

FOCUS

DELAWARE ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY

**Next Meeting – September 16, 2008 at 8:00 PM
--What I did on My Summer Vacation--**

**Speakers: DAS Members
Mt. Cuba Astronomical Observatory**

Vol. 53, No. 7, September, 2008

FROM THE PRESIDENT ■ *Hank Bouchelle*

I hope that everyone had a restful and refreshing summer!

I hope you will agree that we had an exciting group of speakers last year, one that will be hard to match. Nevertheless, this season we have our 2008 Luther J. Porter Educator Award winner Bob Summerfield, our own Bob Mentzer, Al Weber, Greg Lee, and Dave Groski. Naturalist Sally O'Byrne will be our speaker at the dinner meeting, and there are other surprises waiting.

I hope you will agree that this is yet another year to which we can look forward.

As is my custom, I have included the Board meeting agenda for the members to peruse. Please feel free to attend the Board meetings and share your thoughts.

■ DAS SCHEDULED EVENTS & MEETINGS ■

Sat., Sept. 13th - Last of the series of Star Parties at Woodside Dairy - at dusk (This is the Cloud Date as rain spoiled 9/6's original date.)

Tues, Sept. 16th - Monthly Board meeting - 7pm
Monthly Membership meeting - 8pm

Sat., Sept. 20th - Star Party at Mt. Cuba - at dusk

Fri., Oct. 10th - Astro Photo SIG at Mt. Cuba - 7:30pm

Focus Editor

As many of you know, Joe Neuberger has agreed to accept the appointment as our newest Board member, Publications Chair and editor of the Focus. Please join me in congratulating him on his appointment and wish him well in a challenging job that Lee Kaser has performed so well before him. Make a note that future items for the Focus can be sent to him at: JRNeuberger@gmail.com.

DAS BOARD MEETING

7:00 p.m., September 16, 2008
at the Mt. Cuba Astronomical Observatory

Agenda:

Review of June's minutes
Treasurer's Report – Bob Mentzer
Standing committee reports/requests/notes
Focus/Publications – Joe Neuberger
Library- Glenn Bentley
Education Programs- Bob Karcha
Sawin Observatory Tom Sidowski
Observing – Greg Lee
Astronomy Course?
Speaker Remuneration
Expanding use of e-mail list
Forward Planning
Refreshment Chair
Chartered Awards Committee
Other?

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>.

TELESCOPE NIGHT AT WOODSIDE

■ *Tom Sidowski*

The final Summer DAS and Woodside Farm Creamery sponsored "Telescope Nights at Woodside" will be held from dusk to closing on September 13th. The creamery is located at 1310 Little Baltimore Rd. in Hockessin. Check out their website at <http://WoodsideFarmCreamery.com> for more info. Come on out with or without a telescope and enjoy sharing your hobby with the public.

Saturday, September 13, 2008 - at dusk to closing

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 own 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.

Saturday, Sept. 20th - at dusk

Friday, Oct. 20th - at dusk

Friday, Nov. 7th - 8:00pm

Friday, Dec. 5th - 7:30pm

BOB NAEYE IS APPOINTED AS EDITOR-IN-CHIEF OF SKY & TELESCOPE ■ *Bob Mentzer*

The September issue of S & T (page 10) has the news that Bob Naeye is now the new editor in chief.

Bob has given two talks to our group, the first being the May '06 dinner meeting when he talked on the Mars Explorer. He made an encore performance in April of '08 when he spoke on the Gamma-ray Telescope.

Bob has worked for *Astronomy* magazine, *Mercury* magazine, and *Sky & Telescope*, so he brings a wealth of experience to his new job. We wish him well.

MAGAZINE SUBSCRIPTIONS ■ *Bob Mentzer*

You can now mail *Sky and Telescope* subscriptions, at the club rate, directly to S&T. If the renewal card says \$32.95 you will save 5 cents over the \$33 we charge for a renewal. Both S&T and

Astronomy send out renewal notices about 6 months before your subscription expires. These renewal forms don't have the expiration date for your subscription. But this information is part of the mailing label that is printed on the front cover of each month's magazine. So if you're not sure of your expiration date, check the magazine label before you send S&T a check. *Astronomy* subscriptions must still be processed through the club to get the favorable subscription rate.

2009 OBSERVER'S HANDBOOK ■ *Bob Mentzer*

It is now time to order the *2009 Observer's Handbook*. The cost will be about \$18. You can reserve a copy by calling, emailing, or seeing me at the September meeting.

