



January, 2002

At the **January 4** meeting...

**Contributions of
Muslim Scholars
to Astronomy**

Zoubir Bouchikhi

Houston Astronomical Society

GuideStar

Starline - 281-568-9340

Houston Astronomical Society presents *Starline* -- a recorded message of Society events and astronomical happenings. This service is updated regularly, so call often to keep up-to-date on Society functions, new comets and more.

HAS Web Page: <http://www.astronomyhouston.org>

Schedule Changes & Up-To-Date Information

See the *GuideStar*'s Monthly Calendar of Events to confirm dates and times of all events for the month, and call Starline for any last minute changes.

Observatory Site Telephone: 979-732-8861

★★★★★ **The Houston Astronomical Society** ★★★★★★

The Houston Astronomical Society is a non-profit corporation organized under section 501 (C) 3 of the Internal Revenue Code. The Society was formed for education and scientific purposes. All contributions and gifts are deductible for federal income tax purposes. General membership meetings are open to the public and attendance is encouraged.

★★★★★★★★★ **Officers & Past President** ★★★★★★★★★★

President: Kirk Kendrick H: 281-391-3834 Treasurer: Debbie Moran H: 713-666-9428
Vice Pres: Bill Leach H: 281-893-4057 Past President: Don Pearce H: 713-432-0734
Secretary: Brian Cudnik H:

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Liaison responsibility

Bill Flanagan 713-699-8819
Howard Leverenz 713-957-8667
Jay Levy 281-557-4920 Field Trip and Observing, Program
Christopher Mendell
Steve Sartor

★★★★★★★★★ **Committee Chairpersons** ★★★★★★★★★★

Audit Matt Delevoryas 713-666-9428 Program Scott Mitchell 713-461-3020
Education Richard Nugent 713-524-1993 Don Pearce 713-432-0734
Field Tr./Obsg Steve Grubbs 713-455-5701 Publicity Warren Wundt
Novice George Stradley Telescope Darin Palmer 713-223-3123
Observatory Michael Dye 281-498-1703 Welcoming Marg Nunez 713-529-2549
..... Hannah Lange

★★★★★★★★★ **Ad-Hoc Committee Chairpersons** ★★★★★★★★★★

Historian Leland Dolan 713-529-0403 Publ. Star Party Marg Nunez 713-529-2549
Librarian Peggy Gilchrist 281-443-8773 Rice U. Coord. Matt Delevoryas 713-666-9428
Logo Mds Sales Judy Dye 281-498-1703 Schedule Obs'v'ty Steve Goldberg 713-721-5077
Long Range Plan Bill Leach 281-893-4057 Texas Star Pty Steve Goldberg 713-721-5077
Parliamentarian Kirk Kendrick 281-391-3834

★★★★★★★ **Special Interest Groups & Help Committees** ★★★★★★★★

These are now listed on the inside of *GuideStar* (not every month). See the Table of Contents

★★★★★★★★★ **Advisors** ★★★★★★★★★★

Dr. Reginald DuFour, Rice Univ. Dr. Lawrence Pinsky, U. of H.

★★★★★★★★★ **Dues and Membership Information** ★★★★★★★★★★

Annual Dues: Regular \$33.00 Student \$5.00
Associate \$5.00 Honorary None
Sustaining . \$50.00

All members have the right to participate in Society functions and to use the Observatory Site. Regular and Student Members receive a subscription to *The Reflector*. Regular, Student, and Honorary Members receive *The GuideStar*. Associate Members, immediate family members of a Regular Member, have all membership rights, but do not receive publications. Sustaining members have the same rights as regular members with the additional dues treated as a donation to the Society. *Sky & Telescope* mag \$29.95/year, *Astronomy* mag \$29/year -- see club treasurer.

Membership Application: Send funds to address shown on outside cover of *Guidestar*. Attention - Treasurer, along with the following information: Name, Address, Phone Number, Special Interests in Astronomy, Do you own a Telescope? (If so, what kind?), and where you first heard of H.A.S.

Table of Contents

4	President's Corner	13	Observations of the Editor
5	Meeting notice	14	Viewing the Leonids
6	December/January Calendar	16	Membership Renewals
7	Early Amateur Astronomers in Houston		Other Meetings
8	The Odyssey of a Winter Comet	17	HAS Web Page
9	Is Your Rock a Meteorite?	18	Observatory Duty Roster
10	70 New Planets Found	19	Special Help Volunteers
11	The Storms of Jupiter	20	Observatory Corner
12	Photos from Kent Francis	22	Logo Sales

Call the Starline, 281-568-9340 for updates and changes

Welcome to New Members!

