

# **A.L.P.O. Staff Guidelines**

**3rd Edition**

**written and edited by**

**The A.L.P.O. Board of Directors**

**May 1, 2011**

Forward to the 3rd Edition

Dear Staff Member:

This third edition of the *A.L.P.O. Staff Guidelines* follows in content the original first and second editions. This third edition differs from the second addition in some respects. In addition to some editing for punctuation, capitalization and grammar, there are some minor content changes. There is an added emphasis on the importance of A.L.P.O. membership of A.L.P.O. Staff on page 4. More options have been given in communicating section development and issues to the Executive Director. Also, updated information has been inserted into the chapter concerning the A.L.P.O. awards. This edition is being sent out in a PDF format with hard copies available upon demand, free of charge. Thank you for your support of the A.L.P.O. through the donation of your time and toil as volunteer staff members. Without you there would be no A.L.P.O.!

Warmest regards,

Matthew Will  
Secretary and Treasurer  
May 1, 2011

Forward to the First Edition:

Dear Staff Member:

Enclosed is one copy of the newly published *A.L.P.O. Staff Guidelines*. This booklet is a handbook for managing A.L.P.O. Sections and Programs. It is intended to provide specifics concerning how the A.L.P.O.'s mission can best be served while providing guidance and assistance toward helping coordinators manage their own sections. It is not intended to micro manage A.L.P.O. sections or programs. The A.L.P.O. Board will always grant a wide latitude toward scientific creativity and control of program objectives to the coordinator. Understanding this, a broad outline of common goals and values that are already shared by A.L.P.O. Staff, are being presented here. Furthermore, supportive solutions for management of A.L.P.O. Sections are also being offered here too. This document is a collective editorial effort from the A.L.P.O. Board of Directors.

The *Guidelines* document expresses what is needed to maintain the A.L.P.O.'s mission. The directives can be defined under three different classes:

- Basic duties and tasks needed to run a section or program
- Highly recommended practices that are not mandatory
- Purely optional functions that may help coordinators in expanding their services

The importance and necessity of certain tasks in the first bullet point, while discussed throughout the entire document, are highlighted in the final chapter of the *Guidelines*.

The purpose of the *A.L.P.O. Staff Guidelines* is to clarify what is involved in maintaining and advancing A.L.P.O. sections and programs, particularly for newcomers to our Staff. More than just a communication vehicle, the *Guidelines* are meant to assist Staff grappling with situations and offering the means in carrying them out. Of course, working with the Board and its Executive Director is a "two way street". Staff feedback on section management and problems is essential in understanding Staff needs. While the A.L.P.O. Board and its Executive Director feel that certain standards for maintaining A.L.P.O. sections and programs must be sustained, the Board wants to be supportive of the A.L.P.O. Staff in every possible way. We are here to help.

It is through the tireless support of our Volunteer Staff that A.L.P.O. enjoys the finest reputation, amongst its members who contribute observations that keep the observing programs alive, and amongst the professionals outside our organization that use our data, research, and program materials. Strengthening our communications insures our success for the future.

Warmest regards,

Matthew L. Will  
For the A.L.P.O. Board  
January 31, 2003

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## I. INTRODUCTION

This document has been written to clarify the duties and responsibilities of the Association of Lunar and Planetary Observers (A.L.P.O.) Volunteer Staff. The A.L.P.O. Staff positions, while being strictly voluntary, do demand a certain level of commitment. These are positions that serve both science through research and the membership through the goods and services we provide. So, while A.L.P.O. Staff have considerable freedom to develop scientific programs for the betterment of our organization, they must maintain and advance the A.L.P.O. sections under their stewardship. Common sense? Yes! However, the A.L.P.O. Board of Directors believes additional amplification is needed to define Staff duties and responsibilities so that everyone understands the same goals and processes to achieve those goals.

The reader should not be overwhelmed by the multitude of tasks and goals that are introduced for the management of an A.L.P.O. section. Surely, the scope and magnitude of all the functions suggested in this handbook would take a team of coordinators to accomplish, and many of our sections have only one or two coordinators. Only the most basic of aims and goals will be attainable by the smaller staffed sections. Therefore, in this handbook there are some objectives that the A.L.P.O. Board considers necessary for the minimal success of a section. Other practices on these pages are highly recommended rather than mandatory, while still other items are purely optional. The importance and necessity of certain tasks will be expressed throughout this handbook and also highlighted in the final chapter.

The A.L.P.O. Board is happy to assist the Volunteer Staff with problems that it may encounter in managing an A.L.P.O. section. Hopefully, with the Board and Staff communicating with one another, the needs of the Staff member managing a section can be met while the aims and goals the A.L.P.O. are reached.

The A.L.P.O. Board of Directors  
January 31, 2003

## II. THE A.L.P.O. PHILOSOPHY

The purpose of the A.L.P.O. is to stimulate, coordinate and generally promote the study of the Solar System and associated phenomena. While this is the “end game” of the A.L.P.O., the means are accomplished through the section coordinators that serve to facilitate programs that are supported through membership activity. Coordinators support the organization and the membership through reporting their results and accomplishments for the general purview of the A.L.P.O.. The mission of the A.L.P.O. can best be expressed below.

