

The 100th ASSA Annual General Meeting (AGM) was held at the SAAO Auditorium in Observatory, Cape Town on 1 August 2012. The following Council and Section reports were presented.

ASSA President's Report 2011 – 2012

IS Glass

New Constitution

A new Constitution came into effect this year, with the idea of simplifying our operations and making the Society more inclusive. Members are now encouraged to join via the ASSA regional Centres but may choose to stay affiliated as Country Members if necessary. All Centre Members are now full members of ASSA and all Centre Chairmen are automatically Council members.

During the year a number of relatively minor problems relating to the new Constitution emerged and a committee consisting of Lerika Cross (Hon Secretary), Adv AJ Nel (Hon Treasurer), Michael Poll (Past President), Chris Stewart (Council member) and myself has produced an update which will be presented to the Members for ratification later in the year. This should give enough time for membership numbers for 2012-13 to stabilise.

Another significant change is the abolition of the Business Manager post. With the popularity of the new *Sky Guides* this had almost become a full time job. Cliff Turk as (unpaid) incumbent for several years effectively marketed the publication, delivered it to bookstores and dealt with a very large number of private subscribers. With a circulation of about 4000 copies, it

had become too much for one voluntary officer to handle. The distribution of the *Sky Guide* to non-members has now been handed over to Struik Random House Publishers on contract, with the understanding that all members may receive it through their Centres at a special low price. The handling of well over 100 non-member subscriptions to *MNASSA*, many of them in foreign currencies, also required a great deal of correspondence. The printing, postage, subscription agents' fees, bank charges, reminders and replacement of missing issues had also become costly. It was decided that *MNASSA* should no longer be printed and that it would instead be downloadable free of charge by all from the website www.mnassa.org.za which SAAO kindly agreed to host.

Registration as a non-profit organization

There are considerable advantages to the Society to register as a non-profit organization. The Hon Treasurer, Adv AJ Nel, has set this process going.

A number of the proposed changes to the Constitution are being made to comply with the requirements for this registration.

Membership 2011-2012

Pat Booth agreed to be co-opted as Mem-

bership Secretary following the 23 August 2011 Council Meeting and I (as acting Membership Secretary) handed over to her.

Mr Ronnie Glass who has acted as Honorary Auditor for many years, was made an Honorary member on 9 November 2011.

As mentioned, all members of the Centres are now ASSA members according to the new Constitution. The following are the membership numbers (July 2012):

Bloemfontein	75	23 Aug 4 (7)
Cape	60	15 Oct (10)
Garden Route	49	7 Nov (7)
Country Members	169	7 Feb (11)
Durban	90	27 March (10)
Hermanus	92	8 May (12)
Johannesburg	159	26 June (not yet available)
Pretoria	101	
Grand Total	795	

AGM 2011

The contributions to the 2011 AGM were reported in the October 2011 *MNASSA* and the minutes have been placed on the Society's web site.

Council Matters

Because the Council members are scattered around South Africa, one of the changes allowed by the new Constitution is the possibility of meeting via Skype or similar means. Chris Stewart is thanked for acting as the "exchange" for this year's meetings. Using Skype has not always been problem free but it has functioned well enough to be

a practical arrangement.

The Hon Secretary, Lerika Cross, has prepared and distributed agendas and minutes for each Council meeting.

Mike Poll (Past President) has prepared a checklist of deadlines etc. for matters that have to be considered by Council each year.

Dates of Council meetings and attendances:

Sky Guide

Auke Slotegraaf took over once again as *Sky Guide* Editor for the 2011 edition. He had previously edited the *Guide* in 2003-5 and, with M Soltynski, had been responsible for putting it into its current form. Since the time that AB Jones (followed by W Trow) took over for the 2006 edition, the editors have been paid for their work. Their honoraria have been well-covered by the sales revenue.

Auke has accepted a contract for the 2013 edition, which is well under way. I would like to congratulate Auke on the high standard he has brought once again to this onerous task.

