

H·A·D NEWS

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

Number 67



June 2004

ELECTION TIME FOR HAD OFFICERS!

It is time to select the officers for HAD for 2005—2007. The offices up for election this year are the Vice-Chair (who will become the Chair for 2007—2009) and the two at-large Committee Members. No additional nominations were received since the announcement of the preliminary slate, so the final candidates for election are:

Nominated for Vice-Chair (Chair-Elect):

Sara Schechner

One of the HAD Vice-Chair's duties will be to serve as Chair of the AAS Obituary Committee. At the end of the Vice-Chair's two year term, that person will succeed to be the Chair of HAD.

Nominated for HAD Committee at-large members (2 vacancies):

Dan Green

Peter Abrahams

Detailed information on each of the candidates can be found below. The official ballot is on pages 5—6 of this issue. Please mark your selections carefully. Questionable or incorrectly marked ballots will not be counted! Ballots will be received by the HAD Secretary-Treasurer and tallied by him. Results of the election will be announced at the 2005 HAD Business Meeting in San Diego, CA, January 10. Even though there are no alternate candidates in this election cycle, it is important that HAD members vote and note their approval.

You may mail the ballots to the address printed on it, but if you feel comfortable doing so, you may also fax the ballot to (202) 633-9102 or you may also email your choices to brashearr@si.edu. Confidentiality of your selections will be rigorously maintained. The deadline for receipt of ballots is **July 31, 2004**. Please note that the elections are now earlier in the year than previously.

Please be sure to vote!

THE CHAIR'S CORNER

Tom Williams

Our next HAD meeting will be held in conjunction with the AAS Annual meeting in San Diego, California on 9–10 January 2005. On Sunday afternoon, we are planning to mark the centennial of the Mount Wilson Observatory, which was formally founded (approved by the Carnegie Institution board), on 20 December 1904. We also plan a celebration of another anniversary. This meeting marks the twenty-fifth year since the founding of the AAS-Historical Astronomy Division, an event worthy of our recognition.

The distinguished panel of speakers who have agreed to address various aspects of the history of the Mount Wilson Observatory, includes former Mount Wilson and Las Companas Observatory Director George W. Preston, Don Osterbrock, Joe Tenn and Ron Brashear. That aspect of the Sunday afternoon program promises to be very interesting. Also, one of HAD's founders, Owen Gingerich, has promised to share his reminiscences on the history of HAD. All former officers and HAD committee members have been invited to the San Diego meeting and will, hopefully, also be willing to share their own recollections in a less formal way. This Sunday afternoon session will be followed by "an ice cream reception." We will have two sessions of contributed papers and a poster session on Monday. Please consider preparing your paper for a poster session rather than an oral presentation.

I was privileged to represent HAD at a meeting of the historians of all the member organizations of the American Institute of Physics in early April. The meeting was held at the Center for the History of Physics in College Park, Maryland. The meeting was organized by historian Spencer Weart, Director of the CHP and coincidentally, a member of HAD. Most of the representatives who attended were scientists who have taken an interest in the history of their discipline. One interesting commonality among all the organizations represented was the difficulty of recognizing deceased members with an appropriate obituary. Most of the organizations represented in the meeting attempt to publish obituaries only for former officers and award winners.

Continued on Page 3

HAD MEETING IN SAN DIEGO JANUARY 9—10, 2005

The next HAD meeting will be held in conjunction with the 205th meeting of the AAS in San Diego. It is not to late to start planning to attend! There will be a special session on Sunday the 9th of January to celebrate the centennial of the founding of the Mount Wilson Solar Observatory, the precursor of today's Observatories of the Carnegie Institution of Washington. There will be talks by Joseph Tenn (Sonoma State), George Preston (OCIW), Donald Osterbrock (UCSC Lick Observatory), and Ronald Brashear (Smithsonian). HAD will also celebrate its 25th anniversary (see the article to the right for more information). If you would like to contribute an oral or poster paper at one of the other sessions in San Diego, keep in mind that the Preliminary Meeting Announcement will be posted and mailed to members in mid-August. **The deadline for abstract submission is 20 October 2004.**

LEROY E. DOGGETT PRIZE NOMINATIONS SOLICITED

The HAD Prize Committee are anxiously awaiting nominations for the 2006 Doggett Prize. The requirements for nominating an individual for the Doggett Prize can be viewed at the following URL: www.aas.org/had/doggett.html.

