

FOCUS

DELAWARE ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY

Next Meeting: Tuesday, May 20 -- 6:00 pm for fellowship, 7:00 for dinner
Ed Oliver House (formerly the Terrace at Greenhill)
Speaker: Julia Dooley, on the ANDRILL Project in Antarctica

Vol. 53 No. 5, May, 2008



Julia Dooley

at

90° South Latitude? Almost, anyway.

THIS MONTH'S PROGRAM: This is our annual Awards Dinner, and will feature an outstanding Delaware teacher, Julia Dooley, as our Keynote Speaker, talking about her recent project in Antarctica. You will find information about the program below. You won't want to miss it!

FROM THE PRESIDENT

-- Hank Bouchelle

I am sure that those in attendance at the April meeting enjoyed Bob Naeye's talk on the Gamma-Ray Large Area Space Telescope. It was truly fascinating and the quality and number of questions afterward

revealed that I am not the only one who thinks so! Some of you may have heard that Bob is now Editor in Chief of Sky and Telescope magazine. And we found him first!!

The May gathering is, of course, our annual dinner meeting. Bob Mentzer has been alerting folks. Thanks, Bob! The last I heard we were up to 34 reservations, so with limited seating, be sure to make your reservations soon, especially since Bob must inform the Ed Oliver House restaurant of our dinner choices. You can find more complete information below in this Focus.

Speaking of the dinner meeting, we have a wonderful speaker lined up in the person of Julie Dooley. You may have seen the article about her and her experiences in Antarctica in the News-Journal. There are brief descriptions of her and her talk elsewhere in the Focus. I know I don't want to miss it.

I am pleased to announce that Joe Neuberger has agreed to be 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.

**ANNUAL AWARDS DINNER - Bob Mentzer
IT'S ONLY A FEW DAYS AWAY!!**

You need to move quickly to make your reservations for this dinner May 20, at 6:00 PM for fellowship and 7:00 PM for dinner. You'll enjoy the dinner speaker, and an excellent dinner at Ed Oliver's (formerly the Terrace at Greenhill), now under new management. You will also see some of your fellow members of DAS honored for their activities and dedication.

There is a form attached at the end of this issue, it's too late to mail it, but you can refer to it for the menu. The restaurant is under new management and they ask for a final count a week before the dinner. I can't guarantee that I can squeeze you in if you don't respond before the May 13th reservation deadline. E-mail me (robmentzer@comcast.net) or call me at 764-1926 with your dinner selection(s) and pay me later.

AWARDS DINNER GUEST SPEAKER

Our guest speaker for the 2008 Delaware Astronomical Society's Awards Dinner will be Julia Dooley, who recently was recognized with a wonderful honor and opportunity and will tell us about it as our Keynote Speaker. Briefly, Julia was selected as one of five teachers from the United States to be imbedded as a teacher with the ANDRILL Project. The mission of ANDRILL, the ANtarctic DRILLing Project, is to drill back in time to recover a history of paleoenvironmental climate that will guide understanding of future environmental changes. This past season, ANDRILL science teams drilled 1,138 meters below the Antarctic Sea floor to allow us to look back 19 million years ago.

Julia, a Talent Development Teacher with Christina School District had the unique opportunity to be part of an ANDRILL seismic survey in the Mackay Sea Valley, sleeping in tents and living on the sea ice for nearly three weeks. She was also able to take day trips to the Wright Valley in the dry valleys area, and to Cape Evans, main base of the doomed Robert Scott party.

Julia will share her adventures, describe her observations of one very prominent star, and inform us about the ANDRILL project, its applications for

future space exploration and other space related projects.

This spring brings with it officer elections. If you have not already received it, you will soon receive the official ballot. Please remember to mark your ballot and send it to Sarah Baird, our Elections Chair. The returned ballot is a vote of confidence for your officers, and lets them know what kind of job they are doing.

Program Planning Meeting

Mark your calendar for Sunday, June 8. At 2:00 pm in the library at Mt. Cuba Astronomical Observatory we have scheduled our annual meeting to plan programs and activities for the coming year. This is your chance to voice your thoughts about what you would like to see and hear in the coming DAS season.

If you have ideas but cannot attend the meeting, contact information for Board members is always listed in The Focus.

ASTRONOMY COURSE FOR MIDDLE-HIGH SCHOOL TEACHERS – Harry Shipman

Harry Shipman and Tim Brewer, a physics teacher from St. George's Vo-Tech High School, will teach an astronomy course for school teachers in August. It will focus on the 12th grade material from the State of Delaware Standards. It will include stellar life cycles, evolution of the universe, and exobiology. Students should be able to develop a lesson plan based on this material, teach this lesson, and report on the results of teaching this lesson. The class will meet for full days on August 11th and 14th, will take a field trip to NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center in Greenbelt, Maryland on August 15th, and will meet for three 3-hour follow-up sessions after school in the fall. There will be no charge for this course, which is supported by the Delaware Foundation for Science and Mathematics Education.

