The

Rosette Gazette

Volume 20. Issue 1

Newsletter of the Rose City Astronomers

January, 2008



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RCA INFORMATION FAIR

Monday, January 21st!

The January meeting features our annual Information Fair. This is a great opportunity to get acquainted, or reacquainted, with RCA activities and members.

There will be several tables set up in OMSI's Auditorium with members sharing information about RCA programs and activities. The library will be open with hundreds of astronomy related books and videos. If you prefer to purchase books the RCA Sales table will feature a large assortment of Astronomy reference books, star-charts, calendars and assorted accessories.

Learn about amateur observing programs such as the Messier, Caldwell and Herschel programs. Depending on table allocation, RCA members will be displaying programs such as observing the Moon, Planets, Asteroids and more. Find out about our Telescope Library where members can check out a variety of telescopes to try out. Find out about the observing site committee and special interest groups. Special interest groups, depending on participation, include Cosmology/Astrophysics, Astrophotography and Amateur Telescope Making.

Above all get to know people who share your interests.

The fair begins at 7:00 PM, Monday January 21st in the OMSI Auditorium. There will be a short business meeting at 7:30, . Enter at the Planetarium Entrance right (north) of the Main Entrance. Proceed to your right to the Auditorium.



RCA is a member of the Astronomical League. http://www.astroleague.org

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Hubble Deep Field above courtesy R. Williams (STScI), the Hubble Deep Field Team and NASA.

Moon photos below courtesy David Haworth

New Moon January 8 First Quarter Moon January 15 Full Moon January 22 Last Quarter Moon January 29

		Club Of	ficers	
President	Sameer	Ruiwale	(503) 681-0100	sameer_ruiwale@yahoo.com
Past president	Carol	Huston	(503) 629-8809	StarsCarol@comcast.net
VP Membership	Ken	Hose	(503) 591-5585	khose@comcast.net
VP Observing	Doug	Huston	(503) 629-8809	geometer@comcast.net
VP Community Affairs	Patton	Echols	(503) 936-4270	mpecho@rdrop.com
VP Communication	Matt	Brewster	(503) 740-2329	renaissant@comcast.net
Treasurer	Larry	Godsey	(503) 675-5217	larrygodsey@comcast.net
Secretary	Margaret	Campbell- McCrea	(503) 232-7636	mmcrea@nwlink.com
Sales Director	open			
Newsletter Editor	Larry	Deal	(503) 708-4180	Gazette_ed@comcast.net
New Member Advisor	Jim	Reilly	(503) 493-2386	jim-lorien@granitic.net
Web Master	Dareth	Murray	(503) 957-4499	darethlee@comcast.net
Alcor, Historian	Dale	Fenske	(503) 256-1840	fenskedw@msn.com
Library Director	Jan	Keiski	(503) 539-4566	jikeiski@comcast.net
Telescope Director	Greg	Rohde	(503) 629-5475	gfrohde@yahoo.com
Observing Site Director	David	Nemo	(503) 224-6366	david@nemoworld.com
Media Director	Patton	Echols	(503) 936-4270	mpecho@rdrop.com
IDA Liaison	Bob	McGown	(503) 244-0078	bobmcgown@comcast.net
OSP Liaison	Larry	Godsey	(503) 675-5217	larrygodsey@comcast.net
Subscription Director	Larry	Godsey	(503) 675-5217	larrygodsey@comcast.net
SIG Director	Tom	Nathe	(503) 641-3235	tmnathe@verizon.net
OMSI Liaison	Jan	Keiski	(503) 539-4566	jikeiski@comcast.net
Youth Programs Director	open			



RCA MAGAZINE SUBSCRIPTIONS

One of the benefits of RCA Membership is a reduced rate subscription to Sky & Telescope and Astronomy magazines. The RCA member rate for Sky & Telescope Magazine is \$32.95 for one year or \$65.95 for two years. The RCA member rate for Astronomy magazine is \$34 for one year or \$60 for two years. For more information go to the RCA web site index and click on any of the links for magazines. Larry Godsey, Treasurer, 503-675-5217, will be taking renewals and new subscriptions at the Magazine Table before General Meetings. Please make checks out to "RCA" and allow two months for your subscription to be renewed.

