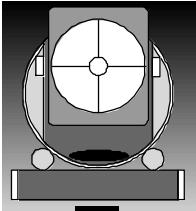


# STARLITE



The Official Publication of the Peoria Astronomical Society, Inc.

Fall Issue No. 158

September 2004

**PEORIA  
ASTRONOMICAL  
SOCIETY, INC.  
P.O. BOX 10111  
PEORIA IL  
61612-0111**

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## PAS Honors Sam Decker

*By Eric Clifton*

During an Orthodox Jewish funeral service, after the casket and the vault have been lowered into the ground, the members of the congregation finish the burial process by shoveling dirt into the grave until it is filled. As each mourner takes his turn, the first few shovelfuls are intentionally ineffective, done with the shovel's blade turned upside-down, curved-side up to acknowledge the reluctance and sadness felt by each loved-one and friend to be doing the job that he's doing.

It's with that same sense of reluctance and sadness that I approach the present task ... that of telling you that Dr. Sam Decker passed at the age of 91.

I had a strange case of déjà-vu during the services. When I said "hello" to Sam the first time I really met him, I had a shovel in my hands. And now, 25 years later, I was saying "good-bye" the same way.

One late summer evening in 1979, while I was digging the trench to run the power out to the 24-inch dome, Rollin Van Zandt had brought Sam

out to Jubilee to see the progress we'd made getting the dome ready for the Society's new telescope. The friendly conversation, the plans, the shared-dreams for the 'Brimfield Site' (as it was then



known), made the time pass so quickly, that the three of us were surprised when we'd noticed that it was growing dark. Sam was that easy to talk with. And as we talked, I was amazed at all of the things Sam knew ... an amazement that went on for as long as I

knew him.

Sam was truly a Renaissance man. He was fascinated by everything. His home and his office made you think you'd wandered into a combination of a museum and a library. With wide interests in art, sculpture, history, music, medicine, photography, his collection of books easily runs over 100,000 volumes. At his home, a Bible printed in the 1600's shares shelf space with a book on Quantum Cosmology, published just months ago. An accomplished photographer, his work ranged from 360-degree panoramas taken with a special rotating camera to photographs of crystals through a microscope in polarized light. An avid traveler, he collected works of art and sculpture from countries all over the world.

Sam cared so much about the Astronomical Society.

It was his initial donation that bought the 3-inch thick slab of glass that Art Grebner and Dan Joyce would turn into a mirror of exceptional quality ... and that mirror, in turn, led to Van designing and building the 24-inch telescope

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# President's Message

by Tim McGrath



The program for our August members meeting was a "Brainstorming" session, conducted by Mike Frasca. The purpose of the meeting was to get

a general feel from the membership at large as to how we (the board of directors) are doing, what is important to the society, and what the board should be working toward. The following is a summary of the ideas that were discussed, broken down by category.

## Resources

- List the club's scopes on the internet
- Have a "links" page on the club website with links to other astronomy sites
- Hold a club "garage sale" to get rid of old and duplicate stuff
- Find and organize the club library. Possibly donate to a school or library
- Make the large binoculars at Jubilee usable, or remove them

- Have a caller to notify members of events, work parties, star parties, etc

- Hold regular (quarterly?) key-holder sessions to increase volunteer base

- Training on CCD camera

- Class or training on telescope

## Maintenance/modifications

- Identify members personal scopes

- Communication

- Astronomical Art in the newsletter

- Publish a "sky" column in the newspaper

- Contact schools, and/or email newsletter to local school districts and libraries

- Think "Tri-county"

- Weather forecast and night sky forecast on web pages

- Distribute pamphlets/fliers at special events

- Communicate with other clubs

- Bring telescopes out at CILCO serenade under the stars

- Astronomy science fair

- Notify boy scout councils at leaders meetings (and girl scouts, 4H, etc)

- Non-member mentoring program

- Comment cards at meetings

(Continued on page 3)

## Observing....

(Continued from page 8)

the best in several years. The other trend has been the sparse numbers of viewers at Jubilee this summer. I guess everyone is busy in the summer doing many other things.

