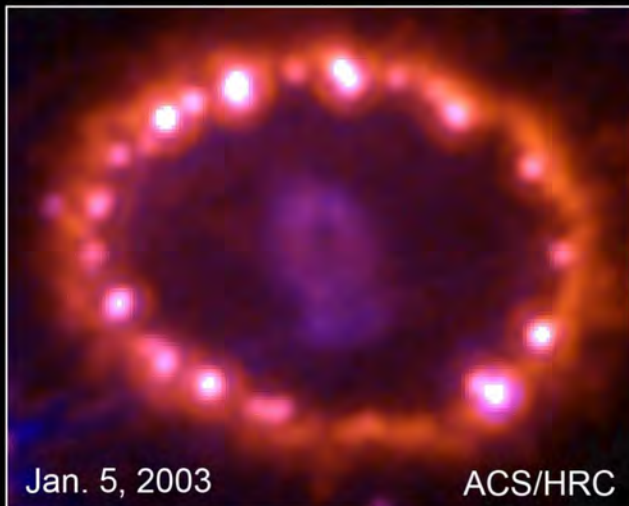
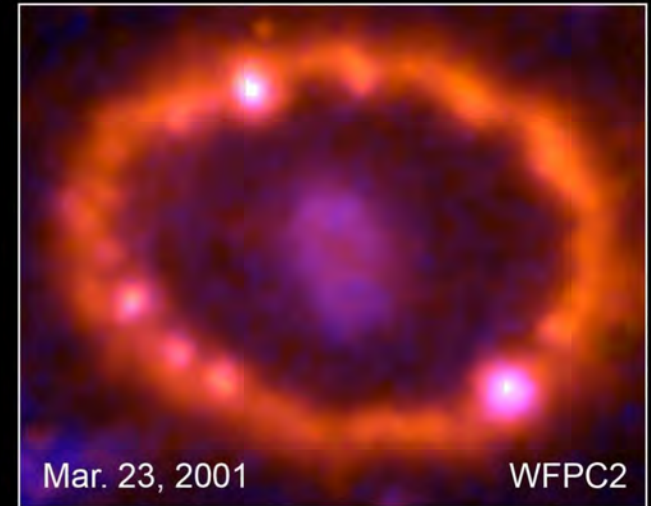
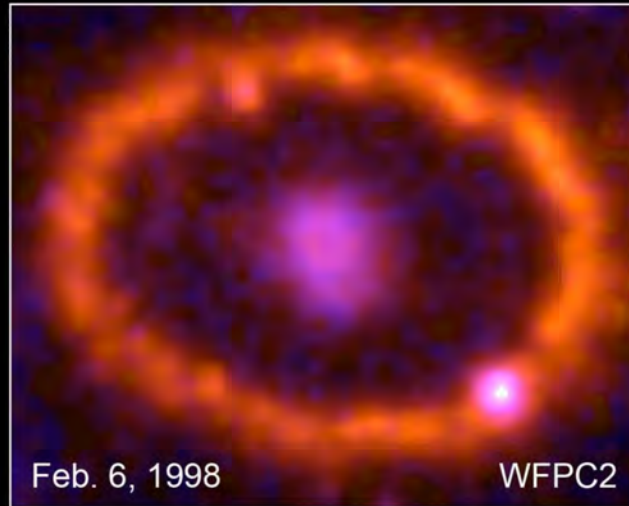
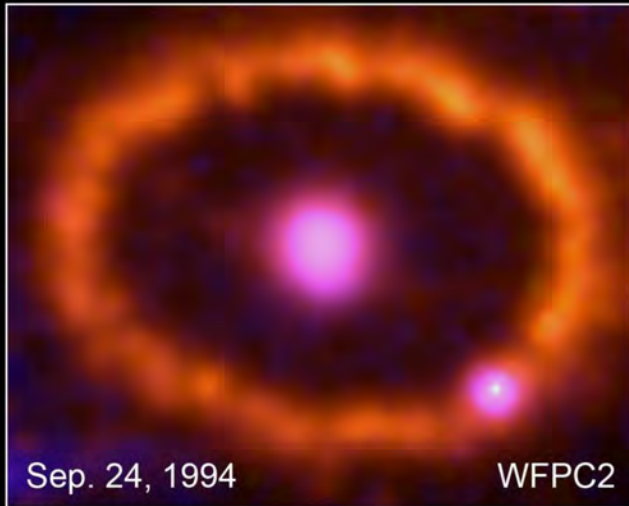
**Lower image:** Interacting Birkeland currents carrying  $10^{18}$  Amps, length 80kpc width 35kpc, over  $10^9$  years. **Credit:** Anthony L. Peratt, <http://www.plasmauniverse.info/>



