



## **March 21 - Green Bank Radio Astronomy -- Randall Detra**

**Ursa Major - Greg Lee; Coming Attractions & Astronomical Events for 2006 -- Sarah Baird.**

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

**BOARD MEETING AT 7:15 P.M. ALL DAS MEMBERS INVITED**

**Volume 51, No. 3  
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### THE EDITOR'S SUMMARY — Lee Kaser

There are many things to report in this issue. To start with, we will have a new presider at our meetings for the rest of the year, because Present Billie Westergard has accepted a new job in West Virginia, as he says in his message below. Vice-President John Case is assuming the position of President as of this meeting. Billie will still be active with us part of the time as a commuter, but unable to attend most meetings and take care of regular Society needs. We thank him for his service to DAS for many years, and wish him well.

A second important topic is selection of candidates for our biennial election of officers, with voting to take place in April. We have some fine candidates already, including two dedicated long-time members of DAS, Hank Bouchelle and Greg Weaver, who are running for president; you will find statements from them in this issue. Other announced candidates are John Case for re-election to Vice President, Lynn King for re-election as Secretary, and Bob Mentzer for re-election as Treasurer. In addition, nominations may be made from the floor for any office at the March 21 Meeting. If you are interested in taking a leadership position in DAS, let any member of the Board know. You can be nominated for an office, serve on a committee, or work on outreach activities. We always need new people for the future health of this Society.

In April, the DAS will again offer its introductory 6-hour evening course in Observing. This can greatly accelerate a new observer's progress in astronomy. Please read the note by Emil Volcheck which follows.

Once again, we urge you to join in the Messier Marathon on March 25. Billie Westergard, Don Surles of the Delmarva Stargazers, and Dave Swartout have planned this event, which involves locating and observing as many Messier objects as you can in one night, using binoculars, telescopes, or the naked eye. Lynn King can provide information about Astronomical League Certificate programs that might interest you. With a bunch of skilled observers, you're sure to see at least some new objects and learn about a lot more. It should be worth losing some sleep.

Finally, arrangements for the annual Awards Dinner meeting May 16 are well set. We have Bob Naeye, a senior editor, well-known speaker, and an accomplished astronomer from Sky and Telescope magazine, as our main speaker, and we expect a fine meal at the Terrace at Greenhill. The new management there has worked well with Hank Bouchelle, in charge of planning the meeting. You will find a reservation sheet on page 6 of this Focus. Please fill it out and return it to Bob Mentzer with your check.

Remember – to make the Focus interesting and relevant, I need you to send me items of interest, astrophotography, pictures of other activities, or even ads for astronomical equipment. Thanks for your help.

### **PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE -- Billie Westergard**

As mentioned above, I have accepted a job assignment in Charleston, West Virginia and will be unable to continue as DAS President. I will be home (in Newark) on most weekends. If you need to contact me, call 366-0938. John Case will be taking over as President of the DAS starting with the March meeting. It has

been my pleasure to lead the DAS over the last two years and I would very much like to thank all of the DAS Board members for all the help that I have received from them. I also thank all of you (DAS members) for your support and attendance at the meetings. All of you are the most important part of the DAS.

The March meeting will feature a talk by Randall Detra titled, 'Green Bank Radio Astronomy'. Randall visited the Green Bank facility a few months ago and has a life-long interest in radio astronomy.

Greg Lee will start off our meeting with 'What's Up in Ursa Major'. Sarah Baird will present our Mini talk about 'Coming Attractions & Astronomical Events for 2006'

Our February meeting was well attended. I would like to thank Greg Lee, Glenn Bentley, and Dr. Henry Lindner for the very fine talks that were presented.

We are scheduled to hold a Messier Marathon on March 25<sup>th</sup>, which will be three days past third quarter moon. This will be an all-night observing event but it will not be a race to the finish. I would like to keep the marathon fun and educational. Perhaps each observer should set a realistic goal of accomplishment or even consider working with another person at the telescope. The DAS will present a certificate to each observer and a little something special for the person who logs the most Messier objects. If you plan to attend the Messier Marathon please contact David Swartout at (302) 836-4618 for the date, time and location of the marathon. This will be a joint event with the Delmarva Skygazers.

All DAS members and others who wish to present a Main Talk or a Mini Talk at a future DAS meeting, which requires the use of POWER POINT, are requested to contact Max Peterson a few days prior to the meeting. You may contact Max at 302-369-6982. This is to resolve any questions about how to set up power point. Please arrive early enough to insure proper function of the equipment prior to 8:00 PM. Slides and overheads should also be checked out and ready to go prior to the meeting start time.

The format for meetings this year will be as follows:

Board of Directors Meeting: 7:15 p.m.

