

The OBSERVER

The Newsletter of the Twin City Amateur Astronomers, Inc.

April 2005 Volume 30, Number 4



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- The May Sky Calendar will be available in the May issue of the *Observer*

DAVID LEVY *coming to SGO!*

by Jean Memken

Plans are being finalized for David Levy's visit to the Twin Cities. Levy, best known for his discovery of Comet Shoemaker-Levy and current science editor of *Parade Magazine*, will participate in a public observing session with the TCAA on Monday, April 25, starting at 7:30 p.m. He will participate in the unveiling of the two newest Hubble images in the Sugar Grove Nature Center, and then will make some informal remarks and answer questions before the observing session begins.

If the weather is nice, this event has the potential of drawing a very large number of people. We will need to have as many TCAA members as possible out at the SGO. The more telescopes and binoculars we have out there, the better. We will also need people to just be available to answer questions about the telescopes, observing, and our club, and maybe conduct tours of our observatory. There will be an information table about our club and we need people to man that. Please plan to come out and help any way you can. This should be a really exciting

event for all of our members. Having one of the most famous amateur astronomers in the world coming to observe with us is something you won't want to miss!

In order to make the best impression possible, we will be having a clean-up session at the SGO on Sunday, April 24, starting at 2:00 p.m. If you have an hour or so to spare then, please come out to help us spruce up the observatory so it looks its best for Levy and the other people coming the next night. The press will also be at the observing session on Monday, and so we want everything to look its best.

On Tuesday, April 26, at 7:30 p.m., Levy will be making a more formal presentation on Mars at Braden Auditorium in the Bone Student Center. The event is free and open to the public, and our club has been given a block of VIP seating tickets. If you are planning to attend, and would like a seat down front, please contact Jean Memken at jmemken@ilstu.edu or 828-8655. She will have the tickets available at the Monday night observing session.

Levy's visit is being sponsored by the



TCAA Calendar of Events

April 16: Astronomy Day Events

Astronomy Day at Eastland Mall, 10a.m. - 4a.m. (in front of Bergner's)
POS at Sugar Grove Nature Center, Coord. William Carney (Kal Kumar, sub.)
Presentation: Moon & Saturn, by William Carney,
Public Observing, 8:00p.m.-10:00p.m.

April 24: Cleaning at Sugar Grove Observatory, 2:00p.m.

April 25: David Levy/TCAA Public Observing Session, at Sugar Grove Obs., 7:30p.m.

April 26: David Levy presentation on Mars, at ISU Braden Auditorium, 7:30p.m.

May 7: Members-Only Observing Session at Sugar Grove Nature Center, 9:30p.m.

The Observer

Newsletter of the TCAA, Inc.

The Observer is a monthly publication of the Twin City Amateur Astronomers, Inc., a registered 501(c)(3) non-profit educational organization of amateur astronomers interested in studying astronomy and sharing their hobby with the public.

TCAA Officers

President	Lyle Rich 309-862-4417 lylerich@hotmail.com
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Treasurer	Duane Yockey 309-452-3936 duane@lybinc.com
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**Observer Editor/
TCAA Education Coordinator**

Rebecca Wenning 21 Grandview Dr. Normal, IL 61761 309-454-4164 rwennin@ilstu.edu	Submissions must be received by the 10th of each month.
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Membership Dues

Individual Adult/Family \$40
Full-time Student/Senior \$25

To join the TCAA, send your name, contact info, and dues payment to:

Duane Yockey
508 Normal Avenue
Normal, IL 61761

College of Applied Science and Technology at Illinois State University as part of Science and Technology Week.

***TCAA BOARD OF DIRECTORS
MEETING MINUTES 4/4/2005***

The Board of Directors meeting came to order at 6:05 PM on 4/4/05, at Lewis, Yockey and Brown. In attendance were Lyle, Duane, Kal, William, Carl, Jeannie, and Michael.

The first order of business was Astronomy Day, 16 April, 2005. Duane reported that it would be held outside of Bergner's, by the old Fannie Mae store. We agreed that our display would run from 10 AM – 4 PM.

Michael volunteered to write a note to Scott Richardson and Dan Craft discussing Astronomy Day (as well as other upcoming events). [This he has done, but neither Scott nor Dan has deigned to reply. A copy was sent to Kal.]

Posters promoting Astronomy Day will be placed at the Planetarium, Challenger Learning Center, Children's Museum, Duane's Office, Bloomington Public Library, Normal Public Library, ISU, and Eastland Mall. Various officers agreed to post them. The text will announce that Astronomy Day will take place at Eastland Mall (from 10-4), by Bergner's, and that a public observing session that night will take place from 8-10. Kal, William, Dan and I agreed to bring telescopes. Carl will arrange a slide show; Michael will be bringing a computer, TV, VCR, and assorted videos. Carl will bring a solar filter. Michael will call Joe, to see if he is interested in doing a mirror grinding demonstration. Duane will verify that solar observing will be acceptable to the Eastland Mall management.