# J U L Y 2 0 1 3

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday																																																																																										
30	1902: Kristian Birkeland begins 2nd auroral expedition Canada Day	1	2	3	Independence Day	4	1911: George Johnstone Stoney dies. In 1874 he proposes the existence of the electron	5	6																																																																																							
7	8	9	10	11	Battle of Boyne Day (N. Ireland)	12	13																																																																																									
14	15	16	17	18	19	20																																																																																										
21	22	23	24	25	26	27																																																																																										
28	29	1922: Emil Wolf born. He discovers the Wolf "red" shift	30	31	1	2	3																																																																																									
4	5	6	7	8	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; font-size: small;"> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p>June</p> <table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; font-size: x-small;"> <tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>5</td><td>6</td><td>7</td><td>8</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>9</td><td>10</td><td>11</td><td>12</td><td>13</td><td>14</td><td>15</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>16</td><td>17</td><td>18</td><td>19</td><td>20</td><td>21</td><td>22</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>23</td><td>24</td><td>25</td><td>26</td><td>27</td><td>28</td><td>29</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>30</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> </table> </div> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p>August</p> <table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; font-size: x-small;"> <tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>4</td><td>5</td><td>6</td><td>7</td><td>8</td><td>9</td><td>10</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>11</td><td>12</td><td>13</td><td>14</td><td>15</td><td>16</td><td>17</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>18</td><td>19</td><td>20</td><td>21</td><td>22</td><td>23</td><td>24</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>25</td><td>26</td><td>27</td><td>28</td><td>29</td><td>30</td><td>31</td><td></td></tr> </table> </div> </div>									1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8		9	10	11	12	13	14	15		16	17	18	19	20	21	22		23	24	25	26	27	28	29		30												1	2	3		4	5	6	7	8	9	10		11	12	13	14	15	16	17		18	19	20	21	22	23	24		25	26	27	28	29	30	31			
							1																																																																																									
2	3	4	5	6	7	8																																																																																										
9	10	11	12	13	14	15																																																																																										
16	17	18	19	20	21	22																																																																																										
23	24	25	26	27	28	29																																																																																										
30																																																																																																
				1	2	3																																																																																										
4	5	6	7	8	9	10																																																																																										
11	12	13	14	15	16	17																																																																																										
18	19	20	21	22	23	24																																																																																										
25	26	27	28	29	30	31																																																																																										

# Plasma beams



**Top:** SN 1987A. Credit: NASA, ESA, P. Challis and R. Kirshner (Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics). <http://hubblesite.org/newscenter/archive/releases/2007/10>

**Left:** Relativistic electron beam damage produced on polystyrene witness foil. Credit: Winston H. Bostick.

In the laboratory, a **beam** of "solid" charged particles may evolve into a hollow cylinder, the ring further subdividing into individual filamentary currents that may also pair up; see the witness foil (left) about 0.1 mm across.

