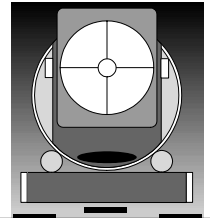


# STARLITE



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## Three Days of Dobson

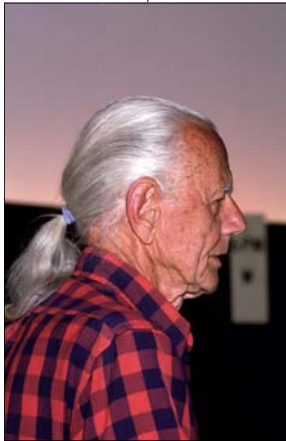
by Rebecca Clifton

It happened innocently enough. Travel arrangements had finally been made and confirmed to get this 80-something-year-old Californian from Naperville to Peoria to Champaign. Hotel accommodations had been finalized. Only follow-up phone calls to the local media remained.

In preparing final press releases before the "big event," I sat down in front of the computer and started my search for interesting tidbits, "sound bites," if you will, about John Dobson.

What was scheduled as a 30-minute "quick look" turned into a five-hour odyssey through the life and times of a very unique person. No longer did John Dobson translate into "Geezer Geek" for me. He had been transformed into a living legend. Growing up in Peking, China;

playing behind sandbags during the Boxer Rebellion; research chemist; worker on the Manhattan Project; pianist; Vendanta monk; revolutionary telescope designer; lecturer; world traveler; student of the Universe.... A poor man, and yet, rich (and enriching) beyond belief. I knew he *had* to stay in our home.



**John Dobson**

Photo courtesy of  
Steve Russell

I informed my husband that I'd cancelled the hotel reservations and that Mr. Dobson would be a guest in our home. Period. Eric was a bit perplexed at my sudden shift from Astro-Spouse Boredom Syndrome sufferer into fervent Dobson Scholar mode. But he put up no argument. Deep inside I think this was a wish come true for him (He'd already volunteered to be

*(Continued on page 7)*

## Detweiler Speaks on Globular

### Clusters

by Rich Tennis

Lew Detweiler, Associate Professor of Physics and Astronomy at Illinois Wesleyan University (IWU) located in Bloomington, Illinois, provided the program for the March 6, 2002, Peoria Astronomical Society members meeting. The title of his talk, "Some of my Research Experiences at a Small Liberal Arts College," veiled the real message he gave that evening.

Professor Detweiler has been involved in astronomy during his 34 years at IWU. He has worked at such observatories as Kitt Peak National Observatory, Steward Observatory in Arizona, Mt. Laguna Observatory in California, and the Dominion Astrophysical Observatory in British Columbia. Professor Detweiler has done work in both single-channel and CCD photometry. His latest publication, "Detection of Metal-Poor Stars in the Direction of the North Galactic Pole,"

*(Continued on page 3)*

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## Wrigley's Wranglings

by Steve Wrigley

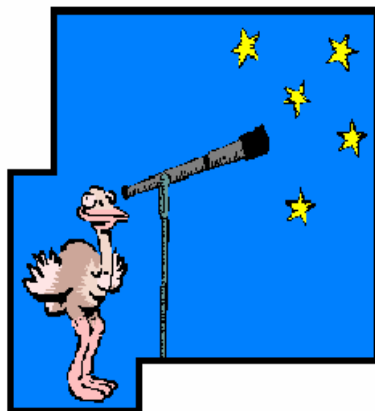


What an exciting time we have had this spring. Professional astronomer Lew Detweiler addressed the Society in March, and John Dobson, the inventor of the Dobsonian Mount for telescopes, visited for four days in April. The first week in May brought an alignment of the planets that won't be seen again for a long, long time. As I write this, our Astrofest packet is on the desk. What a wonderful time to be involved in astronomy.

I'd like to share with you a note I received recently from Dave Kobilka, regarding the Star Party at Jubilee Observatory on April 5, 2002:

**Thanks from Illinois Central College**

On behalf of my Astronomy students and myself, I would like to say thank you to (Steve Wrigley), Eric Clifton, and all the Society members who helped make our trip to the Jubilee Observatory on the night of April 5<sup>th</sup> a great success. I want you to know that afterward my students raved about the great viewing, the cool telescopes, and the amazing knowledge, enthusiasm, and willingness to share of the Society astronomers who were there for the occasion. We were multiply blessed that night. I for one was delighted to have good attendance and a



crisp, clear sky. Having John Dobson there to grace our presence was icing on the cake. My students also raved about him.

