



General Meeting of the Omaha Astronomical Society
Friday, January 5th at 7:30 PM
Durham Science Center, Room 169, UNO Campus
Program: See Page 3

Summary of Suggested Changes to the OAS By-laws

Here are the suggested changes to the OAS By-Laws:

1. Replace all reference to "Youth Chairperson" and replace it with "Outreach Coordinator".

1st occurrence is in Article IV, paragraph 1:

The Executive Committee shall be composed of the President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, Program Chairperson and **Outreach Coordinator**. The seventh member shall be the immediate past President who shall be an ex officio member, and who shall vote only in the case of a tie vote.

2nd occurrence is in Article IX, paragraph 1:

As stated in the Articles of Incorporation, the following officers shall be elected at the annual meeting by the majority of members present. The officers shall be: President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer. In addition and accordance with these By-Laws, the following officers also shall be elected: Program Chairperson and **Outreach Coordinator**.

2. Add a term limit to the office of Past President, for two reasons, one depending on how long a president serves, the position of Past President could last many years, when really it is more of a mentoring position to the new president. Second as long as many of us can remember the Past President has not been called on to cast a tie-breaking vote. With the change Article IV, paragraph 1 would read as follows:

The Executive Committee shall be composed of the President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, Program Chairperson and **Outreach Coordinator**.

nator. The seventh member shall be the immediate past President who shall be an ex officio member, **who will have a term limit of one year**, and who shall vote only in the case of a tie vote.

3. There are references in several places to the club providing each member with a subscription to Sky and Telescope magazine, which is no longer practical as our club dues are 25 dollars, and the cost of Sky and Telescope is almost 33 dollars, so the following changes are proposed:

Change Article V, paragraph 5 from:

Membership shall begin at the time of joining the Society and shall run for one calendar year at which time membership must be renewed. Membership and the member's subscription to Sky & Telescope shall run concurrent insofar as practical.

To this:

Membership shall begin at the time of joining the Society and shall run for one calendar year at which time membership must be renewed.

(Removing the last line)

Change Article VI, paragraph 1 from:

Dues derived from memberships shall be used to meet general obligations. Except for honorary members who shall pay no dues, the amount of the dues paid by each type of membership shall be specified by resolution. Such dues shall be sufficient to cover the cost of official Society publications furnished to each member (one copy per family membership), and obligations assessed by the Astronomical League and the group rate for a subscription to Sky & Telescope.

Continued on page 3

January Club Star Party,
January 20, 2007
OAS Club Site, Weeping Water

Omaha Astronomical Society is a member of the NASA Night Sky Network

Events and Stuff Section

January Meeting Presentation

Eric Balcom will present:

Winter Constellations

New Members

No New Members

January Sky Calendar

3rd Full Moon
11th Last Quarter Moon
18th New Moon
25th First Quarter Moon

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

Friday 12 Jan 07, last quarter moon
Saturday 13 Jan 07, last quarter moon
Friday 19 Jan 07, new moon
Saturday 20Jan 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

Telescope for Sale

Former OAS has a 8" Schmidt-Newtonian Meade Telescope for sale, w/Equatorial mount and stand. Rack & Pinion focuser, large cross hair viewfinder, dust covers, and a 25 mm eyepiece. Price is \$395.00, contact John Hobza at 556-1431 with questions or to set up an appointment to see the scope.

Recent Observing Awards

Clete Baker—Outreach Award

OAS Meeting Minutes

The meeting came to order at 7:30. We had no guests, 42 people total. We did do **rooftop observing** to coincide with the ending of the planetarium show. The secretary read the **November meeting minutes** and Gary Grimes motioned to accept, Sharon Weiss seconded and the minutes were accepted. Bill Bond gave a short **Treasurer's report**, with income in November of \$675.90, expenses of \$370.20, balance of 5,391.05.

Old Business

Outreach — 8 Dec. 06—Cub Scouts Event, Bennington, 7 PM.

14, 18 Dec. 06—Cub Scout Pack meetings, 6:30, location to be announced.

