



# H·A·D NEWS

*The Newsletter of the Historical Astronomy Division  
of the American Astronomical Society*

Number 37

May 1996

## HAD in Toronto

HAD will meet in conjunction with the AAS meeting in Toronto, Ontario, January 12-16, 1997. In addition to two contributed HAD paper sessions on Monday, January 13, there will be a special thematic session "North of the Border: The Development of Canadian Astronomy" on Sunday, January 12, from 1-5 pm, organized by Richard Jarrell.

We are planning for an informal lunch at a local restaurant at noon on Sunday to kick off the meetings. Details will be forthcoming. A tentative list of speakers follows.

R. A. Jarrell (York) "J. S. Plaskett and the Modern Large Reflector"

David DeVorkin (NASM) "Chant and Russell"

\*Alan Batten (DAO) "Binary Star Studies in Canada"

Gene Milone and T. A. Clark (Calgary) "25 Years at the Rothney Astrophysical Observatory"

Peter Broughton (RASC) "Astronomical Work in Canada's Northwest 200 Years Ago"

\*Martin Connors (Athabasca) "Beals and Impact Structures"

Robert Garrison (DDO) "25 Years of the UTSO Telescope"

\*Jean-Louis Trudel (UT), "Astronomical Popularization in Canada"

\* not yet confirmed

*HAD in Toronto* is continued on page 2.

## From the Chair

Woody Sullivan

The death last spring of LeRoy Doggett, our friend, colleague, and former Secretary-Treasurer, still hangs heavy with us. It has affected us personally and as a Division, as will be evident throughout this issue. We ask your patience during the current transition period as Newsletters arrive on your desk somewhat less frequently than usual. We are most grateful to Steve Dick and David DeVorkin, who are sharing the Secretary-Treasurer duties in the interim.

I am delighted to report that a very generous memorial donation has been made in LeRoy's name as an initial endowment for the biennial HAD Prize that was first announced in the last Newsletter. The HAD officers have thus voted to name the prize the LeRoy E. Doggett Prize for Historical Astronomy. Steve Dick (Chair of the Prize Committee) requests your nominations for the first award. [See the HAD Prize rules in the last HAD News]. We are also soliciting contributions from HAD members to enhance the endowment for the Doggett Prize; please send a check, payable to the AAS, to the AAS Executive Office, 2000 Florida Ave. NW, Suite 400, Washington DC 20009, Attn: Doggett Prize.

Starting in January we will again have a regular Secretary-Treasurer. The HAD officers are pleased to appoint Thomas Hockey (Northern Iowa University) to this post. Tom's historical research centers on understanding past reported details of planetary surfaces, about which he wrote his Ph.D.

*From the Chair* is continued on page 2.

*HAD in Toronto*, continued from page 1.

## Call For Papers

There will be two 90-minute contributed paper sessions on Monday, as well as a Business meeting. Abstracts are due to the AAS office by 9 pm EDT October 23. See the AAS Meeting Announcement for details of registration and housing.

## HAD Business Meeting

The HAD Business meeting will be held at the usual time, one hour before the commencement of the afternoon HAD session on Monday. On the agenda will be the installation of new officers, and discussions of upcoming meetings, including the Society centennial meeting set for June 1999, and a proposal to meet in June 1998 in San Diego in honor of the 50th anniversary of the dedication of the 200-inch telescope at Mt. Palomar.

Another issue raised by members is a conflict between Education sessions and HAD sessions at the AAS meetings. Many members of HAD also wish to attend Education sessions, and we need to search for a compromise solution.

## Obituary Report

The interval since the last obituary report has been a particularly busy and poignant one with many friends, colleagues and mentors passing away among the ranks of historians and astronomers alike. Some two-dozen AAS members have been reported to the Executive Office as passing away thus far this year alone, and there is a backlog from previous years raising the number of AAS members in need of obituary notices to 32. At this moment, we have received rough drafts of notices for some 10 members, and expect to receive at least five more before the deadline of mid-September. So far the quality of the notices has been excellent, some are in fact far too long and detailed to print as is, but provide wonderfully rich biographical information that makes the editor wish for more room in the Bulletin. We are doing our best to stay within the allotted space provided by the AAS however, and whenever possible we are including photographs as well as citations to archival sources that will help preserve the personal records of AAS members.

