



The Meridian

The newsletter of the
Quad Cities Astronomical Society

April 2011

<http://www.qcas.org>

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

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

Board Meeting -

Dana Taylor	President
Craig Cox	Treasurer
Karl Adlon	Director
Dale Hendricks	Secretary
Jim Rutenbeck	

Dana called the meeting to discuss the condition of the mirror on our 20" scope. He had noticed that the image was "soft" and felt that we should not let it deteriorate further since it has been over 15 years since the mirror was recoated. Jim indicated that he had had his 16" mirror recoated for about \$800.00. This led next to a discussion of the Iowa City firm, Optical Mechanics, Inc. in Iowa City. They will evaluate the mirror and resurface it for ~ \$780.00. It was also noted that the secondary mirror should also be evaluated for condition and recoated if necessary. The Board agreed that we would commit to up to \$1,000.00 for the work and hope the total is less. The work would probably be completed in about two weeks.

This issue was put before the members present at the meeting and we now have a go ahead to perform the necessary work.

Dana called the regular meeting to order at 7:30 and called for reports.

Secretary's Notes - D. Hendricks

Attendees:

Karl Adlon	Tom Bullock	Craig Cox	Jay Cunningham	Dale Hendricks
Jerry Kelderhouse	Jim Rutenbeck	Jeff Struve	Dana Taylor	Gene Ullsmith

We now have an updated member list and I am still looking for changes to it to ensure we have the most current membership information. Please bear with me as we clean up the list and make it available through our web site to all members.

Treasurer's Notes - Craig Cox

Current balance - \$2,008.50. There are several members yet to pay their dues but Craig is certain that the member of the Sopranos he contacted to collect will be successful in securing these unpaid dues.

Eastern Iowa Star Party - dates for the Party are 29-30 September and 1 October.

Original Meridian newsletter - Gene Ullsmith, a member from quite some time ago, brought with him the first Meridian dated April 1982. Several names included in the document were present at this meeting. Thanks, Gene, for the trip back in time and welcome back to the QCAS. As a side note, it was Gene who gave us the title for our newsletter and he asked if anyone knew the story - Dana did. I have all but one word of it and will apologize ahead of time for not knowing it.

May Every R??? Interested Delve Into Astronomy Now

Bettendorf Family Museum Astronomy Day 7 May - we are close to having the commitments we need to cover both sessions. The first is from 10:00 - 12:00 and the second is from 1:00 to 3:00. We need to have one or two instruments (Dale has committed to bringing a small RFT for general viewing and we have a solar scope (if the sun is shining) to observe sunspots. Dana, Dale, Tom Bullock and Craig have committed to being there and Joe Bannon will be available for the afternoon session.

Update on the Bettendorf Museum activity - this was a good venue and we had 3 members present: Dana, Craig, Bob Mitchell and Dale. The audience was quite young and most were more invested in building and launching pop bottle powered rockets (Dale took one in the chest) and they were quickly bored that there wasn't something more stimulating to do with the scopes. Glen Boyles, the contact at the Museum, was a gracious host but the venue was not much geared for even Astronomy 101.

Attached are a few of photos from the session. The young man sitting with his mother was Shane and he was quite a serious and attentive young man.





Program - videos and discussion events -

Dana shared some photos with the group that he did not have ready for our last meeting. Primarily, it was to demonstrate how to use the stacking program and photoshop to produce a quality finished "shot" that allows us to see real color and depth of the objects observed. Great photos and great work, Dana. His focus was primarily on M42 in Orion shown below. Here is a shot pasted into the report from the internet. An editorial comment - Dana's photo is better.



From the internet:

