



# H·A·D NEWS

---

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

---

Number 79 \* October 2011



## **Doggett Prize to Sullivan**

*Thomas Hockey, University of Northern Iowa,  
Chair, HAD Prize Committee  
and Sara Schechner, Harvard University*

The Historical Astronomy Division of the American Astronomical Society is pleased to announce that Dr. Woodruff T. Sullivan III will be the eighth recipient of the LeRoy E. Doggett Prize for Historical Astronomy. The Prize is awarded biennially to an individual whose long-term efforts and lifetime achievements have had significant impact on the field of the history of astronomy. The 2012 LeRoy E. Doggett Prize is presented to Professor Sullivan in recognition of his research, writing, teaching, and leadership in the history of astronomy community.

Woody Sullivan's passion has been the history of radio astronomy, which he has pursued for nearly 40 years. His first book was a compilation of *Classics in Radio Astronomy* (1982), which

[continued on p.11](#)



## **We're Meeting in Austin**

*Joseph S. Tenn, Sonoma State University*

After holding two meetings in 2011, the Historical Astronomy Division will revert to custom and hold one 2012 meeting jointly with the AAS winter meeting in Austin, Texas.

HAD will start with two special sessions on Sunday, 8 January 2012. The first, from 1:00–3:40 p.m., will be on “Transits of Venus: Looking Forward, Looking Back.” Organizers Jay M. Pasachoff (Williams College) and William Sheehan have arranged four 40-minute talks: “Transits of Venus: 1639, 1761, 1769, 1874, 1882, 2004, and 2012” by Pasachoff, “Astronomers, Transits of Venus, and the Birth of Experimental Psychology” by Sheehan, “Australians and Americans: Observing the 1874 Transit Down Under” by Nick Lomb, of the Powerhouse Museum, Sydney, Australia, and “Transit of Venus Culture: A Celestial Phenomenon Intrigues

[continued on p.10](#)



### From the Chair

*Jarita Holbrook, University of Arizona*

This year has proven to be a historical moment in the life of the James Webb Space Telescope because of the debates over whether it should continue to be funded or not, given that it is over budget and over schedule. Things were further complicated by reports suggesting that the astronomy community was not unanimous in its support of JWST and that there are fears across the astronomy community that support of JWST means reducing funding to other projects. In September, I talked with the John Bahcall Public Policy Fellow, Dr. Bethany Johns, about JWST and its future. Johns clarified, "The American Astronomical Society exists for its members. What we advocate for is determined by the consensus of our members." The mechanism of consensus is the decadal surveys. The AAS and the Public Policy Fellow lobby on behalf of the AAS membership for the support of those projects identified in the decadal surveys, and not one project at the expense of the other. Johns reminds us, "Remember, there were similar arguments about continuing to service HST, and we made it through every time." The good news is that the US Senate markup for NASA funded all of the projects either at the same level as last year or increasing their budgets, and the JWST was fully funded based on a 2018 launch.

[holbrook@u.arizona.edu](mailto:holbrook@u.arizona.edu)

### From the Vice Chair

*Jay Pasachoff, Williams College*

One of my most pleasant duties as Vice Chair is to participate in the planning of meetings. I am happy to be chairing a special session on the Sunday afternoon in Austin about transits of Venus, leading up to the one coming in June. See my

article elsewhere in these pages.

My most regular duty as Vice Chair is to be in charge of soliciting and editing the obituaries of deceased members of the American Astronomical Society, something about which I gave a preliminary report in the last newsletter. Since then, the situation has been worked out, as part of the transition to electronic publishing of the *Bulletin of the American Astronomical Society (BAAS)*.



Obituaries compiled and edited by the HAD Vice Chair have appeared in the *BAAS* since 1991. The *BAAS* is now exclusively online. It includes an index of obituaries and recently deceased members at <http://aas.org/baas/obits/all>. Names of obituaries being solicited appear immediately along with the date of death; when the obituary is posted, the line is put into bold. I receive word of a member's death every week or two.

Obituaries published between 2000 and 2011 are fully available online. The older obituaries may only be available in PDF. Searchable text and photos for older obituaries are being added to the online *BAAS*. If you would like to supply the text for any of the older obituaries the AAS would gratefully accept the assistance. Send missing obituary text to [publications@aas.org](mailto:publications@aas.org). All *BAAS* articles will be stored in the Portico digital preservation and electronic archiving service.

For the time being there will continue to be a duplicate index on the HAD website at <http://had.aas.org/obits.html>.

I work primarily with Communications Manager Crystal Tinch and Judy Johnson, Director of Communications and Managing Editor of the *BAAS*, at AAS headquarters in Washington, DC. They post the obituaries. On rare occasion, I consult the other members of our obituary committee, President Debra Elmegreen and Executive Officer Kevin Marvel. Sometimes I find

out about the need for an obituary from a colleague, sometimes from Ms. Tinch, and sometimes from Division for Planetary Sciences or High Energy Astrophysics Division mailings. Our Historical Astronomy Division Secretary-Treasurer, Joseph Tenn, has been helpful with consultations and proofreading.

