



# GuideStar

**April, 2008**

*At the April 4 meeting...*

## **Hubble Space Telescope Servicing Mission 4**

**Shuttle Flight Director  
Chuck Shaw  
and  
Astronaut John Grunsfeld**

The professional and the amateur astronomy communities will be watching closely the Hubble Telescope servicing mission set for August 28, 2008. This ambitious mission will install a new wide field camera, repair the imaging spectrograph, replace faulty gyroscopes, replace batteries, install a new capture capability, and update the protective blankets on the telescope.

One of the premier instruments for astronomical observing, the fate of the Hubble Space Telescope was uncertain following cutbacks in the Shuttle program. Now that this mission is scheduled the Hubble can continue to provide cutting-edge data for years to come.

### **Highlights:**

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HAS Web Page:

<http://www.AstronomyHouston.org>

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

### **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.  
Aaron Clevenson (NHAC) - "Nucleosynthesis"

Site orientation meeting: ..... 7:00 p.m.  
Classroom 121

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

See last page for a map and more information.

## 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: Bill Leach ..... H: 281-893-4057  
 Vice Pres: Ken Miller ..... H: 936-931-2724  
 Secretary: Doug McCormick ..... H: 281-996-0177  
 Treasurer: Bill Flanagan ..... H: 713-699-8819  
 Past President: Steve Sartor .....

### Additional Board Members

Steve Goldberg ..... 713-721-5077  
 Don Pearce ..... 713-432-0734  
 John Missavage .....  
 Clayton Jeter .....  
 Bram Weisman .....  
 Liaison responsibility

### Committee Chairpersons

Audit ..... Tom Blocker .....  
 Education ..... Richard Nugent .....  
 Field Tr./Obsg ..... George Stradley ..... 281-376-5787  
 Novice ..... Justin McCallum .....  
 Observatory ..... Bob Rogers ..... 281-460-1573  
 Program ..... Brian Cudnik .....  
 Publicity ..... John Missavage .....  
 Telescope ..... Bram Weisman .....  
 Paul & Kay McCallum .....  
 Welcoming ..... Open .....

### Ad-Hoc Committee Chairpersons

Historian ..... Leland Dolan ..... 713-688-0981  
 Librarian ..... Peggy Gilchrist ..... 281-443-8773  
 Logo Mds Sales ..... Judy Dye ..... 281-498-1703  
 Long Range Plan ..... Bill Leach ..... 281-893-4057  
 Parliamentarian ..... Kirk Kendrick ..... 281-633-8819  
 Publ. Star Party ..... Richard Nugent ..... 713-524-1993  
 Rice U. Coord. .... Matt Delevoryas ..... 713-666-9428  
 Schedule Obs'v'ty ..... Steve Goldberg ..... 713-721-5077  
 Texas Star Pty ..... Steve Goldberg ..... 713-721-5077

### 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.  
 Dr. Lawrence Armendarez, U. of St. Thomas

### Dues and Membership Information

Annual Dues: Regular ..... \$36.00  
 Associate ..... \$6.00  
 Sustaining ..... \$50.00  
 Student ..... \$12.00  
 Honorary ..... None

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* and *Astronomy* magazines are available to members at a discount.

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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## 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 Leach ..... 281-893-4057  
 Comets ..... Don Pearce ..... 713-432-0734  
 Lunar & Planetary ..... John Blubaugh ..... 713-921-4275

## 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://www.fbac.org>

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

**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](mailto:bill.leach@nhmccd.edu). Web site: [www.astronomyclub.org](http://www.astronomyclub.org)

## Logo Sales

The *Observer's Handbooks* for 2008 are available. They sell for \$25.00. If you would like to have one or more, please e-mail me at [judyadye@aol.com](mailto:judyadye@aol.com), call me at 281-498-1703, or see me at the meeting... *Judy Dye*

# April/May Calendar:



Photo by Scott Mitchell

Check the web site:  
[www.astronomyhouston.org](http://www.astronomyhouston.org)  
**Webmaster: Kay McCallum**  
[kaym@mcclibrary.net](mailto:kaym@mcclibrary.net)

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

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 [kaym@mcclibrary.net](mailto:kaym@mcclibrary.net).

