

# H. A. D. News

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

**Number 43 February 1998**

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## **The January 1998 HAD Meeting**

by Sara Schechner Genuth  
Center for History of Physics, AIP

This January the AAS met in Washington, D.C. HAD kicked off the meeting with a Tuesday session in memory of LeRoy Doggett, who died in April 1996.

The session was opened by the presentation of the first LeRoy Doggett Prize for Historical Astronomy to Curtis Wilson, who then delivered a talk on the work of Bradley and Lacaille. Other invited talks were in areas of interest to LeRoy: calendars, almanacs, navigation, celestial mechanics, and archaeoastronomy. Steve McCluskey told how calendrical problems led to an interest in lunar theory in medieval Europe. Owen Gingerich spoke of Tycho Brahe's "Copernican campaign" to find Mars' parallax, and Craig Waff described debates in the 1840s over whether the Nautical Almanac should serve navigators or astronomers.

The next three talks concerned recent activities of LeRoy. Ken Seidelmann commented on LeRoy's work in the Nautical Almanac Office in the 1970s-1990s; Brad Schaefer described how LeRoy organized five moonwatch campaigns across North America; and Ian Bartky discussed LeRoy's role in analyzing the affects of Daylight Savings Time as part of a study by the National Bureau of Standards.

Writing as someone who had the privilege to work closely with LeRoy on the HAD Nominating Committee and on the Executive Committee, I can say that the Doggett Memorial Session was a memorable gathering and a fitting tribute to LeRoy. David DeVorkin should be commended for putting together so fine a session.

On Wednesday, there were two more HAD sessions in which we learned about comets and crop circles, Hamlet and Leonardo, radio astronomy and publishing statistics. Quite a smorgasbord! Some noteworthy papers included Jim Lattis's preliminary study of the origins of space astronomy at the University of Wisconsin and Steve Dick's look at how the USNO at the turn of

the century reacted to the new techniques of spectroscopy and photography in astronomy.

During the morning paper session, Don Osterbrock told us of the AAS's memorable tenth meeting at Yerkes in 1909. This set the stage for discussion of the AAS centennial to be celebrated in June 1999. We learned more about HAD's role in planning for the centennial during the HAD business meeting on Wednesday. Historical tributes are taking shape in the form of a book, traveling and online exhibits, and an unparalleled talk at the 1999 meeting. We also hope to have an excursion to Yerkes, the site of early efforts to establish the AAS.

Beyond the meeting, HAD members had the opportunity to explore area restaurants, museums, and archives (some just can't resist the chance to work!). A number of us also had the good fortune to tour the U.S. Naval Observatory with Steve Dick as our guide.

## **Minutes of the 1998 HAD Business Meeting in Washington, DC**

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*[To be approved at the next Business Meeting - T. H.]*

The meeting was called to order at 13:00, January 6, 1998, by David DeVorkin [DD], Chair. DD welcomed those attending and spoke of the high level of activity planned by the HAD in the next two years.

### **OLD BUSINESS:**

1) Approval of Minutes. Michael Molnar moved to dispense with the reading of, and to approve, the minutes of the previous meeting. The motion passed.

2) Secretary-Treasurer's Report. *[See the article in this HAD News, below.]* DD announced that the annual Audit Committee had been named. Members are Frank Edmondson [FE] and Thomas Williams [TW].

There was no discussion.

3) Report of the Obituary Committee. DD read the report for Virginia Trimble [VT]. This was a record year. The 38 obituaries in the current *BAAS* suggest that the AAS membership is "getting old." The average length of each obituary is one page.

Woody Sullivan [WS]: Does this number actually reflect a greater number of deceased persons?

DD: The number demonstrates that the Obituary Committee is not merely providing a "fill-in service" [providing obituaries in the cases of people for whom an obituary is not published in another journal]. Rather, it is providing a nearly comprehensive list of obituaries for deceased AAS members.

Steven Dick: It has become a valuable resource for historians.

Owen Gingerich: How do we learn about the deaths of people who have dropped out of the AAS?

DD: This is difficult. The AAS Office usually is contacted by the families or departments for those who are active members.

WS: There is also sometimes the opposite problem: people who have maintained AAS membership but have not been active in astronomy for many years.

