



Newsletter of the  
Quad Cities  
Astronomical Society  
[www.qcas.org](http://www.qcas.org)  
October 2015

## What's in a Name?

Shawna Duncan

What do the names Oz and Persephone have in common? Both were possible considerations for Pluto's moon, Charon. James Christy is the astronomer credited with discovering Charon. Dr. Mitchell's presentation of the New Horizon's mission to Pluto was very interesting and I hope he will do it again. But there was controversy amongst members regarding how to pronounce Charon and how it was named, so I decided to look into it further. Here's what I found...

Initially, Mr. Christy liked Oz. After some consideration, though, he decided to name it for his wife, Charlene. Her nickname was Char so he added "on" and came up with Charon. Adding "on" was a common naming scheme during that time. However, after this decision, he went back to the observatory and realized that the other astronomers came up with Persephone. In Greek mythology, Persephone is Pluto's wife. Christy thought this name was inarguably the best name. During this time, he and his wife were busy moving into a new home. One night, he woke up and realized that he hadn't told Charlene about the name Persephone. He got out of bed half asleep, opened a dictionary and looked up Charon, in his words..."I found the dictionary and opened it up, and it said Charon, and in Greek mythology the boatman that sails across the river Hades into the domain of Pluto, and I said 'OK,' and I just staggered back to bed."

It was 1985 before the IAU officially adopted the name. As to the pronunciation...most astronomers pronounce Charon as "Sharon" in deference to James Christy and his wife. However, non English speaking people tend to pronounce it as "Karen" because the CH makes a K sound, in both the Greek and Roman languages, where the mythology originates.

So, if you like mythology say Karen, if you want to honor Mr. and Mrs. Christy say Sharon. One final thought, Mr. Christy still likes Oz.

References:

<http://www.astronomy.com/year-of-pluto/2015/06/an-interview-with-jim-christy-how-defective-images-revealed-the-first-double-planet>

<http://www.universetoday.com/41619/charon/>

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charon\\_\(moon\)#Name](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charon_(moon)#Name)

## Epicurean Astronomical Adventures

As the numerous emails circulating suggest, October was a busy month for our membership. There were lots of opportunities to share our astronomical enthusiasm. Dr. Mitchell had some scouts share their epicurean enthusiasm...Thanks for sharing, Dr. Mitchell!

"I hosted a star party for interested boys and troop leaders at the Scout Camporee at Wapsi October 24. An hour or so before that, the troop leaders invited me to be a guest judge for the scouts' Dutch oven dessert bake-off. Each of their desserts had to include at least one of three "secret ingredients": chili powder, pretzel sticks, and/or Airheads candies. All of them were actually pretty good. I particularly remember one where the boys laid complete Airheads strips on top of the dessert. Baking made them melt into strips that looked like rainbow-striped bacon."

## Eastern Iowa Star Party

Jeff Stuve

Not sure that I have any pictures representative of the event, but last night at Menke... first night of the 2015 EISP... Jim, Karl, Robert, and I took the 14" Star-Liner Cass/Newt telescope and fork mount out of the Menke Observatory dome, and replaced it with the new Orion HDX 110 EQ mount that Saint Ambrose had purchased....

I didn't put the 10" SCT that the club is loaning Dr. Mitchell on the new mount yet... instead, I installed the control platform on his laptop, insured that the mount was controlled by the laptop properly, and spent an hour or so training him on the software.

This afternoon, Dr. Mitchell, Jim, and I will install the loaner scope, and I'll work a bit more with Dr. Mitchell on being able to control the system from the classroom either by cable or wirelessly by setting up a private network... this evening, we'll dedicate to a very thorough mount alignment process, and hopefully actually do a bit of observation with the new set up...

So far, I have logged over 125 hours in the project, and am hoping that this qualifies for a maximum \$500 donation to be made to the club by my company's Global Days of Service program...

Future endeavors at Menke will include building a circular table around the new mounts pier extension, wrapping the pier with velcro to hold electronics sure as the gnd controller, future electronic focuser, filter wheel control, dew zapper control, and other such items... setting up the mounts remote control as well as telescope and camera from the classroom... and a bit of general maintenance.

## Calendar

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

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

**November 2 Astronomy (dialogs) Meeting**

**November 16 Business/Astronomy Meeting**

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

**December 7 Astronomy (dialogs) Meeting**

**December 21 Business/Astronomy Meeting**

A big thank you to all members who contributed to this edition:

Karl Adlon  
Bruce Brooker  
Dale Hendricks  
Dr. Robert Mitchell  
Matt Neilssen  
Jeff Struve

(Jeff continued)...