Sales of the *Sky Guide* over the last few years have contributed strongly to the financial well-being of the Society. I would like to pay tribute to Cliff Turk for building up its circulation over his years as Business Manager. Sales as of 30 July came to 4964 for the 2012 edition.

The arrangement with Struik Random House has so far worked very smoothly as mentioned above.

MNASSA

MNASSA under the editorship of Case Rijdsdijk has been published six times during the year. Internet distribution appears to have worked well. The hit rates can be seen at <http://www.saa.ac.za/awstats/awstats.pl?config=www.mnassa.org.za>

Willie Koorts has continued to do the layout and typesetting of each issue and has placed each one on the *MNASSA* download page (www.mnassa.org.za).

Maciej Soltynski has assisted as book editor and I have contributed some news items.

We thank all those who have reported news and contributed items during the year.

Website

Christian Hettlage (Cape Centre) has been webmaster during the year. A small sub-committee driven by Auke Slotegraaf has been considering a new layout for the pages.

ScopeX

I would like to congratulate our Hon Secretary Lerika Cross and members of the Pretoria and Johannesburg Centre for another successful ScopeX, held this year on 21 July and which I had the privilege of attending. This has become I believe the most successful astronomy outreach event in South Africa with an attendance of about 1400.

ASSA Symposium

The Biennial Symposium of ASSA will be held in Cape Town in the SAAO auditorium on October 13-14. This year is an exciting one for Southern African astronomy, following the SKA siting decision, the successful operation of the SALT telescope and the enhancement of the HESS gamma-ray telescope in Namibia.

Registration will open and there will be a braai on the 12th. The Cape Centre will host this event. The Organising Committee consists of C de Coning, IS Glass, C Hettlage, R Jones, K Kirkham, L Labuscagne, S Manxoyi and J Richards and has met on several occasions.

C Hettlage has set up a web site for the event, viz <http://symposium2012.assa.saa.ac.za/>

ASSET

Council has been unhappy about the absence of reports from the ASSA Endowment Trust (ASSET) since the year ending 2006 and has asked its Secretary and Trustees to bring us up to date as soon as

possible – not that anything untoward is believed to have occurred. According to the Trust deed of ASSET they should give us a report at each Annual General Meeting. We have no rights otherwise over ASSET, which is completely separate as an organization from ASSA and was founded to support us in case of financial difficulties. These were a worry at the time when we provided *Sky and Telescope* for members and exchange rates were fluctuating wildly.

ASSA being at present in good financial condition, we have asked the ASSET Trustees to give us some indication of how they see their role in the future.

The ASSET balance sheets for the years ending 2004 to 2008 inclusive have been presented to the Hon Auditor for signing and will be posted on the ASSA web site when this has been done.

Financial Reports

The former Honorary Treasurer, due to personal circumstances, was not able to present audited reports for several years. However, with the recovery of his health, he has now completed the outstanding items. The five years up to mid-2010 have been audited and have been placed online at http://assa.saao.ac.za/html/235_reports.html and <http://assa.saao.ac.za/resource/AuditedAccounts/Audit2010.pdf>

I thank the former Hon Treasurer, Cliff Turk, and the Hon Auditor, Ronnie Glass, for their work on behalf of the Society.

Gill Medals

A further six blanks were ordered by Chris Stewart from Gold Reef City Mint and received. They are stored in a safe at SAAO.

Guidelines for Section Directors

Auke Slotegraaf is drafting a set of uniform guidelines for Section Directors

Sky and Telescope for Hon. Members

It was decided that those honorary members entitled to a *Sky and Telescope* subscription should arrange for this themselves and claim the cost back via the Hon Treasurer and the Hon Membership Secretary. It was felt that this arrangement would obviate delays and confusion.

Thanks

We would like to express here our thanks to the South African Astronomical Observatory for hosting our meetings and for providing web facilities for the Society and its publication *MNASSA*.

