



H·A·D NEWS

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

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In This Issue

The January 2018 HAD meeting	1
HAD Session at the October DPS Meeting	2
From the Chair	3
From the Vice-Chair	3
From the Secretary-Treasurer	4
Minutes of the January 2018 Town Hall	4
The HAD 2017 Obituary Report	6
Assessment of the Abt Archive	7
Update on AAS Oral History Project	8
Preservation of the Dartmouth Observatory	8
Artefacts Consortium Meeting at Adler	10

The January 2018 HAD Meeting

Ken Rumstay, Valdosta State University

The Historical Astronomy Division met (in conjunction with the 231st meeting of the American Astronomical Society) January 8th through the 10th at the Gaylord National Resort and Convention Center in Maryland, just a short distance from Washington DC. Sixteen oral presentations were made in the course of three sessions on Tuesday and Wednesday, while six posters were available for viewing all day on Tuesday.

The meeting began on Monday (January 8th) afternoon with a panel discussion titled *The Future of Astronomy's Archived Observations - An Open Discussion*. Organized by members of the



Sara Schechner accepts the 2018 LeRoy E. Doggett Prize from HAD Past Chair Marc Rothenberg. Sara presented her prize lecture, *Tangible Things of American Astronomy*, on Tuesday afternoon.



A scene from Monday's special session *The Future of Astronomy's Archived Observations - An Open Discussion*. Following an informative panel discussion, questions from the audience were entertained.

Working Group for the Preservation of Astronomical History (WGPAH) and chaired by Sara Schechner, this session featured a panel of nine experts in the use, preservation, and digitization of photographic plates. After their presentations, questions and concerns from the audience were addressed. The panel did an excellent job of convincing us that our plate archives represent a valuable resource which must be preserved!

The WGPAH met that evening at 6:00, with some members participating by telephone. The two main topics of discussion were the Abt archives and the possible demolition of Dartmouth College's Shattuck Observatory. Reports on both of these will be found in this issue. That Swarthmore College's historic 24-inch refractor has found a new home (see the October 2017 issue) was applauded as a success for the WGPAH!

The HAD II session on Tuesday morning consisted of four twenty-minute talks. This was followed by the HAD Town Hall (our annual business meeting) which convened at 12:45 pm in the National Harbor 2 meeting room. About forty people were in attendance as were Pat Seitzer (Chair), Marc Rothenberg (Past Chair), Ken Rumstay (Secretary-Treasurer), and Executive Committee Member Pedro Raposo. Minutes of the Town Hall may be found on page 4.

The HAD III session began at 2:00, and consisted of seven excellent ten-minute talks. Many of these were presented by student researchers, and I was struck by the level of professionalism displayed. David DeVorkin and three of his students talked about various planetaria, a subject dear to my heart; this would be an excellent topic for a special session at a future meeting!



Former HAD Secretary-Treasurer Joe Tenn was spotted at the AAS Donors, Sponsors and 40+E reception on Wednesday evening. So were many other HAD members!

Since 2011 our Division has sought to encourage students of astronomical history to participate in our meetings by offering grants of \$500 to help defray travel expenses. We were very pleased to make three Student Travel Awards this year, to Laura Caron of Georgetown University, Samantha Thompson of Arizona State University, and Teresa Wilson of Michigan Technological University.

The highlight of the meeting was the biennial LeRoy E. Doggett Prize Lecture, *Tangible Things of American Astronomy*, presented by Harvard's Sara Schechner. We ended Tuesday's program with our traditional "minibanquet" at the Public House, a short walk from the Gaylord.

