

ORGANIZING AND PUBLISHING THE PROCEEDINGS OF ASTRONOMICAL MEETINGS

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ABSTRACT. In the 1980s Arthur Upgren arranged it so I became an adjunct professor at Wesleyan University and a member of the staff of Van Vleck Observatory. One of our major collaborations was to organize and publish the proceedings of astronomical meetings. The L. Davis Press published the books and Van Vleck Observatory distributed them to approximately 300 astronomical libraries all over the world. The proceedings that were published with the two of us as editors were: IAU Colloquium No. 76, *The Nearby Stars and the Stellar Luminosity Function* (held at Wesleyan); *Star catalogues, A Centennial Tribute to A. N. Vyssotsky*; *Precision Photometry: Astrophysics of the Galaxy*; *Objective-Prism and Other Surveys* (held at VVO); *Workshop on Databases for Galactic Structure*; and IAU Symposium No. 167, *New Developments in Array Technology and Applications*. Other volumes published by the L. Davis Press were circulated under this agreement and up to 1994, thirteen proceedings were sent out. This series of publications has been transferred to the Institute for Space Observations and Upgren is now an associate editor at ISO.

Key Words: history of astronomy

1. INTRODUCTION

During my years at Wesleyan University and Van Vleck Observatory one of the main ways in which Art Upgren and I worked together was in editing the proceedings of astronomical meetings, some of which were held at Van Vleck Observatory and Wesleyan University, others which were held in Schenectady or in Europe. Most of these books were published by the L. Davis

Press and were circulated by the Van Vleck Observatory to approximately 300 astronomical libraries all over the world. This insured the widest possible circulation for the papers presented at these meetings.

Perhaps I should explain why I am here as a *former* staff member of Van Vleck Observatory. In 1994 the chair of the Astronomy Department intentionally intercepted a piece of campus mail from the office of the President of Wesleyan University addressed to me. Although the chair was officially chastised by the Wesleyan Committee on Rights and Responsibilities, he refused to return the piece of mail or to apologize for his action. In July of 1994 I resigned my position at Wesleyan. The L. Davis Press books which used to be circulated by the Van Vleck Observatory to libraries all over the world were transferred to the Institute for Space Observations which is now handling their circulation. Art Uppgren is an associate editor of the series at ISO so we are continuing our joint work in this area of astronomy. The proceedings of meetings soon to be circulated by ISO are: Photometric Systems and Standard Stars (Straizys and Philip 1996, published jointly with Baltic Astronomy), Thirty Years of Astronomy at the Van Vleck Observatory (Philip 1996, published jointly with Baltic Astronomy), The Third Conference on Faint Blue Stars (Philip, Liebert and Saffer 1997) and a meeting to be held at Yale University in honor of Dorrit Hoffleit (Philip, van Altena and Uppgren 1997).

The first meeting on which we collaborated was one that Uppgren organized at Wesleyan University in May of 1983. The most recent meeting, for which the proceedings have been published by Kluwer Academic Publishers, is IAU Symposium No. 167, Advances in Array Technology and Applications. A summary of the meetings in which we collaborated and which Uppgren has edited will be found in Table 1.

2. ORGANIZATION OF A MEETING

The first step in the process is to think of the idea behind the meeting. This can be, as in this case, the commemoration of an event or as in item 6 of Table 1 a meeting concerning advances in the technology of obtaining astronomical data or as is the case for the meeting to be held later this year at Union College, a meeting concerning the observation and analysis of a certain set of celestial objects. The next step is to discuss your idea with experts in the field to find a group of astronomers who are interested in the idea and who would like to participate in the meeting. A Scientific Organizing Committee can be formed from such a group, making sure to include astronomers from many different countries who cover the range of topics to be discussed at the meeting.