I was asked some months ago by André Heck of the Observatoire Astronomique Strasbourg to submit a report on the AAS Obituary Policy to a book largely about organizations in astronomy that he is editing. The article is in press:

Pasachoff, Jay M., 2011, "New obituary policy for the American Astronomical Society," in *Organizations, People and Strategies in Astronomy*, ed. André Heck (New York: Springer), pp. 319-324. <http://astro.u-strasbg.fr/~heck/opsa.htm>.

[jay.m.pasachoff@williams.edu](mailto:jay.m.pasachoff@williams.edu)



### From the Secretary-Treasurer

*Joseph S. Tenn, Sonoma State University*

Three or four times a year I download the latest HAD membership list from the AAS and send out a mailing, informing the more than 300 members of a new issue of *HAD News* or of something I consider too important or timely to wait for the next issue. And each time a number of the messages come back. If you are reading this and are a HAD member, **please** keep your e-mail address up-to-date with the parent society (go to <http://aas.org/> and click on Member Pages), and **please** tell your computer that messages from me are not spam.

As we approach the end of the year you might consider making a donation to HAD or to the Doggett or Osterbrock Prize Fund.

I look forward to seeing many HAD members at the meeting in Austin.

[joe.tenn@sonoma.edu](mailto:joe.tenn@sonoma.edu)



### From the Past Chair

*Thomas Hockey, University of Northern Iowa*

The award of an HAD prize requires the contributed efforts of many people. First, there are those who nominate an individual. Then there are those who write letters of recommendation on behalf of that individual. And, of course, there is the prize winner him- or herself, who may attend and speak at an HAD meeting. Foremost, though, in my mind is the HAD Prize Committee, each member of which spends many hours reviewing and deliberating upon candidates. I wish to thank HAD members Brenda Corbin, Jarita Holbrook, Marc Rothenberg, Joe Tenn, and Curtis Wilson who currently serve on the HAD Prize Committee, which I chair, and who made possible the award of our LeRoy E. Doggett Prize for Historical Astronomy next January. I also want to invite HAD members to nominate recent books as candidates for the Donald E. Osterbrock Book Prize for Historical Astronomy, to be awarded in January 2013. (See <http://had.aas.org/osterbrock/>.)

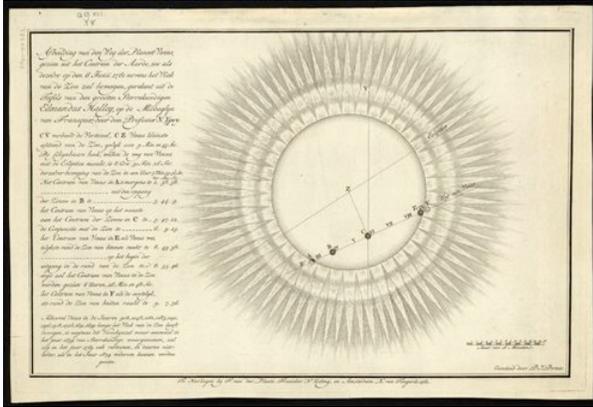
[thomas.hockey@uni.edu](mailto:thomas.hockey@uni.edu)

### The HAD Booth in Austin

*Arnold Heiser, Vanderbilt University*

Our HAD folk will be meeting in Austin this coming January. In addition to our oral and poster sessions, the Doggett Lecture, and the HAD business meeting, we will again have our "Booth" (table) set up in the exhibit hall. We are hoping that HAD members attending the Austin AAS meeting will volunteer to help at the booth sometime between Monday 9:00 a.m. and Thursday noon, except at those times when we will be having HAD sessions. Please let me know those dates and times that you will be able to join us at the HAD booth. Use e-mail or after 1 January call me at 615-438-4290.

[a.heiser@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:a.heiser@vanderbilt.edu)



Abeelding van den weg der planeet Venus  
Nicholas Ypey, 1761

## The 5–6 June 2012 Transit of Venus

Jay Pasachoff, *Williams College*

Next year is an important one for the history of astronomy, as is any of the rare years with a transit of Venus. Since Kepler first predicted an unseen transit of Venus for 1631, transits of Venus have been seen only as predicted by Jeremiah Horrocks in 1639; as observed by Captain Cook's and hundreds of other expeditions and unobserved by Guillaume Le Gentil in 1761 and 1769; as observed photographically from Australia and elsewhere in 1874 and 1882; and as observed from the ground and with orbiting spacecraft in 2004.

I have arranged, jointly with Bill Sheehan, a special session on transits of Venus for the Austin meeting. This special session follows a special session we had on the topic at the HAD/AAS meeting in Atlanta in 2004.

A Venus Transit Observing Working Group has been set up by Lou Mayo of NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center, coordinating public-outreach observations all over. A public-outreach program of observations is being coordinated by Jean-Eudes Arlot of the Institut de Mécanique Céleste at the Observatoire de Paris in France. Mayo, Arlot, and I are all giving talks related to public outreach on the occasion of the transit of Venus at the joint meeting of the AAS Division for Planetary Sciences and the European counterpart society in Nantes, France on 6 October 2011.

