



Nov. 2005 Newsletter of the Omaha Astronomical Society Issue 215

Two Star Gazers & Time & Clear Skies Equals  
Two Globular Cluster Certificates



General Meeting of the  
Omaha Astronomical Society  
Friday, November 4th at 7:30 PM  
Durham Science Center, Room 169  
UNO Campus

Program: See Page 3

## Events

**November Club Star Party**  
**Saturday 26 November**  
**Club Site Weeping Water**

**Mahoney Public Star Parties**

Done for 2005

## Happenings on Mars

OCTOPUS DUST STORM: A new dust storm has erupted on Mars, big and bright enough to see through backyard telescopes. Some longtime observers say it's the most intense they've ever seen. On Oct. 28th the billowing cloud assumed the shaped of a giant tentacled octopus. Mars is putting on quite a show.

Visit the club web site at: **[www.OmahaAstro.com](http://www.OmahaAstro.com)**

Save the club money... and get your newsletter in full color by signing up for the email edition of the Stella. Signing up is easy... just go to:

**[Http://www.omahaastro.com/DigitalStella](http://www.omahaastro.com/DigitalStella)**

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## **BULLETINS**

### **November Meeting Presentation**

**Tips on Observing Mars by  
John Johnson & Eric Balcom**

**Good November Dates to  
Observe at the OAS Club Site or  
at any other good location**

Friday 25 Nov , last quarter moon  
Saturday 26 Nov, last quarter moon

### **Upcoming Events**

**Mars is Close**

**Leonid Meteor Shower**

**Annual December Get Together**

**Venus gets Brighter in December**

## November Outreach

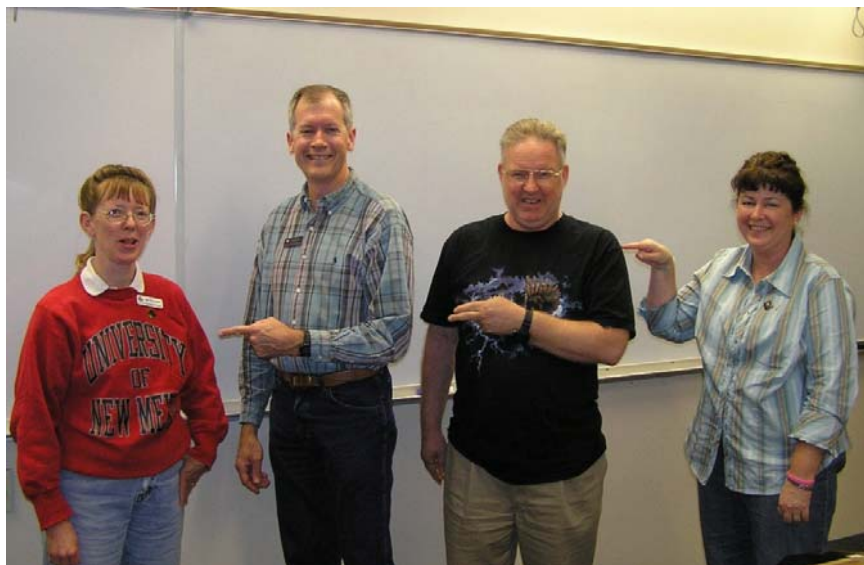
**Thursday - November 3rd** - Blair High School Science Club - We will be trying to observe Mars, Venus, & deep sky. This will be at the High School, which is on the Northeast side of Blair.

**On Saturday - November 5th** we have an event scheduled over at the Hitchcock Nature Center north of Crescent, IA. Here again this event is advertised as a Mars and a constellation observing event.

**On Tuesday November 8th** we have been asked to do a star gazing party at the Sandoz Elementary school which is located at 5959 Oak Hills Dr in Omaha. It is approximately 6 blocks south of "Q" St. and 125th St. The request for this event came through our own OAS member Wayne Boeck whose son attends Sandoz. Also we will plan on a "cloud-out" date for this event for Thursday the 10th.

## The Transfer of Power

Deb Cheney Vice President to Mark Weiss  
Mark Weiss Program Chair to Eric Balcom  
Eric Balcom Secretary to Kim Moss-Allen



## November Sky Calendar

1st New Moon  
8th First Quarter Moon  
15th Full Moon  
17th Leonid Meteor Shower  
23rd Last Quarter Moon

### Recent Observing Awards

**Clark Cheney—Globular Cluster Certificate**  
**Deb Cheney—Globular Cluster Certificate**

### New Members

John Macy of Omaha  
Rick Rubio of Omaha

### NOTICE

Rita Livengood is looking for old Astronomy, Sky & Telescope, and other magazines, such as hunting type that can be sent to here son who is stationed in the Middle East. If you can donate some, please bring them to the November meeting so she can pick them up.