Robert Mentzer--764-1926--RobMentzer@comcast.net

FROM THE EDITOR ■ *Joe Neuberger*

This is my first edition of *Focus* as the new editor, and I want to introduce myself. My name is Joe Neuberger and I am a newer member of DAS and new, too, to the hobby of Astronomy. I am retired and a life-long resident of Wilmington. I am happy that the Board has chosen to accept my offer to serve as the *Focus* editor, and I would like to thank those members who I have met thus far for their gracious welcome of me into the DAS. I would also like to thank Lee Kaser for "showing me the ropes" concerning the newsletter and thank him for his past service as its editor. I can be reached at JRNeuberger@gmail.com for the submission of items of interest or photos for inclusion in future issues.

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.



See Special Preview Info on Page 5's Website of the Month

**DAS ASTROPHOTOGRAPHY SPECIAL
INTEREST GROUP ■ *Bill Hanagan***

The next meeting of the AP SIG is scheduled for 7:30 P.M. on Friday, October 10 at Mt. Cuba. The DAS astrophotography special interest group (DAS AP SIG) meets on Friday nights at 7:30 P.M. 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.

You can get started in astrophotography with just your current camera mounted on a tripod or a motorized telescope by taking wide field photographs of meteor showers, conjunctions, constellations, and star trails. As you move to progressively fainter and smaller subjects, you'll need better equipment. Joining the AP SIG is a great way to learn what equipment you need and what works well before you spend your money.

If you are interested in joining the AP SIG, just email your name, address, and phone number to me at hanaganw@comcast.net (using "@" and "." in place of ? and ?).

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 ■ *Glenn Bentley*

I hope everybody had a safe and productive summer. I would like to use this opportunity to invite the membership to drop by the library at the end of the September meeting to check out our reading material.

**DAS AMATEUR TELESCOPE MAKING SPECIAL
INTEREST GROUP ■ *Bill Hanagan***

The DAS Amateur Telescope Making (ATM) Special Interest Group (SIG) 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 manner of telescope making, mirror making, and the making of accessories for telescopes and observing.

Anyone interested in joining the ATM SIG should email their name, address, and phone number to me at hanaganw@comcast.net (using "@" and "." in place of ? and ?). Meeting dates are announced primarily by email, so if you are interested in telescope making, be sure to let me know!

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 email 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 website under DAS Resource Links.

MEMBERSHIP EXPIRATION NOTICES

if you receive the *FOCUS* by email, you will be notified by email. If you receive it in the mail and 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 -----302-561-0810
- Archivist:* Rene Van Caneghem --- ----410-392-3718
- Board Members at-large:*
- ATM and AP SIGs:* Bill Hanagan -----302-239-0949
- Chairman, Observatory Committee and 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 -----410-869-0706
- Ad Hoc Star Parties:* Sheila Vincent---302-322-4739
- Elections Comm. Chair:* Sarah Baird--302-561-0810
- Awards Comm. Chair:* David Swartout--302-836-4618
- MCAO Web Page:* www.MountCuba.org
- DAS Web Page:* www.DelAstro.org



THE UNIVERSE
YOURS TO DISCOVER

INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF
ASTRONOMY
2009

Explore the Universe during the 2009 International Year of Astronomy!

In 2009 we celebrate the 400th anniversary of Galileo's first observations of the universe through a telescope. In honor of this event, the International Astronomical Union (IAU) and the United Nations have proclaimed 2009 as the International Year of Astronomy to celebrate and spread awareness of astronomy's contributions to society and culture, stimulate young people's interest in science, portray astronomy as a global peaceful endeavor, and nourish a scientific outlook in society.



MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION OR RENEWAL

If you have questions, call any of the member representatives listed. Otherwise, just check the appropriate boxes and complete the form below. Print it or 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.

If you're just joining us for the first time,
THANKS, and welcome to the DAS!

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION OR RENEWAL FORM--Make Checks Payable to DAS

New Member
Renewal

Senior/Family Membership	\$20.00	<input type="checkbox"/>
Junior membership (16/under)	\$10.00	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sky and Telescope Magazine	\$33.00	<input type="checkbox"/>
Astronomy Magazine	\$34.00	<input type="checkbox"/>

NAME _____

STREET ADDRESS _____

Total Submitted _____ \$

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____ TELEPHONE _____

E-MAIL ADDRESS _____

WEBSITE OF THE MONTH
www.JourneyToPalomar.org



America's First Journey into Space

Before the Apollo program reached for the moon, there was the Palomar Telescope that reached for the stars.

More than five years in the making, *The Journey to Palomar* combines never before seen archival materials and interviews with America's top astronomers, historians and authors to tell the story of Chicago-born astronomer George Ellery Hale (1868-1938).

