



The Meridian

The newsletter of the
Quad Cities Astronomical
Society

February 2012

Secretary's Notes

Dale Hendricks

Members in attendance:

Chris Hebel	Ken Boquist	Dana Taylor	Brian Haysbrook	Karl Adlon
Jim Rutenbeck	Steve VanHefte	Craig Cox	Cecil Ward	Bruce Brooker
Robert Mitchell	Dale Hendricks	Jeff Struve	Gary Charnoski	Tom Bullock
John Baker	Joe Bannon	Mitch White*	Greg Greenwood*	Matt Neilssen**
Pieter Vander				

Treasurer's report: Craig reported a total of \$2,538.87.

Survey Solicitation: Dana and Dale received a solicitation from an Iowa State University professor concerning our group asking for volunteers to participate in a survey. Here is a part of the letter we received from Prof Thomas Andre:

I am writing to you, to see if you can possibly help put me in touch with those who engage in astronomy hobbies so that I can ask for volunteers for our study.

Would it be possible for the Quad Cities Astronomical Society to distribute a request for volunteers through its email list or as part of a regular distribution to members? If a postal mailing is used, I could supply paper copies of the volunteer request. I also could also come to a meeting to explain the project to members if the club prefers.

In the first phase of this research project, we plan to interview about 30 people in Iowa, as well as participants from North Carolina; we would randomly select from individuals who volunteer to be contacted. We have obtained all the official human subject research approvals and would ask for formal informed consent from each participant before beginning the study.

Jeff Struve volunteered to participate- thanks, Jeff, and keep us up to date on what they want and how the survey develops.

NASA Art Exhibit - Our Society has been asked to participate in the Art Exhibit that will be coming to the Figge Art Museum in July. It is titled - ART: 50 Years of Exploration and will be at the Figge until

early October. Dana and I participated in the first meeting of the group which also included these local organizations:

- Girl Scouts
- Quad City Rocket Society
- Quad City Elite
- QC Engineering and Science Council (QCESC)

At our first meeting, I asked Lynn Gingas-Taylor, Creative Arts Coordinator of the Figge, to make a short presentation to our group at our February meeting. You all have a copy of the information she provided and during our follow up conversation, we formed a sub-committee of Karl Adlon, Gary Charnoski and myself. We need to have our program/activities line up in to the Figge by 15 March and we are in process to do that. Thanks for all the input to date. Karl, Dana and I may go to the Figge in the near future to determine the size of a display area and agree on what we could offer that would be appropriate for the time period of the exhibition schedule. If any of you have attended the Thursday night sessions at the Figge you will understand what an opportunity this is. The theater there seats about 200 and is a nearly perfect venue for on screen presentations.

We'll keep you all informed as we move forward to the 15 March date. Thanks Karl and Gary for your willingness to commit to this and to all of you who have provided input. This should be a great opportunity for us "show off" our group and what we have done.

Presentations -

How to Plan for Viewing - Gary Charnoski:

Gary posited that most "viewers" tend to look for what they have seen previously as they are comfortable with their knowledge of these objects and the ease of finding them again. He suggests that we find something "new" to our viewing practice and this requires preparation, in addition to clothing in the winter months.

Make a list of objects you haven't see before then check reference publications to learn as much about the objects as possible. Among the publications Gary referenced were these:

- Sky and Telescope
- Astronomy Magazine
- Any book by Steven James Omeara
(website - <http://www.astronomy.com/Columnists/Stephen%20Omeara.aspx>)
- Star Fests are good places to buy reference books
- Sky Pocket Atlas
- Astronomical League - www.astroleague.org
- Deep Sky Herschel Club (badges and patches for locating and identifying objects)
- Burnham's Celestial Handbook (several volumes)

Good overview and mild admonition, Gary - thanks for the effort and information.

Salt and Astronomical distances - Bruce Brooker:

We all have to take this presentation with a grain of salt - sorry, I couldn't help myself.

