

Message of the President

It seems as if one has to write an annual report every six months. But the wealth of data contained in this report reminds one that again an active year has elapsed.

The existence of the International Foundation "Hochalpine Forschungsstationen Jungfrauoch und Gornergrat" (HFSJG) is vindicated by the users' research activities. Progress reports of 31 research groups are included in the present report; they give testimony of what excellent use has been made of the unique conditions at the research stations at Jungfrauoch and Gornergrat.

This annual report was written by Prof. Erwin Flückiger, Director of the research stations. His untiring efforts to keep their environments clean and to make them a success – as well as his longstanding devotion to the Foundation – have made the President's life easy.

The Foundation has found the essential support and understanding of the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNF). The latter has granted the necessary funds for the Swiss contribution until the end of 2003. Constructive exchanges have taken place between the SNF, the Foundation, the Swiss Academy of Sciences (SAS) and its Jungfrauoch Commission, and Secretary of State, Dr. Charles Kleiber of the Swiss Science Agency, how hopefully to integrate the Swiss contribution beyond 2003 into a long-term finance plan. It has also been decided that workshops or conferences shall be organized to make the scientific results of the research stations more visible. The next workshop, organized jointly with the SAS, will take place in September 2002.

In October 2001, the Board of the Foundation held its bi-annual meeting in Zermatt. The meeting was opened with a welcome address by our Honorary President, Prof. Hermann Debrunner; it was read due to his stay in the United States. The fully represented member organizations adopted the budget until the end of 2003. Their continued understanding for the needs of the Foundation is gratefully acknowledged. A substantial part of the meeting was devoted to some of the scientific highlights from the research stations. The dinner and an excursion to the facilities at Gornergrat gave the Board members an opportunity for discussions with the representatives of the SNF and SAS and to meet the newly elected representatives of the Burgergemeinde Zermatt. The friendly atmosphere conveyed confidence that the Foundation can count on as much goodwill and support from the Burgergemeinde as it has enjoyed in the past.

The meeting in Zermatt was also the farewell for two old friends. Erwin Aufdenblatten, the former President of the Burgergemeinde Zermatt, received the warmest thanks for all his help during the construction phase and the continued operation period of the astronomic observatories at Gornergrat. Gisbert Winnewisser, as retiring Professor at the University of Cologne, gave his pet telescope, which has contributed so much to the understanding of interstellar molecules, into the hands of his successor, Prof. Jürgen Stutzki. In his good-bye speech Gisbert Winnewisser quoted Huckleberry Finn's friend who wondered about the stars "whether they was made or only just happened." The answer to this question in its widest sense and in various scientific fields is what we all are still working on.

Basel, February 18, 2002

G.A. Tammann