The Astronews

HUI KILOLANI

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May 2007

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News for Amateurs

— by Clare & Mel Levin

One of the problems amateur astronomers confront, especially at meetings and star parties is to present a persona of some knowledge and ability regarding the night sky. Most important is not to look like the club dunce—something that probably sends shivers up the spine of all new members. This is a fairly complicated issue, because most amateur astronomy clubs are a mix of green newcomers, intermediates, moderately advanced and professional astronomers, physicists, computer whiz-bangs, mathematicians, plus a sprinkling of "know it alls." Well, I thought {when I first joined} that a retired professor of Medicine would put me right into the middle of this bunch of smarties. Boy, was I wrong. It didn't take long to realize that

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Inside this issue:

Upcoming Star Parties

Public Party	**May 5**	**Dillingham**
Club Party	**May 12**	**Dillingham**
Public Party	**May 19***	**Kahala/Waikele**
Club Party	**Jun 9**	**Dillingham**
Public Party	**Jun 16**	**Dillingham**
Public Party	**Jun 23**	**Kahala/Waikele**

**Sidewalk Astronomy Day*

Upcoming Events:

- The next meeting is at 7:30 p.m. on **Tuesday, May 1st** at the Bishop Museum.
- Bishop Museum's next planetarium show with **Barry Peckham** is Friday, **May 4th** at 7:00 pm.

President's Message

Well, Venus is at it again. I just got a call from a friend who saw Venus next to the Moon. This is someone who actually looks at the sky from time to time, but he thought Venus was a comet because it was so bright. Of course, even a bright comet doesn't look as bright as Venus, but that's what many people think a comet SHOULD look like. Venus is confused for many things, especially when it's fairly high in the sunset sky as it is now: a star, an airplane, a UFO...

However, Venus can be very useful to us. The fact that it's so bright makes it almost impossible to ignore. People who never deliberately look for things to see in the night sky will notice it and ask about it. This provides us with many opportunities to lead the questioners to a deeper knowledge of astronomy.

The relative speeds of the orbits of Venus and Earth around the Sun result in the appearance of Venus in the sunset (or sunrise) sky for months at a time, only slowly changing its apparent distance from the Sun. This makes it easy to teach people how to find Venus – just look for the bright thing in the west after sunset. It's amazing how empowered some people feel when they can identify with confidence something that was previously a mystery to them. Those are people who will be eager to learn more.

Venus can also be spotted in the daytime sky. If you find it as soon as you can after sunset, then you can look in the same area earlier and earlier each night (using a fixed reference point helps a lot) until you can find it in the daytime. It's also instructive to watch Venus change its relation to the background stars day after day even as it seems to appear in the same spot in our sky. Then, in a month or so, we can watch

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Hawaiian Astronomical Society
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Observer's Notebook—May 2007

by Jay Wrathall

Planets Close To the Moon

Times are Hawaii Standard Time

May 5, 01h, M 5.9º S of Jupiter
(146º from sun in morning sky)
May 9, 23h, M 1.6º SSE of Neptune
(87º from sun in morning sky)
May 11, 20h, M 1.1º NW of Uranus
(63º from sun in morning sky)
May 12, 13h, M 2.7º NNW of Mars
(54º from sun in morning sky)
May 17, 14h, M 3.0º N of Mercury
(16º from sun in evening sky)
May 19, 16h, M 1.6º N of Venus
(44º from sun in evening sky)
May 22, 10h, M 0.77º NE of Saturn
(78º from sun in evening sky)

Other Events of Interest

Times are Hawaii Standard Time

May 2, 00:10h, Moon Full
May 2, 18h, Mercury at Superior Conj. with sun
(passes into evening sky)
May 16, 09:28h, Moon New
May 30, 0h, 4 Vesta at Opposition
May 31, 15:04h, Moon Full

Note – In Hawaiian standard time there are two full moons in April – the second full moon is often called a blue moon. In UT there are two full moons in June – not May, so June is the month that will be officially considered to have a blue moon.

Planets in May

Mercury has its best evening views of the year during the last two weeks of May.	**Venus** shines brightly in the western evening sky at Mag. -4.0. Sets about 3 1/2 hours after the sun.	**Mars** rises a couple of hours before sunrise at magnitude +1.0.
Jupiter by the end of may Jupiter rises just after sunset and will be in the sky most of the night at mag. -2.5.	**Saturn** shines brightly close to the zenith at sunset at magnitude +0.5 and sets about midnight.	**Uranus** is near Mars in the east before sunrise in May..
Neptune can be found in the eastern sky before dawn.	Dwarf Planet **Pluto** rises before midnight and can be viewed in the early morning hours in the eastern sky.	Asteroid **Vesta** is the brightest asteroid. It will reach opposition late this month and early in June will reach mag 5.4 – visible to the unaided eye.

Meeting Minutes

H.A.S. Secretary

Pres. Chris Peterson called the April 3, 2007 meeting of the Hawaiian Astronomical Society to order at 7:37 p.m. The meeting was held at the Atherton Halau of the Bishop Museum. In attendance were 36 members and four visitors.

