



# The Prairie Astronomer

The Official Newsletter Of The Prairie Astronomy Club, Inc.

May 2002

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 OAS Web Page: [www.OmahaAstro.com](http://www.OmahaAstro.com)  
 Astronomy in NE: [www.blackstarpress.com/arln](http://www.blackstarpress.com/arln)  
 Hyde Observatory [www.hydeobservatory.info](http://www.hydeobservatory.info)  
 NEB-STAR [www.neb-star.org](http://www.neb-star.org)

## MAY PROGRAM

### May program: Astronomy Software Demonstration

**PAC-LIST:** If you have an e-mail address and are not on the PAC List, you may subscribe by submitting an e-mail to [list@4w.com](mailto:list@4w.com). Write "Subscribe PAC-List" in the body of the e-mail.

## CLUB EVENTS

### PAC MEETING

**Tuesday, May 28, 2002, 7:30 PM**  
at Hyde Memorial Observatory

### CLUB STAR PARTY

**Friday, June 7, 2002**  
Olive Creek S.R.A.

### UNL STUDENT OBSERVATORY

**Monday, June 10, 2002**  
Annular Solar Eclipse

### Hyde Observatory

**Monday, June 10, 2002**  
Annular Solar Eclipse - 6:30 PM to Sundown

### NSP PLANNING MEETING

**Thursday, June 13, 2002**  
Mahoney State Park

### PAC MEETING

**Tuesday, June 25, 2002, 7:30 PM**  
at Hyde Memorial Observatory

### Mahoney Star Party Dates

June 14, 4 days after new moon  
 July 12, 2 days after new moon  
 September 27, 2 days before 3rd quarter.

## READ THIS NEWSLETTER ONLINE

Those who wish to help with publishing and postage costs by receiving only the on-line version of the newsletter should contact Liz Bergstrom at 464-2038. Mark Dahmke or Liz can give you the logon account and password for access. You may receive both the mailed version and the on-line version if you wish.

A printable PDF version of this newsletter is also available through the website.

## CONTENTS:

Secretary's Report - By Lee Taylor	Page	2
Hyde Schedule	Page	3
June Star Party - By Jeff King	Page	3
Astronomy Day- By Dave Knisely	Page	3
Jerry Williams - By Erik Hubl	Page	4
Star Chart	Page	6
Events Calendar	Page	7
Club Viewing Site Directions and List of Club Officers	Page	8

The Prairie Astronomer is published monthly by the Prairie Astronomy Club, Inc. Membership expiration date is listed on the mailing label. Membership dues are: **Regular \$20/yr, Family \$22/yr.** Address all new memberships and renewals to: **The Prairie Astronomy Club, Inc., PO Box 5585, Lincoln, NE 68505-0585.** For other club information, please contact one of the club officers listed on the last page of this newsletter. Newsletter comments and articles should be submitted to: **Mark Dahmke, PO Box 80266, Lincoln, NE 68501 or [mdahmke@4w.com](mailto:mdahmke@4w.com),** no less than ten days prior to the club meeting. The Prairie Astronomy Club meets the last Tuesday of each month at Hyde Memorial Observatory in Lincoln, NE.

## Secretary's Report — Lee Taylor

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### Prairie Astronomy Club Minutes for 4/30/02

Dave Knisely called the meeting to order. We began with a fond memorial for Jerry Williams. RIP, Jerry.

The last star party was GREAT. We had more people there than we've had for quite some time.

Congratulations to the following Messier award winners:

Jeff King and Bill Wells: Messier Certificate

Dave Hamilton and Dave and Joey Churilla: Messier Pins

The next star party is May 10th.

Remember that May 5th is the conjunction of 5 planets, but enjoy them any time for the next several weeks!

Hyde volunteer coordinator Dave Churilla is asking any member who'd like to help to come out to Hyde on May 4th and 11th with your 'scopes to help view five planets in a single night.

Hyde will also be open on June 10th, weather permitting, for the sunset solar eclipse.

Astronomy Day 2002 was a HUGE success, despite the day's postponement. Reports are that somewhere around 230 people showed up. We even had good television news coverage.

The next NSP Planning meeting is May 9th. The price of registration increases on June 15th, so make those reservations now!

