



Newsletter of the Quad Cities Astronomical Society

www.qcas.org

September 2015

Meeting Notes

Business Meeting, September 21st

Attendees: Dr. Robert Mitchell, Craig Cox, Mitch White, Dana Taylor, Shawna and Ava Duncan, James Cunningham, Cecil Ward, Bruce Booker

The meeting was called to order at 6:42pm

1. Dana and Bruce installed a solar powered vent fan in the rolling roof building. It works well in full sunlight, however one cloud is enough to stop it. But when it is working it does push a lot of air. Dana would like to install a larger solar panel with a sealed lead acid battery so it will run longer. Bruce suggested that since we have a minimum charge for electricity that we never exceed we should calculate what it would cost to plug a fan using a timer so that it will run periodically throughout each day. Items to consider are the cost of running the fan versus our minimum charge and how to connect the power with a quick disconnect when someone rolls the roof off. Bruce will donate the timer, he will also contact John Baker to find out more about the electric bill. Two of the main problems with the 20" mirror are the thermal problem, which can be solved with a fan and a collimation issue. The collimation changes each time the scope is moved, Dana's tip is to adjust the secondary mirror only.

2. Bruce had an opportunity to inspect the donated 8" Celestron. He wasn't able to look through it because of the weather. It is a newer orange tube design with a zoom eyepiece and a case filled with eyepieces and filters. He was unable to do a 2 star alignment, but was able to do a 3 star alignment once. The scope has no scratches, it has been well cared for and/or hardly used. It is a single arm with alt azimuth. It doesn't have a finder on it but Dale will contact the donor with this inquiry. The scope has a tour function with a 40,000 object database and a 100 best things on a given night feature. It will be a good scope for public events. It runs on 12 volts and requires 8 AA batteries. There is no power supply and it will be kept in the rolling roof observatory.

3. September 18th event was a nonevent. Bruce went to the soccer complex to find everything locked, however the weather was also not cooperating and no one showed up. Dale will talk to the park district about making sure the gates and buildings are unlocked. Future event dates were discussed.

4. There are some additional outreach opportunities available. Dana was contacted by the Putnam Museum. And St. Ambrose holds a weekly science seminar on Wednesdays at 3:30pm, the QCAS is invited to come and speak.

5. John Baker was not present to report as Treasury. Bruce stipulated that the account balance is still approximately \$2000.00.

6. Some possible presentations for the October regular meeting are: Jeff Struve's star party trip and Dr. Mitchell's Pluto presentation. Dana also has a 30 minute presentation on how telescopes work that will happen in the future.

7. The October business meeting will be the election of board members.

Dana motioned we adjourn, Craig seconded the motion and the meeting adjourned at 7:44pm.

Successful QCAS Weekend

Saturday (9/27)

If you've opened up your email at all in the last few days, you will surmise that it was a busy and successful weekend for the Quad Cities Astronomical Society. I will offer my view of the weekend, for yet another perspective if you would so indulge me. I'll give you the, eh hm, female perspective, if you will. When Ava and I first pulled up at the Jens-Wendt Observatory Saturday evening, another vehicle pulled in right after us. A woman got out of her car and came directly over to Ava and I asking us if we were here for the 'star event' and if we were members. We affirmed and she gave a huge sigh, saying "So I won't be the only girl?" This alone made it a great trip. It was nice to instantly make someone feel comfortable. I also got to use my brand new Nikon birthday binoculars 10x50 - great views of the moon! The other fantastic thing about that night was finally getting to climb the ladder and look through the monster telescope. This was pretty exciting for Ava and myself. We spent quite a bit of time with Chris, the woman in the parking lot. and she was enthusiastic too. The three of us documented what we saw that night. M57, M13, M27 and the, as Dana called them, St. Ambrose stars. It was truly amazing that we saw all of this with a full moon! The dumbbell nebula was pretty faint but still visible. Now, I can't wait to go out during a new moon!!! Anybody???

Calendar

Note: **Meetings** are at the Bettendorf Public Library @ 6:30 PM

Observatory **Open Houses** are at Sherman Park, Dixon (Calamus), IA

October 5
Astronomy (dialogs) **Meeting**

October 9 - 11
Eastern Iowa Star Party @ Menke Observatory

October 16th
Open House at the Davenport Soccer Complex

October 19
Business/Astronomy **Meeting**

November 20th
Open House at the Credit Island Lodge on S. River Dr.

Sunday (9/28)

By the time Ava and I arrived at the soccer complex, the partial umbral eclipse was underway and there was quite a crowd. A kind gentleman with a large voice asked everyone to sign our guestbook and a line!!! formed. That was pretty exciting. It was wonderful to see so many children running from telescope to telescope. I felt a little guilty for only bringing Ava. Karl had some observations and great photographs of the event. Thank you Karl for allowing me to share...

"I started with Saturn for the few that were early - some had never seen it in a scope - but then clouds covered it and I turned to the Moon.

The eclipse started with broken clouds that thinned by totality.

A while after totality, I aimed at the Double Cluster - maybe the worst view I've seen with not as many stars as usual, due to the thin clouds - and showed it to maybe 10 people. They enjoyed it - several 'Wow!'s."



Photograph taken by Karl Adlon

Current Astronomical Headlines

Water on Mars

<http://www.skyandtelescope.com/astronomy-news/water-logged-salts-on-mars-2809201523/>

India launches an astronomy satellite

<http://phys.org/news/2015-09-astro-sat-indian-astronomy-satellite.html>

New Camera Turns Lay Stargazer into Expert Astronomer

<http://abc7news.com/science/new-camera-turns-lay-stargazer-into-expert-astronomer-1007331/>

October Sky Happenings

October 8 - Draconids Meteor Shower

October 15 - Mercury at Greatest Western Elongation.

October 13 - New Moon.

October 21 - Orionids Meteor Shower peaks

October 26 - Venus at Greatest Western Elongation.

October 26 - Conjunction of Venus and Jupiter.

October 27 - Full Moon, Supermoon.

October 28 - Conjunction of Venus, Mars, and Jupiter.

QCAS Correspondence:

Please contact the society at: P.O. Box 3706, Davenport, IA, 52808.

Members are welcome and encouraged to submit articles for The Meridian. Submit any and all interesting items (via e-mail) to: Shawna Duncan, Secretary.

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