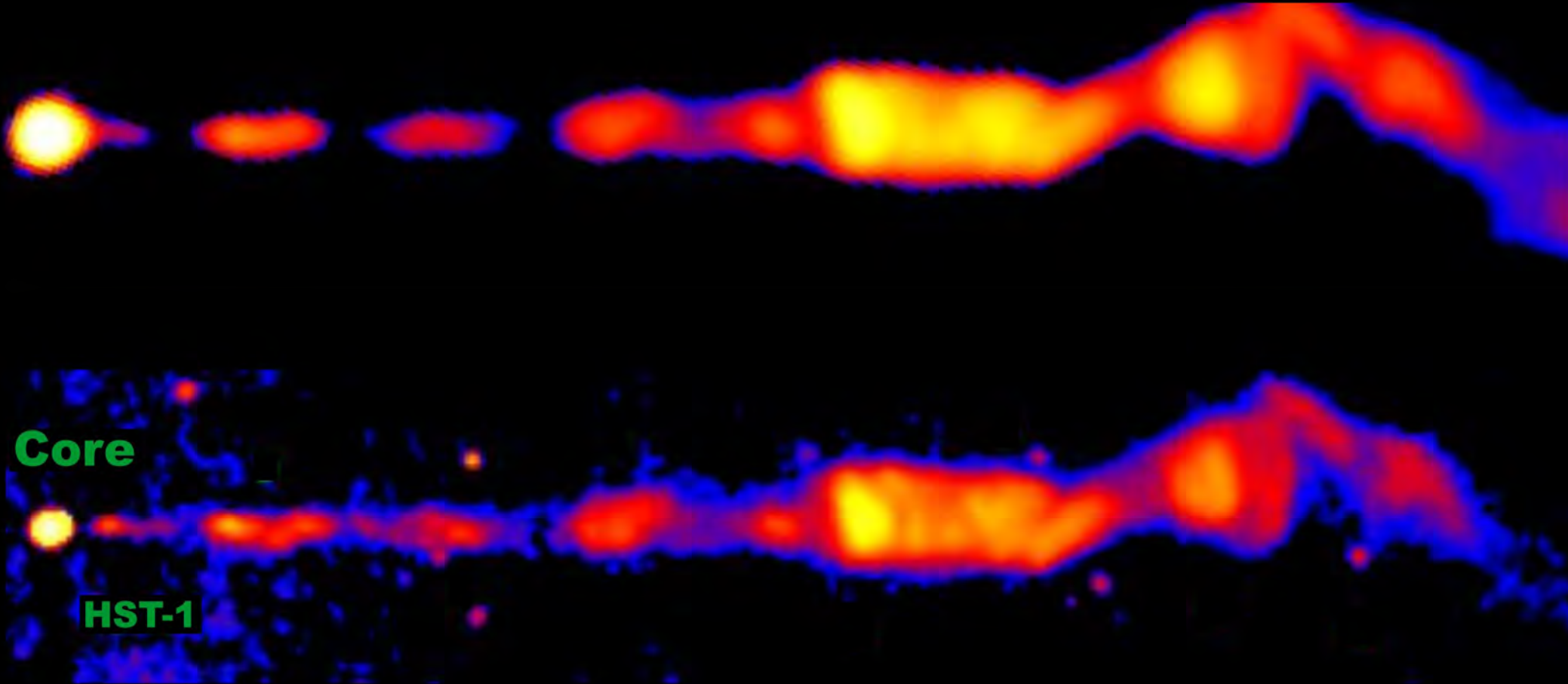
Designated after the year it was detected, Supernova 1987a has been described as a "ring of pearls". Synchrotron radiation and X-rays have also been observed, that are consistent with a **relativistic particle beam**.



# A U G U S T 2 0 1 3

Sunday							Monday							Tuesday							Wednesday							Thursday							Friday							Saturday																				
<small>July</small> 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31							<small>September</small> 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30							30							31							1928: Irving Langmuir coins the word "plasma"							1							2							3													
4							Holiday (Scotland)							5							6							7							8							9							10													
11							12							13							14							15							1957: Irving Langmuir, pioneer dies							16							17													
18							19							20							21							1879: William Crookes discovers "radiant matter"							22							23							24													
25							Late Summer Bank Holiday							26							27							28							29							1871: Ernest Rutherford born; discovers the proton in 1918							30							31						
1							2							3							4							5							6							7																				

# Plasma jets



**M87's jet** was first observed by Heber Curtis in 1918 who described it as "a curious straight ray", seen here in both radio (top) and optical wavelengths. Non-thermal polarized synchrotron radiation is also a characteristic.

Jets such as M87 are radio-luminous **pinched plasmas** whose magnetic fields may be derived from an electric current analogous to auroral Birkeland currents in planetary atmospheres. M87's jet is 5400 light years long.

**Laboratory jet** simulations produce shared characteristics such as power magnitude, isophotal morphology, spectra, and polarized synchrotron radiation as electrons are accelerated through a magnetic field.