NEW BUSINESS

Hawaii Space Lecture Series- The upcoming Hawaii Space Lecture Series information can be obtained online at http://www.higp.hawaii.edu/prpdc.

Pres. Peterson spoke briefly about the NASA Messenger Mission.

Speaker for our June Meeting - Chris announced that we would have a guest speaker at the June membership meeting. Dr. Dave Blewitt has agreed join us at our April 2007 meeting as speaker

Star Party Report – We helped out at the Bishop Museum's "Mad About Science Day." Despite the virtually full moon, the visitors enjoyed their views of the moon, Saturn and the Great Orion nebulae. John Gallagher began showing visitors the daytime sky at about 3:00 p.m. and was joined by Dave Verret and his wife, Barry Peckham, Gretchen West, Steve Chun, and John Sandor.There are four upcoming school events in April.

Donation – The previously mentioned a 4.5" Dobsonian telescope with tripod and one eyepiece donated to the club last month was actually donated by a Mr. Thomas Tan of First Physical and Functional Rehab in Waipahu. We would like to thank him for his very thoughtful gift. The telescope was auctioned off at this month's meeting.

Upcoming Events – The Hawaii State Science and Technology Fair took place April 2nd, 3rd, and 4th at the Neil Blaisdell Center. Club members Jim MacDonald and Gretchen West visited the Neal Blaisdell Convention Hall ,surveyed the Senior and Junior research projects. Awards will be announced at the May General Membership Meeting.

April 21st is this year's Astronomy Day. We will again set up at Kahala Mall for daytime observations. Gretchen West posted a sign-up sheet for helpers. Later that evening will be our monthly Kahala/Waikele suburban Star Party.

The UH Manoa, Institute for Astronomy holds its Open House the following week, April 29th from 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at 2680 Woodlawn Drive.

1st Annual International Sidewalk Astronomy Night – Be spontaneous. Choose a place with a good open sky with a good population of foot traffic. Then set up a scope and ***do sidewalk astronomy*** the way it should be done. The 1st Annual Sidewalk Astronomy Night is slated for Friday May 18th. Surprise people and help them to observe the night sky where they are!

Night Sky Network – John Gallagher spoke very briefly about the NASA – Meet the Solar System Tool Kit which the club has been asked to preview and test.

March challenge-Can You Find It? – Jay Wrathall was the winner of the March Challenge and received an award from Barry Peckham.

Guest Speaker-The membership at this month's meeting enjoyed a presentation by the well-known amateur as-

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Meteor Log—May 2007

by Mike Morrow

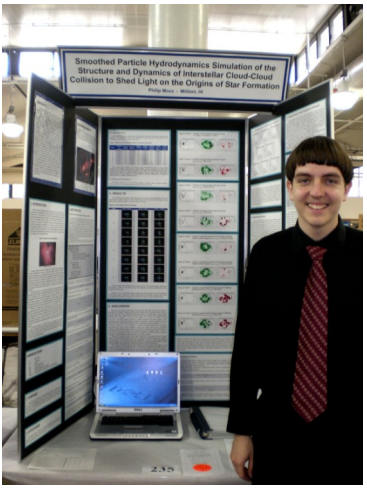
Increasing twilight hampers observations, and the month's major shower, the Eta Aquarids, fights theMoon. Daylight radio showers are a feature of the month.

Sunday the 6th, the **Eta Aquarids**. Radiant 22h32m -01degree.

Rates may reach about 40 an hour on occasion. This is one of two showers associated with Comet Halley. Eta Aquarids are very swift, bright and frequently(40-60%)leave persistent trains.

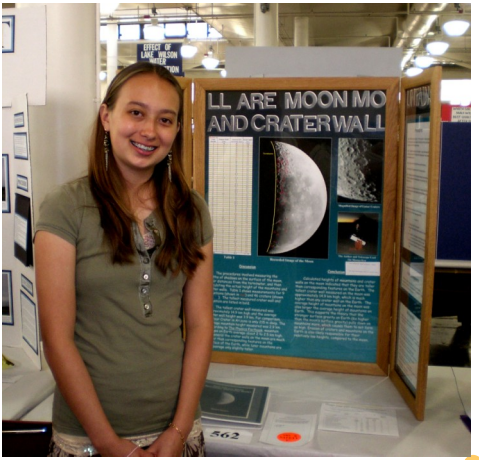
If you are interested in observing meteors
contact Tom Giguere on Oahu at 672-6677 or write to:
Mike Morrow, P.O. Box 6692, Ocean View, Hawaii 96737

Congratulations!



Philip Mocz was our winner at the 50th Hawaii State Science & Engineering Fair in the Senior Research Division with his project entitled: ***Smoothed Particle Hydrodynamics Simulation of the Structure and Dynamics of Interstellar Cloud-Cloud Collision to Shed Light on the Origins of Star Formation***. Philip even went so far as to develop his own computer program to analyze the he used data. Philip is a junior at Mililani High School.

Kristen Simons' project was entitled: ***How Tall are Moon Mountains and Crater Walls?***
She photographed the Moon and developed a method of determining elevations of the various features. She was given the Club's award in the Junior Research Division. Kristen is an 8th grader at Waiakea Intermediate School.