Date	Time	Event
<b>April</b>		
4	7:00 p.m.	HAS Novice Meeting, U of H
	8:00 p.m.	HAS General Meeting, U of H
5		Prime Night, Columbus Observing Site
6	10:55 p.m.	New Moon
12	1:31 p.m.	Moon at First Quarter
20	5:24 a.m.	Full Moon
28	9:13 a.m.	Moon at Last Quarter
<b>May</b>		
2	7:00 p.m.	HAS Novice Meeting, U of H
	8:00 p.m.	HAS General Meeting, U of H
3		Prime Night, Columbus Observing Site
5	7:18 a.m.	New Moon
		Eta Aquarid Meteors Peak
12	10:46 p.m.	Moon at First Quarter
14	11:00 p.m.	Mercury at greatest elongation east
20	9:11 p.m.	Full Moon
23	8:00 a.m.	Mars 0.28 deg. NNE of Beehive Cluster
24		Novice Star Party, Columbus Site
28	9:57 p.m.	Moon at Last Quarter
29	7:30 p.m.	HAS Board of Directors Meeting, Houston Chronicle Building

Send calendar events to Doug McCormick  
 - [skygazer10@sbcglobal.net](mailto:skygazer10@sbcglobal.net)

## Publicity Suggestion Box

I welcome any suggestions that *any* member has to offer. It doesn't matter how trivial you think your idea may be. All input will be reviewed and welcomed.

Let's grow.

Please drop me a note at the following address.

[itjdm0@yahoo.com](mailto:itjdm0@yahoo.com)

John Missavage- HAS Publicity Chair

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

**GuideStar deadline**

**for the May**

**issue**

**is April 15**

(tax day)

★ ★ ★ ★ ★





## **George Stradley - builder, organizer, observer**

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**G**eorge Stradley is a wonderful friend of mine. We each know just how to pick at one another for fun. Knowing when and how to use his witty sense of humor can always put a smile on this guys face, and he's good at it (note the title of his Bio listed below...that's George).



*George Stradley with his  
Televue 76*

Besides all of those smiles that he can generate, George also has a real talent for designing and building high grade telescopes... furniture-like quality. I have always envied his ATM craftsmanship.

George is continuously found at local star parties in our area and being our Field Trip and Observing chairperson, he is always planning a party or two at our Columbus observing site. As a youngster at age 91, he seems much more active than this author... I simply can't keep up with him. As you read about him here, try to figure out where he gets all of his energy...I sure can't.

### **George Stradley's Life In 30 Seconds**

I was born in Wilmington, Delaware 91+ years ago. Somehow, I managed to get an engineering degree and survive through that historic period known as the Great Depression.

Except for an interruption during World War II, I spent my working life in the chemical industry. I had many assignments which resulted in far too much travel; both domestic and foreign.

I quit working for somebody else in 1977 and became my own boss when I founded a modest chemical engineering consulting business. Best thing I ever did!

Hobbies? I became a self-taught amateur cabinetmaker, and reproduced many copies of museum pieces of Colonial furniture. Oh yes, and there has always been an airplane in most

of my adult life until recent years when age and hearing failure forced me to stop.

Astronomy came later -- about 1995 as I remember. I joined HAS in 1999 and have made many, many great friendships. Today, I find great satisfaction building my own telescopes.

### **The George Stradley interview...**

Clayton: What was the first telescopic object that you observed in the night sky that caught your interest in astronomy?

George: The moon, of course but I'm not sure when that was. Let's go to more modern times: It was at TSP and I had just finished building a 6" F/8. Had no finder, yet, and my collimation was lousy. But I struggled to M68. What a sight for me! Bought a Telrad while there and had really great time for the rest of the week. There was no turning back.

Clayton: How are your "star hopping" skills during an observing session? Do you use telescope go-to technology?

George: I'm a pretty good star hopper and I can find things with chart in hand, and time on my side. My truss Dob, however, has a ServoCAT drive with ArgoNavis digital setting circles; so, yes, I do use the go-to on occasion if I'm not doing a program for certification. However, I prefer to star hop and then let the ServoCAT take over the tracking chore.

Clayton: I think you did a fantastic job on the construction of your large Dobsonian truss tube telescope. Tell us about its design, mirror, and features. What's new with it?