President's MessageBy Sameer Ruiwale

I would like to wish all RCA members a very Happy New Year! I am proud and deeply honored to have this opportunity to serve as RCA president. It was long eight years ago that I got introduced to the RCA through a Telescope Making SIG (special interest group) meeting that I first attended then being run by the late Jim Girard. It was a great introduction to what was a very warm, enthusiastic and friendly group of people. I still remember my first star party at Table Mountain in 1999 which was a terrific learning experience in what gear worked best for camping at star parties especially when there was a heavy downpour for two days (and quickly learnt that a 2 person tent was not nearly big enough to fit one person comfortably)!! I also fondly remember my first OSP where I bought my telescope from another RCA'er and also made a lot of new friends from the RCA. Since then and after taking over as Sales Director in 1999, I have had a memorable time with this great group of people who share in my passion for astronomy!!

I want to reach out to our club's new members and welcome them all. We are a big organization with over 250 member families (one of the largest in the US) and can sometimes seem intimidating to new members. I wanted to relate my experiences above to indicate that this is still a very friendly, helpful group of people and that anyone should feel free to approach board members or other members without hesitation for any help, direction or questions that they may have. I hope that all of you (new and old members alike) will take the opportunity to

come to the January annual information fair and learn not only about the different programs, services (library, telescope library and sales table), SIGs, that the RCA offers, but also use the time to meet with and network with other members, get to know them and become part of the RCA community.

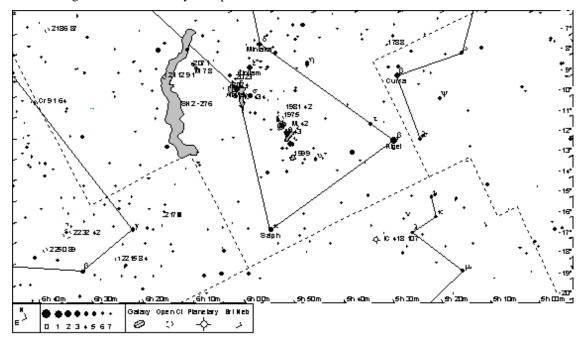
Finally I would like to thank Carol Huston – our outgoing President and the outgoing board members and all current Board members! RCA is a volunteer organization and all of the services and programs that we offer would not be possible without the efforts of these dedicated individuals. It is them and all other volunteers who make being part of the RCA such a rewarding experience. I look forward to serving the club this year!



Orion's Back Roads

M42 is one of the most familiar and spectacular sights in our part of the galaxy but it tends to hog the spotlight, which is too darn bad. I'll discuss two lesser known Orion deep sky objects in this article and a few more next month in an effort to show the variety of objects located in this wonderful part of the sky.

About two degrees south of M42 is the reflection nebula **NGC 1999**. Like much of Orion this is a sprawling star forming area but I'll focus on the brightest and most easily seen portion of 1999.



MegaStar chart showing the location of NGC 1999 south of M42.

This area is about 1500 light years away and is noted for the many young stars forming within the nebula. Punctuated by Herbig-Haro objects – energetic outflows from these young stars – this area would be telescopically spectacular if we could see it all in visible light.



NOAO image, H-alpha, OIII and SII filters.



One degree square field, 2nd generation DSS red image.

(Continued on page 4)

Orion's Back Roads (Continued from page 3)

What we can most easily see through our scopes is the brightest knot of NGC 1999 and this is quite interesting none-theless. Fairly small, round and with a star in its center it looks like it might be a planetary nebula, but at higher power you'll notice an off center and curved triangular dark area. None of this responds well to an OIII or UHC filter but a wide band filter doesn't improve the view either.



NGC 1999 sketch, at 406x, 28" Newtonian.

Close up of NGC 1999, HST image

The bright star in the center of 1999 is V380 Orionis and is a young, intermediate mass star that was formed by the NGC 1999 nebula. The dark nebula is a Bok Globule and is designated Parsamian 34. The Herbig-Haro objects that are so evident in the NAOA image also dimly show up in the 2nd generation DSS red image above but I didn't notice them visually.

I wasn't aware of them at the time of my observation – March 16, 2007 at Camp Hancock – but I'll certainly look for them next time. In fact, the first two Herbig-Haro objects ever discovered are the two bright streaks seen just to the right of 1999 in the NOAO image. They are the result of energetic outflows from a new star being born deep within the larger NGC 1999 nebula. How cool would that be to see!

