



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

STARLITE

WINTER, 2010

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Directors:

President: John Barra, jbarra31@aol.com
Vice-President: Rich Tennis, rltennis7@dishmail.net
Secretary: Perry White, whitepe@hughes.net
Treasurer: Brian Hakes, bhakes@sbcglobal.net
Parliamentarian: Eric Clifton, ericclifton@comcast.net
Nominating Chairman: Nick Johnson, johnsnl@comcast.net
Legal Agent: Mike Hay, me.hay@comcast.net

Editor's Notes: Articles may be submitted via two email addresses: ls_hay@yahoo.com or Starlighteditor@gmail.com. Deadlines for articles for 2011 issues are Feb. 16, May 18, Aug. 17 and Nov. 16. This edition contains a new membership roster as of Nov. 2010.

PLEASE NOTE:

Please notify Scott Swords at 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 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 New Members:

Barbara Brown - Morton, IL

Jennifer Malcome - Cazenovia, IL

President's Message

Now that you have chosen me for a second term as your president, I thought I would use this space to review the priorities I set out for my first term. Then I will give the top priority for my second term.

The highest priority I set last year was to get the 14-inch telescope at Jubilee back to use. While we did not reach that goal completely, substantial progress has been made and the job should be completed by the start of the next viewing season. While I have at times pestered Eric Clifton to meet my priority, I must also thank him for most of the progress for getting the job almost finished correctly. If you check the log book at Jubilee, you would notice the numerous times his name is listed in it this past summer from all the times he has gone out to complete tasks necessary to prepare for lifting the dome back into place.

That major job of lifting the dome was then easily accomplished thanks largely to the effort of Perry White and the Brimfield-Kickapoo Volunteer Fire Department. Perry enlisted his fellow volunteers to assist a group of PAS members to pick up the dome and put it in place. It was all accomplished in a few minutes thanks to all the manpower that helped.

Tim Lester than helped Eric attach the hardware to the doors that close over the dome's opening. Yet to be done is the work necessary to replace the floor and the telescope can then be reset this spring.

My other priority was getting a good inventory of the society's equipment. Inventory Chairman Calene Fleming has done her best to get the list finished so we can decide on the disposition of unneeded items. However, she has not had the best cooperation from of all us. Some of the delay has been caused by the start of what I will call my highest priority for this year.

That priority is to renovate the warming room at Northmoor and be able to dedicate the new dome. Rich Tennis has agreed to chair the committee for Restoration II. He already has had one successful committee meeting. By the time this message is read, two work dates should have accomplished the cleaning out of the material under the dome floor, the temporary storage of movable items in the warming room and the removal of all the old material on the walls of the room.

Then the committee can propose the changes that needed to be made to complete the renovation. Rich's goal is to complete the renovation this spring.

Finally, the board is going to review all the priorities of the society. The first step is to get input from the general membership. That step will be accomplished during the Great Debate V at the December member's meeting. See the related article on that subject.

--John Barra

December Program:

The Great Debate V

By John Barra

The past four years, we debated four topics concerning astronomical or cosmological issues. This year's Great Debate will deal with a more practical issue for the club. It is entitled: What Should Be the Top Priorities of the Peoria Astronomical Society.

We will first discuss the possible priorities for the club. I have listed six as a starting point. They are, in no particular order:

1. Promote observing by club members
2. Promote observing by the public
3. Educate club members on astronomy
4. Educate the public on astronomy
5. Be an advocate for astronomical issues among the astronomical community
6. Be an advocate for astronomical issues that arise with the public

We will at first go over the list and have a discussion on other possible priorities to be added to the list.

We will then debate the pros and cons each possible priority on our final list.

At the end of our debate, everyone will be given a list with all the possible priorities.

Each member will then rank the priorities according to his or her preference.

I will then take the lists home and tabulate the results. They will then be published in the next Starlite and sent by email to everyone on our Yahoo Peoria Astro group.

Lastly, the results will be discussed at subsequent board meeting and used to plan activities. So come to the December meeting and take part in another great debate.

Future Programs

December 1: Great Debate V: What Should be the Priorities of the PAS?

John Barra

January: Planetarium Show--Lakeview Staff

February: Trip to Mt. Palomar: Phil Burroughs

March: Professor Linda French, IWU

April: The New Peoria Marathons (or the two half-marathons): John Barra

May: Open

From Starlites Past

By John Barra

50 Years Ago

Winter Newsletter 1960

“Dr. Ernest Landon will serve as chairman of Special Groups. His particular charge will be to see that the necessary number of keyholders are available. A shortage in this department has made Mrs. Patterson's (past chairman) task difficult in the extreme.”