### The A.L.P.O. Mission Statement

1. To encourage and coordinate regular and systematic investigations of the bodies of our Solar System with the equipment and methods normally available to amateur astronomers.
2. To analyze such data and to publish results [in the *Journal A.L.P.O.* and elsewhere] where they will be available to those doing research on such subjects.
3. To facilitate the exchange of ideas and, where practical, observing data among observers on a worldwide basis.
4. To help individual observers develop observing and reporting skills and to provide relevant training for new observers.
5. To encourage cooperation between amateur and professional astronomers, to carry out projects where the results are useful to professional scientists, and to utilize their advice and guidance.
6. To provide a forum for the exchange of information, ideas, and techniques, including new technologies, applicable to Solar System observing.
7. To provide a repository for the history of Solar System observations.
8. Whenever possible, Staff members should promote their work, the A.L.P.O. and lunar and planetary science. This can be done by communicating to not only the amateur astronomy community but to the public in various educational and media forums that may be available.

### III. APPLICATION FOR SECTION COORDINATORS

#### A. Qualifications

When an A.L.P.O. member wishes to apply for a section coordinator's position he or she should ask of themselves the following:

- Am I an avid observer? (where observing is apart of section operations)
- Do I have a good knowledge of astronomy and a detailed knowledge of my specialty?
- Do I keep myself thoroughly familiar with the current literature in my specialty area?
- Am I willing to correspond with observers and other interested parties on a regular basis?
- Can I write reports regularly?
- Do I have the abilities and temperament to work with others?
- Can I, whenever possible, attend astronomical meetings and use these opportunities to advance to the fullest the A.L.P.O. and the work of my section?

If you can answer yes to most these questions, then becoming an A.L.P.O. section coordinator may be right for you!

#### B. Applying for the Position of Coordinator/Assistant Coordinator

You may already know something about the section that you are wanting to lead, or you may want to start a new A.L.P.O. section. Regardless, a simple proposal in the form of an outline or letter should be submitted to the A.L.P.O. Executive Director defining the structure and goals of the section and how they will be met.

#### **Provisional Status/Permanent Status**

This proposal for assuming control over a section or creating a new section shall be reviewed by the Executive Director. The Executive Director may share this information with the A.L.P.O. Board of Directors, or he or she can may unilaterally approve the appointment of an A.L.P.O. member to a Staff level position. He may also approve a new program or a revised program. Under this scenario, the proposed section and/or applicant is granted "provisional status". In the latter case, for "provisional sections", the applicant is appointed as an "acting section

coordinator” for the section he or she wishes to manage. “Acting section coordinator” status is also defined for persons succeeding others vacating that position in previously established sections and programs. This probationary status should be no shorter than two years, and may be longer at the Board’s discretion. Following the probationary period, “permanent status” can be granted by an A.L.P.O. Board vote. The purpose of the “provisional status” is to monitor the need for a new section and/or the performance of the acting coordinator. If the A.L.P.O. Board is satisfied with the performance of the acting section coordinator then “permanent status” is conferred to the section and/or Staff member. The section is considered in “good standing” and will continue to have that status as it meets the needs of its participants and the A.L.P.O.. A.L.P.O. membership is a requirement for all Staff appointments.

### **Board Oversight of Provisional Appointments**

The A.L.P.O. Board shall exercise oversight for provisional appointments. This means that any provisional appointment by the Executive Director can be overruled by a majority vote of the A.L.P.O. Board. This doesn’t mean that provisional appointments need to be Board approved. The Executive Director has the freedom to make provisional Staff appointments without a formal Board endorsement until review of provisional appointments at next Board meeting. However, an appointment can be rescinded by a Board majority vote.

### **Appointing and Dismissing Powers**

The Executive Director and the A.L.P.O. Board of Directors will have the sole authority for appointing and dismissing both provisional and permanent Staff members from their post. This authority will not be extended or transferred to non-board members.

### **The Importance of Maintaining A.L.P.O. Membership**

A.L.P.O. membership is a requirement for maintaining a volunteer staff position. Staff that are also dues paying members, encourage others to consider an A.L.P.O. membership that are already contributing to our observing programs. More paid members strengthens the A.L.P.O. to facilitate its mission and outreach. Staff members that let their A.L.P.O. memberships lapse and ignore repeated renewal notices will be subject to removal (either by the A.L.P.O. Board or by the Executive Director depending on the status of the Staff member) four weeks after the third renewal notice is sent to the lapsed Staff member.



## IV. SECTION STRUCTURE

### A. **Personnel**

#### **Section Coordinator**

The section coordinator, a voluntary position in the A.L.P.O., manages an A.L.P.O. section and is chiefly responsible for the section's productivity. The section coordinator oversees what could be a wide variety of functions in the section. This can include producing section literature and reports, corresponding with A.L.P.O. members and people outside the A.L.P.O., and archiving and managing data and information within the section. A daunting task to be managed by one person, the section coordinator can delegate responsibilities through appointed “assistant coordinator(s)”, initially approved by the Executive Director.

