



February, 2002

At the **February 1** meeting...

The Trans-Neptunian Comet Belt

Dr. John Matese
Department of Physics
University of Louisiana

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 713-688-0981 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.

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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

Observations... of the editor

by *Bill Pellerin, GuideStar Editor*

This will be the first issue of the *GuideStar* that I've actually put together in 2002. I strive to get my part of the work done by about the 20th of the month so the publication can be printed and mailed to you before the meeting. It adds to the challenge when the meeting date is in the first few days of the month. In February, the meeting is on the first, so the deadline is just a little bit tighter.

I'm composing the *GuideStar* on a new CPU this month. It's faster, of course, but that doesn't mean that the work gets done faster. There's a lot of manual formatting to be done and the material must fit into a set of pages that's an even multiple of four.

Observing.... yes... we had a lucky Saturday a couple of weeks ago. It was new moon, it was a Saturday, and it was clear. Wow!!! How often does that happen? There was an item in *Sky & Telescope* recently in which the author calculated the number of observing days available to him for the year. My calculation:

Max available days: 52 (# of Saturdays) + 5 (suitable holidays) + 5 (vacation) days = 62

Clear skies in Houston: about 33%

Dark skies (late 3rd Q through New Moon) = 30%

Available days: 50% (some otherwise good observing days are committed to other activities)

So:

62 days * 33% * 30% * 50% = 3

I know that I actually have more than 3 observing days per year, and I don't know where my error in calculation exists. If some of the vacation days are spent at the Texas Star Party the percent of clear skies goes up substantially.

Continued on page 14...

Houston Astronomical Society

***Meeting Notice
For Friday, February 1, 2002***

***Dr. John Matese
University of Louisiana
Department of Physics***

The Trans-Neptunian Comet Belt

Dr Matese will present an overview on current thoughts (up to date as of the November 2001 meeting of the Division for Planetary Sciences - AAS in New Orleans) about the properties and evolution of the so-called "Edgeworth-Kuiper" belt.

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.

February:	Ed Preston -- "Coordinate Systems"
March:	Don Pearce -- "Comets"
April:	Amelia Goldberg -- "Navigating the Virgo Messiers"
May:	Jay Levy - "Solar Stuff Plus Meteors"

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.**

February/March Calendar:



Photo by Scott Mitchell

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

1	7:00 p.m.	Novice Presentation - U of H
	8:00 p.m.	General membership meeting U of H.
2		Members Observatory Night
4	7:33 a.m.	Last Quarter Moon
9		Prime Night-Columbus
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

March 2002

1	7:00 p.m.	Novice Presentation - U of H
	8:00 p.m.	General membership meeting U of H.
5	7:24 p.m.	Last Quarter Moon
9		Prime Night-Columbus
12	7:30 p.m.	Advanced SIG Mtg. Rice Univ., contact Matt Delevoryas, 713-795-0808
13	8:03 p.m.	New Moon
16		Members Observatory Night
20	1:16 p.m.	Spring Equinox-sun moves north of celestial equator
21	8:28 p.m.	First Quarter Moon
28	12:25 p.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 4 of 4)

A solar eclipse that passed over Austin in April 1940 was well observed by Texas amateur astronomers, including Joe J. King, Dr. Eugene Parker, W. S. Athey and Rev. Harold F. Palmer of Houston. After the eclipse, amateurs from around the state gathered for dinner and a semi-formal meeting. Athey presented a paper at the meeting. At the conclusion of the meeting Palmer proposed the formation of an association of Texas amateur astronomers. The amateurs present as well as received Palmer's suggestion enthusiastically by those who were working nationally at that time to form the Amateur Astronomers League (AAL, later to become the Astronomical League). The AAL workers hoped the Texas amateurs would develop into a region in that new organization but neither the national nor the Texas organization was finalized before World War II broke out.

Athey continued to pursue amateur astronomy into the mid-1940s. For example, he reported that he was clouded out and missed the August 1943 solar eclipse because of a nearby hurricane. By 1944, Athey had taken up lunar occultation timing in a serious way and was working with a Professor William Ball of the University of Houston physics department on ways to improve the timing of such events.