Arlot's site from the 2004 transit is at <http://www.eso.org/public/outreach/eduoff/vt-2004/>. It has links to many pages of images.

My 22-minute lecture about the transit of Venus, including both historical discussions and contemporary science, appeared recently on the

Phi Beta Kappa website at <http://www.pbk.org/home/playpodcast.aspx?id=772>, and it can also be seen, and enlarged to full-screen size, at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fVvaCoNT1pg>.

Victoria Jaggard's interview of me for National Geographic News is at [http://newswatch.nationalgeographic.com/2011/03/01/watch\\_planet\\_transit\\_2012\\_venus/](http://newswatch.nationalgeographic.com/2011/03/01/watch_planet_transit_2012_venus/).

I have been invited to give an evening lecture about the transit at the American Astronomical Society meeting in Anchorage one week after the event. Colleagues who will be observing from the ground and from space have promised me movies of the 2012 transit in time for my talk. My own scientific research, joint with Glenn Schneider of the Steward Observatory, will be sponsored in part by a grant from the Committee for Research and Exploration of the National Geographic Society, which also sponsored my 2004 research. I plan to observe from the Mees Solar Observatory on Haleakala, with colleagues and students also observing from the Sacramento Peak Observatory, the Kitt Peak National Observatory, and the Big Bear Solar Observatory. We also have arrangements for observations from both the Lockheed Martin Atmospheric Imaging Assembly and Stanford's Heliospheric Magnetic Imager on NASA's *Solar Dynamics Observatory*, and from NASA/Lockheed/Smithsonian instruments on the Japanese Space Agency's *Hinode* spacecraft. Our observations from *ACRIMSAT* using ACRIM3 (Active Cavity Radiometer Irradiance Measurement 3) will again measure the 0.1% drop in the solar intensity during the transit as a close-up analogue of exoplanet transits.

Nick Lomb of Australia has a new book on the 2012 transit. My review for the Phi Beta Kappa newsletter is at <http://www.pbk.org/userfiles/file/flashversion/Fall2011/15.html>. An American edition will be published by The Experiment Publishing in April 2012.

HAD member Bill Sheehan and co-author John Westfall have revised and expanded their 2004 book, *The Transits of Venus*. The 2012 edition, *Eclipses, Transits, and Occultations*, should be out well before the transit.

I have a website with many historical and scientific links at <http://www.transitofvenus.info>, and Chuck Bueter has an excellent website at <http://www.transitofvenus.org>.

Steven van Roode has an excellent website at

<http://www.transitofvenus.nl>, with monthly newsletters of his Transit of Venus Project.

An opera, *Transit of Venus*, by composer Victor Davies with libretto by the Canadian playwright Maureen Hunter, based on her play of the same name, was commissioned and mounted by the Manitoba Opera in 1997. It is described at <http://www.manitobaopera.mb.ca/transitofvenus/transitofvenus.html>. I invite any reader of this note to try to convince a local theatre or opera company to mount the play or the opera, which deals with the tribulations of Le Gentil and his expedition to observe the transit of 1761. My wife and I were fortunate to have seen the play, which is excellent, when it was mounted at the Berkshire Theatre Festival in Stockbridge, Massachusetts in 1998. Reviews of this production may be found at <http://www.curtainup.com/b-venus.html> and at <http://alb.merlinone.net/mweb/wmsql.wm.request?oneimage&imageid=5933818>.

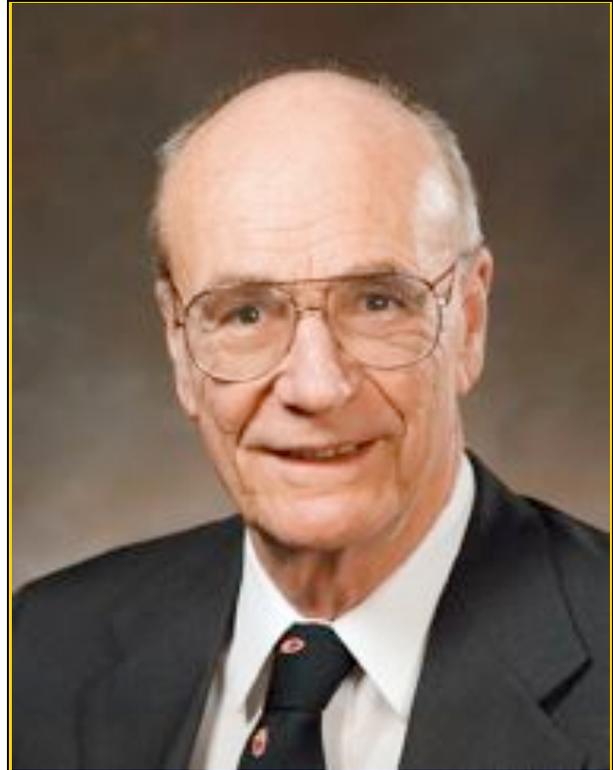
A bilingual French website on the transit is at <http://www.imcce.fr/vt2012>.

