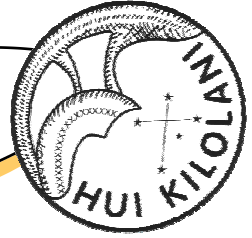


# The Astronews



Volume 53, Issue 6

June 2005

[www.hawastsoc.org](http://www.hawastsoc.org)

## Molokai Under the Stars

Stephanie Choquette

It finally happened! The weekend of May 6th was the first time in two years that I was allowed to be under a starry sky without freezing to death! The location? Molokai ranch, just a quick 20 min flight away. The whole setting is conducive to rest, relaxation and astronomy.

As you arrive at the ranch, you soon realize that the pace of things is much different here. No electricity, no TV, no phones, nothing but peace and quiet. You get to stay in a tentalow, basically a tent, but with a real bed. There are 2 tentalows per unit, each with a picnic table, a very modest shower, and lawn chairs. You are supplied with candles and flashlights for night time lighting although a solar

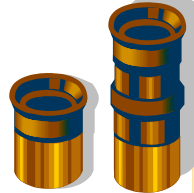
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## Upcoming Star Parties

<b>Club Party</b>	<b>Jun 4</b>	<b>Dillingham</b>
<b>Public Party</b>	<b>Jun 11</b>	<b>Kahala/Waialeale</b>
<b>Public Party</b>	<b>Jun 25</b>	<b>Dillingham</b>
<b>Club Party</b>	<b>Jul 2</b>	<b>Dillingham</b>
<b>Public Party</b>	<b>Jul 9</b>	<b>Kahala/Waialeale</b>
<b>Club Party</b>	<b>Jul 30</b>	<b>Dillingham</b>



## Upcoming Events:

- The next meeting is at 7:30 p.m. on Tuesday, June 7<sup>th</sup> at the Bishop Museum.
- Bishop Museum's next planetarium show (with **Barry Peckham**) is on Friday, June 3<sup>rd</sup>.

## President's Message

On May 4th, the Institute for Astronomy presented a series of talks entitled *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the End of Everything* (a play of words on the *Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* books and newly released movie). A panel of IfA astronomers discussed the threats posed to Earth by astronomical events.

Most of this was familiar, but one thing surprised me: a Gamma Ray Burst on the other side of the galaxy could destroy life on Earth. The energy released in such an event is collimated about as well as a laser pointer's beam, so it could be intense enough to be life threatening over tens of thousands of light years. Of course, GRBs are not very frequent on a human time-scale, and the jets of energy would have to be pointed exactly at Earth, so our chances of dying that way are extremely small.

Still, just last December we got a taste of how powerful the stars that produce some GRBs can be. A Sky & Telescope article in the May issue describes a superflare of a Soft Gamma Repeater called SGR 1806-20 that bathed Earth in as much energy as we receive from the full Moon for two tenths of a second on December 27th. During that amount of time, the star, about 50,000 light years away in Sagittarius, released as much energy as the Sun produces in 250,000 years.

SGRs are thought to be magnetars, neutron stars with extremely large magnetic fields. Superflares are like giant solar flares and release energy in all directions. They wouldn't threaten life on Earth unless they were within a few light years. The potentially fatal GRBs are thought to derive from the formation of a black hole. It's good to live in a quiet neighborhood... of the galaxy..

*Chris*

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**Planets Close To the Moon**

Times are Hawaii Standard Time

- June 8, 02h, M 3.8° N of Venus  
(18° from sun in evening sky)
- June 9, 18h, M 4.8° N of Saturn  
(36° from sun in evening sky)
- June 15, 20h, M 0.43° WSW of Jupiter  
(104° from sun in evening sky)
- June 24, 20h, M 4.3° SSE of Neptune  
(136° from sun in morning sky)
- June 26, 11h, M 2.4° SSE of Uranus  
(114° from sun in morning sky)
- June 28, 16h, M 3.8° NNW of Mars  
(86° from sun in morning sky)









Mercury is closer than 15° from the sun when near the moon in June.

**Other Events of Interest**

Times are Hawaii Standard Time

- June 2, 23h, Mercury at Superior Conj. with sun. (Passes into evening sky)
- June 6, 11:57h, Moon New
- June 13, 15h, Pluto at Opposition
- June 20, 20:48h, Summer Solstice
- June 21, 18:15h, Moon Full
- June 25, 16h, Venus 1.3° N of Saturn  
(23° from sun in evening sky)
- June 26, 01h, Venus, Mercury and Saturn within a circle of 1.37°
- June 26, 01h, Mercury 1.4° NNE of Saturn  
(22° from sun in evening sky)
- June 27, 08h, Mercury 0.07° SSW of Venus  
(23° from sun in evening sky)  
(closest planet-planet appulse this year)