4) Doggett Prize Committee Report. WS reported that yesterday's Prize Session went well and that the AAS Council had approved a lecture by the next prize recipient (in two years) before the entire AAS. As far as the Committee is aware, The LeRoy Doggett Prize remains the world's only award for historical work in astronomy.

The prize endowment continues to grow, seeded by a generous, anonymous gift. \$15,000 was collected in the first year of fund raising.

The Prize Committee consists of the immediate past Chair of the HAD, the Secretary-Treasurer, and two other members. HAD members are encouraged to nominate persons for the next prize. Names and *curriculum vitae* should be sent to the Secretary.

Imad Ahmad [IA]: How are these two [at-large] members selected?

WS: By the HAD [Executive] Committee.

Sara Schechner Genuth [SS]: Is the prize for a lifetime's achievement, or for specific work?

WS: Both. It also may be awarded for service to the history of astronomy.

5) Report from the International Relations Committee. DD read the report for Robert McCutcheon. [See the article in this issue of HAD News, below.]

There was no discussion.

6) Plans for Future Meetings. DD reminded members that the HAD has been invited by the LOC and by CIT to co-sponsor an AAS special session in San Diego, on the fiftieth anniversary of Palomar Observatory. This will not be an HAD session *per se*, as the HAD will only provide speakers. (Donald Osterbrock [DO] and Karl Hufbauer have been invited.) It will not provide logistics or underwriting.

The session will be held on the observing floor at Palomar and will include a recreation of the telescope dedication. There will be tours and a demonstration of telescope operation. Transportation will be by bus from San Diego. A box lunch will be provided.

Katherine Bracher: This will be a full-day event on Sunday, June 7, 1998.

TW: Hopefully we will be able to get on the catwalk!

DD: The paper session will last 1-1½ hours.

WS: The HAD session on Monday, June 8 will celebrate the *AJ* Sesquicentennial. It will consist of four, 20 minute invited papers.

7) Report from the AAS Centennial Committee. DD reported on the Centennial Book. It is ahead of schedule. The book consists of 30 chapters; 28 are in the first proofing stage. Potential covers were exhibited.

SS then reported on the Centennial Exhibit. It will be a modular display of panels. The display will be ready for the June, 1998 AAS meeting in San Diego. It then will travel to other sites. There also will be an on-line version of the exhibit.

There are two main themes to the exhibit: Organization of the AAS and Problems & Politics. (SS reminded members that this is to be a history of the AAS, not astronomy itself.) The first theme will be represented by sections on the initial organization of the Society, arguments about the Society's name, and the changing demographics of the AAS membership. Material about various divisions will be presented. The debate over the role of amateurs in the AAS also will be discussed. Representing the second theme will be material on outreach and on public-policy decisions (*e. g.*, resolutions passed by the AAS).

DO reported on the Centennial Committee itself. There are 25 members; ten are HAD members. They were appointed by the past and present Chairs of the AAS. DO co-chairs the Committee with Bob O'Dell.

The AAS Council has accepted many recommendations made by the Committee. These include unparalleled talks at the Summer, 1999 Meeting. The talks will be on the history or future of the Society. Another session tentatively is titled: "My Most Memorable AAS Meeting."

The Council also has approved a field trip to the site where the Society was founded: Yerkes Observatory. The Society banquet will feature a Centennial-related after-dinner speech. The last 1999 issues of the *ApJ* and/or *AJ* will feature invited historical articles. (The final decision on this matter is up to the editors.)

WS: When did the last official meeting photograph take place?

DD: 1979, as far as I know from those recovered.

WS: What will be the price of the book?

DD: Around \$30.00.

TW: Will the meeting format be similar to that of the ASP during its Centennial meeting?

DO: Yes.

8) Report of the Archeoastronomy Committee. David Iadevaia reported on plans for the Archeoastronomy Committee. [*See the article in this issue of HAD News, below.*]

Robert McCluskey: I urge you to write a note for *Archeoastronomy News* [on HAD Archeoastronomy Committee activities].

## **NEW BUSINESS:**

1) DD pointed out the need for a new Nominating Committee. IA moved that the Chair appoint such a Committee. TW seconded. The motion passed.

2) DD reported that VT (Vice-Chair) has asked if the HAD wishes to endorse a commemorative *ApJ* or *AJ* Centennial issue. FE moved that the HAD do so. Jay Miller seconded. The motion passed.