The story unfolds like a three act drama as it traces the personal and professional struggles to build the four largest telescopes of the 20th century, culminating in the 20-year effort to build the million pound telescope on Palomar Mountain, considered the "moon shot" of the 1930s and 40s.

Hale's giant telescopes reigned over the 20th century scientific world, enabling the greatest

astronomical discoveries since Copernicus and Galileo, making headlines throughout the 20th century with revelations such as Edwin Hubble's 1929 discovery of the expansion of the Universe.

The combination of Hale's dramatic story set against the backdrop of American history and humankind's reach into the far corners of the universe makes for a film with appeal for viewers of all ages.

The Journey to Palomar is the creation of Los Angeles filmmakers Todd and Robin Mason. Inspired by the book *The Perfect Machine* by Ronald Florence. Available on DVD after November 10th through PBS Home Video at www.shopPBS.org. DVD includes exclusive extras on the James Webb Space Telescope, the Giant Magellen Telescope and the Thirty Meter Telescope.

The documentary airs Nov. 10th on PBS. Check local listings for the time in our area. More information and the film's trailer can be seen at www.JourneyToPalomar.org.

PACIFIC ASTRONOMY Sept. 13th at PATS
PATS Join filmmakers Todd
AND TELESCOPE SHOW and Robin Mason as they
kick off this year's PATS
convention with a pre-
view of this upcoming PBS documentary. 

DELMARVA STARGAZERS' "NO FRILLS" STAR PARTY RUNS SEPT. 24-28 ■ Bill Hanagan

Twice a year, in the spring and fall, the Delmarva Stargazers host a major regional star party at Tuckahoe State Park near Queen Anne, MD which goes on for several days. Tuckahoe is about a 90-minute drive from northern New Castle County, DE, depending on traffic. In addition to substantially darker skies than we have in Wilmington and Newark, these star parties offer the opportunity to camp on the observing field.

The spring Stargaze has historically featured extras such as talks on Friday and Saturday evening, a Saturday morning swap meet, telescope making demonstrations, "door" prizes, and a raffle. While the frills add a nice touch, observing with other enthusiasts is really the main event.

The fall Stargaze is dubbed the "No Frills" star party because it has few of these extras. However, there is still coffee, tea, and hot chocolate available all night, as well as hot dogs and other refreshments. This year, the "No Frills" star party will be held from Wednesday, Sept 24 to Sunday morning, September 28. For more details and to register, visit

<http://www.delmarvastargazers.org>. You can sign up to attend one or more evenings. You can even wait to see what the weather is like and register on-site.

If you don't like to camp, you can park before dark with your headlights aiming out the gate and leave anytime you like. And, there is a new Best Western hotel in Denton, MD, which is 15 minutes away. A Holiday Inn Express and other lodging can be found in Easton, MD which is about 25 minutes away. Don't forget to bring your red flashlight and cold weather gear.

I recommend that you tour the field before sunset so you get to know some of the people attending. Many of them are regulars at these star parties and there is an excellent chance you will meet up with them at a future star party.

Naturally, it's a good idea to bring your own telescope to these star parties, but it's hardly a requirement. Amateur astronomers, as a rule, love to share the views through their telescopes. Truss tube Dobsonians as large as 25" often make appearances, and these can give awe inspiring views of objects that appear to be little more than faint smudges in smaller telescopes.



**ASTROPHOTOGRAPHS
OF THE MONTH
FOR SEPTEMBER**

**#1 Stars Appearing Near the Horizon
at Dusk ■ Bill Hanagan**

Cherry Springs State Park, in Cherry Springs, PA, is the second “International Dark Sky Park” and is about a six hour drive from northern Delaware. Keeping the skies dark at Cherry Springs is a top priority for state park officials, who view the dark sky as a natural resource. The first International Dark Sky Park is at the Natural Bridges National Monument in Utah.

Details: This photo is a 25 second exposure at f/1.8 with a 50mm lens on a tripod mounted Canon 20D digital single-lens reflex (DSLR) camera operating at ISO 200.

**#2 The Lagoon Nebula (M8)
from Cherry Springs
State Park ■ Bill Hanagan**

Details: This image is the result of five 1 minute exposures that were dark-subtracted and stacked to reduce noise in the image. The individual photos were taken using a 4.5" f/4 home-built Newtonian telescope. A Televue Paracorr coma corrector was used, making the effective focal length and focal ratio 526mm and f/4.6, respectively. A Canon EOS 20D operating at ISO 800 was



used together with an old Celestron CG-5 mount. The photos were obtained without guiding. Polar alignment was accomplished using only the polar alignment scope in the RA axis of the mount.