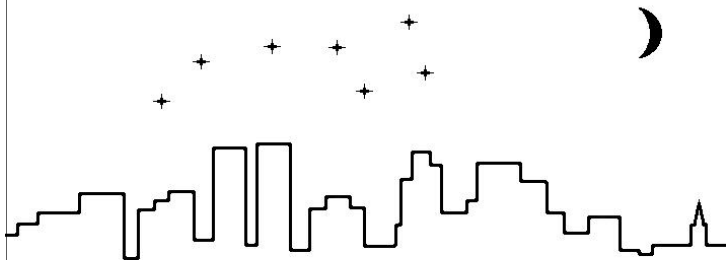


STARLITE

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF
THE PEORIA ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY

www.astronomical.org



Peoria Astronomical Society

WINTER 2007

Inside this issue:

Annual Banquet Recap 2008 Dues Notices	1
Winter astronomy? Meeting Programs Astronomical Calendar	2
Observing Notes Geminid Meteor Shower Comet 17p/Holmes	3
From Starlites Past	4

Annual banquet brings in new leadership

By Tim McGrath


The annual banquet for the Peoria Astronomical Society was held on September 29th, at Midstate College. Members and their families enjoyed a hearty meal, with fried chicken, ham, potatoes, salad, and a host of other delicious dishes and desserts from the many members who attended. Following dinner, a brief business meeting was held to elect the new society officers. The slate of officers was unanimously approved, even though the treasurer position remained unfilled. Later, **Brian Hakes** agreed to take the position, and at the following board meeting he was appointed treasurer by president **Mike Hay**, with the unanimous approval of the board.

Here are the Peoria Astronomical Society officers:

President.....**Mike Hay**
Vice President.....**John Barra**
Secretary.....**Phil Burroughs**
Treasurer.....**Brian Hakes**
Nominating.....**Dan Son**
Legal Agent.....**Mike Hay**
Parliamentarian....**Mike Hay**



Following the dinner and elections, we were treated to an excellent presentation by our guest speaker **Doug Zubenel**, who talked about his childhood experience growing up with the famed amateur astronomer **Leslie Peltier**. It was a fascinating account of Leslie's personal life, and very well presented by Doug.

The board wishes to thank to all the members who attended, especially those who brought food and/or desserts. Thanks to **Rich Tennis** for his effort in organizing the speaker. We would like to especially thank **Mike Bunch** and **Midstate College** for generously allowing us to use their facility and equipment. 



Please welcome our
newest member!

JARED WOIWODE

2008 Membership Dues!



By Brian Hakes

The 2008 membership dues notices have been sent. With postage as high as it is, second and third mailings of dues notification can be costly. While it is the holiday season and subscription notices easily get deferred, the PAS board asks for your consideration in paying dues before the second mailing.

The second mailing will be in January, so if you chose not to mail your dues you may give you dues payment to Brian Hakes, treasurer, at the December or January general meetings.

Astronomy is not a winter sport!

By John Barra

Last night I went on to my deck to check the sky to see if it was clear enough

to check on Comet Holmes. I had not looked at it with my telescope for awhile. Since the moon would not rise until early in the morning, I thought it might be a good time to take out my telescope and see what the comet looked like now.

It was, of course, too cloudy to view. The sad thing was that I was glad. It was too cold. Not that's depressing when someone like me who loves to take out my telescope is happy that it is cloudy.

Astronomy is just not a winter sport. For five or six months, when so many good objects are visible and darkness begins at five o'clock, it is just too cold and windy to really enjoy viewing. Maybe when I was younger, I would dress up warm and view a few times during the winter. But even then, I did not really enjoy it.

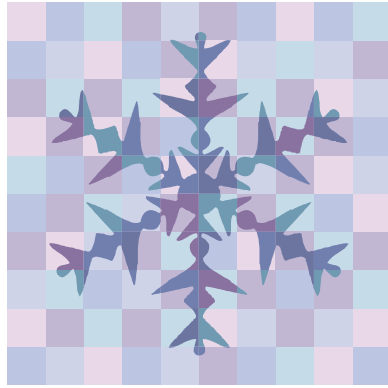
It is true that I do make a point of viewing the Geminid meteor shower in December, if sky conditions are favorable. And I will

do so this year. But you can watch a meteor shower in the cold by snuggling up in a warm sleeping bag with a flat lawn chair and still really enjoy the shower. But as to viewing with a telescope when it is cold—forget it. Especially when you get older like me.

