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**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](http://www.astronomical.org)

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# STARLITE

*SUMMER, 2010*

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### *Directors:*

President: John Barra, [jbarra31@aol.com](mailto:jbarra31@aol.com)  
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Nominating Chairman: Phil Burroughs, [ptburroughs@comcast.net](mailto:ptburroughs@comcast.net)  
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Editor's Notes: There is a NEW look to our newsletter this time. We have used the letterhead logo and made a couple of changes. Due to the United State Postal System having some issues with our last mailing, (some of which came apart, were torn or maybe even lost), we have mailed this issue in an envelope. Hopefully all will arrive in good shape. Let us know your thoughts. The mailing cost is slightly more, however, we are saving on printing by doing it ourselves on our home printer. Article deadlines for August (Sept. issue) are August 18 and for the Dec. issue, by November 17. Articles may be submitted via two email addresses: [ls\\_hay@yahoo.com](mailto:ls_hay@yahoo.com) or [Starlighteditor@gmail.com](mailto:Starlighteditor@gmail.com).

**PLEASE NOTE:**

Please notify Scott Swords at [sswords3@comcast.net](mailto: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](mailto: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 to New Members:***

Mark Richmond, Brimfield  
Edward Smith, Peoria  
Andrew Kieczek, Princeville  
Andy Tillema, Peoria

President's Message

By John Barra

I think it is about time to weatherize the Messier Marathon. Is weatherize really a word? If not, I just made it up. Here is what I mean.

Ever since I joined the club, I have been always interested in the marathon. Over the years, participation has been dwindling almost to nothing. After all these years, I finally figured out why I hate doing the marathon, and probably why attendance has been decreasing. The weather. And I got a plan to change both.

I guess it is just fate that we are even able to observe all the objects in one night. (Except M30 at our latitude). But it is probable equally fateful that March is the month it could be accomplished. The weather is just too lousy then and you have to stay up all night to do it.

Half the time it is cloudy. Another quarter of the time it is way too cold. Even when it is clear and warm enough, clouds always seem to come from nowhere despite what Clear Sky predicts and stops us from doing the whole night.

I thought by retiring and being able to sneak out to do the marathon in middle of the week would solve the problem. Not. This year Rich Tennis and I did the marathon in the middle of the week. Great sky conditions and fairly warm temperatures greeted us. And almost no clouds appeared all night. But a haze to the south and southeast developed at 3:30 am. Out of nowhere. And never went away. So I give up on a single-night marathon in March. The rest of you must be smarter than me and figured it out a lot sooner.

Since while fuming at 4:30 in the morning at the haze and saying "no more," I came with an idea. Why not do it over two nights. Once in the middle of spring for the first half and the rest in early fall for the second. That way the weather is better and you don't have to stay up past

12 or one either night. And you can get M30. View all 110 over the two nights and get a PAS certificate. We can call it the Peoria Marathon.

Now I must confess I had another idea for a Peoria Marathon a few years back. It would happen if you saw a bunch of objects the first night and then the clouds come. you could finish the second night. Bad that turned out to be a dumb idea. Rare the weather cooperated two nights in a row. Plus it was still in March and March is usually too cold. Besides, who would want to be out to three in the morning one night and then have to get up in the middle of the night the next to finish.

But to do half until say 12:30 in a warmer part of spring and do the other half until 12:30 in the warmer part of fall seems more enjoyable. And you could make the list in a way so you didn't have to hunt for real low objects at either end of either nights.

So I went to the sky charts to see what could be done. It turns out that you could do the first half around new-moon weekend in April and the other half during new-moon weekend in August. Perfect. (Other months would not work because you would still miss objects.)

During the next few months I will work on finalizing the lists. Hopefully, we will be able to test the second half list at our public star party in August. We still have to have some help from the weather, but this method should give more flexibility. I will keep everyone informed. Hopefully, we can do a Peoria Marathon next year during warmer weather when you can go to bed during the time we usually go bed during star parties.

