



Peoria Astronomical Society, Inc.

P.O. Box 10111 Peoria, IL 61612-0111
Section of Peoria Academy of Science
Affiliate of the Astronomical League

www.astronomical.org

STARLITE

SPRING, 2011

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Editor's Notes: Articles may be submitted via two email addresses: ls_hay@yahoo.com or Starlighteditor@gmail.com. Deadlines for articles for future 2011 issues are May 18, Aug. 17 and Nov. 16.

PLEASE NOTE:

Please notify Scott Swords at sswords3@comcast.net if you will be getting a new mailing address and/or phone number. It is important that he has your personal information correct so you will continue to receive the Starlite and the Reflector. He would also like to receive any changes to your e-mail address as this is part of his database.

If you would like to join the Peoria Astro e-group or if you have changed your e-mail address, please notify Mike Frasca at mfrasca@att.net with your e-mail address. He does not need your mailing address or phone number. If you are not a member of the e-group, you may want to consider joining. A great deal of club activity information is sent via the e-group. And by the way, it is free to join!!!

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS:

Shelly Anderson, Peoria
Dave Rinkenberger, Washington
Vaclav Ujcik, Edwards

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE:

By John Barra

One thing stuck out in our Great Debate and the accompanying poll (see related article) of our members on what should be the priorities of the society--educating the public did not appear to rank high on that list. Observing by member, educating members, and public observing were all listed higher on the average priority list.

The discussions at the debate seemed to lean towards focusing our public education priority to our Saturday night public viewing sessions at Northmoor. While there was some discussion about creating a "canned" educational program that could be brought out to the public, little other emphasis seems to be placed on doing educational programs at schools and other public forums.

While we continue to get requests to become involved in outside education, only a few members volunteer to participate, and they are usually the same people. The problem is magnified by the fact that the education chairmanship remains open despite our efforts to find someone to fill that responsibility.

As we get more heavily involved in phase two of reconstruction at Northmoor, we will have to make decisions in the near future on education. We have to be flexible enough to be able to do more in this area if more interest toward public education rises in the future. If you have ideas, please relay them to a board member.

Meanwhile, the board is still interested in getting an education chairman to coordinate these efforts. Anyone interested should contact me or Nick Johnson, our nominating chairman.

I would also like to make one last plug for the first half of our first attempt at our new Peoria Messier Marathon. See the related article that explains it. Doing a marathon over two nights, usually widely-separated in time, should encourage more participation, since the weather should be warmer and late, late observing can be avoided. Our first attempt will be Saturday, April 9 at Jubilee and our April membership meeting will be focused on explaining the Peoria Messier Marathon.

FUTURE PROGRAMS:

March 2: Professor Linda French, IWU

April 6: The New Peoria Marathon (or the two half-marathons)--John Barra

APRIL 9: Peoria Messier Marathon: Part I (Jubilee Observatory)

May 4: Trip to Mt. Palomar--Phil Burroughs

Star Parties in Lieu of Meetings During Summer

June 11: Public Star Party--Northmoor Observatory (past 1st Q moon)

July 30: Members Party--Jubilee Observatory (new moon)

August 27: Public Star Party--Jubilee State Park-Prairie Lane Shelter
and Peoria Messier Marathon: Part II (new moon)

Possible Annual Meeting/ Picnic

Sept 3 (1st Q moon)

Sept 17 (3rd Q moon)

Sept 24 (near new moon)

Meetings Back at Lakeview

October 5: Open

November 2: Astrojeopardy--Gene Hodel

December 7: Great Debate VI: John Barra

FROM STARLITES PAST:

By John Barra

50 Years Ago
Spring Newsletter 1961

“Someone once said, ‘There is nothing new under the sun,’ and we astronomers won’t argue that point, will we? But those present at the January business meeting were treated to a meteor shower of shining ideas conducive to polishing up our goals and keeping us moving in orbit.”

We just finished The Great Debate V at our member’s meeting in which we debated the priorities for the Peoria Astronomical Society. The debate was lively and should help the board in future planning. See the results of the debate in another Starlite article.