Council would also like to express its appreciation to Magda Streicher, one of the Society's stalwarts, for her kindness in preparing the Observing Awards certificates, which she has done since 2005.

The Section Directors have also provided an important service to the Society, especially its actively observing members.

Tony Jones and Karen Koch of the Cape Centre kindly organized for the refreshments for tonight's Annual General Meeting and we here express our gratitude to them.

Finally, I would like to express my appreciation to the very helpful 2011-2012 Council and especially to Lerika Cross as Honorary Secretary and Adv AJ Nel as Honorary

Treasurer. Meetings have gone very smoothly and efficiently and the Society seems to me to be running well thanks to their untiring efforts. ☆

Double Star Section Report

Dave Blane

During the course of the year, double star observations have been received from one observer, Magda Streicher. She used her 12-inch and 16-inch S/C telescopes with an Astrometric eyepiece to measure the position and separation of a 16 double stars in Circinus. She also gave detailed descriptions of the colours and appearance of these stars in the eyepiece. In addition she discussed the possibility of other stars in the field being associated with some of the systems. The observa-

tions of doubles in Circinus reported are only samples of her much larger programme undertaken.

The director continued his programme of measuring double stars using a 6-inch refractor and an Astrometric eyepiece. These measurements will be published in due course.

Other than this no other activity has been reported. ☆

Variable Star Section Report

Christopher Middleton

Very few observations have been reported during the last year. Personally, my observation time has been dramatically reduced due to university work load and my PhD progress.

The ESKOM tariff hikes have also had a very negative effect on Highveld winter observations. The levels of pollutants in the air have increased dramatically with the effect of making any accurate photometric measurements almost impossible.

The future of photometry in the Highveld during winter is bleak.

Submission of observations to AAVSO has been hindered by the change in the software platform that AAVSO has made. It is a challenge trying to keep up with their improvements!

A concerted effort will be made during the summer recess to continue with observing programs. ☆

Comet and Meteor Section Report

Tim Cooper

Summary of Observed Meteor Showers

Observer (no. of showers observed)	Showers Observed and duration	Total Time hrs
Mary Fanner (2)	Gamma Normids (7.4), delta Pavonids (5.0)	12.4
Tim Cooper (2)	Eta Aquariids (2.0), alpha Circinids (4.2)	6.2
Tony Jones (1)	Alpha Centaurids (5.0)	5.0
Karen Koch (1)	Alpha Centaurids (4.8)	4.8
Total		28.4

Five meteor showers were observed by four individuals totalling 28.4 hours observations.

Notes on Some Specific Showers Observed:

Alpha Centaurids - the shower was observed by Karen Koch and Tony Jones.

Gamma Normids – observed by Mary Fanner, who found peak activity of nine gamma Normids in 1.9 hours observation with LM=5.5 on the night of March 13/14.

Delta Pavonids – observed by Mary Fanner seeing 11 shower members in 5.0 hours under LM=5.3 on the nights of April 4/5 and 5/6.

Eta Aquariids – Tim Cooper managed observations on the only clear morning, that

of May 4, seeing 13 eta Aquariids in 2.0 hours with LM=5.4.

Alpha Circinids – a possible repeat outburst of this shower, observed in 1977, was predicted by Peter Jenniskens. Tim Cooper detected no shower members amongst 22 meteors in 4.2 hours observation.

Summary of Observed Fireballs

2011 saw a total of eight fireball reports. The full details have been submitted for publication in *MNASSA* as a separate article. The observed events are summarised in the table below.

