

The International Year of Astronomy 2009 (IYA2009) was a success by any measure, as demonstrated in the recently published final report¹. In this special issue of CAPjournal, we take a look at IYA2009 events that focused on cultural astronomy and discuss how including a historical or cultural aspect to an astronomy event can help to engage with a wider audience. By introducing a human element to the grand cosmos, we can make astronomy more enjoyable and easier to understand for the general public.

During IYA2009, many countries ran projects and events that can be classed as “Cultural Astronomy”. The activities focused on indigenous astronomy, the history of astronomy and the inclusive nature of astronomy — a hobby that can be enjoyed by anyone, anywhere. Their activities included public events that combined telescope observing with storytelling, new learning modules for school children, theatre productions and cultural astronomy exhibitions.

We hope that this small selection of events that we present in this issue of CAPjournal will encourage others to highlight the cultural aspect of astronomy in their own education and public outreach activities.

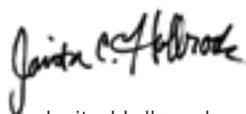
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Happy reading,



Pedro Russo
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Jarita Holbrook
Guest Editor

¹ The 1400-page IYA2009 Final Report is available here: http://www.astronomy2009.org/resources/documents/detail/iya2009_final_report/