With school back in session and longer nights, the fall is a great time to head out to Jubilee on new-moon weekends. I have always thought it was the best time of year to view. I encourage members to take advantage of the season. If you belong to the e-mail group, check your e-mail to see who is heading out to our dark site on any particular weekend. Therefore it is important for us who are viewing to post an e-mail so others know someone will be out at Jubilee.

Beside the normal weekend viewing at Jubilee or at NorthMoor (until the end of October), you might want to try the winery star party, which is mentioned elsewhere in this issue. If you have not been to one, it is a lot of fun. There is something special about star parties--seeing a lot of people with a lot of different scopes. The wine doesn't hurt either.

**...what  
is  
important...**

**Starlite** is published quarterly during the months of March, June, September, and December by the Peoria Astronomical Society, Inc., P.O. Box 10111, Peoria IL 61612-0111. All rights reserved. Deadline for submission is the third Wednesday of the preceding month. Submissions should be directed to Jeffrey Pittenger, 721 Fillmore St, Morton IL 61550, or e-mailed to <starlite\_editor@yahoo.com>. Any materials submitted to **Starlite** become property of the Peoria Astronomical Society, unless other arrangements are made beforehand. Except as noted, written and graphical material from this publication may be reprinted only for non-profit benefit of interested parties, provided specific credit is given to the writer(s), artist(s), and the Peoria Astronomical Society. Any other use of material, including graphics and photographs, is subject to express permission from the Peoria Astronomical Society.

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## Sam Decker....

*(Continued from page 1)*

... and that telescope led to the Society's entire effort to turn an abandoned farmyard into a park for astronomy. A year into the 24-inch project, Sam chipped in again with another sizable contribution to keep the work on track and moving ahead.

In 1982, the PAS hosted ALCON-82, the National Convention of the Astronomical League, a confederation of several hundred organizations like ours. The convention committee, under the leadership of Georgia Sutherland, ran into an early obstacle. We needed a large amount of printing done, deposits had to be made on hotels and banquet facilities, the large volume of mailings required postage ... and all of that required money that the committee did not yet have. Sam cleared that road-block with an interest-free loan to the committee so that we could get the process started. After the registrations began rolling in, we were able to pay Sam back and put on

one of the most successful conventions ever seen by the members of the League. So Sam was, once again, a key part, a critical part of our success.

A few years after that, Sam bought a 14-inch Celestron Compustar ... the first commercially available automatic-aiming telescope. After concluding that it was too big to handle by himself and with too many trees and lights for an observatory at his home, he decided that the best way to make the most effective use of the telescope was to give it to the Society and share it with everybody. That telescope, the most popular one at Jubilee, occupies the small dome at what is now called "The Decker-Grebner-Van Zandt Observatory."

And, finally, just last fall, Sam bought another telescope, solely for the purpose of donating it to the Society. Always a lover of fine optics, Sam bought a good one ... a 4-inch apochromatic refractor. The state-of-the-art drive system allows a laptop computer to be connected to the mounting so that the telescope can be aimed with just a few clicks of

the mouse button.

Sam gave so much of himself to others. After retiring from a long career as a psychiatrist, he donated his services for the next 20 years to the patients in the Veterans Administrations hospitals. He gave to the Society. He gave to his synagogue. In his quiet and unassuming way, Dr. Sam Decker has given us the tools we use to study and to share our knowledge and wonder of the Universe.

So ... the next time, no, make that every time, you look through a telescope at Jubilee, please pause for a few seconds to think of Sam and to thank the kind and caring man who helped make your glimpse of our little corner of the Universe possible.

We owe a great debt of gratitude to Sam ... we owe a great debt of gratitude to his family for sharing him with us these many years ... debts that we cannot ever hope to pay back ... but we can pay forward by continuing to share Sam's legacy.