[jay.m.pasachoff@williams.edu](mailto:jay.m.pasachoff@williams.edu)



### Irene Osterbrock Honored by AAS

The American Astronomical Society has appointed long-time HAD supporter Irene Hansen Osterbrock a Patron of the Society. Irene was working as an assistant to William W. Morgan at Yerkes Observatory when she met Don Osterbrock. They married in 1952 and from then until his death in 2007 she aided him with his work in astronomy and especially in the history of astronomy. She has helped maintain the Mary Lea Shane Archives of Lick Observatory, and has been a major donor to the Osterbrock Book Prize Fund. See <http://news.ucsc.edu/2011/05/irene-osterbrock.html> for more information.



### Call for Nominations for the 2013 DONALD E. OSTERBROCK BOOK PRIZE FOR HISTORICAL ASTRONOMY

*Thomas Hockey, University of Northern Iowa*

The Historical Astronomy Division awards the Donald E. Osterbrock Book Prize biennially to the author(s) of a book judged to advance the field of the history of astronomy or to bring history of astronomy to light.

**Deadline for nominations for the next prize cycle will be 1 March 2012.** Books with copyright dates 2008 through 2011 will be eligible for the 2013 prize. Previously nominated books with copyright dates 2008 or 2009 will carry over automatically.

Any member or affiliate member of HAD may nominate a book for the Prize. References to published book reviews and supporting letters are welcome.

Please send nominations and supporting materials to the Secretary of the Prize Committee, Joseph S. Tenn. [E-mail](mailto:) is preferred.

For further details about the Prize and the prize rules see <http://had.aas.org/osterbrock/>.

## Remembering Allan Sandage

*Joseph S. Tenn, Sonoma State University*

In June I attended a one-day memorial, “Allan Sandage: The End of an Era,” presented by the Carnegie Observatories and held at the Huntington Library.

Among the speakers were Sandage’s grad school classmate Helmut Abt and several of his longtime coworkers, including Gustav A. Tammann, Donald Lynden-Bell, Abhijit Saha, and François Schweizer. Members of his family spoke, as did *New York Times* science writer Dennis Overbye, whose excellent *Lonely Hearts of the Cosmos* is the closest thing to a biography currently available.

When a historian does write a biography, it will be a big job. Sandage published more than 500 papers, dealing with almost every aspect of stellar astronomy and observational cosmology. His discoveries are legion, but I don’t want to write an obituary. For that see the excellent one by David DeVorkin at [http://aas.org/baas/obits/obit?Full\\_Name=Allan\\_R.\\_Sandage&Date=2010-11-13](http://aas.org/baas/obits/obit?Full_Name=Allan_R._Sandage&Date=2010-11-13) or others linked to from my <http://phys-astro.sonoma.edu/bruce medalists/sandage/>.

Instead I want to use this space for a few personal recollections of the man. Our first encounter was at the January 1974 AAS meeting in San Diego. I was nervous. All of my education had been in physics; I had never even taken an astronomy course—although by this time I had been learning the subject by teaching it for three years. And, needless to say, I was a lot younger than I am now. Imagine how I felt when after my talk the great Allan Sandage came over and complimented me on it.

Our next meeting was in 1983 when I persuaded Allan to come to Sonoma State University to speak in our undergraduate colloquium/public lecture series, “What Physicists Do.” He drove the 800 km and arrived on campus—it was Halloween—just as the power went out. We hastily dragged portable chairs outdoors and found a chalkboard. He gave the talk to more than a hundred people under very threatening skies, but the rain did not come. Just as he finished, the power came back on, and several students expressed an interest in seeing the slides he had been unable to show. So we went back into the lecture room, and he repeated the talk with 35-mm slides.

In the early 1990s I wrote a series of articles for *Mercury*, the popular magazine of the Astronomical Society of the Pacific. These were biographies of astronomers awarded the ASP’s Bruce Medal, and to research them I had to go to libraries with back issues of journals as well as to archives. I had a place to stay with my mother in the Los Angeles area, and there were papers of several medalists at the Huntington and at Caltech, but I actually spent more time with the old journals at the Carnegie Observatories headquarters on Santa Barbara Street. Every time I visited, the staff member who came into the library the most often was Allan Sandage. He would stop to ask me who I was working on, and when I said that it was a particularly uninteresting one, H.H. Turner, he remonstrated and proceeded to tell me exactly what Turner had done. He knew the location of every item in the idiosyncratically-catalogued library, as he showed me several times when he instantly pulled up the relevant volume to illustrate a point. His knowledge of twentieth century astronomy and its history was immense, as I have seen again recently while rereading his fine history of the Mount Wilson Observatory. It shows great knowledge of the astronomy of stellar positions and motions as well as that of the astrophysics of stellar evolution and the details of early solar research. It contains wonderful reminiscences of the astronomers he met when he was young and they were old—Gustav Stromberg, Alfred Joy, Paul Merrill, Horace Babcock, Ralph Wilson, Ira Bowen, Rudolph Minkowski, and Olin Wilson, as well as Edwin Hubble and Milton Humason.