The real inspiration, however, comes not from a cameo appearance, but from the individual enthusiasts who are there repeatedly to share with others their celebration of the unfolding universe. That is what inspires an appreciation for nature in receptive minds, and what, years down the road, leads to expanding numbers of those who take action to preserve what is truly valuable in life.

Our hats off to all of you!

Dave Kobilka

Instructor of Astronomy, Earth and Environmental Science  
Illinois Central College

Steve here again:

As I said, this is a wonderful time to be involved in astronomy. It's made even better by having all you great PAS members to share it with. y

*...What a wonderful time to be involved in astronomy...*

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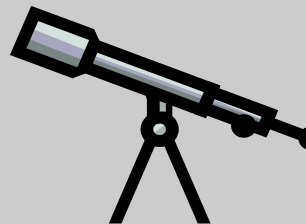
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## Minutes of the Board of Directors

by Dan Son, PAS Secretary

Board meetings are held on the third Wednesday of the month at the Hardee's of Willow Knolls Court in Peoria. Meetings start at 7:30 p.m.

### February 20, 2002

**Treasurer's Report:** (Mike Shelton) The PAS members are paying their dues quickly, thanks.

**Jubilee Observatory:** (Eric Clifton) Talked to Celestron about (C-14) Compustar. They were not very helpful. We do have a few names to call about getting this repaired.

**24-Inch:** (Eric Clifton) Eric checked the scope out and it's working nicely.

**Light Pollution:** (Rich Tennis) Rich has written to eight mayors/presidents with a response from only one. He will continue to follow up with the other seven. He also met with the Eureka mayor and Council on adding lighting to the future ordinances that the city is planning on updating.

**NorthMoor Restoration:** Mike Hay noticed in *Sky & Telescope* a company that makes a fiberglass dome. He will look into their product.

**Messier Club:** (John Barra) John suggested we join the Messier Club with the Observing Club.

<[www.astronomical.org](http://www.astronomical.org)>: (Tim McGrath) Made some updates to the site with e-mails and such.

**Old Business:** Motion made by Mike Hay to give Lew Detweiler \$100 for speaking. Seconded by Dan Son. Motion passed.

### March 20, 2002

**14-Inch:** (Mike Shelton) Trying to

get more information on the Compustar system.

**Light Pollution:** (Rich Tennis) Rich had a great article in the Journal Star. Germantown Hills has a light ordinance in place.

### April 17, 2002

**Academy of Science:** (Scott Hay) The Banquet was a good time with a great talk by John Dobson.

**Education:** (Scott Hay) Science Treasure Hunt books are out. We have three questions in it; how many planets have rings?, what two planets have dust storms?, and what is the length of the telescope at NorthMoor?

**Jubilee Observatory:** (Eric Clifton) There were about 50 students from ICC's Astronomy and Earth Science classes out on Friday, April 5<sup>th</sup>. Eric talked about problems with the old mower and possible purchase of a newer mower. The old mower has about \$1065 in possible repairs. Dan Son made a motion to spend up to \$2000

plus trading in the older mower on a newer mower. Mike Hay seconded. Motion passed.

**14-Inch:** (Mike Shelton) The Compustar works...now we know it's the power supply.

**Light Pollution:** (Rich Tennis) Good turnout at Forest Park: thanks everyone. Rich has talked with Goodfield mayor and will be talking to some of the larger industries in Woodford County. He will also be talking to Nature Conservancy.

**Program:** (Dan Son) June will be Steve Russell on CCD. July NO MEETING. August possible constellation.

**Public Relations:** John Dobson's visit was a great success.

<[www.astronomical.org](http://www.astronomical.org)>: (Tim McGrath) The calendar is working. Give Tim any dates that you would like to have added.

**Old Business:** Need more work done at NorthMoor, mainly lubricating the dome ring, wheels, gears, etc.

Dan Son  
Secretary y

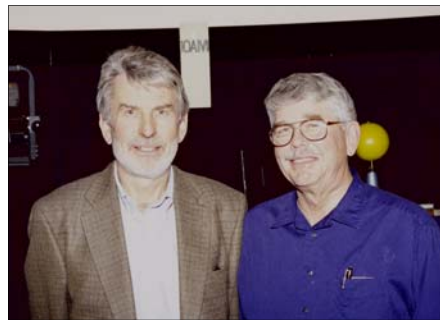
## Detweiler visit...