25 May 2004 ☽

## Message....

*(Continued from page 2)*

- Name tags/greeter at meetings
- Program
- Northmoor Restoration Update
- Invite Steve Van Winkle to talk about city lights
- Digital photography on the cheap
- Show and Tell
- Cosmology
- Hubble company to talk about light fixtures
- Visiting lectureship
- Univ. of IL professor Kaler
- Planetarium show
- Film photography
- Quad City / Castle mobile observatory

### Public Outreach

- Encourage telescope owners to bring their Christmas scopes to a

PAS meeting for tutorial on how to use them

- Astronomy Day
- Sky events in Peoria Journal Star
- Email list of astronomy tips/monthly hi-lights
- Members are on the website
- Explorer (BSA) group for astronomy
- Kids edition of the newsletter, with puzzles, games
- Electronic newsletter
- Integrate PAS program for home-school kids
- Expand Northmoor viewing with more telescopes for a public star party
- Wildlife Prairie State Park observing
- Solar observing at the mall
- Institute of Learning at Bradley
- Invite a star party vendor to Peoria
- Jr High/High school programs

- New member orientation
- Officer ID/name tags
- Publicize meeting dates/times/locations
- Have a meeting host/greeter
- New member orientation packet

This list came from the relatively few members that were present at the meeting. I'm sure there are more great suggestions from the rest of us out there. If you have some ideas, I would love to hear them. I would be glad to discuss them with you at the next meeting, or you can email them to me at: president@astronomical.org.

Tim



# Of Starlites Past

by John Barra

## 40

## YEARS AGO

June Newsletter 1964

**"DO YOU KNOW YOUR HISTORY? PART III:** After the Park Board approved the transaction for the site of our observatory, the scope-less skysky-scanners (the Astronomy Section members) were ready to move. With the completion of the plans on June 24, 1953, the groundbreaking at North Moor Golf Course took place the following autumn."

*Such was an interesting note 40 years ago from an event that occurred 51 years ago. While they might have referred to the predecessor of the PAS as "the scope-less sky scanners" back then, it certainly would not be accurate now. In addition to the clubs' scopes, you can see the latest new "toys" of our members any clear moonless weekend at Jubilee.*

**"FRIDAY NIGHT OBSERVING:** (keyholder schedule\*).....June 12 :Eric Clifton. (Editor's note: back then, Friday nights were for members only with a keyholder running the telescope at North Moor--with Saturday for public viewing.)

*This year's Jubilee Schedule has the following assignment: June 12: Eric Clifton. Just a coincidence or some special allignment of the stars?*



## 25

## YEARS AGO

June Starlite 1978

"By the end of this coming summer, the Peoria Astronomical Society will put into operation by far the largest and most modern amateur telescope and the second largest optical telescope of any kind in the State of Illinois."

*Our observatory at Jubilee is officially known as the Decker-Grebner-Van Zandt Observatory. This past month Sam Decker died. He joined Art Grebner and Rollin Van Zandt in the heavens. He, like they, will be greatly missed. Our sympathy to his family.*

**"THINGS TO LOOK FOR:** June 12, evening: Jupiter passing close by the Beehive....September 26, morning: Jupiter passing Regulus. Actual conjunction occurs after sunrise."

*On May 15 of this year, Comet Heat, not Jupiter, could be seen passing very near the Beehive. It was a spectacular event at Jubilee with binoculars or a telescope. Jupiter has already passed Regulus now, an event that occurs about every 12 years. It is headed towards Spica.*



## Astronomical Calendar

*September 14*

New Moon

*September 15*

PAS Board Meeting, 7:30 p.m.

Northpoint Shopping Center Hardees

*September 16-18*

Astrofest

IL Dark Skies Star Party (SAS)

*September 21*

First Quarter Moon

*September 22*

Autumnal Equinox

*September 25*

PAS annual banquet

Jubilee State Park

*September 28*

Full Moon

*October 6*

PAS Members Meeting, 7:30 p.m.

Lakeview Planetarium

Last Quarter Moon

September 2004						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

October 2004						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24/31	25	26	27	28	29	30

November 2004						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

*October 13*

New Moon

*October 16*

Winery Star Party

Mackinaw Valley Vineyard

*October 20*

PAS Board Meeting, 7:30 p.m.

Northpoint Shopping Center Hardees

First Quarter Moon

*October 21*

Orinid Meteor Shower

*October 27*

Full Moon

*October 31*

Daylight Savings Time ends

*November 3*

PAS Members Meeting, 7:30 p.m.

