



**REPORT ON THE
XXVith General Assembly of the IAU
by Chair Persons of the NOC and LOC**

International
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Final Report

REPORT ON THE XXVIth GENERAL ASSEMBLY
of the International Astronomical Union
August 14-25 2006
Prague, Czech Republic
by Chair Persons of the National and Local Organizing Committees

Jan Palouš, Cyril Ron & Jan Vondrák

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1 Summary

The 26th General Assembly of the International Astronomical Union (IAU) took place in the Congress Center Prague, from 14th to 25th August 2006. The capital of the Czech Republic welcomed the astronomers from all over the world again after 39 years, since the 13th IAU General Assembly was held also in Prague in 1967.

The Prague General Assembly was held under the auspices of the President of the Czech Republic Václav Klaus, former President of the Czech Republic Václav Havel, President of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic Václav Pačes, Lord Mayor of the Capital of Prague Pavel Bém and the Rectors of the Charles University in Prague, Czech Technical University in Prague and Masaryk University in Brno.

The last IAU General Assembly took place in Sydney, the next ones are being prepared for 2009 in Rio de Janeiro and 2012 in Beijing.

Prague welcomed the astronomers from 73 countries who came to discuss and evaluate the most recent discoveries and observations, to go through fundamental scientific, technical and administrative problems and to agree on future international cooperation. The topics covered all astronomical disciplines, ranging from our closest neighborhood to the farthest objects of the universe.

In total, 2412 astronomers participated at the General Assembly, out of which there were 540 students and 115 seniors (the latter two categories paying substantially lower registration fee). Early registration fee, lowered by about 25 per cent, was used by about 85 per cent of participants, 87 persons registered on site. There were 208 registered guests, including 38 children younger than 11 years.

The program of the General Assembly consisted of 6 symposia (3.5-day long), 17 Joint Discussions (1-2 day long), 7 Special Sessions (1-2 day long), the debates of Young Astronomers and Women in Astronomy, and about 110 business meetings of Divisions, Commissions and Working Groups of the IAU. During the scientific program almost 650 oral papers were presented and more than 1550 posters displayed. There were also four Invited Discourses of the leading world astronomers: Jill Tarter (The evolution of life in the Universe), Alan Title (The magnetic field and its effects on the solar atmosphere as observed at high resolution), Shuang Nan Zhang (Similar phenomena at different scales: Black holes, Sun, supernovae, galaxies and galactic clusters) and Reinhard Genzel (The power of new experimental techniques in astronomy: Zooming in on the black hole in the center of the Milky Way). Three presentations of leading astronomers were also made for the Czech public at the building of the Academy of Sciences that were interpreted into Czech (Jill Tarter, Françoise Combes and Reinhard Genzel).

The IAU General Assembly touched a major part of actual questions of astronomy, astrophysics and related disciplines. Among others, small bodies of the Solar System that could closely approach the Earth, double stars and their role in determining the distances in the Universe, star formation, evolution of galaxies, black holes, and new definition of a planet in the Solar System were discussed.

The participants could use the Internet connection in Internet Room in which both desktop computers and tens of free connections for laptop computers were installed. About 1 TB of data was transmitted via this fixed network. Thanks to a sponsorship of the T-Mobile CZ company almost unlimited wireless connection was made possible for those who brought their laptops equipped with WiFi cards. In total, 18370 of wireless connections to Internet were used that lasted 15500 hours; about 250 GB of data were transmitted during the whole General Assembly. This corresponds to approximately 1800 fifty-minute connections each day.

A rich accompanying program was prepared for the participants that more than 2200 persons utilized. Except for tours to the most interesting parts of our country they could take part in the excursion to the Ondřejov Observatory and in a historical colloquium “Astronomy in Prague in the Mirror of Centuries”.

An exhibition was set up in the Congress Center Prague in which 34 companies and institutions from the whole world participated. From the Czech Republic these were: Astronomical Institute of the Academy of Sciences, Klet’ Observatory, Czech Space Office, Czech Astronomical Society, T-Mobile CZ company and Academia publishing house. Among exhibitors, there was also the International Virtual Observatory Alliance.

Every workday a newspaper “Dissertatio cum Nuncio Sidereo III” was issued that provided a symbolic link to the astronomical past of the Czech Lands when Johannes Kepler published in Prague his work *Dissertatio cum Nuncio Sidereo* in 1610, and when the newspaper “Dissertatio cum Nuncio Sidereo II” was issued during the Prague IAU General Assembly in 1967.

The IAU General Assembly was not open for public. However, some parts were transmitted live to the internet by web-streaming, thanks to a sponsorship provided by MediaStream company. All sessions that took place in the Congress Hall were transmitted: Opening and Closing Ceremonies, all four Invited Discourses, discussions and voting on the new definition of a planet and the talk by the laureate of Gruber Foundation Prize, John Mather ¹. More than 8 thousand spectators followed these transmissions during the General Assembly. The most popular was the voting on planet definition during the second plenary session which about 5 thousand spectators witnessed in real time. All these transmissions are recorded and are accessible through the Internet, by January 2007 more than 37 thousand accesses were recorded.

The introductory Press Conference for Czech journalists took place in the building of the Academy of Sciences in Prague, before the opening of the General Assembly, on August 10. Daily press conferences took place during the meetings, directly in the Congress Center, in which both officers of the IAU and important world astronomers participated. The General Assembly was mostly covered by the stations of the Czech Radio (Radiožurnál, Praha, Vltava, Leonardo, ČR 6), but also by the Czech press and Czech TV which provided service to many TV companies in abroad. There were 125 domestic and 70 international journalists and press agencies accredited. The eye-witnesses of IAU General Assemblies agreed that this Prague General Assembly had the highest publicity in the history.

Several Czech astronomers were honored during the assembly. Kamil Hornoch obtained a prize of the Pacific Astronomical Society for 2006 for astronomers - amateurs, Zdeněk Sekanina got the Nušl prize of the Czech Astronomical Society for his whole-life scientific work, the IAU Symposium 240 (Double stars) was dedicated to Miroslav Plavec and the editor of the international scientific journal *Solar Physics* organized a festive lunch as a tribute to Zdeněk Švestka. The congress newspaper remembered in a long article the outstanding Czech astrophysicist František Link whose 100th birthday fell on the second congress day.

¹In October 2006 John Mather was awarded Nobel Prize in Physics.

2 The Early Years

2.1 History of Winning the Bid

The first consideration of Czech astronomers making a bid for obtaining a second IAU General Assembly (GA) in Prague was in the late 1990s. In 1999 the National Committee for Astronomy (NKA) decided to issue an invitation, which was sent to the General Secretary (GS) of the IAU in December 1999. Thus, the preparation time for such a major congress was about 7 years.

A more specific consideration including the venue and preliminary budget was prepared in cooperation with the professional congress agency ICARIS. This proposal, which was supported by the president of the Czech Republic Václav Havel, was sent to the IAU in June 2000. The decision to hold the 2006 IAU General Assembly (GA26) in Prague was announced after the EC meeting at the IAU General Assembly in Manchester in August 2000.

The GS and other members of the Executive Committee (EC) of the IAU visited Prague in May 2001 and inspected the Prague Congress Center (KCP), which was proposed as the GA venue. The second EC visit happened in 2004. Beside the visit in KCP two possible venues for farewell reception were shown: the Jesuit college Clementinum and Industrial Palace. After a recommendation of the EC and discussions by NOC the Industrial Palace was selected. The EC meeting held in Rome June, 2005 decided on the scientific proposals for the program of the Symposia, Joint Discussions and Special Sessions that would be on agenda of GA26.

2.2 Establishment of the National Organizing Committee - NOC

2.2.1 The Chairpersons of the NOC

In January 2001 the NKA elected Jan Palouš as the chairperson and Jan Vondrák as the vice-chairperson of the National Organizing Committee (NOC) of the 26th GA IAU. Their first task was to propose before the end of February 2001 other members of the NOC. This proposal was subject to an approval by the NKA.

2.2.2 NOC members

Following the joint proposal of NOC chair and vice-chair persons the NKA approved in March 2001 the following members of the NOC representing the major astronomy Institutions in the Czech Republic:

Jiří Bičák - Institute of Theoretical Physics, Charles University, Prague;
Jiří Borovička - Astronomical Institute, Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, Ondřejov;
Soňa Ehlerová - Astronomical Institute, Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, Prague;
František Fárník - Astronomical Institute, Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, Ondřejov;
Jiří Grygar - Institute of Physics, Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, Prague;
Petr Hadrava - Astronomical Institute, Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, Ondřejov;
Petr Harmanec - Astronomical Institute, Charles University, Prague;
Petr Heinzl - Astronomical Institute, Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, Ondřejov;
Vladimír Karas - Astronomical Institute, Charles University, Prague;
Marian Karlický - Astronomical Institute, Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, Ondřejov;
Zdeněk Mikulášek - Institute of Theoretical Physics and Astrophysics, Masaryk University, Brno;
Jan Palouš - Chair - Astronomical Institute, Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, Prague;
Miloš Šidlichovský - Astronomical Institute, Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, Prague;
Martin Šolc - Astronomical Institute, Charles University, Prague;
Jan Tichá - Klet' Observatory;
Jan Vondrák - Vice-chair - Astronomical Institute, Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, Prague;
Marek Wolf - Astronomical Institute, Charles University, Prague.

2.3 Formal Hosts

The formal hosts issuing the invitation was NKA of the Czech Republic. However, neither this body nor NOC has the legal subjectivity in the Czech Republic enabling to sign contracts with providers. In the case of GA26, it was the Astronomical Institute of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic (AI ASCR) who overtook the legal responsibility including all the financial risks.

2.4 Financial background

The initial seed funding for printing of the leaflets with the first announcement, first poster and other materials (see below) was provided by the AI ASCR. There was an application for the GA26 support pending at the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports issued in 2005 for 10 MCZK, however, this application failed, which was announced early in 2006. Consequently, it was not possible to decrease the registration fee to the level below 500 EUR, as it was intended in the case of success of the above application. The only additional funding was allocated by the same Ministry after the conference in October 2006, but on a much smaller level, 0.75 MCZK. The main conference incomes were registration fees, a much smaller part was provided by the exhibition, sponsors and the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports. Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic contributed with special travel grants added to the individual grants allocated by the IAU.

2.5 The Professional Conference Organizer - PCO

2.5.1 The Selection Process

One of the most important issues to be decided by the NOC was the appointment of a Professional Conference Organizer (PCO) of the GA. An open tender was announced in April 2001 with a deadline for proposals in May 2001. Some five PCOs responded to the tender request. The number was reduced to two short-list candidates, ICARIS and CBT. The selection was done in the end of May with the following result: the travel agency CBT. (Congress Bussiness Travel) was the main partner providing all the necessary parts of the conference except the Newspaper, Program and Abstract books and distribution of the last minute changes in the program, which was attributed to the congress agency ICARIS. Originally, ICARIS should guarantee also the Internet connection at the conference venue, but this was later provided by another partner.

2.5.2 Contracts

A scheme of contracts has been developed during 2001 and 2002. The main contract was signed between AI ASCR and CBT with the statement that an eventual negative financial result will be covered from the budget of the AI ASCR. Another contract fixed ICARIS as a sub-provider of specific parts of the GA IAU. AI ASCR acts in this contract between CBT and ICARIS as receiver approving that a service was provided properly. Another contract was signed between KCP and CBT. The details of contracts were subject to continuous changes and upgrades, so that changing requirements and specific requests of the conference could be fulfilled.

2.6 Selection of the Venue

Since the very beginning it was apparent that the only place in Prague able to host the GA IAU with estimated 2500 participants is the KCP. This venue hosted recently such large events as the summit conferences of the International Monetary Fund (2001) or NATO (2002). In 2006 still no other similar place existed in Prague.

2.6.1 The Booking

NOC visited several times the KCP during 2001. In November the GS IAU Hans Rickman and AGS IAU Oddbjørn Engvold accompanied by the secretary Monique Orine visited the KCP. They were impressed with the size and scope of the facilities and the possibilities offered by the venue and the process of room reservation

and allocation of specific events started. In 2002, the contract on the room reservations and other services between KCP and CBT was signed. It specified the dates of the GA and the exclusivity, i.g. there will be no other action during our dates in the building. One of the major halls, the Forum Hall (capacity 700), was left as a reserve, and it was included to the budget only later in 2005.

2.7 Development of the Logo

In 2002, the Logo of the 26th GA IAU has been proposed in a graphical studio by Eliška Konopiská. The NOC selected from several variants and approved the final version, which was used since the December 2002 on the conference poster, the 'Expression of Interest' leaflet, and on other materials.



2.8 First Announcement

The First announcement with the information on the 26th GA IAU in Prague in the Czech Republic and on the GA venue was produced early in 2003. This leaflet announced that the website www.astronomy2006.com exists and that it would be continually updated with the information on the accommodation, scientific program, tourist program etc. The contact to the conference secretariat CBT was given, and the Expression of Interest return leaflet was included.

2.9 ...are there frogs there too?

As a part of the promotion of the future GA in Prague the poem '...are there frogs there too' by Jan Neruda was translated during first half of 2003 from Czech to English by Robert Russel and illustrated by Luděk Bárta. Jan Neruda, Czech poet, writer and journalist born in Prague, grew up in a colourful part of the old Prague called Malá Strana (Lesser Town). Neruda's poetry work Cosmic Songs (1878) was inspired by modern astronomy.

2.10 A movie: 'Astronomy in the Czech Republic'

As another part of the GA promotion, the 31 min. movie 'Astronomy in the Czech Republic' was produced early in 2003. The history starting from Tycho Brahe and Johannes Kepler including the time of Jesuit College Clementinum is represented there. The contemporary major astronomical places in the Czech Republic are introduced with its instruments and principal projects.

2.11 Publicity at the 25th GA in Sydney

The NOC recognized that good publicity at the 25th General Assembly in Sydney was important to whet the appetites of astronomers to come to the Czech Republic. A display about the Prague GA, which included large posters with the GA26th logo and a continuous video presentation including the movie 'Astronomy in the Czech Republic' and other movies showing the tourism potential of the country, was set up in the display stand of the next GA provided by to us by Sydney GA organizers free of charge. The area was well attended, the First announcement was distributed there together with the booklet '...are there frogs there too'.

To have an idea on the framework of the GA IAU, two CBT staff members also attended the event. This experiences from Sydney meeting were extremely valuable to the NOC and CBT in framing its approach to organizing such a complex event in Prague.

Attending NOC members met with the IAU Executive Committee during a session where the Co-Chairs of the Sydney Local Organizing Committee presented their interim report. At the Closing Ceremony, Jan Palouš invited the 25th GA participants to the next GA IAU in Prague. He gave a presentation enhanced by images (including some of his own astronomical images) of Czech Republic, Prague and Czech astronomy.

3 The Later Years

3.1 Formation of the LOC

At a meeting in October 2004, the NOC appointed the LOC for the 26th GA IAU. It consisted of the following persons: L. Červinka (ICARIS), Z. Dienstbierová (AI ASCR), J. Palouš (ASCR), R. Plaček (AI ASCR), P. Suchan (AI ASCR), C. Ron - Chair-person (AI ASCR), M. Šenderová (CBT), Z. Tesařová (CBT), J. Tichá (Klet' Observatory), J. Vondrák (AI ASCR), M. Wolf (AI UK).

3.2 Meetings of NOC, LOC, CBT, Icaris and KCP

There were 22 meetings of the NOC & LOC before the beginning of GA. These meeting solved various tasks and problems of the GA. At some of the meetings also other representatives of CBT and ICARIS travel agencies were attending. Different members of SOC/LOC visited the KCP to discuss the budget, IT, networking, catering, etc.

3.3 EC meeting in April 2005 in Rome

The chair NOC was invited to a part of the EC IAU meeting in April 2005 at Monte Mario Observatory in Rome, which was the same day when the new pope was elected. There, the EC decided on the proposals of the Symposia, Joint Discussions (JD) and Special Sessions (SPS) of the 26th GA in Prague, which was announced to the chair NOC, who reported on the status of preparations, on the GA venue and on the level of the registration fee. It was made clear, that without a major sponsor, and assuming 2500 participants, the registration fee level has to be ~550 EUR. This level has been approved by EC IAU. Another financial difficulty was the changing exchange rate of the Czech Crown (CZK), which was steadily rising over seven years of GA preparation. Chair NOC explained that it is necessary to fix the registration fee in CZK, since the main spending are in this currency. This was also approved by the EC.

As concerns the framework of the program, several symposia, JD and other meetings attracting similar groups of specialists overlapped in time. This resulted in a dilution of the speakers and of the audience, since no one can participate two events in parallel.

3.4 Communicating with SOCs of individual events

The SOC's of the approved Symposia 235 - 240, JD 1 - 17, and SPS 1 - 7 started to prepare the detailed program of individual events. The contact between separate SOC's was established via IAU. The names and addresses of the SOC's chair-persons have been published in the IAU Bulletin. However, in our opinion, more communication and exchanges of preliminary programs, lists of key-note speakers and other information on the organization would be very welcome. It should be better organized in the case of future GA.

3.5 Room allocation

Allocation of rooms for individual events was done in cooperation between NOC/LOC - IAU secretariat in Paris - CBT. It was a subject of continuous changes and increasing requests from different IAU Divisions, IAU Commissions, and groups interested to organize a meeting in Prague. The final limit was the total capacity of the KCP, which was used to its maximum. Some days there were 18 meetings in parallel.

3.6 General Assembly Website

The GA26 website <http://www.astronomy2006.com> was originally set up by CBT via Graphic Studio VLADO in 2003, just before the 25th General Assembly in Sydney in the very simple form. Only the general information on the venue, the contact to the NOC, IAU and GA secretariat and the pre-registration form have been provided. Up to the start of the on-line registration, more than 750 participants had been pre-registered. Thus LOC was able to inform them about the start of the on-line registration.

The website has been substantially updated on November 9, 2005. The following items have been put on it: the important dates, the on-line registration form, the on-line abstract submission form, information on exhibition and sponsors, visa information and the scientific program with links to the list of registered abstracts and websites of individual scientific events. Since December 2005 the link to: the IAU grant application, the on-line form to order the proceedings for special reduced price, the on-line registration form of accommodation, and the on-line registration of the social program & tours have been added. The website has been updated continuously and all substantial changes were announced on the News page.

Since the end of April 2006, the RSS Feed has been provided on the GA26 website. The participants were then highlighted on the news and changes on the website through their RSS Feed Reader directly. The associated pages at the server astro.cas.cz were hosted and maintained either by Cyril Ron or by Michal Bursa. They contained all information provided for the SOCs: the easier access to the text of abstracts, the email addresses of the authors, etc. The email addresses of the registered participants were also available to the SOCs in the form of the secured RSS feed.

The website provided the most effective means of the NOC to distribute information to potential GA participants. The NOC have got ready access to the email list of IAU members as a feed-back of the last GA in Sydney Report. It is recommended that in the organization of future GAs, the NOC should be given an up-to-date copy of the IAU email address list.

The statistics of the accesses to the GA26 website in 2006 is shown in the following table:
(see <http://www.astronomy2006.com/stat> for more information)

Month	Unique visitors	Number of visits	Pages	Hits	Bandwidth
Jan	4719	6708	43161	191980	2.28 GB
Feb	4484	6821	40380	199659	1.95 GB
Mar	4902	7885	43572	221310	2.23 GB
Apr	6095	11180	75507	355225	3.77 GB
May	8695	21102	164407	687745	8.87 GB
Jun	8213	19481	110172	529919	6.77 GB
Jul	8279	19351	108757	517538	7.04 GB
Aug	52195	84966	420703	2595590	31.55 GB
Sep	10452	18835	73870	346455	5.24 GB
Oct	6366	10953	40950	191531	3.01 GB
Nov	5431	8878	33464	188974	4.22 GB
Dec	4378	7465	32000	153922	3.50 GB
Total	124209	223625	1186943	6179848	80.44 GB

3.7 Sponsors

In January 2005 letters together with preliminary application forms were distributed to 470 addresses, later in June 2005 brochures for sponsors and exhibitors were sent to 250 addresses by regular mail and to 470 addresses by e-mail. The list of exhibitors is given in section 5.3.

Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic	
American Astronomical Society	sponsor of Program Book
Astronomical Institute of Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic	
Astronomy & Astrophysics	sponsor of Posters
Auroton	sponsor of Internet Room
ESO / IVOA	sponsor of Internet Services
MediaStream	sponsor of the High Speed Internet Connection and Web Video Streaming
National Academy of Sciences	sponsor of Young Astronomers and Women in Astronomy Meetings
Office of Naval Research	sponsor of Young Astronomers and Women in Astronomy Meetings
Peter Gruber Foundation	sponsor of Inaugural Ceremony
T-Mobile	sponsor of Wireless Internet Access
United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs	

3.8 Registration Fee

The originally proposed registration fee, resulting from the very first preliminary budget sent to IAU General Secretary in June 2000, was only 345 USD. It was based on the estimated total expenditures of the General Assembly for 2500 participants of about 34 million CZK and the rate of exchange of about 40CZK/USD that was valid at that time. However, two disadvantageous moments played a very negative role in the evolution of the registration fee level during the 6 years preceding the General Assembly, the first one being dominant:

- Unexpectedly rapid evolution of the rate of exchange between the Czech Crown and both US dollar and Euro; the Czech Crown steadily grew stronger and stronger from about 40CZK/USD and 35CZK/EUR in 2000 to some 22CZK/USD and 28CZK/EUR in August 2006, respectively.

- The growing IAU requirements for more and more rooms and associated services needed in the KCP, so that the total expenditures expressed in CZK grew from the original expectation of 34 million to final almost 40 million.

From this follows that the main cause for the relatively high registration fee (with respect to what we expected in the preliminary budget) was the evolution of USD and EUR with respect to CZK.

At all times the NOC and CBT did their best to keep the expenditures of all services as low as possible, by permanent negotiations with all providers, mainly the KCP. In view of this unhappy evolution, and also because of the fact that all contracts were signed with prices fixed in CZK, we decided well before the GA to fix the registration fee in CZK. This strategy was approved by the IAU EC in April 2005.

Thus the registration fee for regular participants was fixed to 16500CZK (early registration, before May 31) and 20500CZK (after that date); we allowed a substantially lower fee for registered guests (4500 and 6500 CZK respectively), and also for the students (under 35) and seniors (above 70) for 4500 and 5500 CZK, respectively. A special reduced registration fee was also granted for a limited number of participants, fulfilling specific conditions (see section Special Registration Fee below).

3.9 Special Registration Fee

Early in 2006 a strong pressure from Jay Passachoff, the president of Commission 46 and co-chair of Special Session 2 started to allow a reduced fee also for the "teachers". Since this was a very vague definition (most of the astronomers are in a way teachers) that could eventually lead to a substantial hole in the budget, we were opposing this. There were also proposals from other potential participants, requiring a lower fee for those who wished to attend only a small part of the GA (one or two-day registration fee).

After lengthy discussions with the IAU General Secretary we finally decided to allow a special registration fee (equal to student/senior fee) for a limited number of non- astronomers, non-members of the IAU, who wished to participate only in a specific and short (typically one or two day long) session. Their application, containing a clear declaration that they would not attend any other session, had to be addressed to the vice-chair of the NOC, together with a recommendation by the chairperson of the session in question. The deadline for sending the application was originally set to April 9 (identical with the one for IAU grants), but later on it was postponed to May 31 (identical with the early registration).

21 such applications arrived, 4 of which were refused because the applicants either received an IAU grant for the whole GA, or were students and had to pay a reduced fee anyway. They attended JD11 (1), Commission 50 Business Session (3), SPS 2 (10) and SPS 3 (3).

3.10 Invited Speakers

There were four Invited Discourses by Jill Tarter, Shuang Nan Zhang, Alan Title and Reinhard Genzel. These invited speakers did not pay the registration fee. In the case of other key-note and invited speakers to the Symposia, JD and SPS, the level of financial support was covered from the finances of the event provided by the IAU according to SOC's recommendations.

3.11 IAU and other Travel Grants

The IAU grants were distributed by the GS IAU upon recommendations of the SOC's of individual events following the general IAU rules for grant allocations. It covered in some cases the registration fee and other expenses like accommodation and travel, however, in many cases only partially. Additional grants of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic were distributed by the NOC covering the accommodation expense and the per diem.

3.12 Abstracts

The full electronic treatment of abstracts was initially planned to be prepared by one of our professional organizers, ICARIS. However, at the time of the second EC visit in November 2004 in Prague, the detailed treatment of abstracts was not demonstrated. GS requested a test with one abstract to see how it would be processed, which was not possible. GS IAU decided that IAU would order this service from a professional provider Oxford Abstracts (OA) and that IAU will cover this service financially. OA should prepare the abstracts for evaluation by SOC's and also the pdf version of all the abstracts for print of the Abstract Book.

But this service by OA was user unfriendly and rather rudimentary and it was necessary to devote a lot of additional work to display the abstracts on the GA website in a more user friendly form, to help the SOC's with reviewing and to prepare the Abstract Book for print. However, since ICARIS was excluded from this effects, all the load was on GS IAU and NOC/LOC (Cyril Ron, CBT and subproviders). When we asked the OA for minor changes, they answered immediately and they did well what we asked them for. But, if asked for a substantial change, they refused to proceed without new negotiation with the IAU. It was very uncomfortable situation.

The main problems of the OA service can be identified as:

1. OA accepted only MS Word files. For many astronomers it was an unsolvable problem, in particular for those who used the Sun machines, or Macs, or even PC's with Linux.
2. The abstracts had to be submitted as MS Word files using the OA template, but the system did not check if the author really used the template and observed the rules. As a result, about 15% of the abstracts were submitted in other formats (L^AT_EX, open office, plain text - it would be the best solution, abiword, L^AT_EX, Staroffice, pdf, . . .) than MS Word! At first, we asked the authors to set the files right, but afterwards we had to do it ourselves (Cyril Ron, and in some cases the SOC's chairpersons themselves).
3. It was inconvenient to put the MS Word files on the web as one had to click on the link and then the MS Word program started to show the abstract. The body of an abstract contained neither the author's name, nor affiliation, only the title and the text of abstract. The other information was present somewhere in the data base but not accessible from the Internet. Thus to show all the abstracts on the GA web site we had to transform the particular MS Word files to the plain text and html, respectively. We produced a linux script that made this automatically once per week (we used the `wvText` and `wvHtml` procedures of linux). Later on, our Web designers (Graphic studio VLADO) contacted the OA and negotiated with them the RSS Feed (the window into their database) to be able to get more information to be shown on the GA web site, but we never obtained everything that we asked for.
4. The Abstract Book preparation was the nightmare of IAU General Secretary, Oddbjørn Engvold. OA provided only the individual MS Word files for each abstract. Only the immense joint effort of Oddbjørn Engvold and Cyril Ron guaranteed that the final printable pdf file of the Abstract Book was prepared for printing in time. The main problem, and in several cases an unsolvable one, was the nonchalance of submitters, as they did not follow the instructions for the abstract preparation.

After the GA, in December 2006, the web designer (VLADO) and professional organizer CBT presented to the IAU their joint project of an advanced model of a software custom built for IAU based on their experience (both bad and good) with the OA.

3.13 Visas

Visitors from non-EU countries had to possess a passport valid for at least the next 3 months. Participants requiring a visa had to apply immediately to the nearest consular office or a diplomatic mission of the Czech Republic in order to avoid a delayed arrival to the Conference. They were warned that the visa application procedure could take up to two months. It was not possible to obtain visa at the border or Prague Airport.

For more information and addresses of the Czech embassies the participants were instructed to visit the web page of Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic - www.mzv.cz (English version). The "Application for the Czech Visa" was available on the web page in electronic version, too.

In some cases a personal intervention of the NOC chair-person at the Embassies of the Czech Republic in Vietnam, India, Iran and other places was necessary to speed up the process of obtaining the visa.

3.14 Accommodation

Due to a large number of expected participants, and due to the popularity of Prague as a tourist destination, it was important to book accommodation in Hotels and Colleges well in advance. Therefore, the first booking were made by CBT in March 2004 when a total of 2 360 rooms were pre-booked (superior 360, first class 500, moderate 700, tourist 300, hostels 500). The structure of the hotel rooms has been changed following the remarks of IAU executive to have more cheaper rooms (800 rooms in hostels and student dormitories).

Descriptions of the hotels, apartments and university colleges listed in the Registration Form were included on the GA website. The booking of accommodation was provided through the web site, which was connected to the registration form on the web. The price per night of the hotels and apartments ranged from 15 -230 EUR. The first booking has been done in January 2006, the highest frequency of booking has been in June and July 2006.

One night deposit was required in advance to guarantee the booking for 5* and 4* hotels. Full prepayment was required in advance to guarantee the booking for lower category hotels including 3* category, and hostels. Upon receipt of the full prepayment the Conference Secretariat issued the Hotel Voucher and sent it to the participant. This Voucher had to be presented at the reception of the respective hotel upon arrival. There appeared complaints about these conditions and especially about the complete prepayment of the whole stay. For that reason the full prepayment has been changed to one night deposit since July 1.

3.14.1 Cancellation

The following conditions have been declared on the web pages concerning cancellation of the accommodation:

- before July 28, 2006 - full refund;
- before August 8, 2006 - 30% from the total price not refunded;
- 3 days prior to the arrival - 50% from the total price not refunded;
- 2 days prior to the arrival or less - no refund.

All the refunds have been processed after the Conference in 2006.

3.14.2 Final statistics of the accommodation

There were booked 1,243 rooms in 36 hotels or hostels through the GA website. The average stay in these hotels has been 7-8 days. The final accommodation numbers were:

5*	196 rooms
4*	325
3*	567
2*	62
hostels	93

Other accommodation Sixty five astronomers who have received the grant of Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic were accommodated in the academic pensions 'Villa Lanna' and 'Na Marné' and in a University hostel. Several guests have been accommodated in the lodging houses of the Astronomical Institute either in Prague or at the Ondřejov observatory.

Of course, many astronomers chose the accommodation by their own.

3.15 Deadlines

April 9, 2006 Application for IAU grant closes

April 30, 2006 Deadline for application for the Fellowships of the Peter Gruber Foundation

May 10, 2006 Notification of IAU grant

May 31, 2006 End of early registration

June 1, 2006 Recommended deadline for hotel booking

June 26, 2006 End of abstract submission

June 30, 2006 Recommended registration for Media Accreditation

July 31, 2006 Recommended deadline for registration to Farewell Reception

August 7, 2006 End of late registration - after this date only on-site registration is possible

August 7, 2006 Deadline for the on-line Proceedings requests - after this date the purchase will be available only on the spot at the KCP

August 7, 2006 Deadline for the on-line Social & Tourist Program requests - after this date the limited number of the tickets will be available only on-site

August 10, 2006 Deadline for the on-line booking of accommodation.

August 12, 2006 On-site registration was open. For those, who registered early during the weekend 12 - 13 August, 2006, a lottery was organized. The 3 winners got tickets for the dinner for 2 persons at the seeing tower at Žižkov, Prague.

4 IAU 26th General Assembly

4.1 Registration

4.1.1 Conference Kit

At the registration, the participants were provided with a GA Conference Kit containing: the Program Book, the Abstract Book, the List of Participants and several other items such as name badge cover, List of Exhibitors (incl. the Exhibition Floor-Plan), Instructions for Speakers, Instructions for WiFi Connection, map of Prague, brochure - Astronomical Prague by Martin Šolc, list of restaurants surrounding KCP, a pencil, a notepad, information about lunches / ZOOM Restaurant, a booklet on Prague, and a booklet on Astronomical Institute of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic. Other items inserted were leaflets of Blackwell Publishing, Cambridge Science Publishers, Cambridge University Press, Wiley VCH Verlag, 18th Conference on General Relativity and Gravitation, and XXIII Texas Symposium on Relativistic Astrophysics.

A special CD with the presentation ASTRO 2001 in English and German version was distributed to participants separately.

4.1.2 Registration Badges

Badges worn by GA participants were color-coded according to category:

IAU member	Blue
Invited Participant	Green
Registered Guest (including children)	Yellow
NOC/LOC Staff	Brown
Media/Press	Orange
Exhibitor	Light Blue
Executive Committee & IAU Staff	Gold
Visitor	Pink
Special Category	Black

4.2 Scientific Program

INVITED DISCOURSES

ID1	Jill Tarter: "The Evolution of Life in the Universe"	1109
ID2	Alan Title: "The Magnetic Field and its Effects on the Solar Atmosphere as Observed at High Resolution"	590
ID3	Shuang Nan Zhang: "Similar phenomena at different scales: Black Holes, Sun, Supernovae, Galaxies and Galaxy Clusters"	779
ID4	Reinhard Genzel: "The power of new experimental techniques in astronomy: Zooming in on the black hole in the Center of the Milky Way"	928

SYMPOSIA

S235	Evolution of Galaxies across the Hubble Time	807
S236	Near Earth Objects, our Celestial Neighbors: Opportunity and Risk	396
S237	Triggered Star Formation in a Turbulent ISM	489
S238	Black Holes: from Stars to Galaxies - across the Range of Masses	603
S239	Convection in Astrophysics	300
S240	Binary Stars as Critical Tools and Tests in Modern Astrophysics	498

JOINT DISCUSSIONS

JD01	Particle Acceleration - from Solar System to AGN	241
JD02	Pulsar Emission and Related Phenomena	202
JD03	Solar Active Regions and 3D Magnetic Structure	237
JD04	The Ultraviolet Universe: Stars from Birth to Death	337
JD05	Calibrating the Top of the Stellar M-L Relation	199
JD06	Neutron Stars and Black Holes in Star Clusters	330
JD07	The Universe at $z > 6$	532
JD08	Solar and Stellar Activity Cycles	318
JD09	Supernovae: One Millennium after SN1006	293
JD10	Progress in Planetary Exploration Missions	307
JD11	Pre-Solar Grains as Astrophysical Tools	137
JD12	Long Wavelength Astrophysics	279
JD13	Exploiting Large Surveys for Galactic Astronomy	365
JD14	Modelling Dense Stellar Systems	203
JD15	New Cosmology Results from the Spitzer Space Telescope	425
JD16	Nomenclature, Precession and New Models in Fundamental Astronomy	203
JD17	Highlights of Recent Progress in the Seismology of the Sun and Sun-like Stars	202

SPECIAL SESSIONS

SPS1	Astronomical Facilities of the Next Decade	732
SPS2	Innovation in Teaching/Learning Astronomy Methods	400
SPS3	The Virtual Observatory in Action: New Science, New Technology, and Next Generation Facilities	501
SPS4	"Hot Topics"	299
SPS5	Astronomy for the Developing World	280
SPS6	Astronomical Data Management	292
SPS7	Astronomy in Antarctica	250

At the r.h.s. the numbers of those participants are given, who assigned the event at the registration form.

		Congress Hall	Forum Hall	Panorama Hall	Meeting Hall I	Small Hall	Meeting Hall IV	Club A	Club B	Club C	Club D	Club E	Club F	Club H	Small Theater	Meeting Hall V	Chamber Hall	Meeting Rm 2.1	Meeting Rm 1.1	Dressing R 225	Meeting Rm 1.2	Meeting H II	Meeting Rm 3.5												
SEATS		2760	1034	380	410	288	220	180	70	70	70	180	180	160	244	202	50	45	40	30	24	35													
Sunday	09:00-12:30																							09:00-12:30	Sunday										
August 13	14:00-17:30																							14:00-17:30	August 13										
Monday	09:00-10:30																							09:00-10:30	Monday										
August 14	11:00-12:30	S235	S236	S237																			EC-ECS1 9-13	11:00-12:30	August 14										
	14:00-15:30																							14:00-15:30											
	16:00-17:30																							16:00-17:30											
	17:30-18:30																							17:30-18:30											
Tuesday	09:00-10:30	S235	S236	S237																			AAAT 10-13:00	EC81 9-10:30	09:00-10:30	Tuesday									
August 15	11:00-12:30																							11:00-12:30	August 15										
	14:00-15:30																							14:00-15:30											
	16:00-17:30																							16:00-17:30											
	17:30-18:30																							17:30-18:30											
Wednesday	09:00-10:30																							09:00-10:30	Wednesday										
August 16	11:00-12:30	PGF / IAU 12:45 - 13:45	S235	S236	S237	JD1	JD2	JD3	35	05-005													XII-001	11:00-12:30	August 16										
	14:00-15:30																							14:00-15:30											
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	18:15																							18:15											
Thursday	09:00-10:30																							09:00-10:30	Thursday										
August 17	11:00-12:30	S235	S236	S237	JD1	JD2	JD3	05-003	36	V	41-004	JD4	SPS1	JD5	XXII-01			26	I/III-002	W. Becker 13:15-14:30	SCAR 12:14	11:00-12:30	August 17												
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Friday	09:00-10:30																							09:00-10:30	Friday										
August 18	11:00-12:30	SPS3a	S236 Y o A Int. Luncheon	S237	JD6	JD7	JD8	51	IV/V-001	I	JD9	SPS2			30	09	IUCAE	Springer 10-13				11:00-12:30	August 18												
	14:00-15:30																							14:00-15:30											
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Wednesday	09:00-10:30																							09:00-10:30	Wednesday										
August 23	11:00-12:30	S238	S239	S240	JD15	JD14	JD13	41-001	XII	III-002	SPS7	JD16	JD17	50	05	34/VI-001			EC 81 9-12:30				11:00-12:30	August 23											
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Thursday	09:00-10:30																							09:00-10:30	Thursday										
August 24	11:00-12:30	S238 (do 13 h)	S239	S240																			22	46	15-02	Cocktail 17:30-20:00	II-004	05-004	2	mid 9-12:30	XI-002	ALMA 9:30-12:00	PPARC 11-14	11:00-12:30	August 24
	14:00-17:30																							14:00-17:30											
Friday	09:00-10:30																							09:00-10:30	Friday										
August 25	11:00-12:30	S238	S239	S240																						EC82+DPs	11:00-12:30	August 25							
	14:00-15:30																							14:00-15:30											
	16:00-17:30																							16:00-17:30											

4.3 Opening Ceremony

Considerable effort was put into the planning of the Inaugural ceremony. The program and performers were discussed at the NOC/LOC meetings during more than one year. The final scenario was worked out by Mrs. Monika Šenderová of CBT.

The formal GA opening ceremony on Tuesday, August 15, 2006 was held in the Congress Hall of KCP with an audience of about 2,000 people.

Master of Ceremonies:	Jan Palouš, <i>Chairman of NOC</i>
Opening of the XXVIth GA:	Ronald D. Ekers, <i>President of IAU 2003-2006</i>
Anthem of the Czech Republic:	Lesser Town Singers ²
Attending:	Václav Mravec, <i>Head of the International Department of the Office of the President of the Czech Republic</i> Václav Klaus
Official Addresses:	Miloš Gregar, <i>Representative of the town Prague</i> Václav Pačes, <i>President of Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic</i> Jana Musilová, <i>Vice-Rector, Masaryk University in Brno</i> Jan Bednář, <i>Vice-Rector, Charles University in Prague</i> Václav Havlíček, <i>Rector, Czech Technical University in Prague</i>
Welcome after 39 years:	Luboš Perek, <i>Emeritus, AI ASCR.</i>
Performance:	Children's Traditional Ensemble "Rosénka" ³
Presentation of the 2006 Cosmology Prize:	Peter Gruber Foundation
Performance:	Lesser Town Singers
Astronomy in Prague: From the Past to the Present:	Alena Hadravová <i>Research Center for the History of Sciences and Humanities</i>

The Peter Gruber Foundation presents international prizes in Cosmology, Genetics, Neuroscience, Justice, and Women's Rights. Each prize is valued this year at US \$250,000. The Foundation's goal is to recognize, honour, and encourage individuals who have transformed their fields, and by shining a Spotlight on them, encourage others to follow in their footsteps. The Foundation, in cooperation with the IAU, also recognizes promising young investigators in cosmology every three years.

The Opening ceremony was followed by the Session I of IAU General Assembly and the Cocktail in the exhibition area, respectively. The exhibition area provided a wonderful view almost of the whole Prague.

The cost of the Opening has been included in the registration fee. Price per extra ticket was CZK 400 (approx. 14 EUR).

²**Lesser Town Singers:** was established in 1996 as a group of fifteen young musical enthusiasts – mostly students of various Prague high schools. After relatively short period of existence, they have built a large repertoire concentrating on spiritual music from different historical periods and countries, as well as on lighter genres (swing and jazz). In the following years they have enjoyed the opportunity to sing in various cities, churches and concert halls all around the Czech Republic. In 2005 the choir completed a successful concert tour of the USA.

³**Children traditional ensemble Rosénka:** (cimbalom music with folk dancers) has been established in 1982. The repertoire comes out of the nursery rhymes, games, songs and dances from Moravian areas Dolňácko (near Uherské Hradiště) and Slovácko. The original group of 35 members has spread to 130 children and young people at the age of 5 to 25 years. They are divided to the six independent groups and two folk music ensembles. At the present time Rosénka decorates most of the prestigious folk and other cultural events and belongs to the absolute top of folk ensembles in the Czech Republic. This is proved by many prizes from both inland and foreign festivals.

4.4 Concert

The Concert of Prague Philharmonia⁴ was performed on Friday, August 18, 2006 in the Congress Hall of Prague Congress Centre at 6.30 p.m. The cost of this event was included in the registration fee. Price per extra ticket was CZK 400 (approx. 14 EUR). The program of the concert was as follows:

W.A Mozart La Clemenza di Tito (first performed publicly on September 6, 1791 in Prague.),
A. Dvořák The Czech Suite in D Major, Op. 39
J. Šaroun The Lights (first performed publicly here),
W. A. Mozart Symphony in D Major, No.38, KV 504 "Prague".

The genres of Prague and Czech landscape were projected during the performance that could disturb somebody of audience at listening and moreover, the noise of the projectors was too high close to them in the back rows of the Congress Hall. Even in view of these problems the concert was appreciated by the audience.

4.5 Closing Ceremony

The vote on the Resolutions relating to Pluto put the Closing Ceremony and the Plenary Session II into the center of attention of media. About twenty TV-crews took part in the Closing ceremony on Thursday, August 24, 14:00 17:30 in the KCP.

The vocal quartet Affetto opened the Plenary Session II by its program of mediaeval songs that took 10 minutes. First the IAU Secretary announced 925 new individual members of IAU and welcomed those presented in the audience. After the report of Resolutions Committee and the excellent and spectacular presentation by J. Bell concerning the new definition of planets in solar system, the vote for the resolutions started. The voting procedure adopted during the meeting was sufficient in case of the great majority agreed or disagreed but in case of the equilibrium of the positive and negative votes appeared the problem with computing the votes in the large hall. The possibility of hiring out a voting machine was discussed by NOC/LOC but the price was too high and the procedure was set up to the acclamation with the yellow voting cards which only the IAU members obtained at the entrances to the Congress Hall.

The LOC was asked for providing an effective means of respectful scrolling through 173 names of members deceased since the previous GA. Then the new membership in the executive bodies of IAU were introduced. As expected, Catherine Cesarsky was elected as the IAU President for the period 2006-2009. The President-Elect is Robert S. Williams. Brazilian organizers of the next GA27 presented the venue, and Beijing was announced for the 2012 GA (August 12-25).

4.6 Farewell Reception

On Wednesday, August 23 the participants were invited to the Industrial Palace, where the Farewell Reception was held. The palace, built in 1891 in late 19th-century decorative style, is located in a northern part of the city, in the area of Prague Exhibition Grounds.

The whole program evoked the period between two world wars by the properties as old cars, music and clothing of the hostesses. The swing band⁵ together with the Master of Ceremonies (Ondřej Havelka) put the guests into the whirl of dance so that the floor was not sufficient for the dancing couples. The evening was

⁴The Prague Philharmonia was founded in 1994. Its fundamental instrumentation is based on the Viennese classical orchestra, which can be augmented and altered according to the repertoire needs. The orchestra's repertoire focuses on masterpieces of the Classical and Romantic periods as well as music of the twentieth century, including works by neglected composers, rarely-played pieces, and new works by contemporary composers. From the outset, the Prague Philharmonia's Chief Conductor has been its founder Jiří Bělohávek. From 2005/06 season a position of Chief Conductor was overtaken by Kaspar Zehnder. The Prague Philharmonia continues to collaborate with Principal Guest Conductor Michel Swierczewski and young Czech conductor Jakub Hruša. In April 2005, the Prague Philharmonia was a partner to Luciano Pavarotti on his farewell concert in Prague.

⁵Havelka Sisters & Havelka Sisters Band is an ensemble of twelve enthusiastic musicians who have all succumbed to early swings. For many years, they have been walking their audiences through the period between the wars, a period filled with rhythm, dance, inspiration, pure ideals, and romantic loves and dreams. The ensemble is composed of a ladies' vocal quartet and an eight-member orchestra: piano, tenor saxophone, alt saxophone, trumpet, violinophone, guitar, percussion, and bass.

closed by the water and light show on Smetana's music at the Křižík's Fountain beside of the Industrial Palace. The show took 50 minutes and finished just before 1 a.m. Probably it was too late for most of guests because only less than 100 viewers remained to the end of the show. Hot, cold buffet and drinks were available.