George: The truss Dob is a 12.5" F/5. I bought the optics and did the wood work. The primary is a Pegasus 1/12 wave and the diagonal is by ProtoStar. I used Dave Kriege's book for design parameters. I'm in a re-build stage at his time in an attempt to lighten the scope so that I can lift all components. And yes, I will reinstall the ServoCAT with the Argo DSC's.

*Continued ...*

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## *Just Looking... from previous page*

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Clayton: You definitely have a scope that has plenty of light grasp to see those faint fuzzy objects. Are you a visual observer only? Ever try observing and recording some of the popular observing programs?

George: Like everyone else, I have done the AL Messier program and got my certificate (both telescope and binocular). I sketched all the Messiers, but I won't brag about my drawings – they're pretty bad. Sketching did, however, force me to see things I'm sure I would have overlooked. I've got parts of several AL projects underway, but I'm not sure I will live long enough to complete them. I'm also doing the objects in Steve O'Meara's Hidden Treasures book. There is plenty to do out there!

Clayton: You told me that you fell in your driveway sometime back while unloading your telescope from your auto and broke your hip. I'm sure this was a major setback for you. Has this past event affected your star gazing today?

George: Actually, it was my right femur just below the hip. I have a stainless steel pin in the leg which sets off every security alarm I try to pass through. I use a walker when I observe so that I have something to give me stability. All my observing friends kind of watch over me, so I don't feel I've been affected too badly in observing. Just don't ask me to climb Larry Mitchell's ladder!

Clayton: It seems to me that most guitar pickers own more than one guitar. It holds true too with amateur astronomers... they usually own more than one scope. Why is that? Do you?

George: I had three home-built Dobs, but I gave two of them away to my rehab therapists. I then bought a TeleVue 76mm refractor after my injury and intended to dispose of the truss Dob also but aperture fever caught up to me again; hence the current re-build project. Why do we have more than one scope? I'm not sure I can answer; but, that little TV76 gives such great views of the Pleides, or The Coathanger, or comet Holmes with a 31mm Nagler I don't think I will ever part with it.

Clayton: I seem to be a telescope accessory junkie. Tell me about your collection of goodies? Do you have favorites?

George: They're called Naglers, Panoptics and Radians.

Clayton: I've seen you many evenings in years past on the North observing field at the Prude Ranch using your telescope. Are there other major star parties that you have attended or want too?

George: We have a small group which goes to the Hill Country for a week of observing each spring and fall and I have attended Enchanted Skies Star Party at Socorro, NM. I'm not the most avid traveler these days.

Clayton: Excluding myself (just kidding George), do you have an amateur observing mentor?

George: Yeah. Over two hundred of them – they're known as HAS members!

Clayton: I liked that answer, George!

Clayton: How do envision amateur astronomy in the next 25 years?

George: I have to take an optimistic view of this one. I think the hobby is going to grow despite deteriorating skies and the disappearance of good observing sites. Why do I say this? Look at the attendance increase in Astronomy Day; interest seems to be growing at a tremendous rate. It seems the go-to scope is here to stay, and with continuing ease of use and further quality enhancements more people will be attracted.

Clayton: Do you have any helpful advice to pass on to observers just starting out in astronomy?

George: You bet. Join a club. Don't give up. Perseverance takes first place; skill follows.

Clayton: I couldn't have said it any better.

Clayton: Thanks George for taking the time to share your interest and thoughts with us for our monthly HAS newsletter, *The GuideStar*. We wish you luck with all of your astronomy interests. Keep up the great work within our society. Clear skies, always.

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## *Observations... from page 4*

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### By the Way

The April issue of *Texas Monthly* magazine has a nice article in it about the dark energy research that's going on at the University of Texas McDonald Observatory in West Texas. I just read the article and can highly recommend it to you. It's not very technical.

It'd be great if we could persuade Gary Hill or Karl Gebhardt, who are working on this program to come and talk to the Houston Astronomical Society!