#### **Assistant Coordinator**

Assistant coordinators can be chosen by the section coordinator to assist the section, subject to approval through the A.L.P.O. approval process described earlier. First provisional status must be granted by an act of the A.L.P.O. Executive Director, and later permanent status must be granted by an act of the A.L.P.O. Board. Larger sections will demand more manpower. There should be one lead coordinator per section or observing program but there is no set limit on the number of assistant coordinators for a section. It is up to the principal coordinator to assess workloads and the scope of the entire program and what resources are needed to carry it out. There should be one lead coordinator unless there are fully independent programs in a section, i.e. the Lunar Section.

#### **Section Management Skills**

Much of this handbook will introduce concepts, products, or vehicles the section coordinator can produce to advance an effective section program. Before we discuss these particular items perhaps we should examine the qualities and attributes needed to manage a section.

An A.L.P.O. section coordinatorship demands exceptional managerial skills. In the past, successful section coordinators have demonstrated these five qualities:

- **Leadership**

Crafting an organized plan for an observing program or section project and communicating it through official section literature as well as personal correspondence.

- **Competency**

Knowing your subject and expressing your knowledge effectively and accurately.

- **Credibility**

Producing findings and results on a timely basis that communicates not just information and data but your commitment and enthusiasm from this program.

- **Engagement**

Every effort should be made to cultivate enduring acquaintships with observers. Reliable observers should be encouraged to become members of the A.L.P.O. so that they can see their result of their work in print.

- **Stewardship**

The A.L.P.O. has enjoyed a special reputation among amateurs and professionals as an organization that enhances and contributes to the needs of both groups. Carrying on the tradition of the A.L.P.O. and properly managing a program in an organized manner insures continuity of the A.L.P.O. program into the future. This includes a willingness to keep materials organized so that they can be passed on to the next coordinators.

## **Scientific Consultants**

Whenever possible, the coordinator should forge ties with the scientific community, seeking guidance through a professional astronomer/scientist as a consultant. This person can act as a gateway for presenting A.L.P.O. observational results to the larger scientific community and can steer the section toward more useful forms of research. More will be said about this later.

## **B. Accountability**

The section coordinator is a primary contact for members interested in participating in the A.L.P.O.'s observing programs or other activities. As a representative of the A.L.P.O., it is important that all Staff members conduct the business of the A.L.P.O. in a proper and responsible manner. This insures respect and loyalty for the observing program and the A.L.P.O. at large, making a more cohesive and better functioning organization. More will be said about this topic in Chapter V.

## V. SECTION LITERATURE

Inevitably, an A.L.P.O. section must produce literature about itself and its activities whether they be observational programs or other endeavors. Service related sections where the primary goal is interaction between Section Staff and members will still need literature to communicate their primary objectives to the membership. In short, the A.L.P.O. lives by the written word! The following encompasses the range of activities related to producing literature for the A.L.P.O.. It is appropriate that users be charged for cost incurred supplying them with information although such cost should be not exceed actual cost for producing and distributing such materials.

### A. Standardize Observing Methods and Program Guidance

Coordinators should make every effort to standardize program guidance. This includes standardizing observing methods and reporting forms for observing programs. Whether the program is centered around observing or some other activity or service, literature needs to be created for the program that defines its objectives and goals. When possible, general methods and procedures (e.g. seeing scale) should be standardized with all other sections that execute these standards.

#### Start-Up Observing Kits, Simplified Literature, or Brochures

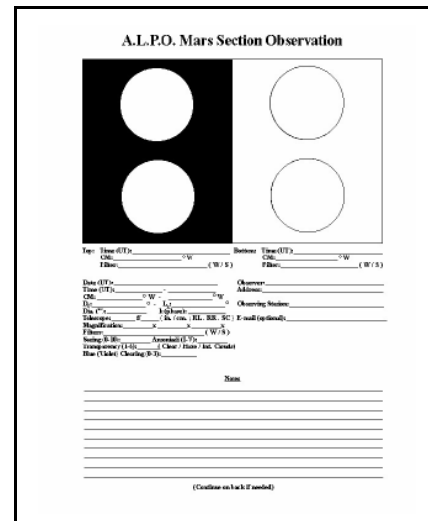
For an A.L.P.O. observing program, introductory literature should be provided for beginning observers. Such a “start-up” observing kit would offer enough information to get the novice primed for the observing of a particular solar system object. This kit would include:

- Simplified handbook (observing program protocol)
- Observing examples
- Ephemerides for the year or apparition, including finding charts if appropriate.

A simplified handbook would briefly describe the observing program protocol: the procedures to performing an observation and documenting it correctly. Examples of observations done correctly should be provided. A supply of observing forms should be included in the kit, and perhaps ephemerides for the solar system object under study as well. Whatever will help get the observer started is appropriate.

