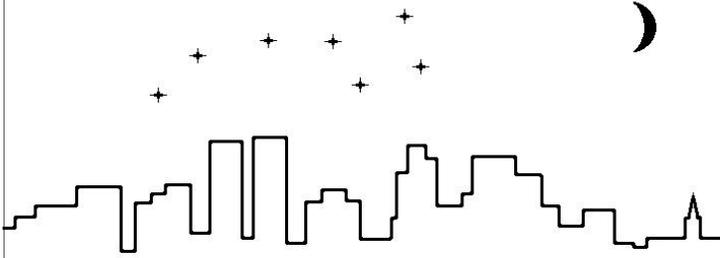


STARLITE

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF
THE PEORIA ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY

www.astronomical.org



Peoria Astronomical Society

FALL 2007

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Northmoor Observatory Renovation Report

By Rich Tennis

First, a sincere *Thanks* for all your support and financial contributions toward the Northmoor Observatory renovation project. Your donations are much appreciated and the Peoria Park District Director expressed surprise that PAS has raised over \$37,000 toward the completion of a new Dome and the other improvements to the Northmoor Observatory.

In review, this project began in the summer of 2002. The goal is to have a new Ash Dome and an improved warm-up/ meeting room completed by the spring of 2009. In 2004, Kenyon and Associates completed a study of what was needed to complete the project and that document became the basis for the financial calculations currently being used. In 2004, the project cost was projected to be \$85,000. The costs were estimated to increase about 25% per year. The current estimate of costs for completion of the project is in the neighborhood of \$168,000. The cost of materials for the dome alone has increased from \$46,610 in 2004 to a current cost of \$59,450. A new roof, new steel doors, and upgraded electrical systems make up the rest of the necessary improvements to the Observatory building.

Initially, a grant proposal was being prepared for presentation to Bielfeldt Foundation. Before that proposal was completed, the Bielfeldt Foundation stopped accepting grant applications. Currently, a grant proposal to be presented to the Caterpillar Foundation is nearing completion. President **Mike Hay**, **Eric Clifton**, and **Rich Tennis** are working with the Peoria Park District to receive documentation that they support these changes and will assume responsibility for deconstructing the old dome and will store the Observatory equipment during construction of the new dome. The Peoria Park District is in the process of providing documentation that PAS owns the current dome, as the Caterpillar Foundation requires this prior to consideration of any grant request. Hopefully, this will be formally approved by the Peoria Park District Board at their September meeting.

Once funding has been obtained, a contractor for the project will need to be selected. The Park District Director, Mike Baietto indicated they have certain contractors that meet their standards and have worked successfully on other projects. Before the grant application is submitted, PAS membership will need to make some decisions regarding how any grant monies will be handled. Documentation is needed to demonstrate that the monies have been used as intended. These and other items will be up for discussion at the PAS Annual Meeting in September. 



**Please welcome our
newest members!**

STAN POPE
KELLY BEWSEY
JESSE HOOVER
PRABHU SHANKAR PICHAI
KENT PETERSON

PAS Annual Banquet is Sep 29th!

