

FOCUS

DELAWARE ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY

NEAR MEETING -- TUESDAY, JANUARY 15

DARK AND WET -- Dr. Judy Provencal, University of Delaware

Mt. Cuba Astronomical Observatory, 8:00 PM

Volume 53, No. 1
January, 2008

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE – Hank Bouchelle

Happy New Year to all of our members, friends, and families! I hope that the new year is treating you well, and that this will be a terrific year for you and yours.

This month's talk is by Dr. Judy Provencal, who is both an outstanding speaker and very active in astronomy locally (the University of Delaware and Mt. Cuba Astronomical Observatory) and internationally. Those of us who have had the good fortune to hear her talks in the past have come away entertained and informed.

And, of course, many thanks to Greg Lee for his elucidation of "What's Up" in our evening skies, and to Bob Karcha for his talk on observing programs of the Astronomical League. And many personal thanks to those who blessed us with goodies to enjoy after the evening's program!

And don't forget to congratulate Rene VanCaneghem on joining the select rank of Distinguished Members of the DAS, awarded by the Board at last month's general meeting.

Focus Distribution -- Hank Bouchelle

Over the last few meetings, the Board has discussed the advantages of making the *Focus* available to its members electronically. Among these would be a drastic reduction in the amount of time required for stuffing and mailing envelopes, and an even more drastic

reduction in printing and mailing costs for the club. And, of course, there is something to be said for saving a tree.

At the last general meeting, members were given the opportunity to opt into a process that would alert them when an electronic version of the month's *Focus* is available at the DAS website. It was gratifying that those in attendance were nearly unanimous in their willingness to participate.

Simply stated, the plan is that those willing to participate provide an e-mail address to Bob Mentzer (robmentzer@comcast.net) (if you send him an e-mail it will be a simple matter for him to cut and paste the address). As each month's *Focus* is prepared, participating members will receive an e-mail alerting them that the newsletter is available, and provide its Web address. The e-mail will also serve as a reminder of the upcoming DAS meeting. It goes without saying that these e-mail addresses will not be shared with anyone for any other purpose.

If you don't have an e-mail account, or are otherwise unable to supply an e-mail address, you can let Bob know (764-1926) and we will continue to mail the *Focus* to you.

Please share with me or other members of the Board any questions or concerns you may have.

MEMBERS NEEDED! -- Hank Bouchelle

As mentioned elsewhere in the Focus, the DAS is in need of two kind souls to fill important positions within the club.

The first of these is Publications Chair. This is a Board position (and thus a wonderful addition to your resume!). The primary responsibility of the Publications Chair is to prepare the Focus. As you may have noted from the above, new procedures will make this position much less time consuming than previously, permitting the Chair to concentrate more on editing and much less on stuffing envelopes. It will also afford one the opportunity to work closely with the Board, a terrific group of people, and offer advice and suggestions to advance the work of the club.

Lee Kaser has served as Publications Chair in the past, and is filling in temporarily. Thus, he is available to chat with anyone interested in the position, and can help the new person learn the ropes. His e-mail address is kaserlo@msn.com.

The second position is much more short-term: Elections Chair, whose primary responsibility is to inform the members of the slate of officer candidates for this spring's officer election. The four current officers are standing for re-election, so there need be no heavy lifting or beating the bushes in a search for candidates. In accordance with the By-laws, though, we do need someone in this position who can accept the names of additional candidates and relay the names of the candidates to the membership.

Please consider my invitation to serve in either of these capacities. I would be glad to chat with anyone interested in more information (hbouchelle@comcast.net).

DAS Board of Director's Meeting, January 15, 2008, 7:00 pm, Library, Mt. Cuba Astronomical Observatory Agenda

(More than we can accomplish in one meeting, but important items, all)

Review of December's minutes

Treasurer's Report – Bob Mentzer

Standing committee

reports/requests/notes

Focus/Publications – Lee Kaser Interim

Library- Glenn Bentley

Education Programs- Bob Karcha

Young Person's Award?