For additional information on this fascinating and relatively unobserved area see

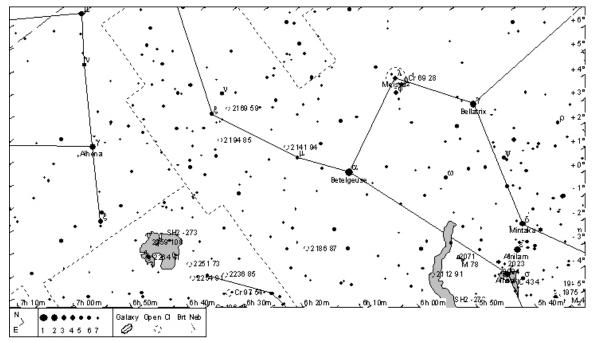
http://www.spaceimages.com/ngc1999photo.html.

Now we're off to a 4th magnitude star northeast of Betelgeuse, Mu Orionis. About 2.5 degrees northeast of Betelgeuse, Mu is easy to locate even in a light polluted sky. As you might suspect Mu is not the end destination but it is mighty close - lurking in the glare of Mu is the surprisingly bright planetary nebula, **Abell 12**.

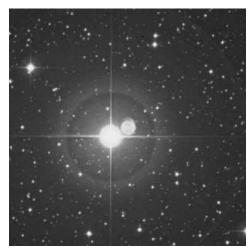
You don't often read the words "Abell" and "bright" in the same sentence and I don't want to give the impression that Abell 12 is easy to see, but it is visible in a 6 inch scope if you have an idea how to see it.

When I wrote "lurking in the glare of Mu" above, I mean that the edge of this round planetary seems to almost touch Mu. To see Abell 12 you'll need to up the magnification enough so you can place Mu just outside the eastern edge of the field of view (fov). Something around 150x should do the trick, although if you have a scope larger than 10 (Continued on page 5)

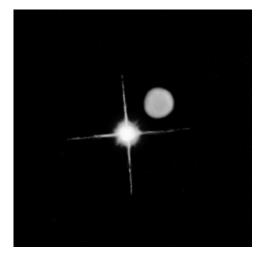
inches more magnification may give a better view. It's possible to see Abell 12 without a nebula filter but using an OIII makes 12 much more visible because it dims Mu and increases the contrast of the planetary.



MegaStar chart showing the location of Mu to the northeast of Betelgeuse.



Abell 12 DSS image.



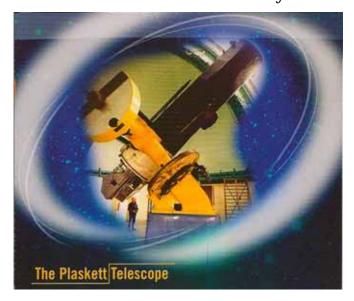
Abell 12 sketch, 28" Newtonian at 467x and OIII filter.

I've seen the planetary as mostly round with a distinct perimeter, and as very slightly darker in its center. Seeing Mu and 12 at the same time is possible with an OIII or UHC filter, and gives the scene a quality similar to the pairing of the galaxy NGC 404 and the star Mirach (Beta Andromedae) in a dark sky. In fact, the 404/Mirach pair is also available to observe this month so if you get a dark enough sky to see the winter Milky Way it would be fun to directly compare the two views.

Abell 12 would better known if it weren't in the glare of Mu, but then its location does make it a snap to find. It may take a little patience to see 12 through Mu's glare so don't be discouraged if you don't see at first glance. It will help to be sure which is the east and west sides of your scope's fov so you're sure which side of Mu to search for the planetary. For an additional photo and sketch check out: http://www.skyhound.com/sh/archive/jan/PNG_198.6-06.3.html.

And of course, since you're in Orion a few long looks at M42 would be a good idea too.

