COMMISSIONS 27 AND 42 OF THE IAU
INFORMATION BULLETIN ON VARIABLE STARS
Number : not numbered

Konkoly Observatory
Budapest
January 1996

HU ISSN 0374 – 0676

EDITORIAL NOTE

SCOPE OF *IBVS*

IBVS was founded (at the Berkeley IAU General Assembly) in 1961 as a Bulletin to facilitate rapid communication of new results in variable star research. *IBVS* has met that goal by circulating an uninterrupted series of more than 4000 short papers of a quality that—as seen from the ever increasing number of subscribers—is now recognized worldwide.

Today *IBVS* has more than 400 subscribers, and publishes almost 200 papers per year—that is, about one accepted manuscript per working day on average. For technical, managerial and economic reasons neither the scope of the journal can be enlarged, nor can the number of papers published each year be increased.

IBVS publishes short papers that report on observational and theoretical aspects related to stellar variability. To be acceptable, papers submitted to *IBVS* should respect the following guidelines:

– the subject should be appropriate for *IBVS*
– the content should be original, and scientifically significant
– the paper should be written in correct English
– all the necessary references should be given
– the methods and the results must be set out clearly
– variable-star designations should respect the rules set by the IAU (see *Specifications concerning designations for astronomical radiation sources outside the solar system*[1]).

Preliminary results are, as a rule, not acceptable, except in those cases where the release of the preliminary information is relevant for the variable-star community (e.g. the discovery of new variable objects, their first description, etc.). Since *IBVS* is an express journal, preliminary results on known objects based on several-year old observations are *not* acceptable. In such cases, publication of the complete and final analysis must be recommended for submission to other regular astronomy journals.

For what concerns papers which are based on large amounts of tabular material, the authors are asked to make these data available by submission to an electronic data archive, or by submission to an appropriate Journal (such as, for example, *The Journal of Astronomical Data*, see below).

For a long time, *IBVS* has also taken care of the publication of announcements of observing campaigns. Since there now exist much faster means of communication, the Editors have decided that such announcements will be accepted in extraordinary circumstances only, and that in no way such announcements will be assigned a regular *IBVS* issue number. We call the attention to the existing Bulletin Board of Commissions 27 and 42 maintained by the Technical Editor of *IBVS* at Konkoly Observatory.

[1] Accessible on *anonymous ftp* at node **cdsarc.u-strasbg.fr**

PAGE CHARGES

With the exception of the *Name Lists of Variable Stars*, *IBVS* does not publish manuscripts that exceed 8 pages. There are no page charges for manuscripts that do not exceed four pages (including tables and figures), but publication of longer papers, only accepted in very exceptional cases, is charged according to the production cost (printing and mailing) at the time.

THE REFEREEING PROCESS

In recent years the refereeing process has gradually shifted from a purely *internal* one (see the Editorial Note published in the *IBVS* issue of August 24, 1988) to a phase where *all* papers are refereed either by the Editors (when the topic of the paper is in their field of competence) *or* by external referees. Thus, since January 1, 1996 **every published *IBVS* paper has been read carefully by at least one competent expert**. The pool of external consultants is constantly growing. The number of submitted manuscripts amounts to about 350 per year of which, due to the refereeing procedure, about 40% are rejected. It should be noted that papers are, first of all, proofread by the Editors. Poorly-written documents, incomplete manuscripts and papers falling outside the scope of the Journal are returned to the authors. Only papers that pass this stage of scrutiny are refereed from the scientific point of view.

SPEED OF PUBLICATION

IBVS has a strong reputation of having a fast cycle involving minimal delay between receipt of a manuscript and its release in printed form. It is, therefore, a major concern of the Editors and of the Editorial Board to avoid any possible decrease in speed of publication due to the refereeing process. In this context, it should be pointed out that fully electronic submission has already improved the speed of publication, and that in most cases refereeing is achieved within a few days after receipt of the manuscript. An important element, though, is that high speed of publication can only be maintained if manuscripts are submitted fully electronically. Thus, the standard procedure of typing manuscripts by the Editorial Staff has been completely discontinued (though typesetting on the basis of an electronically submitted ASCII text file will still be possible).

PAPERS BASED ON VISUAL DATA AND WARNING TO UNEXPERIENCED AUTHORS

Recently the issue was raised whether the Editors should review the adopted policy of not accepting for publication any papers based solely on visual estimates. Whereas the Editors recognise the value of fast dissemination of good visual data, it should be stressed that it is not possible for the Editors and for the referees to assess the value and quality of every single report with visual estimates of variable stars (see also the Editorial Note to Contributing Authors, *IBVS* December 31, 1980). At the same time, visual observers should realise that, today, the turn-around time for *IBVS* manuscripts is certainly longer than is the case for some of the other modern means of communication, such as electronic mail, bulletin boards and even printed notes such as the IAU Telegrams.

