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THE ORIGIN OF THE TWIN CITY AMATEUR ASTRONOMERS

By Carl J. Wenning

Historian's Note: As we move toward the 50th anniversary of the TCAA, I will contribute a small monthly column chronicling the history of the TCAA. While the history of the club is available on line through the 35th year, it has come to my attention that many TCAAers do not know of its existence or have simply never read it. As a way for preparing for the 50th anniversary of the TCAA in 2010, along the way I'll complete the remaining 15 years. Carl J. Wenning

Nearly fifty years ago the Twin City Amateur Astronomers first came into being. The impetus for the new club was provided by John and Bertha Kieviet who had completed their move to the Bloomington/Normal community in 1957. Both John and Bertha had been very active in an astronomy club in Galesburg, Illinois, before John's work as an architect drew him to the Twin Cities. Upon arriving in their new community, the Kieviets discovered much to their chagrin that no astronomy club existed in the Twin Cities. By 1960 this seemed quite unusual in light of the fact that so many things had happened in space during the

past few years: Sputnik, Leika (the space dog), Explorer, Vanguard, the selection of the Mercury astronauts, the Luna 2 hard landing, and the first pictures of the Moon's far side taken by Luna 3. The Kieviets resolved to remedy the situation promptly.

John and Bertha began by contacting Mr. George Sperry, recreation director from the Normal Parks and Recreation Department. It was their hope to establish an astronomy club under the sponsorship of the town of Normal. A meeting was set up with Mr. Sperry to discuss the proposed club. Mr. Sperry visited the home of John and Bertha on January 23, 1960, to discuss details. On January 30 plans were made for an organizational meeting of the club. Announcements were made in the local papers calling for "amateur moon watchers and star gazers" to assemble in the Normal swimming pool bathhouse "to meet fellow novice astronomers." According to Mr. Sperry, "any person of junior high school age and over interested in astronomy" was invited to attend the meeting. The meeting was set for Thursday, February 4, 1960, at 7:30 p.m.

(Continued on page 2)

ASTRONOMY DAY 2007

By Lee Green

Our Astronomy Day activity was held at Barnes & Noble for the second year in a row. It went quite well, in spite of the exceptionally good weather. Those who showed up were quite interested - enough so that we picked up several new members - and we had a larger than expected crowd at our observing session that night. Thanks to Dave Osenga for bringing his telescope and letting us read the book titles on the other side of the store. Thanks to Brian Barling, Lee Green, Dave, Michael Rogers, Carl Wenning, Duane Yockey and all the other member who came out to help.



Duane Yockey and Lee Green

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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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THE ORIGIN OF THE TWIN CITY AMATEUR ASTRONOMERS (CONT.)

(Continued from page 1)

At this organizational meeting Mr. Sperry introduced Mr. Kieviet as the person best qualified to guide the new club through its formative period. Mr. Kieviet then explained what he saw as club goals. The main themes would be observing and the sharing of observations with each other and the general public. The club would be a social and never a money-making organization. Dues would cover what small expenses the club would have. By way of Mr. Sperry, the town of Normal offered support for a club newsletter, if such a newsletter was to be established. *Sky & Telescope* magazine was adopted as a benefit of membership.

John Kieviet was elected temporary chairman of the club, since the election of officers was pending. Mrs. Eileen Jetton and Mr. Lee

Brooks were appointed to serve as a nominating committee, and Mrs. Judy Walker and Mr. Robert Courtney were appointed to a constitution committee. In other business, the 20 amateurs present at that first meeting agreed to meet on the first and third Thursdays of the month at 7:30 p.m. At this meeting, the membership agreed to meet two weeks later to elect officers and adopt formal articles.

February 18, 1960, was the date of the first regular meeting of the club. John Kieviet was elected as the club's first president; Hank Janeczek, vice-president; Judy Walker, recording secretary; Eileen Jetton corresponding secretary and treasurer; and Robert Courtney, librarian. The name "Twin City Amateur Astronomers" was suggested by one Norma Fese. Norma attended the first few meetings of the newly founded organization but never officially joined.

PERSPECTIVE

By Lee Green

It's easy to lose perspective of our place in history.

