



The Prairie Astronomer

May, 2010

Volume 51, Issue #5

The Official Newsletter of the Prairie Astronomy Club

PAC Program

The speaker for the May PAC Program will be retired Russian Academy of Science member George Burba. George worked on many of the early Russian exploratory missions including their Venus and lunar programs. His son's family lives in Lincoln and George is visiting from Russia until the end of June. This will be a great opportunity to learn about the Russian space program from someone on the inside.

In This Issue

Observing in June, Focus on Constellations, Focus on Outreach.

The newsletter is a week early this month, because I will be out of town for the next week. The next meeting is Tuesday, May 25. The PAC history books will be available at the meeting. –Mark Dahmke

Featured Photo



Please send your astrophotos to Mark Dahmke to be added to the PAC website and the newsletter.

Above: Brian Polenik and family, with Dan Delzell, winner of the 6" Dob given away by PAC at Astronomy Day.

Right: Chris Pearson, winner of the FirstScope provided by Astronomy Magazine and Celestron.



Club Business

Announcements:

Dan Delzell called the meeting to order.

The next PAC star parties will be on May 7th & 14th.

There will be a lunar party on May 21st at Jim's.

The next PAC meeting will be Tuesday May 25th, 7:30 PM at Hyde.

MSRAL is June 4th, 5th, & 6th, please register on the website if you are attending.

MSRAL speakers are:

Rob Landis

Pete Shultz

Rick Johnson

Larry Stepp

If you can help with MSRAL BBQ please sign up with Dave C.

If you can help with the conference please sign up with Steve Lloyd.

Door prizes for MSRAL will include celestron 15x70 binoculars, Cambridge press subscription, pocket sky atlas, and Explorer Scientific 18mm eyepiece.

**Waterfest will be held at Holmes Lake on June 12th.
The Nebraska Star Party is August 8th through 13th, 2010.**

Observing Chair Report

Club Observing Chair, Jim Kvasnicka provided a review the planets that are viewable during May which are Venus, Mars, and Saturn in the evening and Mercury, Jupiter, Uranus, and Neptune in the morning. The Canes Venatici was also the topic of discussion.

The Galileo Scopes have arrived and you can pick your scope up if you ordered one.

We concluded the meeting to view a slideshow of Clay Anderson and his mission aboard STS-131 on the Space Shuttle Discovery

**PLEASE REGISTER FOR MSRAL AS SOON AS POSSIBLE
AFTER MAY 20, REGISTRATION WILL INCREASE BY \$10.**

From the Newsletter Archives, May, 1970 – Mark Dahmke

The 1970 Mid-states Convention has transformed from a not too certain groping in the general direction of providing a place to hold the convention to a well-organized, effective, and successful effort to provide the Mid—States region with an extremely good convention. An especially good job was done by the members of the Guest Speaker Committee, who managed to arrange to get Dr. Peter van de Kamp of Swarthmore College to

address us. The other committees have done equally fine work, and the cooperation of the Omaha group has lightened our load considerably. However, the most credit must go to Earl Moser, who organized us, kept us working, and planned out the convention. You haved worked to put on this convention. Now come and enjoy it. –Earl Moser

Club Events

Newsletter submission deadline, June 20, 2010

PAC Club Meeting

Tuesday, May 25, 2010 7:30pm @ Hyde Obsv.

MSRAL, June 4-5

Waterfest, June 12

PAC Club Meeting

Tuesday, June 29, 2010 7:30pm @ Hyde Obsv.

2010 PAC Star Party Dates

June	4 th & 11 th
July	2 nd & 9 th
August	6 th & 13 th
September	3 rd & 10 th
October	1 st & 8 th
November	Oct 29 th & 5 th
December	3 rd & 10 th

2010 PAC Lunar Party Dates

May 21st, June 18th, July 16th, September 17th, October 15th, November 12th

2010 Convention of the Mid-States Region Astronomical League

(MSRAL) June 4th, 5th, 6th at UNL

Nebraska Star Party

August 8th – 13th Merritt Reservoir South of Valentine, NE

Volunteer Activities

Spring Creek Prairie Twilight on the Tallgrass – September (date not set)

Homestead National Monument Halloween on the Prairie – Sat. before Halloween

Hyde Observatory on Saturday nights

Additional volunteer events will occur when they are scheduled.

ON THE NET

PAC:

www.prairieastronomyclub.org

PAC E-Mail:

info@prairieastronomyclub.org

NSP:

www.nebraskastarparty.org

NSP E-Mail:

info@nebraskastarparty.org

OAS

www.OmahaAstro.com

Hyde Observatory

www.hydeobservatory.info

Panhandle Astronomy Club

Panhandleastronomyclub.com

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

For example:

Subscribe pac-list me@myISP.com

To post messages to the list, send to the address

pac-list@prairieastronomyclub.org

PAC can also be found on Twitter and Facebook.

