



The Meridian

The newsletter of the
Quad Cities Astronomical Society

April 2008

March Meeting Minutes

Joe Bannon, Secretary

The February meeting was called to order at approximately 7:50 and began with a discussion of the need to make sure people sign up for the public star parties. Karl had published a signup list in the last Meridian and in his absence it was unknown if anyone had added their name to any sessions. Joe mentioned that the signup list would be published in future Meridians to make members aware of open dates and to serve as a reminder for those who have signed up. (*Note: See the current signup list later in this issue.*)

The first public star party is scheduled for April 26 and two members should be in attendance. One of the two members must be someone who's been cleared on the 20" telescope. Gary mentioned that modifications and upgrades to the telescope might warrant a recertification procedure so all previously certified members are current with the capabilities and operation of the telescope. He also reviewed the requirement to be a club member in good standing for one year before a person could be certified on the telescope. After further discussion, it was noted that the club does not have a list of active members who are certified. (*Note: If you are currently certified to operate the 20" telescope, please let Joe Bannon know so the club can have a current and accurate record.*)

Steve questioned whether two star parties each month (public and member) were necessary. Based on difficulty getting people to sign up for the public star party and the reasonably small turnout over the years, he asked if it would be better to have just one party each month. This one party would be scheduled to take advantage of the new moon but would present a small risk that it would be necessary to share viewing with members of the public.

Steve filed a Treasurer's report where he noted that the club received a letter from the Internal Revenue Service last fall that required the club to file an information request. This was the first time this happened and the requested information was submitted. Steve also noted that the annual fee for the club's post office box was reduced from \$75 to \$52 per year.

Ken distributed brochures for the Nebraska Star Party.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 9:10.



This is the 40th Anniversary of “2001: A Space Odyssey”. A spectacular movie, especially seen on the wide, wide screen. I still remember the scene of Discovery I silently crossing the screen on its way to Jupiter. And I enjoyed the three books that followed (but not the one movie). I also strongly remember reading “Childhood’s End” when I was much (much) younger. On March 19, Arthur C. Clarke died. I see “Rendezvous with Rama”, the movie will be released this year. The book was great – who wants to see the movie when it comes out?!

★ * ★ * ★ *

Well, I’m running out of time, so until next time . . .

Wishing You Clear Skies!

Karl

Observations

Joe Bannon

In honor of spring (and Karl’s handout at the February meeting) I got my telescope out and put it through the paces to be sure it would be ready for some more frequent use. As a matter of fact, I actually set the scope up on my back deck a few nights ago with every intention of seeing Saturn and some other objects. Instead, I found myself in a wrestling match with some clouds and my binoculars to try and see M31. I may be favoring myself, but I’d say it was a draw. Some low clouds passed by and I was left with a basic sketch of what I think was M31, but no certainty that I had seen it.

So as the snow came in intermittent bursts today, I set the scope up in the family room and tested the GoTo features, the electric converter and the power tank. I then organized my notebook, observing logs (while noticing how many logs had no date!) and miscellaneous notes (coordinates of my typical observing locations, magnification of my various eyepieces, etc.).

By the time I was done I was mildly cursing the clouds and hoping for some clearer skies and warmer weather. I think we all deserve it!

Thanks to everyone who has provided photographs of club events or presentations. Those go a long way toward livening up the Meridian, so keep them coming! Photos don’t have to be strictly from club events. If you’ve taken some astrophotographs you’re particularly proud of, feel free to share them with other club members.

Dark Sky Activities

Ken Boquist forwarded to members information about a press conference being hosted by the Illinois Lt. Governor regarding light pollution. We all bemoan the loss of dark skies and here’s a chance to something. Those of you who live in Illinois might want to consider writing a simple, short email encouraging the [Lt Governor](#) and

your local representative to support this initiative. The e-mail Ken received was sent by Audrey Fischer of the Chicago Chapter of the IDA. She asked that you courtesy copy her (audrey@starpals.org) if you do participate.