11 Dec. 06—Nebraska Star Party planning meeting, Eric Balcom, 491-3502.

Club Telescopes

6" Dobsonian	Osa Hendricks
6" Newtonian	Bob Van Meteren
8" SCT	Rita Corell
8 " Dobsonian	Joe Alvarado
13 " Dobsonian	Chris Jewell
Binoculars, 11x80	Bill Bond

Observing

It's cold out! Club Star Party (weather permitting) Saturday, December 16th, Astropark, Weeping Water, Astropark visits in Nov. 7.

New Business

Donation-- The OAS has received a generous donation of an 8" "go to" Schmidt telescope and many eyepieces from Dr. Van Marcus. Wow! Possibly another member loaner telescope or door prizes for member events, etc.

By Laws—President Mark Weiss let us know that the by laws need to be updated and he will be presenting some proposed changes to members soon. Changing membership to the calendar year, limiting past president officer position to one year, etc. Members will have a chance to hear and vote on proposed changes.

Solar Observing—An informal poll was taken to see if any members were interested in learning about solar observing on UNO campus. About 15 members indicated yes. Look for more information coming soon about solar observing.

Outreach Training—Mark Weiss asked if any members would like to help with school outreach but felt that they lacked training. Great way to get new members more involved. Verbally about 15 or 20 members said yes. Ideas—a pamphlet about 25 or so bright\interesting objects for show, training just before an outreach event, coming in daylight. E-mail your ideas to OAS mailbox.

Historian—The OAS is involved in many interesting things over time and could use a group historian. More details to follow.

Awards—Clete Baker earned Outreach Award (#33). Way to go, Clete!

Next meeting January 5th, 2007. Motion to adjourn business meeting made by Bill Bond, seconded by Ed Sikorsky and passed by the (hungry) membership. No program tonight, instead we have the annual **December Holiday Social** with good food, good conversation, and good door prizes. Eric Balcom started off the Door Prizes with the **Grand Prize** of a pair of new **Celestron 12 x 60 Binoculars**. They were won by Sarah Jewell. Congratulations Sarah!

Minutes by OAS Secretary
Kim Moss-Allen

Notice to OAS Members

Notice to those OAS members who ordered calendars, if they are not picked up at the beginning of the January meeting then they will be sold to whoever wants them.

Thanks, the Management

Continued from page 1

To this:

Dues derived from memberships shall be used to meet general obligations. Except for honorary members who shall pay no dues, the amount of the dues paid by each type of membership shall be specified by resolution. Such dues shall be sufficient to cover the cost of official Society publications furnished to each member (one copy per family membership), and obligations assessed by the Astronomical League.

Change Article XIII, paragraph 3 from:

The Treasurer shall also be responsible for ordering the annual subscription to Sky & Telescope for each member.

To This:

The Treasurer shall also be responsible for collecting money and ordering Sky & Telescope and Astronomy magazines for any active member wishing to receive the club discount.

A copy of both the original and the amended By-Laws will be available at the January 5th meeting.

Mark Weiss
OAS President

Notice to OAS Members

Notice to the OAS membership, please check the status of your dues. As we arrive in the new year, there are some members in danger of not receiving their issue of the STELLA. We appreciate all those who are members of OAS.

Thanks, the Management

Club Items in Work

Outreach Training

As discussed briefly at the December meeting we are looking at some ideas for developing an Outreach Training Program. So far we have these major items and are looking for others:

1. Training classes before the School Outreach Season
2. Develop a pamphlet of items that we normally observe during outreach events.
3. Another idea was Carpooling
4. We are looking for other ideas.

Historian

We are currently looking for a volunteer for the position of Historian, if interested please contact OAS President Mark Weiss.

WANTED: OUTREACH VOLUNTEERS

by Clete Baker

When OAS outreach coordinator John Johnson calls for volunteers to man an outreach event are you inclined to pass because you feel your knowledge of the skies is inadequate? It appears that this mindset is widespread among our membership!

