

# THE PRAIRIE ASTRONOMER

The Official Newsletter Of The Prairie Astronomy Club, Inc.

September 2004

Volume 45 Issue #9

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 Hyde Observatory [www.hydeobservatory.info](http://www.hydeobservatory.info)  
 NEB-STAR [www.neb-star.org](http://www.neb-star.org)

## PROGRAM

September program: Neale Monks: "Life on Earth and How to Kill It -- Connecting Astronomy with Evolution and Extinction"

Nomination of officers will also take place at this month's meeting, we will vote at the October meeting.

**PAC-LIST:** You may subscribe to the PAC listserv by sending an e-mail message to: [imailsrv@prairieastronomyclub.org](mailto:imailsrv@prairieastronomyclub.org). In the body of the message, write "Subscribe PAC-List your-email-address@your-domain.com"

For example:  
Subscribe pac-list stargazer@myISP.com

To post messages to the list, send to the address **pac-list@prairieastronomyclub.org**

### 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.

## CLUB EVENTS

**PAC Meeting 7:30pm**  
Tuesday, September 28, 2004

**PAC/OAS Banquet**  
Friday, October 08, 2004 Sapp Lodge, Mahoney

**Club Star Party**  
Friday, October 15, 2004

**PAC Meeting 7:30pm**  
Tuesday, October 26, 2004

**Club Star Party**  
Friday, November 12, 2004

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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 \$30/yr, Family \$35/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

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Prairie Astronomy Club

Minutes for the meeting of August 31, 2004

President Dave Knisley called the meeting to order, we had several guests, including: Jake and Sheila Winmiller and family, Ruth Ann True, and several others, welcome all.

If anyone would like to join the Prairie Astronomy Club, see club Treasurer, Liz Bergstrom.

The last PAC star party had excellent attendance, and happily, there will be no more conflicts with the Mahoney Star Party for the foreseeable future!!!!!!

NSP 11 Wrap-up: We had 354 attendees this year from as far away as England. Several media outlets covered the event, including the Omaha World-Herald, and Astronomy Magazine. The beginner's field school had between 80 and 100 participants this year.

Next year's NSP 12 will be from July 31 to August 5, 2005, with no moon interfering!:) )

Note was made that the NSP planning meetings are scheduled at Mahoney State Park, with the schedule for next year yet to be determined. In lieu of rental fees for the lodge where the planning meetings take place, OAS and PAC members provide public service with Mahoney Star Parties, scheduled during the months the park is open. The next Mahoney Star Party is scheduled for September 17, 2004.

The next PAC Star Party is scheduled on September 10, 2004.

Requests for public service events by PAC should be directed to club program chair, Jack Dunn for information and assistance.

The Washiska Audobon Society will be holding its annual event on Saturday September 11, 2004.

The Astronomical League provides awards for accomplishments in observing, including the well-known Messier and Herschel awards. If you're interested in working on any of the AL's programs, contact club observing chair, Jeff King.

Jack is always looking for new programs for PAC meetings. If you have an idea for something, let Jack know and he'll help you with it.

Hyde news: If you're interested in serving as a Hyde volunteer, contact Hyde Volunteer Coordinator, Dave Churilla and he'll help you start the process. The really BIG news for Hyde is that there are extensive plans afoot, though very little is concrete right now, the Hyde Steering Committee is looking toward the future with great anticipation. As evidence, Hyde's new Celestron NextStar 11" is in Lincoln and will soon be in storage at Hyde awaiting the arrival and installation of its pier and mount.

Hopefully, first light for the new 'scope will occur around the time of the Oct. 27 total lunar eclipse. Hyde will be open to the public for this event. PAC members are encouraged to attend with their telescopes to share the event with the public.

This year's annual PAC/OAS banquet is scheduled for Oct. 8, 2004 at the Sapp Riverview Lodge at Mahoney State Park. Cost is \$10.00 per person. This must be turned in to Liz by Sept. 28. Banquet chair, Larry Hancock distributed flyers about the occasion at the meeting.

