Comparison Star Database Working Group

AAVSO Spring Meeting 2006

Rockford, IL

Presented by Vance Petriew

History

- Team formed in spring of 2003
- Goal is to document all comparison stars and variables on all current AAVSO charts
- Store collected data in a database
- First steps in moving towards a digital charting system
- A volunteer effort with no cost to the AAVSO

Phase 1

- Focus areas:
  - Create list of charts (starting April 2003)
  - Capture chart and sequence information
  - Record accurate positional information
  - Record catalog numbers for each star
  - Report and solve discrepancies (labelling, identities, charts, etc)

Statistics

- Database size: 9.3 MB (text format)
- Documented: 72,151 records (100%)
- Validated: 71,360 records (99%)
- Total number of charts: 4162
- Active Charts: 3330
- Estimated volunteer time: 10,000+ hours

The Team!

Aaron Price

Vance Petriew

Rick Merriman

Keith Graham

Dan Taylor

Brian Skiff

Tim Hagar

Carlo Gualdoni

Mike Simonsen

Bob Stine

Roy Axelsen

Mark Munkacsy

Christopher Watson

Curt Schneider

Jim Bedient

Radu Corlan

Joe Maffei

Arno Van Werven

Pedro Pastor

Dolores Sharples

Stepping Forward

1. Continue documenting all new charts
2. Fix certain chart errors to help clean up the database
3. Separate the star and chart info
4. Create a unique list of AAVSO stars
5. Assign the stars a unique identifier
6. Build a sequence program for adding new stars to the database

Stepping Forward

7. Use the ACP to plot charts automatically

8. Expand star properties (photometry, position, spectral types, etc)

9. Design a database release strategy for version control and archiving

10. Check observation submission process to support database

11. Make database exports freely available

Future Benefits

- Automated charting program
- Customizable charts for individual needs
- Database for planetarium programs
- Recording historical changes of charts and stars
- New method for electronic submission
- Start of a global sequence database for all variable star organizations
- Interface with the Variable Star Index (VSX)