

## Upcoming Meeting

The next meeting will be Saturday May 15 at 7:00 pm at Golden Pond Observatory. As always visitors are welcome to attend!

## Last Meeting Highlights

About 30 people attended our last meeting on April 17, including a reporter from KFVS TV and several geology students from UK.

**Astronomy Day:** David Byrd discussed the details of this event which was held April 24. See the Events and Opportunities section a full report.

**Murray State - NSF Grant:** Prior to the meeting, the officers and a few other interested club members met with MSU physics and astronomy professor Randy Lynn to discuss the possibility of MSU using the observatory for student research. The National Science Foundation (NSF) plans to award about \$1.8 million in 4 to 8 grants nationwide to purchase 0.5 to 2.5 meter telescopes and associated equipment. Randy and professor Art Pallone are planning to apply for one of these grants and are looking for an existing facility to use. Club members voiced several concerns about this proposal, the most significant being limitations on club access to the observatory.

**MSU - WKAA Relationship:** Whether or not they use the observatory, Randy and Art are interested in developing a relationship with the club. David Paessler suggested that we pursue this.

**Loaner Scopes:** David suggested that we purchase a couple of small telescopes for club members to borrow. We currently have a couple of club members who do not yet have scopes. The opportunity to borrow a scope may also attract new club members. The club voted to spend a maximum of \$500 on two telescopes and associated equipment.

**Astronomical League Awards:** Two awards were presented. See below for details.

**TV Interviews:** Following the meeting Jason Lindsey from KFVS 12 television interviewed both Vince Medlock and Jay McNeil.

**Viewing:** This was one of the few clear nights we've had in a while, so several people set up their telescopes and viewed until the seeing conditions turned poor around midnight.

## Astronomical League Awards

April Meeting:

- Bob Vickers - Double Star

- David Paessler, Urban Club
- David Paessler, Master Observer

The Master Observer certificate is awarded for completing 10 observing clubs. David is the 26th person to ever earn it! Congratulations David!

May Meeting:

- Vince Medlock - Messier Honorary

The WKAA website lists club members who have earned observing club certificates and provides links to the Astronomical League website.

Contact David if you have any questions.

## Events and Opportunities

**Telescopes to the People:** 100 to 150 people from about ages 3 to 75 came to the McCracken County Public Library in Paducah for "A Night with the Planets" on Thursday March 18. Prior to the observing session, David gave a talk to a standing room only audience in the library's public meeting room. Following the talk the public viewed Jupiter, Saturn, Mars, and Venus through nine telescopes set up by several club members. It was another excellent public viewing session!

**TMessier Marathon** The Messier Marathon was rained out. Maybe the weather will cooperate next year!

**Astronomy Day:** Astronomy Day was held Saturday April 24 at Golden Pond. All of the planetarium shows were free and several club members set up telescopes for viewing the sun. We even had a member of the central Illinois contingent - Jeff Burton. It was great to see him! A non-club member also demonstrated a planetary motion computer program. There was a good turnout from the public this year

**Telescopes to the People:** Our May 6th viewing session at the Challenger Learning Center in Paducah was well attended by the public. David Paessler and Bill Kassebaum brought their 16" scopes and Dale and Carol Baltimore helped by manning the handout table and Bill's 105mm scope. We had about 200 people come by and view the Sun, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, and at the end, comet Neat. The club once again earned some good PR with the Paducah area.

**Texas Star Party:** This is a really nice star party held in west Texas May 16-23. About 800 people attend each year and the skies are so dark that you can see 7th magnitude stars with your naked eye. Jay McNeil goes every year and has offered to caravan with anyone who is interested in going. See the [Texas Star Party website](#) for more information.

**Venus Transit:** There will be a Venus transit June 8. The last occurrence was in 1882.

**15th Annual Twin Lakes Star Party:** The star party will be held October 9 - 16 at Pennyrile State Forrest.

**New Astronomy Magazine:** Sky and Telescope is publishing a new magazine for beginning observers - Night Sky. David has some certificates for free introductory issues. See him at the meeting if you are interested.

**Free Astronomy Book:** Dale and Carol Baltimore are giving away a copy of The Backyard Astronomer's Guide by Terrence Dickinson and Alan Dyer (pub. 1991). Pick it up at the next meeting if you are interested.

**McNeil's Nebula:** Check out the article on McNeil's Nebula in the June issue of Sky & Telescope Magazine.

**Book Recommendation:** Jay McNeil has highly recommended the Deep Sky Companions series by Stephen James O'Meara. Jay says that O'Meara describes each object in layman's terms, explains how to find it with a small scope, and provides its astrophysical background based on the latest research. You can also check out Michael Cohen's opinion of Deep Sky Companions: The Caldwell Objects in his book review at [wkaa.net](http://wkaa.net).

**Website:** If anyone would like to include an article on the WKAA website, contact John McCubbin. Articles don't have to cover advanced or technical topics - they could be about something as simple as a beginner's first experiences observing. New club member Michael Cohen has posted several book reviews you might want to check out!

**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. Turn in your renewals to David in order to receive the discount.

## **New Members**

No new members have joined since the last meeting. The club currently has 34 paid members for 2004.

## **Treasurer's Report**

Current Funds as of 4/11/04

Bank Balance      \$2103.45

**Loaner Scopes:** They have been purchased and are almost ready to check out!