We suggest that if any HAD member or HAD affiliate wishes to nominate an individual to receive the fifth LeRoy E. Doggett Prize in 2006, that such intent should be made known to the Doggett Prize Committee Secretary, Ronald Brashear, at an early date. A single page letter of justification and an abbreviated CV for the individual nominated should suffice for this early notification. **The deadline for nominations is Dec. 1, 2004!**

We hope that a number of nominations will be received for the committee to consider. There are many noteworthy historians who should be considered as candidates for this prestigious award.



PICTURES NEEDED FOR HAD 25TH ANNIVERSARY

At the HAD meeting in San Diego in January, 2005, we will celebrate twenty-five years of HAD existence. For that portion of the meeting, David DeVorkin has agreed to assemble a PowerPoint picture show of the personalities and events that make up our history. Toward that end, we would like everyone who has pictures of early HAD meetings to consider sending them to David at the following non-irradiated address:

Dr. David DeVorkin
Smithsonian Institution
P.O. Box 37012
NASM 3559, MRC 311
Washington, DC 20013-7012

If you can send scanned pictures as digital files, they should be sent to David at david.devorkin@nasm.si.edu

CONDITIONS: David will be unable to return any pictures to donors except under very rigidly controlled conditions. Thus, you should consider any pictures you send him to be donations to the picture archives at the American Institute of Physics, Center for the History of Physics, Emilio Segre Visual Archives. If you have a picture that you feel is particularly appropriate and wish to discuss the conditions for its return to you, please contact David at the above e-mail address.

We thank David once again for agreeing to take on a task that is needed for the sake of HAD. He has demonstrated his commitment to HAD in so many ways for so many years, and this is yet another. Many thanks, David! Please help us make this a noteworthy celebration by getting out those boxes of old photographs and slides and sending the HAD pictures along to David.

Thanks, and best wishes to all,
Tom Williams, Chair
AAS-Historical Astronomy Division

Future HAD Meetings

★ Mark your calendars for the following HAD meetings, and consider not only participating by attending, but also submitting papers:

January 9—10, 2005—San Diego, California

★ The theme in this meeting will be related to the Centennial of the Carnegie Institution of Washington's establishment of the Mount Wilson Observatory. The meeting will also mark the 25th anniversary of HAD.

September 4—9, 2005—Cambridge, England

★ A joint meeting with the AAS Division of Planetary Sciences is being planned.

January 8—9, 2006—Washington, DC

January 7—8, 2007—Seattle, Washington

HAD Officer Candidates' Statements

Sara J. Schechner

I would be honored and delighted to be elected as Vice Chair of HAD. I am the David P. Wheatland Curator of Harvard University's Collection of Historical Scientific Instruments and a card-carrying historian of astronomy. I have been an active member of HAD for over 20 years, having served twice on the Executive Committee, and once each on the Nominating and Audit Committees. Between 1995 and 1999, I played a leading role in the preparations for the hundredth anniversary of the AAS, undertaking extensive archival research, and serving on the Society's Centennial Committee and as Curator of the American Astronomical Society's First Hundred Years, a traveling exhibition. I also served as an AAS liaison and advisor to *Physics Today*, which published a commemorative essay on 100 years of American astronomy. My publications include *Comets, Popular Culture, and the Birth of Modern Cosmology* and *Western Astrolabes*, plus numerous articles and museum exhibitions on astronomical instruments and the history of astronomy. Current projects include a catalogue of the sundials at the Adler Planetarium and a cut-and-paste astrolabe kit. I am also active in the IAU and IUHPS Scientific Instrument Commission, between whom I am coordinating historical programs related to the Transit of Venus.

Dan Green

Dan has been employed as an astronomer at the Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics since 1980, working (with Brian Marsden, and more recently also with Gareth Williams) to archive modern and historical data on comets, minor planets, supernovae, etc., in his positions on the staffs of the Central Bureau for Astronomical Telegrams and the Minor Planet Center and as Editor of the International Comet Quarterly. This archiving has entailed publication and analysis of the observations, including numerous lectures and published papers on these subjects. Recent work has involved the processing of centuries-old comet and supernova data. He also has served very

actively on numerous scientific and local organizing committees (including as chairman for several of them) for astronomical meetings worldwide in the last two decades. Green's wide interests in the history of astronomy include astronomy education in the 19th century, the rise of electric outdoor lighting and its impact on astronomy since the late 19th century, and the problem of dealing with and preserving old astronomical books, manuscripts, and plates.