The universe is thought to be 13 billion years old. For the last 4 billion years, a tiny planet has circled a small star. For a few hundred millions of years, life has graced our planet. For the last few thousand years, mankind has tried to survive and increase our understanding of the world and our place in the cosmos. Truly brief is mankind's tenure on this planet.

We happen to live in a time where extraordinary changes are happening every day. It has been less than 400 years since Galileo first looked through his tiny telescope to see that Jupiter had it's own orbiting moons. Just 200 years have passed since steam-powered machinery began transforming the world on an industrial scale. In the last 100 years, electricity has become widely available and amazing advances in science have given us a deeper understanding of the universe.

The technologies we have developed in the last 50 years allow us to enjoy unprecedented

levels of comfort and control of our environment. Advances in aviation let us travel the world, medicines provide longer and healthier lives, weather satellites provide accurate forecasting, computers provide more information quicker and the Internet tries us together in way we could never imagine.

Think of what we've learned astronomy in recent years. Less than 40 years have passed since we walked on the Moon. Less than 30 years ago we sent the Voyager probes on grand planetary tours and its been only 20 years since we launched the Hubble Space Telescope. In the 13 years since comet Shoemaker-Levi collided with Jupiter, we have accelerated the identification of asteroids that could cause a future calamity. Quality telescopes are more available and affordable than ever before and today we give hardly a thought to bringing out our Go-To telescopes, pressing a few buttons and looking in wonder at sights rarely seen, even in the recent past.

Coordinators are needed still for several of the 2007 Public and Members Only Observing Sessions at Sugar Grove Nature Center. Additional POS coordinators are needed; two per session are preferred. Please sign up by contacting one of the Board members if you are willing to host or co-host one of these sessions.

Members Only Observing Sessions occur one week earlier than the above POS. Coordinators (who should be SGNC key holders unless they have their own telescope) are still needed for nearly all of these sessions. Please sign up by contacting one of the Board members if you are willing to coordinate one of these events.

MOOS 2007 Date	MOOS Coordinator(s)
May 12	1. 2.
June 9	1. Duane Yockey 2.
July 14	1. Brian Barling 2.
August 11	1. 2.
September 8	1. 2.
October 6	1. 2.

2007 Date	POS Topic(s)	POS Coordinator(s)
May 19	Galaxies of Leo, Coma, and Virgo	1. Mike Rogers 2.
June 16	Globular Clusters M3 and M13	1. Dave Osenga 2. Duane Yockey
July 21	First Quarter Moon and Jupiter	1. John Werner 2.
August 18	Planetary Nebulas M27 and M57	1. Carl Wenning 2.
September 15	The Milky Way Galaxy	1. Carl Wenning 2. Dave Osenga
October 13	Double Cluster in Perseus	1. 2.

APRIL'S MOOS WAS FUN

By Lee Green

While the weather did not cooperate on April 14 with our planned visit to Millikin University to see their Requarth Observatory, our alternate plan to visit Panera's restaurant was splendid. We took over a wing of the restaurant. There was a good turnout with Brian Barling, Lee Green, Andrew and Renae Morrison, Michael Rogers and Jean Memken and their children Benjamin, Sarah and Jonathan, Dan Miller, Sheri Rodgers and John Werner attending. We had an impromptu chess tournament where John held his own against Jonathan's excellent play. It's always nice to meet with other club members in the light of day and better to share food together.

SPRING CLEANING

By Lee Green

One of the joys of springtime is upon us. Spring Cleaning.

For our next MOOS on May 12, we're holding a Telescope Clinic for all members and their guests. If you own a telescope or want to bring someone who does, we invite you to dig them up (the telescopes and your friends) and bring them out for a little springtime air.

You'll have knowledgeable members who can help you set up your scopes and get them pointing in the right direction. In addition, we'll provide a list of interesting and easy-to-find observing targets so you can amaze your friends all season long.

We plan to meet at Panera's restaurant in south Bloomington at 6PM for food and joviality. Then we will travel to the Sugar Grove Observatory around 7PM for the clinic. Please join us May 12 for one or both activities. You're welcome to join us even if you don't have a scope since we hope to have many instruments there for viewing. It should be fun.

