

# FOCUS

DELAWARE ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY

**AWARDS DINNER MEETING MAY 16**  
**MARS EXPLORER PROGRAM – BOB NAEYE, SKY AND TELESCOPE**  
**The Luther Porter Award; The Amateur Astronomer Of The Year Award**  
**The Terrace at Greenhill – Social Hour 6:00 PM, Dinner 7:00 PM**

Volume 51, No. 5  
MAY, 2006 (OUR 50<sup>TH</sup> YEAR)

**FROM THE EDITOR – Lee Kaser**

**FIRST AND FOREMOST, if you haven't already done sent in your reservation, call Bob Mentzer (302-764-1926) and make your reservation (hopefully with some of your family and friends) for our annual dinner meeting. There is a reservation form at the end of this FOCUS, but time is short, so pick your main course and let him know you will be there. We have an outstanding speaker in Bob Naeye, a Senior Editor of Sky and Telescope Magazine, and we will recognize the accomplishments of some of our own DAS members with our annual awards. Hank Bouchelle has worked with the Terrace to select an excellent menu. Don't miss this meeting!!**

Secondly, you have received an election ballot with this issue, offering you an excellent pair of choices for president, Hank Bouchelle and Greg Weaver, both fine astronomers and long-time members of DAS. Other offices on which you should vote are Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer, where incumbents are running unopposed (great people, but no suspense there). Please take a minute and fill out the ballot and mail it. The results of the election will be announced in the June issue of the FOCUS.

Finally, this is my final issue as editor of the FOCUS. For the past almost three years, I've tried to produce a monthly issue which would interest our members, and it's time to take a break and travel a bit. Beginning with

next issue, Marc Hutton, an avid observer and experienced newsletter writer, will take over. Actually, he's helping with this one, too, to learn whatever I can teach him about the process, which he will of course tailor to his taste—I'm sure he'll have some improvements.

Remember – to make the Focus interesting and relevant, your contributions are needed. Please send Marc items of interest, astrophotography, pictures of other activities, or even ads for astronomical equipment. Thanks for your help.

**PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE – John Case**

Our pleasant April meeting was held at the McCullough School Planetarium with a talk on my favorite satellites, the four Galilean ones of Jupiter, and a demo of the planetarium all by Hank Bouchelle. Greg Lee gave a nice "What's Up" as well.

You'll find postcard election ballots in this Focus. Please return your vote to Election Committee Chair, Costas Krikelis.

This month is our dinner meeting, the speaker is excellent, and his presentation WILL be accessible to significant others and family of DAS members too. I hope, then, you and yours will be able to join us. If needed, last minute calls to our Treasurer, Bob Mentzer ( 764-1926) can (very likely) get you dinner reservations..

**REMAINING PROGRAMS FOR SPRING 2006**

May 16 - Dinner Meeting with Keynote Speaker Senior Editor Bob Naeye, *Sky & Telescope* Magazine, speaking on the Mars Explorer Rovers. Located at "The Terrace at Greenhill" on DuPont Road.

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

**NEW MEMBERS THIS MONTH -- WELCOME**

HILARY GEARS	WILMINGTON, DE
BRYAN HOLLER	WILMINGTON, DE
MAX PETERSON	NEWARK, DE

**MARCH 29 SOLAR ECLIPSE FROM EL SALLUM, EGYPT** - Don Shedrick

This March I went on the Sky & Telescope sponsored Solar Eclipse Tour of Egypt. This was an 11 day tour which included in addition to the eclipse, all the most popular tourist attractions in Egypt such as the pyramids and Sphinx of Giza, a Nile River cruise from Luxor up to Aswan with stops along the way to see the ancient temples and tombs.

On the day before the eclipse, we left Cairo and headed west towards our eclipse site nearly on the center line of the path of totality in the far northwest corner of Egypt, only a few kilometers from the Libyan border. On the way, we stopped at the El Alamein WWII Museum, then on to our overnight stop at Matrouh, a very nice Mediterranean tourist haven.

Due to security restrictions, we had to be at our eclipse site very early the next morning, so we left our hotel at 4 am and headed west to our viewing site at El Sallum. This is a very small town on the Mediterranean with an old Egyptian military base on a high plateau overlooking the town. Upon arrival in the town, there were already many anxious eclipse viewers present. They were anxious, because there was a fog coming in from the high plateau, and as we snaked along the narrow road up to our viewing site the fog got steadily worse. It was about 8 am, and the eclipse total phase was to start at about 12:40 pm. We were all hoping the fog would burn off, as it was obvious it was very clear above the fog. Finally, after much gut wrenching, it finally lifted suddenly at about 11 am, in time to see the partial phase.

There were what seemed like hundreds of buses and thousands of people at the military base and it had taken on a carnival like

atmosphere, with music, food, and souvenirs for sale. Much of the crowd and security was due to the fact that Egyptian president Hosni Mubarak had decided to watch the eclipse from the same site. He had military everywhere, and large VIP tents.

With the fog safely gone, we all anticipated totality. As darkness increased, Venus was easily seen, and then a red sunset for 360 degrees around us. Finally, for a brief moment, a spectacular diamond ring, and then the indescribable glow of totality. As anyone who has seen a solar eclipse can tell you, the effect and beauty cannot be adequately described to someone who has not yet seen one, and photos do not do it justice. This was one of the most beautiful eclipses that I have seen, with an elegant symmetry to the corona making a pattern that reminds one of a butterfly. In addition to this, there were faint coronal streamers emanating from both solar poles. Several prominences were also visible. This was a fairly long eclipse at 4 minutes of totality, but it was over in what seemed like a flash, with another diamond ring.