Peter Abrahams

I am an unaffiliated writer on the history of the telescope, and my work can be most easily inspected at the site: <http://www.europa.com/~telscope/binotele.htm>. I have been active on boards of organizations including the Antique Telescope Society (currently past-president & co-editor of their periodical *JATS*) and the Columbia Willamette chapter of Sigma Xi. I would welcome the opportunity to work with the HAD committee to further historical astronomy. The HAD committee serves to assist the maintenance of current programs but there are other programs which could expand the reach and effectiveness of HAD. All would require volunteered time & labor, a portion of which I could supply. One example of new program initiatives is increased cooperation with HAD and the Astrophysics Data System. This could include the following: *HAD News* would be scanned and posted by ADS upon submission of a set of newsletters. Current publications in our field, including *HAD News*, *JHA*, *JAHH*, & *JATS*, can submit a table of contents & abstracts for listing in the system. This is a service to authors contributing to the publication, as well as serving users. ADS is actively seeking to expand the range of historic literature they provide. Unfortunately this means the sacrifice of a set of journals since they use a contractor for this scanning, who "guillotines" the bindings from the volumes (though the loose pages are recoverable). Despite this consequence, the utility of the ADS system to users worldwide indicates, to me, the desirability of increasing the range of their holdings.

Joint HAD-DPS Meeting in UK

Results of our poll indicate strong interest in proceeding with a joint meeting of HAD with the AAS Division of Planetary Sciences (DPS) in Cambridge, England September 4—9, 2005. Simon Mitton, Chair of the DPS local organizing committee, has agreed to serve also as Chair of the HAD local organizing committee. There will be a complete program of invited and contributed talks, tours to local sites of historical interest, and an evening plenary lecture by a prominent historian of astronomy—plus plenty of time to interact with our overseas colleagues. Registration will take place on Sunday, September 4, with a joint HAD-DPS welcome session that evening. HAD paper sessions will run throughout the day on Monday and Tuesday, September 5 and 6; extension of paper sessions to Wednesday, September 7, may be arranged if need dictates. Complete logistical details will appear in the next newsletter, but room rates are expected to be around \$160/day, including all three meals for the day, and registration fees are expected to be comparable to that of a normal AAS meeting. Any discount transportation arrangements will be announced as well.

The Chair's Corner (continued from Page 1)

In contrast, the AAS is small enough that our practice is to publish an obituary for every AAS member who dies. The history divisions in these organizations are correspondingly larger. Consider, for example, the fact that the History Forum of the American Physical Society has three thousand members and enjoys an income of \$13K per year! Some of these organizations are also considering establishment of museums in which to collect historically interesting examples of the apparatus with which their discipline has been practiced.

Elsewhere in this newsletter you will find notes on the election of new HAD officers and committee members under the new By Laws, nominations for the next Doggett Prize and our progress towards the organization of a joint meeting with the AAS Division of Planetary Sciences in Cambridge, UK in 2005. I hope that many of you will start planning now to attend that meeting.

HAD REPORT TO AAS COUNCIL ON BAAS ANNUAL REPORTS

At the request of AAS President Catherine Pilachowski, a review of the Observatory and Departmental Reports was undertaken to determine whether those reports could be simplified and still serve as a useful archival resource for historical purposes. A number of the most important observatories and academic departments are no longer submitting annual reports as reflected in the graph below.

Further analysis showed that the decline actually began in the mid-1980s and has continued unabated since that time. Reports submitted by new entities in the period between 1986 and 1996 were sufficient to mask the longer term declining trend for the major institutions. Space would not permit a full listing here of the institutions that have stopped submitting these annual reports. Suffice to say that by the mid-1990s a major portion of the research and teaching capacity in the discipline no longer submitted BAAS annual reports. That trend has continued to the present date. The effect of this decline is that the BAAS Annual Reports can no longer be considered of value as an historical archive.

A report to the AAS Council was prepared by HAD Chair Tom Williams and reviewed by David DeVorkin, Steve Dick, Jay Pasachoff, and Virginia Trimble who concurred in its conclusions. While specifying, as requested, the minimum content of an annual institutional report that would serve as a useful historical archive, the major HAD recommendation to the AAS Council was that immediate steps be taken to restore the participation of the major research and teaching institutions in these annual reports. An oral version of the report was delivered to the AAS Council meeting in Denver.

“WOODFEST” A.K.A. “The New Astronomy: Opening the Electromagnetic Window and Expanding Our View of the Planet Earth,” a meeting to honor Woody Sullivan on his 60th Birthday

In the last issue of *HAD News*, we announced the upcoming Woodfest. Well, it actually took place just before this issue went to press, so we just had to include a brief report. The city of Seattle pulled out all the stops and the sun shone brightly on all three days of the meeting. The weather was warm and toasty and Mount Rainier made its presence known throughout the meeting. The meeting sessions itself were held on the campus of the University of Washington.