“An active Board of Directors composed of officers and committee chairmen will meet once a month to facilitate the business of the Section. Some projects for the immediate future are to bring the brochure up to date, rewrite the constitution....”

We continue to meet once a month. One of the suggestions at the Great Debate was to make a new brochure. And once again we look to update our by-laws. Hopefully, we will get both projects done this year.

25 Years Ago
Spring Starlite 1986

“The most recent improvement has been a completely new electrical service to the (Northmoor) observatory building, including a 200 amp breaker panel in the dome itself. The Northmoor lecture room has a permanently mounted 5000 watt electric heater....”

So the heater actually is 25 years old. May have to be replace it as part of Restoration II. While the warmup room has been gutted, too much snow has cancelled the last meeting of the committee; but hopefully better weather will allow us to be done by the May viewing season.

“Finally, we are planning to try to have at least one public ‘comet party’ to observe the now outbound Halley’s Comet. This will probably be during the mid-April to mid-April period.”

I remember in mid-1995 when we hoping for another bright comet come our way. Then there came Hale-Bopp and all the public excitement over it. Now we hope for another bright comet to come our way. Nothing like a bright comet to get the public interested in astronomy.

BOARD MEETING HIGHLIGHTS AUG. '10 – JAN. '11

Aug. 18, 2010

Minutes from July were not available. Approval tabled until Sept. meeting. Treasurer's report was provided by Brian Hakes and approved. Bill Cole reported that 10 of 16 scheduled observing date for Northmoor were good viewing nights. Clear nights attendance had been consistently in the 100 visitor range per night. Rich Tennis brought 4 of the 5 eyepieces to the meeting. The 5th eyepiece (7 mm) is being returned to be replaced by a 10 mm eyepiece. Eric Clifton reported that done sheet metal work at Jubilee is complete. He arranged for the Brimfield Fire Department to assist in setting the dome on Sat. Aug. 28. Phil Burroughs presented the new slate of officers as: Pres.-John Barra, V.Pres.-Rich Tennis, Treas.-Brian Hakes, Sec.- Perry White, Parliamentarian-Eric Clifton, Nom. Chairman- Nick Johnson, Legal Agent- Mike Hay. Phil moved these names be accepted and the Board approved. Scott Swords reported on two new members, John & Leanna Crichton and one returning member, Larry Russell. Mike Hay reported the new edition of the Starlite would be mailed next week. (week of Aug. 22). John Barra reported that all programs are set for the remainder of 2010. He asked for suggestions for 2011 PAS program content.

Sept. 15, 2010

Minutes from July and Aug. board meetings were read and approved with minor spelling changes. The Treasurer's reports was provided by Brian and approved. Brian reported that the receipts received for banquet attendance and the payout to Bernardi's resulted in a final net cost of \$12.00. The banquet was a success and everyone enjoyed the speaker, Pamela Gay including spouses of members. Bill Cole reported the Sept. 11 viewing at Northmoor was good and was the reason for his departure from the banquet early. Eric and Steve Russell will meet at Northmoor to get measurements for a clamping eyepiece adaptor to be purchased from Precision Parts. Eric made the motion to allocate up to \$300 for this. The 14-inch dome was installed on Aug. 28 in a joint effort by the Brimfield Fire Dept. and PAS members. Scott reported two new members, Barbara Brown and Jennifer Malcolm.

Oct. 20, 2010

Minutes from Sept. were read and approved. Treasurer's report was provided by Brian and approved. The Star Party for OLLIE and ICC folks was held Oct. 1 with 40-50 attendees. Some new members also attended.

Nov. 17, 2010

Minutes for Oct. were not available. Approval was tabled until the Dec. meeting. Brian Hakes presented the treasurer's report for Oct. Rich Tennis provided an overview of the activities from the Nov. 13 workday at Northmoor. The demolition phase is slightly ahead of schedule as the storage cabinets were removed on the 13th. Calene Fleming provided an update on plans to dispose of PAS owned books. The material will be offered to attendees of the Dec. general membership meeting. Gary Bussman reported he is sending emails to the PAS email list regarding observing opportunities for this month.