By Tim McGrath



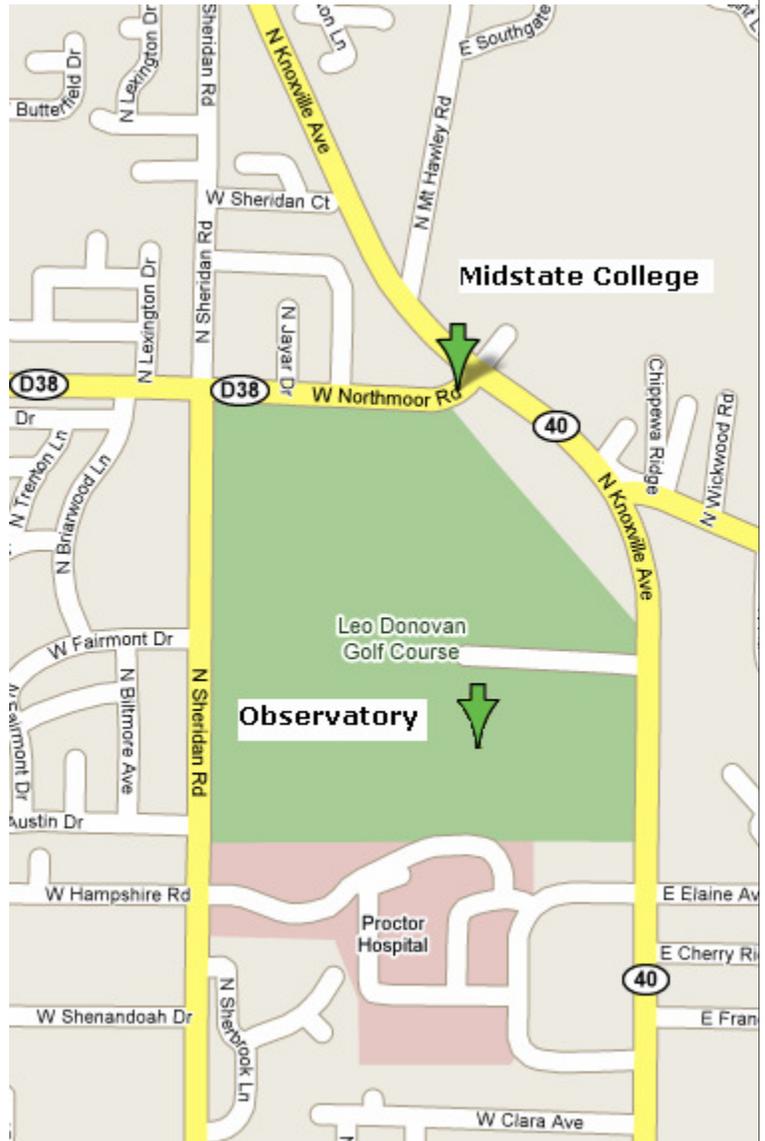
This year, the PAS annual banquet will be **Saturday, September 29th**. The location of the banquet is **Midstate College**, 411 W. Northmoor Road, in Peoria. The college is easy to find, located at the corner of Knoxville and

Northmoor Road, just North of Leo Donovan Golf Course (see map at right). The doors will open at 5:00, and dinner will be served at 6:00. Following dinner, we will hold elections for next years officers, and then hear from a special guest speaker.

As in the past, dinner will be buffet style, so please bring a covered dish or a dessert to share. You will also need your own table service (plates, silverware, etc). The PAS will provide baked ham, fried chicken, iced tea & lemonade.

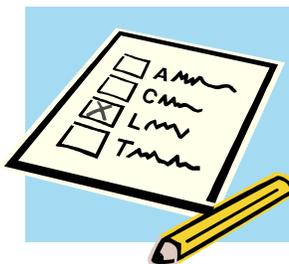
Following dinner and the elections, our special guest speaker, **Doug Zubenel**, will speak about his personal experiences with the famed amateur astronomer Leslie Peltier.

An award-winning artist, telescope maker, inventor, and astrophotographer, Doug has been a frequent contributor of articles and photographs to *Sky & Telescope*, *Astronomy*, *Modern Astronomy*, and other periodicals. His retrospective of Leslie Peltier, whom Harlow Shapley referred to as "the world's greatest non-professional astronomer, has been presented to audiences at ALCON, the Texas Star Party, Nebraska Star Party, and the Astronomical Society of Kansas City. He's named his latest 12.5-inch f/10 "PlanetCatcher". Doug happened to be a neighbor to Leslie Peltier as a boy.



Midstate College is easy to find, located at the corner of Knoxville Ave. and Northmoor Road. The address is 411 W. Northmoor Rd.

PAS Slate of Officers Announced!



Our current Nominating Chair, **Helen Ware**, and the Peoria Astronomical Society Board of Directors, are proud to announce the 2008 slate of officers. These members will be voted upon at the banquet. Please consider filling an open position! There is plenty of opportunity to help the PAS.

