

The OBSERVER

The Newsletter of the Twin City Amateur Astronomers, Inc.

September 2005 Volume 30, Number 9

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

~ Kal Kumar ~



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Dear Club Members:

By now most of you have heard about the untimely passing away of our club president Lyle V. Rich. Lyle will be greatly missed and we extend our condolences to his wife, Mary Jane, and his family. This is indeed a very saddening event for our club and as we keep Lyle in our thoughts, we must acknowledge his strong leadership of our club over the last two years. His demise left me to take up the responsibility of running the club for rest of the year. We will get through this trying time together, and I am going to do my very best in this position – garnering from examples of previous club presidents. I sincerely hope that I would have your help and support in my endeavor to smoothly execute club activities.

The club has been pretty active this year, especially on the public

and educational outreach programs for schools and scouts, publicity, membership drive, etc. (Kudos to our Secretary Michael!) I would like to see more members turn out for our scheduled events, to enjoy, share and make use of the club's offerings in great ways.

Some good news to share with you is that there is a possibility that our observatory will be getting a wireless Internet connection pretty soon. I invite you to come on out in good numbers and enjoy the night sky and do a little justice to your interest in this hobby...using it as an opportunity to pause as life invariably rushes by.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any concerns or suggestions that would help with the club's functioning (e-mail: kalkumar@earthlink.net). Borrowing from an author unknown: the stars are the streetlights of eternity! HAPPY STAR GAZING! Thank you! ~ Kal



TCAA Calendar of Events

- Sept. 10: Public Observing Session at SGNC, 8:00 p.m. "Open Cluster M11"
Coordinators: #1 - Dan Miller, #2 - Michael Rogers
- October 1: Members-Only Observing Session at SGNC, 7:30 p.m.
Coordinators: #1 - William Carney, #2 - Kal Kumar
- October 8: Public Observing Session at SGNC, 7:00 p.m. "Venus & M31"
Coordinators: #1 - Carl Wenning, #2 - Duane Yockey

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	Kal Kumar 309 661-3452 Kalkumar@earthlink.net
Secretary	Michael Rogers 309-825-6454 mprogers@mac.com
Treasurer	Duane Yockey 309-452-3936 duane@lybinc.com
5th Director	William Carney 309-829-7748 willcarney@aol.com

Property Manager

William Carney	309-829-7748 willcarney@aol.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 1st 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

**PRESIDENT LYLE V. RICH
UNEXPECTEDLY
PASSES AWAY**

~ by Carl J. Wenning, Historian ~

Perhaps they are not stars in the sky . . . but rather openings where our loved ones shine down to let us know they are happy.

— Eskimo saying
contributed by Jean Memken

It is with great sorrow that I report the unexpected and untimely death of TCAA President Lyle Rich. On Friday, August 26, Lyle unexpectedly passed away at 3:10 p.m. due to an embolism. Lyle and his good wife Mary Jane left for a trip in Ireland during late July, but Lyle was hospitalized several days after their arrival there due to an infection. After 27 days in an Irish hospital, Lyle was transported back to the U.S. with Mary Jane and a nurse at his side. He was subsequently hospitalized at Bromenn for several days taking a course of antibiotics. He then suddenly and unexpectedly took a turn for the worse. Lyle was 58 years old when he passed away.

Though I only met Lyle just over two years ago, I felt even then that I had known him for a long time. While researching the history of the club for its 25th Anniversary in the early 80s, I spoke with John and Bertha Kieviet (our club's founders) and Weldon Schuette (member extraordinaire), and reviewed astronomy club newsletters to find information about the early days of the club. I was able to write the following paragraph about Lyle and other members of the TCAA:

“Observing the sky was an obsession for some, especially with the younger members. On the night of July 29, 1963,

Lyle Rich and three other club members observed the Delta Aquarid meteor shower. Lyle observed and recorded 106 meteors alone. The observations formed the basis of a short article that appeared in the September 1963 issue of *Sky & Telescope* magazine. Beyond meteor observations, numerous magnitude estimates continued as part of an ongoing observing program. Beta Lyrae was the subject of 66 observations completed by David Williams, Mike Ryder, Henry Janecek, Warren Light, Bill Blunk, and Lyle Rich. The observations and the club's observing project were the subject of an article prepared for *Review of Popular Astronomy* in the July 1964 issue. Observations were also made of comets Alcock, Humason, Ikeya-Seki, and Nova Herculis.”

