

The 2011 ASSA Annual General Meeting (AGM) took place in the Auditorium of the Christian Brothers College, Mount Edmund, Pretoria Road, Silverton, Pretoria on 3 August 2011. The following Council and Section reports were presented.

ASSA Council Report 2010 - 2011

M Poll

Membership for 2010 - 2011

As of 16 July 2011 the membership of the national body stood at 241 including 13 Honorary Members. However the total number of members will now be revised upwards, considering that, under the new Constitution every paid up member of a Centre is a member of ASSA.

At its meeting on 25 June 2011, Council accepted the nomination of ASSA Auditor, Ronnie Glass for Honorary Membership of ASSA.

Council Meetings

The ASSA Council has met seven times during the current year. All the meetings were held at the War Museum in Johannesburg, and thanks are due to Lerika Cross for arranging this venue. A number of Council members attended via Skype and this form of attendance was generally successful. The average attendance was just over 7 persons per meeting.

A number of Skype conferences were held in between meetings, particularly in connection with the drafting of the new Constitution.

Council Persona

At the 2010 AGM no nominations for the posts of Secretary, Business Manager and Membership Secretary had been received. Both AJ Nel and Lerika Cross offered their services in the post of Secretary. After discussions after the AGM, Lerika Cross' offer was accepted. The nomination was ratified at the ASSA Council meeting of 21 August 2010.

Johan Smit offered to take over as Membership Secretary, and this appointment was also ratified at the 21 August Council meeting. The fact of Lerika Cross and Johan Smit taking over specific portfolios left two vacancies for members without portfolios - Adv AJ Nel and Auke Slotegraaf were subsequently co-opted into these positions.

The position of Business Manager was left open, pending the results of the negotiations with Struik publishers for Struik to market and distribute the *Sky Guide*, and the pending decision about making *MNASSA* an electronic publication. If Struik were to market and distribute *Sky Guide*, and *MNASSA* became electronic, most of the Business Manager's tasks would become

redundant. In the event, the position remained unfilled.

Isobel Bassett finalised administrative loose ends with respect to the 2010 Edition of *Sky Guide* and Council conveys its grateful thanks to Isobel for the work she did. Maureen Rogers' assistance in the hand over of the membership list to the new Membership Secretary is also noted.

During December 2010, both the Membership Secretary and the Treasurer tendered their resignations from Council. Council thanks both Johan Smit and Rynhardt van Rooyen respectively for their input while on Council. Ian Glass and AJ Nel offered to take over as Membership Secretary and Treasurer respectively. Their offers were formally accepted at the Council meeting of 5 February 2011. It should also be noted with thanks that, when the post was vacant, Johan Retief of the Hermanus Centre offered his services as Membership Secretary

Constitution

In February 2011 the Council of ASSA mandated a task team to review and revise the ASSA Constitution which was last revised in 1979 amendments at various times since then, with the last revision being in 2004. The task team comprised Michael Poll, Ian Glass, Chris Stewart, Lerika Cross and AJ Nel. The final draft was submitted for a ballot of ASSA members and the draft was accepted for implementation. The new Constitution was effective from 25 June 2011.

In the new Constitution there were fundamental changes from the previous version, and Council has in the past few weeks been implementing these changes. It is hoped that the new Constitution at least addresses the problem of confusion about joining two separate but overlapping entities viz. the ASSA national body and the local Centres.

Thanks are due to the task team members for the time, trouble and travel that they expended in this exercise.

It has been noted that there are some aspects of the new Constitution that could be amended, and it is suggested that these be attended to before the next AGM.

***Sky Guide* Editor**

In November 2010, members of the Editorial Board held discussions with Wayne Trow, the Editor of the 2011 Edition of *Sky Guide Africa South* and were informed, *inter alia*, that Wayne Trow could not make a commitment for more than one year further. Accordingly, because of the concerns about continuity, the Editorial Board members approached Auke Slotegraaf to ask if he would consider resuming the Editorship, and Auke accepted, indicating that he would be prepared to make a commitment for longer than one year. Council accepted his appointment as Editor at its meeting of 5 February 2011.

***Sky Guide* Assistant Editor**

In July 2011 Maciej Soltynski advised Council that he would like to step down as

Assistant Editor of *Sky Guide Africa South* [SGAS] with immediate effect.