**Image:** M87 jet in radio (top) & optical. Credit: H. L. Marshall/MIT/NASA/NRAO. **Radio:** NRAO/AUI/NSF. **Optical:** NASA/STScI/UMBC/E. Perلمان *et al.*, <http://hea-www.harvard.edu/XJET/source-d.cgi?M87>



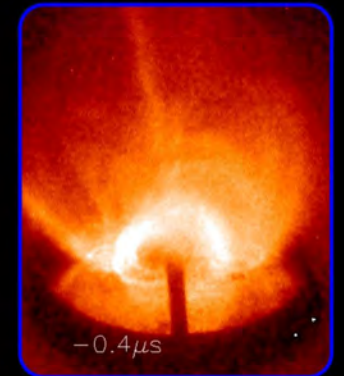
# S E P T E M B E R 2 0 1 3

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday																																																																																	
	1 Labor Day	2	3	4	5 Rosh Hashanah	6	7																																																																																	
Grandparent's Day	8	9	10 Patriot Day	11	12	13	14 Yom Kippur																																																																																	
	15	16	17	18 Sukkot	19	20	21																																																																																	
20:44 Autumn Equinox	22	23 1870: Georges Claude born. In 1910 he displays the first neon lamp	24	25	26	27	28 1987: Willard Harrison Bennett, pioneer dies																																																																																	
	29	30	1	2	3	4	5																																																																																	
	6	7	8	9	10	<table style="margin: auto; border: none;"> <tr> <td colspan="7" style="text-align: center;">August</td> <td colspan="5" style="text-align: center;">October</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td> <td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td></td><td></td><td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>4</td><td>5</td><td>6</td><td>7</td><td>8</td><td>9</td><td>10</td> <td>6</td><td>7</td><td>8</td><td>9</td><td>10</td><td>11</td><td>12</td> </tr> <tr> <td>11</td><td>12</td><td>13</td><td>14</td><td>15</td><td>16</td><td>17</td> <td>13</td><td>14</td><td>15</td><td>16</td><td>17</td><td>18</td><td>19</td> </tr> <tr> <td>18</td><td>19</td><td>20</td><td>21</td><td>22</td><td>23</td><td>24</td> <td>20</td><td>21</td><td>22</td><td>23</td><td>24</td><td>25</td><td>26</td> </tr> <tr> <td>25</td><td>26</td><td>27</td><td>28</td><td>29</td><td>30</td><td>31</td> <td>27</td><td>28</td><td>29</td><td>30</td><td>31</td><td></td><td></td> </tr> </table>		August							October												1	2	3				4	5	6	7	8	9	10	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	27	28	29	30	31		
August							October																																																																																	
							1	2	3																																																																															
4	5	6	7	8	9	10	6	7	8	9	10	11	12																																																																											
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	13	14	15	16	17	18	19																																																																											
18	19	20	21	22	23	24	20	21	22	23	24	25	26																																																																											
25	26	27	28	29	30	31	27	28	29	30	31																																																																													

# Plasma sun

The Sun is a plasma producing the solar wind, as well as solar flares and prominences: arch-shaped, sometimes twisting structures in the corona.

Plasma physicists at Caltech have made a plasma gun which produces arched, erupting, twisted flux tubes (see photo below) that are similar to solar prominences.



**Top:** Simulated prominences. Credit: J. F. Hansen and P. M. Bellan, Caltech, Bellan Plasma Group, [http://ve4xm.caltech.edu/Bellan\\_plasma\\_page/](http://ve4xm.caltech.edu/Bellan_plasma_page/)

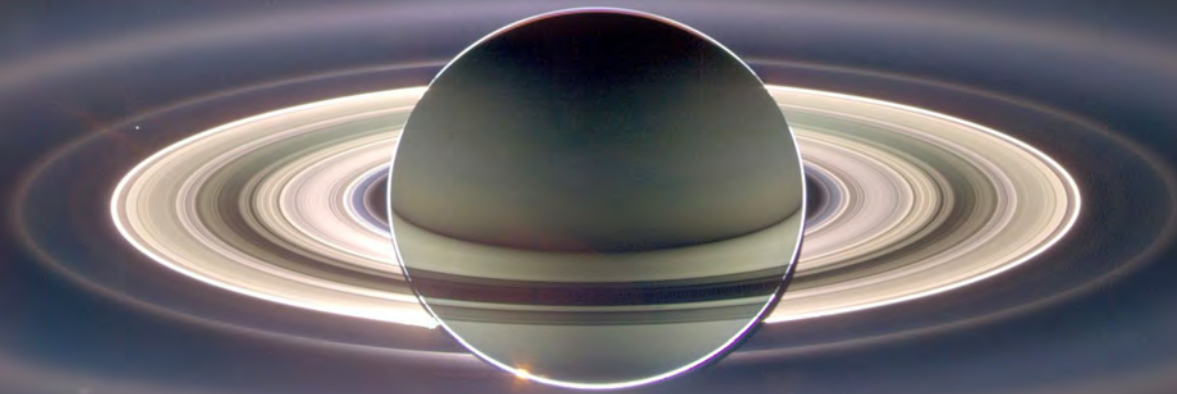
**Left:** Sun false color X-ray image. Credit: ISAS, Yohkoh Project.