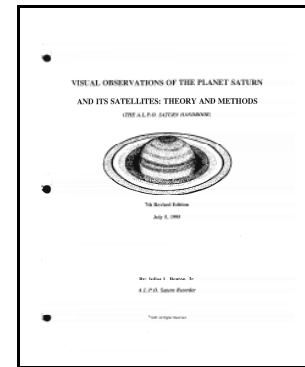
### B. Advanced Observing Manuals

Advanced, more detailed manuals can be produced if



The image shows a form titled "A.L.P.O. Mars Section Observation". It features two columns of circular diagrams for observation. The left column has two solid black circles, and the right column has two white circles with black outlines. Below the diagrams is a data entry section with fields for "Top Time (UT)", "Bottom Time (UT)", "Date (UT)", "Obs. #", "Filter", "Seeing (W/S)", "Observer", "Address", "Observing Station", "Mag/Filter", "Apparition (UT)", and "How (V/L/B/C/Other)". There are also lines for "Notes" and a footer that says "(Continue on back if needed)".

needed by the section for the advanced amateur. This information might consist of detailed technical discussions about the solar system object including instructions concerning observing techniques that require careful, detailed explanations. Also, a recommended reading list would be helpful for those wanting to pursue their studies of the object further. Such a list could include standard reference materials that complement the text of the handbook.



## C. Section Newsletters

### **Purpose**

A section newsletter is a desirable vehicle for disseminating section-specific news to participating observers, although reports of more general interest are more appropriately published in the *A.L.P.O. Journal*. An regular circular has many purposes and advantages for an A.L.P.O. section.

- **Unites the Observing Section**

Keeping in touch with observers encourages them to be productive contributors. Think of it as the "gluing" together of your observer-base. A well-written newsletter serves to keep people interested and feeling like they belong to something active and purposeful.

- **Dissemination of Time-Critical Info**

In addition to uniting observers in the section, having first hand time-critical information can lead to better observing data from them.

- **Reducing the Burden of Corresponding**

Finally, "broadcasting" information can help reduce the burden of having to individually write letters or make phone calls to everyone in the observing section concerning current events. However, the newsletter should not be used as an excuse for not keeping one's correspondence up-to-date.

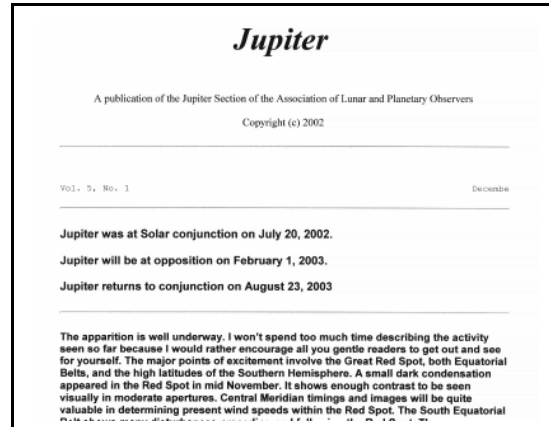
- **Newsletters and the Web**

Given the opportunities of the electronic age, the newsletter can be sent via e-mail or posted on the A.L.P.O. Web Site. Understanding that not all observers are on-line, the section coordinator should also offer a hard-copy newsletter in return for a supply of self-addressed stamped envelopes.

## Selections of Items

Such a newsletter can:

- Disseminate immediate news about observations or section events.
- Instruct in the latest observing techniques/advancements.
- Single out achievements of section observers or participants.
- Acquaint observers with section staff and facilitate communication of important section news to observing program members.
- Contain discussions about professional interaction and coordination with the A.L.P.O. section.



## D. Apparition or Progress Reports to the JALPO

### For Each Apparition or Annually

The chief goal of any A.L.P.O. section is to have timely reports of its accomplishments and other activities that support the section's mission. These would appear in the *Journal of the Association of Lunar and Planetary Observers (JALPO)* on an annual or apparitional basis. For observing programs, these would be the **apparition reports** summarizing an observing season's events for the observed planet or solar system phenomenon. For non-observing sections not related to a specific solar system subject, these would be simple **progress reports**. The framework of such a report would be based on the goals and objectives of the program as presented by the coordinator to the A.L.P.O. Executive Director when the section was proposed or when the coordinator assumed control of the section.

For observing programs, regular **apparition reports** must be written. The importance of apparition reports can not be emphasized too much. The primary job of an A.L.P.O. observing section is to collect observations, analyze them, and report on the results. Indeed, that is the primary job of the A.L.P.O. itself. We serve as an vehicle for people seeking an outlet for their desire to observe the Solar System and advance science. Also the A.L.P.O. is a resource for professionals interested in our data and results. Therefore, communicating our results periodically through reports covering an observing season's events for a planet or solar system phenomena is essential.