I suppose if I had the money, and wanted to spend it for that purpose, I could always invest in a robotic telescope and view the skies on a monitor in my warm house. But for an old starhopper like me, that just would not be fun.

Maybe when I retire, I will have to consider spending some of these cold, winter months in a warmer climate where I can take out my telescope and enjoy viewing those winter objects that I miss every year.

In the meantime, I can't wait until springtime for the Messier Marathon. But then again, it will probably be cloudy at it usually is. Or clear, but too cold and windy to even try. Oh well, at least I can go on the internet and hunt for fun astronomy sites to view or look at the skies with someone else's robotic telescopes that has been put on the web. But it is just not the same thing.



Upcoming Meeting Programs

December 5, 2007

Astro-Jeopardy!!
Presented by Gene Hodel

January 2, 2008

Preview the new equipment at the Planetarium!!
Presented by Dave Grebner

February 8, 2008

2007 Year End Review
Presented by Dan Son

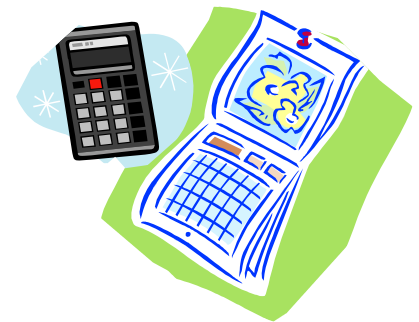
Astronomical Data Calendar

December

- 9 Monocerotids peak
- 12 sigma-Hydrids peak
- 14 Geminids peak
- 14 Moon and Neptune 1.5° apart
- 17 First Quarter Moon
- 20 Mercury and Jupiter 1.8° apart
- 22 Ursids peak
- 23 Jupiter Conjunction with Sun
- 23 Full Moon
- 23 Moon and Mars 31' apart
- 24 Mars Opposition
- 31 Third Quarter Moon

January

- 4 Quadrantids peak
- 8 New Moon
- 9 Moon and Mercury 1.1° apart
- 12 Moon and Uranus 1.9° apart
- 15 First Quarter Moon
- 19 Moon and Mars 36' apart
- 21 Mercury Greatest E. Elongation
- 22 Full Moon
- 22 Mercury and Neptune 16' apart
- 29 Third Quarter Moon



February

- 1 Venus and Jupiter 35' apart
- 6 Mercury Inferior Conjunction
- 6 New Moon
- 10 Neptune Conjunction with Sun
- 13 First Quarter Moon
- 16 Moon and Mars 54' apart
- 20 Lunar Eclipse, 7:42p first contact
- 20 Full Moon
- 24 Saturn Opposition
- 25 delta-Leonids peak
- 28 Third Quarter Moon

Observing Notes By John Barra

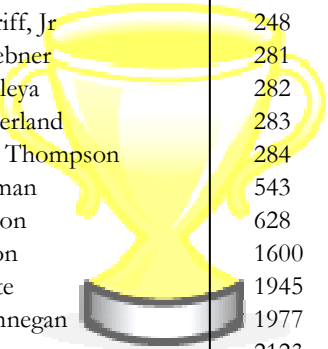
Brandt Bechtold received a Certificate from the Astronomical League at the November meeting of the Peoria Astronomical Society for having observed all 110 Messier Objects following the rules of the League’s Messier Club. A regular certificate is awarded for observing 70 objects while an honorary certificate is awarded for observing all 110. He was also awarded a Messier Club Pin since he completed the entire list.



Members of the PAS are encouraged to complete this list which must be done using a telescope without the aid of setting circles or a “go to” devise. Members who are eligible to receive their awards should present their log book compiled according to AL rules to the club’s observing chairman, who is currently John Barra, who can relay the certification to the league and obtain the awards.