Dec. 15, 2010

Minutes from Oct. and Nov. were read and approved. Brian presented the treasurer's report for Nov. and it was approved. Bill Cole reported that some renovations were done, since viewing season is over at Northmoor. The warm up room has been demolished. Unwanted books were made available to members at the membership meeting. Scott reported there is one new member, Vaclav Ujcik. John passed out handouts with upcoming 2011 program agenda that is known at this time.

Jan. 19, 2011

Minutes from Dec. were read and approved. Brian presented the treasurer's report and it was approved. Bill Cole reported that the info is out for the "treasure hunt". Letters have been sent seeking viewing hosts for the 2011 season. Dr. Kevin Kimberlin from Bradley Physics department was present and participated in the restoration planning discussion. A list of items was made during discussion. Unwanted books were donated to Lakeview Book Sale. Scott reported there are two new members, Shelly Anderson and Tatianna Johnson, who is formerly from Moscow and works for IDOT as a Civil Engineer. Jesse Hoover reported the website is not working correctly. He will work with Tim McGrath to address the issue.

STAR PARTIES:

From Gary Bussman, Observing Chairman:

Here are the scheduled star parties for the upcoming month. Also remember, third quarter and new moon weekends are the best time to head out to Jubilee Observatory.

Location	Date	Time
Northmoor Observatory	Saturday, June 11	7:30 pm
Jubilee Observatory	Saturday, July 23	7:30 pm
Rain date	Saturday, July 30	7:30 pm
Jubilee State Part	Saturday, August 20	7:30 pm
Rain date	Saturday, August 27	7:30 pm

A lot of the club activities are communicated using the Peoria Astro e-group website. Each month, I will put out the monthly observing news along with additional updates for future star parties. To keep in the loop, you should join the e-group. All you have to do is notify Mike Frasca at mfrasca@att.net with your email address. Once that is done, you will get all member updates on any upcoming star parties and observing news. The best thing is it's free to join! Everyone who has a telescope and those who want to get one should come out. If you haven't had your scope out for some time, bring it out. There are plenty of people to help you learn how to use it, if that's the issue. Come out even if you don't own one. It's fun just to look up!!!! Look forward to seeing old faces and new ones. This is a great time to meet people in the society!

SURVEY RESULTS: Results of Great Debate V: What Should be the Priorities of the Peoria Astronomical Society?

by John Barra

At the conclusion of our December general meeting, the Great Debate 5, members filled out a sheet ranking from 1-9 what each thought should be the priorities for the PAS. Below is a tabulation of those results, with one being the highest and nine the lowest.

Rank	Priority	Average
1.	Promoting Observing by Members	1.64
2.	Promoting the PAS	2.34
3.	Educating Members on Astronomy	2.38
4.	Long Range Planning	3.83
5.	Promoting Observing by the Public	4.07
6.	Educating Public on Astronomy	4.23
7.	Maintenance/Operations	4.36
8.	Advocating Astr. Issues w/ Members	6.00
9.	Advocating Astr. Issues w/Public	6.42

I might add that 8 or 9 probably would have been ranked somewhat higher since it was difficult for everyone to decide what category dark sky issues should be placed. It should be noted, however, that no one came up with another other issue to advocate, except dark sky issues.

A great deal of discussion at the debate centered around better promotion of the society. The consensus was that such promotion would best be made if centered around our public viewing at Northmoor. Among the suggestions were to have visitors add information in our logbook (addresses, phone numbers, email addresses, etc.) and to make a new brochure to hand out to visitors. The results of the survey have already been discussed and will continue be discussed at our board meetings in helping to determine future action.

First Half of Peoria Messier Marathon is April 9

By John Barra

As mentioned in Starlite articles from last year, we are starting up a Peoria Messier Marathon that is really two half-marathons. Half of the objects are to be viewed in one night in early spring and the other half in mid-summer.

