

1946 and held its first meeting in 1947, with 32 member clubs and several organized geographical regions.

Due to some personality conflicts and perhaps to their great distance from the majority of the Astronomical League's clubs and activities, some of the western societies felt a need for closer communication among themselves, and the umbrella group known as the Western Amateur Astronomers was founded in 1949. Thus it was that in 1951 the A.S.P. received a proposal from the W.A.A. that they should become affiliated with the Society. After discussion, the A.S.P. Board agreed to this affiliation, and modified its bylaws accordingly in 1952. One A.S.P. Board member would be selected by the W.A.A.; the A.S.P. would help the amateur societies in obtaining speakers for their meetings, and would announce amateur meetings and activities in the *Publications*. In return, the W.A.A. urged its members to join the A.S.P., and asked each member society to buy a bulk supply of *Leaflets* to distribute to its members.

Harry L. Freeman, of the Los Angeles Astronomical Society, was the first W.A.A. representative to the A.S.P. Board; when he died in less than a year, Harold W. Milner of Palo Alto replaced him, and subsequently a number of distinguished amateur astronomers have ably represented the W.A.A. on the A.S.P. Board. Several of the recent A.S.P. summer meetings have been held jointly with the W.A.A. and other amateur astronomy groups, and amateurs continue to contribute useful data to astronomy in such areas as observations of variable stars, sunspots, planetary features, and discoveries of comets and novae. The Society recognized these contributions in 1978 with the creation of its Amateur Achievement Award.

In 1989, as part of the general expansion of the Society's activities on the national level, the A.S.P. Board broadened the amateur representation on the Board by allowing nominees for the amateur position not only from the W.A.A. but also other large amateur groups in North America.

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At the same time that the Society was reaching out to amateurs, its leaders began to expand the Society's work in public education. A prophetic step was the creation of an A.S.P. astronomy film library in 1963. Board member George Perkins (the W.A.A. representative) took charge of this project. Films could be borrowed by schools, colleges, or amateur astronomy clubs, for a rental fee of \$3.00. By the end of 1964 eight films were available; two more were added in 1968. An article about the film program in *Sky and Telescope* for January 1965 caused a surge of activity, and Perkins reported to the Board in May 1965 that "Since then we have had a difficult time filling all requests. All films are out constantly."

By 1969, as the films themselves began to age and

new discoveries about quasars, pulsars, and distant galaxies grabbed the astronomical headlines, requests for the older films petered out, and the library was eventually discontinued. But the success of the film library inspired the development of the A.S.P.'s mail-order catalog, which has become one of the most important ways in which the Society serves the public today.

## Chapter 14:

# The 1960's: Changes in the Wind

The 1960's brought new challenges and opportunities to the A.S.P. One of these concerned the *Publications*, which suffered from several problems. A change of printers in 1963 led to delays which were increased by a typesetter's strike, so that the *Publications* appeared at least a month late. The editor, Katherine G. Kron, also complained that authors seemed reluctant to contribute papers, and issues had been held up for lack of suitable material. Time and more active solicitation of papers cured this problem so that by 1968 "...the supply of willing authors and timely subjects [was] greater than the journal's capacity."

That same year, the Board decided to increase the number of pages, and to publish review articles, with

*Katherine G. Kron and D. Harold McNamara, the two most recent editors of the Publications of the A.S.P. (Photo by A. Fraknoi.)*



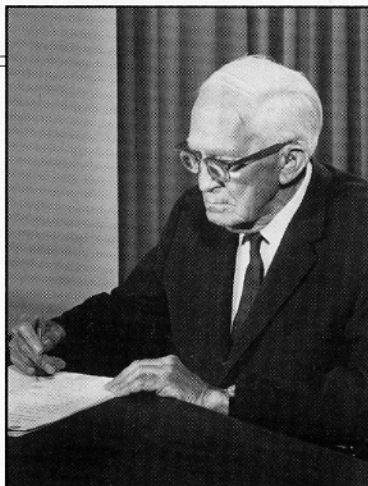
extensive bibliographies, on topics of current interest. A new editor, D. Harold McNamara, took over in 1968; this occasioned some severe delays in publication as the editorial offices were moved from Flagstaff, Arizona to Provo, Utah, but these were overcome within a year. The *Publications* have continued to come out of Provo ever since.