Well I'm here to tell you that joining your fellow OAS members on outreach events is not only a great way to gain knowledge, it might just be the best way. The informative programs offered at our monthly meetings provide an excellent background to put viewing into context, but nothing beats actually getting out into the field and putting theory into practice. Beyond that, as ancient wisdom holds, the best way to LEARN a subject is to TEACH it to someone else.

"But," you say, "how am I supposed to teach what I don't know?"

The answer is easy. You don't. You must remember that visitors who attend our outreach events know no more than you, and usually far less. No matter how limited your expertise, a view through your eyepiece will expand their world. Some will ask questions. If you know the answer, great. If you don't know the answer, it's a certainty that a neighboring volunteer will, and by passing it along you can learn it right along with your visitor.

I've often said that had I picked up astronomy as a hobby in my 20s, I'd have taken pride in being able to rattle off volumes of facts and figures about the heavens, and find obscure objects without the aid of a computer. Having waited until my 50s, however, there simply isn't enough room in the memory banks, nor enough time in the schedule, to pore over books and learn all there is to know. (I also unabashedly rely upon my Go-To scope to find the objects I don't have the wet-ware to star-hop locate, but that's another article entirely!) So I began attending outreach events within a couple months of buying my first telescope with no ammo in my brain and only my enthusiasm to go on. I immediately discovered that it's hugely rewarding to share that enthusiasm with visitors because it's so doggone infectious. I also discovered that my ignorance is not a hindrance! After four years of participation I can look back and say that, by far, the greatest majority of the knowledge I've accumulated thus far is the result of learning one factoid at a time in the field as an outreach volunteer.

Here's how a typical outreach night progresses. When I volunteer I have a general idea what conditions we'll face: whether the moon will be up or not and whether it will be bright, whether we'll be in an

urban setting where only bright objects are available or far enough out of the city to see some deep sky objects. I'll follow, through magazines or the internet, any "high points" for viewing, such as a comet or a particularly well positioned planet, and get to know a few things about these objects. Over time I've also accumulated a short list of objects that always intrigue me, no matter how many times I've viewed them. These are the objects for which I have room to commit a few factoids to memory: what they are, how distant, how bright, when they were discovered and by whom ... that sort of thing. These are the kinds of details that can be rattled off casually while your visitor is at the eyepiece, and act as conversation starters. There's usually enough "gee whiz" factor in just a few of them to engage your visitor, and such details can be easily found in magazines or reference books. If you don't have factoids in hand, though, don't sweat it. Keep your ears attuned to your neighbors and you're bound to pick up a few in the field as the evening's observing progresses.

Armed with these potential targets, and a general idea whether they'll be visible under the prevailing conditions, I'll set out early enough to get my scope set up before dark, but certainly before visitors arrive to view. I've learned that setting up in the dark, while possible, isn't much fun, and neither is being caught in the midst of setting up by visitors clamoring to see what you're looking at.

Evenings typically begin with a brief overview, including our introduction as volunteer members of OAS, delivered by the "senior" volunteer on site (to identify the senior volunteer, look for the person who reacts with the closest thing to an appropriate shrug when someone asks, "Who wants to give the spiel?"). It's fun to get folks thinking about astronomy as separate from telescopic viewing by starting with the basic question, "What do you need in order to appreciate astronomy?" The answer is, of course, just your eyes, though none of your visitors with all kinds of elaborate gear on display before them ... will think of it until you suggest it. Discussing naked eye viewing leads to determining orientation, which leads to basic aids like planispheres and charts, followed by optical aids including binoculars and scopes. The overview may then go on to describe what telescopes do and how they work, identify the types of telescope represented, and explain a bit about the differences. After appropriate cautions the visitors are invited to spread out among the available scopes and talk to the volunteers.

Since I rely heavily on the Go-To feature of my scope, I'm often at a disadvantage early in the evening until I can get a fix on Polaris and calibrate its orientation. Until then, I can usually pick out an easy

target such as a bright planet or the moon to show visitors. As the sky darkens it's possible for me to orient the scope and then train it on one of the objects on the list I'm prepared to know something about. Or even <gasp!> locate something I know nothing about, just because I can.