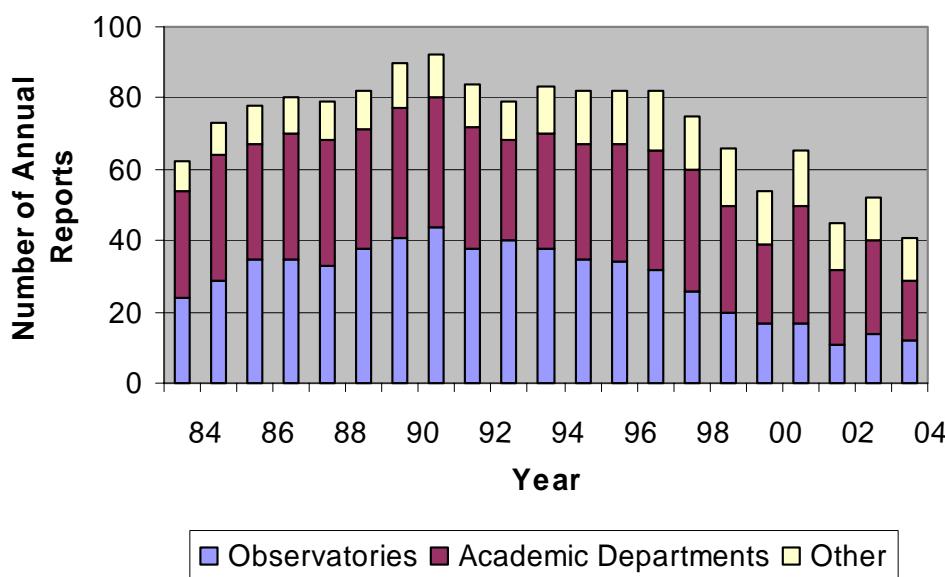
As befits Woody’s interests, the meeting was an eclectic mix of the history of radio & other wavelength astronomy, astrobiology, and a few others that didn’t fit into simple categories. The morning session on the first day, June 16, featured astrobiology with Steven Dick’s (NASA) “The Biological Universe revisited” and Chris Chyba’s (SETI Institute & Stanford): “Contingency and the Cosmic Perspective,” and then some radio astronomy history with Ken Kellermann’s (NRAO) “Grote Reber: founding father of radio astronomy and professional amateur,” Alastair Gunn’s (Jodrell Bank) “Rays, radians and radishes: early radio astronomy at Jodrell Bank,” and Richard Strom’s (ASTRON) “Radio astronomy in Holland before 1960: just a bit more than HI.”

The afternoon followed with more astrobiology, John Baross’s (U Washington) “Parallel habitats on Earth, planets and moons,” and Peter Ward’s (U. Washington) “A taxonomy of habitable planets: assessing the odds of life in variable plane-

tary systems.” Then a switch to philosophy of science came with Carol Cleland’s (Colorado U) “The advent of historical science.” A burst of space astronomy history followed with Robert Smith’s (U Alberta) “The history of space astronomy: an attempt to see the big picture,” Peter Abrahams’s (Independent Scholar, Oregon) “Telescopes lofted to space,” and ended with David DeVorkin’s (Smithsonian NASM) “SAO during the Whipple years: Project Celeste.”

The second day started with more radio astronomy history featuring Wayne Orchiston (ATNF/AAO; presenting) & Bruce Slee’s (ATNF) “The Radiophysics field stations and the early development of radio astronomy,” Marshall Cohen’s (Caltech) “Owens Valley Radio Observatory and dark mat-

Graph 1: Analysis of BAAS Annual Reports



BALLOT FOR 2005—2007 HAD ELECTIONS

PLACE AN “X” IN THE BOX NEXT TO THE NAME OF THE PERSON FOR WHOM YOU CAST YOUR VOTE.

DEADLINE FOR RECEIPT OF BALLOTS: 31 JULY 2004.

HAD VICE-CHAIR (CHAIR-ELECT):

Sara Schechner

HAD COMMITTEE MEMBER (2 vacancies):

(You may vote for either one or two of the candidates)

Dan Green

Peter Abrahams

After marking your ballots either:

- (1) Mail to: Ronald Brashear, P.O. Box 37012, Dibner Library, NMAH 1041 MRC 672, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC, 20013-7012
- (2) Fax to: Ronald Brashear, (202) 633-9102
- (3) Email your selections to brashearr@si.edu

DO ONLY ONE OF THE ABOVE!!! FOR EXAMPLE, IF YOU EMAIL YOUR SELECTIONS DO NOT MAIL YOUR BALLOT.