When Lyle first introduced himself to me at the Annual meeting of 2003, I immediately knew him by name. I almost felt as though I was recovering a long lost friend. I was amazed to find out shortly afterward that I had known Lyle's sister, Beverly, for going on ten years! I never made the connection between the two until one day I mentioned to Bev that I had met another Rich.

Lyle was born on January 13, 1947 in Normal. He joined the TCAA when a high school student and was a very active member. He graduated from Normal Community High School in 1965 and from Illinois State University in 1969. He then joined the Navy and was absent from the TCAA until his return upon retirement in 2003. During his 12-year active duty Navy career he earned the rank of Captain, and then spent another 8 years in the Naval Reserves. He then worked for the Defense Department and finally the Department of Agriculture. His specialty was computer systems and security.

Lyle was laid to rest at East Lawn Memorial Gardens in Bloomington

on Friday, September 2. Attending the funeral were TCAA members Jean Memken and Carl Wenning, and former member Bill Blunk. Once again I express on behalf of the TCAA sincere condolences to Mary Jane, Lyle's sons Carl and Eric, and his sister Beverly.

***IT'S OFFICIAL -
TELESCOPE RAFFLE
DRAWING SEPTEMBER 10***

ISU Planetarium Director Tom Willmitch has given his consent. The raffle drawing for a new Argonaut 6-inch Maksutov-Newtonian OTA (optical tube assembly) will be held at the start of the public observing session (POS) on Saturday, September 10th. The raffle drawing will be held at 8:00 p.m. in the picnic shelter of the Sugar Grove Nature Center come rain or shine. While only 32 of the possible 50 tickets have been sold to date, Tom Willmitch has agreed to allow the TCAA to move ahead with the drawing. As is, this fundraising effort on behalf of the ISU Planetarium will net \$640.00. It would be great if this dollar amount could reach \$1,000 before the drawing.

If you are interested in vying for this valuable, top-quality telescope, you should know that tickets are

still available at a price of \$20 each. Tickets will be sold up until the time of the drawing. To purchase your numbered ticket(s), get \$20 per ticket to Carl Wenning prior to the drawing. Make your check payable to Illinois State University Foundation/Planetarium.

It's too late now to mail you check, so either hand deliver it to Carl Wenning at 21 Grandview Drive, Normal, IL 61761-4071, or give it to him at the September 10th event. All ticket requests with payment must be received by Carl prior to the drawing. Ticket requests with donations arriving by mail after delivery on Saturday, September 10th, cannot be honored and will be returned. If you would like to arrange to see the telescope before purchasing your raffle ticket(s), feel free to contact Carl by phone at (309) 454-4164 or via e-mail at wenning@phy.ilstu.edu.

You might recall that the telescope was purchased from Orion Telescopes and Binoculars (item 09068) by the original owner about five years ago and has never been used. The OTA, to be raffled without a pier (the original purchaser did not buy one), lists at \$1,799. Remember, because the winner of the telescope will have to provide his or her own mount for the telescope, as well as eyepieces and adapters, this might cause some members to shy away from purchasing raffle tickets. Don't let this be the case. Consider the fact that you might win the telescope. You could then donate the telescope to the TCAA taking full advantage of any tax-deductible charitable contribution available through itemizing deductions on the Federal 1040 tax form. A donor

could thereby convert a single winning \$20 ticket into a \$1,799 tax deduction that could have an actual cash value to the donor of 15% or more of the full value of the telescope. The TCAA is an IRS recognized 501(c)(3) educational non-profit corporation chartered in Illinois.

***OBSERVING, EDUCATION
AND PUBLIC OUTREACH***

The August 6th picnic and MOOS was attended by about 15 or so TCAA members and guests. There was much food and good cheer, and several new members rounded out the attendance. The sky was rather clear that evening and, so, another 10 or more members and guests of the TCAA arrived for observing later that evening. A few early Perseid meteors also made their appearance. The POS slated for August 13th was clouded out. Despite that fact, Mike Rogers and several members of the general public showed up at SGNC for the session. Michael gave his slated talk about M57 and provided the public with a brief tour of the Sugar Grove Observatory.