The Houston Astronomical Society encourages you to join our group of active amateur astronomers and take advantage of the benefits of membership. As a member you'll have access to the club observing site near Columbus, Texas. (You're required to participate in a site orientation meeting before you get the gate lock combination.) The site has concrete pads for setting up your telescope, restroom and bunkhouse facilities, and areas set aside for camping. You'll get monthly issues of the *GuideStar* newsletter, you'll get to vote and to serve the organization as an officer, and you will be supporting the local amateur astronomy community.

Special Interest Group Listing

Any member who wants specific information on a SIG listed below may call the listed individual. Also, see the "Ad Hoc Committee Chairpersons" on the inside front cover and the "Special Help Volunteers" listing (not in every issue).

Advanced	Bill Flanagan	713-699-8819
Comets	Don Pearce	713-432-0734
Lunar & Planetary	John Blubaugh	713-921-4275
Occultations & Grazes ...	Wayne Hutchison	713-827-0828
Advanced	Bill Leach	713-863-8459

President's Corner

January 2002



by Kirk Kendrick

The weather forecasts change to “arctic” fronts, cold weather, and occasional rain as the next front arrives. The temperature swings from freezing to 80 degrees in a day. A typical Houston winter. Why observe now? Well...the skies following a cold front can be crisp, dry, and transparent - VERY unusual for summer. The nights are long. Sunburns are rare. This year, Jupiter and Saturn adorn the sky. And, most importantly, the parks and dark sky observing spots are MUCH less crowded!

I actually enjoy the winter much more than summer. No mosquitoes (normally). No sweating (again, normally). And, MUCH less chance for hurricanes and flooding (once again, normally). My equipment acclimates faster, and my CCD needs a lot less help cooling down. I have a long break with lots of friends and family around. And there isn't any grass to mow (okay, I've said it, but ... normally).

Right before a New Year...on December 28...another occultation of Jupiter by the moon occurs. Please see the HAS website for details (<http://www.astronomyhouston.org>).

At the last Board meeting in November, the results of the Long Range Planning Committee survey were discussed. A key decision was to retire the HAS Starline telephone message service, and move to e-mail and web notification of important events. Further review and forward plans based on the survey results will be covered in the January and March 2002 board meetings.

I also want to thank the board and committee chairs for an AWESOME budget meeting. We finished before 9:00pm with an agreed balanced budget (within 1%). And, had a nice get together at the 59 Diner to celebrate.

I look forward to seeing all of you in 2002!

Clear skies!

...Kirk

Houston Astronomical Society

***Meeting Notice
For Friday, January 4, 2002***

Contributions of Muslim Scholars to Astronomy

Zoubir Bouchikhi

Originally from Algeria, Dr. Bouchikhi earned his Ph.D in Islamic Studies from the University of Wexford; MA in Islamic Studies and Human Sciences from GSISS, Leesburg, Virginia; MA in Islamic Studies and Human Sciences from IIUM, Kuala Lumpur Malaysia.

Schedule of meeting activities:

All meetings are at the University of Houston Science and Research building. See the inside back cover for a map to the location.

Novice meeting: 7:00 p.m.
Across from Room 117

Site orientation meeting: 7:00 p.m.
Classroom

General meeting: 8:00 p.m.
Room 117

**See the inside back cover for a map
and more information.**

November/December Calendar:



Photo by Scott Mitchell

<i>Date</i>	<i>Time</i>	<i>Event</i>
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January 2002

4	7:00 p.m.	Novice Presentation - U of H
	8:00 p.m.	General membership meeting U of H.
5	9:55 p.m.	Last Quarter Moon
12		Prime Night-Columbus
13	7:29 a.m.	New Moon
15	7:30 p.m.	Advanced SIG Mtg. Rice Univ., contact Matt Delevoryas, 713-795-0808
21	11:47 a.m.	First Quarter Moon
28	4:51 p.m.	Full Moon

February 2002

1	7:00 p.m.	Novice Presentation - U of H
	8:00 p.m.	General membership meeting U of H.
4	7:33 a.m.	Last Quarter Moon
12	1:41 a.m.	New Moon
	7:30 p.m.	Advanced SIG Mtg. Rice Univ., contact Matt Delevoryas, 713-795-0808
20	6:02 a.m.	First Quarter Moon
27	3:17 a.m.	Full Moon

*Send calendar events to JBlubaugh@aol.com
or call 713-921-4275.*

Early Amateur Astronomers in Houston

By Thomas R. Williams

(Part 3 of 4)

Last month we introduced Oscar Monnig of Fort Worth as an organizer and primary influence in Texas amateur astronomy during the 1930s. Monnig became well known nationally as the editor and publisher of the *Texas Observers Bulletin (TOB)*. In 1939, Monnig actively recruited meteorite enthusiasts to form a network that stretched across the state and included participants from Oklahoma and Arkansas as well. At the McDonald Observatory dedication ceremony Monnig met several Houston amateur astronomers including Joe J. King and Dr. Eugene M. Parker in addition to W. S. Athey. Both King and Parker became members of Monnig's network, and remained actively involved in the field as members of the Meteoritic Society.