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Tape Here



Woody Sullivan (center) is the center of attention at the Saturday excursion to the Carbon River Glacier, Mt. Rainier National Park

Continued from page 4

ter," and Wayne Orchiston's (again!) "Elizabeth Alexander, the first female radio astronomer" (okay, Wayne kindly filled in for Ron Bracewell who was unable to come at the last minute). Some astrobiology was next with Geoff Marcy's (UC Berkeley) "Extra-solar planetary systems" (where he actually announced at the meeting a newly found planet orbiting HD117207 (a G8V star at 33 parsecs) with $M = 2.06$ Jovian masses, and orbit $e = 0.15$ and $P = 7.19$ years!), and Ed Turner's (Princeton) "Detection and characterization of extra-solar planets and plants." The morning closed with a splendid presentation by the artist Rebecca Cummins (U. Washington), "Light work: contemporary artists consider the Sun," which owed a lot to Woody's getting her interested in sundials and astronomy.

The afternoon started with a look back at other astronomical milestones with Ronald Brashear's (Smithsonian Libraries) "The transits of Venus and new astronomies: a time to reflect." Then came some high-energy astronomical history (I guess that can be taken a couple of ways), Bruce Hevly's (U. Washington) "X rays, extreme ultraviolet and the life of instruments," and Virginia Trimble's (UC Irvine) "The origin of gamma ray astronomy: When one photon was a discovery, two was a spectrum, and three was the Rossi Prize." A bit of dialing came next

with Jim Evans's (U. Puget Sound) "Gnomonike Techne: the dialer's art and its meaning in the Ancient World," and then a bit more radio astronomy featuring Karl Hufbauer's (U. Washington) "Radio studies of solar phenomena, 1940-60: their significance?," and Richard Jarrell (York U.) "Radio astronomy ... whatever that is': the marginalization of early radio astronomy in astronomy." Afterwards the participants retired to the university's Waterfront Activities Center for a reception and a banquet. There followed toasts to Woody and his presentation of the highlights of his life and those yet to come, including the transit of Venus across Jupiter on 14 Sep. 2123! Woody then led a sing-along to songs by Tom Lehrer at which point we knew we all had had enough to drink!

The meeting then ended on Friday with a tad more astrobiology, Mott Greene's (U. Puget Sound) "Astrobiology and anthropomorphism: are we still looking for ourselves?," Frank Drake's (SETI Institute) "Lessons from the history of SETI," and Dan Werthimer's (SETI Institute & UC Berkeley) "Do we know how to search for ET?" Two final radio astronomy papers followed: Bruce Balick (U. Washington) "Discovery of Sgr A*: an exposé," and Miller Goss's (NRAO) "Fifty years of Galactic Center research: the impact of the discovery of Sgr A in 1951 and 1954 and Sgr A* in 1974." Finally, it was Woody's turn, and he spoke eloquently summing up the conference with "Points of view: shadows, photons, planets, and life."

Thanks to the folks at UDub for their great hospitality and organization of this meeting. Proceedings will be published by Kluwer. Stay tuned!



Woody Sullivan (right) and Joe Tenn stop to savor the unnatural wonders on the Saturday excursion following Woodfest

Historical Astronomy Division of the American Astronomical Society

Chair: Thomas R. Williams, trw@rice.edu

Vice-Chair: Donald K. Yeomans,

Donald.K.Yeomans@jpl.nasa.gov

Secretary-Treasurer: Ronald S. Brashear, brashearr@si.edu

Past-Chair: Barbara Welther, bwelther@cfa.harvard.edu

At-Large Committee Members: John W. Briggs,
jwb@hale.yerkes.uchicago.edu;

Alan W. Hirshfeld, AHirshfeld@umassd.edu

Website: www.aas.org/had/had.html

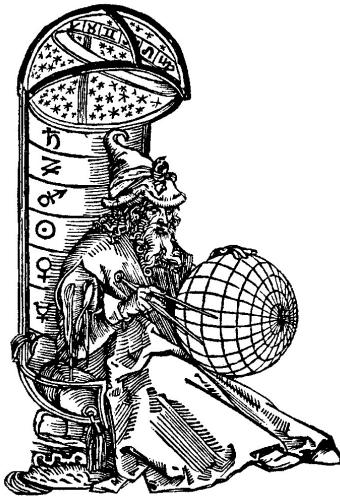
HAD News is published in February, June, and October, and sent to all individual members of the Historical Astronomy Division of the American Astronomical Society. The deadline for receipt of articles, news items, and announcements is the first of the month prior to the month of publication. Please send contributions as plain text in email or as email attachments in Microsoft Word to Ronald Brashear at brashearr@si.edu.



Some of the participants at Woodfest in Seattle. How come you aren't in this picture?

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