

“CURIOUS ABOUT ASTRONOMY?”: CORNELL UNIVERSITY’S ASK AN ASTRONOMER WEBSITE. V. Carruba, L. M. Carter, M. Cuk, M. A. Jackson, C. E. Jordan, M. Krco, K. L. Masters, J. D. Pandian, D. M. Rothstein, A. Saintonge, B. R. Scharringhausen, K. Spekkens, C. M. Springob, *Department of Astronomy, Cornell University, Ithaca NY 14853, USA*, (curious@astro.cornell.edu), D. A. Kornreich, *Department of Physics and Physical Science, Humboldt State University, Arcata CA 95521, USA*, The Curious Team, *Department of Astronomy, Cornell University, Ithaca NY 14853, USA*.

“Curious About Astronomy? Ask an Astronomer” is a website (<http://curious.astro.cornell.edu>) run by graduate and undergraduate student volunteers at Cornell University. Questions from the general public, submitted either by email or using a convenient web form, are answered by members of the Curious Team, and particularly interesting questions are posted on the website for visitors to browse. We receive and answer a few hundred questions each month from people of diverse backgrounds, including K-12 and post-secondary students and instructors, amateur astronomers, parents, scientists in various fields and others around the world with an interest in astronomy. We have recently upgraded the website, creating 22 different sections about specific topics in astronomy, a searchable index of hundreds of cross-listed questions and a

page of suggestions and guidelines for teachers.

The Curious Page has already become a source of useful information for the public. Questions and answers about the so-called “Moon Hoax” and a recent news article about the Sun going supernova have received thousands of hits. By offering individual responses about any aspect of astronomy to anyone who has Internet access and by continually updating our archive of answered questions, we hope to provide a unique, growing astronomy resource for students, educators and the general public—as well as a valuable opportunity for the Curious Team to participate in educational outreach and improve its communication skills in a setting that requires no formal budget or faculty supervision.