

NEWSLETTER 21
HISTORICAL ASTRONOMY DIVISION
AMERICAN ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY

October 1991

-- Atlanta Meeting (1): HAD Activities

HAD activities at Atlanta start at 8:30 am Monday, January 13, when Robert Smith will be presenting a HAD/AAS Invited Discourse. He will provide interesting and provocative historical perspective on Space Telescope, based upon his book of the same name, which recently won the History of Science Society's Watson Davis Prize. The HAD day will then continue with regular morning and afternoon contributed paper sessions and an important business meeting, to be held one hour before the afternoon paper session, as per usual practice.

-- Atlanta Meeting (2): AAS Announcements

No HAD member contacted me with problems concerning receipt of the AAS Preliminary Announcement for Atlanta, in response to the warning issued in the last Newsletter. It seems like the problem of mailings is being nicely solved by Sharon Savoy, Membership Coordinator, at the AAS Executive Office. If there are any lingering questions, contact her at (202) 328-2010. If for some reason you cannot get through to the AAS office, call me at (note new temporary phone) (609) 734-8073. The AAS final program for Atlanta should be in the mail on 13 November, so if you do not receive it by the last week of November, call Sharon.

-- Atlanta Meeting (3): Business Meeting

Items for the Business Meeting remain largely as expressed in the last Newsletter. The most important issues, dealing with the continuation of Observatory Reports, the possibility of a revised dues structure, and the possibility of the AAS Executive Office taking over dues responsibilities, garnered some interest among HAD members since their announcement in August. We look forward to a lively and productive meeting.

-o- A new dues structure, and rectifying the dues cycle to agree with the AAS cycle on a yearly basis (see note below on Dues Rectification).

-o- HAD concern over the continuation of observatory reports in the B.A.A.S. Reactions from members, and clarifications of issues by observatory directors will be discussed.

-o- Report from the Obituary Committee (Steve Dick, present chair), to include membership and activities during the year.

-o- As usual, we will be very interested to hear if the HAD is meeting the needs of its membership.

-o- Upcoming meetings at the Adler and the Huntington will be discussed (see below).

HAD Activities in Atlanta, Monday, January 13:

AAS/HAD INVITED DISCOURSE: 8:30 -- 9:20 am Salon III/4

Robert W. Smith (NASM/Smithsonian/Johns Hopkins) "Big Science is Bad Science? Historical Reflections"

HAD SESSION 1: 10:00 -- 11:30 am Salon I (Steve Dick, Chair)

B. E. Schaefer (NASA/GSFC) "Length of the Lunar Month"

K. Gloria (Van Vleck) "The Restoration of an 18th Century Celestial Globe"

L. F. Drummeter, Jr. (SI/NMAH) "Notes on the History of the Blink Comparator"

J. H. Robinson (U. So. Florida) "Atmospheric Refraction and the Possible Precision of Archaeoastronomical Alignments"

HAD BUSINESS MEETING: 1:00 -- 2:00 pm Salon I

HAD SESSION 2: 2:00 -- 3:30 pm Salon I (John Lankford, Chair)

D. Hoffleit (Yale) "Women in History of Variable Star Research"

R. S. Brashear (Huntington Library) "Timing is Everything: World War I and the Spectroscopic Parallax"

D. H. DeVorkin (Smithsonian) "Russell's Theory of Stellar Evolution"

D. E. Osterbrock (UCO/Lick Obs., UCSC) "The Pauper and the Prince: Ritchey, Hale and Big American Telescopes"

S. J. Dick (USNO) "Otto Struve, Stellar Rotation and Planetary Systems"

-- Announcements

-- History of Science Society

The History of Science Society's Astronomy Interest Group held its second meeting during the HSS Madison meetings, including a business session and a program at the Washburn Observatory. Marc Rothenberg reports that the Madison meetings entertained four full sessions and seven papers in other sessions dealing with aspects of the history of astronomy. Most significant were sessions on "Disciplinary History: Modern Astronomy as a Case Study"; "Much Ado about Medieval and Early Modern Cosmology: A session in honor of Edward Grant"; "Astronomers and Telescopes"; and "The Role of Comets in the Scientific Revolution." Many HAD members contributed to these stimulating sessions. For more information about the HSS astronomy group, contact Marc Rothenberg or John Lankford.

-- Dues Rectification: Second Notice

At the end of 1992, the Executive Office of the AAS plans to assume dues collections for Society Divisions, including the HAD.

Whether or not the HAD decides to take advantage of this service, it affords an excellent opportunity to rectify everyone's dues to the cycle set by the Society itself. Thinking about how this will be done has advanced since the last Newsletter. Briefly, the idea is to ask all HAD members whose dues will be in arrears by December 1992 to renew now to complete **only the remainder** of what is owed the Division. Those who have paid beyond December 1992 will be issued a credit during the 1993 dues cycle.

I expect that we will have to establish a new dues rate for all categories starting in January 1993, to reflect the increased activity of the Division, increased postal costs, increased banking costs (a rip off) and any administrative costs the use of the AAS services will entail.