Some amateur organisations—such as, for example, AAVSO, BAA, IAPPP—may, in fact, serve as a clearing house for such manuscripts. In this case the submission procedure is as follows: the authors should first send their paper based on or containing visual data to one of the above-mentioned organisations. Only *after* such attested scrutiny can the manuscript be submitted for publication in the *IBVS*. The Editors, however, point out that, after such "clearing", the manuscripts will follow the regular editorial procedure—that is, a first scrutiny by the editors, followed by an assessment by an independent referee. The editors, though, cannot assume any responsibility in possible conflicts on authors' rights after such clearing has taken place; the authors themselves should judge whether the contribution of the advising person does or does not merit co-authorship.

A related point of concern is the increasing number of manuscripts based on photoelectric data (photomultiplier and CCD) submitted by non-professional astronomers. Such manuscripts—though often containing high-quality data —are not always suitable for direct publication because non-scientific language is used. Thus, in the past, the Editors have had to put a lot of effort in upgrading and editing such papers. In the present situation, with a fast-growing number of submitted manuscripts covering an ever expanding area of astrophysical research, the Editorial staff is in no position to continue this service. Since it is not the intention to refuse interesting papers on the basis of grammatical and stylistic arguments, the Editors encourage such authors to have their manuscripts "cleared" on the pre-refereeing level by a professional colleague who has more experience in writing scientific papers (this procedure is, actually, quite commonly adopted at scientific Institutes where authors help each other with proofreading manuscripts before submission).

SUBMISSION OF MANUSCRIPTS AND INSTRUCTIONS TO AUTHORS

IBVS **only** accepts manuscripts submitted electronically (via ftp, e-mail, or IBM PC formatted floppy diskette), preferably in LaTeX format using the *IBVS* style file, or plain ASCII file. Figures should be submitted electronically too, in PostScript format.

If the author has no means of transforming his/her figures to the required formats, a deviation from the above policy can be tolerated, though it should be stressed that figures—either electronically in a non-PS format, or on paper—after transformation to PostScript will suffer loss of resolution, and their file-sizes will be much larger.
The submission procedure by **ftp** is as follows:

ftp ftp.konkoly.hu (or ftp 193.6.22.2)
`login`: anonymous
`password`: *your E-mail address*
cd pub/ibvs/manuscript
mdir *yourname*
cd *yourname*
put *yourfile.tex*
put *yourfig.ps*

PLEASE INFORM THE EDITORS ABOUT YOUR SUBMISSION BY SENDING A NOTE TO ibvs@ogyalla.konkoly.hu. Direct submission by email is also possible at this same address.
The *IBVS* style file can be retrieved via ftp (get ibvs.sty).

SUBSCRIPTION INFORMATION

Two modes of subscription are available: subscription to the paper version, and subscription to the electronic version. For the first mode, an annual subscription fee is (see our WWW site – address below –for detailed information, or contact the Administrative Editor); subscription to the electronic version is free of charge.

ELECTRONIC CIRCULATION

Since 1995, *IBVS* has been available electronically, via anonymous ftp and also on the World Wide Web. The installation of an ftpmail server, which would permit users not having access to ftp and WWW facilities to request and get *IBVS* via e-mail, is being considered. (Note that with the use of public ftpmail servers this is possible already.) Visit us at the following URLs:

http://www.konkoly.hu/*IBVS*/*IBVS*.html

or

ftp://ftp.konkoly.hu/pub/ibvs

If you use the electronic version regularly and have not yet registered, please register at

http://www.konkoly.hu/*IBVS*/register.html

Registered electronic subscribers will be notified periodically via e-mail about available new issues and other news. You can get information by "finger"-ing ibvs@ogyalla.konkoly.hu

BACK ISSUES

Back issues are available at nominal postage and handling costs. For orders, please contact the Administrative Editor.

The *Journal of Astronomical Data* "reprints" back issues of *IBVS* on CD-ROM. According to the agreement between *JAD* and *IBVS*, the most recent volume (i.e. the current 100 issues) will remain available electronically at Konkoly Observatory. After the completion of each *IBVS* volume of 100 issues, *JAD* will "reprint" the first 50 issues on its forthcoming CD-ROM issue, and the remaining 50 in their next issue. *JAD* 1 (1995) contains *IBVS* issues 4001-4100. As soon as a new *JAD* CD is received at Konkoly, the corresponding *IBVS* issues will be removed from on-line access. Mirror Web sites will remove those volumes as well. However, registered electronic users can always request individual issues from volumes already available on *JAD* CDs.

The great demand for back issues (frequently from number 1 on) has prompted us to initiate a project of making available on CD-ROM the complete content of *IBVS* from issue 1 to 4000 (ASCII and PostScript bitmap formats). Thanks to a generous grant of the National Information Infrastructure Development Program of Hungary (Nemzeti Információs Infrastruktúra Fejlesztési Program), this scanning of the back issues is now progressing well, and the publication of the resulting CD-ROM (as a separate JAD volume) is expected in the course of 1997.

This unique undertaking will transform *IBVS* to a fully electronically available indexed publication that is machine-searchable, back issues included.

K. Oláh (Editor) olah@ogyalla.konkoly.hu
L. Szabados (Editor) szabados@ogyalla.konkoly.hu
A. Holl (Technical Editor) holl@ogyalla.konkoly.hu
Zs. Kővári (Administrative Editor) kovari@buda.konkoly.hu
and

C. Sterken, on behalf of the Editorial Board