To say that Bruce has a unique perspective on issues that most of us don't think about very deeply would be an understatement. So, here goes with his analogy, analysis and description and I hope this does justice to his excellent presentation -

Bruce started by determining how to determine what a million grains of salt looked like and to make it understandable. Then, using this as a starting point he tackled the distance to the moon, the sun and across the Milky Way to our nearest galaxy neighbor, Andromeda, and last - to the end of the known Universe. I was not able to copy down all the info (I should have) but here is what I have.

300,000 jars of salt to represent all the stars in the Milky Way which is 147,300 lbs of salt. Calculating one semi-trailer truck can carry 50,000 lbs of salt, this would require ~ 3 semi-trailer truck loads of salt.



To the edge of the Universe, here is what I have and, Bruce, if I don't have this exactly as you laid it out, my apologies and please amend.

If one inch represented the Milky Way, it would be 6.6 miles to the edge of the Universe. It would require 121.7 BIL supertankers to carry the salt to take us to the edge of the Universe and these tankers, end to end, would be 13,690 round trips to the moon. That nearly exhausts my puny ability to think of things like this. I truncated the presentation but this gives some idea of what the distances in our amazing Universe - near to the far end - are in terms of salt. Thanks, Bruce.

Repeat information:

Mars Opposition:

Repeat note: Saturday, March 3, Mars will be at opposition and Venus, Jupiter, Saturn, the Moon and possibly Mercury will be visible in the evening. Two days later, Mars will have its closest approach to Earth, 100.78 million km.

	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
					1 First-Quarter Moon	2	3 Mars at opposition – app. ang. diameter: 14"
MAR 4		5 March 5, Comet Garradd closest to Earth (1.27 AU)	6	7 1792- John Herschel born	8 Full Moon	9 Sunset: 6:03 PM	10 1977- Rings of Uranus discovered
MAR 11	11 Daylight Savings Begins 	12 Venus and Jupiter 3° apart	13 1781- John Herschel discovers Uranus	14 1879- Albert Einstein born	15 Last-Quarter Moon	16 Sunset: 7:11 PM	17 St. Patrick's Day
MAR 18		19 7PM - QCAS Meeting @ Bettendorf Library	20 First Day Of Spring 	21	22 NEW MOON	23 1840- First photograph of Moon	24
MAR 25	25 Waxing Moon near Jupiter	26 Waxing Moon near Venus	27 Waxing Moon near Aldebaran	28	29	30 First-Quarter Moon	31 QCAS Star Party
APR 1		2 1845- First photograph of the Sun	3	4	5	6 Full Moon	7 Passover begins
APR 8	8 Easter	9	10	11	12 1961- Yuri Gagarin first man in orbit	13 Last-Quarter Moon	14
APR 15	15 Texas Star Party begins	16 7PM - QCAS Meeting @ Bettendorf Library	17	18 Dawn: Mercury: greatest elongation, ~7° below Moon	19	20 Sunset: 7:50 PM	21 NEW MOON Lyrid Meteor Shower
APR 22		23	24	25 Administrative Professionals' Day	26	27	28 QCAS Star Party

Annular Solar Eclipse: May 20/21

We will be on the fringe of the viewing path and here is what it looks like across the US. The eclipse ends in New Mexico and it will be below the horizon for us.

Venus Transit: Robert suggested that we might be able to see more of this transit from the SAU Ballroom Balcony - it is above the tree line and should provide for a few more moments of transit.

Upcoming Celestial and Club Events

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@nelsontaylor.com	Facilities	Jim Rutenbeck	jrutenbeck@frontier.com
Vice-president	Joe Bannon	mzbannon@aol.com	Web Master	Dana Taylor	dana@nelsontaylor.com
Secretary	Dale Hendricks	dhusna68@mchsi.com	Outreach	Joe Bannon	mzbannon@aol.com
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 Dale Hendricks at dhusna68@mchsi.com.