Lakeview Planetarium

*November 4*

Taurid Meteor Shower

*November 5*

Last Quarter Moon

*November 12*

New Moon

*November 16*

Leonid meteor shower peaks

*November 17*

PAS Board Meeting, 7:30 p.m.

Northpoint Shopping Center Hardees

Moon passes 3 north of Jupiter

*November 19*

First Quarter Moon

*November 26*

Full Moon

## Minutes....

(Continued from page 7)

**Program:** (Dan Son)  
 June will be Gene Hodel on Cassini.  
 July will be Eric Clifton on The Building of Jubilee.  
 Call Mike Frasca about Brainstorming.  
 Call a local weatherman.  
 Call a teacher at Roanoke high school who worked on the Cassini project.

**Membership:** (Scott Swords)  
 We have 2 new members, Jo Collins and Lee Wenger.

**Website:**  
 The web site will continually be updated as time allows.

**Old Business:**  
 Audit is a week away from being finished.

**New Business:**  
 Brandt Bechtold brought an idea about having people bringing their scope out to NorthMoor on a Saturday night and PAS would have people on hand to help them use their scopes properly.  
 Astrofest is September 16-18th  
 Illinois Dark Skies Party Sept 16-19th  
 Prairie Skies Star Party Sept 9th & 11th  
 Oct 16th Mackinaw Winery

=====

### June 16, 2004

**Attendees:** Calene Fleming, Mike Hay, John Barra, Scott Swords, Tim McGrath, Bill Cole, Neric Calgaro, DeWayne Bartels, Rich Tennis, Mike Radigan and Dan Son..

**Treasurer's Report:** (Mike Shelton)

Mike presented the Treasurer's report (copies attached) for the month of December and January. Dan Son made a motion to accept the treasury reports, 2nd by Mike Hay. Motion passed.

We can pay the Academy of Science at any time. Pas will pick a date after March board meeting when we will an official count of members and pay for 2004.

### Committee Reports

**Jubilee Observatory:** (Eric Clifton)  
 Will be finishing doors soon, aluminum is on hand.  
 Brian Bill's ICC class will be coming out on July 9th or 10th with a July 23rd



## The Bulletin Board

Wide Pens, Inc. for their efforts in making the logo and printing the pens.

● ● ●

There is no longer a working phone line at Jubilee observatory. Please keep this in mind if you go out there.

● ● ●

I will have the clubs TMB telescope, donated by Dr. Sam Decker, at the PAS picnic on Sept 25th. If you are interested in taking keyholder training, please plan to attend the picnic. Also, I would appreciate if you let me know ahead of time, so I know how many to expect.

● ● ●

There is a new grass sweeper at Jubilee. I am working on a document that will explain both mower operation, and instructions on how to use the sweeper. There will be a copy attached to the bulletin board next to the mower.

### PAS Banquet

The date has been set for the PAS annual banquet.  
 The orginal date of the 11th has been changed. The new date is:  
**September 25.**

● ● ●

### NEW! For Science Treasure Hunters!

We have something new to offer visitors at NorthMoor when they bring their Peoria Academy of Science Treasure Hunt books. We have full color, laminated, posters dedicated to the question topics. PAS is also giving away pens with our logo and website address to each treasure hunt participant. Thank you goes to Kerri McGrath for designing the posters. Thank you also to World

or 24th as a rain date.

**Light Pollution:** (Rich Tennis)  
 Wildlife Prairie Park dark sky's is progressing, they are getting costs finalized and looking for financial backing.

July 1st the Tri County Regional Planning Commission starts work on light pollution control ordinance.

Rich has attached copies of some proposed bills in the Illinois House Rules Committee and Illinois Senate Rules Committee.

**NorthMoor Observatory** (Bill Cole)

More cloudy Saturday nights.

**NorthMoor Restoration:**  
 (Scott Hay)

Next meeting will be June 23rd at East Peoria Park District building, last meeting was cancelled.

**Observing Club:** (John Barra)  
 Summer mini marathon will be July 17th with the 16th as a rain date.

**Program:** (Dan Son)

July will be on Cassini  
 August will be Brain Storming with Mike Frasca.

