



General Meeting of the Omaha Astronomical Society
Friday, April 6th at 7:30 PM
Durham Science Center, Room 169, UNO Campus
Program: See Page 3

Upcoming Events

UNL's Behlen Observatory Public Open House/
Stargazing - at Behlen , Observatory on April
20th at 7:00 PM

Astronomy/Earth Day at Elmwood Park on April
21st from 12:00 Noon to 6:00 PM (Jeff Huston
will be at the meeting to provide further details.)
OAS will be looking for members to help set-up
and man the booth during that time. We will also
be looking for people with solar filter equipped
telescopes who would be available that day to
provide a view of the Sun. Jeff will be there at
10:30 am, and Mark will there at about 11:00

Arlington Middle School - at Eastern Nebraska 4-
H Center (Gretna) on Thursday April 26th at 7:30
PM. We will be looking for volunteers to help
with this event. This would be a great event for
someone who would like to shadow a more
experienced member during an outreach event,
if you would like to do this please contact either
Mark Weiss or John Johnson.

Friedel Academy Elementary School - at Chalco
Hills Recreation Area on Sunday April 29th at
7:30 PM. This would also be a great event for
someone who would like to shadow a more
experienced member during an outreach event,
if you would like to do this please contact either
Mark Weiss or John Johnson.

Metro Science Fair Winner

Well this year we had a winner at the Metro Sci-
ence Fair, he was a gentleman from the junior
division. He should be coming to our meeting in
May to receive his prizes from the club.

Green Comet

By **Joe Rao**

SPACE.com Skywatching Columnist

A new comet has recently been discovered, and like the
brilliant Comet McNaught from earlier this year, this latest
discovery belongs to an Australian: Comet Lovejoy
(C/2007 E2).

On March 15th, Terry Lovejoy of Thornlands, Queensland,
Australia, discovered a 9th-magnitude comet in the south-
ern constellation Indus the Indian. In reporting the find to
the Central Bureau for Astronomical Telegrams (CBAT), in
Cambridge, Massachusetts, Lovejoy described the comet
as having a coma that appeared distinctly green in color,
with a slight extension to the southwest.

Remarkably, Lovejoy made the discovery not with a tele-
scope but using an off-the-shelf digital camera! In fact, it
appears to be the very first case of the discovery of a
comet discovered in this manner.

The green comet is too dim to see with the naked eye, but
it's a nice target for backyard telescopes. The comet's
distinctive greenish hue seems to suggest that it is rich in
cyanogens and diatomic carbon.

But it still should continue to be an interesting object to
follow with binoculars and small telescopes as it moves
north during April.

For most northern observers, it will not be until the second
week of April that Comet Lovejoy will emerge from out of
the dawn twilight and be positioned low in the southeast
sky.

**April Club Star Party,
April 14th, 2007
OAS Club Site, Weeping Water**

**Omaha Astronomical Society is a mem-
ber of the NASA Night Sky Network**

Events and Stuff Section

April Meeting Presentation

8" Dobsonian Refurbishment

By Stafford Pelish

New Members

None

Good March Observing Dates to Observe at the Club Site or other good dark sky location

Friday 13 April 07, last quarter moon
Saturday 14 April 07, last quarter moon
Friday 20 April 07, new moon
Saturday 21 April 07, new moon

Mahoney Public Star Parties

All Friday evenings from Twilight On the Golf Driving Range of the Mahoney State Park Ashland, NE

Friday May 18, 2007
Friday June 15, 2007
Friday July 13, 2007
Friday August 10, 2007
Friday September 14, 2007

Recent Observing Awards

Gary Grimes got Lunar II certificate #7

April Sky Calendar

2nd Full Moon
10th Last Quarter Moon
17th New Moon
24th First Quarter Moon

OAS March 2, 2007 Meeting Minutes

The **meeting** came to order at 7:35. No rooftop observing tonight. **February minutes** were read and Sharon Weiss motioned to accept, Gary Grimes seconded and the minutes were accepted. John Macy gave a short **Treasurer's report**, with income in February of \$230.00, expenses of \$94.23, balance of \$5262.24. We had 27 people present.

Old Business - Outreach

*March 9th, Fullerton Magnet School, 4711 N. 138th Omaha

*March 10th, Metro Science and Engineering Fair, Milo Bail Student Center. We have allotted \$50 stipend to 1 junior and 1 senior astronomy related project. POC Al Dorn or John Johnson.

*April 29th, Tentative Outreach at Chalco Hills

*May 19th, Sidewalk Astronomy Day. The idea is to take your telescope to any busy public place to share astronomy with folks. Village Point, Old Market, movie theater parking lot, Halloween, store, etc.

Club Telescopes

6" Dobsonian, Ann Donovan
6" Newtonian, Bob Van Meteren
8" SCT, Larry Wilkes
13 " Dobsonian, Chris Jewell
Binoculars, 11x80, Bill Bond

Observing-- Club Star Party (weather permitting!) at Astropark, Sat., Mar. 17th. Lunar eclipse on Saturday, March 3rd, however, it will already be well in progress as the moon rises at around 6:15 local time. Astropark is not accessible because of snow at this time.