On Saturday, August 27th, Mike Rogers did his magic once again by presenting a talk for about 75 individuals, mostly Girl Scouts and their parents, at the Old Town Township Hall (located is east of Bloomington on Cheney's Grove Road, several miles northeast of the junction Route 150 and Towanda Barnes Road, and just north of Downs). This is the first time that this site has been used for an observing program by the TCAA. The program and observing session were part of the Bloomington



Public Library's outreach program. The program started at 9:30 PM and ran late into the evening with cool, dry weather and very dark and clear skies. According to Mike, "We lost track of how many TCAAers were out there, but Mac, Dan, Duane, Kal, Sheri, Neale, Jeannie and Mike were out there, and they staffed four telescopes. The skies were exceptionally good, even the dew didn't get out of hand. Laura Kracher from BPL did a great job of coordinating things."

The members-only observing session on September 3rd was successful. Observers were greeted with a very transparent if not perfectly dark sky. Roy and Diane Lawry brought out their 8-inch home built Dobsonian and thrilled viewers with amazing images produced by a variety of Nagler eyepieces. Roy and Diane also demonstrated their laser collimator and showed how easy it was to get good alignment with just a few seconds of work. Chris Franklin, Carl Wenning, Kal Kumar, Steve Newbold and his brother-in-law from Crystal Lake, IL, enjoyed about three hours of viewing from the SGO. More than 30 Messier and NGC objects were

observed, and good views of Venus, Jupiter, Uranus, Neptune and Pluto were had. Currently Pluto is located near a number of bright stars that makes its identification very easy even though it is shining near 16th magnitude.

We have been scheduled by special request for three Girl Scout observing sessions during September, and your assistance is needed. September 16th (full moon), 23rd, and 30th. Mike Rogers has requested assistance with these observing activities; he cannot be present for the events on September 23rd. The sessions will be held at Camp Peairs on the southwest side of Lake Bloomington. The sessions are all Friday nights. The event on the 16th will be for leaders & daughters, on the 23rd for Girl Scouts in grades 4-6, and the 30th for fathers and daughters as part of the father-daughter camp out. We have been told to expect around 50 people for each session, and that there won't be much overlap between audiences. If you can help out, call Mike Rogers at 825-6454 or e-mail him at mprogers@mac.com.

SGNC MEMBERSHIP

SEPTEMBER 30th CAMP OUT

SGNC Interpreter Angela Smith has asked members of the TCAA to assist with the first annual SGNC Friends Family Camp Out to be held from 5:00 p.m. on Friday, September 30, till noon on Saturday, October 1. Carl and Rebecca Wenning have agreed to provide a campfire talk and laser-pointer-mediated sky lecture, and tell legends that can be related to the night sky. Legends will be presented from a variety of cultures,

including American Indian, Greek, Norse, Eskimo, etc. The Summer Triangle will dominate the heavens at 8:00 p.m. that evening, lending itself to the telling of the story of Orpheus and Euridice. Later that evening, Perseus, Andromeda, Cassiopeia, Cepheus, Pegasus, and Cetus will dominate the eastern sky, lending themselves to the telling of the story of Perseus and Andromeda. Neptune, Uranus, and Mars will also be readily observed that evening, clear sky prevailing. Angela has asked for an open house at the SGO that same evening, and one or more key holders is requested to assist. If you can assist by operating the LX200 telescope, please contact Carl by phoning 454-4164 or e-mailing wenning@phy.ilstu.edu.

While the camp out is reserved to the SGNC Membership, TCAAers who assist with this event are more than welcome to pitch their tents and join in on the overnight fun. In fact, if the sky is clear, this could lead to an all night observing session. The moon is 27 days old, and won't rise until just before sunup.

If you are not an SGNC Member, you might want to consider joining this group. Even if you are not a member, you can receive free periodic e-mail alerts that include program reminders, local nature sightings, and nature news. If so, e-mail sugargrovinc@earthlink.net and include "nature alerts" in the subject line. (Your e-mail address will not be shared.) You may also subscribe to the "Nature of the Grove" newsletter that is published every 2-3 months, and is full of listings about offerings at SGNC. Contact SGNC to be put on the mailing list.

Make a date with

StarDate

on

WGLT, 89.1 FM

Weekdays @ 6:58 AM & 6:58 PM

Sponsored by the TCAA

Partners in Astronomy Education
with the ISU Planetarium
@
309-438-5007

**TCAA BOARD MEETING
MINUTES, 10 AUGUST 2005**

~ Michael Rogers, Secretary ~

The Board of Directors met at the offices of Lewis, Yockey and Brown on 10 August 2005. In attendance were Vice-President Kal Kumar, Treasurer Duane Yockey, 5th Director William Carney, and Secretary Michael Rogers. The meeting was called to order at 6:02 PM.