(Continued from page 1)

2001, *The Astronomical Journal*, Vol. 121, was the basis for his presentation.

Professor Detweiler provided a better understanding on the study of metal-poor stars (high hydrogen content) and how the science of past astronomical work allowed his study to make its conclusions. The technical presentation progressed through the study of globular clusters showing the type of data that is collected to isolate metal-poor stars. Detweiler showed slides of some of the sites where he conducted his research and some related personal experiences. The presentation was followed by a lengthy question and answer period.

Professor Detweiler invited the PAS to visit the observatory at the IWU campus and look at their 24-inch research telescope. Professor Detweiler donated his honorarium to the Light Control Committee of the PAS to help in that endeavor.



Lew Detweiler and Rich Tennis. Rich introduced Detweiler prior to his talk.

Photo courtesy of Stephen Russell



## Monthly Program Schedule

Meetings will be held in the Lakeview Museum Planetarium. Unless otherwise noted, all programs begin at 7:30 p.m.

**June 5, 2002**

**CCD Photography**  
Stephen Russell

**July 3, 2002**

**NO MEETING**

**August 7, 2002**

TBA

**September 4, 2002**

TBA

# Of Starlites Past

by John Barra

## 45 YEARS AGO Summer Newsletter 1957\*

(\*Editor's Note: Since we could not locate the summer issue from 40 years ago, we substituted the Summer Newsletter from 1957.)

"President R. P. Van Zandt held a business meeting following the dinner and made for his theme the fact that the observatory, started in 1953, was now substantially completed and the greatest need at the present time is a building and adequate organization suitable to the available facilities."

Forty-five years later, thanks to Van, we still have a great organization. And John Dobson spoke at the Academy of Science dinner. Van was and remains to the Peoria Astronomical Society what Dobson is to San Francisco Sidewalk Astronomers.

"A study of the observing times brought out the fact that the greatest use of the observatory must of necessity be in the winter time. Although we have heat in the form of a butane gas fire stove in the assembly room, it was found that intermittent heat was quite unsatisfactory...."

I thought we were lucky by just keeping the snow out of the observatory in the winter. Seriously, I always felt we should make more use of the observatory in the winter because of the great winter skies. But for some reason, I am just not able to get myself up to trying to open the dome in the winter. y

# ABCDEFABCDEF

## 25 YEARS AGO June Starlite 1977

"Star Party Schedule for Van Zandt Observatory (dates omitted). These will not be cancelled for weather unless it's actually raining or completely overcast after sunset. Don't be dissuaded by cloud conditions over Peoria."

And don't be elated by clear skies over Peoria. How many times have you left sunny Peoria to be quickly greeted by cloudy Jubilee. And they laugh at me because I have cloud-out nights the night before events.

"The refreshment committee for the Extra-Terrestrial Life Party, held at Lakeview, wishes to express grateful appreciation for the donations of baked good and dedicated assistance on the snowy night of March 19<sup>th</sup>. The...effort...reinforced the conviction that the Astronomical Society is one of the greatest groups of people in the USA!"

Extra-Terrestrial Life Party? I think some of the lifetime members of this ET Club still show up at our general meetings. At least they are not in charge of refreshments. y



## Astronomical Calendar

- June 1  
Star Party at Jubilee Observatory
- June 2  
Last-quarter Moon
- June 3  
Venus passes within 1.7° north of Jupiter in evening (year's brightest pairing)
- June 5  
PAS Members Meeting, 7:30 p.m.  
Lakeview Planetarium  
CCD Astrophotography  
Stephen E. Russell
- June 8  
Star Party at Jubilee Observatory
- June 10  
Partial Solar eclipse visible from most of North America except in the East  
New Moon
- June 17  
First-quarter Moon
- June 19  
PAS Board Meeting, 7:30 p.m.  
Willow Knolls Court Hardee's
- June 21  
Summer Solstice at 8:24 a.m. CDST
- June 24  
Full Moon

June 2002						
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
23/30	24	25	26	27	28	29

July 2002						
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	31			

August 2002						
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	31

- July 2  
Mercury within 0.3° south of Saturn in morning  
Last-quarter Moon
- July 3  
NO MEMBERS MEETING
- July 6  
Earth at aphelion  
Star Party at Jubilee Observatory
- July 10  
New Moon
- July 13  
Star Party at Jubilee Observatory
- July 17  
PAS Board Meeting, 7:30 p.m.  
Willow Knolls Court Hardee's  
First-quarter Moon
- July 24  
Full Moon
- August 1  
Last-quarter Moon