Wednesday morning brought a final session of contributed talks. Abstracts of all the presentations are available for viewing at the HAD website (https://had.aas.org/membership/had_meetings/2018). It was an excellent meeting, and we hope to see you all at next January's meeting in Seattle!

hadsec@aas.org

HAD Session at the October DPS Meeting in Provo, Utah

Ken Rumstay, Valdosta State University

The AAS Division for Planetary Sciences held its annual meeting on October 15th through the 20th at the Provo Marriott Hotel and Conference Center in Provo, Utah. On Tuesday morning of the meeting Anita Cochran (McDonald Observatory) and Jay Pasachoff (Williams College) chaired a session titled *Historical Astronomy: Rosetta, Cassini, Transit of Mercury*. Three papers were presented: *The Rosetta Mission to Comet 67P/Churyumov-Gerasimenko: The US Contributions* (by Bonnie J. Buratti and Paul R. Weissman), *Iapetus: Tenth Anniversary of the Cassini Flyby and the Albedo Dichotomy Enigma* (by Tilmann Denk), and *The 2016 Transit of Mercury and the Solar Parallax* (by Jay M. Pasachoff; Udo Backhaus; Bernd Gährken; and Glenn Schneider). Abstracts of these presentations may be viewed on the DPS website at <https://aas.org/meetings/dps49/schedule>.

I would like to thank Jay Pasachoff for taking the lead in organizing these historical sessions at DPS meetings. We hope to expand this practice to other AAS divisions in the near future.

hadsec@aas.org



From the Chair

Patrick Seitzer, University of Michigan

The 231st AAS meeting at National Harbor was a great success for HAD. There were sixteen oral presentations in three different oral sessions plus six posters. The special session on Monday afternoon, entitled *The Future of Astronomy's Archived Observations – An Open Discussion*, was very well attended. The 2018 Doggett Prize winner, Sara Schechner of Harvard University, gave a plenary talk titled *Tangible Things of American Astronomy*.

The next AAS meeting will be in Denver, CO in June of 2018. This is home to the historic Chamberlin Observatory of the University of Denver. Robert Stencel is planning a HAD visit to this Observatory one evening during the AAS meeting, and I hope to see many HAD members there.

I look forward to seeing many of you at upcoming AAS meetings and encourage you to send me suggestions for improving the Historical Astronomy Division. In particular, how can HAD encourage more Junior members, students, and early career professionals to be part of HAD and present at HAD sessions? To this end, it was gratifying that HAD was able to give three Student Travel Awards which allowed one undergraduate and two graduate students to present at the National Harbor meeting. How can HAD encourage similar participation in future?

Finally, it is with great sadness that HAD learned of the passing of Peter Abrahams this past March. He was a giant in the field of the history of telescopes, and a model to follow for depth of research and sharing of information. He served on the HAD Executive Committee from 2005 to 2007; he will be sorely missed. An obituary is in progress for the AAS web site.

pseitzer@umich.edu



From the Vice Chair

Alan Hirshfeld, U. Mass. at Dartmouth

A couple of weeks back, in my freshman astronomy class, I set up some apparatus to display the spectra of various light sources. While handing out diffraction gratings to the students, I asked how many had ever seen a spectrum demonstration in a classroom or science center. Only three of the seventy students raised their hands. Neither had any of the dozen or so engineering majors (sitting together in the second row) ever seen a spectrum other than a rainbow or glass-refracted sunbeam at home.

The advent of spectroscopy was such a technological milestone in the history of astronomy that its apparent omission from the entire pre-college curriculum was striking, especially since a demonstration of the phenomenon is both simple and cheap. One doesn't have to delve too deeply into the physics underlying spectrum formation to convey the idea that a spectrum reveals basic chemical and physical properties of its source, whether seen across the classroom or across the Galaxy. This is precisely the insight that propelled observational astronomy into the modern age.

There was a buzz in the lecture hall as students conferred about the multi-hued bands and lines that seemed to hover in the space beyond the gratings. Even the tech-savvy engineering majors marveled at this colorful, virtual-reality overlay to their everyday perception of the world. Later this week, I'll present the spectrum demo to a group of visiting ninth graders to foster discussion of its implications. Just as a peek at the moon through a telescope provides a segue into Galileo's contributions to astronomy, a visible spectrum offers a natural lead-in to the historical development of astrophysics.

ahirshfeld@umassd.edu



From the Secretary-Treasurer

Ken Rumstay, Valdosta State University

Greetings all, from southern Georgia (not South Georgia; that's an island in the South Atlantic)! I hope you are all enjoying mild spring weather as you read this. Here in Valdosta we received an inch of snow on January 3rd; the first we'd seen in twenty-eight years. Ironically, that was the day when Earth reached perihelion; it made for an excellent argument for the seasons *not* resulting from the variable distance between Earth and Sun!