**Membership:** (Scott Swords)  
 Will & Amelia Holt are our newest members.

**Website:**

Web site is being updated; we have a new poll section and new picture of Venus.

**Old Business:**

Audit is not done.

**New Business:**

Sheldon wants to thank everyone who helped with the Transit of Venus, it was a huge success.

Gary Bussman, Calene Fleming, Scott Swords and Eric Clifton where on Grandview Dr along with some Bradley Physics class students.

Calene made a motion to purchase a 42" wide pull from behind the tractor sweeper from Farm & Fleet for around \$160, seconded by John Barra. Motion passed.

Banquet is now September 25th..●

# Can You Spot This?

IC 4665

by John Barra

Can You Spot This? premiered in Starlite Issue #144, December 2000.

This month I will show you how to find an easy open cluster, one that beginners can find. It is IC 4665. IC stands for the Index Catalog. I think it is easier to find than most Messier objects. But not only did it not make the Messier list, it did not even make the NGC (New General Catalog) list.

The key to finding this bright cluster at magnitude 4 is to know the pattern of the constellation Ophiuchus--the reason it is a good learning object for beginners. But it has been overlooked by many amateurs, therefore it is featured here for the more advanced.

This constellation is actually the

thirteenth constellation which is crossed by the sun on the ecliptic. However, it is the one left off the zodiac. Maybe that is why IC 4665 was ignored for so long.



Once you have conquered the pattern of stars that make the primary shape of Ophiuchus, find Beta, the second brightest star in it. Beta makes a nice pattern itself with Gamma, 67 and a few a stars of similar brightness. If you find Beta

with binoculars, this cluster will stand out right away.

Aim your finder or Telrad at Beta. Using a low power eyepiece, look into it. You should see IC 4665. Or you can aim your Telrad following the constellation line shown in Chart 1, with the lower part of your inner circle on Beta. On real dark nights with good seeing, you can see it with your naked-eye as a hazy patch.

*...left  
off the  
zodiac...*

Because of its size (about 2/3 of a degree), you will have to do most of your seeing with a low power eyepiece or a medium power eyepiece with a wide viewing angle. There are approximately 30 bright stars visible in this cluster. It looks like the pattern shown in Chart 2. To me, the cluster looks like the word "HI" or the Roman Numeral "IX", depending on the orientation of your telescope.

## OBJECT STATISTICS:

Name: IC 4665  
Type: Open Cluster  
Magnitude: 4.2  
Size: 41'  
Coordinates:  
17 hr., 46.3 min.;  
+05 °, 43.0 min.

## Board of Directors Nominees

The following slate of officers was nominated to serve the Peoria Astronomical Society for the 2004-2005 term. They will be voted on at the PAS Annual Banquet on September 25, 2004.

President: Tim McGrath  
Vice-President: John Barra  
Treasurer: Brandt Bechtold  
Secretary: Dan Son  
Legal Agent and Parliamentarian:  
Mike Hay  
Nominating Chairman:  
DeWayne Bartels