APRIL POS

By Lee Green

April's Public Observing Session on April 21 was a BIG success. The skies were very clear, the weather was warm, the scopes were out and about 25 people braved the perfect conditions to join us at the Sugar Grove Nature Center.

Special thanks to all the members who attended including Brian Barling, Lee Green, Dan Miller, Sheri Rodgers, Michael Rogers, Carl Wenning, John Werner and Duane Yockey as well as our newest members Jim and Patty Ryan.















Michael made a fascinating, informative and challenging presentation about Saturn, its moons, the space science missions to Saturn and the people in history who pioneered the study of the Ringed Planet. Lee conducted a brief tour of the constellations in the spring skies before we adjourned for a viewing session where we found a variety of celestial objects through the five telescopes we had set up.

Everyone had a wonderful time. Thanks again to all who made this meeting so successful.

GOING BACK TO THE MOON

Essay by Astronaut Ron Garan
From Astronomy.com

MAY SKY GUIDE

02	Mercury is in superior conjunction, 11 P.M.	
04	The Moon passes 0.5° south of Antares, 1 P.M.	
05	Eta Aquarid meteor shower peaks	
	The Moon passes 6° south of Jupiter, 7 A.M.	
10	The Moon passes 1.8° south of Neptune, 3 A.M.	
12	The Moon passes 1.3° north of Uranus, 2 A.M.	
	The Moon passes 3° north of Mars, 8 P.M.	
16	Mercury passes 7° north of Aldebaran, 4 P.M.	
17	The Moon passes 3° north of Mercury, 7 P.M.	
19	The Moon passes 1.7° north of Venus, 8 P.M.	
22	The Moon passes 0.8° north of Saturn, 2 P.M.	
23	The Moon passes 0.7° north of Regulus, 11 A.M.	
30	Asteroid Vesta is at opposition, 9 A.M.	
	Venus passes 4° south of Polux, 2 P.M.	
31	The Moon passes 0.4° south of Antares, 8 P.M.	

NASA selected Ron Garan as a pilot in July 2000. Although he has yet to be assigned to a space flight, Garan has performed technical duties in the Astronaut Office Station and Shuttle Operations Branches, and logged more than 4,000 hours in more than 30 types of aircraft.

In April, Garan and three other "aquanauts" spent more than 2 weeks in an undersea laboratory known as Aquarius as part of NASA's Extreme Environment Mission Operations (NEEMO) mission. They practiced remotely operated robotic surgery and simulated moonwalking techniques.

Recently, Garan shared his views concerning President Bush's Vision for Space Exploration. Below is his essay explaining why we should return to the Moon.

On May 10, 1869, a golden spike joined two railways at Promontory Point, Utah, and the first transcontinental railroad was completed. On January 14, 2004, President Bush announced a new vision for our nation's space exploration program and committed the United States to a long-term human program to explore the solar system starting with a return to the Moon.

The railroad provided the backbone for the industrial revolution that provided the largest increase in life expectancy and improvement in quality of life in history. Just as the industrial revolution brought about unprecedented improvements in quality of life, so too can the new age of space exploration, but this time with a positive impact on the environment.

The public and private sectors of our nation must seize the opportunity if we are to begin a period of sustainable space exploration. Since the Vision for Space Exploration was announced, there has been an on-going debate about the reasons for taking the next step in space exploration, a return to the Moon.

We should return to the Moon to establish an Earth-Moon transportation system and a permanent human presence. This will allow our space program to provide a significant tangible benefit to all humanity and a substantial return on our national space investment. There are dozens of reasons we should return to the moon. Here are just few of the best:

Exploration: America's history is built on a desire to open new frontiers and to seek new discoveries. Establishing a lunar infrastructure will push us to improve the reliability of space transportation and allow us to demonstrate what is required to explore Mars and beyond. Establishing a permanently occupied lunar base will allow us to go prospecting for lunar resources needed to accomplish our exploration objectives.

Protection: There is a real risk to the Earth's inhabitants from asteroid impacts and volcano eruptions. If a large object the size of Comet Shoemaker-Levy that recently slammed into Jupiter hit the Earth, civilization would be destroyed. The moon is a superb location for early detection systems and the development of technology that could preserve Earth's inhabitants in the event of a devastating eruption.