# O C T O B E R 2 0 1 3

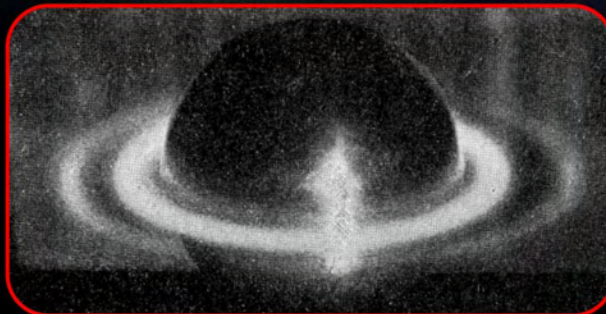
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday																																																																																				
29	30	1 1956: Winston H. Bostick coins the word "plasmoid"	2	3 1942: Hannes Alfvén predicts Solar plasma waves	4	5																																																																																				
6	7	8	9	10	11	12																																																																																				
13 Columbus Day	14	15	16	17	18	19 1937: Ernest Rutherford dies; discovered the proton																																																																																				
20	21	22	23 United Nations Day	24	25	26																																																																																				
27 British Summer Time Ends 1970: Hannes Alfvén awarded Nobel Prize for his work on magnetohydrodynamics	28	29	30 Halloween Halloween	31	1	2																																																																																				
3	4	5	6	7	<table border="0"> <tr> <td colspan="7">September</td> <td colspan="7">November</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>5</td><td>6</td><td>7</td> <td>3</td><td>4</td><td>5</td><td>6</td><td>7</td><td>8</td><td>9</td> </tr> <tr> <td>8</td><td>9</td><td>10</td><td>11</td><td>12</td><td>13</td><td>14</td> <td>10</td><td>11</td><td>12</td><td>13</td><td>14</td><td>15</td><td>16</td> </tr> <tr> <td>15</td><td>16</td><td>17</td><td>18</td><td>19</td><td>20</td><td>21</td> <td>17</td><td>18</td><td>19</td><td>20</td><td>21</td><td>22</td><td>23</td> </tr> <tr> <td>22</td><td>23</td><td>24</td><td>25</td><td>26</td><td>27</td><td>28</td> <td>24</td><td>25</td><td>26</td><td>27</td><td>28</td><td>29</td><td>30</td> </tr> <tr> <td>29</td><td>30</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td> <td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td> </tr> </table>		September							November							1	2	3	4	5	6	7	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	29	30												
September							November																																																																																			
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	3	4	5	6	7	8	9																																																																													
8	9	10	11	12	13	14	10	11	12	13	14	15	16																																																																													
15	16	17	18	19	20	21	17	18	19	20	21	22	23																																																																													
22	23	24	25	26	27	28	24	25	26	27	28	29	30																																																																													
29	30																																																																																									

# Plasma rings



**Top:** Cassini's view of Saturn's rings in exaggerated color contrast. **Credit:** NASA/JPL/Space Science Institute. PIA08329. <http://photojournal.jpl.nasa.gov/catalog/PIA08329>

**Right:** Kristian Birkeland's small cathode-globe terrella, with about 0.1 milliamperes current. Source: Sec.2, Ch VI, *The Norwegian Aurora Polaris Expedition 1902-1903*, publ. 1908.



Backlit by the Sun, Saturn's rings are composed of small particles.

In the interplanetary plasma, dust is charged negatively by electrons, and positively by sunlight, resulting in a "dusty plasma". Electromagnetic forces dominate.

During the 1900s, Norwegian scientist Kristian Birkeland experimented with a magnetized metal globe called a **terrella** in a vacuum chamber (see photo left).

Different currents could produce aurora... and Saturn-like rings.