Among other duties at Valdosta State University I serve as Director of our campus planetarium and observatory, presenting star shows to over 4000 visitors annually. March was Women's History Month, and to celebrate (and to commemorate the coming 150th birthday of Henrietta Swan Leavitt on July 4th) I designed a show titled *The Ladies of Harvard*. As the title suggests it highlighted the pioneering work of Williamina Fleming, Antonia Maury, Annie Jump Cannon, and of course Ms. Leavitt, along with others. I found a wonderful reference source in Dava Sobel's recent *The Glass Universe* (Viking 2016, ISBN 978-0670016952); if you've not yet read it, I strongly recommend it!

The famous female Harvard computers have been portrayed onstage at least twice to my knowledge. Lauren Gunderson's fine 2011 play *Silent Sky* is a dramatization of the life of Henrietta Leavitt; I've been campaigning for our Theatre Department to produce it, but so far without success. Then, as many of you know, in 1879 Harvard astronomer Winslow Upton wrote (during a fishing trip spoiled by rain) a parody of the operetta *H.M.S. Pinafore* which he titled *The Harvard Observatory Pinafore*. Applying new lyrics and libretto to Sir Arthur Sullivan's music, he made good fun of the astronomers and computers. It was first produced on New Year's Eve in 1929 at the Cambridge AAS meeting, and is still occasionally performed by amateur groups. I think it would be fun for HAD

to stage it at a future AAS meeting; if any of you reading this are interested please contact me. I particularly think that the lyrics to the song "An Astronomer is a Sorry Soul" are timeless:

*He must open the dome and turn the wheel
And watch the stars with untiring zeal,
He must toil at night though cold it be,
And he never should expect a decent salarree.*

I'm sure that last line in particular strikes a chord for many of you!

I would like to conclude by making four requests:

- 1) If you have a suggestion for a special session at next January's meeting, please let me know!
- 2) If you would like to assist Joe Tenn with the Astronomy Genealogy Project, please contact him at astrogendirector@aad.org. The goal of AstroGen is to list as many as possible of the world's astronomers along with their academic parents (i.e., their thesis advisors).
- 3) This is an election year for HAD!. If you would like to run for the office of Vice-Chair (and President-Elect), or to be a Member-at-Large on the HAD Committee, please contact me. Also please feel free to nominate others, but as a matter of courtesy please discuss the matter with them first!
- 4) Finally, please keep your contact information up to date with our parent society! To make changes, go to <https://aad.org/>, log in, and click on "Membership" and then "Update Profile." And please set your spam filter to allow HAD messages to reach you. I promise to not bombard you with too much e-mail!!

Thank you once again for allowing me to serve as your Secretary-Treasurer, and I hope to see you all (or many of you, at least) next January in Seattle!

hadsec@aad.org

Minutes of the January 2018 HAD Town Hall

Ken Rumstay, Valdosta State University

The 2018 HAD Town Hall convened at 12:45 pm on Tuesday, January 9th, in the National Harbor 2 meeting room at the Gaylord National Resort and Convention Center in Maryland. Those members of the Executive Committee in attendance were Pat Seitzer (Chair), Marc Rothenberg (Past Chair), Ken Rumstay (Secretary-Treasurer), and Pedro Raposo. Vice-Chair Alan Hirshfeld and member Robert Stencil were unfortunately unable to attend.

After a brief delay caused by technical difficulties (which plagued much of the AAS meeting), Pat Seitzer welcomed all those in attendance and introduced the Executive Committee. He began the session by summarizing earlier discussion about HAD meeting dates. We have decided to continue our tradition of having paper sessions and our annual Town Hall in conjunction with winter meetings of the American Astronomical Society. That would not preclude our having HAD sessions in conjunction with other meetings, and we plan to have one at the June 2018 AAS meeting in Denver (with a guided tour of the historic Chamberlin Observatory). We also hope to have a HAD session at the October meeting of the Division of Planetary Sciences, to be held in Knoxville. The desirability of having historical talks at meetings of all the AAS divisions was discussed, and as a starting point we will try to have at least one member from each division join HAD and serve as our representative to that division.