During 2005 NOC/LOC still hoped that it will be possible to offer the Farewell Reception free of charge. In this case we expected about 1500 guests. Early, in 2006 when the application for support at the Ministry of Education failed, we concluded that the budget does not allow free of charge access. We started a discussion on the price per ticket and also on the number of attendees, which probably would reduce if we include any charge. As a result we expected 1/2, e.g. 750 attendees, and we set the price to 30 EUR per person, which was about one half of the real price. The on-line registration for this event was open at the GA web page at On-Line Social & Tourist Program Form.

As a final result 422 tickets have been sold, and 135 persons were invited free of charge (SOC's members, LOC/NOC members, EC IAU, etc.).

4.7 Audio-Visual Facilities

At the very beginning of the GA preparation the LOC discussed what kind of audiovisual (AV) facilities would be required by presenters. We took into consideration the recommendation of the NOC of the 25th GA Assembly in Sydney that *"for future GA meetings, full AV facilities should be factored into the initial planning and budgeting."* It has been decided to support not only the Microsoft software (PowerPoint) but also the open source programs and other common formats of presentations (it means OpenOffice, pdf, ps and html formats). We wanted to enable the presentations of the special movies and for the Mac users too. Therefore, the private laptops could be hooked into all rooms equipped for data projection. The supported formats and software together their versions installed to the PCs in the rooms (MS PowerPoint, OpenOffice Impress, Adobe Acrobat Reader, Windows Media Player, QuickTime, Ghostview) were presented well before the beginning of the GA at the web page. Accordingly, the general policy was established that full facilities, including transparency projection would be provided for all Symposia, Joint Discussions, Special Sessions and Invited Discourses and even for the smaller meetings, for example Commission, Division and EC meetings.

The first calculated provision of AV facilities from KCP for the IAU GA have been "astronomically" expensive as well. The LOC thought about limiting the use of AV facilities to the major meetings only. But later, after many hard and long negotiations between LOC (mostly Z. Tesařová and J. Palouš) and KCP the provision reached the normal and tolerable cost.

The LOC provided at the 3rd floor in KCP a "Speaker Preparation Room" equipped with the same hardware and software as those used in the session rooms to enable to check the presentations (and modify them) if necessary. For those using their own laptop, a few extra LCD displays were available to check if the video-signal output to the data projector has been working flawlessly. All participants obtained the "Instruction for Speakers" which were included in the Conference Kit. All speakers were strongly advised to report to the Speaker Preparation Room well before (3-4 hours in minimum) their talk.

It should be noted that the AV facilities and presentation support, in conjunction with support of staff in the Speaker Preparation Room and in the session rooms, were outstanding. Many speakers praised the high quality of the facilities and the absence of presentation disruptions.

4.8 Posters

In the initial planning, all posters were to be located in the Terrace I, Terrace II and in the part of Congress Hall Foyer(2nd floor). The planned use of these areas was based on a maximum of about 800 posters displayed at any one time, with a poster changeover during the weekend within the GA period. However, the NOC had agreed to display all posters approved by meeting SOCs, and the final number of requested poster reached 1,550. At the beginning of July, the large discrepancy appeared between requests for poster allocations during the first and second week of the GA. In view of this, the LOC decided to create more space for the participants by exchanging the Congress Hall Foyer with the South Hall (3rd floor). Thanks to the negotiations with the

KCP, no additional costs were charged. The posters have been allocated with the aim that the posters of certain event should be located together, and that the poster area and the session room of an event should be as close as possible.

There was a total of 1070 poster boards with a portrait format of an effective area 97 cm (width) x 180 cm (height). This effective area was covered by a carpet-like surface and the posters were fixed only with pins. The poster boards were almost fully occupied during the first week and half occupied during the second week.

4.9 GA Newspaper

Every workday a newspaper *Dissertatio cum Nuncio Sidereo III* was issued that provided a symbolic link to the astronomical past of the Czech Lands when Johannes Kepler published in Prague his work *Dissertatio cum Nuncio Sidereo* in 1610, and when the newspaper *Dissertatio cum Nuncio Sidereo II* was issued during the Prague IAU General Assembly in 1967.

The daily Newspaper was prepared by the editorial board composed of the editor in chief and 8 reporters, 2 technical editors, 2 cartoonists, 2 secretaries and the language editor. Due to a large number of contributions, starting from No. 7 an electronic supplement appeared on GA website. 4 numbers were composed of 8 pages (format A3) and the remaining 6 numbers included 4 pages (format A3) only. 3000 copies were produced with the exception of the last number, when only 2000 copies were produced. Selected articles were translated into Czech and published on the website of the Czech Astronomical Society.

4.10 Women in Astronomy Meeting

The Women in Astronomy lunch was held on Monday 21 August from 12:30 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. The Lunch Meeting was preceded by a business meeting of the IAU Working Group for Women in Astronomy. The Women in Astronomy lunch was attended by the current president of the IAU Ron Ekers, the incoming President Catherine Cesarsky, the first woman to hold this position, the General Secretary and Vice-Presidents, many senior astronomers, as well as young astronomers and students. The total number of participants was 301 coming from 49 countries. The geographical distribution was adequate, ranging from large, developed countries (United States, Russian Federation, Germany, Italy, France, United Kingdom) to developing countries (Armenia, Honduras, Indonesia, Iran, Macedonia, Philippines, Trinidad & Tobago, Viet Nam). The large majority, 92 percent of participants, consists of women. The meeting was hosted by the Working Group for Women in Astronomy and was chaired by the co-chair of this WG Anne Green.

The focus of this meeting was on changes in the status of women in astronomy since the 2003 General Assembly in Sydney and on formulation of strategies that will improve the environment for all astronomers.

All participants received a copy of The Baltimore Charter for Women in Astronomy.

The keynote speakers were Prof. Sunetra Giridhar (Indian Institute of Astronomy, Bangalore, India) and Dr. Patricia Knezek (WYIN Observatory, Arizona, USA). The subject of the meeting was Career Development for Women.

Sunetra Giridhar started her talk with information about women literacy in India. It is 54.16 % and it is increasing (for both genders), but very different in different parts of India. The proportion of women in astronomy is increasing in India in the last few decades, also in senior positions, but only in states where the women literacy increases (for example in Maharashtra, West Bengal). Some of Indian women in astronomy are working abroad. There is a plan prepared by the departments of science and Technology SERC named "Women Scientist Scheme" three year grants for women to obtain sufficient results helping them to get a good positions.

Patricia Knezek spoke about "Women in astronomy in the AAS community: Past + Present = Plan for the Future". She presented various statistics showing the position of women in astronomy in the past and during recent years. There are a lot of young women interested in astronomy during their student years (The 60% Cohort in the U.S.). If the female proportion in astronomy declines with age, being highest for students and smallest in permanent positions, then the main question is: where do these women go? Why women still seem to be either slow or leave their careers? The first step is a more detailed statistical survey in the astronomical

community, although the background could vary between countries. The situation also varies widely from institution to institution. There is a substantial need to establish reliable, well understood statistics. As a second step we need to answer the question why. The AAS/AIP is working on The Longitudinal Study of Astronomical Career Path. There is not only the traditional view of success, but there are another alternative career ways. The astronomical land is changing now. Large collaborative efforts are increasing; demand for education is increasing as well as roles in science and university management, public outreach, science policy, programming, instrumentation. In this way many varied fields are opening for “career” in astronomy. The main point is that full participation of men and women in astronomy will maximize the excellence in the field.

These two presentations were followed by discussions in breakout groups of 10 on five most important issues over lunch: Unequal opportunity “has discrimination gone underground? Mentoring and self-confidence” does women network work effectively or are our discussions supportive but not constructive? How can we upwardly manage our careers better? Do young women astronomers need more role models? Who makes an effective mentor? Suggestions and strategies for building self-confidence are women more reluctant to promote themselves? Anecdotal evidence suggests that women base their application on past achievements rather than on their potentials for a job, which men do. Do you agree? Family responsibilities is there an easier time to manage having children? What kind of provision for child-care is critical at workplaces and conferences? After a career interruption, is your re-entry at a lower level, which then makes the path to senior position a longer one? Since women are still (generally) the primary caregivers, is there a greater vulnerability for research disruption and exclusion from time critical projects? Dual careers equal advancement of two careers is extremely difficult. Lack of mobility often affects women more than men. How can we mitigate this? How can we encourage greater consideration of options for partners? Can we make a paradigm shift so that a non-standard career path is not a disadvantage? What do recent statistics tell us? Now that the gender imbalance at school and university has largely disappeared, how do we ensure this translates into greater representation for women in permanent and senior appointments, in positions that carry decision-making responsibilities and prestige?

Members of these randomly created table-groups could exchange and share various points of views coming from different countries and various types of institutions. These discussions were very interesting, deep and detailed, and women in astronomy were very active in them.

Then results of these groups were reported back to the plenary session at the end of meeting.

The following action items were submitted to the incoming IAU Executive: ensure adequate representation for women in IAU bodies, on Science Organizing Committees and as invited speakers for Symposia, make the provision of childcare at meetings, either supplied or paid for, a priority. By the way, this General Assembly of the IAU has started a new era with the first woman elected for the IAU president Catherine Cesarsky. It was also mentioned that the IAU gender statistics gives an incomplete picture because younger astronomers, both men and women, are not usually members of the IAU.

This Women in Astronomy meeting was an excellent opportunity to exchange ideas and experience. Organizers hope to prepare such meeting again for the next GA IAU in Rio de Janeiro in 2009 and next such meeting would be very helpful to improve the environment for women in astronomy.

4.11 Young Astronomers

This year at General Assembly of IAU two new initiatives for young astronomers were established. They are the lunch-debate or lunch-discussions and consulting service. The purpose of these events is to mediate contact between young astronomers and experienced astronomers from various countries and institutions like ESA, NASA, ESO, etc.

The lunch-discussions took place last Tuesday. It was organized as a buffet with discussions of young astronomers with the guest astronomers at the round tables. There were 20 round tables with 11 participants — 9 of whom were young astronomers and 2 were guest astronomers. At the round tables 2 to 3 themes were discussed. They were chosen according to suggestions and votes of young astronomers through web interface before the General Assembly started. The themes touched three main areas — one being about institutions like ESA, NASA and possibilities for young astronomers, second were CV, applications for postdocs and job

opportunities and the third one was concerning the job of the scientist, e.g. how one can cope with so many papers published each day. At this event there were about 180 young astronomers and 41 guest astronomers. As far as we have some feedback from conversations with participants it was quite successful. The assessment questionnaires were filled in by participants at the end of the lunch-discussions but we have not yet finished their evaluation. Out of these questionnaires we will make a draw and one of the participants will get free admission to the next General Assembly in three years in Rio de Janeiro (given to her or him by IAU).

The other event, the consulting service, is taking place during the whole General Assembly. Its purpose is to mediate one-to-one discussions between the young astronomer and the consultant. We have 82 consultants now who are ready to help young astronomers. They registered as consultants before the General Assembly started either through web interface or by mail. It is still possible to do it now. Several discussions between young astronomers and consultants have already taken place. At the end of the General Assembly we again will produce an assessment questionnaire in the form of the web page so that we have feedback on how successful this initiative was.

5 Additional Functions

5.1 Internet Room and Internet Access

When planning the concept of the Internet Room and the Internet access for participants in general, LOC had to estimate the number of PC stations and free connection points that would be sufficient on one hand and not very costly on the other. Since the rental price of a computer offered by KCP exceeded the price of a new PC on the market, we were hinted either to buy some brand new computers or to search for sponsors. In spring 2006, we were contacted by the managing director of 'AUROTON Computer', the amateur astronomer, who offered us 15 equipped PCs and one printer free of charge. The AUROTON became an official sponsor to GA in this way. Moreover, LOC managed to negotiate a free wireless access with T-Mobile CZ for 500 simultaneous connections to be available across the whole building. Beside the 15 workstations in the Internet Room, we also decided to prepare 30 seats with just network cables and power outlets for users with laptops and additional 20 seats with only power outlets for wireless capable laptops.

The LOC became nervous on August 10, three days before the beginning of GA, as the news on the revealed terror plot at Heathrow and Gatwick airports in England appeared. Besides numerous cancellations (about 20 participants gave the reason of the cancellation the terror plot), rumor had it that the flight passengers are not allowed to take their laptops into the plane, even that the USB Flash drives have been forbidden. As a reaction, five more workstations have been hired from a local computer supplier (130EUR per PC) and 50 cheap USB Flash drives have been bought (only 10 have been demanded by participants later).

The Internet Room performed extremely successfully and was used intensively by the participants. Although from time to time there was a queue for the PCs (especially after lunch), it was rarely more than ten people long.

Computers in the Internet Room were connected to the 100Mbps network with low-priority packet handling, so that it did not block more important scientific applications in the periods of high network load. This excellent high-speed connectivity was much appreciated among participants while they downloaded resources for their unfinished presentations, sent digital photographs to their homes, etc. It was even possible to backup a full hard-drive for a lady who suffered a broken laptop. All PCs were equipped with LCD screen, dual operating system (Windows XP / SUSE Linux 10) and with the essential set of office, network and multimedia software.

Also important was the constant presence of an attendance, who was ready to assist people with various problems. Together with the experts from the Speaker Preparation Room they managed to solve practically all technical difficulties that people were coming with. From banal stuff like configuring the wireless access to more difficult like already mentioned hard-drive backup from a non-working laptop.

It was decided by LOC not to follow the feedback from Sydney on the provision of PC stations without seats to speed up the user turnover. And this decision turned out to be a good one. Many people came with

unfinished presentations and they spent time with a computer making some final editing. Thus we rather recommend to provide enough computer capacity to serve people needs without making long queues. We think some 30 computers and 40 places for people with laptops is sufficient.

All around the KCP building we had an open and free wireless connection ready to serve up to 500 users simultaneously. It was operated by T-Mobile CZ as a sponsorship. The limit of 500 users was estimated by LOC prior to the conference and the actual usage of the wireless network did reach it only a few times. The wireless connection served with no problems and 18370 of individual connections to the Internet were made that lasted 15500 hours in total; about 250 GB of data were transmitted during the whole General Assembly only through wireless. This corresponds to approximately 1800 fifty-minute connections each day.

5.2 Internet live streaming and video archive

At the beginning of 2006 the people from IVOA asked LOC for the high speed connection in their exhibition stand. LOC has contacted MediaStream. They provided it and as a by-product of the high speed connection they offered to the LOC to prepare recording and the Internet live streaming (and archiving) of the main events of the General Assembly. Live streaming during General Assembly have visited 8122 live viewers in total during the GA. Most viewed show was General Assembly Session 2 (final Planet Definition vote) with 5056 viewers.

The "Top 10" list of shows during General Assembly in order of number of views:

1.	Discussion on the Definition of a Planet	6943
2.	General Assembly Session 2 (Planet Definition vote)	6102
3.	General Assembly Opening Ceremony	3170
4.	Invited Discourse - Jill Tarter	1483
5.	General Assembly Closing Ceremony	781
6.	General Assembly Session 1	590
7.	Invited Discourse - Alan Title	564
8.	Invited Discourse - Shuang Nan Zhang	439
9.	Peter Gruber Foundation Cosmology Prize Winner Lecture	433
10.	Invited Discourse - Reinhard Genzel	358

The video archive has sustained rate of 450 views per day in the first month after General Assembly. As agreed, video archive will be available for at least 3 years. Based on current estimates, we predict to reach 100,000 total views by the time of next General Assembly in Rio.

5.3 Exhibition

Stand 1 - AstroGrid the UK's Virtual Observatory System

Stand 2 - Elsevier academic publishers

Stand 3 - Western Australia Radio Astronomy

Stand 4 - Cambridge University Press publisher of the Proceedings of the International Astronomical Union

Stand 5 - Gemini Observatory

Stand 6 - Centre de Donnees astronomiques de Strasbourg

Stand 7 - American Astronomical Society

Stand 8 - Astronomy & Astrophysics - EDP Sciences

Stand 9 - 10 - International Virtual Observatory Alliance (IVOA)

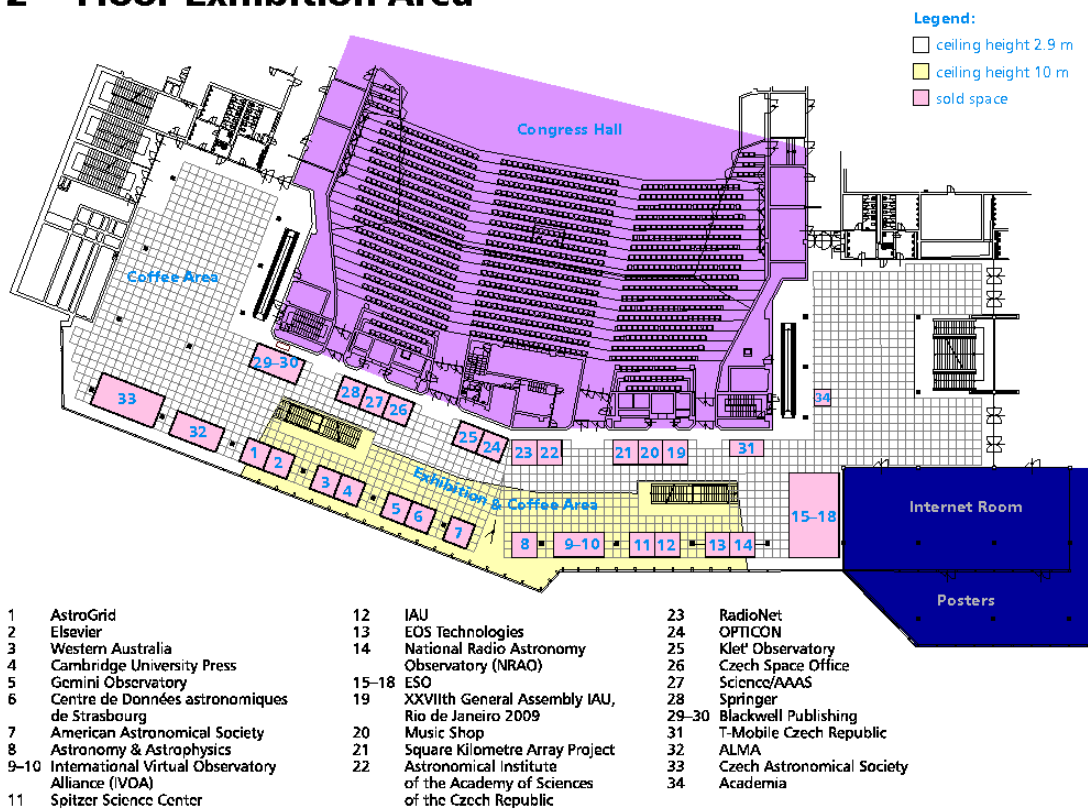
Stand 11 - Spitzer Science Center

Stand 12- IAU-UAI

Stand 13 - EOS Technologies, Inc.

Stand 14 - National Radio Astronomical Observatory

2nd Floor Exhibition Area



Stand 15 - 18 - European Souther Observatory - ESO
Stand 19 - JZ Congressos, IAU / XXVIIth General Assembly — IAU 2009
Stand 20 - Music Shop
Stand 21 - Square Kilometre Array Project
Stand 22 - Astronomical Institute, Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic
Stand 23 - RadioNet
Stand 24 - OPTICON the OPTical Infrared CO-ordination Network for astronomy
Stand 25 - Klet' Observatory
Stand 26 - Czech Space Office - Česká kosmická kancelář, o.p.s.
Stand 27 - Science/AAAS
Stand 28 -Springer
Stand 29-30 - Blackwell Publishing Ltd
Stand 31 - T-Mobile Czech Republic a.s.
Stand 32- ALMA the Atacama Large Millimeter Array
Stand 33 - Observatories in the Czech Republic - Czech Astronomical Society
Stand 34 - Academia , publishing house of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic.

5.4 Tour Programs

The tour program was planned and managed by CBT. Tour booking forms were provided on the GA website. Tours could also be booked during GA in the Reception Area. The list of the tours with the number of participants follows:

Grand City Tour with Visit to Prague Castle	329
Prague Boat Trip with Dinner/Lunch & Music	252
A Cosmic Celebration of Czech Beer, Brewery U Fleků	141
Český Šternberk and Ceasar Bohemia Glass Factory	59
Jewish Ghetto and Old Town Square	56
Trip to Castle Karlštejn & Nížbor Glass Factory	82
Trip to Konopiště Chateau	88
Trip to Kokořín Castle	39
Trip to Křivoklát Castle	10
Medieval Town of Kutná Hora	133
Trip to Mělník Chateau with Wine Tasting	40
Lesser Town & Charles Bridge, Old Town	36
Excursion to Ondřejov Astronomical Observatory	152
Palaces and Gardens in the Lesser Town	74
Visit to the Pilsner Urquell Brewery & Kozel Chateau	16
West Bohemian Spas	79
Trip to Benátky nad Jizerou (Tycho's Observatory)	23
Extra tours through Astronomical Prague - organized by Mrs. A. Šolcová	72
Total: 22 events	2108

5.5 Associated Events

Accompanying events not covered by Conference Budget / or partly.

EC 81 Meeting	13/08	09:00	Academy of Sciences	35
Dinner at Vila Lanna	14/08	20:00	Vila Lanna	40
Young Astronomers Meeting	15/08	11:00	Small Hall	200
Peter Gruber Foundation - Gala Dinner	15/08	20:00	Stone Bell House	60
Reception by Lord Mayor of Prague	15/08	18:30	Old Town Hall	120
EAS Meeting	17/08	16:00	Meeting Room 1.2	
EDP Sciences	17/08	16:00	Chamber Hall	500
USNA Reception	17/08	20:00	Palfy Palace, Lesser Town	125
IUCAF: RAS Club Dinner	20/08	19:00	Restaurant Zvonice	20–30
ESO: ALMA Meeting	21/08	09:00	Dressing Room 225	
Women in Astronomy Meeting	21/08	11:00	Room 2.1.	50
		12:30	Small Hall	300
EAS General Assembly	21/08	14:00	Club C	
ESA: GAIA Meeting	21/08	15:30	Chamber Hall	
Farewell Reception	23/08	20:00	Industrial Palace	560
EC 82 Meeting	25/08	09:00	Meeting Hall II	35

Inter-Union Commission for the History of Astronomy (ICHA) organized the Colloquium "Astronomy in Prague in the Mirror of Centuries" on the history of astronomy in and around Prague. This supplementary program to IAU GA 2006 was organized during the weekend August 19 – 20 and consisted in following events. Number of participants is given in parentheses:

1. Review on Prague astronomical monuments (150),
2. Walk through Astronomical Prague – Old Town (160),
3. Discussion, Walk through Astronomical Prague – Lesser Town (68)
4. One-day bus trip "Astronomy in East-Bohemia" to visit the towns Jaroměř-Josefov, Žamberk and Litomyšl in traces of astronomers Wilhelm von Biela, Theodor Brosen, August Seydler and Zdeněk Kopal (50)

6 Publicity

The introductory Press Conference for Czech journalists took place in the building of the Academy of Sciences in Prague, before the opening of the General Assembly, on August 10. Daily press conferences took place during the meetings, directly in the Congress Center, in which both officers of the IAU and important world astronomers participated. The General Assembly was mostly covered by the stations of the Czech Radio (Radiožurnál, Praha, Vltava, Leonardo, ČRo 6), but also by the Czech press and Czech TV which provided service to many TV companies in abroad. There were 125 domestic and 70 international journalists and press agencies accredited. The eye-witnesses of IAU General Assemblies agreed that this Prague General Assembly had the highest publicity in the history.

More information is in the report 'The public communication at the IAU GA 2006' by Christensen et al. (2006).

7 Experience gathered from 26th GA IAU in Prague

Over 7 years preceding 26th GA IAU, during its realization, and during the post-GA period until March 2007, the organizers gathered a lot of special experience. Here, we try to review it for the use of the next GA IAU organizers.

7.1 Work load by the individual NOC/LOC members

Work load on the 26th GA organizers was constantly growing and differed dramatically if we compare individual NOC/LOC members. In the case of NOC chair and vice-chair persons, the work load was constantly growing from 10% of the overall working time in 2001 through 50% in the spring of 2005 to 100% since the beginning of 2006. The work load of other NOC members was kept below 10% over all the years. Since October 2004, when the LOC was established, a similar situation was developed: the LOC chair-person started at the level 10% in October 2004, which increased to 50% in the spring of 2005 up to 100% since the beginning of 2006. Here, we do not evaluate the work load of the professional congress organizers CBT and ICARIS.

7.2 Time line of organizational steps

- December 1999 - letter of intent sent to GS IAU;
- June 2000 - a complete proposal including venue and budget issued;
- August 2000 - decision of the EC on the 26th GA;
- January 2001 - NOC chair and vice-chair elected by National Committee on Astronomy (NKA);
- March 2001 - complete NOC appointed by NKA;
- May 2001 - professional conference organizer CBT and sub-provider ICARIS selected;
- July 2001 - preliminary reservation of the Prague Congress Center for the fixed dates August 14 - 25, 2006 issued;
- November 2001 - visit of GS and AGS in Prague;
- February 2002 - a system of contracts between Astronomical Institute ASCR - CBT - ICARIS developed. The contract with ICARIS was signed later, after fixing the profit of the ICARIS, who was reluctant to sign before it;
- October 2002 - definitive contract on reservation of the Prague Congress Center and other services signed, only two thirds of the finally used capacity were contracted at that time;
- December 2002 - Logo of the 26th GA IAU developed;
- January 2003 - First announcement leaflet produced;
- February 2003 - website **www.astronomy2006.com** opened, it has been upgraded up to 2006;
- March 2003 - the poem "... are there frogs there too" by Jan Neruda was translated into Czech and printed as a part of GA promotion;
- April 2003 - a 31 min. movie on "Astronomy in the Czech Republic" produced. It was evaluated as the best movie with the scientific subjects produced in 2003 in the Czech Republic and later it was shown in the Czech TV channel 1.
- July 2003 - 25th GA in Sydney: stand in the exhibition area was established, where the First announcement, "... are there frogs there too", movie on the Czech astronomy and other materials were distributed. At the closing ceremony Jan Palouš invited 25th GA participants to the next GA in Prague.
- March 2004 - visit of the IAU Executive in the Prague Congress Center;
- October 2004 - LOC established;

- March 2005 - application for the financial support at the level 10 MCZK from the government of the Czech Republic issued;
- April 2005 - EC decided on the general framework of the GA program, registration fee fixed in CZK;
- November 2005 - on-line registration opened. In the case of the positive result of the governmental grant we were ready to decrease the fee and return a part to those who did pay early;
- February 2006 - governmental grant fails, final reservation of almost complete capacity of the Prague Congress Center (one third more with respect to the first contract of October 2002);
- April 2006 - IAU grants distributed;
- 31st May 2006 - early registration finishes. It was postponed from 15th April 2006;
- 26th June 2006 - deadline for sending abstracts;
- 15th July 2006 - deadline for SOC chairs to deliver the detailed program of their events for the Program Book.
- 7th August 2006 - deadline of the on-line registration;
- 12th August 2006 - on-site registration opens;
- 14th to 25th August 2006 - 26th GA IAU;
- 25th November 2006 - deadline for proceedings of the Symposia and other events;
- February 2007 - draft report on the 26th GA IAU sent to GS, final 23th meeting of the NOC/LOC;
- March 2007 - financial audit performed, final version of the 26th GA IAU report produced.

7.3 Lessons learned from 26th GA IAU

7.3.1 Selection of the scientific program

The most important step in the preparation of the GA is the selection of the framework for the scientific program by the EC. Obviously, it depends on the proposals and previous interest and trust of the astronomical community to the importance of the GA. The screening of the proposals, critical review and the final choice are extremely important. It should be scientifically actual and interesting involving the first class key-note speakers.

We do consider 18 months before GA as sufficient for preparation of detailed programs of individual events based on selected good proposals. Very important is the selection and early invitation of top-class key-note speakers. It should be done well in advance, about 12 months before GA, otherwise they are booked for other conferences. All the invitations should be done before the end of the year preceding the GA. It is also a delicate astro-political item, since if you miss to invite someone, who considers himself as a key-person, he probably would not come to GA at all. Another part of this experience is that only about 50% of the invited speakers, who did promise to come, will really show up at the conference. Therefore, we strongly recommend to construct a sufficiently long reserve list.

7.3.2 Selection of a professional conference provider

Selection of a proper professional conference provider is crucial for the success of the GA. The decision should be taken well in advance (more than 5 years before GA in our case). Our choice of the CBT agency was extremely successful.

7.3.3 Participants

It should be a broad audience from different countries. It depends on their finances and on the distribution of IAU and other grants. A controversial situation is that allocation of travel money frequently depends on the fact if a contribution is accepted as oral. In many cases it could not have been done before 26th June 2006, when was the deadline for abstract submission. But this was too late for money allocation from a potential institution. Another objection was that there were too few holes in the program left at the date of the abstract submission deadline. But from the perspective of the organizers it is impossible to leave the program more open until one month before the GA. From the point of view of the budget it would be convenient to coincide the early registration and abstracts approval. Many submitters made registration after the abstract approval but it was after the end of "early registration". We had to solve many exceptions from the late registration.

7.3.4 Level of the Registration Fee

We do understand that 550 EUR, which corresponds to the actual expense a two weeks conference in Prague with 2500 participants, is rather high for many, particularly for the young, astronomers. In our opinion, the only way how to surpass this problem is to have at least one major sponsor, who would be able to cover 1/4 - 1/3 of the total expense. Unfortunately, our application to the government of the Czech Republic failed.

7.3.5 Registration Database

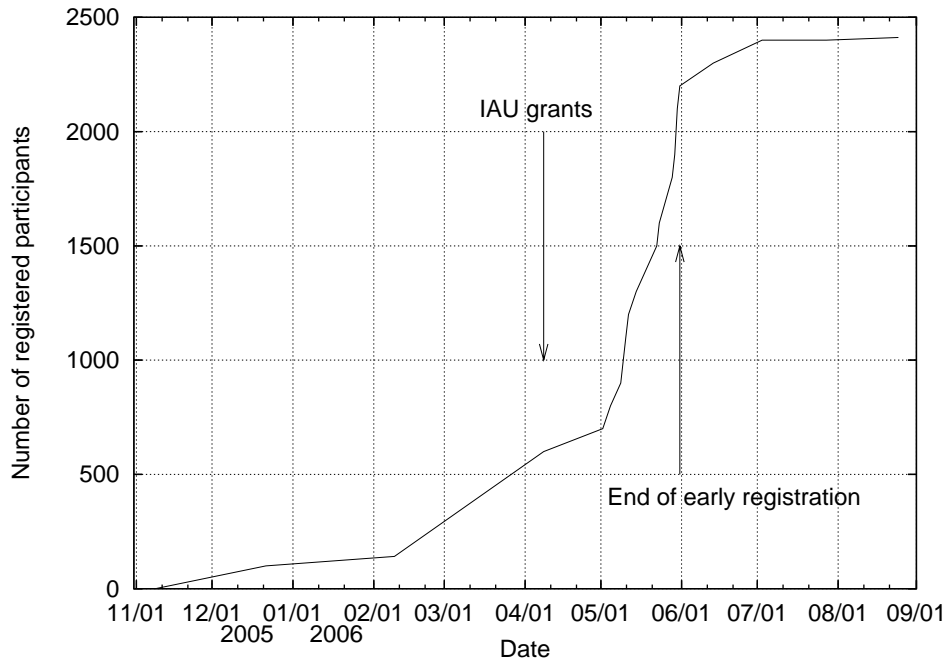
We do recommend to have one universal database with a complete information on registration, abstract submission, grant allocation, payments done. It could also include the information on accommodation and other events. The separation of the d-base with abstracts at Oxford Abstract resulted in an extremely uncomfortable situation. Another complication is with the potential participants, non-members of the IAU. The checking process is in some case very slow. We do recommend to abandon this regulation and open GA and its scientific events to all interested individuals. The only rule should be the scientific expertise. On the top of it, the organizers should have the access to the IAU membership d-base. The CBT offered the whole software solution for registration, abstracts, accommodation, accompanying program "in one" to IAU in December 2006. We recommend the IAU EC to consider this offer seriously since we think it would be a waste of work to begin from scratch every GA IAU.

7.3.6 Rooms and equipment

It is necessary to make reservation of sufficient number of meeting rooms in time, at the beginning of the GA preparation. Many of request for organizing the 'fringe', small meetings appeared just before or even during the GA. The request for additional room for the very active and successful Press Center also appeared rather late from our point of view. The next GA organizer should allocate at least 3-4 rooms for the Press Center (e.g. Press Room, Press Interview Room and Press Conference Room). With respect to the planning it is always better to cancel rooms than to add more of them later.

It is necessary to consider the gradual improvement of the technology and connectivity of participants. The next GA should be equipped with the hi-speed internet and wireless connection. The level of the audio-visual equipment of the session rooms should be as high as possible. Also the video recording and web-streaming of the sessions met with the lively response. These items are rather expensive and it is necessary to take them into account in time.

8 Registration Statistics



8.1 Final Attendance Information

8.1.1 Overall information

Overall Attendance/Early	2412/2050
IAU Members	1113
Invited Participants	1299
Registered Guests > 11years old	172
Children (11 & under: free)	36
Students	540
Seniors	115
Teachers	14

8.1.2 Top 10 countries out of 72 in total

1.	USA	547
2.	Germany	188
3.	Japan	169
4.	France	150
5.	United Kingdom	140
6.	Italy	121
7.	Czech Republic	119
8.	Netherlands	89
9.	Russian Federation	88
10.	Spain	72

8.2 Acknowledgements

NOC needs to acknowledge an excellent cooperation with GS IAU Oddbjørn Engvold, which was both intensive and effective, in the final period on almost daily basis. An important collaboration with the IAU secretariat was also helpful, particularly we appreciate the advice and help by Monique Orine. NOC/LOC would like to express special thanks to brothers David & Michal Bursa and to the company MediaStream for substantial help with Internet implementation in the KCP. This report would not be complete without an acknowledgement of the important role played by CBT in the success of the GA, which was visible in all GA functions including registration, accommodation, negotiations with KCP, management of the exhibition, etc. Particularly the cooperation with CBT representatives Zuzana Tesařová, Zina Pecková and Monika Šenderová should be appreciated.

9 List of all 72 countries which the GA26 participants came from

Argentina	17
Armenia	2
Australia	60
Austria	20
Azerbaijan	1
Belgium	28
Brazil	43
Bulgaria	1
Canada	45
Chile	19
China Nanjing	60
China Taipei	14
Colombia	1
Croatia	3
Cuba	2
Czech Republic	118
Denmark	14
Egypt	2
Estonia	6
Finland	15
France	150
Germany	188
Greece	16
Honduras	1
Hungary	16
India	23
Indonesia	4
Iran	3
Iraq	1
Ireland	5
Israel	10
Italy	121
Japan	169
Kazakhstan	1
Kenya	1
Korea, RP (South Korea)	39
Latvia	4
Lithuania	2
Macedonia	2
Mexico	33
Mongolia	1
Morocco	2
Nepal	1
Netherlands	89
New Zealand	9
Norway	5
Peru	2
Philippines	1
Poland	26
Portugal	8
Romania	5
Russian Federation	88
Saudi Arabia	1
Serbia	18
Slovakia	6
Slovenia	2
South Africa	21
Spain	72
Sweden	22
Switzerland	25
Tajikistan	1
Thailand	3
Trinidad & Tobago	1
Turkey	7
Ukraine	31
United Kingdom	140
Uruguay	2
USA	547
Uzbekistan	3
Vatican City State	4
Venezuela	6
Viet Nam	2

10 List of Participants (those who passed the registration desk)

Michael **A'Hearn**, University of Maryland, College Park, USA
 Rabab **Abdel Hamid**, National Research Institute of Astronomy and Geophysics, Cairo, Egypt
 Shinsuke **Abe**, Kobe University, Kobe, Japan
 Pavel **Abolmasov**, Special Astrophysical Observatory, Moscow, Russian Federation
 Roberto **Abraham**, University of Toronto, Toronto, Canada
 Marek **Abramowicz**, Göteborg University, Göteborg, Sweden
 Helmut **Abt**, NOAO, Tucson, USA
 Jayanta **Acharya**, Mahendra Sanskrit University, Kathmandu, Nepal
 Mark **Adams**, NRAO, Charlottesville, USA
 Conny **Aerts**, Instituut voor Sterrenkunde, Leuven, Belgium
 Alfonso **Aguerri**, Instituto de Astrofísica de Canarias, La Laguna, Spain
 Amir **Ahmad**, Armagh Observatory, Armagh, United Kingdom
 Bobomurat **Ahmedov**, Ulugh Beg Astronomical Institute, Tashkent, Uzbekistan
 Andrea **Ahumada**, Obs. Astronomico, Univ. Nac. Cordoba, Cordoba, Argentina
 Kaare **Aksnes**, University of Oslo, Oslo, Norway
 Juan Facundo **Albacete Colombo**, Osservatorio Astronomico di Palermo, Palermo, Italy
 Santiago **Alcobe**, UPC, Barcelona, Spain
 Conel **Alexander**, Carnegie Institution of Washington, Washington, USA
 Mohsen **Alizadeh**, Astrophysics Goettingen, goettingen, Germany
 France **Allard**, Centre de Recherche Astronomique de Lyon, Lyon, France
 Nicole **Allard**, Institut d'Astrophysique de Paris, Paris, France
 Christine **Allen**, Instituto de Astronomia, UNAM, Mexico City, Mexico
 Carroll **Alley**, University of Maryland, Silver Spring, USA
 Mehmet Ali **Alpar**, Sabanci University, Istanbul, Turkey
 Athem **Alsabti**, University College London, London NW7 2QS, Iraq
 Saad **Alshehri**, Institute of Astronomical & Geophysical Research, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia
 Oscar **Alvarez Pomares**, Ministry of Science Technology and Environment, La Habana, Cuba
 Joao **Alves**, Calar Alto Observatory - Centro Astronomico Hispano Aleman, Almeria, Spain
 Pedro J. **Amado**, Univ. Granada-IAA (CSIC), Granada, Spain
 Sachiko **Amari**, Washington University, St. Louis, USA
 Pavel **Ambroz**, Astronomical Institute ASCR, Ondrejov, Czech Republic
 Eduardo **Amores**, IAG/Universitat de Barcelona/IEEC, Barcelona, Spain
 Ricardo O. **Amorín**, Instituto Astrofisico de Canarias, La Laguna, Spain
 Philippe **Amram**, Laboratoire d'astrophysique de Marseille, Marseille, France
 An ja C. **Andersen**, Niels Bohr Institute, Copenhagen University, Copenhagen, Denmark
 Johannes **Andersen**, Nordic Optical Telescope, Copenhagen, Denmark
 Michael **Andersen**, Astrophysikalisches Institut Potsdam, Potsdam, Germany
 Philippe **André**, CEA Saclay, Gif-sur-Yvette, France
 Alexandre Humberto **Andrei**, Observatório do Valongo/UFRJ, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
 Olga **Andryeyeva**, Crimean astrophysical observatory, Nauchny, Ukraine
 Diaz **Angeles I.**, Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, Madrid, Spain
 Luca **Angeretti**, INAF - Osservatorio Astronomico di Bologna, Bologna, Italy
 Guillem **Anglada-Escude**, University of Barcelona, Barcelona, Spain
 Hong Bae **Ann**, Pusan National University, Busan, Korea, RP
 Francesca **Annibali**, Space Telescope Science Institute, Baltimore, USA
 Antonios **Antoniou**, University of Athens, Faculty of Physics, Athens, Greece
 Gordana **Apostolovska**, University "Kiril i Metodij", Skopje, Macedonia
 Philip **Appleton**, California Institute of Technology, Pasadena, USA
 Alfonso **Aragon-Salamanca**, University of Nottingham, Nottingham, United Kingdom
 Eva **Arazimová**, Czech Republic
 Bojan **Arbutina**, Astronomical Observatory, Belgrade, Serbia
 Brent **Archinal**, U. S. Geological Survey, Flagstaff, USA
 Arnold **Ardenne, van**, ASTRON, Dwingeloo, Netherlands
 Serena Emily **Arena**, University of Milano, Varese, Italy
 Frédéric **Arenou**, Observatoire de Paris/CNRS, Meudon Cedex, France
 Patricia **Arevalo**, Southampton University, Southampton, United Kingdom
 Gonzalo **Argandona**, ESO, Santiago, Chile
 Robert **Argyle**, Institute of Astronomy, Cambridge, United Kingdom
 Elisa Felicitas **Arias**, Bureau International des Poids et Mesures, Sèvres, France
 Jean-Eudes **Arlot**, IMCCE/CNRS, Paris, France
 Keith **Arnaud**, Goddard Space Flight Center, Greenbelt, USA
 David **Arnett**, Steward Observatory, Tucson, USA
 Jonathan **Arons**, University of California, Berkeley, USA
 Oscar **Arratia**, University of Valladolid, Valladolid, Spain
 Christophe **Arviset**, ESA-ESAC, Madrid, Spain
 Ayumi **Asai**, Nobeyama Solar Radio Observatory, Nagano, Japan
 Naoki **Asai**, Chiba University, Chiba, Japan
 Natalia **Asari**, Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina, Sao Jose, Brazil
 Joana **Ascenso**, Centro de Astrofísica da Universidade do Porto, Porto, Portugal
 Michael **Ashley**, University of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia
 Zeki **Aslan**, TUBITAK National Observatory, Antalya, Turkey
 Martin **Asplund**, Research School of Astronomy and Astrophysics, Weston, Australia
 Abdul **Asvarov**, Institute of Physics, Baku, Azerbaijan
 Olga **Atanackovic-Vukmanovic**, Faculty of Mathematics, University of Belgrade, Belgrade, Serbia
 Jason **Aufdenberg**, NOAO/Embry-Riddle, Tucson, USA
 Kerry **Azar**, EOS Optronics GmbH, Deggendorf, Germany
 Willem **Baan**, ASTRON, Dwingeloo, Netherlands
 Pulat **Babadjanov**, Institute of Astrophysics, Dushanbe, Tajikistan
 Rafael **Bachiller**, Observatorio Astronomico Nacional, Madrid, Spain
 Chang Hyun **Baek**, ARCSEC, Sejong University, Seoul, Korea RP
 Maarten **Baes**, Universiteit Gent, Gent, Belgium
 Ioannis **Bagetakos**, University of Hertfordshire, Hatfield, United Kingdom
 Jack **Baggaley**, University of Canterbury, Christchurch, New Zealand
 Alexander **Bagrov**, Inst. of Astronomy RAS, Moscow, Russian Federation
 Andrey **Bagrov**, Moscow State University, Moscow, Russian Federation
 Coryn **Bailer-Jones**, Max-Planck-Institut fuer Astronomie, Heidelberg, Germany
 Mark **Bailey**, Armagh Observatory, Armagh, United Kingdom
 Nicholas **Bailey**, University of Southampton, Southampton, United Kingdom
 ma@astro.umd.edu
 hhrabab@yahoo.com
 avell@kobe-u.ac.jp
 pasha@sao.ru
 abraham@astro.utoronto.ca
 marek@fy.chalmers.se
 abt@noao.edu
 jayantaacharya@gmail.com
 mtadams@nrao.edu
 conny@ster.kuleuven.be
 jalfonso@iac.es
 amir@star.arm.ac.uk
 ahmedov@astrin.uzsci.net
 andrea@oac.uncor.edu
 kaare.aksnes@astro.uio.no
 facundo@astropa.unipa.it
 santiago@alcobe.net
 alexande@dtm.ciw.edu
 alizadeh@astro.physik.uni-goettingen.de
 fallard@ens-lyon.fr
 nallard@iap.fr
 chris@astrocu.unam.mx
 coalley@physics.umd.edu
 alpar@sabanciuniv.edu
 a.alsabti@ucl.ac.uk
 salshehri@kacst.edu.sa
 oscar@citma.cu
 jalves@caha.es
 pja@iaa.es
 sa@wuphys.wustl.edu
 pambroz@asu.cas.cz
 amores@astro.iag.usp.br
 ricardo.amorin@iac.es
 philippe.amram@oamp.fr
 anja@dark-cosmology.dk
 ja@astro.ku.dk
 mandersen@aip.de
 pandre@cea.fr
 oat1@on.br
 andre_ava@mail.ru
 angeles.diaz@uam.es
 luca.angeretti@bo.astro.it
 anglada@am.ub.es
 hbann@pusan.ac.kr
 annibali@stsci.edu
 ananton@phys.uoa.gr
 gordanaa@iunona.pmf.ukim.edu.mk
 apple@ipac.caltech.edu
 Alfonso.Aragon@Nottingham.ac.uk
 eva.arazimova@volny.cz
 barbutina@aob.bg.ac.yu
 barchinal@usgs.gov
 brink@astron.nl
 Serena.Arena@unimi.it
 frederic.Arenou@obspm.fr
 patricia@astro.soton.ac.uk
 gargando@eso.org
 rwa@ast.cam.ac.uk
 farias@bipm.org
 arlot@imcce.fr
 kaa@milkyway.gsfc.nasa.gov
 darnett@as.arizona.edu
 arons@berkeley.edu
 meusan@eis.uva.es
 Christophe.Arviset@esa.int
 asai@nro.nao.ac.jp
 asai@astro.s.chiba-u.ac.jp
 natalia@astro.ufsc.br
 joanasba@astro.up.pt
 m.ashley@unsw.edu.au
 aslan@tug.tug.tubitak.gov.tr
 martin@mso.anu.edu.au
 asvarov@physics.ab.az
 olga@matf.bg.ac.yu
 jasona@noao.edu
 kerry.azar@eos-optronics.com
 baan@astron.nl
 pb@tajik.net
 r.bachiller@oan.es
 chback@kasi.re.kr
 maarten.baes@ugent.be
 ioannis@star.herts.ac.uk
 jack.baggaley@canterbury.ac.nz
 abagrov@inasan.ru
 bagrov_andrey@rambler.ru
 calj@mpia.de
 meb@arm.ac.uk
 sonya@soton.ac.uk