Thanks

## **Stella Notes on OAS October 2005 Business Meeting**

### **Omaha Astronomical Society**

October 7, 2005

**Treasurer's Report.** OAS Treasurer Bill Bond presented the September 2005 Treasurer's Report. Income was \$ 4540.90. Expenses were \$ 140.90. Account balance of \$ 4,483.31.

#### **Old Business**

##### **1. OAS Outreach** Coordinator John Johnson

The Papillion-LaVista 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Star Parties are concluded and were successful. John thanked many OAS Members for their frequent participation in the 10 star parties held.

10/11/2005 – Maras Middle School Star Party at 17<sup>th</sup> and U Streets 7:00 pm. Those interested in participating should contact John Johnson.

10/11/2005 – Trinity Christian School Star Party at 156<sup>th</sup> and West Dodge Road 7:00 pm. Those interested should contact John. Star Party will be held in the east side of the church parking lot.

##### **Messier Observing Committee. Clark & Deb Cheney**

Deb & Clark Cheney reported that Mars will be in opposition on 11/07/2005. Good viewing from October 23<sup>rd</sup> through November 7<sup>th</sup>. Its size will grow to 20.6 arc seconds. Its magnitude will be -2.3. October has the Orionid and Draconid Meteor Showers. Three OAS Members used the Weeping Water, NE, Astro Site in September 2005.

##### **Outreach Awards**

OAS Participates in the NASA Night Sky network Program. As we sponsor star parties, the Club earns points.

The Astronomical League is developing a New Program and will give credit for similar outreach participation. The Program will be out in January 2006.

##### **Lunar II Certification**

This is a new Astronomical League Certification Award Program. It requires more observing challenge than the Lunar I Award program. What is involved is keeping a written Log of your observations, providing a description and some sketch or Astro photography of the Moon, and new "challenging" viewing targets to observe.

**New Business.**

**General Liability Insurance Policy**

The annual renewal of the OAS Policy is due. Its present aggregate amount is general liability insurance for \$600,000. Policy amount is \$250.00.

A motion from Phil Heflin and a second by Eric Balcom to raise the insurance aggregate limit to \$1 million and to pay the difference (increased amount) was carried by a voice vote.

**Holiday Party for the December Meeting**

A motion from Mark Weiss and a second from Phil Heflin were made to increase the amount that the OAS will sponsor for Door Prizes from \$150.00 to \$200.00 carried by a voice vote.

OAS Members, if so inclined, can also purchase and contribute to the Door Prizes being given out that night.

**3. OAS 2005 Elections of all Officers**

New or incumbent officers as a result of separate nominations and voice votes are:

President – Al Dorn  
Vice-President – Mark Weiss  
Secretary – Kim Moss-Allen  
Treasurer – Bill Bond  
Outreach Coordinator – John Johnson  
Program Chair – Eric Balcom

**Awards & Recognition.**

Deb Cheney and Clark Cheney each received their Globular Cluster Observing Certificates #32 and #33 respectively from the Astronomical League.

**October Meeting Program.**

Useful Websites for observing – [www.ngcic.org](http://www.ngcic.org) - Clark & Deb Cheney

Respectfully submitted,

**Eric Balcom**

“Out going” OAS Secretary

November Stella Quiz

by KMA

1. On January 1st, 1801 Giuseppe Piazzi discovered the first asteroid in this constellation, visible now in the east. Which constellation is it?
2. Which of the following was NOT a comment heard at a recent Gretna astronomy outreach program concerning M-13:
  - a. It looks like mucus on your lens!
  - b. Wow!
  - c. It looks better in the other scope.
  - d. It's, like, all "spider-webby."
  - e. Boring!
3. A nebula, bigger and brighter than any in our own galaxy, is sometimes called, "the Giant Loop Nebula" or "True Lover's Knot." What is it's other name and official designation?
4. What arrives at opposition on November 7th? And what is "opposition"?
5. Which of the following words is not a word related to "star"?
  - a. consider
  - b. asteroid
  - c. philomath
  - d. disaster?
6. About 4000 years ago it was the "polestar." Now Thuban is the alpha star of what circumpolar constellation (the eighth largest)?
7. What constellation is seen by the Australian Aboriginals as a boomerang?
8. Where would you find no circumpolar stars?
9. Which nebulae are likely to appear round and which irregular? Absorption, SMR (super nova remnant), reflection, emission, and planetary.
10. Which term would I most want to see on new binoculars and why:
  - a) fully-coated, b) fully multi-coated or c) coated?