*The Strolling Astronomer*

**ALPO Feature**  
**The Uranus, Neptune and Pluto Apparitions in 2001**

By Richard W. Schmude, Jr., coordinator,  
ALPO Remote Planets Section

**Abstract**

The selected V (1.0) values for Uranus, Neptune and Pluto + Charon are  $-7.53 \pm 0.01$ ,  $-7.01 \pm 0.02$  and  $-0.93 \pm 0.10$ , respectively. Photoelectric magnitudes made since 1927 suggest that the southern hemisphere of Uranus is darker than the northern hemisphere; furthermore, the record shows that Uranus dimmed after its solstices in 1946 and 1985. Based on the 08 September 2001 Titania occultation event, an upper limit of 1.0 microrbar is selected for the surface atmospheric pressure of that moon.

**Introduction**

In March 2002, the Advanced Camera for Surveys was installed in the Hubble Space Telescope (HST) (Cowan, 2002a, 132, 2002b, 163). This camera has twice the resolution of the previous camera on HST. A second major development has been the tentative approval of a Pluto probe that will arrive at Pluto

Roe and co-workers (2001, 1636) used 3- and 10-meter telescopes to study a thick cloud on Neptune at the 4 bar level. They report that the cloud is probably composed of H<sub>2</sub>S (hydrogen sulfide) and that it has albedos of 0.23 and 0.18 at wavelengths of 1.27 and 1.56 micrometers, respectively. Martin and co-workers (2001, 1079) used the Keck II telescope to investigate the speeds of bright features at 12 different latitudes and concluded that the wind profile on Neptune was the same in 2001 as it was in 1989.

Grundy and Buie (2001, 248) imaged the infrared spectra of (Pluto + Charon) on 83 different nights

**Table 1: Contributors to the ALPO Remote Planets Section in 2001**

Name	Location	Type of Observation
Patrick Abbott	AB, Canada	VP
Michael Amato	CT, USA	C
Ray Berg	W, USA	C, V
Norman Boiziar	NY, USA	C, V

Every section coordinator, whether that person manages an observing section or a non-observing section, represents a broad community of astronomers. Section coordinators:

- Represent the amateur astronomers that participate in the programs and contribute to its success.
- Serve as liaisons to the professionals that seek data from the sections and offer advise on collecting data.
- Act as ambassadors for the A.L.P.O. to the greater astronomical community that does not otherwise come in contact with our organization.

It is through and because of our A.L.P.O. members and program participants that we represent the best of amateur astronomy. Therefore, it is important how we project ourselves as Staff members. In all cases, our productivity is the measure of our success and how we are judged by others. The apparition reports are our finest product and the justification for our existence.

### **Approach to Writing Apparition or Progress Reports**

Some consideration needs to be given to composing an apparition report in the proper standard of content, English, and format. While technical writing skills are not a requirement in composing an apparition report, careful attention to details is critical in conveying the credibility of the observations and the entire report itself. Correct spelling, punctuation, and grammar will aid in making the *JALPO* Editor's role easier. Again, great literary skills are not required. However, as with any writing project, a certain amount of planning and preparation is necessary. Conscientious work is its own reward. Consult the editorial submissions policy on the A.L.P.O. Web Site or contact the *JALPO* Publisher for a copy of this important guidance document. Of course, the lines of communication should always be open between the editors and the coordinator to assure a smooth course toward publication of apparition reports.

While scientific content and accuracy are important, Staff members should write their articles using language which invites rather than intimidates the reader. Certainly, it should be possible to do this without sacrificing the scientific value of the apparition or progress report. Indeed, the report is more valuable if more people read it. The goal here is not to impress people with our knowledge but to disseminate our information in a reader-friendly manner.

### **E. Journal Submissions by Others**

One further word on editorial policies for submissions to the *Journal*. Coordinators may be called upon from time to time, to peer review scientific paper submissions. These papers may come from persons writing on topics that are apart of the areas of study concerning the coordinator's section or program. Coordinators are encouraged to review these papers with the same objectivity that their own submitted papers undergo for publication in the *Journal*.

## F. The A.L.P.O. Web Site

The section coordinators should take full advantage of the A.L.P.O. Web Site. The A.L.P.O. Web Administrator can assist in posting section literature that can be readily transferred to the site. It should be noted that server space limitations may restrict the types and forms of literature that can be posted on the A.L.P.O. Web Site. Below are listing of types of literature acceptable for the web site:



- E-mail addresses of coordinators and assistant coordinators and their subspecialties
- A mission statement about the program
- Observing forms and introductory literature
- Selected observations by members
- Related web site addresses

Coordinators are encouraged to post more extensive literature that demands more server space on independent servers that can be linked to the A.L.P.O. Web Site. This literature includes:

- The section newsletter
- Advanced handbooks
- A reading list
- Previously published section reports

So, many of the goods and services offered by a section or program to its participants, can be facilitated with ease through the A.L.P.O. Web Site.

Section coordinators should be aware that not all A.L.P.O. members and participants have world wide web access. Printed literature should be available from the section coordinator for postal mailing at a nominal cost to the member.

