

COMMITTEE ON SMALL BODY NOMENCLATURE

*(COMITE POUR LA NOMENCLATURE DES PETITS CORPS
CELESTES)*

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1. Comet names

A revision of the guidelines for naming comets was undertaken. After considerable discussion the revision has been completed with some changes to guidelines and more detailed history and examples. The assistance of the director of CBAT, Daniel W. E. Green, in redrafting these guidelines was much appreciated by the committee.

A trend worth noting in 2002 is that of 172 comets designated, 132 are named SOHO and 20 are named LINEAR.

2. Minor planet names

More than 2800 names of minor planets have been approved and published in the Minor Planet Circulars in the period July 1999 - June 2002. Before this time a total of 6730 minor planets had received names since 1801; thus nearly one third of all names have been bestowed in this triennium. Among these is the first of the transneptunian objects to be named, (20000) Varuna. The Lincoln Laboratory asteroid survey program LINEAR has begun to name many of its thousands of discoveries in honor of science students and their teachers who are finalists in a series of science competitions.

There are now nearly 50000 numbered minor planets, up from less than 18000 two years ago. The CSBN has investigated methods of limiting the naming process and experimented with one. Further work needs to be done in this area.

Pamela M. Kilmartin
Chairperson of the Committee