

FOCUS

DELAWARE ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY

NEXT MEETING: TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 20, 2005

Main Program : Show and Tell by DAS Members: Randell Detra, Max Peterson, Billie Westergard, David Sowell, others; What's Up –Cygnus –Greg Lee.

Mt. Cuba Astronomical Observatory at 8:00 P.M.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING MONDAY, 9/19, AT 7:30 P.M.

Volume 50, No. 8
September, 2005

PRESIDENTS MESSAGE FOR SEPTEMBER

Welcome to a new year of astronomical fun and adventure with the Delaware Astronomical Society. The September meeting will feature Show & Tell mini talks by DAS members about recent astronomy activities that they have participated in. If you would like to have a few minutes (15 minutes maximum) to talk about an astronomy related event that you attended, observations, photos, slides etc. please call me at (302) 366-0938 (home) or (302) 622-7347 (work) or email westerb@udel.edu to be included in the program. At this point I have Show and Tell talks scheduled for our September meeting by those members listed above.

I think we have a very good schedule of activities for our 2005 – 2006 year. Please see the complete DAS Schedule elsewhere in the Focus.

I also want to welcome Dickinson High School Astronomy Club members as Authors of Galactic Pursuit, a fun game (to start in October).

The DAS needs your help. We need a person to Chair the DAS Election committee this year because we will have an Election for our officers in May, 2006. Please consider serving in the following positions: DAS President, Vice President, Secretary,

Treasurer, and DAS Focus Editor, positions that will be open after the June 2006 meeting.

The format for meetings this year will be as follows:

Board of Directors Meeting 7:15 P.M.

Program Meeting 8:P.M.

“DAS Business” by your officers.

“What's Up” Monthly Constellations by Greg Lee (5 minutes).

“Mini Talk” by various members (15 minutes).

“Main Talk” by various members or guests (45 minutes).

Fun and comradery after the meeting.

I would remind everyone that talking to others when someone is trying to give a talk, or has the floor, is very rude and will not be tolerated by this President.

Thanks to all of you for your support.

Billie Westergard

UPCOMING MEETINGS

October 18, 2005 - White Dwarfs -- by Dr. Harry Shipman; What's Up – Cepheus - Greg

Lee. Mini talk – Almost Heaven Star Party -- Dan Chester.

November 15, 2005 - Structure Formation In The Early Universe and The Hubble Ultra Deep Field - Billie Westergard; What's Up – Cassiopeia -- Greg Lee; Mini talk – Star Hopping -- David Swartout.

December 13, 2005 - Christmas Party-Caroline Herschel -- Lynn King (30 minute talk); What's Up – Taurus - Greg Lee; Mini talk – Off Axes Telescope -- David Groski (30 minute talk).

January 17, 2006 - The Messier Objects - Prelude To A Marathon -- Don Surles; What's Up – Auriga - Greg Lee; Mini talk – Sun Dials -- Bob Mentzer.

February 21, 2006 - Astronomy Forum - by Bob Karcha's Dickinson High Astronomy Club; What's Up – Canis Major - Greg Lee; Mini talk – Extrasolar Planets -- Glenn Bentley.

March 21, 2006; Green Bank Radio Astronomy -- Randall Detra; What's Up –Ursa Major - Greg Lee; Mini talk – Coming Attractions & Astronomical Events for 2006 -- Sara Baird.

March 25, 2006 - The Messier Marathon

April 18, 2006 - Galileo's Satellites -- Hank Bouchelle at Calvin R. McCullough Planetarium; What's Up– Bootes - Greg Lee; Mini talk – The Twin Quasar -- Billie Westergard.

May 16, 2005 - Dinner Meeting with Keynote Speaker Senior Editor Bob Naeye, *Sky & Telescope* Magazine; The Luther Porter Award; The Amateur Astronomer Of The Year Award; Location TBD.

June 20, 2006; The No Spin Space Shuttle -- Mike Borgia; What's Up – Draco - Greg Lee; Mini talk - Degenerate Matter.

June, 24, 2006 - Picnic at MCAO with a cookout and other activities.

New Member Tour of MCAO After Each Meeting.

WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBER
LEON THOMPSON, WILMINGTON, DE

STAR PARTIES AT MT. CUBA

Tom Sidowski

Mars is at opposition on November 7th, and it along with nebula, clusters and galaxies will be prime targets at DAS star parties at MCAO this fall. These star parties are primarily for DAS members, family and friends, but in reality we don't turn anybody away. If you want to learn a little more about the heavens, check out other telescopes, get help with that new telescope you recently acquired, or just enjoy the celestial sights, then come on out to a DAS star party at Mt. Cuba. The schedule for upcoming star Parties follows: (all events are weather-permitting, of course).

September 9 th Friday	8:00PM
October 9 th Friday	8:00PM
November 5 th Saturday	7:30PM
December 3 rd Saturday	7:30PM
January 6 th Friday	7:30PM

DAS 50TH ANNIVERSARY

--Emil Volcheck

In the Fall of 2006, the DAS will mark its 50th year of operation. It seems appropriate to have some sort of suitably grand celebration for our being able to hang in there for that long, without being reduced to a small group of old men meeting for lunch, or booze, at a local watering hole occasionally!

Briefly, according to our best record, in October of 1956, a group of guys, all employed in the du Pont Company's Engineering Department and located at the old Louviers Building near Newark, got together at the home of Rene van Caneghem. Their purpose was to talk over the possibility of forming an astronomy club in Delaware. Apparently, there was general agreement that it was a good idea, but a suggestion was made that a representative pay a visit to Armand Spitz, founder of Spitz Laboratories - the only US-based maker of planetarium instruments, who had their operations in Yorklyn, DE.

Spitz agreed that it was a good idea and encouraged them to go ahead. So, in November of that same year, the group met again, agreed to give it a go and selected the name, Delaware Astronomical Society. From then on, it's history!

To pull together and run such a celebration will require participation from

some of you. So, this message is an appeal for folks to volunteer to partake in the committee (or team, or task group, or group, or whatever term is popular for such functionaries!). The initial work, I believe, should be brainstorming for ideas on just what kinds of activities we should try to include in the celebration - and bring a proposed program back to the board and members for a go ahead.

That would then be followed up by folks (hopefully including some members beyond the original group) who would take on the various elements of the proposal and make them happen.

I have agreed to get the process started and will need your help! So, please give me a call (610-793-5156) or email me (emilv@ccil.org) to let me know that you are interested and willing to be part of the first phase of the celebration.

<ASTRONOMY HACKS> - Emil Volcheck
This is the title of a new book from O'Reilly Publishing (the "annoyances" and "hacks" people). It was written by Robert and Barbara Thompson, and obviously comes from the hands and minds of capable and very dedicated observers. The format is a compilation of 65 "hacks" (you might call them chapters) that cover a full range of observing how-it-should-be-dones. The authors go into great depth in an effort (pretty successful, it seems to me) to provide other amateurs, especially new ones, with practical advice, instructions and tips on getting the most out of the time, effort and dollars that amateurs put into their hobby. The authors approach has caused yours truly to actually read the book essentially cover-to-cover! The publisher has donated a copy of the book to DAS; so it will be in the library after the next DAS meeting. Meanwhile, we are seeking to obtain some discount "coupons" which may be available to members. If we are successful, details on the deal will be in the Focus. So, see librarian Glenn Bentley about a loan - I think you'll enjoy it. More importantly, I'm sure that you will find very good value in its ideas, regardless of how skilled or unskilled an amateur astronomer you may be. [Emil Volcheck]

ASTRONOMY SOFTWARE - Emil Volcheck
MCAO still has a few copies of the retail versions of Imaginova's "Night Sky

Explorer" - an introductory desktop planetarium program - and "Galaxy Explorer" - also an introductory program that lets you explore some 28,000 galaxies from the Tully Galaxy database. Either program can be had for \$8 (or \$9 if you want a copy mailed to you). Just give me a buzz (610-793-5156) or email me (emil@mountcuba.org). (Emil Volcheck).