Sawin Observatory Tom Sidowski

Observing – Greg Lee
May dinner location/speaker discussion
June meeting format/program?

Focus distribution

Publications Chair vacancy

Spring Officer Elections Chair

Chartered Awards Committee

Other Business?

DAS Board Meeting, December 18, 2007

Executive Summary

Hank Bouchelle noted that there is still the need to decide on a venue and a speaker for the May meeting. We are soliciting suggestions.

Tom Sidowski reported on progress with upgrades to the Sawin. He also noted that an unneeded mirror and telescope would be offered for sale.

Hank Bouchelle noted that we are still in need of a Publications Chair (whose primary responsibility is the Focus. Also the By-laws require that an Elections Chair be appointed in January to solicit nominees for the Society's officer election in the spring.

DAS Meeting Topic Schedule, 2007-2008

Feb. 19 -- Mini-talk night

-- Costas Krikelis on *Ancient Greek Astronomy*

-- Dave Groski on *A Schupmann Medial Refractor and Stellafane*

March 18 -- Long-term Survival of Life

Forms in Space -- Dr. Russell Vreeland, West Chester State University (*tentative*)

April 15 -- The Gamma-ray Large Area Space Telescope --With Robert Naeye, NASA (*very tentative*)

May 20 -- Annual Dinner Meeting
Speaker and location to be announced

June 17 -- To Be Announced

AWARDS -- Gus Swartout

The awards committee continues to invite nominations for both the Amateur Astronomer Award and the Luther Porter Award. The Amateur Astronomer Award is open to all DAS members. Individuals who have clearly been

identified through their enthusiasm and participation with astronomy are ideal candidates. Have you recognized a good candidate during our monthly meetings or at the star parties? Please take the time to honor this person by submitting his or her name. Past recipient's names can be found on the award planks located in the curved hallway.

The Luther J. Porter Educator Award honors an individual who has made a substantial contribution to astronomy education and/or awareness, in either a professional capacity or as a dedicated amateur. Nominees do not need to be professional astronomers. Luther J. Porter was a long-time member and devoted supporter of the Delaware Astronomical Society and served for many years as its Treasurer. The awards are presented at the annual dinner meeting held in May. Nominations can be submitted to any of the committee members; Bob Karcha, Greg Lee, and myself.

STAR PARTIES AT MT. CUBA – Tom Sidowski

Star parties are usually held on the grounds of the Mt. Cuba Astronomical Observatory. You can bring your on scope or just come to observe through others. Telescopes in use may include the club's 12.5" Newtonian reflector, 17" Coulter Odyssey 2, or 6" Orion SkyQuest XT6 Dobsonian (when not on loan). Star parties are always weather permitting.

Here is the complete list scheduled now:

Saturday, 02/09/08 @ 7:30pm

Saturday, 03/08/08, @ 8:00pm (cont'd)

Friday, 04/11/08, @ 8:00pm

Friday, 05/09/08 @ 8:00pm

LOANER TELESCOPES -- Tom Sidowski

One of the best advantages of being a member of the Delaware Astronomical Society is that all members have the privilege of being trained to use and then borrow equipment owned by the club for personal use. Currently, we have two scopes available for loan: a Celestron 8" Schmidt-Cassegrain, and a 6" Orion SkyQuest XT6 Dobsonian reflector. The loan is for at least a month. If you're interested in checking out either of these scopes, contact Tom Sidowski at 239-1844.

MCAO PUBLIC NIGHTS – Emil Volcheck

The Mt. Cuba Observatory Public Nights continue year round! In addition to learning about many aspects of the heavens, you'll have a chance to visit and view our all-digital full-dome planetarium! You can pick up a schedule when you next come to a meeting - or get the latest updated version off the website at: <http://mountcuba.org>.

DAS ASTROPHOTOGRAPHY SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP (AP SIG) – Bill Hanagan

The DAS Astrophotography Special Interest Group meets on Friday nights at 7:30 PM every other month at Mt. Cuba regardless of weather. The SIG also meets for photo shoots scheduled on 1-2 day notice to synchronize with the weather.

