



Astronomy Club of Tulsa

OBSERVER

May 2005

<http://www.AstroTulsa.com>

ACT, Inc. has been meeting continuously since 1937 and was incorporated in 1986. It is a nonprofit; tax deductible organization dedicated to promoting, to the public, the art of viewing and the scientific aspect of astronomy.

What

The Astronomy Club of Tulsa Meeting

When

20 May 2004 at 7:30 P.M.

Where

Room M1 inside Keplinger Hall, the Science & Engineering Building at TU. Enter the parking lot on the East Side of Keplinger Hall from Harvard and 5th Street. This will take you directly toward the staircase to enter the building. Room M1 is the first room on the left.

President's Message

Craig Davis

May 2005 Newsletter

The guest speaker for our May club meeting will be Dr. Pete Schull, OSU. Dr. Schull is an Associate Professor of Physics but also in charge of OSU's observatory, the H. S. Mendenhall Observatory. Dr. Schull has several noteworthy associations - International Astronomical Union, American Astronomical Society, referee for professional journals and National Science Foundation, Former deputy network scientist, Space Telescope Science Institute, computer bulletin board for observations of Supernova 1987A. Being in charge of OSU's observatory, H. S. Mendenhall was recently rewarded by receiving a new telescope - 24", to replace the former C-14. Obviously this will be a tremendous benefit to not only the capabilities of the observatory but also to the students that will enjoy its usage. The C-14 will of course continue to be used but only in a side status. No longer the primary observing tool. With that, it should be very interesting to see how the observatory began and progressed to the point that it has grown at this time.

The summer is just around the corner and it will be here before we know it. With that, what are we going to do to make the coming summer months a most

rewarding time? Well, with the warm to hot, to extremely hot weather, coupled with the months ahead, we should be able to get quite a significant amount accomplished at the club's observatory. From not only a fresh coat of paint - inside/outside, to also the construction of four new concrete setup pads. This task will without a doubt be quite rewarding to so many different club members in the long run.

I am quite confident in saying that with a new coat of paint on the observatory it will once again hold that "new" appearance - greatly needed. This of course will take quite some time to accomplish but that's fine. It's always best to take the extra time needed for it to result in a job done well. As should be commonly understood by all club members, projects of this size and magnitude should be willingly accepted, if not even more so, expected. Any volunteers to assist with this project will be openly accepted!

With that, we should also understand and accept that with the costs of materials today for matters of this nature, as well as many others, we should also be openly willing to accept what has been reluctantly mentioned. A small flyer notice of info concerning this was passed out at the last club meeting. With that, I now openly extend my appeal to all to agree to a small increase in our annual club membership dues. Of course I realize that many will think of this in a very negative fashion, understandable. The same manner in which we all were not openly enthused when gas prices skyrocketed to 2.23 a gallon, remember? I'm sure you do. That will undoubtedly occur again in the future. Even so, unfortunately, everything changes and with that, so must we. The proposed increase will most certainly not be overwhelming, guaranteed. Yet it shall still take up the slack that exists in the overall costs of maintaining the club's observatory along with other factors, inclusive. The decision for this action has come from not only the club's board members but also the information gathered in reference to other astronomy clubs rates of annual dues. At the time of this writing we are the lowest annual dues rate club in a five state region. This comparison is to clubs of equivalent member size or larger. So, at the upcoming club meeting, May 20th, I shall bring forward the specific details of this and call for a vote on this matter and hopefully, all of you, will be understanding and in agreement.

The first weekend in June is actually an important time to really look forward to. A weekend that alone can be a lot of fun for all that may attend, PRAIRIE THUNDER! Yes, it's been mentioned before, especially at our last club meeting. But again, I simply wish to remind everyone that Prairie Thunder is less than a month away. With our crazy weather hopefully it will be in a much more cooperative state at the time of this event for not only the Tulsa Rocket Club but even more so for good clear skies for us that Saturday night. As I have said before, up in that region of the state there is so much less light pollution in comparison to what we have to deal with here. Even at our observatory.

It's really nice when you can simply take a quick glance to the South and pick out the Lagoon or the Trifid, naked eye. Look a little further and you may not have any trouble at all in locating the Beehive, M-31, and more. If any of you are perhaps working towards a binocular certificate from the League, it will be a very beneficial observing location. So plan ahead and look forward to an event that may very well be one of the best of the summer. 2005 Prairie Thunder!

One final note to all - what's happening way out in space on the 4th of July? Do you know? If not, check around and find out. It will be a most exciting 4th of July!!

Clear Skies to all,
Craig D. Davis
President

Club VOTE May 20th

Change in Annual Dues Vote

by John Land

At the April board meeting it was proposed that we make changes in our annual Astronomy Club Dues. A notice of the proposed change was passed out to those who attended the April meeting.