LOANER TELESCOPES - Emil Volcheck
Fall's mild weather months will be a good time to get out and try your hand with a scope. So, if you are new to the club and/or do not have a scope, you can get the loan of either:

- 1) a Celestron 8" Schmidt-Cassegrain
- 2) an Orion 6" Dobsonian reflector

The loan is for at least a month (depends on how long the waiting list is). To get on that list, promptly, contact Emil Volcheck, 610-388-1581.

MCAO PUBLIC NIGHTS - Emil Volcheck
The Mt. Cuba Observatory Public Nights will continue right thru the summer! You can off the website at: pick up a schedule when you next come to a meeting - or get the latest updated information on topics covered, at http://mountcuba.org/public_nights.htm

ASHLAND NATURE CENTER
-- Lynn King
The DAS has been invited to come to Ashland Nature Center's Harvest Moon Festival, Saturday, October 1, 2005, 10 a.m. - 4/5 p.m. We would like to have a few telescopes there with members to demonstrate them. This is a good outreach opportunity, and more information will be available at the meeting.

ASTROBLAST 2005 -- Emil Volcheck
This is a Star Party held annually in western Pennsylvania, this year near Franklin, PA, about 75 miles north of Pittsburgh, from Sept. 27 to Oct. 2. It features numerous educational presentations and is held at an excellent dark-sky site in a large field which offers outstanding visibility. If you are interested in attending this, please visit their web site, www.oras.org.

STELLA-DELLA VALLEY STARFEST
--Forwarded by Emil Volcheck

After a long hot summer - observing at Stella-Della in the early Fall promises to be a delight. Please join us for a great weekend of observing, camping, guest speakers, program swap meet, fellowship and more. May's Munchables will be providing food services all weekend, so bring your telescope and appetite, too. Check out the website for the latest information, directions and additional registration forms regarding Stella-Della at www.bma2.org. Hope to see you at Stella Della XIX Sept. 30th - Oct. 2nd. Hosted by the Bucks-Mont Astronomical Association (BMAA). Questions?

Ed Radomski, BMAA Treasurer 215-822-8312 ejrado@bigfoot.com
Dwight Dulsky, SDV 2005 Chair 267-733-7253 sdv@bma2

SAWIN OBSERVATORY REMINDER

-- Emil Volcheck

DAS members who are interested in becoming users of the Sawin Observatory and/or the Big Red DOB, should contact Tom Sidowski (239-1844) to arrange for some hands-on training in using the facility. [Emil Volcheck, Observatory Chair, emilv@ccil.org].

AMATEUR TELESCOPE MAKERS SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP – Bill Hanagan

The ATM SIG generally meets on weekends to discuss and work on many aspects of telescope making. We are now planning a series of meetings to bring participants steadily along on the path to complete a medium-size tube-based Dobsonian telescope. Apertures of 6" to 10" are typical. Our goal is to have this crop of telescopes completed in time for observing Mars in the fall. If you are interested in building your own telescope, please email me at the address below. If you are interested in joining this group, please e-mail your name, address, and phone number to me at: HanaganW@attglobal.net using your preferred e-mail account to send the requested information.

SAWIN OBSERVATORY MAINTENANCE

--Tom Sidowski

This past summer, a group of us got together and completed some basic maintenance on the club's Sawin Observatory. The complete outside of the building was painted and the inside was thoroughly cleaned. The

observatory was inspected and found to be in good order. It is now ready to be utilized by DAS members who wish to observe the skies with a quality instrument. If you would like to get checked-out as a keyholder of the Sawin observatory, just contact me to set up a time.

I'd like to acknowledge those who gave up their time on a hot July Saturday to help out with the work needed. They are (below, left to right): Bill Hanagan, Bill McKibben, Bob Mentzer, Greg Lee, Glenn Bentley, Marc Hutton, and me. James Morgan was another helper, but isn't shown because he was taking the picture. Thanks to all of you for donating your time and energy to help out with the maintenance.



DAS BY-LAWS REVISION COMMITTEE

--Henry Bouchelle

In the spring of this year a group of DAS members met to discuss making more specific the roles and responsibilities of the Board Members Elected at Large ("Article IV.C.-- Board Members Elected at Large: Three members of the Board of Directors shall be elected at large from the Senior Membership (i.e., full members) of the Society") and similar issues.