# R Leo -- A Lovely Variable

**Object:** R Leo  
**Class:** Mira Class Variable Star  
**Magnitude:** 5.8 to 10 / period 312 days  
**R.A.:** 9 h, 47 m, 34 s  
**Dec:** + 11 degrees, 25 minutes, 44 seconds  
**Distance:** 390 ly  
**Constellation:** Leo  
**Size:** n/a  
**Optics needed:** Binoculars or any telescope when it's bright, more aperture when it's dim

## Why this object is interesting.

R Leo is on the AAVSO (American Association of Variable Star Observers) list of 'easy to observe' variable stars. They're correct. It is easy to observe and easy to find. Because of its proximity to two other stars I always look for a 'fox head' asterism. The two white stars nearby are the ears of the fox and R Leo, which is reddish, is the nose. To the side of this triangle is the bright (mag 6.4) star SAO98767.

Current observations on the AAVSO web site have R Leo shining at about magnitude 7.5, so it'll be easily visible in a small telescope. It on dropping in brightness, though, so if you want to see it when it's bright, get out and take a look soon.

The first person to classify R Leo as a variable star was J.A. Koch of Danzig, and this was done in 1782. R Leo is the fourth long period variable star to be identified. It has been observed by AAVSO observers since 1903 with more than 55,000 observations now on record.

I made a photometric measurement of R Leo and came up with a magnitude of 7.3 on March 8, 2008 which corresponds to measurements made by other observers on that date.

If you're interested in observing R Leo yourself (and I highly recommend that you do), visit [www.aavso.org](http://www.aavso.org) and get a chart. On the left side of the home page, type 'r leo' in the "Pick a Star" field, select the "Find Charts" radio button and click <Go>. The AAVSO has a new automatic chart generating tool -- it's very cool. Enter the star name and in the "Plot a chart of this scale" enter 'D'. You can try other scales, too. It's all free.

R Leo is an end-of-life star that has left the main sequence of mid-life stars. Stars like R Leo are large, have high brightness, and are often M class (red). The color contrast between R Leo and its companions is striking and makes for a nice visual experience.



My March 8, 2008 image of R Leo (monochrome)



From TheSky 6, showing the red color of R Leo

# Tracking Wildlife from Space



By Patrick L. Barry

## It's 10 o'clock, and do you know where your Oriental Honey Buzzard is?

Tracking the whereabouts of birds and other migrating wildlife across thousands of miles of land, air, and sea is no easy feat. Yet to protect the habitats of endangered species, scientists need to know where these roving animals go during their seasonal travels.

Rather than chasing these animals around the globe, a growing number of scientists are leveraging the bird's-eye view of orbiting satellites to easily monitor animals' movements anywhere in the world.



*The ARGOS program tracks the whereabouts of endangered migrating animals via miniature transmitters on the animals and the POES satellites in orbit.*

The system piggybacks on weather satellites called Polar Operational Environmental Satellites, which are operated by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), as well as a European satellite called MetOp. Sensors aboard these satellites pick up signals beamed from portable transmitters on the Earth's surface, 850 kilometers below. NOAA began the project—called Argos—in cooperation with NASA and the French space agency (CNES) in 1974. At that time, scientists placed these transmitters primarily on buoys and balloons to study the oceans and atmosphere. As electronics shrank and new satellites' sensors became more sensitive, the transmitters became small and light enough by the 1990s that scientists could mount them safely on animals. Yes, even on birds like the Oriental Honey Buzzard.

“Scientists just never had the capability of doing this before,” says Christopher O’Connors, Program Manager for Argos at NOAA.

Today, transmitters weigh as little as 1/20th of a pound and require a fraction of a watt of power. The satellites can detect these feeble signals in part because the transmitters broadcast at frequencies between 401 and 403 MHz, a part of the spectrum reserved for environmental uses. That way there's very little interference from other sources of radio noise.

“Argos is being used more and more for animal tracking,” O’Connors says. More than 17,000 transmitters are currently being tracked by Argos, and almost 4,000 of them are on wildlife. “The animal research has been the most interesting area in terms of innovative science.”

For example, researchers in Japan used Argos to track endangered Grey-faced Buzzards and Oriental Honey Buzzards for thousands of kilometers along the birds' migrations through Japan and Southeast Asia. Scientists have also mapped the movements of loggerhead sea turtles off the west coast of Africa. Other studies have documented migrations of wood storks, Malaysian elephants, porcupine caribou, right whales, and walruses, to name a few.