As Vice-Chair, Alan Hirshfeld is responsible for providing obituaries of deceased AAS members; these are posted to the HAD website and the online *Bulletin of the American Astronomical Society*. When possible we rely on colleagues of the deceased to provide these, but Alan has taken it upon himself to write the obituaries himself when volunteers aren't forthcoming. He prepared fifty-seven in 2017 alone: we applaud his service!

Secretary-Treasurer Ken Rumstay presented data related to the overall health of the Division. As of the end of 2017 our total membership stands at 314, a slight decline compared with this time last year. During the past five years our numbers have remained steady, as documented in the following table. An alarming trend is the decrease in junior members; we are considering various means by which we may attract more youngsters to our fold.

	12/13	12/14	12/15	12/16	12/17
Full	133	132	140	139	134
Associate	41	48	48	49	45
Junior	19	17	8	8	5
Emeritus	72	77	86	96	103
Divisional Affiliate	27	24	23	25	23
Other	2	4	3	3	4
Total	294	302	308	320	314

HAD membership statics (2013-2017)

The tables below provide a detailed account of HAD's financial state. They indicate that we are in excellent fiscal shape, with increasing balances in all three accounts.

	2015	2016	2017
Balance as of January 1 st	\$18,129.99	\$17,553.73	\$20,543.25
Income	4,505.54	5,069.95	6,030.31
Expenditures	5,081.80	2,080.43	1,822.80
Balance as of December 31 st	\$17,553.73	\$20,543.25	\$24,750.76

HAD operating account (2015-2017)

	2015	2016	2017
Balance as of January 1 st	\$35,637.99	\$34,767.75	\$37,234.15
Income	(870.24)	3,968.84	5,766.81
Expenditures	0.00	1,502.44	0.00
Balance as of December 31 st	\$34,767.75	\$37,234.15	\$43,000.96

LeRoy E. Doggett Prize account (2015-2017)

	2015	2016	2017
Balance as of January 1 st	\$20,157.38	\$21,121.44	\$24,852.34
Income	1,850.29	3,778.25	6,499.30
Expenditures	886.23	47.35	1,618.33
Balance as of December 31 st	\$21,121.44	\$24,852.34	\$29,733.31

Donald E. Osterbrock Prize account (2015-2017)

Ken concluded his report by thanking the generous individuals who had made financial contributions to HAD during the past year: Daniel Brocious, Daniel Caton, Edward Churchwell, Donald Davis, Reginald Dufour, Thomas English, William Forrest, Otto Franz, Donald Groom, Arnold Heiser, Alan Hirshfeld, David Jenner, Laura Kay, Russell Kulrud, Marie Lukac, Stephen McCluskey, David Meisel, Terry Oswalt, Robert Rowe, Ken Rumstay, Woody Sullivan, Virginia Trimble, Tom Williams, Robert Wing, Adolf Witt, and Donald Yeomans. Their generosity will help HAD achieve its goals!

Those attending the Town Hall also heard progress reports from Jarita Holbrook on the AAS Oral History Project, and from Jennifer Bartlett (Chair of the Working Group for the Preservation of Astronomical History) regarding the fate of the Abt archives. Their reports on these two important HAD initiatives may be found on pages six and seven of this issue.

Submitted April 12, 2018

hadsec@aaas.org

The HAD 2017 Obituary Report

Alan Hirshfeld, U. Mass. at Dartmouth

Since last year's obituaries report, an additional thirty-three obituaries have been completed; seventeen are currently in progress by an assigned author; six author requests await a response; and 87 obituaries remain outstanding (down from 109 as of May 2017). Crystal Tinch and I continue to work from a shared Google Docs spreadsheet, whose pages list various subsets of the obituaries, including those completed and those in need of completion. Names of recently deceased members are added by Crystal or me, following notification from colleagues. I progressively enter information as to the status of the obituary: author yet to be assigned; author request sent/pending; author assigned/obituary in progress; obituary completed/posted. I would like to express my thanks to Mary Mathias, the AAS's former Content Editor and Website Coordinator: the obituary website has been redesigned, which greatly improves its user search capability.