In late 2002 / early 2003 Maciej envisioned a much improved version of the Society's Handbook and to this end he approached Auke Slotegraaf, then editor of *MNASSA* and Auke was enthusiastic about the idea. The two of them approached the ASSA Editorial Board, who gave them their blessing, and thus *Sky Guide Africa South* was born.

Maciej has given freely and generously of his time and expertise to three SGAS Editors, with whom for eight years he worked in a spirit of partnership, teamwork and mutual agreement, on tasks ranging from the time-consuming and tedious but essential proof-reading, to content and layout and other related matters.

When the first Editor resigned unexpectedly, and when it appeared that no volunteer replacement was forthcoming, it was Maciej who suggested that the *Sky Guide* Editor should be financially compensated for the services rendered in editing and producing the publication. The implementation of this proposal has ensured continuity in the Editorship.

A further initiative from Maciej came when difficulties arose regarding the distribution of SGAS by ASSA. Maciej opened and directed negotiations with the publisher Struik which resulted in an agreement with Struik Nature to print, publish and distribute SGAS. When the third editor advised that he would not

continue for more than another year, on behalf of Council, Maciej initiated an invite Auke Slotegraaf to be editor again – for 2012. Maciej indicated that it is with a strong sense of sadness that he withdraws from further involvement with SGAS.

Contract with Struik for the printing and distribution of Sky Guide

The 2011 Edition of *Sky Guide Africa South* was the first edition published under the terms of a contract between ASSA and Struik, whereby Struik printed and distributed the publication. The arrangement has proved extremely successful, and in this connection a very large "thank you" goes to Maciej Soltynski for driving the negotiations on behalf of ASSA, both for the 2011 and the 2012 Editions.

MNASSA Editor

Willie Koorts stepped down as Editor of *MNASSA* and Case Rijdsdijk took over with Willie still doing the layout. The appointment was confirmed by Council at its meeting held on 30 October 2010. The offer from Allen Versfeld to be involved with *MNASSA* is noted with thanks, as is an offer from Lia Labuschagne to assist the Editor. Ian Glass is Assistant Editor. Council acknowledges the time and effort that Case and Ian have put in to the production and circulation of *MNASSA*.

As of the August 2011 edition of *MNASSA*, the publication will be electronic, except that provision has been made for members without internet access.

Website

The ASSA website has been well managed by Christian Hettlage during the year, and Council acknowledges his input with thanks

Sections of ASSA

Thanks are due to the observing section directors for work done during the year, and for the reports submitted. Jacques van Delft has submitted his resignation as director of the Solar Observing Section due to other priorities on his time. Thanks are due to Jacques for the work he has done.

ASSA Symposium

The Pretoria Centre of ASSA hosted a three day Symposium under the auspices of ASSA in October 2010. The theme was "Light and Spectrum Pollution". More than 30 people attended. Thanks are due to Johan Smit (Chairman of the Pretoria Centre), Andrie van der Linde and Danie Barnardo for organizing what was a very successful event. The Symposium report was published in *MNASSA* for December 2010.

Visit of US scientists, November 2010

Michael Poll, as President, was invited to Bloemfontein on 10 November 2010, to represent ASSA at function hosted at the Boyden observatory on the occasion of the visit of US scientists Dr Jeffrey A. Hoffman, Prof Charles H. Mc Gruder II, and Dr Robert Williams. The occasion was also used to launch the Boyden Observatory Museum. Michael was asked to give the vote of thanks at the close of the public lecture.

In connection with the Boyden Observatory, in August 2010, on behalf of ASSA, the President wrote a letter of motivation and support for the proposed Digital Dome Theatre and Planetarium at the Observatory

IAU Office

It was learned during 2010 that South Africa had been selected to host the IAU Office for Astronomy Development. The agreement was to be signed in Pretoria on 30 July 2010. The President was invited but was unable to attend.

The President was invited to the launching of the Office at a function that was held in Cape Town on 16 April 2011, but was unable to attend. Some members of the ASSA Council attended, including Lia Labuschagne, Case Rijdsdijk and Matie Hoffman.

The President and some members of the Pretoria Centre attended a function at the SAASTA offices in Pretoria on 26 May 2011, where the Director, Kevin Govender, introduced the Office.

**Department of Science and Technology :
Astronomy Desk**

As reported in the December 2010 issue of *MNASSA*, (p. 202) the Department of Science and Technology established an "Astronomy Desk" to be headed by Prof Manfred Hellberg. On 25 October 2010 the President received a letter from Prof Hellberg, inviting input from ASSA about any of the items in the brief. The letter

was circulated to Council, and Case Rijdsijk and Maciej Soltynski communicated with Prof Hellberg. It is noted that Prof Hellberg's appointment was for the six months beginning on 1 October 2010.

