HISTORICAL ASTRONOMY DIVISION

The Historical Astronomy Division was founded in 1980 to represent a number of history-related interests of the American Astronomical Society, including scholarly research in the History of Astronomy, Archaeoastronomy, the application of early astronomical records in modern research, and the archiving and preservation of astronomical materials. An organizing committee was appointed by the AAS Council and in 1979-1980 drew up the By-Laws that now govern the Division. Members of that original committee were Owen Gingerich, Kenneth Brecher, Richard Berendzen, Philip Morrison, Woodruff Sullivan, and John Eddy. In 1980 the first regular officers were elected and appointed at the 157th Meeting of the AAS in Albuquerque in January 1981. They are Eddy, Chairman; Gingerich, Vice-Chairman; Brecher, Secretary-Treasurer; and John Carlson and David DeVorkin, Councilors.

The First Meeting of the Division was held on January 12, 1981 in Albuquerque in connection with the 157th Meeting of our parent Society. A full day of papers was presented, including invited talks by Brecher, Bart Bok, Von del Chamberlain, W. H. Donahue, Kendrick Frazier, Gingerich, W. G. Hoyt, J. Lankford, and Ray Williamson. On January 11 the Division sponsored a field trip to the Anasazi site at Chaco Canyon, northwest of Albuquerque, arranged by Michael Zeilik.

One of the concerns of the Division is that of preservation of astronomical materials, including the personal and professional papers of astronomers, as well as past and current books and periodicals. The preservation of papers and materials that may be of interest to future historians is not always an easy or popular task. As for printed materials, although the very rare books (ca 1450 to 1800) are well cared for in most libraries, observatory publications and astronomical journals published from the 1850's through the early 1900's are in real danger from any enemy within -- the paper. The wood pulp used in making paper in combination with the alum sizing used creates a high acid content which causes rapid deterioration. Paper used in this period, and often today, becomes brittle and breaks easily with use. A study of these problems has been initiated by the Historical Astronomy Division by the appointment of a Standing Committee on Preservation, chaired by DeVorkin, with the help of Carlson, Brenda Corbin, Sharon Gibbs, Estelle Karlin, and Deborah Warner.

John A. Eddy
Chairman

PLANETARY SCIENCES DIVISION

In 1981, the Division for Planetary Sciences (DPS) finds itself in the same ambiguous state as the scientific discipline it represents. The culmination of twenty years of spacecraft exploration of the solar system took place in 1980-81 with the two spectacular Voyager encounters with the Saturn system, following closely upon Voyager Jupiter, Pioneer Venus, and Pioneer Saturn. An unprecedented number of discoveries, and masses of data that will require additional years of analysis, have resulted from these missions and from vigorous ground-based studies, including heavy use for planetary observing of the 3-m IRTF in Hawaii and the IUE satellite. Public support for planetary exploration is also at an all-time high, as witnessed by cover stories in TIME and NEWSWEEK, the popularity of the COSMOS television series, success of the Viking and Halley Funds, and the growth of The Planetary Society to 100,000 members within a year of its foundation.

Ironically, this apparent strength comes at a time when planetary science is under severe political and financial attack. NASA support for solar system exploration has steadily declined, with only a single mission new start--Galileo--since FY 1975. Galileo itself still lacks an adequate launch vehicle, and it may not reach Jupiter until the end of the decade. In the latest round of FY82 budget cuts, NASA even considered the outright elimination of the planetary program, including the Voyager spacecraft still enroute to Uranus and Neptune. At a time when NSF and other budgets are also in decline, concern over the future of planetary science has nearly over-shadowed the triumph of recent discoveries and has spurred the DPS to increasing levels of involvement in both public education and political action.

The 1981 annual meeting of the DPS was held in Pittsburgh on 12-16 October with about 300 registrants. B. Hapke of U. Pittsburgh headed the local organizing committee, while M. Belton of KPNO was program chair. A Special Voyager/2 Saturn session, organized by E. Stone of Caltech, as well as an emotional evening session on public policy and planetary exploration, attracted widespread interest from the national press as well as Division members. The next DPS meeting will be held in Boulder 19-22 October 1982, with L. Esposito and R. West, both of U. Colorado, as local host and program chair, respectively. The 1983 meeting will be 17-20 October in Ithaca, and tentative plans are to meet in 1984 in Hawaii and 1985 in Baltimore.

At the Calgary AAS meeting the DPS sponsored a half day session highlighting recent results in planetary science, and a similar session is planned for Troy in 1982. The Division has also taken action to enfranchise its Affiliate Members and to initiate one or two annual prizes in planetary science. Two DPS members have been nominated by petition to run for AAS office in an effort to increase Division contact with the rest of the AAS: M. Belton for Vice President and D. Morrison for Councilor.

New officers for the DPS are M. Belton (KPNO), Chair; C. Chapman (PSI), Vice-Chair; Committee Members R. Beebe (NMSU) and C. Pilcher (U. Hawaii), and Press Officer R. Greenberg (PSI). Other members of the Division Committee are L. Wilkening (U. Arizona), Secretary-Treasurer, D. Morrison (U. Hawaii), Past-Chair, and J. Bergstralh (NASA HQ), J. Burns (Cornell), J. Elliott (MIT), and E. Stone (Caltech). Retiring from the Com-