To assist in the writing of obituaries, I proposed an initiative to the HAD Committee to request advance biographical and professional information from AAS Emeritus members. However, the initiative is currently on hold pending finalization of an AAS review of its privacy and security policies, specifically relating to the solicitation, use, and storage of members' personal data.

We would like to ask for your assistance in reducing our backlog of outstanding obituaries! If you could provide at least a brief description of the life and career of any of the individuals listed at right, please contact us!

Submitted April 11, 2018

ahirshfeld@umassd.edu

<i>Doolittle, Robert F. II</i>	<i>Nather, R. Edward</i>
<i>Drake, Michael J.</i>	<i>Neukum, Gerhard</i>
<i>Elliot, James L.</i>	<i>Ostro, Steven J.</i>
<i>Ellis, Frederick E.</i>	<i>Peregrine, David S.</i>
<i>Felten, James</i>	<i>Plavec, Mirek J.</i>
<i>Fitch, Walter S.</i>	<i>Pomerantz, Martin</i>
<i>Fountain, John</i>	<i>Ptak, Roger L.</i>
<i>Freeman, Tarsh</i>	<i>Raimond, Ernst</i>
<i>Frost, Kenneth J.</i>	<i>Rakos, Karl D.</i>
<i>Fujita, Yoshio</i>	<i>Rasool, S. Ichtiague</i>
<i>Gehrels, Tom</i>	<i>Reichert, Gail A.</i>
<i>Gibbs, Michael G.</i>	<i>Richards, Mercedes</i>
<i>Gondolatsch, Friedrich</i>	<i>Roberts, George C.</i>
<i>Gordon, Kurtiss J.</i>	<i>Rodman, James P.</i>
<i>Gould, Robert J.</i>	<i>Roemer, Elizabeth</i>
<i>Greeley, Ronald</i>	<i>Rouse, Carl A.</i>
<i>Greyber, Howard D.</i>	<i>Rubin, Robert H.</i>
<i>Guttman, Paul H.</i>	<i>Ruffle, Paul M.</i>
<i>Haddock, Fred T.</i>	<i>Schiffmacher, Edward R.</i>
<i>Hansen, J. Richard</i>	<i>Shorthill, Richard W.</i>
<i>Hedeman, E. Ruth</i>	<i>Steinlin, Uli</i>
<i>Hobbs, Robert W.</i>	<i>Sternglass, Ernest J.</i>
<i>Horak, Henry George</i>	<i>Stone, Sidney N.</i>
<i>Howard, William E.</i>	<i>Strom, Karen</i>
<i>Juda, Michael</i>	<i>Sturch, Conrad R.</i>
<i>Kamp, Lucas</i>	<i>Svestka, Zdenek F.</i>
<i>Kaufmann, Pierre</i>	<i>Tooper, Robert F.</i>
<i>Kennedy, Hans D.</i>	<i>Tueller, Jack</i>
<i>Kent, Jack T.</i>	<i>Upton, Edward Key Lloyd</i>
<i>Kliore, Arvydas J.</i>	<i>Van Steenberg, Michael E.</i>
<i>Koch, David G.</i>	<i>Varadi, Ferenc</i>
<i>Kohman, Truman P.</i>	<i>Warwick, James Walter</i>
<i>Kowal, Charles T.</i>	<i>Weekes, Trevor C.</i>
<i>Krishnaswamy, Sumant</i>	<i>Wesemael, Francois</i>
<i>Kundu, Mukul R.</i>	<i>Whitaker, Ewen</i>
<i>Legg, Thomas H.</i>	<i>Wilson, James R.</i>
<i>Lin, Robert P.</i>	<i>Wolfe, Arthur M.</i>
<i>Maffei, Paolo</i>	<i>Wood, H. John III</i>
<i>Margarve, Thomas E.</i>	<i>Woodgate, Bruce E.</i>
<i>Marlborough, John Michael</i>	<i>Young, Arthur</i>
<i>McNamara, D. Harold</i>	<i>Zelle, Joseph F.</i>
<i>Merilan, Michael Preston</i>	<i>Zapolsky, Harold S.</i>
<i>Mitalas, Romas</i>	<i>Zombeck, Martin V.</i>
<i>Namba, Osamu</i>	