South African Institute of Physics.

A letter was received by the President from Jaynie Padayachee (PhD), the Editor of *Physics Comment*, the publication of the South African Institute of Physics. Jaynie indicated that a forthcoming issue would focus on ***Astronomy in South Africa***. The President was invited to write a short article on the history and current status of the Astronomical Society of South Africa. The submission accordingly appeared in the 25 September issue of the Publication. (Download is about 1.2MB from <http://www.saip.org.za/PhysicsComment/>)

Honour for Case Rijdsijk

A letter was received from Prof JD Skinner, President of the Royal Society of South Africa, stating that Case Rijdsijk had been made an Honorary Member of the Society. Honorary membership is awarded to persons who have furthered science in South Africa in a manner apart from their academic positions at Universities and other research institutions. Council congratulates Case on this honour.

Honour for Hermanus and the Hermanus Centre

With input from Dr Amanda Gulbis from the SAAO in Capetown, the Hermanus Astronomy Centre applied to the Minor Planet Committee to have asteroid 260824



Case Rijdsijk (right) receiving his honorary membership of the Royal Society of South Africa. It was presented by Vice-President Jane Carruthers during the Society's annual dinner at Kelvin Grove. Image by Maciej Soltynski

named "Hermanus", and the designation was recently approved. The citation reads in part "This minor planet is named in recognition of the Hermanus Astronomy Centre's enthusiasm for astronomy and their dedication to educational outreach in South Africa". This achievement certainly recognises all the effort that the Hermanus Centre has put into bringing astronomy to the public.

Deaths

ASSA Council noted with regret the death of Jan Hers on 24 August 2010. The Obituary was published in *MNASSA*, October 2010, p. 175.

Thanks

I would like to thank all those members of Council who have assisted in the func-

tioning of ASSA during the past year. At the risk of omitting some worthy names, I would like particularly to thank Lerika Cross for her work as Secretary. She really has done a tremendous amount, and has been of great assistance to everyone on Council, and indeed, to the membership of ASSA. I would also like to mention Ian Glass and AJ Nel who took on the portfolios of Membership Secretary and Treasurer respectively at short notice, and Chris Stewart who organised the Skype conferences.

Personal note

I have been President for two years and it has been quite an experience. I did not expect to be quite as busy, and I have had to put a lot of personal activities aside to deal with ASSA business. I will not be on Council for the coming year, and, although I do not want to sound indispensable, I will be available if anyone wants to tap my ASSA database and make use of the experience of ASSA business that I have accumulated. I wish the incoming Council all the best for the coming year. ☆

Cosmology Section Report

Frikkie de Bruyn

Purpose

The purpose of the Cosmology Section is:

- To promote an interest in the study of cosmology among members of ASSA.
- To disseminate news, articles, press releases and scientific papers of a cosmological nature among members by way of emails and post.
- To promote the scientific study of cosmology.

The discoveries at the Large Hadron Collider at CERN such as the containment of anti-matter, the ongoing hunt for the Higgs particle, matter as it would have existed in the very first instances of the universe's life are just a few of important matters of ongoing research at CERN. Mr Maciej Soltynski supplied the major part of news from the LHC. Many thanks to Mr Soltynski.

Activities

A wide variety of matters were circulated and discussed by members. Below is a summary of the most important issues:

The possible existence of dark energy and its effects on the accelerated expansion of the universe has been narrowed down to the Local Group of galaxies.

Two books of note were published and discussed. Stephen Hawking's book on "The Grand Design" and Roger Penrose's book on possible evidence of a cyclical universe and the possibility of the existing of time before the Big Bang.

The results of the Sloan Digital Sky Survey.

The director's research on the possible effects of dark energy in the merger (or not) of the Milky Way Galaxy and the Magellanic Clouds continue.

The director was involved in discussions in the press on the incorrect assumption of zero gravity in space.

Future activities

The circulation of news of interest to members and research into dark energy and its effects will continue. ☆

Deep-sky Section Report

Auke Slotegraaf

Observers actively contributing to the Section are Magda Streicher, Richard Ford and Auke Slotegraaf. Several new observers are on the brink of active participation: these include Lynnette Foster, Hendrik van Rensburg, and Pieter Koornhof.