- August 3  
Star Party at Jubilee Observatory
- August 7  
PAS Members Meeting, 7:30 p.m.  
Lakeview Planetarium  
TBA
- August 8  
New Moon
- August 10  
Star Party at Jubilee Observatory
- August 11  
Perseid Meteor Shower
- August 15  
First-quarter Moon
- August 21  
PAS Board Meeting, 7:30 p.m.  
Willow Knolls Court Hardee's  
Starlite Deadline
- August 22  
Full Moon
- August 30  
Last-quarter Moon



## The Bulletin Board

### New Members

Welcome to:  
Cheryl Criss

☺ ☺ ☺

### Mark Your Calendars

Astrofest 2002 is scheduled for Thursday, September 12<sup>th</sup> through Sunday, September 15<sup>th</sup> at Camp Shaw-Waw-Nas-See near Kankakee, Illinois. Register before August 3<sup>rd</sup> (by postmark) to get a break on the price. For information, contact the Chicago Astronomical Society at <<http://www.chicagoastro.org>>.

The next PAS annual banquet will be scheduled for either Saturday, September 21, or Saturday, September 28, 2002. Stay tuned for more information.

☺ ☺ ☺

### How many astronomers...

...does it take to change a light bulb? Just one, if he's Rich Tennis.

An article on Tennis' backyard observatory, christened "Star House," was featured in the *Journal Star's* SciTech section on March 12, 2002. A nice set of photographs accompanied his praises of Woodford County's dark skies.

Following up that article, a second piece appeared in the *Journal Star's* May 23, 2002, edition. This article detailed Tennis' and the PAS's efforts to convince city and county officials to limit light pollution and preserve our dark skies.

If successful, the PAS may build a monument to Tennis, constructed entirely out of discarded mercury vapor light bulbs.

☺ ☺ ☺

### Attention Telescope Makers

A new group is starting at PAS. Mike Hay will be heading a Telescope Making group. We will be making (yes, grinding) our own mirrors and building the scopes. The first meeting will be in early June (date and time not set) at the Hardee's in East Peoria (four corners at Main and Washington Streets).

Mirror kits (available in various sizes) and grinding grit will need to be obtained to participate. For details, information, and/or to sign up for the group, please contact Dan Son at <[sunshine92@insightbb.com](mailto:sunshine92@insightbb.com)> or 698-8611.

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### Pitch In!

PAS members have decided to hold Saturday Work Parties at Jubilee Observatory. Starting June 1<sup>st</sup>, we are asking any and all members (keyholders and non-keyholders alike) to come out to Jubilee and help with the 14-inch scope and dome. The start time will be 9:00 a.m. every Saturday, weather permitting.

No previous experience is needed. We just need people to show up and help! Please call or e-mail Dan Son (<[sunshine92@insightbb.com](mailto:sunshine92@insightbb.com)> or 698-8611) or Eric Clifton (<[ericjclifton@insightbb.com](mailto:ericjclifton@insightbb.com)> or 686-2864) and let them know if you can help out and what Saturdays you can show up.

☺ ☺ ☺

### Jubilee Mowing Schedule

June 1: C Fleming, C Lamb, S Swords

June 8: M Frasca, T Lester, D

Teeter

June 15: D Grebner, T McGrath, R Tennis

June 22: B Hakes, J McElyea, S Thomas

June 29: M Hay, G Mettlach, B Weston

July 6: S Hay, G Neaveill, P White

July 13: J Barra, B Herbst, S Russell

July 20: B Bechtold, G Horst, M Shelton

July 27: B Bill, C Jeske, D Son

August 3: G Bussman, D Kasel, S Swords

August 10: E Clifton, JC Kline, D Teeter

August 17: C Fleming, C Lamb, R Tennis

August 24: M Frasca, T Lester, S Thomas

August 31: D Grebner, T McGrath, B Weston

September 7: B Hakes, J McElyea, P White

September 14: J Barra, M Hay, G Mettlach

September 21: B Bechtold, S Hay, G Neaveill

September 28: B Bill, B Herbst, S Russell

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### NorthMoor Viewing Schedule

