



The Meridian

The newsletter of the
Quad Cities Astronomical Society

July 2010

<http://www.qcas.org>

Secretary's Notes

Joe Bannon

Board Meeting Notes

A board meeting was held prior to the June 21 general meeting. Board members discussed the possibility of developing a more formal process for obtaining clearance to use the 20" telescope. The ability to identify 10 Messier objects through the scope was given as an example. Board members agreed the suggestion had merit and decided to try to flesh out the details of a proposal that could be taken to the general membership. Board members agreed to send their suggestions to Dana within two weeks.

Updates to the club's web site were demonstrated and are discussed in greater detail later in this article.

Monthly Meeting Notes

Members in attendance at the June meeting:

Karl Adlon	Craig Cox	Chris Hebel	Dana Taylor
Joe Bannon	Jay Cunningham	Robert Mitchell	Steve VanHyfte
Al Cattoir	Joyce Ericson	Jim Rutenbeck	Cecil Ward

The Treasurer reported there is \$1,824.75 in the club account.

Dana began the meeting by noting that the Putnam Museum sent free passes to the IMAX theater as a thank you for the club's assistance with the program for the Girl Scouts. The passes were shared with those members who helped with presentations or observing.

On a similar note, Joe mentioned he received a thank you note from Jeff Sebille, the committee chair for Cub Scout Pack 241 for the club's May presentation. The note said:

Sorry I am slow on thanking you and the QCAS. The Scouts had a great time at the presentation. In my e-mail to Cecil, I said that the boys talked about all we could see when we returned to camp and the sky cleared.

As far as the content, I thought at first, the topic of light/lens physics might be a bit dry for 1st - 3rd graders but they did a good job following along and Dana and Cecil were very patient with the questions, "personal stories" and a couple of episodes of restlessness. Looking through the telescopes was a real treat for the boys and I hope they made some good memories.

Thank you once again to all at the QCAS. I hope we can work together again.

Joe confirmed the plan to host an observing session for Big Brothers/Big Sisters on Friday, July 23 at Emeis Park. Thanks to the input of other members, Joe confirmed with the Davenport Parks and Rec department this plan and also contacted members of the baseball leagues that use the nearby fields to confirm they would not have the lights on that late. If the weather precludes observing, Big Brothers/Big Sisters said we can move indoors to their building and make a presentation. Joe requested anyone interested in helping contact him.

Joyce mentioned an observing session she and Karl have planned for July 6-8, depending on the weather.

Robert returned some old issues of Astronomy (circa 1983-1988) that were uncovered during the spring cleanup of the observatory. He took them to Saint Ambrose to see if they could fill out any missing editions in their library but found all were there. Anyone interested in these should contact Joe, who will otherwise use them as giveaways for kids during the Big Brothers/Big Sisters star party.

Members discussed the recent e-mails related to the use of the 20" telescope. Cecil suggested that in the future, if a member has an issue with someone, they should not send an e-mail to everyone but should first try to deal directly with the individual. The past incident resulted in unnecessary and rude e-mails being sent to more people than necessary, according to Cecil. Karl agreed and Dana reminded everyone of the old advice to praise in public but criticize in private.

Dana demonstrated new features that have been added to the club's web site. At the homepage, members will now see a Log In button along the left hand side. Once logged in, members will have access to additional options, including a reservation calendar for the 20" telescope.

When first attempting to log in, members will need to input their e-mail address and use the default password. Users who weren't able to attend the meeting should contact a board member for the default password.

After logging in with the default password, you will be prompted to create a unique password. Once you've created your unique password, you will enter the site and see the other options that will allow you to update your account information or reserve the 20" telescope. Both portions are fairly straightforward and if you have difficulties, contact a board member or someone who attended the meeting. The new reservation system will replace the requirement to send an e-mail to everyone, notifying them of your intention to use the 20" telescope. However, members noted it can still be used in addition to the reservation system, or to invite others to join you when you have reserved the scope. Other relevant points:

- Board members have additional access that allows them to update the account information for other members. All other members will only see and can only update their own account information.
- Security is not yet in place, but will be added, to preclude members that haven't paid their annual dues from accessing the log in function.



