Vol. 53 No. 4, April, 2008

THIS MONTH'S PROGRAM: Bob Naeye, now working at NASA, was our May Awards Dinner speaker a few years ago when he was a senior editor at Sky and Telescope magazine. Those who have heard him know how excellent a speaker he is. Be sure to attend and hear his explanation of the NASA program for the Gamma-ray Large Area Space Telescope. You won't regret it.

FROM THE PRESIDENT -- Hank Bouchelle

What a treat was the March meeting program. Several folks made a point to mention to me how much they enjoyed Russell Vreeland's talk, and I heartily agree!

This month's talk is by Robert Naeye, a name some of you may recognize. He was our dinner speaker a few years ago. I am looking forward to hearing him again.

This spring brings DAS officer elections for President, Vice-president, Treasurer, and Secretary. While all four current officers will be running as incumbents, we are always interested in competition, and to offer the chance for others to participate.

Sarah Baird is our Elections Chair, and she will be glad to accept nominations from any interested individual. You may reach her at 302-561-0810 or at her email address, which is sarahdaileybaird@hotmail.com.

And don't forget to mark your calendar for the May dinner meeting!

ANNUAL AWARDS DINNER -- Lee Kaser

IT'S ONLY A MONTH AWAY!

It's time to make your reservations for this dinner May 20, at 6:00 PM for fellowship and 7:00 PM for dinner. You'll enjoy the dinner speaker, and an excellent dinner at Oliver's (formerly the Terrace at Greenhill, now under new management. You will also see some of your fellow members of DAS honored for their activities and dedication. A form for reservations is attached at the end of this FOCUS, so you can print it, fill it out with your entree selections, and send it to Bob at his address given on the form, or, better yet, give it to him at the meeting next Tuesday, April 15.

NOMINATIONS AND ELECTION 2008 -- Sarah Baird

Next month, ballots will be sent out for spring officer elections. The four positions up for election are President, Vice-President, Treasurer, and Secretary. All four incumbents, Hank Bouchelle, John Case, Bob Mentzer, and Lynn King, are running for re-election, but nominations from the floor will be accepted at the April meeting.

MCAO PUBLIC NIGHTS -- Emil Volcheck

The Mt. Cuba Observatory Public Nights continue year round! In addition to learning about many aspects of the heavens, you'll have a chance to visit and view our all-digital full-dome planetarium! You can pick up a schedule when you
next come to a meeting - or get the latest updated version off the website at: http://mountcuba.org.

**DAS Board of Directors Meeting**
Tuesday, April 15, 2008 – Members are Invited
7:00 pm, Mt. Cuba Astronomical Observatory

- Review of March’s minutes
- Treasurer’s Report – Bob Mentzer
- Standing committee reports/requests/notes
- Focus/Publications – Lee Kaser?
- Library- Glenn Bentley
- Education Programs- Bob Karcha
  - Sawin Observatory  Tom Sidowski
  - Observing – Greg Lee
  - Focus distribution
- May dinner – Bob Mentzer
- Recap
- Speaker discussion
- June meeting planning
- Publications Chair vacancy
- Chartered Awards Committee
- Other?

**DAS MEETING TOPICS, 2007-2008**

- May 20 -- Annual Dinner Meeting
  Speaker and location to be announced

- June 17 Mini-talk -- Bill Hanagan and the Astrophotography Special Interest Group
  Mini-talk -- Wayne King

**MCAO PUBLIC NIGHTS – Emil Volcheck**
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**STAR PARTIES AT MT. CUBA – Tom Sidowski**
Star parties are usually held on the grounds of the Mt. Cuba Astronomical Observatory. You can bring your on scope or just come to observe through others. Telescopes in use may include the club's 12.5" Newtonian reflector, 17" Coulter Odyssey 2, or 6" Orion SkyQuest XT6 Dobsonian (when not on loan). Star parties are always weather permitting.

Here is the complete schedule through June:

- Friday, April 11 @ 8:00pm
- Friday, May 9 @ 8:00pm
- Friday, June 13 @ Dusk

**MT. CUBA TREE PROJECT – Bob Mentzer**
In the last month 6 pickup loads of wood have been removed from the grounds. There is still plenty left. You will need a chain saw. Contact Bob Mentzer for details.

**LOANER TELESCOPES -- Tom Sidowski**
One of the best advantages of being a member of the Delaware Astronomical Society is that all members have the privilege of being trained to use and then borrow equipment owned by the club for personal use. Currently, we have two scopes available for loan: a Celestron 8" Schmidt-Cassegrain, and a 6" Orion SkyQuest XT6 Dobsonian reflector. The loan is for at least a month. If you're interested in checking out either of these scopes, contact Tom Sidowski at 239-1844.