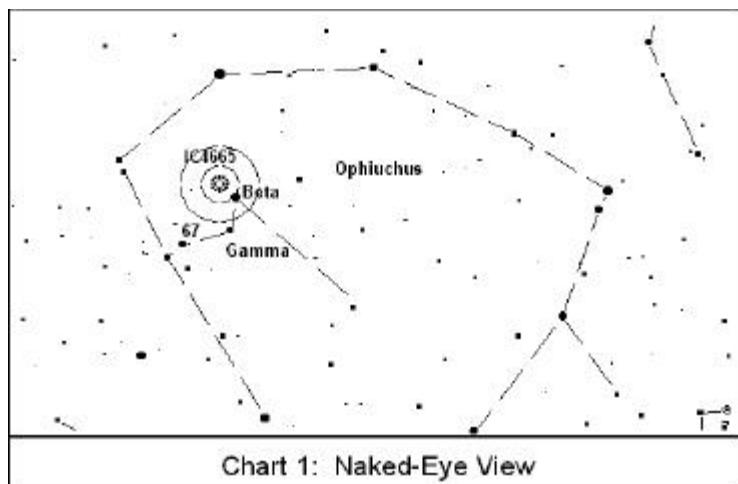


Chart 1: Naked-Eye View

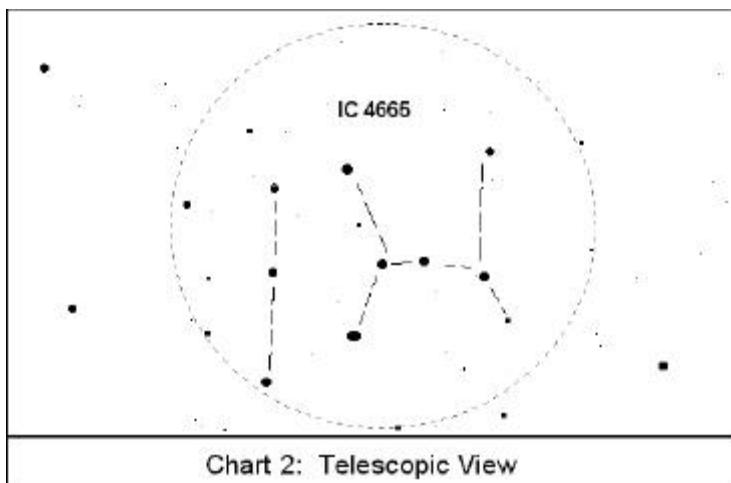


Chart 2: Telescopic View



## Minutes of the Board of Directors

*by Dan Son, PAS Secretary*

*Board meetings take place on the third Wednesday of the month. Those referenced below were held at the Hardee's of Willow Knolls Court in Peoria. Future PAS Board meetings will be held at the Hardee's of Northpoint Shopping Center in Peoria. Meetings start at 7:30 p.m.*

=====

**April 21, 2004**

**Attendees:** Calene Fleming, Mike Hay, John Barra, Scott Swords, Tim McGrath, Bill Cole, Brandt Bechtold, Jeff Pittenger, Rich Tennis, Mike Radigan and Dan Son.

### **Committee Reports**

#### **Jubilee Observatory:**

(Eric Clifton)  
The work party did an excellent job cleaning out the barn and grounds. Thanks to everyone who helped. Eric is fine tuning the doors and will cover them with sheet metal.

**Light Pollution:** (Rich Tennis)  
Our goal is: The right amount of light in the right area at the right time.

We are waiting for DNR to finalize the reading of the bill for Wildlife State Park Dark Sky Preserve.

#### **NorthMoor Observatory**

Work party cleaned house. Thanks to all that helped.  
If you want to schedule a group, let Bill Cole know the date so we don't have a conflict.

#### **NorthMoor Restoration:** (Scott Hay)

Waiting on a letter from Eric Clifton stating books are in order as of 2003 and signed by Eric Clifton and Mike Hay.

**Observing Club:** (John Barra)  
Friday night's Messier Marathon had 4 people show with 3 hours of clear skies. Saturday was clear and very windy, no one showed.

**Program:** (Dan Son)  
May Dan Son with constellations Cygnus, Delphinus and Sagitta

June Cassini Mission  
July Eric Clifton with Jubilee Construction  
August Mike Frasca with Brain-storming?

#### **Public Relations**

Press Release (Copies attached). Change time to 11:00 for Northmoor observing.

**Starlite:** (Jeff Pittenger)

Deadline for Starlite will be June board meeting.

**Membership:** (Scott Swords)  
No new members. Drops will be done in June and the Roster will go out in September.

**Website:** (Tim McGrath)  
Working on the site and correcting information.

#### **Old Business:**



Banquet will be September 11th; Eric Clifton is reserving the Banquet hall.

*Larry Kellerman with help from Paul Halcomb introduced a possible grant proposal (copies attached) that would allow money to be used to purchase equipment or upgrade present equipment with ICC being involved with PAS.*

Directions to ICC star party, take curve past the old Dickerson building and it will be in grassy area by where the semi's park.