The first half is scheduled for Saturday, April 9 at Jubilee Observatory. A nearly third-quarter moon does not rise until mid-morning. Since the object is to be done each night around midnight, you won't have to worry about the moon.

A fuller explanation of the mechanics of the Peoria Marathon will be the subject of the April membership meetings. Check-off sheets will be handed out then.

A person successfully completes a Peoria Messier Marathon by observing all 110 Messier Objects on any two nights in a calendar year. The dates we picked were done with the intention of being able to observe all the objects between 9 and midnight. However, any two nights are acceptable--understanding that using different dates might cause one to be up until later in the morning.

The second-half is tentatively scheduled for Saturday, August 27. With these two dates, only one object should be particularly challenging. M79, a globular cluster in Lepus, will be setting on April 9, about six degrees above the horizon at 9 pm, so you should start looking for it in late twilight. It will not be in night sky during those hours on August 27.

Finally, M77, a globular cluster in Cetus, will probably night observable until a little past midnight on August 27.

STAR HOUSE AND THE BLIZZARD OF 2011

By Rich Tennis

There are advantages to having an observatory. However, there can be a downside to having an observatory. I experienced such a downside with the blizzard of 2011.

I had anticipated the upcoming storm predictions and taken, what I thought, were adequate measures. I was confident that all was protected with plastic garbage bags, desk height and down. All the rest of the equipment, sky charts and books above the desktop height were left uncovered, as nothing had been snowed-on above that level in 13 winters.

After the blizzard calmed down, I ventured out to see how Star House survived with my snow blower in the lead. I opened the door and was shocked to see everything from the floor to the ceiling covered with snow, from 1 to 4 inches deep. Even my new 10-inch Meade SCT was covered with snow, as on filters, eyepieces, sky charts, and astronomy books.

Being so cold, -6 degree F, the snow was dry, so the books, filters, and maps and books were never wet after the snow was hand brushed. Two hours of "snow-dusting" and removal of about five bushels of snow were removed.

The story has a good ending with nothing inside showed any trace of the "snow-job" it received. The telescope and charts and eyepieces performed very well at the first clear evening soon after.... and "all lived happily ever after".

SAYING GOODBYE TO FRIENDS

Since the publishing of the last Starlite, we have lost two friends of the Society and its members. Bernice Grebner passed away January 4, 2011. Bernice was a long time member and past president of the PAS.

From Rich Tennis:

I was just informed of the passing of Dave Toeppen, Feb 14, 2011. Dave was very instrumental in getting a lot of northern Illinois communities adding light control to their zoning ordinances. Dave was also instrumental in my getting interested in the subject of light pollution, as his wife's sister lived in Eureka years before.

*Thanks to Dave

ARTICLE FOR SALE:

From Rich Tennis

I talked to the gentleman from Pekin that has this mint condition telescope for sale. He had it in the Peoria Journal Star, but did not have a single call, except mine. I had called him to get the story. Dave Beuscher bought it upon retirement, but changed his mind on it after a short use of it. He is to have cataract surgery sometime in the future, but wants to start again with a smaller telescope later. I got permission from him to add it to our Starlite. It is to be as follows:

"Telescope for sale - Meade 8-inch SCT LX-200 GPS Includes: tripod, full diameter sun filter, anti-dew shield, eyepieces - (6.4mm, 9.7mm, 24mm), f/6.3 focal reducer, "Bob's Knobs". Used only six times. \$2,200 firm. (309) 353-6311 Pekin, IL"

NORTHMOOR OBSERVATION SCHEDULE

2011 Hosting Schedule

May 7 Terry Beachler Sheldon Schafer Nick Johnson
May 14 Bill Cole Brandt Bechtold Nerio Calgaro
May 21 Phil Burroughs Sheldon Schafer Tim McGrath
May 28 Steve Wrigley Jon Wrigley Gerald Horst