MidStates Regional Conference—“Outreach: The Future of Astronomy.” Brochures are ready. Cost is just \$35. Includes Friday evening Meet and Greet at Regency Lodge, 107th and Pacific. The Conference is on Saturday, including lunch and snacks. Dates are: June 8th and

9th, 2007. Schedule is on our website, omahaastro.com

New Business

Astronomy Day— We will have Astronomy Day in conjunction with Earth Day which is planned for 21 April (rain date 22 April) at Elmwood Park, Omaha. Jeff Houston is tentative POC (point of contact).

OAS-- is helping Midstates Conference by acting as treasurer, taking cash and writing checks.

Sad News--Phil Heflin, longtime OAS member passed away on Feb, 14th. His family has decided to sell, disburse his astronomy equipment, and has offered OAS a chance to buy his observatory. Al Dorn visited Phil's observatory in Iowa to check out equipment. Look for more information to come.

Treasurer John Macy – If you are not getting Stella or the Reflector as you think you should, let John know, so he can straighten it out. Also, he asks if the club has any problem with him going to a system so all dues are due on one date, Out of cycle members would be pro-rated. Will be discussed in Stella.

Awards—Gary Grimes earned the **Lunar II Certificate, #7**. Way to go, Gary!

Next meeting, April 6th, 2007. Motion to adjourn business meeting made by Al Dorn, seconded by Bob Dunn and passed.

Because of a Winter Storm warning and corresponding low attendance, tonight's program: Refurbishing an 8" Reflector, will be rescheduled to April.

Minutes by OAS Secretary
Kim Moss-Allen

April Astronomy Quiz

1. This nebula with a "planetary" name was the first object in the catalog of deep sky objects of English astronomer William Herschel. Which is it?
2. Where is Palus Somni?
3. This constellation contains stars called Alchiba and Gienah, is at it's highest in the sky in May, and contains the Ring-Tailed Galaxy. Which is it?
4. Minor Planet 1986 RG3 was recently renamed. Why and what is its new name?

5. Which is longer, a synodic month or a sidereal month?
6. Match: a) synodic month b) sidereal month c) time it takes the Moon to complete one revolution around the Earth with respect to the vacuum stars. d) time it takes for the moon to complete one set of phases.
7. Recently a large amount of water was found underground on Mars. Where is it and what type of instruments found it, radar, magnetic, visual or infrared?
8. T or F Minor planets are not visible without aid of binoculars, telescopes, etc.
9. What is selenodesy?
10. Name several differences between Hydra and Hydrus.
11. Holding 3 fingers together at arm's length will cover the space between the two "pointer stars" in the Big Dipper; approximately what is that in degrees?
12. This deep sky object was discovered in 1714 by Edmond Halley, is about 25, 000 light years away from earth, and contains around 300,000 stars. What is it?

Phil Heflin Estate Sale

Phil Heflin Estate has land and equipment for sale, including the following:

117 acres of farmland and/or

2.5 acre observatory site with buildings

16-inch Cave Astrola-16 Cassegrain telescope with or without equatorial mount

8-inch folded refractor with Brandt Doublet Achromat Lens

8-inch Criterion Dynamax-8 Schmidt-Cassegrain telescope with original case

5-inch Orion 20X125A giant binoculars with mount

Gas-laser optics bench and misc. lenses

Metalworking tools, including Jet 15 drilling/milling machine and Montgomery-Ward lathe

Contact Al Dorn/291-5595 for further details



OAS Club Officers

President:	Mark Weiss	291-5322	mweiss4@cox.net
Vice President:	Gary Grimes	(712)-527-3495	b52crow@netzero.com
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Outreach Coordinator:	John Johnson	333-5460	jwjohnson@oppd.com
Stella Editor:	Mark Weiss	291-5322	mweiss4@cox.net

March Astronomy Answers

1. The False Cross is in Vela, the Sail and Carina, the Keel.
2. It's a crater on the moon's southeastern edge.
3. Water. The 2 hot gaseous planets, didn't seem to have any water, unlike the gas giants in our own solar system.
4. June 30th, 2007 brings a conjunction of Venus and Saturn.
5. Mariner 10. It's also the *only* mission, so far, to explore Mercury up close.
6. The "Follower" is Alpha Tauri, the alpha star in the constellation Taurus, the Bull. It's also called Aldebaran.
7. Planets in our solar system with no water are Mercury (with no atmosphere) and Venus (which has an atmosphere, but contains substances other than water.)
8. Pagan's 3 is an asterism in Monoceras, named after Canadian Randy Pagan, shaped like a small number 3. It's just "above" or west of the star called Theta in Canis Majoris.
9. The southern celestial pole is in Octans, the Octent.
10. It's Monoceras and the 3 part nebula is the Rosette Nebula, NGC 2237, 2238 and 2239.
11. The "rain bringing stars" are the open cluster, the Hyades.

References: National Audubon Society Field Guide to the Night Sky, 1991; Night Sky, Jan/Feb 2007; Omaha World Herald, Feb. 21, 2007

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Please send related correspondence to: STELLA, c/o
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ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP DUES

Regular/Family
\$25.00

Junior/Student
\$10.00

Newsletter Only
\$10.00

Send your check to:
The OAS
c/o John Macy
P.O. 6257
Omaha, NE 68106

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.

Visit the club web site at:
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 send an e-mail to:

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