



# Historical Astronomy Division

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## HISTORICAL ASTRONOMY DIVISION NEWSLETTER MARCH 1987

### Outgoing Chairman's Report -- Ed Krupp

The Historical Astronomy Division held its seventh annual meeting in conjunction with the 169th Meeting of the American Astronomical Society in Pasadena, California. Attendance at the regular sessions, on Thursday, 8 January, averaged 100 throughout the morning -- an overflow crowd with standing room only. Thursday was the last day of the AAS meeting, but even the afternoon HAD session drew an attendance of 60 people. The William Andrews Clark Memorial Library in Los Angeles, renown for its collections of seventeenth and eighteenth century literature on English culture, has hosted prestigious symposia on the history of science, and it provided an elegant, refined and scholarly environment for the HAD special session on Friday afternoon, 10 January. Attendance at the Clark totaled 40, and Dr. Norman Thrower, Director of the Clark Library and Professor of Geography at UCLA presented an informative and entertaining account of the Library's origins and after the paper session he provided a tour of the Library's research facilities.

Altogether, 18 contributed papers and four invited papers were presented at the three HAD sessions. Topics ranged from the calendar reforms during the French Revolution to the origins of the Mauna Kea Observatories. A final nod to Comet Halley -- the 1759 observations by Thomas Stevenson of Barbados; an inquiry into the original calendric function of the Pleiades; several controversial analyses of ancient Chinese and Korean records of possible supernovae and eclipses; and the first attempt to measure the solar constant by balloon suggest the widely ranging research reported upon by HAD members.

The Pasadena meeting provided provided the opportunity for the HAD to schedule an invited Society lecture. Dr. Karl Hufbauer, of the Department of History at U. C. Irvine delivered a well-received talk on "The Stellar Energy Problem from Eddington to Bethe" to an audience of more than 200 on Thursday, January 8. Professor Hufbauer challenged the astronomical audience to comment on his analysis of the migration of nuclear physicists into astronomical problem areas, and throughout the remainder of the AAS meetings, various HAD members reported that his remarks stimulated much discussion from senior members of the Society who had played a part in understanding processes of nucleosynthesis.

Approximately 45 persons attended the Division Business Meeting, held at 12:30 PM on Thursday, January 8. Members

expressed an overwhelming preference to hold the next HAD meeting in conjunction with the 171st Meeting of the American Astronomical Society in Austin, Texas, in January 1988 [see Don Osterbrock's report].

New Division Officers were introduced at the Business Meeting, and they include:

Donald Osterbrock	Chairman
Katherine Bracher	Vice-Chairman
Art Hoag	Counselor
Barbara Welther	Counselor

Von del Chamberlain and Owen Gingerich retire from the HAD Council, and retiring HAD Chairman Ed Krupp becomes a Counselor. David DeVorkin continues as Secretary-Treasurer for two more years. At the meeting, Ed Krupp transferred the traditional emblem of power, the "Ich Bin HAD" plaque, to Donald Osterbrock.

On Saturday, January 11, 1987, Ed Krupp led a fully booked HAD all-day tour to California Indian rock art sites. These sites, at Burro Flats and Agua Dulce Canyon, contain beautiful imagery and glyphs with astronomical connotations. An unexpectedly elaborate and memorable catered lunch was arranged by Griffith Observatory Secretary Barbara Hoekendorf and her associates. Through cooperation and dedication of resources by Rockwell International's Rockedyn Division and the Los Angeles County Department of Parks and Recreation, 47 participants has a chance to see archaeoastronomical sites that are normally not accessible.

As retiring HAD Chairman, I want to express my appreciation to the HAD officers and the HAD nomination committee who have served during my term and who have provided genuinely helpful advice and support on all HAD matters. I am especially grateful to David DeVorkin for his businesslike attention to all details conducted with dependable friendship, which made working on behalf of the HAD a pleasure. I intend to provide the present officers with the same kind of support, out of respect for the fine treatment I received. Finally, I want to thank the HAD membership at large for continuing to make the HAD an active forum for thoughtful historical research and an important contributor to the overall character and well-being of the American Astronomical Society.

### Incoming Chairman's Report

-- Donald Osterbrock

#### THE NEXT HAD MEETING:

At our HAD Business Meeting in Pasadena, and also in the HAD (executive) Committee Meeting held earlier that day, we discussed the date and place for our next meeting. There was

general agreement that the AAS meeting in Vancouver in June would be too soon. Most of those present thought that we should schedule our HAD meeting in conjunction with the AAS meeting in Austin, Texas, January 10 - 14, 1988, unless a better alternative were proposed, and a host identified.

Then in early February our member David Evans, on behalf of the University of Texas, called me up and invited (and in fact urged) us to have our meeting there on Sunday and Monday, January 10 and 11. For the AAS meeting he and other historically minded Texas astronomers are preparing an exhibit of their historical astronomy collection of instruments and books. This remarkable collection, including works from Copernicus through Herschel and more, will be on display at the Academic Center on the University of Texas campus. David suggested that we hold the HAD special sessions there on Sunday, January 10, with guided tours of the exhibit during the session breaks, and follow this with our regular sessions during the AAS meetings on Monday, January 11. This seemed such a good plan, and the University of Texas group (which includes in all five members of the HAD) were so enthusiastic to come there, that I contacted all the members of the HAD Executive Committee, and all agreed we should definitely meet in Texas. We have already put in our request to the AAS Executive Office to hold our regular session on that Monday.

So please plan to come to Austin on January 10 and 11, 1988. You will receive further information on the meeting in successive HAD Newsletters, as plans develop.

Finally, on behalf of the entire HAD, let me thank Ed Krupp for the very excellent job he has done as Chairman for the past two years. The sessions for papers at Houston and Pasadena, the invited speakers, and the field trips and tours he organized were all very good, and we are most grateful to him.

### Sec/Treas Rept -- David DeVorkin

A special mailing was sent out in mid-February to all HAD members who have not paid dues in the past three years or, as Affiliates, have not paid the required surcharge. If you did not receive one of these special notices, you are a member in good standing. If you did receive the notice, you must respond either with payment or with a corrected record of your membership status. Anyone who received the notice and does not respond one way or another will be dropped from the roster.

The amended balance sheet for the HAD submitted to the AAS Executive Office is attached to this Newsletter.

A more extensive Newsletter will be issued in the summer to report on progress in planning for Austin. If any HAD member would like to utilize this Newsletter for brief announcements of activities or publications of interest to HAD members, please do not hesitate to contact me.

1986 HAD BALANCE SHEET

YEAR ENDING 12/31/1986

(exclusive of account held by AAS)

Balance from 1985: \$648.36

Income

Dues: \$1041.00

Contributions: 150.00

Interest: 29.62

Subtotal (1986 Income): \$1220.62

Total Income (1985 Balance + Income): \$1868.98

Expenses\*

(Office?) Houston expenses:

Abstract and Registration Fees \$175.00\*

Bus fee (Houston meeting) \$20.00

Office (Postage, etc.) \$313.11

Total HAD Expenses: \$508.11

Balance: \$1360.87

\*corrected from Treasurer's report presented at Pasadena Meeting. Reflects error in attributing a 1985 expense to 1986.