

INTRODUCTION

The Whole Earth Telescope, or WET, is a set of telescopes, which comes into life a few times per year. It is being activated by astronomers who travel to telescopes at selected longitudes around the Earth and observe the same stars with functionally equivalent instruments during several consecutive nights. The result is a nearly continuous lightcurve which can be analyzed for asteroseismological pulsations or other periodic or quasiperiodic modulations. So far 12 coordinated WET campaigns have been conducted, and a wealth of important results are obtained.

In order to discuss the scientific output, the organization of campaigns, target selection, instrumental design etc., a total of three workshops have been held. The first one was in Austin, Texas in November 1991, the second was in Molėtai, Lithuania in August 1993 and the third was in Ames, Iowa, July 17–21, 1995. The last workshop was hosted by the International Institute of Theoretical and Applied Physics (IITAP), and organized by Steve Kawaler and Christopher Clemens. The selection of Ames for the workshop also marks that WET has become an official IITAP project, and generous funding for the workshop was provided by this institute, which in particular enabled participation of astronomers from developing countries and Eastern Europe. On behalf of the participants, we express our sincere thanks to the organizers and the host institute for the splendid arrangement and generous support.

The workshop contained reviews, contributions and a lot of vivid discussions. Following the suggestion of Joe Patterson, a targeted debate on the specific issue in a courtroom setting was arranged between Chris Clemens and Darragh O'Donoghue. The issue was whether oscillations in the AM CVn type stars are nonradial pulsations of the DB white dwarf primaries or tidal or superhump oscillations of the accretion disk.

Most of the reviews, contributions and some of the arguments used in the "AM CVn trial" and other discussions, have been collected in this and the following two issues of the *Baltic Astronomy* journal, which will be also reprinted as a proceedings book, as was

done with the proceedings from the previous workshop, published in *Baltic Astronomy*, vol. 2, No. 3/4 (p. 360-568).

We thank the speakers and other contributors for their rapid submission of manuscripts, and the *Baltic Astronomy* editor for accepting such a large number of papers for publication in a short time. Special thanks go to the IITAP for providing funds for the editing needs and a laser printer, which helped a lot in preparation of the camera-ready manuscript.

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