

SOCIETY MATTERS

The Astronomical Society of India invites nominations for the award of the Vainu Bappu Gold Medal for the year 2010.

Instituted in the memory of late M.K. Vainu Bappu, founder President of the Society and a past President of the International Astronomical Union, this medal is awarded once every two years to honour exceptional contributions to Astronomy & Astrophysics by young scientists anywhere in the world.

The award of the medal will be based on an evaluation of the scientific work of the nominee as published or accepted for publication on or before 31st December 2010. The nominee should be 35 years of age or younger on this date.

Nominations for the award may be made by a Head of Institution, Director of an Observatory, Head of Department or by senior scientists and should include the following information:

- Name, affiliation and address of the nominee
- Date of birth
- Academic record
- Scientific accomplishments for which the nomination is made
- List of publications and reprints relevant to the nomination
- Citations, awards and any other information bearing on the scientific excellence of the nominee
- Name, designation and address of the proposer (The nomination must be dated and signed by the proposer)

Nominations must reach the secretary of the society by June 30, 2011. The nomination material must include an electronic copy of all of the above, either on a CD/DVD/USB stick or sent by e-mail.

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More information can be obtained at the ASI web site <http://www.astron-soc.in/awards.html>
You may contact the secretary for any clarifications (E-Mail: secretary@astron-soc.in).

- Nominations are invited for the **Justice Oak best thesis award for 2009**. Please see the society web pages for more details about the award. Nominations should be sent to the secretary of the society.
- Nominations are invited for the **new discovery award**. Indian astronomers who have discovered a comet, an asteroid, a nova or a supernova are eligible. More details about the award are available on the society web pages. Nominations should be sent to the secretary of the society.

● 29th meeting of the ASI: The 29th meeting of ASI was hosted by Pt. Ravishankar Shukla University, Raipur on the invitation of Prof. S. K. Pandey during Feb.23-26, 2011. The meeting was well attended with over 200 participants. The scientific program was prepared by the SOC, chaired by Prof. Pushpa Khare. A total of 18 plenary talks were organised, apart from close to 60 papers chosen for oral presentation in parallel sessions. A large number of posters were also put up by participants. Sessions on the following topics were organised:

- ◆ High Energy Astronomy
- ◆ Resources in Astronomy
- ◆ Stars and the Galaxy
- ◆ Teaching of Astronomy
- ◆ Stellar Dynamics
- ◆ Sun & the Solar System
- ◆ Extragalactic Astronomy & Cosmology

● In addition the program had Reports from the observatories, Rapporteur talks on posters, Thesis presentations, etc. Various awards were announced at the meeting:

❖ Best poster awards:

Stars and the Galaxy: Lokesh Kumar Dewangan (PRL, Ahmedabad)

Extragalactic Astronomy and Cosmology: Samridhi Kulkarni (Pt. R S University, Raipur)

Instrumentation: Jointly to Dhivya Sengodan (RRI, Bangalore) and Uma Unnikrishnan (University of Calicut)

Sun and the Solar System: Satish Chandra (Saurashtra University, Rajkot)

❖ The best thesis presentation award was given to Dr. Manju Sudhakar for presenting her thesis titled Monte Carlo simulations of the High Energy X-ray Spectrometer (HEX) on Chandrayan-I.

❖ The young astronomer award for 2009 was given to K. Nagaraju for his paper: K. Nagaraju, K. B. Ramesh, K. Sankarasubramanian and K. E. Rangarajan, *An efficient modulation scheme for dual beam polarimetry*, BASI, 35, 307 (2007)

❖ The Vainu-Bappu Gold Medal for 2008 has been awarded jointly to Dr. Niayesh Afshordi (Perimeter Institute) and Dr. Nissim Kanekar (NCRA). The medals will be presented in a ceremony to be scheduled towards the end of 2011. Citations for the award are as follows.

Niayesh Afshordi: Niyaesh Afshordi has made wide ranging and insightful contributions in a variety of areas of Cosmology, Structure formation in the universe and the physics of accretion. Particularly noteworthy are his work to probe dark energy using both data from the Cosmic Microwave background and galaxy surveys and his ideas to constrain primordial non-gaussianity.

Nissim Kanekar: Nissim Kanekar has made imaginative use of radio astronomy techniques to probe the variation of fundamental constants of physics. His work has also resulted in enlarging significantly the sample of high redshift galaxies detected through their 21 cm absorption, and to a greater understanding of the physical conditions and evolution of their interstellar media.

- The ASI in its general body meeting voted to rename the best thesis presentation award as the K. D. Abhyankar best thesis presentation award in order to commemorate the contributions of late Prof. K. D. Abhyankar.
- The ASI general body also voted to increase the amount given for the New Discovery Award from Rs.2,000 to Rs.10,000.
- It has been decided to continue to support popular astronomy lectures (to be delivered at School/Junior College/Public level at preferably away from Major Cities) by ASI Members. This scheme was started during the international year of astronomy (IYA-2009). ASI members who wish to give popular talks under this scheme are requested to contact the secretary for further details.
- The executive council has approved initiating a series of symposia titled ASI symposia. These meetings are expected to be on focused topics. It is expected that these symposia will encourage discussions amongst astronomers working on similar problems. ASI will provide funding of up to Rs.1 Lakh for each symposium, and up to three such symposia will be sponsored every year. Those interested in organising an ASI symposium should get in touch with the secretary.
- The following new members have been inducted during the last three months.

ASI Life Members

1. Ajay S Chaudhari
2. Jayashree Roy
3. H K Jassal
4. B C Joshi
5. Mahavevappa Naganathappa
6. Arun Kumar Diwakar
7. Sunil Chandra
8. Padmakar Singh Parihar
9. Madhav Khushalrao Patil
10. Pramod G. Musrif
11. Bhuwan Joshi
12. Anita Bagora
13. Gorakh Nath

14. Tirthankar Roy Choudhury
15. Shaju K. Y.
16. Amit Kumar

ASI Associate Members:

1. Shreyas Agrawal
2. S S Shripati
3. Pramod Karbhari Pawar
4. Pande Mahadev Baburao
5. V N Dattatray
6. Kamal Kumar Tanti
7. Ambika Singh

J. S. Bagla
Secretary
Astronomical Society of India