David DeVorkin

*From the Chair*, continued from p. 1

thesis at New Mexico State University. Welcome aboard, Tom, and we hope you realize what you're getting into!

Looking ahead beyond the Toronto meeting this January (see notice elsewhere), we see many interesting items in HAD's future. At the January 1998 meeting in Washington, DC we plan a session and/or evening talk in memory of LeRoy Doggett. If you have any specific ideas for such a session or would like to help organize this, please let me know. In conjunction with the June 1998 meeting in San Diego we plan to hold a symposium on historical topics related to commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the Palomar 200-inch telescope. Finally, you will find elsewhere a report of the AAS Centennial Committee; preliminary ideas about the celebratory June 1999 meeting in Chicago and at Yerkes Observatory are now being bandied about.

And lastly, another trivia question. Joe Tenn was first to answer the previous one concerning the connection between Grote Reber and Edwin Hubble, namely that the latter's mother was the former's grade school teacher in Wheaton, Illinois. The new query: Ugo Buoncompagni (1502-1585) was an important person in the history of "applied astronomy." Who was he and what did he do? Send your answers, as well as any comments on HAD business, to woody@astro.washington.edu.

## Atlanta HSS Meeting

Galileo will be featured in "Beyond Lecture," a special session sponsored by the History of Science Society's Committee on Education at the Atlanta meeting of the HSS. It will be Friday, 28 November, from 7:00 to 9:00 pm. Its purpose is to suggest methods of teaching in addition to lectures. The presenters and their topics are:

Paul Farber, "Using Role Playing in a Lecture Class"

Albert Van Helden, "Teaching Galileo: From Web Page to Class Discussion"

Daniel Siegel, "Demonstration Experiments"

Joan Richards, "Using the Galileo Telescope"

## HAD Elections

The HAD Nominating Committee, composed of Steve Dick (chair), Ed Krupp and Ken Brecher, has nominated the following slate of candidates:

### Chair

David DeVorkin

### Vice Chair

Robert McCutcheon

Virginia Trimble

### Committee (two positions)

Barbara Becker

Don Goldsmith

Karl Hufbauer

Kevin Krisciunas

Craig Waff

According to the HAD bylaws, within 30 days of the date the slate was sent to members "additional candidates may be nominated by petition of at least 10% of the Membership [now 25 members], or 10 Members, whichever is greater. The final ballot, containing the names of all duly nominated candidates, shall be sent to each Member of the Division, with a brief biography of each nominee, at least eight weeks prior to the annual business meeting." The ballot must be received by the Secretary two weeks prior to the annual business meeting, which will occur on January 13.

## AIP History Center News

### New World Wide Web Site for the History of Physics, Astronomy and Geophysics

A site featuring the history of physics and allied sciences is now available on the Internet's World Wide Web, mounted by the AIP Center for History of Physics. This new web site will provide information on the AIP's Center and its programs and services, such as its grants in aid and its oral history programs. There is also information on the Center's Niels Bohr Library, including descriptions of its holdings, samples of finding aids, top archival records and oral histories, and information on access. Also included is an introduction to the Emilio Segre Visual Archives including samples of photographs and a featured WEB exhibit,

"Einstein: Image and Impact." The address (URL) is <http://www.aip.org/history/>

### 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) and their social interactions. Grants can be up to \$2500 each. They can be used only to reimburse direct expenses connected 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 College Park, Maryland (easily accessible from Washington, DC), or to microfilm papers or to tape-record oral history interviews with a copy deposited in the Library.

Applicants should either be working toward a graduate degree in the history of science (in which case they should include a letter of reference from their thesis adviser), or show a record of publication in the field.