Summary of Observed Comets

Five comets were observed in 2011 by four individuals as summarised in the

Summary of Observed Fireballs

Date, 2011	Time, UT	Observer	Location	V mag
May 6	22h31	Simon Walsh and others	Waterberg, Limpopo	-5
July 20	16h28	Louis Piovesan	Estcourt, KZN	-5
August 18	16h25	Sarah Coronaios	Makhado, Limpopo	-7
August 19	19h07	Lourens van Niekerk and Andrew Morgan	Makhado and Tuli Wilderness Area	> -5
August 23	20h15	Peter Herbert	Seapoint, W Cape	> -3
August 27	04h00	Laurence Matthews	Barrydale, S Cape	-4
September 23	17h13	Constant Volschenk	Observatory, Gauteng	-3
October 21	17h15	Jessy de Kock and Brandon Talbot	Peninsula, W Cape	-5

Summary of Observed Comets

ICQ Observer Code	C/2009 F4	C/2006 S3	C/2009 P1	213P	C/2011 W3
BEG01			●		●
COO02	●	●	●	●	●
STR03			●		
WAKxx			●		
KORxx			●		●
TOUxx			●		

Key to observers in Table:

BEG01 = Mike Begbie

STR03 = Magda Streicher

KORxx = Kos Coronaios

COO02 = Tim Cooper

WAKxx = Nigel Wakefield

TOUxx = Oleg Toumilovic

table above.

Begbie and Tim Cooper, photographed by Kos Coronaios.

Notes on Specific Comets Observed

C/2009 F4 McNaught – imaged by Tim Cooper.

C/2006 S3 LONEOS – imaged by Tim Cooper.

C/2009 P1 Garradd – was well observed by Magda Streicher, Nigel Wakefield, Mike Begbie and Tim Cooper, photographed by Kos Coronaios and Oleg Toumilovic, sketched by Magda Streicher and CCD imaged by Tim Cooper.

213P van Ness – was imaged by Tim Cooper.

C/2011 W3 Lovejoy – observed by Mike

Summary of Asteroid Observations

The following asteroidal occultation events were attempted:

TYC 1275-01666-1 by (559) Nanon on 2011 March 16 - cloud reported by Nigel Wakefield.

TYC 0807-00901-1 by (7) Iris on 2011 April 25 – cloud reported by Nigel Wakefield and Tim Cooper

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

Deep-sky Section Report

Auke Slotegraaf

It is a pleasure to thank a growing list of contributors to the Section during the year under review. The regular contributors remain Magda Streicher, Richard Ford and Auke Slotegraaf. First-time contributors include Andre de la Porte (Pretoria, South Africa), Etienne

Entres (Harrismith, South Africa), Daniel Acker, Kim Gowney (UK) and Tom Bryant (USA).

A special word of thanks is due to Percy Jacobs of the Pretoria Centre for taking the initiative to co-ordinate an active

group of observers in the Centre. The director looks forward with great anticipation to future reports from George Dehlen, Louis Kloke, Grant Thompson, Pat Kühn, Michael Poll, Andre de la Porte and Craig Kloke.

Observation of the deep sky forms a natural part of the activities of most observing groups. Observers are encouraged to submit their observations to the Section. Examples include the observing evenings arranged by the Cape Centre and the West Rand Astronomy Club.

During the Spring Southern Star Party (October 2011) three observers, Pierre de Villiers, Andre de Villiers and Wim Filmalter, successfully completed the Beginner's Observing Challenge.

Section stalwart Magda Streicher published her long-awaited tome, "*Astronomy Delights*", the first book of its

kind in South Africa (for a book review, see *MNASSA*, April 2012, pp.84-85). This beautifully illustrated limited-edition work encapsulates Magda's unique perspective on the Universe beyond our solar system.

The Director gave two observing workshops during the year, on 5 March (at the Autumn Southern Star Party) and 25 November at a deep-sky weekend near Sutherland. Given that the Internet (and particularly Skype) has become a reliable communication channel, the Director invites all Centres or observing groups to take part in these workshops through a web-based meet-up.