At the observatory dedication ceremony Monnig told King about a recent meteorite fall near Kendleton, Texas, southwest of Houston. With F. F. Fouts, also of Houston, King succeeded in finding a large piece of the meteorite. Although King and Fouts abandoned the search after finding just that one fragment they had, through their search, accurately identified the fall-zone. Monnig and other members of the Texas Observers exploited the information provided by King and Fouts fully, finding dozens of other meteorite fragments in the Kendleton area. The Kendleton meteorite remains one of the more important finds produced by Monnig's network.

Blakely Smith on Rice Boulevard and Harry Hilliard were also amateur astronomers and Houston correspondents of Monnig's *Texas Observers Bulletin*.

The Odyssey of a Winter Comet

By Don Pearce

For all of recorded history the comet has been tracing tiny circles in the sky (as seen from earth) in the constellation Cepheus, near the border with Cygnus. Even then, however, a very slight nudge in its orbit in the remote past had sealed its fate, and the “fatal attraction” of the Sun had controlled its downward motion towards the inner solar system. With its orbit inclined over 72 degrees, it has been coming from the “north,” from above the plane of the ecliptic, destined to plunge below that plane, but more about that later. Then, on December 16th, 2000, the Lincoln Near Earth Asteroid Research (LINEAR) automated telescope team (MIT) announced their discovery of an “asteroidal object”, which soon proved to be about an 18th magnitude comet, while it was still in Cassiopeia. It was designated “C/2000 WM1 (LINEAR)”, or, more commonly, (and perhaps incorrectly) “Comet LINEAR WM1”. This is a “virgin” comet (we believe), one whose nucleus has never been seared by the solar forces, and is now undergoing the tremendous stresses that a first time near-solar cometary approach must produce. Losing up to 10 tons of material a second when in the solar neighborhood, millions of tons of its precious nucleus will be lost before it is able to return to the safety of deep space. Of course, it is the loss of this material that enables the comet to, well, look like a comet.

During most of this year it more or less “behaved”, although for a while it was running a little fainter than predicted, but as of now (Dec. 15) it is right on schedule at about 5.5 magnitude. Although some comet forecasters have claimed it “peaked” around Dec. 7th, (closest approach to Earth occurred on Dec. 1st); I (and most cometers) think it will continue to slowly brighten (to about 5.0 magnitude) as the greater earth distance is offset by its closer proximity to the Sun. It reaches perihelion on Jan. 22nd (0.5554 A.U.), although the solar elongation closes from a current 77 degrees to 32 degrees on that date. However, the main problem with observing it, even by the end of December, is that it is rapidly moving too far south for northern hemisphere observers. Although it never, technically, is beyond our view in the Houston area, by the time it reaches a maximum southerly declination of -54 degrees on Jan. 10th, for all practical purposes is beyond our reach. I have seen it from my backyard in Bellaire in binoculars (Dec. 10th) and I had had an excellent view of it from Larry Wadle’s ranch south of Weimar

Continued on page 15....

Is Your Rock is a Meteorite?

By John Lane

Have you ever found a meteorite? Maybe you found a rock that you suspected of being a meteorite, but you just wasn't sure. Here are four easy ways to determine if you have found a meteorite:

1. Meteorites are almost always made of Iron, nickel. Hence they will stick to a magnet. Any magnet will do. I prefer refrigerator magnets because they are small and can be carried anywhere. If you have a large pile of suspicious rocks that you want to sift through, you might try recycling an old speaker magnet from that radio that Aunt Millie gave you for Christmas. It will be like panning for gold. Speaker magnets are very powerful and can attract Iron with great strength. Don't jump for joy when your magnet becomes loaded down with suspected alien rock because most (if not all) of what you will find will be Magnetite, an abundant and naturally occurring rock native to Earth.
2. Meteorites will almost always have a dark brown or a black glaze on them. This is called the so-called fusion crust. When the meteor races through our atmosphere it heats up and its outer layer tends to melt forming the glaze.
3. They are heavier for their size.
4. Take the non-glazed side of a ceramic tile and scratch it with your suspected meteorite. If it leaves a gray streak it is probably a magnetite. However, if you can't get it to streak, it is most likely a meteorite.

Happy New Year
from the
Houston Astronomical Society

70 New Planets Found

By John Lane

Have you heard how many new planets have been found, outside of our solar system, recently? The latest total pushes the number up to at least seventy Jupiter sized or bigger planets. The technology has not yet evolved (but is on the drawing board) to detect smaller planets like Earth. However, newer discoveries and equipment may, one day, make this quest possible.