PAC newsletter editor, Mark Dahmke reports not much new for either the website or newsletter.

The dues proposals placed on the PAC-list were brought before the membership. They are:

- 1) \$25.00 for individual membership, \$30 for a family membership
- 2) \$30.00 for individual, \$35 for family

The president opened the floor for debate of the two proposals; Liz Bergstrom spoke in support of the second option, noting the greater flexibility it provides for the future.

The question was called, and by majority vote, the new dues structure was elected to be \$30.00 for individual and \$35.00 for a family membership, effective at the next club meeting, Sept. 28, 2004. Currently, the club refractor is with Treasurer, Liz Bergstrom and the reflector returned to Hyde as soon as possible.

Motion to adjourn, seconded

Adjourn to Dr. Martin Gaskell's program of his trip to the republics of Uzbekistan and Kzakhstan for his astronomical research.

Respectfully submitted by,

Lee Taylor

## Hyde Observatory Volunteer Schedule

Date	Team Leader	Operators		Supervisor	Events
<b>October</b>					
10/2/04	Brian Sivill	Cece Hedrick	Josh Machacek		
10/9/04	Dave Hamilton	Joey Churilla	Steve Lloyd	Dave Churilla	
10/16/04	Bob Leavitt	AJ Benker	Erica Block		
10/23/04	Jeff King	Josh Machacek	Bob Kacvinsky		
10/27/04	Scopes On Lawn	Joey C / Bob K	Erica Block	Dave C - Outside	Lunar Eclipse
10/27/04	Dave Hamilton	Josh Machacek		Dave Knisely	Lunar Eclipse 7 - midnight
10/30/04	Dan Delzell	Jared Delzell	Dave Brokofsky		
<b>November</b>					
11/6/04	Bill Wells	Joey Churilla	Bob Kacvinsky	Dave Churilla	
11/13/04	Dan Delzell	Jared Delzell	Erica Block		
11/20/04	Bob Leavitt	Steve Lloyd	AJ Benker	Dave Hamiton	
11/27/04	Jeff King	Josh Machacek	Cece Hedrick		
<b>Summer Hours: April through September (Sundown to 11:00 PM)</b>					
<b>Winter Hours: October through March (7:00 PM to 10:00 PM)</b>					

## Audubon Spring Creek Festival - by Dave Churilla

Just thought I'd update everyone on the Audubon Spring Creek Festival that was held Saturday night, September 11th with members of PAC as presenters.

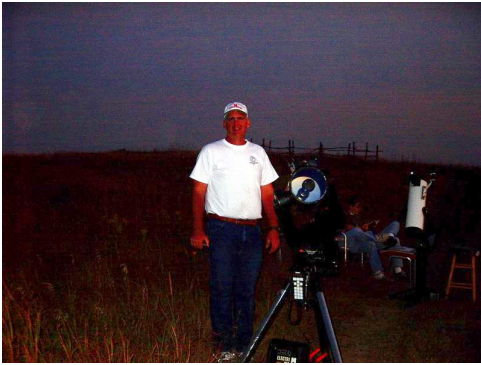
First, let me thank Neale Monks, Dave Hamilton, Bob Kacvinsky and Brian Sivill who joined me South of Denton for this event (and Bill Wells who tried, but took ill that day). Between us we had a 10" Dob, an 8" LX 90 SCT, an 8" LX 200 SCT, and 8" Orion Dob and a 6" Schmidt-Newtonian (?). We had quite a line up for the groups who came through to observe with us.

For those who aren't familiar with the event, and I by no means am no expert, the Wachiska Audubon Society puts on this festival near the fall that spans a good portion of the day. There are nature hikes, bug collecting, etc during the day, a BBQ in the late afternoon, and the day is capped off with a night session of things around the campfire (not sure what this year was), black light bug observing, and, of course, the crème-de-la-crème....deep sky observing with the Prairie Astronomy Club.

