

ArAS News

NEWSLETTER OF THE
ARMENIAN ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY (A r A S)

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The ArAS Newsletter in the INTERNET: <http://www.aras.am/ArasNews/arasnews.html>

INTERNATIONAL YEAR of ASTRONOMY NEWS



Update from the **International Year of Astronomy (IYA-2009)** events (world and Armenia).

Latest activities and events:

- Aug 3-14 IAU XXVII GA in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil**
Aug 19-24 UNESCO Congress in Kazan, Russia: “Astronomy and World Heritage”
Aug-Sep Ringless Saturn
Sep 1 Creation of Viktor Ambartsumian International Prize department at NAS RA
Sep 2 Jupiter without its Moons (mutual occultations and eclipses between the Galilean satellites)
Sep 10 Areg Mickaelian’s interview at *News.am* Internet news media about science and astronomy problems in Armenia
Sep 13 Official application to IAU Executive Committee to organize International School for Young Astronomers (ISYA-2010) in Byurakan, Armenia
Sep 16 TV program about famous Armenian astronomer Benjamin Markarian by Supreme Master TV (Australia)
Sep 18 Official day of Astronomy in Armenia (Ambartsumian’s birthday)
Sep 18 Public observations of amateur astronomers in Yerevan
Sep 18 Announcement of Viktor Ambartsumian first international prize (for 2010)
Sep 22-23 French-Armenian workshop in Byurakan
Sep 24 Meeting of the coordinators of French-Armenian collaboration Daniel Kunth and Georges Alecian with the President of NAS RA Radik Martirossian; discussion of astronomy problems in Armenia
Sep 24 Daniel Kunth's and Georges Alecian's interview to "Respublica Armenia" newspaper on French-Armenian collaboration and problems of astronomy in Armenia
Sep 25 Invited seminar by Alain Sarkissian (LATMOS, France) and Georges Alecian (OBSPM, France) at the Yerevan State University
Sep 30 Workshop in Byurakan in frame of the International Conference on Computer Science and Information Technologies (CSIT-2009)
Oct 1 IYA-2009 meeting at Yerevan secondary school #64

Next important events:

- Oct Russian Phobos-Grunt Mars mission
Oct Chinese Yinghuo-1 Mars mission
Oct 23-24 Second 24 hours of astronomy (Galilean Nights)
Nov 17 Leonid meteors: over 500 meteors per hour
Dec E-ELT site selection: Argentina, Chile, Morocco, Spain, etc.
Dec 23 Celebration of Prof. Elma Parsamian’s 80th anniversary in Byurakan
Dec 28 Armenian IYA-2009 closing ceremony in Byurakan
Jan 9-10 IYA-2009 closing ceremony in Padua, Italy

The IYA webpage is available at <http://www.astronomy2009.org/> and the IYA-2009 Armenian webpage, at http://www.aras.am/IYA_2009.htm.

FRENCH-ARMENIAN WORKSHOP



The second French-Armenian workshop named **“Present and future of collaborations in astronomy between France and Armenia”** was organized on **22-23 September 2009** in the **Byurakan Astrophysical Observatory**. In addition to scientific program, one of the aims of this workshop was to make an assessment of the activities financed by the PICS. Another aim was to discuss about the future of the collaborations and possibly about new orientations. The workshop was divided into two sessions: a scientific one (Sep 22) and a political one (Sep 23).

About 20 astronomers participated, mostly PICS members and collaborators. Three French astronomers were among the participants: Daniel Kunth (IAP, former coordinator of PICS/Jumelage projects), Georges Alecian (OBSPM, present coordinator of PICS), and Alain Sarkissian (LATMOS). 18 talks were given (by Georges Alecian, Athur Nikoghossian, Tigran Movsessian, Arthur Hakobyan, Ruben Andreasian, Kamo Gigoyan, Tigran Magakian, Ararat Egikian, Gabriel Ohanian, Georges Alecian, Arthur Nikoghossian, Haik Harutyunian, Daniel Kunth, Areg Mickaelian, Alain Sarkissian, David Sedrakian, Hovhannes Pikichian, and Areg Mickaelian) and two posters were presented (by Alain Sarkissian). Beside the scientific talks (mostly devoted to results obtained in frame of the French-Armenian collaboration), there also were talks devoted to future possibilities of continuation of the collaboration, science policy, and the newly created webpage (Alecian, Nikoghossian, Harutyunian, Kunth, and Mickaelian).