Katherine **Bailey Mathae**, National Academy of Sciences, Washington, USA
 Paul **Baki**, University of Nairobi, Nairobi, Kenya
 K.S. **Balasubramaniam**, National Solar Observatory, Sunspot, USA
 Lajos György **Balazs**, Konkoly Observatory, Budapest, Hungary
 Yuri **Balega**, Special Astrophysical Observatory of RAS, Nizhniy Arkhyz, Russian Federation
 Sallie **Baliunas**, Harvard-Smithsonian, Cambridge, USA
 Fernando Jesus **Ballesteros**, University of Valencia, Paterna, Spain
 Jean **Ballet**, Service d'Astrophysique, Gif sur Yvette Cedex, France
 John **Bally**, University of Colorado, Boulder, USA
 William **Banerdt**, Jet Propulsion Laboratory, Pasadena, USA
 John **Bangert**, US Naval Observatory, Washington, USA
 Boris **Banjevic**, Institute for Informatics and Statistics Belgrade, Belgrade, Serbia
 Akiva **Bar-nun**, Tel-Aviv University, Tel-Aviv, Israel
 Fabio **Barazza**, University of Texas at Austin, Austin, USA
 Rafael **Barbadosa**, Instituto de Geofísica, Mexico city, Mexico
 Cesare **Barbieri**, University of Padova, Padova, Italy
 Beatriz **Barbuy**, University of Sao Paulo, Sao Paulo, Brazil
 Graham **Barnes**, NorthWest Research Associates, Boulder, USA
 Ulisses **Barres de Almeida**, University of São Paulo, São Paulo, Brazil
 Mary **Barsony**, Space Science Institute and San Francisco State University, San Francisco, USA
 Joanna **Barstow**, University of Leicester, Leicester, United Kingdom
 Martin **Barstow**, University of Leicester, Leicester, United Kingdom
 Olga **Barsunova**, Main astronomical observatory, St. Petersburg, Russian Federation
 Miroslav **Barta**, Astronomical Institute, ASCR, Ondřejov, Czech Republic
 Cestmir **Barta jr.**, BBT-Materials Processing, Prague 8, Czech Republic
 Aaron **Barth**, University of California, Irvine, Irvine, USA
 Anna **Bartkiewicz**, Torun Centre for Astronomy, Torun, Poland
 Corrado **Bartolini**, University of Bologna, Bologna, Italy
 Oleg **Bartunov**, Sternberg Astronomical Institute, Moscow University, Moscow, Russian Federation
 Rulee **Baruah**, HRH PoW Institute of Engineering and Technology, Jorhat, India
 M. Antonella **Barucci**, Paris Observatory, Meudon, France
 John **Baruch**, University of Bradford, Bradford, United Kingdom
 Guillaume **Bascoul**, University of Cambridge, Cambridge, United Kingdom
 Tim **Bastian**, NRAO, Charlottesville, USA
 Pierre **Bastien**, Université de Montréal, Montreal, Canada
 Alan **Batten**, Dominion Astrophysical Observatory, Victoria, Canada
 Holger **Baumgardt**, University of Bonn, Bonn, Germany
 Manuel **Bautista**, IVIC, Caracas, Venezuela
 Altan **Baykal**, Ankara, Turkey
 Michael **Bazot**, University of Aarhus, Aarhus, Denmark
 Ugo **Becciani**, INAF, Catania, Italy
 Werner **Becker**, Max-Planck Institut für extraterr. Physik, 85741 Garching, Germany
 Tim **Bedding**, University of Sydney, Sydney, Australia
 Luigi R. **Bedin**, ESO - Garching, Garching, Germany
 Alexandre **Beelen**, Argelander-Institut für Astronomie der Universität Bonn, Bonn, Germany
 Timothy **Beers**, Michigan State University, E. Lansing, USA
 Mitchell **Begelman**, University of Colorado, Boulder, USA
 Kenji **Bekki**, University of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia
 Kevin **Belkacem**, Observatoire de Paris, Meudon, France
 Steven **Bell**, HMNAO, Didcot, United Kingdom
 Jocelyn **Bell Burnell**, University of Oxford, Oxford, United Kingdom
 Gaetano **Belvedere**, Astrophysical Section, Catania, Italy
 Amy **Bender**, University of Colorado, Boulder, USA
 George **Benedict**, University of Texas, Austin, USA
 Elena **Benevolenskaya**, Stanford University, Stanford, USA
 Lance **Benner**, Jet Propulsion Laboratory, Pasadena, USA
 Michael **Bennett**, Astronomical Society of the Pacific, San Francisco, USA
 Piero **Benvenuti**, INAF, Rome, Italy
 Arnold **Benz**, ETH Zurich, Zurich, Switzerland
 Willy **Benz**, University of Bern, Bern, Switzerland
 Svetlana **Berdugina**, Institute of Astronomy ETH Zurich, Zurich, Switzerland
 Jacqueline **Bergeron**, Institut d'Astrophysique de Paris, Paris, France
 Nils **Bergvall**, Uppsala Astronomical Observatory, Uppsala, Sweden
 Stefan **Berinde**, Babes-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, Romania
 Bruce **Berriman**, Caltech, Pasadena, USA
 Jerome **Berthier**, CNRS, Paris, France
 Francesco **Bertola**, University of Padova, Padova, Italy
 Edward **Beshore**, University of Arizona, Tucson, USA
 Gregory **Beskin**, Special Astrophysical Observatory of RAS, Nizhniy Arkhyz, Russian Federation
 Michael **Bessell**, ANU, Weston, Australia
 Henrik **Beuther**, Max-Planck-Institute for Astronomy, Heidelberg, Germany
 Weihao **Bian**, Nanjing Normal University, Nanjing, China
 Luciana **Bianchi**, Johns Hopkins Univ., Baltimore, USA
 Jiri **Bicak**, Charles University, Prague, Czech Republic
 Geoffrey **Bicknell**, Australian National University, Canberra, Australia
 John **Bieging**, University of Arizona, Tucson, USA
 Frank **Bigiel**, MPI for Astronomy, Heidelberg, Germany
 Giovanni **Bignami**, Università di Pavia, Pavia, Italy
 Richard **Binzel**, M.I.T., Cambridge, USA
 Mirel **Birlan**, IMCCE, Paris, France
 Dmitry **Bisikalo**, Institute of Astronomy, RAS, Moscow, Russian Federation
 Adriaan **Blaauw**, Kapteyn Institute, Groningen, Netherlands
 Carlo **Blanco**, Catania University, Catania, Italy
 Joss **Bland-Hawthorn**, Anglo-Australian Observatory, Eppipng, Australia
 Roger **Blandford**, Stanford University, Stanford, USA
 Leo **Blitz**, University of California, Berkeley, Berkeley, USA
 David **Bloek**, University of the Witwatersrand, WITS, South Africa
 Hans **Bloemen**, SRON, Utrecht, Netherlands
 Harry **Blom**, Springer, New York, USA
 Anna **Blomqvist**, Uppsala Astronomical Observatory, Uppsala, Sweden
 Andrea **Boattini**, INAF-Osservatorio Astronomico di Roma, Roma, Italy
 David **Boboltz**, U.S. Naval Observatory, Washington, USA
 Dino **Boccaletti**, University of Rome "La Sapienza", Rome, Italy
 kbmthae@nas.edu
 pbaki@uonbi.ac.ke
 bala@nso.edu
 balazs@konkoly.hu
 balega@sao.ru
 baliunas@cfa.harvard.edu
 fernando.ballesteros@uv.es
 jbballet@cea.fr
 bally@casa.colorado.edu
 bruce.banerdt@jpl.nasa.gov
 bangert@usno.navy.mil
 boris.banjevic@zis.beoland.com
 akivab@post.tau.ac.il
 barazza@astro.as.utexas.edu
 astroangell9@yahoo.com.mx
 cesare.barbieri@unipd.it
 barbuy@astro.iag.usp.br
 graham@cora.nwra.com
 u.b.almeida@dur.ac.uk
 mbarsony@stars.sfsu.edu
 mab@star.le.ac.uk
 mab@star.le.ac.uk
 monoceros@mail.ru
 barta@asu.cas.cz
 bartabt@atlas.cz
 barth@uci.edu
 annan@astro.uni.torun.pl
 corrado.bartolini@unibo.it
 oleg@sai.msu.su
 ruleebaruah@yahoo.co.in
 antonella.barucci@obspm.fr
 john@telescope.org
 gb272@cam.ac.uk
 tbastian@nrao.edu
 bastien@astro.umontreal.ca
 alan.batten@nrc.gc.ca
 holger@astro.uni-bonn.de
 bautista@kant.ivic.ve
 altan@astroa.physics.metu.edu.tr
 bazoy@phys.uaf.it
 ube@oact.inaf.it
 web@mpe.mpg.de
 bedding@Physics.usyd.edu.au
 lbedin@eso.org
 abeelen@astro.uni-bonn.de
 beers@pa.msu.edu
 mitch@jila.colorado.edu
 bekki@bat.phys.unsw.edu.au
 kevin.belkacem@obspm.fr
 sab@nao.rl.ac.uk
 jocelyn@astro.ox.ac.uk
 gbelvedere@ct.astro.it
 amy.bender@colorado.edu
 fritz@astro.as.utexas.edu
 elena@quake.stanford.edu
 lance.benner@jpl.nasa.gov
 mbennett@astrocity.org
 piero.benvenuti@inaf.it
 benz@astro.phys.ethz.ch
 wbenz@space.unibe.ch
 sveta@astro.phys.ethz.ch
 bergeron@iap.fr
 nils.bergvall@astro.uu.se
 sberinde@math.ubcluj.ro
 gbb@ipac.caltech.edu
 berthier@imcce.fr
 bertola@pd.astro.it
 ebeshore@lpl.arizona.edu
 beskin@sao.ru
 bessell@mso.anu.edu.au
 beuther@mpia.de
 whbian@nju.edu.cn
 bianchi@pha.jhu.edu
 bicak@mbox.troja.mff.cuni.cz
 geoff@mso.anu.edu.au
 jbieging@as.arizona.edu
 bigiel@mpia.de
 giovannibignami@katamail.com
 rpb@mit.edu
 Mirel.Birlan@imcce.fr
 bisikalo@inasan.ru
 a.blaauw@astro.rug.nl
 cblanco@oact.inaf.it
 jbh@ao.gov.au
 rdb3@stanford.edu
 lblitz@astro.berkeley.edu
 igalaxy@iafrica.com
 H.Bloemen@srn.nl
 harry.blom@springer.com
 anbl0562@student.uu.se
 boattini@iasf-roma.inaf.it
 dboboltz@usno.navy.mil
 boccaletti@uniroma1.it

Thomas **Boch**, CDS, Observatoire astronomique de Strasbourg, Strasbourg, France
 Dominique **Bocheleé-Molvan**, Observatoire de Paris, Meudon, France
 Nikolai **Bochkarev**, Sternberg Astron.Inst., Moscow, Russian Federation
 Michael **Bode**, Liverpool John Moores University, Birkenhead, United Kingdom
 Asmus **Boehm**, Astrophysical Institute Potsdam, 14482 Potsdam, Germany
 Ann **Boesgaard**, University of Hawaii, Honolulu, USA
 Henri **Boffin**, ESO, Garching, Germany
 Thomas **Bogdan**, NOAA, Boulder, USA
 Daniel **Boice**, Southwest Research Institute, San Antonio, USA
 Christian **Boily**, Uni. Louis Pasteur, Strasbourg, France
 Samuel **Boissier**, Laboratoire d'Astrophysique de Marseille, Marseille, France
 Wilfried **Boland**, NOVA, Leiden, Netherlands
 Tom **Boles**, Coddensham Observatory, Coddensham, United Kingdom
 Edi **Bon**, Astronomical Observatory, Belgrade, Serbia
 Axel **Bonacic Marinovic**, Utrecht University, Utrecht, Netherlands
 Alceste **Bonanos**, Carnegie Institution of Washington, Washington, USA
 Ian **Bonnell**, University of St Andrews, St Andrews, United Kingdom
 Roy **Booth**, Hartebeesthoek Radio Astronomy Observatory, Johannesburg, South Africa
 Méderic **Boquien**, CEA, Gif-sur-Yvette cedex, France
 Andrea **Borch**, Astronomisches Rechen-Institut, Heidelberg, Germany
 Jiri **Borovicka**, Astronomical Institute, Ondřejov, Czech Republic
 Alan **Boss**, Carnegie Institution, Washington, USA
 Elvira **Botez**, Astronomical Observatory, Cluj-Napoca, Romania
 Gert **Botha**, University of Leeds, Leeds, United Kingdom
 William **Bottke**, Southwest Research Institute, Boulder, USA
 Nicolas **Bouche**, MPE, Garching, Germany
 Steve **Boudreault**, Max-Planck-Institut für Astronomie, Heidelberg, Germany
 Jean-Louis **Bougeret**, CNRS - Observatoire de Paris, Meudon, France
 François **Boulanger**, IAS, Orsay, France
 Rychard **Bouwens**, University of California, Santa Cruz, Santa Cruz, USA
 Herve **Bouy**, UC Berkeley, Berkeley, USA
 Edward **Bowell**, Lowell Observatory, Flagstaff, USA
 Brian **Boyle**, CSIRO Australia Telescope National Facility, Epping, Australia
 Richard P. **Boyle**, S.J., Vatican Observatory, Vatican City State, Vatican City State
 James **Braatz**, NRAO, Charlottesville, USA
 Arthur **Bradley**, Spacecraft System Engr Svcs, Annapolis Junction, USA
 Axel **Brandenburg**, Nordita, Copenhagen, Denmark
 Bernhard **Brandl**, Leiden Observatory, Leiden, Netherlands
 Hector **Bravo-Alfaro**, Universidad de Guanajuato, Guanajuato, Mexico
 Anatoliy **Brazhenko**, Poltava Gravimetric Observatory, Poltava, Ukraine
 Michel **Breger**, University of Vienna, Wien, Austria
 Slawomir **Breiter**, Poznan Observatory, Poznan, Poland
 Dieter **Breitschwerdt**, University of Vienna, Wien, Austria
 Massimo **Brescia**, INAF, Napoli, Italy
 René **Breton**, McGill University, Montreal, Canada
 Paulo **Bretones**, UNICAM and ISCA, Valinhos, Brazil
 Elias **Brinks**, University of Hertfordshire, Hatfield, United Kingdom
 Danielle **Briot**, Observatoire de Paris, Paris, France
 Avery **Broderick**, Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics, Cambridge, USA
 Jean **Brodie**, University of California, Santa Cruz, USA
 Noah **Brosch**, Tel Aviv University, Tel Aviv, Israel
 Wim **Brouw**, Groningen University, Groningen, Netherlands
 Anthony **Brown**, Leiden University, Leiden, Netherlands
 John C **Brown**, University of Glasgow, Glasgow, United Kingdom
 Matthew **Browning**, Univ. of California Berkeley, Berkeley, USA
 Miroslav **Broz**, Charles University, Praha 8, Czech Republic
 Frederik **Bruhweiler**, Catholic Univ. of America, Washington, USA
 Nicholas **Brummell**, University of Colorado, Boulder, USA
 Allan Sacha **Brun**, CEA, Gif sur Yvette, France
 Ausma **Bruneniece**, Pumpuru Secondary School, Riga, Latvia
 Gianfranco **Brunetti**, Istituto di Radioastronomia-INAf, Bologna, Italy
 Rob **Brunswick**, EOS Technologies, Inc., Tucson, USA
 Hans **Bruntt**, University of Sydney, Sydney, Australia
 Gustavo **Bruzual**, C.I.D.A., Merida, Venezuela
 Sarah **Bryan**, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg, South Africa
 Aleksander **Brzezinski**, Space Research Centre, Polish Academy of Sciences, Warsaw, Poland
 Sarah **Buchner**, HartRAO, Krugersdorp, South Africa
 Jane **Buckle**, University of Cambridge, Cambridge, United Kingdom
 David **Buckley**, SAAO, Cape Town, South Africa
 Vaclav **Bumba**, Astronomical Institute, Ondřejov, Czech Republic
 Andrew **Bunker**, University of Exeter, Exeter, United Kingdom
 E. Margaret **Burbidge**, Univ. of CA San Diego, La Jolla, USA
 Geoffrey R. **Burbidge**, Univ. of CA San Diego, La Jolla, USA
 Martin **Bureau**, University of Oxford, Oxford, United Kingdom
 Marta **Burgay**, INAF - Cagliari Observatory (Italy), Capoterra (CA), Italy
 Donald **Burnett**, Calif. Inst. of Technology, Pasadena, USA
 Joseph **Burns**, Cornell University, Ithaca, USA
 Michal **Bursa**, Astronomical Institute, Prague, Czech Republic
 Milan **Burša**, Astronomical Institute, Prague, Czech Republic
 Michael **Burton**, University of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia
 Paul **Bushby**, University of Cambridge, Cambridge, United Kingdom
 Lucio **Buson**, INAF, Padova, Italy
 Deborah **Busonero**, INAF, Pino Torinese (TO), Italy
 Friedrich **Busse**, University of Bayreuth, Bayreuth, Germany
 Ron **Buta**, University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa, USA
 Harvey **Butcher**, Stichting ASTRON, Dwingeloo, Netherlands
 Bryan **Butler**, NRAO, Socorro, USA
 Michael **Cai**, Academia Sinica, Taipei, China Taipei
 Brady **Caldwell**, Uppsala Astronomical Observatory, Uppsala, Sweden
 Paul **Callanan**, University College Cork, Cork, Ireland
 Paul **Cally**, Monash University, Clayton, Australia
 Robert **Cameron**, Max-Planck-Institut für Sonnensystemforschung, Katlenburg-Lindau, Germany
 Loretta **Campeggio**, University of Lecce, Lecce, Italy
 boch@astro.u-strasbg.fr
 dominique.bochelee@obspm.fr
 boch@sai.msu.ru
 mfb@astro.livjm.ac.uk
 aboehm@aip.de
 boes@ifa.hawaii.edu
 hboffin@eso.org
 Tom.Bogdan@noaa.gov
 DBoice@swri.edu
 cmb@astro.u-strasbg.fr
 samuel.boissier@gmail.com
 boland@strw.leidenuniv.nl
 tomboles@coddenshamobservatories.org
 ebon@aob.bg.ac.yu
 bonacic@astro.uu.nl
 bonanos@dtm.ciw.edu
 iabl@st-and.ac.uk
 roy@oso.chalmers.se
 mboquien@discovery.saclay.cea.fr
 borch@ari.uni-heidelberg.de
 borovic@asu.cas.cz
 boss@dtm.ciw.edu
 elvirabotez@email.ro
 gert@maths.leeds.ac.uk
 bottke@boulder.swri.edu
 nbouche@mpe.mpg.de
 boudrea@mpia.de
 jean-louis.bougeret@obspm.fr
 francois.boulanger@ias.u-psud.fr
 bouwens@ucolick.org
 hbouy@astro.berkeley.edu
 ebowell@lowell.edu
 Brian.Boyle@csiro.au
 rboyle@as.arizona.edu
 jbraatz@nrao.edu
 abradley@hst.nasa.gov
 brandenb@nordita.dk
 brandl@strw.leidenuniv.nl
 hector@astro.ugto.mx
 brazhai@mail.ru
 michel.berger@univie.ac.at
 breiter@amu.edu.pl
 breitschwerdt@astro.univie.ac.at
 brescia@na.astro.it
 bretonr@physics.mcgill.ca
 bretones@mpc.com.br
 ebrinks@star.herts.ac.uk
 Danielle.Briot@obspm.fr
 abroderick@cfa.harvard.edu
 brodie@ucolick.org
 noah@wise.tau.ac.il
 w.n.brouw@rug.nl
 brown@strw.leidenuniv.nl
 john@astro.gla.ac.uk
 matthew@astron.berkeley.edu
 mira@sirrah.troja.mff.cuni.cz
 bruhweiler@cua.edu
 brummell@solarz.colorado.edu
 sachabrun@ceia.fr
 ausma.bruneniece@gmail.com
 brunetti@ira.inaf.it
 rbrunswick@eostech.com
 bruntt@physics.usyd.edu.au
 bruzual@cida.ve
 sarah.bryan@gmail.com
 alek@cbk.waw.pl
 sarah@hartrao.ac.za
 j.buckle@mrao.cam.ac.uk
 dibnob@sao.ac.za
 bumba@asu.cas.cz
 bunker@astro.ex.ac.uk
 mburbidge@ucsd.edu
 gburbidge@ucsd.edu
 bureau@astro.ox.ac.uk
 burgay@ca.astro.it
 burnett@gps.caltech.edu
 jab16@cornell.edu
 bursa@astro.cas.cz
 bursa@ig.cas.cz
 m.burton@unsw.edu.au
 P.J.Bushby@damtp.cam.ac.uk
 buson@pd.astro.it
 busonero@oato.inaf.it
 busse@uni-bayreuth.de
 buta@sarah.astr.ua.edu
 butcher@astron.nl
 bbutler@nrao.edu
 mike@asiaa.sinica.edu.tw
 brady.caldwell@astro.uu.se
 paul@ucc.ie
 paul.cally@sci.monash.edu.au
 cameron@linmpi.mpg.de
 campeggio@le.infn.it

Matteo **Cantiello**, Utrecht University, Utrecht, Netherlands
Vittorio **Canuto**, NASA, New York, USA
Massimo **Capaccioli**, University of Naples, Naples, Italy
Hugo **Capelato**, Instituto Nacional de Pesquisas Espaciais, Sao Jose dos Campos, Brazil
Nicole **Capitaine**, Observatoire de Paris, Paris, France
Cristina Elisabet **Cappa**, Instituto Argentino de Radioastronomia, U.N. La Plata, Argentina
Patrizia **Caraveo**, INAF, Milano, Italy
Mónica **Cardaci**, Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, Ciudad Universitaria de Cantoblanco, Spain
Vladimir **Cardoso de Oliveira**, ISCA Faculdades, Limeira, Brazil
Claude **Carignan**, Université de Montreal, Montreal, Canada
Chris **Carilli**, NRAO, Socorro, USA
Patrick **Carolan**, N.U.I. Galway, Mayo, Ireland
C. Marcella **Carollo**, ETH Zürich, Zürich, Switzerland
Kenneth **Carpenter**, NASA's GSFC, Greenbelt, USA
Alberto **Carramiñana**, INAOE, Tonantzintla, Mexico, Tonantzintla, Mexico
Luis **Carrasco**, INAOE, Puebla, Mexico
Valerio **Carruba**, Universidade de São Paulo, São Paulo, Brazil
Andrea **Carusi**, INAF, Rome, Italy
Juarez **Carvalho**, JZ Congressos, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
Jorge **Casares**, Instituto de Astrofísica de Canarias, La Laguna, Spain
Sean **Casey**, Universities Space Research Association, Moffett Field, USA
Rosella **Cassano**, Istituto di Radioastronomia-INAf, Bologna, Italy
Thierry **Castermans**, Université de Mons- Hainaut, Mons, Belgium
James **Caswell**, CSIRO, ATNF, Epping, Australia
Silvia **Catalan**, Institut d'Estudis Espacials de Catalunya (IEEC-CSIC), Barcelona, Spain
Barbara **Catinella**, Arecibo Observatory, Arecibo, USA
Fausto **Cattaneo**, University of Chicago, Chicago, USA
Gianna **Cauzzi**, Istituto Nazionale di Astrofisica (INAF), Firenze, Italy
Alfonso **Cavaliere**, Univ. Tor Vergata, Roma, Italy
Cynthia **Celebre**, PAGASA, Quezon City, Philippines
Alberto **Cellino**, INAF, Pino Torinese, Italy
Annalisa **Celotti**, S.I.S.S.A., Trieste, Italy
Michal **Ceniga**, Faculty of Science of Masaryk University, Brno, Czech Republic
William **Cepeda**, National Astronomical Observatory of Colombia, Bogota D.C., Colombia
Zdenek **Cepelcha**, Astronomical Institute, ASCR, Ondrejov, Czech Republic
Jitka **Cermakova**, Astronomical Institute, ASCR, Ondrejov, Czech Republic
Catherine **Cesarsky**, ESO, Garching, Germany
Diego **Cesarsky**, MPE, Garching, Germany
Paula **Chadwick**, University of Durham, Durham, United Kingdom
Dalia **Chakrabarty**, University of Nottingham, Nottingham, United Kingdom
Carlson R **Chambliss**, Kutztown University - Retired, US - Kutztown, USA
Nicolas **Champavert**, CRAL - Observatoire de Lyon, Saint Genis Laval, France
Kwing **Chan**, Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, Hong Kong, China Nanjing
Julio **Chaname**, Space Telescope Science Institute, Baltimore, USA
Hum **Chand**, Inter University Centre for Astronomy and Astrophysics, Pune, India
Rachel **Chandler**, Blackwell Publishing Ltd, Oxford, United Kingdom
Thyagarajan **Chandrasekhar**, Physical Research Laboratory (PRL), Ahmedabad, India
Chan-Kao **Chang**, Institute of Astronomy, National Central University, Jhongli City, China Taipei
Heon-Young **Chang**, Kyungpook National University, Daegu, Korea RP
Hsiang-Kuang **Chang**, National Tsing Hua University, Hsinchu, China Taipei
Yavor **Chapanov**, Central Laboratory for Geodesy, Sofia, Bulgaria
Jacqueline **Chapman**, Macquarie University, Sydney, Australia
Richard **Chappelle**, Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, Praha, Czech Republic
Phil **Charles**, SAAO, Observatory, South Africa
Patrick **Charlot**, Observatoire de Bordeaux, Floirac, France
Vassilis **Charmandaris**, University of Crete, Heraklion, Greece
George **Chartas**, Penn State University, University Park, USA
Ranga-Ram **Chary**, Caltech, Pasadena, USA
Vasilea **Chatzidogiannaki**, University of Athens, Athens, Greece
Chang-Hui Rosie **Chen**, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Urbana, USA
Wen-Ping **Chen**, National Central University, Chung-Li, China Taipei
Xian **Chen**, Peking University, Beijing, China Nanjing
Yang **Chen**, Nanjing University, Nanjing, China Nanjing
Yi-Jhen **Chen**, National Central University, Taiwan, Jhongli City, China Taipei
K.S. **Cheng**, University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong, China Nanjing
Steven **Chesley**, Jet Propulsion Laboratory, Pasadena, USA
Roger **Chevalier**, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, USA
Po-Shih **Chiang**, Graduate Institute of Astronomy, NCU, Taiwan, Jhongli City, China Taipei
Ileana **Chinnici**, INAF, Palermo, Italy
Cesare **Chiosi**, University of Padova, Padova, Italy
Sabina **Chita**, SIU, Utrecht, Netherlands
Chul-Sung **Choi**, Korea Astronomy & Space Science Institute, Taejeon, Korea RP
Philip **Choi**, California Institute of Technology, Pasadena, USA
Young-Jun **Choi**, Jet Propulsion Laboratory, Pasadena, USA
Yunhee **Choi**, Kyunghee University, Yongin-si, Korea RP
Suchinda **Chotipanich**, Ministry of Science and Technology, Thailand, Thailand
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Carol **Christian**, STScI, Baltimore, USA
Daniel **Christlein**, Universidad de Chile, Santiago de Chile, Chile
You-Hua **Chu**, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Urbana, USA
HyunSoo **Chung**, Korea Astronomy and Space Science Institute, Daejeon, Korea RP
Leonid **Chuzhoy**, University of Texas at Austin, Austin, USA
Benedetta **Ciardi**, Garching, Germany
Roberto Cid **Fernandes**, Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina, Florianopolis, Brazil
Andrea **Cimatti**, INAF - Osservatorio di Arcetri, Firenze, Italy
Pierantonio **Cinzano**, ISTIL- Istituto di Scienza e Tecnologia dell'Inquinamento Luminoso, Thiene, Italy
Mark **Clampin**, GSFC, Greenbelt, USA
David **Clark**, ELSEVIER, Amsterdam, Netherlands
Paul **Clark**, University of Heidelberg, Heidelberg, Germany
Cathie **Clarke**, Institute of Astronomy, Cambridge, United Kingdom
John **Clarke**, Boston University, Boston, USA
M.Cantiello@astro.uu.nl
vcanuto@giss.nasa.gov
capaccioli@na.astro.it
hugo@das.inpe.br
nicole.capitaine@obspm.fr
ccappa@fcaglp.unlp.edu.ar
pat@iasf-milano.inaf.it
monica.cardaci@uam.es
geo@alie.br
claudc.carignan@umontreal.ca
ccarilli@nrao.edu
patrick.carolan@nuigalway.ie
marcella@phys.ethz.ch
Kenneth.G.Carpenter@nasa.gov
alberto@inaoep.mx
carrasco@inaoep.mx
valerio@astro.iag.usp.br
andrea.carusi@iasf-roma.inaf.it
juarez@jz.com.br
jcv@iac.es
scasey@mail.arc.nasa.gov
rcassano@ira.inaf.it
thierry.castermans@unh.ac.be
James.Caswell@csiro.au
catalan@ieec.uab.es
bcatinel@naic.edu
cattaneo@flash.uchicago.edu
gcuzzi@arcetri.astro.it
cavaliere@roma2.infn.it
cynthia_celebre@yahoo.com
cellino@to.astro.it
celotti@sissa.it
emceniga@physics.muni.cz
wecepedap@unal.edu.co
zdeneke@asu.cas.cz
jitka@asu.cas.cz
cesarsk@eso.org
diego.cesarsky@mpe.mpg.de
p.m.chadwick@durham.ac.uk
dalia.chakrabarty@nottingham.ac.uk
peckova@cbttravel.cz
nicolas.champavert@obs.univ-lyon1.fr
maklchan@ust.hk
jchaname@stsci.edu
hcverma@iucaa.ernet.in
anne.weston@oxon.blackwellpublishing.com
chandra@prl.res.in
rex@astro.ncu.edu.tw
hyc@knu.ac.kr
hkchang@phys.nthu.edu.tw
chapanov@clg.bas.bg
jchapman@physics.mq.edu.au
rjc@astro.cas.cz
pac@saao.ac.za
charlot@obs.u-bordeaux1.fr
vassilis@physics.uoc.gr
chartas@astro.psu.edu
rchary@caltech.edu
vaschatz@hotmail.com
c-chen@astro.uiuc.edu
wchen@astro.ncu.edu.tw
chenxian_83@pku.edu.cn
ygchen@nju.edu.cn
d939005@astro.ncu.edu.tw
hrspksc@hkcc.hku.hk
steve.chesley@jpl.nasa.gov
rac5x@virginia.edu
pschiang@astro.ncu.edu.tw
chinnici@astropa.unipa.it
chiosi@pd.astro.it
s.chita@astro.uu.nl
cschoi@kasi.re.kr
pchoi@ipac.caltech.edu
Young-Jun.Choi@jpl.nasa.gov
yhchoi@apl.khu.ac.kr
peckova@cbttravel.cz
lars@eso.org
christensen@mps.mpg.de
jcd@phys.au.dk
carolc@stsci.edu
christlein@astro.yale.edu
chu@astro.uiuc.edu
hschung@kasi.re.kr
chuzhoy@astro.as.utexas.edu
ciardi@mpa-garching.mpg.de
cid@astro.ufsc.br
cimatti@arcetri.astro.it
cinzano@istil.it
mark.clampin@nasa.gov
david.clark@elsevier.com
pcc@st-andrews.ac.uk
cclarke@ast.cam.ac.uk
jclarke@bu.edu

Jens Viggo **Clausen**, Copenhagen University, Copenhagen, Denmark
Andrew **Clegg**, National Science Foundation, Arlington, USA
Christine **Clement**, University of Toronto, Toronto, Canada
Maurice **Clement**, University of Toronto, Toronto, Canada
Helen **Coffey**, NOAA National geophysical data center, Boulder, USA
Barbara **Cohen**, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, USA
Carlos **Coimbra-Araujo**, Campinas State University, Campinas, Brazil
Robert **Coker**, Los Alamos National Laboratory, Los Alamos, USA
Matthew **Colless**, Anglo-Australian Observatory, Epping, Australia
Suzy **Collin-Zahn**, Observatoire de Paris-Meudon, Meudon, France
Josep **Colome**, IEEC, Bellaterra, Spain
Francoise **Combes**, Observatoire de Paris, Paris, France
Julia **Comerford**, University of California, Berkeley, Berkeley, USA
Christopher **Conselice**, U. of Nottingham, Nottingham, United Kingdom
Guy **Consolmagno**, Specola Vaticana, Vatican City, Vatican City State
Alberto **Conti**, Space Telescope Science Institute, Baltimore, USA
Kem **Cook**, Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, Livermore, USA
Michael **Cooper**, University of California at Berkeley, Berkeley, USA
Asantha **Cooray**, University of California, Irvine, USA
Christopher **Corbally**, Vatican Observatory, Citta del Vaticano, Vatican City State
Ian F. **Corbett**, European Southern Observatory, Garching, Germany
Brenda **Corbin**, U. S. Naval Observatory, Chevy Chase, USA
Thomas **Corbin**, U. S. Naval Observatory, Chevy Chase, USA
Alessandro **Corongiu**, INAF, Capoterra, Italy
Alexandre **Correia**, University of Aveiro, Aveiro, Portugal
Serge **Correia**, AIP, Potsdam, Germany
Enrico Maria **Corsini**, Universita' di Padova, Padova, Italy
Luca **Cortese**, Cardiff University, Cardiff, United Kingdom
Alessandro **Costa**, INAF OACT, Catania, Italy
Joaquim **Costa**, INPE, São Paulo, Brazil
Rafael **Costero**, Instituto de Astronomia, UNAM, Mexico City, Mexico
Patrick **Cote**, Herzberg Institute of Astrophysics, Victoria, Canada
Angela **Cotera**, SETI Institute, Avondale, USA
William **Cotton**, National Radio Astronomy Observatory, Charlottesville, USA
Régis **Courtin**, CNRS-Observatoire de Paris, Meudon Cedex, France
Thierry **Courvoisier**, ISDC, Versoix, Switzerland
Lennox **Cowie**, University of Hawaii, Honolulu, USA
Dennis **Crabtree**, NRC-HIA, Victoria, Canada
Philippe **Crane**, NASA, Washington, USA
Lisa **Crause**, South African Astronomical Observatory, Cape Town, South Africa
Claudio **Cremaschini**, University of Trieste, Pompiamo (BS), Italy
Francoise **Crifo**, Observatoire de Paris, Meudon cedex, France
Mark **Cropper**, MSSL/UCL, Dorking, United Kingdom
Ashley **Crouch**, Canadian Space Agency, Longueuil, Canada
Richard **Crutcher**, University of Illinois, Urbana, USA
Attila **Cséki**, Faculty of Mathematics, University of Belgrade, Pancevo, Serbia
Jorge **Cuadra**, Max-Planck-Institut für Astrophysik, Garching, Germany
Rafael **Cubarsi**, Politechnical University of Catalonia (UPC), Barcelona, Spain
Chenzhou **Cui**, National Astronomical Observatory, Beijing, China Nanjing
Xiangqun **Cui**, Institute Of Astronomic Optics And Technology, Nanjing, China Nanjing
Martin **Cullum**, ESO, Garching, Germany
Katia **Cunha**, National Optical Astronomy Observatory, Tucson, Brazil
Margarida **Cunha**, Centro de Astrofísica da Universidade do Porto, Porto, Portugal
Andrew **Cunningham**, University of Rochester, Rochester, USA
Charles **Cunningham**, HIA, Victoria, Canada
Maria **Cunningham**, University of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia
Anna **Curir**, INAF-Astronomical Observatory of Torino, Torino, Italy
Krzysztof **Czart**, Nicolaus Copernicus University, Torun, Poland
Bożena **Czerny**, Copernicus Astronomical Center, Warsaw, Poland
Nicolo **D'Amico**, INAF - Cagliari Astronomical Observatory, Capoterra (CA), Italy
Francesca **D'Antona**, INAF, Monteporzio, Italy
Mauro **D'Onofrio**, University of Padova, Padova, Italy
Gary **Da Costa**, Australian National University, Weston Creek, Australia
Cristiano **Da Rocha**, Institut fuer Astrophysik Goettingen, Goettingen, Germany
Jörg **Dabringhausen**, Universität Bonn, Bonn, Germany
Emanuele **Daddi**, NOAO - Tucson, Tucson, USA
Rustam **Dagkesamanskiy**, Pushchino Radio Astronomy Observatory, Pushchino, Russian Federation
Alexander **Dalgarno**, Harvard-Smithsonian Center for astrophysics, Cambridge, USA
Silvia **Dalla**, University of Manchester, Manchester, United Kingdom
Elena **Dalla Bontà**, University of Padova, Padova, Italy
Batmunkh **Damdin**, Research Centre of Astronomy and Geophysics of MAS, Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia
Maaiké **Damen**, Leiden Observatory, Leiden, Netherlands
Goran **Damljanovic**, Astronomical Observatory, Belgrade, Serbia
Hassane **Darhmaoui**, Al Akhawayn University in Ifrane, Ifrane, Morocco
Mousumi **Das**, Raman Research Institute, Bangalore, India
Sergio **Dasso**, Instituto de Astronomía y Física del Espacio (IAFE), Buenos Aires, Argentina
Srabani **Datta**, University of Manchester, Manchester, United Kingdom
Ashley **Davies**, JPL, Pasadena, USA
John **Davies**, UK ATC, Edinburgh, United Kingdom
John **Davis**, University of Sydney, Sydney, Australia
Rodney **Davis**, Jordell Bank Observatory, Cheshire, United Kingdom
Joanne **Dawson**, Nagoya University, Nagoya, Japan
Francisco Xavier **De Araujo**, Observatorio Nacional, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
Carlos **De Breuck**, ESO, garching, Germany
James **De Buizer**, Gemini Observatory, Tucson, USA
Reinaldo **de Carvalho**, INPE, São José dos Campos, Brazil
Peter **De Cat**, Royal Observatory of Belgium, Brussels, Belgium
Elisabete **de Gouveia Dal Pino**, IAG, University of São Paulo, São Paulo, Brazil
Jean-Pierre **De Greve**, Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Brussels, Belgium
Richard **de Grijs**, University of Sheffield, Sheffield, United Kingdom
Cornelis **De Jager**, Royal Netherlands Institute for Sea Research, Den Burg, Netherlands
Ocker C. **De Jager**, North-West University, Potchefstroom, South Africa
Teije **De Jong**, Astr Inst Anton Pannekoek, Amsterdam, Netherlands
jvc@astro.ku.dk
aclegg@nsf.gov
cclement@astro.utoronto.ca
mcclement@astro.utoronto.ca
Helen.E.Coffey@noaa.gov
bcohen@unm.edu
carlosc@ifi.unicamp.br
robc@lanl.gov
colless@aaoo.gov.au
suzy.collin@obspm.fr
colome@ieec.uab.es
francoise.combes@obspm.fr
julie@astron.berkeley.edu
conselice@nottingham.ac.uk
gjc@specola.va
aconti@stsci.edu
kcook@llnl.gov
cooper@astro.berkeley.edu
acooray@uci.edu
corbally@as.arizona.edu
icorbett@eso.org
brenda.corbin@verizon.net
batblny@aol.com
corongiu@ca.astro.it
acorreia@fis.ua.pt
scoreia@aip.de
corsini@pd.astro.it
luca.cortese@astro.cf.ac.uk
acosta@oact.inaf.it
jercosta@craam.mackenzie.br
costero@astroscu.unam.mx
Patrick.Cote@nrc-cnrc.gc.ca
acotera@seti.org
bcotton@nrao.edu
Regis.Courtin@obspm.fr
thierry.courvoisier@obs.unige.ch
cowie@ifa.hawaii.edu
Dennis.Crabtree@nrc.ca
pcrane@hq.nasa.gov
lisa@saao.ac.za
claudiocremaschini@gmail.com
francoise.crifo@obspm.fr
msc@mssl.ucl.ac.uk
ash@astro.umontreal.ca
crutcher@uiuc.edu
astrofizicar@gmail.com
jcuadra@mpa-garching.mpg.de
rcubarsi@mat.upc.es
ccz@bao.ac.cn
xcui@niaot.ac.cn
mcullum@eso.org
kcunha@noao.edu
mcunha@astro.up.pt
ajc4@pas.rochester.edu
charles.cunningham@nrc-cnrc.gc.ca
maria.cunningham@unsw.edu.au
curir@to.astro.it
kczart@astri.uni.torun.pl
bcz@camk.edu.pl
damico@ca.astro.it
dantonaa@mporzio.astro.it
mauro.donofrio@unipd.it
gdc@mso.anu.edu.au
rocha@astro.physik.uni-goettingen.de
joedab@astro.uni-bonn.de
edaddi@noao.edu
rdd@prao.psn.ru
adalgarno@cfa.harvard.edu
s.dalla@manchester.ac.uk
dallabonta@pd.astro.it
btmnh_d@yahoo.com
damen@strw.leidenuniv.nl
gdamljanovic@aob.bg.ac.yu
H.Darhmaoui@aui.ma
mousumi@rri.res.in
sdasso@iafe.uba.ar
Srabani.Datta@manchester.ac.uk
Ashley.Davies@jpl.nasa.gov
jkd@roe.ac.uk
j.davis@physics.usyd.edu.au
rdd@jb.man.ac.uk
joanne@a.phys.nagoya-u.ac.jp
araujo@on.br
cdebreuc@eso.org
jdebuzier@gemini.edu
reinaldo@das.inpe.br
peter@oma.be
dalpino@astro.iag.usp.br
jpdgreve@vub.ac.be
R.deGrijs@sheffield.ac.uk
cedj@kppnplanet.nl
fskocdj@puk.ac.za
t.dejong@uva.nl