**DAS ASTROPHOTOGRAPHY SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP -- Bill Hanagan**
The DAS astrophotography special interest group (DAS AP SIG) meets on Friday nights at 7:30 P.M. every other month at Mt. Cuba regardless of weather. The SIG also meets for photo shoots scheduled on 1-2 day notice to synchronize with the weather.

The monthly meetings are informal and typically include the presentation of astrophotos taken by the members along with an extended question and answer period. Objects commonly photographed include constellations, auroras, lunar eclipses, and planetary photos, as well as a wide variety of deep-sky objects such as nebulae, galaxies, star clusters, etc. The topics discussed cover the entire gamut of astrophotography, from how to get started with a minimum of equipment, to polar aligning your telescope, all of the way to the fine points of using auto-guiders and post-processing digital images.

You can get started in astrophotography with just your current camera mounted on a tripod or a motorized telescope by taking wide field photographs of meteor showers, conjunctions, constellations, and star trails. As you move to progressively fainter and smaller subjects, you'll
need better equipment. Joining the AP SIG is a great way to learn what equipment you need and what works well before you spend your money.

If you are interested in joining the AP SIG, just email your name, address, and phone number to me at hanaganw@comcast.net (using "@" and "." in place of w and .).

SAWIN OBSERVATORY REMINDER
-- Tom Sidowski

The DAS maintains a club observatory on the grounds of the Mt. Cuba Astronomical Observatory. The Sawin Observatory houses the club’s permanently mounted 12.5" reflecting telescope and a 17.5" Coulter Odyssey 2 Dobsonian telescope. It is for the use by club members once they are trained and checked-out in a simple operating procedure. Members who are interested in becoming key holders of the Sawin Observatory should contact me at 239-1844 to arrange for training in the use of the facility.

LIBRARY NEWS -- Glenn Bentley

Please feel free to drop by the library at the end of the April meeting to peruse our reading material, videos and audio tapes. Clear Skies.

DAS AMATEUR TELESCOPE MAKING SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP -- Bill Hanagan

The DAS Amateur Telescope Making (ATM) Special Interest Group (SIG) meets on evenings and weekends according to the availability of the members and the particular projects that are underway. The general range of activities of the ATM SIG includes all manner of telescope making, mirror making, and the making of accessories for telescopes and observing.

Anyone interested in joining the ATM SIG should email their name, address, and phone number to me at hanaganw@comcast.net (using "@" and "." in place of w and .). Meeting dates are announced primarily by email, so if you are interested in telescope making, be sure to let me know!

SUMMER ASTRONOMY COURSES FOR TEACHERS -- Hank Bouchelle

The DAS has quite a few teachers among its membership, and this may be of interest to you should you be one of them. And please feel free to pass this information along to teachers of your acquaintance who may be interested in astronomy education.

The College of the Atlantic in Bar Harbor, Maine, offers accredited two and four credit summer residential courses for teachers in a variety of subjects, including astronomy. The College is set on the shores of Frenchman Bay and offers close access to the beauty of Acadia National Park and the many attractions of Mt. Desert Island. Room and board are available at the College.

Introduction to Astronomy (July 13-26) is a four credit course that presents astronomy concepts and content principally through a variety of activities that participants can use in their classrooms, and thus is suitable for teachers of all grade levels.

Teaching with a Portable Planetarium (July 7-August 2) is a two graduate credit course that provides instruction in setting up, taking down, and maintaining a portable planetarium, and includes the development of instructional programs.

Further information may be obtained by contacting Jean Sylvia, Associate Director of Summer Programs, at jsylvia@coa.edu or 800-597-9500.

DAS FORUM/E-MAIL SITE ON YAHOO --Don Shedrick

This is a restricted e-mail service for use by DAS members for DAS purposes. To use this site, go to http://groups.yahoo.com; search for Delaware astronomical society; and click on the link that comes up. To join, you must have a Yahoo ID and password; if you don’t, you can register at this time by following Yahoo’s instructions. You will then be allowed to “Join the group” upon clicking in that box. You must then register for the DAS group and add your profile by clicking on “add new profile” and completing the form. When adding or editing your profile, you will need to enter your actual name in the “Real Name” box so you can be identified as a DAS member so Don Shedrick can approve your application to join the DAS group, and everyone will know to whom they are communicating. Finally, specify your desired email address for delivery of messages. Note you may choose to not have your name and email address displayed to anyone other than DAS members who are members of the Yahoo DAS email group.