WORKSHOP ON GRID INFRASTRUCTURES



A 1-day workshop entitled **“Grid Infrastructures in the South Caucasus Region: Present Status and Perspectives”** in frame of the conference Computer Science and Information Technologies (CSIT-2009) was held in Byurakan on September 30. It was organized to summarize the results obtained from two International Scientific and Technical Centre (ISTC) projects: ISTC A-1451 “Development of Scientific Computing Grid on the Base of ArmCluster for South Caucasian Region” and ISTC A-1606 “Development of Armenian-Georgian Grid Infrastructure and applications in the Fields of High Energy Physics, Astrophysics and Quantum Physics”. Together with information scientists and physicists, five Byurakan astronomers participate in these projects, as well as Georgian Abastumani Observatory astronomers led by Nino Kochiashvili take part in the second project for creation of a joint Armenian-Georgian Virtual Observatory (ArGeVO).

Some 35 scientists participated in the workshop, including projects’ team members Areg Mickaelian (sub-manager from BAO), Tigran Magakian, Haik Harutyunian, Lusine Sargsyan, and Parandzem Sinamyan, Abastumani astronomers Nino Kochiashvili and Rezo Natsvlisvili, ISTC projects managers Vladimir Sahakyan and Hrach Astsatryan (both from Institute for Informatics and Automation Problems (IIAP), NAS RA), projects’ curator Igor Tyurin (ISTC, Moscow), and several foreign collaborators.

Some 20 talks were presented, including astrophysical talks by Areg Mickaelian “The Digitized First Byurakan Survey on ArmCluster” and by Nino Kochiashvili “Development of the Georgian Virtual Observatory”. After the meeting, the participants visited the high-altitude cosmic ray station on Aragatz and enjoyed the nice sightseeing near the Aragatz lake. A workshop banquet was held in the evening of the same day.

Description and other information on projects ISTC A-1451 and A-1606 can be found at ArVO home page under <http://www.aras.am/Arvo/arvo.htm>.

VIKTOR AMBARTSUMIAN INTERNATIONAL PRIZE



Viktor Ambartsumian International Prize is one of the important awards in astronomy/astrophysics and related sciences. It is being awarded to outstanding scientists having significant contribution in physical-mathematical sciences from any country and nationality. The Prize totals **USD 500,000** and is being awarded once each two years, starting with **2010**.

To apply for the Prize, a work may be presented by an author or authors' group (not more than 3 persons). The cash award is being equally shared between the winners, and a diploma, a medal and a certificate are being awarded to each winner.

The right for the nomination of works is reserved to: Nobel Prize Winners, Presidiums of national academies of sciences, scientific councils of astronomical observatories, and councils of corresponding departments of universities. A nomination for the application of V.A. Ambartsumian Prize is not allowed in case if his/her presented work has already been presented for another international prize.

Necessary documents for nomination: 1. Statement of scientific results or achievements, which are being nominated, 2. Published papers, books, CD/DVDs, or other works that are being nominated, 3. Curriculum Vitae of the nominee, 4. List of refereed publications of the nominee, 5. General annotations with reports of three referees, 6. Other documents that might be important for the decision.

The documents should be submitted to: V.A. Ambartsumian Prize Committee, Presidium of the National Academy of Sciences, Marshal Baghramyan ave. 24, Yerevan 0019, Armenia.

Deadline for nominations: March 18, 2010. The decisions will be made before July 18, 2010 and the award of Viktor Ambartsumian International Prize will take place on September 18, 2010.