June 4 Rich Tennis Terry Beachler Bob Pauer
June 11 Scott Swords Calene Fleming Gerald Horst
June 18 Dave Grebner Dan Son Rodney Nordstrom
June 25 Steve Wrigley Jon Wrigley Nick Johnson

July 2 Bill Cole Brandt Bechtold Nerio Calgaro
July 9 John Barra Mike Hay Brian Hakes
July 16 Tim Lester Sheldon Schafer Rodney Nordstrom
July 23 Bill Cole Dave Grebner Nerio Calgaro
July 30 Phil Burroughs Brian Hakes Nick Johnson

Aug 6 Rich Tennis Dan Son Bob Pauer
Aug 13 Scott Swords Calene Fleming Tim Lester
Aug 20 Steve Wrigley Jon Wrigley Phil Burroughs
Aug 27 John Barra Mike Hay Dave Grebner

Sept 3 Rich Tennis Rodney Nordstrom Bob Pauer
Sept 10 Tim Lester Tim McGrath Gerald Horst
Sept 17 John Barra Mike Hay Dan Son
Sept 24 Bill Cole Brandt Bechtold Nerio Calgaro

Oct 1 Rich Tennis Tim McGrath Nick Johnson
Oct 8 Scott Swords Calene Fleming Brian Hakes
Oct 15 John Barra Mike Hay Bob Pauer
Oct 22 Terry Beachler Phil Burroughs Rodney Nordstrom
Oct 29 Steve Wrigley Jon Wrigley Dan Son

Jubilee Maintenance Schedule – 2011

<Prep for ICC Astro Class 4/8 thru 4/30>

APR 2	Eric Clifton	Jesse Hoover	Brian Bill
APR	Scott Swords	Calene Fleming	Rich Tennis
APR	Greg Neaveill	Bob Pauer	Perry White
APR 9	Eric Clifton	Doug Kasel	Tim McGrath
APR 16	John Barra	DeWayne Bartels	Brandt Bechtold
APR 23	Gary Bussman	Mike Frasca	Brian Hakes
APR 30	Mike Hay	Dave Grebner	Gerry Horst
MAY 7	Scott Hay	Cliff Jeske	Tim Lester
MAY 14	Steve Russell	Dan Son	DeWayne Bartels
MAY 21	John Barra	Gary Bussman	Mike Frasca
MAY 28	Scott Swords	Calene Fleming	Brandt Bechtold
JUNE 4	Brian Bill	Eric Clifton	Jesse Hoover
JUNE 11	Brian Hakes	Greg Neaveill	Doug Kasel
JUNE 18	Rich Tennis	Perry White	Steve Russell
JUNE 25	Dave Grebner	Mike Hay	Tim Lester
JULY 2	Scott Hay	Gerry Horst	Tim McGrath
JULY 9	Cliff Jeske	Scott Swords	Calene Fleming
JULY 16	Bob Pauer	Dan Son	John Barra
JULY 23	DeWayne Bartels	Gary Bussman	Mike Frasca
JULY 30	Brandt Bechtold	Brian Bill	Dave Grebner
AUG 6	Eric Clifton	Brian Hakes	Mike Hay
AUG 13	Jesse Hoover	Tim Lester	Doug Kasel
AUG 20	Scott Hay	Greg Neaveill	Steve Russell
AUG 27	Rich Tennis	Perry White	Gerry Horst
< Prep for ICC Astro Class - Date TBD>			
SEPT 3	Scott Swords	Calene Fleming	Bob Pauer
SEPT 10	Dan Son	Tim McGrath	DeWayne Bartels
SEPT 17	John Barra	Brandt Bechtold	Brian Bill
SEPT 24	Gary Bussman	Eric Clifton	Mike Frasca
OCT 1	Dave Grebner	Brian Hakes	Mike Hay
OCT 8	Scott Hay	Jesse Hoover	Cliff Jeske
OCT 15	Scott Swords	Calene Fleming	Bob Pauer
OCT 22	Gerry Horst	Doug Kasel	Tim Lester