

BOSNIA

At the IAU General Assembly, I had the pleasure of meeting Professor Muhamed Muminovic, and receiving a copy of the textbook "Astronomija", which he wrote in the past few years, under very difficult conditions. It is an excellent introduction to astronomy for students at the senior high school and university level. The difficult state of Bosnian astronomy was outlined in Mercury, Vol: 24, No. 2 (March/April 1995) under the subtitle "How Can We Help"?

BRAZIL

The following message comes from Paulo Sergio Bretones, Universidade Estadual de Campinas.

"The Second Brazilian Meeting on Teaching of Astronomy was sponsored by the Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul (UFRGS), November 07-09, 1997. The meeting was held in the Instituto de Fisica of UFRGS and in the Planetarium Prof. Jose Baptista Pereira in Porto Alegre for the celebration of the 25 years of the Planetarium. In parallel with the meeting, the First Meeting of Planetariums of Mercosul and the Second Meeting of the Brazilian Association of Planetariums (ABP) were also held.

There were about 65 participants - school and university teachers, students, planetarians and amateurs. The program consisted of debates, and 22 short communications.

The opening lecture was given by Professor Jose Renan de Medeiros, president of the Brazilian Astronomical Society (SAB). The topic was "Modern Astronomy, Cosmology and Astronomy in Brazil".

The debates were devoted to the following themes: Astronomy: teaching, popularization in the current days, astronomy as an optional discipline at secondary school, production of educational material, the planetariums and the complementation to the teaching/learning process in Astronomy, the work and difficulties. There was a general assembly of the Brazilian Association of Planetariums and a short course for teachers.

Evenings were spent at the opening of an exhibition about the 25 years of the Planetarium of Porto Alegre, a special planetarium show and a visit to the old observatory of the university.

For more information, contact Paulo Sergio Bretones (paulo.bretones@mpcbbs.com.br), Rua Joaquim de Paula Souza, 1168; Jd. Proenca - CEP: 13096-142; Campinas - SP; BRAZIL.

CARIBBEAN

Keachea Dixon (an International Relations student at the University of Toronto) and John Percy are undertaking a project to make contact with astronomy educators in the Caribbean countries. At present, IAU Commission 46 has no contact people in these countries. If you know of astronomers (professional or amateur) or astronomy educators there, please contact John Percy (see address above). We have already made one useful contact in Jamaica.

FORMER SOVIET UNION

At the IAU General Assembly, Professor N.G. Bochkarev (Sternberg Astronomical Institute, Russia) reported on the Euro-Asian Astronomical Society. It includes about 750 astronomers from all over the former Soviet Union, and about 20 other countries. It supports seven publications (scientific, informative, and popular), and holds large, multi-topical meetings. The publications and meetings include many topics related to education and popularization of astronomy. It is remarkable that so many of the astronomical institutes in the former Soviet Union continue to operate, under very difficult conditions. They deserve our support, in the form of books and journals, for instance.