

**Homer F. DaBoll
2008 Award**

IOTA Annual Meeting
September 12, 2008
Apple Valley, CA

Background

- Concept of Award defined at the 2006 IOTA meeting (Delaware):
 - To recognize significant contributions to occultation science and to the work of the IOTA*
- Name honors Homer DaBoll (1920 – 1990)
 - organizer of grazing occultation expeditions in Midwest USA beginning in late 1960's
 - Suggested the name “International Occultation Timing Association”
 - Founding officer of IOTA 1975 (secretary/treasurer)
 - First editor of Occultation Newsletter, from 1974 through 1990
- 1st Award recipient (2007) was Dave Herald

2008 Award Selection

- Nominations were solicited in late August
- Award committee formed from volunteers
 - Dave Gault, NSW, Australia (also was on last year's committee)
 - Dave Herald, ACT, Australia, (recipient of last year's award)
 - Colin Haig, Ontario, Canada
 - Terrence Redding, Florida, USA
 - Robert Buchheim, California, USA (chairman)
- Award committee goals:
 - select recipient of 2008 Homer DaBoll award
 - recommend criteria & procedures for future years

Deliberations

- Total of 6 nominations received, from 8 nominators
 - All were excellent candidates
- All communication conducted by e-mail
 - private to the committee
 - independent of IOTA officers
- Approach was “discussion to reach a consensus” (not “majority voting”), considering:
 - Documentation provided with nominations
 - Experience & personal knowledge of the candidate’s contributions.



2008

HOMER F. DABOLL AWARD



Presented to

EDWIN GOFFIN

For his asteroid occultation
predictions that are a foundation of
IOTA's successful observing program

Thoughts on Criteria & Procedures for Future-Years Awards

- Who is eligible for award?
- Who is eligible to make nominations?
- How should Award committee be chosen?
- What criteria should be used in evaluating candidates?
- What participation should IOTA Officers have?
- Should a “David E. Laird” award for exceptional observations be instituted?

Eligibility (current)

Who is eligible for the award?

- Anyone who has made significant contribution to occultation science or the work of the IOTA
- Excluding sitting IOTA officers & award committee
- IOTA membership not required

Who can make Nominations?

- No defined restrictions at this time
- “Call for Nominations” made via Yahoo group effectively restricts nominators to active occultation community

Criteria for Evaluating Candidates (from 2008 deliberations)

- History of ongoing + current contributions
- Recognized & appreciated by the current occultation community
- Recognition of “Elderly Giants”
- Seminal Work
- Innovation
- Inspiration
- Specific focus on Occultation science

- **Contribution to occultation science:** such as
 - observations (quantity/quality)
 - data reduction or analysis of results
 - predictions (including associated mathematical methods, or pre-occultation astrometry to refine predictions)
 - innovations in equipment or methods of observation
- **Contributions to the work of the IOTA:** e.g.
 - recruiting or training occultation observers
 - projects to increase the number of observed occultations, or increase the density of observations of occultations
 - projects to increase the access to, improve the usefulness of, or improve the completeness of occultation records (archives of observed results)
 - activities that increase awareness of occultations, and the value of occultation data, among amateur astronomers
 - significant professional-amateur collaborations in occultation projects
 - technical or administrative service to the IOTA (by a non-executive): this might include such things as newsletter preparation, financial management, or coordination of special campaigns.
- **Scientific use of occultation data:** for example
 - application of occultation data or methods in innovative ways
 - application of occultation data or methods to new astronomical problems
- Will award recipient be an **inspiration to others?**

Personal Thoughts

- **“Call for volunteers” for Award Committee was effective**
 - A pre-selection “vetting” process may be wise, to avoid embarrassment
- **Work of the 2008 awards committee was excellent**
 - collaborative, thoughtful, open, honest discussion
 - sharing of knowledge and experiences
 - diligent responsiveness (despite time-zone differences)
 - helpful suggestions about process and criteria
- **Cycle time was OK (barely), but process should start earlier**
 - Call for nominations should be made ~8 weeks before meeting
 - Deadline ~ 5 weeks before meeting
 - Provides ~2-3 weeks for deliberations
 - 2-3 weeks for fab of award plaque
- **Items we didn’t have to deal with, but which may come up in the future:**
 - what are the boundaries of “occultation science”?
 - lunar, graze, and asteroid occultations are clearly “in”
 - what about: Solar eclipses? Extra-solar planet transits? other phenomena?
 - what about deceased nominees?
 - suggest restriction to “living person” or “deceased within last year”