Astrophotos of deep-sky objects were received from Kos Coronaios, Lucas Ferreira, Dale Liebenberg, Dany Duprez, Pete Scully and Anthony Ayiomamitis.

It's a particular pleasure to be able to report that the Deep-sky Observer's Companion Database website was launched in September 2010. The URL for the site is <http://www.docdb.net>. DOCdb is a free online resource for deep-sky observing. In addition to functioning as a growing archive of observations, an array of software tools allows observing sessions to be planned and managed. It also acts as a repository for observing tutorials and guidelines and has a growing selection of historical material of interest to deep-sky observers. As of this writing, the website has not yet been actively promoted in the observing community as technically it is still in its testing phase. However, it is fully functional and already has 54 registered users.

During the year under review, the "ConCards" resource was developed and released. This consists of basic star charts, one per constellation, with each chart showing a (subjective) selection of the "best" deep-sky objects in that constellation. By including only the most prominent deep-sky objects, the ConCards fill the gap between planispheres (such as the Southern Star Wheel) and star atlases. The ConCards are available as a free download from <http://www.docdb.net/tutorials/concards.php>.

Largely the creation of Martin Lyons, an affordable, robust and portable observing shelter has been field-tested. Four have been assembled and are in regular use. The shelter is made of PVC tubing and plastic sheeting and can be used as a semi-permanent structure or when out in the field.

In closing, special mention has to be made of Richard Ford's continued efforts to improve his deep-sky observing skills and of Magda Streicher's ongoing contributions and her work at compiling two new publications. For the past two years Magda has been collaborating with Australian observer Jenni Kay on a book

about small open clusters. This work will be published by the Webb Society in January next year. Meanwhile, Magda has been hard at work on her own book

of southern deep-sky objects, a 350-page tome spanning 45 constellations. This book will be published at the end of 2011. ☆

Historical Section Report

Chris de Coning

Introduction

During the past year (Calendar Year 2010) the following has happened concerning the History of Astronomy.

Website

Selected pages of the website were updated as new information was found.

Archive

Over the past ten years members of the public donated material and the Archives now has a wealth of original material. This includes nearly all the minute books of the Council and the Cape Centre from 1922 to present.

The Archive was kindly housed by the SAAO in a room at the McClean Building. This room was needed for other purposes however and the Archive was moved to another building where the conditions are far from satisfactory for housing irreplaceable original documents. The Manuscripts & Archives Department at the University of Cape Town (UCT) was approached and they showed an interest in safeguarding the material. Since the material is original and irreplaceable, a project was launched to make digital copies of the most valuable documents,

i.e. the minute books. Special mention needs to be made to Gregory Harvey who scanned the material, as well Lesley Hart from UCT who allowed us to use special equipment for this task.

Publications

Individuals in their private capacities wrote articles with historical content. Please note my appreciation to the following people:

- Ian Glass for "The Astronomical Museum at SAAO" published in *MNASSA* Vol. 69, nos. 1 & 2, pp. 20-30.
- Willie Koorts (and Cliff Turk); "Disappearance of Lacaille Plaque", *MNASSA* Vol. 69, nos. 3 & 4, pp. 45-48.
- Greg Roberts; "Amateur Rocketry in South Africa 1952-63", *MNASSA* Vol. 69, nos. 7 & 8, pp. 134-146.

Obituaries

MNASSA published an obituary for Jan Hers in *MNASSA* Vol 69, nos 9 & 10, pp. 175-176.

Friends of the Cape Town Observatory

The friends' activities also gathered momentum. The main focus is to get the McClean Telescope, a favourite for public events, operational.

Opinions and quotes were gathered but the cost is staggering to a volunteer organisation such as ours. Different ingenious options are being considered. "Thank you" to the engineers, Martin Lyons and Wim Filmhalter, who are giving their expertise for the love of the cause, and to Anne

Charles for her unwavering dedication.

The Arc of the Meridian Project was resurrected. This is a government initiative to link Cape Town with other centres on the Meridian. Ian Glass contributed technically to the project. ☆

Education and Public Communication Section Report

Case Rijdsijk

It is clear that the Director needs to review the structure and working of the section and it seems an opportune time to do so with the implementation of the new constitution.

However it is encouraging to note that many ASSA Centres are involved in a wide range of activities. Many of these have been reported in *MNASSA*, highlights being ScopeX, the Karoo Star Party, the Southern Star Party and the Hermanus Centre with their MONET project involving local schools.