TABLE 1. Proceedings of meetings published

Year	Title	Editors	Publisher
1983	IAU Coll. No. 76, The Nearby Stars and the Stellar Luminosity Function	Philip Upgren	LDP
1988	IAU Symposium No. 133, Mapping the Sky - Past Heritage and Future Directions	Debarbat Eddy, Eichhorn Upgren	Kluwer
1989	Star Catalogues, A Centennial Tribute to A. N. Vyssotsky	Philip Upgren	LDP
1991	Precision Photometry: Astrophysics of the Galaxy	Philip	LDP
1991	Objective-Prism and Other Surveys	Philip Upgren, Janes	LDP
1991	IAU Coll. No. 100, Fundamentals of Astronomy	Eichhorn Murray, Upgren	Kluwer
1993	Workshop on Databases for Galactic Structure	Philip, Hauck, Upgren	LDP
1994	Hot Stars in the Galactic Halo	S. Adelman Upgren C. Adelman	Cambr.
1995	IAU Symposium No. 167, New Developments in Array Technology and Applications	Philip Janes Upgren	Kluwer

The members of the SOC can suggest other speakers to participate in the meeting. Once a dozen or so firm commitments to speak have been made it is time to advertise the meeting to the astronomical community. Before email this process could be expensive but now it is simple, fast and cheap. For example in the case of The Third Conference on Faint Blue Stars I identified some IAU commissions that covered the topics of the conference and obtained from their presidents copies of their email lists. I then looked over the proceedings of meetings that had been held earlier on similar topics (for example I used the mailing list for the Second Conference on Faint Blue Stars which had been held in Tucson eight years earlier) and made up a combined list of names. There is an electronic copy of an extensive email list on internet (ftp to ftp.ast.cam.ac.uk and request the file /guide/astropersons.lis). From this compilation I was able to find email addresses for the people on my list. Later, I found that on the Web one can go to <http://www.astro.utoronto.ca/home.html> and find there an item, ASTRONOMERS, RGO's Directory of email addresses. If one picks

this choice a name can be entered and the 11 000 names in the file will be searched and the email addresses that match the entered name will appear on the screen.

The next step is to make a distribution list so that a message can be emailed to hundreds of people with one command. One problem with a distribution list is that it prints the names of all the people on the list at the top of the message and for a long list this can take up many screens on the computer, so I broke my list into many sections and now the list of names attached to each message was one or two screens only.

There are many expenses involved in running a meeting. Foremost is the cost of producing the proceedings volume. In most cases meeting rooms at a college or university can still be obtained at no cost if that institution is the host of the meeting. But there are the abstract booklets, secretarial help, communications, receptions, meals, coffee breaks, poster boards and poster board supports, badges, discussion sheets, transportation to the airport and other expenses that must be planned for. In some cases I have been able to obtain support from the National Science Foundation. It is usual to obtain a "seed" grant from the home institution. For any expenses not covered by grants the registration fee has to be set at a level that provides the cash flow need for the meeting. It helps to offer a slightly lower registration fee to those who register early since this encourages people to register earlier. As for housing I locate a hotel to be the official meeting hotel and then let participants deal with the hotel directly.

3. THE MEETING

The administration of the college or university can be contacted to obtain a speaker to open the meeting and welcome the participants. Members of the SOC and some others are selected to be chairs of the scientific sessions. A senior person at the meeting can be asked to make the summary speech at the closing session. I find it is very helpful to include the discussion that follows each paper in the proceedings volume. My method for doing this is to have each questioner and speaker write a summary of their comments on discussion sheets. The discussion sheets are typed up as rapidly as possible and then handed back to the person who made the remark for corrections. These corrected remarks are passed on to the person who gave the paper for his or her answer. At the end of the meeting we usually have a complete set of corrected discussion up to the afternoon of the last day. The discussion is circulated once more, by email, to each speaker for final corrections.

Through an audio - visual department or your home academic department the necessary slide projectors and overhead projectors can be obtained. In larger departments graduate students are available to help out with duties such as running slide projectors, handing out discussion sheets and such. For smaller departments it is possible to hire a few temporary workers to do these tasks. Make sure that your session chairs know which sessions, and when, they will chair.

Poster papers are now quite popular. A room, close to the meeting room, should be selected for the display of poster papers. Depending on the number of poster papers they can be shown for the entire meeting or changed daily. Special times should be set aside in the program for people to read poster papers and for the poster authors to be available to discuss their papers. In addition some sessions are set aside during the meeting for discussion of poster papers and these discussions then appear in the proceedings volume.