Ambartsumian Prize Committee Members: Radik Martirosyan (Armenia, Chair), Norair Arakelyan (Armenia), Gennady Bisnovaty-Kogan (Russia), Geoffrey Burbidge (USA), Catherine Cesarsky (France), Reinhard Genzel (Germany), Martin Rees (UK), Yervant Terzian (USA), Robert Williams (USA).

Contact: Areg Mickaelian (Scientific secretary of Viktor Ambartsumian International Prize Committee, phone: +374-91-195914, e-mail: aregmick@aras.am).

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS FOR 2009 AWARDS

As announced in our previous Newsletters (#30 and #31), this year (in connection with IYA-2009) ArAS will award 6 prizes: **Benjamin Markarian award** (best observational result), **Marat Arakelian award** (best statistical result), **Gurgen Sahakian award** (best theoretical result), **Ludwik Mirzoyan award** (for outstanding services in astronomy), **Paris Pishmish award** (for female astronomer), and **Yervant Terzian award** (for young astronomers). For all prizes, nominations/applications should be submitted to **one of ArAS Co-Presidents** (Haik Harutyunian, Areg Mickaelian, or Yervant Terzian) not later than **December 1**. Other details can be checked in the abovementioned ArAS Newsletters or at ArAS webpage.

ANNIVERSARIES. Armen OSKANIAN - 60



On September 20, we would celebrate the 60th anniversary of one of the former Byurakan astronomers, **Dr. Armen Oskanian**. He tragically passed away in fall of 2004 in Crimea, where he was the leader of the Armenian team at the International Astronomical Olympiad. Armen did not continue initiated by himself great job of astronomical education in Armenia. However, Armen with his pupils achieved a number of results and awards and proved that astronomy in Armenia would survive and go on.

Armen Oskanian was born on Sep 20, 1949, in Belgrade, Serbia (formerly in Yugoslavia). Being the heir of the famous Armenian Tehlerian clan, Armen was a son of an Armenian father (famous astronomer Vahé Oskanian) and Serbian mother. He received his primary and secondary education in Serbia. In 1966, Armen's father, the director of the Belgrade observatory, was invited by *Prof. Viktor Ambartsumian* to work in the Byurakan Astrophysical Observatory and the family moved to live in Armenia. After studying for two years in the school No. 19 in Yerevan, Armen Oskanian was admitted in the Physics Department at the Yerevan State University in 1968, where he got Lenin scholarship, in 1973 obtained his M.Sc. degree under supervision of Viktor Ambartsumian, fulfilled his military service in the Soviet Army (1973-1975), and in 1975 started working at BAO, passed post-graduate fellowship in 1980-1983, and defended his Ph.D. thesis in 1990 also under supervision of Viktor Ambartsumian. Armen's main research field was the statistical and theoretical study of flare stars. He was a research associate at the division of Theoretical Astrophysics at BAO.

In addition to his research work, Armen started teaching physics and astronomy at the physical-mathematical college "*Quantum*" in Yerevan. Here his real talent in the very responsible work of educating gifted adolescents was discovered. He was not just a teacher; his responsibility for this work was expressed rather strongly, and in addition to teaching he could attract more and more gifted pupils to astronomy. There can be no doubts that our teenagers would not win so many medals at the International Astronomical Olympiads had not they had the honor of being taught by Armen Oskanian. He was the leader of our team at four International Astronomical Olympiads in 2001-2004 (Crimea, SAO, Stockholm, and again Crimea, respectively). Altogether in these Olympiads, Armen's students won three 1st rank, three 2nd rank, and five 3rd rank diploma, thus making Armenia the best team during these years. For his merits, Armen was nominated the **best teacher of the year in 2004 in natural sciences in Armenia**. The high award was granted by the Catholicos and the Ministry of Education and Science.

During a number of years, Armen Oskanian also was a lecturer at the Yerevan State University (YSU) and almost always was the best one according to the students' questionnaire. He was a member of the Euro-Asian Astronomical Society (EAAS) and one of the active members of ArAS (since 2002). He was a member of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) in Astronomy, member of juries during several Olympiads.

Areg Mickaelian