Through the pages of the *Texas Observers Bulletin* we learn that Athey kept Oscar Monnig informed of the status of other amateur astronomers in Houston. He reported to Monnig, for example, the deaths of two well-established Houston amateurs in 1940. The two deceased amateurs were Robert J. Ring and A. J. Aucoin. Ring had a rooftop observatory at his home at 1603 Tuam, while A. J. Aucoin had owned a 9-inch Clark refractor.

1000 + The Amateur Astronomer's Field Guide to Deep Sky Observing...Revisited

Emails submitted by Clayton Jeter

Tomm,

This is just a kind "thank you note" for your work on your Field Guide that I have just about worn out. I am a longtime member of The Houston Astronomical Society. I have made 12 TSP's and I have heard that you too have attended them. Lately?

Here's my story with your "1000+ The Amateur Astronomer's Field Guide to Deep Sky Observing". First it is my foremost used guide at the eyepiece. I really don't think it caught on in our club in a big way in the 80's because the club just kept raving about Wil Tirion's book. Yeah it's a goodie...but yours was much easier to use (user friendly). Everything an observer needed was right there!!! I used the hell out of it (still do). I liked it so much that I began preaching from it and about it. I have gotten many friends and club members to awaken and see the light (no pun) on it's use. Now my friends scramble to find used copies...my self included.

Why are they not sold... perhaps an updated version? Actually the time is ripe for it to be introduced again. Tomm.... we need your guide again! Mine is actually now held together with filament tape.

Give me a shout and fill in the blanks for me.

See ya,
Clayton L. Jeter...in Houston

TOMM's response:

Thanx for your kind words and enthusiasm, Clayton, and you and your friends are very welcome. It has been my greatest pleasure to produce my 36-year relationship with my best friend and wife, my children, and 1000+. You have made my day with your kind comments. Unfortunately, I cannot return the favor. 1000+ is out of print and completely sold out with no plans to reprint at present. Sky Publishing

Continued on page 14....

Houston Astronomical Society

2002 Annual Banquet

Dr. Everett Gibson

Space Scientist-Geochemist

of the Solar System Exploration Division of NASA.

"The Search for Life on Mars: The Inside Story!"

Saturday, Feb 23, 2002

at the West Loop Marriott

San Felipe and West Loop - Southbound Service Road

(Enter from the service road or San Felipe)

6:30pm Cash Bar, 7:00pm Dinner

Mail this form to the HAS for your dinner reservations.

Name:	_____
Address:	_____
City:	_____
State:	_____ Zip: _____ - _____
Home Phone no:	_____ Work Phone no: _____
Email Address:	_____
Club Affiliation:	<input type="checkbox"/> HAS <input type="checkbox"/> FBAC <input type="checkbox"/> NHAC <input type="checkbox"/> JSCAS
Dinner choices (mark the number of each meal):	
London Broil	_____
Chardonnay Basil Chicken	_____
Vegetarian	_____
Total number of meals:	_____
Total Due: (# meals x \$24)	_____
Dinner includes Italian Cream Cake, coffee or tea, gratuity, tax, and parking	

Make check payable to: Houston Astronomical Society

Mail this form to:

Houston Astronomical Society

Marg Nunez, Banquet Chairman

PO Box 20332

Houston TX 77225-0332

Dress code: Business Casual to Semi-Formal

Mars - The Orphan Moon

by John Lane

On his web page, *Enterprisemission.com*, Richard C. Hoagland describes what he believes is the ancient history of Mars. The history of Mars is an interesting subject, and Hoagland's analysis is very intriguing. To be honest, I don't know if I believe or even understand half of what I saw. Who knows, his theories may one day be taught in the classroom as fact. It is my hope that I can accurately describe his version of the history of Mars.

There are two fascinating surface features, on Mars, called the Tharsis Bulge (sometimes called the Tarsis Ridge) and the Arabia Bulge. The Tharsis Bulge (the larger one) is home to the famous Olympus Mons, the biggest Volcano in the solar system. It's also where you will find other volcanoes such as Ascraeus, Pavonis and Arsia Mons. The Arabia bulge is smaller and on the other side of the planet. With that information, I ask you what could have formed these bulges? Could it have been Volcanism? Or, was it something else. The reasons I ask you these questions is because I appreciate the intellect and interest of all readers of this publication. So, please feel free to e-mail me at, *John.j.lane@nhmccd.edu* if you think you have a different answer than the one Richard C. Hoagland offers. For now, put on your seat belt and I will take your imaginations to a place it has probably never been.

