



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

WINTER, 2011

WHAT'S IN THIS ISSUE?

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Directors:

President: Rich Tennis, rltennis7@dishmail.net
Vice-President: Perry White, whitepe@hughes.net
Secretary: Nick Johnson, johnsnl@comcast.net
Treasurer: Brian Hakes, bhakes@sbcglobal.net
Parliamentarian: Eric Clifton, ericjclifton@comcast.net
Nominating Chairman: Jesse Hoover, hooveje@gmail.com
Legal Agent: Mike Hay, me.hay@comcast.net

Editor's Notes: Articles may be submitted via two email addresses: ls_hay@yahoo.com or Starlighteditor@gmail.com. Deadlines for articles for the 2012 publications are: February 15, May 16, August 15 and November 14. (Reminder: Please submit all articles in a word format.)

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:

We welcome a new members: Claude Cook, Henry, and Morgan Broquard, East Peoria.

FUTURE PROGRAMS:

December 7: Great Debate VI: Move Downtown or Move Elsewhere? John Barra

January 4, 2012: Update from Cassini: Lee Green (TCAA)

February 1: Astronomical Factors Driving Long-Term Climate Cycles: Sheldon Schafer

March 7: Messier Marathon with Binoculars: John Barra

April 4: Organizational Meeting: Filling Committee Vacancies

May 2: Video: 50 Year Anniversary of the Space Program: Rich Tennis

By-Laws

At the end of this newsletter you will find the By-Laws for the Peoria Astronomical Society. If you have questions, please contact a Board member.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE -- "Rich's Ramblings"

As your newest PAS President, I want to extend a hearty welcome to all who have joined the Peoria Astronomical Society in the last year as well as extend warm greeting to all returning members. There are many individual reasons for first joining our club and many of you have found good reasons for continuing your membership for many years. As we returning members reflect on why we continue to belong, it is easy to find many ways PAS meets our needs. It is good to be part of a group of like-minded amateur astronomers.

My own experience with PAS began when I was seeking advice about what kind of telescope to purchase. I owned a 70 mm Sears and Roebuck refractor and was ready to expand a bit. When I came to my first PAS meeting in 1997, Eric Clifton greeted me at the door. When I made my needs known, several members immediately began to help me understand the issues involved in selecting a telescope and to clarify my own specific needs within my budgetary constraints. I was even given good advice on reputable dealers, and I will be forever grateful for their good advice and assistance. I learned early on that this is a group of amateur astronomers who want to share their delight in viewing the night sky and want others to have similar good viewing experiences.

To all our new members thus far in 2011: Morgan, Allen, Bernie, Justin, Shelly, Tatiana, and Larry; have we met your expectations as to what you were looking for in an astronomy club? Has PAS helped you in your development as a stargazer? As I begin this big responsibility of being your President, I ask you to send me an e-mail, rltennis7@dishmail.net or call me at 309-467-3597 to let me know where we have hit the mark and where we have missed the mark in helping meet your expectations of PAS.

AND for you seasoned members, we could benefit greatly from your experience and input. The members of the PAS Board encourage you to come to the Board meetings, 7:30 PM on the 3rd Wednesday of the month at Hardee's on North Knoxville. You may find a committee or project that triggers your interest. I'll even buy you a cup of coffee when you attend your first PAS Board meeting.

Clear and dark skies,

Rich

FROM STARLITES PAST

By John Barra

50 Years Ago

Winter Newsletter 1961

“A mobile observing service will be made available to those in hospitals and other institutions who would like to look through a telescope and learn more about astronomy but are unable to visit the observatory.”

Now I am sure at the time that was a great idea. But today, the hospitals give off so much light that I am not sure you could even see the moon. Speaking of today and hospitals and telescopes, how much closer do you need to be to an incoming helicopter?

“The stand at the observatory has new wheels, installed by Bill McCowan and Al Sharav. It is much easier to move, and those who use it will appreciate the change.”

The original observing stand without wheels remains under the observatory floor. I bet that sure was a pain to use on viewing nights. A little technology goes a long way. It makes you appreciate those members who have the mechanical skills to make our job easier

25 Years Ago

December Starlite 1986

“Dick McClain tells me that he and Van have finished another great improvement at Northmoor Observatory. They have installed a cog-wheel for the dome. The hesitant friction drive has been replaced by a circular cog rail, evenly spaced around the entire dome, driven by a pinion on the old motor.”

As I said above, a little technology goes a long way. And now with the new Ash Dome at Northmoor, as Geiko tells us, even a caveman could turn the dome.

“COMPUTER PROGRAM FOR EXPOSURE TIME CALCULATIONS. This program...

5 CLS

10 REM PROGRAM BY BRIAN WESTON

15 PRINT 'Exposure Time Calculations' (etc, etc, etc)”

And I suppose they had to still use punch cards. I have problems using the easy-to-use computer programs we now have. If I had to use the computers back then...well, I guess I could type this article on an old, IBM manual typewriter.

BOARD MEETING HIGHLIGHTS:

Board meeting: June 15, 2011:

The minutes for the April, 2011 meeting were read and approved. The Treasurer's report was approved as read. Bill Cole reported that the red lights in the warm-up room at Northmoor are leaking white light. There was discussion on how to remedy the situation. It was decided to use red light bulbs and it was noted that each fixture has a toggle switch. As part of the restoration, Eric Clifton made a motion to purchase a digital sidereal clock with GMT and GPS updates. We are still undecided as to what to do with the floor and it was decided to postpone plans as the upcoming viewing season is upon us. At the Jubilee site, the floor has been re-installed and we need an 11x11 foot carpet remnant to put on top of the plywood.