Argos data is available online at [www.argos-system.org](http://www.argos-system.org), so every evening, scientists can check the whereabouts of all their herds, schools, and flocks. Kids can learn about some of these endangered species and play a memory game with them at [spaceplace.nasa.gov/en/kids/poes\\_tracking](http://spaceplace.nasa.gov/en/kids/poes_tracking).

*This article was provided by the Jet Propulsion Laboratory, California Institute of Technology, under a contract with the National Aeronautics and Space Administration.*

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## ***Membership Renewals...***

**Your membership is renewable on January 1 of each year.**

Total yearly dues are \$36.

Your payment for 2008 is due as of January 1, 2008.

Magazine subscriptions can be renewed at any time and the renewal does not need to be synchronized with your HAS dues.

Membership in the Houston Astronomical Society is one of the great bargains in Astronomy. For a regular membership of \$36 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 regularly, 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.

Encourage other astronomy enthusiasts to join the organization as well. It's a great group.

***Thanks!***

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**Minutes**  
**of the March, 2008 Meeting of the**  
***Houston Astronomical Society***

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The March, 2008 meeting of the Houston Astronomical Society was called to order on March 7th at 8:02 p.m. by HAS President, Bill Leach.

**Opening Announcements:**

- Bill Leach introduced himself and welcomed everyone, including five new members and one guest, to the meeting.

**Announcements:**

- Observatory Chair, Bob Rogers, announced that the Columbus site gate combination was changed on March 1st. The new combination was distributed after the meeting to all members in attendance who have completed site orientation training and are current on their HAS dues.
- Observatory Chair, Bob Rogers, and past observatory chairs, Mike Dye and Kirk Kendrick presented Ed Preston with a gift of appreciation in honor of Ed's 17 years of service as Observatory Treasurer. Ed is stepping down from this post, having served from 1990 to 2008. Ed addressed the membership, saying simply that it was something he could do to serve the club. Ed recently retired and will be relocating with his wife to his property in Virginia next to a nature preserve. Ed noted with a smile that the nature preserve will ensure his skies will be dark for many years to come.
- Telescope Loaner Program Co-Chair, Bram Weisman, reviewed the details of the Loaner Telescope Program and pointed members to the HAS website, [www.astronomyhouston.org](http://www.astronomyhouston.org), for more information.
- Field Trip/Observing Committee Chair, George Stradley, announced that the next star party will be March 29th at the Columbus observing site. This will be a regular star party with other area clubs invited. HAS will be providing hamburgers, and attendees are asked to sign up to bring the fixings. George asked members to RSVP to the email address listed for him on the HAS website, no later than March 26th if they are planning to attend.
- George also announced that Warren Wundt was planning a star party in the San Antonio area on Saturday, March 17, and Warren needed volunteers. Interested parties were asked to email Warren at [wwundt@satx.rr.com](mailto:wwundt@satx.rr.com).
- Steve Goldberg showed a video by Lloyd Overcash of the

Moon occulting Venus in daylight on March 5th.

- Education Committee Chair, Richard Nugent, solicited members to observe a grazing occultation of a star by the moon on the evening of May 10th. Richard will be coordinating observations by a group of observers placed along a line in southeast Houston. Interested members should contact Richard at the email address listed for him on the HAS website.
- Richard also solicited volunteers to judge projects in astronomy, space science, and astrophysics at the 49th Annual Science and Engineering Fair, Friday, March 14th. Several members volunteered to serve as judges.
- Judy Dye announced that planning for the annual HAS Banquet is underway. She asked for a show of hands from those interested in attending a banquet this year, and there was a lot of interest. Judy said that there will be two entrée choices for the meal this year, and she asked members to contact her if they had any ideas for the speaker.
- Don Pearce gave the Comet Report, highlighting Comets 17P/Holmes, 8P/Tuttle, 46P/Wirtanen, and C2008 C1 Chen-Gao. For more information on these comets and other comets of interest, see Don's Comet Corner on the HAS website.
- Bill Leach announced that the March 2008 Meeting of the HAS Board of Directors will be held Thursday, March 27th at 7:30 p.m. at the offices of the Houston Chronicle in downtown Houston. Bill reminded everyone that the HAS Board Meetings are open to all HAS members.
- Steve Goldberg reminded those planning to attend The Texas Star party that the accommodations deposits were due to the Prude Ranch and the TSP registration fees were due to the TSP registrar.

