

In Memorium

Jörn Rossa (1969–2009)



“The Role of the Disk-Halo Interaction in Galaxy Evolution – Outflow *vs.* Infall?” conference was the last international meeting that Jörn Rossa could attend. He passed away on September 19th, 2009 at the young age of 40 in Mainz, Germany from a virulent fast-acting cancer. He was born in the same city on March 17th, 1969.

Already as a teenager Jörn was fascinated by space exploration and astronomy. He owned his first telescope at age twelve and gave talks at his local amateur club with fourteen. He started to write to prominent astronomers and astronauts for their perspectives, autographs, and reprints. And the start for his collection of popular astronomy magazines also dates back to his teenage years. Yet, to be a “serious” amateur astronomer was not enough for him, thus he was very dedicated to make his passion to a profession.

After finishing high school in 1989 and the obligatory German military service Jörn went to the University of Heidelberg (Germany) where he obtained a diploma degree in physics (Dipl.-Phys, MSc equivalent) in 1996. He continued his studies at the Ruhr-University Bochum in Germany and received his Dr. rer. nat degree

(PhD) in 2001 with a thesis focusing on extraplanar diffuse ionized gas and dust in the halos of edge-on spiral galaxies – thus contributing significantly to the subject of this meeting. In the framework of this thesis he performed the largest-to-date ground-based $H\alpha$ survey of a number of galaxies, quantified their extraplanar ISM, and correlated its properties with the starformation activity in the galaxy disk. After his graduation, Jörn stayed in Bochum for another year as a Postdoctoral Associate. During this time he expanded his interests in the same general subject area through the use of X-ray and radio observations. His interest in the ISM of nearby galaxies continued through his subsequent postdoctoral career. He analyzed high-spatial resolution Hubble Space Telescope (HST) WFPC2 $H\alpha$ data of the edge-on non-starburst spiral galaxy NGC 891. The data revealed for the first time super-thin filaments, which may indicate an important role of magnetic fields for the structure and transportation of gas. He then received time with HST/ACS to study four other galaxies to greater depth and resolution and at this meeting he presented first results of these new data.

Jörn was a very versatile observer, complementing his belief that understanding of the star-formation activity in galaxies can be only achieved through a multi-wavelength study of various galaxy types.

Following his appointment in Bochum, Jörn moved in 2002 to the Space Telescope Science Institute (STScI) in Baltimore, where he worked for four years as a postdoctoral researcher. Since 2006 he was working at the University of Florida (UF) as a core team member of the Flamingos 2 Extra-Galactic Survey. He was largely responsible for the target selection strategies for both samples (star-forming galaxies and AGN), for coordinating the weekly group meetings, and for designing a webpage for the extragalactic group. He enjoyed living in Florida where snorkeling became a new passion. And certainly enough, he was a member of the Commander's Club at Kennedy Space Flight Center and watched numerous space shuttle launches there. Those of us who worked with Jörn know how extremely responsive, punctual, well organized, polite and truthful he always was.

Jörn enjoyed traveling a lot. Thus he managed to visit 45 U.S. States and many countries around the world including New Zealand and Australia. And he loved music. He owned an impressive and – of course – well organized collection of CDs. He idolized Fleetwood Mac, The Eagles, and Tom Petty, among many other artists. This passion for music eventually made him start to play the guitar himself.

He is being missed by his parents Alfred and Gudrun Rossa, his relatives, friends, and colleagues.

Ralf-Jürgen Dettmar

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