**Planets in June**

<p> <b>Mercury</b></p> <p>Will be visible in the west just after sunset during the last 10 days of June.</p>	<p> <b>Venus</b></p> <p>Low in the west after sunset. Very close to Mercury and Saturn late in the month.</p>	<p> <b>Mars</b></p> <p>Rises after midnight and is brightening and getting large enough to see some detail. Mag - +0.0.</p>
<p> <b>Jupiter</b></p> <p>Still shining brightly in the south-southwest at magnitude -2.0.</p>	<p> <b>Saturn</b></p> <p>Last month to observe Saturn before it gets too close to the sun. Very close to Venus and Mercury late in the month.</p>	<p> <b>Uranus</b></p> <p>Rises about 11:00 pm – will be better placed for viewing later in the year.</p>
<p> <b>Neptune</b></p> <p>Rises just before midnight – can be viewed before dawn.</p>		<p> <b>Pluto</b></p> <p>Reaches opposition June 13. This is the best month to try to observe this very faint planet. Mag. +13.8.</p>

The May 3, 2005 general membership meeting of the Hawaiian Astronomical Society was called to order at 7:33 p.m. by President Chris Peterson. The meeting was held at the Atherton Halau on the grounds of the Bishop Museum. There were 26 members and 4 visitors in attendance.

President Chris Peterson greeted the members and spoke briefly about the club activities that took place during the month of April. They were: State Science Fair - April 4-5. Ryoko Ogasawara, in senior research, and Justin Bisel, in junior research, were each awarded an HAS certificate of merit, a one year HAS membership and a subscription to an astronomy magazine. The senior researcher also received a \$50 check.

Astronomy Day - took place April 16, 2005, on the upper level parking area of Kahala Mall, outside of Barnes & Noble. John Gallagher was the backbone of the function this year, holding down the fort, talking to passers-by and interested parties. Vice President Barry Peckham, using the club PST, showed the sun to the public.

IFA Open House - was Sunday April 10, from 11am - 4pm. Again John Gallagher and Barry Peckham met the public. Paul Lawler showed the sun.

Bishop Museum Family Science Day—April 9th. Forrest Luke, Paul Lawler and Dave Verrett were on duty.

Molokai Ranch in May - A number of members will be spending an “astronomical” weekend at the Kaupo Beach Village, Molokai Ranch, May 5-6. The event was organized by

Barry Peckham.

Planets in the night sky - Chris Peterson pointed out that May will be the last month to have decent views of the planet Saturn as it slips from the night time sky. Jupiter will still be a nice sight for May and part of June.

Space Shuttle and Hubble Space Telescope - Chris mentioned that the new administrator for NASA, Mike Griffin, may revisit the idea of repairing the Hubble Space Telescope.

New Zealander seeking sponsorship at club star party - An older gentleman, 80+ years old, visiting from New Zealand was seeking sponsorship at the May 6th club star party. Mr. Lore will be on Oahu May 6th. Mmembers were asked to consider sponsoring the visitor at a Club party.

Visitors and New Members - Four visitors introduced themselves. All four are new members and are interested in finding the right and getting into viewing at weekend star parties.

Guest Speaker - Karen Meech, who was unable to be with us in April, may speak on Astrobiology at an upcoming meeting later this year.

Bishop Museum News - Planetarium Director, Carolyn Kaichi, related that the Deep Impact event at the Bishop Museum will take place Sunday, July 3rd. The public will be allowed onto the grounds around

5:30 p.m. and the impact will occur at 7:52 p.m. Those club astronomers who will be helping out that evening should be set up at least 45 minutes prior to the start time. Other activities scheduled for that evening will be lecturers, and an inflatable skylab. Carolyn pointed out that there

*(Continued on page 5)*

Not much goes on during June. Nighttime showers are minor. Daytime showers are good radio showers.

Tuesday the 7th, **the Arietids**. Radiant 02h56m +24deg.

This is mainly a radio shower of high rates. The New Moon helps trying to see something of this shower with its radiant barely 30 degrees west of the Sun. So try a look before dawn.

Monday the 27th, **the June Bootids**. Radiant 14h56m +46 deg.

Radts for this shower run from none to about 50 meteors per hourThe shower returned in 1998 after being absent for about 70 years. The shower may be seen within 6 hours of 08h UT.

If you are interested in observing meteors contact Tom Giguere on Oahu at 672-6677 or write to: Mike Morrow, P.O. Box 6692, Ocean View, Hawaii 96737

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**School and Group Star Parties** are being coordinated by Forrest Luke. If you are contacted for a school star party, please have the school contact Forrest directly by phone at 623-9830 or via e-mail at <lukef003@hawaii.rr.com>.