PRESIDENT	Mike Hay
VICE PRESIDENT	John Barra
TREASURER	<open>
SECRETARY	Phil Burroughs
LEGAL AGENT	Mike Hay
PARLIAMENTARIAN	Mike Hay
NOMINATING	Dan Son

Upcoming Events

ICC Fall Star Party

Once again, PAS is hosting the combined ICC astronomy classes taught by Brian Bill and Larry Kellerman at Jubilee Observatory. This event draws upwards of 40 guests, and has an excellent track record of clear skies, good viewing, and good times!

Friday Oct 5th is the primary date, with Oct 6th, Oct 12th, and Oct 13th as backup/rain dates. Stay tuned to the PeoriaAstro email list for up-to-the-minute details.



Illinois Star Parties

Astrofest ✨

September 6th—9th
<http://chicagoastro.org/af/index.html>

Prairie Skies Star Party ✨

September 13 - 16, 2007
<http://www.prairieskies.org/>

Illinois Dark Skies Star Party ✨

September 13th - 16th
<http://www.sas-sky.org/main.html>

PAS MEETINGS & PROGRAMS @Lakeview Museum Planetarium

September 5: A Video on Black-holes presented by *Brian Bill*

October: No meeting!
 The Annual Banquet on September 29 will substitute for the October meeting.

November 7: The Great Debate II: Where Shall Man Go Next?
Moderated by John Barra

December 5: Astro-Jeopardy! presented by *Gene Hodel*
(This meeting will be in the Lakeview conference room, next to the planetarium)

Astronomical Data Calendar

September

- 3 Third Quarter Moon
- 8 delta-Aurigids peak
- 9 Uranus Opposition, Mag=5.7
- 11 New Moon
- 19 First Quarter Moon
- 20 Piscids peak
- 26 Full Moon
- 29 Mercury Greatest Eastern Elongation

October

- 3 Third Quarter Moon
- 7 Moon and Saturn 1.4° apart
- 8 Draconids peak
- 11 New Moon
- 19 First Quarter Moon
- 21 Moon and Neptune 1.5° apart
- 21 Orionids peak
- 22 Moon and Uranus 48' apart
- 23 Mercury Inferior Conjunction
- 25 Full Moon
- 28 Venus Greatest Western Elongation



November

- 1 Third Quarter Moon
- 8 Mercury Greatest Western Elongation
- 9 Ceres Opposition
- 9 New Moon
- 17 First Quarter Moon
- 17 Leonids peak
- 21 alpha-Monocerotids peak
- 24 Full Moon
- 26 Moon and Mars 1.4° apart

You Know You Are A Redneck Astronomer If...

1. The most important part of your instrumentation is the pickup truck.
2. You carry a shotgun to deal with skunks, raccoons, and streetlights.
3. The board with holes on the side of the DOB mount fit beer cans instead of eyepieces
4. A cup holder by the eyepiece has a partial beer to balance different eyepieces. (Amazing how many need replacing as they get too light.)
5. You will fight that SOB trying to find WWV when it was already on a perfectly good country station.
6. The counterweight on your Dob doubles as a spit can.
7. You've used lard to slick those declination bearings.
8. Others at the star party complain about the smoke when you barbecue spam.
9. You start to giggle when you tell your buddies that you have a 16-incher.
10. You ever wonder what your granny's truss has to do with building a telescope.
11. You nostalgically refer to Canis Major as Old Duke.
12. You lie and tell your buddies the next morning that your red eyes are from drinking and partying rather than stargazing.

Recap of Summer Star Parties By John Barra

This summer, the Peoria Astronomical Society decided to replace its summer general meetings with organized monthly star parties. The change was met with limited success, solely due to the necessity to rely on the weather.

The June star party, slated to be open to the public at Northmoor Observatory, was rained out. The weather forecast also threatened to wipe out the July star party, a members only party at the Jubilee Observatory. However, the seven or eight members who completely ignored all the local and national forecasts, but relied on internet satellite watching and the Peoria Clear Clock and ventured out to Jubilee at sunset, were treated to one of the best viewing nights of the season, at least until 12:30 am. when clouds started to roll back into the area.

Finally, the August star party at Jubilee State Park, open to the public, was a huge success. About 20 members and over 40 from the public were treated with good skies and good viewing. Most of those from the public came from either the planetary bike ride earlier that date or from the campgrounds.

