

Editorial

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There was much noise in the media last year about something many thought was unnecessary. Pluto, which we have learned in school as the planet at the frontier of our solar system, was demoted from its planethood, and it was grouped with a bunch of objects now to be called 'dwarf planets'. What caught most of the attention of the people was the fact that it was decided by voting in a meeting of the International Astronomical Union in Prague in August 2006. Many people asked if it was normal in science to decide something by voting; some even asked, 'what is in a name?' How does it matter what you call something?



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Classification is important in science and the process of classification depends on the variety of objects under scrutiny. Often, when new data arrive and new objects are added to the list, there is a need to redraw the borders between different classes, to re-define them in order to match the new ensemble. And often there are problems with borderline cases, as their identities are prone to change during such a reclassification.

We bring out in this issue an article which will demystify the change in the denomination of Pluto and other objects in the solar system. At the same time, we pay homage to the discovery of Pluto and its discoverer, Clyde Tombaugh, whose story would surely inspire professional and amateurs alike.

Speaking of borderline cases, bats have always fascinated people, with their mammalian and bird-like characteristics. Bats also have many other unique features, like the ability to navigate with the help of sound waves. They have also given rise to many myths (as well as horror stories!). An article in this issue on the curious world of bats will dispel some of the common misconceptions. We also have some other interesting articles here, on tomography and catalytic antibodies, and so on.