Program Meeting: 8:00 p.m.

What's Up: 8:15 p.m.

Mini Talk: 8:30 p.m.

Main Talk: 8:45 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.

Fun and comradery after the meeting.

If you would like a tour of MCAO after the meeting, just ask John Case.

#### UPCOMING PROGRAMS FOR 2006

March 25 - The Messier Marathon—Contact Dave Swartout (302-836-4618) for location, time, and other information.

April 18, 2006 - Galileo's Satellites -- Hank Bouchelle at Calvin R. McCullough Planetarium; What's Up-- Bootes - Greg Lee;

May 16 - Dinner Meeting with Keynote Speaker Senior Editor Bob Naeye, *Sky & Telescope Magazine*; The Luther Porter Award; The Amateur Astronomer Of The Year Award; The Terrace at Greenhill, June 20 - The No Spin Space Shuttle -- Mike Borgia; What's Up - Draco - Greg Lee; Mini talk - Degenerate Matter.

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

#### OBSERVING THE SKY: AN INTRODUCTORY COURSE - SPRING 2006 -- Emil Volcheck

In April, the DAS will conduct a seminar series on introductory astronomy. This informal and interactive series is intended for those individuals who wish to have an introduction to "Observing the Sky". It will present basic information for observing and understanding a wide range of astronomical topics, including solar and lunar happenings, stars and constellations, appearance and locations of planets, as well as types of telescope and their use. Participants will receive a syllabus, sunrise/set tables, a calendar of astronomical events, and a handy planisphere to use in locating celestial objects. There will be opportunities for sky viewing (weather permitting <g>). The 4-session series will be held on Apr 5, 12 19, 26. Each session will begin at 8:00 PM and end at approximately 9:30 PM. All sessions will be held at the Mt. Cuba Astronomical Observatory on Hillside Mill Road in Greenville. The fee for DAS members is \$20 (\$35 for non-members). The deadline for registration is Mar 31 and pre-registration is required. Call the Observatory, at 302-654-6407, (or email to [mtcuba@udel.edu](mailto:mtcuba@udel.edu)) for a registration form.

STAR PARTIES AT MT. CUBA – Tom Sidowski

The planets Saturn and Jupiter, a possible bright comet and the usual sights of the starry sky will be prime targets at DAS star parties at Mt Cuba this spring. The schedule for upcoming star parties is listed below:

April 1st	Saturday	7:30pm
April 28 <sup>th</sup>	Friday	8:00pm
May 26th	Friday	8:00pm

#### BRANDYWINE CREEK S. P. OUTREACH PROGRAMS -- Lynn King

Saturday, April 22 – Solar Viewing 1-3PM  
Wednesday, Aug. 9 - Hayride & Moonrise

#### STATEMENTS OF CANDIDATES FOR PRESIDENT OF DAS FOR 2006-2008 TERM

(From Greg Weaver) -- I have been a member of the DAS for over 30 years. I'm an avid observer, using my C-11 whenever my schedule and clear skies permit. I help out several times a year on Public nights acting as cohost. There I enjoy showing guests treats the sky has to offer.

I have been active in limiting light pollution, working with legislators to pass county and state laws limiting lighting and the fixtures that cause light pollution. I enjoy teaching others about astronomy and exposing them to the beauty of the night sky.

(From Hank Bouchelle) -- As many of you may remember, I served two terms each as President and Vice-president of the DAS. Since then, except for a brief interruption, I have served as Board Member at Large. I have also served the society in smaller ways. I have enjoyed all of these offices immensely, and feel that they have given me useful experience.

The most important duties of the President are, of course to maintain the Society and to foster its purposes and ideals, as stated in the society's By-Laws.

However, another important role for the President is to set and then work with all elements of the society to achieve a positive and realistic agenda. I want to speak about what I think is important.

Engage the membership: To keep the members informed about the workings of the society, to engage them in decisions regarding its operation, and to make sure the society solicits and then supports their involvement.

To create a charter and statement of purpose for the Luther J. Porter Award. This award has every right to be a signature award for the society. Once it has a clear and stated purpose, it is proper to solicit support for it within and outside the society.

#### DAS 50TH ANNIVERSARY – Emil Volcheck

In November 2006, the DAS will mark its 50th year of operation. It seems appropriate to have a 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 occasionally for lunch, or booze, at a local watering hole!

To pull together 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. The initial work will be to get a group together to brainstorm for ideas on what kinds of activities we should include in the celebration - then bring a proposed program back to the board and members for approval.

Then, we'll be looking for people, including folks beyond the original group, who would take on the various elements of the proposal and make them happen.

We need as much help as we can get. Please give me a call (610-793-5156) or email me (emilv@ccil.org) to let me know your interest.

