

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>

ArAS IX ANNUAL MEETING



ArAS IX Annual Meeting will be held on Friday, November 26, 2010. This time there will be general discussions on ArAS matters rather than scientific session. A scientific session on archaeoastronomy devoted to Anania Shirakatsi's 1400th anniversary was planned before; however it was decided to hold a small meeting and press-conference and apply for a bigger symposium on archaeoastronomy in 2011. The brief topics of ArAS IX Annual Meeting are as follows:

- 1) Report on ArAS activities in 2009-2010 (A.M. Mickaelian),
- 2) Discussions on ArAS affairs: webpage, ArAS newsletters, annual meetings, etc.,
- 3) ArAS Council elections.

ArAS ANNUAL PRIZE for YOUNG ASTRONOMERS 2010



The deadline for nominations for the ArAS **Annual Prize for Young Astronomers (Yervant Terzian Prize) 2010** is November 30. The prize will be awarded to a young scientist under 35 working in astronomy or related field and showing significant results in research and/or other scientific activities connected anyhow with the Armenian astronomy.

Nominations may be made by ArAS members or any research organization from Armenia or elsewhere and should be sent to one of the ArAS Co-Presidents. They should include personal data for the nominee and a brief description of his/her achievements during the year, including important scientific results, all published papers, participation in meetings and summer/winter schools, given talks, etc., whatever is considered to be important. At least one refereed publication is required to qualify for the Prize.

The winner will be announced in the last issue of ArAS Newsletter at the end of the year. A **diploma** and sum of **\$250** will be awarded to the winner. The Prize is being sponsored by the ArAS Co-President **Prof. Yervant Terzian**.

PROCEEDINGS of VIKTOR AMBARTSUMIAN – 100 MEETING

A few days ago, the Proceedings of the Conference "*Evolution of Cosmic Objects through their Physical Activity*" dedicated to Viktor Ambartsumian's 100th anniversary has been published. It is a big volume of 355 pages with a hardcover and fully color publication. The full reference is:

Evolution of Cosmic Objects through their Physical Activity, Proceedings of the Conference dedicated to Viktor Ambartsumian's 100th anniversary, held 15-18 Sep 2008 in Yerevan and Byurakan, Armenia, Editors: H.A. Harutyunian, A.M. Mickaelian & Y. Terzian, Yerevan, "Gitutyun" Publishing House of NAS RA, 2010.

Here are the contents of the volume, so that each author may use it for citations. All these papers will soon appear in ADS.

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XV INTERNATIONAL ASTRONOMY OLYMPIAD



The International Astronomy Olympiad (IAO) is a scientific-educating event for students of the junior high school classes, 14-18 years old, which includes an intellectual competition between these students. The style of the problems is aimed at developing the imagination, creativity and independent thinking.

The XV IAO was held in Sudak (Crimea, Ukraine, about 100 km from Simferopol, capital of Crimea) on October 16-24, 2010. There were 18 teams of the following states participating in the Olympiad: Armenia, Bulgaria, Canada, China, Croatia, Estonia, India, Indonesia, Italy, Kazakhstan, Korea, Lithuania, Romania, Russia, Moscow Land, Serbia, Sweden, and Ukraine. Following the educating style of the IAO the organizers invited famous scientists to give lectures for the participants. Altogether there were 5 lectures during all the program of the Olympiad. On October 23, at the conclusion of all the rounds the results being available, the Jury Board members had a meeting to look at the overall performance of all the students without knowing their names or nationalities (the so-called "blind minutes"). As the usual procedure at this meeting, we decided on the cut-off level for the Golden, Silver and Bronze medals and Diploma of Participation. But, as per convention, the names should not be announced till the Closing Ceremony, which took place on October 24. This year 5 Armenian students took part in IAO. Three of them became owners of **bronze medals: Aram Mkrtychyan, Virab Gevorgyan and Vahan Aslanyan**. Our students also received a Special Diploma for the best result in the theoretical round. We are very glad and congratulate them for such results. More information: <http://www.issp.ac.ru/iao/> and <http://iao.org.ua/>.