Buy club apparel through the club website. Shirts, hats, mugs, mouse pads and more.



June Observing: What to View--Jim Kvasnicka

This is a partial list of objects visible for the upcoming month.

Planets

Venus: Shines at magnitude -4.0 in the west. On June 19th and the 20th Venus will be less than 1° from M44, the Beehive Cluster.

Mars: Starts the month very close to Regulus and only 6" wide.

Saturn: Magnitude 1.1. In late May the rings were tilted just 1.7° from edgewise. The rings will start to open up and won't be this thin again until 2024.

Jupiter/Uranus: In Pisces less than 1° from each other the first half of June.

Mercury: Rises in the dawn an hour before sunrise. Difficult to see without binoculars.

Neptune: Between Capricornus and Aquarius.

June Messier List (The Virgo Galaxy Cluster)

M58: Oval patch of light. .

M59/M60: Both fit in the same FOV, fuzzy circles.

M84/M86: Fuzzy round shapes with bright cores.

M87: Round fuzzy circle with brighter core.

M88: Oval shape with brighter core.

M89/M90: Same FOV. M89 is round and M90 is oval shaped.

M91: Hazy oval patch of light.

M98: Bright pencil like streak of light.

M99: Bright, round patch of light.

M100: Round, hazy glow of light.

Last Month: M49, M51, M61, M63, M64, M85, M94, M101, M102, M104

Next Month: M3, M4, M5, M53, M68, M80, M83

NGC and Other Deep Sky Objects

NGC 4274: Elongated galaxy with a bright core in Coma Berenices.

NGC 4388: Edge on galaxy in Virgo.

NGC 4559: Elongated galaxy in Coma Berenices.

NGC 4565: Large edge on galaxy in Coma Berenices.

Double Star Club List

Sigma Corona Borealis: Equal pair of bright yellow stars.

16/17 Draconis: Equal pair of white stars.

Mu Draconis: Close pair of white stars.

Kappa Herculis: Yellow pair.

Alpha Herculis: Orange and greenish stars.

Delta Herculis: Bright white primary with a blue-purple secondary.

Rho Herculis: Close white pair.

95 Herculis: Yellow and white pair.

Alpha Librae: Wide pair of yellow and white stars.

Challenge Object

NGC 6629: Planetary nebula in Sagittarius. At 200X the 15" disk is well defined. The 12.8 magnitude central star may be visible.



Focus On Constellations - Jim Kvasnicka

Bootes

Bootes, The Bear Watcher or Herdsman is the 13th largest constellation in the sky. Bootes is far off of the Milky Way so it lacks open clusters and diffuse nebulae. Like most constellations off of the Milky Way it is well populated with faint galaxies. Bootes does contain many fine double stars, seven from the Double Star Club. Bootes is easy to spot with its distinctive shape and the bright star Arcturus, the third brightest star in the sky. The constellation Bootes is best seen in late spring.

Mythology

Bootes may be one of the most ancient constellations in the sky. It has been recognized by numerous cultures in different forms. The Egyptians believed the north circumpolar stars were evil. The most evil of all the constellations was the Great Bear. Bootes, they believed, was placed in the sky to guard the Great Bear and see she did no harm. The Greeks knew Bootes as the Bear Watcher or Bear Guard because he seemed to chase Ursa Major and Ursa Minor across the sky. Bootes is also called the Herdsman because he seems to hold the leashes of the Hunting Dogs, the constellation Canes Venatici. In one Greek legend Arcas was the son of Zeus and Callisto. Hera, the wife of Zeus was angry and turned Callisto into a bear. One day in the woods Arcas came upon his mother Callisto who was now a bear. Not recognizing her he raised his spear and was about to kill his mother when Zeus stepped in and intervened. Zeus had them both placed in the sky forever. Callisto as Ursa Major, and Arcas as Ursa Minor.

Objects Magnitude 12.0 and Brighter

Galaxies: NGC5248, NGC5557, NGC5676, NGC5669, NGC5582,
NGC5614, NGC5899, NGC5533, NGC5687, NGC5529, NGC5660,
NGC5689, NGC5665

Open Clusters:

Globular Clusters: NGC5466

Planetary Nebulae:

Bright Nebulae:

SNREM:

Dark Nebulae:

Named Stars: Arcturus (Alpha), Nekkar (Beta), Seginus (Gamma), Izar (Epsilon), Mufrid (Eta)

Number of Objects in Various Observing Clubs

Messier Club: 0 objects

Double Star Club: 7 objects

Herschel 400 Club: 5 objects

Globular Cluster Club: 1 object

Open Cluster Club: 0 objects

Planetary Nebula Club: 0 objects

Urban Club: 0 objects

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP DUES

REGULAR MEMBER - \$30.00 per year. Includes club newsletter, and 1 vote at club meetings, plus all other standard club privileges.