3) DD proposed a Bylaws change to allow Affiliate Members to serve on the HAD Committee (except in the role of Chair or Secretary-Treasurer.)

DO: Affiliates already may serve.

SS: The previous Nominating Committee operated under the assumption that Affiliates could serve.

WS moved that this Bylaw change be initiated--should it be found that Affiliates may not serve on the HAD Committee. Tom Hockey seconded. The motion passed.

The meeting adjourned at 14:00.

To be submitted at the next HAD Business Meeting,

Thomas Hockey, Secretary

## **Secretary-Treasurer's Report 1997**

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A provisional financial report (pre-audit) appears below:

<b><u>HAD Treasury (Savings Account)</u></b>	
Starting Balance March 13, 1997*	\$25.00
Income	
Dividends	\$0.33
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Total Income	\$25.33
Expenses	\$0.00
Ending Balance January 5, 1998	\$25.33
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### **HAD Treasury (Share Draft Account)**

Starting Balance March 13, 1997*	\$952.19
Income	
Dividends	\$7.47
Dues ( <i>paid directly to the Treasurer</i> )	\$30.00
Transferred to HAD Treasury from AAS Treasury	\$1,000.00
AAS ( <i>refund of prize speaker's 1998 meeting registration</i> )	\$225.00
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Total Income	\$1,262.47
Expenses	
Printing, postage, and supplies**	\$1554.49
Share draft fee (+ tax)	\$2.12
Guest Speaker Registration: Curtis & Bartky ( <i>1998 meeting</i> )	\$350.00
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Total Expenses	\$1,906.41
Ending Balance December 31, 1997	\$308.25
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\*transferred from Chevy Chase Bank to UNI Credit Union

\*\*paper, envelopes, 1 return-address rubber stamp (+ tax)

**HAD Funds in AAS Treasury**

Starting Balance January 1, 1997	\$4,719.00
Income	
1997 dues	\$1,192.00
1998 dues	\$1,529.00
Interest***	\$250.00
Total Income	----- \$2,971.00
Expenses	
Transferred from AAS Treasury to HAD Treasury	\$1,000.00
Total Expenses	----- \$1,000.00
Ending Balance December 31, 1997	\$6,690.00
	=====
<b><u>TOTAL HAD ASSETS</u></b>	<b>\$6,998.25</b>
	=====

**Doggett Fund**

Starting Balance January 1, 1997	\$11,181.00
Income	
1997 Contributions	\$3,475.00
1998 Contributions	\$445.00
Interest***	\$900.00
Total Income	----- \$4,820.00
Expenses	

Certificate

	\$300.00
	-----
Total Expenses	\$300.00
Closing Balance December 30, 1997	\$15,701.00
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The HAD received the following property in 1997:

A complimentary copy of VARGHA, M. & PATKÓ S, L. *St. Gellert's Hill Observatory's Chronicle: The Correspondence of Johann Pasquich and of Paul Tittel*. Budapest: Konkoly Observatory (1996) ...  
\*\*\*estimate

**News from the AIP Center for History of Physics**

Caroline Moseley, Archivist

**International Catalog of Sources for History of Physics and Allied Sciences is Now Online**

The AIP Center for History of Physics is pleased to announce the online version of the International Catalog of Sources for History of Physics and Allied Sciences (ICOS) at <http://149.28.112.25/pdi/icos.htm>, or for an easier address link from our homepage at <http://www.aip.org/history/>. The ICOS includes information about primary source-material papers of scientists, records of major institutions, oral history interviews, etc.--preserved in the Center's Niels Bohr Library and over five-hundred other repositories worldwide. The collections described (currently over 5000 records) document physics and related

fields, such as astronomy, acoutics, optics, and geophysics, chiefly from the late 19th century to the present. Please contact [nbl@aip.org](mailto:nbl@aip.org) if you have any questions or comments about the ICOS online, or if you can provide us with new or updated information to add to the catalog.

## **AAS Centennial Planning**

David DeVorkin

The book's editor has secured and edited some 30 chapters for the centennial volume of the AAS, entitled *The American Astronomical Society's First Century*. The first proof sheets of 28 of the 30 chapters have now been checked and returned to the AIP. Several people have helped to secure photographs. Sara Schechner Genuth is planning an exhibit for the 1999 meetings, based upon material collected for the book and archival materials in the AIP Niels Bohr Library.