-- Astronomical Bibliography

Ruth Freitag reports that her time has been taken up by helping to move her Library of Congress staff offices (Science and Technology Division) to the renovated portions of the Adams building, so she has been packing boxes. Imagine what it must be like moving that library! She also spent 10 days in London during October, tracking down bibliographical nuggets too rare to survive the Atlantic crossing. Some of these will no doubt appear when her listings resume. She admits that she had to travel quickly to renew her British Library card before it expires in November: "Using the BL's resources will be rather interesting for the next few years, as it is in the throes of a massive shift. Everything--the Great Russell Street collections, the science holdings at Holborn and Aldwych, the India Office Library, the materials in remote storage locations, and what else I'm not sure; with the exception of the newspapers, which will remain at Colindale--will eventually be housed in the new building at St. Pancras. The ingathering will take several years, and when it is completed, the new building, whose capacity is enormous, will nevertheless be FULL. People will simply have to stop publishing!"

In response to a recent inquiry, Ruth would like to remind HAD members that she does not include (by universal agreement with the HAD officers, at least my universal agreement) citations to historical articles in obvious places, like Sky & Telescope and Journal for the History of Astronomy. Discussion of this exclusion is welcome anytime.

Ruth [as well as your secretary] has also been receiving very nice comments of encouragement for the bibliography. It will continue until our postal money runs out!

-- International Symposium on Indian and Other Asiatic Astronomies:

For the record: This largely invited symposium will be held 12--16 December 1991 in Hyderabad and Jaipur, India. Contributions are welcome on Babylonian astronomy, Vedic astronomy, Siddhantic astronomy, as well as Japanese, Chinese, Tibetan and other Asiatic Astronomies. Astronomy in Islamic

culture, Indo-Arab and Turko-Arab interaction, and Greek-Asiatic interaction also will be covered. Contact ASAP, B. G. Siddarth, B. M. Birla Science Centre, Adharsh Nagar, Hyderabad-500 463.

-- American Institute of Physics Grants-In-Aid

The Center for History of Physics of the AIP awards grants-in-aid (of up to \$2,000 each) to reimburse direct expenses incurred for research in the history of modern physics and allied sciences (such as astronomy) and their social interactions. 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 tape-record oral history interviews with a copy deposited at the Library. Applicants should either show a record of publication in the history of science, or be working toward a graduate degree in the field, in which case they should include a letter of reference from their thesis adviser, along with (in any case) a vita and a letter of no more than two pages describing the research project and budget. These should be sent to Spencer R. Weart, Center for History of Physics, American Institute of Physics, 335 East 45 Street New York NY 10017. Deadlines are **30 June** and **31 December** of each year.

-- Formation of a Society for antique telescope collectors:

Bart Fried would like to know "if you own or admire vintage telescopes, binoculars, or astronomical instruments, and are interested in forming a society to promote their appreciation." If so, contact him at 514 Launfall Road, Plymouth Meeting, PA 19462.

Plans of the Society at present include an inaugural convention and antique telescope show, slated for the U.S. Naval Observatory in Washington on 28-29 March 1992. Also planned is a regular Society publication. Anyone interested in these activities should contact Bart Fried, who requests that you enclose a self-addressed stamped envelope for his reply.

-- John S. Hall

Don Osterbrock reports the passing of John Hall, "who died at his home in Sedona, Arizona on 15 October. He was 83 years old ... and was a pioneer in photoelectric photometry, the head of the Equatorial Division of the U.S. Naval Observatory, and the director of Lowell Observatory until his retirement about 15 years ago."

John Hall shared an active interest in the history of astronomy with many other HAD members, and was always ready to allow himself to be interviewed (by at least three historians at different times, to my knowledge). Don noted that John Hall's death was announced in the San Jose Mercury News, and in the New York Times. His passing is a poignant reminder of the importance of the HAD's initiative in seeing to the proper and timely preparation of obituary notices in the BAAS.

-- Joint DDA/HAD meeting at the Adler Planetarium
and Astronomical Museum, June 3--5, 1992.

Plans are now firming up. John Lankford has been working with LeRoy Doggett and E. Myles Standish to establish a local organizing committee, which now consists of Peter Vandervoort of Chicago, and Liba Taub of the Adler.

As presently conceived, there will be 1.5 days of DDA papers and 1.5 of HAD papers, all in unparalleled sessions. The DDA has invited Martin Schwarzschild to present its Dirk Brouwer Lecture, which will take place on Friday evening, June 4, before cocktails and dinner. There will be three HAD-invited talks: LeRoy Doggett, Steve Dick, and Noel Swerdlow have been approached for special presentations. All this and the Adler's exquisite exhibitry will make for a really smashing time!

To assist in planning for the Adler meeting, we **must** have your responses to the following questions. Copy this page and send your response ASAP to: David DeVorkin, Institute for Advanced Study, School of Natural Sciences E-103, Princeton, N.J. 08540.

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Y () N () I will attend the Adler meeting, June 3 - 5.

Y () N () I plan to contribute a paper to the HAD sessions.

name _____

Return ASAP to David DeVorkin, Institute for Advanced Study,
School of Natural Sciences E-103, Princeton, N.J. 08540.

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