



Issue 178/ June 2024

ARMENIAN
ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY

ArAS Newsletter



EDITOR: MELINE ASRYAN

CONTENTS

Local News

The 10 th Byurakan Science Camp	2
BAO Hosts Insightful Seminars on Various Topics	3
Cooperation Between the IAU E-ROAD and SWCA ROAD	4
Astrophotography Competition at the Byurakan Astrophysical Observatory	5

International News

Astronomy & Astrophysics: Board of Directors Meeting	6
IAU Announces Results of Elections for Divisions and Commissions	7
CAP 2024 Conference: La Cité de l'espace: Hub for CAP 2024	8

Other News

Apply to Host the IAU Hands-On Workshops	9
--	---

LOCAL NEWS

The 10th Byurakan Science Camp

On 8-15 June, the Byurakan Astrophysical Observatory (BAO) hosted the 10th Byurakan Science Camp (10BSC).

It brought together 38 children aged 9-12 from different regions of the Republic of Armenia. As always, the Science Camp stood out with its rich programme. It launched with introductory excursions introducing the children with the Observatory, its founder Victor Ambartsumian's life and activities, as well as the telescopes.

Within the framework of the programme, the children enriched their knowledge by participating in interactive lectures held by professionals in various fields, including BAO researchers and invited speakers.

The Camp participants also took part in different games and competitions, testing their knowledge of Astronomy, Geography, and more. During their free time, they went



sightseeing in the nearby historical places and had fun celebrating the Armenian holiday, Vardavar. On the last day of the Science Camp, winners of the competitions were awarded special prizes.

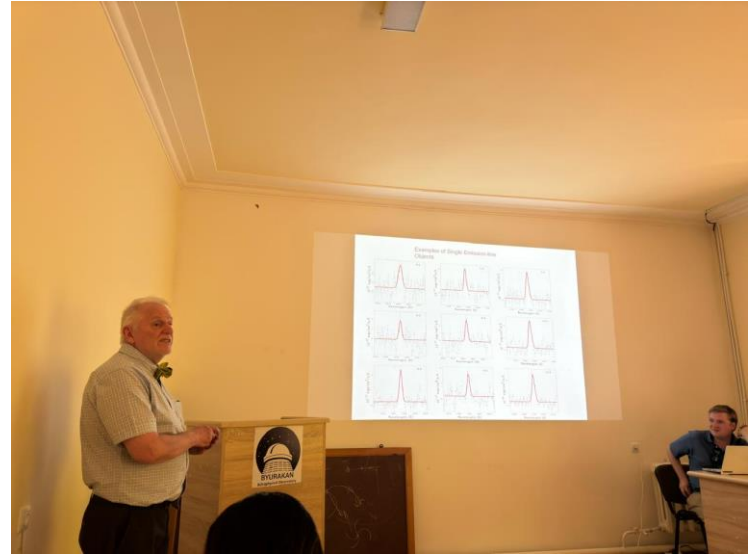
It should be noted that the 10BSC camp was partially funded by FAR. Sona Farmanyan is the Coordinator of these events.

BAO Hosts Insightful Seminars on Various Topics

June was full of insightful seminars at the BAO, featuring prominent speakers like Donald Schneider from the Pennsylvania State University (USA) and George Alecian from Obs. Paris-Meudon (France).

On June 13, Prof. Schneider had an on-site seminar devoted to “The Hobby-Eberly Telescope Dark Energy Experiment (HETDEX)”. In his talk he presented a brief overview of the Hobby-Eberly Telescope Dark Energy Experiment (HETDEX). You can find out more about the seminar by reading the [abstract](#) of the talk.

On June 17, the BAO hosted an online seminar by Prof. Alecian. He gave a talk on “Unraveling the Enigma of Chemically Peculiar Stars”. The speaker mentioned that some chemically peculiar stars were first identified as early as the end of the 19th century due to their very strange spectra characterized by unusually strong metallic spectral lines. And over the subsequent decades, these main sequence stars were systematically cataloged and classified into various groups, yet the enrichment (sometimes extreme) of many metals on their surfaces (such as mercury concentrations exceeding those in the Sun by a factor of 10^5 and even more) remained unexplained, rendering these stars enigmatic. Learn more about the talk [here](#).



Donald Schneider at BAO. 2024.

