

**AAS Historical Astronomy Division  
Annual Report 2009**

Thomas Hockey, Chair

1 March 2009

This report describes the activities of the Historical Astronomy Division (HAD) from its division business meeting in Austin, January 2008, to its most recent meeting in Long Beach, January 2009.

**Membership**

HAD has 248 active members (190 regular and 58 affiliate).

**Officers and Committee**

Current officers of the Division are Thomas Hockey (University of Northern Iowa), Chair; Jarita C. Holbrook (University of Arizona), Vice Chair; and Joseph S. Tenn (Sonoma State University), Secretary-Treasurer. Committee members-at-large are Kevin Krisciunas (Texas A & M University) and James Lattis (University of Wisconsin). Sara J. Schechner (Harvard University) remains on the Committee as Past Chair. Terms of all, except the Secretary-Treasurer (who ~~is was~~ reappointed ~~for an indefinite term~~ to a four year term ending in January 2013), run from January 2009 until January 2011. We thank Jay Holberg and Gene Milone for their past two years of Committee service.

An election for a new vice chair (who is also the chair-elect) and two new committee members is scheduled for early fall 2010. The Nominating Committee consists of Sara Schechner (chair), JoAnn Palmeri (University of Oklahoma), and John Briggs (Clay Center Observatory). *Is this correct, or should there be a new Nominating Committee? I repeat once more that John Briggs is not a member of HAD. He has not been since 2004.*

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**Finances**

HAD finances are in good shape. At the end of 2008 HAD had \$ \_\_\_\_\_ *I will try again to get this.* in its account. The

Doggett Prize Fund had \$\_\_\_\_\_. and this. We appreciate those AAS members who continue to donate to HAD and to the Prize Fund.

### Meetings

The HAD holds its annual meeting in conjunction with the January AAS meeting. We typically have ~~one day of~~two or three special HAD sessions with invited speakers addressing thematic topics. This is followed ~~the next two days~~ by sessions of contributed papers and a poster session.

We had an excellent meeting at Austin in January 2008, with two special sessions: The first commemorated the fiftieth anniversary of the "International Geophysical Year and the Dawn of Space-Based Astronomy." The second examined "Astronomy at the Time of Jamestown and Its Role in the Exploration of America." HAD Doggett Prize winner David DeVorkin delivered an AAS plenary address, "Astronomy and its History on the Nation's Mall." The HAD Committee has voted to make up to \$1,000 available to organizers of future special sessions, to be used to defray the travel costs of guest speakers when necessary.

Austin saw the first-ever HAD Booth on the exhibit floor, staffed throughout the AAS meeting by HAD members.

### Prizes

The 2008-2009 Doggett Prize and Book Prize selection committee is chaired by the immediate past HAD Chair, Sara Schechner, and also includes the current HAD chair, the HAD Secretary-Treasurer, and members-at-large Michael Hoskin (University of Cambridge) and Brenda Corbin (USNO retired). Minor changes to the Doggett Prize rules were adopted this year. The first HAD Book Prize will be awarded in 2011. [Should this be included?]

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### Publications

*HAD News*, edited by Joe Tenn, was published in April 2008 (available at <http://www.aas.org/had/hadnews/HADN72.pdf>) and October 2008 (available at <http://www.aas.org/had/hadnews/HADN73.pdf>). Tenn posted a list of online resources useful to historians of astronomy on the HAD website.

### **Obituary Committee**

The Historical Astronomy Division is responsible for the preparation of the memorials to deceased members of the AAS that are published annually in the *BAAS*. Under the editorship of then HAD Vice Chair Thomas Hockey, 21 obituaries were published this past year. In this work, Hockey was assisted by Virginia Trimble, appointed by the AAS Council as a member of the HAD Obituary Committee. After some prodding by the HAD Secretary-Treasurer the AAS has made all obituaries produced by HAD available online at the SAO/NASA ADS website. There are links to these on the HAD site.

### **Other**

The HAD endorsed the AAS's statement on Community-based Priority Setting in the Astronomical Sciences. HAD chair Sara Schechner attended the AAS ~~Counsel~~ Council meeting in June 2008 (Saint Louis) and the AAS Executive Committee meeting, with other Division chairs, in October 2008 (AAS offices in Washington, D.C.).