I volunteered to chair a By-Laws revision committee to consider this Article (and others if we are requested). I am hoping that several DAS members will help with the committee. I do not expect it to be time consuming. In fact, it would be wonderful if our work could be completed by the April DAS meeting, so that any revisions could be included in the mailing with the ballots for spring Officer election. You can reach me at 983-7830 or hbouchelle@comcast.net if you have questions or would like a copy of the current By-Laws.

DAS FORUM/E-MAIL SITE ON YAHOO

--Don Shedrick

This is a restricted e-mail service for use by DAS members for DAS purposes. To use this site, go to <http://groups.yahoo.com>; search for delawareastronomicalsociety; and click on the link that comes up. To join, you must have a Yahoo ID and password; if you don't, you can register at this time by following Yahoo's instructions. You will then be allowed to "Join the group" upon clicking in that box. You must then register for the DAS group and add your profile by clicking on "add new profile" and completing the form. When adding or editing your profile, you will need to enter your actual name in the "Real Name" box so you can be identified as a DAS member so Don Shedrick can approve your application to join the DAS group, and everyone will know to whom they are communicating. Finally, specify your desired e-mail address for delivery of messages. Note you may choose to not have your name and email address displayed to anyone other than DAS members who are members of the Yahoo DAS email group. For more detailed instructions, go to the DAS web site under [DAS Resource Links](#).

MEMBERSHIP EXPIRATION NOTICES: If the mailing label on the envelope containing your *FOCUS* is marked with Red Marker, your membership is expiring or has expired. To continue to receive the *Focus*, *Sky and Telescope*, and *Reflector*, send the renewal form on the back of this page with your check to:

DAS, c/o Robert Mentzer
605 River Road
Wilmington, DE 19809

Feel free to call any of us with your suggestions and questions.

DAS CONTACTS

Membership: Any of the following:
President: Billie Westergard ----- home 302-366-0938

Work	302-622-7347	
Vice President: John Case -----	4888	302-836-
Secretary: Lynn King -----	8816	302-764-
Treasurer: Bob Mentzer-----	1926	302-764-
DAS/MCAO Advisor: Emil Volcheck----	5156	610-793-
Messier Club: Lynn King -----	8816	302-764-
Observing: Greg Lee -----	5358	302-762-
Youth Coordinator: Sarah Baird -----	8950	302-292-
Archivist: Rene Van Caneghem -----	3718	410-392-
Board Members at-large:		
ATM and AP SIGs: Bill Hanagan -----	0949	302-239-
Chairman, Observatory Committee and Friday Night Star Parties:Tom Sidowski -----	1844	302-239-
By-Laws: Henry Bouchelle -----	3230	302-655-
Light Pollution Strategist; Greg Weaver	1338	302-239-
Library Chair: Glenn Bentley -----		610-869-0706
Ad Hoc Star Parties: Sheila Vincent - ---		302-322-4739
Elections Comm Chair:Costas Krekelis	9099	302-478-
Awards Comm Chair – David Swartout	4618	302-836-
MCAO Web Page: www.physics.udel.edu/MCAO		
DAS Web Page: http://delastro.org/		
Focus Editor: Lee Kaser, Phone 302-995-6251		
Fax: 302-995-6805		
E-mail: kaserlo@msn.com		

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM

If you have questions, call any of the member representatives listed above. Otherwise, just check the appropriate boxes and complete this form. Cut it off (after reading the other side, hopefully) and send it with your check to Bob Mentzer at his address above. The magazine prices are group rates to DAS members. Thanks, and welcome to the DAS if you're just joining us for the first time.

New Member
Renewal

Senior/Family Membership \$20.00
Junior membership (16/under) \$10.00
Sky and Telescope Magazine \$33.00
Astronomy Magazine \$34.00

NAME _____

STREET ADDRESS _____

Total Submitted ----- \$ _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____ TELEPHONE _____

E-MAIL ADDRESS (optional) _____

Do you have a telescope? _____ If yes, please describe briefly. _____

Any Comments or Requests? _____



WHAT A GANG!!! AND WHAT A TELESCOPE!!!