EISP Menke Observatory Dome Premier... Well, got the pier extension and mount permanently installed and the club scope set up for use... Doc had a lot of fun computer controlling it, he took a number of pics all having a bit of expected drift as I only performed a rough 3 star alignment, and no polar alignment until much later in the session...

My attempts at a drift align looked good from the software tracking schema, however didn't hold up when did a bit of imaging... still more drift than expected...

Matt has a number of theories for this.... 1) trying to do the drift align with the 10" F10 scope, 2) a balance problem... the drift align used stars in the West and South and a test of a Western star looked pretty good, but we took our test images of objects in the South and East which has weren't so good ... 3) maybe the club scope has a bit of mirror and/or mechanical idiosyncrasies making a great polar alignment to difficult to achieve... I'm wondering if additionally, it may be due to my just doing a marginal 3 star align preceding the polar align routine rather than a precise align, although every object slewed to was close to center in the FoV, and even Neptune was in the FoV using an 8mm eyepiece... I dunno!



Photograph by Karl Adlon, Menke Observatory

## Classifieds

Equipment inventory --- for possible 14" Huge refracto lenses--- two 8" D&G lenses approx. f/30 in metal cells--- these 2 are currently mounted again in "folded refractor set-up"--- two 19 inch wooded discs hold the 2 lenses and 2 flats for folding and 2 two inch focusers.----- I could break up the sets into as many pieces as needed... if profitable. I bought for \$2000 and transported from NY. Easily worth \$4000 plus. Could easily be resold for \$2000.

10 inch D&G folded refractor (again around f/30) like above but with heavy duty 19" metal cells. Bought for \$4000 and shipped west. Could easily be sold for \$6-8,000, I think. Could maybe sell the 10 inch lens in D&G cell alone for a "shipped" 14" cass.

8" coultter Dob.; 23" brass looking, bronze ish, Byers gear with motor and worm!--- beautiful, new, impressive; Mirror stuff: 20 inch f/4 blank finished to sphere; 16" full thickness coated FLAT; 16" and 18" full thickness tel mirrors.

HUGE 10" or 11" or 12"---hard to guarantee clear aperture camera or projection lens---3 feet long metal focusing housing.---probably 4-6 elements---impressive; another approx 5 inch camera lens in metal box housing; 5" f/10 camera lens---was going to make a huge finder.;30 mm Meade Grenade-looking eyepiece- 82 degree field! Etc!!!! I think I could round up pix of ones you might want to pursue.

**Please contact Jeff Struve regarding all the above items: pwrhsepro@aol.com**

## 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.

### Officers

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The Greater Bettendorf Community Foundation's Halloween Parade scared up a good time Saturday night.

For the first time in a number of years, the parade near Cumberland Square was held at night. The theme was "Scary Movies."

Parade-entry winners:

### Float Division

- First Place: QC Astronomical Society
- Second Place: IH Mississippi Valley Credit Union
- Third Place: Blackhawk Bank and Trust

### Walking Group Division

- First Place: Academy for the Performing Arts
- Second Place: Lourdes Catholic

## First Place!

In the above photo is (from left to right) Kylah, John Baker's granddaughter, Bruce Brooker and John Baker, or Cpt. Picard.

Congratulations Kylah, Bruce, John, Dana Taylor, Dale and Allison

Hendricks for the hard, expedient work preparing for the Bettendorf Halloween Parade. The float was awarded first place!



M13, photographed by Karl Adlon during the Eastern Iowa Star Party

## November Skies

Matt Neilssen

November 4th through 7th is a possible once in seven year peak of the Taurid Meteor Shower. The aging moon shouldn't be too much of a factor if this one pops off.

[Taurids](#)

The famous Leonid Meteor Shower peaks around first quarter moon. Unfortunately the true peak is a bit early that night. So the Quad Cities is not ideally situated.

[Leonids](#)

Just after that on the 22nd there is a possible once in 10 years peak of the Alpha Monocerotids Meteor Shower. Too bad the same Moon conditions apply (if not worse) for this one. There is an off chance that the peak will show 400+ meteors per hour!

[Alpha Monocerotids](#)

Thanksgiving Morning the Moon will pass directly between us and the bright star Aldebaran in Taurus, blocking it from view. Sky Safari shows this beginning at 4:40am from my backyard. Anyone getting up early to start roasting the turkey ought to check that out.

[Occultation of Aldebaran](#)

Comet Catalina - Could make it to magnitude 4 for us. It's been a while since there was an easy naked eye comet. If it happens (fingers crossed) we'll all have a good reason to get up in the morning. November is just the beginning of a possibly awesome showing of this comet though. It will get even better as the winter progresses.

[Comet C/2013 US10 Catalina](#)

So basically, November could be a really good month from general stargazing. No telescope required!