

## Upcoming Meeting

The first meeting of 2004 will be Saturday January 17 at 7 p.m. at Golden Pond Observatory. Visitors are welcome to attend! Following the meeting David Paessler and Ross Workman will teach a short class on collimation for anyone who is interested. Newtonian reflector and Schmidt-Cassegrain telescopes will be included. Also our winter star party is coming up January 23-24 at Pennyrile State Park. See Events and Opportunities below.

## Last Meeting Highlights

About 22 people attended our last meeting and chili supper on November 22. We all enjoyed chili and fixin's and lots of delicious desserts before the meeting. Thanks to everyone who brought food!

**Learning Opportunities at Meetings:** David suggested we start having short (15-20 minute) educational sessions following our monthly meetings for anyone who is interested. A number of members were interested, so David and Ross will teach a short class on collimation at the January meeting. Newtonian reflector and Schmidt-Cassegrain telescopes will be included.

**Website Revision:** John McCubbin has totally rewritten the WKAA website - it looks and works great! If you have not already seen it, check it out at [www.wkaa.net](http://www.wkaa.net). If you have any suggestions or problems, contact John McCubbin or John Holland.

**Dues Change:** In March the club's Astronomical League (AL) dues will be increasing to \$5 per club member per year. (For example, if WKAA has 45 members in March, the club will pay the Astronomical League \$225 (45x\$5) for membership dues.) The current dues for WKAA membership are \$15 per family per year - regardless of the number of family members who participate in WKAA or in AL. As a result of the dues increase by the Astronomical League, the club voted to restructure members dues. Beginning in March, membership dues will be \$15 for an individual and \$5 for each additional family member who plans to participate in the Astronomical League (e.g., earn AL observing club certificates). Additional family members may continue to participate in WKAA activities (monthly meetings, winter star party, Astronomy Day, etc.) for no additional dues.

**Golden Pond Planetarium Upgrade:** The planetarium will reopen March 1 following extensive equipment upgrades. A grand opening celebration with guests from NASA and JPL is planned soon after it reopens.

**2004 WKAA Activities Schedule:** The 2004 schedule is posted on the WKAA website at <http://www.wkaa.net/schedule.php>. General changes include the addition of the winter

star party in January, the addition of a December meeting, and the removal of scheduled board meetings. Separate board meetings will be scheduled as needed.

**Twin Lakes Star Party:** Ross Workman received several follow-up e-mails from star party attendees. Most comments were very positive. The attendees seemed to particularly like the snacks, coffee, and warm stove. Someone did suggest, however, that the observing field needed leveling. Ross also received one complaint from a registrant who arrived on Saturday after the activities were over. The complaint concerned the schedule change, which was driven by the bad weather forecast. The folks from both the forestry service and Pennyryle State Park were very pleased with the star party - so much so that our forestry service contact is going to work to have the observing field dedicated for public use for activities such as the star party. David Paessler reported that the star party income was similar to last year's, but the expenses were considerably lower than last year's. This was primarily a result of door prize donations. Thanks again to Vince Medlock for doing a great job with door prize solicitation! Based on some e-mailed comments and conversations with star party attendees, Ross suggested that we consider reducing or eliminating door prizes next year and have a big BBQ or catered lunch instead. Several people have commented that the reasons they come to the star party are to observe, to visit with old friends, to meet new people, and to learn new ideas (not to win door prizes). Ross also mentioned that only very small door prizes are given away at the Mid-South Star Party in Mississippi.

**Lost and Found:** A battery, a charger, and a jump-start charger were left at the star party. Contact Ross Workman if any of them belong to you.

**Viewings for the Public:** There was a lot of discussion about scheduling future public viewing sessions around the area. John McCubbin suggested that WKAA cosponsor an event with a new 4H astronomy club from Hopkinsville. He agreed to make contact with them. Warren also mentioned that an astronomy club in Eddyville has contacted him within the last year. John Workman reminded us that Jody Smith, the producer for the WPSD morning news show, has provided great opportunities for publicity in the past.

## **Astronomical League Awards**

These AL observing club certificates were be awarded at the last meeting:

- Laura Dietrich - Lunar
- Jeff Burton - Caldwell

At the January meeting Bob Vickers will be presented with his Caldwell Certificate.

Follow this link for information on the [Astronomical League Observing Clubs/Awards](#). Contact David if you have any questions.

## **Events and Opportunities**

## Viewings for the Public

- Winter Star Party: Our winter star party will be held January 23-24 at Pennyrile State Park. This event is geared toward amateur astronomers and will be very informal with no specific activities scheduled. See the WKAA website (<http://www.wkaa.net/article.php?articleid=28&ret=schedule.php>) for more information.
- Paducah Schools Lunch Buddy Program: This program pairs "at-risk" children with adult volunteers for lunch once or twice a month. They are looking for a volunteer to pair with a kid who is interested in astronomy. Contact David Paessler if you are interested.

Sky and Telescope subscription discount: Club members who subscribe through the club receive a \$10 discount. They also receive a 10% discount on products purchased from Sky Publishing.

## New Members

No new members have joined since the last meeting. The club currently has 45 members.

## Treasurer's Report

Current Funds as of 1/16/04

Bank Balance	2204.61
Cash on hand	43.00
Checks for deposit	0.00
Grand total	2247.61