*Continued...*

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# Banquet News

I was asked if we were going to have a banquet soon. My answer was this: Would the members of the club support one? Some commitment would be needed by the members. This is the only dress-up affair that the club has, and I think the members enjoy having a banquet.

**So, we are going to have a banquet.** We are now in the process of finding a speaker. If you have any suggestions, please e-mail me. I would like to have a name, a contact number, and what their specialization is. If all you have is a web address for this person, send it to me.

Thank you.

Judy Ann Dye  
Banquet Chairman  
judyadye@aol.com  
281-498-1703 Ho  
281-687-4684

## Minutes... from previous page

### Program:

- Steve Goldberg introduced the featured speaker for the evening, HAS member Tom Williams, PHD in History from Rice University, past president of the HAS and the AAVSO, and active participant in the Astronomical Society of the Pacific. Tom delivered his presentation entitled, "Albert G Ingalls and his Amateur Telescope Making Team." Upon concluding his presentation, Tom entertained questions, and Steve presented him with a gift of appreciation from the society.

### Closing Announcements:

- Bill Leach pronounced the meeting adjourned at 9:45 p.m.

## Want Ads

### **For Sale: Celestron C-5 Outfit**

Includes:

- 5x24 finder scope
- Erect image diagonal
- Four Eyepieces: 25 mm; 17 mm; 12.5 mm; and 7.5 mm
- Equatorial wedge, adjustable for latitude
- Battery powered (9v) motor drive
- Celestron Rubber Covered Tripod--very sturdy
- Carrying case-Celestron

Condition excellent. Price: \$425 for complete outfit. For more information or to make offer, contact Tom Williams, 713-526-2868.

### **For Sale: 17.5" Newtonian**

Perfect for imaging or visual star parties. 17.5" f4.5 Newtonian telescope with highly accurate microprocessor-controlled, step-per-based alt-az drive system with focal plane rotator. Designed and built by Andy Saulietis and the owner. Accepts ST4-compatible inputs for autoguiding. Mechanical and calibration work done by the owner to optimize system accuracy for autoguided CCD imaging. Original 1981 Coulter mirror refocused to smooth 1/8th-wave surface by Sky Optical in late 80's. Primary and secondary recoated with enhanced coatings group by PAP in early 90's. Optics in excellent condition. 80mm f5 finder. Breaks

*Continued...*

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# Observatory Corner

By Bob Rogers, Observatory Chairman



*Hello everyone.*

**I**mportant notice – As promised, the gate combination to the HAS Observing site was changed on March 1st. If you haven't received the new combination yet, please contact me by email at [siteworkerbob@hotmail.com](mailto:siteworkerbob@hotmail.com). In order to get the new combination, you must have attended a Site Orientation class since joining HAS and have your dues paid for 2008.

**An update on the Tractor Shed** – I met with a contractor a few weeks ago to get a price for building the form and pouring the concrete. The price quoted is \$1,350.00 to build the form with 6 beams and the pouring of the concrete. The project should be starting in a few weeks. After the concrete is poured I will get the new cover ordered and installed. The contractor has agreed to come back after the cover is installed and install the wall for the back side of the shed at no charge using materials that are available at the site. The cover for the back side will help to keep the rain out of the Tractor Shed.

**An update on the C-14 project** – The Observatory Committee has ordered the Servo Motors and the rest of the upgrade equipment for the C-14. We hope to get started on the upgrade soon. We have had 2 donations towards the upgrade. First is a brand new Dell computer that is dedicated to the C-14 and the other is a donation from Daniel Bisque from Software Bisque of a copy of TheSky Six Professional Astronomy software for the computer. Thank you very much Daniel and thank you very much to the HAS member (to remain anonymous) who got this done.