This year luckily the weather didn't hurt us, despite a slight haze, and we were able to get many great objects in for people. I don't know if it's a function of the type of gathering that creates this atmosphere or what, but most seemed very knowledgeable about science already...or at least very interested, and they very much appreciated the objects we were putting in, which ranged from beautiful Star Clusters like M13 and the Perseus Double Cluster to dim fuzzies like M81 and M82. On my end of the line people showed a genuine interest in nebulae, especially the star birth ones. Luckily my

UHC filter displayed the Lagoon Nebula (M8) and the Swan Nebula (M17) quite well, and there were more than a few "oohs" and "aahs" at M13, my main object for the night, at 127X and as the night darkened a bit, at 204X.

And, once again our station became the bottleneck (people are sent out in groups of about 8-10 each with the intent of each group spending about 10 minutes at each station) as people refused to leave our area, thoroughly enjoying the sights. The events organizers had to send up the curfew cops to get everyone to leave as we were past closing time (10 PM) and still had about 20 people or more with us.



It was a fun and successful night for PAC. I highly recommend others joining in next year. The Audubon Society always invites us to come out and enjoy the day activities as well as the BBQ (I think Neale partook of that feast), and the crowd is fun to set the scopes up for. Thanks again to Neale, Bob, Dave H, and Brian for their help.

## October 27 Lunar Eclipse

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On October 27, 2004, the full Moon will undergo a deep total eclipse lasting for 1 hour 22 minutes, when it will be high in the eastern sky after dark. Hyde will be open to the public for this event. PAC members are encouraged to attend with their telescopes to share the event with the public. The penumbral phase begins at about 7:06pm CT, but the shadow will start to be visible around 7:45pm. Totality begins around 9:23pm and lasts until about 10:44pm. The eclipse will end at about 12:30am.

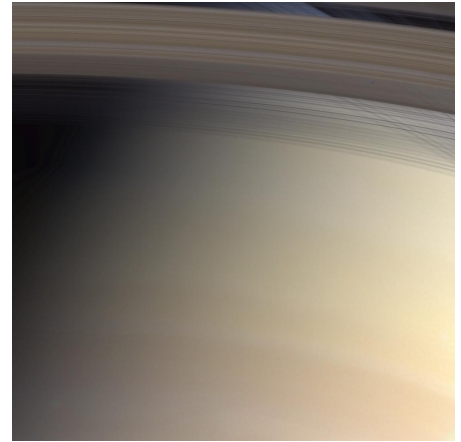
## Strings of Shadowy Rings Drape Saturn

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Saturn's ring shadows appear wrapped in a harmonious symphony with the planet in this color view from the Cassini spacecraft.

Saturn and its rings would nearly fill the space between Earth and the Moon. Yet, despite their great breadth, the rings are a few meters thick and, in some places, very translucent. This image shows a view through the C ring, which is closest to Saturn, and through the Cassini division, the 4,800-kilometer-wide gap (2,980-miles) that arcs across the top of the image and separates the optically thick B ring from the A ring. The part of the atmosphere seen through the gap appears darker and more bluish due to scattering at blue wavelengths by the cloud-free upper atmosphere.

The different colors in Saturn's atmosphere are due to particles whose composition is yet to be determined. This image was obtained with the Cassini spacecraft narrow angle camera on July 30, 2004, at a distance of 7.6 million kilometers (4.7 million miles) from Saturn.



The Cassini-Huygens mission is a cooperative project of NASA, the European Space Agency and the Italian Space Agency. The Jet Propulsion Laboratory, a division of the California Institute of Technology in Pasadena, manages the Cassini-Huygens mission for NASA's Science Mission Directorate, Washington, D.C. The Cassini orbiter and its two onboard cameras were designed, developed and assembled at JPL. The imaging team is based at the Space Science Institute, Boulder, Colo.

For images and information about the Cassini-Huygens mission, visit <http://saturn.jpl.nasa.gov> and <http://www.nasa.gov/cassini>. Images are also available at the Cassini imaging team home page, <http://ciclops.org>.

### In Service... -- By Lee Taylor

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First, I'd like to take this opportunity to commend and thank those who have given so much of their time and energy in service to PAC and Hyde Observatory.