## **From the National Science Foundation**

Rolf Sinclair  
Division of Physics

Dear Colleagues:

A principal way in which the National Science Foundation supports the participation of undergraduates in research is through the "Research Experiences for Undergraduates ('REU') Program". This Program supports several hundred groups ("Sites") each summer in a variety of departments and laboratories in all fields of science, mathematics, and engineering.

Each group consists of (typically) ten or more undergraduates, each of whom is assigned to some aspect of the on-going research of the institution.

The NSF Divisions of Physics, Material Research, and Astronomy between them support over a hundred such Sites throughout the country. The research topics vary between Sites, but they all include topics of interest to members of many of the APS Divisions and Topical Groups and the AAS Divisions (and their students). Application deadlines are usually in February or March each year. Interested students should inquire directly of each Site for application procedures and for information on the research topics available.

The list of REU Sites for Physics, Materials, and Astronomy is at :

<http://www.nsf.gov/home/crssprgm/reu/reupma.htm>

The complete list of all REU Sites can be found at :

<http://www.nsf.gov/home/crssprgm/reu/start.htm>.

Students are encouraged to inspect the entire list since some Sites in a number of fields (such as Biology, Chemistry, Computer and Information Science, Engineering, and Geology) often have components of research of interest to physics and astronomy students.

Please pass this announcement along to the members of your Division or Group.

## **From the HAD Chair**

The January 1998 meeting in Washington proved to be as exciting and varied as any we have held in the past. The memorial session for LeRoy Doggett together with the awarding of the first Doggett Prize to Curtis Wilson began the program, which continued the next day with contributed sessions and on the third day with posters. During the meeting, I was asked to summarize HAD activities before the AAS Council. What follows is a brief synopsis of my report:

"The Historical Astronomy Division of the AAS continues to be active in many areas of intrinsic interest to the promotion of history, and of service to the Society. The two categories are not mutually exclusive. The membership remains stable at about 250, including 64 affiliates. In 1997 the HAD met with the AAS in January, and elected not to meet in June. In 1997 the HAD Secretary produced four issues of the Newsletter totaling 146 pages, and distributed them to 287 sites (including AAS Corporate members and a few friends of the HAD). HAD major activities in 1997 included preparations for the AAS Centennial, the production of obituaries for the *BAAS*, deliberations over the first winner of the Doggett Prize, the production of exhaustive bibliographies of recent literature in the history of astronomy, the expansion of the International Relations Committee and the creation of a new Archaeoastronomy Committee."

1998 is an election year. A new nominating committee will be formed to produce a slate of candidates for HAD office (Vice-President and Committee). Elections will

take place at the end of the year. HAD Affiliates will be able to hold office as Committee members.

David DeVorkin, Chair

## **Report from the Archeoastronomy Committee**

At the 191st meeting of the AAS held in Washington, D.C. this past January, David G. Iadevaia, the chairman of the Archaeoastronomy Committee, announced the following: (1) a call for members of HAD with an interest in archaeoastronomy to join the committee, (2) a request that members begin the planning of an archaeoastronomy session at a future AAS meeting, which would deal with the "nuts and bolts" of archaeoastronomy data-collection techniques, (3) and a request to begin giving some thought to an archaeoastronomy webpage to be included with the HAD website.

Those who would like to participate should send e-mail [todgi@api-az.com](mailto:todgi@api-az.com) expressing an interest in one or all three areas.

Since the meeting it has been decided to ask for an oral and paper session to be included at the Austin meeting next January. This session will be about the "nuts and bolts" of data collection techniques as they relate to archaeoastronomy. I would like to define "nuts and bolts" as addressing those problems that are encountered in data collection at a site. Topics to consider would be techniques that can be used to make measurements on site of the azimuth position of rising objects: The use of a compass as a simple measure or a full blown

survey of a site, for example, gives us the ability to determine heliacal rising/setting of certain celestial objects. The idea here is to concentrate on objective data collection without the need to appeal to cultural or mythical significance (a topic for another session). That is to say (1) exactly where on the horizon did a celestial object rise at a point in time and (2) is a site constructed accordingly? (3) What are the problems encountered when one tries to answer (1) and (2)?