Flavio **De Lorenzi**, Max-Planck-Institut für extraterrestrische Physik, Garching, Germany
 Fiore **De Luise**, INAF-Osservatorio Astronomico di Roma, Monteporzio Catone (Roma), Italy
 Ana Beatriz **De Mello**, Observatorio Nacional / MCT, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
 Duilia **De Mello**, NASA's GSFC, Greenbelt, USA
 Sven **De Rijcke**, Ghent University, Gent, Belgium
 Bonita **De Swardt**, University of Cape Town, Cape Town, South Africa
 Christopher **De Vries**, Cal State University, Stanislaus, Turlock, USA
 David **De Young**, US National Opt Astron Obs, Tucson, USA
 Tim **De Zeeuw**, Leiden Observatory, Leiden, Netherlands
 Suzanne **Debarbat**, Observatoire de Paris, Paris, France
 Pascale **Defraigne**, Royal Observatory of Belgium, Uccle - Brussels, Belgium
 Véronique **Dehant**, Royal Observatory of Belgium, Brussels, Belgium
 Jean-Michel **Deharveng**, Laboratoire Astrophysique Marseille, Marseille, France
 Lise **Deharveng**, Laboratoire d'Astrophysique de Marseille, Marseille Cedex 4, France
 Serge **Demers**, Université de Montreal, Montreal, Canada
 Marek **Demianski**, University of Warsaw, Warsaw, Poland
 Vasily **Demichev**, Space Research Institute, Moscow, Russian Federation
 Licai **Deng**, National Astronomical Observatories, CAS, Beijing, China Nanjing
 Michel **Dennefeld**, IAP-Paris, Paris, France
 Aliz **Derekas**, University of Sydney, Sydney, Australia
 Sebastien **Derriere**, CDS, Strasbourg, France
 Ralf-Juergen **Dettmar**, Ruhr-University Bochum, BOCHUM, Germany
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 Kathryn **Devine**, University of Wisconsin, Madison / NRAO, Socorro, USA
 Jonathan **Devor**, Harvard University (CfA), Cambridge, USA
 David **DeVorkin**, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, USA
 Mario **Di Martino**, INAF, Pinotorese, Italy
 Philip **Diamond**, Jodrell Bank Observatory, Macclesfield, United Kingdom
 Fabiola **Díaz**, Universidad de Los Andes, Mérida, Venezuela
 Javier **Díaz-Castro**, Instituto de Astrofísica de Canarias, La Laguna, Spain
 Sami **Dib**, Centro de Radioastronomía y Astrofísica, Morelia, Mexico
 Steven **Dick**, NASA HQ, Washington, USA
 Helene **Dickel**, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, USA
 John **Dickel**, Univ. of New Mexico, Albuquerque, USA
 John **Dickey**, University of Tasmania, Hobart, Australia
 Mark **Dickinson**, National Optical Astronomy Observatory, Tucson, USA
 Andrea **Dieball**, University of Southampton, Southampton, United Kingdom
 Mark Eric **Dieckmann**, Ruhr Universität Bochum, Bochum, Germany
 Mark **Dijkstra**, The University of Melbourne, Parkville, Australia
 Olga **Dluzhnevskaya**, Institute of Astronomy, Moscow, Russian Federation
 Clare **Dobbs**, St Andrews, United Kingdom
 László **Dobos**, Eötvös University, Budapest, Hungary
 José-Angel **Doboco**, University of Santiago de Compostela, Santiago de Compostela, Spain
 Consuelo **Doddli**, UNAM, México D.F., Mexico
 Michelle **Doherty**, European Southern Observatory, Garching, Germany
 Markus **Dolensky**, European Southern Observatory, Garching bei Muenchen, Germany
 J. Richard **Donnison**, Queen Mary, University of London, London, United Kingdom
 Michael **Dopita**, RSCA, Australian Nat. U., Weston Creek, Australia
 Søren Bertil **F. Dorch**, Copenhagen University Library, the Royal Library, Copenhagen, Denmark
 Alain **Doressoundiram**, Observatoire de Paris, Meudon, France
 Lev **Dorman**, Tel Aviv University, Qazrin, Israel
 Ivan **Dorotovic**, Slovak Central Observatory, Hurbanovo, Slovakia, Hurbanovo, Slovakia
 Horacio **Dottori**, Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul, Porto Alegre, Brazil
 Nigel **Douglas**, Kapteyn Astronomical Institute, Groningen, Netherlands
 Marian **Douspis**, Institut d'Astrophysique Spatiale, Orsay, France
 Michal **Dovciak**, Astronomical Institute, Praha, Czech Republic
 Bruce **Draine**, Princeton University, Princeton, USA
 Natalia **Drake**, Sobolev Astronomical Institute, SPSU, St. Petersburg, Russian Federation
 Dainis **Dravins**, Lund Observatory, Lund, Sweden
 Ronald **Drimmel**, INAF - OATo, Pino Torinese, Italy
 Simon **Driver**, University of St Andrews, St Andrews, United Kingdom
 Gloria **Dubner**, Institute of Astronomy and Space Physics (IAFE), Buenos Aires, Argentina
 Pascal **Dubois**, Observatoire Astronomique de Strasbourg, Strasbourg, France
 Pierre-Alain **Duc**, CNRS AIM, CEA-Saclay, Gif sur Yvette cedex, France
 Christine **Ducourant**, Bordeaux Observatory, Floirac, France
 Inese **Dudareva**, Riga Business College, Riga, Latvia
 Walt **Duley**, University of Waterloo, Waterloo, Canada
 Deborah **Dultzin-Hacyan**, Universidad Nacional Autonoma de Mexico, Mexico D. F., Mexico
 Douglas **Duncan**, University of Colorado, Boulder, USA
 Joanna **Dunkley**, Princeton University, Princeton, USA
 Renato **Dupke**, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, USA
 Gilles **Durand**, CEA Saclay, Saclay, France
 Josef **Durech**, Charles University in Prague, Prague, Czech Republic
 Vanessa **Dury**, Ghent University, Gent, Belgium
 Anne **Dutrey**, Observatoire de Bordeaux, Floirac, France
 Martijn **Duvoort**, University of Utrecht, Utrecht, Netherlands
 Eli **Dwek**, NASA Goddard Space Flight Centre, Greenbelt, USA
 Michael **Dworetsky**, University College London, London, United Kingdom
 John **Dyson**, University of Leeds, Leeds, United Kingdom
 Wojciech **Dziembowski**, Warsaw University, Warsaw, Poland
 Juan **Echevarria**, Instituto de Astronomia, UNAM, Mexico City, Mexico
 Andreas **Eckart**, University of Cologne, Koeln, Germany
 Alessandro **Ederoclitte**, Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Brussels, Belgium
 Tõnis **Eenmäe**, Tartu University, Tartu, Estonia
 Peter **Eggleton**, Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, Livermore, USA
 Fumi **Egusa**, the Institute of Astronomy, the University of Tokyo, Mitaka, Japan
 Sona **Ehlerova**, Astronomical Institute, Praha, Czech Republic
 Guenther **Eichhorn**, Harvard-Smithsonian CfA, Cambridge, USA
 Ron **Ekers**, CSIRO, Epping, Australia
 Patrick **Elebert**, University College Cork, Cork, Ireland
 Davide **Elia**, University of Lecce, Lecce, Italy
 Nicholas **Elias**, Univ. Heidelberg & MPIA, Heidelberg, Germany
 David **Elliot**, RAS, Oxford, United Kingdom
 lorenzi@mpe.mpg.de
 deluise@mporzio.astro.it
 demello@on.br
 duilia@ipanema.gsfc.nasa.gov
 sven.derijcke@UGent.be
 bonita@mensa.ast.uct.ac.za
 chris@physics.csustan.edu
 deyoung@noao.edu
 dezeeuw@strw.leidenuniv.nl
 Suzanne.Debarbat@obspm.fr
 pascale.defraigne@oma.be
 veronique.dehant@oma.be
 jean-michel.deharveng@oamp.fr
 lise.deharveng@oamp.fr
 demers@astro.umontreal.ca
 mde@fuw.edu.pl
 demichev@iki.rssi.ru
 licai@bao.ac.cn
 dennefeld@iap.fr
 derekas@physics.usyd.edu.au
 derriere@astro.u-strasbg.fr
 dettmar@astro.rub.de
 deustua@aaas.org
 devine@astro.wisc.edu
 jdevor@cfa.harvard.edu
 devorkind@si.edu
 dimartino@oato.inaf.it
 pdiamond@jb.man.ac.uk
 fdiaz@ula.ve
 fdc@iac.es
 dib@astrosmo.unam.mx
 steven.j.dick@nasa.gov
 h-dickel@phys.unm.edu
 johnd@phys.unm.edu
 john.dickey@utas.edu.au
 med@noao.edu
 andrea@astro.soton.ac.uk
 markd@tp4.rub.de
 dijkstra@physics.unimelb.edu.au
 olgad@inasan.ru
 cld2@st-and.ac.uk
 dobos@complex.elte.hu
 oadoco@usc.es
 doddol@seruidor.unam.mx
 mdoherty@eso.org
 Markus.Dolensky@eso.org
 r.donnison@qmul.ac.uk
 Michael.Dopita@anu.edu.au
 dorch@astro.ku.dk
 alain.doressoundiram@obspm.fr
 lid@physics.technion.ac.il
 dorotovic@suh.sk
 dottori.voy@terra.com.br
 ndouglas@astro.rug.nl
 marian.douspis@ias.u-psud.fr
 dovciak@astro.cas.cz
 draine@astro.princeton.edu
 drake@on.br
 dainis@astro.lu.se
 drimmel@to.astro.it
 spd3@st-and.ac.uk
 gdubner@iafe.uba.ar
 dubois@astro.u-strasbg.fr
 paduc@cea.fr
 ducourant@obs.u-bordeaux1.fr
 inesehej@gmail.com
 wwduley@uwaterloo.ca
 deborah@astroscu.unam.mx
 dduncan@colorado.edu
 jdunkley@princeton.edu
 rdupke@umich.edu
 durandgs@cea.fr
 durech@sirrah.troja.mff.cuni.cz
 Vanessa.Dury@UGent.be
 dutrey@obs.u-bordeaux1.fr
 M.R.Duvoort@phys.uu.nl
 eli.dwek@nasa.gov
 mmd@star.ucl.ac.uk
 jed@ast.leeds.ac.uk
 wd@astrouw.edu.pl
 jer@astroscu.unam.mx
 eckart@ph1.uni-koeln.de
 aederoclitte@vub.ac.be
 tonis@ut.ee
 ppe@igpp.ucllnl.org
 fegusa@ioa.s.u-tokyo.ac.jp
 sona@ig.cas.cz
 gei@cfa.harvard.edu
 ron.ekers@csiro.au
 p.elebert@ucc.ie
 eliad@le.infn.it
 n.elias@lsw.uni-heidelberg.de
 anne.weston@oxon.blackwellpublishing.com

Richard Ellis, California Institute of Technology, Pasadena, USA
Bruce Elmegreen, IBM Research Division, Yorktown Heights, USA
Debra Elmegreen, Vassar College, Poughkeepsie, USA
Sebastian Els, CTIO, La Serena, Chile
Andrii Elyiv, Kyiv National Taras Shevchenko University, Kiev, Ukraine
Vacheslav Emel'yanenko, South Ural University, Chelyabinsk, Russian Federation
Eric Emsellem, Centre de Recherche Astronomique de Lyon, Saint Genis Laval, France
Sigrid Englich, Vienna University of Technology, Vienna, Austria
Oddbjørn Engvold, Inst.Theoret. Astrophys., Oslo, Norway
Torsten Ensslin, Max-Planck-Institut fuer Astrophysik, Garching bei Muenchen, Germany
Benoit Epinat, OAMP, Marseille, France
Daniel Epitácio Pereira, Observatorio Nacional / MCT, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
Balint Erdi, Eotvos University, Budapest, Hungary
Luigi Errico, INAF - Astronomical Observatory of Capodimonte, Naples, Italy
Alejandro Esquivel, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Mexico, Mexico
Dafydd Evans, Institute of Astronomy, Cambridge, United Kingdom
James Evans, University of Puget Sound, Tacoma, USA
Nancy R. Evans, SAO, Cambridge, USA
Martha Evonuk, University of California, Santa Cruz, Santa Cruz, USA
Laurent Eyer, Observatoire de Genève, Sauverny, Switzerland
Stewart Eyres, University of Central Lancashire, Preston, United Kingdom
Giuseppina Fabbiano, Harvard Smithsonian CfA, Cambridge, USA
Andrew Fabian, University of Cambridge, Cambridge, United Kingdom
Sergei Fabrika, Special Astrophysical Observatory, Nizhnij Arkhyz, Russian Federation
Daniel Fabrycky, Princeton University, Princeton, USA
Gregory Fahlan, National Research Council of Canada, Victoria, Canada
Diego Falceta-Gonçalves, IAG/USP, Sao Paulo, Brazil
Heino Falcke, ASTRON, Dwingeloo, Netherlands
Edith Falgarone, ENS & Paris Observatory, Paris, France
S. Michael Fall, STScI, Baltimore, USA
Renato Falomo, INAF - Padova, Padova, Italy
Benoit Famaey, Université Libre de Bruxelles, Bruxelles, Belgium
Xiaohui Fan, University of Arizona, Tucson, USA
Cheng Fang, Nanjing University, Nanjing, China Nanjing
Netzach Farbiash, Ben-Gurion University, Beer-Sheva, Israel
Frantisek Farnik, Astronomical Institute, Ondrejov, Czech Republic
Steven Federman, University of Toledo, Toledo, USA
Francis Fekel, Tennessee State University, Nashville, USA
Marcello Felli, Osservatorio di Arcetri, Firenze, Italy
Sofia Feltzing, Lund Observatory, Lund, Sweden
Luigina Ferretti, INAF Istituto di Radioastronomia, Bologna, Italy
Annette Ferguson, University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh, United Kingdom
Roger Ferlet, CNRS, Paris, France
Julio Angel Fernández, Facultad de Ciencias, Montevideo, Uruguay
Eduardo E. Fernandez Lajus, Universidad Nacional de La Plata, La Plata, Argentina
Gilles Ferrand, C.E.S.R., Toulouse, France
José M. Ferrandiz, University of Alicante, Alicante, Spain
Andrea Ferrara, SISSA, Trieste, Italy
Laura Ferrarese, Herzberg Institute of Astrophysics, Victoria, Canada
Francesco R. Ferraro, Bologna University, Bologna, Italy
Alan Fey, U.S. Naval Observatory, Washington, USA
Agnes Fienga, IMCCE/Observatoire de Paris, Paris, France
Julietta Fierro, Instituto de Astronomía, UNAM, D.F., Mexico
Jose Fiestas, Astronomisches Rechen-Institut, Heidelberg, Germany
Herminia Filgaira, Colegio EPLA, Godella, Spain
Miroslav Filipovic, University of Western Sydney, Glenmore Park, Australia
David Finley, National Radio Astronomy Observatory, Socorro, USA
Friedrich Firneis, Austrian Acad. of Sc., Vienna, Austria
Tobias Fischer, University of Basel, Basel, Switzerland
David Fisher, University of Texas at Austin, Austin, USA
Robert Scott Fisher, Gemini Observatory, Hilo, USA
Alan Fitzsimmons, Queen's University Belfast, Belfast, United Kingdom
Bernhard Fleck, ESA, Greenbelt, USA
Peter Fletcher, PPARC, Swindon, United Kingdom
Andy Flower, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, United Kingdom
David Floyd, Space Telescope Science Institute, Baltimore, USA
Sara Fogelström, Institution of Physics, Gothenburg University, Göteborg, Sweden
Marta Folgueira, Universidad Complutense de Madrid, Madrid, Spain
Ed Fomalont, NRAO, Charlottesville, USA
Duncan Forbes, Swinburne University, Hawthorn, Australia
Holland Ford, Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, USA
Emese Forgacs-Dajka, Eötvös University, Budapest, Hungary
Eric Fossat, Université de Nice, Nice, France
Ian Foster, University of Chicago & Argonne National Laboratory, Argonne, USA
Sebastien Foucaud, University of Nottingham, Nottingham, United Kingdom
Peter Fox, NCAR, Boulder, USA
Siegfried Franck, Potsdam Institut of Climate, Potsdam, Germany
Isabel Franco, Max Planck Institut fuer Astronomie, Heidelberg, Germany
Marijn Franx, Leiden Observatory, Leiden, Netherlands
Otto Franz, Lowell Observatory, Flagstaff, USA
Filippo Fraternali, INAF Bologna, Bologna, Italy
David Frayer, Caltech, Pasadena, USA
John Fregeau, Northwestern University, Evanston, USA
Richard French, Wellesley College, Wellesley, USA
Carlos Frenk, University of Durham, Durham, United Kingdom
Sándor Frey, FÖMI, Budapest, Hungary
Lars Michael Freyhammer, University of Central Lancashire, Preston, United Kingdom
Alexei Fridman, Institution of Astronomy of RAS, Moscow, Russian Federation
Eileen Friel, U.S. National Science Foundation, Arlington, USA
Ludmila Fritzová-Švestka, retired, Bunschoten, Netherlands
Christiane Froeschle, O.C.A., Nice Cedex, France
Claude Froeschle, O.C.A., Nice Cedex, France
Jay Albert Frogel, Aura, Inc., Potomac, USA
rse@astro.caltech.edu
bge@watson.ibm.com
elmegreen@vassar.edu
sels@ctio.noao.edu
elyjiw@ukr.net
vvelmel@susu.ac.ru
emsellem@obs.univ-lyon1.fr
senglich@mars.hg.tuwien.ac.at
oengvold@astro.uio.no
ensslin@mpa-garching.mpg.de
benoit.epinat@oamp.fr
dnep@on.br
B.Erdi@astro.elte.hu
errico@na.astro.it
esquivel@nucleares.unam.mx
dwe@ast.cam.ac.uk
jcevens@ups.edu
nevans@cfa.harvard.edu
mevonuk@es.ucsc.edu
laurent.eyer@obs.unige.ch
spseyres@uclan.ac.uk
pepi@cfa.harvard.edu
acf@ast.cam.ac.uk
fabrika@sao.ru
dfab@astro.princeton.edu
greg.fahlan@nrc-cnrc.gc.ca
diego@astro.iag.usp.br
falcke@astron.nl
edith@lra.ens.fr
fall@stsci.edu
renato.falomo@oapd.inaf.it
bfamaey@ulb.ac.be
fan@as.arizona.edu
fangc@nju.edu.cn
farbiash@bgu.ac.il
ffarnik@asu.cas.cz
steven.federman@utoledo.edu
fekel@evans.tnstate.edu
felli@arcetri.astro.it
sofia@astro.lu.se
lferretti@ira.inaf.it
lferguson@roe.ac.uk
ferlet@iap.fr
julio@fisica.edu.uy
effajus@feaglp.unlp.edu.ar
gilles.ferrand@cesr.fr
jm.ferrandiz@ua.es
ferrara@sisa.it
laura.ferrarese@nrc-cnrc.gc.ca
francesco.ferraro3@unibo.it
afey@usno.navy.mil
fienga@imcce.fr
julietta@astroscu.unam.mx
fiestas@ari.uni-heidelberg.de
ferbaro@uv.es
m.filipovic@uws.edu.au
dfinley@nrao.edu
Friedrich.Firneis@oeaw.ac.at
bert.fischer@stud.unibas.ch
dbfisher@astro.as.utexas.edu
sfisher@gemini.edu
a.fitzsimmons@qub.ac.uk
bfleck@esa.nascom.nasa.gov
peter.fletcher@pparc.ac.uk
aflower@cambridge.org
floyd@stsci.edu
sara.fogelstrom@rudorna.se
martaf@mat.ucm.es
cfomalont@nrao.edu
dforbes@swin.edu.au
ford@pha.jhu.edu
E.Forgacs-Dajka@astro.elte.hu
Eric.Fossat@unice.fr
foster@mcs.anl.gov
sebastien.foucaud@nottingham.ac.uk
pfox@ucar.edu
franck@pik-potsdam.de
franco@mpia.de
franx@strw.leidenuniv.nl
ogf@lowell.edu
filippo.fraternali@bo.astro.it
frayer@ipac.caltech.edu
fregeau@northwestern.edu
rfrench@wellesley.edu
c.s.frenk@durham.ac.uk
frey@sgo.fomi.hu
lmfreyhammer@uclan.ac.uk
fxela@online.ru
efriel@nsf.gov
z.svestka@srn.nl
froesch@obs-nice.fr
claud@obs-nice.fr
jfrogel@aura-astronomz.org

Mitsumi **Fujishita**, Kyushu Tokai University, Kumamoto, Japan
 Tomoko **Fujiwara**, Kyushu University, Fukuoka, Japan
 Masataka **Fukugita**, University of Tokyo, Kashiwa, Japan
 Yasuo **Fukui**, Nagoya University, Nagoya, Japan
 Toshio **Fukushima**, National Astronomical Observatory, Japan, Tokyo, Japan
 Marcello **Fulchignoni**, Observatoire de Paris, Meudon, France
 Jose **Funes**, Vatican Observatory, Tucson, USA
 Stefano **Gabici**, Max Planck Institut fuer Kernphysik, Heidelberg, Germany
 Pavel **Gabor**, Univ Paris 7, Paris, France
 Carlos **Gabriel**, ESA / ESAC, Madrid, Spain
 Dimitri **Gadotti**, Max Planck Institute for Astrophysics, Garching, Germany
 Terrance **Gaetz**, Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory, Cambridge, USA
 Tovmassian **Gagik**, Instituto de Astronomia, UNAM, Ensenada, Mexico
 Roy **Gal**, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, USA
 Piero **Galeotti**, University of Torino, Torino, Italy
 Rudolf **Gális**, Faculty of Science, P.J. Šafárik University, Košice, Slovakia
 Yves **Gallant**, LPTA Montpellier, Montpellier cedex 5, France
 Aurelia Teresa **Gallego Calvente**, University of Valencia, Paterna, Spain
 Simona **Gallerani**, ISAS, Trieste, Italy
 Daniel **Gambis**, Observatoire de Paris, PARIS, France
 Weiqun **Gan**, Purple Mountain Observatory, Nanjing, China Nanjing
 Yu **Gao**, Purple Mountain Observatory, Nanjing, China Nanjing
 Beatriz **Garcia**, National Technological University, Mendoza, Argentina
 M. Antonieta **Garcia**, Gemini South Observatory, La Serena, Chile
 Rafael A. **Garcia**, Service d'Astrophysique CEA/Saclay, Gif-sur-Yvette CEDEX, France
 Gabriela **Garcia Lugo**, Universidad de Los Andes, Mérida, Venezuela
 Jonathan **Gardner**, NASA's GSFC, Greenbelt, USA
 Bianca **Garilli**, INAF, Milano, Italy
 Peter **Garnavich**, University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, USA
 Michael **Garrett**, Joint Institute for VLBI in Europe, 7900 AA Dwingeloo, Netherlands
 Robert **Garrison**, University of Toronto, Toronto, Canada
 Dale **Gary**, NJIT, Newark, USA
 Séverin **Gaudet**, NRC/HIA/CADC, Victoria, Canada
 Ralph **Gaume**, US Naval Observatory, Washington, USA
 Panagiotis **Gavras**, University of Athens, Athens, Greece
 Natasa **Gavrilovic**, Astronomical Observatory, Belgrade, Belgrade, Serbia
 Elena **Gavryuseva**, Arcetri Astrophysical Observatory, Florence, Italy
 Kosmas **Gazeas**, University of Athens, Zografos, Athens, Greece
 Karl **Gebhardt**, University of Texas, Austin, USA
 Doug **Geisler**, Universidad de Concepcion, Concepcion, Chile
 Richard **Gelderman**, Western Kentucky University, Bowling Green, USA
 Françoise **Genova**, CDS, Observatoire de Strasbourg, Strasbourg, France
 Gianfranco **Genzile**, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, USA
 Reinhard **Genzel**, Max-Planck Institute for Extraterrestrial Physics, Garching, Germany
 Martin **George**, James Cook University, Launceston, Australia
 Meynet **Georges**, University of Geneva, Sauverny, Switzerland
 Christopher **Gerardy**, Imperial College London, London, United Kingdom
 Michele **Gerbaldi**, Institut d'Astrophysique, Paris, France
 Tomas **Gergely**, National Science Foundation, Arlington, USA
 Enrico **Gerlach**, Lohrmann observatory, Dresden, Germany
 Alexander **Getling**, Institute of Nuclear Physics, LMSU, Moscow, Russian Federation
 Elsa **Giacani**, Instituto de Astronomia y Fisica del Espacio, Buenos Aires, Argentina
 Steven **Gibson**, Cornell University, Ithaca, USA
 Mark **Gieles**, Utrecht University, Utrecht, Netherlands
 Janusz **Gil**, University of Zielona Gora, Zielona Gora, Poland
 Alan **Gilmore**, University of Canterbury, Lake Tekapo, New Zealand
 Gerry **Gilmore**, University of Cambridge, Cambridge, United Kingdom
 Alvaro **Gimenez**, ESA, Noordwijk, Netherlands
 Carlos Guillermo **Gimenez de Castro**, Universidade Presbiteriana Mackenzie, São Paulo, Brazil
 Owen **Gingerich**, Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics, Cambridge, USA
 Isabella M. **Gioia**, INAF, Bologna, Italy
 Gabriele **Giovannini**, Bologna University, Bologna, Italy
 Pascal **Girard**, L3AB, foirac, France
 Sunetra **Giridhar**, Indian Institute of Astrophysics, Bangalore, India
 Giuliano **Giuffrida**, University, Monte porzio Catone (RM), Italy
 Laurent **Gizon**, Max-Planck-Institut fuer Sonnensystemforschung, Katlenburg-Lindau, Germany
 Ian **Glass**, SAAO, Observatory, South Africa
 Gary **Glatzmaier**, University of California Santa Cruz, Santa Cruz, USA
 Evert **Glebbeek**, Utrecht University, Utrecht, Netherlands
 Elena **Glushkova**, Sternberg Astronomical Institute, Moscow, Russian Federation
 Oleg **Gnedin**, Ohio State University, Columbus, USA
 Stephanie **Gogarten**, University of Washington, Seattle, USA
 Umit Deniz **Goker**, Ege University, Istanbul, Turkey
 Itzhak **Goldman**, Tel Aviv University, Tel Aviv, Israel
 Paolo **Goldoni**, APC/UMR 7164 & SAp/CEA, Gif-sur-Yvette, France
 David **Golimowski**, Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, USA
 Alex **Golovin**, Kyiv National Taras Shevchenko University, Berdyansk, Ukraine
 Robert **Golshan**, JHU-APL, Chevy Chase, USA
 Daniel **Gomez**, IAFE, Buenos Aires, Argentina
 Juan Carlos **Gomez**, INAOE, Puebla, Mexico
 Matias **Gomez**, Universidad de Concepcion, Concepcion, Chile
 Ana I **Gomez de Castro**, Universidad Complutense de Madrid, Madrid, Spain
 Yilen **Gomez Maqueo Chew**, Vanderbilt University, Nashville, USA
 Ana **Gómez Stefanovitch**, Observatoire de Paris-Meudon, Meudon CEDEX, France
 Robert **Gonczy**, O.C.A., Nice Cedex, France
 Philippe **Gondoin**, European Space Agency, Noordwijk, Netherlands
 Rosa M. **Gonzalez Delgado**, Instituto de Astrofisica de Andalucía, Granada, Spain
 Jonay Isai **Gonzalez Hernandez**, Observatoire de Paris, Meudon, France
 Omaira **Gonzalez-Martin**, Instituto de Astrofisica de Andalucía, Granada, Spain
 Eduardo **Gonzalez-Solares**, University of Cambridge, Cambridge, United Kingdom
 Rene **Goosmann**, Astronomical Institute, Praha 4, Czech Republic
 Nat **Gopalswamy**, NASA/Goddard Space Flight Center, Greenbelt, USA
 Olga **Gopasyuk**, Crimean Astrophysical Observatory, Nauchny, Ukraine
 mfuji@ktmail.ktokai-u.ac.jp
 tomochan@gemini.rc.kyushu-u.ac.jp
 fukugita@icrr.u-tokyo.ac.jp
 fukui@a.phys.nagoya-u.ac.jp
 Toshio.Fukushima@nao.ac.jp
 marcello.fulchignoni@obspm.fr
 jfunes@as.arizona.edu
 Stefano.Gabici@mpi-hd.mpg.de
 p.gabor@jesuit.cz
 Carlos.Gabriel@sciops.esa.int
 dimitri@mpa-garching.mpg.de
 gaetz@cfa.harvard.edu
 gag@astrosen.unam.mx
 rg8j@virginia.edu
 piero.galeotti@unito.it
 galis@upjs.sk
 gallant@lpta.in2p3.fr
 teresa.gallego@uv.es
 galleran@sissa.it
 daniel.gambis@obspm.fr
 wqgan@pmo.ac.cn
 yugao@pmo.ac.cn
 beatrizgarcia@gnail.com
 agarcia@gemini.edu
 rgarcia@cea.fr
 gygarcia@ula.ve
 jonathan.p.gardner@nasa.gov
 bianca@lambrate.inaf.it
 pgarnavi@nd.edu
 garrett@jive.nl
 garrison@astro.utoronto.ca
 dgary@njit.edu
 severin.gaudet@nrc.gc.ca
 rgaume@usno.navy.mil
 pgavras@phys.uoa.gr
 ngavrilovic@aob.bg.ac.yu
 elena.gavryuseva@gmail.com
 kgaze@physics.auth.gr
 gebhardt@astro.as.utexas.edu
 dgeisler@astro-udec.cl
 gelderman@wku.edu
 genova@astro.u-strasbg.fr
 genzile@unm.edu
 genzel@mpe.mpg.de
 martin@qvmag.tas.gov.au
 georges.meynet@obs.univie.ch
 c.gerardy@imperial.ac.uk
 gerbaldi@iap.fr
 tgergely@nsf.gov
 enrico.gerlach@mailbox.tu-dresden.de
 A.Getling@ru.net
 egiacani@iafe.uba.ar
 gibson@naic.edu
 gieles@astro.uu.nl
 jag@astro.ia.uz.zgora.pl
 alan.gilmore@canterbury.ac.nz
 gil@ast.cam.ac.uk
 agimenez@rssi.edu
 guigee@craam.mackenzie.br
 ginger@cfa.harvard.edu
 gioia@ira.inaf.it
 ggiovannini@ira.inaf.it
 pascalg34@hotmail.com
 giridhar@iap.res.in
 giuffrida@mporzio.astro.it
 gizon@mps.mpg.de
 isg@sao.ac.za
 glatz@es.uccs.edu
 glebbeek@phys.uu.nl
 elena@sai.msu.ru
 ognedin@astronomy.ohio-state.edu
 smorris@astro.washington.edu
 udenizg@gmail.com
 goldman@wise.tau.ac.il
 pgoldoni@cea.fr
 dag@pha.jhu.edu
 astronom_2003@mail.ru
 robert.golshan@jhuapl.edu
 dgomez@df.uba.ar
 jgc@inaoep.mx
 matias@astro-udec.cl
 aig@mat.ucm.es
 yilen.gomez@vanderbilt.edu
 ana.gomez@obspm.fr
 rgonzi@obs-nice.fr
 pgondoin@rssi.edu
 rosa@iaa.es
 Jonay.Gonzalez-Hernandez@obspm.fr
 omaira@iaa.es
 eglez@ast.cam.ac.uk
 rene.goosmann@obspm.fr
 gopals@ssedmail.gsfc.nasa.gov
 hapa.ol@bk.ru

Denis **Gorshanov**, Main Astronomical Observatory of RAS, Saint-Petersburg, Russian Federation
Yuki **Goto**, Mito 2nd Highschool, Mito, Japan
Naoteru **Gouda**, National Astronomical Observatory of Japan, Mitaka, Japan
Dimitrios **Gouliermis**, Max-Planck-Institut fuer Astronomie, Heidelberg, Germany
Mariejo **Goupil**, Observatoire de Paris, Meudon, France
Georgia-Peristera **Gradoula**, University of Athens, Athens, Greece
Tomáš **Gráf**, Technical University, Ostrava, Czech Republic
Götz **Gräfener**, University of Potsdam, Potsdam, Germany
John **Graham**, Carnegie Institution, Washington, USA
Anahí **Granada**, National University of La Plata, La Plata, Argentina
Gian Luigi **Granato**, INAF - OAPD, Padova, Italy
Mikael **Granvik**, Observatory, Univ. Helsinki, University of Helsinki, Finland
Richard **Gray**, Appalachian State University, Boone, USA
Anne **Green**, University of Sydney, University of Sydney, Australia
Daniel W. E. **Green**, IAU Central Bureau for Astronomical Telegrams, Cambridge, USA
David **Green**, Cavendish Laboratory, Cambridge, United Kingdom
Richard **Green**, Large Binocular Telescope Observatory, Tucson, USA
Jenny **Greene**, Harvard, Cambridge, USA
George **Greenstein**, Amherst College, Amherst, USA
Jane **Gregorio-Hetem**, University of Sao Paulo, Sao Paulo, Brazil
Scott **Gregory**, University of St Andrews, St Andrews, United Kingdom
Oliver **Gressel**, Astrophysikalisches Institut Potsdam, Potsdam, Germany
R. Elizabeth **Griffin**, Herzberg Institute for Astrophysics, Victoria, Canada
Roger **Griffin**, Cambridge University, Cambridge, United Kingdom
Paolo **Grigis**, ETH Zurich, Zurich, Switzerland
Fabien **Grise**, Observatoire astronomique de Strasbourg, Strasbourg, France
Matthias **Gritschneider**, USM Munich, Munich, Germany
Martin **Groenewegen**, Instituut voor Sterrenkunde, KUL, Leuven, Belgium
Giovanni-Federico **Gronchi**, University of Pisa, Pisa, Italy
Paul **Groot**, Radboud University Nijmegen, Nijmegen, Netherlands
Monique **Gros**, Institut d'Astrophysique de Paris, Paris, France
Preben **Grosbol**, European Southern Observatory, Garching, Germany
Uta **Grothkopf**, European Southern Observatory, Garching, Germany
Rebecca **Grouchy**, University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa, USA
Marcel **Grün**, Observatory and Planetarium, Prague, Prague, Czech Republic
Daniel **Grunberger**, A&A - EDP Sciences, Les Ulis, France
Ruth **Grützbauch**, University of Vienna, Wien, Austria
Jiří **Grygar**, Nunciis Siderius III, Prague, Czech Republic
Matteo **Guainazzi**, European Space Agency, Madrid, Spain
Jose **Guichard**, INAOE, Santa Maria Tonantzintla, Mexico
Pierre **Guillard**, IAS, Orsay, France, Bures sur Yvette, France
Edward **Guinan**, Villanova University, Villanova, USA
Theodore **Gull**, Goddard Space Flight Center, Greenbelt, USA
Sergei **Gulyaev**, Auckland University of Technology, City, New Zealand
Stanislav **Gunar**, Astronomical Institute, Ondřejov, Czech Republic
Alastair **Gunn**, University of Manchester, Macclesfield, United Kingdom
Alexander **Gurshtein**, Mesa State College, Grand Junction, USA
Leonid **Gurvits**, Joint Institute for VLBI in Europe, Dwingeloo, Netherlands
Bo **Gustafson**, University of Florida, Gainesville, USA
Maiken **Gustafsson**, University of Aarhus, Aarhus C, Denmark
Leonel **Gutierrez**, IAC, La Laguna, Spain
Raul **Gutierrez-Sanchez**, INTA, Villafranca del Castillo, Spain
Julien **Guy**, LPNHE IN2P3/CNRS, Paris, France
Vasilii **Gvarnadze**, Sternberg Astronomical Institute, Moscow, Russian Federation
Sebastian **Haan**, Max Planck Institute for Astronomy, Heidelberg, Germany
Jaroslav **Haas**, Charles University, Prague, Czech Republic
Asao **Habe**, Hokkaido University, Sapporo, Japan
Petr **Hadrava**, Astronomical Institute ASCR, Praha, Czech Republic
Ahmed **Hady**, Cairo university, Cairo, Egypt
Guillermo **Hägele**, Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, Ciudad Univ. de Cantoblanco, Spain
Therese **Hägström**, Earth Sciences, Gothenburg, Sweden
Masaaki **Hagino**, Hida Observatory, Kyoto University, Takayama, Japan
Lauri **Haikala**, University of Helsinki, Helsinki, Finland
Chris **Haines**, INAF Osservatorio Astronomico di Capodimonte, Naples, Italy
Jean-Louis **Halbwachs**, Observatoire Astronomique de Strasbourg, Strasbourg, France
Alexander **Halevin**, Odessa National University, Odessa, Ukraine
Kenji **Hamaguchi**, NASA/GSFC, Greenbelt, USA
Hashem **Hamedivafa**, Zanjan University, Zanjan, Iran, Islamic Rep of
Jean-Marie **Hameury**, Strasbourg Observatory, Strasbourg, France
Nicolay J. **Hammer**, Max Planck Institut für Astrophysik, Garching, Germany
Wonyong **Han**, Korea Astronomy & Space Science Institute (KASI), Taejon, Korea RP
Yasuharu **Hanaoka**, The Society of Little Astronomer, Osaka, Japan
Yoichiro **Hanaoka**, National Astronomical Observatory of Japan, Mitaka, Japan
Yuriko **Hanaoka**, Orbys, Nara, Japan
Shravan **Hanasoge**, Stanford University, Stanford, USA
Michal **Hanasz**, Nicolaus Copernicus University, Torun, Poland
Toshihiro **Handa**, University of Tokyo, Mitaka, Japan
David **Hanes**, Queen's University, Kingston, Canada
Robert **Hanisch**, Space Telescope Science Institute, Baltimore, USA
JingFang **Hao**, Tsinghua University, Beijing, China Nanjing
Shirin **Haque**, Univ. of the West Indies, St Augustine, Trinidad & Tobago
Tetsuya **Hara**, Kyoto Sangyo University, Kyoto, Japan
Eduardo **Hardy**, NRAO, Santiago de Chile, Chile
Petr **Harmanec**, Astronomical Institute, Charles University Praha, Czech Republic
Alan **Harris**, Space Science Institute, La Canada, USA
William **Hartkopf**, United States Naval Observatory, Washington, USA
Hayk **Harutyunyan**, Byurakan Observatory, Armenia, Yerevan, Armenia
Janice **Harvey**, Gemini Observatory, Hilo, USA
John **Harvey**, National Solar Observatory, Tucson, USA
Lisa **Harvey-Smith**, Joint Institute for VLBI in Europe, Dwingeloo, Netherlands
Martin **Harwit**, Cornell University, Washington, USA
Hashima **Hasan**, NASA Headquarters, Washington, USA
Satyid Sirajul **Hasan**, Indian Institute of Astrophysics, Bangalore, India
dengorsh@mail.ru
okamura.norio@mail.ibk.ed.jp
naoteru.gouda@nao.ac.jp
dgoulier@mpia.de
mariejo.goupil@obspm.fr
bettygradoula@yahoo.gr
tomas.graf@vsb.cz
goetz@astro.physik.uni-potsdam.de
graham@dtm.ciw.edu
granada@fcaglp.unlp.edu.ar
granato@pd.astro.it
mikael.granvik@helsinki.fi
grayro@appstate.edu
agreen@physics.usyd.edu.au
green@cfa.harvard.edu
dag@mrao.cam.ac.uk
rgreen@as.arizona.edu
jgreene@cfa.harvard.edu
sgreenstein@amherst.edu
jane@astro.iag.usp.br
sg64@st-andrews.ac.uk
ogressel@aip.de
Elizabeth.Griffin@nrc.ca
rfg@ast.cam.ac.uk
pgrigis@astro.phys.ethz.ch
grise@astro.u-strasbg.fr
gritschm@usm.uni-muenchen.de
groen@ster.kuleuven.be
gronchi@dm.unipi.it
pgroot@astro.ru.nl
gros@iap.fr
pgrosbol@eso.org
esolib@eso.org
grouc001@bama.ua.edu
grun@planetarium.cz
grunberger@edpsciences.org
gruetzbauch@astro.univie.ac.at
grygar@fzu.cz
Matteo.Guainazzi@sciops.esa.int
jguich@inaoep.mx
pierre.guillard@ias.u-psud.fr
edward.guinan@villanova.edu
gull@milkyway.gsfc.nasa.gov
sergei.gulyaev@aut.ac.nz
gunar@asu.cas.cz
agg@jb.man.ac.uk
agurshtein@hotmail.com
lgruvits@jive.nl
gustaf@astro.ufl.edu
maikeng@phys.au.dk
leonel@iac.es
raul.gutierrez@laeff.inta.es
guy@lpnhp.in2p3.fr
vgvaram@sai.msu.ru
haan@mpia.de
haas.jaroslav@tiscali.cz
habe@astro1.sci.hokudai.ac.jp
had@sunstel.asu.cas.cz
aahady@yahoo.com
guille.hagele@uam.es
therese@gvc.gu.se
hagino@kwasan.kyoto-u.ac.jp
haikala@astro.helsinki.fi
chris@na.astro.it
halbwachs@astro.u-strasbg.fr
halevin@astronomy.org.ua
kenji@milkyway.gsfc.nasa.gov
vafa@mail.znu.ac.ir
hameury@astro.u-strasbg.fr
hammer@mpa-garching.mpg.de
whan@kasi.re.kr
yas-hanaoka@orbys.co.jp
hanaoka@solar.mtk.nao.ac.jp
yas-hanaoka@orbys.co.jp
shravan@stanford.edu
mhanasz@astri.uni.torun.pl
handa@ioa.s.u-tokyo.ac.jp
hanes@astro.queensu.ca
hanisch@stsci.edu
jessica-hjft@163.com
shirin@tstt.net.tt
hara@cc.kyoto-su.ac.jp
ehardy@nrao.edu
hec@sirrah.troja.mff.cuni.cz
awharris@spacescience.org
wih@usno.navy.mil
hhayk@bao.sci.am
jharvey@gemini.edu
jharvey@noao.edu
harvey@jive.nl
harwit@verizon.net
hhasan@nasa.gov
diria@iap.res.in