#### **New Business:**

New Jubilee keyholders are Bob Pauer and Jeff Pittenger.  
New TMB keyholders are Rich Tennis, Bob Pauer, Mark Koonce and Jeff Pittenger.

After some beating up on Dan Son by those present he (Dan Son) will write to the new magazine for some free copies of The Night Sky to be given to new members.

=====

**May 19, 2004**

**Attendees:** Calene Fleming, Mike Hay, John Barra, Scott Swords, Eric Clifton, Tim McGrath, Mike Shelton, Bill Cole, Brandt Bechtold, Jeff Pittenger, Rich Tennis, Mike Radigan and Dan Son.

#### **Treasurer's Report:**

(Mike Shelton)  
Mike presented the Treasurer's report (copies attached) for the month of April. Dan Son made a motion to accept the report, 2nd by Mike Hay. Motion passed.

#### **Committee Reports**

**Education:** The Institute of Retired Learning at Bradley University will be hosted by Bill Cole on Wednesday in October.

#### **Jubilee Observatory:**

(Eric Clifton)  
Painted the doors and will be covering them with Aluminum.

#### **Light Pollution:**

(Rich Tennis)  
Rich is having a meeting with Mike Rutherford on Tue. and later meeting with Kirby Risk for finding lighting fixture possibilities. Any light pollution legislation is dead for this year but will be reintroduced next year.

#### **NorthMoor Observatory:**

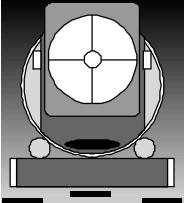
(Bill Cole)  
*Northmoor viewing is well under way. We are averaging 30-40 persons and 2/3 of the nights are cloud free.*

#### **NorthMoor Restoration:**

(Scott Hay)  
There will be a May 26th meeting at Fondulac Park Building in East Peoria.

**Observing Club:** (John Barra)  
July 17th will be a new moon and a summer mini marathon will be held that Saturday night.  
The Perseids meteor shower will be August 11th & 12th.

*(Continued on page 5)*



Astronomy Section Newsletter  
Peoria Academy of Science  
c/o Princen  
677 E. High Point Terrace  
Peoria, IL 61614

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PEORIA, IL  
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#158, September 2004

## In This Issue...

Sam Decker Honored, Can You Spot This? Board of Directors Nominees, and more....

## Observing Club Notes

by John Barra

### Meteor Shower Update

This year's Perseid meteor shower was a bust again. But it was the weather rather than a weak meteor stream that was the blame. The Peoria Clear Sky Clock predicted clear skies at midnight--the time when meteor watching is the best. However, that prediction only suckered a few people to stay up late at our Jubilee observatory site. From midnight to 4:30 am, three large "sucker" holes appeared in the sky. All three closed up within 10 minutes. Only about fifteen meteors were observed the entire evening as a result.

### ...Three major showers...

Jubilee observatory site. From midnight to 4:30 am, three large "sucker" holes appeared in the sky. All three closed up within 10 minutes. Only about fifteen meteors were observed the entire evening as a result.

Three major showers occur in

the last third of the year. The Orionids occur on the late evening or early morning of October 20/21 (Wednesday/Thursday). A first-quarter moon will interfere with early viewing. However, it should set about the time meteor viewing is at its best. This shower has gotten little attention in the past. But its predicted high of 30 per hour might make it worth trying, especially if the skies are clear.

The 33-year storm cycle of the Leonids is now past history. This shower occurs on November 16 and 17 (Tuesday/Wednesday) and will also encounter a near first-quarter moon. Typically, the Leonids are avoided during the years in between the storm cycle because of its low rate of 15 per hour. But you usually can see a few bright meteors each

year.

Finally, the always-fruitful Geminid shower (60 per hour) occurs this year with no moon in the sky. It can be challenging because of its date of December 12/13 (Sunday/Monday). However, if the clouds stay away and you dress warm, this shower always produces. I would mark that date on your calendar.

### Fall Observing Usually The Best

I have noticed two trends from viewing this summer. The first is that the sky has been deceptively good. It took a little patience on most of the new-moon weekends to "stick it out" until midnight. But having done so numerous times, I believe the quality of the transparency in the sky has been

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