Below is the proposed change with some clarification over the April notice.

Proposed Change in Annual dues For Astronomy Club of Tulsa to become effective July 1, 2005

- Adults - \$ 35 per year includes Astronomical League Membership
- Students \$ 15 without League membership.
- Students \$ 20 with League membership.

Student shall be defined as a person 25 or younger actively taking courses at a college or trade school or persons still in High school or below.

Adult Students over 25 may join at the student rate for one year if enrolled in an Astronomy course in an area college.

You may express your vote at the May 20th meeting or if unable to attend the meeting you may email or phone in a vote to Craig Davis By Thurs May 19th. Craig Davis at 252-1781 sirian@cox.net You **MUST** identify yourself when sending in a vote.

EXPLANATION: As best we can determine it has been almost 15 years

since we made any changes in the dues. The Astronomical League increased their dues to \$ 5 each in 2003. After 9-11 the costs of liability insurance for the observatory and club events have risen to over \$700 per year even after changing companies to find the lowest rate. Most public places require insurance before they will allow us to hold events. League and Insurance alone amount to almost \$ 10 per person.

Running and maintaining our observatory and grounds continues to be a large part of our expenses. All of the labor is volunteer but materials are needed for upkeep or improvements. We have made some major improvements to the facility over the past two years which we all enjoy. We would like to make some improvements to the grounds and complete some long term maintenance projects the next two years.

The Student Rate is to encourage young people to experience astronomy with us without a major financial burden. At least one school offers extra credit to students for visiting and joining the club. Most are members for only one year but a few stay with us and become long term members and leaders.

Astroland Tidbits

by John Land

Congratulations to Zach Garrett ! Zach was selected as the 4th place winner in the National Young Astronomers award. Zach has been active in astronomy for several years. Zach built his own finely crafted 6 inch refractor. He runs small company to purchase large observing binoculars. Zach has also helped out with public events and our Night Sky Network.

Welcome New Members: Shannon DelloIacono, Jerry Sanders, John LaJoie, Estella Green, Heather Benzel, Alexis Bird, Joshua Bird, Teresa Wilber, Blake Stanworth, Morgan Simpson, Jennifer Vick, William Dunn, Blake Genaro, David Evans. We are particularly pleased to have Russell Miller returning to us from a tour of Duty in Iraq with the 120th Engineering Battalion.

Don't let your subscriptions run out over summer vacations. Renew your memberships and magazine subscriptions. To spend up your renewals use the online forms at <http://www.astrotulsa.com/Club/join.asp> Please send any inquiries about your membership or other club matters to membership@astrotulsa.com

ON LINE Club Memberships and Renewals:

Club memberships are \$25 per year for adults and \$15 per year for students. We now have an automated on line registration form on the website for new

AND renewal memberships plus magazine subscriptions. You simply type in your information and hit send to submit the information. <http://www.astrotulsa.com/Club/join.asp> You can then print a copy of the form and mail in your check.

Astronomy Club of Tulsa - 25209 E 62nd St - Broken Arrow, OK 74014

Magazine Subscriptions: If your magazines are coming up for renewal, try to save the mailing label or renewal form you get in the mail. Do NOT mail renewals back to the magazine! To get the club discount you must go through the club group rate. Astronomy is \$29 for 1 year or \$55 for 2 years. www.astronomy.com Sky & Telescope is \$33 / yr www.skyandtelescope.com Sky and Telescope also offers a 10% discount on their products. NIGHT SKY is \$18 / yr A exciting new bi-monthly magazine for beginning or casual astronomers. <http://nightskymag.com/> The club has coupons for a free issue

Address Corrections- Email changes - Questions:

You may forward questions to the club call our message line at 918-688-MARS (6277) by email membership@astrotulsa.com Please leave a clear message with your name, phone number, your question - along with address or email Please make email subject lines that address your question. The spam filters may DELETE emails without clear identification!

GETTING EVEN

BY JERRY MULLENNIX

What a year for discovery! Cassini arrived at Saturn 11 months ago to begin 7 years exploring what is arguable the prettiest planet we view in our scopes. In January The European Space Agency's Huygens Probe drifted through Titans atmosphere to give us our first look at surface features of a strange and wonderful moon. Then Cassini went on to send daily science about the ring structure and surface detail of some of Saturn's 34 moons. Excuse me, did I say 34? Just this week Cassini found another moon hidden in the Keeler gap. The Keeler gap is located about 250 kilometers (155 miles) inside the outer edge of the A ring, which is also the outer edge of the bright main rings. The new object is about 7 kilometers (4 miles) across and reflects about half the light falling on it - a brightness that is typical of the particles in the nearby rings. Well that's 35, but I would bet the count will increase as we rewrite just about everything we thought we knew about Saturn over the next few years.