The establishment of the African Astronomical Society, AfAS, has meant that the director has been approached for assistance in developing astronomical resources for groups in other parts of

Africa. A fuller report will be available next year. The opening of the IAU Global Office of Astronomy Development, GOAD, based at the SAAO in Cape Town, means that there are many opportunities for co-operation between GOAD and the ASSA, and a working relationship has already been established. In addition good relations are being maintained with the South African Institute of Physics, SAIP, as well as the African Physical Society, AfPS. Continued close cooperation with the SAAO outreach programme is also being maintained.

The director wishes to thank the SAAO for continued support, especially in being able to attend the 2nd Middle-East and Africa Regional IAU Meeting, MEARIM 2, in Cape Town in April 2011. ☆

Double Star Section Report

Lucas Ferreira

Having been the Director of the Double Star section for just about a year now, more has happened in this section than in the last previous years. My immediate

goal as Director was, and still is to:

- identify people who are doing double star work,
- inspire others to take an interest in

- observing double stars,
- try and find other methods of observing double stars, i.e. digitally vs. micrometer, and
- make regular contributions to *MNASSA* and the local newsletter on observations or topics of interest.

To date, I have updated the Double Star Section Webpage, updated and enhanced the ASSA Introduction to Double Stars manual and written a couple of double-star articles for *MNASSA* which included photos of Double Stars taken by myself. These articles were uploaded to the Section web page for keen Amateur Astronomers and Double Star observers to read and study. By writing these articles, I hope that it would inspire others to become interested in Double Stars. I have also made contact with Mr Bob Argyle from The Institute of Astronomy in Cambridge, in the UK and have established a good relationship with him. He is well known in the astronomy world for studies, observations, measurements and research in the Double Stars. By having such a valuable contact in this field, worthful Double Star data can now be submitted to him from South Africa and published worldwide and be recorded in the Washington Double Star Catalogue. I was originally introduced to Mr Bob Argyle by Magda Streicher who has also recently made available all her previous Double Star observations and measurements to me and the Double Star section. Magda has been a great support to me and the section. Sadly, very few had shown interest in this section in past the year and

I have had very few people contact me regarding double stars measurement and observations. Hopefully this will increase in the years to come.

There is however an exception: I have received numerous observations and measurements from a gentleman in Vereeniging by the name of Mr Dave Blane. He is very enthusiastic about double stars and has been measuring them for many years now. For his valuable contributions to the Double Star Section he was awarded a Merit Certificate for Valuable Measurements & Observations which he received at the Johannesburg ASSA branch during their annual meeting earlier this year.

I am currently in the progress of experimenting with software to find a better, more modern way of measuring the position angle and separation of Double stars thru astrophotography i.e. using digital photos of Double Stars. The method is digital instead of manual, using a Micrometer. It is quite complicated with a steep learning curve, but I hope to conquer this challenge in the near future to be able to assist others doing their measurements digitally

I presented a talk on Double Stars at our local astronomy club, GRASSA in May 2011 and am sure to do so again at other ASSA centres in the near future.

My conclusion is that it is still early days in a new era for the ASSA Double Star

section, and that a more aggressive approach to promoting Double Stars by observing them through telescopes at local Astronomy club meetings, monthly ASSA centre meetings and on open events evenings at our South African Observatories is very much required. People must also be made aware of the important role they can play and the valuable

contributions they can make in this field of astronomy as amateurs, by means of simple observations and if you'd like to take it a step further by measuring Double Stars. These suggested measures can turn the tide and restore Double Star Section to its formal glory. I am very excited about the New Year, and am looking forward to an exciting year. ☆

Occultation Section Report

Brian Fraser

Once again there were no favourable minor planet events taking place over the areas covered by our observers in 2010. Also the weather conditions proved an obstacle for the observers in the Gauteng area, as it does in normal years for the coastal areas.

The highlight of the year was the expedition by a team of American astronomers to observe the occultation of a star by

Pluto in July 2010. Groups of two members travelled to Boyden, the Karoo near Uppington, the Aloe Ridge hotel observatory and the Innes dome to observe the event. The team at Aloe Ridge managed good results. All the other stations suffered from cloudy conditions of some sort. Dave Hughes, Chris Curry and Rodney Hyman put in a huge amount of effort to get the Innes telescope in working condition for this observation. ☆

Comet and Meteor Section Report

T P Cooper

Six meteor showers were observed by three individuals totalling 38.5 hours observations.