You may wonder how planets, that are several light years away, can be detected in the first place. Astronomers are currently using three techniques:

1. First they observe a potential host star to see if it wobbles. Truly massive planets play a game of gravitational tug-a-war with their parent star causing them to wobble as the planet rotates around them. The wobble is then confirmed by comparing detailed photographic shots of the star taken over an extended period of time. So, you don't actually see the planet, but you know there is one there because of the wobble of its parent star.
2. If a star is wobbling edge-on to the Earth, it is less noticeable, using the previously referred to technique. That's when astronomers observe its light spectra. If the star's light is shifted to the blue-violet, the star is moving toward the Earth. If its spectra is shifted to the red-orange, it's moving away from the Earth. This is actually another way to detect a wobble. The shift in anything's light spectra is known as the Doppler effect.
3. The last and most effective way to find planets, and possibly even those the size of Earth, was founded by David W. Latham of the Smithsonian Institute. Latham recently accurately predicted that a planet in orbit around the star HD209458 (in Pegasus) and would transit (pass in front of) it. This was a special event because the planet was tilted edge-on toward Earth. The event happened in November of 1999. The planet is actually 200 times the size of Earth, but the fact that it was

Continued...

The Storms of Jupiter

by, *John Lane*

Where would you find a thunderstorm that is 300 years old, packing 300-mph winds, across an area three times as wide as Earth? That's right it's on Jupiter and its called the Great Red Spot.

The Great Red Spot along with its storm clouds have circled the planets equator and have entertained astronomers for centuries.

A recent movie token by NASA's Cessini probe also reveals a confounded weather pattern around Jupiter's polar regions. The images reviled a mottled appearance of several smaller storms which are the size of the biggest storms on Earth. When they compared 1,200 images token over 70 days, scientist were stunned at the mystery they found. It appears that Jupiter has a stable and organized weather pattern. Caltech scientist Ashwin Vasavada stated, "The movie shows that the (storms) last a long time and move in organized patterns", He later implies, "you'd expect chaotic motion to go with the chaotic appearance but that's not what we see."

Passing 6 million miles from Jupiter last December, Cassini, also found evidence of a huge nebula of volcanic material surrounding the planet. Scientist believe this was spewed out by Io, one of its four larger moons. Reuters Online, July 17, 2001.

70 New Planets... from previous page

photographed transiting its sun gives astronomers new hope of finding smaller planets in the same manner.

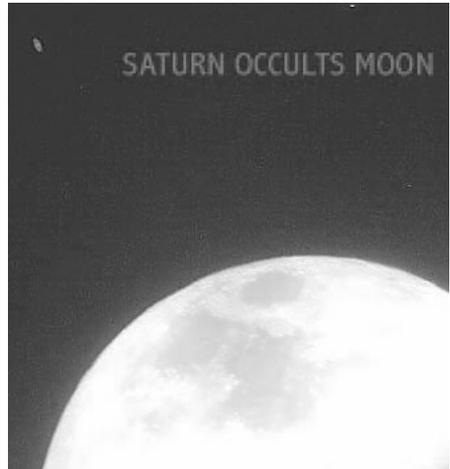
Finally NASA plans to launch the Terrestrial Planet Finder as early as 2011. This array of telescopes may prove to be the a faster and more accurate way of detecting smaller planets.

So, what's the big deal with finding smaller planets anyway? Although many other factors must be considered, many astronomers believe that life would have a better chance of evolving on a smaller planet than a large one.

Photos from Kent Francis

On the night of a full moon (7:45 p.m., 11/30/01), Kent Francis captured saturn near the limb of the moon. This picture was taken with Kent's Olympus D340L digital camera afocally (through the eyepiece), hand-held. the telescope is a Tele-Vue TV-85, with a 9mm Nagler eyepiece and a moon filter. This produces 67x magnification with a 1.2 degree field of view.

The image was enhanced with Adobe Photo Deluxe



Kent also captured this image of a Leonid meteor flying through the handle of the big dipper.

Kent also captured this picture of the moon (crater unidentified).



Observations... of the editor

by Bill Pellerin, GuideStar Editor

Astronomical observations, for me at least, have been few and far between this last month. As luck would have it, the last few weeks have been characterized by clear weeknights and cloudy, rainy weekends. This weekend is forecast to be true to that pattern. I have been quite impressed with the clearness of the sky when I step out at night from my home in the city... I just haven't been able to take full advantage of the situation.

Wow.... I really enjoyed the swapfest at last month's meeting. I was able to get rid of some items that I no longer needed (at give-away prices), and I hope that those who got them enjoy them. I know of at least one telescope that was sold (to Sandra Brown), and I witnessed the sale of a binocular eyepiece holder. There were plenty of books and accessories available at the sale as well. All in all, it was a great success.

I am pleased to be able to include several interesting items in this issue. More photos from Kent Francis, articles from David Lane, and from Don Pearce. Our long-time contributors Mike Dye (Observatory Corner) and John Blubaugh (Calendar) have contributed for this month's issue. All submissions are greatly appreciated, so if you have anything to submit, I'd be glad to share it with the membership.

