



Mingo Creek Park Observatory

The Guide Star

Newsletter of the Amateur Astronomers Association of Pittsburgh, Inc.

Founded June 9, 1929 by Chester B. Roe and Leo J. Scanlon

Website: 3ap.org



Nicholas E. Wagman Observatory

December 2009

Vol. 43, No. 12

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For those who are new to our traditions, the holiday party is the social highlight of the year! For those who have not been to a holiday party, we have a short talk, but the focus is food, fun and celebrating with friends new and old.

This year's guest speaker is highlighted in the next article in this newsletter. After the speaker, it will be time to recognize our hardworking volunteers with our annual club service awards. Then we party!

The holiday party features a delicious spread of foods, desserts, and door prizes, usually enough for every club member! The club purchases a limited amount of food and door prizes to get us started and the members bring the rest! We are counting on you to make this work! There are a few "traditional" menu items, pumpkin soup, rum balls, and John Holtz's homemade ice cream. Mary DeVaughn has graciously volunteered to bring the Kosmic Kolbasi in honor of Don Shepard. Ann Norman will bring Thai noodles. New people, please start your own tradition if you like, traditions have to start somewhere. If you don't do homemade, Giant Eagle or take-out is fine! (But don't bring drinks or plates and silverware—these will be provided. Unless you have your own drink preference that you believe may not be "common").

As for door prizes, consider donating used astronomy, space, or science fiction-related books and DVDs, or memorabilia that is still in good condition; or purchase a book, mug, poster, space calendar, red-light flashlight or other observing aid; or surprise us! And if you cannot bring something this year, there's always the next.

In any case, this party is all about getting members under one roof to celebrate the season and our AAAP activities in 2009. The most important contribution you can make is to join us. We want to see YOU there! Friends and spouses are welcome, but one must be a member to win a door prize. Dressy or casual is fine, but expect to see a lot of green, red, blue, gold, and sparkles!

Our party planners this year, like last, are Tom Reiland (who rented the hall), Craig Lang (organizing the speaker and volunteers), Ann Norman and Kathy DeSantis (door prizes and decorations), Katy Holtz (organizing the music), Charlotte and Jim Tunney (bringing the sandwich trays), Ed Moss (doing coffee and being President!) and others that become involved after Guide Star press time. If we are hit with a huge blizzard the day of the party (it has happened before), check your email for cancellations.

AN INVITE TO THE AAAP HOLIDAY PARTY!

By Ann Norman and Craig Lang

Our Holiday Party will be December 11. The party will start at 7:30 officially, but the doors will be open a bit earlier so that you can get yourself "setup". The location swings back to the North. As we did two years ago, we will be gathering at the Shaler Villa Volunteer Fire Hall. (This is the fire hall in the valley, NOT the fire hall on the top of the hill. Here is the address:

960 Saxonburg Blvd, Glenshaw, PA 15116

Directions to Shaler Fire Hall
By Tom Reliand

If someone is coming from the South, they should take Route 28 to Route 8 through Etna and make a right turn at the first light after leaving Etna. That's Saxonburg Blvd. Go about 1/4 of a mile and it's on the left.

Members coming from the North can either take Route 8 and turn left onto Saxonburg or they can get on Saxonburg going south from either Route 228, Route 910 or Harts Run Road.

DECEMBER'S MEETING TOPIC

The speaker for this year will differ a bit from previous years. A typical trait of those of us involved in astronomy is that we are attracted to gadgets. Imagine pointing your cell phone at a point in the sky and instantly seeing a map of the sky in that area with a nearby object defined. Imagine you want to find a particular object in the sky. You indicate what you want to find and the phone directs you to it. Let us call this a "push-to/go-to in a phone". Interested yet?

Kevin Serafini, a software engineer with Google, will be introducing a new application for certain types of cell phones that will perform this push-to/go-to behavior. An amazing application of GPS and cell phone technology called Google Skymap. He will talk about the application and even hands-on demos of it on phone devices.

Come to the Shaler Villa Fire Dept Hall and get your gadget fix with Kevin Serafini and Google Skymap.

ODE TO THE HOLIDAY PARTY!

By Ann Norman

Twas three weeks before Christmas
and all through the fire hall.

AAAPers had gathered
for the best party in Glenshaw.

Door prizes were laid out
on the tables with care.

People filled out a ticket
and said a quick prayer.

The speaker then spoke
on a subject most fascinating

Dinner comes next.
No time for procrastinating!

Then up from the kitchen
there arose such a clatter.

From crock pots and ice cubes
and wiping up splatter.