Osamu **Hashimoto**, Gunma Astronomical Observatory, Agatsuma, Japan
Tetsuya **Hashimoto**, The University of Tokyo, Mitaka, Japan
Yasuhiro **Hashimoto**, SAAO, Cape Town, South Africa
Günther **Hasinger**, MPE Garching, Garching, Germany
Hirofumi **Hatano**, Nagoya University, Nagoya, Japan
Bunyo **Hatsukade**, Institute of Astronomy, Univ. of Tokyo, Tokyo, Japan
Artie **Hatzes**, Thüringer Landessternwarte, Tautenburg, Germany
Xavier **Haubois**, Observatoire de Paris, Meudon, France
Hans J. **Haubold**, United Nations, Vienna, Austria
Michael **Hauser**, Space Telescope Science Institute, Baltimore, USA
Boris **Häufler**, Max-Planck-Institute for Astronomy, Heidelberg, Germany
Matthew **Hayes**, Stockholm University, Stockholm, Sweden
William **Heacock**, University of Hawaii at Hilo, Hilo, USA
John **Hearnshaw**, University of Canterbury, Christchurch, New Zealand
Andre **Heck**, Strasbourg Astronomical Observatory, Duttlenheim, France
Douglas **Heggie**, University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh, United Kingdom
Craig **Heinke**, Northwestern University, Evanston, USA
Petr **Heinzel**, Astronomical Institute, ASCR, Ondrejov, Czech Republic
Dominikus **Heinzeller**, Institute for Theoretical Astrophysics, Heidelberg, Germany
Ulrike **Heiter**, Uppsala Astronomical Observatory, Uppsala, Sweden
Ladislav **Hejna**, Astronomical Institute of AS CR, Veselí nad Lužnicí, Czech Republic
Christiane **Helling**, ESA, Noordwijk, Netherlands
Amina **Helmi**, Kapteyn Astronomical Institute, Groningen, Netherlands
George **Helou**, California Institute of Technology, Pasadena, USA
Mary-Kay **Hemenway**, University of Texas-Austin, Austin, USA
Angela **Hempel**, Geneva Observatory, Sauverny, Switzerland
Arne **Henden**, AAVSO, Cambridge, USA
Christian **Henkel**, MPIFR, Bonn, Germany
Patrick **Hennebelle**, Observatoire de Paris, Paris, France
Martin **Hennemann**, Max Planck Institute for Astronomy, Heidelberg, Germany
Agnès **Henri**, A & A - EDP Sciences, Les Ulis, France
Todd **Henry**, Georgia State University, Atlanta, USA
Herman **Hensberge**, Royal Observatory of Belgium, Brussels, Belgium
Gerhard **Hensler**, University of Vienna, Vienna, Austria
Andreas **Herber**, AWI Bremerhaven, Bremerhaven, Germany
Stéphane **Herbert-Port**, UA/Steward Observatory, Tucson, USA
William **Herbst**, Wesleyan University, Killingworth, USA
Liliana **Hernandez**, UNAM, Mexico City, Mexico
Xavier **Hernandez**, Instituto de Astronomia, UNAM, Mexico, Mexico
Jonathan **Hernández-Fernández**, Instituto de Astrofísica de Andalucía-CSIC, Granada, Spain
Artemio **Herrero**, Instituto de Astrofísica de Canarias, La Laguna, Spain
Dieter B. **Herrmann**, Berlin, Germany
Jim **Hesser**, NRC/HIA, Victoria, Canada
Janice **Hester**, Princeton University, Princeton, USA
Daniel **Hestroffer**, Paris observatory, PARIS, France
Annibal **Hetem**, Fundacao Santo Andre, Sao Paulo, Brazil
Hans Hermann **Heyer**, ESO, Garching b. München, Germany
Mark **Heyer**, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, USA
Pascale **Hibon**, ESO Chile /LAM, Santiago, Chile
Amalia **Hicks**, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, USA
Vince **Higgs**, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, United Kingdom
Arika **Higuchi**, National Astronomical Observatory of Japan, Mitaka, Japan
Ron **Hilditch**, University of St Andrews, St Andrews, United Kingdom
Frank **Hill**, National Solar Observatory, Tucson, USA
Tomas **Hillberg**, Solar Physics - Royal Academy, Stockholm, Sweden
Wolfgang **Hillebrandt**, Max-Planck-Gesellschaft, Garching, Germany
Lynne **Hillenbrand**, California Institute of Technology, Pasadena, USA
James **Hilton**, U.S. Naval Observatory, Jacksonville, USA
Pierre **Hily-Blant**, IRAM, Saint Martin d'Heres, France
Hans **Hippelein**, MPI Astronomy Heidelberg, Heidelberg, Germany
Shino **Hirabayashi**, Mito 2nd Highschool, Mito, Japan
Masanori **Hirai**, Fukuoka University of Education, Munakata, Japan
Masaaki **Hiramatsu**, The University of Tokyo, Tokyo, Japan
Alina **Hirschmann**, Institut d'Estudis Espacials de Catalunya IIEEC, Barcelona, Spain
Marc **Hitschfeld**, University of Cologne, Köln, Germany
Klára **Hloučová**, Institute of Organic Chemistry and Biochemistry, Prague, Czech Republic
Susanne **Hoefner**, Uppsala University, Uppsala, Sweden
Erik **Hoeg**, Copenhagen University, Copenhagen, Denmark
Henk **Hoekstra**, University of Victoria, Victoria, Canada
Catherine **Hohenkerk**, HM Nautical Almanac Office, Steventon, United Kingdom
Alisher S. **Hojaev**, UBAl, CFSR, UAS, Tashkent, Uzbekistan
Jay **Holberg**, University of Arizona, Tucson, USA
Andras **Holl**, Konkoly Observatory, Budapest, Hungary
Kelly **Holley-Bockelmann**, Penn State University, University Park, USA
Mark **Holliman**, University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh, United Kingdom
Johan **Holmberg**, MPIA, Heidelberg, Germany
Satoshi **Honda**, National Astronomical Observatory of Japan, Tokyo, Japan
Kyeong Soo **Hong**, Sejong University, Seoul, Korea RP
Peter **Hoppe**, Max-Planck-Institute for Chemistry, Mainz, Germany
Jiri **Horak**, Astronomical Institute, ASCR, Praha, Czech Republic
Erika **Horniaková**, Slovak Agricultural University, Nitra, Slovakia
Kamil **Hornoch**, Lelekovice, Lelekovice, Czech Republic
Mizuhiko **Hosokawa**, National Institute of Information and Communications Technology, Koganei, Japan
Takashi **Hosokawa**, NAOJ, Mitaka, Japan
Jinliang **Hou**, Shanghai Astronomical Observatory, Shanghai, China Nanjing
James **Hough**, University of Glasgow, Glasgow, United Kingdom
Leo **Houziaux**, Academie Royale de Belgique, Bruxelles, Belgium
Suzanne **Howard**, University of Cambridge, Cambridge, United Kingdom
Ian **Howarth**, University College London, London, United Kingdom
Andy **Howell**, University of Toronto, Toronto, Canada
Esther M. **Hu**, Institute for Astronomy, Univ. of Hawaii, Honolulu, USA
Haili **Hu**, Radboud University Nijmegen, Nijmegen, Netherlands
Jian **Hu**, Tsinghua University, Beijing, China Nanjing
osamu@astron.pref.gunma.jp
tetsuya@optik.mtk.nao.ac.jp
hashimot@saa.ac.za
ghasinger@mpe.mpg.de
hattan@z.phys.nagoya-u.ac.jp
hatsukade@ioa.s.u-tokyo.ac.jp
artie@tls-tautenburg.de
xavier.haubois@obspm.fr
Hans.Haubold@unvienna.org
hauser@stsci.edu
Boris@mpia.de
matthew@astro.su.se
heacock@hawaii.edu
john.hearnshaw@canterbury.ac.nz
heck@astro.u-strasbg.fr
d.c.heggie@ed.ac.uk
cheinke@northwestern.edu
pheinzel@asu.cas.cz
dh@ita.uni-heidelberg.de
ulrike@astro.uu.se
ljejna@volny.cz
chelling@esa.int
ahelmi@astro.rug.nl
helou@ipac.caltech.edu
marykay@astro.as.utexas.edu
Angela.Hempel@obs.unige.ch
arne@aavso.org
chenkel@mpifr-bonn.mpg.de
patrick.hennebelle@ens.fr
hennemann@mpia.de
henri@edpsciences.org
thenry@chara.gsu.edu
herman.hensberge@oma.be
hensler@astro.univie.ac.at
aherber@awi-bremerhaven.de
shf@as.arizona.edu
wherbst@wesleyan.edu
liliana@astroscu.unam.mx
xavier@astroscu.unam.mx
jonatan@iaa.es
ahd@iac.es
post@dbherrmann.de
Jim.Hesser@nrc-cnrc.gc.ca
jhester@princeton.edu
hestro@imcce.fr
annibal.hetem@usa.net
hheyer@eso.org
heyer@astro.umass.edu
phibon@eso.org
ahicks@alum.mit.edu
vhiggs@cambridge.org
higuchia@th.nao.ac.jp
rwh@st-andrews.ac.uk
fhill@noao.edu
hillberg@astro.su.se
wfh@mpa-garching.mpg.de
lah@astro.caltech.edu
jhilton@usno.navy.mil
hilyblan@iram.fr
hippelein@mpia-hd.mpg.de
okamura.norio@mail.ibk.edu.jp
hiraim@fukuoka-edu.ac.jp
hiramatsu.masaaki@nao.ac.jp
alina@ieec.uab.es
hitschfeld@ph1.uni-koeln.de
klara@hlouch.cz
hoefner@astro.uu.se
erik@astro.ku.dk
hoekstra@uvic.ca
cyh@nao.rl.ac.uk
ash@astrin.uzsci.net
holberg@argus.lpl.arizona.edu
holl@konkoly.hu
kellyhb@gravity.psu.edu
msh@roe.ac.uk
johannh@bredband.net
honda@optik.mtk.nao.ac.jp
zxxxxx@empal.com
hoppe@mpch-mainz.mpg.de
horak@astro.cas.cz
Erika.Horniakov@uniag.sk
k.hornoch@centrum.cz
hosokawa@nict.go.jp
hosokawa@th.nao.ac.jp
houjl@shao.ac.cn
j.hough@physics.gla.ac.uk
peckova@cbtttravel.cz
showard@ast.cam.ac.uk
idh@star.utoronto.ca
howell@astro.utoronto.ca
hu@ifa.hawaii.edu
hailihu@astro.ru.nl
hujian98@mails.tsinghua.edu.cn

Juei-Hwa **Hu**, Institute of Astronomy, Jhongli City, Taoyuan County, China Taipei
 Nguyen Dinh **Huan**, Vinh University, Vinh City, Viet Nam
 Cheng **Huang**, Shanghai Astronomical Observatory CAS, Shanghai, China Nanjing
 Cheng-Li **Huang**, Shanghai Astron. Obs., Shanghai, China Nanjing
 Hsiu-hui **Huang**, MPE, Garching, Germany
 Hui-Chun **Huang**, Nat'l Taiwan Normal Univ, Taipei, China Taipei
 Maohai **Huang**, National Astronomical Observatories of China, Chaoyang District, China Nanjing
 John **Huchra**, Harvard University, Cambridge, USA
 Murat **Hudaverdi**, Nagoya University, Nagoya, Japan
 Rene **Hudec**, ASU AV CR, Ondrejov, Czech Republic
 Marc **Huertas-Company**, Observatoire de Paris, Meudon, France
 Susanne **Huettemeister**, Ruhr-Universitaet Bochum, Planetarium Bochum, Bochum, Germany
 John **Hughes**, Rutgers University, Piscataway, USA
 Chung Yue **Hui**, MPE, Garching, Germany
 Richard **Hunstead**, University of Sydney, Sydney, Australia
 Jarrod **Hurley**, Swinburne University, Hawthorn, Australia
 Gary **Huss**, University of Hawaii at Manoa, Honolulu, USA
 Piet **Hut**, Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton, USA
 Minh **Huynh**, Spitzer Science Center/Caltech, Pasadena, USA
 Jorga **Ibrahim**, Institute of Technology Bandung, Bandung, Indonesia
 Takashi **Ichikawa**, Tohoku University, Sendai, Japan
 Kiyotomo **Ichiki**, University of Tokyo, Tokyo, Japan
 Yutaka **Ihara**, Tokyo Univ., Saitama, Japan
 Dragana **Ilic**, Faculty of Mathematics, University of Belgrade, Belgrade, Serbia
 Yury **Ilyasov**, Lebedev Physical Institute Russian academy of Sc, Pushchino, Russian Federation
 Akira **Imada**, Kyoto University, Kyoto, Japan
 Yusuke **Imaeda**, Kobe University, Kobe, Japan
 Chris **Impey**, University of Arizona, Tucson, USA
 Song In-Ok, ARCSEC, Sejong University, Seoul, Korea RP
 Andrew **Ingersoll**, Caltech, Pasadena, USA
 Hirohiko **Inoue**, ISAS/JAXA, Sagami-hara, Japan
 Makoto **Inoue**, National Astronomical Observatory of Japan, Mitaka, Japan
 Huib **Intema**, Leiden Observatory, Leiden, Netherlands
 Enrichetta **Iodice**, INAF-Astronomical Observatory of Capodimonte, Naples, Italy
 Daisuke **Iono**, NAOJ, Tokyo, Japan
 Sergei **Ipatov**, University of Maryland, College Park, USA
 Rosina **Iping**, Catholic University of America, Washington, USA
 William **Irvine**, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, USA
 Aoi **Ishida**, Mito 2nd Highschool, Mito, Japan
 Daisuke **Ishihara**, University of Tokyo, Tokyo, Japan
 Takako **Ishii**, Kyoto University, Kyoto, Japan
 Ryoko **Ishioka**, NAOJ, Hilo, USA
 Jose **Ishitsuka**, NAO of Japan & Instituto Geofisico, Lima, Peru
 Emre **Isik**, Max Planck Institute for Solar System Research, Katlenburg-Lindau, Germany
 Syuzo **Isoe**, The Japan Spaceguard Association, Shibuya, Japan
 Takeshi **Itoh**, University of Tokyo, Bunkyo-ku, Japan
 Natalia **Ivanova**, CITA, Toronto, Canada
 Oleksandra **Ivanova**, Main Astronomical Observatory of NASU, Kyiv, Ukraine
 Tamara **Ivanova**, Institute of Applied Astronomy, St.Petersburg, Russian Federation
 Anatoliy **Ivantsov**, Research Institute "Nikolaev Astronomical Observatory", Mykolaiv, Ukraine
 Zeljko **Ivezic**, University of Washington, Seattle, USA
 Ikuru **Iwata**, National Astronomical Observatory, Asakuchi, Japan
 Masanori **Iye**, National Astronomical Observatory, Mitaka, Japan
 Robert **Izzard**, University of Utrecht, Utrecht, Netherlands
 Pavel **Jachym**, Astronomical Institute, Praha, Czech Republic
 Carole **Jackson**, CSIRO ATNF, Epping, Australia
 Robert A. **Jacobson**, JPL, California Institute of Technology, Pasadena, USA
 Jan **Janik**, Masaryk University, Brno, Czech Republic
 Edmund **Janssen**, ESO, Munich, Germany
 Gemma **Janssen**, University of Amsterdam, Amsterdam, Netherlands
 Katja **Janssen**, INAF - Osservatorio Astrofisico di Arcetri, Firenze, Italy
 Robert **Janusz**, S.J., Vatican Observatory, Vatican City State, Vatican City State
 Anne-Katharina **Jappsen**, Astrophysikalisches Institut Potsdam, Potsdam, Germany
 Moira **Jardine**, University of St Andrews, St Andrews, United Kingdom
 Silva **Järvinen**, Astrophysikalisches Institut Potsdam, Potsdam, Germany
 Davoud **Jassur**, University of Tabriz, Tabriz, Iran, Islamic Rep of
 Vera **Jatenco-Pereira**, University of São Paulo, São Paulo, Brazil
 Atefeh **Javadi**, alzahra university, Tehran, Iran, Islamic Rep of
 Tesla **Jeltema**, Carnegie Observatories, Pasadena, USA
 Edward **Jenkins**, Princeton University, Princeton, USA
 Peter **Jenniskens**, SETI Institute, Mountain View, USA
 Myoungwon **Jeon**, KyungHee University, Yongin-shi, Korea RP
 Young-Beom **Jeon**, Korea Astronomy and Space Science Institute, Daejeon, Korea RP
 Philip **Jewell**, National Radio Astronomy Observatory, Charlottesville, USA
 Biwei **Jiang**, Beijing Normal University, Beijing, China Nanjing
 Katharine **Johnston**, University of St Andrews, St Andrews, United Kingdom
 Kenneth **Johnston**, US Naval Observatory, Washington, USA
 Melanie **Johnston-Hollitt**, University of Tasmania, Hobart, Australia
 Barrie **Jones**, The Open University, Milton Keynes, United Kingdom
 Paul **Jones**, no affiliation, Waterloo, Australia
 Thomas **Jones**, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, USA
 Umesh **Joshi**, Physical Research Laboratory, Ahmedabad, India
 Paul C. **Joss**, MIT, Dracut, USA
 M. K. Ryan **Jeung**, Columbia University, New York, USA
 Laurène **Jouve**, CEA Saclay, Gif-Sur-Yvette, France
 Gyula **Jozsa**, AlfA, Bonn, Germany
 Alexander **Judge**, The University of Sydney, The University of Sydney, Australia
 Bruno **Jungwiert**, Astronomical Institute, Prague, Czech Republic
 Veronika **Junk**, USM Universitäts-Sternwarte München, Munich, Germany
 Jan **Jurcak**, Astronomical Institute, AS CR, Ondrejov, Czech Republic
 Andreas **Just**, University of Heidelberg, Heidelberg, Germany
 Stephen **Justham**, Oxford University, Oxford, United Kingdom
 Mika **Juvela**, Helsinki University Observatory, Helsinki, Finland
 d939003@astro.ncu.edu.tw
 vinh_dhsp@hotmail.com
 hc@shao.ac.cn
 chuang@shao.ac.cn
 rhuang@mpe.mpg.de
 hspring@alioth.geos.ntnu.edu.tw
 mhuang@bao.ac.cn
 huchra@cfa.harvard.edu
 hudaverd@u.phys.nagoya-u.ac.jp
 rhudec@asu.cas.cz
 marc.huertas@obsmp.fr
 huette@astro.rub.de
 jph@physics.rutgers.edu
 dhui@mpe.mpg.de
 rwh@physics.usyd.edu.au
 jhurley@astro.swin.edu.au
 ghuss@higp.hawaii.edu
 piet@ias.edu
 mhuyhn@ipac.caltech.edu
 jorga@as.itb.ac.id
 ichikawa@astr.tohoku.ac.jp
 ichiki@resceu.s.u-tokyo.ac.jp
 iharayt@ioa.s.u-tokyo.ac.jp
 dilic@matf.bg.ac.yu
 ilyasov@prao.psn.ru
 a.imada@kusastro.kyoto-u.ac.jp
 imaeda@kobe-u.ac.jp
 cimphey@as.arizona.edu
 songio@sejong.ac.kr
 api@gps.caltech.edu
 hirohiko@astro.isas.jaxa.jp
 inoue@nro.nao.ac.jp
 intema@strw.leidenuniv.nl
 iodice@na.astro.it
 d.iono@nao.ac.jp
 sipatov@umd.edu
 iping@milkyway.gsfc.nasa.gov
 irvine@fcrao1.astro.umass.edu
 okamura.norio@mail.ibk.ed.jp
 ishihara@ir.isas.jaxa.jp
 ishii@kwasan.kyoto-u.ac.jp
 ishioka@subaru.naoj.org
 pepe@hotaka.mtk.nao.ac.jp
 ishik@mps.mpg.de
 isobe@spaceguard.or.jp
 titoh@amalthea.phys.s.u-tokyo.ac.jp
 nata@cita.utoronto.ca
 sandra@mao.kiev.ua
 itv@ipa.nw.ru
 anatoly@mao.nikolaev.ua
 ivezic@astro.washington.edu
 iwata@oao.nao.ac.jp
 iye@optik.mtk.nao.ac.jp
 jachym@ig.cas.cz
 Carole.Jackson@csiro.au
 robert.jacobson@jpl.nasa.gov
 honza@physics.muni.cz
 ejanssen@eso.org
 gemma@science.uva.nl
 kjanssen@arcetri.astro.it
 rj@jezuici.krakow.pl
 akjappsen@aip.de
 mmj@st-and.ac.uk
 sjarvinen@aip.de
 Jassur@tabrizu.ac.ir
 jatenco@astro.iag.usp.br
 atefehj@gmail.com
 tesla@ocw.edu
 ebj@astro.princeton.edu
 pjenniskens@mail.ars.nasa.gov
 myjeon@apl.khu.ac.kr
 ybjeon@kasi.re.kr
 pjewell@nrao.edu
 bjiang@bnu.edu.cn
 kgj1@st-andrews.ac.uk
 kjj@astro.usno.navy.mil
 Paul.Jones@csiro.au
 b.w.jones@open.ac.uk
 Paul.Jones@astro.umn.edu
 twj@prl.ernet.in
 joshi@space.mit.edu
 moo@astro.columbia.edu
 ljouve@cea.fr
 gjoza@astro.uni-bonn.de
 ajudge@physics.usyd.edu.au
 bruno@ig.cas.cz
 vjunk@usm.uni-muenchen.de
 jurcak@asu.cas.cz
 just@ari.uni-heidelberg.de
 sjustham@astro.ox.ac.uk
 mika.juvela@helsinki.fi

Mikko **Kaasalainen**, University of Helsinki, Helsinki, Finland
 Hedvika **Kadlecova**, MFF UK, Prague 8, Czech Republic
 Mary Ann **Kadooka**, University of Hawaii, Honolulu, USA
 Styliani **Kafka**, NOAO/CTIO, La Serena, Chile
 Valeria **Kagramanova**, Ulugh Beg Astronomical Institute UAS, Tashkent, Uzbekistan
 Stephen **Kahler**, Airforce Research Lab, Hanscom AFB, USA
 Norio **Kaifu**, NAOJ, Hachioji, Japan
 Nick **Kaiser**, University of Hawaii, Honolulu, USA
 Sachi **Kakurai**, Mito 2nd Highschool, Mito, Japan
 Sergei **Kalabanov**, Kazann State University, Kazan, Russian Federation
 Meelis **Kaldalu**, University of Tartu, Tartu, Estonia
 Leonid **Kalinichenko**, Russian Academy of Science, Moscow, Russian Federation
 Nickolay **Kalinichenko**, Institute of Radio Astronomy NASU, Kharkiv, Ukraine
 Belinda **Kalomeni**, Izmir Inst. of Technology, Izmir, Turkey
 Nadia **Kaltchev**, University of Wisconsin Oshkosh, Oshkosh, USA
 Kazuhisa **Kamegai**, Institute of Astronomy, Univ. of Tokyo, Tokyo, Japan
 Hidehiro **Kaneda**, ISAS/JAXA, Sagami-hara, Japan
 Hyesung **Kang**, Pusan National University, Pusan, Korea RP
 Young-Woon **Kang**, Sejong University, Seoul, Korea RP
 Wolfgang **Kapferer**, University of Innsbruck, Innsbruck, Austria
 George **Kaplan**, U.S. Naval Observatory, Washington, USA
 Petri **Käpylä**, University of Helsinki, University of Helsinki, Finland
 Vladimir **Karas**, Astronomical Institute, Prague, Czech Republic
 Aris **Karastergiou**, IRAM, Saint Martin d'Herès, France
 Eugenia **Karitskaya**, Institute of Astronomy RAS, Moscow, Russian Federation
 Albrecht **Karle**, University of Wisconsin-Madison, Madison, USA
 Marian **Karlicky**, Astronomical Institute, ASCR, Ondřejov, Czech Republic
 Hiroshi **Karoji**, National Astronomical Observatory of Japan, Tokyo, Japan
 Sergey **Karpov**, Special Astrophysical Observatory of RAS, Nizhny Arkhyz, Russian Federation
 Ramesh **Karuppusamy**, University of Amsterdam/ASTRON, Zwiggelte, Netherlands
 Nobunari **Kashikawa**, Mitaka, Japan
 Jana **Kasparova**, Astronomical Institute AS CR, Ondřejov, Czech Republic
 Namir **Kassim**, Naval Research Laboratory, Washington, USA
 Masato **Katayama**, National Astronomical Observatory of Japan, Mitaka, Japan
 Manabu **Kato**, Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency, Sagami-hara, Japan
 Seiichi **Kato**, Hyogo College of Medicine, Nishinomiya, Japan
 Pierre **Kaufmann**, Mackenzie Presbyterian University, Sao Paulo, Brazil
 Koji **Kawabata**, Hiroshima University, Higashi-Hiroshima, Japan
 Ryohei **Kawabe**, NAOJ (National Astronomical Observatory of Japan), Mitaka, Japan
 Nobuyuki **Kawai**, Tokyo Institute of Technology, Meguro-ku, Japan
 Akiko **Kawamura**, Nagoya University, Nagoya, Japan
 Nobuyuki **Kawano**, National Astronomical Observatory of Japan, Mitaka, Japan
 Adela **Kawka**, Astronomický ústav AV ČR, Ondřejov, Czech Republic
 H. Uwe **Keller**, Max Planck Institut für Sonnensystemforschung, Katlenburg - Lindau, Germany
 Hans-Ulrich **Keller**, Observatory & Planetarium, Stuttgart, Germany
 Kenneth **Kellermann**, NRAO, Charlottesville, USA
 Andreas **Kelz**, Astrophysikalisches Institut Potsdam, Potsdam, Germany
 Ajit **Kembhavi**, IUCAA, Pune, India
 Simon **Kemp**, Universidad de Guadalajara, Guadalajara, Mexico
 Robert **Kennicutt**, University of Cambridge, Cambridge, United Kingdom
 Ramon **Khanna**, Springer-Verlag, Heidelberg, Germany
 Mikhail **Kharinov**, Institute of Applied Astronomy, St.-Petersburg, Russian Federation
 Alexander **Kholtygin**, Astronomy Institute of SPU, Saint-Petersburg, Russian Federation
 Habib **Khosroshahi**, University of Birmingham, Birmingham, United Kingdom
 Jean-Baptiste **Kikwaya**, Vatican Observatory, London, Canada
 Pam **Kilmartin**, University of Canterbury, Lake Tekapo, New Zealand
 Dong-Woo **Kim**, SAO, Cambridge, USA
 Ho-il **Kim**, KASI, Daejeon, Korea RP
 Sungeun **Kim**, Sejong University, Seoul, Korea RP
 Sungsoo **Kim**, Kyung Hee University, Yongin, Korea RP
 Woong-Tae **Kim**, Seoul National University, Seoul, Korea RP
 Yeon-Han **Kim**, Korea Astronomy and Space Science Institute, Daejeon, Korea RP
 Andrew **King**, University of Leicester, Leicester, United Kingdom
 Kenzo **Kinugasa**, Gunma Astronomical Observatory, Agatsuma, Japan
 Marcin **Kiraga**, Warsaw University, Warsaw, Poland
 Mario **Kirakov**, Klet Observatory, Ceske Budejovice, Czech Republic
 John **Kirk**, MPI Kernphysik, Heidelberg, Germany
 Maria **Kirsanova**, Institute of Astronomy RAS, Moscow, Russian Federation
 Ekaterina **Kiseleva**, South Ural State University, Chelyabinsk, Russian Federation
 Laszlo **Kiss**, University of Sydney, Sydney, Australia
 Zoltán T. **Kiss**, Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, Hungary
 Ludmila **Kisseleva-Eggleton**, California Maritime Academy, Walnut Creek, USA
 Irina **Kitiashvili**, Kazan state university, Kazan, Russian Federation
 Spyridon **Kitsionas**, Astrophysikalisches Institut Potsdam, Potsdam, Germany
 Olga **Kiyaeva**, Pulkovo Observatory, St Petersburg, Russian Federation
 Hans **Kjeldsen**, University of Aarhus, Aarhus C, Denmark
 Hubert **Klahr**, Max-Planck-Institut für Astronomie, Heidelberg, Germany
 Josip **Kleccek**, Astronomical Institute ASCR, Ondřejov, Czech Republic
 James **Klimchuk**, Naval Research Laboratory, Washington, USA
 Sergei **Klioner**, Dresden Technical University, Dresden, Germany
 Valentina **Klochkova**, Special Astrophysical Observatory RAS, Nizhny Arkhyz, Russian Federation
 Jaroslav **Klokocnik**, Astronom. Inst., Ondřejov, Czech Republic
 Alexis **Klutsch**, Observatoire astronomique de Strasbourg, Strasbourg, France
 Miroslav **Klvana**, Astronomical Institute ASCR, Ondřejov, Czech Republic
 Patricia **Knezeck**, WIYN Observatory, Tucson, USA
 Zoran **Knezevic**, Astronomical Observatory Belgrade, Belgrade, Serbia
 Alexei **Kniazev**, South African Astronomical Observatory, Cape Town, South Africa
 Christian **Knigge**, University of Southampton, Southampton, United Kingdom
 Kirsten **Kraiberg Knudsen**, Max-Planck-Institut für Astronomie, Heidelberg, Germany
 Chiaki **Kobayashi**, National Astronomical Observatory of Japan, Tokyo, Japan
 Yukiyasu **Kobayashi**, National Astronomical Observatory of Japan, Mitaka, Japan
 David **Koch**, NASA Ames Research Center, Moffett Field, USA
 Vladimir **Kocharovskiy**, IAP of RAS, Nizhny Novgorod, Russian Federation
 mikko.kaasalainen@helsinki.fi
 hedvika.kadlecova@centrum.cz
 kadooka@ifa.hawaii.edu
 skafka@noao.edu
 kavageo5@rambler.ru
 stephen.kahler@hanscom.af.mil
 kaiser@hawaii.edu
 kaifunorio@aol.com
 okamura.norio@mail.ibk.ed.jp
 sergei.kalabanov@ksu.ru
 meelis@isamaa.ee
 leonidk@synth.ipi.ac.jp
 kalinich@ira.kharkov.ua
 belinda@mail.ege.edu.tr
 kaltchev@uwosh.edu
 kamegai@ioa.s.u-tokyo.ac.jp
 kaneda@ir.isas.jaxa.jp
 hskang@pusan.ac.kr
 kangyw@sejong.ac.kr
 Wolfgang.E.Kapferer@uibk.ac.at
 gkaplan@usno.navy.mil
 petri.kapyla@oulu.fi
 vladimir.karas@cuni.cz
 aris@iram.fr
 karitsk@sai.msu.ru
 albrecht.karle@icecube.wisc.edu
 karlicky@asu.cas.cz
 karoji@naoj.org
 beskin@sao.ru
 ramesh@astron.nl
 kashik@zone.mtk.nao.ac.jp
 kasparov@asu.cas.cz
 namir.kassim@nrl.navy.mil
 masato.katayama@nao.ac.jp
 kato@planet.sci.isas.jaxa.jp
 katosi@hyo-med.ac.jp
 pierre.kaufmann@pesquisador.cnpq.br
 kawabtj@hiroshima-u.ac.jp
 ryo.kawabe@nao.ac.jp
 nkawai@phys.titech.ac.jp
 kawamura@a.phys.nagoya-u.ac.jp
 kawka@sunstel.asu.cas.cz
 keller@linmpi.mpg.de
 Hans-Ulrich.Keller@Stuttgart.de
 kellermann@nrao.edu
 akelz@aip.de
 akk@iucsa.ernet.in
 snk@astro.iam.udg.mx
 robk@ast.cam.ac.uk
 ramon.khanna@springer.com
 kharna78@rambler.ru
 afk@theor1.astro.spbu.ru
 habib@star.sr.bham.ac.uk
 jkikwaya@uwo.ca
 pam.kilmartin@canterbury.ac.nz
 kim@cfa.harvard.edu
 hikim@kasi.re.kr
 sek@sejong.ac.kr
 sungsoo.kim@khu.ac.kr
 wkim@astro.snu.ac.kr
 yhkim@kasi.re.kr
 ark@astro.le.ac.uk
 kinugasa@astron.pref.gunma.jp
 kiraga@astrouw.edu.pl
 klet@klet.cz
 john.kirk@mpi-hd.mpg.de
 kirsanova@inasan.ru
 kleo@susu.ac.ru
 laszlo@physics.usyd.edu.au
 Z.Kiss@astro.elte.hu
 lkisseleva@cesum.edu
 Irina.Kitiashvili@ksu.ru
 skitsionas@aip.de
 kiyaeva@gao.spb.ru
 hans@phys.au.dk
 klahr@mpia.de
 kleccek@asu.cas.cz
 klimchuk@ssd5.nrl.navy.mil
 Sergei.Klioner@tu-dresden.de
 valenta@sao.ru
 jkloko@cn.asu.cas.cz
 klutsch@astro.u-strasbg.fr
 mklvana@asu.cas.cz
 knezeck@noao.edu
 zoran@kob.bg.ac.yu
 akniazev@sao.ac.za
 christian@astro.soton.ac.uk
 knudsen@mpia-hd.mpg.de
 chiaki@th.nao.ac.jp
 yuki@merope.mtk.nao.ac.jp
 d.koch@nasa.gov
 kochar@appl.sci-nnov.ru

Rajesh Kochhar, NISTADS, New Delhi, India
 Oleg Kochukhov, Uppsala University, Uppsala, Sweden
 Tadayuki Kodama, National Astronomical Observatory of Japan, Mitaka, Japan
 Laurent Koechlin, Observatoire Midi-Pyrénées, Toulouse, France
 Franziska Koeckert, Astrophysikalisches Institut Potsdam, Potsdam, Germany
 Rainer Koehler, Sterrewacht Leiden, Leiden, Netherlands
 Anton Koekemoer, Space Telescope Science Institute, Baltimore, USA
 Kotaro Kohno, The University of Tokyo, Mitaka, Japan
 Luboš Kohoutek, Hamburg Observatory, Hamburg, Germany
 Barbara Kolaczek, Space Research Centre PAS, Warsaw, Poland
 Katrien Kolenberg, University of Vienna, Vienna, Austria
 Svitlana Kolomyiets, Kharkiv National University, Kharkiv, Ukraine
 Boris Komberg, ASC, Lebedev Physical Institute, Moscow, Russian Federation
 Siramas Komonjinda, University of Canterbury, Christchurch, New Zealand
 Ayumi Komori, Mito 2nd Highschool, Mito, Japan
 Shinya Komugi, University of Tokyo, Mitaka, Japan
 Albert Kong, MIT, Cambridge, USA
 Edvard Kononovich, Sternberg Astronomical Institute, Moscow, Russian Federation
 Alexander Konvalenko, Institute of Radio Astronomy of NASU, Kharkiv, Ukraine
 Evangelos Kontizas, National Observatory of Athens, Athens, Greece
 Mary Kontizas, National & Kapodistrian University of Athens, Athens, Greece
 David Koo, Univ. of Calif., Santa Cruz, Santa Cruz, USA
 Markus Kopf, Astrophysical Institute Potsdam, Potsdam, Germany
 Sergey Koposov, Max Planck Institute for Astronomy, Heidelberg, Germany
 Daniela Korcakova, Astronomical Institute ASCR, Ondrejov, Czech Republic
 Heidi Korhonen, Astrophysical Institute Potsdam, Potsdam, Germany
 Maarit Korpi, Observatory, Helsinki, Finland
 Alexander Kosovichev, Stanford University, Stanford, USA
 Jan Kostelecky, VUGTK, Zdiby, Czech Republic
 Nadia Kostogryz, Main Astronomical Observatory of NAS of Ukraine, Kyiv, Ukraine
 Pavel Koten, Astronomical Institute, Academy of Sciences, Ondrejov, Czech Republic
 Dubravka Kotnik-Karuz, University of Rijeka, Rijeka, Croatia
 Pavel Kotrc, Astronomical Institute, Ondrejov, Czech Republic
 Pavel Koubsky, Astronomical Institute, Ondrejov, Czech Republic
 Nataliya Kovalenko, Astronomical Observatory of Kyiv University, Kyiv, Ukraine
 Jean Kovalevsky, Observatoire de la Cote d'Azur, Nice, France
 Zsolt Kövári, Konkoly Observatory, Budapest, Hungary
 Attay Kovetz, Tel Aviv University, Tel Aviv, Israel
 Katsuji Koyama, Kyoto University, Kyoto, Japan
 Yoshihide Kozai, Gunma Astronomical Observatory, Tokyo, Japan
 Davor Krajnovic, University of Oxford, Oxford, United Kingdom
 Busaba Kramer, National Astronomical Research Institute, Chiang Mai, Thailand
 Michael Kramer, University of Manchester, Macclesfield, United Kingdom
 George Krasinsky, Institute of Applied Astronomy, Russia, St-Petersburg, Russian Federation
 Michaela Kraus, Astronomical Institute AV CR, Ondrejov, Czech Republic
 Dietmar Krauss-Varban, University of California, Berkeley, Berkeley, USA
 Joachim Krautter, Landessternwarte, ZAH, Heidelberg, Germany
 Marko Krco, Cornell University, Ithaca, USA
 Mariska Kriek, Leiden Observatory, Leiden, Netherlands
 Leif Kahl Kristensen, University of Aarhus, Aarhus, Denmark
 Michal Krizek, Academy of Sciences, Praha, Czech Republic
 Thomas Kronberger, University of Innsbruck, Innsbruck, Austria
 Pavel Kroupa, Argelander Institute for Astronomy, Bonn, Germany
 Jiří Krticka, Masaryk University in Brno, Brno, Czech Republic
 Yuriy Krugly, Institute of Astronomy of Kharkiv National University, Kharkiv, Ukraine
 Mark Krumholz, Princeton University, Princeton, USA
 Viktoriia Krushevskaja, Main Astronomical Observatory of NAS of Ukraine, Kyiv, Ukraine
 Volodymyr Kryvdyk, National Taras Shevchenko University of Kyiv, Kyiv, Ukraine
 Valery Kryvodubskyj, Astronomical Observatory of Kiev National University, Kiev, Ukraine
 Janusz Krywult, Pedagogical University, Kielce, Poland
 Leonid V. Ksanfomality, Space Research Institute, Moscow, Russian Federation
 Yi-Jehng Kuan, Nat'l Taiwan Normal Univ, Taipei, China Taipei
 Petr Kubanek, Astronomical Institute ASCR, Ondrejov, Czech Republic
 Jiri Kubat, Astronomický ústav AV CR, Ondrejov, Czech Republic
 Aya Kubota, Institute of Physical and Chemical Research (RIKEN), Wako-shi, Japan
 Blanka Kucerova, Masaryk University, Brno, Czech Republic
 Petr Kuchynka, IMCCE-Paris, Paris, France
 Takahiro Kudoh, NAOJ, Mitaka, Japan
 Sergey Kudryavtsev, Sternberg Astronomical Institute, Moscow, Russian Federation
 Andreas Kuepper, University of Bonn, Bonn, Germany
 Konrad Kuijken, Leiden Observatory, Leiden, Netherlands
 Irina Kumkova, Sobolev Astronomic Institute, SPU, Saint-Petersburg, Russian Federation
 Maria Kun, Konkoly Observatory, Budapest, Hungary
 Zdenka Kuncic, University of Sydney, Sydney, Australia
 Magdalena Kunert-Bajraszewska, Nicolaus Copernicus University, Torun, Poland
 Hideyo Kunieda, Nagoya University, Nagoya, Japan
 Masaya Kuniyoshi, Waseda University, Tokyo, Japan
 Nario Kuno, National Astronomical Observatory of Japan, Nagano, Japan
 Daniel Kunth, Institut d'Astrophysique, Paris, France
 Friedrich Kupka, MPI for Astrophysics, Garching, Germany
 Sergey Kurdubov, Institute of Applied Astronomy, St.-Petersburg, Russian Federation
 Jaron Kurk, MPA, Heidelberg, Germany
 Olga Kuzmanovska, Faculty of Natural Sciences and Mathematics, Skopje, Macedonia
 Vladimir Kuznetsov, IZMIRAN, Troitsk, Russian Federation
 Yuliana Kuznyetsova, Main Astronomical Observatory of NAS of Ukraine, Kyiv, Ukraine
 Jae Mann Kyeong, Korea Astronomy and Space Science Institute, Taejeon, Korea RP
 Francesco La Barbera, INAF-Osservatorio Astronomico di Capodimonte, Casavatore (NA), Italy
 Alessandra La Spina, University of Pisa, Pisa, Italy
 Ivo Labbe, Carnegie Institution of Washington, Pasadena, USA
 Panagiotis Labropoulos, Rijksuniversiteit Groningen, Groningen, Netherlands
 Nicolas Labrosse, University of Wales Aberystwyth, Aberystwyth, United Kingdom
 Pedro Lacerda, U. Hawaii/U. Coimbra, Coimbra, Portugal
 Pawel Lachowicz, Polish Academy of Sciences, Warsaw, Poland
 rkochhar2000@yahoo.com
 oleg@astro.uu.se
 kodama@optik.mtk.nao.ac.jp
 laurent.koechlin@ast.obs-mip.fr
 fkoekert@aip.de
 koehler@strw.leidenuniv.nl
 koekemoer@stsci.edu
 kkohno@ioa.s.u-tokyo.ac.jp
 lkohoutek@hs.uni-hamburg.de
 kolaczek@cbk.waw.pl
 kolenberg@astro.univie.ac.at
 s.kolomyiets@gmail.com
 bkombert@asc.rssi.ru
 skol18@student.canterbury.ac.nz
 okamura.norio@mail.ibk.ed.jp
 skomugi@ioa.s.u-tokyo.ac.jp
 akong@space.mit.edu
 konon@sai.msu.ru
 akonov@ira.kharkov.ua
 ekonti@astro.noa.gr
 mkontiza@phys.uoa.gr
 koo@ucolick.org
 mkopf@aip.de
 math@sai.msu.ru
 kor@sunstel.asu.cas.cz
 hkorhonen@aip.de
 Maarit.Korpi@helsinki.fi
 AKosovichev@solar.stanford.edu
 kost@fsv.cvut.cz
 kosn@mao.kiev.ua
 koten@asu.cas.cz
 kotnik@ffri.hr
 pkotrc@asu.cas.cz
 koubsky@sunstel.asu.cas.cz
 natalia.kovalenko@hotmail.com
 jean.kovalevsky@obs-azur.fr
 hec@sirrah.troja.mff.cuni.cz
 attay@etoile.tau.ac.il
 koyama@cr.sephys.kyoto-u.ac.jp
 kozai@wave.plala.or.jp
 dxk@astro.ox.ac.uk
 busaba@nari.or.th
 mkramer@jb.man.ac.uk
 kra@quasat.jp.nw.ru
 kraus@sunstel.asu.cas.cz
 varban@ssl.berkeley.edu
 J.Krautter@lsw.uni-heidelberg.de
 marko@astro.cornell.edu
 mariska@strw.leidenuniv.nl
 lkk@phys.uu.dk
 krizek@math.cas.cz
 Thomas.Kronberger@uibk.ac.at
 pavel@astro.uni-bonn.de
 krticka@physics.muni.cz
 krugly@astron.kharkov.ua
 krumholz@astro.princeton.edu
 vkrush@mao.kiev.ua
 kryvdyk@univ.kiev.ua
 krivod1@observ.univ.kiev.ua
 krywult@pu.kielce.pl
 ksanf@iki.rssi.ru
 kuan@alioth.geos.ntnu.edu.tw
 pkubanek@asu.cas.cz
 kubat@sunstel.asu.cas.cz
 aya@crab.riken.jp
 aknalb@physics.muni.cz
 Laskar@imcce.fr
 kudoh@th.nao.ac.jp
 ksm@sai.msu.ru
 akuepper@uni-bonn.de
 kuijken@strw.leidenuniv.nl
 kumkova@iperas.nw.ru
 kun@konkoly.hu
 z.kuncic@physics.usyd.edu.au
 magda@astro.uni.torun.pl
 kunieda@u.phys.nagoya-u.ac.jp
 kmasaya@gmail.com
 kuno@nro.nao.ac.jp
 kunth@iap.fr
 fk@mpa-garching.mpg.de
 ksl@ipa.nw.ru
 kurk@mpia.de
 olgicak@iunona.pmf.ukim.edu.mk
 kvd@izmiran.ru
 juliana@mao.kiev.ua
 jman@kasi.re.kr
 labarber@na.astro.it
 laspina@dm.unipi.it
 ivo@ociv.edu
 labrop@astro.rug.nl
 nll@aber.ac.uk
 pedro@ifa.hawaii.edu
 paulo@camk.edu.pl