Finally, Merit Awards for deep-sky observing have been awarded to Richard Ford, Andrie van der Linde, Percy Jacobs, George Dehlen, Louis Kloke, Grant Thompson, Pat Kühn, Michael Poll, Andre de la Porte and Craig Kloke. ☆

Solar Section Report

Johan Retief

Since my appointment in October 2011, I have been doing a review of the work being done by the ASSA regarding Solar Observation in the RSA during the past five years. A quick review of the situation is as follows:

- a. The website of the solar section was last updated in May 2007.
- b. The last solar bulletin was published by ASSA December 2009.
- c. The website of the Bloemfontein Solar

- d. There are no ASSA solar programmes running since 2009.
- e. At no stage were there more than seven observers involved in the observation programmes by the section and observations have mainly been limited to sun spot counts.
- f. I have failed to find any organization in the RSA that is currently interested in the results of solar observations by amateurs.

- g. There are many robotic telescopes and cameras, on earth and in orbit, that seem to cover the entire scope of the possible results that can be obtained by amateurs in Southern Africa.
- h. Amateur solar telescopes like the Coronado range are more aimed at the recreational solar observation by the amateur than for serious research, these telescopes are also quite expensive.
- i. There has been no recent communication to the directorate by any amateur observer that indicates an interest in solar observation.

I have visited the website of the Solar Section of the British Astronomical Society (BAS) at http://britastro.org/baa/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=43&Itemid=81 and found that they have an active and well organized solar section with about 70 observers sending reports to them. These latter observers are from as far afield as New Zealand, Australia and most of Europe.

I have reviewed the information provided to observers by the solar section in the

past and have produced a rough draft of a guide on solar observational techniques for beginners in astronomy (this has been done for the beginners section of the Hermanus Astronomy Centre and not specifically for ASSA's Solar Section).

Conclusion

It is my contention that the continued maintenance of a Solar Directorate by ASSA should be seriously reconsidered. After the review it seems that the continued maintenance of the section is really not worthwhile.

Recommendations

Based on the above the following recommendations are made to the Council for consideration:

1. That ASSA's Solar Section be discontinued.
2. That the websites for both the ASSA and Bloemfontein Solar Sections be closed down.
3. That amateur astronomers in Southern Africa who wish to participate in solar observation be invited to join BAS's Solar Section. ☆

Occultation Section Report

Brian Fraser

Once again there were very few favourable minor planet occultation predictions for the areas where our active observers reside and no occultations were observed. We have again used the predictions provided on Steve Preston's website.

An attempt was made to observe a lunar occultation with a Philips webcam attached to a motor driven 8-inch telescope with an audible time service recorded on top of the visual picture. This proved to be very successful and will be used again for bright lunar occultations. ☆

Cosmology Section Report

Frikkie de Bruyn

Purpose

The purpose of the Cosmology Section is:

- to promote an interest in the study of cosmology,
- to disseminate news, press releases and scientific papers of a cosmological nature,
- to promote the study of cosmology as a science.

Activities

A wide variety of events were discussed in 2011 among a total of 51 members. It was 32 years since Guth proposed his theory to explain the exponential expansion of the early universe. This theory is still accepted by most cosmologists today to describe cosmological principles such as the homogeneity and isotropy of the universe. An interview with Guth about his theory was circulated to members of the Cosmology Section.

The effects of dark energy were detected in the Local Group of Galaxies and a great deal of research papers about dark matter were made available to members. Since some members do not read scientific papers, a summary of the paper was provided with a link to the internet to enable those members who wish to do so, to read the paper.

The director responded to articles about the early universe published in the local

newspaper and some of the director's responses were published on the internet.

A great deal of attention was given to continuing experiments at the Large Hadron Collider at CERN to detect the possible existence of the Higgs boson. The particle will, if discovered, complete the Standard Model of Particle Physics. The particle was not found but the mass range within which it should be present has been established. A new particle, the $\chi_b(3P)$ was discovered which could help to explain the structure of matter.

An interesting paper explaining the expansion of the universe as being the result of turbulence at the Planck temperature and not dark energy has been circulated.

