

IMPORTANT: NO MEETING IN JULY OR AUGUST. SEE YOU IN SEPTEMBER.



# The Meridian

The newsletter of the  
Quad Cities Astronomical Society

July 2009

<http://www.qcas.org>

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## June Meeting Minutes

Joe Bannon

Members in attendance at the meeting:

Karl Adlon	Joyce Ericksen	Robert Mitchell	John Waack
Gary Charnoski	Chris Hebel	Dana Taylor	Cecil Ward
Jay Cunningham	Dale Hendricks	Steve VanHyfte	

Old Business:

We are on for the 17 July visit to the 24" scope at Peoria. Thoughts were offered on how to assemble and caravan to the site. It is about a 1hr + 45 min trip to Peoria with sunset being at ~ 2100 or 9:00 pm. The scope is in Jubilee State Park and it was agreed that the assemblage would leave at 1930/7:30pm. Dana wanted mail sent to him for confirmation of those who planned to attend.

There will be no meeting between now and 17 July and it was agreed that those who were going would meet at our regular meeting site. Saturday, 18 July, is the rain date.

Dana raised the issue that there be no photo sessions with the 20" scope during public star parties – it is there for viewing. Cecil recommended that a sign be placed in a prominent spot first and then if there was a need for a policy then it should be taken to the board for a decision. 27 June is the next public star party and Dana will send a message to the group and the board for discussion.

Treasurer's Report – Steve VanHyfte:

Steve reported on the utility bill and the post office bill. Post Office reduced its rate to \$54.00/year. The utility bill was \$16.75 which seemed high to Steve. The society has used 680kw for its history. We need some insect and weed spray for the observatory site but the bottom line is the club is solvent with a balance of \$1,334.03. We all agreed Steve should be Treasurer for life – Steve has no vote.

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Steve then mentioned a missing part and wants everyone to look for it as they may have picked it up inadvertently. No blame assigned – just concern that the part is needed, is expensive and the society needs it to be returned.

As to the star party – Dana asked who wanted to go. He asked that people send him email or call and a group will be rounded up to head out for a night of star viewing.

Dale Hendricks mentioned his trip to Greenwich, England, and the details of its importance to navigation and the determination of longitude. This required precision timepieces that could be carried on ships to measure the time difference of star and planet observations from Greenwich, 0° longitude. Greenwich is a chronometer and astronomer's heaven.

Joyce mentioned that 21 June would show a close gathering of Mars and Venus at 4:00am – weather permitting, it should be a great show. It was also mentioned that on or about the same date, Titan would be casting its shadow on Saturn.

Dana then showed a collection of Hubblecast videos hosted by Dr J. These are interesting and informative – good show, Dana.

Karl Adlon then showed some examples of how a stacker improves the quality of photos – Deep Sky Stacker was also discussed.

No July or August meeting for the group. We will pick up with a September meeting.

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## Observations

### Karl Adlon

Karl bought another telescope! But this time it's for someone else – a niece who's been interested for a while. It's a used telescope from an AstroMart seller; a 5" f5 Celestron Newtonian – probably made in China.

The scope was in very good condition, but a quick look told me it needed collimation. Later, I saw it was way out and when I tried to adjust it – I couldn't. What's an engineer to do? Why, take it apart, of course! I took the 3 screws holding the mirror mount out and had some difficulty removing it. Then I saw the diagonal was positioned too far forward. I adjusted it back toward the bottom of the scope; taped a cross on the bottom of the tube and aimed the secondary.

Then I replaced the main mirror mounting. Or tried to. It wouldn't mount without springing the cell. That's why I had trouble removing it! Three screws protruded far enough into the tube that they contacted the cell. This scope had never worked properly!! It could never have been collimated in this condition. I found six small washers in my spare parts bin; put two under each screw head and reassembled without any issues.

Since I was able to fix it, the scope turns out to be a really good deal. It doesn't look like the scope has ever been apart, so I'm thinking previous owners thought otherwise about it. I wonder how many scope there with similar problems.

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## Member Astrophotos

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Here are some photos taken by John Baker, or John and Gary Charnoski.



Triffid Nebula – 16 different images taken on different days and combined using Photoshop CS4. Most are 32-second exposures at ISO-2000.

M31 (June 28)



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Cocoon Nebula - 11 shots, ISO-25600, ranging from 27-31 seconds each (June 28). You can see around the edges the amount of noise generated from shooting at ISO-25600. The central part of the image shows the stacked image which is much better quality.

Steve calibrating the polar alignment of the scope (June 22). Not a lot of stacking here; just a lot of climbing up and down the ladder. Thanks Steve!



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## Upcoming Celestial and Club Events

July 9-11	Jupiter moves from left to right of the Moon; Mu Capricorni visible 17' NNW and Neptune visible 17' NNW of that
July 18	St. Ambrose public star party at Menke Observatory
July 18-19	Pleiades, Mars, Aldebaran and Venus in east 1-2 hrs. before sunrise. Moon is to the upper left of Mars on the 18 <sup>th</sup> and left of Venus on the 19 <sup>th</sup> .
July 21	New Moon
July 23-24	Crescent Moon below Regulus and Saturn on the 23 <sup>rd</sup> and 24 <sup>th</sup> , respectively, in the west approximately 45 minutes after dusk
July 25	QCAS public star party at Jens-Wendt Observatory
July 25-27	Saturn passes within 20' north of 4 <sup>th</sup> magnitude Sigma Leonis
July 30-31	Antares moves from left to right of the Moon

Jens-Wendt Observatory – Quad Cities Astronomical Society – Located at Sherman Park in Dixon, Iowa

Monsignor Menke Observatory – St. Ambrose University – Located at Wapsi River Environmental Education Center in Dixon, Iowa

## QCAS Contacts

Elected Officers			Volunteers and Committees		
President	Dana Taylor	<a href="mailto:dana@nelsonstaylor.com">dana@nelsonstaylor.com</a>	Facilities	Jim Rutenbeck	<a href="mailto:jim@qconline.com">jim@qconline.com</a>
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All other contacts can be sent to the club at P.O. Box 3706, Davenport, IA, 52808.

Members are also reminded that anyone can submit articles for *The Meridian*. Submit articles to Joe Bannon at [jbannon@midamerican.com](mailto:jbannon@midamerican.com) and [mzbannon@aol.com](mailto:mzbannon@aol.com).