In 1998, as chair of the ASP History Committee, I organized a session at the Society’s annual meeting on “Cosmology 1948–1998.” Historian Helge Kragh spoke on “The Rise and Fall of the Steady State Theory,” Ralph Alpher presented (in absentia) a paper on “The Origin and Development of the Big Bang Model,” and Allan presented “Stellar Evolution and Cosmology: The Early Days at Palomar.” Virginia Trimble then summed up the fifty years with “Dewey Defeats Truman and Other Advances Since 1948.” I got to spend some time with Allan, during which he declared, “I’m a stellar astronomer. Cosmology is too hard.” It was during the time of the Hubble wars, which he was already starting to lose. I told him that twenty years later the value of the Hubble constant would be known whether he continued to devote all of his time to it or not, but that only he

could write the history of Mount Wilson Observatory as it should be written. I do not claim that my advice was decisive, but I am glad he wrote it.

Allan Sandage could be a fierce antagonist to his peers, but he was always kind to me and to many others. His passing definitely marks the end of an era.

[joe.tenn@sonoma.edu](mailto:joe.tenn@sonoma.edu)

### **Sullivan Papers Available**

*Ellen N. Bouton, NRAO Archivist*

The National Radio Astronomy Observatory Archives is pleased to announce the availability of the papers of Woodruff T. Sullivan III. Sullivan's book, *Cosmic Noise: A History of Early Radio Astronomy* (Cambridge University Press, 2009) discusses the history of radio astronomy through 1953, and represents 30 years of intensive research by him. In 2010 Sullivan donated to the NRAO Archives the 188 audio tapes and related paperwork for the extensive set of interviews he conducted between 1971 and 1988 with 255 radio astronomers around the world, many of whom are now deceased. The interview tapes are a unique resource for the history of radio astronomy, which was still a relatively young field when Sullivan began his interview project in 1971.

The 2011 Pollock Award from Dudley Observatory, made annually for a project in the history of astronomy or astrophysics, provided funding for a summer intern, Sierra Smith, who digitized the 22–40 year old audio tapes, and worked with NRAO Archivist Ellen Bouton to create the Web finding aid for the Sullivan papers as well as Web pages for individual interviewees. See <http://www.nrao.edu/archives/Sullivan/sullivan.shtml> for the finding aid, which includes links to the interviewee pages and also to the listing of conference talks and lectures on radio astronomy history and on SETI recorded by Sullivan.

It is standard practice for Archives to obtain signed permissions from interviewees before making interviews available to researchers, either in person at the Archives or on the Web. Ms. Smith also worked on contacting interviewees or their heirs for permissions, and the Archives now has signed permission forms from many interviewees. However, there are still people for whom we have been unable to find contact information, and we seek the help of readers of

this newsletter. A list of interviewees for whom we lack addresses, either for the interviewee or for heirs/next of kin, is posted at <http://www.nrao.edu/archives/Sullivan/addresses-needed.shtml>. Please review the list, and contact me if you are able to provide addresses or contact information for the listed interviewees or their heirs/next of kin, or for people who may know of appropriate addresses. Your help in making these interviews available to researchers will be greatly appreciated.

Over the next year Dr. Sullivan will be donating the remainder of his research materials on radio astronomy history to the NRAO Archives. We are grateful to him for his gift, which provides an extraordinary resource for historians and researchers.

[ebouton@nrao.edu](mailto:ebouton@nrao.edu)



### **HAD Members Honored**

Two HAD members have been honored this year.

Dennis Danielson of the University of British Columbia has been selected by the Alexander von Humboldt Society to receive the Konrad Adenauer Research Award, which will enable him to carry out research in Germany. A professor of English, Danielson is known for his books on cosmology and history of astronomy, including a biography of Copernicus's supporter, Georg Rheticus.

NASA has honored Nancy Roman by establishing the Nancy Grace Roman Technology Fellowship in Astrophysics. It is for early-career researchers and is "designed to foster technologies that advance scientific investigations in the origin and physics of the universe and future exoplanet exploration." A stellar spectroscopist, Roman became NASA's first chief of astronomy in 1959 and started the process that led to the Hubble Space Telescope. A long-time HAD member, she is currently writing her autobiography.



### **The Van Biesbroeck Prize**

*Helmut A. Abt, Kitt Peak Nat. Obs.*

The George Van Biesbroeck Prize is awarded by the American Astronomical Society (AAS) for long-term and extraordinary unselfish service to astronomy. Whereas most prizes in science are given for outstanding personal research, this is unique in recognizing unselfish service so that others can complete their research. Who was George Van Biesbroeck, and why does this award bear his name?

### **George Van Biesbroeck**

George (originally Georges) Van Biesbroeck was born in Ghent, Belgium on 20 January 1880. He was trained as an engineer but gradually shifted to doing observational astronomical work in Uccle, Belgium and in Germany. When WWI broke out and curtailed astronomy in Europe, he came to the Yerkes Observatory of the University of Chicago. There he observed visually close double stars because his excellent eyes were better at resolving them than photographs that averaged over times of good and bad seeing. He also observed comets (and found three), asteroids (found 13), and other solar system objects.