Board meeting: July 20, 2011

The minutes for the June meeting were not available. The Treasurer's report was read and approved. Nick Johnson, the nomination chair, reported that two positions are without named candidates for the September election. The positions are Vice President and Secretary. Scott Swords reported we have one new member, Justin Wilkerson. John Barra provided a tentative schedule for programs for the remainder of the year.

Board meeting: August 17, 2011

The minutes for the July meeting were not available. The Treasurer's report was read and approved. Brian Hakes also reported that for the period from July, 2007 to July, 2011 total Society expenditures were just under \$82K for Northmoor. He also reported on the status of procuring the new plaque for Northmoor. The prospective supplier provided a quote of \$1300 for a bronze plaque based on the specifications and design Brian provided. Rich Tennis made a motion to allow Brian to make necessary design modifications and pursue purchasing the plaque with a \$1500 limit. Eric Clifton seconded the motion and it was approved via board majority vote. Nick Johnson noted that Bill Cole's replacement of one red light with a white one was a good improvement for shutting down the dome at night. Rich reported the check for the sidereal clock has cleared. Eric reminded the Board of upcoming ICC star party dates. September 16 is the primary date. Eric and Tim Lester discovered that the power supply mounted to the 14" dome pier needs repair or replacement at Jubilee. He estimated cost will be in the \$100-150 range. Nick Johnson presented the proposed officer/director candidate slate vote at the upcoming annual meeting. Proposed candidates are President-Rich Tennis, Vice President- Perry White, Treasurer- Brian Hakes, Secretary- Nick Johnson, Nominating- Jesse Hoover, Parliamentarian- Eric Clifton and Legal agent-Mike Hay. The Board approved this slate by via majority vote. Rich reported that all new Peoria Street developments will use "full cut off" lighting. Final planning was completed for the Sept. 17 picnic/annual meeting. The Society will provide the chicken, coffee and water. Members are to bring a side dish and provide their own soda and table service. John Barra reported the Society received a note requesting Society participation in an upcoming "Observe the Moon Night" on Oct. 8.

Board meeting: September 21, 2011

The Board reviewed minutes for the June, July and August meeting. Three minor corrections arose and were noted by the Secretary. The Treasurer's report was read and approved. Brian reported on his meeting with the new museum managers. Highlights are as follows: Lakeview Museum to close Sept. 2012. Scheduling of event space at the new museum facility (including planetarium) will begin July 1, 2012. Fee rates are not currently set, but they will be competitive to other meeting/event venues. Rental agreements will be required. Reduced rates for non-profit organizations will be considered. Underground parking will be available, but will require a parking fee. The planetarium area will accommodate banquets, but all food must be catered by the facility. No outside food will be allowed. Peoria Park District will take over the Lakeview Museum building. John Barra suggested that we might want to start thinking about alternated locations for PAS meetings. Brian also updated the Board on the status of the Northmoor plaque. Subsequent conversation ended with one actionable item, which was Bill Cole's recommendation to change the word "North Moor" to the single word "NORTHMOOR" on the plaque. Brian will pass that change to the supplier. Bill reported there has not been much activity on the remaining restoration tasks scheduled for 2011. In particular, he noted that the drainage ditch on the east side of the observatory still needs covered. Bill also reported the new sidereal clock was delivered with the wrong internal processor. The clock was returned to the manufacturer for rework. Scott Swords reported there are two new members—Claude Cook and Morgan Broquard. Bill and John held conversations with Alice Jackson of the Peoria Public Library regarding PAS participation in the Oct. 8 "Observe the Moon Night". The PAS and PPL will co-host the event. The event will run from 6-8 PM.

Board meeting—October 19, 2011

The minutes from September were reviewed and three "typo" errors were noted. Revised minutes were approved. The Treasurer's report was approved as read. Bill Cole reported that during the spring and summer observing season, approximately 2/3 of the Saturday night sessions were "clear enough to observe". He also reported that the "Observe the Moon Night" has attendance estimated between 100 and 150 people. Jesse Hoover reported there are still intermittent problems accessing the website. He will meet with the website host provider to resolve the problems. Bill Cole reported the new sidereal clock arrived and is now installed. Brian Hakes reported the new plaque for Northmoor will be cast around the end of October. Calene Fleming suggested that the Honorary Membership status bestowed on Mike Hay at the annual meeting be noted in the minutes. Rich Tennis reported that he discovered the focuser on the Northmoor telescope was not working properly. He and Steve Russell determined there was a missing screw on the focuser. A replacement screw was located and the repair should be complete by the Oct. 23 viewing session.

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"

From Louis Carr

"My curiosity about what's out there in space led me to purchase a Meade MTS-SN8 telescope 23 years ago. I recall that the telescope was purchased from a store in Minneapolis and cost a bit over \$900. However, it has been years since I used the telescope since my neighborhood on West Lake St. in Peoria has become the location of numerous motels and shopping centers. The light pollution is terrific. So I've decided to sell the Meade MTS-SN8. I have two eyepieces for the scope and have also mounted it on a wheeled platform so that it can be moved about. The scope has been sheltered in a special sealed cabinet that I made for it in my garage and to the best of my knowledge is in good working order. I am asking \$600 for the package.

I can be reached at 309-691-8927 or by email at lcarr@mtco.com and would be glad to show the package to any interested parties."

