

COMMISSION 4: EPHEMERIDES

(EPHEMERIDES)

PRESIDENT: Jean Chapront

VICE-PRESIDENT: George Krasinsky

ORGANIZING COMMITTEE: V. Abalakin, J.-E. Arlot, T. Fukushima, Miao-Fu He, C. Hohenkerk, G. Kaplan, H. Kinoshita, J. Lieske, H. Schwan, K. Seidelmann, M. Standish

1. Introduction

First, apologies from J. Chapront, the President, and G. Krasinsky, the Vice President, for their absence were stated by T. Fukushima, the nominee of the Vice President for the next term. Also it was introduced that the President nominated Fukushima as the Acting President for this commission meeting. Fukushima asked Hohenkerk to be the Secretary of the meeting.

Next, Fukushima drew attention to the important changes in the Statutes and By-laws of the IAU that were being voted on during the first session of the General Assembly (GA) in the afternoon (of the day of the business meeting) by the National representatives. It was noted that, if approved, they would be in effect immediately, namely before the second session of the GA.

2. Reports of Nautical Almanac Offices

As usual, the status reports were given by the representatives of major institutions publishing nautical almanacs and astronomical ephemerides; (1) J. Bangert of the Nautical Almanac Office of US Naval Observatory (USA), (2) Arlot, on behalf of W. Thuillot for Institut de Mecanique Celeste et de Calcul des Ephemerides (France), (3) Fukushima for the Ephemeris Computation Office of National Astronomical Observatory of Japan as well as the Japan Hydrographic Department (Japan), and (4) Hohenkerk for HM Nautical Almanac Office (UK).

3. Officers

The following list of the commission officers candidate for the next term were proposed and approved unanimously; G. Krasinsky (President), T. Fukushima (Vice President), J. Bangert, J. Chapront, C. Hohenkerk, G. Kaplan, K. Seidelmann, M. Standish, and J. Vondrak (Organizing Committee).

4. Membership

S. Howard (USA) was proposed by Kaplan, seconded by Standish, and unanimously passed, as were the Officers.

All the attendants stood in respect for the Commission members who had died during the last three years during the time their names were read.

5. Discussion on Change of Status and Bye Laws

It was pointed out that the new organizational structure of the IAU was a "top down", rather than the "bottom up" structure. Thus new IAU members would first join a division, not a commission.

The area of concern was that Commission 4 - Ephemerides, which contained the Almanac Offices, was not a standard commission and needed continuity. According to the new rules, the Commission President would have to justify the existence of the commission every 3 years after the first 6 years. Many attendants wanted to know the (1) differences between Working Groups and Commissions in the new rules, and (2) how were new commissions started. It was also pointed out that young people usually were only interested in specialist meetings and not the more general Division meeting.

As a result of further discussion, it was decided to invite a member of the Executive Committee to explain the changes sometime during the Division 1 meeting scheduled in the GA.

Seidelmann was asked to produce the first draft of Commissions 4's Terms of Reference.

6. Division Working Groups

It was remarked that Division Working Group (WG) would be appointed by the Division. However, in the viewpoint of Commission 4, the following areas of interest required the creation of new WG(s):

1. Implementation, Nomenclature, and Explanation of New Paradigm
2. UT1 Prediction
3. Extensive Research of Minor Planets
4. Precession Model
5. Earth Orientation (including Precession)

After the discussion, it was decided that the following WGs should continue:

- WG on ICRF (perhaps with some re-arrangement)
- WG on General Relativity

7. Announcement

Hilton announced that, at next summer's American Astronomical Society meeting at Denver, Colorado, he would be chairing a special session dedicated to the IAU 2000 resolutions on fundamental astronomy. This is an excellent opportunity to educate the broader astronomical community about the resolutions, and he was looking for speakers.

Toshio Fukushima
Acting President of the Commission