June 1: B Weston, C Lamb

June 8: L Bodell, J Wrigley

June 15: D Son, S Hay

June 22: M Hay, V Broquard

June 29: J Barra, T Lester

July 6: B Cole, P Burroughs

July 13: B Hakes, D Wrigley

July 20: S Hay, D Hill

July 27: D Grebner, J Miller

August 3: S Wrigley, W Jaquet

August 10: G Horst

August 17: T Beachler, C Fleming

August 24: E Clifton, S Swords

August 31: B Weston, C Lamb

September 7: L Bodell, J Wrigley

September 14: D Son, S Hay

September 21: M Hay, V Broquard

September 28: J Barra, T Lester

☺ ☺ ☺

# John Dobson Photos

Photos courtesy of Steve Russell



John Dobson and Brian Bill discuss the cosmos



Now it's an official "Dobsonian"



Solar observing at Tony Stolin's house; from left, John Dobson, Margaret Stolin, Tony Stolin, Scott Swords, and Bill Cole



Solar observing with John Dobson; from left, Dobson, Margaret Stolin, Tony Stolin, Scott Swords, and Eric Clifton



In a casual conversation; from left, Dan Son, Brian Hake, Michael Shelton, John Dobson, and Eric Clifton



John Dobson and Tony Stolin view solar prominences

## *Dobson...*

*(Continued from page 1)*

John's driver as they dashed from place to place during John's three-day stay).

And so, John Dobson arrived in Central Illinois (which gave a whole new meaning to the term "optically flat" compared to the mountains he was used to). After a tour of Star House, Woodford County's only observatory, we were welcomed with a delicious dinner at the home of Rich and Margo Tennis. John gave the blessing in Sanskrit — then translated, with a twinkle in his eye, "for those who aren't quite fluent in ancient tongues." The meal was magnificent and John was mesmerizing! I had the pleasure of sitting next to him and was enraptured as we discussed nutrition, botany, rock music, and only a little astronomy.

The PAS members meeting that evening was the first real event on John's busy Peoria schedule. If you were there, you got a real treat. Delivering his cosmology presentation in a casual, easy-going, charming manner, John frequently emphasized a point with a small curtsy in the direction of Jolie Nordstrom.

John Kenny's Thursday afternoon astronomy class at Bradley University also received the benefit of John's visit to Peoria. When asked how many telescopes being built around the world today use his design or some variation, he shrugged and answered simply, "About half."

And later that night, energy never waning, John was the featured speaker at the Peoria Academy of Science's Annual Banquet. He talked a bit about cosmology, a bit about astronomy in general, and a lot about the Sidewalk Astronomers...his preferred topic.

You see, John really doesn't seem to give a fig about the fame his telescope mount design has brought him. He dislikes the

name "Dobsonian Mount," but he likes the term "Dobsonian Hole" ... that small patch of sky directly overhead where aiming a Dobsonian gets difficult. He doesn't much stand on ceremony. He really gets a kick out of being known for his "Dobsonian Method of Print Distribution." Flyers ("how do you think they got their name?") were flung over the heads of his audience by a grinning John who admittedly loves to watch people's reactions to his method. Living legends are allowed to have senses of humor!

Friday turned out to be a busy day too. A tour of NorthMoor had to be canceled when John decided to take an impromptu nap on our family room floor. OK. It's not so unusual for an 87-year-old guy to want to recharge with a quick forty winks. What was unusual was that the most antisocial of our five felines decided to curl up for a nap right alongside of John. If you are a cat person, you know just how finicky cats can be. They pick their company very carefully. Evidently, John passed muster.

Friday afternoon saw John and a half-dozen PAS members arrive at Tony Stolin's home in Pekin for a solar star party. There, John declared that Tony's new hydrogen-alpha telescope gave the best view of the Sun John had ever seen. That was a great laud for Tony. John Dobson does not hand out unwarranted compliments. And, he does not seem to impress easily. So, Tony — you did good! (P.S. That was Friday. On Monday, an equally impressed Scott Swords ordered a telescope just like Tony's!)

That evening our star party at Jubilee took full advantage of the only clear night in a week-and-a-half. Jubilee was jumping. David Kobilka brought his Astronomy class and his Earth Sciences class from ICC. About 25 to 30 PAS members joined the festivities, many with their own telescopes. Add to that some extended family and friends of all ages as they ap-

peared throughout the evening. Altogether, we had about 80 or 90 people on the hilltop that night.