From left to right: *Vahan Aslanyan (Owner of Bronze Medal), Virab Gevorgyan (Owner of Bronze Medal), Hovsep Harutyunyan (Diploma of Participation), Michael Gavrilov (Founding Chairman of the IAO), Aram Mkrtychyan (Owner of Bronze Medal), Marietta Gyulzadyan (Armenian Team Leader), Tigran Nazaryan (Armenian Team Leader), Vardan Avetisyan (Diploma of Participation).*

Marietta Gyulzadian

From STONE AGE to SPACE AGE ***Astronomy & World Heritage Thematic Study released***



The UNESCO World Heritage Committee, at its 34th session in Brasilia, Brazil, has for the first time endorsed a study into a field of science heritage. The thematic study on the Heritage Sites of Astronomy and



Archaeoastronomy, prepared within the framework of the International Year of Astronomy 2009, presents an overall vision of astronomical heritage and attempts to identify some of the most outstanding examples which are of significance to all humankind.

The study is the result of cooperation between the **IAU Working Group on Astronomy and World Heritage** and the **International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS)**, the advisory body to UNESCO regarding cultural sites. The two organisations worked together to produce a detailed account of the rich history of astronomy around the world and the key sites for this heritage. The document, the full title of which is ***“Heritage Sites of Astronomy and Archaeoastronomy in the context of the World Heritage Convention”***, identifies broad issues in the assessment of cultural heritage relating to astronomy and includes examples of historical sites, some already on the World Heritage List or national Tentative Lists. This study was an integral part of the successful International Year of Astronomy 2009, whose activities in 148 countries reached millions of people and increased public understanding and appreciation of astronomy around the world.

The study has several objectives. One is to gain a clearer picture of the character and composition of astronomical heritage around the world. Another is to identify just how to define this type of heritage in the context of the World Heritage Convention. The report details the main characteristics we should expect from an astronomical heritage site, and compares this to a representative sample of major heritage sites for astronomy around the world. Sixteen main areas are identified in the report, spanning all of human history from the Stone Age to space heritage.

“Astronomy represents a rich and significant part of humanity’s shared cultural and natural heritage. Recognising this formally means that we can now identify and clarify astronomical value in the context of the World Heritage Convention,” says **Clive Ruggles**, chair of the IAU’s Working Group on Astronomy and World Heritage and co-author of the study.

Anna Sidorenko-Dulom, Chair of the International Year of Astronomy 2009 Cornerstone project Astronomy and World Heritage and coordinator of the thematic initiative Astronomy and World Heritage at UNESCO World Heritage Centre adds: *“Recently there has been a lot of interest in reviewing the relationship between the heritage of the sciences, the traditional knowledge of indigenous communities, and the World Heritage Convention. In this context, the new Thematic Study provides the foundation for assisting State Parties to harmonise their Tentative Lists at a thematic level and to prepare nominations, including comparative analyses explaining the importance of nominated properties in their national and international context. This raises serious possibilities of inscribing astronomical sites of outstanding universal value on to the World Heritage List.”*

The study therefore has important practical implications for the effective implementation of the World Heritage Convention and for helping state parties create credible nomination dossiers. But as well as its practical benefits for the management of world heritage, the study is a useful tool for helping to understand humanity’s history.

“This document proposes valuable new concepts for heritage, combines different categories of cultural heritage in previously unexplored ways, and highlights hitherto unrecognised links between cultural and natural heritage, “ says **Michel Cotte**, co-author of the study and ICOMOS advisor. *“We believe that the vision arising from this study is applicable beyond astronomy to the history of science more broadly. This will be to the lasting benefit of the whole of science and technology heritage”.*

ArAS and ArAAS GROUPS in FACEBOOK

 At present Facebook is the biggest social network having more than 500 million users. Most of the ArAS members and many astronomers use it for networking and other activities. We have started using Facebook for distribution of ArAS news and announcements as well (e.g. ArAS Newsletters #42 was announced). Now we have created **ArAS group in Facebook** so that ArAS members and other astronomers may join to share news and information (at the moment only 21 people are members of this group).

On the other hand, last year we started an initiative to collect information about amateur astronomers in Armenia aimed at the creation of **Armenian Amateur Astronomers Society (ArAAS)**. An ArAAS webpage is open at <http://www.aras.am/Amateur/amateur.html> where everybody can register and leave his/her data for further communication. Unfortunately, only 14 amateurs registered last year probably because of inefficiency of such networking, as we believe there are many more amateurs in Armenia. Now we have created **ArAAS group in Facebook** and already 43 people are involved. The list of all ArAAS registered people will appear on the web.