On sandwiches, salads!
On condiments, cookies!
On noodles, and chocolate!
Mysterious goodies!

Deserts on that table
up against the left wall!

Now dash away, dash away,
dash away all!

The awards were distributed
to those most deserving.
Before anyone could go
and get their first serving.

The party that followed
was boisterous and loud.

If Leo Scanlon could be here,
I'm sure he'd be proud.

Of a talented association
of astronomical punsters
Who stare at the skies
and educate youngsters

The door prizes were distributed
by Santa's chief elf.
(A nice pile of presents,
if I do say so myself.) ;)

The music that played
was spacey and ethereal.
Just right for a Holiday Solstice
-type festival.

The party roared on,
right up to the time
When we'd need to be out.
We were feeling sublime.

And I heard Tom exclaim
'ere he cleaned up the site:

Yunz have a great season!
. . . Hey, look up! A clear night!

KEVIN J. BRUNELLE ASTROPHOTOGRAPHY CONTEST WINNERS 2009

By Mark Arelt, co-chair and organizer

Thank you to all who participated in the 2009 Kevin J. Brunelle Astrophotography Contest of the AAAP. The astroimagers provided us with so many excellent photographs that choosing winners was difficult and this year we were treated to see many subjects that haven't been visited often by our cameras before. To those who use the cameras and equipment, I say keep up the good work.

To those who watched and were dazzled by the program, I say thank you for your support. I hope you enjoyed it. To those who assisted in the many facets of organizing and running the contest, my heartfelt thanks to you as well.

The winners are:

In category (A) Astronomical-150mm or less

1st place "Orion Rising" —Mark Arelt

2nd place "M45"—Frank Wielgus

3rd place "Rho and Antares"—Nathan Brandt

"Flame, Horsehead and Orion Nebula"—Frank Wielgus



In category (B) Astronomical-150mm or greater

1st place "NGC7635-Bubble Nebula"—Bill Snyder

2nd place "Veil Nebula-Western Portion"—Mark Arelt

3rd place "Rosette Nebula"—Nathan Brandt



In category (C) Atmospheric

1st place "Fog in The Vale"—Mark Arelt

2nd place "Blazing Dawn"—Mark Arelt

3rd place "Sunrise from Duck, NC."—Fred Klein



VP COLUMN

By Craig Lang

I hope that everyone has enjoyed the first two speakers of the 2009 -2010 meeting season. I believe that I have some more great speakers lined up for us.

December 11, at our annual holiday party, Kevin Serafini, a software engineer at Google will introduce us to the Google Skymap application.

On January 8 Bill Roemer of the AAAP will present "Reason vs. Revelation - Can Science and Theology Be Partners".

On March 5th Lisa Beightol and Krissy Pydynowski, both Meteorologists with AccuWeather will present "Weather Forecasting for Observers".

And on April 9 Eric Fischer of the AAAP will present "January 1984 Grouping of Planets Rendering".

Information on February and May topics will be coming soon.

I would like to wish all AAAP members and their families a safe and happy holiday season complete with clear nights for some winter observing. Winter observing, something I have done little of myself. I would like to change that this year. If you do get out and observe this winter, be sure to share it on the Yahoo Group and at our meetings. I am sure that many others who do not get the chance to get out would be happy to hear your reports.

Now get out there and start wondering...

FRED KLEIN'S GENEROUS OFFER

I'm tired of hearing "I have a telescope, but I can't make it work". So, I'm going to do something about it.

If you have a telescope of any age, design, or manufacturer and cannot get it to work, call me at 412-372-8021 after 6:30PM or on the weekend and I will meet with you to try to make it work. I only ask that:

- 1) The scope is not obviously broken.
- 2) That you have read the manual front to back (even if you don't understand it all).
- 3) You have tried to set it up under the stars at least twice and not been successful.

P.S. Don't even offer me any compensation.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

A. ERIC FIEDLER & FAMILY

MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS

By Michael Meteney

If you haven't already, it is time again to renew your memberships for 2010. Enclosed in this issue of the Guide Star (on pages 7 and 8) is a renewal form that has two parts. The first part is your personal information that we need to make sure our database is up-to-date and accurate. The second part is the billing information. Please fill in both parts of the form completely.

You will notice a change in the dues structure. The basic membership is still \$24.00. We now have a student membership (\$16.00) instead of a junior membership. This is for any K-12 and full-time college student. We also have a family membership (\$40.00) that includes anyone living in the same household. The family membership need only include the basic primary member's contact information and then list the remaining family members' names. All correspondence, Guide Star, and mailings will be sent to the family members through the primary member's contact information. This will reduce printing and mailing costs and redundancy.