Hoagland's theory suggest that at one time Mars was simultaneously a satellite of not one but two other massive planets. Its orbited them both at a distance of 100,000 to 300,000 miles causing Mars to be locked into a synchronous, tidal locked orbit with other two neighbors. Hoagland suggest that the larger Tharsis Bulge always faced THE larger planet and the smaller Arabia Bulge faced the smaller one. Over millions of years, this unique synchronous orbit and the constant gravitational pull of the two larger parent planets could have warped the Martin surface forming the two bulges.

Continued...

Mars... from previous page

This ideal may be shocking and hard to except until we consider how the Earth's gravity has influenced the Moon. Consider this analogy. Billions of years ago the Moon was in a rather impressive volcanic state. The interior boiled with molten rock and lava until a few sizable meteors blasted holes in its surface. The lave all flowed to the side facing Earth because of tidal forces. Plus, only one side of the Moon faces the Earth. The far side is more dense and falls victim to sinterifical force which pushes it away from our view.

Does Richard C. Hoagland sound familiar to you. Before I had a chance to finish this article he briefly appeared on Pax's Encounters With the Unexplained.

Ref: Enterprisemission.com

∞ Want Ads ∞

For Sale! Complete visual and CCD astronomy setup. System includes 12" Meade LX-200 telescope, assortment of Televue Eyepieces, SBIG ST-7 CCD Camera, assorted Meade, Optec, and Losmandy accessories, as well as a 4x6 Trailer for hauling everything neatly to your favorite star party or observing spot! Selling everything as a complete outfit for \$7,000. Please contact Bill Murphy for details. E-mail: bill@wemurphy.com, Cell Phone: (832) 594-0136.

What's A Blue Moon?

By John Lane

Have you ever heard of a blue moon? There is at least one full moon every month, but a blue moon is quite simply the second full moon of any given month. They take place about seven times in nineteen years, or once every thirty-three months. The moon does not actually turn blue, but, on rare occurrences, volcano dust can cause a blue looking moon. Thanks to the media and the internet, the term "blue moon" is a new phrase coined and made popular only in the last two decades. People living before then never heard of a blue moon.



Not all parts of the Earth experience a blue moon at the same time. Consider the latest blue moon that happened in October, November and December of 2001. Our blue moon (for the Central Time Zone) happened in October. Blue moons occurred on different months in different time zones. It happened in November for time zones from New York to Moscow. Time zones east of Moscow took place in December.

Marg's Star Parties

.....

Here's your chance to share your enthusiasm for astronomy with some school kids. Marg Nunez has planned two events for the near future. Bring your telescope, or just come by... Either way, you'll have a great time.

Friday, Feb 22, Grady Middle school, Sage at San Felipe, 6pm, Speaker at 6, veiwing at 7pm

Mitchell April 19th 7pm. Details to be announced

Call or Email Marg. for more details. 713-529-2549 **Marg10@flash.net**

China Plans Moon Landing

By John Lane

We almost never hear anything about the Chinese space program. In 1999 the official Xinhua news agency announced a four-step manned space flight plan that would establish a space station serviced by a shuttle style vehicle by 2005. The four-step plan concludes with putting a man on the Moon.

You may be wondering why we never heard anything about this before. Probably, because this ambitious of an announcement could easily be confused just another one of Beijing's propagandastunts. This announcement does not really surprise me. If Xinhua really wanted to impress the west, they should announce the inclusion of women into there politically incorrect "manned space flight crew".

Further evidence of their intentions was supported when they sent a monkey, a dog and snail into orbit in January 2001 aboard a Shenzou spacecraft.

Ref: Independent News & Media Online

Emails... from page 8

had tentative plans to print a revised, expanded edition some years back, but dropped them when they changed personnel in the "books" department. Your best bet is to lobby *S&T* and demonstrate demand and a market for the reprint. Probably a forlorn hope, but the best that exists at present.

Thanx again for your interest. I wish all of you in Texas clear skies and the wherewithal to take greatest advantage of them in 2002 and beyond.