A total number of 218 submissions were made by members, including discussions on submissions, questions arising from submissions, etc.

Future activities

Attempts by scientists at the LHC to confirm or reject the existence of the Higgs boson will be of great interest. Research to detect the true nature of dark energy or, an alternative explanation for the accelerated expansion of the universe will continue. ☆

Historical Section Report

Chris de Coning

During the past year (Calendar Year 2011) the following has happened concerning the History of Astronomy.

Website

The Website has undergone a major change. Previously, in 2007, the look and layout was totally changed. In 2009 more content was added to the website. The process is on-going in nature.

Archive

- The scanning of the most valuable documents in the Archive, the minute books of ASSA Council and Cape Centre, was completed. A digital version of the Archive is in the process of being made available to researchers and the public by placing it on the website of the Historical Section. Thanks to Lesley Hart for her assistance and for allowing us to use the A3 scanner, a special piece of equipment required to scan Imperial (non-metric) documents
- The Archive, which was housed in totally unsuitable conditions (see previous report), has been relocated. The original irreplaceable material has been placed on loan to The Manuscripts & Archives Department at the University of Cape Town (UCT).
- In 2011 MNASSA became a digital publication. This represents special challenges to the Archive as a secure method and format to store digital material for long periods of time still needs to be developed.

Publications

Individuals in their private capacities published articles of historical nature in MNASSA. Please note my appreciation to the following people:

- Case Rijdsdijk: *Neptune turns One*, Vol 70, nos. 3 & 4, April 2011.
- Greg Roberts: *Yuri Gagarin - The Columbus of Space*, Vol 70, nos. 3 & 4, April 2011.
- *Hubble turns 21*, Vol 70, nos. 5 & 6, June 2011.
- Ian Glass: *In the footsteps of La Caille, Everest and Maclear on the Kapokberg*, Vol 70 nos 7 & 8, August 2011.

Obituaries

MNASSA published obituaries on the following astronomers:

- Willard Boyle: 1924 - 2011. Vol 70 nos. 5 & 6 Jun 2011.
- Christina Scott, Africa's foremost science journalist dies. Vol 70, nos 11 & 12, Dec 2011

Friends of the Cape Town Observatory

The Friends of the Cape Town Observatory was created in order to save and conserve buildings and instruments that are of historical value. Their first priority was the McClean building at the SAAO which had developed serious problems with its hydraulic floor and dome. Prior to 2011, due to the cost involved and the recession not much happened.

Then the South African Government hosted the G8 and BRICK countries ministers on science and technology. It was decided to host an event in the McClean building. Adequate money was made available to repair and paint the McClean dome. Due to this unexpected windfall the building is now repaired. A special word of gratitude needs to be expressed towards the Department of Science and Technology, the Friends of the Cape Town Observatory, and in particular to one of their members, an engineer who took the task upon himself to

co-ordinate and do many of the repairs himself. Thanks to Wim Filmhalter.

Boyden Observatory Museum

In 2011 Boyden Observatory renovated the administration building on the premises and turned it into a museum. Previously, some of the objects were housed at the Mangaung Fire station Museum but have now been moved to a venue that is more in keeping with the topic. Education and astronomical outreach forms an integral part of the museum. ☆

Education and Public Communication Section Report

Case Rijdsdijk

Since the inception of this section it has been difficult to achieve the original aims set out, mainly due to poor communication between centres. The director has continued to develop resources for many educational establishments and Science Centres, in addition to presenting many talks and workshops at schools and other groups on behalf of ASSA. And other centres have achieved many good outreach activities, eg JHB/Pretoria with ScopeX, Hermanus with the MONET project and Durban with the Astronomy Starter kit.

of ScopeX or the biennial Symposium. However several efforts at doing this failed – probably because the centres are far apart and are unable to meet on a regular basis. It is clear that this section needs to revisit its role within ASSA, and this will be done in accordance the councils' aim of reviewing of the role, purpose and objectives of all sections within the ASSA. ☆

Originally it was hoped that all centres would send through their outreach programme and materials to enable the section to approach major funders for an annual ASSA function along the lines

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. In 2012 ASSA Council specifically set aside an amount of R100 000 as capital to generate funding for the Scholarship.