Mark **Lacy**, California Inst. of Technology, Pasadena, USA
 Guilaïne **Lagache**, Institut d'Astrophysique Spatiale, Orsay, France
 Petr **Lála**, Nuncius Sidereus III, Praha 6 - Dejvice, Czech Republic
 Fabrice **Lamareille**, Laboratoire d'Astrophysique de Toulouse/Tarbes, Toulouse, France
 Sebastien **Lambert**, Royal Observatory of Belgium, Brussels, Belgium
 Hubert **Lampeitl**, STScI, Baltimore, USA
 Patricia **Lampens**, Koninklijke Sterernwacht van België, Brussel, Belgium
 Nguyen Quynh **Lan**, Hanoi University of Education, Hanoi, Viet Nam
 Arlo **Landolt**, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, USA
 John **Landstreet**, University of Western Ontario, London, Canada
 Benjamin **Lane**, MIT, Cambridge, USA
 Mathieu **Langer**, Institut d'Astrophysique Spatiale, Orsay cedex, France
 Glen **Langston**, NRAO, Green Bank, USA
 Barbara **Lanzoni**, INAF, Bologna, Italy
 Tatiana **Larchenkova**, ASC of Lebedev Physical Institute, Moscow, Russian Federation
 Ted **LaRosa**, Kennesaw State Univ, Kennesaw, USA
 Stephen **Larson**, University of Arizona, Tucson, USA
 Jerry **LaSala**, University of Southern Maine, Portland, USA
 Jacques **Laskar**, Observatoire de Paris, Paris, France
 Paul **Laskarides**, University of Athens, Greece, Zografos, Athens, Greece
 David **Latham**, CfA, Cambridge, USA
 Olivera **Latković**, Astronomical Observatory Belgrade, Belgrade, Serbia
 John **Lattanzio**, Monash University, Melbourne, Australia
 Eija **Laurikainen**, Department of Physical Sciences, Oulu, Finland
 Casey **Law**, Universiteit van Amsterdam, Amsterdam, Netherlands
 David **Law**, Caltech, Pasadena, USA
 Andrew **Lawrence**, University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh, United Kingdom
 Joseph **Lazio**, NRL, Washington, USA
 Daniela **Lazzaro**, Observatorio Nacional, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
 Christophe **Le Poncin-Lafitte**, observatoire de paris, Paris, France
 Jean-pierre **Lebreton**, ESA/ESTEC, Noordwijk, Netherlands
 Yvelin **Lebreton**, Paris Observatory, Meudon, France
 Alain **Lecavelier**, IAP-CNRS, Paris, France
 Nathalie **Lecrosnier**, A & A - EDP Sciences, Les Ulis Cedex A, France
 Aurelie **Lecureur**, Observatoire de Paris, Meudon, France
 Chang Won **Lee**, Korea Astronomy and Space Science Institute, Daejeon, Korea RP
 ChungUk **Lee**, Korea Astronomy and Space Science Institute, Daejeon, Korea RP
 Hee-Won **Lee**, Sejong University, Seoul, Korea RP
 Hyung Mok **Lee**, Seoul National University, Seoul, Korea RP
 Jae Woo **Lee**, Sejong University, Seoul, Korea RP
 Jeewon **Lee**, Kyunghee University, Khung Ki Do, Korea RP
 Jeong-Ju **Lee**, Sejong University, Seoul, Korea RP
 Ki-Won **Lee**, KNU/ARCSEC, Daegu, Korea RP
 Myung Gyoon **Lee**, Seoul National University, Seoul, Korea RP
 Tse-Lin **Lee**, IANCU, Jhongli, China Taipei
 Youngung **Lee**, Korea Astronomy and Space Science Institute, Daejeon, Korea RP
 Laurits **Leedjarv**, Tartu Observatory, Toravere, Estonia
 John **Leibacher**, National Solar Observatory, Tucson, USA
 Elia **Leibowitz**, Tel Aviv University, Ramat Gan, Israel
 Bruno **Leibundgut**, ESO, Garching, Germany
 Elisabet **Leitet**, Uppsala Astronomical Observatory, Uppsala, Sweden
 Claus **Leitherer**, Space Telescope Science Institute, Baltimore, USA
 K. D. **Leka**, NorthWest Research Associates, Boulder, USA
 Anne **Lemaitre**, University of Namur, Namur, Belgium
 Libor **Lenza**, Hvězdárna Valašské Meziříčí, Czech Republic
 Jacques **Lepine**, University of Sao Paulo, Sao Paulo, Brazil
 Patricio **Letelier**, State University of Campinas, Campinas, Brazil
 Giuseppe **Leto**, INAF, Catania, Italy
 Kam-Ching **Leung**, University of Nebraska, Lincoln, USA
 Anny-Chantal **Levasseur-Regourd**, Univ. Paris VI, Verrieres, France
 Hugo **Levato**, Complejo Astronómico El Leoncito, San Juan, Argentina
 Lina **Levin**, Institution of Physics, Gothenburg University, Göteborg, Sweden
 Harold F. **Levison**, Southwest Research Institute, Boulder, USA
 Brian **Lewis**, Arecibo Observatory, Arecibo, USA
 Guoping **Li**, Nanjing Institute of Astronomical Optics & Technology, CAS., Nanjing, China Nanjing
 I-hui **Li**, Toronto, Canada
 Jinzeng **Li**, National Astronomical Observatories, CAS, Beijing, China Nanjing
 Xiangdong **Li**, Nanjing University, Nanjing, China Nanjing
 Yanchun **Liang**, National Astronomical Observatories, CAS, Beijing, China Nanjing
 Sophia **Lianou**, University of Athens, Athens, Greece
 Javier **Licandro**, Inst. de Astrofísica de Canarias, Santa Cruz de La Palma, Spain
 Matthias **Liebendoerfer**, University of Basel, Basel, Switzerland
 Simon **Lilly**, ETH Zürich, Zürich, Switzerland
 Jeremy **Lim**, ASIAA, Taipei, China Taipei
 Ganghua **Lin**, National Astronomical Observatories, CAS, Beijing, China Nanjing
 Robert **Lin**, University of California, Berkeley, USA
 Lennart **Lindgren**, Lund Observatory, Lund, Sweden
 Josefina F. **Ling**, Universidade de Santiago de Compostela, Santiago de Compostela, Spain
 Jon **Linker**, SAIC, San Diego, USA
 Hendrik **Linz**, MPIA Heidelberg, Heidelberg, Germany
 Andre **Lipand**, Tartu University, Tartu, Estonia
 Ute **Lisenfeld**, Universidad Granada, Granada, Spain
 Thorsten **Lisker**, University of Basel, Binningen, Switzerland
 Anna **Litvinchova**, Crimean Astrophysical Observatory, Simferopol, Ukraine
 Fukun **Liu**, Peking University, Beijing, China Nanjing
 Guo-Chin **Liu**, Academia Sinica, Taipei, China Taipei
 Yang **Liu**, Stanford University, Stanford, USA
 William **Livingston**, National Solar Observatory, Tucson, USA
 Tom **Lloyd Evans**, University of St Andrews, St Andrews, United Kingdom
 Man Kit **Lo**, The University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong, China Nanjing
 Alex **Lobel**, Royal Observatory of Belgium, Brussels, Belgium
 Felix **Lockman**, NRAO, Green Bank, USA
 Ulf **Löckmann**, University of Bonn, Bonn, Germany
 mlacy@ipac.caltech.edu
 guilaïne.lagache@ias.u-psud.fr
 petr@lala-web.cz
 flamare@ast.obs-mip.fr
 s.lambert@oma.be
 lampeitl@stsci.edu
 patricia.lampens@oma.be
 nquynhlan@dhsphn.edu.vn
 landolt@rouge.phys.lsu.edu
 jlandstr@astro.uwo.ca
 blane@mit.edu
 mathieu.langer@ias.u-psud.fr
 glangsto@nrao.edu
 barbara.lanzoni@bo.astro.it
 tanya@lukash.asc.rssi.ru
 ted@avatar.kennesaw.edu
 slarson@lpl.arizona.edu
 lasala@usm.maine.edu
 laskar@imcce.fr
 plaskar@phys.uoa.gr
 dlatham@cfa.harvard.edu
 olatkovic@aob.bg.ac.yu
 john.lattanzio@sci.monash.edu.au
 eija.laurikainen@oulu.fi
 claw@science.uva.nl
 drlaw@astro.caltech.edu
 al@roe.ac.uk
 Joseph.Lazio@nrl.navy.mil
 lazzaro@on.br
 christophe.leponcin-lafitte@obspm.fr
 jean-pierre.lebreton@esa.int
 Yveline.Lebreton@obspm.fr
 lecaveli@iap.fr
 lecrosnier@edpsciences.org
 aurelie.lecureur@obspm.fr
 cwl@kasi.re.kr
 leecu@kasi.re.kr
 hwlee@sejong.ac.kr
 hmlee@astro.snu.ac.kr
 leejaewoo@sejong.ac.kr
 jwlee@apl.khu.ac.kr
 leeji@arcsec.sejong.ac.kr
 kwl@knu.ac.kr
 mglee@astrog.snu.ac.kr
 d929002@astro.ncu.edu.tw
 yulee@kasi.re.kr
 leed@aai.ee
 jleibacher@nso.edu
 elia@wise.tau.ac.il
 bleibundgut@eso.org
 elisabet.leitet@astro.uu.se
 leitherer@stsci.edu
 leka@cora.nwra.com
 anne.lemaitre@fundp.ac.be
 libor.lenza@astrovm.cz
 jacques@astro.iag.usp.br
 letelier@ime.unicamp.br
 gle@oact.inaf.it
 kleung@unlserve.unl.edu
 aclr@aerov.jussieu.fr
 hlevato@casleo.gov.ar
 linalevin@hotmail.com
 hal@boulder.swri.edu
 blewis@naic.edu
 gp1@niaot.ac.cn
 tornado@astro.utoronto.ca
 ljz@bao.ac.cn
 lixd@nju.edu.cn
 ycliang@bao.ac.cn
 s.lianou@phys.uoa.gr
 licandro@ing.iac.es
 matthias.liebendoerfer@unibas.ch
 simon.lilly@phys.ethz.ch
 jlim@asiaa.sinica.edu.tw
 lgh@sun10.bao.ac.cn
 rlin@ssl.berkeley.edu
 lennart@astro.lu.se
 oafana@usc.es
 jon.a.linker@saic.com
 linz@mpia-hd.mpg.de
 sicraft@ut.ee
 ute@ugr.es
 tlinker@astro.unibas.ch
 litanya@ukr.net
 fklui@bac.pku.edu.cn
 gcliu@asiaa.sinica.edu.tw
 yliu@quake.stanford.edu
 wcl@nso.edu
 thhle@st-andrews.ac.uk
 h0492064@hkusua.hku.hk
 alobel@sdf.lonestar.org
 jlockman@nrao.edu
 uloeck@astro.uni-bonn.de

Katharina **Lodders**, Washington University, Saint Louis, USA
 Yeong-Shang **Loh**, University of Colorado, Boulder, USA
 Nick **Lomb**, Sydney Observatory, Haymarket, Australia
 James **Lombardi**, Allegheny College, Meadville, USA
 Knox **Long**, STScI, Baltimore, USA
 Marco **Longhitano**, University of Basel, Basel, Switzerland
 Teodoro **Lopez Moratalla**, Real Instituto y Observatorio de la Armada, San Fernando, Spain
 Javier **Lopez-Santiago**, INAF-Osservatorio Astronomico di Palermo, Palermo, Italy
 Duncan **Lorimer**, West Virginia University, Morgantown, USA
 Yu-Qing **Lou**, Tsinghua University, Beijing, China Nanjing
 Mireille **Louys**, Observatoire de Strasbourg, Strasbourg, France
 Ye **Lu**, The national Astronomical Observatories of China, Beijing, China Nanjing
 Jan **Lub**, Leiden Observatory, Leiden, Netherlands
 Donald **Lubowich**, Hofstra U., Hempstead, USA
 Ray **Lucas**, Space Telescope Science Institute, Baltimore, USA
 Hans **Ludwig**, Observatoire de Paris-Meudon, Meudon Cedex, France
 Maria **Lugaro**, University of Utrecht, Utrecht, Netherlands
 Jeff **Lusted**, University of Leicester, Peterborough, United Kingdom
 Alexander **Lutovinov**, Space Research Institute RAS, Moscow, Russian Federation
 Brian **Luzum**, U.S. Naval Observatory, Washington, USA
 A-Ran **Lyo**, ASIAA, Taipei, China Taipei
 Evaggelia **Lyratzis**, University of Athens, Athens, Greece
 Chopo **Ma**, NASA/Goddard Space Flight Center, Greenbelt, USA
 Yuehua **Ma**, Purple Mountain Observatory, CAS, Nanjing, China Nanjing
 Mordecai-Mark **Mac Low**, American Museum of Natural History, New York, USA
 Dario **Maccagni**, INAF, Milano, Italy
 Thomas **Maccarone**, University of Southampton, Southampton, United Kingdom
 Ferdinando **Macchetto**, Space Telescope Science Institute & ESA, Baltimore, USA
 Carla **Maceroni**, INAF, Monteporzio C., Italy
 Mami **Machida**, NAOJ, Mitaka, Japan
 Walter **Maciel**, University of Sao Paulo, Sao Paulo, Brazil
 William **Macintyre**, Massey University, Palmerston North, New Zealand
 Lucas **Macri**, NOAO, Tucson, USA
 Piero **Madau**, University of California, Santa Cruz, USA
 Natasha **Maddox**, University of Cambridge, Cambridge, United Kingdom
 Claus **Madsen**, ESO, Garching, Germany
 Greg **Madsen**, Anglo-Australian Observatory, Eastwood, Australia
 Tokio **Maeda**, Kuishutokai University, Kumamoto City, Japan
 Terence **Mahoney**, Instituto de Astrofisica de Canarias, La Laguna, Spain
 Jean-Pierre **Maillard**, Institut d'Astrophysique de Paris, PARIS, France
 Amanda **Mainzer**, JPL, Pasadena, USA
 Roberto **Maiolino**, INAF, Monte Porzio Catone, Italy
 Berlinda **Maiolo**, University of Lecce, Lecce, Italy
 Dmitry **Makarov**, Special Astrophysical Observatory, RAS, Nizhny Arkhiz, Russian Federation
 Valeri **Makarov**, MSC/JPL Caltech, Pasadena, USA
 Lidia **Makarova**, Special Astrophysical Observatory, RAS, Nizhny Arkhiz, Russian Federation
 Junichiro **Makino**, National Astronomical Observatory of Japan, Mitaka, Japan
 Kazuo **Makishima**, University of Tokyo, Tokyo, Japan
 Stella **Malaroda**, Complejo Astronómico El Leoncito, San Juan, Argentina
 Sangeeta **Malhotra**, Arizona State University, Tempe, USA
 Oleg **Malkov**, Institute of Astronomy, Moscow, Russian Federation
 Valery **Malofeev**, Lebedev Physical Institute, Pushchino, Russian Federation
 J. McKim **Malville**, University of Colorado, Boulder, USA
 Eric **Mamajek**, Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics, Cambridge, USA
 Arturo **Manchado**, Instituto de Astrofisica de Canarias, La Laguna, Spain
 Richard **Manchester**, CSIRO, ATNF, Marsfield, Australia
 Ward **Manchester**, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, USA
 Cristina **Mandrini**, Instituto de Astronomia y Fisica del Espacio, Buenos Aires, Argentina
 Vassilios **Maniannis**, National & Kapodistrian University of Athens, Athens, Greece
 Claudia **Maraston**, University of Oxford, Oxford, United Kingdom
 Juan-Maria (Jon) **Marcaide**, Universidad de Valencia, Burjassot-Valencia, Spain
 Simone **Marchi**, Padova University, Padova, Italy
 Gianpietro **Marchiori**, European Industrial Engineering, Venezia, Italy
 Francisco J. **Marco**, Universidad Jaume I, Castellon, Spain
 Alexandre **Marcowith**, CESR, Toulouse, France
 Jean-Luc **Margot**, Cornell University, Ithaca, USA
 Sera **Markoff**, University of Amsterdam, Amsterdam, Netherlands
 Eva **Marková**, Observatory Upice, Upice, Czech Republic
 Mikhail **Marov**, Keldysh Institute, Moscow, Russian Federation
 Thomas **Marquart**, Uppsala Astronomical Observatory, Uppsala, Sweden
 Gábor **Marschalkó**, Eötvös University, Budapest, Hungary
 Laurence **Marschall**, Gettysburg College, Gettysburg, USA
 Brian **Marsden**, Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory, Cambridge, USA
 Stephen **Marsden**, Institute of Astronomy ETH Zurich, Zurich, Switzerland
 Dmitry **Marshall**, Institute of Applied Astronomy, St.-Petersburg, Russian Federation
 B. Christopher **Martin**, Caltech, Pasadena, USA
 Christopher **Martin**, Oberlin College, Oberlin, USA
 Crystal **Martin**, Univ. of California, Santa Barbara, Santa Barbara, USA
 M. Angeles **Martinez**, Instituto de Astrofisica de Andalucia (IAA-CSIC), Granada, Spain
 Maria J. **Martinez**, Universidad Politecnica de Valencia, Valencia, Spain
 Peter **Martinez**, South African Astronomical Observatory, Observatory, South Africa
 Vicent J. **Martinez**, University of Valencia, Valencia, Spain
 Eric Emmanuel **Martinez Garcia**, UNAM, Morelia, Mexico
 Valentin **Martinez Pilet**, Instituto de Astrofisica de Canarias, La Laguna, Spain
 Carlos **Martinez-Roger**, Instituto de Astrofisica de Canarias, La Laguna, Spain
 Fabrice **Martins**, MPE, Garching bei Muenchen, Germany
 Eder **Martioli**, INPE, Sao Jose dos Campos, Brazil
 Věra **Marvanová**, retired, Prague, Czech Republic
 Kevin **Marvel**, American Astronomical Society, Washington, USA
 Yoshimitsu **Masaki**, Geographical Survey Institute, Tsukuba, Japan
 Thomas **Maschberger**, Universität Bonn, Bonn, Germany
 Antonella **Maselli**, Max Planck Institut fuer Astrophysik, Garching, Germany
 Brian **Mason**, US Naval Observatory, Herndon, USA
 lodders@wustl.edu
 yeongloh@colorado.edu
 nickl@phm.gov.au
 james_c_lombardi@yahoo.com
 long@stsci.edu
 marco.longhitano@stud.unibas.ch
 teodoro@roa.es
 jlopez@astro.unipa.it
 Duncan.Lorimer@manchester.ac.uk
 peckova@cbttravel.cz
 louys@astro.u-strasbg.fr
 ly@baoo.ac.cn
 lub@strw.leidenuniv.nl
 donald.lubowich@hofstra.edu
 lucas@stsci.edu
 Hans.Ludwig@obspm.fr
 M.Lugaro@phys.uu.nl
 jl99@star.le.ac.uk
 aal@hea.iki.rssi.ru
 bjl@maia.usno.navy.mil
 arl@asiaa.sinica.edu.tw
 elyratzis@phys.uoa.gr
 cma@gemini.gsfc.nasa.gov
 yhma@pmo.ac.cn
 mordecai@amnh.org
 dario@lambdate.inaf.it
 tjm@phys.soton.ac.uk
 macchetto@stsci.edu
 maceroni@mporzio.astro.it
 mami@th.nao.ac.jp
 maciel@astro.iag.usp.br
 w.r.macintyre@massey.ac.nz
 lmacri@noao.edu
 pmadau@ucolick.org
 nm333@cam.ac.uk
 cmadsen@eso.org
 madsen@aoa.gov.au
 3oesel22@stmail.kitokai-u.ac.jp
 tjm@iac.es
 maillard@iap.fr
 Amanda.K.Mainzer@jpl.nasa.gov
 maiolino@oa-roma.inaf.it
 berlinda.maiolo@le.infn.it
 dim@sao.ru
 vvm@caltech.edu
 lidia@sao.ru
 makino@th.nao.ac.jp
 maxima@phys.s.u-tokyo.ac.jp
 helevato@casleo.gov.ar
 Sangeeta.Malhotra@asu.edu
 malkov@inasan.ru
 malofeev@prao.psn.ru
 malville@hotmail.com
 emamajek@cfa.harvard.edu
 amt@iac.es
 Dick.Manchester@csiro.au
 chipm@umich.edu
 mandrini@iafe.uba.ar
 vmaniman@phys.uoa.gr
 maraston@astro.ox.ac.uk
 J.M.Marcaide@uv.es
 marchi@pd.astro.it
 gmarchiori@ie.it
 marco@mat.uji.es
 Alexandre.Marcowith@cesr.fr
 jlm@astro.cornell.edu
 sera@science.uva.nl
 markova@obsupice.cz
 marov@keldysh.ru
 tmarqar@astro.uu.se
 g.marschalko@astro.elte.hu
 marschal@gettysburg.edu
 bmarsden@cfa.harvard.edu
 marsden@astro.phys.ethz.ch
 dim_etu@rambler.ru
 cmartin@srl.caltech.edu
 Chris.Martin@oberlin.edu
 cmartin@physics.ucsb.edu
 geli@iaa.es
 mjmartin@mat.upv.es
 peter@sao.ac.za
 vicent.martinez@uv.es
 e.martinez@astro.unam.mx
 vmp@iac.es
 cmr@iac.es
 martins@mpe.mpg.de
 eder@das.inpe.br
 veram@volny.cz
 marvel@aas.org
 ymasaki@gsi.go.jp
 tmasch@astro.uni-bonn.de
 maselli@mpa-garching.mpg.de
 elentirno@mindspring.com

John William Mason, Praxis Publishing Ltd., Barnham, United Kingdom
 Silvia Mateos, University of Leicester, Leicester, United Kingdom
 Jane Mather, Hyattsville, USA
 John Mather, NASA GSFC, Greenbelt, USA
 Gautier Mathys, European Southern Observatory, Santiago 19, Chile
 Demetrios Matsakis, US Naval Observatory, Washington, DC, USA
 Dennis Matson, JPL, Pasadena, USA
 Takuya Matsuda, Kobe University, Kyoto, Japan
 Hideo Matsuhara, ISAS, JAXA, Sagamihara, Japan
 Hidenori Matsui, Hokkaido University, Sapporo, Japan
 Chiho Matsumoto, Nagoya University, Nagoya, Japan
 Ryoji Matsumoto, Chiba University, Chiba, Japan
 Giorgio Matt, Universita' Roma Tre, Roma, Italy
 Jaymie Matthews, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada
 Kalevi Mattila, Observatory, Helsinki, Finland
 Seppo Mattila, Queen's University Belfast, Belfast, United Kingdom
 John Mattox, Fayetteville State University, Fayetteville, USA
 Leonid Matveyenko, Space Research Institute, Moscow, Russian Federation
 Claire Max, University of California at Santa Cruz, Santa Cruz, USA
 Satoshi Mayama, GUAS/Subaru Telescope, Hilo, USA
 Pavel Mayer, Charles University, Praha 8, Czech Republic
 Jose Maza, Universidad de Chile, Santiago, Chile
 Olga Mazeeva, South Ural State University, Chelyabinsk, Russian Federation
 Tsevi Mazeh, Tel Aviv University, Tel Aviv, Israel
 Paolo Mazzali, Max-Planck Inst. f. Astrophysics, Garching, Germany
 William McAdam, Univ. Sydney, Sydney 2069, Australia
 Harold McAlister, Georgia State University, Atlanta, USA
 Dennis McCarthy, U. S. Naval Observatory, Washington, USA
 William McCutcheon, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada
 David McDavid, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, USA
 Richard McDermid, Leiden University, Leiden, Netherlands
 Colleen McGhee, Wellesley College, Wellesley, USA
 Melissa McGrahe, NASA-Marshall Space Flight Center, Huntsville, USA
 Peter McGregor, Australian National University, Weston, Australia
 Dan McKenna, Vatican Observatory, Tucson, USA
 David McKinnon, Charles Sturt University, Bathurst, Australia
 Maura McLaughlin, West Virginia University, Morgantown, USA
 Ian McLean, UCLA, Los Angeles, USA
 Robert McMillan, University of Arizona, Tucson, USA
 Stephen McMillan, Drexel University, Philadelphia, USA
 Derek McNally, University of Hertfordshire, Hatfield, United Kingdom
 M. Virginia McSwain, Yale University, New Haven, USA
 Casey Meakin, University of Arizona, Tucson, USA
 Jose Medina, University of Alcalá, Alcalá de Henares, Spain
 Rodney Medupe, University of Cape Town, Cape Town, South Africa
 Mikhail Medvedev, University of Kansas, Lawrence, USA
 Karen Meech, University of Hawaii, Honolulu, USA
 George Melikidze, Institute of Astronomy, Zielona Góra, Poland
 Jens Melinder, Stockholm Observatory, Stockholm, Sweden
 Jorge Melnick, ESO, Santiago, Chile
 Valentin Melnik, Radio Astronomy Institute, Kharkiv, Ukraine
 Don Melrose, University of Sydney, Sydney, Australia
 Luiz Mendes, Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais, Belo Horizonte, Brazil
 Paulo Jorge Mendes Cerqueira, Vienna University of Technology, Vienna, Austria
 Claudia Mendes de Oliveira, Universidade de Sao Paulo, Sao Paulo, Brazil
 Jairo Mendez-Abreu, Osservatorio Astronomico Padova, Padova, Italy
 Michael Mendillo, Boston University, Boston, USA
 Ching Meng, Jhu Applied Physics Laboratory, Laurel, USA
 Hongyu Meng, Purple Mountain Observatory, CAS, Nanjing, China Nanjing
 Karl Menten, Max-Planck-Institut fuer Radioastronomie, Bonn, Germany
 John Menzies, SAAO, Cape Town, South Africa
 Amata Mercurio, INAF-Osservatorio Astronomico di Capodimonte, Napoli, Italy
 Andrea Merloni, Max-Planck-Institute for Astrophysics, Garching, Germany
 Andrei Mesinger, Columbia University, New York, USA
 Keiko Messinger, NASA Johnson Space Center/ESCG, Houston, USA
 Scott Messenger, NASA/Johnson Space Center, Houston, USA
 Margarita Metaxa, Filekpaideutiki Etaireia, Athens, Greece
 Jillian Meyer, University of Washington, Seattle, USA
 Leonhard Meyer, University of Cologne, Köln, Germany
 Martin Meyer, STScI, Baltimore, USA
 Georges Meylan, Ecole Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne, Saclay, Switzerland
 Giuseppina Micela, INAF Osservatorio Astr. Palermo, Palermo, Italy
 Stefan Michalowski, OECD, Paris, France
 Tadeusz Michalowski, Poznan Observatory, Poznan, Poland
 Gabriela Michalska, Astronomical Institute, University of Wrocław, Wrocław, Poland
 Peter Michaud, Gemini Observatory, Hilo, USA
 Patrick Michel, Côte d'Azur Observatory, Nice, France
 Marco Micheli, Università di Pisa, Brescia, Italy
 Areg Mickaelian, Byurakan Astrophysical Observatory, Byurakan, Armenia
 Enno Middelberg, Australia Telescope National Facility, Epping, Australia
 Steffen Mieske, ESO, 85748 Garching b. Muenchen, Germany
 Zdenek Mikulasek, Masaryk University, Brno, Czech Republic, Brno, Czech Republic
 Katarzyna Mikurda, Kiepenheuer Institut Fuer Sonnenphysik, Freiburg, Germany
 Andrea Milani, University of Pisa, Pisa, Italy
 Yulia Milanova, Saint-Petersburg State University, Saint-Petersburg, Russian Federation
 George Miley, Leiden University, Leiden, Netherlands
 Robert Milkey, American Astronomical Society, Washington, USA
 Tom Millar, Queen's University Belfast, Belfast, United Kingdom
 Richard H. Miller, University of Chicago, Chicago, USA
 Robert Minchin, Arecibo Observatory, Arecibo, USA
 Young Minh, Korea Astronomy and Space Science Institute, Daejeon, Korea RP
 Selma Mink, de, Astronomical Institute Utrecht, Utrecht, Netherlands
 Felix Mirabel, European Southern Observatory, Santiago, Chile
 docjohn@dircon.co.uk
 sm279@star.le.ac.uk
 john.c.mather@nasa.gov
 john.c.mather@nasa.gov
 gmathys@eso.org
 dnm@usno.navy.mil
 dmatson@jpl.nasa.gov
 tmatsuda312@yahoo.co.jp
 maruma@ir.isas.jaxa.jp
 hidenori@astro1.sci.hokudai.ac.jp
 chihou@u.phys.nagoya-u.ac.jp
 matumoto@astro.s.chiba-u.ac.jp
 matt@fis.uniroma3.it
 matthews@astro.ubc.ca
 mattila@cc.helsinki.fi
 s.mattila@qub.ac.uk
 jmattox@uncfsu.edu
 matveen@iki.rssi.ru
 max@ucolick.org
 nipponmaru2004@yahoo.co.jp
 mayer@mbx.cesnet.cz
 jmaza@das.uschile.cl
 omega@susu.ac.ru
 mazeh@post.tau.ac.il
 mazzali@mpa-garching.mpg.de
 mcadam@physics.usyd.edu.au
 hal@chara.gsu.edu
 dmc@maia.usno.navy.mil
 mccutche@phas.ubc.ca
 dam3ma@virginia.edu
 mcdermid@strw.leidenuniv.nl
 cmcgree@wellesley.edu
 trdie.r.allen@nasa.gov
 Peter.McGregor@anu.edu.au
 dmckenna@as.arizona.edu
 dmckinnon@csu.edu.au
 mclaugh1@jb.man.ac.uk
 mclean@astro.ucla.edu
 bob@lpl.arizona.edu
 steve@physics.drexel.edu
 dmn@star.herts.ac.uk
 mcswain@astro.yale.edu
 cmeakin@as.arizona.edu
 jose.medina@uah.es
 thebe@saa.ac.za
 medvedev@ku.edu
 meech@ifa.hawaii.edu
 gogi@astro.ia.uz.zgora.pl
 jens@astro.su.se
 jmelnick@eso.org
 melnik@ira.kharkov.ua
 melrose@physics.usyd.edu.au
 luizt@cpdee.ufmg.br
 mendes@mars.hg.tuwien.ac.at
 oliveira@astro.iag.usp.br
 mendez@pd.astro.it
 mendillo@bu.edu
 ching.meng@jhuapl.edu
 cas.nj@pmo.ac.cn
 kmenten@mpifr-bonn.mpg.de
 jwm@saa.ac.za
 mercurio@na.astro.it
 am@mpa-garching.mpg.de
 mesinger@astro.columbia.edu
 keiko.nakamura1@jsc.nasa.gov
 scott.r.messenger@nasa.gov
 m-metaxa@otenet.gr
 jillian@astro.washington.edu
 leo@phl.uni-koeln.de
 martinm@stsci.edu
 georges.meylan@epfl.ch
 giusi@astro.unipa.it
 stefan.michalowski@oecd.org
 tmich@amu.edu.pl
 michalska@astro.uni.wroc.pl
 pmichaud@gemini.edu
 michel@obs-nice.fr
 m.micheli@sns.it
 aregmick@apaven.am
 enno.middelberg@csiro.au
 smieske@eso.org
 mikulas@ics.muni.cz
 kasia@kis.uni-freiburg.de
 milani@dm.unipi.it
 yulia.milanova@pobox.spbu.ru
 miley@strw.leidenuniv.nl
 milkey@aaas.org
 Tom.Millar@qub.ac.uk
 rhm@oddjob.uchicago.edu
 rminchin@naic.edu
 minh@kasi.re.kr
 mink@astro.uu.nl
 fmirabel@eso.org

Alla **Miroshnichenko**, Institute of Radio Astronomy of NAS of Ukraine, Kharkov, Ukraine
 Deborah **Mitchell**, Jodrell Bank Observatory, Macclesfield, United Kingdom
 George **Mitchell**, Saint Mary's University, Halifax, Canada
 Nagako **Miyauchi-Isobe**, NAOJ, Mitaka, Japan
 Yoshihiko **Mizumoto**, NAOJ, Mitaka, Japan
 Norikazu **Mizuno**, Nagoya University, Nagoya, Japan
 Houjun **Mo**, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, USA
 Miroslav **Mocak**, Max Planck Institute, Garching, Germany
 Rafal **Moderski**, Copernicus Astronomical Center, Warszawa, Poland
 Anthony **Moffat**, Université de Montréal, Montréal, Canada
 Subhanjoy **Mohanty**, Harvard University, Cambridge, USA
 Alexey **Moiseev**, Special Astrophysical Observatory RAS, Nizhny Arkhiz, Russian Federation
 Francisco Javier **Moldon**, Universitat de Barcelona, Barcelona, Spain
 Ivelina **Momcheva**, University of Arizona, Tucson, USA
 Eric **Monier**, SUNY College at Brockport, Brockport, USA
 Richard **Monier**, Université Montpellier 2, Montpellier, France
 Guy **Monnet**, ESO, Garching bei Muenchen, Germany
 Josefina **Montalban**, University of Liege, Liege, Belgium
 David **Montes**, Univ. Complutense de Madrid, Madrid, Spain
 Colin **Montgomery**, James Cook University, Daleys Point, Australia
 Francisco Javier **Montejo Salazar**, Spanish Royal Naval Observatory, San Fernando, Spain
 Hong Kyu **Moon**, Korea Astronomy and Space Science Institute, Daejeon, Korea RP
 Ben **Moore**, University of Zurich, Zurich, Switzerland
 Luisa **Morales-Rueda**, Radboud Universiteit Nijmegen, Nijmegen, Netherlands
 James **Moran**, Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics, Cambridge, USA
 Alessandro **Morbidelli**, CNRS/OCA, Nice, France
 Larry **Morgan**, NRAO, Green Bank, USA
 Kanae **Morishima**, Mito 2nd Highschool, Mito, Japan
 Mark **Morris**, University of California, Los Angeles, Los Angeles, USA
 David **Morrison**, NASA Astrobiology Institute, Moffett Field, USA
 Luca **Moscadelli**, Osservatorio Astrofisico di Arcetri, Firenze, Italy
 Monika Agnieszka **Moscibrodzka**, Polish Academy of Sciences, Warsaw, Poland
 Harvey **Moseley**, NASA / GSFC, Greenbelt, USA
 Kazutaka **Motoyama**, Institute for Advanced Research in Astrophysics, Hsin-Chu, China Taipei
 Martine **Mouchet**, University P7, Meudon, France
 Jeremy **Mould**, NOAO, Tucson, USA
 Serge **Mouret**, IMCCE - Paris Observatory, France, France
 Michael **Mueller**, DLR Berlin, Berlin, Germany
 Karri **Muironen**, University of Helsinki, Helsinki, Finland
 Dmytro **Mukha**, Institute of Radio Astronomy, Kharkov, Ukraine
 Thomas **Müller**, Max-Planck-Institut, Garching / Munich, Germany
 Teodoro **Muñoz-Darias**, Instituto Astrofisica de Canarias (IAC), La Laguna, Spain
 Kazuyuki **Muraoka**, IoA, the University of Tokyo, Mitaka, Japan
 Paul **Murdin**, Royal Astronomical Society, London, United Kingdom
 Richard **Mushotzky**, NASA/GSFC, Greenbelt, USA
 Koraljka **Muzic**, University of Cologne, Cologne, Germany
 Thorsten **Naab**, University Observatory Munich, Munich, Germany
 Tohru **Nagao**, Arcetri Obs., Florence, Italy
 Yoshitsugu **Nakagawa**, Kobe University, Kobe, Japan
 Koichi **Nakajima**, Hitotsubashi University, Hachioji, Japan
 Fumitaka **Nakamura**, Niigata University, Niigata, Japan
 Kenji **Nakamura**, Matsue College of Technology, Matsue, Japan
 Ko **Nakamura**, University of Tokyo, Tokyo, Japan
 Tsuko **Nakamura**, University of the Air, Tokyo, Japan
 Syuichi **Nakano**, Oriental Astronomical Association, Sumoto, Japan
 Rendong **Nan**, National Astronomical Observatories, Beijing, China Nanjing
 Dibyendu **Nandi**, Montana State University, Bozeman, USA
 Jyri **Näränen**, University of Helsinki, University of helsinki, Finland
 Ramesh **Narayan**, Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics, Cambridge, USA
 Jayant **Narlikar**, Inter-University Centre for Astronomy and Astrophysics, Pune, India
 Gillian **Nave**, NIST, Gaithersburg, USA
 Gijs **Nelemans**, Radboud University Nijmegen, Nijmegen, Netherlands
 Jerry **Nelson**, University of California at Santa Cruz, Santa Cruz, USA
 Robert A. **Nelson**, Satellite Engineering Research Corporation, Bethesda, USA
 Thomas **Nelson**, Madison, USA
 Stefan **Nesslinger**, Dr. Reemis Observatory Bamberg, Bamberg, Germany
 David **Nesvorný**, Southwest Research Institute, Boulder, USA
 Martin **Netolicky**, Masaryk University, Brno, Czech Republic
 Ralph **Neuhaeuser**, Univ. Jena, Jena, Germany
 Heidi **Newberg**, Rensselaer Poly. Inst., Troy, USA
 Jeffrey **Newman**, Lawrence Berkeley Nat'l Lab, Walnut Creek, USA
 Gerald **Newsom**, Ohio State University, Columbus, USA
 Il-Seong **Nha**, Yonsei University, Seoul, Korea RP
 Panagiotis **Niarchos**, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Athens, Greece
 David **Nice**, Bryn Mawr College, Bryn Mawr, USA
 Dieter **Nickeler**, Astronomical Institute AV CR, Ondrejov, Ondrejov, Czech Republic
 Marie-Helene **Nicol**, Max-Planck Institut Fur Astronomie, Heidelberg, Germany
 Kotaro **Niinuma**, Waseda University, Shinjyuku-ku, Japan
 Silvana **Nikolic**, Universidad de Chile, Santiago, Chile
 Slobodan **Ninkovic**, Astronomical Observatory Belgrade, Belgrade, Serbia
 Takayuki **Nishikawa**, The Graduate University for Advanced Studies, Hilo, USA
 Mayuri **Nishitani**, Mito 2nd Highschool, Mito, Japan
 Larry **Nittler**, Carnegie Institution of Washington, Washington, USA
 Takahiro **Niwa**, Kobe University, Kobe, Japan
 Daisaku **Nogami**, Kyoto University, Takayama, Japan
 HeeSun **Noh**, KyungHee Univ., YongIn city, Korea RP
 Keith **Noll**, Space Telescope Sci. Institute, Baltimore, USA
 Kenichi **Nomoto**, University of Tokyo, Tokyo, Japan
 Hideko **Nomura**, Kobe University, Kobe, Japan
 Birgitta **Nordström**, Niels Bohr Institute, Copenhagen, Denmark
 Colin **Norman**, JHU/STScI, Baltimore, USA
 Ray **Norris**, CSIRO ATNF, Eppine, Australia
 Antonella **Nota**, STScI/ESA, Baltimore, USA
 mir@ira.kharkov.ua
 dlm@jb.man.ac.uk
 gmitchell@ap.stmarys.ca
 miyauchi@optik.mtk.nao.ac.jp
 mizumoto.y@nao.ac.jp
 norikazu@a.phys.nagoya-u.ac.jp
 hjmo@nova.astro.umass.edu
 mmocak@mpa-garching.mpg.de
 moderski@camk.edu.pl
 moffat@astro.umontreal.ca
 smohanty@cfa.harvard.edu
 moisav@sao.ru
 jmolton@am.ub.es
 imomcheva@as.arizona.edu
 emonier@brockport.edu
 monier@graal.univ-montp2.fr
 gmonnet@eso.org
 j.montalban@ulg.ac.be
 dmg@astrax.fis.ucm.es
 ColinRL@bigpond.net.au
 fjmontejo@roa.es
 fullmoon@kasi.re.kr
 moore@physik.unizh.ch
 lmr@astro.ru.nl
 moran@cfa.harvard.edu
 Morby@obs-nice.fr
 lmorgan@nrao.edu
 okamura.norio@mail.ibk.edu.jp
 morris@astro.ucla.edu
 dmorrison@arc.nasa.gov
 mosca@ca.astro.it
 mmosc@camk.edu.pl
 harvey.moseley@nasa.gov
 motoyama@tiara.sinica.edu.tw
 martine.mouchet@obspm.fr
 jrm@noao.edu
 mouret@imcce.fr
 michael.mueller@dlr.de
 Karri.Muironen@helsinki.fi
 muha@ira.kharkov.ua
 tmueller@mpe.mpg.de
 tmd@iac.es
 kmuraoka@ioa.s.u-tokyo.ac.jp
 treasurer@ras.org.uk
 richard@xray-5.gsfc.nasa.gov
 muzic@ph1.uni-koeln.de
 naab@usm.uni-muenchen.de
 tohru@arcetri.astro.it
 yoshi@kobe-u.ac.jp
 zxb04046@nifty.com
 fnakamur@ed.niigata-u.ac.jp
 nakamkrn@matsue-ct.jp
 nakamura@rescue.s.u-tokyo.ac.jp
 tsukonk@yahoo.co.jp
 nakano@oaa.gr.jp
 nrd@bao.ac.cn
 nandi@mithra.physics.montana.edu
 naranen@astro.helsinki.fi
 rnarayan@cfa.harvard.edu
 jvn@iucaa.ernet.in
 gillian.nave@nist.gov
 nelemans@astro.ru.nl
 jnelson@ucolick.org
 RobtNelson@aol.com
 nelson@astro.wisc.edu
 nesslinger@sternwarte.uni-erlangen.de
 davidn@boulder.swri.edu
 netol@physics.muni.cz
 rne@astro.uni-jena.de
 heidi@rpi.edu
 janewman@lbl.gov
 gnewsom@astronomy.ohio-state.edu
 slisnha@chol.com
 pnriacho@phys.uoa.gr
 dnice@brynmaur.edu
 nickeler@asu.cas.cz
 nicol@mpia-hd.mpg.de
 ji_taru@yahoo.co.jp
 silvana@das.uchile.cl
 sninkovic@aob.bg.ac.yu
 nishkwtk@subaru.naoj.org
 okamura.norio@mail.ibk.edu.jp
 lrn@dtm.ciw.edu
 niwa@kobe-u.ac.jp
 nogami@kwasan.kyoto-u.ac.jp
 hsn083@hotmail.com
 noll@stsci.edu
 nomoto@astron.s.u-tokyo.ac.jp
 hnomura@kobe-u.ac.jp
 birgitta@astro.ku.dk
 norman@stsci.edu
 ray.norris@csiro.au
 nota@stsci.edu

John **Novotney**, ASCR, Praha, Czech Republic
 Achille **Nucita**, University of Lecce, Lecce, Italy
 Pasi **Nurmi**, Tuorla Observatory, Piikkiö, Finland
 Harry **Nussbaumer**, Institute of Astronomy, Zurich, Switzerland
 David **Nutter**, Cardiff University, Cardiff, United Kingdom
 John **O'Byrne**, University of Sydney, Sydney, Australia
 Yumiko **Oasa**, Kobe University, Kobe, Japan
 Martin **Obergaulinger**, Max-Planck-Institut fuer Astrophysik, Garching, Germany
 Edouard **Oblak**, Observatoire de Besançon, Besançon, France
 Vladimir **Obridko**, IZMIRAN, Troitsk, Russian Federation
 Francois **Ochsenbein**, Observatoire de Strasbourg, Strasbourg, France
 Hiroshi **Oda**, Chiba University, Chiba, Japan
 Carolina **Ödman**, Leiden Observatory, Leiden, Netherlands
 Sally **Oey**, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, USA
 Aviv **Ofir**, Tel Aviv University, Tel Aviv, Israel
 Seungkyung **Oh**, Kyung Hee University, Yongin-shi, Korea RP
 Masatoshi **Ohishi**, NAOJ, Mitaka, Japan
 Ken **Ohsuga**, Department of Physics, Tokyo, Japan
 Hiroshi **Ohtani**, Kyoto, Japan
 Youichi **Ohyama**, Institute of Space and Astronautical Science, Sagami-hara, Japan
 Devendra **Ojha**, Tata Institute of Fundamental Research, Mumbai, India
 Takuya **Okamoto**, Wakayama University, Kainan, Japan
 Norio **Okamura**, Mito 2nd Highschool, Mito, Japan
 Sadanori **Okamura**, University of Tokyo, Tokyo, Japan
 Kayoko **Okazaki**, Mito 2nd Highschool, Mito, Japan
 Katsuya **Okoshi**, UEC, NAOJ, Mitaka, Japan
 Haruyuki **Okuda**, ISAS, Hachioji, Japan
 Toru **Okuda**, Hakodate Campus, Hokkaido Univ. of Education, Hakodate, Japan
 Katalin Ilona **Olah**, Konkoly Observatory, Budapest, Hungary
 Ernesto **Oliiva**, INAF-Telescopio Nazionale Galileo, S. Cruz de La Palma, Spain
 Joana **Oliveira**, Keele University, Keele, United Kingdom
 Sebastian **Oliver**, University of Sussex, Brighton, United Kingdom
 Hans **Olsen**, Copenhagen University, Holbæk, Denmark
 Lisbeth Fogh **Olsen**, Dark Cosmology Centre, Niels Bohr Institute, Copenhagen, Denmark
 Amitesh **Omar**, ARIES, Nainital, Nainital, India
 Kazuyuki **Omukai**, NAOJ, Mitaka, Japan
 Takashi **Onaka**, University of Tokyo, Bunkyo-ku, Japan
 David **Ondřích**, Nunciuss Siderus III, Praha, Czech Republic
 Jose **Oñorbe**, Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, Madrid, Spain
 Eri **Oowada**, Mito 2nd Highschool, Mito, Japan
 Wayne **Orchiston**, James Cook University, Townsville, Australia
 Stephen **Ord**, University of Sydney, Sydney, Australia
 Monique **Orine**, IAU, Paris, France
 Marina **Orio**, INAF - Padova, Wisconsin, Italy
 Emanuela **Orru**, University of Cagliari, Capoterra (CA), Italy
 Ana Maria **Orsatti**, Facultad de Ciencias Astronomicas y Geofisicas, La Plata, Argentina
 Roberto **Ortiz**, University of Sao Paulo, Sao Paulo, Brazil
 Amelia **Ortiz-Gil**, University of Valencia, Paterna, Spain
 Isabel **Osorio**, University of Porto, Porto, Portugal
 Jose **Osorio**, University of Porto, Porto, Portugal
 Lubor **Ostřihanský**, retired, Prague, Czech Republic
 Eve **Ostriker**, University of Maryland, College Park, USA
 Pedro **Osuna**, European Space Agency, Madrid, Spain
 Terry **Oswalt**, Florida Institute of Technology, Melbourne, USA
 Kazuaki **Ota**, University of Tokyo, Chofu-city, Japan
 Juergen **Ott**, CSIRO Australia Telescope National Facility, Marsfield, Australia
 Ulrich **Ott**, Max-Planck-Institut für Chemie, Mainz, Germany
 Ashraf **Owies**, Mialno-Bicocca University, Milan, Italy
 Stanley **Owocik**, University of Delaware, Newark, USA
 Franco **Pacini**, Arcetri Observatory-University Florence, Florence, Italy
 Carmen Pilar **Padilla-Torres**, Instituto de Astrofísica de Canarias, La Laguna, Spain
 Paolo **Padoan**, University of California, La Jolla, USA
 Paolo **Padovani**, European Southern Observatory, Garching bei München, Germany
 Isabella **Pagano**, INAF, Catania, Italy
 Erika **Pakstiene**, VU Institute of Theoretical Physics and Astronomy, Vilnius, Lithuania
 Ludmila **Pakuliak**, MAO NASU, Kiev, Ukraine
 Ana **Palacios**, CEA/DSM/DAPNIA, Gif-sur-Yvette, France
 Rosita **Paladino**, Astronomical Observatory of Cagliari, Capoterra (CA), Italy
 Jan **Palous**, Astronomical Institute, ASCR, Prague, Czech Republic
 Stéphane **Paltani**, Integral Science Data Centre, Versoix, Switzerland
 Xiaopei **Pan**, Jet Propulsion Laboratory, Pasadena, USA
 Vladimir **Panchuk**, Special Astrophysical Observatory RAS, Nizhny Arkhiz, Russian Federation
 S. K. **Pandey**, Pt Ravishankar Shukla University, Raipur, India
 Vishambhar Nath **Pandey**, Raman Research Institute, Bangalore, India
 Vernon **Pankonin**, National Science Foundation, Arlington, USA
 Paolo **Paolicchi**, University of Pisa, Pisa, Italy
 Polychronis **Papaderos**, University of Göttingen, Göttingen, Germany
 Margit **Paparo**, Konkoly Observatory, Budapest, Hungary
 Casey **Papovich**, University of Arizona, Tucson, USA
 Pavel **Papushhev**, Institute of the Solar Terrestrial physics, Irkutsk, Russian Federation
 Stefan **Parimucha**, Safarik University, Kosice, Slovakia
 Jang-Hyun **Park**, Korea Astronomy and Space Science, Daejeon, Korea RP
 Young-Deuk **Park**, Korea Astronomy & Space Science Institute, Daejeon, Korea RP
 Genevieve **Parmentier**, University of Cambridge, Cambridge, United Kingdom
 Bruce **Partridge**, Haverford College, Haverford, USA
 Jay **Pasachoff**, Williams College, Williamstown, USA
 J.-Fernando **Pascual-Sánchez**, University of Valladolid, Valladolid, Spain
 Fabio **Pasian**, INAF, Trieste, Italy
 Miriani Griselda **Pastoriza**, Instituto de Fisica, Porto Alegre, Brazil
 Eniko **Patkos**, ESO, Munich, Germany
 Alessandro **Patruno**, University of Amsterdam, Amsterdam, Netherlands
 Thibaut **Paumard**, MPE, Garching, Germany
 Kresimir **Pavlovski**, University of Zagreb, Zagreb, Croatia
 novotney@volny.cz
 nucita@le.infn.it
 pasnurmi@utu.fi
 nussbaumer@astro.phys.ethz.ch
 david.nutter@astro.cf.ac.uk
 j.obyrne@physics.usyd.edu.au
 yummy@kobe-u.ac.jp
 mobergau@mpa-garching.mpg.de
 oblak@obs-besancon.fr
 obridko@izmiran.ru
 francois@astro.u-strasbg.fr
 oda@astro.s.chiba-u.ac.jp
 odman@strw.leidenuniv.nl
 msuey@umich.edu
 avivofir@wise.tau.ac.il
 skoh@ap1.khu.ac.kr
 masatoshi.ohishi@nao.ac.jp
 k.ohsuga@rikkyo.ac.jp
 ohtani@kustro.kyoto-u.ac.jp
 ohyama@ir.isas.jaxa.jp
 o_jha@tifr.res.in
 s065016@sys.wakayama-u.ac.jp
 okamura.norio@mail.ibk.edu.jp
 okamura@astron.s.u-tokyo.ac.jp
 okamura.norio@mail.ibk.edu.jp
 okoshi.katsuya@nao.ac.jp
 okda@agate.troja.mff.cuni.cz
 okuda@cc.hokkyodai.ac.jp
 hec@sirrah.troja.mff.cuni.cz
 oliva@tng.iac.es
 joana@astro.keele.ac.uk
 S.Oliver@Sussex.ac.uk
 hjfo@webspeed.dk
 lisbeth@dark-cosmology.dk
 amitesh.omar@gmail.com
 omukai@th.nao.ac.jp
 onaka@astron.s.u-tokyo.ac.jp
 david.ondrich@gmail.com
 jose.onnorbe@uam.es
 okamura.norio@mail.ibk.edu.jp
 Wayne.Orchiston@jcu.edu.au
 steve.ord@gmail.com
 orine@iap.fr
 orio@astro.wisc.edu
 eorru_s@ira.inaf.it
 aorsatti@fcaglp.unlp.edu.ar
 ortiz@astro.iag.usp.br
 amelia.ortiz@uv.es
 iposorio@fc.up.pt
 jposorio@fc.up.pt
 peckova@cbttravel.cz
 ostriker@astro.umd.edu
 Pedro.Osuna@sciops.esa.int
 toswalt@fit.edu
 ota@optik.mtk.nao.ac.jp
 Juergen.Ott@csiro.au
 ott@mpch-mainz.mpg.de
 ashraf.owies@unimib.it
 owocik@bartol.udel.edu
 pacini@arcetri.astro.it
 cppt@iaa.es
 ppadoan@ucsd.edu
 ppadovan@eso.org
 ipa@oact.inaf.it
 erika@itpa.lt
 pakuliak@nip.net.ua
 ana.palacios@cea.fr
 rpaladin@ca.astro.it
 palous@ig.cas.cz
 Stephane.Paltani@obs.unige.ch
 xiaopei.pan@jpl.nasa.gov
 panchuk@sao.ru
 skp@iucaa.ernet.in
 vnpandey@rri.res.in
 vpankoni@nsf.gov
 paolicchi@df.unipi.it
 papade@astro.physik.uni-goettingen.de
 paparo@konkoly.hu
 papovich@as.arizona.edu
 papushhev@iszf.irk.ru
 parimuch@ta3.sk
 jhpark@kasi.re.kr
 ydpark@kasi.re.kr
 gparm@ast.cam.ac.uk
 bpartrid@haverford.edu
 jay.m.pasachoff@williams.edu
 jfpascua@maf.uva.es
 pasian@oats.inaf.it
 miriani.pastoriza@ufrgs.br
 epatkos@eso.org
 apatruno@science.uva.nl
 paumard@mpe.mpg.de
 pavlovski@phy.hr