## FUTURE PROGRAMS

June 19: Public Star Party at Northmoor (1st Q. moon)

July 10: Private Star Party at Jubilee Observatory (new moon)

August 7: Public Star Party at Jubilee State Park (new moon)

September 11: Annual Banquet --Speaker: Dr. Pamela Gay (SIU)

(resume meetings at planetarium)

October 6: "How We Found Our Home in the Universe": Eric Clifton

November 3: Astrojeopardy--Gene Hodel

December 1: Great Debate V: John Barra

BANQUET: SEPTEMBER 11, 2010 (Place to be announced)

Speaker: Dr. Pamela Gay

A lifetime stargazer, Dr. Pamela L. Gay has followed her obsession to a profession. Today Pamela is a visiting assistant professor of Physics at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville, where she teaches introductory physics and astronomy courses. She also helps to mentor students working on observational astronomy projects through Swinburne Astronomy Online.

Teaching by day, she works on astronomy data by night, teaming up with amateur astronomers who are expert observers to study variable stars. She serves on the council of the American Association of Variable Star Astronomers.

With Aaron Price and Travis Searle worked on Slacker Astronomy, the first podcast devoted explicitly to astronomy. Slacker Astronomy was the reason for science becoming a distinct genre in podcast. Her most well known project may be [Astronomy Cast](#), a podcast she co-hosts with Fraser Cain (Producer of [Universe Today](#)).

She is part of the Galaxy Zoo collaboration, and collaborates with others helping writing the software and education content for the Zoo. Dr. Gay was also a co-chair of the United States new media efforts with regard to the [International Year of Astronomy](#), 2009. She has written articles in Astronomy and Sky & Telescope magazines.

Dr. Gay has a B.S. in Astrophysics from Michigan State University in 1996 and a Ph.D. in Astronomy from the University of Texas in 2002.

## STARLITES PAST

50 Years Ago

Second Starlite 1960

“The most significant event in the history of the Astronomy Section is the dream-come true of owning our own Planetarium! The major contribution of \$50,000 from Mr. Murray Baker made this possible, and is definitely earmarked for construction of the Planetarium Building.”

Now if the power-that-be finally get all the details worked out, the new Lakeview Museum may soon be a reality. Then we can start having our meetings in the new, new planetarium. And a new home for Lakeview’s new state of the art system.

“Orville Bensing announced at our fall dinner meeting that arrangements have been made for Dr. Wehrner Von Braun to speak at Bradley sometime in April of 1962. Approximately a hundred seats will be held for the astronomy section.”

And that would be seven years before the first moon landing. I wonder if they ever pulled it off. Sure would have been an interesting evening.

Starlite Past (continued)  
25 Years Ago  
Summer Starlite 1985

“During each membership meeting, a program is given. Who is responsible for these programs? Ultimately, it is the members. Each member should volunteer his or her services.”

Still true 25 years later. We have a lot of talented members. Even though we have programs set for the rest of the year, we are starting to look for programs for next year. Any volunteers?

“The Messier Club will meet on the following Saturday nights at Jubilee Observatory. There will be no rain dates. ... (emphasis added)”

No rain dates? Didn't it rain back then. If we didn't have rain dates, we probably wouldn't have any star parties. (Didn't they know that astronomical rain dates are supposed to be the night before?)”

“We offer you the universe. No other organization can make such a promise. The Peoria Astronomical Society can provide its members with some of the most exciting and challenging programs; however, there are limitations. Membership apathy is the prime cause.... So far, I see 15% ... actively involved.”

That percentage is about the same today. For my ideas on a solution and on the direction the club should take, please read the President's Message in this issue.

“According to George Mauer of the LeHigh Valley Amateur Society, the first measurement of Halley's Comet from Kitt Peak has found it with a 6' arc-second diameter (about 26,000 km.).”

Has it really been 25 years since the last return of Halley? Has it really been almost 13 years since Hale-Bopp? When can we expect the next bright one? Soon?

Yerkes Observatory (Rich Tennis)

PAS past attempts at observing at Yerkes Observatory seem to have theme of Charlie Brown attempting to kick the football being held by Lucy. However, we will continue with the planned viewing in the summer months ahead nearest the new moon phase of the moon. For the summer those dates would be June 12, July 10, and August 7. A 3:30 departure from Lakeview Museum parking lot in order to get there and catch a bite to eat on the way. Updates will be entered into the PAS website calendar, [www.astronomical.org](http://www.astronomical.org). There has been the suggestion that the week before each of these dates would have an acceptable dark sky for viewing up through midnight. Bob Pernic, staff member at Yerkes, will look into that possibility.