There were no successful applicants in 2012. In 2011 the ASSA Scholarship was awarded to Claire Antel, a 3rd year BSc student at UCT. Claire obtained her B.Sc. degree at UCT with distinction in Astrophysics and Physics, and the degree with distinction. In 2012 she has embarked on a B.Sc. Honours in Astrophysics and Space Science in the National Astrophysics and Space Science Programme (NASSP) at UCT.

The holder in 2006 and 2007, Wendy Williams, is now working towards her PhD on Giant Metrewave Radio Telescope (GMRT) and LOFAR observations of radio galaxies at the University of Leiden.

Dr Renée Hlozek, holder of the ASSA Scholarship in 2005, successfully completed her DPhil studies in observational cosmology at Oxford University, and has been appointed a Lyman Spitzer Jr. Postdoctoral Fellow in the Astrophysics department of Princeton University.

SAAO – ASSA Scholarships

The purpose of the three South African Astronomical Observatory – Astronomical Society of Southern Africa 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 2012 was R6 000, up from R5 000 in 2011.

In 2011 the Scholarships were awarded as follows:

To Allen Versfeld (an ASSA member) who was in his 2nd year of BSc studies at UNISA, and is continuing his studies in 2012.

To Fawaaz Davids, 1st year BSc student at UCT.

In 2012 Fawaaz Davids was re-awarded the Scholarship, and continues with his studies towards a BSc at UCT.

Mpati Ramatsoku, who held the Scholarship in 2007 and 2008 and Rocco Coppjans, who held the Scholarship in 2008 and 2009, continue their studies for a Masters degree in the NASSP at UCT. Rocco is working on a project which involves commissioning and characterising the new Sutherland High-speed Op-

tical Cameras (SHOC) that will be used on the 30, 40 and 74-inch telescopes at Sutherland.

Expression of appreciation

Dr Ian Glass, Sivuyile Manxoyi (SAAO) and Andrew Gray 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. SAAO is thanked for making funds available for the SAAO-ASSA Scholarships. ☆

Concise Financial Report

AJ Nel (Treasurer)

Note: Numbers in [square] brackets are for the previous financial year.

Overview of Financial Year, July 2011 – June 2012

The ASSA derived a gross income of R101 561.06 for the financial year, compared to R127 658.49 for the previous year. Gross expenditure amounted to R73 297.94 [R106 742.04]. The Society thus made a net profit of R28 263.12 [R20 916.45].

As at 30 June 2012 the Society's major assets consisted of the cash in its business account amounting to R194 238.04 [R167 100.72], as well as approximately R270 000 in two investment accounts.

Royalties made up 68.88% [40.1%] of the income received whilst membership fees made up 10.5% [18%] and the internal sale of *Sky Guides* equated to 9.82% [18%].

Almost 53% [25%] of the expenses related to editorial cost, whilst 27.75% [25%] of the cost was associated with printing. Reimbursements were down

to less than 10% [25%] and once off costs made up approximately 15% of the expenses.

Forecast

In lieu of constitutional changes it is foreseen that membership income decrease slightly as some benefit of the previous dispensation was still derived in the current financial year. This decrease will however be set off against costs associated with *MNASSA* incurred in the current financial year, which cost will not be incurred in future years. Editorial cost will, as in the previous year, be built into the production cost of the *Sky Guide* and as such the expense will be covered, though no future profit (other than royalties) would be derived from *Sky Guide* sales by the Society.

The Society will early in the 2012/2013 financial year become a registered non-profit organisation and will be required to conform more actively to its aim of distributing bursaries. In this regard it is foreseen that approximately fifty percent of the funds in the current business ac-

count as well as all the funds in the two investment accounts be transferred to a central investment account and that the annual interest earned with the said funds be used to settle the bursaries.