Gillian **Peach**, University College London, London, United Kingdom
Tone **Peacock**, ESTEC ESA, Leiden, Netherlands
Chris **Pearson**, JAXA, Sagamihara, Japan
John **Pearson**, James Cook University, Newport Beach, USA
Tomas **Pechacek**, Astronomical Institute AV CR, Prague, Czech Republic
Jean-Claude **Pecker**, Collège de France, Paris, France
P. James E. **Peebles**, Princeton University, Princeton, USA
Anne **Pellerin**, Space Telescope Science Institute, Baltimore, USA
Roser **Pello**, Laboratoire d'Astrophysique de Toulouse-Tarbes, Toulouse, France
William **Pence**, NASA/GSFC, Greenbelt, USA
Jayant Kumar **Pendharkar**, Osmania University, Hyderabad, India
Chien **Peng**, Space Telescope Science Institute, Baltimore, USA
John **Percy**, University of Toronto, Toronto, Canada
Lubos **Perek**, Astronomical Institute, Praha, Czech Republic
Giovanni **Peres**, Università di Palermo, Palermo, Italy
Nicolas **Peretto**, University of Manchester, Manchester, United Kingdom
Adam **Perkins**, Cambridge University Library, Cambridge, United Kingdom
Kala **Perkins**, Australian National University, Saratoga, USA
Celine **Peroux**, European Southern Observatory, Garching, Germany
Paolo **Persi**, INAF, Roma, Italy
Geraldine **Peters**, University of Southern California, Los Angeles, USA
William **Peters**, University of Arizona, Tucson, USA
Bruce **Peterson**, Australian National University, Weston Creek, Australia
Dawn **Peterson**, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, USA
Ruth **Peterson**, UC Santa Cruz, AstAdv, Palo Alto, USA
Gérard **Petit**, BIPM, Sèvres, France
Pascal **Petit**, Observatoire Midi-Pyrénées, Toulouse, France
Monika **Petr-Gotzens**, ESO, Garching, Germany
Jerome **Petri**, Max-Planck-Institut für Kernphysik, Heidelberg, Germany
Daniel **Pfenniger**, Geneva Observatory, University of Geneva, Sauverny, Switzerland
Jörg **Pfleiderer**, Austrian Academy of Sciences, Wien, Austria
Randy **Phelps**, U.S. National Science Foundation, Arlington, USA
A. G. Davis **Philip**, ISO and Union College, Schenectady, USA
Robin **Phillips**, University of Lethbridge, Lethbridge, Canada
Alan **Pickwick**, European Association for Astronomy Education, Sale, United Kingdom
Douglas **Pierce-Price**, ESO, Garching bei München, Germany
Luca **Pigatto**, INAF, Padova, Italy
Andrzej **Pigulski**, Wrocław University, Wrocław, Poland
Catherine **Pilachowski**, Indiana University, Bloomington, USA
Maria Cristina **Pineda de Carias**, Universidad Nacional Autónoma, Tegucigalpa, Honduras
Gennadiy **Pinigin**, Nikolaev Astronomical Observatory, Mykolaiv, Ukraine
Olga **Pintado**, CONICET, San Miguel de Tucuman, Argentina
Robert **Piontek**, Astrophysikalisches Institut Potsdam, Potsdam, Germany
Giampaolo **Piotto**, Università di Padova, Padova, Italy
Sophie **Pireaux**, Observatoire de la Côte d'Azur, Grasse, France
Nikolai **Piskunov**, Uppsala University, Uppsala, Sweden
Elena **Pitjeva**, Institute of Applied Astronomy of RAS, St.-Petersburg, Russian Federation
Jana **Pittichova**, University of Hawaii, Honolulu, USA
Graziella **Pizzichini**, INAF/IASF, Bologna, Italy
Eliska **Plackova**, Astronomical Institute Ondrejov, Ondrejov, Czech Republic
Imants **Platais**, Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, USA
Paul **Plucinsky**, Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics, Cambridge, USA
Michael **Pohlen**, Kapteyn Instituut Rijksuniversiteit Groningen, Groningen, Netherlands
Christian **Pollas**, Observatoire de la Côte d'Azur, Caussols, France
Onno **Pols**, Astronomical Institute Utrecht, Utrecht, Netherlands
Mélanie **Pomares**, Laboratoire d'Astrophysique de Marseille, Marseille, France
Gabriele **Ponti**, Università di Bologna, Bologna, Italy
David **Pooley**, University of California at Berkeley, Berkeley, USA
Nedelia Antonia **Popescu**, Astronomical Institute of RA, Bucharest, Romania
Petre **Popescu**, Astronomical Institute of RA, Bucharest, Romania
Luka **Popovic**, Astronomical Observatory, Belgrade, Serbia
Simon **Portegies Zwart**, University of Amsterdam, Amsterdam, Netherlands
Laura **Portinari**, University of Turku, Piikkiö, Finland
Vladimír **Porubčan**, Comenius University Bratislava, Bratislava, Slovakia
Stuart **Pottasch**, Groningen University, Groningen, Netherlands
Isabelle **Pouliquen**, A & A - EDP Sciences, Les Ulis Cedex A, France
Ken **Pounds**, University of Leicester, Leicester, United Kingdom
Dimitri **Pourbaix**, Université Libre de Bruxelles, Brussels, Belgium
Arcadio **Poveda**, National University of Mexico, Mexico City, Mexico
Renata **Prates**, JZ Congressos, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
Petr **Pravec**, Astronomical Institute AS CR, Ondrejov, Czech Republic
Thomas **Preibisch**, Max-Planck-Institute for Radioastronomy, Bonn, Germany
Paresh **Prema**, University of Cambridge, Cambridge, United Kingdom
Premana **Premadi**, Institut Teknologi Bandung, Bandung, Indonesia
Francesca **Primas**, European Southern Observatory, Garching, Germany
Daniel **Proga**, University of Nevada, Las Vegas, Las Vegas, USA
Tomas **Prosecky**, Astronomical Institute, ASCR, Ondrejov, Czech Republic
Vojislava **Protitch-Benishek**, Astronomical Observatory, Belgrade, Serbia
Michael **Prouza**, Nuncius Sidereus III, Prague, Czech Republic
Andrej **Prša**, University of Ljubljana, Ljubljana, Slovenia
Maxim **Pshirkov**, Lebedev Physical Institute, Pushchino, Russian Federation
Ivanio **Puerari**, INAOE, Sta. Maria Tonantzintla, Mexico
Elena **Puga**, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, Leuven, Belgium
Jean-Loup **Puget**, IAS, Orsay Cedex, France
Simon **Pustilnik**, Special Astrophysical Observatory RAS, Zelenchuk district, Russian Federation
Izold **Pustylnik**, Tartu Observatory, Tartu, Estonia
Jean-Marc **Quilbé**, A & A - EDP Sciences, Les Ulis, France
Andrew **Quinn**, James Cook University, Australia, Redditch, United Kingdom
Kenneth **Quinn**, SPRINGER, Heidelberg, Germany
Andreas **Quirrenbach**, Landessternwarte Heidelberg, Heidelberg, Germany
M. Cristina **Rabello-Soares**, Stanford University, Stanford, USA
René **Racine**, Université de Montréal, Mont-St-Hilaire, Canada
Venkataraman **Radhakrishnan**, Raman Research Institute, Bangalore, India
g.peach@ucl.ac.uk
anthony.Peacock@esa.nl
cpp@ir.isas.jaxa.jp
starsjohn@adelphia.net
pechacek_t@seznam.cz
j.c.pecker@wanadoo.fr
pjep@princeton.edu
pellerin@stsci.edu
roser@ast.obs-mip.fr
pence@milkyway.gsfc.nasa.gov
jkpendharkar@yahoo.co.uk
cyp@stsci.edu
jpercy@utm.utoronto.ca
perek@ig.cas.cz
peres@astropa.unipa.it
nicolas.peretto@manchester.ac.uk
ajp21@cam.ac.uk
kala.perkins@anu.edu.au
cperoux@eso.org
paolo.persi@iasf-roma.inaf.it
gjpeters@mucen.usc.edu
wpeters@as.arizona.edu
Bruce.Peterson@anu.edu.au
dawnp@virginia.edu
peter@uiclick.org
gpetit@bipm.org
petit@ast.obs-mip.fr
mpetr@eso.org
j.petri@mpi-hd.mpg.de
daniel.pfenniger@obs.unige.ch
joerg.pfleiderer@uibk.ac.at
rdphelps@nsf.gov
agdp@union.edu
robin.phillips@uleth.ca
Alan.C.Pickwick@btinternet.com
dpiercep@eso.org
pigatto@pd.astro.it
pigulski@astro.uni.wroc.pl
catyp@astro.indiana.edu
mcarias@cablecolor.hn
pinigin@mao.nikolaev.ua
opintado@tucbbs.com.ar
rpiontek@aip.de
piotto@pd.astro.it
sophie.pireaux@obs-azur.fr
piskunov@astro.uu.se
evp@ipa.nw.ru
jana@ifa.hawaii.edu
pizzichini@iasbo.inaf.it
placek@asu.cas.cz
imants@pha.jhu.edu
plucinsky@cfa.harvard.edu
pohlen@astro.rug.nl
christian.pollas@obs-azur.fr
o.r.pols@astro.uu.nl
melanie.pomares@oamp.fr
ponti@iasfbo.inaf.it
dave@astron.berkeley.edu
nedeliapopescu@yahoo.com
petre@aira.astro.ro
lpopovic@aob.bg.ac.yu
spz@science.uva.nl
lporti@utu.fi
porubcan@fmph.uniba.sk
pottasch@astro.rug.nl
pouliquen@edpsciences.org
kap@le.ac.uk
pourbaix@astro.ulb.ac.be
poveda@servidor.unam.mx
prates@jz.com.br
ppravec@asu.cas.cz
preib@mpifr-bonn.mpg.de
pprema@ast.cam.ac.uk
premadi@as.itb.ac.id
fprimas@eso.org
dproga@physics.unlv.edu
prosecky@asu.cas.cz
vprotic@aob.bg.ac.yu
prouza@fzu.cz
andrej.prsa@fmf.uni-lj.si
pshirkov@prao.ru
puerari@inaoep.mx
elena@ster.kuleuven.be
jean-loup.puget@ias.u-psud.fr
sap@sao.ru
izold@aai.ee
quilbe@edpsciences.org
ajq20042003@yahoo.co.uk
kenneth.quinn@springer.com
A.Quirrenbach@lsw.uni-heidelberg.de
csoares@sun.stanford.edu
racine@astro.umontreal.ca
rad@rri.res.in

Iratius **Radiman**, Institut Teknologi Bandung, Bandung, Indonesia
 Piero **Rafanelli**, University of Padova, Padova, Italy
 Roman **Rafikov**, Canadian Institute for Theoretical Astrophysics, Toronto, Canada
 Deepak **Raghavan**, Georgia State University, Sandy Springs, USA
 Julio Cesar **Ramirez Velez**, Observatoire Paris Meudon, Meudon Cedex, France
 Piero **Ranalli**, RIKEN, Wakoshi, Japan
 Scott **Ransom**, NRAO, Charlottesville, USA
 Jesper **Rasmussen**, University of Birmingham, Birmingham, United Kingdom
 Andreas **Rathke**, EADS Astrium GmbH, Friedrichshafen, Germany
 Paul **Ray**, Naval Research Laboratory, Washington, USA
 William **Reach**, California Institute of Technology, Pasadena, USA
 Luisa **Rebull**, JPL/IPAC/Caltech, Pasadena, USA
 Elsa **Recillas-Pishmish**, INAOE, Cholula, Mexico
 Travis **Rector**, University of Alaska Anchorage, Anchorage, USA
 Martin **Rees**, Cambridge University, Cambridge, United Kingdom
 Katharine **Reeves**, Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory, Cambridge, USA
 Michael **Reid**, Harvard-Smithsonian Submillimeter Array, Hilo, USA
 Bo **Reipurth**, University of Hawaii, Hilo, USA
 Harold **Reitsema**, Ball Aerospace, Boulder, USA
 Monica **Relano**, Granada University, Granada, Spain
 Matthias **Rempel**, National Center for Atmospheric Research, Boulder, USA
 Miriam **Rengel**, MPI for Solar System Research, Katlenburg-Lindau, Germany
 Armin **Rest**, NOAO/CTIO, Tucson, USA
 Douglas **ReVelle**, Los Alamos National Laboratory, Los Alamos, USA
 Soo-Chang **Rey**, Chungnam National University, Daejeon, Korea RP
 Mark **Reynolds**, University College Cork, Cork, Ireland
 Stephen **Reynolds**, North Carolina State University, Raleigh, USA
 Estela **Reynoso**, IAFE, Buenos Aires, Argentina
 Kirsty **Rhook**, University of Cambridge, Cambridge, United Kingdom
 Ignasi **Ribas**, CSIC/IEEC, Bellaterra, Spain
 Anita **Richards**, University of Manchester, Macclesfield, United Kingdom
 Mercedes **Richards**, Penn State University, University Park, USA
 Paul **Richards**, University of California, Berkeley, Berkeley, USA
 Derek **Richardson**, University of Maryland, College Park, USA
 Harvey **Richer**, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada
 Bernd **Richter**, BKG, Frankfurt am Main, Germany
 Hans **Rickman**, Uppsala Astron. Observatory, Uppsala, Sweden
 Dominik **Riechers**, Max-Planck-Institute for Astronomy, Heidelberg, Germany
 Frank **Rieger**, University College Dublin, Dublin, Ireland
 Judit **Ries**, The University of Texas at Austin, Austin, USA
 Francois **Rincon**, University of Cambridge, Cambridge, United Kingdom
 Tanja **Rindler-Daller**, Universität Wien, Vienna, Austria
 Alberto **Riva**, INAF Osservatorio Astronomico di Brera (Milano), Merate, Italy
 Guy **Rixon**, University of Cambridge, Cambridge, United Kingdom
 Annie **Robin**, Observatoire de Besançon, Besançon cedex, France
 Frank **Robinson**, Yale University, New Haven, USA
 Thomas **Robitaille**, University of St Andrews, St Andrews, United Kingdom
 Ian **Robson**, UK ATC, Edinburgh, United Kingdom
 Luis **Rodriguez**, UNAM, Morelia, Mexico
 Jose M. **Rodriguez Espinosa**, Instituto de Astrofísica de Canarias, La Laguna, Spain
 Ramon Enrique **Rodriguez Taboada**, Inst. of Geophysics and Astronomy, La Habana, Cuba
 Nayra **Rodriguez-Eugenio**, Instituto de Astrofísica de Canarias, La Laguna, Spain
 Gijs **Roelofs**, Radboud University Nijmegen, Nijmegen, Netherlands
 Friedrich **Roepke**, UC Santa Cruz and MPA Garching, Santa Cruz, USA
 Fernando **Roig**, National Observatory (ON), Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
 Loïc **Rolland**, CEA-Saclay, Gif-sur-Yvette, France
 Cyril **Ron**, Astronomical Institute, Prague, Czech Republic
 Rosa M. **Ros**, Technical University of Catalonia, Barcelona, Spain
 Patricia **Rosenzweig**, Universidad de Los Andes, Mérida, Venezuela
 Anish **Roshi**, Raman Research Institute, Bangalore, India
 Erik **Rosolowsky**, Center for Astrophysics, Cambridge, USA
 Thomas **Rosswall**, Internaional Council for Science, Paris, France
 Barry **Rothberg**, Space Telescope Science Institute, Baltimore, USA
 Arnold **Rots**, Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics, Cambridge, USA
 Luc **Roupe van der Voort**, Institute of Theoretical Astrophysics, Oslo, Norway
 Carl **Rouse**, Rouse Research, Skillman, USA
 Sheila **Rowan**, University of Glasgow, Glasgow, United Kingdom
 Michael **Rowan-Robinson**, Imperial College London, London, United Kingdom
 Ian **Roxburgh**, Queen Mary, University of London, London, United Kingdom
 Frédéric **Royer**, Observatoire de Paris, Meudon, France
 Jean-Pierre **Rozelot**, Observatoire de la Côte d'Azur, Grasse, France
 Robert **Rubin**, NASA Ames Research Center, Moffett Field, USA
 Monica **Rubio**, Universidad de Chile, Santiago, Chile
 Eduardo **Rubio-Herrera**, University of Amsterdam, Amsterdam, Netherlands
 Slavek **Rucinski**, University of Toronto, Richmond Hill, Canada
 Alastair **Rucklidge**, University of Leeds, Leeds, United Kingdom
 Guenther **Ruediger**, Astrophysikalisches Institut Potsdam, Potsdam, Germany
 Clive **Ruggles**, University of Leicester, Leicester, United Kingdom
 Pilar **Ruiz-Lapuente**, Univ. Barcelona, Barcelona, Spain
 Anthony **Rushton**, Jodrell Bank Observatory, Macclesfield, United Kingdom
 Linda **Rusk**, Science International, Cambridge, United Kingdom
 Pedro **Russo**, MPI for Solar System Research, Katlenburg - Lindau, Germany
 Domagoj **Ruždjak**, Faculty of Geodesy, University of Zagreb, Zagreb, Croatia
 Adam **Ruzicka**, Astronomical Institute, ASCR, Praha, Czech Republic
 Tatiana **Ryabchikova**, Institute of Astronomy RAS, Moscow, Russian Federation
 Yuri **Ryabov**, MADI, Moscow, Russian Federation
 Hans **Rykaczewski**, ESO, Garching, Germany
 Stanislaw **Rys**, Jagiellonian University, Krakow, Poland
 Steven **Saar**, Harvard-Smithsonian CfA, Cambridge, USA
 Elena **Sabbi**, Space Telescope Science Institute, Baltimore, USA
 Elaine **Sadler**, University of Sydney, University of Sydney, Australia
 Margarita **Safonova**, Indian Institute of Astrophysics, Bangalore, India
 Kanak **Saha**, Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore, India
 iratius@as.itb.ac.id
 piero.rafanelli@umip.d.it
 rrr@cita.utoronto.ca
 raghavan@chara.gsu.edu
 julio.ramirez@obspm.fr
 piero@crab.riken.jp
 srsansom@nrao.edu
 jesper@star.sr.bham.ac.uk
 andreas.rathke@astrium.eads.net
 Paul.Ray@nrl.navy.mil
 reach@ipac.caltech.edu
 rebull@ipac.caltech.edu
 elsa@inaoep.mx
 rector@uaa.alaska.edu
 mjr@ast.cam.ac.uk
 kreeves@cfa.harvard.edu
 mareid@sma.hawaii.edu
 reipurth@ifa.hawaii.edu
 hreitsem@ball.com
 mrelano@ugr.es
 rempel@hao.ucar.edu
 rengel@mps.mpg.de
 arest@ctio.noao.edu
 revelle@lanl.gov
 screy@cnu.ac.kr
 m.reynolds@ucc.ie
 steve_reynolds@ncsu.edu
 ereynoso@iafe.uba.ar
 krhook@ast.cam.ac.uk
 iribas@ieec.uab.es
 amsr@jb.man.ac.uk
 mrichards@astro.psu.edu
 richards@physics.berkeley.edu
 dcr@astro.umd.edu
 richer@astro.ubc.ca
 richter@iers.org
 hans@astro.uu.se
 riechers@mpia.de
 frank.rieger@ucd.ie
 moon@astro.as.utexas.edu
 F.Rincon@damtp.cam.ac.uk
 daller@astro.univie.ac.at
 alberto.riva@brera.inaf.it
 gtr@ast.cam.ac.uk
 annie.robin@obs-besancon.fr
 frank.robinson@yale.edu
 tr9@st-andrews.ac.uk
 eir@roe.ac.uk
 l.rodriguez@astrosmo.unam.mx
 jmr.espinosa@iac.es
 ramone@infomed.sld.cu
 nre@iac.es
 gijstroel@astro.ru.nl
 roepke@uolick.org
 froig@on.br
 rolland@in2p3.fr
 ron@ig.cas.cz
 ros@mat.upc.es
 astropatty101@yahoo.com
 anish@rri.res.in
 erosolow@cfa.harvard.edu
 thomas.rosswall@icsu.org
 rothberg@stsci.edu
 arots@head.cfa.harvard.edu
 rouppe@astro.uio.no
 moxleyrouse@verizon.net
 s.rowan@physics.gla.ac.uk
 mnr@imperial.ac.uk
 i.w.roxburgh@qmul.ac.uk
 frederic.royer@obspm.fr
 rozelot@obs-azur.fr
 rubin@cygnus.arc.nasa.gov
 mrubio@das.uchile.cl
 erubio@science.uva.nl
 rucinski@astro.utoronto.ca
 a.m.rucklidge@leeds.ac.uk
 gruediger@aip.de
 cliveruggles@btinternet.com
 pilar@am.ub.es
 arushon@jb.man.ac.uk
 lrusk@science-int.co.uk
 russo@mps.mpg.de
 rdomagoj@geof.hr
 adam.ruzicka@gmail.com
 ryabchik@inasan.ru
 ryabov@vmat.madi.ru
 hrykaczewski@eso.org
 strys@oa.uj.edu.pl
 saar@cfa.harvard.edu
 sabbi@stsci.edu
 ems@physics.usyd.edu.au
 rita@iap.res.in
 kanak@physics.iisc.ernet.in

Kazuya **Saigo**, National Astronomical Observatory of Japan, Mitaka, Japan saigo@th.nao.ac.jp
 Anna **Sajina**, Spitzer Science Center, Pasadena, USA sajina@ipac.caltech.edu
 Takeshi **Sakai**, Nobeyama Radio Observatory, Nagano, Japan sakai@nro.nao.ac.jp
 Seiichi **Sakamoto**, National Astronomical Observatory of Japan, Tokyo, Japan seiichi@nro.nao.ac.jp
 Itsuki **Sakon**, University of Tokyo, Bunkyo-ku, Japan isakon@astron.s.u-tokyo.ac.jp
 Takashi **Sakurai**, National Astronomical Observatory of Japan, Mitaka, Japan sakurai@solar.mtk.nao.ac.jp
 Heikki **Salo**, University of Oulu, Oulu, Finland heikki.salo@oulu.fi
 Réza **Samadi**, Observatoire de Paris, Meudon, France reza.samadi@obspm.fr
 Ronald **Samec**, Bob Jones University, Greenville, USA rsamec@bju.edu
 Masahiro **Sameshima**, Institute of Astronomy, University of Tokyo, Tokyo, Japan msameshima@ioa.s.u-tokyo.ac.jp
 Leda **Sampson**, Institute of Astronomy, Cambridge, United Kingdom lsampson@ast.cam.ac.uk
 Nikolay **Samus**, Institute of Astronomy, Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow, Russian Federation samus@sai.msu.ru
 Ruben **Sanchez-Janssen**, Instituto de Astrofísica de Canarias, La Laguna, Spain ruben@iac.es
 Renzo **Sancisi**, INAF-Osservatorio Bologna & Kapteyn Institute, Bologna, Italy sancisi@bo.astro.it
 Walt **Sanders**, New Mexico State Univ., Santa Cruz, USA wsanders@cruzio.com
 Wilton **Sanders**, NASA Headquarters, Arlington, USA wilton.t.sanders@nasa.gov
 Maria Eugenia **Sansaturio**, University of Valladolid, Valladolid, Spain meusan@eis.uva.es
 Alfredo **Santillan**, UNAM, Mexico City, Mexico alfredo@astrosc.unam.mx
 Craig **Sarazin**, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, USA sarazin@virginia.edu
 Lakshmi **Saripalli**, Raman Research Institute, Bangalore, India lsaripal@rri.res.in
 Clementina **Sasso**, MPI for Solar System Research, Katlenburg-Lindau, Germany sasso@mps.mpg.de
 Katsuhiko **Sato**, The University of Tokyo, Bunkyo-ku, Japan sato@phys.s.u-tokyo.ac.jp
 Yusuke **Sato**, Hokkaido University, Sapporo, Japan yusuke@costep.hucc.hokudai.ac.jp
 Gilbert **Satterthwaite**, Imperial College London, Bromley, United Kingdom gilbert@satterthwaite225.fsnet.co.uk
 Luca **Sbordone**, INAF - Osservatorio Astronomico di Trieste, Monte Porzio Catone, Italy sbordone@oa-roma.inaf.it
 Colin **Scarfe**, University of Victoria, Victoria, Canada scarfe@uvic.ca
 Daniel **Schaerer**, Geneva Observatory, Sauverny, Switzerland daniel.schaerer@obs.unige.ch
 Gerd **Schatz**, Universität Heidelberg, Bruchsal, Germany bgschatz@t-online.de
 Daniel **Scheeres**, The University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, USA scheeres@umich.edu
 Peter **Scheirich**, Astronomical Institute, ASCR, Ondřejov, Czech Republic petr.scheirich@centrum.cz
 Richard **Schilizzi**, International SKA Project Office, Dwingeloo, Netherlands schilizzi@skatelescope.org
 Eric **Schindhelm**, University of Colorado, Boulder, USA eric.schindhelm@colorado.edu
 Sabine **Schindler**, University of Innsbruck, Innsbruck, Austria sabine.schindler@uibk.ac.at
 Eva **Schinnerer**, Max Planck Institut fuer Astronomie, 69117 Heidelberg, Germany schinnerer@mpia.de
 Patricia **Schippers**, CESR, Toulouse, France schipper@cesr.fr
 Rolf **Schlichenmaier**, Kiepenheuer-Institut fuer Sonnenphysik, Freiburg, Germany schliche@kis.uni-freiburg.de
 Reinhard **Schlickeiser**, Ruhr-Universität Bochum, Bochum, Germany rsch@tp4.rub.de
 Brian **Schmidt**, The Australian National University, Weston Creek, Australia brian@msu.anu.edu.au
 Marion **Schmitz**, Caltech, Pasadena, USA zsb4ms@ipac.caltech.edu
 Glenn **Schneider**, University of Arizona, Tucson, USA gschneider@as.arizona.edu
 Rainer **Schoedel**, Universitaet zu Koeln, Koeln, Germany rainer@ph1.uni-koeln.de
 Ralf-Dieter **Scholz**, Astrophysical Institute Potsdam, Potsdam, Germany rdscholz@aip.de
 Jaroslava **Schovancova**, Charles University, Prague, Czech Republic jarka@schovanc.net
 Ethan **J. Schreier**, AUI, Washington, USA ejs@au.edu
 Harald **Schuh**, Techn. Univ. Wien, Wien, Austria harald.schuh@tuwien.ac.at
 Rita **Schulz**, ESA, Noordwijk, Netherlands rschulz@rssd.esa.int
 Hannah **Schunker**, Monash University, Clayton, Australia hannah.schunker@sci.monash.edu.au
 William **J. Schuster**, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Ensenada, México wschuster@astroen.unam.mx
 Dan **Schwartz**, Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory, Cambridge, USA das@cfa.harvard.edu
 Pavol **Schwartz**, Astronomical Institute, ASCR, Ondřejov, Czech Republic schwartz@asu.cas.cz
 Hugo **E. Schwarz**, CTIO/NOAO, La Serena, Chile hschwarz@ctio.noao.edu
 Joseph **Schwarz**, ESO, Garching, Germany jschwarz@eso.org
 Salvatore **Sciortino**, INAF - Osservatorio Astronomico di Palermo, Palermo, Italy sciorti@astropa.inaf.it
 Cecilia **Scorza**, Landessternwarte, Heidelberg, Germany cscorza@lsw.uni-heidelberg.de
 Luigi **Secco**, University of Padua, Padova, Italy secco@pd.astro.it
 Ladislav **Sehnal**, Astronomical Institute, Ondřejov, Czech Republic lsehnal@asu.cas.cz
 Marc **Seigar**, University of California, Irvine, Irvine, USA mseigar@uci.edu
 John-Hugh **Seiradakis**, University of Thessaloniki, Thessaloniki, Greece jhs@astro.auth.gr
 Zdenek **Sekanina**, Jet Propulsion Laboratory, Pasadena, USA zs@sek.jpl.nasa.gov
 Kazuhiro **Sekiguchi**, Subaru Telescope, Hilo, USA kaz@nao.jo.org
 Marcin **Sekowski**, Institute of Geodesy and Cartography, Warszawa, Poland msek@igik.edu.pl
 Caius **Selhorst**, INPE/CRAAM - National Institute of Space Research, São Paulo, Brazil caius@craam.mackenzie.br
 Benoit **Semelin**, Observatoire de Paris, Paris, France benoit.semelin@obspm.fr
 Oldrich **Semerak**, Charles University, Prague, Czech Republic semerak@mbox.troja.mff.cuni.cz
 Eugene **Serabyn**, Jet Propulsion Laboratory, Pasadena, USA Gene.Serabyn@jpl.nasa.gov
 Tetyana **Sergeeva**, Main Astronomical Observatory of NASU, Kyiv, Ukraine sergeeva@mao.kiev.ua
 Peter **Serlemitsos**, NASA/GSFC, Greenbelt, USA pjs@astron.gsfc.nasa.gov
 Alfonso **Serrano**, INAOE, San Andrés Cholula, Mexico asp@inaoep.mx
 Mathieu **Servillat**, CESR, Toulouse, France mathieu.servillat@cesr.fr
 Masumichi **Seta**, University of Tsukuba, Tsukuba, Japan seta@physics.px.tsukuba.ac.jp
 Giancarlo **Setti**, University of Bologna, Bologna, Italy setti@ira.inaf.it
 Marta **Sewilo**, Space Science Institute, Boulder, USA sewilo@astro.wisc.edu
 Nicholas **Seymour**, Caltech, Pasadena, USA seymour@ipac.caltech.edu
 Natalia **Shakht**, Main (Pulkovo) Astronomical Observatory, Saint-Petersburg, Russian Federation shakht@gao.spb.ru
 Vyacheslav **Shalyapin**, Institute for Radiophysics and Electronics, Kharkov, Ukraine vshal@ire.kharkov.ua
 Michael **Shao**, Jet Propulsion Laboratory, Pasadena, USA aes@astro.princeton.edu
 Alice **Shapley**, Princeton University, Princeton, USA pshaver@eso.org
 Peter **Shaver**, ESO, Garching bei Muenchen, Germany pshaver@eso.org
 Ed **Shaya**, U. of Maryland, College Park, USA eshaya@umd.edu
 Stephen **Shectman**, Carnegie Observatories, Pasadena, USA shec@ociw.edu
 Suneel **Sheikh**, University of Maryland, College Park, USA sheikh@asterlabs.com
 Qian **Shengbang**, Yunnan Observatory, Kunming, China Nanjing qsb@ynao.ac.cn
 Valeriy **Shepelyev**, IRA NAS Ukraine, Kharkiv, Ukraine shep@ira.kharkov.ua
 Rahul **Shetty**, University of Maryland, College Park, USA shetty@astro.umd.edu
 Ivan **I. Shevchenko**, Pulkovo Observatory, St. Petersburg, Russian Federation iis@gao.spb.ru
 Vladislav **Shevchenko**, Sternberg State Astronomical Institute, Moscow, Russian Federation vladislav_shevch@mail.ru
 Kiyoto **Shibasaki**, Nobeyama Solar Radio Observatory, Minamisaku, Japan shibasaki@nro.nao.ac.jp
 Hyunjin **Shim**, Seoul National University, Seoul, Korea RP hjschim@astro.snu.ac.kr
 Yoshito **Shimajiri**, the university of Tokyo, Mitaka-shi, Japan yoshito.shimajiri@nao.ac.jp
 Jihye **Shin**, Kyunghee University, Yongong-si, Korea RP jhshin@apl.khu.ac.kr
 Yuji **Shirasaki**, NAOJ, Mitaka, Japan yuji.shirasaki@nao.ac.jp
 Alexander **Shirokov**, CITA, Toronto, Canada shirokov@cita.utoronto.ca
 Isaac **Shlosman**, University of Kentucky, Lexington, USA shlosman@pa.uky.edu

Steven **Shore**, University of Pisa, Pisa, Italy shore@df.unipi.it
 Boris **Shustov**, Institute of Astronomy of RAS, Moscow, Russian Federation bshustov@inasan.ru
 Milos **Sidlichovsky**, Astronomical Institute, ASCR, Praha, Czech Republic sidli@ig.cas.cz
 Nikolay **Sidorenkov**, Hydrometcentr of Russia, Moscow, Russian Federation sidorenkov@mecom.ru
 Vladimir **Sidorov**, Kazan State University, Kazan, Russian Federation Vladimir.Sidorov@ksu.ru
 Adel **Sidorova**, School 39, Kazan, Russian Federation adelinasa@yandex.ru
 El Arbi **Siher**, Faculty of Sciences and Techniques, Beni Mellal, Morocco siher@ucam.ac.ma
 Sergiy **Silich**, INAOE, Puebla, Mexico silich@inaoep.mx
 Alison **Sills**, McMaster University, Hamilton, Canada asills@mcmaster.ca
 Adriana V. R. **Silva**, Mackenzie University, Sao Paulo, Brazil asilva@craam.mackenzie.br
 Laura **Silva**, INAF-Trieste, Trieste, Italy silva@oats.inaf.it
 Robert **Silverberg**, NASA/Goddard Space Flight Center, Greenbelt, USA robert.silverberg@nasa.gov
 Helen **Sim**, CSIRO, Marsfield, Australia helen.sim@csiro.au
 Zdislav **Sima**, Astronomical Institute ASCR, Prague, Czech Republic sima@ig.cas.cz
 Stanislava **Simberova**, Astronomical Institute, ASCR, Ondrejov, Czech Republic sssimbero@asu.cas.cz
 Susan **Simkin**, Michigan State University, East Lansing, USA simkin@pa.msu.edu
 Michal **Simon**, SUNY-Stony Brook, Stony Brook, USA michal.simon@suny.edu
 Vojtech **Simon**, Astronomical Institute, ASCR, Ondrejov, Czech Republic simon@asu.cas.cz
 Suryadi **Siregar**, Bandung Institute of Technology, Bandung, Indonesia suryadi@as.itb.ac.id
 Rowena **Sirey**, PPARC, Swindon, United Kingdom rowena.sirey@pparc.ac.uk
 Dan **Skandera**, MPI for Plasma Physics, Garching, Germany Dan.Skandera@ipp.mpg.de
 Evan **Skillman**, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, USA skillman@astro.umn.edu
 Olaf **Skjaeraasen**, University of Oslo, Oslo, Norway olafsk@astro.uio.no
 Petr **Skoda**, Astronomical Institute ASCR, Ondrejov, Czech Republic skoda@sunstel.asu.cas.cz
 Ljiljana **Skuljan**, Massey University, Auckland, New Zealand l.skuljan@massey.ac.nz
 Elena **Skurikhina**, Institute of Applied Astronomy, St.-Petersburg, Russian Federation sea@ipa.nw.ru
 Petr **Slany**, Slezská Univerzita, Opava, Czech Republic sla10uf@axpsu.fpf.slu.cz
 Rikard **Slapak**, Institution of Physics, Gothenburg University, Ljung, Sweden orendien@hotmail.com
 Tim **Slater**, University of Arizona, Tucson, USA tslater@as.arizona.edu
 Miroslav **Slechtsa**, Astronomical Institute ASCR, Ondrejov, Czech Republic slechtsa@sunstel.asu.cas.cz
 Eric **Slezak**, Observatoire de la Cote d'Azur, Nice, France slezak@obs-nice.fr
 Agnieszka **Slowikowska**, MPI for Extraterrestrial Physics, Garching, Germany aga@mpe.mpg.de
 Barry **Smalley**, Keele University, Newcastle-under-Lyme, United Kingdom bs@astro.keele.ac.uk
 Richard **Smart**, osservatorio astronomico di Torino, pino torinese, Italy smart@to.astro.it
 Stephen **Smartt**, Queen's University Belfast, Belfast, United Kingdom s.smartt@qub.ac.uk
 Ladislav **Smelcer**, Hvězdárna Valasské Meziříčí, Czech Republic lsmelcer@astrovm.cz
 Ivars **Smelds**, Univ. of Latvia, Riga, Latvia shmeld@latnet.lv
 Rodolfo **Smiljanic**, University of São Paulo, São Paulo, Brazil rodolfo@astro.iag.usp.br
 Mikhail **Smirnov**, Institute of Astronomy, Moscow, Russian Federation msmirnov@inasan.ru
 Aleksandrina **Smirnova**, Special Astrophysical Observatory RAS, Nizhnij Arkhyz, Russian Federation alexiya@sao.ru
 David **Smith**, CENBG/IN2P3/CNRS, Gradignan, France smith@cenbg.in2p3.fr
 Eric **Smith**, Washington, USA Eric.P.Smith@nasa.gov
 Graham **Smith**, University of Birmingham, Birmingham, United Kingdom gps@star.sr.bham.ac.uk
 Howard **Smith**, Center for Astrophysics, Cambridge, USA hsmith@cfa.harvard.edu
 Malcolm G. **Smith**, AURA Observatory in Chile, La Serena, Chile msmith@ctio.noao.edu
 Martin C. **Smith**, University of Groningen, Groningen, Netherlands msmith@astro.rug.nl
 Myron **Smith**, CSC/STScI, Baltimore, USA msmith@stsci.edu
 Penny **Smith**, Blackwell Publishing Ltd, Oxford, United Kingdom anne.weston@oxon.blackwellpublishing.com
 Verne **Smith**, National Optical Astronomy Observatory, Tucson, USA vsmith@noao.edu
 Derck **Smits**, University of South Africa, UNISA, South Africa smitsdp@unisa.ac.za
 Vernesa **Smolcic**, MPIA, Heidelberg, Germany smolcic@mpia.de
 Kristyna **Snajdrova**, Vienna University of Technology, Vienna, Austria ksnajd@mars.hg.tuwien.ac.at
 Chris **Snedden**, University of Texas, Austin, USA chris@verdi.as.utexas.edu
 Keely **Snider**, Arizona State University, Phoenix, USA keely.snider@asu.edu
 Leonie **Snijders**, Leiden Observatory, Leiden, Netherlands snijders@strw.leidenuniv.nl
 Michal **Sobotka**, Astronomical Institute ASCR, Ondrejov, Czech Republic msobotka@asu.cas.cz
 Laerte **Sodre**, Universidade de São Paulo, São Paulo, Brazil laerte@astro.iag.usp.br
 Michael **Soffel**, Lohrmann observatory, Dresden, Germany soffel@rcs.urz.tu-dresden.de
 Ulysses **Sofia**, Whitman College, Walla Walla, USA peckova@cbttravel.cz
 B. Thomas **Soifer**, California Institute of Technology, Pasadena, USA bts@irastro.caltech.edu
 Julia **Sokolova**, Institute of Applied Astronomy RAS, St. Petersburg, Russian Federation jrs@ipa.nw.ru
 Sami **Solanki**, Max Planck Institute for Solar System Research, Katlenburg-Lindau, Germany solanki-office@mps.mpg.de
 Enrique **Solano**, INTA, Madrid, Spain esm@laeff.inta.es
 Martin **Solc**, Charles University of Prague, Prague, Czech Republic martin.solc@mff.cuni.cz
 Alena **Solcová**, Czech Technical University, Prague, Czech Republic solcova@mbox.cesnet.cz
 Paolo **Soleri**, University of Amsterdam, Amsterdam, Netherlands psoleri@science.uva.nl
 Jan-Erik **Solheim**, University of Oslo, Oslo, Norway j.e.solheim@astro.uio.no
 Mitsuru **Soma**, National Astronomical Observatory of Japan, Mitaka, Japan Mitsuru.Soma@nao.ac.jp
 Qian **Song**, Chinese National Astronomical Observatories, Beijing, China Nanjing sq@bao.ac.cn
 George **Sonneborn**, NASA Goddard Space Flight Center, Greenbelt, USA george.sonneborn@nasa.gov
 Boonrucksar **Soonthornthum**, Chiang Mai University, Chiang Mai, Thailand boonraks@chiangmai.ac.th
 Roberto **Soria**, Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics, Cambridge, USA rsoria@cfa.harvard.edu
 Gennaro **Sorrentino**, INAF-Astronomical Observatory of Capodimonte, Napoli, Italy gsorren@na.astro.it
 Anselmo **Sosa**, Instituto de Astrofísica de Canarias (IAC), La Laguna, Tenerife, Spain asosa@iac.es
 Mario **Soto**, Leiden Observatory, Leiden, Netherlands soto@strw.leidenuniv.nl
 Edgar **Soulié**, Societe astronomique de France, Paris, France carmen@cfht.hawaii.edu
 John **Southworth**, University of Warwick, Coventry, United Kingdom j.k.taylor@warwick.ac.uk
 Zofie **Sovova**, Klet Observatory, Ceske Budejovice, Czech Republic klet@klet.cz
 Alessandro **Spagna**, INAF-Osservatorio Astronomico di Torino, Pino Torinese, Italy spagna@to.astro.it
 Timothy **Spahr**, Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory, Cambridge, USA tspahr@cfa.harvard.edu
 David **Spergel**, Princeton University, Princeton, USA dns@astro.princeton.edu
 Francois **Spite**, Observatoire de Paris, Meudon, France francois.spite@obspm.fr
 Monique **Spite**, Paris-Meudon Observatory, Meudon, France monique.spite@obspm.fr
 Pavel **Spurny**, AsU AV CR, Ondrejov, Czech Republic pspurny@asu.cas.cz
 Rainer **Spurzem**, University of Heidelberg, Heidelberg, Germany spurzem@ari.uni-heidelberg.de
 Ingrid **Stairs**, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada stairs@astro.ubc.ca
 E Myles **Standish**, CalTech/JPL, Pasadena, USA ems@jpl.nasa.gov
 Letizia **Stanghellini**, National Optical Astronomy Observatory, Tucson, USA letizia@noao.edu
 Snezana **Stanimirovic**, University of California, Berkeley, Berkeley, USA sstanimirovic@astro.berkeley.edu
 Benjamin **Stappers**, ASTRON, Dwingeloo, Netherlands stappers@astron.nl
 Ronald **Stark**, NWO, The Hague, Netherlands stark@nwo.nl
 Magda **Stavinschi**, Astronomical Institute of the RA, Bucharest, Romania magda@aira.astro.ro
 John **Steele**, University of Durham, Durham, United Kingdom j.m.steele@durham.ac.uk