Cooperation Between the IAU E-ROAD and SWCA ROAD

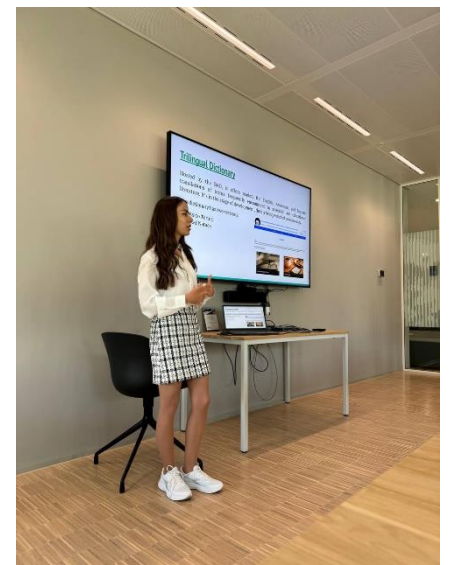
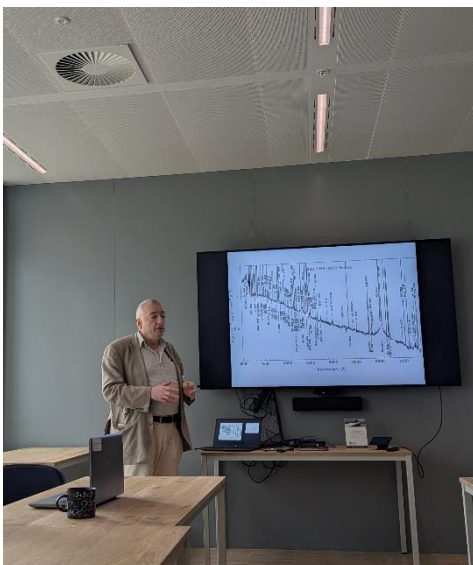
Within the framework of Astronomy project development and coordination, the Byurakan Astrophysical Observatory staff members visited the Leiden University (Netherlands). The Armenian participants of the project were BAO Director Areg Mickaelian, Head of Public Relations Department Gayane Baleyan, and Press Secretary Meline Asryan.

The project launched with a meeting with the Coordinator from Leiden Pedro Russo, Prof. George Miley and the Leiden University team and had a full two-week-long program. The IAU SWCA ROAD representatives held introductory seminars. BAO director Areg Mickaelian presented a talk on “Astronomy and Big Data”, introducing both Armenia's experience in the field and cooperation between BAO and international organizations.

Gayane Baleyan and Meline Asryan made a joint report dedicated to Astronomy Educational and Public Outreach Activities in the IAU South West and Central Asia Regional Office of Astronomy for Development (SWCA ROAD).

This was a great opportunity to introduce the astronomical heritage of Armenia and the programs implemented in the field of science outreach to the researchers of the Leiden University. The Armenian guests also visited the Old Leiden Observatory and Utrecht Sonnenborgh Observatory to get acquainted to their facilities for public visits.

It should be noted that this is the 2nd such cooperation between the BAO and Leiden University. The project was co-sponsored by the European Union's Erasmus+ project and featured a scientific, educational, and public component.



Areg Mickaelian, Gayane Baleyan, Meline Asryan

Astrophotography Competition at the Byurakan Astrophysical Observatory

The Byurakan Astrophysical Observatory is organising an astrophotography contest in the scope of its outreach projects. The contest aims to engage photographers and the general public in Astronomy and highlight the importance of dark sky preservation. It will take place on July 12-19 at the Observatory and will have three main categories:

- Best telescope photos
- Best photo of BAO architecture and territory
- Best photo of the night sky

The winners will receive a prize of 75,000 AMD each as well as have the opportunity to conduct night observations with professional telescopes.

The head of the project is Lilit Darbinyan, a national coordinator of the IAU Office for Astronomy Outreach of Armenia.



INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Astronomy & Astrophysics: Board of Directors Meeting

On 14 June, “Astronomy & Astrophysics” Journal (A&A) Board of Directors meeting took place in Vilnius (Lithuania).

During the meeting, the reports of the previous 2023 activities were presented, and future actions were discussed. Director of the Byurakan Astrophysical Observatory Areg Mickaelian participated in the meeting as well.