Also, the web site must not be a substitute for submissions of scientific papers to the *JALPO* since the *JALPO* is still recognized as the medium of record for our organization by the astronomical community, both amateur and professional. In addition, the *Journal* reaches a wider audience than those who have access to or care to browse our web site.

## **G. Archiving**

### **The Purpose**

Naturally section coordinators will want to maintain well-organized files. If for no other reason than having an organized approach for retrieving and analyzing observations and data, a common filing system can aid sections that have multiple coordinators sharing data on similar projects. Also, a well-organized filing system can be easily passed along to the next coordinator.



### **A Working Method**

Providing for the safety and accessibility of the observations received is an important long-term goal of the A.L.P.O.. For future A.L.P.O. studies and scientific posterity, it is extremely important that we preserve and protect the increasingly vast storehouse of data and records of the A.L.P.O.. In the past, original observations on paper and other paper records have been the only means of maintaining section data and information. Preserving paper documents indefinitely poses special problems for their care and handling. Some of our older sections now have observations spanning 50 years or more. As time goes on, it becomes riskier to store these documents in a private residence as opposed to an institutional setting (a library or museum). Under the current situation there is always the risk of a sudden loss of the original observations through destruction of the section coordinator's home by flood, wind, or fire.

With the advent of electronic digital recording through computers, observations and section information can be preserved indefinitely. Section files can be duplicated and maintained as a computer database through scanners and transferred to current storage media (at present, compact disc). Copies of these media can be made and kept at separate geographic locations. In addition to being protected against the ravages of time and catastrophes, multiple copies can be shared with A.L.P.O. Staff, professionals, and other organizations. Sections should make the computerized archiving of its observational files a vital and immediate goal. Archiving is an ongoing task not only in terms of adding new information, but also in transferring old data on obsolescent media to current media.



The A.L.P.O. Board or Computing Section will be happy to offer further guidance and suggestions about the electronic archiving of section records. Understanding the constraints with time and resources, the Board may be able to provide or locate assistance in these matters.

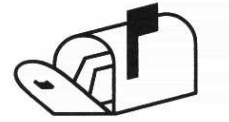


## VI. SECTION COMMUNICATIONS

### A. Observer/Participant Correspondence

#### Answering Replies

One important aspect of section management is keeping up with correspondence addressed to the section coordinator. Correspondence may include:



- Acknowledgments of observations being sent to the section for analysis.
- Inquiries regarding participation and general interest in the section's observing program or non-observing activities.
- Requests for goods and services.

Letters should be answered promptly, politely, and informatively. Correspondence should be answered within three weeks of receipt. E-mail should be answered sooner; however, the coordinator should not be oppressed by the volume and size of e-mail coming in and should prioritize the order of his or her replies. Nor should a Staff member feel constrained to answer e-mail so promptly that the response is incomplete or misleading.

It is also recognized that Staff members should expect to receive self-addressed stamped envelopes (SASE) from persons writing to them. Whenever possible, coordinators should answer letters even if an SASE was not provided. This is especially true for international members who may not have adequate means at their disposal to furnish return postage (though it should be pointed out that overseas members living in Universal Postal Union countries can readily furnish International Reply Coupons to coordinators). However, answering letters without return postage is at the discretion of the coordinator.

#### Philosophy

Observers must be corresponded with, perhaps trained, and certainly encouraged on a regular basis. Regardless of how motivated observers may be to serve science in the beginning, they must receive some feedback from the people receiving their observations or that motivation will die. No one will continue to pour their observations into a black hole when no recognition is forthcoming through personal correspondence or the section reports published in the *JALPO*.

Likewise, all inquiries should be acted upon in a timely manner so that inquirers do not lose interest in waiting for a reply.

In regard to offering goods and services supplied by an A.L.P.O. section, these can be

advertised on the A.L.P.O. Web Site or in the *Journal*. Coordinators and other Staff should charge only for cost of preparation, printing, and distribution of literature and observing forms.

Items such as handbooks or other tangible goods that are offered for sale must already exist when advertised. Accepting money for products that don't exist can be cause for immediate dismissal. It also imposes an additional risk of possible legal action by the U.S. Postal Service upon individual Staff members who do not fulfill such purchases. The A.L.P.O.'s integrity is dependent upon the honesty and dependability of its staff. The entire organization suffers when one person misrepresents him or herself and their section by overselling their cause. Let's provide only those products that are already available, doing so in a responsible manner.

## **B. Communicating with Other Related Amateur Organizations**

International cooperation with organizations like the B.A.A. and the O.A.A. has become an essential responsibility of some section coordinators. Such sharing of information not only improves the image and prestige of A.L.P.O. but also rounds out our databases and creates mechanisms for worldwide alerts concerning time-dependent phenomena.