A call for those interested in possibly presenting a paper is now made. Contact Iadevaia if you are interest in presenting an oral or display paper at this session.

David G. Iadevaia, Chair

## **Report from the International Relations Committee**

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The IRC met one time in calendar 1997 on May 29. At this meeting:

- Tanya Levin and Mike Sfraga of the University of Alaska joined as new committee members.

- IRC decided to suspend provision of *JHA* subscriptions to institutions in the FSU until new institutions needing subscriptions are identified. (The institutions to which the subscriptions were being provided were the Shternberg Institute and Pulkovo Observatory. The former now has its own subscription, whereas the Pulkovo library was struck by a major fire.)

- IRC adopted a motion to investigate the possibilities of cooperating with the AGU on

a joint IGY 50th anniversary project.

- The IRC created its own web page at <http://www.aas.org/~had/irchad.htm>. The page is still "under construction" and has yet to be linked to the other AAS pages.

Robert McCutcheon, Chair

## **San Diego, June, 1998**

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David DeVorkin

Plans for San Diego are now taking shape: The HAD is cooperating with the LOC and with Caltech to create a commemorative session to be held on the floor of the 200-inch Hale reflector. Two of three invited speakers have been confirmed. Three buses will be provided to transport AAS meeting attendees to Mount Palomar. [For more details, see Business Meeting Minutes, above.] In addition, Paul Hodge and Woody Sullivan are organizing a paper session for the regular meetings to commemorate the 150th year of the *Astronomical Journal*.

## **From the Secretary**

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The *HAD News* begins its voyage around the globe in the Mail Room of the University of Northern Iowa. There, it is mixed with other bulk mailing (to arrive at the bulk-mail minimum) and sent on to the U. S. Postal Service. Thus, while each issue leaves my office in the calendar month written on the cover, I never know when it arrives at its destination. I was reminded of this fact in November, when all Canada-bound copies showed up unexpectedly in *my* mailbox: victims of the Canadian postal strike.

As an experiment, I intend to write the February date on which this issue leaves my company, in the lower-left-hand corner of your envelope. I ask those who wish to help me with my experiment to send a short e-mail message containing the date on which it actually reached your hands. In this way I can assess my success at producing a timely *HAD News*.

Thomas Hockey  
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I: hockey@uni.edu

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## Notices

We mourn the passing of two historians of astronomy: Ronald W. Golland died on December 8, 1997. He was an independent scholar working in the history of celestial mechanics. Olaf Pederson also died late last year. He was the author of *Early Physics and Astronomy: A Historical Introduction*.

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## Book Review

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Virginia Trimble  
(University of Maryland and  
University of California)

**Modern Theories of the Universe from Herschel to Hubble.** Michael J. Crowe (Dover Publication, Inc. NY, 1994). Pp. x + 435. \$9.95 (paperback)

and

**Cosmology and Controversy: The Historical Development of Two Theories of the Universe.** Helge Kraghe (Princeton University Press, 1996) Pp. xiv + 500. \$35 (hardback)

These two volumes taken together provide an overview of much of the development of observational and theoretical cosmology from the musings of Herschel on the nature of the spiral and other nebulae to the triumph of Big Bang over Steady State cosmology in 1965 (or whenever you think this happened). The styles are very different. More than half of Crowe's pages contain verbatim extracts from the writings of astronomers from Halley to Hubble, with Herschel, Curtis, and Shapley (the published version of their debate), Agnes M. Clerke, and Immanuel Kant represented at greatest length. In contrast, Kraghe's text is the more usual sort of narrative in his own words, though of course with extensive referencing to the original literature and other documents.

In addition, Crowe is (deliberately, I assume) very non-judgemental and does not provide modern resolutions of the various controversies he describes. This is, I think, a major barrier to achieving one of the author's goals, "a solid introduction to the fundamentals of stellar astronomy." Kraghe, in contrast, brings the reader to a firm, modern conclusion and believes that: "On the whole, theory (big bang) was found superior to other views of the universe on epistemic grounds and not other reasons," where "other reasons" might have included social negotiation or external authority.

