

Minutes

**IAA Committee on SETI
Saturday, September 30, 2000
9:00 AM, Hotel Sofitel
Rio de Janeiro, Brazil**

1. Attendance:

Chairman: Jill Tarter
Co-Chairs:

Ivan Almar (outgoing) - Claudio Maccone (newly elected)
Tom Pierson

Secretary: Tom Pierson (acting) - Guillermo Lemarchand (newly elected)

Members: Maccone C., DeBiase R., Tarter, D., Norris, R., Kopal, V., Malina R., Lemarchand, G., Shostak S., Oliver, C., Ramirez de Arellano, R., Sterns P., Tarter, J., Rummel, J., Pierson, T.

Guests: Davis, M., Shuch, P., Corbet, R. (see appendix 1)

2. Adoption of the Agenda of the Meeting (see appendix 2)

The chairman, Jill Tarter, opened the meeting at 9 am in Hotel Sofitel.
The agenda was approved as presented.

3. Approval of the Report on the Last Meeting

The minutes of the committee and subcommittees were approved as presented (see appendix 3).

In addition, Ray Norris reported on the subsequent, informal meeting of the post-detection subcommittee that took place this past August during the International Astronomical Union General Assembly in Manchester, England. The subcommittee has been restructuring itself over this past year, and has established a web site. There will be both a publicly accessible version of the site and also a password protected section accessible only to members of the committee. There is some question about whether the subcommittee is to engage only in the case of a confirmed detection, or also to be involved in the advance work prior to confirmation, to help assist in the confirmation. Discussion was supportive of earlier involvement, and in fact it is important to make this possible. The subcommittee was encouraged to continue with this assumption. Stearns strongly encouraged the subcommittee to develop clear plans that everyone can follow as a blueprint for roles in the process.

4. IAA Conferences and Symposia

There were no IAA Conferences or Symposia sponsored by the SETI Committee.

4.1. Academy participation to the International Astronautical Congress

4.1.1. Status of 2000 Sessions at Rio

Session 1

paper IAA-00-IAA.9.1.10 is withdrawn

Session 2

paper IAA-00-IAA.9.2.02 is withdrawn

paper IAA-00-IAA.9.2.03 will be read by third author, Carol Oliver

paper IAA-00-IAA.9.2.05 is withdrawn

4.1.2. Status of Preparation of the 2001 Toulouse

Session 1 SETI Science and Technology

Coordinators:

J. Tarter (USA)

C. Maccone (Italy)

Chairmen:

S. Montebugnoli (Italy)

S. Shostak (USA)

Rapporteur:

S. Shostak (USA)

Session 2 SETI: Interdisciplinary Connections

Coordinators:

J. Tarter (USA)

C. Maccone (Italy)

Chairmen:

R. Malina (USA)

D. Vakoch (USA)

Rapporteur:

P. Sterns

4.1.3. Status of Preparation of the 2002, Houston

Session 1 New SETI Facilities Enlarge the Search (Joint with COSPAR)

Coordinators:

J. Tarter (USA)
D. Vakoch (USA)

Chairmen:

J. Tarter (USA)
C. Maccone (Italy - COSPAR)

Rapporteur:

A. Tough (Canada)

Session 2 Who Will Speak for Earth? What Will They Say? When Will They Say It? (Joint with COSPAR)

Coordinators:

J. Tarter (USA)
D. Vakoch (USA)

Chairmen:

D. Vakoch (USA)
J. Rummel (USA - COSPAR)

Rapporteur:

P. Sterns (USA)

4.2. Stand Alone Symposium 2000-2001

There will be no stand-alone symposia during 2000-2001

5. Committee Membership

5.1. Current Members proposed for a New Term

Membership extended for another 3 year term:

- John Billingham (USA)
- Cristiano Cosmovici (Italy)
- Albert Harrison (USA)
- Claudio Maccone (Italy)
- Roger Malina (USA)
- Lubos Perek (Czech)
- Frank Stootman (Australia)
- Donald Tarter (USA)
- Douglas Vakoch (USA)

5.2. New Members

Recommended as new members:

- Mike Davis (USA)
- Paul Shuch (USA)
- Ian Morison (UK)
- Remington Stone (USA)
- Harvey Butcher (Netherlands)

5.3. Withdrawal

The following members should be thanked for their service, and withdrawn from the committee list:

- Kent Cullers (USA)
- Stephen Doyle (USA)
- Sanders Rosenberg (USA)
- Kelvin Wellington (Australia)
- Deceased: Jean Heidmann (France)

6. Committee Publication Activity Review

6.1. Publications

6.2. Position Paper or Cosmic Study

Unfortunately, Jean Heidmann, the lead author of the Cosmic Study on a Lunar Farside Radio Observatory, passed away this year. His co-chair, Claudio Maccone has gathered up the materials that Jean was working on, and has agreed to continue preparation of this Study, but understandably, he will need more time. During the Rio Congress, the IAA Board affirmed the change in authorship, and extended the due date for this Cosmic Study until the summer of 2001.

6.3. Report to the U.N.

As detailed in the report from the subcommittee on Issues of Policy Concerning Communication with Extraterrestrial Intelligence (included within Appendix 3), Ernst Fasan and Jill Tarter made a brief presentation to the UN Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, informing them of the accelerating SETI observing programs, and inviting them to participate in the formulation of a procedure to deal with the eventuality of a detection. Both of the IAA Position Papers on this topic were delivered and filed for further reference.