After approval of the minutes of the previous meeting, a brief discussion was held regarding the minimum age for key holders. It was decided that, to address legal and liability concerns, that key holders should be at least 18 years of age. Younger members could certainly be trained on the telescope (and indeed were encouraged to do so), but could only use it with an adult key holder present.

Duane submitted the treasurer's report for July. Kal's name was missing from the list of key holders, but Duane will correct that. Duane also noted that, as AICor representative, he receives various mailings about area star parties and the like. He will continue to forward those to the e-mail list. Several upcoming events were discussed:

- The Members-Only Observing Session and Public Observing Session schedules were modified slightly, to read as follows:

MOOS Schedule:

3 September — Michael, Kal

1 October — William, Kal

3 December — Carl, Duane

POS Schedule:

10 September — Open Cluster M11; Dan, Michael

8 October — Venus and Galaxy M31; Carl, Duane

5 November — Mars opposition; Michael, Dan

- While it was felt that a POS in December or January would be pointless, consideration was given to a January MOOS.

- We have an observing session/talk scheduled for the Bloomington Public Library, on the 27th of August.

- The Festival of Trees will take place at the Interstate Center, from the 17th to 20th of November. Duane will continue to investigate

- A question arose as to our annual banquet date. It is scheduled for the 11th of February, 2006, and the featured speaker is Dr. Roger Phillips, Director of the McDonnell Center for the Space Sciences.

- Planning for Astronomy Day was deferred to the next meeting.

- Regarding publicity, Michael noted that his letter to science teachers was ready to mail, once we received permission from school superintendents. Lyle was going to work on that, but if he was unable, Duane would contact the superintendent of Unit 5.

- Michael has had several conversations with *The Pantagraph* about publishing periodic astronomy columns. The editor — who indicated that he is swamped, but not to worry, that was normal for the business — will get back to Michael in two weeks.

- The new member packets are in need of revision. William will distribute them to Board members for further study.

- It was decided that a membership drive per se was not needed, but that publicity for the upcoming Mars opposition should spur club growth.

- Michael will work on redoing the TCAA brochure, and bundle it with the POS brochure.

- Duane will discuss electronic distribution of *The Observer* with the editor, Rebecca Wenning.

- The telescope raffle will take place on the 10th of September, and interested parties should contact Carl Wenning to purchase tickets.

- Angela Smith, Director of the Sugar Grove Nature Center, noted that they are going to get Internet access at the center, and asked if, for a one-time fee of \$300, we would like access at the observatory. The Board agreed that this was a good idea, and Duane will send \$300 to the SGNC.

- Duane has the club's newly acquired 10" Meade telescope in his possession. (See accompanying article for details.) It will be transported to the observatory shortly. He will also send a letter of thanks to the donor.

- William will continue to do research on purchasing eyepieces.

- Michael will investigate prices for t-shirts, and e-mail the list about buying new t-shirts once he has those prices in hand.

- The next (Board) meeting will be on the 5th of October

The meeting adjourned at 7:10 PM.

**TCAA RECEIVES GIFT OF
10-IN TELESCOPE**

The TCAA has been the beneficiary of another telescope donation thanks to Pat Schlehuber. Pat has donated a 10-inch Meade LX6 2120 telescope. The telescope is an f/6.3 telescope. This makes it more suitable for deep space viewing, but it is still good for all sorts of observing. The telescope

TCAA Treasurer's Report – August 2005

OPERATING FUND BALANCE – July 31, 2005 - \$ 1,492.02

Income
Ken & Lori Eckhardt (Dues) - \$ 40.00
Neale Lehmkuhl (Dues Renewal) - \$ 40.00
Expenses
Rebecca Wenning (July Observer) - \$ 50.45
Susan Komen Fdtn. (Lyle Rich Memorial) - \$ 40.00

Announcing New TCAA Members

Ken & Lori Eckhardt
Renewal Date: 082005
Welcome!