In view of recent events, I'd like to make a few comments, as a PAC member and close friend of many of you. I would hope that my service to PAC, and in the past, Hyde Memorial Observatory would be viewed by those involved in either entity as honorable. This has always been my goal: to advance the science of astronomy, public comprehension of the same, the goals and efforts of both PAC and Hyde, and to enjoy learning the wonders of the universe with like-minded individuals. While I enjoy personal recognition as much as anyone, I do NOT consider it a primary objective. I simply derive pleasure from associating with those who like the subject as much as I do. As many of you know, I have had some personal problems in the recent past, and to prevent those problems from impacting the organizations I care most about, I withdrew from one, and, at one point, intended to resign as secretary of PAC. I was persuaded by others not to do this, and as a result, have been able to serve during some very enjoyable times and events. I greatly appreciate your confidence and faith in me. I look forward to serving PAC in any way I can in the future.

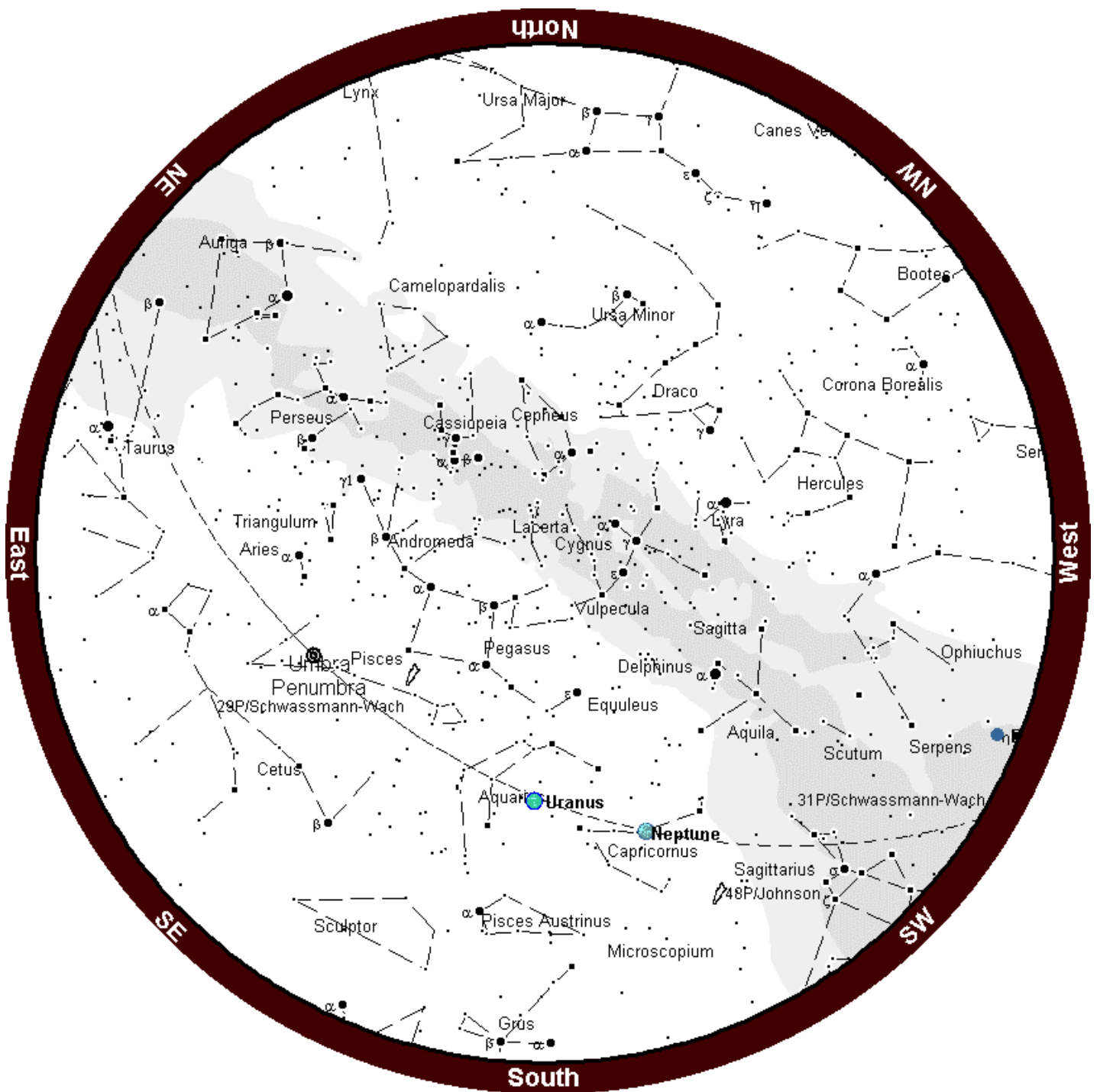
I do enjoy being secretary. I hope that PAC has benefited from the things I've done while in office. I try to perform my duties to the best of my ability, and have always been willing to take advice and criticism when necessary. In fact, I often request a second opinion on many of my decisions, when I feel it is appropriate. When someone tells me I'm doing a good job, my response is to ask if there's a way I can do the job better. If and when I decide that I cannot serve effectively in some capacity, I will not ask to be chosen for that service. If the membership, or officers of the club choose not to grant me the opportunity to serve, I will respect and honor those decisions, with no personal offense taken.