As the new calendar year starts, we have some new officers and committee heads, and some returning officers and committee heads. These folks deserve our thanks for making a significant contribution to the operation of the Houston Astronomical Society.

Wishing you clear skies and new moons in 2002

Viewing the Leonids

By Don Pearce

Our original plan was to go to the “Drake Ranch”, northwest of Willis, then, successively, the Columbus site, Canyon of the Eagles, and Fort McKavett, whichever the weather best dictated. However, beginning on Wednesday, and still by Friday, it appeared that the weather system crapping on Texas was leaving Louisiana and Mississippi relatively clear. By midday Saturday we made the decision to head towards Lake Charles, which had a “clear” forecast throughout the Saturday night- Sunday morning hours, with the added caveat that we received information from a local (non astronomer) source of an “excellent” location to observe meteors. Our team consisted of Art Ciampi, Brian Cudnik, and myself (Don Pearce), followed, later, by John Blubaugh with Richard Bunkley and David Schmidt joining us from another location.

Just before we left (7:30pm) I spoke with Kenneth Drake, and he thought the local weather was still “iffy”, and that he might have to join us later. When we arrived at the “excellent” site, (I didn’t anticipate the size of Lake Charles) we realized we were actually in suburban Lake Charles and it was little better than the old Eckerd’s parking lot in the Bellaire Triangle! Fortunately, we had some time to spare so we headed north and we found an excellent site just east of Ragley, La. Its one drawback was the very frequent odor of burnt garbage. As midnight approached, we were treated to some due east-west skimmers, surprisingly bright, in the 0 to -1 range, we also were treated to a bright orange fireball at about -4.5 in the northeast. As time progressed, the sky began to deteriorate, as the persistent bank of cirraform to the south seemed to encroach upon us, then at about 2 a.m. high fog rolled in, and the sky just “crapped over.” In the meantime we had received a message from Drake that his place was clear!

We decided to move north, and wound up about 5 miles west of Longville, La. (which we dubbed “The Minor Duchy of Burkina Faso”). Initially, it was not much better than the site we had vacated (except being even darker); however, sometime after 3.a.m. the sky miraculously cleared and what a display we were treated with! Numerous fireballs ranging from -2 to -5, it seemed that the really bright ones were going to the southeast

Continued....

Viewing the Leonids... from previous page

from the radiant. We saw a tremendously bright fireball, about -10 also in the southeast, and because of the low cirrus it illuminated, resembled a tactical nuclear detonation in the distance (without the mushroom cloud). After 4.a.m., there were long periods when it seemed not even a second passed when one of us did not see a meteor.

Brian has estimated that we observed about 600 meteors in a one-hour period from about 3:45 to 4:45 a.m. (CST), and that the corrected ZHR, with our limiting magnitude of 5.3, was 1800. There were many leaving trains (which appeared green and sometimes persisted for about a minute), but the most amazing sight for me was the 4 simultaneous, parallel, evenly spaced meteors going SSW as I was facing to the south, through Hydra. That was amazing, and then to top it off, I saw 3 more simultaneous meteors emanating from the radiant, and all going different directions, (12pm, 4pm, and 8pm as I faced the east). All things considered, it was a wonderful night of watching meteors, certainly the best I have ever experienced. Shortly after 5 a.m., the sky deteriorated again, and by 5:20, we packed up and left, even as we continued to see Leonids, for the 3-hour ride back to Houston.

Winter Comet.... from page 8

on Dec. 13th. It had about a 1.5-2 degree bright tail and was very centrally condensed. This will be about my last good observation of it while it is still a relatively bright comet, for when it returns to the northern skies in late February it will then be fainter than 7th magnitude and fading. If one wants to observe this comet, it would be suggested to see it now, which brings us to back to the first part of this story. This comet, which spent eons plummeting from the north (or above) towards the inner solar system, makes a gradual u-turn around the 10th of Jan., reaches perihelion on Jan. 22nd, and then resumes its northerly course, never to return. In fact, with its current eccentricity of 1.000270, it has a hyperbolic orbit and, unless perturbed, will eventually leave the solar system altogether. So, even with your planned cryogenic body, you won't live long enough to see C/2000 WM1 (LINEAR) again. As it departs the inner solar system, the comet will begin tracing smaller and smaller circles (as seen from earth) in the constellation Cygnus, each circle moving a little closer to its origin point in Cepheus.

Membership Renewals...

Please check the mailing label on your copy of the *GuideStar*.

It'll tell you when your membership expires. If it expires soon, please send your renewal to the address on the outside cover of *GuideStar*. The dues information is on the inside front cover.