The next Mahoney Star Party will be May 17th. Coincidentally, that date is also reserved for Homestead National Monument's Stars on the Prairie" event.

Newsletter editor, Mark Dahmke is looking for articles for the newsletter anyone with something interesting to put in, contact Mark.

Treasurer's report: 22 people have so far opted for the new electronic version of the newsletter.

Finally, it is with deep regret that yours truly will be unable to continue in my duties as club secretary.

Respectfully submitted by:

Lee Taylor

## Hyde Schedule

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Date	Team Leader	Operators		Supervisor	Events
<b>May</b>					
5/25	Dave Hamilton	AJ Benker	Steve Lloyd	Rick J	
<b>June</b>					
6/1	Bill Wells	Dan Delzell	Jared Delzell		
6/8	Dave Churilla	Joey Churilla	Joe Babcock		
6/10	Jeff King	Joey Churilla	Dave Brokofsky	Dave C	Solar Eclipse
6/15	Brian Sivill	Steve Lloyd	Lynda Beck		Solar Viewing
6/22	Dave Hamilton	Justin DeVries	AJ Benker	Martin G	
6/29	Jeff King	Bob Leavitt	Jeff Campbell	Martin G	

## Prairie Astronomy Club's June Star Party — Jeff King

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Friday, June 7<sup>th</sup> - Olive Creek Recreational Area

May's PAC Star Party was cancelled due to uncooperating weather and has been rescheduled for June 7th.

Snacks and soft drinks will be provided for everyone who attends. The sun sets after 9:00 p.m., with dark skies around 10:00 p.m.

Several Messier objects are visible this time of the year, so if you're interested in starting a Messier Observing Program, let your Observing Chair know ahead of time and he will provide you with the means of properly recording your observations. Programs exist for both binoculars and telescopes, so just about everyone can participate.

For directions, check out the club's on-line newsletter, or the back page of the mailed version.

A door prize will be awarded to one of the lucky participants, so make your plans today.

A Nebraska Park Permit is required to use this facility. They may be purchased at most Hy-Vee stores.

## Astronomy Day— Dave Knisely

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Well, the "3-pronged" attack on the concept of Astronomy Day seems to have succeeded. The UNL Student Observatory Open House and Hyde Star Parties were pretty much clouded/rained out, but the Sunday afternoon "short" session at Mueller Planetarium was a smashing success. Over 200 people visited the exhibit from about 1:30 to 4 p.m., and we got a \*very nice\* story on it on the 10 p.m. Ch. 10 News (we need to thank Chris Hunt for a job well done). There were about 9 telescopes and a couple of pairs of binoculars, plus two computers, a very nice astrophotography slide show by Jeff Campbell, a "how-to" astrophotography exhibit by Bill Wells, a mirror grinding demonstration by Martin Gaskell, a meteorite display by Erik Hubl, a "live" TV display of a dollar bill at the end of the hall through Mark Dahmke's LX-200, and some IDA video, along with about 11 or 12 members of the club who helped out just by being there. We saw a lot of people interacting with members of the general public, and lots of fliers being picked up, so I think all in all, our message got across. The crowd was a nearly continuous stream of visitors, rather than the more typical "bursts" of people clustered around the planetarium or Laser shows. In fact, there was no time where there weren't at least 5 or 6 public visitors present in the lobby exhibit area, and at times, it was nearly standing room only.

A few club members also seemed to feel that this shorter Sunday session was easier, less stressful, and about as well attended as our previous full-day Saturday sessions, so maybe we need to do this sort of thing next year. Perhaps we can have a "backup" date for the Hyde Public Star Party fixed in advance (maybe Sunday evening, which might have

worked tonight), but in any case, it looks like we may have a new model to follow when it comes to future Astronomy Day events. I want to thank everyone who attended, and especially want to thank Jack Dunn for his leadership and support and that of Mueller Planetarium.



## **Jerry Williams**— Erik Hubl

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Jerry Williams was born in Greenleaf, KS on April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1928. His father was a high school teacher and coach but he soon lost his job in the wake of the stock market crash. Jerry and his family moved to Auburn, NE and lived on his grandparents' farm.

