

Jeff Lichtman, Pres., Bob Patterson, Vice President, Jack Chancellor, Sec., Bob Baker, Treas.

## FROM THE UNION TO SOCIETY

The Concept is Unique...Yet Serves a Need for the  
Amateur Radio Astronomer

*The IUAA fails to meet any obligation of their organization to needs of the radio oriented astronomer.*

These are the resounding words uttered almost in unison by Jeffrey Lichtman, Major Bob Patterson, K5DZE, and Jack Chancellor, W9SON. Last winter, Jack fired a letter off to IUAA headquarters in Ireland and demanded representation of the American Chapter and recognition of their radio communication efforts to unite all amateur radio astronomers. "That our membership dues are not being fully represented," Jack stated in a lengthy letter.

The International Union of Amateur Astronomers' reply was befuddled, amazed, and mostly void of any future structure to aid the Americans in their loyal efforts.

Loyalty and membership declined (on the American side) as Jeff, Bob and Jack immediately saw the need for an organization tailored to the needs of the amateur radio astronomers, most of them already amateur radio operators. Therefore, SARA (Society of Amateur Radio Astronomers) was born.

SARA has a bright future ahead. There is no other organization like it that we know of. Considerable effort has gone into trying to give the membership something for its dues and its attention.

We are in no rush to expand," explained K5DZE, "but rather we seek a group of interested amateurs who want to try to expand amateur radio astronomy and to contribute to the field of science."

Much has been done so far, but much remains to be done.

At the present, the organizational details, correspondence and 100 other things have us in the paperwork stage," commented W9SON, Secretary of SARA.

"We want to get organized and get to the observation, coordination and correlation phase, said President Jeffrey Lichtman. Major Bob Patterson, K5DZE is Vice President.

Robert S. Baker, Treasurer stated, "This is an exciting time. I am excited about SARA."

Baker's excitement is well understood. The SARA Constitution has been adopted and signed by the four officers. Copies may soon be had upon request. Send an SASE to SARA, Office of the Secretary, 3305 Searles Avenue, Rockford, Illinois 61103.

Some of the things SARA is offering are - tapes of radio sources, books, computer programs, annual meeting and conventions, newsletters, instructional aids, ham radio communications, electronic aids and much more.

By the time you read this, K5DZE will carry his Voyager Observatory-CSY to Korea for a short (we hope) tour of duty. Jeff will still be intact at Feeding Hills, MA. Robert Baker works desperately in his Grafton Observatory in North Grafton, MA. W9SON's BETJAC Research Observatory has been dismantled

because of a new location. It will be known as Chancellor Radio Observatory (CRO) and is headquarters for SARA secretarial duties.

The mail addressed to the Radi Astronomy Net (RAN), a facility of the Radio Astronomy Commission (RAC) is still coming in from all parts of the world. Those who have sent the SARA secretary SASE's for the old RAN NEWSTTER will be honored by the new SARA NEWSLETTER. RAC was a chapter of the IUAA.

SARA, according to Lichtman, will also be affiliated with the Astronomical League.

"Also" SARA announced, "we expect to keep our newsletter in the high technical resource as it was with RAN - informative and educational."

The most difficult challenge SARA will meet is the organization of a radio astronomy net. W9SON's stint as a net controller met failure due to selection of a frequency where foreign broadcasts were of a higher level than that of the net. KSDZE took over the net with some moderate success. The problem here is that such a vast area is covered and Net Control will not be able to contact everyone; nor will everyone be able to contact Net Control.

Therefore, SARA is looking for some energetic member to assume the office of communication officer and run the SARA Net as he sees fit. W9SSON has suggested RTTY interludes only instead of a so-called "yakking net." His idea is to exchange information by RTTY (which many are now computerized) at certain intervals. A coded sequence at the beginning of the message would key the computers' cassette tape (or disk) of a SARA MEMBER and store the information to be displayed at any later date. An ambitious project indeed, but not inconceivable.

"It seems," explained W9SON, "that this method would eliminate the confusion and frustration of running a net in the voice portion of the band." He hopes some enterprising SARA member will help develop software (BASIC Program) to key interest along these lines.

These are the many facets of SARA, compatible information to its members. As a way of welcoming Charter Members into the Society, SARA is providing a special audio cassette tape free to the first 20 members.

That pulsar you see in the sky is SARA, flaring bright with hope for the future!

-Jack Chancellor, W9SON