

SECTION SEVEN
Posters

Poster Review

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The reader of this proceedings volume might ask why was it thought interesting to publish a few pages about the posters presented at IAU Colloquium 162? It had been decided that indeed the history of the meeting would not have been complete without some words about the poster presentations. The final success of the entire Colloquium depended on all presentations, either oral or poster.

The posters themselves have been different but it has been interesting to note that sometimes similar projects and ideas have been elaborated at very distant places in the world.

The basis of our teaching should be related to our roots; we ought to mention old traditions in our own country, such as the cosmological ideas of old Guarani Indians or the story of the first South American 18th century. Observatory of F. Buenaventura Suarez which have been shown by *A. E. Troche Boggino* of the University of Asuncion, Paraguay. However, I found most interesting the history of evolution of the human mind as depicted by the diagram of *A. E. Troche Boggino* showing chronological sequences of contemporary scientists, philosophers, writers, painters, sculptors and composers, from the times of Copernicus to the present day. It is easy to make a perpendicular cut or cross-section of the diagram at a given epoch, for instance that of Copernicus, and get to know what other famous persons have been living during his life-time.

In another part of the world, at the University of Glamorgan, UK, *Mark Brake* had been also in favour of a historical/cultural approach when telling his audience scientific facts, both when dealing with university students and with the general public.

Our teaching should begin at primary and secondary schools. *Jean-Luc Fouquet* of Saint-Martin de Ré, France, wrote about the fun of introducing astronomy while playing with very young (5–12 yrs) children, while *T. Lacey* of Nottingham, UK, has displayed a set of astronomical work cards produced for young (7–11yrs) children to be posted to schools. *Vladimir Stefl* of Brno University, Czech Republic, urged teachers to introduce more astronomical examples when teaching physical laws in secondary schools. I must say that when I have expressed my disbelief whether a certain equation is used in secondary education, I was quickly convinced by looking at the content of textbooks from no less than 7 countries which *V. Stefl* had been comparing. *Michael McCabe* of Portsmouth University, UK, had written about his work: he had prepared 234 screens of interactive multimedia for showing fundamental astronomical notions. Two Spanish teachers from Alicante, *Bernat Martinez* and *Gullem Bernabeu* have told about their experiences when introducing two types of teaching, on practical and theoretical levels, as well as on the evaluation of students' alternative conceptions on astronomical observations. Practical worked at an Observatory was one of the prizes given for winners of the Astronomical Olympiads in Russia, where this type of contest has its 50th anniversary as announced by *A. V. Zasov* of Moscow University.

I have been happy to learn that many Observatories take an active part in the teaching process as described in four posters. *Francisco Diego* of University College London, UK, had a chance to enlist some of the staff members of the Physics and Astronomy Department of his University to go to schools for special lectures, *Margaret Metaxa* of Athens, Greece, has shown plans for a summer school for 16–18 yrs students at the Observatory of Athens, while *Marie-France Duval* of Marseille University, France, displayed special

didactic programmes prepared by each of the nine French Astronomical Observatories. And finally, didactic activities of Abastumani Observatory in Georgia were mentioned in a poster by *E.K. Kharadze*.

Our teaching goes still farther, at University level, and here I have noted five posters. The introduction of new university programmes and practical work in astrophysics has been discussed by *Gabor Szecsenyi-Nagy* of *Eotvos* University, Hungary, while *Mary Kontizas* of Athens University, Greece, told about laboratory astronomical work for all physics students at her University. In order to get a better understanding of the physical processes in stars *Harinder Singh* and his collaborators at Delhi University, India, prepared for their students a visualisation of a flow in a box, meant to represent flows in stellar interiors. *John Wilkinson* of Central Queensland University, Australia, reported about astronomical courses for external students in physics, while *Valentin G. Karetnikov* from Odessa University, Ukraine, wrote on astronomy curriculum at his University.

A wide variety of approaches has been shown in relation to the general public. *E. Malamud* and his collaborators from the Open University, Milton Keynes, UK, proposed to raise the public interest in astronomy using the solar telescopes of an observatory, while *Gabor Szecsenyi-Nagy* of Budapest reminded us of the Total Solar Eclipse in 1999, whose path of totality runs so conveniently across Hungary, his country. *Julieta Fierro* of UNAM, Mexico, has been of the opinion that her students can develop many interesting ideas for the general public, so she let them prepare their own programmes for shows, etc, while broadcasting astronomical news on television was the topic of a poster by Alexandra Levell from Leicester University, UK. A whole complex of different astronomical interrelations for those who would go for a visit to the Laboratory - "Astronomical Village" has been proposed by Stephen Pompea of Tucson, USA, while *Nestor Camino* of the University de la Patagonia, Argentina, told of his experience to get a good contact with the public by means of an astronomical publication, published monthly in a local newspaper.

More sophisticated teaching projects have been shown by *Mark Jones* from the Open University, Milton Keynes, UK, who told of the possibility of conference contacts between students and their tutors by means of computers. Another poster by *Hans J. Fogh Olsen* of Copenhagen Observatory, Denmark, advertised the production of CD-ROMS with starmaps for this year. It has been a good idea to unite the efforts of more scientific institutions on giving information for the general public through a whole network which has been shown by *Carol Christian* and her colleagues from scientific institutions in the Eastern part of the US.

Two posters were meant to encourage simple observations. The first by *Roland Szostak* of Munster University, Germany, related simple experiments – solar measurements conducted by your (10 yrs) children where they could obtain a correct value of the length of the solar year. The second poster by *John R. Percy* of Toronto University, Canada, told about the project of the AAVSO to help secondary school students in observing variable stars with data obtained from AAVSO archives. For persons working in science it seems interesting to know more about themselves. Such a survey of motivation of scientists has been undertaken by *Ian Elliot* of Dunsink Observatory, Ireland, who has shown, *inter alia*, that a maximum interest in science is displayed at the age of 10-12 yrs, while the decision of taking a scientific career was taken by the majority towards 15-17 yrs. *Artur Chernin* of Moscow University, Russia, has written some reminiscences of George Gamov as a teacher.

At the end of the posters presentation I would like to mention those related to our artificial sky, to the Planetariums. *Tallas Saygac* and his colleagues of Istanbul Uni-

versity, Turkey, had listed the most important conditions for the future work of a large planetarium which they hope to be able to have one day in their city, while *Francisco Diego* of University College London, UK, recalls his past experience at the Luis E. Erro Planetarium in Mexico City, which he proposes to introduce in future in the Greenwich Planetarium in London.

A review of posters does not give the whole picture of many colourful panels, with diagrams and photographs, that have been displayed for five days in the south Wing of University College London. But I hope that all participants will remember the words of Julieta Fierro: "When we shall speak to our various audiences let us try to let them *feel the excitement of understanding!*"