To apply, send a vitae plus a letter of no more than two pages describing your research project, and including a brief budget showing the expenses for which support is requested. Send to Spencer Weart, Center for History of Physics, American Institute of Physics, One Physics Ellipse, College Park, MD 20740, tel. (301) 209-3174, fax (301) 209-0882, e-mail [sweart@aip.org](mailto:sweart@aip.org). Deadlines for receipt of applications are June 30 and December 31 of each year.

## IAU Commission 41 in Kyoto

IAU Commission 41 (History of Astronomy) will meet in conjunction with the IAU General Assembly in Kyoto, Japan, August 18-30, 1997. A Joint Discussion on "The History of Oriental Astronomy" will be held all day on Monday, August 25 and the next morning. Business sessions and contributed paper sessions will be held August 21st and 26th. In addition, Commission 41 is sponsoring several other sessions with historical components. For more information contact Steve Dick, Commission 41 VP.

## AAS Centennial Year

In 1999 the AAS will celebrate its centennial. The Society came into existence at its first meeting, held at Yerkes Observatory in September 1899. The Council has decided to hold the 1999 summer meeting in Chicago, and on the recommendation of the HAD Committee, has set up a Centennial Committee to plan the observance of this important anniversary. The members of the Centennial Committee were appointed by the AAS Council on the recommendation then President Frank Shu. This committee was intended to be a large one, with members broadly representative of the current AAS leadership and its members, with a strong emphasis on history of astronomy. The present members of the Centennial Committee are Neta Bahcall, Peter Boyce, Katherine Bracher, Anne Cowley, David DeVorkin, Steve Dick, Andrea Dupree, Sara Schechner Genuth, Owen Gingerich, Josh Grindlay, Paul Hodge, Richard Jarrell, Ed Jenkins, Richard Kron, Bob Milkey, Bob O'Dell (vice chair), Don Osterbrock (chair), Bob Rosner, Vera Rubin, Maarten Schmidt, Woody Sullivan, Silvia Torres-Peimbert, and Barbara Welther.

We have begun discussions of how to celebrate the centennial. One decision has already been made, to produce a Centennial book in 1999. The lead time for this project is necessarily long, and David DeVorkin, who has agreed to edit it, reports on the progress on it below. We also plan to have a historical exhibit at the meeting in Chicago, which afterward we hope to send around North America to as many astronomical centers as we can. Sara Schechner Genuth, chair and curator of the Centennial Exhibit Subcommittee, reports on plans for it below also. Certainly we will have one or more invited historical talks at the Centennial meeting, as well as one or two invited looks into the future. Very probably there will also be a field trip to Yerkes Observatory (Rich Kron, Bob Rosner and their colleagues are looking into this), one or more souvenir Centennial T-shirts (Vera Rubin is checking into this), and a tie-in to the 150th anniversary of the founding of the Astronomical Journal, suggested by Paul Hodge.

Our Centennial Committee will welcome ideas, suggestions, and input from all AAS, HAD, and other Division members. Please send them or give them to any member of the Centennial Committee, with copies to Bob O'Dell and me. Thanks very much.

Don Osterbrock, Chair  
Centennial Committee

## AAS CENTENNIAL BOOK

We have been making good steady progress on the AAS centennial book. Contracts have been signed by the editor and between the AAS and the AIP, the publisher. The majority of authors has now been identified. There have been a few changes from earlier reports, but the book continues to be a large format (8x11) volume to provide ample space for good photographic illustrations and text. It is expected to be some 300 pages in final form, and will be available well ahead of the centennial year so that Society members will be given a chance to purchase the book at discount as part of their 1998 and 1999 membership renewals. The details are still to be worked out.

