



The Meridian

The newsletter of the
Quad Cities Astronomical Society

November 2009

<http://www.qcas.org>

Secretary's Notes

Joe Bannon

Members in attendance at the October meeting:

Joe Bannon	Jay Cunningham	Norm Utke
Ken Boquist	Joyce Ericson	Steve VanHyfte
Al Cattoir	Dale Hendricks	Cecil Ward

The October meeting was opened by Joe with a recommendation that the elections be postponed due to the low turnout and the lack of candidates present. All agreed. Joe also suggested amending the by-laws to move the elections to a time when they don't get pushed against the planning of the EISP and occur right after the summer layoff. A recommendation was made to send this to the officers/board.

Members next reviewed the EISP. The weather this year didn't cooperate and there were limited opportunities for good observing. Friday night gave the best chances with a few hours of clear skies. Saturday night was overcast for virtually the entire evening, but members and guests shared company inside the Menke classroom building while waiting for any signs of clearing. Jim Lewis made his annual trek from Alabama. Doug, the fellow from Iowa City with the dachshund, was there and a fellow from Dewitt whose name I neglected to get. Some scouts and parents who were camping at the WREEC stopped by, but it was pretty much an unfortunate set of conditions.

Joyce recapped the presentation she helped coordinate at the Audubon School in Rock Island.

Dale mentioned the possibility of teaming with organizations like Junior Achievement to reach out to younger people and folks who may be interested in astronomy. Joyce suggested a presentation to the Macintosh Users Group (MUG) she's a member of might also be a way to reach other potential members. Joyce was asked to determine if the MUG is interested in a presentation and possible topics. Cecil mentioned that the Putnam museum is opening an astronomy exhibit in March and through his contacts there's the possibility of the club doing an observing session on opening night. There isn't a solid date for this opening but Cecil will keep the club posted. He also mentioned that the Putnam may be interested in some of Augie Wendt's old equipment and two presentations he did this summer that included about 75 people, total.

As a follow up to last month's note that the red light is out some members said they thought other members were unscrewing the red light instead of turning it off. Joe was asked to send an e-mail regarding this to potentially save the cost of buying a new bulb and the trip to the observatory to install it. All agreed that members should be reminded to turn the bulb off by the light switch and not by unscrewing it.

Observations

The September Star Party Al Cattoir

I didn't hold much promise for anything to really go on at the September star party, but a few people were there: a person from DeWitt and a person from Mount Carroll, along with Dana. It was decided not to open up the telescope building since the public wasn't there.

Deciding to set up was a major decision, due to fog, but since the person from Mount Carroll had a small refractor and I had my 10" Newtonian along, it was decided to set up and see.

Standing in the fog and the immense dew that clouded up my finder scope seemingly every minute (cotton to blot the lens is good to have along), the Moon and Jupiter started out the night. Then the sky cleared up in parts more and M13, M57 the Ring Nebula were visible, along and Alberio. In the small refractor, the Dumbbell Nebula was observed while I attempted to find it. The person from Mount Carroll likes to pick out a group of stars as a pattern so after looking through his telescope at the Dumbbell Nebula, he pointed out a group of stars that looks like a golf club.

We headed over to the Eastern Sky and looked at the Double Cluster and ended up looking at M31, the Andromeda Galaxy. But it was dewing up too fast and the fog was really getting thicker then. We decided to tear down around 9 pm and pack up.

Although there were some clouds, the viewing really was not that bad, and if the dew and fogging hadn't been so bad, we would have perhaps discussed more about what a person can see from DeWitt or from Mount Carroll.

Someone asked if dew gets down to my mirror and from past experience, it takes more than a couple of hours for dew to get down there. Dewing up of a mirror in a Newtonian usually only occurs if a person has a telescope out all night and is pointing the telescope straight up most of the time.

I used to wrap three 12V bulbs with aluminum foil and use them to heat up the mirror of the big telescope and I always wanted to put a trap door big enough for one hand to reach down to the mirror and blot it with cotton instead of relying on those bulbs.

Why I Join Astronomy Clubs Karl Adlon

If you like to observe clouds, you are in luck! But I think I want to move. Meager. That's how I describe my recent observing. So I write about something else.

MJ's (wife) car problems resulted in me not attending the last meeting. It also resulted in, after hearing a little about the meeting, one thought about my involvement in astronomy clubs in Akron, Naperville, Wilmington and now the Quad Cities.

Many years ago we went to a Halloween Party dressed in jeans, a plain black mask and an orange tee-shirt that read, "Sorry. No costumes. We're just here for the beer!"

I'm reminded of that when I consider what drives me to join an astronomy club. The first club was Akron's and that was a long, long time ago. I was a teenager (did I mention that it was a long time ago?) interested in space, astronomy and other things. Astronomy to me then meant observing. I thought I'd hear something about observing – telescopes, different things that were seen, how far away they were, etc. Nope. It was about Quasars and how their light's spectral lines were red shifted by the Doppler effect. Not having taken any physics classes, I could hardly wait to get out of there. Did I mention that no one in the club had seen a Quasar?

Well, I'm a little more knowledgeable about physics (and other things) than I was then, not as much as I should be I suppose, but like art, I know what I still like.

1. I like to look through a telescope or binoculars at something far away in the sky.
2. I like to talk about or hear about looking through a telescope or binoculars at something far away in the sky.



It's as simple as that. Maybe I need a black tee-shirt that reads, "Sorry. No science. I'm just here for the scopes!"

[Feel free to insert some whining of your own about meetings not discussing observing enough. I'm good at whining. If you want some let me know. Wining also.]

So what to do?...Wait!...Can it be that simple?...Just show up to the meeting early and talk about observing before the meeting?

What if no one comes? No problem – read a book, watch a video or listen to music until the meeting starts.

Maybe this will work...Start easy...Arrive a little early to the next meeting and let's see what happens.

Upcoming Celestial and Club Events

Oct. 31-Nov. 2	Mars passes through the Beehive Cluster (midnight to dawn)
Nov. 1-3	Jupiter is approximately 1/3 ⁰ north of Iota Caricorni
Nov. 6	Cub Scout Troop visits Menke observatory at approx. 6:00 p.m.; members are asked to help
Nov. 8	Mars is within a few degrees of the moon in the evening
Nov. 10	Regulus is about 4 ⁰ upper left of the Moon at dawn
Nov. 12	Saturn is about 8 ⁰ left of the Moon at dawn
Nov. 14	Spica is about 4 ⁰ upper left of the Moon at dawn; St. Ambrose astronomy class field trip to Menke observatory, members are asked to help
Nov. 15	Moon is about 6 ⁰ to 7 ⁰ to the right of Venus about ½ hour before sunrise
Nov. 16-17	Leonid meteor shower peaks from midnight on the 16 th to dawn on the 17 th
Nov. 23	Jupiter is 3 ⁰ to 4 ⁰ below the Moon in the evening

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@nelsonstaylor.com	Facilities	Jim Rutenbeck	jim@qconline.com
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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.