Matthias **Steffen**, Astrophysikalisches Institut Potsdam, Potsdam, Germany
Vojtech **Stefka**, Astronomical institution, Prague, Czech Republic
Robert **Stein**, Michigan State University, East Lansing, USA
Matthias **Steinmetz**, Astrophysical Institute Potsdam, Potsdam, Germany
Robert **Stencel**, University of Denver, Denver, USA
Jan **Stenflo**, ETH Zurich, Zurich, Switzerland
Jiří **Štěpán**, Astronomical Institute, ASCR, Ondřejov, Czech Republic
Alexander **Stepanov**, Pulkovo Observatory, Saint-Petersburg, Russian Federation
Francis Richard **Stephenson**, University of Durham, Durham, United Kingdom
Kazimierz **Stepien**, Warsaw University Observatory, Warszawa, Poland
Chris **Sterken**, Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Brussels, Belgium
Greg **Stinson**, University of Washington, Seattle, USA
María Jeanette **Stock**, Universidad del Zulia, Maracaibo, Venezuela
Hervey **Stockman**, Space Telescope Science Institute, Baltimore, USA
Irena **Stojimirovic**, University Of Massachusetts, Amherst, USA
Ivana **Stoklasova**, AsU AVCR Praha, Praha, Czech Republic
Thaísa **Storchi-Bergmann**, Instituto de Física - UFRGS, Porto Alegre, Brazil
Rostislav **Stork**, Astronomical Institute, ASCR, Ondřejov, Czech Republic
Christian **Straka**, Yale University, New Haven, USA
Klaus **Strassmeier**, Astrophysical Institute Potsdam, Potsdam, Germany
Guy **Stringfellow**, University of Colorado, Boulder, USA
Richard **Strom**, ASTRON & Univ. of Amsterdam, 7990 AA Dwingeloo, Netherlands
Curtis **Struck**, Iowa State University, Ames, USA
Joseph **Stuart**, MIT Lincoln Laboratory, Lexington, USA
Zdenek **Stuchlik**, Slezská Univerzita, Opava, Czech Republic
Micaela B. **Stumpf**, MPI fuer Astronomie, Heidelberg, Germany
Eckhard **Sturm**, MPI fuer Extraterrestrische Physik, Garching, Germany
Vladislav **Sturma**, Astronomical Institute ASCR, Ondřejov, Czech Republic
Ladislav **Subr**, Charles University, Praha, Czech Republic
Ravi **Subrahmanyan**, Raman Research Institute, Bangalore, India
Pavel **Suchan**, Astronomical Institute, ASCR, Praha, Czech Republic
Masahiro **Suganuma**, NAOJ, Mitaka, Japan
Aniket **Sule**, Astrophysikalisches Institut Potsdam, Potsdam-Babelsberg, Germany
Kefeng **Sun**, I. Physikalisches Institut, Köln, Germany
Xiaochun **Sun**, Institute for the History of Natural Sciences, Beijing, China Nanjing
Kazuyoshi **Sunada**, Nobeyama Radio Observatory, Minamisaku, Japan
Rashid A. **Sunyaev**, Max-Planck Institut Für Astrophysik, Garching, Germany
Brankica **Surlan**, Faculty of Mathematics, Belgrade, Serbia
Bunji **Suzuki**, Kasukabe Girls' HS, Kasukabe, Japan
Yoichiro **Suzuki**, University of Tokyo, Kashiwa, Japan
Michal **Svanda**, Astronomical Institute of Academy of Sciences, Ondřejov, Czech Republic
Hakan **Svedhem**, ESA/ESTEC, Noordwijk, Netherlands
Zdeněk **Švestka**, retired, Bunschoten, Netherlands
Jiri **Svoboda**, Charles University, Prague, Czech Republic
Govind **Swarup**, Tata Institute of Fundamental Research, Pune, India
Winston **Sweatman**, Massey University, Auckland, New Zealand
Jean-Pierre **Swings**, University of Liege, Liège, Belgium
Kirill **Sydorchuk**, Institute of Radio Astronomy of NASU, Kharkiv, Ukraine
Michael **Sydorchuk**, Institute of Radio Astronomy of NASU, Kharkiv, Ukraine
Július **Sýkora**, Astronomical Institute of the SAS, Tatranská Lomnica, Slovakia
Alexander **Szalay**, The Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, USA
Bela **Szeidl**, Konkoly Observatory, Budapest, Hungary
Marian **Szymczak**, Nicolaus Copernicus University, Torun, Poland
Linda **Tacconi**, Max-Planck-Inst. fuer ext. Physik, Garching, Germany
Kengo **Tachihara**, Kobe University, Kobe, Japan
Masahide **Takada-Hidai**, Tokai University, Hiratsuka, Japan
Toshinobu **Takagi**, Institute of Space and Astronautical Science, Sagami, Japan
Hiroyuki **Takahashi**, Chiba University, Chiba, Japan
Keitaro **Takahashi**, Princeton University, Princeton, USA
Satoko **Takahashi**, Graduate University for Advances Studies, Mitaka, Japan
Tutomu **Takeuchi**, Tohoku University, Sendai, Japan
Suzanne **Talon**, Université de Montréal, Montréal, Canada
Yoichi **Tamura**, the University of Tokyo, Mitaka, Japan
Jonathan **Tan**, University of Florida, Gainesville, USA
Masahiro **Tanaka**, National Astronomical Observatory of Japan, Mitaka, Japan
Masayuki **Tanaka**, University of Tokyo, Tokyo, Japan
Yasuo **Tanaka**, Max-Planck-Institut fuer Extraterrestrische Physik, Garching, Germany
Gonzalo **Tancredi**, Fac. Ciencias, Montevideo, Uruguay
Yu Hua **Tang**, Nanjing University, Nanjing, China Nanjing
William **Tango**, University of Sydney, Manly, Australia
Yoshiaki **Taniguchi**, Ehime University, Matsuyama, Japan
Andrea **Taracchini**, University of Trieste, Casalmaggiore (CR), Italy
Massimo **Tarengi**, ALMA, Las Condes Santiago, Chile
Jill **Tarter**, SETI Institute, Mountain View, USA
Ramarao **Tata**, University of Central Florida, Orlando, USA
Grazina **Tautvaisiene**, ITPA of Vilnius University, Vilnius, Lithuania
Swaraj **Tayal**, Clark Atlanta University, Atlanta, USA
Edward **Taylor**, Leiden Observatory, Leiden, Netherlands
Greg **Taylor**, UNM, Albuquerque, USA
Jonathan **Tedds**, University of Leicester, Leicester, United Kingdom
Edward **Tedesco**, University of New Hampshire, Durham, USA
Ramachrisna **Teixeira**, Sao Paulo University, São Paulo, Brazil
Adelina **Tempirova**, Special Astrophysical Observatory, St.Petersburg, Russian Federation
Sonia **Temporin**, INAF-Osservatorio Astronomico di Brera, Milano, Italy
Theo **Ten Brummelaar**, CHARA/GSU, Altadena, USA
Guillermo **Tenorio-Tagle**, INAOE, Tonantzintla, Mexico
Thorsten **Tepper Garcia**, Universitaet Goettingen, Goettingen, Germany
Elena **Terlevich**, INAOE, Tonantzintla, Mexico
Roberto **Terlevich**, INAOE, Tonantzintla, Mexico
Fred **Tettelbach**, US Naval Observatory, Washington, USA
Christian **Theis**, University of Vienna, Vienna, Austria
Gilles **Theureau**, CNRS, Orléans, France
David **Tholen**, University of Hawaii, Honolulu, USA
msteffen@aip.de
stefka@ig.cas.cz
stein@pa.msu.edu
msteinmetz@aip.de
rstencel@du.edu
stenflo@astro.phys.ethz.ch
stepan@asu.cas.cz
stepanov@gao.spb.ru
f.r.stephenson@durham.ac.uk
kst@astrouw.edu.pl
csterken@vub.ac.be
stinson@astro.washington.edu
mjstock@cida.ve
stockman@stsci.edu
irena@nova.astro.umass.edu
ivana@sirrah.troja.mff.cuni.cz
thaisa@ufrgs.br
stork@asu.cas.cz
straka@astro.yale.edu
kstrassmeier@aip.de
Guy.Stringfellow@colorado.edu
strom@astron.nl
curt@iastate.edu
stuart@ll.mit.edu
stu10uf@axpsu.pf.slu.se
stumpf@mpia-hd.mpg.de
sturm@mpe.mpg.de
placek@asu.cas.cz
subr@sirrah.troja.mff.cuni.cz
rsubrahm@rri.res.in
suchan@astro.cz
suganuma@merope.mtk.nao.ac.jp
asule@aip.de
kefeng@ph1.uni-koeln.de
xcsun@ihns.ac.cn
sunada@nro.nao.ac.jp
sunyaev@mpa-garching.mpg.de
brankica74@matf.bg.ac.yu
suzukibn@da2.so-net.ne.jp
suzuki@icrr.u-tokyo.ac.jp
svanda@asu.cas.cz
h.svedhem@esa.int
z.svestka@stron.nl
assacy@seznam.cz
swarup@ncra.tifr.res.in
w.sweatman@massey.ac.nz
swings@astro.ulg.ac.be
kirill.sidorchuk@gmail.com
sidor@rian.kharkov.ua
sykora@ta3.sk
szalay@jhu.edu
hec@sirrah.troja.mff.cuni.cz
msz@astro.uni.torun.pl
linda@mpe.mpg.de
tatihara@kobe-u.ac.jp
hidai@apus.rh.u-tokai.ac.jp
ktakahas@ir.isas.jaxa.jp
takahasi@astro.phys.s.chiba-u.ac.jp
ktakahas@princeton.edu
satoko.takahashi@nao.ac.jp
takeuchi@astr.tohoku.ac.jp
talon@astro.umontreal.ca
yoichi.tamura@nao.ac.jp
jt@astro.ufl.edu
masahiro.tanaka@nao.ac.jp
tanaka@astron.s.u-tokyo.ac.jp
ytanaka@mpe.mpg.de
gonzalo@fisica.edu.uy
yhtang@nju.edu.cn
w.tango@physics.usyd.edu.au
tani@sgr.phys.sci.ehime-u.ac.jp
taracchini@gmail.com
mtarengi@alma.cl
cneller@seti.org
rrtata@gmail.com
taut@itpa.lt
stayal@cau.edu
ent@strw.leidenuniv.nl
gbtaylor@unm.edu
jat@star.le.ac.uk
etedesco@comcast.net
teixeira@astro.iag.usp.br
adelina.tempirova@mail.ru
giovanna.temporin@uibk.ac.at
theo@chara-array.org
gtt@inaoep.mx
tepper@astro.physik.uni-goettingen.de
eterlevi@inaoep.mx
rjt@inaoep.mx
fred.tettelbach@navy.mil
theis@astro.univie.ac.at
theureau@cnrs-orleans.fr
tholen@ifa.hawaii.edu

Holly **Thomas**, University of Manchester, Manchester, United Kingdom
 Sandrine **Thomas**, LAO (Laboratory of Adaptive Optics), Santa Cruz, USA
 Barbara **Thompson**, NASA, Greenbelt, USA
 Michael **Thompson**, University of Sheffield, Sheffield, United Kingdom
 William **Thuillot**, Imcce/Paris Observatory, Paris, France
 Jana **Ticha**, Klet Observatory, Ceske Budejovice, Czech Republic
 Milos **Tichy**, Klet Observatory, Ceske Budejovice, Czech Republic
 Evgeniy **Tikhomolov**, TRIUMF, Lab. for Nuclear and Particle Physics, Vancouver, Canada
 Andrey **Timokhin**, Sternberg Astronomical Institute, Moscow, Russian Federation
 Adrian **Tiplady**, SKA South Africa, Johannesburg, South Africa
 Olivier **Tiret**, LERMA, Observatoire de Paris, Paris, France
 Alan **Title**, Stanford-Lockheed Institute, Palo Alto, USA
 Oleg **Titov**, Geoscience Australia, Canberra, Australia
 Andrei **Tokovinin**, Cerro Tololo Inter-American Observatory, La Serena, Chile
 Charles **Tolbert**, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, USA
 Aleksandar **Tomic**, People's observatory, Belgrade, Serbia
 Kaori **Tomiyama**, Mito 2nd Highschool, Mito, Japan
 Juri **Toomre**, University of Colorado, Boulder, Boulder, USA
 Martin **Topinka**, AsU AV CR, Ondrejov, Czech Republic
 Maria Carmen **Toribio**, Universitat de Barcelona, Barcelona, Spain
 Gabriel **Török**, FDF SLV Opava, Opava, Czech Republic
 Olga **Toropina**, Spase Research Institute (IKI), Moscow, Russian Federation
 Andrea Fabiana **Torres**, National University of La Plata, La Plata, Argentina
 Guillermo **Torres**, Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics, Cambridge, USA
 Kelly **Torres**, Federal University of Minas Gerais/ Brazil, Bruxelles, Belgium
 Silvia **Torres-Peimbert**, Universidad Nacional Autonoma de Mexico, Mexico City, Mexico
 Tomoka **Tosaki**, Nobeyama Radio Observatory, Minamisaku, Japan
 Monica **Tosi**, INAF Osservatorio Astronomico di Bologna, Bologna, Italy
 Gino **Tosti**, University of Perugia, Perugia, Italy
 Tomonori **Totani**, Kyoto University, Kyoto, Japan
 L. Viktor **Toth**, Eötvös University, Budapest, Hungary
 Tommaso **Treu**, University of California Santa Barbara, Santa Barbara, USA
 Patrick **Treuthardt**, University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa, USA
 Virginia **Trimble**, Univ. of California & Las Cumbres Observatory, Irvine, USA
 Ginevra **Trinchieri**, INAF-OABr, Milano, Italy
 Konrad **Tristram**, MPI für Astronomie, Heidelberg, Germany
 Javier **Trujillo Bueno**, Instituto de Astrofisica de Canarias, La Laguna, Spain
 Sergei **Trushkin**, Special astrophysical observatory RAS, Nizhniy Arkhzy, Russian Federation
 Gregory **Tsarevsky**, Astro Space Center, Moscow, Moscow, Russian Federation
 Masato **Tsuboi**, National Astronomical Observatory, Japan, Minamisaku, Japan
 Takashi **Tsuji**, University of Tokyo, Mitaka, Japan
 Takuji **Tsujimoto**, National Astronomical Observatory of Japan, Tokyo, Japan
 Sachiko **Tsuruta**, Montana State University, Bozeman, USA
 Dmitry **Tsvetkov**, Sternberg Astronomical Institute, Moscow, Russian Federation
 Ilkka **Tuominen**, Observatory, Helsinki, Finland
 Marc **Turler**, INTEGRAL Science Data Centre, Versoix, Switzerland
 Jean **Turner**, UCLA, Los Angeles, USA
 David **Turnshek**, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, USA
 Catherine **Turon**, Observatoire de Paris, Meudon, France
 Taavi **Tuvikene**, Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Brussels, Belgium
 Anthony **Tyson**, University of California, Davis, Davis, USA
 Anastasios **Tzioumis**, ATNF, CSIRO, Epping, Australia
 Pietro **Ubertini**, IASF INAF, Rome, Italy
 Asif **Ud-Doula**, University of Delaware, Newark, USA
 Stephane **Udry**, Geneva University, Versoix, Switzerland
 Yoshihiro **Ueda**, Kyoto University, Kyoto, Japan
 Makoto **Uemura**, Hiroshima University, Higashi-Hiroshima, Japan
 Burak **Ulas**, Onsekiz Mart University, Canakkale, Turkey
 Ayse **Ulubay Siddiki**, MPI for Extraterrestrial Physics, Garching, Germany
 Andrea **Urban**, University of Texas at Austin, Austin, USA
 Sean **Urban**, U.S. Naval Observatory, Washington, USA
 Dejan **Urošević**, University of Belgrade, Belgrade, Serbia
 James **Urquhart**, University of Leeds, Leeds, United Kingdom
 Nilesh **Urunkar**, Persistent Systems Pvt. Ltd., Pune, India
 Vladimir **Usov**, Weizmann Institute of Science, Rehovot, Israel
 Petri **Vaisanen**, South African Astronomical Observatory, Observatory, South Africa
 Margarita **Valdez-Gutierrez**, OAN - IA - UNAM, Ensenada, Mexico
 Jacques P. **Vallee**, National Research Council Canada, Victoria, Canada
 David **Valls-Gabaud**, Observatoire de Paris, Meudon Cedex, France
 Giovanni **Valsecchi**, INAF, Roma, Italy
 William **Van Altena**, Yale University, New Haven, USA
 Gerard **van Belle**, California Institute of Technology, Pasadena, USA
 G. Wayne **Van Citters**, U.S. National Science Foundation, Arlington, USA
 Mario **Van den Ancker**, European Southern Observatory, Garching bei Munchen, Germany
 Else **Van den Besselaar**, Radboud University Nijmegen, Nijmegen, Netherlands
 Remco **van den Bosch**, Leiden Observatory, Leiden, Netherlands
 Edward **Van den Heuvel**, University of Amsterdam, Amsterdam, Netherlands
 Karel A. **van der Hucht**, National Institute for Space Research, Utrecht, Netherlands
 Thijs (J.M.) **Van der Hulst**, Kapteyn Astronomical Institute, Groningen, Netherlands
 Pieter **Van der Kruit**, Kapteyn Astronomical Institute, Groningen, Netherlands
 Johan **Van der Walt**, North-West University, Potchefstroom, South Africa
 Arjen **Van der Wel**, Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, USA
 Fleur **Van Dijl**, SPRINGER, Dordrecht, Netherlands
 Ewine **Van Dishoeck**, Leiden Observatory, Leiden, Netherlands
 Pieter **Van Dokkum**, New Haven, USA
 Wim **Van Driel**, Observatoire de Paris, Meudon, France
 Lidia **van Driel-Gesztelyi**, University College, London, United Kingdom
 Schuyler **Van Dyk**, California Institute of Technology, Pasadena, USA
 Walter **Van Hamme**, Florida International University, Miami, USA
 Ingrid **Van Houten-Groeneveld**, Leiden observatory, Leiden, Netherlands
 Joeri **Van Leeuwen**, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada
 Sven **van Loo**, University of Leeds, Leeds, United Kingdom
 Jacco **Van Loon**, Keele University, Keele, United Kingdom

h.thomas@postgrad.manchester.ac.uk
 ts_sandrine@yahoo.fr
 barbara.j.thompson@nasa.gov
 michael.thompson@sheffield.ac.uk
 thuillot@imcce.fr
 jticha@klet.cz
 mtichy@klet.cz
 tikh@triumf.ca
 atim@sai.msu.ru
 atiplady@ska.ac.za
 olivier.tiret@obspm.fr
 title@imsl.com
 oleg.titov@ga.gov.au
 atokovinin@ctio.noao.edu
 crt@virginia.edu
 atomic@aob.bg.ac.yu
 okamura.norio@mail.ibk.jp
 jtoomre@solarz.colorado.edu
 toast@asu.cas.cz
 mctoribio@am.ub.es
 terek@volny.ru
 toropina@iki.rssi.ru
 andy@carina.fcaglp.unlp.edu.ar
 gtorres@cfa.harvard.edu
 kbtorres@fisica.ufmg.br
 silvia@astroscu.unam.mx
 tomoka@nro.nao.ac.jp
 monica.tosi@oabo.inaf.it
 gino.tosti@fisica.unipg.it
 totani@kustastro.kyoto-u.ac.jp
 l.v.toth@astro.elte.hu
 tt@physics.ucsb.edu
 treut001@bama.ua.edu
 vtrimble@uci.edu
 ginevra.trinchieri@brera.inaf.it
 tristram@mpia.de
 jtb@iac.es
 satr@sao.ru
 tsar@lukash.asc.rssi.ru
 tsuboi@nro.nao.ac.jp
 ttsuji@ioa.s.u-tokyo.ac.jp
 tsujil@mac.com
 uphst@gemini.msu.montana.edu
 tsvetkov@sai.msu.su
 Ilkka.Tuominen@helsinki.fi
 marc.turler@obs.unige.ch
 turner@astro.ucla.edu
 turnshek@pitt.edu
 catherine.turon@obspm.fr
 taavi.tuvikene@vub.ac.be
 tyson@physics.ucdavis.edu
 Tasso.Tzioumis@csiro.au
 pietro.ubertini@iasf-roma.inaf.it
 asif@bartol.udel.edu
 stephane.udry@obs.unige.ch
 ueda@kustastro.kyoto-u.ac.jp
 uemuram@hiroshima-u.ac.jp
 bulash@gmail.com
 siddiki@exgal.mpe.mpg.de
 aurban@astro.as.utexas.edu
 seu@usno.navy.mil
 dejanu@matf.bg.ac.yu
 jsu@ast.leeds.ac.uk
 Nilesh.urunkar@persistent.co.in
 fnusov@wicc.weizmann.ac.il
 petri@saao.ac.za
 mago@astrosen.unam.mx
 jacques.vallee@nrc.gc.ca
 dvg@cft.hawaii.edu
 giovanni@iasf-roma.inaf.it
 vanalten@astro.yale.edu
 gerard@ipac.caltech.edu
 gvcantt@nsf.gov
 mvandena@eso.org
 besselaar@astro.ru.nl
 bosch@strw.leidenuniv.nl
 edvdh@science.uva.nl
 k.a.van.der.hucht@sron.nl
 vd hulst@astro.rug.nl
 vdkruit@astro.rug.nl
 fskdjvdw@puk.ac.za
 wel@pha.jhu.edu
 fleur.vandijl@springer.com
 ewine@strw.leidenuniv.nl
 dokkum@astro.yale.edu
 wim.vandriel@obspm.fr
 lvdg@mssl.ucl.ac.uk
 vandyk@ipac.caltech.edu
 vanhamme@fiu.edu
 vhouten@strw.leidenuniv.nl
 joeri@astro.ubc.ca
 svenvl@ast.leeds.ac.uk
 jacco@astro.keele.ac.uk

Walter Van Rensbergen, Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Brussel, Belgium
 Hugo van Woerden, Kapteyn Astron. Institute, Groningen, Netherlands
 Dany Vanbeveren, Astrophysical Institute, Brussels, Belgium
 Marek Vandas, Astronomical Institute, ASCR, Praha 4, Czech Republic
 Katerina Vanková, Nunciussidereus III, Tábor, Czech Republic
 Michal Varady, Astronomical Institute ASCR, Ondřejov, Czech Republic
 Jesus Varela, INAF-Osservatorio Astronomico di Padova, Padova, Italy
 Magda Vargha, Konkoly Observatory, Budapest, Hungary
 Evgenii Vasiliev, Tartu Observatory, Toravere, Estonia
 Iryna Vavilova, CRSTP NAS of Ukraine, Kyiv, Ukraine
 Luiz Paulo Vaz, Federal University of Minas Gerais, Belo Horizonte, Brazil
 Enrique Vazquez-Semadeni, UNAM, Morelia, Mexico
 Christian Veillet, Canada France Hawaii Telescope, Kamuela, USA
 Sylvain Veilleux, University of Maryland, College Park, USA
 Thangasamy Velusamy, Jet Propulsion Laboratory, Pasadena, USA
 Paolo Ventura, Observatory of Rome, MontePorzio Catone (RM), Italy
 Frank Verbunt, Astronomical Institute, Utrecht, Netherlands
 Lourdes Verdes-Montenegro, Instituto de Astrofisica de Andalucia, Granada, Spain
 Gijs Verdoes Kleijn, Rijksuniversiteit Groningen, Groningen, Netherlands
 Miguel Verdugo, Institut fuer Astrophysik Goettingen, Goettingen, Germany
 Jan Verfi, Nunciussidereus III, Praha 4, Czech Republic
 Daniela Vergani, INAF - IASF Milan, Milan, Italy
 Maria Marcela Vergne, Facultad de Ciencias Astronomicas y Geofisicas, La Plata, Argentina
 Anne Verhamme, Observatoire de Genève, Saclay, Switzerland
 Marc Verheijen, Kapteyn Astronomical Institute, Groningen, Netherlands
 Pierre Vernazza, Observatoire de Paris, Meudon, France
 Jean Vernin, Nice University, Nice, France
 Jan Veselý, University Hradec Králové, Hradec Králové, Czech Republic
 Enrico Vesperini, Drexel University, Philadelphia, USA
 Maxime Viallet, Observatoire Astronomique de Strasbourg, STRASBOURG, France
 Dmitri Vibe, Institute of Astronomy of the RAS, Moscow, Russian Federation
 Raimundo Vicente, Faculty of Sciences, Lisbon, Alges, Portugal
 Krisztián Vida, ELTE Budapest, Nagykanizsa, Hungary
 Edgardo Vidal Perez, Universiteit Gent, Gent, Belgium
 Erick Dennis Vidal Safor, Instituto Geofisico del Peru, Lima, Peru
 Alfred Vidal-Madjar, Institut d'Astrophysique de Paris, Paris, France
 Sonja Vidojević, Mathematical faculty, Belgrade, Serbia
 Jose M. Vilchez, Instituto de Astrofisica de Andalucia-CSIC, Granada, Spain
 Emmanuil Vilkoviskiy, Fesenkov Astrophysical Institute MON RK, Almaty, Kazakhstan
 Ilgonis Vilks, Institute of Astronomy, Riga, Latvia
 Alberto Angelo Vittone, INAF - Astronomical Observatory of Capodimonte, Naples, Italy
 Loukas Vlahos, University of Thessaloniki, Thessaloniki, Greece
 Wolfgang Voges, MPI for Extraterrestrial Physics, Garching, Germany
 Nicole Vogt, New Mexico State University, Las Cruces, USA
 Steven Vogt, Lick Observatory, Santa Cruz, USA
 David Vokrouhlický, Charles University, Prague, Prague 8, Czech Republic
 Nikolaus Volgenau, Universität zu Köln, Köln, Germany
 Bernd Vollmer, Observatoire de Strasbourg, Strasbourg, France
 Jan Vondrak, Astronomical Institute ASCR, Praha 4, Czech Republic
 Viktor Votruba, Astronomical Institute, ASCR, Ondřejov, Czech Republic
 Frederic Vrba, U.S. Naval Observatory, Flagstaff, USA
 Jan M. Vrřilek, Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics, Cambridge, USA
 Saeqa Vrřilek, Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics, Cambridge, USA
 Branislav Vukotić, Belgrade Astronomical Observatory, Belgrade, Serbia
 Takehiko Wada, JAXA/ISAS, Sagami, Japan
 Hermann-Friedrich Wagner, Ministry of Education and Research, Niederkassel, Germany
 William Wagner, NASA, Washington, USA
 Glenn Wahlgren, Lund Observatory, Lund, Sweden
 Richard Wainscoat, University of Hawaii, Honolulu, USA
 Nolan Walborn, Space Telescope Science Institute, Baltimore, USA
 Stefanie Walch, University Observatory, Munich, Germany
 Patrick Wallace, CCLRC/RAL, Didcot, United Kingdom
 Fabian Walter, Max Planck Institut fuer Astronomie, 69117 Heidelberg, Germany
 Nicholas Walton, University of Cambridge, Cambridge, United Kingdom
 Edward Waluska, James Cook University, La Quinta, USA
 Guomin Wang, Nanjing Institute of Astronomical Optics & Technology, CAS, Nanjing, China Nanjing
 Hongchi Wang, Purple Mountain Observatory, Nanjing, China Nanjing
 Jingxiu Wang, National Astronomical Observatories, Beijing, China Nanjing
 Jun-Jie Wang, National Astronomical Observatories, CAS, Beijing, China Nanjing
 Na Wang, Urumqi Observatory, NAOC, Urumqi, China Nanjing
 Shiya Wang, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Urbana, USA
 Yiping Wang, Purple Mountain Observatory, Nanjing, China Nanjing
 Brian Warner, University of Cape Town, Rondebosch, South Africa
 Jun-ichi Watanabe, National Astron. Obs. Japan, Mitaka, Japan
 Kenya Watarai, Osaka Kyoiku University, Kashiwara, Japan
 Paul Watson, University of Sydney, Sydney, Australia
 David Webb, Boston College, Hanscom AFB, USA
 Natalie Webb, Centre d'Etude Spatiale des Rayonnements, Toulouse, France
 Michael Weber, Astrophysikalisches Institut Potsdam, Potsdam, Germany
 Robert Weber, TU-Vienna, Vienna, Austria
 Rachel Webster, University of Melbourne, Parkville, Australia
 Sven Wedemeyer-Böhm, Kiepenheuer-Institut für Sonnenphysik, Freiburg, Germany
 Anne-Marie Weijmans, Leiden Observatory, Leiden, Netherlands
 Edward Weiss, Wesleyan University, Middletown, USA
 Achim Weiss, Max-Planck-Institut fuer Astrophysik, Garching, Germany
 Werner Weiss, University Vienna, Vienna, Austria
 Paul Weissman, Jet Propulsion Laboratory, Pasadena, USA
 Charles Weller, Sequim, USA
 William Wells, James Cook University, Olympia, USA
 Patrick Weltevrede, University of Amsterdam, Amsterdam, Netherlands
 Marc Wenger, Observatoire de Strasbourg, Strasbourg, France
 Julia Weratschnig, University of Innsbruck, Innsbruck, Austria
 Jessica Werk, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, USA
 wvanrens@vub.ac.be
 hugo@astro.rug.nl
 dvbevere@vub.ac.be
 vandas@ig.cas.cz
 phobo@centrum.cz
 varady@asu.cas.cz
 varela@pd.astro.it
 vargha@konkoly.hu
 eugstar@mail.ru
 vavilova@nas.gov.ua
 lpv@fisica.ufmg.br
 e.vazquez@astromo.unam.mx
 veillet@cft.hawaii.edu
 veilleux@astro.umd.edu
 velusamy@jpl.nasa.gov
 ventura@oa-roma.inaf.it
 verbunt@astro.uu.nl
 lourdes@iaa.es
 verdoes@astro.rug.nl
 mverdugo@astro.physik.uni-goettingen.de
 janverfi9@seznam.cz
 daniela@lambrate.inaf.it
 mvergne@fcaglp.unlp.edu.ar
 anne.verhamme@obs.unige.ch
 verheyen@astro.rug.nl
 pierre.vernazza@obsmp.fr
 vernin@unice.fr
 astrohk@astrohk.cz
 vesperin@physics.drexel.edu
 viallet@astro.u-strasbg.fr
 dwiebe@inasan.ru
 rovicente@gf.ul.pt
 vidakris@mail.com
 edgardoandres.vidalperez@ugent.be
 evidal@axil.igg.gob.pe
 alfred@iap.fr
 sonja@alas.matf.bg.ac.yu
 jvm@iaa.es
 vilk@aphi.kz
 vilks@latnet.lv
 vittone@na.astro.it
 vlahos@astro.auth.gr
 wolfgang.voges@mpe.mpg.de
 nicole@nmsu.edu
 vogt@ucolick.edu
 vokrouhl@mbox.cesnet.cz
 volgenau@ph1.uni-koeln.de
 bvollmer@astro.u-strasbg.fr
 vondrak@ig.cas.cz
 votruba@sunstel.su.cas.cz
 fjv@nofs.navy.mil
 jvrřilek@cfa.harvard.edu
 svrřilek@cfa.harvard.edu
 bvukotic@aob.bg.ac.yu
 wada@ir.isas.jaxa.jp
 Hermann-friedrich.wagner@ndh.net
 william.wagner@hq.nasa.gov
 glenn.wahlgren@astro.lu.se
 rjw@ifa.hawaii.edu
 walborn@stsci.edu
 swalch@usm.uni-muenchen.de
 P.T.Wallace@rl.ac.uk
 walter@mpia.de
 naw@ast.cam.ac.uk
 ewaluska@dc.rr.com
 gmwang@niaot.ac.cn
 hcwang@pmo.ac.cn
 wangjx@bao.ac.cn
 wangjj@bao.ac.cn
 na.wang@ms.xjb.ac.cn
 swang9@uiuc.edu
 ypwang@pmo.ac.cn
 warner@physci.uct.ac.za
 jun.watanabe@nao.ac.jp
 watarai@cc.osaka-kyoiku.ac.jp
 watson@physics.usyd.edu.au
 david.webb@hanscom.af.mil
 Natalie.Webb@cesr.fr
 mweber@aip.de
 rweber@mars.hg.tuwien.ac.at
 rwebster@physics.unimelb.edu.au
 sven@kis.uni-freiburg.de
 weijmans@strw.leidenuniv.nl
 eweis@wesleyan.edu
 aweiss@mpa-garching.mpg.de
 weiss@astro.univie.ac.at
 paul.r.weissman@jpl.nasa.gov
 cweller@olympen.com
 bill98502@msn.com
 wiltvrede@science.uva.nl
 wenger@astro.u-strasbg.fr
 Julia.Weratschnig@uibk.ac.at
 jwerk@umich.edu

Paul **Wesseli**, SRON, Groningen, Netherlands paul@sron.rug.nl
Patricia **Whitelock**, Astronomical Observatory University of Cape Town, South Africa paw@sao.ac.za
Alan **Whiting**, University of Birmingham, Birmingham, United Kingdom abw@star.sr.bham.ac.uk
Brad **Whitmore**, Space Telescope Science Institute, Baltimore, USA whitmore@stsci.edu
Anthony **Whitworth**, Cardiff University, Cardiff, United Kingdom anthony.Whitworth@astro.cf.ac.uk
Richard **Wielebinski**, MPI for Radioastronomy, Bonn, Bonn, Germany rwielebinski@mpifr-bonn.mpg.de
Tommy **Wiklind**, ESA/STScI, Baltimore, USA wiklind@stsci.edu
Iwan **Williams**, Queen Mary -London, London, United Kingdom i.p.williams@qmul.ac.uk
Robert **Williams**, Space Tel. Sci. Institute, Baltimore, USA wms@stsci.edu
Roy **Williams**, California Institute of Technology, Pasadena, USA roy@caacr.caltech.edu
Lee Anne **Willson**, Iowa State University, Ames, USA lwillson@iastate.edu
Robert **Willson**, Tufts University, Medford, USA rob.willson@tufts.edu
Robert E. **Wilson**, University of Florida, Gainesville, USA wilson@astro.ufl.edu
Thomas **Wilson**, European Southern Observatory, Garching, Germany twilson@eso.org
Robert **Wing**, Ohio State University, Columbus, USA wing@astronomy.ohio-state.edu
P. Frank **Winkler**, Middlebury College, Middlebury, USA winkler@middlebury.edu
Michael **Wise**, University of Amsterdam, Amsterdam, Netherlands wise@science.uva.nl
Edwin **Wnuk**, Astronomical Observatory of the AM University, Poznan, Poland wnuk@amu.edu.pl
Marek **Wolf**, Charles University Prague, Praha 8, Czech Republic wol@cesnet.cz
Gudrun **Wolfschmidt**, Hamburg University, Hamburg, Germany wolfschmidt@math.uni-hamburg.de
Scott **Wolk**, Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics, Cambridge, USA swolk@cfa.harvard.edu
Alexander **Wolszczan**, Pennsylvania State University, University Park, USA alex@astro.psu.edu
Anna **Wolter**, INAF - Osservatorio di Brera, Milano, Italy anna@brera.mi.astro.it
Lodewijk **Woltjer**, Obs. de Haute Provence, Saint-Michel l'Observatoire, France ulla.dw@bluewin.ch
Jong-Hak **Woo**, University of California at Santa Barbara, Santa Barbara, USA woo@physics.ucsb.edu
Peter **Wood**, Australian National University, Weston Creek, Australia wood@mso.anu.edu.au
William Michael **Wood-Vasey**, Harvard University, Cambridge, USA wmwood-vasey@cfa.harvard.edu
William **Wooden**, U.S. Naval Observatory, Washington, USA whw@usno.navy.mil
Henry **Wootten**, NRAO, Charlottesville, USA awootten@nrao.edu
Jason **Wright**, University of California, Berkeley, Berkeley, USA jwright@astro.berkeley.edu
Richard **Wunsch**, Astronomical Institute, ASCR, Prague, Czech Republic richard.wunsch@matfyz.cz
Rosemary **Wyse**, The Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, USA wyse@pha.jhu.edu
Meng **Xiang-Gruess**, Institut fuer Theoretische Astrophysik, Heidelberg, Germany m.xiang-gruess@gmx.de
Da Run **Xiong**, Purple Mountain Observatory, Nanjing, China Nanjing xiongr@pmo.ac.cn
Dawei **Xu**, National Astronomical Observatories of China, Beijing, China Nanjing dwxu@bao.ac.cn
Kadri **Yakut**, Ege Univesity, Izmir, Turkey kadri@ster.kuleuven.be
Masako **Yamada**, National Astronomical Observatory of Japan, Mitaka, Japan yamasako@th.nao.ac.jp
Yoshiyuki **Yamada**, Kyoto University, Kyoto, Japan yamada@amesh.org
Hiroaki **Yamamoto**, Nagoya University, Nagoya, Japan hiro@a.phys.nagoya-u.ac.jp
Hitomi **Yamanoi**, The Graduate University for Advanced Studies, Tokyo, Japan yamaniht@cc.nao.ac.jp
Hitoshi **Yamaoka**, Kyushu University, Fukuoka, Japan yamaoka@rc.kyushu-u.ac.jp
Yuki **Yanagisawa**, Mito 2nd Highschool, Mito, Japan okamura.norio@mail.ibk.edu.jp
Jiayan **Yang**, Yunnan Observatory, Kunming, China Nanjing yjy@ynao.ac.cn
Tinggao **Yang**, National Time Service Center CAS, Lintong Xian, China Nanjing yangtg@ntsc.ac.cn
Taihei **Yano**, National Astronomical Observatory of Japan, Tokyo, Japan yano.t@nao.ac.jp
Yongqiang **Yao**, National Astronomical Observatories of China, CAS, Beijing, China Nanjing yqyao@bao.ac.cn
Tahir **Yaqoob**, JHU/GSFC, Baltimore, USA yaqoob@pha.jhu.edu
Naoki **Yasuda**, University of Tokyo, Chiba, Japan yasuda@icrr.u-tokyo.ac.jp
Yaroslav **Yatskiv**, Main Astronomical Observatory NAS of Ukraine, Kyiv, Ukraine yatskiv@nas.gov.ua
Shuhua **Ye**, Shanghai Astronomical Observatory, CAS, Shanghai, China Nanjing ysh@shao.ac.cn
Howard **Yee**, Univ. of Toronto, Toronto, Canada hyee@astro.utoronto.ca
Lotfi **Yelles Chaouche**, MPI for solar system research, Katlenburg-Lindau, Germany yelles@mps.mpg.de
Donald **Yeomans**, NASA/JPL, Pasadena, USA donald.K.yeomans@jpl.nasa.gov
Aili **Yishamuding**, Urumqi observatory, NAOs,CAS, Urumqi, China Nanjing aliyi@ms.xjb.ac.cn
Peter **Yoachim**, University of Washington, Seattle, USA yoachim@astro.washington.edu
Takashi **Yoshida**, National Astronomical Observatory of Japan, Mitaka, Japan takashi.yoshida@nao.ac.jp
Makoto **Yoshikawa**, Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency, Sagamihara, Japan makoto@isas.jaxa.jp
James **Young**, Jet Propulsion Laboratory, Wrightwood, USA james.w.young@jpl.nasa.gov
Ruslan **Yudin**, Pulkovo Observatory, St.-Petersburg, Russian Federation ruslan61@gao.spb.ru
Joao **Yun**, Lisbon Observatory, Lisboa, Portugal yun@oal.ul.pt
Lev **Yungelson**, Institute of Astronomy, RAS, Moscow, Russian Federation lry@inasan.ru
Revaz **Yves**, Observatoire de Paris, Paris, France yves.revaz@obspm.fr
Norbert **Zacharias**, U.S. Naval Observatory, Washington, USA nz@usno.navy.mil
Erik **Zackrisson**, Tuorla Observatory, Piikkiö, Finland ez@astro.uu.se
Yulia **Zagaynova**, Institute of Solar-Terrestrial Physics SB RAS, Irkutsk, Russian Federation vikkey@iszf.irk.ru
Jean-Paul **Zahn**, Observatoire de Paris, Meudon, France jean-paul.zahn@obspm.fr
Alexander **Zakharov**, Institute of Theoretical and Experimental Physics, Moscow, Russian Federation zakharov@itep.ru
Vasily **Zakharov**, Max Planck Institute for Solar System Research, Katlenburg-Lindau, Germany zakharov@mps.mpg.de
Miloslav **Zejda**, ITPA Masaryk University, Brno, Czech Republic zejda@physics.muni.cz
Andreas **Zezas**, Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory, Cambridge, USA azezas@cfa.harvard.edu
Chengmin **Zhang**, National Astronomical Observatories, Beijing, China Nanjing zhengcm@bao.ac.cn
Hongqi **Zhang**, National Astronomical Observatories of China, Beijing, China Nanjing hzhang@bao.ac.cn
Jing **Zhang**, Purple Mountain Observatory, CAS, Nanjing, China Nanjing zjpmo@yahoo.com.cn
Shuang Nan **Zhang**, Tsinghua University, Beijing, China Nanjing zhangsn@mail.tsinghua.edu.cn
Xiaolei **Zhang**, US Naval Research Lab, Washington, USA xiaolei.zhang@nrl.navy.mil
Yang **Zhang**, Purple Mountain Observatory, CAS, Nanjing, China Nanjing zypmo@nrao.com.cn
Gang **Zhao**, National Astronomical Observatories, Beijing, China Nanjing gzhaob@bao.ac.cn
Meng **Zhao**, NAOC, Beijing, China Nanjing zhaomeng@ourstar.bao.ac.cn
Yongheng **Zhao**, National Astronomical Observatory of China, Beijing, China Nanjing yzhao@lamost.org
Vladimir **Zharov**, Sternberg Astronomical Institute, Moscow, Russian Federation zharov@sai.msu.ru
Jianfeng **Zhou**, Tsinghua University, Beijing, China Nanjing zhoujf@tsinghua.edu.cn
Jin **Zhu**, Beijing Planetarium, Beijing, China Nanjing jinzhu@bjpp.org.cn
Li-Ying **Zhu**, Yunnan Observatory, CAS, Kunming, China Nanjing lyzhu16@vip.sohu.com
Yongtian **Zhu**, Institute of Astronomical Optics & Technology, Nanjing, China Nanjing ytzhu@niaot.ac.cn
Zi **Zhu**, Nanjing University, Nanjing, China Nanjing zhuzi@nju.edu.cn
Bodo **Ziegler**, Institut fuer Astrophysik Goettingen, Goettingen, Germany bziegler@astro.physik.uni-goettingen.de
Hans **Zinnecker**, Astrophys. Inst. Potsdam, Potsdam, Germany hzinnecker@aip.de
Michael **Zolensky**, NASA, Houston, USA michael.e.zolensky@nasa.gov
Nadezhda **Zolotova**, St. Petersburg State University, St. Petersburg, Russian Federation ned@geo.phys.spbu.ru
Tomaš **Zwitter**, University of Ljubljana, Ljubljana, Slovenia tomaz.zwitter@mf.uni-lj.si
Piotr **Zycki**, Nicolaus Copernicus Astronomical Center, Warsaw, Poland ptz@camk.edu.pl
Robert **Zylka**, IRAM, Grenoble, France zylka@iram.fr