Tomm Lorenzin

P.S. You may be interested in the expanded and revised 2000+ Catalog, which I have published on the wwweb. Find it at <http://www.1000plus.com/2000plus/>. No maps, at present, but you may find the listings familiar and greatly expanded. Feel free to print out as much as you like, and share it out, as long as you do not infringe upon my copyright by charging more than simply the cost of reproduction for the pages

Observations... from page 4

The point of the article, and of this exercise, is that we don't get many good, clear, moonless nights when we can observe the sky. Take advantage of the ones we do get, and drink in all that the sky has to offer. Have your observing plan ready, your packing list ready, your equipment ready, and resolve to get out more this year.

We have more contributions by John Lane this month. You'll enjoy seeing what he's been able to find out. Our series of articles by Tom Williams ends this month. I've enjoyed these, and hope that you do too. Imaging enthusiast Kent Francis has provided us with some more photos to enjoy.

Until next time... clear skies and new moons!

..Bill

More Astrophotos from Kent Francis

Our regular contributor of images has provided us with the following for February:



The first image shows the Shadow of Io on Jupiter. This is a rather subtle feature in this image, but being able to capture this is quite an accomplishment. Consult your current issue of *Sky & Telescope* for information on Jupiter moon shadows, and see one yourself!

Kent's second image shows the terminator of the moon. The terminator is the place transition between the sunlit and the shadowed areas of the lunar surface, and it is always here that you can see the moon's features at their best.

The best time for observing the moon is near first quarter (it's in the sky at a convenient time), or near third quarter (rises about midnight). Full moon represents one of the worst times to observe the moon because the sunlight is hitting the surface face-on. None of the features of the moon stand out under these conditions.



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>

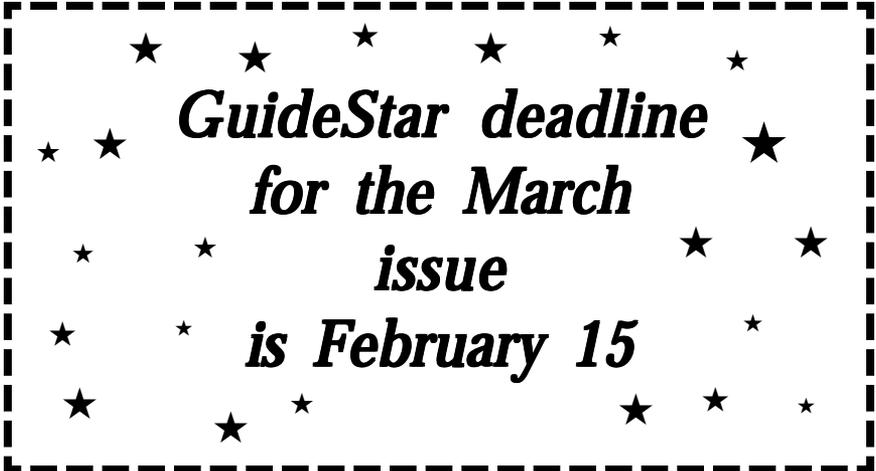
North Houston Astronomy Club meets at 7:30 p.m. on the 4th Friday of each month in the Teaching Theatre of the Student Center at Kingwood College. Call 281-312-1650 or E-mail bill.leach@nhmccd.edu. Web site: www.astronomyclub.org

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 March
issue
is February 15***

Observatory Duty Roster

by Michael B. Dye, Observatory Chairman

This is the duty list for February, March and April. 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.

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 Matt Delevoryas 713-662-2939
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 Fennel Site

April Supervisor To Be Announced 281-599-0248
Rusty Flecher Site
Jean-Marc Follini Site
Fred Garcia Members Observatory Night 04-13-02
John Garza III Members Observatory Night 04-13-02
Clifton Goldman Members Observatory Night 04-13-02
David Granadino Site
Chai S. Heng Site
David L. Herlinger Site
Gary Hlivko Site
Wayne Hutchinson Site

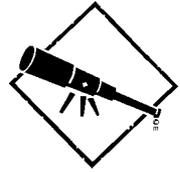
Please remember that Site work can be done anytime and does not have to be done just before Members Observatory Night. Contact your Site Supervisor for details. Names are selected for Site Duty using the current Alphabetical listing for Observatory Key Holders. If any member knows of a conflict please 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	713-688-0981
	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	713-688-0981
	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



The Observatory Committee Annual Meeting was at the Observatory Site on January 12th. We had very clear weather for this meeting and as an added bonus the 12th was also Prime Night. The meeting was very productive in that we went over the accomplishments of last year (not many) and mapped out our goals for this year. Some of the activities were farmed out to different Committee members. We designated Allen Gilchrist, Kirk Kendrick and Michael Dye to write the RV Storage rules/guidelines/policies. Last year this same group was supposed to do this but after a good start we got stalled in a data-gathering mode and didn't get around to completing the activity. We hope that we will get more done this year than last. I am still collecting data but at this point I only have responses from about seven members.