On a related note, the IDA has announced events related to [National Dark Sky Week](#), March 29 – April 4, with special note of Earth Hour; a global initiative to turn lights off for one hour at 8:00 PM (local time) on March 29. While this isn't going to have anything more than a temporary impact on light pollution, it may be significant in that the World Wildlife Fund is the sponsor. If this initiative can highlight a common solution to a problem that affects many different groups, the issue may gain more attention. It's unlikely that light manufacturers, local governments and others will implement measures to reduce light pollution because a small group of people who like to look at the stars complains. However, if problem is also shown to affect nocturnal creatures and their environment, waste energy, cost more money...well, it might stand a better chance of catching people's attention.

Upcoming Celestial and Club Events

Apr. 4	Friday	Crescent Moon adjacent to Venus at sunrise
Apr. 5	Saturday	New Moon
Apr. 8	Tuesday	Crescent Moon near the Pleiades at dusk
Apr. 11	Friday	Moon passes near Mars
Apr. 14	Monday	Moon is right of Saturn and Regulus after dusk
Apr. 15	Tuesday	Moon is lower left of Saturn and Regulus after dusk
Apr. 19	Saturday	Moon is about 4.5° below Spica at dusk
Apr. 21	Monday	Monthly Meeting (19:30) @ Deere-Wiman Carriage House
Apr. 23	Wednesday	Moon is a few degrees lower right of Antares before dawn
Apr. 26	Saturday	Jens-Wendt Observatory – PUBLIC Star Party Mars near Pollux
Apr. 27	Sunday	Jupiter a few degrees above the Moon before dawn

PUBLIC STAR PARTIES		
April 26	Karl Adlon	Joe Bannon
May 31		
June 28		
July 26	NEED someone here for sure	
August 30		
September 27		

PUBLIC STAR PARTY EXPECTATIONS

- ★ Each club member will sign up for at least one star party.
- ★ The first person should be a key holder; the second can be any member, key holder or not.
- ★ If it's your turn and something comes up, it's your responsibility to find a replacement.
- ★ You should get there about ½ hour after sunset and open up while there's some light.
- ★ Sign the log book.
- ★ You should be there if it's clear or if it's cloudy. No need if it's storming.
- ★ If it's cloudy, there are slides and a projector in the observatory. You can show slides, or talk about the observatory and telescope, describe opening the observatory, pointing the scope, what you can see through the scope, invite them back when it's clear. Tell them what you like to observe.
- ★ Recommend if it's cloudy you take a book, computer & DVD, etc. in case nobody else shows up.

Jens-Wendt Observatory – Quad Cities Astronomical Society – Located at Sherman Park in Dixon, Iowa

QCAS Contacts

Elected Officers			Volunteers and Committees		
President	Karl Adlon	kmja@mchsi.com	ALCor	Ken Boquist	hippalus@aol.com
Vice-president	Jim Rutenbeck	jim@qconline.com	Facilities	Jim Rutenbeck	jim@qconline.com
Secretary	Joe Bannon	mzbannon@aol.com	Web Master	Open	
Treasurer	Steve VanHyfte	svanh@mchsi.com	Outreach	Joe Bannon	qcas@mchsi.com
Director	Gary Charnoski	stargazer_44444@yahoo.com	Programming	Jim Rutenbeck	jim@qconline.com

All other contacts can be sent to qcas@mchsi.com or mailed to the club at P.O. Box 3706, Davenport, IA, 52808.

Members are also reminded that anyone can submit articles for *The Meridian*. Submit articles to Joe Bannon at jbannon@midamerican.com and mzbannon@aol.com.

HELP WANTED

...STILL...STILL...STILL

Got some Web design skills and a little free time? The club's Web site is down and a new Web master is needed. Files for the old site are available and were created in Dream Weaver, though a new site could be made with any software you have. Contact Joe Bannon or any board member if interested.

Presentations

Don't forget that if you make a presentation to a group, share the information with the club. These events help demonstrate fulfillment of one of the club's bylaws; to help bring astronomy to the public. Whenever you make a presentation, collect a contact name and number, the date, the content of the presentation, and the number of participants. Send that information to any board member or bring the information to a meeting.

These types of activities help raise the club's profile, identify potential new members, and support future grant requests.