OPERATING FUND BALANCE – August 31, 2005 - \$ 1,481.57

OBSERVATORY FUND BALANCE – July 31, 2005 - \$ 978.21

Income
Keyholder Fee (Kal Kumar) - \$ 5.00
Expenses
None - \$ 0.00

OBSERVATORY FUND BALANCE – August 31, 2005 - \$ 983.21

TOTAL TCAA FUNDS – August 31, 2005 - \$ 2,464.78

Respectfully submitted,
L. Duane Yockey, Treasurer

Sugar Grove Observatory

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

Duane Yockey (April 2001, renewed through 2005)	Sothilingam family (June 2005)
Michael Rogers (August 2001, renewed through 2005)	Christopher Franklin (July 2005)
William Carney (March 2002, renewed through 2005)	Kal Kumar (August 2005, renewed through 2006)
Carl Wenning (January 2004, renewed through 2005)	
Brian Barling (February 2004, renewed through 2005)	
Lenore Trainor (December 2004, renewed through 2005)	
Kevin Brown (May 2005)	

will typically provide brighter images, a wider field of view, and lower magnification with a given eyepiece than will a telescope designed specifically for planetary observing such as an f/10 or f/12 instrument. It is the understanding of the assistant editor that the telescope arrived accompanied with several eyepieces and filters. Additional details will be provided later when a full inventory is taken by our property manager, William Carney. The image shown here of an LX6 2120 telescope is suggestive, and not a picture of the actual telescope. Thanks and a tip 'o the hat to Pat for this most generous donation!



will manage the publicity for this event, and handle registration. The materials fee will be collected on the first evening. Programs will run from 7:00 to 10:00 p.m. each evening. The following topics will be presented:

- 1) Constellations and star maps
- 2) Getting to know the workings of the sky
- 3) How to use a telescope – orientation to the LX200
- 4) Celestial objects, observing programs, and observing aides

While there will be a small amount of lecture included, the focus in this series will be on hands-on, minds-on activities. TCAA members who complete the program will become certified SGO users. They will become key holders upon payment of the \$10 key holder fee. More details will be provided as plans become formalized.

STAR PARTY REMINDERS

September 29-October 2
Prairie Skies Star Party
Camp Shaw-Waw-Nas-See 4-H
camp, near Kankakee, IL.
Info: pssp@prairieskies.org,
www.prairieskies.org

October 6-October 9
4th Annual Dark Skies Star Party
Jim Edgar Panther Creek State Park,
25 mi NW of Springfield, IL
Sponsored by the Sangamon
Astronomical Society and the St.
Louis Astronomical Society
Info: www.sas-sky.org

INTERNET ACCESS AT SGO

Following approval at the August 10th meeting of the TCAA Board

of Directors, wireless Internet connections will become available at the SGO as part of a cooperative effort of the SGNC and TCAA. On September 7th a wireless router will set up inside Sugar Grove Nature Center providing digital signals to the observatory setting. Once the SGO desktop computer is outfitted with a suitable wireless card, the observatory should have regular Internet access. The SGNC has agreed to cover the monthly access charge on behalf of the TCAA.

HOW TO ENJOY ASTRONOMY WHEN THE MOON IS FULL OR SKIES ARE UNCOOPERATIVE

~ Michael Rogers/Will Carney ~

1. Fire up your favorite astronomy program on your computer (or, if you don't have a computer, your friend's), put your nose really close to the monitor, and enjoy the view :-)
2. Go to www.stsci.edu (the Hubble Space Telescope web site) and enjoy even better views
3. Go to www.nasa.gov and spend *days* exploring
4. Wander the astronomy section of your preferred library/bookstore.
5. Send notes to other astronomers about how to enjoy astronomy when the moon is full or the skies are uncooperative.
6. Check on current space-related news on <http://www.space.com/> and <http://www.spacedaily.com/>
7. Go to <http://www.spaceweather.com/> for up to date news on solar activity, approaching asteroids and other items.
8. Check Astronomy Picture of the day for different images each day at <http://antwrp.gsfc.nasa.gov/apod/astropix.html>

TCAA TO OFFER 4-PART ADULT EDUCATION COURSE

A four-part adult education course will be offered by the TCAA for this first time in many years starting January 7th. The observational astronomy series will run four consecutive Saturday evenings in Sugar Grove Nature Center, fair weather or foul. The course will be tuition free, but there will a \$10-\$15 materials charge per person. This program will be especially useful to TCAA members who want to learn more about practical observing.

The adults-only education program is being presented by the TCAA, but co-hosted by the Sugar Grove Nature Center. SGNC



The OBSERVER

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