The family eventually located in Omaha, NE where Jerry's father worked for the military on the Enola Gay project. Jerry attended Omaha Tech High School and upon graduation he attended college for several years. He and his brother Gene enlisted in the Air Force to avoid being drafted into the infantry. Jerry attended Officer candidate school, became a pilot and earned the rank of Lieutenant. He was discharged from service in 1956.

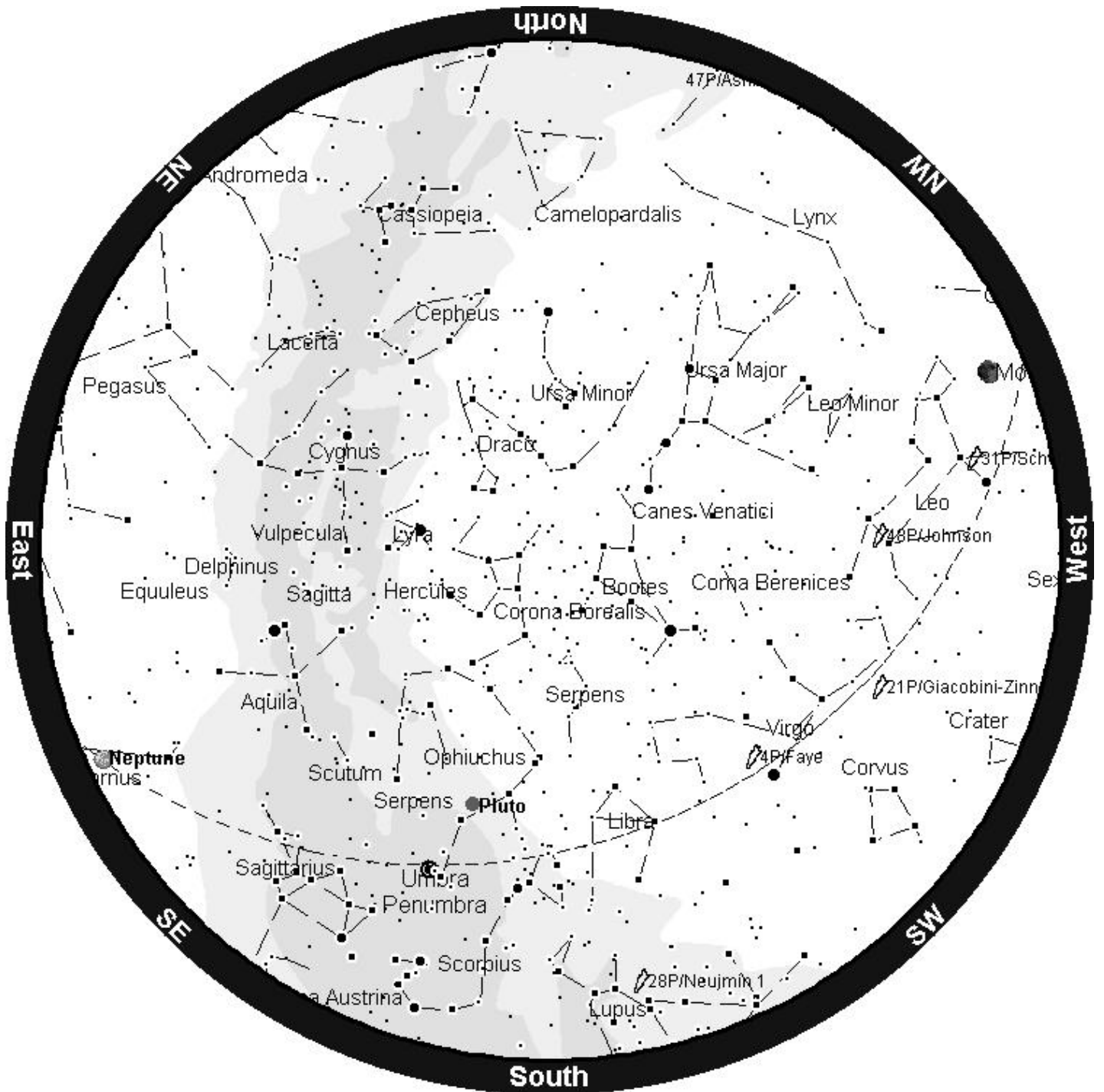
Jerry then moved to Lincoln, NE and attended UNL and eventually UNMC in pursuit of a medical degree. In 1963 he re-enlisted in the Air Force to help defray the expense of school and served four more years as a medical doctor earning his residency.