A reminder, the AAAP no longer processes *Sky and Telescope* subscriptions. If you want S&T magazine for the first time, use the enclosed form (on page 2) to get your club subscription rate. If you are a current subscriber, use your renewal notice you receive from S&T. It should have the \$32.95 club rate on the renewal notice. There have been some *Sky and Telescope* subscription renewal invoices that did not have the club rate on them. This is what happens when companies outsource services. **Send new and renewal subscriptions for S&T magazine directly to SKY PUBLISHING! Do not mail them to us.**

Subscriptions to Astronomy magazine are still handled through the club. Please send these in ASAP so there is no lapse in your subscription. The lead-time on magazines is three months.

Current building key holders need to pay their key fees at this time. To get a building key, you must first be trained by an observatory director.

If you have any questions, you can contact Michael Meteney (treasurer) or Don Hoecker (membership secretary). Thank you.

AAAP Membership Renewal Form – 2010

Please fill in this single form for anyone in your household who wishes to be a member of the AAAP. We are now offering adult, student, and family memberships. All family members must share the same residence. Student memberships have now replaced junior memberships. To be a student member, you must be a K -12 or fulltime college student. As in the past, you may receive a discounted subscription to *Astronomy Magazine* through the AAAP. The subscription must be included with your membership dues payment. There is a separate form to receive a discount subscription to *Sky and Telescope Magazine*. This is to be sent directly to Sky Publishing. **Do not send any *Sky and Telescope* subscriptions to the AAAP!**

Completely fill in the following information on this form (please print):

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____ - _____

Phone (home) _____ (Work) _____

E-mail _____

How do you want your "Guide Star" Delivered? Online (____) Snail Mail (____)

Optional: Do you have a telescope(s) or other special equipment you would like listed under your name in our membership directory? If so, please describe them below.

Additional Family Members:

Name _____ Relationship _____

Name _____ Relationship _____

Name _____ Relationship _____

Name _____ Relationship _____

Name _____ Relationship _____
(over)

AAAP Membership Renewal Form – 2010

ITEM	PRICE	ENCLOSED PAYMENT
AAAP Adult Membership (Jan. 1 to Dec. 31 2009)	\$24.00	
AAAP Student Membership (Covers all students K -12 and <u>fulltime</u> college students).	\$16.00	
Family Membership - This membership covers the adult membership and all family members that live with the adult member. Please list all family members to be included on the attached form.	\$40.00	
“Astronomy” Subscription (12 issues per year) Both new and renewals are processed through the AAAP. Do not renew your subscription directly with Astronomy Magazine. You won't get your discount.	US. \$34.00 Can \$40.25 Int. \$50.00	
Key Fee - Only current key holders! Check appropriate observatory: Mingo____ Wagman____	\$15.00 each	
Tax Deductible Donation	----	
TOTAL PAYMENT	----	

It is very important that all payments be received by 12/15/2009 so that magazine subscriptions can be processed in a timely manner.

Prices are subject to change without notice. Payments must accompany this application.

Make checks payable to: **AAAP, Inc.**

Send this form with payments to:

Michael Meteney – Treasurer, AAAP
1070 Sugar Run Road
Venetia, PA 15367

Membership questions?

E-mail: MembershipSecretary@3ap.org

Phone: 412-243-8298

Billing questions?

E-mail: Treasurer@3ap.org

Phone: 724-348-9087

Amateur Astronomers Association of Pittsburgh, Inc.

Founded June 9, 1929 by

Chester B. Roe and Leo J. Scanlon

2009-2010 Executive Officers:

- President: **Edward Moss**
president@3ap.org
- Vice President: **Craig Lang**
vicepresident@3ap.org
- Treasurer: **Michael Meteney**
treasurer@3ap.org
- Corresponding Sec: **John Mozer**
correspondingsecretary@3ap.org
- Recording Sec: **Dennis Derda**
recordingsecretary@3ap.org
- Membership Sec: **Don Hoecker**
membershipsecretary@3ap.org
- Guide Star Editors: **Bill & Maureen Moutz**
gseditor@3ap.org

AAAP Member Dues*:

AAAP Dues:	\$24.00
Student Membership (K-12 & full time college student):	\$16.00
Family Membership	\$40.00

***Basic Procedure for Paying Dues:**

1. Make check payable to "AAAP Inc."
2. Send check to Michael Meteney, Treasurer, 1070 Sugar Run Road; Venetia, PA 15367-1514



Please submit any articles for the Guide Star to the Guide Star Editors at gseditor@3ap.org by the 20th of each month.

****Some websites may need to be copied and pasted in your browser to view them****

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