



# The Prairie Astronomer

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## NASA

Can any one tell me what NASA stands for? National Aeronautics and Space Administration? No, thats what the letters mean. But what does NASA STAND for? Way back in 1958 Congress passed the National Aeronautics and Space Act. It stipulated that NASA "should provide for the widest practicable and appropriate dissemination of information concerning its activities and the results thereof." They established shortly there after the Technology Utilization Program which would handle this.

So what did all this mean? Ironically the act passed means the true intent of NASA is not to conquer space, land on the Moon or send space probes to the planets. It first and foremost mission is to provide the human race with down to earth benefits that can be used by man now. Space travel itself and the subsequent planetary exploration is a pleasant side benefit.

As a result of this program many benefits have been realized through the space program. Areas that have been directly touched are industry, health, medicine, earth resources, communications, transportation, and recreation.

More specifically, Cryo-Anchors which prevent thawing beneath the Alaskan pipeline extending beneath the frozen arctic tundra. Waste treatment facilities that acutually use recycled waste to treat waste water making the water reuseable. Silent Communications

Alarm Network(SCAN), a pen sized security transmitter to help security guards provide more immediate aid when needed. Solar Energy technology which will provide 80 to 85% of the heating and cooling requirements for homes, apartments, and business'. Intumescent paint which actually swells and forms a thick insulation when exposed to fire. Fireplace systems that are 45% more efficient than conventional fireplaces. Solid state watches and miniature calculators. Meal systems for the elderly that are nutritious, do not require refrigeration, have a long shelf life and are easy to prepare. AM/FM/CB/Combination stereo systems for cars. Golf clubs and fishing rods made of reinforced composite materials developed through space technology. Tempered foam for football helmets which has a compression rating of 90%.

So what does all of this sudden flurry of benefits mean to us the astronomy population? Alot, because most of the spinoff benefits mentioned above touch nearly all of us in one way or another. And it is important that we understand this and can convey this to the general public in a tactful, diplomatic, and understandable fashion. Why? Because as you can see around you it is becoming increasingly difficult for the professional astronomer to wage the war against creeping light polution, fewer choice sites for new observatory construction, and an uphill battle for funding of the giants needed to see



## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Thanks this month go out to those who made this years National Astronomy Day observance a success.

Special thanks go to Dave Knisely, Rick Johnson, Bryan Schaaf, Andy Corkill, and John Lortz. Helping to deliver a considerable amount of equipment as well as helping to set up. John Lortz this year not only provide guidance for the day but also put up a fairly elaborate display. It featured an enclosed booth with slide presentation complete with sound track script by his wife.

Bryan rebuilt our large stand up sign so it is more permanent and graphic. On one side is the club name and logo and on the other side is the National Day announcement.

So again thanks to those who helped further the advancement of amateur astronomy.

Russ Genzmer

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The Prairie Astronomer is published monthly by the Prairie Astronomy Club.

Membership structure.

1. Newsletter subscriber only, \$6.00. Over 21 years of age no voting privileges (newsletter only).

2. Junior member (New) \$6.00. 21 years of age and less. Receive newsletter and club voting privileges. No Sky and Tele subscription through club at this rate.

3. Regular member \$19.00. Receives newsletter, voting privileges, Sky and Telescope subscription with dues through club. No age restriction.

4. Family members \$21.00. Same as regular member, but receives 2 votes in elections.

Numbers 2,3, and 4 above also can receive as an elective, Astronomy Magazine through the club at \$12.00 per year. Address membership renewals to: Prairie Astronomy Club, Inc., P.O. Box 80553, Lincoln Ne. 68501. address all articles for inclusion in the newsletter to Russ Genzmer 5301 South 30th, Lincoln Ne. 68516. All articles must be received 10 days before the meeting date.



through all this. The answer? You guessed it. The space program. So you see, we all need it.

\*\*\*\*\* NEWSWORTHY NOTES \*\*\*\*\*

A nova has appeared in the constellation Veysius Householdus. The new addition was noted at 6:04 pm on May 10th and was named Amanda Christine, welcoming her home were her parents Ron and Cindy Veys and missy who is the big sister now.

Andy Corkill of our club has completed his search for the Messiers and it has been submitted for inspection by the Astronomical League. He is going to be present at the Mid States Convention as is Earl and Margie Moser and hopes to have it presented to him at that time. All of us in the Prairie Astronomy Club and especially those of us who already have it congratulate him on this achievement. Now, Andy get ready for the Hershels.

The latest Telescope Making magazine is in. It is \$1.50 and the following people have standing orders and can pick it up at the meeting. Ron Veys, Norm Frerichs, Dan Neville, John Lortz, John Johnson. We have some extra issues available on a first come first serve basis.

We should be able to have some good general discussion about that comet that suddenly appeared in the northern sky earlier this month.

The Mid States Convention is rapidly approaching. June 3,4,5 at William Jewel College in Liberty Mo. If you haven't registered call Tom Martinez 228-5846.

As was mentioned at the last meeting here is a reprint of the 8 basic areas the members of the PAC stressed they wished the club could help them with.

1. Establishing worthwhile observing programs.
2. Electronics and computers.
3. Technical discussion on distance of objects, and black holes.
4. Optics, eyepieces, and mounts.
5. General study constellations and planets.
6. Telescope building.
7. More efficient use of the telescope in locating objects.
8. Occulation and grazing observing.

If you have an interest in any of the above areas and would like to give a short program 15-20 minutes please contact John Lortz.

## Observer's Report

In Draco, one bright galaxy is NGC-5907, an 11th magnitude edge on spiral located 2 1/2 degrees south and one west of iota Draconis. The galaxy shows as a streak of light with a slightly brighter center and a vague dark lane.

In Canes Venatici, M3 is a beautiful globular cluster located six degrees east of Beta Comae Berenices. It show hundreds of faint stars in a six inch and the cluster is really spectacular in an eight inch. 4 1/2 degrees east of M3 is a somewhat smaller globular cluster NGC 5466 which should also show stars in a 6 inch.

The best globular in the northern sky is of course, M13 2 1/2 degrees south and a bit west of Eta Herculis. However, those with six or eight inch



instruments should look just north of the cluster for the small 12th magnitude galaxy NGC 6207. This object is a good test object for those amateurs who wish to know how faint they can go.

For those who like planetary nebulae, NGC 6210 should prove very interesting. It is about 1 degree south and 1.5 degrees west of 51 Herculis and shows up as a small bluish fuzzy disk with a 12th magnitude central star.

The nice thing about summer is the large number of bright globular clusters visible, such as M5, located just north of the fifth magnitude star 5 Serpentis. It is a dense cluster requiring high power on a six or eight inch but when resolved shows up as a blazing ball of stars. And, just when you thought it was safe to forget about galaxies, look at the close pair NGC 5363 and NGC 5364 located three and one half degrees north

and 1 1/2 degrees west of Tau Virginis. 5363 appears as a small round spot of light and 5364 is a large fuzzy patch with a brighter nucleus as seen with an eight inch.

For those of you with dark and unobstructed south horizons, I suggest M83, a large spiral galaxy located 3 degrees west and two degrees north of h Centauri. My eight inch shows a fairly bright oval nucleus with a large elliptical area of haze surrounding it. Many patchy details are visible in the hazy outer region and those with 10 inch telescopes should be able to see the spiral structure in the galaxy clearly.

David Knisely

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