Membership in the Houston Astronomical Society is one of the great bargains in Astronomy. For a regular membership of \$33 you get the opportunity to support an active and growing organization, you get the monthly *GuideStar* newsletter, and you get access to the outstanding H.A.S. observing site near Columbus, Texas. (You must attend an orientation, given monthly, to use the site.) And, after two months of membership you can borrow, at no charge, one of the Society's loaner telescopes. It's the best deal in town, we think. Please renew your membership when it expires.

Thanks!

Other Meetings...

Fort Bend Astronomy Club meets the third Friday of the month at 8:00 p.m. at the First Colony conference Center. Novice meeting begins at 7:00, regular meeting begins at 8:00. Web site: <http://rampages.onramp.net/~binder/>

Johnson Space Center Astronomical Society meets in the the Lunar and Planetary Institute on the 2nd Friday of each month. Web site: <http://www.ghgcorp.com/cbr/jscas.html>

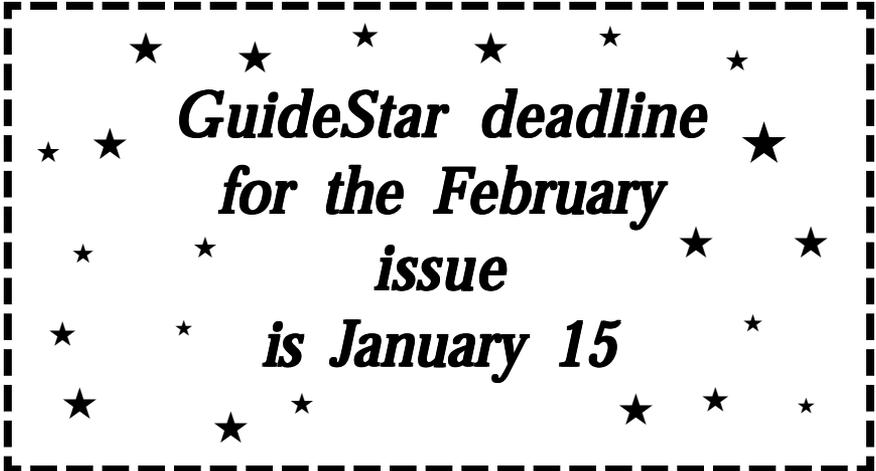
North Houston Astronomy Club meets at 7:30 p.m. on the 4th Friday of each month in the Teaching Theatre of the Student Center at Kingwood College. Call 281-312-1650 or E-mail bill.leach@nhmccd.edu. Web site: www.astronomyclub.org

HAS Web Page

The Houston Astronomical Society Web page has information on the society, its resources, and meeting information.

The address is: <http://www.astronomyhouston.org>

Want your astronomy work and name on the Internet for the whole world to see? Have some neat equipment? Pictures in film, CCD, hand drawings or video format are all welcome on the page. Do you have an idea to improve the page? I'm listening. Send me Email at goldberg@sccsi.com. (You can click on my name on the HAS home page). Or, you can call Steve Goldberg (WebMaster), at 713-721-5077.



***GuideStar deadline
for the February
issue
is January 15***

Observatory Duty Roster

by Michael B. Dye, Observatory Chairman

This is the duty list for January, February and March. Some names may have been moved from one month to another to accommodate some conflicts. If you are listed in this roster, please be sure to contact your supervisor for any information that you may need and the date and time to be at the site. You may change from site duty to open house or from open house to site duty by pre-arrangement with the Site Supervisor for that month. Changes between months require Observatory Chairman coordination.

January Supervisor Robert Rogers 281-997-9682
Margaret Nunez Members Observatory Night 01-05-02
Ralph Overturf Site
Don Pearce Members Observatory Night 01-05-02
Sim Picheloup Site
Glenn Ray Members Observatory Night 01-05-02
Mike Reynolds Site
Henry Schneider Site
Steve Simpson Site

February Supervisor Cooper Walls 713-461-9590
Larry Waddle Site
Mark Watson Site
Tom Williams Members Observatory Night 02-02-02
Barbara Wilson Members Observatory Night 02-02-02
Buster Wilson Members Observatory Night 02-02-02
Warren Wundt Site
John Blubaugh Site
John Chauvin Site

March Supervisor To Be Announced ???-??-???
Art Ciampi Site
Brian Cudnik Site
George Dolson Members Observatory Night 03-16-02
Den Drake Members Observatory Night 03-16-02
Mark Egan Members Observatory Night 03-16-02
John Fennell Site
Rusty Flecher Site
Jean-Marc Follini Site

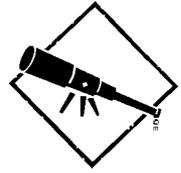
Please remember that Site work can be done anytime and does not have to be done just before Members Observatory Night. Contact your Site Supervisor for details. Names are selected for Site Duty using the current Alphabetical listing for Observatory Key Holders. If any member knows of a conflict please call me before your name is listed.