Both authors have, as you might expect, consulted a great many documents that an ordinary astronomer would never dream exist, let alone think of looking for. Neither, however, seems to have uncovered anything that would make most of us say, "Oh, wow! So that's what it was like." (This was very much my reaction to the passage in Cecilia Payne Gaposchkin's autobiography where she described Shapley holding up a letter that reported the discovery of Cepheids in external galaxies by Hubble and saying, "This is the letter that destroyed my universe!")

Both also say a certain number of things that will make a practicing cosmologist (or even a teacher of first-year general relativity and cosmology) wince. One example of each must suffice. From Crowe, an explanation of the Hubble Law that begins, "Let us take Andromeda, which has a recessional velocity of about  $+50.6 \text{ km sec}^{-1}$ . We and it are approaching at  $-100 \text{ km sec}^{-1}$  or thereabouts.

And Kraghe says of Baade's presentation at the 1952 Rome IAU (where he shrunk the Hubble constant and expanded the universe by a factor of two) that it was "a similar but better argued conclusion" to that of Albert Behr the year before. In fact, they had found two different factors of two (which should have been multiplied to drop H from 500 to  $125 \text{ km/sec/Mpc}$  right then and there). Behr had "pre-discovered" the Scott effect, which affects how you compare distant galaxies with nearby ones, while Baade (having not seen RR Lyrae stars in Andromeda with the 200" telescope) had recalibrated the Cepheid distance scale within nearby galaxies. And, oh, all right, I would never have heard of Behr if he weren't cited in Scott's first paper

and Sidney van den Bergh hadn't told me about him a few years ago.

Did I buy these books? No, they were review copies. Should you? No, probably not, unless you aspire to serious expertise in the history of cosmology from 1715 to 1965. Despite their modest prices, they take the same amount of shelf space as other books you are likely to consult more often. Are they worth having in the large library nearest you? Yes, surely.

## ***Introducing the Journal of Astronomical History and Heritage***

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Following extensive discussions at the recent General Assembly of the IAU, a research publication titled the *Journal of Astronomical History and Heritage* is to be launched in 1998. This will go some way towards providing an alternative outlet for those who liked to publish historical material in the *Quarterly Journal of the Royal Astronomical Society* and in *Vistas in Astronomy*.

*JAH2* will be published twice-yearly, in June and December, and will feature review papers, research papers, short communications, and book reviews. Papers on ALL aspects of astronomical history will be considered, including studies which place the evolution of astronomy in political, economic and cultural context. Papers on astronomical heritage may deal with historic telescopes and observatories, conservation projects (including the conversion of historic observatories into museums of astronomy) and historical or industrial archaeological

investigations of astronomical sites or buildings. All papers will be refereed prior to publication.

Managing Editor of the new journal is John L. Perdrix, from Perth, Australia, who is closing down the *Australian Journal of Astronomy* in order to activate the new journal. Papers Editor is Dr. Wayne Orchiston, Executive Director of the Carter Observatory (the National Observatory of New Zealand). An international Editorial Board is in the process of being formed, and Dr. Bambang Hidayat (Indonesia, and IAU Vice-President), Professor Rajesh Kochhar (India) and Professor Brian Warner (South Africa) have already agreed to join.

The annual subscription, for individuals, is just \$US20. Queries regarding subscriptions, book reviews and the production of the new journal should be directed to :

Mr. J. Perdrix at Astral Press, PO Box 107, Wembley, WA 6014, Australia (or e-mail: [geochem@techpkwa.curtin.edu.au](mailto:geochem@techpkwa.curtin.edu.au)).

Queries regarding papers should be directed to :

Dr. W. Orchiston at the Carter Observatory, PO Box 2909, Wellington, New Zealand (or e-mail [Wayne.Orchiston@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:Wayne.Orchiston@vuw.ac.nz)).

Wayne Orchiston  
John Perdrix

## Introducing New HAD Members

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### Sandy Whitesell

My interest in historical astronomy centers around my role in directing the historical restoration of the University of Michigan's circa 1854 Detroit Observatory and its original telescopes, and creating an Observatory museum. I hold a Ph.D. in the History of Higher Education from the University of Michigan, and my career has been at the University for the past 24 years. My forthcoming book on the early history of the Detroit Observatory will be published later this year. I am particularly interested in the architecture of observatories, in scientific instrumentation, and in the biographical history of early astronomers.