# N O V E M B E R 2 0 1 3

Sunday		Monday		Tuesday		Wednesday		Thursday		Friday		Saturday	
October 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31		December 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31		29		30		31		All Saints Day 1		All Souls Day 2	
Daylight Savings Time Ends 3		4		1879: James Clerk Maxwell, pioneer dies Election Day Guy Fawkes Day 5		6		7		8		9	
Remembrance Day 10		Veteran's Day 11		12		13		14		15		16	
1607: Northern Lights seen over Europe, and described by Johannes Kepler 17		18		19		20		21		22		23	
24		25		26		Hanukkah 27		Thanksgiving 28		29		St. Andrew's Day 30	
1		2		3		4		5		6		7	

# Plasma generator

Michael Faraday discovered that an electrically conductive disk rotating in a magnetic field generated an electric current between the central axis and the disk's circumference.

It is sometimes called a Faraday disk, or homopolar generator or **unipolar inductor**.

As electrically conducting plasma rotates through its own magnetic field, electric currents are created along its axes.

Unipolar inductors have been associated with the Sun, stars, galaxies, sunspots, and nebulae (left)... almost everywhere we see a rotating plasma!

**Image:** Crab Nebula showing the X-ray (blue), and optical (red) images superimposed. **Credit:** NASA/CXC/ASU/J. Hester et al.

<http://hubblesite.org/newscenter/archive/releases/2002/24/image/a/>



# D E C E M B E R 2 0 1 3

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday																																																																						
1	2	3	1931: Carl-Gunne Fälthammar, plasma pioneer, born	4	5	6																																																																						
8	9	10	1910: Georges Claude displays the first neon lamp in Paris	11	12	13																																																																						
15	16	17	1856: Sir J J Thomson, pioneer born	18	19	20																																																																						
22	23	24	25	26	27	28																																																																						
29	30	31	1	2	3	4																																																																						
5	6	7	8	9	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: flex-start;"> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p>November</p> <table style="font-size: small; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>1</td><td>2</td></tr> <tr><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>5</td><td>6</td><td>7</td><td>8</td><td>9</td></tr> <tr><td>10</td><td>11</td><td>12</td><td>13</td><td>14</td><td>15</td><td>16</td></tr> <tr><td>17</td><td>18</td><td>19</td><td>20</td><td>21</td><td>22</td><td>23</td></tr> <tr><td>24</td><td>25</td><td>26</td><td>27</td><td>28</td><td>29</td><td>30</td></tr> </table> </div> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p>January</p> <table style="font-size: small; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td></tr> <tr><td>5</td><td>6</td><td>7</td><td>8</td><td>9</td><td>10</td><td>11</td></tr> <tr><td>12</td><td>13</td><td>14</td><td>15</td><td>16</td><td>17</td><td>18</td></tr> <tr><td>19</td><td>20</td><td>21</td><td>22</td><td>23</td><td>24</td><td>25</td></tr> <tr><td>26</td><td>27</td><td>28</td><td>29</td><td>30</td><td>31</td><td></td></tr> </table> </div> </div>							1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30				1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	
					1	2																																																																						
3	4	5	6	7	8	9																																																																						
10	11	12	13	14	15	16																																																																						
17	18	19	20	21	22	23																																																																						
24	25	26	27	28	29	30																																																																						
			1	2	3	4																																																																						
5	6	7	8	9	10	11																																																																						
12	13	14	15	16	17	18																																																																						
19	20	21	22	23	24	25																																																																						
26	27	28	29	30	31																																																																							

1931: Carl-Gunne Fälthammar, plasma pioneer, born

1910: Georges Claude displays the first neon lamp in Paris

1856: Sir J J Thomson, pioneer born

Christmas Day  
Christmas

1979: Charles Bruce, electrical engineer, dies

1867: Kristian Birkeland, plasma pioneer born

17:11 Winter Solstice  
Winter Solstice

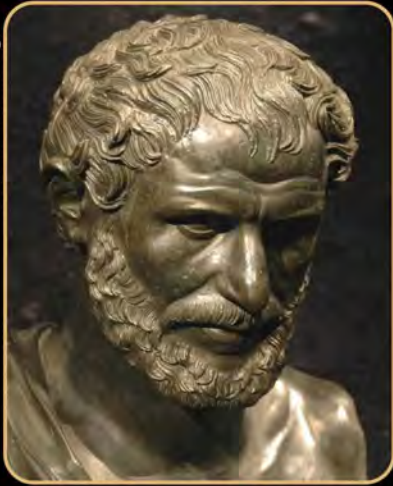
Boxing Day  
Kwanzaa

November  
1 2  
3 4 5 6 7 8 9  
10 11 12 13 14 15 16  
17 18 19 20 21 22 23  
24 25 26 27 28 29 30

