

## INTRODUCCION/INTRODUCTION

Southern South America has long been one of the leading areas for astronomical research in the world. The uniquely clear, dry skies of the Andes mountains have attracted a number of countries to construct major observatories here, crowned by the recent announcement by ESO of the advent of the world's largest optical telescope – the 16-m Very Large Telescope. There are, in addition to the international observatories, a number of Chilean and Argentinean astronomical centers. Indeed, Argentina is the host of the 1991 IAU General Assembly.

However, despite the large number of astronomical institutions and the growing number of astronomers in this region, there have not been any general meetings devoted to bringing together south-Andean astronomers for many years. By contrast, in the US and Europe, for example, not only are there annual meetings like those of the American Astronomical Society, but also conferences which periodically unite astronomers from even smaller regions. Both organizers of the current meeting had the good fortune to go to graduate school in the northwestern US -southwestern Canada and attended the Northwestern Astronomy Conferences. These brought together typically about 100 astronomers – professionals, graduate students, and even a few interested amateurs – for 2 days of astronomical presentations and social activities each year. We both found them to be very useful – for learning, exchanging ideas, getting acquainted with other astronomers, and, as graduate students, presenting one's first scientific talk in a professional (but not overwhelmingly so) environment.

Subsequently finding ourselves both in Chile, in an area of comparable astronomical activity but devoid of meetings, we felt it was time to initiate a much-needed forum for the presentation of astronomical research in southern South America. Thus the Reunión Astronómica Sur-Andina was born. The first meeting was held in Santiago, Chile on March 18 and 19, 1991 on the campus of the Catholic University. The meeting brought together some 60 participants from Chile, Argentina and even the US and Europe. The first day was devoted mainly to results related to the large scale structure of the Universe, since there are now a substantial number of workers in this field, principally from Observatorio de Córdoba, Catholic University, and Cerro Tololo. The second day saw talks on a wide variety of topics, from globular clusters to Be stars to supernovae. The following are abstracts from the presentations, which included both short (10-20 minute talks) as well as longer invited talks.

In view of the great success of this initial venture, there was unanimous agreement that similar meetings should be held every other year in the region, at different host institutions. We look forward to the next Reunión Astronómica Sur-Andina!

Doug Geisler and Leopoldo Infante

## LISTA DE PARTICIPANTES/LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

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