

**AAS Historical Astronomy Division  
Annual Report 2012**

Jarita Holbrook, Chair

April 13, 2012

This report describes the activities of the Historical Astronomy Division [HAD] in calendar year 2011.

**Membership**

HAD had 307 active members (including 42 division affiliates) at the end of the year. Annual dues remained \$8 for AAS members and \$10 for division affiliates.

**Officers and Committee**

Current officers of the Division are Jarita C. Holbrook (University of California, Los Angeles), Chair; Jay M. Pasachoff (Williams College), Vice Chair; and Joseph S. Tenn (Sonoma State University), Secretary-Treasurer. Committee members-at-large are Richard Jarrell (York University) and Wayne Osborne (Central Michigan University). Thomas Hockey (University of Northern Iowa) remains on the Committee as Past Chair. Terms of all run from January 2011 until January 2013, except the secretary-treasurer's term, which will end in January 2015.

**Finances**

At the end of 2011 the Division had \$14,375 in its account. The LeRoy E. Doggett Prize Fund had \$31,338. The Donald E. Osterbrock Book Prize Fund had \$13,525. We appreciate those AAS members and others who continue to donate to HAD and to the Prize Funds.

**Meetings**

Although it has occasionally met separately, the HAD in recent years has met annually in conjunction with the January AAS meetings. In 2011 we had an excellent meeting in Seattle, in January, together with the 217<sup>th</sup> AAS Meeting, and held a second meeting in May, together with the 218<sup>th</sup> AAS Meeting in Boston,

the latter also in conjunction with the centennial meeting of the American Association of Variable Star Observers. In Seattle, we had two special sessions "The Astronomical Contributions of the Herschel Family," with seven speakers, and "Neptune after One Orbit: Reflections on the Discovery of a Planet," with five speakers. We had three oral sessions with fourteen contributed papers. There were twelve contributed papers in our poster session. A highlight of the meeting was the presentation of the first Donald E. Osterbrock Book Prize for Historical Astronomy to Nathan Sivin of the University of Pennsylvania for *Granting the Seasons: The Chinese Astronomical Reform of 1280, With a Study of Its Many Dimensions and a Translation of its Records*.

We had two special sessions at the Summer meeting in Boston: "Women in the History of Variable Star Astronomy," with four oral presentations, and "Variable Star Astronomy in Theory and Practice," with six oral presentations. There were also two contributed oral presentations.

### **Travel**

In October, HAD Chair Jarita Holbrook and Vice Chair Jay Pasachoff traveled to Washington to attend a meeting of the AAS Executive Council. Holbrook reported on the last year of HAD activities and exchanged ideas with the officers of the other AAS divisions. AAS has offered to help advertise our division to attract younger members.

### **Prizes**

The HAD Prize Committee was chaired by the immediate past Chair, Thomas Hockey (University of Northern Iowa), in 2011, and also included the current HAD Chair, Jarita Holbrook, the HAD Secretary-Treasurer, Joseph Tenn, and members-at-large Brenda Corbin (USNO) and Marc Rothenberg (NSF). In 2011 Hockey recused himself from the discussion and voting but continued to chair the committee. Curtis Wilson was appointed the fifth voting member of the Prize Committee to help select the 2012 recipient of the LeRoy E. Doggett Prize for Historical Astronomy. Woodruff T. Sullivan, III of the University of Washington was selected. The HAD Student Travel Award was awarded for the first time to Clifford J. Cunningham of James Cook University to partially support his presentation in one of the invited sessions of the Seattle meeting.

## **Publications**

*HAD News*, edited by Tenn, was published in April and October 2011 (both available at <http://had.aas.org/hadnews/>). Due to the efforts of Tenn, the HAD website now contains titles of all papers presented at all HAD meetings (and other history papers presented to the AAS) with links to abstracts, an almost complete set of *HAD News*, links to all obituaries published in the *BAAS*, and a selection of links to important online sources for history of astronomy.

## **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 *Bulletin of the American Astronomical Society*. Under the editorship of HAD Vice Chair Jay Pasachoff, obituaries were requested for the 36 deaths of members that were reported in 2011 as well as renewed requests for some from prior years. The AAS is making all obituaries produced by HAD available online via the SAO/NASA ADS website, with *BAAS* citation references. They are all posted at <http://aas.org/baas/obits/all>, which is available through a link with the latest ten member deaths reported at the bottom left of the main Society page at <http://aas.org>.

## **Other**

Portions of the *AAS Directory* having to do with HAD were updated. We are grateful to the American Astronomical Society for establishing a special registration rate for Division Affiliate members attending only the HAD portion of the January 2011 AAS meeting.