After viewing the partial phases which followed totality, we boarded our buses and headed back to Matrouh for a celebration dinner in a large tent on the beach which also included local entertainment. The next morning we had a long bus ride across the desert back to Cairo, and began the rest of our tour of Egypt.

I have posted some eclipse photos on the DAS Yahoo email group (all the more reason to join today!)

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

Because of a very low number of registrations (including only a couple of DAS members), we had to postpone the course. We will give it another try in the Fall; so watch for the notice! And, let other folks, who might benefit from this introduction, know about it. The fee for DAS members is still expected to be \$20 (\$35 for non-members). If you would like to receive a personal notification about the next series, call the Observatory, at 302-654-6407, or email [mtcuba@udel.edu](mailto:mtcuba@udel.edu).

**STAR PARTIES AT MT. CUBA** -- Tom Sidowski

The Woodside Farm Creamery has confirmed five dates for a series of star parties this summer, listed below. These have been very

popular in the last couple of years, and we are sure you will enjoy them in 2006, (along with the ice cream, of course):

Saturday, June 17th (Solar Observing)	1:30 - 3:00pm
Saturday, July 8th	8:00 - 9:00pm
Saturday, July 22nd (Solar Observing)	1:30 - 3:00pm
Saturday, August 5th	8:00 - 9:00pm

The creamery is located at 1310 Little Baltimore Road, Hockessin, DE 19707.

Also, here are the next few DAS star party at Mt. Cuba dates:

Friday, May 26th	8:00pm
Friday, June 23rd	8:00pm
Friday, July 21st	8:00pm
Friday, August 25th	8:00pm

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

Wednesday, Aug. 9 - Hayride & Moonrise

#### STATEMENTS OF CANDIDATES FOR PRESIDENT OF DAS JULY, 2006 - JULY, 2008

(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.

(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.

#### 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 help us settle on what activities might be appropriate for this event, we'd like to hear suggestions from our members. If you have an idea, please do not hesitate to pass it on to me. You can give me a call (610-793-5156) or email (mtcuba@udel.edu) with that idea!!

#### 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 library at the June meeting to check out potential reading material for the coming cloudy summer evenings. The DAS Library wishes you and yours a safe and prosperous summer.

LOANER TELESCOPES -- Emil Volcheck  
Spring'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
- or 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 or 302-654-6407.

#### MCAO PUBLIC NIGHTS – Emil Volcheck

The Mt. Cuba Observatory Public Nights are scheduled thru June. 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>.

#### AWARDS -- Dave Swartout

The awards committee would like to thank those of you who sent in your nominations for the Luther Porter Award and Amateur Astronomer Award. Please join us for the May dinner meeting when they are presented.

#### 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](mailto: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](http://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.

**DAS MEMBER CLASSIFIED ADS**

**"1994 10" Meade LX-200 Schmidt-Cassegrain 'Go-To' telescope.- Mark B. Stutman**  
 Meade scope case, Meade 26mm, Televue 9, 15 & 35mm eyepieces, Meade 2" diagonal mirror, JMI NGF-S 2" motofocus, Tel Rad LED view finder, JMI wheely bars, Tuttle Dewcap, 2" Lumicon Deep Sky filter, folding observing chair, scope cover, Tundra accessory hard case. Asking \$1600. All offers considered. Home: (302) 369-1819 Cell: (302) 420-3289 E-Mail: [mbstutman@hotmail.com](mailto:mbstutman@hotmail.com)"

**Inexpensive Planetarium Software (MCAO)- Emil Volcheck**  
 Folks, I have finally got a replacement shipment from Imaginova of the capable, but inexpensive planetarium software: Night Sky Explorer. MCAO is selling them for \$8 per copy. This is certainly one of the best deals around for a very capable program. If you or anyone you know, would like to get their feet wet, this is a good start. PC or MAC, works with either platform. Let me know if interested.

**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: Vacant until June, 2006  
 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: [www.mountcuba.org](http://www.mountcuba.org)  
 DAS Web Page: [www.delastro.org](http://www.delastro.org)  
 Focus Editor: Lee Kaser, Phone 302-995-6251  
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 Future Focus Editor: Marc Hutton Phone 302-351-3415  
 E-mail [Huttonm@comcast.net](mailto:Huttonm@comcast.net)

**WEB SITES OF THE MONTH**

Green Bank Radio Astronomy Observatory: <http://www.gb.nrao.edu/GBT/GBT.shtml>  
 Arecibo (Chile) Observatory: <http://www.naic.edu/> (NASA/NSF/Cornell University)  
 Telrad Sky Object Charts: [http://www.solarius.com/msas/findercharts/messier\\_objects.html](http://www.solarius.com/msas/findercharts/messier_objects.html)  
 Mashing Moon Myths: <http://www.Clavius.org>

**MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION OR RENEWAL 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 and send it with your check to Bob Mentzer

at his address given on page 5. 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   
 The Night Sky (recommended for new members) \$18.00

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

STREET ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

Total Submitted ----- \$

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_ TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_

E-MAIL ADDRESS (optional) \_\_\_\_\_

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

Any Questions? Call us.

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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.