Twenty-five PAS members have been awarded AL Messier Awards according to list shown on the League’s website. Below is the list of those members, which includes the certificate number and the year awarded.

NUMBER	YEAR	NAME	NUMBER	YEAR	NAME
47	1968	Arthur Grebner	247	1975	Paul Blum
48	1968	George Triff, Jr	248	1975	Randy Blum
72	1968	David Grebner	281	1981	R. P. Van Zandt
73	1968	Jerry McEleya	282	1981	Bart Benjamin
116	1970	Judy Sunderland	283	1981	John Lyle
117	1970	Dr. Christ Thompson	284	1981	Mike Luthy
121	1970	Gary Fugman	543	1982	Karl Hasich
149	1971	Billy Blaxton	628	1984	John Bradney
150	1971	Dan Wilson	1600	1998	John Barra
151	1971	Mark Tuate	1945	2002	Rich Tennis
217	1974	Robert Finnegan	1977	2002	Tim McGrath
245	1975	Scott Tallyn	2123	2007	Brandt Bechtold
246	1975	Howard Brooksbank			



Geminid Meteor Shower should be good in 2007! By John Barra

The Geminid Meteor shower, which is always reliable if conditions are right, should be particularly good this year. They peak around 11 pm Peoria time on Thursday, December 13. The 4-5 day old crescent moon sets around 8:15 pm. so it will not interfere with the radiant which should be high during the peak.

Of course, the sky must be clear or partly clear to be able to observe the shower. Members of the society will be out at the observatory at Jubilee if the weather permits. Watch the weather and weather reports and check the PAS website for updates to see if it will be a good observing night. Dress appropriately and bring snacks, drinks, and a good observing chair.



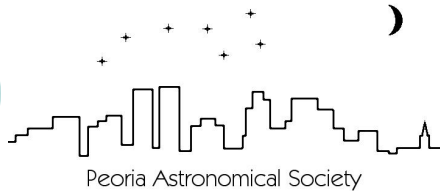
Comet 17p/Holmes surprises observers By Tim McGrath

Comet 17p/Holmes has provided observers with a surprise these last couple months, when it suddenly exploded into naked eye visibility! Several PAS members have observed the comet. A few members even came out with me to open Northmoor observatory for public viewing for an extra week in November. This picture shows a typical view of the comet as it appeared in a telescope.



Photo Copyright © 2007 by Gary W. Kronk (Kronk Observatory, Illinois, USA)

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From Starlites Past...

By John Barra

40 YEARS AGO

November Starlite 1967

"In going over the membership list, I find 27 keyholders (Northmoor) available. By the time you consider that some are students, some have working conditions that prevent participation, and such things as vacations, sickness, etc., there are times during the year when only a dozen or so keyholders are around. This can and does create problems and extra work."

With the increased competition of other activities 40 years later, the problem has only worsened. The PAS board is looking at ways to increase the number of keyholders for all the club's telescope. We are hoping to give more notice for future keyholder training sessions.

"Van Zandt has been approached to have his orrery copyrighted to be released for educational purposes. If you didn't attend the annual banquet, you missed a demonstration of this orrery."

In reading many past issues of the Starlite, it seems that Van was often available to be the speaker at the annual banquet. Past members had the opportunity to learn from Van's vast knowledge of astronomy.

25 YEARS AGO

December Starlite 1982

"On September 25, 1982, we held our Annual Banquet at Lakeview, and for those of you who missed it, you missed out on a real treat. This year's banquet was highlighted by a real genuine pig roast. Our bats go off to Terry Evans. He was "Chief Chef" that day as he took care of everything...."

The food has always been good and plentiful at the banquet/picnics that I have attended that past 12 years. But I must admit, I sure would not mind if another 'Chief Chef' who could roast a pig stepped forward.

"In the past, the 24" dome has shown some signs of (water) leakage. Thanks to Eric Clifton, Barry Redenbo, Joel Fugman, and Steve Morse, this problem has now been solved. These members have completed the job of installing a weather baffle on the shutter to the 24" inch dome."

Lately it has been the invasion of birds rather than water that has caused 'leakage' in our observatories. Work on solving the problem has been ongoing.