This year, the number of people coming to Northmoor on public nights thankfully has been on the increase making it difficult for two keyholders to get the job done. Non-keyholder members can be of great

assistance by helping out. See the related article in this newsletter on the board and Northmoor Chairman Bill Cole's attempt to organize this task.

“....Al Sharov did some fixing on the chronograph. Then Van and Ed Davis figured out a sort of mental rhythm method for increasing the instrument's accuracy in timing occultations....Anyone interested in getting in the actual scientific phase of astronomy and having a of fun at the same time can help set up a regular program to obtain these occultation timings.”

Timing occultations are not as popular today. But the speaker at our annual banquet told us amateurs a new fun way to help out astronomical science in the comfort of our home--via the internet. Go to the Zoo Universe home page at www.moonzoo.org/ to find an easy way to help identify craters on the moon, sort galaxies by type, and other projects. I did and its fun.

25 Years Ago

Fall Starlite 1985

“Northmoor Observatory, thirty years old this year, has undergone a nearly total renovation. Outside improvements at Northmoor includes new roof on the lecture room, freshly painted outside walls on the dome and lecture roof, and a repair and weatherproofing treatment to the dome itself.”

During the past year-and-a-half, we have almost undergone a nearly total renovation also. Work included the new dome, painting outside walls and another new roof. We are finally getting serious about phase two concerning inside work. The newly formed committee will have met for the first time before this issue is published.

“Many of you wonder when the best time for deep-sky viewing occurs. Optimum deep-sky viewing can only be done when there is no moon in the sky. Generally speaking, you will find observers out at Jubilee Observatory on the weekends of new moon and last quarter moon, weather permitting.”

Observing Chairman Gary Bussman has been trying to get more members back to that practice of observing at Jubilee on new moon and last quarter moon weekends instead of just at organized star parties. He is posting those dates from time to time via the Peoria Astro e-mail group.

Northmoor Observatory Needs Members

NorthMoor Observatory needs more members' participation during public viewings. Please volunteer to be a host or just show up on clear Saturday evenings. There may be near a hundred visitors on a good Saturday. PAS has about 105 members of which some don't even live in the Peoria area. We do have 20 members who have volunteered to host and get scheduled for 2 or 3 of the 26 Saturday evenings of the public viewing season of May thru October. Of the present 20 host volunteers, 17 are NorthMoor keyholders. A keyholder is a member who has been properly trained to operate the observatory. The keyholder is expected to do public viewing hosting duties and has been assigned a key that provides that member observatory access at any time. A member that volunteers to host does not have to be a keyholder for that volunteer will be scheduled to cohost with a keyholder. In the past, 2 hosts have been scheduled for each of the 26 Saturdays; but, due to some crowds that have shown up, we could use at least 3 assigned hosts. Non-keyholder hosts can become eligible to be a keyholder after getting sufficient experience with the observatory operation and history.

Contact the NorthMoor Observatory chairman Bill Cole at wmrcole@comcast.net or cell phone 369-6414 to get added to the host list.

PAS Clothing

Perhaps you have seen some PAS members wearing shirts or caps with the PAS embroidered logo on them. You can order these and other items as well. They make great stocking stuffers or allow you to discuss your favorite hobby to those who may be interested.

For those who would like to have a Peoria Astronomical Society shirt or cap, any other item that Land's End might have for embroidered stuff this can call Land's End at 1-800-963-4816. Use the customer number listed below.

Rich Tennis

Customer Number: 3990240 Logo # for shirts: 0529025 Logo # for hats: 0756549

PAS Educational Chairman

We are seeking a member to serve as Education Chairperson. Duties of this position include:

- Coordinate PAS responses to requests for assistance from local schools and organizations.
- Initiate new activities/programs with local schools, colleges, or universities.
- Identify and communicate astronomy education opportunities for PAS members via monthly membership meetings, Starlite, Website, or PAS email list.
- Serve as liaison with the Peoria Academy of Science.
- Report on education activities at the monthly PAS Board meetings.

This is a unique position for someone interested in championing the introduction of astronomy to local youth. The holder of this Chair possesses great flexibility in determining the education program content as well as the schedule to develop and execute it. Minimum time requirement is estimated at 2 to 4 hours per month, but could be expanded to any amount of time the Chairperson chooses to invest.

If interested, please contact Nick Johnson, Nominations Chair, at johnsnl@comcast.net.