

COMMITTEE ON SMALL BODY NOMENCLATURE (COMITÉ SUR LA NOMENCLATURE DES CORPS PETITS)

CHAIRMAN: Michael F. A’Hearn

MEMBERS: K. Aksnes, J. Fernández, P. Kilmartin, Y. Kozai, B. G. Marsden, H. Rickman, L. Schmadel, V. Shor, R. West, D. Yeomans

1. Terms of Reference

The committee met in public session and attending were 9 members of the committee and an additional dozen or so interested individuals. The new terms of reference for the committee, approved by the Executive Committee earlier this year, were briefly reviewed in so far as they affect procedures at the GA. There was little discussion since the members were already familiar with the terms. (The terms are published on the committee’s web page at <http://www.ss.astro.umd.edu/IAU/sbnc/>.)

2. Membership

Membership was elected for the next triennium. *Ex officio* members include B. G. Marsden (USA) as director of the Minor Planet Center, K. Aksnes (Norway) as the president of the Working Group on Planetary System Nomenclature, and M. A’Hearn (USA) who was appointed by the incoming president of Division III (M. Marov) as his official representative. Members elected for the next triennium included J. Fernández (Uruguay), P. Kilmartin (New Zealand), Y. Kozai (Japan), L. Schmadel (Germany), V. Shor (Russia), J. Tichá (Czech Republic), R. M. West (Denmark/ESO), G. Williams (USA), D. Yeomans (USA), and J. Zhu (China). Then P. Kilmartin was elected as the incoming chairperson of the committee. (This membership was subsequently ratified by Division III.)

3. Appeals and Approvals

At future GAs, all names approved during the preceding three calendar years will be ratified by Division III and the GA, and Division III will act on any appeals, on the report of the CSBN, and report that action to the GA. To illustrate the scale of this approval, lists were shown of all minor planets and comets named between 1 January and early July of the current year (483 and 84, respectively). No rational discussion of the list can occur at the GA because it is such a large list. Thus the list will be publicly available on the committee’s web site (address above) with a notice published in the IAU Information Bulletin in January of GA years. Only written appeals made well in advance of the GA will be considered. Since most appeals will have been dealt with expeditiously by the committee, only rare, serious disagreements are expected to arise as appeals at the GA.

As a friendly test case, the CSBN discussed the appeal by Fujiwara for (10850) Denso. The committee had recently become sensitive to possible commercial use of the names of minor planets (Denso is the name of the auto parts company for which the discoverer works) and rejected the name on those grounds. On the other hand, previous commercial names had been approved, as pointed out by Fujiwara. In this case, the discoverer had agreed that the CSBN would be considering a guideline against commercial names and, if no guideline was forthcoming, he would re-propose that name. After considerable discussion, it was agreed that no new guideline forbidding commercial names should be written, but that the

committee should continue to be alert to prevent selling of names or proposing names as a *quid pro quo* for financial gain. The case was subsequently presented, again as a test case, to Division III, which approved using the name Denso.

Additional discussion of other possible guidelines was deferred to a later session. S. Isobe proposed that the IAU cease naming minor planets. Many agreed that if the rate of discovery continued to increase, it might be inevitable that naming would be limited to minor planets considered important for one reason or another, but there was little support for taking any such action at this time.

4. Official Publication

A general discussion was held on the question of designating Lutz Schmadel's Dictionary of Minor Planet Names as an official IAU publication. This book was first initiated under the sponsorship of Commission 20 and is now in its fourth edition, which edition now includes a searchable CD ROM with all the information of the book. The book provides a detailed record of the citations, often including longer citations than can be printed in the Minor Planet Circulars. It also includes citations from earlier periods when citations were not tracked systematically. It was generally agreed by all attendees, including L. Schmadel, that this Dictionary should be an official IAU publication providing the authoritative information about the basis for all names of minor planets. It was generally agreed also that, whenever Dr. Schmadel retires, the IAU will have the authority to appoint any succeeding editor. Dr. Schmadel indicated that the CD ROM version could be updated annually, but that the printed version could not.

5. Diversity of Names

J. Fernández urged significant efforts to increase the geographic diversity of names, particularly by allowing and even seeking inputs from people of diverse cultures. A. W. Harris urged creation of a bank of names to be used whenever there are asteroids available for naming. The set of numbered asteroids for which the discoverer's naming privilege had expired was estimated to be currently several dozen; it was expected that this number would increase in the future and that some large surveys might accept names from others for some of their more recently numbered asteroids. D. Yeomans proposed that all IAU National Representatives be asked to supply 5-10 names and citations to the CSBN to provide the start of a bank of names for future use. The chairman was advised to prepare such a letter for distribution through the General Secretary. There was little support for a proposal by M. A'Hearn to shorten the period (now 10 years after numbering) during which a discoverer has the privilege of first proposing a name for an asteroid.

6. Guidelines Review

The committee met in closed session to review numerous cases from the past triennium. The goal was to find new guidelines that would lead to fewer names and/or citations being rejected by the committee and also to reduce the total workload. There was general, although not universal, agreement that additional guidelines were needed in several areas. Subcommittees were appointed to work on three topics – new guidelines for minor planet names (Fernández, Schmadel, Tichá, Zhu), new guidelines for cometary names (Marsden, West, Williams, Yeomans), and new procedures to reduce the workload at the MPC in dealing with citations for names of minor planets (A'Hearn, Aksnes, Marsden, and Williams). Any new guidelines will be publicly posted during the triennium, implemented conditionally, and then brought up for discussion at GA25.

Michael F. A'Hearn
Chairman of the Committee