## **C. Professional Correspondence**

### **Researchers**

A.L.P.O. observing sections should attempt to forge strong ties with the professional community. For many years the A.L.P.O. has been recognized for its contributions to the science of astronomy. That recognition has come from professional astronomers familiar with particular programs in the A.L.P.O. that match their areas of interest and expertise. In the past, awareness of an observing program by the professional usually came about through section coordinators initiating correspondence with the professional, introducing the A.L.P.O. and the observing program they were managing, and asking for guidance on specific matters of common interest. Much can be learned and an exchange of ideas can occur from this mutual cooperation as the coordinator fine tunes his or her research and the professional astronomer studies the program's data. But most professionals have never heard of the A.L.P.O., so the initiative has to come from the A.L.P.O. section coordinator.



Seeking out and familiarizing oneself with the professional landscape can come by way of reviewing professional journals and books that provide expanded references and bibliographies as well as by attending professional conferences. One can also explore the internet in search of professional astronomers interested in your section's area of coverage. The A.L.P.O. Board may be of some help in guiding coordinators toward fruitful alliances with the professional astronomy community.

### **Popular Magazines and Professional Journals**

Enhancing the stature of the A.L.P.O. and your section should be a long-term goal. After an observing program has been established, one might further seek recognition through publications outside the A.L.P.O.. Popular magazines such as *Sky & Telescope* and *Astronomy* accept feature articles from amateurs who are in a position to comment about topics in astronomy because of their intimate knowledge acquired through managing an observing program. Also, the A.L.P.O. Publicist stands ready to help you publicize your section's activities and discoveries. When writing such an article one should not merely write about the subject in which they have an interest but should also identify themselves with the A.L.P.O. and the program they are managing. Such an opportunity to spotlight the section should not be missed. The A.L.P.O. and your section will always benefit from such publicity.

#### **D. Conventions**

It is quite understandable that A.L.P.O. Staff cannot attend every convention for every year they are on staff. Affordability of traveling and personal commitments may not always make attendance possible. Staff should make the effort to attend conventions at least every three to four years. While participation is never mandatory at a convention, your presence will benefit those who can attend and learn about your section and your interest in the program you manage.

Delivering a paper at the convention about section news and activities is even better! It brings more attention to the section and your program. The paper does not have to be limited to just a progress report on the section. Some fine scientific papers have been delivered at conventions on topics ranging from observing techniques to historical accounts of amateur astronomy's past.



Also, field trips, luncheons, and other social events allow you to meet, converse, and share experiences with Staff, members, and other speakers. A small display about your section and its work is always very welcome. The convention is an excellent venue for encouraging beginners to participate in your program while at the same time discussing problems in science with more advanced amateurs.

#### **E. Other Amateur and Professional Conferences**

An A.L.P.O. section coordinator should, whenever possible, attend astronomical meetings outside the A.L.P.O.'s and use these opportunities to advance to the fullest the A.L.P.O., and the work of your section. Staffers should accept invitations to speak at meetings other than A.L.P.O. conferences, such as at local astronomical societies. When voicing personal opinions on a topic, a staff member should distinguish their own views from the A.L.P.O.. Attending such conferences can be a great way to make A.L.P.O. visible to the amateur community at large.

**F. Section Communications with the Executive Director**

The lead coordinator for each section within the A.L.P.O. will provide annual reports communicating the current status for each section. Of course, status reports are not apparition reports. These reports only deal with the activities of the section as noted below. Reports should be brief, no more than a page or two, and should include:

- **Listing of current activity in the section**
  - programs
  - accomplishments
  - participation levels
  
- **Publication status**
  - what has been published?
  - where?
  
- **Section problems**
  - staff
  - resources
  
- **Managerial considerations**
  - archiving
  - miscellaneous

Annual reports should be sent to the Executive Director in the month of May. Such reports that have recently appeared in the *Journal A.L.P.O.* can be an adequate substitute for direct reports to the Executive Director.

## VII. AWARDS

The A.L.P.O. offers two awards. The Walter H. Haas Observer's Award and the Peggy Haas Service Award.

### A. The Walter H. Haas Observer's Award

The Walter H. Haas Observer's Award is bestowed annually (generally when the A.L.P.O. meets in the summer), to an amateur astronomer for excellence in observational Solar System astronomy. This award is named after our founder and original executive director, and was established in 1985. The selection of this award is conducted by a committee convened by its committee chairman, Walter H. Haas. The composition of the committee changes from year to year so that the responsibility of selection is shared by a wider group of members in the A.L.P.O. that are well qualified, while allowing others that vote one year, to be considered for the award in another year, when not serving on the committee.



Walter Haas, courtesy of Bob Maxey

This award is given for excellence in Solar System observational amateur astronomy. Work done as part of the observer's job must be regarded as professional work and is not considered as an amateur effort for this award. However, a professional astronomer can be recognized for work done when he or she was an amateur. Theoretical research, the publishing of papers, astronomical correspondence, financial support of amateur projects, and many other meritorious astronomical activities must likewise be ignored in choosing the awardee (the A.L.P.O. does have another award, the Peggy Haas Award, which can recognize such outstanding services, discussed later, in this chapter). The awardee need not be an active observer at the present time, nor does he or she need to be alive. Nor is this award for observations in any particular year or other time interval. Thus the Award in the present year might be for contributions in the 20th Century. There is absolutely no requirement that the awardee be a citizen or resident of the United States. It is enjoyable when the awardee can attend the A.L.P.O. Convention at which the presentation is to be made, but this matter also is no criterion for the selection of the awardee. It is, however, required that the awardee well represent the ideals of the A.L.P.O..