Assessment of the Abt Archive

Jennifer Bartlett, U.S. Naval Observatory

On 2017 December 20, Julie Steffen (AAS Director of Publishing), Jennifer Bartlett (Chair, AAS Working Group on the Preservation of Astronomical Heritage—WGPAH), and Molly Stothert-Maurer (Processing Archivist, University of Arizona Special Collections) visited the Cube-Smart Self-Storage facility in Tucson, Arizona to investigate the contents of three units. The primary concerns were:

- 1) What is the physical condition of the stored materials?
- 2) What is the historical value of the stored materials?
- 3) What guarantees of confidentiality were made to reviewers and authors?

The units house the “Abt archive,” which consists of approximately 450 oversize boxes of materials related to the *Astrophysical Journal* during the editorships of Helmut A. Abt (NOAA, retired) and Robert C. Kennicutt, Jr. (U. Cambridge, retired). Abt served from 1971 through 1999 using a manual, paper-intensive review process. Kennicutt followed him from 1999 through 2006; his term began an electronic review process.

The material is mostly in good physical condition and is well-organized. However, all the boxes are filthy, and some are moldy; therefore, remediation will be necessary for their retention. The assessors noticed spiders in the units and evidence of rodents.

Historians of science would value the contents. The reviewers’ reports, the authors’ responses, and the editors’ mediation of those discussions show how the editorial process shaped the resulting science. Communications from authors and reviewers provide glimpses into their personalities, document other events in their lives, identify the networks in which they participated, and hint at

their other research. The routine correspondence and administrative paperwork document the processes by which manuscripts moved through the pipeline. Several boxes also contain manuscripts the editors deemed not suitable for publication. Overall, the reviewers’ reports and authors’ responses are most significant.

The confidentiality assurances only protect the contents of the reviewers’ reports, but not in perpetuity. However, the statements indicate that the editors will seek permission from the reviewer during his or her lifetime or from their heirs for at least fifty years after their death. These restrictions are more stringent than those currently in effect and the recommendations of American Institute of Physics (AIP). According to the “Professional and Ethical Standards for the AAS Journals,” the names of the reviewers and the contents of their review-related correspondence are embargoed for fifty years, although aggregate studies are possible after fifteen years for articles published since 2008 (<https://journals.aas.org/policy/ethics.html#confidentiality>). The AIP recommends a fifty-year embargo period with provisions for designated officials to permit earlier access and other types of analysis.

The full report, “Assessment of the Abt Archive for the American Astronomical Society 2017 December 20–21” is available on the WGPAH website (<https://aas.org/files/abtassessment-2017-12-20.pdf>), including additional photographs and a redacted sample manuscript package.

Given the historical value of the Abt archive, the substantial costs of conservation and storage, and the confidentiality guarantees, the Publications Committee and WGPAH are developing a plan for the preliminary processing of the contents in preparation for its long-term storage.

jennifer@bartlettastro.com



Unit #347 contains the oldest material and is overfull. Although some boxes show signs of water damage, the files inside appear to be unharmed.



Update on AAS Oral History Project

Jarita Holbrook, University of the Western Cape

To date the AAS Oral History Project has recorded 192 interviews since 2015; of these thirty-eight have been transcribed. We are taking a hiatus from collecting additional interviews until we get more of the interviews through the process and placed in the online archive. The AAS has a contract with a transcription company to transcribe the remaining interviews; however the bulk of the interviews already transcribed have not been placed online. What is needed is for each transcript to undergo a preliminary editing process: correcting typos, removing repetition, checking spelling, cleaning up swear words, etc. The corrected transcript is then given to the scientist to review and correct. The scientist should make corrections and add dates if the dates are missing. As a last step, the transcript should be returned to AAS with the signed consent form. Once everything is signed off, the transcript will be given to AIP to place in their online Oral History Archive. The Oral History Team is in discussions about how much time to give each scientist before the edited transcript is due. At AAS National Harbor, we gained two HAD volunteers to help do the preliminary edits of transcripts and we would like to enlist a few more. If you would be interested in helping out with this project, please contact Jim Lattis at jim.lattis@gmail.com.

astroholbrook@gmail.com.



