

HISTORICAL ASTRONOMY DIVISION NEWSLETTER 13 AUGUST 1989

-- THE WASHINGTON MEETINGS, JANUARY 9 - 14, 1990

There will be much for historians to savor at the January 1990 AAS meetings. In addition to the two regular contributed paper sessions, to be held on Saturday, January 13, we have been invited by the U. S. Naval Observatory for a special session on national observatories on Sunday, January 14, and there will also be a smaller workshop/discussion session on the preservation of observatories as national landmarks, conducted by representatives from the National Park Service. The regular sessions are, of course, open to all on a first come first served basis, but attendance at the USNO special sessions will be limited, so reservations will be necessary.

*Special All-Day Session on National Observatories
at the U. S. Naval Observatory, Sunday, January 14:*

The theme of the invited-paper all-day session at the USNO is national observatories: origins and purposes. Organized by Steve Dick and LeRoy Doggett, the two paper sessions are now taking shape. Although final acceptances and a formal agenda are still being worked out, the following description will indicate the richness of the day's offerings:

The morning session will focus on the international setting. Speakers who have been invited and have expressed interest include Alan Batten, Adriaan Blaauw, Richard Jarrell, and Susan DeBarbat. They will cover Pulkova, ESO, Canadian observatories and the Paris Observatory, respectively. In addition, it is hoped that there will be invited papers on Greenwich as well as on South American observatories.

The afternoon session will cover the American setting, where invited speakers may include Don Osterbrock, Dorrit Hoffleit, and Steve Dick on aspects of the USNO, Frank Edmondson on AURA, Allan Needell and Woody Sullivan on NRAO, and perhaps a paper on national observatories in space.

Since the Observatory sits on highly restricted real estate, the USNO hosts have decided to provide a lunch on the grounds, at a nominal charge (to be determined). There will also be a tour of the observatory and a reception will follow the sessions in the early evening.

Admittance to this Sunday session is open to all, but will be on a first-come first served basis, because the seating limit is 100 people. Please call or write Steve Dick, Historian, U. S. Naval Observatory, (34th and Massachusetts Ave NW, Washington DC 20392/(202) - 653-0145) as soon as possible if you are planning to attend the Sunday session and the reception following.

Further details will be announced in the November/December HAD Newsletter.

*Call For Contributed Papers: Saturday Sessions, January 13th,
in Crystal City:*

Since there has been a reasonably strong show of interest, we have been given two paper sessions on Saturday. These will emphasize, as always, works in progress in the areas of classical astronomy, archaeoastronomy, and modern astronomy. All HAD members are encouraged to provide 10-minute contributed papers through the normal registration process. And as always, securing a slot in a contributed paper session will be a function of how early your abstract is received at the AAS Executive Offices. First-come first-served is the watchword at what will be a very crowded AAS meeting.

*Workshop on Historic Preservation Issues
Dealing with Historic American Observatories*

On Friday morning, January 12th, there will be a 90-minute workshop and presentation at the AAS meeting by the National Park Service on the process of designating observatories as national historic landmarks, and on accompanying historic preservation issues. Observatory directors will be invited, but there may be room as well for interested members of the AAS. The workshop planners will describe the NPS study of historic observatories, recently completed by NPS professional staff, and now under internal review by the Service. The workshop will be a summation of how the Service reached its conclusions, which should provide useful insight for AAS members involved in the process, or concerned with it. The workshop will also address preservation issues dealing with historic American observatories, such as the question of how to promote long-term preservation of a still-active operating observatory. Guidelines for establishing criteria for seeking compatible alternatives for the preservation of the historic fabric of an observatory will be discussed and debated.

This workshop provides a critical opportunity for historians to appreciate the process of selection by the Service, as well as come to grips with issues that address the role of observatories in the history of American astronomy.

*Reception
National Air and Space Museum,
Wednesday evening, January 10*

On Wednesday evening, January 10, the Society will hold a reception for all registered participants and guests at the National Air and Space Museum. Before the general reception begins in Space Hall, a half-hour presentation (from 7:30 - 8:00 pm) in the museum's Langley Theater will highlight the theme of the meeting: A Decade of Astronomy in Space. Although final details have yet to be worked out, we hope to have short addresses on this theme, highlighted by the presentation of a commemorative artifact to NASA that will be taken on the Hubble Space Telescope deployment mission. The artifact now in hand, kindly loaned by the Mount Wilson Institute, is a guide eyepiece from the Mount Wilson 100-inch telescope that was most likely used by Edwin Hubble.

Seating in the Langley is limited, so try to arrive early. The reception in Space Hall will take place immediately upon the conclusion of the Langley Theater program, (approximately 8:00 till 10:00 pm) and is not limited to those who secured a seat in the Langley. There will be no special transportation, but the Museum is easily accessible by the Metro Yellow Line. This is an excellent opportunity for out of town guests to tour the space exhibits without the usual crowds. Specific times and directions will be provided in the November/December Newsletter.

-- NEWS OF THE PROFESSION

GRANTS-IN-AID for History of Modern Physics and Allied Sciences (astronomy, geophysics, etc.): The Center for History of Physics of the American Institute of Physics has a program of grants-in-aid for research in the history of modern physics and allied sciences such as astronomy, geophysics and optics. Grants can be awarded in amounts up to \$2000 each. Funds can be used only to reimburse direct expenses associated with the work. Preference will be given to those who need part of the funds for travel and subsistence to use the resources of the Center's Niels

Bohr Library in New York City, or to microfilm papers or to tape-record oral history interviews with copies deposited in the Niels Bohr Library. Applicants should either be working toward a graduate degree in the history of science, or show a record of publication in the field. To apply, send a vitae plus a letter of not more than two pages describing your research project, including a brief budget showing predicted expenses, to: Spencer R. Weart, Center for History of Physics, American Institute of Physics, 335 East 45th Street, New York, NY 10017. Deadlines for receipt of applications are June 30 and December 31 of each year.

SITE FOR QUINCENTENARY MEETING OF MAYANISTS: Anthony F. Aveni writes to announce that at the 7th Mesa Redonda de Palenque, a committee was formed to plan for a quincentenary meeting of Mayanists who will discuss astronomical issues in Maya studies. They would like to accompany this meeting with a major planetarium presentation on the subject of what celestial phenomena were observed and how sky events were staged in order to relate the events to the people, specifically regarding the conduct of war, the practice of agriculture, and fertility rites. They are at the proposal writing stage and would like to hear from planetarium people who possess the capability of projecting 360 degree panoramas as viewed from public assembly points in Palenque, Copan and Tikal. If there is interest for this planned 1992 event, a chance to show, as Tony states, "our own public something of the astronomical achievements of one of the highest cultures of the Americas," please contact him at The Department of Astronomy, Colgate University, Hamilton, NY 13346-1398 (315) 824-1000 ext 214.

-- *HAD sessions at the University of Michigan, June 1989:*

A summary will appear in the November/December 1989 Newsletter.

HOW TO READ YOUR ADDRESS LABEL:

A number of people have asked how to read the mailing label, to determine status and membership type. Here's how:

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|  Dr. First and Last Name. (Type) m/d/yr (Status)
|  address
|  address
|  address
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Under Type:

F = full AAS member
 A = Affiliate
 S = Associate or Special
 J = Junior AAS member
 C = Corporate member

m/d/yr = date your membership lapses

Status

Y = dues in arrears (PAY UP!!)
 N = dues OK, (unless the date is
 passed, then it means that I have
 given you a grace period...)