I had expected John to "hold court" at Jubilee. After all, he's in his element ... surrounded by inquiring minds and telescopes to match. But he surprised me. He went from scope to scope — like the rest of us. He occasionally wandered away on his own to gaze up and get lost in the enormity of it all — like the rest of us. He gave forth an astronomical fact or two — like the rest of us. But mostly, he just looked up — with a smile on his face and serenity in his eyes — enjoying people who were enjoying astronomy.

Saturday morning came. Time for breakfast, then good-byes. It was truly bittersweet. This houseguest, this living legend, this man had come not only into our home but into our hearts. You see, while he wasn't "on stage" or "scheduled," we talked. And talked. And talked some more. John and I formed a friendship that I will treasure the rest of my life. John Dobson is much, much more than an astronomer. He is a scholar, in every sense of the word. He is a gentleman . . . in every sense of the word. And, yes, he marches to the tune of a very different drummer. He is all — and so much more than — his biographers have told.

After I had given John one last hug and we had waved our last good-byes, Eric and I just looked at each other. Without speaking, we walked back inside. And our house actually felt empty! An incredibly unique and wonderful person had come into and gone out of our lives in the course of just three-and-a-half days. But he had undeniably left his imprint...not only on both of us, but on every mind that he touched in Peoria.

Thanks to my husband, I have been given some wonderful experiences — meeting Dr. J. Allen Hynek; meeting Dr. Clyde Tombaugh; touring Mt. Hopkins; observing at Yerkes; experiencing eclipses. The list is long and rewarding. But, nothing — NOTHING — compares to having met and become friends with John Dobson. y

## Can You Spot This?

### NGC 6826: The Blinking Planetary

by John Barra

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

NGC 6826, the Blinking Planetary, is located in the star-rich area of Cygnus the Swan or Northern Cross. Finding the target stars near it is not too difficult. But because of the unusual effect that gives this planetary nebula its name, the nebula itself can be downright difficult to find at times. Once you find it, you will know it.

Start by locating Gamma Cygni at the crossroads of the two beams that make the Northern Cross (see Chart 1). Then locate Delta at the top of the short span of the cross. You can see all the major stars of the cross with the naked eye, even in light-polluted areas. Then locate the three stars Theta, Iota, and

Kappa Cygni that form a near line above and to the left of Delta. All three can be seen with the naked eye. Theta, which is about a magnitude dimmer than the other two, is our target star. Aim your Telrad or finder at Theta and center it in a low-power eyepiece.

You might want to look at all these stars in your binoculars first to make sure you find Theta. Become familiar with the star patterns around it. Now look at Chart 2. While keeping the same eyepiece, notice companion star 1 near Theta. You should also notice the triangle of stars formed by stars 2, 3, and 4. Finally, you should be able to make out an asterism (I call it the Backward 7) with its two brightest stars 5 and 6. Now you are ready to star-hop.

Move your scope from Theta, in

the opposite direction of stars 2, 3, and 4, through 5 and 6. A little bit farther you should notice a 10<sup>th</sup>-magnitude "star" with a 9<sup>th</sup>-magnitude star nearby.

This second star does not show on the chart because of the size the nebula takes up on the chart-making program. The first star may actually be the planetary nebula NGC 6826 or it may be the nebula's central star, depending on what you are seeing.

If you cannot distinguish the nebula/central star and the nearby star, glance back and forth between the pair at higher power. When you are looking directly at the central star, you will see the central star. When you are looking at the other star, you should see the nebula out of the side of your eye where the other star had just been seen.