It is further foreseen that auditing (which has been an ongoing problem) will be brought up to date during the 2012/2013 year, specifically as only the 2010/2011

and 2011/2012 years are still to be audited.

Conclusion

The Society is currently financially strong and stable with ample reserves. It is foreseen that the Society will show similar financial results in the 2012 / 2013 financial year. See the ASSA website for further details. ☆

Summary of ASSA Awards 2012

Deep-sky Section: Director, Auke Slotegraaf
Richard Ford was awarded the General Observer's Certificate for deep-sky observations submitted to the Section during the year 2012.

Andrie van der Linde received a Merit Award for deep-sky observations submitted to the Section.

George Dehlen, Louis Kloke, Percy Jacobs, Grant Thompson, Pat Kühn, Michael Poll, Andre de la Ponte and Craig Kloke received Merit Awards for deep-sky observations made during the year 2012.

Cosmology Section: Director, JF de Bruyn
Case Rijdsdijk and Maciej Soltynski received Merit Awards in recognition for outstanding contributions to the Cosmology Section

Comet, Asteroid and Meteor Section: Director, Tim Cooper

The following people received General Awards for Observations of the events in-

dicated. Mary Fanner for the gamma Nor-mid and delta Pavonid meteor showers. Tony Jones and Karen Koch for the alpha Caurid meteor shower. Mike Begbie and Kos Coronaios for comets C/2009 P1 and C/2011 W3. Magda Streicher and Nigel Wakefield for comet C/2009 P1.

Presidential Awards 2012

Auke Slotegraaf was awarded the Long Service Award for his devotion of many years of service to ASSA in a variety of ways such as the *Sky Guide*, outreach and Deep-sky Section.

Citation: Auke Slotegraaf has devoted many years of service to ASSA and has always made himself available to help the Society. He has many times led the way in promoting outreach activities and has been the backbone of Deep-sky Observing in South Africa.

Auke was ratified as a new member on 8 April 1991 and has since taken on many roles. He was Editor of *MNASSA* in the

years 1994-2005 and Webmaster in 2004-6. He has been an Honorary Member since 2002 and a Presidential Award was made to him in 2006. He undertook the onerous task of editing the *Sky Guide* in 2003-5 and has been its Editor again since the 2011 edition.

He has contributed via his star charts, his constellation wheel chart and his webpage which contains a plethora of southern hemisphere astronomical information. Not content with just providing the basics, he has also included information about astronomers and has given detailed data about objects in an easily understandable way.

Willie Koorts got the Presidents' Award for all his hard work editing and setting *MNASSA* for many years.

Citation: Willie Koorts has made an enormous contribution to the ASSA over

the years in a wide variety of ways. Since he joined the ASSA in 1990 he has been active in many outreach activities which include the local schools in both Wellington and Sutherland, talking at holiday camps, participating and helping in ASSA Star parties and every year he spends time with various Voortrekker groups. In addition he is always there to help sort out other people's telescope and other technical problems. He has also been a frequent presenter at the Annual ScopeX exhibition in Johannesburg, and he continues with these activities up to the present

In 2004 he took on the onerous task of editing and producing the ASSA Monthly Notes, *MNASSA*, which he handed over to the current editor at the end of 2010, but he continues as layout editor, a time consuming task. His work is always produced to the most exacting standards. ☆

news notes

New Director for SAAO

NRF press release, 12 July 2012

We are pleased to announce that Professor Ted (TB) Williams has agreed to join the NRF as Director: South African Observatory (SAAO) with effect from 01 January 2013.

Prof Williams brings with him a wealth of experience and knowledge which includes research in observational extragalactic astronomy and instrumentation development, as well as major leadership positions at the Southern African Large Telescope (SALT) and Rutgers University Department of Physics and Astronomy.