**27 Jun 2005**  
**03 July 2005**

**Camp Erdman - MDA (some wheelchairs)**  
**Deep Impact Night (Bishop Museum)**

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*Minutes* (Continued from page 4)

are new Hubble photographs displayed in the Planetarium Lobby.

Planetary Data Center - In conjunction with the newly released movie, "A Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy," there will be a panel discussion, "A Hitchhiker's Guide to the End of the Universe" on May 4 at 7 p.m. in room 554 fo the POST Building, UH Manoa.

Solar Eclipse Trip Brochure Available - Anyone interested in the March 29, 2006 solar eclipse in Africa can view materials about a commercial trip by contacting Chris Peterson.

Domain Name - An unidentified individual offered the club \$5,000 to by the club's domain name. The Board has decided that we are not interested in selling our domain name.

Auction - a donated 440 mm scope

(with impaired computer driver) was auctioned at this month's meeting for \$50 to Rick Deever.

Donation - Jim MacDonald informed the club of a \$100 monetary donation from John and Kealoha Swatek of the Big Island.

2003 Asterism Contest Trophy - was awarded at the May meeting. First place was a tiny wooden Dobsonian telescope and a one year subscription to Astronomy America magazine. Second place was a ceramic item and a copy of Astronomy America.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:54 p.m.. Refreshments were served followed by a short NASA Deep Impact production in the Planetarium.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Gretchen West

**Electronic Telescope** (Cont. from page 1) powered light can be found in each tent. Yes, it feels like you are camping and since there are no distractions, one is able to make plans for the upcoming night's observing session. After a nice meal by the sea we are ready to set up our equipment.

Being a small and rather dry island, Molokai is a great place to observe from. Light pollution is not a

were lucky enough to be treated to multiple sporadic meteors on both nights.

About 30 people enjoyed this weekend, some with telescopes, others with binoculars, most with just their eyes. Everyone shared their knowledge and experiences. When you were done observing on the field, you could go back to your tent to relax in a lawn chair while still looking up at the



problem like it is on Oahu. As the sun sets and the stars start revealing themselves, you know you are in for a treat. I had been looking forward to such observing conditions for a long time and I was prepared. With four pages of objects to search for! I brought my 12.5" telescope and as soon as it was dark enough, I got started. From galaxies in Canes Venatici, to planetaries in Hydra and Draco, to the treasures of Centaurus, Sagittarius and Scorpius, then back to galaxies in Leo and Virgo, to just following the very bright Milky Way, this was great. Of course, there was Jupiter and Saturn to look at as well as searching for comet Tempel 1 and we

sky. Or, you could take a shower while also looking up at the stars as there is no roof over your head! And when you finally decided to go to bed, you were able to leave the tent flaps open so that you could fall asleep looking at, STARS! Over those 2 nights I got about 12 hours of observing done and only 6 hours of sleep. And that was perfect!

To have a full weekend dedicated only to astronomy and to share it with people who are also passionate about the night sky is a wonderful experience. To be able to go straight to bed once you are done observing because your tent is only a few feet away, priceless! When's the next trip?!

## State Science Fair 2005

by Jim MacDonald

The club participated in the 48th **Hawaii State Science and Engineering Fair** by selecting a winning project in the Space Science category at the junior and senior level. **Justin Bisel** of **Hilo Intermediate** won in the junior category with his project, *Sun Intensity on Mauna Kea*. The senior category winner was



Justin

**Ryoko Ogasawara** of **Waiakea High** with her project, *Searching for Black Holes: II*. Both winners were given a certificate of accomplishment, membership in HAS, and a year's subscription to either *Sky and Telescope* or *Astronomy* magazine. The senior category winner was also given a \$50.00 cash award.



Ryoko

## Treasurer's Report

by Jim MacDonald

### HAS Financial Report as of May 15, 2005

Initial Balance:.....	<b>\$4,402.77</b>
Receipts:	
Astronomy Payment.....	116.00
Donations .....	152.00
Dues Received.....	243.00
S&T Payments .....	137.79
Telescope Fee.....	20.00
T-Shirt Sales.....	15.00
Total Income: .....	<b>\$683.79</b>
Expenses:	
Astronews .....	67.14
Magazine Subscriptions .....	94.90
Postage .....	4.42
Refreshments.....	7.39
Total Expenses: .....	<b>\$173.85</b>
Ending Balance:.....	<b>\$4912.71</b>

The club welcomes ten new members this month. They include **Pamela, Bonnie**, and **Alecia Griffin**; **Brian** and **Heather Crawford**; **Andrew** and **Amy Perry**; **Rick** and **Dusty Decker**; and **Mahealani Jackson**. In addition, many thanks to those renewing their membership and to **John** and **Karen Swatek**, **Jane Houston Jones**, **Mehealani Jackson** and **Sapavith Vanaprucus** for their generous donations. Clear skies to all!

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