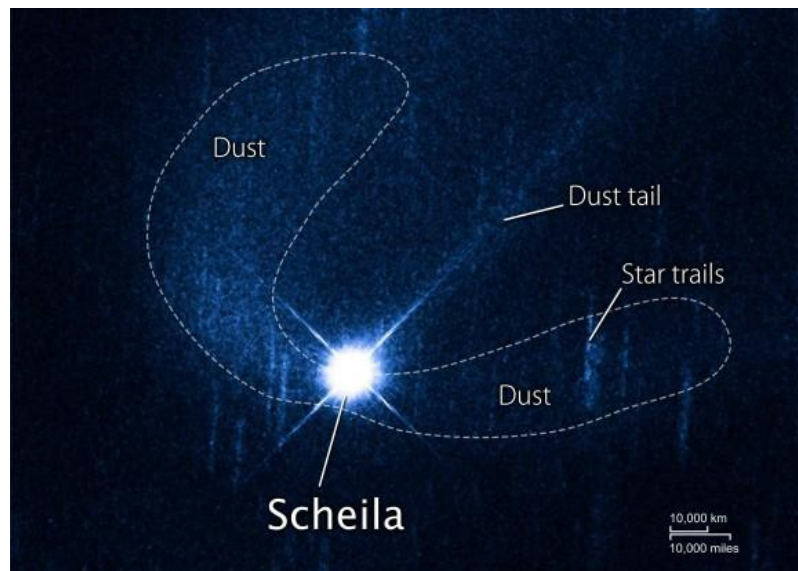
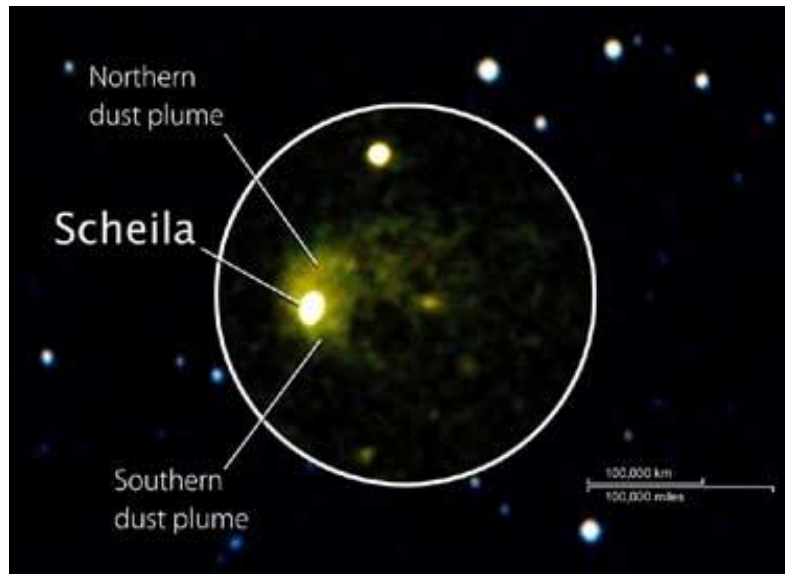
The Orion Nebula is one of the most scrutinized and photographed objects in the night sky, and is among the most intensely studied celestial features. The nebula has revealed much about the process of how stars and planetary systems are formed from collapsing clouds of gas and dust. Astronomers have directly observed protoplanetary disks, brown dwarfs, intense and turbulent motions of the gas, and the photo-ionizing effects of massive nearby stars in the nebula. There are also supersonic "bullets" of gas piercing the dense hydrogen clouds of the Orion Nebula. Each bullet is ten times the diameter of Pluto's orbit and tipped with iron atoms glowing bright blue. They were probably formed one thousand years ago from an unknown violent event.

Karl Adlon - What's up for May?

Karl showed the skies in late April/early May in the morning with the gathering of planets day by day by time and running continuously. The program is **TheSky6** which is available for download in several versions.

Karl also showed his "work in progress" on a PP presentation Introduction to Astronomy. He plans to use this to present and educate other astronomy clubs/groups, civic organizations and schools, mostly at or above the junior high level.

Asteroid Sheila (596) Collision - The Hubble Space Telescope imaged (596) Scheila on Dec. 27, 2010, when the asteroid was about 218 million miles away. Scheila is overexposed in this image to reveal the faint dust features. The asteroid is surrounded by a C-shaped cloud of particles and displays a linear dust tail in this visible-light picture acquired by Hubble's Wide Field Camera 3. Because Hubble tracked the asteroid during the exposure, the star images are trailed. Credit: NASA/ESA/D. Jewitt (UCLA)



Upcoming Celestial and Club Events

May - first 3 weeks	Venus, Mars, Mercury and Jupiter are together in the morning sky. This will be the best conjunction of the year.
03 May	New moon
06 May	Eta Aquarid meteor shower peaks
17 May	Full moon
16 May	Next QCAS meeting at 7:30pm
May (evening) sky	Saturn (southeast)
Mid May	Comet Garradd 15° high in the SE - comet is heading north and it rises earlier and climbs higher in the predawn sky by late in the month.
22/23 May	Saturn's four brightest moons line up the night of 22/23 May

MAY

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1	2	3 NEW MOON	4	5 1961-Alan Shepard 1 st American in space	6	7
8	9 FINAL STARGATE UNIVERSE	10 First-Quarter Moon	11 Sunset 8:04. Moon 64%	12	13	14
15	16 7:30 QCAS Mtg	17 Full Moon	18	19	20	21
22	23	24 Last-Quarter Moon	25	26	27	28 QCAS Star Party
29	30 Memorial Day 	31	1 NEW MOON	2 1932-Pete Conrad born	3 Bootleg Astronomy Star Party	4 Bootleg Astronomy Star Party
5	6 1831-James C. Maxwell born	7	8 Sunset 8:35 First-Quarter Moon 1625-Giovanni Cassini born	9	10	11
12	13	14	15 Full Moon	16 1963-Valentina Tereshkova 1 st woman in space	17	18
19	20 7:30 QCAS Mtg	21	22	23 Last-Quarter Moon	24	25 1894-Hermann Oberth born QCAS Star Party

QCAS Contacts

Elected Officers			Volunteers and Committees		
President	Dana Taylor	dana@nelsontaylor.com	Facilities	Jim Rutenbeck	jrutenbeck@frontier.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 – be reminded that you can submit articles for *The Meridian*. Submit articles to Dale Hendricks at: dhusna68@mchsi.com. If dale is not available, as backup, you may submit information to Joe Bannon at: mzbannon@aol.com or jbannon@midamerican.com