

The Many Faces of the Telescope

Since we have spent the last two columns on my standards related trip to Europe, we should finish up by talking about the ISO/TC172/SC4 inaugural meeting on telescopes in St. Petersburg from Oct. 4-9, 1992. The Secretariat for the meeting was the Russian standards organization, GOST, and our host in St. Petersburg was the S.I. Vavilov State Institute for Optics.

There were delegations from five nations at the meeting: Austria, Germany, Japan, Russia, and the U.S. One of the first items of business was to define the scope of Subcommittee 4—Telescopes. It was decided that "telescopes" were any optical instruments that were used to view objects at a distance.

Based on this definition, the subcommittee decided to form three working groups: WG1, responsible for

standards on binoculars, WG2 for riflescopes, and WG3 for amateur astronomical telescopes. The Japanese delegation brought some sample Japanese Industrial Standards (JIS) in each of the three areas for consideration by the subcommittee.

The subcommittee also decided to work on definitions of optical terms applicable to each of the three areas, and on optical test methods for determining the optical quality of telescopes. In addition, they decided what kind of environmental test standards should be applied to each type of telescope. Since there is already a set of environmental standards for optical instruments, ISO 9022, the subcommittee made some initial recommendations on which parts of this standard were appropriate and how severe the tests should be, depending on the type of use of the telescope. For example, the environmental tests for binoculars used professionally would be more severe than for opera glasses and binoculars intended for casual or amateur use.

In addition to the official delegates at the meeting, there were a number of Russian observers, many from Russian optical firms (some of which were less than two years old). These observers used the meeting as an opportunity to establish optical contacts outside Russia. To help build these contacts and to introduce the other delegations to Russia, tours were arranged through parts of the Winter Palace and Hermitage museums, and the St. Peter and Paul fortress; delegates also attended an opening night performance of Verdi's Don Carlos at the Kirov Theater.

The next meeting of SC4 is scheduled for Nov. 29-Dec. 3, in St. Petersburg. Anyone interested in the work of ISO/TC172/SC4 on telescopes is invited to contact Edward Scherrer at NAPM, 914/698-7603, for further information.

—Robert E. Parks

Electronic Information

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operating radio-telescopes or searching the contents of large libraries and databases.

The best place to find additional information about the Internet, electronic mail, and related information services, is on the Internet itself. Many host sites archive a large number of documents, papers, and research reports describing information services and the locations of service providers. The best place to start for more information about the Internet is by FTP to *nmsc.nsf.net*. On the Physics Information Network (FTP *pinet.aip.org*) the directory *pub/internet.info* contains a collection of electronic documents describing many of the services and sites available to the Internet user.

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The domain name for OSA (the portion of the e-mail address after the @ sign) will be: *osa.org*.

All of OSA's previous Internet addresses, ending in *@aip.org* or *@pinet.aip.org*, will still be supported for a period of three to six months after the new addresses become active.