



The Meridian

The newsletter of the
Quad Cities Astronomical Society

June 2009

<http://www.qcas.org>

May Meeting Minutes

Joe Bannon

Members in attendance at the meeting:

Joe Bannon	Jay Cunningham	Wayne Jens	Dana Taylor	Cecil Ward
Gary Charnoski	Joyce Ericksen	Robert Mitchell	Steve VanHyfte	
Craig Cox	Arlene Jens	Jim Rutenbeck	John Waack	

The May meeting opened with a brief Treasurer's report. All active members are current with dues and there is approximately \$1,550.00 in the club's account. Steve mentioned there was a small hiccup in updating the name of the registered agent for the State of Iowa records and to resolve, an Iowa address must be used that isn't a post office box. Dana volunteered to have his address be used.

A review of old business followed. Joe reported on Astronomy Day at the Family Museum on May 2. Joe and Karl manned a telescope and coordinated solar observing. A slide show was also developed and played on a continuous loop in the theater of the museum. Some contacts were made, including one young man whose father is a physicist and he was given information about the club. Joe will get a copy of the presentation to Dana.

Dana provided an update on the planned trip to visit the Peoria Astronomical Society's 24" scope. Eric Clifton, the PAS contact, has said they are still experiencing some issues with the drive and so the trip has been rescheduled to Friday, July 17. Dana said the scope is worth seeing and has some unique characteristics. A bench grinder was used to make a rough curve and there are other examples of unique methods in a PowerPoint presentation that Eric has.

Dana confirmed that prior to the July 25 star party we will have the ability to notify the public via the Web whether the event is cancelled due to weather conditions.

The schedule for the Eastern Iowa Star Party was confirmed for October 16-18.



Jim and Craig shared their experiences at the recent event hosted by the Cedar Amateur Astronomers, Inc. They've installed a 25" scope they inherited from the University of Iowa and also have a 10" or 12" Celestron in a dome and roll off building that houses a couple of other scopes, including a 6" refractor. Their Web site has a nice photo of the layout of their observatory (see <http://www.cedar-astronomers.org>). There were good programs led by astronomers from the University of Iowa and also Grinnell College. Jim also toured the Torus Optics site and has had a 16" mirror recoated by the company to his satisfaction.

Jim and Craig also attended the Bootleg Astronomers Star Party in May at the Green River State Wildlife Area in Illinois. Other club members have been to this site for its dark skies and Craig said that next year's party will move to June.

Wayne mentioned he has some club equipment at home such as a couple of cameras, one of which is an Air Force camera that uses 4" by 5" frames. There was some discussion of how useful this equipment would be with the club's current telescopes and the possibility of donating them to a museum. Wayne also has some books.

A presentation followed, courtesy of Dana, who brought a series of podcasts related to the Hubble telescope, with emphasis on the Servicing Mission 4. These brief presentations are developed by the European Space Agency and are available at <http://www.spacetelescope.org>. The site also includes video and images of the day.

Observations (aka Postcards from the Beach)

Karl Adlon

So, we're walking on our favorite beach in the morning in North Carolina. The beach runs toward east-southeast. The sun is reflecting off the water/sand as the waves wash in and then recede. Each time the waves receded, leaving the drying sand, thousands of tint reflections of the sun sparkle for an instant. I suppose many people might think they are like flash cameras at a sporting event. I think of the life of a galaxy speeded up and individual stars going supernova. Funny how something as uncomplicated as sand and water can be so pretty.

Back home in the Quad Cities, the Hubble Telescope appears low in the sky, when visible, as it orbits the earth, so I have never tried to see it. Before leaving for NC, I printed the times Hubble would be visible there. Most mornings it was about 5 AM. One morning I woke a little before 5 and decided to go on the balcony and have a look. It was supposed to be visible starting in the southwest. There are some thin clouds but I can see Antares. Hubble's supposed to be brightest about 5:03, about 29 degrees high. I start to wonder: did I get the time right? Did the servicing mission change the orbital parameters? Did I print out the times before or after the servicing was complete?

Well, I might as well see what I can see while I'm out here. Antares and Scorpio. The teapot must be visible. There it is – the handle and the spout. What's that extra star and why's it moving right through the teapot? You know.

So what's better? Seeing something pretty that you didn't plan on seeing or planning for and seeing something you wanted to see? Unfair question, you might think, and I'd agree. Here's wishing us both and as often as possible.

Upcoming Celestial and Club Events

June 6	Moon occults Antares in the evening
June 9	Shadows of Io and Ganymede visible on Jupiter from 3:06 to 5:16 a.m.
June 13	Menke Star Party
June 19-21	Venus, Mars and crescent Moon visible low in the east near dawn
June 20	Pleiades visible to the lower left of the waning crescent Moon near Dawn
June 21	Shortest night of the year; start of summer (12:46 a.m.). Mercury, Moon and Aldebaran visible in binoculars near dawn.
June 22-23	Pluto at opposition to Sun; rises around sunset and sets around sunrise
June 26-27	Moon passes near Regulus and Saturn, respectively
June 27	QCAS Public Star Party at Jens-Wendt Observatory

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

Monsignor Menke Observatory – St. Ambrose University – Located at Wapsi River Environmental Education Center in Dixon, Iowa

QCAS Contacts

Elected Officers			Volunteers and Committees		
President	Dana Taylor	dana@nelsontaylor.com	Facilities	Jim Rutenbeck	jim@qconline.com
Vice-president	Chris Hebel	Chrishebel57@yahoo.com	Web Master	Dana Taylor	dana@nelsontaylor.com
Secretary	Joe Bannon	mzbannon@aol.com	Outreach	Joe Bannon	qcas@mchsi.com
Treasurer	Steve VanHyfte	vanhyfte@mchsi.com	Programming	Jim Rutenbeck	jim@qconline.com
Director	Karl Adlon	kmja79@mchsi.com			

All other contacts can be sent 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.