WGPAH, HAD, and AAS President Urge Preservation of the Historic Dartmouth Observatory

Sara J. Schechner, Harvard University

Constructed in 1853 during the “Observatory Movement” in antebellum America, the Shattuck Observatory at Dartmouth College is one of the oldest observatories in the US that has retained its original architectural footprint and much of its early apparatus. Today the College Park site is in regular use for teaching and research in astronomy, meteorology, and ecology.

In autumn 2017, Dartmouth College placed the Shattuck Observatory in peril by considering its demolition to make way for a new 750-bed student dormitory. Without consulting any stakeholders, the Dartmouth administration began a feasibility and geological survey of the site for the new dorm. The Departments of Physics and Astronomy, Earth Sciences, and Chemistry were completely blindsided.

Seeking to preserve the observatory, Dartmouth’s Department of Physics and Astronomy initiated a public campaign, writing letters to senior college and public officials and inviting people to sign a petition. This online petition may be found at <https://goo.gl/jDruf8>, along with a history of the Shattuck observatory and information about the multi-disciplinary research and educational conducted at the site.

At the January 2018 AAS meeting in National Harbor, MD, I brought the observatory issue to the attention of the Working Group for the Preservation of Astronomical Heritage (WGPAH) and the Historical Astronomy Division (HAD). WGPAH asked me to draft a letter for the AAS president to send, if willing, to the Dartmouth president and deans.

The draft letter was endorsed by both HAD and WGRAH, and their chairs (Pat Seitzer and Jennifer Bartlett) forwarded the letter to Christine Jones, current president of the AAS. She tweaked it to her satisfaction and sent it to President Philip J. Hanlon and the other deans of Dartmouth College on February 20, 2018. The letter called attention to

the significance of the Shattuck Observatory in the history of American astronomy, expressed our belief that it should be preserved, and urged the Dartmouth administration and trustees to place the dormitory elsewhere. A copy of the letter to President Hanlon appears below.



AMERICAN ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY
OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

February 20, 2018

Dear President Hanlon:

I am writing as the President of the American Astronomical Society to express my concern with the news that Dartmouth College is considering removal of the historic Shattuck Observatory. If this is indeed the case, I urge the College to rethink its plans and protect the historical integrity of the observatory structure and its present site.

The Shattuck Observatory is a significant landmark in the history of American astronomy. Built in 1853 by the distinguished architect Ammi Young, the building is an excellent and rare surviving example of the "Observatory Movement" in antebellum America. In this movement, colleges, including Dartmouth, answered President John Quincy Adams' call to action for American astronomers to undertake original research, equal to that performed in Europe.

The astronomical research carried out in the late 1800's demanded specialized, fixed instruments - in particular, equatorial telescopes, transits and clocks - set up in buildings carefully aligned with the cardinal directions and on high ground. Slits in the roofs and rotating domes enabled astronomers to make precise measurements of celestial objects. Dartmouth's Shattuck Observatory is one of the very few from this era to have its original structure intact. The building, therefore, is as much an historic scientific instrument as the Alvan Clark & Sons telescope it still houses. To remove the Shattuck Observatory from its original, scientific footprint would be a great loss to our understanding of the development of American astronomy and Dartmouth's pivotal role in this history. Today the Shattuck observatory continues to be an inspiration and a symbol of the importance of scientific research at Dartmouth and in our Nation.

I hope that Dartmouth College will not cast aside this important landmark in the history of American astronomy, nor surround it with dormitory lights. A dormitory can be built in many places, but an observatory, like a bridge, must be situated just so. The Shattuck Observatory should be cherished as part of the Nation's and Dartmouth's Scientific heritage.