Once you've confirmed that you

*...the nebula itself can be downright difficult to find....*

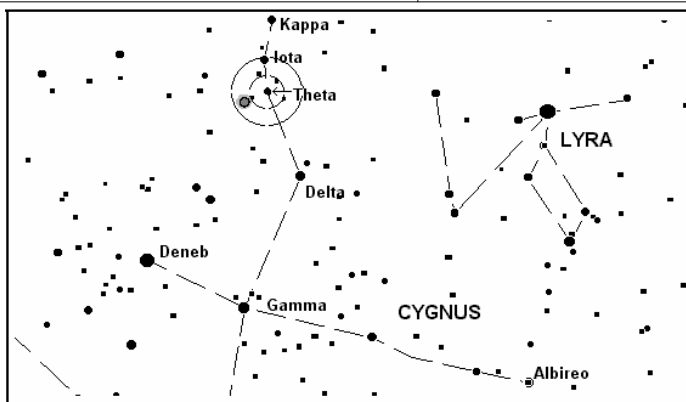


Chart 1: Low Power

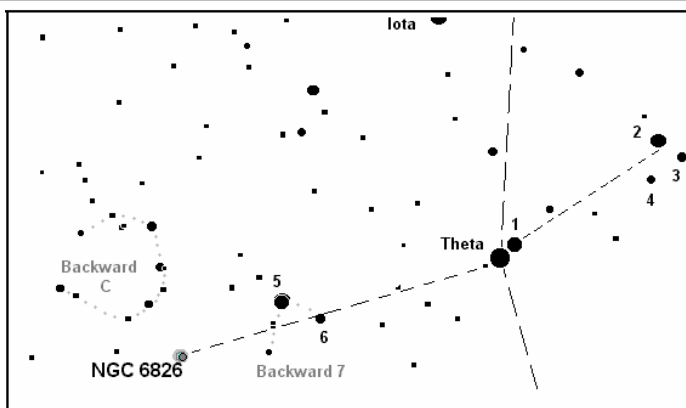
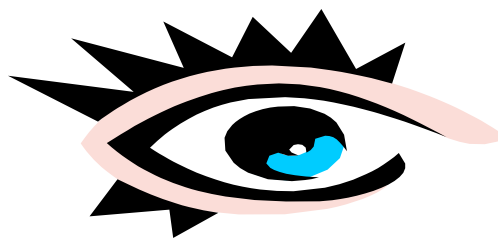


Chart 2: High Power



have the nebula, switch from looking at it with straight vision to averted vision and back again. You should then understand why it is called the Blinking Planetary. By switching visions, it "blinks" from central star to planetary nebula.

If you are not sure of the exact location, notice its position on the chart relative to the Backward 7 asterism and relative to a near-circle of stars above that form an asterism I call the Backward C. Once you find it, you can have a lot of fun switching powers and watching this nebula blink off and on.

#### OBJECT STATISTICS:

Name: NGC 6826 Blinking Planetary

Type: Planetary Nebula

Magnitude: 8.8

Size: >25"

Coordinates: 19 hr. 44.8 min.; +50deg. 31 min. y



## PeoriaAstro@yahoogroups.com

compiled by Michael Frasca



Here are some highlights from the Peoria Astronomical Society's e-mail group. If you are an active member of the PAS and would like to subscribe to PeoriaAstro, send an e-mail message to Michael Frasca <frasca@uic.edu> with the following information: name, snail-mail address, and e-mail address. You will be added to the group.

@ @ @  
 From: Dan Son <sunshine92@insightbb.com>  
 Date: Mon, 18 Mar 2002  
 Subject: Czech Light pollution law

Here is a link to a story about a new law in the Czech Republic:

<[http://www.space.com/spacewatch/skies\\_czech\\_020318.html](http://www.space.com/spacewatch/skies_czech_020318.html)>

@ @ @  
 From: Rich Tennis <mtennis@mtco.com>  
 Date: Sun, 31 Mar 2002  
 Subject: Ikeya-Zhang is viewable in the west

Just got in from viewing the comet, Ikeya-Zhang, ~ 8:15 p.m. It has about a 4° long tail and about a 0.1° head. It was visible with binoculars and wide field telescopes.

@ @ @  
 From: Rich Tennis <mtennis@mtco.com>  
 Date: Sun, 7 Apr 2002  
 Subject: A great week for PAS

Just reflecting on this past week and all the activities that

## Lakeview Museum Hosts Dr. James Zimbleman

Dr. James Zimbleman, a planetary geologist from the Smithsonian Institution, lectured at Lakeview Museum of Arts & Sciences on February 27, 2002.

At 12:00 noon, as part of Lakeview's Lunch and Learn series, Dr. Zimbleman took his audience on "A Tour of the Solar System." Later that evening, he spoke of the geology of our "red neighbor" with his talk entitled "A Close Up Look at Mars."

Both lectures were free and open to the public.



Planetary geologist Dr. James Zimbleman lectures at Lakeview Museum  
 Photo courtesy of Steve Russell

(Editor's note: This information was provided by Sheldon Schafer, Vice President of Education, Lakeview Museum of Arts & Sciences.)  
 y

have been going on for PAS...John Dobson speaking twice, Jubilee star party with ICC and John Dobson, and the first PAS presentation to the public on light pollution at Forest Park Nature Center last night. I have to say that God was looking out for us with some pretty nice weather. He sent in the rain so we can all get some sleep on this first day of Day-light Saving.