Set Those Calendars: (Rich Tennis)

Next Total Eclipse

The best observing of a total eclipse date nearest Peoria: Set your calendar for the next closest viewing of a total eclipse for August 21, 2017 18:31 UT. Location: GPS coordinates 36 Deg 58.5 Sec N and 87 Deg 39.3 Sec W. It will be 115 miles wide and will last 2min and 39.4 seconds. The location for this ideal observing of the total eclipse is near Bainbridge, Kentucky, which is a little east of the Land Between the Lakes Park. The path of the eclipse is in a general line that is from the southeast to the northwest. More information on this can be at the web site, <http://eclipse.gsfc.nasa.gov/SEplot/SEplot2001/SE2017Aug21T.GIF>

## 2010 Hosting Schedule

May 1 Scott Hay Rodney Nordstrom  
May 8 Terry Beachler Sheldon Schafer  
May 15 Steve Wrigley Jon Wrigley  
May 22 Rich Tennis Sheldon Schafer  
May 29 Scott Swords Calene Fleming

June 5 Scott Hay Brandt Bechtold  
June 12 Phil Burroughs Gerald Horst  
June 19 Brian Hakes Rodney Nordstrom  
June 26 John Barra Mike Hay

July 3 Dave Grebner Nerio Calgaro  
July 10 Brian Hakes Brandt Bechtold  
July 17 Bill Cole DeWayne Bartels  
July 24 Tim Lester Tim McGrath  
July 31 Steve Wrigley Jon Wrigley

Aug 7 Dave Grebner Gerald Horst  
Aug 14 Rich Tennis Nerio Calgaro  
Aug 21 Scott Swords Calene Fleming  
Aug 28 Brian Hakes Rodney Nordstrom

Sept 4 Phil Burroughs Dan Son  
Sept 11 Bill Cole Brandt Bechtold  
Sept 18 Tim Lester Tim McGrath  
Sept 25 John Barra Mike Hay

Oct 2 Steve Wrigley Jon Wrigley  
Oct 9 DeWayne Bartels Gerald Horst  
Oct 16 Rich Tennis Nerio Calgaro  
Oct 23 Terry Beachler Dan Son  
Oct 30 Scott Swords Calene Fleming

## Jubilee Maintenance Schedule - 2010

JUNE 5 Brian Bill Eric Clifton Jesse Hoover  
<Prep for PAS Members Meeting 7/10>

JUNE 12 Brian Hakes Greg Neaveill Doug Kasel  
JUNE 19 Rich Tennis Perry White Steve Russell  
JUNE 26 Dave Grebner Mike Hay Tim Lester

JULY 3 Scott Hay Gerry Horst Tim McGrath  
JULY 10 Cliff Jeske Scott Swords Calene Fleming  
JULY 17 Bob Pauer Dan Son John Barra  
JULY 24 DeWayne Bartels Gary Bussman Mike Frasca  
JULY 31 Brandt Bechtold Brian Bill Dave Grebner

AUG 7 Eric Clifton Brian Hakes Mike Hay  
AUG 14 Jesse Hoover Tim Lester Doug Kasel  
AUG 21 Scott Hay Greg Neaveill Steve Russell  
AUG 28 Rich Tennis Perry White Gerry Horst

< Prep for ICC Astro Class - Date TBD >

SEPT 4 Scott Swords Calene Fleming Bob Pauer  
SEPT 11 Dan Son Tim McGrath DeWayne Bartels  
SEPT 18 John Barra Brandt Bechtold Brian Bill  
SEPT 25 Gary Bussman Eric Clifton Mike Frasca

OCT 2 Dave Grebner Brian Hakes Mike Hay  
OCT 9 Scott Hay Jesse Hoover Cliff Jeske  
OCT 16 Scott Swords Calene Fleming Bob Pauer  
OCT 23 Gerry Horst Doug Kasel Tim Lester