"Playing" With A 1.82 Meter Scope Doing Spectroscopy By Tim R Crawford



A casual conversation with Rick Huziak on the American Association of Variable Star Observers (AAVSO) chat line led to an invitation to meet with Rick and Dr. Gordon Sarty (University of Saskatchewan) at the Dominion Astrophysical Observatory (DAO) near Victoria, BC and work with them to learn how to operate the 1.82 meter "Plaskett" telescope doing spectroscopy on High Mass X-Ray Binary Stars (HMXB's), for five nights in December. I had been doing photometry on Dr. Sarty's target list, of HMXB's (in support of the AAVSO), both V and Ic filters, for several months prior to this.

In 2001 Rick, who has been an active amateur astronomer since 1968, won the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada's (RASC) "Chant Medal," for outstanding research in the field of amateur astronomy. In 2003 Rick won the prestigious "Director's Award" from the AAVSO for his many outstanding contributions in the field of Variable Star observing. In 2004, the International Astronomical Union (IAU) named an asteroid (4143) Huziak in a citation for his many amateur contributions.

The scopes at the DAO are operated by the National Research Council of Canada (NRC) and Canadian Citizens are able to apply for time on them. Dr. Sarty was successful, for the second time in 2007, in securing time on the instrument for December. The previous May he had trained Rick on the operation of the scope and spectrograph.

At the time I was in tied up in Anchorage and was uncertain when I would be able to return home to Arch Cape, OR. I told Rick & Dr. Sarty that I would need a week to make a decision. My wife and friends encouraged me to jump on the opportunity, which I shortly decided to do.

The weekend before I was to arrive in Victoria, BC the "hurricane" force windstorm hit the Oregon and Washington coasts. Because of road closures, lack of land line or cell

phone service and no power it was a day to day decision as to whether or not I would be able to make the trip. Finally on Thursday I made the decision to leave home on Friday and we emptied the refrigerator into the garbage can, unplugged everything we could and drove off to Snohomish, WA where my wife would stay with our daughter and her family while I went to Victoria. Because of road closure's, including I-5, we had to take "back roads" on our way to Olympia, WA where we were then able to swing back to I-5.

To get to Victoria on Saturday, December 8th, from Snohomish, WA I had to take a ferry across Puget Sound then drive over to Point Thomson, WA to catch the 90 minute Ferry Ride to Victoria, BC. My phone rang just as I was about to go through customs and it was Rick telling me to drive on up to the 1.82 meter dome where he would meet me. They also have a 1.2 meter scope and a 16" scope in their own domes on site.

Rick took me down the hill a ways from the main road where there is a small cottage with comfortable sleeping rooms for the visiting astronomers that are well isolated from noise and traffic so that we were able to sleep after long nights. They also operate a large comfortable looking house near the Dome but it is not isolated for late sleeping. The small cottage had a living room with TV (never turned on during our stay) and a small kitchen with eating space.

After getting settled in we headed back up the hill to the large dome and started watching the Canadian satellite images to figure out if and when we could open. About 6:30 the sky looked quite promising so Rick took me out into the dome and started to explain how we open the shutters, then the wind screen then uncover the mirror. The first two operations are accomplished with a hand held device that looks somewhat like a garage door opener. After the mirror was uncovered we started the scope/dome computers (there is a back room filled with computer equipment and we had at our disposal four screens to operate everything, including the spectrograph.



Tim On Road to 1.82M Dome

Huziak

(Continued on page 7)

Spectroscopy (Continued from page 6)

When everything was up and running we instructed the 1.82 meter scope to slew to our fist target on a preplanned list and went back out into the dome to hold down a button on a large hand control for the scope so that it would make a fast slew and so that we could be sure that there were no ladders or other obstructions in the way and that none of the equipment would run into any part of the pier. I did jump several times as the dome slewed into position as it makes quite a racket, at different times, which I was accustomed to by the end of the first night.

By the end of that first night, which had to be abbreviated because of clouds around 12:30, I had made a number of scope slews and was learning how to operate the spectrograph computer screens for the various operations of the spectrograph. We did stay in the Dome until around 4AM so we could get our body clocks adjusted to "all night" observing. We were able to capture 8 spectrograph images (H-Gamma line specifically) of five different HMXB targets.

The next night the clouds never did clear for us at all so Rick helped me review some of the operation instructions and then we each worked on "projects" until about 4AM again. Checking satellite and radar images every hour, of course.