In the 1930s he conducted a site survey for the W. J. McDonald Observatory's 82-inch telescope (of the University of Texas but initially operated by the University of Chicago) and took photographs at many solar eclipses to confirm the Einstein gravitational shift of starlight as it passed the Sun. In 1963 he moved to the University of Arizona to help align its new telescopes and to continue observing with its larger telescopes.

Elizabeth Roemer wrote an excellent obituary for him for *Icarus* **23**, 134-35 (1974) ([http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/0019-1035\(74\)90110-9](http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/0019-1035(74)90110-9)). She recounts several of the fantastic stories about his drive and endurance, such as the evening he broke his arm slipping on the ice, so he worked at his desk all night until the doctor's office was open in the morning and he could walk there to have it set.

In another story, Tom Gehrels tells in his 1988 autobiography, *On the Glassy Sea*, that just after Van B observed with the McDonald 82-inch on his 82<sup>nd</sup> birthday (he also observed with the Kitt Peak 84-inch on his 84<sup>th</sup> birthday and the Steward 90-inch on his 90<sup>th</sup> birthday) he fell off the platform of the Newtonian focus and was badly injured. Tom went to the hospital emergency ward the next day, but the nurse would not admit him because she said that he was dying. When the nurse looked away, Tom went in and saw Van B looking very pale and still. Not knowing what to say to a dying man, he blurted out "Mr. Van B, this evening I observed Comet Tago-Sato-Kosaka." Van B's eye popped open and he said "Did you notice that its nucleus has split in three?"

A characteristic of Van Biesbroeck's work was that much of it was done to help other astronomers. Even though he concentrated on nearby stars in closely-spaced visual orbits, he knew that he would never live long enough to derive their orbital elements; those were left to future generations. Similarly for many of his solar-system observations. He was truly an unselfish astronomer.

After 71 years of observational work, he died on 23 February 1974 at the age of 94. Because he was still observing the month before, he left unfinished manuscripts and studies. Some colleagues completed those studies and saw them through publication. In particular, his assistant, Carl D. Vesely, and Brian G. Marsden (of the Harvard-Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory) finished four manuscripts, and I completed his paper on about 2200 measurements of 700 visual double stars.

### **Local Awards to Young People**

To raise funds for the page charges for those papers, his colleagues appealed to his friends and relatives. After the papers were published, there were some funds left (about \$1800). The fund became the Van Biesbroeck Memorial Fund. A small standing committee was organized in 1978

to grant annual awards to meritorious young local people in memory of Dr. Van Biesbroeck. The members of that committee were Uwe Fink, Tom Gehrels, Elizabeth Roemer, and Micheline Van Biesbroeck Wilson (his youngest daughter) of the Lunar and Planetary Laboratory of the University of Arizona and myself. The presidency of the committee rotated among these people. The awards were given to young local people (because we could not afford travel expenses) who were involved in observational research, instrumental development, or data processing. Each fall we advertised for nominations, and those were considered carefully. Also, once nominated, that person remained a considered candidate indefinitely. The award was presented on or close to Dr. Van B's birthday (Jan. 20).

The first recipient, in 1979, of the Van Biesbroeck Award was D. Scott Davis for his work on the design, development, and use of a high-resolution Fourier spectrometer. All recipients are listed at [http://aas.org/prizes/george\\_van\\_biesbroeck\\_prize](http://aas.org/prizes/george_van_biesbroeck_prize).

### **National Awards Independent of Age**

By 1986 we felt that the idea of recognizing unselfish service deserved to be a national one. We interpreted this as service generally outside of a person's paid position. Also, young people do not have the time to do unselfish service for others because they must be concerned about their own futures. None of the astronomical societies were giving awards for service to astronomy. The award was increased to \$500 plus travel expenses to Tucson, a certificate, and a picture of Dr. Van B. at the Yerkes 40-inch telescope. Members of the committee were specifically ineligible to receive it. Meanwhile, Uwe Fink, Elizabeth Roemer, & Micheline Wilson were replaced on the committee by Timothy Hunter, Robert McMillan, and Marcia Rieke. In 1993 Arthur A. Hoag was added. In 1995 we added Jaylee Mead and Frank N. Bash to broaden the committee to members outside of Tucson.

The first recipient under the national award was Dorrit Hoffleit in 1988 for her editions of the *Bright Star Catalogue* and the *Yale Parallax Catalogue* and her work on variable stars. The last two awards were presented at AAS meetings (June 1995, January 1997) so that they could be seen by more people.

### **Fund Raising**

Meanwhile the funds for this award were running low and we felt that it would be better to involve a larger group of people or another organization in its oversight. We approached both the Astronomical Society of the Pacific and the American Astronomical Society to take over the Van Biesbroeck Award. Both showed interest but declined to accept it unless we could provide an endowment of at least \$25,000. I approached the Flintridge Foundation, started by Francis L. Moseley, which was awarding grants for science and the arts. After much correspondence they declined our request for \$15,000 and dropped science as one of their fields of interest.