The public observing session that evening will be on the Moon and Saturn; William will give a 15 minute talk.

A discussion of the David Levy visit then ensued. He will be staying at the Radisson, and we discussed whether we should pick him up, for an observing session that starts at 7:30 PM.

Carl will talk to Angela about coordinating the unveiling of the new Hubble images. Jeannie will see if David can come out at 6:30 PM for a pre-unveiling media event. Carl will talk to Angela about

parking, too.

Duane will send his treasurer's report to Carl. Duane also reported that he is going to attend NCRAL.

Dan and Jeannie will be tidying the SGO on the 24th, at 2 PM.

William announced that keyholder training will take place on 8/4/05 at 6 PM.

Carl will e-mail schedules for the POS and MOOSs to the BOD. He will also send .pdfs of the POS schedule/brochure. Friday, William will check for membership brochures. Michael said he would check to see if he has membership brochures on his computer.

Kal discussed the Harry Potter festival, and we decided we should participate.

Someone apparently donated a Russian Maksutov, and we are probably going to raffle it off: 50 tickets, \$20 per person. The raffle will be concluded when all the tickets are sold. We will try to do this within the membership.

Speaking of membership, it was decided to return to that issue following Astronomy Day and the David Levy visit.

William reported that the 12" seemed to be OK.

The meeting adjourned at 7:15 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Michael Rogers

***DONATIONS TO
ISU PLANETARIUM
by Carl Wenning***

If you are willing and able and have yet to assist the ISU Planetarium with a financial donation as requested in a recent mailing to TCAA members, please send your donation to the ISU Foundation today with a memo that the donation is intended for the Friends of the Planetarium. If you have lost your letter, remittance envelope, and/or designation form and would like another, please contact Carl Wenning at (309) 454-4164 or e-mail him at wenning@phy.ilstu.edu.

Money collected from the recent solicitation letter will be used to bridge the gap between now and a future date when a new ISU Planetarium will be built. Donations are needed at this time to help bring the planetarium projector up to factory specifications before Spitz Space Systems stops servicing this instrument. The current star projector was installed in

the planetarium in 1964, and features the use of 1950s electronic circuitry, several parts of which have failed recently.

Donations earmarked for the planetarium will be used immediately to repair the projector's annual motion power supply that has been out of commission for about 5 years now. As a result, the planetarium cannot be used to demonstrate solar, lunar, and planetary motion. The repair of the annual motion power supply is expected to cost several thousand dollars. About a thousand dollars was spent recently to repair the projector's star lamp power supply that failed during December, and which remained out of commission until early February.

APR. 9 MOOS SUCCESSFUL

by Carl Wenning

The member-only observing session held on Saturday evening, April 9, was quite successful. About a dozen TCAA members were in attendance at SGNC for an evening of observing. Several member-owned telescopes were set up in the parking lot, and the SGO was put to its first official club use (after realigning its finder scopes) since its return from repairs during February. The session, coordinated by Michael Rogers and Neale Lehmkuhl, began with a clear sky that by 10 p.m. had become too hazy to allow continued observing. Despite this fact, there was much lively conversation, and a few good views of planets and galaxies. A good time was had by all.

TCAA MEMBERS OFFER MERIT BADGE WORKSHOPS

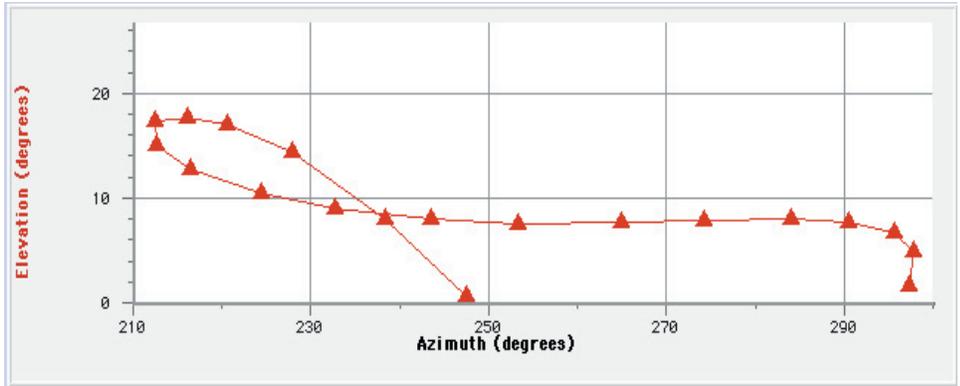
by Carl Wenning

The TCAA, ISU Planetarium, and Challenger Learning Center are joining forces to offer a series of merit badge workshops for Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts this spring. These workshop and follow-up session will satisfy all requirements for the following badges:

#1) Boy Scouts Astronomy, Junior Girl Scouts Sky Search, and Cadette/Senior Girl Scouts Space Exploration.