#### OBSERVING CLUBS – Dave Swartout

As a member of the DAS, you are also a member of the Astronomical League. One of the benefits of this membership is that you are able to participate in any of their 27 Observing Clubs. These clubs are designed to further develop and award your observing skills through the use of instruments, or just your naked eye. The observations you make are an individual effort that uses the honor system.

Some clubs have different levels of accomplishments and there is no time limit to complete. Upon finishing the required number of observations, the Astronomical League will review your logs, document your name along with our astronomical society, and will then issue you a certificate and pin to be awarded at our next monthly meeting. If you are interested and would like to participate, just log into <http://www.astroleague.org/> and click on the button Observing Clubs. Follow the rules and regulations and you will be on your way. In the following list you will find that there is something for everyone. There are

even clubs tailored to children to spark a budding interest in the night sky. Contact me for more information.

#### LIBRARY NEWS – Glenn Bentley

I would like to take this opportunity to invite the membership to drop by the lending library to check out potential reading material for coming snowy evenings.

#### LOANER TELESCOPES -- Emil Volcheck

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, 610-793-5156.

#### MCAO PUBLIC NIGHTS – Emil Volcheck

The Mt. Cuba Observatory Public Nights will continue right thru winter! 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>.

#### VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR MCAO AND DAS

-- Emil Volcheck

There are opportunities for individuals to help out MCAO and DAS by volunteering for two openings: (1) MCAO needs a librarian to maintain the collection in the Jackson Memorial Library. This is a time and pace yourself position. A bit of knowledge of the Dewey Decimal System would be helpful, but we have the reference volumes to do the small amount of such cataloging. (2) DAS needs an archivist. This opportunity has two main tasks, the first being to organize the files that have accumulated over the years (including removing unneeded/unwanted duplication in the filed material. The second is to pick up the "Chronicles" where Rene Van Caneghem has completed them – at the end of 1981, the 25<sup>th</sup> year of DAS. The material for the second 25 years needs to be compiled.

Any Volunteers? Call me - (610-793-5156).

#### AWARDS -- Dave Swartout

This is the last call for 2006 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.

#### 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](mailto:hanaganw@comcast.net).

#### SAWIN OBSERVATORY REMINDER

-- Tom Sidowski

DAS members who are interested in becoming users of the Sawin Observatory and/or the Big Red DOB, should contact me at 302-239-1844 to arrange for some hands-on training in using the facility.

#### 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 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 below with your check to:

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

Or give it to Bob at a meeting. Thank you.

Call any of us with your concerns!

#### DAS CONTACTS

Membership: Any of the following:

President: John Case -----	302-836-4888
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	302-239-1338
Library Chair: Glenn Bentley -----	610-869-0706
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
DAS PowerPoint Adviser-Max Peterson	302-369-6982
MCAO Web Page: <a href="http://www.mountcuba.org">www.mountcuba.org</a>	
DAS Web Page: <a href="http://www.delastro.org">www.delastro.org</a>	
Focus Editor: Lee Kaser, Phone	302-995-6251
	Fax: 302-995-6805
	E-mail: <a href="mailto:kaserlo@msn.com">kaserlo@msn.com</a>

**WEB SITES OF THE MONTH**

The prize-winning website of the Chester County Astronomical Society: [www.ccas.us](http://www.ccas.us)  
James Morgan's favorite site for hard-to-find small parts: [www.scopestuff.com](http://www.scopestuff.com)  
The GLOBE at night Star Party March 22-29: [www.globe.gov/globeatnight](http://www.globe.gov/globeatnight)  
Astronomical League Web Site: [www.astroleague.org](http://www.astroleague.org)

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**RESERVATION FORM FOR DAS MAY DINNER AND AWARDS MEETING**

The Terrace at Greenhill, May 16, 2005.  
Fellowship Hour 6:00 PM, Dinner and Program Begins at 7:00 PM

**Menu**

- (1) Grilled Chicken Breast with Mushroom and Marsala Wine Sauce: \$22.50
  - (2) Sliced Top Round of Beef with Marsala Wine Demiglaze 22.50
  - (3) Baked Filled of Flounder Stuffed with Crab Imperial 28.00
- Dinners include a choice of vegetable, potato or rice, dessert, rolls, and coffee or hot tea.

Number of Orders:	(1) Chicken	x 1 2 3 4	Amount:	\$ _____
	(2) Beef	x 1 2 3 4	Amount	\$ _____
	(3) Fish	x 1 2 3 4	Amount	\$ _____
			Total:	\$ _____

Cut off this form and send it with your check to Bob Mentzer at his address given on page 5.

For membership information, please contact any member of the Board. Thank you.