We wished to raise funds from friends, now that the award had been given to outstanding people who were nationally known as unselfish contributors to astronomy, but we could not do so without qualifying as a non-profit corporation so that contributors could claim IRS deductions.

In 1996 AAS Council member Jeffrey L. Linsky recommended to the Council that the AAS award a prize to individuals for outstanding service to astronomy. Under questioning, he said that a transfer of the Van Biesbroeck Award would be a satisfactory solution. The Council expressed favor for such an award and President Frank Shu asked Jeff and me to work together and present a plan to the Council.

A memorandum of agreement was proposed in March 1997 by Abt and Linsky, modified by AAS officers by adding a paragraph ("Should the funds transferred to the AAS prove insufficient to keep the Prize operational, the AAS is under no obligation to continue the Prize, but may do so at its discretion."), and approved by the Council. See <http://members.aas.org/comms/vanbies.cfm> for the Charge and current membership of the George Van Biesbroeck Prize Committee.

### **Incorporation**

The need for incorporation was so that contributors could deduct their contributions on income tax forms. I worked with local lawyer Mark Raven, who promised to complete the forms at minimal expense. For the "Van Biesbroeck Award, Inc.", we filed the Articles of Incorporation and a Certificate of Disclosure on 27 August 1991 to the Arizona Corporation Commission with myself as the Statutory Agent. Also we filed a set of Bylaws, minutes of the first

meeting, Application for Employer Identification Number, Application for Recognition of Exemption, and other documents. When I mentioned to the committee that I had paid \$415, the other members contributed some of the money. The next bill was \$1553, even though Mark contributed his time without charge. I paid \$631.61 and the law office (Stompoly & Stroud, P.C.) contributed a like amount. There was extensive correspondence with the state and additional information to be furnished. We were added to the 233 non-profit foundations in Arizona. I paid additional costs of \$243.20; the corporation paid \$502.70 and annual fees of \$10. After incorporation, many individuals contributed to provide a minimal amount to keep the prize active.

After the award was transferred to the AAS in 1997, the corporation was dissolved in 2000 simply by failing to pay the annual fee. The remaining funds of about \$12,000 were transferred by Treasurer Marcia Rieke to the AAS.

### **The Van Biesbroeck Prize of the AAS**

Under the new ground rules, the Van Biesbroeck Prize Committee's recommendation for the prize is due December 1<sup>st</sup> in the Secretary's office, and the Council acts during its January meeting. One of the continuing rules for the prize is that members of the Van Biesbroeck Prize Committee are not eligible to receive it. Therefore I was very surprised to learn at the June 1997 Council meeting that the Council had decided to give the prize to me, primarily for the editorship of the *Astrophysical Journal*. I objected, saying that it was against the rules. However, they foresaw that, saying that there was a three-day interval between the dissolution of the old committee and the formation of the AAS one, so that Council acted during that interval. And they consulted their lawyer on the legality of that action!

A few comments are appropriate. Frank Lovas compiled his catalogs of radio and molecular lines, which are used by virtually all radio astronomers, in his spare time, not during his paid employment. The Van Biesbroeck Prize is limited to living astronomers. Barry Lasker was informed that he had been selected for the Prize, but died on 10 February 1999 before its presentation, so it was given to his wife Sharon. Harold McNamara was Editor of the *PASP* for 22 years (1969-1991) and started the ASP Conference Series, which by 1999

was publishing at least 40 volumes per year at about \$30 per volume. It obtained the contract to publish IAU conference volumes. One can see from the lists of recipients that the Prizes have been given for a wide variety of activities, such as instrumentation, programming, compiling catalogs, administration, editing, education, and photometric standards. These people all fulfill the example set by George Van Biesbroeck for unselfish service to astronomy and help to other astronomers and future generations.

In recent years there have been campaigns to increase the endowments for the AAS awards and by 2006 that for the Van B Prize rose to \$61,007. This assures the continuation of the annual awards almost indefinitely.

[abt@noao.edu](mailto:abt@noao.edu)

### **Hall Library Fellowships Available**

Linda Hall Library resident fellowships for 2012 are now available. Fellowships up to \$3,000 per month will assist scholars to finance a research visit to the library in Kansas City. Doctorate-seeking scholars, post-doctorate scholars, and independent scholars are eligible. Application deadline is 3 January 2012. See <http://www.lindahall.org/fellowships/index.shtml> for details.

### **Meeting in Austin**

*continued from p. 1*

the Public" by Chuck Bueter, [TransitofVenus.org](http://TransitofVenus.org).

The second HAD Special Session will be from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. on Sunday. Organized by Marc Rothenberg (National Science Foundation), it is on "Funding Astronomy in the Post-World War II Era," and will include the following lectures: "Astronomy In Post-War Japan" by Sharon Traweek, UCLA, "The Transformation Of An Astronomical Institution" by David H. DeVorkin, Smithsonian Institution, "European Astronomy In The Age Of Space Research, 1964-1970" by Arturo Russo, University of Palermo, Italy, "The National Science Foundation Revolutionizes American Astronomy, 1950-1975" by Rothenberg, and "Development Of Infrared Astronomy" by G. H. Rieke, University of Arizona.