Summary of Observed Meteor Showers

Observer (no. of showers observed)	Showers Observed and duration	Total Time hrs
Tim Cooper (4)	Eta Aquariids (2.0), Orionids (8.0), December Phoenicids (3.0), Geminids (3.0)	17.0
Mary Fanner (3)	April Lyrids (4.8), Geminids (6.6), Velids (4.8)	16.2
Cliff Turk (1)	Geminids 2009 (1.1), Geminids 2010 (4.2)	5.3
Total		38.5

Notes on some Specific Showers Observed

April Lyrids – the shower was observed by Mary Fanner

Eta Aquariids – observations pre-maximum were entirely washed out by rain. Tim Cooper observed on the morning of 6 May seeing 15 eta Aquariids in one hour with LM=5.4

Orionids – despite the near-full moon, the shower was well observed by Tim Cooper. The enhanced activity predicted by Sato and Watanabe (CBET No.2507 dated 19 October 2010) was observed on the morning of 21 October, seeing 10 Orionids per hour under LM=5.3 skies.

December Phoenicids – Tim Cooper observed weak but definite activity from this shower on the evenings of 4 and 5 December, seeing 5 Phoenicids in 3 hours. All observed members were plotted.

Geminids – were observed by Tim Cooper. Cloud badly affected the nights of 12/13 and 13/14 December so that the maximum was missed.

Velids – were observed by Mary Fanner on the nights of 29/30 and 30/31 December, seeing 16 shower members and 21 sporadics in just under 5 hours observation.

Summary of Observed Fireballs

A total of six fireball reports were seen in 2010. The full details have been submitted for publication in *MNASSA* as a separate article.

Summary of Observed Comets

Six comets were observed in 2010 by four individuals as follows:

ICQ Observer Code	10P	29P	81P	103P	C/2009 R1	C/2010 B1
BEG01				●		
COO02	●	●	●	●		●
STR03		●	●			
WAL					●	

Key to observers in Table:

BEG01 = Mike Begbie COO02 = Tim Cooper
 STR03 = Magda Streicher WAL = Simon Walsh

Notes on Specific Comets Observed

10P Tempel – observed and imaged by Tim Cooper

29P Schwassman Wachman – observed by Magda Streicher and imaged by Tim Cooper

81P Wild – observed by Magda streicher and imaged by Tim Cooper

103P Hartley – observed by Mike Begbie and Tim Cooper, imaged by Tim Cooper

C/2009 R1 McNaught – was imaged by Simon Walsh

C/2010 B1 Cardinal – was imaged by Tim Cooper

Summary of Asteroid Observations

Photometry was conducted by Tim Cooper and Paul Ludick on the following objects.

Paul Ludick: 209 Dido, 1056 Azalea

Tim Cooper: 94 Aurora, 631 Phillipina

Tim Cooper and Brian Fraser observed the occultation of TYC1914-00301-1 by 20000 Varuna on 19/20 February. Both observed misses.

All observers of comets, asteroids and meteors, are heartily thanked for their contributions. ☆

Dark-sky Section Report

J Smit

After some period of inactivity in the section the challenge was taken up during the last year again.

The main purpose of this section is educating everyone about the fact that light pollution is not really an astronomical problem. This statement sound counter-productive coming from an astronomer, but even superficial study of the causes and effects will show that it actually is a symptom of an underlying problem. So the work this year concentrated on bringing the message across that addressing the underlying causes will automatically solve the symptom. At the core of the problem is this statement: Light pollution is caused by improper lighting installations. The number one effect of improper installations is wasted energy with its associated negative consequences, the most serious

for us being increased cost and reduced safety and security.

Talks were presented at ASSA Pretoria, ASSA Johannesburg, the Gauteng land service for schools event and at the Green Market events in Pretoria. Informally the topic was touched on at every observing opportunity that ASSA Pretoria attended. The purpose of these talks was to educate the audiences to see the problem as follows:

- Higher energy cost
- Reduced safety and security
- The artificial disturbance of the natural day/night cycle may, as a result, have serious psycho-physiological and even medical consequences for humans, along with ecological and evolutionary implications for animals, plants, and even entire ecosystems.

- Light pollution is the only pollution that cost more to perpetuate than to eliminate.