Also in July, another ICC star party was held at the Jubilee Observatory. Once again, it was very successful. Somehow **Brian Bill** is always able to predict great weather on the days he schedules for ICC star parties. 



Pictures from the August 11th Public Star Party at Jubilee College State Park.

About 20 members and over 40 public guests showed up for a clear night of good viewing. The Perseid meteor shower that weekend was an added treat!

Photos by Terry Beachler

An Update on the 2007 Meteor Showers By John Barra

Many of the PAS members who attended the August star party at Jubilee State Park stayed late to watch for Perseid meteors, even though the scheduled peak for the Perseid shower was not until the next night. It proved to be a good thing because it became cloudy the next night.

Several meteors could be seen early during the star party and several members of the public waited to watch meteors with us. While meteors could be seen on a regular basis, the numbers certainly did not match the numbers that would have been expected during the peak. However, a large portion of those that were observed were very bright, making the late night worthwhile.

The usually consistent Geminid meteor shower, which has twice as many meteors during its peak than the Perseids, will peak on Thursday night, December 13 into the early morning hours of Friday, December 14. The advantage of the Geminid shower is that the radiant rises early in the evening. A portion of that advantage will be overshadowed by the four-day old crescent moon, although it will set at 8:15 pm. The disadvantage is that it is usually cold.

If the weather permits viewing, you can always count on some members being out at Jubilee for this shower. Watch your e-mails. And bring a sleeping bag for warming.

Special Thanks...

Sheldon Schafer really put together an enjoyable way to learn about our world and its surroundings. Personally, I really enjoyed the addition of some of the minor planets to the model. GREAT WORK!!!!

I thought everyone who went through Pluto was in great spirits. I heard no complaints. Probably half of the 46 folks gave me a special personal "thank you."

Special thanks also are in order for **Scott Swords** and **Calene Fleming** for manning the Wyoming Rest area. **Phil Burroughs** rode all the way to Kewanee and back and still found the energy to host NorthMoor viewing Saturday night!!! Also thanks to everyone at NorthMoor and Jubilee for your hosting efforts!

Together, you are the envy of every Astronomy club!

Thanks

-Scott Hay

Not Just for Kids

CRAFT CORNER (FROM NASA.GOV)

Build a rocket out of the shapes below.

Visit these Websites for online Astronomy fun.

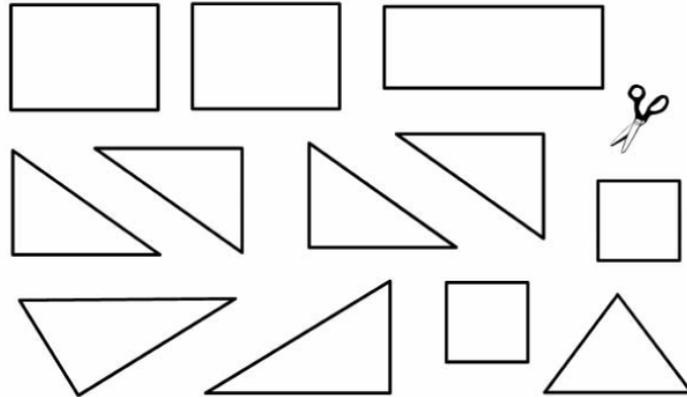
<http://www.dustbunny.com/afk/>

<http://www.kidsastronomy.com/fun/index.htm>

<http://www.nasa.gov/audience/forchildren/home/index.html>

<http://www.space.com/>

Cut out each shape. Use all the pieces. Put them together to make a rocket.