Tentatively titled "The American Astronomical Society's First Century," the book will have 5 sections:

- (1) The Society's First Half-Century
- (2) The Society adapts to a New World
- (3) Recollections of the Society in Past Time
- (4) Contemporary issues of concern to astronomy and the society today
- (5) Society Demographics

Some two-dozen members of the Society, historians and astronomers alike, will be contributing to the volume with recollections, essays, and formal historical chapters. As now planned, Don Osterbrock will lead off with "The Pre-History and Origins of the AAS;" DeVorkin will cover the Pickering years to 1920; Marc A. Rothenberg will write on "Amateurs and the AAS"; Richard Jarrell will write on "The 1911 Toronto Meeting and Canada's contribution to the AAS" and Silvia Torres-Peimbert will discuss the development of astronomical institutions in Mexico, from 1942 on, and their relation with American astronomers. We will include a copy of the original Constitution of the AAS and an annotated portion of a transcript of the 1909 Council Meeting of the AAS where members deliberated heatedly over the name of the society. We will also reprint Joel Stebbins' classic 1947 paper "The American Astronomical Society, 1897-1947" from *Popular Astronomy*.

In the second section, "The Society adapts to a New World" we will start off with DeVorkin discussing how the Society (and American astronomy generally) reacted to the prospect of government funding and how this changed the nature of

the science itself. How the Society adapted to a rapidly changing discipline will be the subject of following chapters on the origins of the divisions of the Society by Dale P. Cruikshank (DPS); R. L. Duncombe (DDA); Virginia Trimble (HEAD); Katherine Bracher (HAD) and John H. Thomas (SPD). Susan M. Simkin will review the "Origin of the Committee on the Status of Women in Astronomy"; Peter Boyce and Margaret Burbidge will recount the decisions that led to the move of the Executive Office to Washington, and Helmut Abt will provide an essay on the "The Society and the ApJ." We still hope to identify contributors to review the creation of the AAS Executive Office and the AAS's relations with the AJ and Icarus.

The third section "Recollections of the Society in Past Time" will provide senior members of the Society with the opportunity to give us glimpses, from direct experience, of how the Society functioned in the past. Thus far Vera Rubin will recount her first AAS meeting, at Haverford, in 1950, and Frank Edmondson will provide reminiscences of being AAS Treasurer. Similar accounts from L. Frederick, A. Landolt and a few others are planned as well.

The fourth section will depart from history and deal with contemporary issues, to give the volume greater scope in making a statement on the state of the Society and discipline today and lessons learned for the future. Here, four past Presidents of the Society, John Bahcall, Andrea K. Dupree, Sidney Wolff and Frank H. Shu will offer their insight and perspective.

Finally, scattered throughout the text will be graphical summaries of the Society's Demographics, summarizing Society membership over time; the locations of meetings (regionally) over time (by decade); Attendance at meetings over time; and statistics on Society Officers over time (Presidents and VPs only): their average ages at election; "professional" ages at election; the top 15 institutions where they trained; the top 15 institutions where they worked when elected; and the frequency distribution of specialties (most common, least common) practiced by the Society's leaders.

Where we have made little progress to date is in identifying photographs - of society members, individuals, groups, events, etc., that will illuminate its history. We would also like to consider photographic memorabilia or scenes of special value from meetings. If any Society and HAD members have items they would like to share with the Society at its centennial, please send good photostatic copies to David DeVorkin now so that planning for the photographic sections can proceed. We are looking for good materials that heretofore have not been published. Anything (almost) is fair

game: signed dinner menus, notes from meetings that reveal some important aspect of the meeting or historical event, photographs taken during Council meetings, or of memorable tours or banquet speakers, draft notes on the origins of divisions or of committees, cartoon caricatures (in good taste), all are welcome. Please help! If we choose your submission, I will have copies made, will return originals to you, and you will be credited fully in the text if you took the picture. If someone else took the picture, we will rely on you to provide the provenance, but will still credit you as providing the materials. It is time to start looking in those old files of past meetings!

David DeVorkin, Editor  
Centennial Book

## AAS CENTENNIAL EXHIBIT

To commemorate the centenary of the AAS, we are planning a traveling exhibit with an online version on the World Wide Web.

The traveling exhibit would consist of five 3' x 5' display panels, each panel devoted to a theme or high point in the history of the AAS. The exhibit would open at the AAS meeting in Chicago in 1999, and afterwards would travel to astronomical centers and the American Center for Physics (ACP) in College Park. At the ACP venue, we hope that artifacts might join the panels. A virtual version of the traveling exhibit would be posted on the WWW.