Special "Help" Volunteers

Any member who wants specific information on a subject listed below may call the individual listed. If you have a moderate knowledge of a special subject and would be happy to have others ask you about that subject, let the editor know and your subject, name and phone will be listed in *GuideStar* in the future. Note that we have listed a few possible areas where you might volunteer, but, of course, you are not limited to these. You can also have a specialty which is a sub-group of another. Note that the number of names for any subject is not limited to only one person. Also see the "Ad Hoc Committee Chairpersons" on the inside front cover and the "Special Interest Groups Listing article.

Subject	Name	Phone
Asteroids	Barbara Wilson	281-933-1289
Astrometry	Richard Nugent	713-910-5945
Astrophotography	Steve Goldberg	713-721-5077
Beginning in Astronomy	Peggy Gilchrist	281-558-1190
	Amelia Goldberg	713-721-5077
Comets	Kenneth Drake	281-367-1592
	Don Pearce	713-432-0734
Computers	Matt Delevoryas	713-795-0808
	Leland Dolan	713-529-0403
	Ricardo Palmeira	713-669-1409
Cosmology	Ricardo Palmeira	713-669-1409
Deep Sky	Larry Mitchell	281-448-8700
	Barbara Wilson	281-933-1289
Double Stars	John Blubaugh	713-921-4275
Drawing (Sketching).....	Scott Mitchell	713-461-3020
Herschel Objects	Larry Mitchell	281-448-8700
History, Astro'y - General	Leland Dolan	713-529-0403
	Ricardo Palmeira	713-669-1409
History, Astro'y - Amateurs	Tom Williams	713-526-2868
Mathematics, Astronomical	Richard Nugent	713-910-5945
Messier Objects	Novice Committee (see inside front cover)	
Photometry	Open	
Radio Telescopes	John Hiatt	713-464-4010
Satellites, Artificial	<open>	
Solar Observing	Larry Mitchell	281-448-8700
Spectroscopy	Open	
Thin Crescent Moons	Don Pearce	713-432-0734
Telescopes	Clayton Jeter	281-383-1337
Variable Stars	Barbara Wilson	281-933-1289
	Tom Williams	713-526-2868
Video	Larry Mitchell	281-448-8700

Observatory Corner



By Michael B. Dye Observatory Chairman



Some of the members who used the Observatory Site this past month (like late November/early December) may have noticed that the Exit (East) gate was not working very well. In fact, the gate had lost the top hinge. Thanks to the courageous efforts of Kirk Kendrick and Donald Swank, a relative, who worked on the offending gate during the first weekend in December the gate is now working. The two of them were able to drill a 1-inch hole where the old hinge pin used to be. The

old pin screwed into the post and because of the pull on the pin from the gate, eventually pulled out. This required that a new and different method be used to secure the gate hinge to the post. This was accomplished by Kirk and Donald installing a long $\frac{3}{4}$ inch diameter hinge pin that went all the way through the post. This pin was then secured to the post with two back to back nuts. They then spent some time getting the gate set correctly and went home. The actual fix action actually took about 30 minutes during the rain. Kirk said that it took about three hours to find where to buy the parts and get them.

The weekend of December 15th and 16th, we, Kirk, Jerod Kendrick and I went to the Observatory Site to clean up a small group of problems that we had cluttering up our "To Fix" list. While I worked on replacing the defunct Heater Thermostat in the Observatory, Kirk and Jerod replaced three (out of four) nonfunctioning lights and the nonfunctioning Dehumidifier in the Chart room. They completed the Chart Room activities before I completed my Observatory activity, so Jerod went out (in the sporadic rain) to fix the slide to the East Gate while Kirk started on the Chart Room Heater Thermostat. I eventually finished my job and went into the Chart Room to assist Kirk. About that time Jerod showed up with the slide to the gate and he and Kirk went to work on the slide so that we could close and secure the gate. I finished the wiring in the new thermostat about the same time they finished messing with the slide. Jerod went back to the gate while Kirk started "winterizing" the Observatory Site. I went out and found a sack of Fire Ant poison and spread as much winter joy to as many fire ant mounds

Continued...

Observatory Corner... from previous page

as I could find. Jerod completed the gate activity and helped Kirk with the last of the “winterizing”. I finished feeding the fire ants and we all piled into Kirk’s truck and went to Schobels to get something to eat before we went home. The rain came down sporadically the entire time we were at the Observatory Site. So if you ever wondered how the President and Observatory Chairman spend three and a half hours on a rainy Sunday afternoon, now you know. We are also not above requisitioning help from innocent bystanders.