Patricia S. Whitesell, Ph.D.  
Assistant to the Vice President for Research  
Chair, Detroit Observatory Advisory Group  
Member, University History & Traditions  
Committee The University of Michigan

### Bob Stencil

I suppose interest in historical matters grows with age in some people. Having been named 4th director of Chamberlin Observatory here in Denver, with its roots to 1890 and the 20-inch Alvan Clark refractor, and I've been researching the history of this local site. Perhaps directors of historic observatories should participate in an HAD-sponsored AAS session sometime.

Bob Stencil  
Denver University

## Upcoming Meetings

### **Special HAD-sponsored Session at AAS meeting, San Diego**

When: Monday, 2:00 pm, 8 June 1998

Session Title: "The *Astronomical Journal* Celebrates its Sesquicentennial"

4 invited speakers (program not yet finalized)

Session Chair: P.W. Hodge (present *A. J.* editor)

Co-organizer: W.T. Sullivan

The *Astronomical Journal* was founded by Benjamin Gould in 1849 and after 150 years has become one of the elite astronomy journals of the world. But the road travelled has often been rocky, and the journal's focus and influence has greatly varied. In this commemorative session, four invited historians and astronomers will examine the mid-19th century milieu out of which the journal arose, the journal's founding and early history, and the journal's 20th-century history under editors such as Benjamin Boss and Dirk Brouwer.

Woody Sullivan

### **The International Spring Meeting of the Astronomische Gesellschaft 1998**

Gotha, Germany, May 11 - 15, 1998

The conference will take place in commemoration of the first astronomical congress held in 1798 at the Seeberg Observatory. Therefore, history of astronomy is one of two special fields of the meeting, with a natural focus on the 18th and 19th centuries. The other field is astrometry. We expect results from the satellite Hipparcos and the discussion of succeeding projects. The language will be the "lingua franca" of our times, English. Especially characteristic quotations in French and German may be presented in the original version as well. There will be invited lectures as well as short oral and poster contributions.

Scientific Organizing Committee: Peter Brosche (Daun/Bonn), Wolfgang R. Dick (Potsdam), Roland Wielen (Heidelberg)

#### **Registration for the conference:**

Information and registration - chairman of the Local Organizing Committee: Oliver Schwarz, Uthmannstr. 8, D-99867 Gotha, Germany E-mail: SternwGTH@aol.com

Other information (*e. g.*, about travel to Gotha and accomodation) may be downloaded from URL <http://members.aol.com/SternwGTH>. Later also the preliminary programme will be placed there.

The Organizing Committee asks for registration as early as possible, not later than by March 15, 1998. Registered participants will receive a list of hotels and bed & breakfasts in Gotha. O. Schwarz may help you with organizing your accomodation.

**Fees:**

Members of the Astronomische Gesellschaft: DM 60, students DM 40, non-members DM 80. Excursion to Inselsberg: DM 25. In case that your conference fee will be received by January 15, 1998, the excursion will be free for you.

Please make your payments to Acct # 750 003 715, Sparkasse Gotha, BLZ 820 520 20, indicating "Fruehjahrstagung." Requests for re-funding of fees received later than one week prior to the conference may be granted only at 50%.

**Scientific programme:**

Please send your requests concerning the programme as well as your abstracts of papers and posters by March 15, 1998, to Prof. Peter Brosche, University of Bonn, Observatorium Hoher List, D-54550 Daun, Germany. We ask for your understanding that contributions submitted later may not be accepted.

In deference to other meetings of the Astronomische Gesellschaft, no abstract book will be published due to a lack of funds. However, we intend to publish the abstracts together with the invited papers in the *Proceedings* to appear after the meeting. For this you may edit your abstracts later. Prior to the meeting the abstracts will be published on the WWW (URL see above). For this, authors are asked to submit machine-readable abstracts, either on diskette together with the hardcopy to Prof. Brosche (any formats, also Word or WordPerfect, except Macintosh formats), or by e-mail to the LOC at

SternwGTH@aol.com (ASCII, HTML or LaTeX), or by ftp to ftp.potsdam.ifag.de into the directory pub/incoming/wdi with a short e-mail notice to wdi@potsdam.ifag.de (any formats, except Macintosh).

