

6. to be published

### **BASIC SPACE SCIENCE IN AFRICA**

At the 6th UN/ESA Workshop on Basic Space Science, in Bonn in 1996, a group of astronomers and space scientists from Africa formed a Working Group on Basic Space Science in Africa, and they have subsequently developed a "foundation charter". Their representative to Commission 46 is Prof. Z. Ben Lakhdar (Tunisia), with Prof. G. Ogunade (Nigeria) as alternate. The co-ordinator (and a useful contact person) of the WG is Dr. Peter Martinez ([peter@uctvax.uct.ac.za](mailto:peter@uctvax.uct.ac.za)).

### **COMET CHASING ON THE WEB**

Like Comet Hyakutake in 1996, Comet Hale-Bopp is "everyone's comet" (at least in the northern hemisphere), and has the potential to focus public interest on astronomy, and on science in general. I have already seen Comet Hale-Bopp from my back yard, with my unaided eye, and you and your students, all over the world, can do the same. One source of information is Scientific American's "Amateur Scientist" column - see the January 1997 and February 1997 issues. These issues are available on-line: <http://www.sciam.com/0197issue/0197amsci.html> and <http://www.sciam.com/0297issue/0297amsci.html>

In general, these Amateur Scientist columns are a good source of ideas for classroom science activities, science fair projects etc. A complete index of the columns (April 1952 to present) is available on the WWW at: <http://www.thesphere.com/SAS/SciAm/SciAm.html>. Some of the columns are also available on-line in full text, either at the site just mentioned, or in the on-line back issues of Scientific American at <http://www.sciam.com>.

### **ASTRONOMY EDUCATION AROUND THE WORLD**

#### **ARGENTINA**

Drs. Richard Branham and Beatriz Garcia ([ntcricyt@criba.edu.ar](mailto:ntcricyt@criba.edu.ar)) are developing a Regional Center for Scientific Research, including many different sciences, in Mendoza. They travel all over the province giving presentations to students, and the general public. The Center will soon open an Interactive Science Museum, and Drs. Branham and Garcia are in charge of the Astronomy section. They are in particular need of books and journals for their library. Please contact Dr. Garcia, at the e-mail address above, if you have ideas, or can help.

#### **AUSTRALIA**

Southern Star Education (contact person: Paul Floyd, e-mail: [ssempps@technet2000.com.au](mailto:ssempps@technet2000.com.au)) distributes a free teachers' newsletter Sky Links, four times a year. Southern Star Education is a mobile planetarium service, based in Beechmont, Queensland.

#### **BRAZIL**

The first Brazilian meeting on Teaching of Astronomy was held in the Planetarium of Campinas, October 25-28, 1996. There were about 55 participants - school and university teachers, students, planetarians, and amateurs. The program consisted of debates, and 25 short communications. The opening lecture was given by Professor Ronaldo R.F. Maorao, from the Museum of Astronomy and Related Sciences (CNPq). The topic was "The Teaching and Popularization of Astronomy in Brazil and Worldwide". The debates were devoted to the following themes: teaching astronomy in the schools, astronomy in the universities (inclusion at the undergraduate level, or not?), planetariums: teaching and popularization of astronomy, municipal observatories: amateurs and the teaching and popularization of astronomy. Evenings were spent at a special planetarium show, and in a visit to "Abrahaio de Moraes Observatory" nearby.

During the meeting, the Brazilian Association of Planetariums (ABP) was founded. For more information, contact Paulo Sergio Bretones ([paulo.bretones@mpcbbs.com.br](mailto:paulo.bretones@mpcbbs.com.br)), Rua Joaquim de Paula Souza, 1168; Jd. Proenca - CEP: 13096-142; Campinas SP, BRAZIL

### CANADA

Toronto hosted the 1997 Winter Meeting of the American Astronomical Society, and there were several education events: a two-day teachers' workshop, a one-day workshop for Project ASTRO (the Astronomical Society of the Pacific's program which partners professional and amateur astronomers with teachers), sessions on "Current Developments in Astronomy Education" and "Teaching Astronomy with the Internet", and two public lectures. There was also a very interesting session on "Jobs Outside Academia". An increasing number of astronomy graduates (not just in North America) are taking jobs outside astronomy, either by choice or not. In this session, several such people offered advice on how astronomy graduates can prepare themselves better for such jobs, and how their departments and supervisors could help. The proceedings of this session will eventually be posted on the AAS' web site: <http://www.aas.org>

### GREECE

The AstroLaboratory Unit of the Arsakeio High Schools, one of the oldest non-profit educational establishments in Greece, has taken the initiative to present, on the Internet, an educational program entitled "Exploring the Universe with the Classroom of the Future". This program, which has the scientific support of the Astronomical Institute of the National Observatory of Athens, runs March 11-26, 1997. For more information, contact Margaret Metaxa ([mmetaxa@compulikk.gr](mailto:mmetaxa@compulikk.gr)), or check out the Web site: <http://www.forthnet.gr/arsakeio/universe.htm>.

### ITALY

On March 9, 1497, Nicolaus Copernicus observed an occultation of Aldebaran by the Moon from Bologna. Five hundred years after, on March 14, 1997 (at 19 h U.T.), another lunar occultation of Aldebaran will be visible from Bologna. The Department of Astronomy, University of Bologna, and the Associazione Astrofili Bolognesi, are organizing an open telescope observation of the occultation from the Bologna hills (weather permitting, presumably). See it happen at: <http://www.bo.astro.it/copernic/occ-eng.html>

### JAPAN

An interesting mini-workshop on "Activities in Popularization and Observations" was held at the Bisei Astronomical Observatory, Japan, on August 25, 1996. Another mini-workshop will be held on August 31, 1997, right after the IAU General Assembly. For information about the 1997 workshop, and about how to obtain a copy of the proceedings of the 1996 workshop, please contact the Director of the Observatory, Professor T. Kogure, Bisei Astronomical Observatory, 1723-70 Ohkura, Bisei, Okayama 714-14, Japan; e-mail: [kogure@bao.go.jp](mailto:kogure@bao.go.jp) I hope that some members of Commission 46 will be able to attend this workshop.

### MEXICO

Dr. Armando Arellano Ferro, of the Organizing Committee of Commission 46, informs us that the new Astronomy Building of the University of Guanajuato was formally inaugurated. Congratulations!

### PHILLIPINES

The Phillipine Atmospheric, Geophysical, and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) has prepared a program for the celebration of the Centennial of Astronomy in the Phillipines in 1997. The launching program will commence with the observance of the National Astronomy Week, in the third week of February, to be followed by an intensive information campaign on Comet Hale-Bopp, and a partial solar eclipse on 9 March 1997. It will also be highlighted by a series of seminars on astronomy for science teachers in 15 regions of the country, free planetarium shows, production of calendars and souvenir items, and the Astro Olympiad - a contest on astronomy for high school students, with cash and other prizes. The culminating activity of the celebration will be in November.