The next item I want to talk about is something that is not necessarily within my bailiwick. The Logo Sales activity has approximately 46 (out of 70) of the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada 2002 *Observer’s Guides* left after two months of sales. At this point we should be down to less than 25 or so. To say that sales are slow would be an understatement. I decided to investigate this problem and discovered that various members thought that the price of \$20.00 was too much. In defense of the new higher price I would like to point out the Astronomical League Sales web site also offers the same book for \$20.00. The main difference is that you still have to pay postage and wait for the book to arrive. We have the book and have already paid the postage. The H. A. S. has also paid the Texas Sales Tax, which is included in the price. The main reason that we have a higher price is that members of the Board of Directors told Judy to raise the price because for the last few years we have taken a loss when the books are sold at a lower price. Remember buying these books and others from Logo Sales helps not only yourself but also the club. Please help the club treasury and yourself by buying an *Observers Guide*.

As of the time I write this article I have still not set a date for the Annual Observatory Committee meeting. When I set one, I will try and get it on the Web site for those who interested in attending. I have, however, worked up a schedule for Prime Night and Members Observatory Night dates. The list is printed below.

Continued...

Logo Sales

For H.A.S. Logo merchandise, call:
Judy Ann Dye - 281-498-1703

Hooded Sweatshirts

M	\$31.00
L	\$31.00
XL	\$31.00
XXL	\$33.00



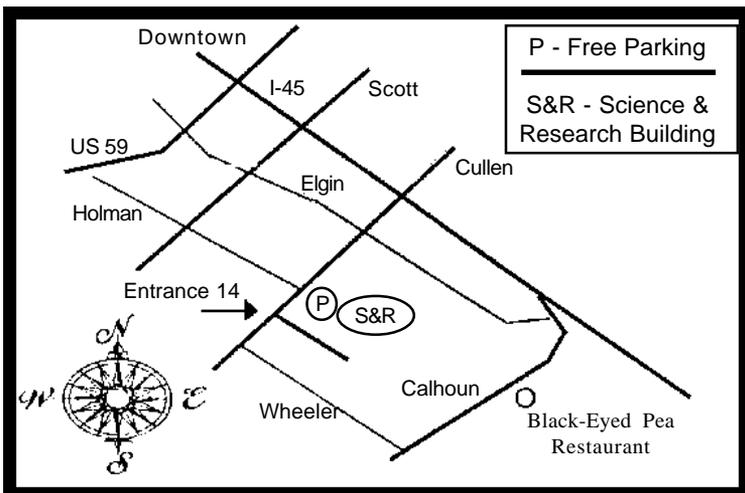
Judy shows the logo on the back of the new hooded sweatshirts.

These are the prices for our new hooded sweatshirts. These are made from heavy sweatshirt material and were very popular at the previous meetings. If you want one, come to the January meeting -- cash and checks accepted.

Observatory Corner... from previous page

Month	Prime	Ngt	Mem	Obs
Jan	12	.....	5	
Feb	9	.....	2	
Mar	9	.....	16	
Apr	6	.....	13	
May	11	.....	4	
Jun	8	.....	1	
Jul	6	.....	27	
Aug	10	.....	3	
Sep	7	.....	28	
Oct	5	.....	26	
Nov	2	.....	30	
Dec	28	.....	7	

Please fill out the appropriate log form when you use the site. Remember we use these forms as attendance records and to report Observatory Site problems such as broken toilets.



General Membership Meeting

The Houston Astronomical Society holds its regular monthly General Membership Meeting on the first Friday of each month, unless rescheduled due to a holiday. Meetings are in Room 117 of the Science and Research Building at the University of Houston. A Novice Presentation begins at 7:00 p.m.. The short business meeting and featured speaker are scheduled at 8:00 p.m. Also typically included are Committee Reports, Special Interest Group Reports, current activity announcements, hardware reviews, an astrophotography slide show by members and other items of interest.

Board of Directors Meeting

The Board of Directors Meeting is held on dates scheduled by the board at 7:00 p.m. in Room 106 of the Space Science Building at Rice University. Call StarLine for Board Meeting information. Information provided to GuideStar will be published. The meetings are open to all members of the Society in good standing. Attendance is encouraged.

GuideStar Information

The H.A.S. *GuideStar* is published monthly by the Houston Astronomical Society. All opinions expressed herein are those of the contributor and not necessarily of Houston Astronomical Society. The monthly Meeting Notice is included herein. *GuideStar* is sent via bulk rate mail to Regular, Student, and Honorary Members of H.A.S., selected individuals and recent visitors to the General Membership Meeting. Contributions to *GuideStar* by members are encouraged. Electronic submission is helpful. Submit the article in ASCII text, MS-Word (preferred), or WordPerfect format on an IBM format floppy or via AOL (BILLP10566). Mail copy to the address shown on the outside cover or to the editor at 256 East 5th Street, Houston, TX 77007. Copy must be received by the 15th of the month for inclusion in the issue to be mailed near the end of the same month. Or, bring copy to the General Membership Meeting and give it to the Editor, or phone to make special arrangements.

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