## Recent Discussion "Threads" on the History of Astronomy Discussion Group (HASTRO-L)

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- Drift of the Equinoxes and Solstices
- Calendars and Calendar Algorithms
- HASTRO-L Archives
- Sala di Galatea
- Variance in the Mean Synodic Month
- Dante's Astronomy
- Barcelona Eclipse of 1567
- Great Comets Between 1670 and 1900
- Regiomontanus
- Adam Massinger
- William Thompson
- A Historical Lunar Impact Witnessed from Earth?
- Perlerin de Prusse
- Celestial Events that have Changed History
- Image of Ptolemy
- The Moon & Navajo Beliefs
- Quality of Galileo's Optics
- Emerson Quote about the Stars
- New Book on Flamsteed

HASTRO-L is provided by Stephen McCluskey at the University of West Virginia.

# From the Lucubratory

Woody Sullivan, University of Washington

In response to a few inquiries, a *lucubratory* is a somewhat playful term for a place of work or study, illuminated by artificial lights at night; it produces *lucubrations*, nocturnal writings, especially those of a laborious or elaborate nature (if the writings were also morose, it would of course then be a *lugubratory*). The door of my den bears a sign saying *Lucubratory*, as well as another saying *Phrontistery* (rhymes with *monastery*), a place for quiet study. Both words date to Shakespeare's time, but are seldom heard anymore.

I love the night. I'm thankful that the rarity of stars is sufficient that Heinrich Olbers was puzzled, and also I'm glad that Earth is part of only a single-star system. And yet to be cut off from one's star's light for half of one's life is fundamentally bizarre. But then again this darkness is obviously essential to most astronomers (although most of my own work has ironically been in radio astronomy). With me it's more a psychological matter: of getting something done while the rest of the world sleeps--and not

worrying about the consequent sleeping while the rest of the world is buzzing around!

Longfellow loftily wrote:

The heights by great men reached  
and kept  
Were not attained by sudden flight,

But they, while their companions  
slept,  
Were toiling upward in the night.

[1858, *The Ladder of St. Augustine*]

Or one can appeal to Thoreau:

How insupportable would be the days, if the night with its dews and darkness did not come to restore the drooping world! As the shades begin to gather around us, our primeval instincts are aroused, and we steal forth from our lairs, like the inhabitants of the jungle, in search of those silent and brooding thoughts which are the natural prey of the intellect.

[1863, *Night and Moonlight*]

Last time I challenged readers to send me a cardboard model of the simple east-facing wall sundial described in detail in the 17th-century book that I quoted in extenso. No one did! So again I raise the prospect of eternal fame to whomever sends me an accurate model.

Good night.

(woody@astro.washington.edu)

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The *HAD News* is supported in part by the Department of Earth Science, University of Northern Iowa.

Layout by John Alexander

# The LeRoy Doggett Fund

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The first HAD LeRoy E. Doggett Prize for Historical Astronomy has been awarded. The legacy of what we believe to be the first and only national award given by a society for historical work in astronomy (or for a life's contribution to the field) has gotten off to a wonderful start.

The fund that supports this prize continues to grow slowly, because of your contributions. We are also able to report that income from accrued interest matched the award this year, but just barely. At about \$15,000, the fund is adequate, but the comfort margin is very thin.

We would like very much to increase this endowment to insure that the Prize will continue and prosper. Please help us to do this with another round of contributions for 1998. A cut-out form, to be included with your check, is provided below for your convenience.

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I would like to make a contribution to the LeRoy E. Doggett Prize for Historical Astronomy, and enclose a check or money order in the amount of

\$25 \_\_\_\_\_ \$50 \_\_\_\_\_ \$500 \_\_\_\_\_ \$1000 \_\_\_\_\_ other \_\_\_\_\_

Name (as you would like it to appear in the *HAD News*):

\_\_\_\_\_

If you want your donation to appear in honor of a friend, relative, institution, or astronomer, please provide that name here:

I make this donation in the name of \_\_\_\_\_

Please make checks or money orders payable to the "AAS - Doggett Prize Fund" and mail to the AAS Executive Office, 2000 Florida Avenue, NW, suite 400, Washington, DC 20009, attn: Doggett Prize

(The AAS is qualified under the IRS regulations section 501(C)3 to receive tax-deductible donations.)

AAS STAFF: Please forward the information above to the HAD Secretary.

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