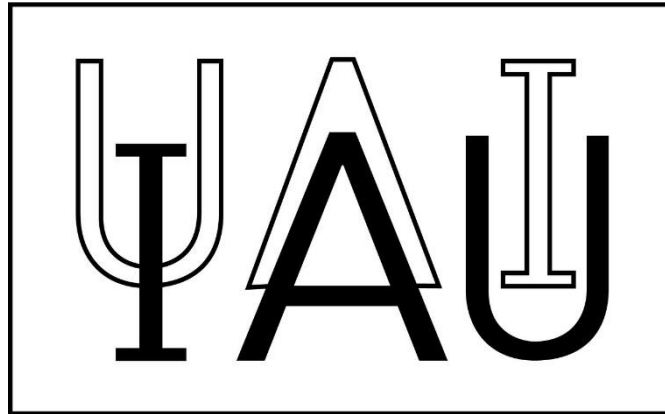
It is interesting to note that A&A is one of the 4 most important astronomical journals in the world.

A&A member countries are Armenia, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Germany, Denmark, Estonia, Spain, Italy, Poland, Croatia, Greece, Hungary, Lithuania, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, Czech Republic, Portugal, Serbia, Slovak Republic, Ukraine, Finland, France, as well as European Southern Observatory and Argentina, Chile that joined recently.



A&A Board of Directors Meeting. 2024.

IAU Announces Results of Elections for Divisions and Commissions



IAU has recently announced the results of Elections for Division Steering Committees (SC) and Commission Organising Committees (OC) for the next triennium 2024-2027.

The elections for Divisions and Commissions are key in renewing the IAU's structures. They occur every three years and coincide with the General Assembly (GA) year, which will take place in August (Cape Town, South Africa).

For the Divisions Steering Committees, 4945 votes were cast, with an average participation of 18.5% by the Division Members.

Armenia will be represented in IAU Division C Education, Outreach and Heritage by Areg Mickaelian, Director of the Byurakan Astrophysical Observatory.

Find the complete list of New members of Divisions' Steering Committees and Commissions Organizing Committees [here](#).

CAP 2024 Conference

La Cité de l'espace: Hub for CAP 2024

On June 24-28, Communicating Astronomy with the Public (CAP) Conference was hosted by La Cité de l'espace (Toulouse, France). It is the only large-scale, international conference for astronomy communication and 11th in such series of conferences organised by the International Astronomical Union (IAU).



Gayane Baleyan. Areg Mickaelian. Meline Asryan

The conference was targeted towards professionals from science communication, informal education, planetaria and science centres, as well as professional and amateur astronomers and brought together professionals from all over the world, including Armenia.

Armenia was represented in the conference by a delegation from the Byurakan Astrophysical Observatory. Among its members were the Director of

BAO Areg Mickaelian, Head of Public Relations Department Gayane Baleyan and Press Secretary Meline Asryan.

The conference stood out with its diverse topics covered through a variety of session formats, including keynote speakers, invited talks, parallel and workshop sessions under the dome.

OTHER NEWS

Apply to Host the IAU Hands-On Workshops

The IAU has announced that you can now apply to host the IAU Hands-On Workshops (I-HOW) programme in 2025 and 2026. Applications should be submitted to one of the I-HOW [steering committee](#) members by the deadline of 31 August 2024.

The [IAU Hands-On Workshops \(I-HOW\) Programme](#) is a series of workshops in space science for early-career scientists in developing countries. It consists of two-week-long, hands-on, capacity-building workshops, during which participants learn how to access and analyse archived astronomical data and use it to conduct original research. With typically three workshops held per year, the I-HOW programme has trained over 1500



participants from over 50 different countries so far. The diverse topics covered have ranged from Earth's surface and atmosphere to space weather and science with small satellites.

The co-sponsors of the program are the [Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation](#) and the IAU, while the local host country should contribute the other half.

ArAS News is the electronic newsletter of the Armenian Astronomical Society. It was distributed to all ArAS members from the beginning of 2002, 4 times a year, typically at the end of each trimester. In 2009-2014, 8 issues annually and since 2015, 12 issues annually have been released.

ArASNews publishes information materials on ArAS, Byurakan Astrophysical Observatory and the Armenian astronomy in general, reports on ArAS Annual Meetings and participation of the Armenian astronomers in important international meetings, articles on occasion of anniversaries of famous Armenian astronomers and ArAS members, acceptance of new ArAS members, achievements of the Armenian astronomers, astronomical education in Armenia, Armenian archaeoastronomy, as well as science articles (reviews) on important studies.

So, if you want to share your studies with the scientific community, send us your articles to melin.asryan@gmail.com. They will be reviewed for the publication in ArAS Newsletters next issues.

[ArAS Newsletter issues](#) are available online.