Workshop Date: Saturday, April 23,
9:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m., ISU
Planetarium

Follow-up session: Saturday, May 21,



6:00 p.m. at Sugar Grove Observatory
Cost: \$15 per participant, includes all materials and badge.

Presenter: Tom Willmitch

#2) Boy Scouts Space Exploration, Junior Girl Scouts Aerospace*, and Cadette/Senior Girl Scouts Rocketry*.

Workshop Date: Saturday, April 30, 9:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m., Challenger Learning Center

Follow-up session: Saturday, May 21, 6:00 p.m. at Sugar Grove Observatory
Cost: \$20 per participant, includes all materials and badge.

Presenter: Carl J. Wenning

#3) Boy Scouts Aviation, Junior Girl Scouts Aviation, and Cadette/Senior Girl Scouts Aviation*.

Workshop Date: Saturday, May 7, 9:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m., Challenger Learning Center

Follow-up session: Saturday, May 21, 6:00 p.m. at Sugar Grove Observatory
Cost: \$15 per participant, includes all materials and badge.

Presenter: Janet Moore

Reservations must be made at least two weeks prior to workshop date. To reserve a spot, call or visit the Challenger Learning Center at Prairie Aviation Museum, 2901 East Empire Street, Bloomington, Illinois, 61704. Phone: (309) 661-1621. Payment is due at time of reservation – please have credit card available when you call.

EVENING APARITION OF VENUS 2005

by Carl Wenning

The diagram above shows the position of Venus as seen locally 45 minutes after sunset for the interval from May 15 to December 1, 2005. Unfortunately, the evening apparition of Venus during 2005 will be relatively poor compared to other

years. Due to the ecliptic's shallow angle throughout most of the interval, Venus tends to "hug" the horizon, never appearing all that far from the sun throughout the entire interval.

Venus emerges from the glare of the sun in mid May and will be visible very low in the west-northwest (azimuth 292.5 degrees) with binoculars at chart time. Over the next few weeks it will pull away from the sun, setting a bit later than the sun each evening until mid June. At around this time, the planet will begin to move horizontally to the left for the next few months. By the beginning of autumn, the brilliant planet will also begin to move a bit higher in the sky relative to the sun with each passing evening. Nonetheless, the climb will not be impressive. Venus reaches greatest elongation 47.1 degrees east of the sun on November 3, 2005. Even so, it will not appear far above the sun because most of that angular distance is south of the sun, and very little to the east due to the shallow angle of the planet-sun line.

The diagram shows Venus on the 1st and 15th of each month from May 15, 2005, until December 1, 2005. Thereafter it shows Venus at roughly weekly intervals until the planet's last evening appearance on or about January 8, 2006, when it once again enters the glare of the sun to emerge later in the morning sky. The dates of the last five positions on the chart are for the evenings of 12/8, 12/15, 12/23, 1/01, and 1/08.



TCAA Treasurer's Report – March 2005

OPERATING FUND BALANCE – February 28, 2005 - \$ 1,624.67

Income

William Lawence (Dues) - \$ 40.00
Jim Steidinger (Sr. Dues Renewal) - \$ 25.00

Expenses

Carl Wenning (postage) - \$ 37.00
Carl Wenning (Observer) - \$ 17.45

OPERATING FUND BALANCE – March 31, 2005 - \$ 1,635.22

OBSERVATORY FUND BALANCE – February 28, 2005 - \$ 936.87

Income

None - \$ 0.00

Expenses

None - \$ 0.00

OBSERVATORY FUND BALANCE – March 31, 2005 - \$ 936.87

TOTAL TCAA FUNDS – March 31, 2005 - \$ 2,572.09

Respectfully submitted,
L. Duane Yockey, Treasurer

Sugar Grove Observatory

Listing of Official Keyholders (Paid \$10 deposit/\$5 renewal)

Jim Swindler (April 2001, renewed through 2004)
Duane Yockey (April 2001, renewed through 2005)
Dan Miller (August 2001, renewed through 2004)
Michael Rogers (August 2001, renewed through 2005)
William Carney (March 2002, renewed through 2005)
Vic Connor (August 2002, renewed through 2004)
Neale Lehmkuhl (May 2003, renewed through 2004)
Carl Wenning (January 2004, renewed through 2005)
Brian Barling (February 2004), renewed through 2005
Lenore Trainor (December 2004, renewed through 2005)
Lyle Rich, renewed through 2005

**Announcing New
TCAA Members**



Bill Lawrence
Renewal Date: 200604

Welcome!



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Newsletter of the TCAA, Inc.

Rebecca Wenning, Editor
21 Grandview Drive
Normal, IL 61761-4071

Are Your Dues Due?

The Dues Blues?

If you see a check in the box above, it means your dues are due. To retain membership, please send your dues renewal to our esteemed Treasurer:

Duane Yockey
508 Normal Avenue
Normal, IL 61761