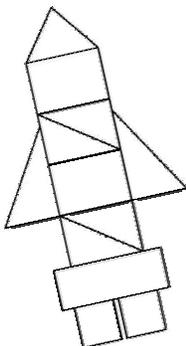
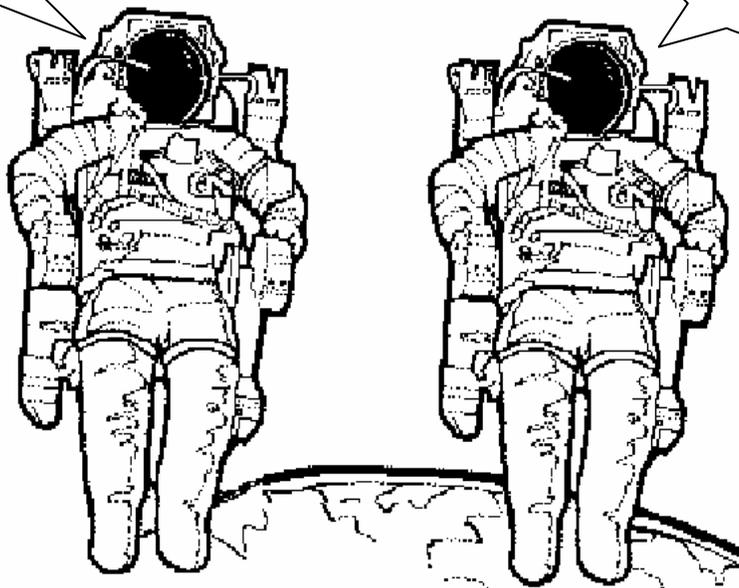
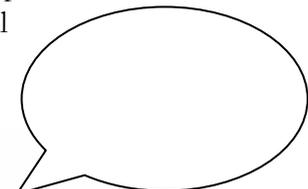
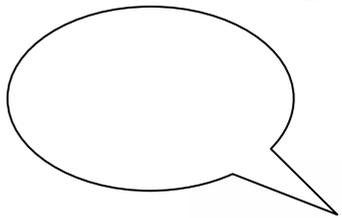
Q: How do we know that Saturn was married more than once.

A: Because he wears lots of rings

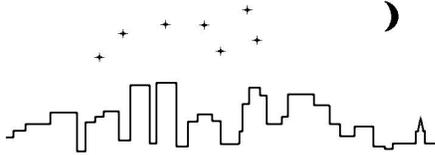
JUST IMAGINE... COLORING CONTEST

(PICTURE FROM KIDSASTRONOMY.COM)

If you were in Outer Space, what would you and your best friend be discussing? Submit your finished picture to Northmoor Observatory. All entrants' names will



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Peoria Astronomical Society

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From Starlites Past...

By John Barra

40 YEARS AGO

November Starlite 1967

"Scientists are now convinced that water in the form of ice still exists in large quantities just below the lunar surface, says Dr. J. R. Arnold of the University of California, an expert on moon and meteorite chemistry. Se says there is strong evidence of abundant ice on the moon to support a base for astronauts."

The debate on whether there is abundant ice on the moon to support a base (or on Mars) still rages on without any definitive answer. But it sure is clear we are not much closer to creating an extraterrestrial base anywhere than we were 40 years ago.

"...and before we left Stuttgart, we went to

the Black Forest, which was just out of this world. Unknown to me was a nearby city Wilder der Stadt, which is the birthplace and home of Kepler...Man, that was all I needed for an excuse to go there. '-in a letter from George Triff while touring Europe."

However, centuries later, Kepler's laws on planetary motion seem still just about right on...

25 YEARS AGO

September Starlite 1982

"There are a lot of things that are easy to measure. A telescope's mirror is 24 inches across and a refractor's lens is nine inches in diameter. A gallon of gas costs around \$1.20, my car holds a little over 10 gallons, and good for about 11, maybe 12 trips to Jubilee."

It seems like only 3 or 4 years ago gas also got as low as \$1.20. This summer it got as high as \$.340 a gallon, suddenly making that trip to Jubilee. Thankfully, that price has dropped quite a bit. But how long before it gets back to that price or higher? Astronomy has gotten a lot more expensive.

"Joel, too, has a right to pride for the absolutely beautiful job he did in the painting the 24-inch and, likewise, Dana, Tom, and Andrea for doing the same thing with the 14-inch." (Only two weeks before ALCON opened, both telescopes were completely torn down for painting. Risky? Audacious? You bet!!)

Anyone want to try to get ALCON here again next year? Probably, if it will help get the domes done at Northmoor and Jubilee.