Since 1972, when *Mercury* magazine was inaugurated, the *Publications* have contained only technical material aimed at the professional astronomer. The A.S.P. Board set a goal for the *P.A.S.P.* to become one of the leading professional astronomical journals in the United States, and to broaden its coverage of the areas within astronomy. Editor McNamara has pursued this goal with much success. In 1971 the page size was increased, to facilitate the publishing of tables and diagrams; and publication went from bimonthly to monthly in 1983. The 1987 volume ran to 1,400 pages, compared with 888 pages in 1972 (the first year of the change in content). In 1988, volume 100 carried a series of special Centennial retrospective articles, each starting from an earlier *P.A.S.P.* article that was epochal in its field and reviewing the progress since that paper. (See Chapter 18.) The Board has also decided to try to make the *Publications* the principal U.S. journal for papers on astronomical instrumentation and software, and recent issues have carried articles on such topics as interferometer systems for infrared astronomy, photon-counting arrays for spectroscopic and imaging purposes, and a television system for telescope guiding.

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In 1964 the A.S.P. observed its 75th anniversary at an annual meeting held in Tucson in December (rather than in the summer). Astronomer and former A.S.P. President Alfred H. Joy had published an account of the Society's beginnings in the February 1964 *P.A.S.P.*, and at the Tucson meeting he presented a review of "Seventy-five Years of the A.S.P.", which subsequently also appeared in the *Publications*. Outside the meeting session room in Tucson there was an exhibit of photographs of early Society members and officers. Joy himself was a member and contributor to the A.S.P. for over forty years, including 23 years as the editor of the *Leaflets*.

At the same time that the A.S.P. was looking back at its origins, it was looking ahead to see how it could better achieve its goals. By the mid-1960's, the Society's meetings and activities had not kept up with the growth of astronomy itself, and a number of officers and directors felt that it was time to re-examine the Society's structure and programs. In 1968 the Board appointed what turned out to be a crucial Aims Committee, consisting of Helmut Abt, George Abell, George Perkins, and Harold Weaver, "to analyze the future goals of the Society, to implement more specifically some of its broadly-stated objectives, and to attempt to



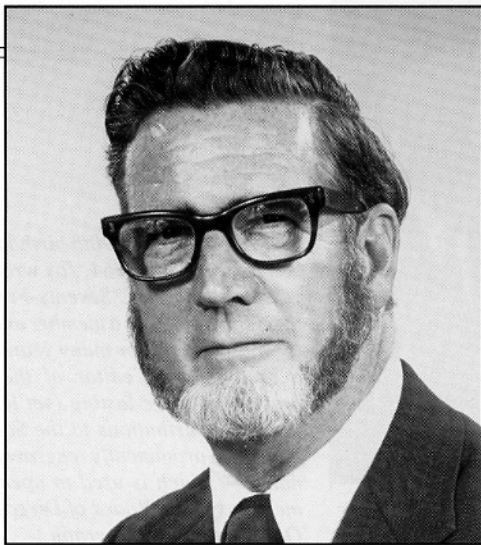
Alfred H. Joy on his 90th birthday, September 23, 1972. In 1964, Joy wrote an anniversary review of "Seventy-Five Years of the A.S.P." He was a member and contributor to the A.S.P. for many years (including a long term as editor of the *Leaflets*). Among his more lasting (yet less publicly visible) contributions to the Society is the gavel — prominently engraved with his name — which is used to open and close meetings of the Board of Directors. (Hale Observatories photograph.)

correlate these ideas into a meaningful pattern that would expand the role of the Society within the astronomical community." Their conclusions, published in detail in the October 1970 *P.A.S.P.*, were implemented in the next few years, and changed the A.S.P. in profound ways.

For example, the *Publications* had customarily concentrated on observational optical astronomy, and the committee suggested a broadening into other areas and permitting longer papers. The *Leaflets* were helpful to the lay members, but their format was "restrictive and not conducive of respect by professional astronomers, who are the principal contributors." The committee felt that the Society was failing to attract the younger professional astronomers (especially those in newer fields like radio, infrared, and x-ray astronomy). At the same time the lay members and amateurs were having less impact on the Society and getting less from it, and their membership was declining. The scientific meetings were "either decreasing or static in (a) frequency, (b) the numbers of attendees, (c) the numbers of papers presented, (d) the caliber of the astronomers attending, and (e) the impact on a field that is otherwise growing rapidly." The committee concluded that the Society was "gradually failing to live up to its original aims," and was stagnating.