Sincerely,

Christine Jones
President, American Astronomical Society

Harvard-Smithsonian, Cfa • 60 Garden Street • Cambridge, MA 02138 USA

617-495-7137 • F 617-495-7356 • president@aa.org

At the start of March 2018, President Hanlon of Dartmouth College announced that the dormitory was off the table because it was too expensive to build on the rocky ledges of College Park. The college will look to various campus sites to build some smaller swing-space housing to enable old dorm renovations and the future expansion of the student body

The official public explanation made no mention of the uproar from faculty, students, and outsiders like us who wanted to protect the Shattuck Observatory, ongoing meteorological and other scientific studies at the site, or the green ecology and tranquility of College Park. Nonetheless, I would like to think that we have made a difference, whether or not it is publically acknowledged. Some Dartmouth faculty have written to express thanks to WGAH and HAD for our “wonderful work” in prompting an official letter of support from the AAS

The Shattuck Observatory is safe for now, but the college has made no commitment to preserve it. I will keep the members of HAD and WGAH posted as news comes in.

schechn@fas.harvard.edu



Artefacts Consortium Meeting at the Adler Planetarium

Pedro M. P. Raposo, Adler Planetarium

Chicago's Adler Planetarium is proud to announce that it will host the 28th meeting of the Artefacts Consortium on October 14th through the 16th. The Artefacts Consortium is an international association of historians in museums and academic institutions who share the goal of promoting the use of objects in serious historical studies; information may be found at <http://www.artefactsconsortium.org/>. The meetings are opportunities for professionals to explore the use, care, and interpretation of objects and collections.



The Shattuck Observatory, on the campus of Dartmouth College in Hanover, New Hampshire. Constructed in 1854, its most famous director was Edwin Brant Frost, who would later go on to become the director of the Yerkes Observatory.

The October meeting will explore how museums and other related institutions have defined and maintained the relevance of their collections. We will follow up on themes explored in previous Artefacts meetings, described in the volume *Challenging Collections** from the Artefacts XVI meeting. As the editors noted in their introduction to that volume, museums today “must balance a number of functions, not always mutually compatible: exhibition, preservation, research, and education. ... the nature of museums’ relationships with their public has shifted from one of unquestioned authority to a partner in dialogue”.

At the same time, humanities scholars have shown an increased interest in objects, collections, and museums. For a range of stakeholders, collections provoke questions of status and purpose that are, organizational, social, and intellectual. As context and events have changed how museums operate, how have scholars at museums and similar institutions apprehended the relevance of their collections? In what ways have interpretations changed depending on prevalent historiography and motivations of the interpreter? What is the impact of changing techniques available for examining objects? How do institutions prioritize acquisitions and displays for their collections? How has the growing importance of digital access affected the role of collections? More generally, in what ways are history collections relevant to broader society?

This meeting will allow scholars within and outside the museum community to explore how the relevance of museum collections has changed through history. It will also enable museum professionals to pose challenging questions about the present and future of relevance of collections. The meeting schedule will include opportunities to experience and explore collections, exhibitions, and programs at the Adler Planetarium,

Meeting registration and paper submission are now open. The deadline for submitting papers and session proposals is July 20th. For additional information, please visit our website at

<https://www.adlerplanetarium.org/artefacts..>

praposo@adlerplanetarium.org

**Challenging Collections: Approaches to the Heritage of Recent Science and Technology* (Boyle and Hagmann 2017 <http://opensi.si.edu/index.php/smithsonian/catalog/book/168>).



Two the fascinating astronomical artefacts in the Adler Planetarium collection. Top: Brass telescope manufactured in France, c. 1740. Bottom: Horizontal sundial made by Hanns Ducher of Nuremberg in 1600.



Historical Astronomy Division of the American Astronomical Society

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A complete version of this newsletter, with color photographs and active links, may be found at <https://had.aas.org/sites/had.aas.org/files/HADN91.pdf>.

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HAD News
c/o K.S. Rumstay
Department of Physics, Astronomy, and Geosciences
Valdosta State University
Valdosta, GA 31698