

# The OBSERVER

The Newsletter of the Twin City Amateur Astronomers, Inc.

October 2006 Volume 31, Number 10



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## *TCAAers*

### ***CONTRIBUTE TO FAMILY SCIENCE DAY***

On Sunday, September 24, eight valiant TCAAers were present for the Family Science Day event at Bone Student Center on the campus of ISU. The event, consisting of more than 60 displays and 100 volunteers, was held as a fundraiser to support the Challenger Learning Center at Prairie Aviation Museum. The display ran from 2 p.m. until 8 p.m. More than 600 individuals attended the event.

The TCAA display consisted of four parts: (1) a static display board with lots of handouts, (2) a demonstration dealing with how telescopes work, (3) a demonstration of astronomical software demonstrations, and (4) viewing of the landscape, sun, and Jupiter as the clouds permitted. These displays provided the opportunity for the TCAA to provide educational outreach, showcase itself, and might well have the effect of generating additional interest in our group.

Representing the TCAA over the course of the six-hour day were Paulette and



## Upcoming Events

- October 21  
Autumn Celebration at SGNC, 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.  
Members-Only Observing Session at SGO, dusk-dawn  
Coordinator: Duane Yockey
- October 28  
Public Observing Session at SGNC, 7:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.  
"M31 - The Andromeda Galaxy"  
Coordinators: 1. Duane Yockey, 2. Dan Miller
- November 18  
Members-Only Observing Session at SGO, dusk-dawn

## The Observer

Newsletter of the TCAA, Inc.

*The Observer* is a monthly publication of the Twin City Amateur Astronomers, Inc., a registered 501(c)(3) non-profit educational organization of amateur astronomers interested in studying astronomy and sharing their hobby with the public.

### TCAA Officers

President Dan Miller  
damiller@mail.millikin.edu

Vice-President Brian Barling  
309-454-5493  
res2213h@verizon.net

Secretary/Historian Carl Wenning  
309-454-4164  
cjwennin@ilstu.edu

Treasurer Duane Yockey  
309-452-3936  
duane@lybinc.com

Publicity/Web Michael Rogers  
309-825-6454  
mprogers@mac.com

5th Director Neale Lehmkuhl  
309-378-4335  
PETREALEHM@aol.com

### Property Manager

William Carney 309-829-7748  
willcarney@aol.com

### Observer Editor

Rebecca Wenning Submissions  
21 Grandview Dr. must be  
Normal, IL 61761 received by  
309-454-4164 the end of  
rwennin@ilstu.edu each month.

### Membership Dues

Individual Adult/Family \$40  
Full-time Student/Senior \$25

To join the TCAA, send your name, contact info, and dues payment to:

Duane Yockey  
508 Normal Avenue  
Normal, IL 61761

Dan Miller, Mike Rogers & Jean Memken, Lee Green, Carl Wenning, Duane Yockey, and Dave Osenga. The Rogers children and Rebecca Wenning also assisted with science activities on behalf of the CLC. Thanks and a tip 'o the hat to all who contributed to this important effort.

### **OBSERVING LOG BOOK**

On Thursday, September 14, Lee Green and Carl Wenning took advantage of the near third-quarter moon to observe from about 7:30 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. at SGNC. Lee used his Celestron 14-inch telescope (C-14) to conduct casual observations of many celestial objects. Carl was able to observe 26 Herschel list objects (all NGC) with his C-11. This brings Carl up to about 80 Herschel objects, but far behind Brian Barling who now has many more objects to his credit.

On Friday, September 15, a group of TCAAers attended an informal members-only observing session at SGNC following notification on the listserv. In attendance were new members Josh Lindsey and Andrew Morrison. Other members included Dave Osenga, Roy Lawry, Duane Yockey, and Carl Wenning. No formal observations were made, but many dozens of Messier and NGC objects were observed using the "goto" capacity of Carl's C-11. Roy's O-III filter was used to pull out fine detail in M27 (the dumbbell nebula), M57 (the ring nebula) and NGC 7009 (the Saturn nebula). His light pollution rejection (LPR) filter was useful for observing globular clusters low to the horizon in the direction of Sagittarius and the Dixie Truck Stop. Roy's wide-ranging collection of eyepieces was used to demonstrate the capacity of the C-11 to resolved the blue-green disks of both Uranus and Neptune (6mm eyepiece and 293X). Dave Osenga showed his very considerable observing prowess using his vintage 1978 Edmund 6-inch Newtonian reflector. He was easily able to find such dim objects as M51 (the whirlpool galaxy),

and M81 and M82 (galaxies in Ursa Major) when both were relatively low in the northwestern sky.

