

## Editorial

# So Long, and Thanks for All the Manuscripts<sup>1</sup>

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My ten-year term as Editor of *JAAVSO* ended as of October 1. It's a pleasure to introduce my successor Professor Nancy Morrison, hand the editorship over to her, reflect on my experience, thank the many people who have supported my work, and ride off into the sunset.

### 1. Introduction

Nancy Morrison is a professional astronomer with a very broad and distinguished career as a scientist and educator. She obtained her Ph.D. from the University of Hawaii, and then enjoyed a 32-year professorial career at the University of Toledo, where she is now Professor Emerita. Her research has been in the areas of stellar spectroscopy and photometry, hot supergiant stars—and in time-series analysis and variable stars. I've had the pleasure of co-authoring two papers with her, including one on P Cygni which used AAVSO data. At Toledo, she also served as Director of the Ritter Observatory (a research facility), the Ritter Planetarium and the Brooks Observatory, which serve students and the public. She has also been an exemplary citizen in her profession, serving in several roles in the American Astronomical Society including Treasurer (2014–2020). She has also served on the Board and Executive Committee of the Astronomical Society of the Pacific, a resource for educators and amateur astronomers and the public, as well as professionals. She brings remarkable experience and judgement, not just to *JAAVSO* but to the AAVSO's governance and operations.

### 2. Reflection

When I began as Editor, I had no formal training for the job, though I had edited some newsletters, and several conference proceedings, including that of the AAVSO's first European meeting. (I also had no formal training in university teaching and administration!) Fortunately, my predecessor Professor Charles Whitney and the AAVSO HQ staff had provided both guidance and guidelines; the latter can be found on the *JAAVSO* pages on the AAVSO website. They remind us that the mission of the AAVSO is “to enable anyone, anywhere, to participate in scientific discovery through variable star astronomy,” and that the purpose of *JAAVSO* is “to promote the AAVSO's overall mission by serving as the pre-eminent publication venue not

only for AAVSO Members, but for the entire community of variable star scientists and researchers.” *JAAVSO* content is broad, ranging from variable star observation, data, and research, to astronomical history, biography, and education.

The *JAAVSO* authorship and readership are an equally diverse and unique combination of professional and amateur astronomers, astronomy instructors, and students. This affects the type and initial quality of the manuscripts that we receive, how they are refereed and edited, and how they appear in their final version. To put it another way: *JAAVSO* is not the *Astrophysical Journal*. Unlike some journals, we are happy to work with our authors, who may be new to manuscript preparation, to improve their manuscript, rather than to reject it outright. But, in the end, the content and presentation must still meet our publication criteria.

Our new Editor will be glad to know that my tenure has gone smoothly. I have had Mike Saladyga to keep me focussed, and the rest of the Council and staff to provide support. I have not, to my knowledge, had any issues of academic misconduct, or any overtly political conflicts, or any other complications to deal with. That's one of the joys of serving with an organization like AAVSO.

What of the future of *JAAVSO*? This depends on the vision of the new Editor, the Editorial Board, and the AAVSO Council and staff. I have already reflected on my own vision of its future in a previous Editorial (Percy 2017), so I will not do so again here. But I will follow *JAAVSO* with great interest, and continue to support it in any way that I can.

Citizen science is expanding and diversifying (Percy 2019). There is every reason to think that variable star observing and analysis by amateur astronomers and students (as well as by professional astronomers) will continue. *JAAVSO* provides a means to publish analyses and interpretations of those observations, and to summarize, through short or longer reviews, the role that AAVSO observations play in astronomy today. This provides motivation and feedback to observers, and the cycle of progress continues.

### 3. Thanks

To the AAVSO Council and staff, for their faith in and support for *JAAVSO*, and for constantly highlighting it on their website, reports and publications. It requires some financial and

<sup>1</sup> With apologies to Douglas Adams.

staff resources, but is absolutely central to AAVSO's mission as a premier "citizen science" organization for over a century.

To Associate Editor Elizabeth Waagen for advice, assistance, and good judgement in providing a second set of editorial eyes, and for ensuring that *JAAVSO* is well-connected to the Association's mission and history. Elizabeth has been my colleague and good friend for 40 years, and one of the reasons that the AAVSO continues to be my favourite organization.

To Production Editor Michael Saladyga especially, who turns a variety of input manuscripts into high-quality professional versions for electronic and print publication, aided by his long experience, expertise, and wisdom in both astronomy and academic writing. I thank him also for the extra task of dealing with manuscripts which my students and I submit to *JAAVSO*, in a timely and fair way. Most of all, I thank him for his excellent oversight and judgement in all things related to *JAAVSO*.

To the Editorial Board, past and present, who provide valuable advice and assistance in many different ways. Presently they are: Geoff Clayton, U.S.; Kosmas Gazeas, Greece; Laszlo Kiss, Hungary; Katrien Kolenberg, Belgium; Kristine Larsen, U.S.; Vanessa McBride, South Africa; Ulisse Munari, Italy; Karen Pollard, New Zealand; and Nikolaus Vogt, Chile. I'm delighted to have this network of "kindred spirits" around the world.

To the University of Toronto Department of Astronomy and Astrophysics for continuing to provide me with facilities and support in my "retirement"—which is not unreasonable, considering that I do a lot more in my "retirement" than edit *JAAVSO*, and hope to continue to do so.

To the anonymous and therefore unrecognized referees, who voluntarily read and assess the manuscripts, and provide evaluation and important feedback to the authors and editors, thereby helping *JAAVSO* to maintain its scientific standards and reputation.

To the *JAAVSO* authors, without whom there would be no *JAAVSO*. Thank you for providing the meat (and potatoes) for our publication, and for providing me with such interesting reading material over the past decade. It strengthens my belief that there is still an important role for amateurs and students, as well as professionals, in astronomical research and publication today. And thank you to the *JAAVSO* readers—without whom there would also be no *JAAVSO*—whether you are reading it today, or many years in the future.

## References

- Percy, J. R. 2017, *J. Amer. Assoc. Var. Star Obs.*, **45**, 131.  
 Percy, J. R. 2019, *J. Amer. Assoc. Var. Star Obs.*, **47**, 1.