

The OBSERVER

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December 2006

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TCAA HOLIDAY PARTY SATURDAY, DECEMBER 9, 7-10 P.M.

The TCAA's traditional winter holiday party (Saturnalia?) will be held on Saturday, December 9, at Sugar Grove Nature Center from 7:00 to 10:00 p.m. Angela Smith has agreed to allow the TCAA membership to use the Nature Center's classroom to hold this informal event at no charge to the club. While the number who will turn out for this event is unknown, we suspect that all those who do attend will have a good time meeting other club members, and sharing their enjoyment of astronomy. If the sky is clear, we'll be certain to have the Sugar Grove Observatory open for periodic viewing.

Because this is a "no host" event, *all TCAAers who will be attending are urged to bring both refreshments and*

treats to share. If anyone has a source of music to liven up the event, then please bring that along too. If you own astronomy resources that you haven't quite been able to understand or get to work, then bring those along as well. The resources might prove to be the origin of a lively and informative conversation. If you have pictures to show, they too will be greatly appreciated. In the event of inclement weather (e.g., 6 inches of snow) or if you get lost on the way out to SGNC, feel free to call Carl Wenning on his cell phone at (309) 830-4085. A map and driving directions to Sugar Grove can be found on the TCAA web site at <http://twincityamateurastronomers.org>.

Last year the TCAA Holiday

Party was a real pleasure. A large part of the evening was spent gathered around an electric fireplace in the Nature Center's bird viewing room. There was much lively conversation, and excellent food and drink. We had a chance to meet face-to-face, and actually see the faces of those with whom we were talking for once. Several members who we don't see often enough showed up, and lively talk ensued. Conversations ranged from past and future travels, to observing programs and equipment, our January adult education program, and just about anything else you can imagine. If you are unable to attend this year, may the joy and peace of this holiday season be yours throughout the coming year.

Celestial Highlights in 2007

- **February 10 - Saturn at Opposition.** The ringed planet will be at its closest approach to Earth. This is the best time to view and photograph Saturn and its moons.
- **March 3 - Total Lunar Eclipse.** The eclipse will be visible throughout most of the Americas, Europe, Africa, and Asia.
- **March 19 - Partial Solar Eclipse.** The partial eclipse will be visible throughout most of Asia and Alaska. (NASA Map and Eclipse Information | NASA Eclipse Animation)
- **March 21 - First Day of Spring.** The Vernal Equinox occurs in the northern hemisphere at 00:07 UT. There will be equal amounts of day and night.
- **June 6 - Jupiter at Opposition.** The giant planet will be at its closest approach to Earth. This is the best time to view and photograph Jupiter and its moons.
- **June 21 - First Day of Summer.** The Summer Solstice occurs in the northern hemisphere at 18:06 UT. The Sun is at its highest point in the sky and it will be the

(Continued on page 2)

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.

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Submission deadline is the first of each month.

Membership Dues

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

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

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ASTRONOMY COURSE BEGINS JANUARY 13 AT SGNC

Make plans now to participate in a 3-part observational astronomy course to be held at Sugar Grove Nature Center on three successive Saturday evenings during January. The course is intended primarily for adults, but is open to youths 12 years of age and older with an accompanying adult. The main themes of the course will be solar system objects, deep space objects, and how to use a telescope. Those wishing to learn how to use their own telescopes may bring them along to obtain specialized instruction after class.

The lead instructor will be Carl Wenning, former director at the ISU Planetarium. Other qualified members of the Twin City Amateur Astronomers will assist with the teaching of this

course, and help those who bring along their own telescopes learn how to use them.

Classes will take place on three successive Saturday evenings, January 13, 20, and 27, 2007. Class activities begin at 7:00 p.m. sharp and will continue through 9:00 p.m. each evening even if the sky is cloudy. In the event of inclement weather or poor road conditions, the class will be postponed. Phone Carl between 5 and 6 p.m. at (309) 830-4085 if road and weather conditions are of concern.