The last 12 months have not been locked on Saturn and the list here is not near complete but here goes. The mars pathfinders and Global Survey Satellite are alive and well sending science everyday as we re-learn mars in spectacular detail. SOHO continues to stare at our star. Old Faithful, I mean Hubble contin-

ues to amaze and is joined by Chandra and Spitzer scopes bringing us deep space images never before imagined. This combined with about 50 other current missions feeding us information daily that we hungrily gobble up.

Now if you were amazed in the 80's as I was by the remarkable images sent to us by the Voyager I and II missions then you should be aware these old friends are alive and well sending us information everyday from the deep reaches of our solar system. They are teaching us what a remarkable span a single star has and the great influences exerted by our sun even at 14 billion Kilometers away. The spacecrafts have been sending data for 27 years and are expected to continue to feed us until 2020 as they quickly approach interstellar space.

Still not satisfied? Want more? OK, me too- get your scopes ready because at 1:00am on the 4th of July Deep Impact will slam into the comet Tempel 1 in an attempt to pay comets back for the billions of years they have been slamming into others and us. All right, as you may have guessed the science is far more extensive then just dishing out a little payback. Comets played a major role in the evolution of Earth and understanding the components that make up a comet are critical in understanding the story of Earth and to a degree the solar system.

Currently the Comet Tempel 1 is in the constellation Virgo RA 12.8709h Dec 8.4097° and high in the sky if you want to get some pre-impact views. The comet is dim (mag 9.82 currently) but still viewable, both Tim Davis and myself have observed the comet over the last few weeks in both a 12" and an 8". When the impact happens the comet is expected to brighten to close to mag 5 and may break up into several pieces. The brightening effect could last hours, days, weeks or even years. David Stine informed me this morning that there is some reports that the comet could go as bright as mag 0. Imagine a faint fuzzy in the eyepiece one minute and then the next an object nearly as bright as Jupiter. The task is not easy from Tulsa as the comet will only be 6 degrees above the SW horizon when the impact happens and that is just tough telescope territory. However, if it goes as expected it should be an easy binocular or maybe naked eye object right after impact. Give it about 6 ½ minutes for the light to travel to us. If you travel West the angle improves dramatically. I suggest you try and view it as much as you can over the next few weeks so you can clearly see the difference after impact. In truth I have read about 25 different papers and articles on this topic and my opinion is no one really knows what to expect, but you can take this to the bank - "its payback time".

ASTRONOMY EVENTS

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED:

The Director for the Tulsa area Cub Scout Day Camp is wondering if some members of your club would like to come out on the evening of June 21 (4:30 - 8:00 pm) and work with about 120 fourth and fifth grade boys.

NOTE:

Tentatively scheduled dates below are bracketed with question marks. The number of persons expected is in parenthesis.

EVENTS AT RMCC OBSERVATORY:

MAY

- 13 Fri 07:45 CS Pack 778 & Mounds School (40)
- 14 Sat 06:30 Model T Club (20)
- 19 Thu 07:30 Tulsa School of Arts and Sciences (20)

JUN

- 03 Fri 08:00 Club Star Party
- ? 04 Sat 08:00 Back Up for 06/04 ?
- 13 Mon 08:00 ORU Summer Science Kids Camp (30)

EVENTS AWAY FROM OBSERVATORY

MAY

- 10 Tue 07:30 Collinsville Elem School (100) at the School at 12818 No. 129th E Ave
- 20 Fri 07:30 Regular Club Meeting at TU Keplinger Hall

JUN

- 04 Sat 09:00 AM Prairie Thunder Rocket Launch (1000+) at Pawhuska Airport
- 05 Sun ??:?? Prairie Thunder Rocket Launch at Pawhuska Airport
- ? 21 Mon 04:30-08:00 Tulsa area Cub Scout Day Camp (120) ?

Gerry Andries
 Observatory Group Director
 Astronomy Club of Tulsa

Astronomy Club of Tulsa membership (\$25/year) includes membership in the Astronomical League and subscription to ACT's "Observer" and AL's "Reflector". "Astronomy" (\$29/year) and "Sky and Telescope" (\$33/year) are also available through the club. For more information contact John Land at 918.357.1759. Permission is hereby granted to reprint from this publication provided credit is given to the original author and the Astronomy Club of Tulsa Observer is identified as the source.

OFFICERS

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918.637.1477

BOARD MEMBERS AT

LARGE

Neta Apple
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Dan Lamoreaux
Tom McDonough
Jim Miller
David Stine

APPOINTED STAFF

RMCC Observatory Director:

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RMCC Facility Manager:

Craig Davis—252-1781

Membership Chairman:

John Land—357-1759

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Astronomy Club of Tulsa

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