The general purposes, they believed, should continue to be "services to astronomy at large and public information and education." In the services category, they made several specific proposals, including:

- The *Publications* should become a technical journal, in a larger format, and a second popular journal should be created which would replace the *Leaflets* and also include Society news and business, information for teachers, and general news notes.
- Single-topic symposia on current areas of research interest should be sponsored by the A.S.P. either at the summer meetings or separately.
- An Awards Committee should be formed to gather information for the Board on Bruce Medalist nominees and to consider other



*George Abell, member of the pivotal Aims Committee and A.S.P. President in 1969 and 1970. (Photograph courtesy of U.C.L.A.)*

awards like a modification of the Trumpler Lectureship.

In the area of public information and education, several specific ideas were also put forward. They included:

- The proposed popular journal should be aimed at "lay people interested in reading about astronomy, professional and amateur astronomers, teachers, and planetarium personnel." The success of such a journal would depend largely on its editor.
- Lecture programs should be expanded, especially outside of California. Good lectures are needed in high schools, colleges, and public forums, as well as for amateur groups.
- The film library should be publicized more, and supplemented with film strips.
- A public information spokesman to interpret astronomical news to the media is greatly needed.
- A television series on astronomy might be guided (but not funded) by the A.S.P.
- Guidance should be provided to amateurs who want to make useful contributions to observational astronomy.

To effect these changes, the committee recommended the creation of a full-time position of *executive officer*, who should be an astronomer or a scientific administrator or both. Such a person would edit the popular journal, plan the logistics of Society meetings, oversee lecture series and films, serve as an information source to the news media, and have other duties as these programs expanded.

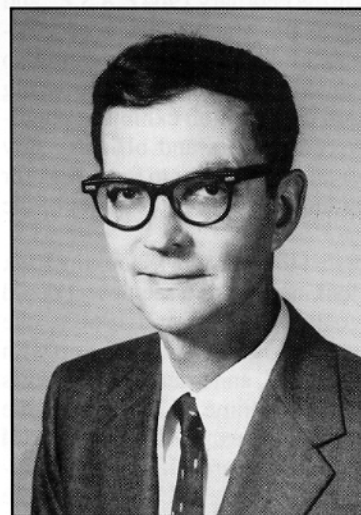
The committee also recommended that elections and other Society business should be done by mail rather than at the Annual Meeting, so that all members could participate, and that Board members be limited to two consecutive three-year terms, to get more people involved in running the Society. An increase in dues was

recommended to finance the new staff and journal.

The recommendations of the Aims Committee led to immediate action on the part of the Board. By the time this extensive report appeared in print, the Board had already appointed an Awards Committee. They had also approved a larger format for the *P.A.S.P.*, produced a pilot lecture series, and approved mail ballots and the two-term Board limitation.

In November 1969 the Board approved a search for an A.S.P. executive officer, and a committee was chosen to conduct interviews. In November 1970 the Board selected Leon E. Salanave, who began work on May 1, 1971. Salanave had been an A.S.P. member since 1935, when he joined as a student member, and had written several notes and articles for the *P.A.S.P.* and the *Leaflets*.

Born in San Francisco in 1917, Salanave received A.B. and M.A. degrees from the University of California, where he was an associate in astronomy from 1940-1947, taking time out to teach navigation during World War II. He then taught at Sacramento College for several years, and was a lecturer at the new Morrison Planetarium in San Francisco from 1949-1953, and associate curator of the California Academy of Sciences from 1954-1956. In 1956 he went to Arizona, first as a research associate with the site survey for what became Kitt Peak National Observatory, then as a research engineer and in 1961 as a research associate in optics at the Institute of Atmospheric Physics at the University of Arizona. He remained there for ten years, until he took the A.S.P. position. His background in public education through his planetarium work, and his administrative experience at the Academy of Sciences, put him in a good position to fill this new post and begin work on the expanded roster of A.S.P. programs.



*Leon Salanave, the Society's first Executive Officer.*