- When reserving the scope, you can designate it as exclusive time. The expectation is that you will be doing something that requires a reasonable amount of effort to set up or conduct, and therefore, others shouldn't expect you to stop what you're doing if they want to come that same time.
- The reservation system will prevent overlapping reservations and color coding will indicate whether the time is exclusive (red) or if you're inviting everyone to share the time you reserved (green).
- Always use the site to reserve the scope if you want to use it. No one wants to leave home without doing so only to find someone updated the calendar after they left and now has properly reserved the time.

Members are encouraged to visit the site and explore these new features. Future additions include the ability to upload photographs.

Karl made a presentation of his observations of Comet McNaught. In the early hours of June 16, he tried some visual observing and collected some photographs. Conditions weren't ideal and the visual portion suffered. However, after processing the photographs, some decent images were created. A primary and secondary tail were visible in one. Karl also provided a handout on cleaning eyepieces and telescope optics.

Dana followed with a presentation on the Ipad and associated astronomy applications. Many were demonstrated, including a star chart that not only determined your coordinates automatically, but also changed the view as you moved around. Perhaps most interesting was the fact that many of the apps were less than \$5 and the most expensive one was about \$15. If you're observing and Dana's around, ask for a demonstration. You won't be disappointed.

Comet Between the Clouds

Karl Adlon

Lots of clouds and lots of rain; the soil is soaked. But at 2:30 AM on the morning of June 16 I could see some stars and headed out of the subdivision to see if I could see C/2009 R1 – Comet McNaught. The day before, I had picked a spot with access from the road to the edge of a corn field. First I noticed that the sky was a muddy orange. Apparently humidity in the air was being lit by light pollution from The Cities. I grabbed my 15X70 binoculars and found a fuzzy patch, but no tail. Well maybe a slight brightening above it.

I took a series of exposures on a fixed mount, one of which is at right. The comet is a little left of center, a little more than 1/4 down from the top and is slightly blue-green.

It was rather disappointing considering reports of naked eye possibilities.



I took 17 similar pictures similar and stacked them. After heavily processing them the result is this final image at right.

Not terrible – but I can see that a fixed mount is not the way to go.

This may be the best I can do on this comet, considering coming viewing conditions and weather.

I'm wishing on a star for another comet like Hyakutake.



Upcoming Celestial and Club Events

July 4	Predawn: Jupiter is about 10 ⁰ right of the last quarter Moon
July 8	Predawn: The Pleiades cluster is about 1 ⁰ - 3 ⁰ above the crescent Moon.
July 9	Dusk: Regulus is about 1 ⁰ lower left of Venus
July 10	Dusk: Regulus is about 1 ⁰ below Venus
July 11	New Moon
July 14	Dusk: Moon is about 7 ⁰ lower left of Venus
July 15	Dusk: Moon is about 7 ⁰ lower left of Mars
July 17	Menke Star Party
July 21	Evening: Antares is 4 ⁰ - 6 ⁰ right of the gibbous Moon
July 23	Dusk: Star Party for Big Bros./Big Sisters at Emeis Park
July 27	Dusk: Regulus is less than ½ ⁰ upper right of Mercury
July 29 – 30	Dusk: Mars is less than 2 ⁰ below Saturn
July 30	Evening: Jupiter is about 6 ⁰ lower right of the gibbous Moon
July 31	QCAS Public Star Party

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	jrutenbeck@frontier.com
Vice-president	Chris Hebel	Chrishebel57@yahoo.com	Web Master	Dana Taylor	dana@nelsonstaylor.com
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Treasurer	Craig Cox	Admiralcox2000@yahoo.com	Programming	Jim Rutenbeck	jrutenbeck@frontier.com
Director	Karl Adlon	Kmja79@yahoo.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.

FOR SALE

Cecil is selling this Pristine TeleVue 101 refractor for a friend. This scope was used only occasionally and has been meticulously taken care of. Included: TeleVue OTA with TeleVue Qwik Point, TeleVue Telepod, TeleVue padded hard case, TeleVue 20mm Plossl, Orion 9mm orthoscopic, Orion Skyglow and 80A filters, Meade #140 2X Teleneegative Amplifier, 2' diagonal, and padded eyepiece case. The tripod does show some minor marks, the 20mm Plossl has very minor use marks, and the Meade 140 is missing the set screw. New this would sell retail for over \$4,000; selling price is \$3,000. Shipping to CONUS paid by buyer. Money order or certified check.