Teachers who are interested in taking this course should contact me (phone 302-831-2986, e-mail harrys@udel.edu) before June 16.

Bad News

It has fallen to me to share some unhappy news. Emil Volcheck, former DAS officer, long time Board member over almost all of the past 50 years, dedicated volunteer in many areas, and the recipient of every award the Society can bestow, has been taken ill. He is recovering at Chester County Hospital. Keep him in your thoughts and prayers.

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 MEETING TOPICS

June 17 – Astrophotography Program

- (1) Bill Hanagan and the Astrophotography SIG
- (2) Wayne King

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.

The final star party for this season will be: Friday, June 13 @ Dusk

MT. CUBA TREE PROJECT – Bob Mentzer

There is still plenty of good firewood, now dried for several months, left from our major tree-trimming project, and you are welcome to all you want. You will need a chain saw. Contact Bob Mentzer for details.

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.

DAS ASTROPHOTOGRAPHY SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP -- Bill Hanagan

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

We won't be at Mt. Cuba for this month's meeting, but I would like to take this opportunity to invite the membership to drop by the library at the end of the June meeting to check out reading material for the upcoming summer "extended loan" season. That's right folks, borrow a book, video or audio tape and get to keep it all summer. Clear Skies and have a great summer.

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!

SUMMER ASTRONOMY COURSES FOR TEACHERS -- Hank Bouchelle

The DAS has quite a few teachers among its membership, and this may be of interest to you should you be one of

them. And please feel free to pass this information along to teachers of your acquaintance who may be interested in astronomy education.

The College of the Atlantic in Bar Harbor, Maine, offers accredited two and four credit summer residential courses for teachers in a variety of subjects, including astronomy. The College is set on the shores of Frenchman Bay and offers close access to the beauty of Acadia National Park and the many attractions of Mt. Desert Island. Room and board are available at the College.

Introduction to Astronomy (July 13-26) is a four credit course that presents astronomy concepts and content principally through a variety of activities that participants can use in their classrooms, and thus is suitable for teachers of all grade levels.

Teaching with a Portable Planetarium (July 7-August 2) is a two graduate credit course that provides instruction in setting up, taking down, and maintaining a portable planetarium, and includes the development of instructional programs.

Further information may be obtained by contacting Jean Sylvia, Associate Director of Summer Programs, at jsylvia@coa.edu or 800-597-9500.

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 set up this group service, 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 web site 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 – Gus Swartout -----

302-836-4618

MCAO Web Page: www.mountcuba.org

DAS Web Page: www.delastro.org

FOCUS Editor: As I retire (again), I would like to thank Joe Neuberger for volunteering as the new Focus Editor. He and I will work together to get the June issue out, then it will be all his show. I've enjoyed doing it but am now overcommitted. Thanks for the help, Joe.

WEBSITE OF THE MONTH

<http://www.free-ed.net/free-ed/Science/Astronomy/astronomy01/lessonMain.asp?iNum=1>

A long title -- you might do well to copy-and-paste it into your browser. This site will answer a lot of questions you might have about our universe!!

Annual Awards Dinner Reservation Form

The Terrace at Greenhill -- (Oliver's) May 20, 2008

Fellowship Hour 6:00 PM Dinner and Program begin at 7:00 PM

MENU -- Price includes appetizer, salad, entree, vegetable, starch and desert, fresh baked rolls and butter, coffee, tea, decaffeinated coffee, and iced tea.

ENTREE

- 1. Grilled chicken breast in a mushroom and Marsala wine sauce. \$26
- 2. Sliced top round of beef in a mushroom and Marsala wine sauce \$26
- 3. Baked filet of salmon served with cucumber dill cream sauce. \$29
- 4. Penne primavera tossed with garlic, olive oil, fresh herbs \$26
and seasonal vegetables

Number of Orders:

- (1) Chicken \$26 x _____ (Number) = Amount \$ _____
- (2) Beef \$26 x _____ (Number) = Amount \$ _____
- (3) Salmon \$29 x _____ (Number) = Amount \$ _____
- (4) Primavera \$26 x _____ (Number) = Amount \$ _____

TOTAL \$ _____

Cut off or print this form and send it with your check to: Robert Mentzer
605 River Road
Wilmington DE 19809

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. 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. Thanks, and welcome to the DAS if you're just joining us for the first time.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION OR RENEWAL FORM

- | | | | | |
|------------|--------------------------|------------------------------|---------|--------------------------|
| New Member | <input type="checkbox"/> | Senior/Family Membership | \$20.00 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Renewal | <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 _____