January  
1 2 3 4  
5 6 7 8 9 10 11  
12 13 14 15 16 17 18  
19 20 21 22 23 24 25  
26 27 28 29 30 31

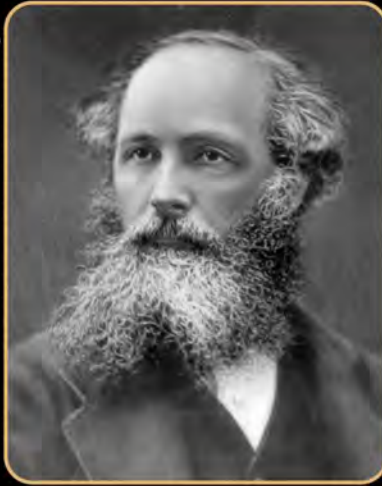
# Plasma Universe pioneers

Source: Livius.Org



**Heraclitus** of Ephesus (540–475 BC) noted that: “.. the thunderbolt steers the course of all things”

Source: Cavendish Lab., Univ. of Cambridge



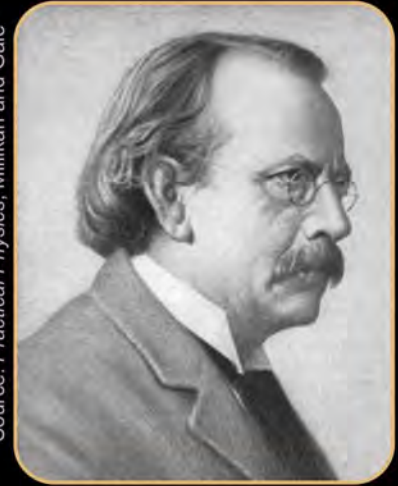
**James Clerk Maxwell** (1831-1879) devised a unified model of electricity, magnetism and inductance.

Source: *History of Science*, vol. 5, p.106



**Sir William Crookes** (1832-1919) discovers in 1879 “radiant matter”, he also calls the “Fourth State of Matter”.

Source: *Practical Physics*, Millikan and Gale



**Sir J. J. Thomson** (1856-1940) in 1897 identifies “plasma” as consisting of charged particles.

Source: Wikipedia



**Kristian Birkeland** (1867-1917) models the aurora in a terrella, and predicts “space is filled with electrons and flying electric ions of all kinds”

Source: *GE Review*, Dec. 1932



**Irving Langmuir** (1881-1957) investigates the properties of ionized gases, and coins the term “plasma”. 1932 Nobel Prize, Chemistry

Source: Royal Institute of Technology, Sweden



**Hannes Alfvén** (1908-1995) stresses the importance of electrified magnetic space plasmas. Awarded the 1970 Nobel Prize in physics.

## 2013 Plasma Universe Calendar

[www.plasma-universe.com](http://www.plasma-universe.com)

With special thanks to Prof. Paul Bellan (California Institute of Technology), Hanna Dahlgren (Royal Institute of Technology, Sweden), Dr. Timothy E. Eastman ([www.plasmas.org](http://www.plasmas.org)), Bert Hickman ([teslamania.com](http://teslamania.com)), Dr. Todd Hoeksema (Stanford University), Dr Herman L. Marshall (Massachusetts Institute of Technology), Dr Anthony L. Peratt (Los Alamos National Laboratory), Caroline Tresman.

### Web sites

[www.plasma-universe.com](http://www.plasma-universe.com) • [plasmauniverse.info](http://plasmauniverse.info)  
[www.plasmas.org](http://www.plasmas.org) • [www.plasmacoalition.org](http://www.plasmacoalition.org)

### Books

*Cosmic Plasma* by Hannes Alfvén, 1981  
*Physics of the Plasma Universe*  
by Anthony L. Peratt, 1992  
*The Electric Sky* by Donald E. Scott, 2007

Text & compilation © 2013 Ian Tresman



# J A N U A R Y 2 0 1 4

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
29	30	31	New Year's Day New Year's Day	1 2nd January (Scotland)	2	3
5	The Epiphany	6	7	8	9	10
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	Martin Luther King, Jr. Day	20	21	22	23	24
26	27	28	29	30	31	1
2	3	4	5	6	1881: Irving Langmuir, plasma pioneer born	
					December 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31	February 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28

1991: Winston H. Bostick, plasma pioneer dies