**If you have a Randalls card**, and have not done so, please have it coded for the Houston Astronomical Society. Our number is #6618. The Society gets 1 percent of the gross sales that members spend at Randalls. Randalls totals up the amount spent each quarter and will send us a check if the amount goes over \$2,500.00, otherwise the total rolls over to the next quarter or zeros out at the end of the calendar year. So please link your Randalls card to the Houston Astronomical Society so that the society can benefit from this Randalls program. Our number is #6618. This is very easy to do, just go to the Courtesy Booth and tell the person there what you want to do.

**Some dates of interest here for everyone.** George Stradley, our Field Trip and Observing Chairman, has set the following 2008 Field Trip Schedule –

- March 29th for an All Clubs Field Trip
- May 24th for a Novice Party
- June 28th for an All Clubs Field Trip

- August 23rd for a Novice Party
- September 27th for the All Clubs Field Trip /HAS Picnic
- October 25th for a HAS General Membership – Ken Miller's Ranch.

Keep an eye out on the Web site and here at the Observatory Corner for future updates for these Field Trips.

If you have any suggestions or thoughts for the site, let me know.

*Thanks,*

**Bob Rogers**  
**Observatory Chairman**  
**281-460-1573**  
**[siteworkerbob@hotmail.com](mailto:siteworkerbob@hotmail.com)**

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down to numerous major pieces for transport. With modest effort, can be a traveling scope, but better as a semi-permanent observatory. See my website for many images made with this system over the last decade.

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### 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. Parking is NOW across from Entrance 14, by the stadium.

### Board of Directors Meeting

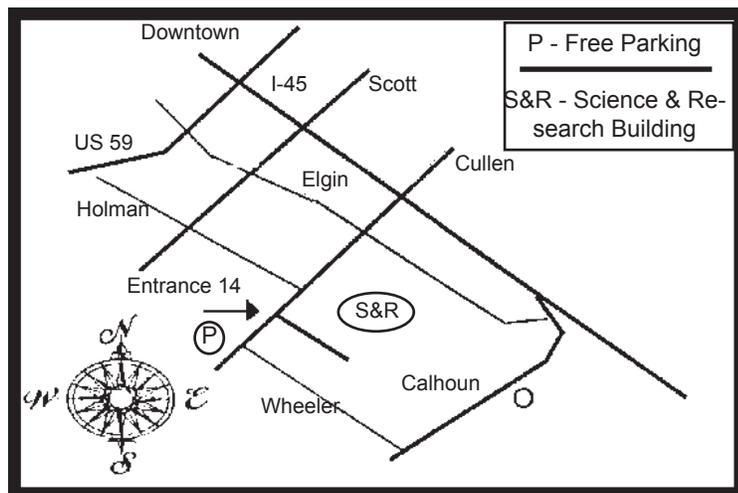
The Board of Directors Meeting is held on dates scheduled by the board at 7:00 p.m. at the University of St. Thomas. Information provided to GuideStar will be published. The meetings are open to all members of the Society in good standing. Attendance is encouraged.

### 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 available on the HAS web site to all members of H.A.S., and to persons interested in the organization's activities. Contributions to *GuideStar* by members are encouraged. Electronic submission is helpful. Submit the article in text, MS-Word format via email [BillPellerin@sbcglobal.net](mailto:BillPellerin@sbcglobal.net). Copy must be received by the 15th of the month for inclusion in the issue to be available 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.

Editing & Production: Bill Pellerin, 713-880-8061; FAX: 713-880-8850;  
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## Houston Astronomical Society Meeting

Meeting on April 4, 2008

7:00 Novice & Site Orientation

8:00 General Meeting

University of Houston

### Houston Astronomical Society

P.O. Box 20332 • Houston, TX 77225-0332



The Houston Astronomical Society welcomes you to our organization. The HAS is a group of dedicated amateur astronomers, most of whom are observers, but some are armchair astronomers. The benefits of membership are:

- Access to our 18 acre observing site west of Houston -- a great place to observe the universe!
- A telescope loaner program -- borrow a HAS telescope and try observing for yourself!
- A monthly novice meeting, site orientation meeting, and general meeting with speakers of interest.
- Opportunities to participate in programs that promote astronomy to the general public (such as Star Parties at schools)
- A yearly banquet with a special guest
- A yearly all-clubs meeting for Houston area organizations
- Meet other amateurs and share experiences, learn techniques, and swap stories

***You're invited to attend our next meeting.  
You'll have a great time.***