4. PREPARING THE PROCEEDINGS

I encourage the majority of the participants at the meeting to submit their papers at the time of the meeting and set a deadline a month or two after the meeting. It is a good idea to take a quick look at each manuscript as soon as possible. Often there are problems with references (missing names of authors, missing editors and publishers) and this information can be requested by email. The editors of the proceedings volume are responsible for reviewing each of the papers. In the case of editorial comments the paper is emailed back to the author for revision.

Immediately after the meeting the first job is to edit the discussion and then send each section to the author of the paper involved. This part of the book is usually finished well before the papers are edited. The papers are then circulated to the other editors. The corrections and comments are sent back to Schenectady, consolidated and then emailed back to the authors for their consideration. When the author corrections come back a final copy of that paper can be prepared for publication. I find this procedure to be a vital part of the editorial process. There are too many chances for errors to appear in the manuscripts submitted. These can be errors of the author or errors created during the editorial process and by circulating the papers back to the authors most of these can be found and then corrected.

There are many forms in which a paper can be submitted. If a paper is to be edited it must be submitted in some form that is machine readable. I have had papers submitted in Postscript, TeX, WordPerfect, Word and just plain

ASCII. I require that a fully formatted paper be sent in (either in hardcopy or in Postscript or TeX) so I will know how the author wants the paper to look but every paper has differences in style and terminology. In the proceedings produced by the L. Davis Press I want a uniform style throughout. Papers are edited so common terms are used throughout, correct English usage is followed, Tables and Figures are labeled in a consistent fashion, references are corrected to the standard format and any questions concerning the logic of the paper are noted. Once a paper has been edited and then printed out in the LDP style a copy is mailed back to the author for final corrections.

Although many astronomical editors do not create indices I have felt that this is a most important stage of editing a book. As soon as a substantial part of the proceedings is ready I start going through the papers, marking names, objects and subjects for the index. If the final page numbers are not yet set pages can be given temporary numbers such as 1.001 for page one of paper one, and so on. In the spreadsheet containing the index the final page numbers can be added in a new column. On the first sweep through the manuscript I pick up names, on the second sweep I do the names of astronomical objects (and pick up any names missed in the first pass) and on the third sweep subjects are selected (and missing names and objects on earlier passes are noted). Once the spreadsheet is finished the entries are sorted by page number and the index is almost in final form.

There are two different paths taken by those who produce astronomical proceedings. One path, taken by "compilers", merely collect the papers submitted by authors and place page numbers on the pages, write a preface and a table of contents and then submit the manuscript for publication. The other path, outlined in the paragraphs above, is that taken by "editors". There are two competing parts to the editorial process. In one part you wish to do the best job possible and find every possible error. In the other part you want to get the proceedings volume out as quickly as possible for their value diminishes rapidly if too much time is taken in the production of the manuscript. One can never get rid of every mistake in a book but at least I can say that I have corrected far more errors than I have made in the editorial process.

5. THE FUTURE: ELECTRONIC PUBLISHING

Electronic publishing of journals and books is in our future. The Letters of the Astrophysical Journal are already being produced in an electronic version and other journals in astronomy will soon be published in this manner. Soon the Astrophysical Journal, Astronomy and Astrophysics and Monthly Notices will all have electronic versions. Two books from the L. Davis Press are in the

process of being placed on the World Wide Web by Guenther Eichhorn in the ADS system. Plans for an IAU Joint Discussion at Kyoto (on electronic publishing) involve the electronic publishing of the proceedings. An offer to the IAU is being made to the IAU Executive Committee for the electronic publication of many of the IAU publications.

There are many concerns that have to be addressed. Libraries still prefer hardcopy versions for their collections. There are questions concerning the handling of copyrights and how subscribers are going to be charged for accessing journals and books. Refereeing of papers must continue to ensure the continued high quality of published papers. Electronic submission of papers makes it possible for unrefereed papers to be circulated and these papers should not become part of main body of astronomical literature.

During the editorial process I learned that a new IAU contract for the publishing of IAU Symposia has been made with the Astronomical Society of the Pacific and in 1998 symposia will be published under their conference series. This means that the symposia volumes will be published with prices that astronomers and astronomical libraries can afford which should increase their circulation throughout the community.