News *(Continued from page 1)*
learning the night sky was a tedious and difficult endeavor for a guy in his late 70's—especially when dealing with people who began learning Astronomy when they were between 8 and 12. Finally, by much repetition, I found I could get around the night sky {if there wasn't too heavy a cloud cover to confuse me}. So, I plodded along until finally I realized, "Hey, wait a minute, this is supposed to be fun," and it really is. So now I don't hesitate to ask for help from experts. When I need help to collimate my scope, I ask Barry and he is always helpful and cheerful so I feel no guilt.

The other side of this Astronomy thing is Clare, who actually got us in this Astronomy hobby in the first place. She went about this whole Astronomy business with a completely different approach. First, she learned the Greek alphabet--{not just alpha, beta, gamma}, but the whole thing including the hieroglyphics. Then she memorized the names of about 200 stars and their locations in their respective constellations. This was followed by learning the 25 most luminous stars in order of their brightness. Meanwhile she devoured Sky and Tel and Astronomy magazines and several texts on Astronomy. She then read Hawking and introduced me to "event horizons." That was just the beginning, and I was really impressed. But my claim to fame in the household is finding deep sky objects with our Lightbox. So we continue our partnership in Astronomy knowing that when we need help, it is never far away. When we are both stumped, we can always call on that famous trio—***Peter, Paul, and Barry***.

President *(Continued from page 2)*
through our telescopes the shrinking illuminated crescent on a growing globe as Venus sinks lower at sunset. Happy Venus watching!

Chris

Minutes *(Continued from page 4)*
tronomer and comet finder, Don Machholz. Don gave us insight into his views on creating inexpensive and very durable equipment. He described his methods of observation and gave us insights into the time and dedication it takes to find the number of comets he has detected and been credited with finding.
The meeting was adjourned at 8:50 p.m. and refreshments were served. Joanne Bogan conducted a rousing show in the Planetarium for interested members, following the meeting.

Respectfully Submitted,
Gretchen West

Treasurer's Report

by Jim MacDonald

HAS Financial Report as of April 16, 2007

Initial Balance:	**$5,083.69**
Receipts:	
Donations	50.00
Dues Received	156.00
Magazine Payments	134.95
T-Shirt Sales	30.00
Telescope Rentals	40.00
Total Income:	**$410.95**
Expenses:	
Astronews	50.00
Magazine Subscriptions	99.90
Refreshments & Speaker dinner	25.06
Science Fair award	50.00
Postage	4.86
Total Expenses:	**$281.30**
Ending Balance:	**$5,213.34**

This month we added six new members. They are **Leigh Lasher**; **Scott**, **Jocelyn** and **Noah Coats**; **Ken Elliott**, and **Mary Becker**. The club thanks **Paul Erickson**, **Ken Elliott** and **Mary Becker** for their cash donations. An appreciative thanks also those renewing their membership this month. Clear skies to everyone!

Special Notice

HAS will publish a complete listing of Club members in the **June 2007** issue of the Astronews. This publication is required by Club by-laws, Article III, Section 2 Para C(e) and Article VIII, Section 1B. Unless notified otherwise, this list will include all member's names, addresses, and phone numbers. If you wish to have some or all of your data excluded, please notify the Club Treasurer, Jim MacDonald before **May 15, 2007** by sending an e-mail to jim.macd@hawaiiantel.net or by written notice to the Club's post office box listed on the back page of this newsletter. Please be advised that this listing is intended for Club members' personal use only in contacting one another. With the exception of membership in the Astronomical League, HAS does make this list available to, nor do we sell its contents to anyone for any purpose. Please let us know if you do not wish to be included.

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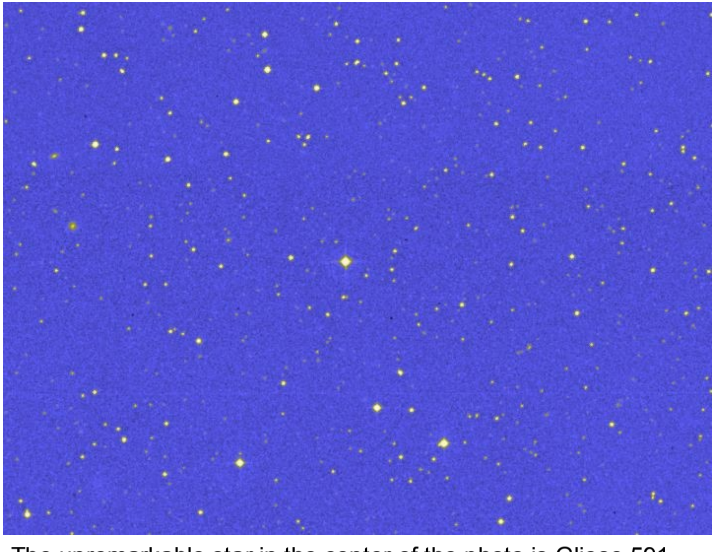

The unremarkable star in the center of the photo is Gliese 591, 20 light years away in Libra. Gliese 581, a red dwarf has three orbiting planets, including the most earth-like planet ever found.