7. Nominations for Academy 2000 Book Awards

No book award nominations were made.

8. Schedule Conflicts to be avoided at the next Astronautical Congress

8.1. List of recommended sequence of meetings

SETI I and II sessions should be on the same day or successive days, as early in the Congress as possible.

8.2. List of Committee Meetings or Technical Sessions that should not be in parallel

A list of conflict to be avoided was prepared and given to Lubos Perek during the IPC meeting.

9. Committee Contribution to the IAA World Wide Web Site

The SETI Institute maintains a website for the IAA SETI Committee

10. Other Business

A. Jill Tarter introduced Dr. Michael Yarymovych, President of IAA, to describe changes on committee structure within the Academy.

Dr. Yarymovych emphasized that the changes occurring in the Academy may have made people feel that SETI is threatened. In fact, there is no threat and these changes may provide SETI more access to the decision making structure. The new plan approved almost unanimously by the Academy Board. Under the new structure, there will be three levels of Committee structure: Academy Committees (6), Program Committees, and Study Groups. SETI fits under the new Academy Committee of Physical Sciences, and the Chair of the SETI Committee sits on this group. Current system will be used for the Toulouse conference. Then, for the Houston conference, the new structure will kick in. There are also changes in the relationship with the IAF. Henceforth, these Congresses will no longer be the IAF Congress. It will simply be the International Astronautical Congress.

The SETI Committee will continue as long as it desires to continue to organize sessions, and it can also organize new Study groups on specific issues. The overall pressure is to produce things on a regular basis. To a certain degree, the SETI Committee will be a sort of super-Program Committee. Our title will continue to be the SETI Committee.

In response to a question regarding whether we should change our title from "Committee", Dr. Yarymovych responded that this might be useful, but not necessary. Perhaps the SETI "Forum".

B. Discussions on tribute to Jean Heidmann. Jill introduced the idea of establishing a book award in Jean's name. Does COSPAR have any awards in Astronomy? Pierson suggested perhaps a public lecture in his name in the field of Astronomy and Astrophysics. Shuch suggested getting Saha crater renamed Heidmann crater.

C. Rio Sessions. Tarter reviewed the schedules for the two main sessions, and also the subcommittee meeting times and dates (all as described in Jill's September 20 letter. Carol Oliver also described the semi-formal SETI meeting on Thursday October 5 from 2-5 P.M. at the museum of Astronomy. Details on transportation will be available at the Tuesday meeting. Paul Shuch also mentioned that he is giving a SETI talk on Thursday evening at 7:30 at the Planetarium.

D. Tom Pierson moved that Ray Norris, now that his membership in the Academy is confirmed, formally be appointed chair of the Post Detection Sub-Committee. This was unanimously approved. Tarter then read Ivan Almar's letter of resignation. She reviewed her recommendation that Claudio Maccone be elected, and asked for Claudio to speak to his interests and ability to carry to the function. Claudio said that he is indeed able to serve in this capacity, and especially will be able to attend the April meetings in Paris each year as our committee representative, and he is eager to represent the European interests in SETI. Unanimously approved. Tarter proposed that Guillermo Lemarchand be nominated to the position of Executive Secretary and after this was seconded, she asked for his willingness. He expressed that he is, with some worry about time commitments, but is willing to serve. He also complimented the broad international representation on the leadership of our committee.

E. Claudio Maccone reported on SETI Italy's efforts, which most recently has been focused on using their equipment for RFI diagnosis at an important site. There is also growing interest in SETI in Italy with the public, and continuing efforts in algorithm development. There has also been some governmental funding made available for astrobiology, which opens opportunities for SETI proposals. Guillermo Lemarchand provided a brief update on the Argentine SETI efforts, including the fact that in a few weeks they will begin an all sky search for OH masers. Rosa Ramirez de Arellano reported on recent meetings in Turkey in attempts to protect the frequency spectrum. She will send to the committee members the list of recent actual allocation of frequencies. Jill Tarter thanked her for these efforts on behalf of the Radio Astronomy Community. There will be reports from the other countries as part of the papers presented this week.

F. There was discussion about the World Space Congress in 2002 in Houston (joint meeting with COSPAR two-week meeting). Opportunities should be sought for joint sponsorship of sessions with COSPAR. As starting points it was suggested that for SETI I - Norris and Rummel, Co-Chairs, Oliver, Rapporteur; SETI II - Tough, Sterns Co-chairs, Fasan, Rapporteur. Discussions subsequent to the Rio Congress led to the program listed in item 4.1.3. Attempts to have a jointly sponsored Plenary Session entitled "Searching for Life in the Universe: From Microbes to Minds" did not succeed. However, Jill Tarter will co-chair an additional COPAR session with Gerda Hoerneck on Searching for Life in the Solar System.

G. Chair will prepare a list of members rotating off, and will accept suggestions for new committee members through Wednesday of this week. The results are as presented in item 5. above.

H. The meeting closed with a warm and heartfelt thank you to Ivan Almar for his strong support as Co-Chair of this committee for the past 16 years, and we all look forward to working with him on other projects in the future. Jill Tarter read a statement from Ivan Almar discussing his views for the future of the SETI Committee (see Appendix 4).

11. Next Meeting

The next meeting will take place on the weekend prior to the Toulouse IAC.