In 1967, Jerry worked at a clinic in Cleveland, Ohio. He spent 2 years working as a neurosurgeon but decided to move back to Auburn in 1975 where he set up a family practice.

While in Nebraska, Jerry also served as an Emergency Room Physician available on weekends. He would often be flown to small town hospitals to handle emergency cases and relieve the workload of the local doctors. He eventually retired from the profession in 1993 after providing nearly 18 years of medical service to the Midwest.



# June Star Chart



# Events Calendar

June 2002						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1  Sun: 17:57 - 08:51  Hyde Observatory open to the public (sunset-11pm)
2  Sun: 17:56 - 08:52	3  Sun: 17:56 - 08:52  Venus and Jupiter within 1 deg.	4  Sun: 17:56 - 08:53	5  Sun: 17:55 - 08:54	6  Sun: 17:55 - 08:54	7  Sun: 17:55 - 08:55  Club Star Party	8  Sun: 17:55 - 08:56  Hyde Observatory open to the public (sunset-11pm)
9  Sun: 17:54 - 08:56	10  Sun: 17:54 - 08:57  Annular solar eclipse Hyde Observatory open (6:30-sundown)	11  Sun: 17:54 - 08:57	12  Sun: 17:54 - 08:58	13  Sun: 17:54 - 08:58  NSP Planning Meeting	14  Sun: 17:54 - 08:59  Mahoney Star Party	15  Sun: 17:54 - 08:59  Hyde Observatory open to the public (sunset-11pm)
16  Sun: 17:54 - 08:59	17  Sun: 17:54 - 09:00	18  Sun: 17:54 - 09:00	19  Sun: 17:54 - 09:00	20  Sun: 17:55 - 09:01	21  Sun: 17:55 - 09:01	22  Sun: 17:55 - 09:01  Hyde Observatory open to the public (sunset-11pm)
23  Sun: 17:55 - 09:01	24  Sun: 17:56 - 09:01	25  Sun: 17:56 - 09:01  PAC Meeting 7:30pm Hyde Observatory	26  Sun: 17:56 - 09:02	27  Sun: 17:57 - 09:02	28  Sun: 17:57 - 09:02	29  Sun: 17:58 - 09:02  Hyde Observatory open to the public (sunset-11pm)

**Directions to Olive Creek  
Observing Site**

Shorter:

Take Hwy 77 South out of Lincoln until you get to the Crete corner (junction Hwy 77 and Hwy 33). Go West on Hwy 33 (toward Crete) until you get to SW 72 St. Turn Left (South) on SW 72 St. and go about 5 miles until you get to SW Panama Rd. Turn right (West) until you get to SW 100 St. (SW 100 St does NOT go through to Hwy 33). Turn Left (South) on SW 100 St and go about 1 to 1 1/2 miles until you see the sign and entrance to Olive Creek (this is the West side of the Park). It's on your left (East) side of the road.

More Black Top:

Take Hwy 77 South out of Lincoln until you get to the Crete corner (junction Hwy 77 and Hwy 33). Go West on Hwy 33 (toward Crete) until you get to about SW 114 St. - the first intersection after SW 100 St. (forgot to look at this street sign, sorry - you'll see a sign for Olive Creek though at this road- but don't count on anymore signs after that, I didn't see any). Turn Left (South) on SW 114 St and go about 5 miles or so until you get to SW Panama Rd (you'll see a church and small school on your right). Turn Left (East) and go about a mile to SW 100 St, then turn Right (South) and go 1 to 1 1/2 miles until you see the Olive Creek entrance and sign (on your left hand side of the road).

**OFFICERS  
OF THE PRAIRIE ASTRONOMY CLUB**

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**The Prairie Astronomer  
c/o The Prairie Astronomy Club, Inc.  
P.O. Box 5585  
Lincoln, NE 68505-0585**

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First Class Mail

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**Next PAC Meeting  
May 28, 2002  
7:30 PM  
Hyde Observatory**