The Award itself consists of an engraved plaque. The awardee also receives a two-year complimentary membership in the A.L.P.O.. The previous recipients are listed below in alphabetical order with the year that they received the Award.

Richard Baum.....(2005)	Christopher Go.....(2008)	Detlev Niechoy.....(2010)
Jeff Beish.....(1989)	Gordon Garcia.....(2000)	Jose Olivarez.....(1993)
Phillip W. Budine.....(1992)	Alan W. Heath.....(1998)	Dr. Donald Parker.....(1986)
Charles ("Chick") Capen.....(1985)	Alika Herring.....(1991)	Damian Peach.....(2004)
Tom Cave.....(1996)	Richard Hill.....(1999)	Christophe Pellier.....(2007)
Tom Cragg.....(2009)	David Levy.....(1987)	Elmer J. Reese.....(1995)
Dr. Jean Dragesco.....(1990)	Don Machholz.....(1994)	Richard Schmude.....(2002)
William Dembowski.....(2006)	Frank Melillo.....(2001)	Dr. John E. Westfall.....(1988)
Mario Frassati.....(2003)	Isao Miyazaki.....(1997)	

**B. The Peggy Haas Service Award**



Peggy (formally Beryl E.) Haas, circa 1954, courtesy of Walter H. Haas

The Peggy Haas Award was established to recognize a member of the A.L.P.O. for outstanding service to our organization. This award was named after our founder's late wife, for her past support of the A.L.P.O. in many meaningful and indispensable ways from assisting her husband with the *Journal*, to creating a banner that hangs in front of the rostrum at A.L.P.O. paper sessions at our annual meetings. She was also the A.L.P.O.'s Librarian for its book lending service from 1966 to 1985. The award was inaugurated in 1997. The current Executive Director solely selects the recipient for this award. The Peggy Haas Award can recognize an A.L.P.O. officer, board member, volunteer staff member, or non staff member that has contributed outstanding service in some way to the organization, in a capacity excluding observational skills (observational skills are

recognized by the Walter H. Haas Award). Considered not to be an annual award, presentation will occur when appropriate and not at any specific time interval. The Award itself consists of an engraved plaque. The awardee also receives a lifetime membership in the A.L.P.O..

Past recipients the Peggy Haas Service Award are listed below in alphabetical order with the year that they received the Award.

- Walter H. Haas.....(1997)
- Richard E. Hill.....(2005)
- Harry D. Jamieson.....(2001)
- Don Machholz.....(2000)
- Kenneth T. Poshedly.....(2010)
- Elizabeth W. Westfall.....(2004)
- John E. Westfall.....(1998)
- Matthew L. Will.....(2003)

## VIII. SUMMARY

What has been presented in this handbook has been a road map for successfully managing an A.L.P.O. section program. Like many main highways, the path toward success has many avenues and side roads well worth exploring. Many of these side roads are meant to be offered as enhancements to a program if the main goals of that program are being met and the appropriate personnel are available to fulfill these goals. Sections with limited staff can only be expected to reach the main milestones along the road.

It is hoped that these major milestones have been highlighted sufficiently and that A.L.P.O. Staff understand what is needed to satisfy their own constituents, our A.L.P.O. members and contributing observers. Below is a summary of the key guidelines the A.L.P.O. Board feels is critical to maintaining an A.L.P.O. section.

1. Maintaining the A.L.P.O. section as proposed when a new coordinator assumes control. The proposals should include the aims of the program and the methodologies for getting the work done.
2. Issuing periodic apparition or progress reports after planetary apparitions or on an apparitional or annual basis depending on the nature of the program.
3. Answering correspondence, requests and acknowledgments promptly and fully.
4. Honoring monetary transactions for goods and services in a prompt and responsible manner.
5. Maintaining the past records of the section in a well-organized manner and archiving them in a permanent form.
6. Promoting the A.L.P.O. and your section whenever and wherever possible.
7. Submitting regular annual reports to the Executive Director about the progress that your section is making and any problems that you are having managing it.

In the past, the vast majority of A.L.P.O. Staff have represented the Association in exemplary fashion. Our reputation continues to be dependent upon the great work of the Volunteer Staff. The A.L.P.O. Staff links the contributions of members to various informational outlets such as the *Journal*, the web site, other media, and conferences.

Our staff is the lens of this organization that brings clarity to our purpose and our accomplishments. Let's all make the A.L.P.O. the finest amateur astronomy organization it can be. Our commitment to excellence will validate the quality of our work and insure the respect we receive from A.L.P.O. members and the broader astronomical community.