On the 10th the sky looked promising early so we got into the observatory around 4:30PM in anticipation of an early opening. The clouds and moisture were a constant threat as the evening progressed and finally about 7pm we decided to chance an opening (getting the mirror wet is simply not an option). The dome and scope started to misbehave... we had a very hard time getting the scope to point to the correct position, then the dome sometimes slewed on it's own and or would not present the "slit" in the proper position. We would get one thing fixed then the other would go haywire... all the while we were sweating out having the dome open as the clouds were passing through. While I learned a lot more about the system as a result of these difficulties we actually were only able to get one spectrograph image that night. When we closed up at 4AM the forecast was not looking good for that night, the 11th, and we had to leave the scope out of it's normal parked position as it simply refused to park properly.

When we got up the next morning the sun was out and when we got back to the observatory in the mid afternoon mtc stated that they had not really been able to find anything wrong and were able to get the scope to park.

During the evening we received a call from Dr. Sarty who had been unable to come out as his young daughter had broken her leg. While talking with me Gordon asked if I thought I would be comfortable returning possibly on my own to operate the equipment. Hummmm... that did give me some cause for pause. I had spent some time creating an instruction set on the steps necessary to operate all the controls and obviously was gaining some experience with dealing with problems; with some hesitation, knowing I would probably be a bit terrified at first, I did say yes and we discussed a tentative return date next May, if he is able to get a block of time assigned to him.



Tim In the Plaskett Scope Control Rm.

Huziak

We kept checking the satellite images, radar, and forecasts, probably every 1/2-hour, as the afternoon wore on. Everything pointed to a "clearing" up midnight. About 10:30 we made the decision to chance opening up as we had a good-sized sucker hole overhead. Well the first problem was that the dome would not position the slit in front of the scope on the first target. We spent an hour or so and then decided to simply move the dome by manual control with the hand paddle so we could get data. After the first manual position we told the computer to put the dome back on automatic and it tracked just fine to the second target. There were only one or two more times during the night that we had to switch the dome to manual operation. The next day mtc read our log and then took a serious look at the problem and discovered that there was one broken dome position switch and some problems with the magnetic readers in several other places (whew).

We managed to get 10 spectrographs that night of 7 different HMXB targets; most exposures were for 30 minutes with some at 40 minutes and a few at 25 minutes. There is also a lot of time spent in setting up the Spectrograph to take reference spectrograms before and after each image using a built in "lamp" designed for this purpose. We closed up the observatory around 6:15 and hit the sack. By the end of this "run" I was becoming quite comfortable with the operation of everything and now look forward to a return trip, if it works out



Rick Standing By The Spectrograph

Crawford

(Continued on page 8)

Spectroscopy (Continued from page 7)

Wednesday afternoon the forecast looked pretty hopeless so we made plans to attend the Victoria Centre meeting of RASC; Rick is a RASC member of the Saskatoon Centre and I have been an at large member of RASC for some time. Given the relative closeness of Victoria I made a decision to become a member of the Victoria Centre. Only afterwards did I realize that Rick was "hoping" I would join his Centre.

Rick examined the "instructions" document that I had created and made some minor corrections and additions and announced that it was fine and that he would be using it in the future as well as future operators that they might train.

The HMXB's being studied by Dr. Sarty do not have known periods nor known radial velocities so that is the objective of his program which will continue for some time in the hopes that those facts will be able to be established.

As I was revising this I received an email from the AAVSO photometry group in which Dr. Sarty stated that he was already writing up the first paper from the HMXB project for the target "V831 Cas" as "Rick and Tim got some nice spectra of this star at the DAO last week – worth publishing."

For those with an interest in learning more about the nature of HMXB's and this project:

"Finding Periods in High Mass X-Ray Binaries," by Gordon E. Sarty et al.

http://arxiv.org/abs/astro-ph/0702248

Original Request for AAVSO observer participation:

http://www.aavso.org/publications/alerts/alert348.shtml#hm

Request for additional HMXB Target Observations:

http://www.aavso.org/pipermail/aavso-photometry/2007-December/002959.html

HMXB Charts Location:

http://homepage.usask.ca/~ges125/AAVSO_HMXB_Charts.html

This had been a great experience, and one that also appears to have been successful. I feel fortunate that I have had an opportunity to drive and play with a telescope with a 72" mirror and to have possibly made another small scientific contribution.