Duane had to leave the observing session early due to work commitments in the morning, but departed convinced that he needs to purchase a C-11 of his own. Carl left the observing session convinced that he needs to purchase more eyepieces. Dave left the observing session convinced that now is the time for him to begin working on his Messier observing certificate.

On Wednesday, September 20, Roy and Diane Lawry, William Carney, Carl Wenning, and Khondkar Karim (ISU Physics Department) traveled to Moraine View State Park to take advantage of the clear and dark sky. Starting observations at about 7:30 p.m., the group observed until about 9:15 p.m. when a cloudbank rolled in. Carl was surprised at the amount of degradation the site has suffered from light pollution in the ten or so years since he had last observed at the site. While the site is darker than that at SGNC, the sky glow from Bloomington-Normal and Champaign-Urbana are clearly visible.

The MOOS slated for September 23 was nearly clouded out, but a few hardy individuals did attend the session despite the partly cloudy sky. After watching the weather all day hoping the rain and clouds would pass, Lee Green went to the SGNC armed only with binoculars and a star chart. Between the cloudbanks, he experienced dark, highly transparent skies with moderate seeing conditions. Two club members – Kent and Josh Ferguson – stopped by to see what activities were happening. Everyone left 1-1/2 hours later with an appreciation of binocular viewing after finding only three Messier objects M31, M13 and M92.

Carl Wenning went out to Comlara Park – Lake Evergreen – north of Normal on September 25th for a solitary viewing session. He picked off another 23 NGC objects in his pursuit of the Herschel 400 list. Lee Green observed from home,



beginning efforts to observe the Herschel 400. He successfully observed 25 objects under the city lights of Normal.

Lee, Duane, and Carl observed from Lake Evergreen on Tuesday, September 26 from about 8 to 10 p.m. in an effort to observe more NGC objects in the areas of Ophiuchus and Sagittarius. Carl was able to catalog 9 more NGC objects, and Lee, 15. After Duane left, an inquisitive opossum visited with Lee and Carl.

### **SEPTEMBER 30 POS SUCCESSFUL**

Lee Green had his C14, Dan Miller staffed the SGO Meade 12", Carl Wenning his 11", Duane Yockey had his 10-inch, and Dave Osenga had his 8". Also in attendance were Sheri, Brent, and Blake Rodgers, Mac Macavoy, Brian Barling, Kent and Josh Ferguson, and Ginnie Underwood. Carl gave a talk about Uranus and Neptune using Voyager III software. The audience totalled about 60, including a scout troop that was camping at SGNC that evening. There was a first quarter moon and a mostly cloudy sky, but the moon was visible through the clouds. A view of Uranus and Neptune were obtained, and it began to clear a bit around 9:00 p.m. Due to the publicity at the Family Science Day, it would likely have been even more successful had the sky been clear.

### **VITAL STATISTICS**

	Oct 15	Oct 31	Nov 15
Sunrise	7:07 p.m.	6:24 a.m.	6:41 p.m.
Sunset	6:16 p.m.	4:54 p.m.	4:39 p.m.

DST Ends Sunday, October 29, at 2:00 a.m.

Moon Phases:  
3/4 October 14  
New October 22  
1/4 October 29  
Full November 5

On October 15:

Morning Stars: Venus (Virgo), Saturn (Leo) – Venus is too close to the Sun to observe and will enter the evening sky soon.

Evening Stars: Mercury (Libra), Mars (Virgo), Jupiter (Libra), Neptune (Capricornus), Uranus (Aquarius)

### **SKYLINE FOR OCTOBER 2006**

~ by Tom Willmitch, ISU Planetarium ~

Autumn is now upon us and soon the leaves will display their dazzling fall colors. This is time of cool weather and perhaps a short-lived Indian summer (once known as St Luke's summer, St Martin's summer or All-Hallowm summer).

Summer stars linger to the west shortly after sunset, while the stars of autumn are found high overhead, and winter stars begin to peek above the eastern horizon. Although fainter than the stars of the other seasons, the autumn night sky contains the Royal Family of Cepheus the King, Cassiopeia the Queen, and Andromeda the Princess – as well as Cetus the Sea Monster and Perseus the Hero and slayer of both frightening Medusa and the sea monster.