Monday, 9 January, will be a big day for HAD. There will be poster papers all day, morning and afternoon sessions of contributed oral

presentations, and the annual HAD Business Meeting at midday. The afternoon will culminate in the presentation of the 8th LeRoy E. Doggett Prize for Historical Astronomy to Woodruff T. Sullivan III of the University of Washington, followed by his plenary lecture on “Cosmic Noise: The Pioneers of Early Radio Astronomy and Their Discoveries.” And the day will conclude with the fifth HAD minibanquet in a nearby restaurant. Watch for an e-mail asking you to make reservations for it.

Tuesday morning will see the last session of oral contributed papers, and that afternoon there will be a HAD field trip to the University of Texas [Harry Ransom Center](#), with its famous Herschel archives and first editions of books by Copernicus, Kepler, Cassini, and other astronomers of note.

Among the presenters of oral contributed papers will be Matthew Whitehouse, a graduate student at the University of Arizona. He was selected by the HAD Committee to receive the second HAD Student Travel Award to present his paper, “Music and Astronomy: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives.”

Details of all sessions, including abstracts, will be available on the HAD website at <http://had.aas.org/meetings/2012Abstracts.html>.

[joe.tenn@sonoma.edu](mailto:joe.tenn@sonoma.edu)

## Sullivan to Receive Doggett Prize

*continued from p. 1*

brought together seminal papers published between 1896 and 1954 with commentary. This was followed by *The Early Years of Radio Astronomy* (1984), a collection of essays, and most recently, [Cosmic Noise: A History of Early Radio Astronomy](#) (2009), a detailed and magisterial study of the subject from an intellectual, technical, and social point of view through the 1950s.

In preparation of these works, Woody interviewed some 250 early radio astronomers and gathered original documents, creating an archive for use by future historians. Tapes and transcripts of the interviews already have been transferred to the National Radio Astronomy Observatory in Charlottesville, which has agreed to digitize them and preserve them along with Woody's other materials. He also has been active in promoting

the preservation of important personal papers of radio astronomers—including Martin Ryle, Edward Appleton, Frank Kerr, and the CSIRO Radiophysics Division in Sydney—as well as the historical radio receivers and antennas used by radio astronomers. He has coordinated these efforts through AAS and IAU Working Groups.

Woody's efforts to share, not only the products of his historical research, but also the primary sources themselves, is but one important, multifaceted, and compounded example of his service to the history-of-astronomy community.

Woody was a founding member and organizer of HAD, circa 1980, a HAD Committee member (1989-1991), and Vice Chair and Chair of the Division (1993-1997). He has organized ten special HAD meeting sessions over the years and delivered numerous papers.

Woody served on the organizing committee of IAU Commission 41 (circa 1986-1993), too. Since then he has organized about five special C41 sessions.

A member of the Astronomical Society of the Pacific's History Committee from 1982 to 1993, Woody chaired it in 1986–1992. He was instrumental in organizing the ASP Centennial program in 1989.

A prominent member and local organizer of two annual meetings for the North American Sundial Society, Woody's historical and astronomical perspectives have informed his talks and public sundial installations, including his leadership in the design and fabrication of the NASA [Mars Rover sundial](#) (with Bill Nye).

Lastly, Woody's historical knowledge is incorporated into his college and graduate courses in astronomy and astrobiology and into the textbook he recently coedited, [Planets and Life: The Emerging Science of Astrobiology](#) (2007), which integrates historical, philosophical, and ethical issues with scientific matters. For the History Department at the University of Washington, he offers a course on “The History of Physics and Astronomy, 1800-1940.” Through such pedagogy, Woody Sullivan has introduced the history of astronomy to many students and made vital space for the subject within the curriculum.

[thomas.hockey@uni.edu](mailto:thomas.hockey@uni.edu)



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

HAD News #79, October 2011, edited by Joe Tenn  
Please send contributions for the next issue,  
comments, etc. to [joe.tenn@sonoma.edu](mailto:joe.tenn@sonoma.edu).

A complete version of this newsletter, with color  
photographs and active links, may be found on the  
HAD website at <http://had.aas.org/>.

**Photo credits:** p. 1: W.T. Sullivan III; [Globe  
Images](#). p. 2: J.S. Tenn; J.M. Pasachoff. p. 3: E.  
Tenn; T. Hockey. p. 4: [Library of Congress](#). p. 5  
(both): Univ. of Calif., Santa Cruz. p. 7: D.  
Danielson; AIP Emilio Segrè Visual Archives.  
p. 8: [University of Cambridge, Institute of  
Astronomy](#).

HAD News  
c/o J. S. Tenn  
Department of Physics & Astronomy  
Sonoma State University  
Rohnert Park, CA 94928, USA