NEWS and EVENTS PAGE at ArAS WEBSITE



Recently we have created a new entry in the main menus of ArAS website: "News and Events". There we will place all publications in Armenian mass media (newspapers, Internet pages) related to astronomy. Starting from the last year declared as the International Year of Astronomy (IYA-2009), there have been a number of press-conferences and interviews (by Haik Harutyunian and Areg Mickaelian), articles and information materials (especially by "Armenpress" news agency) related to IYA-2009, its events and other astronomical matters. Now we will have a page where all these news and events will be maintained. The page is available at <http://www.aras.am/News/news.htm>.

ANNIVERSARIES



Prof. James HOUCK – 70. *Prof. James R. Houck of Cornell University, USA, celebrated his 70th anniversary on October 5. A scientific symposium in his honor was held at Cornell, attended by his students and colleagues with numerous exciting scientific presentations.*

Prof. Houck began his scientific career in 1966 as a graduate student at Cornell, being one of the first to send infrared detectors into space, using small rockets that observed for only a few minutes. Later, he was one of the pioneers in using airplanes to fly infrared telescopes. He was a member of the team that constructed the Infrared Astronomical Satellite (IRAS), the first all sky infrared survey from space. Because of this work, he was a discoverer of the Ultraluminous Infrared Galaxies (ULIRGs).

Since 1984, he was a leader in the effort to construct and launch the US Spitzer Space Telescope. He was the Principal Investigator of the Infrared Spectrograph (IRS) on Spitzer, the only spectrograph and most used instrument on Spitzer, which operated from 2003 until 2009. For this work, he received the Weber Prize in Astronomical Instrumentation from the American

Astronomical Society (AAS). His research continues to emphasize ULIRGs, both starbursts and AGN, discovering the most luminous galaxies in the universe.

The ArAS thanks James Houck for the opportunities that the IRS has provided for research at Byurakan Astrophysical Observatory, which has resulted in papers including collaborations with Lusine Sargsyan and Areg Mickaelian.

Daniel Weedman

Renata MNATSAKANIAN – 80. Renata Gegham Mnatsakanian was born on November 18, 1930 in Tbilisi. She graduated from the Yerevan State University (LSU) in 1953. Since 1957 she worked at BAO, first as a laboratory assistant, then in 1958-1959 as an engineer, and since 1960 as a junior research associate. In 1975 she was appointed as the Head of the Informatics Department attached to the BAO library. Mnatsakanian has 18 research papers published in 1965-1984 on Supernovae, blue stars in clusters, blue galaxies, galaxy clusters. Later, in 1987, she moved to the Institute of Radio Measurements in Orgov.

Elza HOVHANNESIAN – 75. Elza Yakov Hovhannesian was born on Nov 22, 1935 in Leningrad (St. Petersburg). She graduated from the Leningrad State Univ. (LSU) in 1958. In 1958-1960 she worked as a laboratory assistant at the LSU Astron. Obs. and since 1960, at BAO. In 1961-1986 she was a junior research associate at the Department of Extragalactic Astronomy of BAO, and since 1987, research associate and the Head of BAO Photographic Archive. She had 9 research papers published in 1961-1986 on photometry and colorimetry of galaxies, blue and variable stars, UV-excess objects. She passed away on August 7, 1994.

Julietta Gharibyan

Julietta Gharibyan



A group of Byurakan female astronomers. *From left to right: Romela Shahbazian, Nina Ivanova, **Elza Hovhannesian**, Elma Parsamian, **Renata Mnatsakanian**, Sveta Arakelian, Karine Sahakian, Amalia Poghosian, Julietta Gharibyan.*

NEW ArAS MEMBERS

We are happy to inform that three more astronomers entered ArAS in October 2010:

Prof. Garik Israelian (Instituto de Astrofísica de Canarias, Spain)

Gurgen Paronyan (Byurakan Astrophysical Observatory, Armenia)

Hayk Abrahamyan (Byurakan Astrophysical Observatory, Armenia)

Prof. Israelian is one of the winners of Viktor Ambartsumian International Prize 2010. Gurgen Paronyan and Hayk Abrahamyan are young researchers at BAO.