October opens with a Full or Hunter's moon late on the evening of October 6. Rising at around midnight, the Last Quarter moon occurs on October 13. Invisible in the glare of the daytime sky, the New moon takes place on October 22. And finally, the First Quarter moon graces the evening sky on October 29.

For roughly the first half of October both the brilliant planet Jupiter and fleet-footed Mercury can be found low in the sky shortly after sunset. The King of the Planets Jupiter hangs low in the sky and is easily seen low to the southwest. Far more challenging is faint Mercury – appearing star-like in binoculars and found hugging the horizon to the west-southwest in evening twilight. On the evening of October 10 faint Mercury will be located at the 5 o'clock position relative to and 10-degrees away from bright Jupiter. Look for this line up of planets 35 minutes after sunset. On the evening of October 18 Jupiter is found almost directly above and only 4.3-degrees way from Mercury, with both planets located just above the horizon 35 minutes after sunset. By month's end Mercury is setting in bright twilight.

In the morning sky bright Saturn is found in the morning sky roughly 7-degrees above the spring star Regulus in Leo the Lion.

Venus and Mars are both located in the daytime sky and not visible during

October.

Finally, don't forget to turn your clocks back an hour before going to bed on Saturday, October 28. It is 2 AM that Sunday morning when we switch from Daylight Savings to Standard Time, reflecting the shorter days as winter approaches.

### **AUTUMN CELEBRATION AT SGNC REMINDER**

~ from Sept. board meeting report ~

The TCAA will participate in the Autumn Celebration at SGNC on Saturday, October 21st, from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. We will have an open house at SGO, and a display table to provide information and get people to visit the observatory. Last year's event had an attendance of some 3,000, with about 10% visiting the SGO. Carl will inform Angela Smith and pursue the possibility of the TCAA putting up a concession stand to sell "Swedish Pretzels" with the profits split between the TCAA and the SGNC.

TCAA volunteers would be appreciated to man the display table, recruit new club members, and showcase the observatory. Even if unable to commit to volunteer, come stop by to enjoy the festivities.

*Make a date with*

# StarDate

on

## WGLT, 89.1 FM

Weekdays @ 6:58 AM & 6:58 PM

Sponsored by the TCAA

Partners in Astronomy Education  
with the ISU Planetarium

@

309-438-5007

## TCAA Treasurer's Report – September 2006

OPERATING FUND BALANCE – August 31, 2006 - \$ 1,723.26

### Income

Gail Nelsen (Dues) - \$ 40.00  
Eckhardt family (Dues Renewal) - \$ 40.00

### Expenses

Rebecca Wenning (September *Observer*) - \$ 18.72

OPERATING FUND BALANCE – September 30, 2006 - \$ 1,784.54

OBSERVATORY FUND BALANCE – August 31, 2006 - \$ 1,022.55

### Income

Interest - \$ 1.78

### Expenses

None - \$ 0.00

OBSERVATORY FUND BALANCE – September 30, 2006 - \$ 1,024.33

TOTAL TCAA FUNDS – September 30, 2006 - \$ 2,808.87

Respectfully submitted,  
L. Duane Yockey, Treasurer

### Sugar Grove Observatory

#### Listing of Official Keyholders (Paid \$10 deposit/\$5 renewal)

Duane Yockey (April 2001, renewed through 2006)  
Michael Rogers (August 2001, renewed through 2006)  
William Carney (March 2002, renewed through 2006)  
Carl Wenning (January 2004, renewed through 2006)  
Brian Barling (February 2004, renewed through 2006)  
Lenore Trainor (December 2004, renewed through 2005)  
Kevin Brown (May 2005, renewed through 2006)  
Christopher Franklin (July 2005, renewed through 2006)  
Kal Kumar (renewed August 2005)  
David Osenga (January 2006)  
Gerry Schoeder (February 2006, renewed through 2007)  
Karen & Ed Duran (February 2006)  
Josh Lindsey (August 2007)



*Welcome New Member!*

Gail Nelsen



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Rebecca Wenning, Editor  
21 Grandview Drive  
Normal, IL 61761-4071

Are Your Dues Due?

**The Dues Blues?**

If you see a check in the box above, it means your dues are due. To retain membership, please send your dues renewal to our esteemed Treasurer:

Duane Yockey  
508 Normal Avenue  
Normal, IL 61761