I would hope that others view their own service to astronomy, PAC and Hyde in the same light as I do mine. I often ask myself: Is what I'm doing beneficial to the club? Is this an honorable action/statement/decision? Is the information I am basing my decision upon accurate? Why do I feel this way? How should I proceed?

Forgive me for rambling a bit, but I just wanted to express myself.

Wishing everyone clear, dark, and steady skies, I submit this, as always  
Respectfully,  
Oliver Lee Taylor

# October Star Chart



# Events Calendar

October 2004						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1 	2 
					Sun: 07:23 - 19:09	Sun: 07:24 - 19:07  Hyde Observatory open to the public
3 	4 	5 	6 	7 	8 	9 
Sun: 07:25 - 19:06  Regulus 1/4 deg from Venus	Sun: 07:26 - 19:04	Sun: 07:27 - 19:02	Sun: 07:28 - 19:01	Sun: 07:29 - 18:58	Sun: 07:30 - 18:56  PAC/OAS Banquet	Sun: 07:31 - 18:54  Hyde Observatory open to the public
10 	11 	12 	13 	14 	15 	16 
Sun: 07:32 - 18:53	Sun: 07:33 - 18:51	Sun: 07:35 - 18:50	Sun: 07:36 - 18:48	Sun: 07:37 - 18:47	Sun: 07:38 - 18:45  Club Star Party	Sun: 07:39 - 18:43  Hyde Observatory open to the public
17 	18 	19 	20 	21 	22 	23 
Sun: 07:40 - 18:42	Sun: 07:41 - 18:41	Sun: 07:42 - 18:39	Sun: 07:43 - 18:38	Sun: 07:44 - 18:36	Sun: 07:46 - 18:35	Sun: 07:47 - 18:33  Hyde Observatory open to the public
24 	25 	26 	27 	28 	29 	30 
Sun: 07:48 - 18:32	Sun: 07:49 - 18:31	Sun: 07:50 - 18:29  PAC Meeting 7:30pm	Sun: 07:51 - 18:28  Lunar Eclipse; Lunar eclipse; Hyde Observatory open to the public	Sun: 07:52 - 18:27	Sun: 07:54 - 18:25	Sun: 07:55 - 18:24  Hyde Observatory open to the public

Moon phase images by: António Cidadão

**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  
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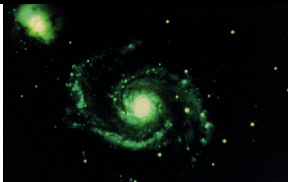
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**The Prairie Astronomer**  
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First Class Mail

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**Next PAC Meeting**  
**September 28, 2004**  
**7:30 PM**  
**Hyde Observatory**