Per Ardua ad Astra

Telescope Workshop

When: Saturday, January 19, 10:00 AM - 3:00 PM

Place: Technical Marine Service, Inc. 6040 N. Cutter Circle on Swan Island

For more information contact:

Director: John DeLacy johncdelacy@comcast.net Assistant: Don Peckham don@dbpeckham.com

The Rose City Astronomers, **Science Special Interest Group** (SCI-SIG) will be meeting on January 19th at 3pm. Following the Telescope Workshop at Technical Marine Services.

This month's talk will be given by Tim Crawford (Arch Cape observatory) on "Visual Observing of Variable Stars". Topics covered will include why study variable stars, how to perform observations and hands on exercises.

Information about SCI-SIG

This group is for people who would like to advance their skills in astronomy beyond casual observing. Various projects that some group members are involved in include; variable and double star observing, occultations, photometry and astrometry. A science background is not required, however a curious mind does help.

Location of TMS -

http://www.rca-omsi.org/clubprojects.htm#telescope

RCA SIG coordinator

RCA LIBRARY

The Rose City Astronomers maintains a comprehensive club library of astronomy related articles, books, CDs and videos. These items can be borrowed by members through checkout at the general meetings for a period of one month with renewals available by phone or e-mail to the club library director, Jan Keiski.

The RCA library is constantly growing through many donations and the purchase of new materials. A listing of library materials (PDF format) can be found at the library web page: http://www.rca-omsi.org/library.htm

Jan Keiski (jikeiski@comcast.net) 503-539-4566

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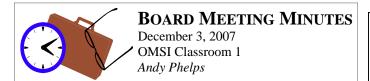
ASTROPHYSICS / COSMOLOGY SIG

Date/Time: Wednesday, January 23, 7 PM. Topic: "Analogs of Space Flight & Exploration"

Presented by: Bob McGown Place: Linus Pauling Complex,

3945 S.E. Hawthorne St., Portland. Contact: Bob McGown (503-244-0078) or Dareth Murray, (503-957-4499).

http://www.rca-omsi.org/cosmologysig.htm



Board Members present: Peter Abrahams, Tom Nathe, Greg Rohde, Matt Vartanian, Carol Huston, David Nemo, Larry Godsey, Ken Hose, Andy Phelps, Dareth Murray, Bob McGown, Matt Brewster, Jan Keiski

Guests present: Margaret Campbell, Doug Huston, Jay Wilkins.

Carol Huston called the meeting to order at 7:03pm.

Board Reports

- Secretary's Report Andy Phelps: Quorum (10) met with 13 voting members present. Welcome to new RCA secretary Margaret Campbell. Some handoff responsibilities are to pass on hard and electronic copies of 2006-2007 minutes to Margaret and email Larry all final copies of minutes. The "secretary binder" has been handed off to Margaret.
- Treasurer's Report Larry Godsey: Total Liabilities & Equity Operations: \$17,410.41, Site Fund \$16,030.44. Larry reviewed the budget for the year-to-date.
- VP Programming Matt Brewster: Potluck dinner at December meeting will be in auditorium. Matt will use the club credit card to purchase some items for the dinner. Will be posting information in the Gazette and on the e-list.
- VP Observing Matt Vartanian: Welcome to new board member Doug Huston: Has passed information and material to Doug. Matt and Doug have been working on the 2008 observing schedule. We would like to use the Maupin airport location again this year for a star party.
- VP Community Affairs Patton Echols: (via email) I have observed a problem with the way that community star party requests are handled. And while I am working on fixing the part of the problem I can control, my organizational changes will not solve the entire problem. A large part can be solved by publishing some expectations and tips for those wishing to request star party support. Unless there is objection, I will draft a page for the website, run it by the board, and if approved, ask our web master to link it as appropriate.
- VP Membership Ken Hose: November 1 new member, 5 renewals, \$136 collected in dues. Club membership stands at 256 member families.
- New Member Advisor Jim Reilly: (via email) I held a newmember meeting at OMSI before the general meeting in November. About eight people attended, fewer than I had hoped, but SIG coordinator Tom Nathe was there. We have informally agreed that my task is to emphasize the RCA benefits and do less general astronomy instruction, and Tom's new-member SIG will do more of that. Holding the meeting in the planetarium went well, with Jim Todd running the board and bringing up the virtual sky to show a few items of interest (notably c.Holmes). The timing was good for the orientation, and left time for questions. I followed up by e-mail the following week with a few links to valuable sites and added a few things I had inadvertently left out of my talk. Tom and I will pursue a more rigorous schedule for these and SIG meetings, but we have not locked down any dates just yet. Many thanks to Jim Todd for helping us make this work!

