

3. SUPERNOVA 1987A IN THE LARGE MAGELLANIC CLOUD

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EDITORIAL

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Joint Discussion III, Supernova 1987A in the LMC, and the subsequent Supernova Working Group meeting produced a total of thirty-two papers by investigators from twelve countries. Organized by the out-going Chairperson of the Supernova Working Group, Virginia Trimble, these two meetings gave IAU members attending the XXVth General Assembly a timely update on the status of understanding of this immensely important event.

Out of the discussions that took place during and after the Working Group meeting came one very strong recommendation first put forward to me by J. Craig Wheeler and seconded by a number of others:

The observations of SN1987A should be fully archived

and in much the same way as those of Periodic Comet 1982i (Halley) have been. It should be remembered that Comet Halley returns to our neighborhood every 76 years; we cannot expect another bright supernova to appear so soon.

Writing on behalf of the Supernova Working Group, I urge that interested parties organize the effort needed to collect and publish all the available observational data on SN1987A. This work should be started immediately; the longer we wait, the greater the chance will be that observations will be misplaced, misinterpreted, forgotten, or lost.

To be more specific, I have suggested, noting the extremely fine x-ray and neutrino observing programs carried out by Japanese investigators, that it would be highly appropriate for scientists of that nation to head this archival project. The Supernova Working Group very much hopes that our eastern colleagues will accept this difficult but important challenge.