I announced in the December 2001 *GuideStar*, that we added Ed Szczepanski to the Observatory Committee. Ed spends a few weekends each month at the Observatory Site and has volunteered to help maintain the Observatory Site grounds by mowing the grass around the pads and the campgrounds. Ed has been working on the Pad area for the last few months and it looks very good. Maybe Ed will discover another comet when he is out there. Good Luck, Ed.

One of the items we decided not to pursue any further was an "end all activity" to remove the Gophers from the Observatory Site. It did not look like I was making very much progress anyway. We came to the conclusion that I would continue to use bait and gas to keep the gophers in control.

Last year we had decided to change the number of members that would work at the Observatory Site each month. We would have two schedules. A Summer (April through October) Schedule in which we would have ten members working at the Observatory Site each month and Winter

Continued...

Observatory Corner... from previous page

(November through March) Schedule in which we will have six members. The reason we are going to do this is because we don't have much yard work to do during the winter while we seem to be short members during the summer. After making this decision last year, I promptly forgot about the idea. The dumb thing is that no one else remembered it either. This year I am implementing this idea starting with the February Duty Roster. I am moving last two names from the February Roster to the March Roster. This will make the March Roster contain only six names and April Roster contain ten names.

One of the good news items was that last year we (the Observatory Committee) had determined that the flashing lights that were located on each side of the road culverts were either going bad or were missing. Ed Preston volunteered (?) to come up with a replacement flashing light design. Ed was successful in this endeavor and presented the committee with a completed working model at the meeting. He is going to make about ten units and we will replace the missing or non-functional flashers at each culvert this year.

The last item we talked about was getting a pile of gravel to use in filling in the caved in sections of the site road. The cave-ins are caused by gophers digging tunnels under the road. I will be getting this pile of gravel as soon as I locate a source for same.

The last item I want to address is that this year we will paint the Observatory. This will involve sand blasting the building brick and metal structures and repainting it. We will attempt to accomplish this activity during a full moon window but I would like to remind all members that during this activity the Observatory will be shut down and cannot be used. I will announce when we are going to do this as soon as I can line up a company to come out and perform the activity.

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.

Continued....

Observer's Handbook

Get ready for the 2002 observing season by getting your copy of the Observer's Handbook at the next meeting. This book will be your constant observing companion for the year. All of the important astronomical events for the year are included in this guide.



Don't miss a big event because you weren't prepared. Get your copy from Judy at Logo Sales at the next meeting. They won't last forever, you know!!!

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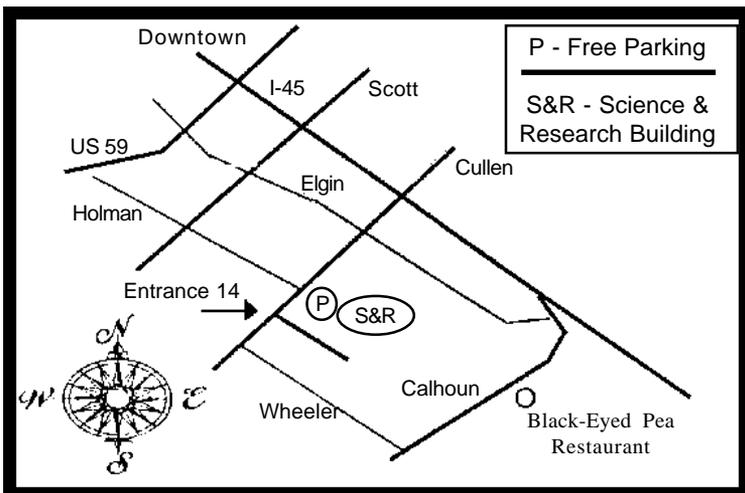
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Hooded Sweatshirts

M	\$31.00
L	\$31.00
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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 meeting -- cash and checks accepted.





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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