



News from The Society for Astronomical Sciences

2004 Symposium is Highly Successful Vol. 2, Number 2

Well, the 2004 Symposium is history and I must say that the meeting and presentations along with our largest ever Proceedings has made the first SAS Symposium a highly successful event. A mixture of professionals and amateurs presented their work and in most cases with the professionals, where amateurs can participate in their particular projects was highlighted. The following is a brief description of the topics covered by our professional colleagues who willingly gave their time to attend our Symposium.

The first speaker, Richard

Kowalski spoke on the use of software and photometry to determine the shapes of NEO's. He was followed by Lance Benner, again speaking on asteroids and how amateur contributions, in particular position determinations, help them in their use of radar to determine shapes. Arne Henden described the wealth of information available on the internet and how this information may be mined. Wednesday was concluded by Jurgen Wolf and Tim Castellano talks. Jurgen spoke on the exciting SOFIA project where amateurs will

actually have an opportunity to fly on this high altitude infrared observatory. Tim gave a description of his extrasolar transit research and his recruiting methods consisted of a beautiful glass cube with the current 3-D etching of the nearby stars with planets. Of course you must be a participant to acquire one although there was a sign up sheet for others who were interested. (I signed up but have not heard anything yet!)

Thursday's session got
Continued on page 3



David Dunham describes how occultations help advance science and where amateurs can and do help.

Your Participation Wanted!

This years Symposium emphasis, in case you didn't already guess, was asteroids/minor planets. This should have been clear from the speakers we were able to assemble. In the coming years of course, we will place emphasis on other topics. No matter what the emphasis however, please remember that these Professionals are looking for a few good men (or women) to participate in their projects. Nothing could be better for the reputation of SAS than for professionals to know that if

they participate in our Symposium, more than likely they will find and interested party or two to help out. Obviously not everything presented will appeal to everybody, that will never happen. Lets just hope that among the group, perhaps a particular presentation will strike a chord among a couple of participants. If that is the case

contact the Professional for more information. Most everything you need to have to contact the speakers is in the Proceedings.

We thank our 2004 Sponsors whose support makes our meeting possible:

- APOGEE INSTRUMENTS, INC
- SANTA BARBARA INSTRUMENT GROUP
- SKY & TELESCOPE
- SOFTWARE BISQUE

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Committee:

- Lee Snyder – Co-Chairman
- Robert Stephens – Co-Chairman
- Robert Gill – Audio Visual Webmaster
- Dave Kenyon – Program Co-Chairman
- Dale Mais – Program Co-Chairman, Newsletter editor
- Brian Warner – Program Co-Chairman

Advisors:

- Arne Henden
- Dirk Terrell



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This years participants in the SAS Symposium .



Membership Information

Membership in your new Society for Astronomical Sciences (SAS).

As was pointed out with the last issue, it was felt that a modest membership fee would greatly help SAS to produce a better product for its members. This fee will be \$25.00 per year, the same membership fee of the old IAPPP organization. What will this membership fee provide? Well for one thing it WILL NOT go to any committee members as part of their efforts within SAS. We volunteer our time for The Society.

Members will receive a discount for the registration fee each year for the Symposium at Big Bear. It will assure you that you will get a copy of the

published proceedings each year, even if you do not attend the Symposium. It will help defray costs in bringing in outside speakers (professionals) to the symposium.

Membership is annual and runs from July to June of the following year. To become a member, send \$25 to: Society for Astronomical Sciences, 8300 Utica Avenue, Suite 105, Rancho Cucamonga, CA 91730. You may also join online at the registration page of the web site. Membership dues are tax deductible.

The SAS is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization.

2004 Symposium is Highly Successful: **cont. from page 1**

underway with David Dunham. We are all aware of David's efforts in occultation measurements spanning over 5 decades. We were fortunate to have a representative from AAVSO, Aaron Price, who spoke on the topic "Blurring the line: Amateurs as Observers and Data Analysts". It would appear that there may be opportunities for collaboration/interaction between SAS and AAVSO. My impression is that dramatic changes in the sense of modernizing is taking place at AAVSO which will be most welcome for those of us interested in variable stars AND the use of CCD cameras in monitoring these beasts. Finally, Alan Harris, our keynote speaker, provided us with the after dinner talk on amateur involvement in determining asteroid light curves. I recall a graph he showed that gradually got heavier and heavier in data points of determined light curves and how Alan pointed out that this was directly due to amateur contributions!

So what's next? Well gang, its time to think about these projects and if something strikes your fancy, to get involved. These high power professionals don't come to SAS to hear themselves talk, they are here to generate interest in their project and hopefully gather a recruit or two. So don't hesitate to make contact with these professionals if your interested, believe me, they will be thrilled to have you participate.

Working Group for Professional-Amateur Collaborations (WGPAC)

Things are beginning to take off in the area of Professional-Amateur collaborations. I think all of you should sense that now. The technology gap between the two groups has closed significantly over the past decade which has made these collaborations more feasible now than they have ever been. To this end, in 1999 The American Astronomical Society (AAS) formed a committee called The Working Group for Professional-Amateur Collaborations (WGPAC). See website at: <http://www.aas.org/wgpac/>

This was a temporary committee at the time but recently it has become a permanent committee of the AAS with rotating members and chairperson. I must admit that during the first 3-4 years it seemed that very little was getting done. But times are changing and under the guidance of outgoing chair Dr. Jay White during the past year or so, things are beginning to move. This could be seen at the recent AAS meeting in Denver where there was a special Topical Session of the WGPAC where several of

those who participated in the SAS meeting also spoke. The participant list at this session can be seen at <http://www.aas.org/wgpac/>

[meetings/denver2004/announcement.html](http://www.aas.org/wgpac/meetings/denver2004/announcement.html).

There seems to be a growing interaction occurring between various groups is my sense of things, especially with AAVSO and hopefully the SAS. AAVSO is actively seeking individuals with programming skills and to this end, an amateur and professional registry has been created at <http://www.aas.org/wgpac/registry/>. At this site you can register yourself, describing your skills, equipment etc. Likewise professionals who are interested can do the same thing. Soon this database will be searchable so linking individuals will become much easier.

Its hard to say at this point how all this will evolve. As I mentioned above, Dr. White's term has ended and Rick Feinberg of Sky and Telescope will be taking over as Chair. More information will be following in upcoming S&T issues. Sky and Telescope is fully behind promoting these collaborations so having Rick take over the reigns of the WGPAC can only spell positive benefits for the Pro-Am movement. Stay tuned for further advances!!



Contact Us:

8300 Utica Avenue, Suite 105
Rancho Cucamonga, CA 91730

Email:

Lee Snyder: lsnyder@socastrosci.com
Robert Stephens: rstephens@socastrosci.com
Dale Mais: dmais@socastrosci.com, Newsletter Editor

The Photo Gallery, SAS 2004



The 2004 Symposium gets underway



Break time-1



Dr. Tim Castellano describes his extrasolar transit research



Dr. Alan Harris along with SAS participants at the Thursday evening dinner. Alan was the after dinner speaker.



Break time-2



As is almost always the case, the weather this time of year is outstanding