A supplemental telescope observing session will take place following each class if the sky is clear. Members of the astronomy club will assist with observing sessions, and will help instruct class members in the use of their own telescopes – so bring yours along if you have one.

A registration and materials fee will be collected the

first night of class. The fee is \$20 per person for the general public, and \$17 for members of SGNC. If no instructional materials are desired, the fees will be \$13 and \$10 respectively.

Registration for this course is required, and may be completed by contacting Sugar Grove Nature Center by phone (309) 874-2174 or email - sugargrovenc@earthlink.net by January 5, 2007. Let us know the names of all participants in your party, and whether or not materials are desired. Fees will be collected at the first class. Register early if you wish to attend. Last year the course filled to over-flowing, and a number of individuals had to be turned away.

Celestial Highlights in 2007 (Cont.)

(Continued from page 1)

- longest day of the year.
- **August 13 - Neptune at Opposition.** The blue planet will be at its closest approach to Earth. This is the best time to view Neptune, although it will only appear as a tiny blue dot in all but the most powerful telescopes.
- **August 28 - Total Lunar Eclipse.** The eclipse will be visible throughout most of eastern Asia, Australia, the Pacific Ocean, and the Americas.
- **September 10 - Uranus at Opposition.** The blue-green planet will be at its closest approach to Earth. This is the best time to view Neptune, although it will only appear as a tiny blue-green dot in all but the most pow-

erful telescopes.

- **September 11 - Partial Solar Eclipse.** The partial eclipse will be visible throughout most of central and southern South America.
- **September 23 – First Day of Fall.** The Autumnal Equinox in the northern hemisphere occurs at 09:51 UT. There will be equal amounts of day and night.
- **December 22 – First Day of Winter.** The Winter Solstice in the northern hemisphere occurs at 06:08 UT. The Sun is at its lowest point in the sky and it will be the shortest day of the year.
- **December 24 - Mars at Opposition.** The red planet will be at its closest approach to Earth and its face will be fully illuminated by the Sun. This is the best time to view and photograph Mars.

TCAA Treasurer's Report – November 2006

OPERATING FUND BALANCE – October 31, 2006 - \$ 1,833.98

Income

Orlyn Edge (Sen. Dues Renewal) - \$ 25.00

Bak Lee (Sen. Dues Renewal) - \$ 25.00

Expenses

Rebecca Wenning (November Observer) - \$ 32.11

OPERATING FUND BALANCE – November 30, 2006 - \$ 1,851.87

OBSERVATORY FUND BALANCE – October 31, 2006 - \$ 1,034.33

Income

None - \$ 0.00

Expenses

None - \$ 0.00

OBSERVATORY FUND BALANCE – November 30, 2006 - \$ 1,034.33

TOTAL TCAA FUNDS – November 30, 2006 - \$ 2,886.20

Respectfully submitted,
L. Duane Yockey, Treasurer

Sugar Grove Observatory

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

Duane Yockey (April 2001, renewed through 2006)

Michael Rogers (August 2001, renewed through 2006)

William Carney (March 2002, renewed through 2006)

Carl Wenning (January 2004, renewed through 2006)

Brian Barling (February 2004, renewed through 2006)

Lenore Trainor (December 2004, renewed through 2005)

Kevin Brown (May 2005, renewed through 2006)

Sothilingam family (June 2005)

Christopher Franklin (July 2005, renewed through 2006)

Kal Kumar (renewed August 2005)

David Osenga (January 2006)

Gerry Schoeder (February 2006, renewed through 2007)

Karen & Ed Duran (February 2006)

Josh Lindsey (August 2006)



HAPPY HOLIDAYS!



The OBSERVER

Newletter of the TCAA, Inc.

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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

Visit the Twin City Amateur Astronomers
on the web at
www.twincityamateurastronomers.org/