

AAS Historical Astronomy Division Annual Report 2013

Jay M. Pasachoff, Chair

April 15, 2014

This report describes the activities of the Historical Astronomy Division [HAD] in calendar year 2013.

Membership

HAD had nearly 300 active members (including about 10% division affiliates) at the end of the year. Of the total members nearly one-fourth had emeritus status. Annual dues increased to \$15 for AAS members and \$20 for division affiliates to cover the \$5 fee the AAS now charges the Division for each. The dues increase took effect 1 January 2014.

Officers and Committee

Officers of the Division were Jay M. Pasachoff (Williams College), Chair; Marc Rothenberg (National Science Foundation), Vice Chair; and Joseph S. Tenn (Sonoma State University), Secretary-Treasurer. Committee members-at-large were Linda French (Illinois Wesleyan University) and Wayne Orchiston (National Astronomical Research Institute of Thailand). Jarita C. Holbrook (University of the Western Cape) remained on the Committee as Past Chair. Terms of all ran from January 2013 until January 2015, except the secretary-treasurer's four-year term, which will also end in January 2015.

Finances

At the end of 2013 the Division had \$16,236 in its account. The LeRoy E. Doggett Prize Fund had \$36,147. The Donald E. Osterbrock Book Prize Fund had \$16,622. We appreciate those AAS members and others who continue to donate to HAD and to the Prize Funds.

Meetings

The Division has increased its meeting frequency, meeting with other divisions as well as with the Society. In 2013 HAD met with the AAS and HEAD in January, as it has for many years, and also with the DPS in October. During the January meeting in Long Beach, HAD presented special sessions on "Making Astronomy Public, Los Angeles Style," "Preservation of Astronomical Heritage and Archival Data," and "Fifty Years of Celestial X-ray Astronomy," the last of these a joint session with HEAD. These three sessions included 27 speakers, and there were also two poster papers and nine contributed oral papers, as well as the Osterbrock Book Prize Lecture by Harvey M. Bricker and Victoria R. Bricker, who received the prize for *Astronomy in the Maya Codices*.

HAD sessions at the joint DPS/HAD meeting in Denver included three invited lectures related to planetary astronomy, five oral contributed papers, and one poster paper.

Travel

In October, Vice Chair Rothenberg and Secretary-Treasurer Tenn attended the Fall Leadership Meeting of the AAS Executive Council. Tenn reported on the last year of HAD activities and both he and Rothenberg exchanged ideas with the officers of the other AAS divisions.

Prizes

The HAD Prize Committee was chaired by the immediate past Chair, Jarita C. Holbrook, and also included the current HAD Chair, Jay M. Pasachoff, the HAD Secretary-Treasurer, Joseph S. Tenn, and members-at-large Woodruff T. Sullivan (University of Washington) and Marc Rothenberg (National Science Foundation). Holbrook recused herself from the selection process (although she continued to chair the Committee) and was replaced for the year by Steven J. Dick (National Air and Space Museum). The Prize Committee selected the ninth recipient of the LeRoy E. Doggett Prize for Historical Astronomy, F. Richard Stephenson (University of Durham), for the prize to be awarded in January 2014. The HAD Student Travel Award was awarded by the HAD Committee to Sarah Reynolds (Indiana University) to subsidize her presentation at the January 2014 HAD meeting in National Harbor. (There were to be two awards, but the other awardee withdrew.)

Publications

HAD News, edited by Tenn, was published in April and October 2013 (both available at <http://had.aas.org/hadnews/>). 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 and, for recent meetings, photos of speakers; an almost complete set of *HAD News*; links to all obituaries published in the *BAAS* and posted on the AAS website; 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 in the (now online) *Bulletin of the American Astronomical Society*. Under the editorship of HAD Vice Chair Marc Rothenberg, obituaries were requested for members whose deaths were reported in 2013, as well as renewed requests for some from prior years. The AAS has made all obituaries produced by HAD available on the AAS website, but they can be difficult to browse. They can all be found from the one-page alphabetical list on the HAD site at <http://had.aas.org/obits.html>.

New Projects

At its meeting in January 2013 the HAD Committee endorsed two new projects: the Oral History Project, directed by Jarita C. Holbrook, and the Astronomy Genealogy Project, directed by Joseph S. Tenn. The OHP is well underway, with a \$2500 grant-in-aid secured from the AIP Center for History of Physics to defray travel and expenses of interviewers, and with several interviews conducted during the first year. AstroGen, as the Astronomy Genealogy Project is to be known, is starting slowly, with a small team entering data in a temporary database and making decisions on formatting and which information to include. Sometime in 2014 the team will call

on the AAS IT Department for assistance (promised at the Fall Leadership Conference in 2012) in implementing the project online. It will be similar to its inspiration, the Mathematics Genealogy Project (<http://genealogy.math.ndsu.nodak.edu/>), which now contains nearly 180,000 “mathematicians,” including many physicists and astronomers.

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 AAS meetings.