The monthly meetings are informal and typically include the presentation of astrophotos taken by the members along with an extended question and answer period. Objects commonly photographed include constellations, auroras, lunar eclipses, and planetary photos, as well as a wide variety of deep-sky objects such as nebulae, galaxies, star clusters, etc. The topics discussed cover the entire gamut of astrophotography, from how to get started with a minimum of equipment, to polar aligning your telescope, all of the way to the fine points of using auto-guiders and post-processing digital images.

If you are interested in joining the AP SIG, just email your name, address, and phone number to me at hanaganw@comcast.net.

SAWIN OBSERVATORY REMINDER

-- Tom Sidowski

The DAS maintains a club observatory on the grounds of the Mt. Cuba Astronomical Observatory. The Sawin Observatory houses the club's permanently mounted 12.5" reflecting telescope and a 17.5" Coulter Odyssey 2 Dobsonian telescope. It is for the use by club members once they are trained and checked-out in a simple operating procedure. Members who are interested in becoming key holders of the Sawin Observatory should contact me at 239-1844 to arrange for training in the use of the facility

LIBRARY NEWS - by Glenn Bentley

I would like to take this opportunity to invite the membership to drop by the library at the January meeting to check out potential reading material for the coming snowy evenings. The DAS Library wishes you and yours a safe and merry Christmas.

OBSERVER'S HANDBOOK – Bob Mentzer

I still have a couple copies of the 2008 Observer's Handbook. Price is \$17. E-mail me at robmentzer@comcast.net or call me at 764-1916.

FREE FIREWOOD -- Bob Mentzer

Mt Cuba Tree Project: There is still firewood available from last spring's tree cutting. If you want to gather some, call me at 764-1926.

DAS AMATEUR TELESCOPE MAKING SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP (ATM SIG)

-- Bill Hanagan

The DAS Amateur Telescope Making Special Interest Group meets on evenings and weekends according to the availability of the members and the particular projects that are underway. The general range of activities of the ATM SIG includes all manners of telescope making, mirror making, and the making of accessories for telescopes and observing.

Anyone interested in joining us should email their name, address, and phone number to me at hanaganw@comcast.net.

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 Delaware astronomical society; 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* or *Astronomy*, and *Reflector*, send the renewal form below with your check to:

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

DAS CONTACTS

Call any of us with your concerns!

- Membership: Any of the following:
- President: Hank Bouchelle----- 302-429-4013
- Vice President: John Case ----- 302-836-4888
- Secretary: Lynn King ----- 302-764-8816
- Treasurer: Bob Mentzer----- 302-764-1926
- DAS/MCAO Advisor: Emil Volcheck---- 610-793-5156
- Education Chair: Bob Karcha----- 302-999-9509
- Messier Club: Lynn King ----- 302-764-8816
- Observing: Greg Lee ----- 302-762-5358
- Youth Coordinator: Sarah Baird ----- 302-292-8950
- Archivist: Rene Van Caneghem ----- 410-392-3718
- Board Members at-large:
- ATM and AP SIGs: Bill Hanagan ----- 302-239-0949
- Chairman, Observatory Committee and DAS Monthly Star Parties: Tom Sidowski ----- 302-239-1844
- By-Laws: Henry Bouchelle ----- 302-983-7830
- Light Pollution Strategist; Greg Weaver 302-239-
- Library Chair: Glenn Bentley ----- 410-869-0706
- Ad Hoc Star Parties: Sheila Vincent - --- 302-322-4739
- Elections Comm. Chair -- Costas Krikelis 302-478-9099
- Awards Comm. Chair – David Swartout 302-836-4618
- MCAO Web Page: www.mountcuba.org
- DAS Web Page: www.delastro.org
- Focus Editor: **A Volunteer is Needed**

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION OR RENEWAL

If you have questions, call any of the member representatives listed above. Otherwise, just check the appropriate boxes and complete the form below. Cut it off and send it with your check to Bob Mentzer at his address given 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.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION OR RENEWAL

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) _____

Any Questions? Call us.