Commerce: When the early pioneers headed west and expanded our nation, they did not carry everything with them they would need for their journey. Settlers "lived off the land" or bought what they needed from pioneering entrepreneurs. Future entrepreneurs could develop lunar refueling or servicing stations for satellites, lunar mining and space tourism. These commercial activities would allow us to return national treasures from space and provide a significant return on our space investment.

Research: The Moon offers an incredible opportunity to further human understanding and discovery. If we establish a sustainable, economically viable, revenue-generating lunar base then our science and exploration will be limited only by our imagination. Radio telescopes on the far side of the Moon would be shielded from all radio signals (noise) from Earth and could achieve tremendous increases in sensitivity. The Moon's relatively undisturbed geology offers a window into the Earth's past, and possibly a peek at its future.

Education: Our space program is a tremendous motivator for students of all ages. I can personally attest to the ability of the space program to encourage students. I enrolled in math and science courses and began the pursuit of an engineering degree the day after the first space shuttle mission landed. Creation of a permanent lunar base will inspire millions of young people toward higher education and greatly increase the world's technological capabilities.

We presently spend less than 1 percent of the federal budget on our nation's space program. Once we reach the point of self-sustainable space operations we can unite in the common adventure of exploration of worlds beyond our own. The first step to achieving this is establishing a sustainable permanent human lunar settlement.

Just as we look back and thank those before us for developing things most of us take for granted such as railroads and highways, the generations to come should be able to look back and thank us for committing to space exploration and development. — Ron Garan

TCAA Treasurer's Report – April 2007

OPERATING FUND BALANCE – March 31, 2007 - \$ 2,730.83

Income

Roy Lawry (Sen. Dues Renewal) - \$ 25.00
James Ryan (Dues) - \$ 40.00
James Wharton (Sen. Dues Renewal) - \$ 25.00
Terry Wright (Dues) - \$ 40.00

Expenses

LYB Inc. (April Observer) - \$ 15.60
Secr. of State (Change Reg. Agent fee) - \$ 5.00
Secr. of State (Annual Report fee) - \$ 5.00
William Carney (Light Bulbs & mouse bait) - \$ 21.94
Grinnell Mutual (Liab. Ins. Renewal) - \$ 137.00
McLean Co. Recorder (Reg. Agent filing fee) - \$ 21.00

OPERATING FUND BALANCE – April 30, 2007 - \$ 2,655.29

OBSERVATORY FUND BALANCE – March 31, 2007 - \$ 1,076.11

Income

Interest - \$ 1.75
Lee Green (Keyholder Fee & renewal) - \$ 15.00

Expenses

None - \$ 0.00

OBSERVATORY FUND BALANCE – April 30, 2007 - \$ 1,092.86

TOTAL TCAA FUNDS – April 30, 2007 - \$ 3,748.15

Respectfully submitted,
L. Duane Yockey, Treasurer

Sugar Grove Observatory

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

Duane Yockey (renewed through 2007)	Gerry Schroeder (renewed through 2007)
Michael Rogers (renewed through 2006)	Karen & Ed Duran (renewed through 2006)
William Carney (renewed through 2007)	Josh Lindsey (August 2006)
Carl Wenning (renewed through 2007)	Andrew Morrison (February 2007)
Brian Barling (renewed through 2007)	Dan Miller (renewed through 2007)
Kevin Brown (renewed through 2006)	Lee Green (April 2007, renewed through 2008)
Christopher Franklin (renewed through 2006)	
David Osenga (renewed through 2007)	

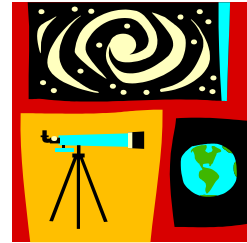


UPCOMING EVENTS

May 12—MOOS
May 16—TCAA Board Meeting
May 18-19—NCRAL
May 19—POS
June 9—MOOS
June 16—POS

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Jim Ryan
Terry Wright



The OBSERVER

Newletter of the TCAA, Inc.

Erin Estabrook, Editor
314 Covey Court
Normal, IL 61761

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/