- Book Library Jan Keiski: Jan received several new books.
- Telescope Library Greg Rohde: A 6-inch f/8 telescope has been donated. Greg will pick it up.
- IDA Bob McGown: Talked with Vera Katz about light pollution. Bob has been involved with two lighting lawsuits. The Board discussed the desire to become more active in lighting issues. Ideas will be funneled through Bob.
- Magazine Subscriptions Larry Godsey: nominal.
- Webmaster Dareth Murray: nominal.
- Site Committee David Nemo: nominal.
- SIGs Tom Nathe: Tom presented a document detailing the creation, maintenance, and termination of special interest groups. Document was discussed and edited. Tom will make changes and present to board.
- OMSI Carol and Jan: nominal.

Old Business

- Action Item: Forum/E-List status: David Nemo. Survey has ended, 90 people responded. Committee is reviewing data and will make a recommendation.
- Action Item: Mentorship program Jim Reilly and Tom Nathe connect. This may be a way to support youth programs during the off-season? Tabled.
- Action Item: Awards Committee to develop a comprehensive list of AL and RCA awards with criteria and submittal dates – Dareth, Bob, Doug, Dale. Work will begin on this soon.
- Action Item: Carol and Dareth to review and present information about sister club concept in connection with the GAMA group. Margaret will share her input on this topic.
- Action Item: Carol to procure a new youth director for RCA. Tabled.
- ALCON report: Dareth and David All checks have cleared and bank account will be closed. Dareth will contact PSU about outstanding funds.
- Action Item: Doug and Sameer looking into participation in next Astronomy Day.
- Summary of elections at November general meeting: Andy
 presented the following slate of nominees for board members:
 President, Sameer Ruiwale; Larry Godsey, Treasurer; Margaret
 Campbell, Secretary; Ken Hose, VP of membership; Doug
 Huston, VP of observing; VP Community Affairs, Patton
 Echols; VP Communication, Matt Brewster. Election was
 called and the slate was approved by acclamation.

New Business

- Jay Wilkins, New Special Interest Group: Jay presented an idea to start a SIG for people who were interested in near earth asteroids. The creation of this SIG was discussed. Jay will set up a table at January info fair to gauge interest.
- Young Astronomer Award, Bob McGown: A young RCA member qualifies for the Astronomical League's award. Awards committee should publicize this award.

Oregon Museum of Science and Industry Rose City Astronomers 1945 SE Water Avenue Portland, Oregon 97214-3354



January 2008						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
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6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

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Jan 7	Mon	RCA Board Meeting	OMSI Classroom 1	7pm
Jan 19	Sat	Telescope Workshop	Swan Island	10am-3pm
Jan 19	Sat	Science Sig	Swan Island	3pm
Jan 21	Mon	RCA Information Fair!	OMSI Auditorium	7pm
Jan 23	Wed	Astrophysics/Cosmology SIG	Linus Pauling House	7pm

February 2008

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Feb 1	Fri	Downtowner's Luncheon	TBD	Noon
Feb 4	Mon	RCA Board Meeting	OMSI Classroom 1	7pm
Feb 16	Sat	Telescope Workshop	Swan Island	10am-3pm
Feb 16	Sat	Science Sig	Swan Island	3pm
Feb 18	Mon	RCA General Meeting	OMSI Auditorium	7:30pm
Feb 20	Wed	Astrophysics/Cosmology SIG	Linus Pauling House	7pm

The RCA General Meeting falls on the third Monday of each month. We usually meet in the Auditorium at OMSI, next to the Murdock Planetarium. Occasionally the meeting is held in Murdock Planetarium. Check here each month for details, or look us up at the RCA web site (http://www.rca-omsi.org).

RCA CLUB INFORMATION

Message Line: (503) 255-2016 Web Site: http://www.rca-omsi.org