## Still Observing at 90

OAS' senior astronomer, Phil Heflin, turned 90 years young this week. He is still an active observer and is looking forward to sharing the red planet Mars with friends and neighbors this month. Phil admits that his preference lies in watching the deep sky, and he holds one of the original OAS COMET certificates. COMET certificates were started in our club about 40 years ago and later adopted by the Astronomical League, becoming the observing programs now known as the Messier Clubs.

Phil and his wife Virginia spend time nearly every month at their Starlight Observatory. Phil's observatory is on a hilltop about 25 miles northeast of Council Bluffs, surrounded by farm fields. It currently houses a 16-inch Cave cassegrain reflector (that last such telescope built) and an 8-inch folded refractor. Phil put up the observatory around twenty-five years ago, and installed the 16-inch "about 15 years or so ago" (if anyone needs specifics, Phil still has the sales receipt on file).



## Reminder

To all members, please remember that the December meeting also includes our annual social. Please remember that we will be passing around a sign up sheet, during the November meeting, so decide what food and beverage items you can bring to the December meeting.

Also please remember that we will accept any and all donations of astronomy related items for door prizes. If you have any items do donate as a door prize please bring it to the December meeting and contact Eric Balcom at the meeting and let him know what it is.

Thanks in advance.

## Looking for Something Different

If you are looking for some new items to observe consider trying the Caldwell list, while the entire list of 109 objects will require some objects visible only from the southern hemisphere, there is an award for observing 70 of the objects which is possible from the United States, difficult but possible. There are many nebulae in the Caldwell list that are well known, plus some other objects that we use as show pieces during star parties. One example is the double cluster in Perseus, it is Caldwell object C-14. The blinking planetary in Cygnus is C-15. Another is the blue snowball nebula in Andromeda.

If you ever get the chance to travel south, you would need to observe objects in constellations with names like Apus, Dorado, Triangulum Australe, and Crux. Some of the objects you would be looking for would be C-102 the southern Pleiades, C-99 the Coalsack Nebula (dark nebula), and C-94 the Jewel Box cluster. This list includes many nebulae and galaxies, consider it for your next observing project.

## November Astronomy Quiz Answers

1. Triangulum
2. E) Boring! (I realize it's not a fair question--but their reactions were fascinating!)
3. It is NGC 2070, the Tarantula Nebula, so-called because of its resemblance to a spider.
4. Mars. Opposition is when a planet whose orbit is farther from the sun than ours (a "superior planet") is directly opposite from the sun in relation to us. It is on the same side of the sun as the Earth, with the Earth lying between it and the sun. Opposition is a good time to observe a planet because it is fully illuminated, closest to earth at this point and in the sky all night.
5. C) philomath, meaning "lover of learning." Consider comes from root words meaning "with the stars," asteroid means "star form," and disaster means "ill-starred" or "against the stars."
6. Draco
7. Corona Borealis
8. At the equator all stars would appear to rise in the east and set in the west.
9. Round: SMR and planetary. Irregular: absorption, emission and reflection.
10. Fully multi-coated, meaning all glass surfaces have advanced coatings, including the prisms. Coatings "increase the transmission of light and decrease the reflected light by creating an interference effect at the boundary of glass/air."

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### Club Officers .....

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*al1@ditol.com*

**Vice President:** Mark Weiss 291-5322

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**Treasurer:** Bill Bond 491-4135

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**Secretary:** Kim Moss-Allen 291-7887

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**Program Chair:** Eric Balcom 491-3502

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**Outreach Coordinator:** John Johnson 333-5460

*jwjohanson@opd.com*

**Stella Editor:** Mark Weiss 291-5322

*mweiss4@cox.net*

### BENEFITS OF MEMBERSHIP

- ◆ Members receive the STELLA, our monthly newsletter.
- ◆ Each member is automatically a member of the Astronomical League, the only nation-wide organization for amateur astronomers.
- ◆ Use of the observing site at Weeping Water, NE
- ◆ The opportunity to borrow one of several club-owned telescopes.
- ◆ Organized trips to local observatories, planetariums and museums.
- ◆ Significant savings on subscriptions to **Sky & Telescope** and **Astronomy** magazines.
- ◆ Savings on astronomy books and printed materials.

### ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP DUES

Regular/Family  
\$25.00

Junior/Student  
\$10.00

Newsletter Only  
\$10.00

Send your check to:  
The OAS  
c/o Bill Bond  
12835 Aurora Plz,  
Lot 237  
Omaha, NE 68164