Feedback from audiences was always very positive and everyone agreed that they see the problem in a completely different light. Anyone wishing to use it can contact me for a copy of my presentation. An entry on the Enviropaedia web site was subscribed to, as well as a page created on the ASSA Pretoria web site. No formal feedback was received through either of these two channels. A plan is in place to start a Facebook group to make the message accessible to the modern (younger, on-line active) generation. The most positive feedback so far reached was from Dawie van Vuuren from MetroGIS (PTY) Ltd. They do environmental impact studies and are looking for a repeatable method to easily judge the state of light pollution in areas that they study.

We are currently experimenting with recording the state of the sky photographically. The basic idea is to find standard camera settings to use that show what can be seen naked eye and are sensitive enough to see changes and are repeatable. All that is needed is then to take photos of predetermined areas at different times to create a permanent record that can be compared with a similar set of photos taken at a different date. The first results are very encouraging. Having a photographic record of the sky over a location enables seeing changes over time and provides physical proof of any change. We also found this simple method very valuable to identify sources of light pollution and sky glow, and most importantly, it does count as physical evidence in court. A full report will be done once our current experiments are completed.

The only advice that I can give is: Talk about this, inform everyone you meet, apathy is our biggest enemy. ☆

ASSA Scholarships Report

Maciej Soltynski

The ASSA Scholarship was established in 2000 to encourage the study of Astronomy at any Southern African university at the 2nd and 3rd year level. The Scholarship is funded by ASSA with occasional financial support from the ASSA Endowment Trust. There were no successful candidates in 2010.

In 2011 the ASSA Scholarship was award-

ed to Claire Antel, a 3rd year BSc student at UCT. The holder in 2006 and 2007, Wendy Williams, has completed her MSc in astronomy at UCT, and is now working towards her PhD on LOFAR observations of radio galaxies at the University of Leiden. Renée Holzek, holder of the ASSA Scholarship in 2005, continued with her DPhil studies in observational cosmology at Oxford University.

South African Astronomical Observatory - Astronomical Society of Southern Africa Scholarships

The purpose of the three SAAO - ASSA Scholarships is to encourage current or *intending* undergraduates (i.e. 1st, 2nd or 3rd year) studying for a BSc degree at any university in South Africa, who have a stated interest in astronomy, to prepare for furthering their interest. The Scholarships are financed by SAAO and are administered by ASSA. The value of each Scholarship in 2010 was R4 600, and in 2011, R5 000

In 2010 the Scholarship was awarded to Riyaadh Jamodien, a 1st year BSc student at the University of Stellenbosch. In 2011 the Scholarship was awarded as follows: To Allen Versfeld (an ASSA

member) who is in his 2nd year of BSc studies at UNISA and to Fawaaz Davids, 1st year BSc student at UCT. Mpati Ramatsoku, who held the Scholarship in 2007 and 2008 and Rocco Coppejans, who held the Scholarship in 2008 and 2009, both completed their BSc (Hons) in the National Astrophysics and Space Science Programme (NASSP) at UCT and are now studying for their Masters degree in the same programme.

Expression of appreciation

Dr Ian Glass, Andrew Gray, Kevin Goven-der in (2010) and Dr Enrico Oliver (in 2011) are thanked for their valued inputs in the evaluation and selection of candidates during the period under review. Thanks also go to the teachers and lecturers who supplied assessments of candidates. ☆

news notes

Farewell to Phil and Anne Charles

After seven years at the helm of the SAAO in South Africa, several farewell occasions were held for Phil and Anne Charles. Described here are two functions on two consecutive days, held at SAAO Sutherland and Cape Town respectively.

Sutherland

The Sutherland staff put on something extraordinary to bid Phil and Anne goodbye. Something they will remember for a long time to come. Before going off to lunch at the Recreation Centre on site, everybody gathered in the parking area in front of the hostel. Martin Wilkinson, SALT Systems

Engineer, acted as master of ceremonies.

Possibly sensing something unusual was to follow, the guests of honour appeared slightly nervous. First, the Royal couple were to be welcomed by a trumpet salute. But "due to budgetary constraints, 'n boer maak 'n plan", this had to be replaced by a vuvuzela chorus! Phil was then presented with his very own vuvuzela (custom made, hexagonally shaped to match the SALT mirror segments) and signed by members of the SALT team. This he was obviously obliged to blow. For the safety of all concerned, it was decided that Phil should



Pictures: Lisa Crause



Picture: Steve Potter