It happens from time to time that the object I'm trained on is over represented among the other scopes on the field, and one of the other volunteers will suggest another object for me to locate. Aha! Here's my chance to learn something and add to the inventory of objects I know about! For the time being, when a visitor asks me questions about the new object, I may have to consult one of the other volunteers for the answers. For this I look to anyone wielding a green laser pointer; they're almost always well-versed authorities. Just from answering a few repeated questions several times during the course of the evening, I'll have no trouble remembering the answers even weeks later when I tackle that object again for another visitor.

Meanwhile, during lulls in the queue of visitors I'll move around the group and see the views through some of the other scopes. I can compare them against my own, or assess how a piece of equipment I've contemplated buying stands up. By the end of the evening I'll have had many pleasant conversations and even made a few folks shriek with delight. I'll have incrementally expanded my knowledge, and had a few good stints at the eyepiece on my own. More importantly, I'll have been using my scope and sharing my enthusiasm instead of storing it in the garage or keeping it to myself.

The bottom line is this: don't be afraid to participate eagerly in OAS outreach events regardless of your level of expertise. No one is judging the extent of your knowledge, especially the people with whom you're sharing your love of the skies. They're just delighted at the view. I'll see you at the next event. And don't forget to wear your name tag.

Astronomy Quiz—January 2007

1. In 1965 comet Ikeya-Seki showed up near this constellation's alpha star. Also, it's often identified as one of the monsters slain by Hercules. Which constellation is it?
2. Why does the sky on Mars look "pink"?
3. What are these?



4. True or false? Equuleus, the Little Horse or the Colt (near Pegasus) is the smallest constellation in area.
5. What is a tektite?
6. This constellation is on meridian October 10th, has a star that's name means fish's mouth and is near Aquarius. Which is it?
7. What is interstellar medium?
8. What globular cluster is closest to Earth? Hint: Southern hemisphere near Scorpius.
9. Where is the crater Telemachus?
10. The sun is in vernal (spring) equinox in this constellation. The Babylonians called it Nunu, the Turks called it Balik, which both mean "fish." Which constellation is it?
11. What is the significance of January 4th, 2007?
12. True or False? Pluto has a dark equatorial band and bright polar caps of methane ice that vary in size over the Pluto "year."



OAS Club Officers

President:	Mark Weiss	291-5322	mweiss4@cox.net
Vice President:	Gary Grimes	(712)-527-3495	b52crow@netzero.com
Treasurer:	John Macy	991-5587	ptmacy@doctor.com
Secretary:	Kim Moss-Allen	291-7887	dallen@novia.net
Program Chair:	Eric Balcom	491-3502	ecbalcom@msn.com
Outreach Coordinator:	John Johnson	333-5460	jwjohnson@oppd.com
Stella Editor:	Mark Weiss	291-5322	mweiss4@cox.net

December Astronomy Answers

1. This is the globular cluster **M15** in the constellation Pegasus.
2. **25** days.
3. **Near Earth Asteroid**
4. **Sagittarius**, and Kaus Australis will translate to "Southern Bow".
5. Greek astronomer **Hipparchus** (or Hipparchos) around **150 BC**.
6. Mare Nubium = Sea of Clouds, Sinus Iridium = Rainbow Bay, Mare Imbrium = Sea of Showers and Sinus Medii = Central Bay.
7. **Hyperbolic**
8. Rabindranath **Tagore**, "Stray Birds."
9. **Mars**, in the Chryse region
10. It's **Corona Australis**, the Southern Crown. The Greeks and Romans saw it as a laurel wreath, a traditional crown for heroes and victors.
11. Sunspots **closer** to the equator move around the sun faster than those at higher latitudes.
12. It's **Phaethon** and it is the source of the Geminid meteors. This year the Geminid meteor shower peaks in the predawn hours of December 14th.

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Please send related correspondence to: STELLA, c/o
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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:
<http://www.OmahaAstro.com>

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