FAMILY MEMBER - \$35.00 per year. Same as regular member except gets 2 votes at club meetings.

If you renew your membership prior to your annual renewal date, you will receive a 10% discount.

Club members are also eligible for special subscription discounts on Sky & Telescope Magazine.

Club Telescopes

To check out one of the club telescopes, contact **Jason Noelle**. If you keep a scope for more than a week, please check in with Jason once a week, to verify the location of the telescope and how long you plan to use it. The checkout time limit will be two weeks, but can be extended if no one else has requested use of a club scope.



Focus on Outreach–Dave Churilla

This month's article will be short as there isn't anything north side. to report for Outreach from this past month.

I'll remind everyone again to register for the Mid States Regional Astronomical League Convention being held June 4th, 5th, & 6th. While Rob Landis, Pete Schultz and Rick Johnson are certainly worth the price to go to the MSRAL Convention, you really don't want to miss out on hearing my presentation on Outreach! Actually, I'm giving a little bit of a different take on the subject so don't let my motor mouth scare you away (and there's a time limit on the talks, so you're safe!). You'll enjoy the slide show. Other members of PAC will be speaking as well. You definitely want to hear Dave Knisely talk about Solar Observing and Erik Hubl's talk about Light Pollution. And to top it all off the registration fee includes the banquet Saturday night with Keynote Speaker Rob Landis! And contrary to rumors the Banquet is NOT at McDonald's...it's at Jack's house...just kidding, it's at the Knolls!!

And be sure to sign up for the Star-B-Que on Friday night (June 4th) to kick off the convention. Besides home cooked (or I should say smoked) pork sandwiches courtesy of Wisconsin Bob K's Smoke House (I know...Wisconsin????), we'll all get a chance to socialize with each other and members of other clubs in our Region. Keep your fingers crossed that my usual bad weather jinx doesn't apply for that night as Joey "Sunspot" Churilla, Dave "CME" Knisely and myself (Dave "Solar Flare" Churilla) are planning to set up our telescopes for Solar Viewing (H-Alpha) from 6:30 until 8 PM (dinner is served from 7-8). You can enjoy a presentation about the History of Hyde, and then we'll have the Deck in Hyde Observatory open for viewing.

A lot of hard work has and will go into this event so help us out by registering and coming out for some fun.

Following are the Outreach events we have planned so far for this year. Please let me know if you can help out, especially at Waterfest! It's coming up the 2nd weekend of June (June 12th) and I need to know NOW who is coming to help.

Waterfest: June 12th from 5-8 pm. This is a celebration of the environment, the sun and of Holmes Park. We set up for Solar Viewing if weather permits. Over 3,000 people attend this so we need help. It's at Holmes Park,

north side.

Spring Creek's Twilight on the Tallgrass: In September (date not set but usually around 1st quarter moon). We like to have at least 6 telescopes (more is better) to set up for this event. The scopes set up on the Prairie as 1 of about 3 stations for hikers to stop at during a nighttime trail walk. The event usually attracts between 300 and 400 people and is at Spring Creek Prairie west of Denton with viewing form about 8 pm to 10 pm.

Homestead National Monument's Howling Halloween: This is the Federal Park's Open house and is geared toward kids and their parents and is usually held the Saturday before Halloween. It attracts over 400 people and is west of Beatrice.

What if you're contacted for Outreach? If you are contacted for an Outreach Activity and want to handle it, that's great – I don't need (nor want) to be involved with every event that we do. I do, however, ask that you let me know about it and afterward send me information about the event so I can track and log it. I need:

Event Name

Event Location

Organization

Contact Name and Information (phone, email, etc)

Volunteers (and who organized)

Event Date & Time – include set up time – so we can track volunteer hours

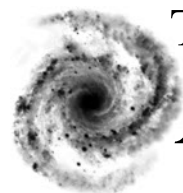
What you did (i.e. Set up scopes, did presentation or a talk, etc.)



Astronomy Day

Thanks to all the volunteers in PAC who worked Astronomy Day 2010. Attendance was 628. I was especially glad to see that both telescopes were won by kids. The scope given by PAC was won by a kid whose grandfather lives in Kansas and is an amateur astronomer. He's discovered a comet. He's in the NE Kansas club.





THE *Prairie* *Astronomy* *Club*

Amateur Astronomy --
A Hobby as Big as the Universe

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 to the right. Newsletter comments and articles should be submitted to: **Mark Dahmke, PO Box 80266, Lincoln, NE 68501 or mark@dahmke.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.

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Next PAC Meeting
TUESDAY
May 25, 2010
7:30 PM
Hyde Observatory