I want to thank those PAS members who helped me with the Forest Park Nature Center presentation with their powerful telescopes and presence in the audience. Steve Wrigley, Tim Lester, Scott Hay, Mike Shelton, and the gentleman with the Meade ETX. We even got some TV time, so thanks to WMBD-TV for the publicity. I did chuckle with the TV camera operator asking permission to turn on the bright light to tape the viewing of the skies...think the light pollution talk hit home with her. It provided a good opportunity of what glaring lights can do with night vision :-).

@ @ @  
 From: Don Ware <djware@swbell.net>  
 Date: Sun, 12 May 2002  
 Subject: Observation Support Applications in Java

I've been searching the web looking for Java applications for astronomy; apparently there is quite a lot of work being done in this area right now. For those of you who like to plan your observing sessions, I thought the following link might help you:

It uses Digital Sky Survey, online so you don't have to run out and pay a couple hundred bucks for the CD-ROMs, as well as the Hubble Guide Star Catalog as well as others; the navigator can display whatever area of the sky you are interested in, then you simply click the stars to add them to your list...pretty neat.

<<http://archive.eso.org/JSky/>>

This one is an article from work, which talks about Java in Astronomy, and was presented at JavaOne.

<<http://www-106.ibm.com/developerworks/java/library/j-j1sky/>>

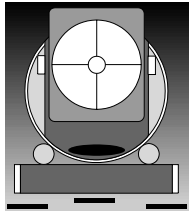
@ @ @  
 From: Gene Hodel <ghodel@rb60.com>  
 Date: Sat, 25 May 2002  
 Subject: Telescope for sale

Since I am no longer able to set up my scope by myself, it is for sale. It is a Meade 2080 Schmidt-Cassegrain. I bought it new in 1983. It has a drive corrector and Lumicon off-axis guider. Also has a Tuthill polar alignment system. There are three eyepieces and one 2" eyepiece with a beautiful wide-field view. Anyone interested in more information, let me know. I would also like to know if anyone is aware of the web address of a site which is available for selling used scopes.

@ @ @  
 From: Tim and Kerri McGrath <tkmcgrath@insightbb.com>  
 Date: Wed, 29 May 2002  
 Subject: John Dobson pictures

I have loaded a few pictures of John Dobson's visit in April to the website.

From the front page, choose the "Events" link, under the header "Society Information." y



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

#150, June 2002

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**In This Issue...**

John Dobson, Lew Detweiler, James Zimbleman, Can You Spot This?, and more....

*Observing Club Notes*

by John Barra

**Weather Ruins Marathon Again**

Once again, cloudy skies played havoc with this past March's Messier Marathon. And even the best weather and sky condition predictions proved that behind every dark cloud during prime marathon dates, there is a dark lining.

All weather forecasts predicted that the prime Saturday date for the marathon would be clouded out. Those forecasts proved correct. So several PAS members decided to try a day early (rain/cloud out day) on Friday. Weather forecasts looked favorable.

And the new Clear Sky Clock (<[www.cleardarksky.com](http://www.cleardarksky.com)>) indicated that thin clouds might interfere with the first few hours Friday,

but the rest of the night was predicted to be cloud-free with very transparent skies.

So four of us headed for Jubilee. Unfortunately, the Clear Sky Clock's prediction was exactly backwards. At 7:00 p.m., the skies were cloud-free with excellent viewing. It was so clear that the always difficult M74 was observable. However, within a couple of hours, the clouds came in and stayed the rest of the night. So much for the Clear Sky Clock. The four of us left before midnight. Better luck next year. Of the seven years we have scheduled the all-night marathon, only one greeted us with clear skies all night.

**Moon Favorable for August Perseid Shower**

Hopefully the weather will be more favorable for this year's Perseid

meteor shower because the Moon certainly will be. A three-day-old Moon will set shortly after 10:00 p.m. on Sunday, August 11<sup>th</sup>. The radiant of the shower will be high above the sky by midnight.

If the weather permits, plan on coming out to Jubilee anytime around ten and plan on staying all night until the morning of the 12<sup>th</sup>. You should be able to see good meteors all night, or for as long as you want to stay. The Perseids are always reliable, averaging between 30 to 60 meteors per hour throughout the evening. They are also noted for some very bright meteors.

Remember to dress for the weather. It is usually warm. Mosquito repellents are strongly suggested. Brings your own snacks and drink and a comfortable chair. A lawn lounge that folds flat works very well for observing the showers. y

*...behind every dark cloud...*

*...there is a dark lining....*