

COMMISSION 27

VARIABLE STARS

ÉTOILES VARIABLES

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Peter L. Cottrell, Margarida Cunha,

Gerald Handler, Peter Martinez,

Dimitar D. Sasselov,

Seetha Somasundaram,

Douglas L. Welch

PROCEEDINGS BUSINESS MEETING on 16 August 2006

1. Overview of activities and achievements

The meeting started at 16h00. The president welcomed the 24 participants to the business meeting of Commission 27. After the approval of the agenda, she gave an overview of the activities of Commission 27 of the past three years.

Large emphasis was put on contact with the community, through the creation of an up-to-date operational email list (311 entries) and a refurbishment of the Commission's web site. The president gave special thanks (by means of Belgian chocolates) to Dr. Andras Holl from Konkoly Observatory (Hungary) for his continuous efforts as Commission 27 web master. On average a monthly message was sent through the email list, concerning the distribution of news, meeting announcements, newsletters, deadlines for proposals, etc. The feedback from the community was rather large (some 1000 messages were received by the president over the three years).

Strong attention was also paid to keep close contact with the IAU secretariat. The president collaborated with the secretariat on the debugging of the new IAU website.

A total of 18 IAU meeting proposals was evaluated by the OC. The OC did this evaluation by means of a ranking system, and not on a case-by-base basis, to ensure the most objective procedure.

A specific effort was made to make sure that the triennial report on Research in Variable Stars and Commission 27 activities was as representative as possible. In order to achieve this, a draft version written by the president was screened by the OC, and, subsequently, distributed to all the Commission 27 members with a call for feedback and comments. About 60 reactions were received according to which the draft was revised and submitted for publication in the transactions.

2. Election of new officers

Elections were held to compose the new Organising Committee of Commission 27 for the coming triennium. The results are as follows:

- New president: Steve Kawaler (USA).
- New vice-president: Gerald Handler (Austria).
- Retiring OC members: Jørgen Christensen-Dalsgaard (Denmark), Carla Cacciari (Italy), Peter Cottrell (New Zealand), Dimitar Sasselov (USA), and Doug Welch (Canada).
- Continuing OC members: Conny Aerts (ex officio), Tim Bedding (Australia), Margarida Cunha (Portugal), Peter Martinez (SA), and Seetha Somasundaram (India).

- New OC members: Marcio Catalan (Chile), Laurent Eyer (Switzerland), Simon Jeffery (Northern Ireland), Karen Pollard (New Zealand), and Katalin Olah (Hungary).

The president expressed her gratitude to Jørgen Christensen-Dalsgaard, Carla Cacciari, Peter Cottrell, Doug Welch and Dimitar Sasselov, who served on the OC of Commission 27 for at least three terms of three years each with a lot of motivation and dedication. She thanked them for the fruitful collaboration. She welcomed Marcio Catalan, Laurent Eyer, Simon Jeffery, Karen Pollard and Katalin Olah as new OC members and wished them good luck with their OC work under the leadership of the new president.

3. New members

A total of 62 among the 925 approved new IAU members chose Commission 27 as their prime commission. All of them received a welcome mail from the outgoing president straight after the GA. Their contact addresses have been added to the email list, which was passed on to the new president.

4. Contributed talks

Two talks were submitted during the preparation of the Business meeting. They were considered of high relevance to the commission and thus time was devoted to them.

4.1. *IAU Archives of Unpublished Observations of Variable Stars by Michel Breger*

Abstract. Several of the IAU Archives of Unpublished Observations of Variable Stars are essentially unavailable at present. We propose a solution to this problem. In the past, data files were sent as paper copies to three places (Royal Astronomical Society in UK, Odessa Astronomical Observatory in Ukraine, and CDS in France). Recent communications suggested that the retrieval problem is still not solved and that modern access to the valuable and irreplaceable data needs to be established. A cursory inspection of a hundred files shows about half to be under 10 pages, but a few as large as 57 pages. We propose the following solution:

1. Peter Hingley (Librarian RAS) has kindly agreed to make paper copies of the files to be sent to a centre where they are digitized.
2. Arne Henden (AAVSO) has kindly agreed to digitize the data.
3. Michel Breger updates the cover sheets (e.g., listing publications and the occasional revisions) and descriptions.
4. The data are made publicly available through the AAVSO, Commission 27 and Vienna web sites with the AAVSO site being long-term.

We would like to receive the approval of Commission 27 for this procedure before starting the work.

The proposal by Michel Breger to digitize the remaining Archives of Unpublished Observations of Variable Stars for which only a paper copy exists at present, was approved and the president thanked Peter Hingley, Arne Henden, Andras Holl and Michel Breger for their efforts.

4.2. *Prospects and problems of the General Catalogue of Variable Stars by Nikolai Samus*

Abstract. I am planning to speak about the current situation with variable star catalogs. The Moscow GCVS team is continuing its effort but encounters a number of problems. To make the catalog a really GENERAL one, we have to merge it with many new catalogs presented by automatic surveys. We have made the important preliminary step by providing accurate coordinates for virtually all old GCVS stars. Then, the automatic classifications provided in the survey catalogs are too superficial from the GCVS point of view, and the GCVS classification system seems too complex. I will suggest a simpler classification system based on the GCVS experience, having in mind that experts in particular variability types will be able to supplement it in their specialized catalogs. I need the opinion of the commission/division for planning the future of the GCVS.

The plan was made to create an informal Working Group on variable star classification and future variable star catalog issues. This working group should be composed of members from

both Commission 27 and Commission C42. Depending on the achievements during the coming three years, and the needs thereafter, an official IAU Working Group Status will be applied for during the next GA in Rio de Janeiro. A call for participation will be made in the fall of 2006. The president thanked Nikolai Samus for taking up this initiative and his lively discussion.

5. Plans for future meetings

It was decided that Division V (Commission 27 *Variable Stars* and Commission 42 *Close Binaries*) should join their efforts and start preparing a proposal for a Symposium on Variable Stars at the IAU XXVII GA in Rio de Janeiro, 2009. It was felt that this should be done in close contact with the Working Groups that act under the auspices of Division V, as these had already expressed their interest to join this initiative during the GA.

6. Closing remarks

The president thanked the Commission 27 community for the numerous constructive reactions and encouragements she received from members. She ended the meeting by wishing the Commission 27 members a good continuation of their work under the leadership of the new OC. She pointed out that the minutes of the meeting, as well as the slides of the talks, will be made available through the Commission 27 website.

The meeting ended at 17h15 with a telephone conversation with the new president, who was unfortunately unable to attend the GA, giving him a summary of the meeting.

Conny Aerts
president of the Commission