For more detailed instructions, go to the DAS web site under DAS Resource Links.
MEMBERSHIP EXPIRATION NOTICES
if you receive the FOCUS by email, you will be notified by email. If you receive it in the mail and the mailing label on the envelope containing your FOCUS is marked with Red Marker, your membership is expiring or has expired. To continue to receive the FOCUS, Sky and Telescope or Astronomy, and Reflector, send the renewal form below with your check to:

DAS, c/o Robert Mentzer
605 River Road
Wilmington, DE 19809

DAS CONTACTS
Call any of us with your concerns!
Membership: Any of the following:
President: Hank Bouchelle------------------- 302-429-4013
Vice President: John Case ------------------- 302-836-4888
Secretary: Lynn King ------------------------- 302-764-8816
Treasurer: Bob Mentzer---------------------- 302-764-1926
DAS/MCAO Advisor: Emil Volcheck----- 610-793-5156
Education Chair: Bob Karcha-------------- 302-999-9509
Messier Club: Lynn King ------------------- 302-764-8816
Observing: Greg Lee ----------------------- 302-762-5358
Youth Coordinator: Sarah Baird --------- 302-561-0810
Archivist: Rene Van Caneghem ---------- 410-392-3718
Board Members at-large:
ATM and AP SIGs: Bill Hanagan -------- 302-239-0949
Chairman, Observatory Committee and Monthly
Star Parties: Tom Sidowski ------------- 302-239-1844
By-Laws: Henry Bouchelle ---------------- 302-983-7830
Light Pollution Strategist; Greg Weaver 302-239-1338
Library Chair: Glenn Bentley ----------- 410-869-0706
Ad Hoc Star Parties: Sheila Vincent --- 302-322-4739
Elections Comm. Chair – Sarah Baird 302-561-0810
Awards Comm. Chair – David Swartout 302-836-4618
MCAO Web Page: www.mountcuba.org
DAS Web Page: www.delastro.org

FOCUS Editor: A Volunteer is needed to replace Lee Kaser, who is retiring for the second time and has a major time conflict. If you have email, can edit a bit and use a word processor, you can do this job. Formally described as Publications Chair, this is a Board position which puts you in the know about Club activities. Contact Lee Kaser (kaserlo@msn.com or 302-995-6251) or Hank Bouchelle for more information.

WEBSITE OF THE MONTH – A LOT OF GOOD STUFF – GIVE IT A LOOK

http://www.galaxyphoto.com/

This site includes a large number of very colorful images, first shown as thumbnails and openable for easy viewing. Take a look!!

Two Sample Photos
Annual Awards Dinner Reservation Form

The Terrace at Greenhill -- (Oliver's) May 20, 2008

Fellowship Hour 6:00 PM    Dinner and Program begin at 7:00 PM

MENU -- Price includes appetizer, salad, entree, vegetable, starch and desert, fresh baked rolls and butter, coffee, tea, decaffeinated coffee, and iced tea.

ENTREE
1. Grilled chicken breast in a mushroom and Marsala wine sauce. $26
2. Sliced top round of beef in a mushroom and Marsala wine sauce $26
3. Baked filet of salmon served with cucumber dill cream sauce. $29
4. Penne primavera tossed with garlic, olive oil, fresh herbs and seasonal vegetables $26

Number of Orders:
(1) Chicken $26 x _____ (Number) = Amount $_____
(2) Beef $26 x _____ (Number) = Amount $_____
(3) Salmon $29 x _____ (Number) = Amount $_____
(4) Primavera $26 x _____ (Number) = Amount $_____

TOTAL $_____

Cut off or print this form and send it with your check to: Robert Mentzer
605 River Road
Wilmington DE 19809

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION OR RENEWAL
If you have questions, call any of the member representatives listed above. Otherwise, just check the appropriate boxes and complete the form below. Print it or cut it off and send it with your check to Bob Mentzer at his address given above. The magazine prices are group rates to DAS members. Thanks, and welcome to the DAS if you’re just joining us for the first time.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION OR RENEWAL FORM

New Member  [ ] Senior/Family Membership $20.00 [ ]
Renewal [ ] Junior membership (16/under) $10.00 [ ]
                                                Sky and Telescope Magazine $33.00 [ ]
                                                Astronomy Magazine $34.00 [ ]

NAME____________________________________
STREET ADDRESS__________________________ Total Submitted ------ $_____
CITY________________________ STATE_____ ZIP______ TELEPHONE_____________
E-MAIL ADDRESS_________________________________________________________