Research and development of the exhibit's themes are expected to be by-products of work on the centennial volume. Many of the illustrations collected for the book will also be used in the exhibit. Despite this overlap, we see the two projects as complementary and mutually supportive. Many book buyers will, no doubt, wish to see the exhibit, while some exhibit viewers will be inspired to buy the book. More to the point, we expect the exhibit in its traveling and online formats to reach the broadest audience.

Given the synergy of the projects, it has made sense to let the book take the lead up to this point. This September, however, the Centennial Exhibit Subcommittee (David DeVorkin, Steve Dick, and myself) will begin to identify the themes and narratives (emerging from the book research) that will best lend themselves to an exhibit format. We will then identify the visual materials required to tell the story of the AAS and develop the chosen themes. I urge anyone with photographs, memorabilia, noteworthy instruments, or artifacts to contact me or David DeVorkin. We will share material submitted.

Sara Schechner Genuth  
Curator and Chair

## LeRoy E. Doggett

### Astronomer, U. S. Naval Observatory

LeRoy Elsworth Doggett, Head of the Nautical Almanac Office at the U. S. Naval Observatory, was an expert in calendars, astronomical phenomena, and astronomical history. For the last 20 years he compiled and edited the *Astronomical Almanac*, the world standard authority for the precise determination of astronomical events and positions of celestial objects. He was also responsible for the *Nautical Almanac* and *Air Almanac*, which are still relied upon for navigation. He died 16 April 1996 of cancer. At the time of his death he was Secretary-Treasurer of the HAD, and a major enabling force in the division.

LeRoy was born 22 October 1941 in Waterloo, Iowa. He received a B.S. degree from the University of Michigan in 1964, an M.S. degree from Georgetown University in 1970, and a PhD in engineering mechanics from North Carolina State University in 1981. He worked as an astronomer in the Nautical Almanac Office from 1965; he headed that Office from 1991 until his death. His doctoral dissertation was on the use of Chebyshev polynomials for the generation of a high precision ephemeris of Mars. *The Almanac for Computers*, introduced in 1976, the *Floppy Almanac* (1986), and the *Multiyear Interactive Computer Almanac* (1993) are among the important applications based upon his work.

LeRoy investigated calendars from all over the world, both ancient and modern. He contributed the Calendar chapter of the *Explanatory Supplement to the Astronomical Almanac*, regarded as the most practical description of the various calendars now in use. His work in progress at his death was an encyclopedia of calendrical topics, including associated chronological eras and cycles. He was the U.S. expert on the subject and was frequently consulted by other scientists, the media, and the general public concerning astronomical phenomena, calendars and the history of astronomy.

When consulted by Islamic scholars concerning controversies about the beginning of Ramadan,

he organized nationwide Moon watches, which provided a massive collection of observations for critical cases over the United States. He also collected, analyzed and published the data which has been the definitive basis for improved prediction methods for lunar visibility.

As Secretary-Treasurer of HAD LeRoy organized many of its meetings, edited its Newsletter, and served as point of contact for its national activities. He was also an active member of the Society's Division on Dynamical Astronomy, the International Astronomical Union, and the Institute of Navigation. He was past chairman of the Washington Section of the ION.

LeRoy found time to author over 40 scientific publications, and co-edit *Sky with Ocean Joined: Proceedings of the Sesquicentennial Symposium of the U.S. Naval Observatory*. He had also served as associate editor of the journal *Archaeoastronomy* and the quarterly "Archaeoastronomy and Ethnoastronomy News."

He received the U.S. Naval Observatory's Gilliss Award in 1986 for his work on publication of the almanacs, and the 1995 Simon Newcomb Award for his research on calendars. He is the first to receive both of these awards.

LeRoy possessed a wide knowledge and deep appreciation for classical music. While a graduate student, he served as music reviewer for "The Technician," the newspaper of North Carolina State University. During the 1980s he was active with the Friends of Music at the Smithsonian Institution, serving for two years as their President.

He is survived by his wife, Jane Ozenberger, and his stepdaughter, Maia Whang. His marriage to Rachel Doggett ended in divorce.