



Panhandle Astronomy Club

"Amateur Astronomy & Education"



THE SCOPE

Volume 3 Issue 6

June 2008

Astronomy BBQ

to be held

June 6, 2008

6:30 pm

Mues' Home

Instead of a meet and greet this month we will have an

Astronomy BBQ

at the Mues' home

(45 Poplar Street; Gering, Nebraska).

Hamburgers, drinks

and paper products

will be provided.

Bring a side dish to share.

We will have a meeting, during the BBQ, to discuss:

Western Nebraska Star Gaze

&

Astronomical League

Dues & Elections

If weather permits, plan on observing afterwards.

Questions?

Contact Bruce

at 308-641-5874

How can you help the club?

- **Participate!** Bring the family and join in.
- **Volunteer!** Donate your time, talents, energy and creativity to further our mission.
- **Share your knowledge and Skills!** Be a guest speaker at a club meeting, host a program for children, or give a demonstration.
- **Become a Sponsor!** Monetary, material, door prize, raffle items, etc. Donations keep our costs down.



CONGRATULATIONS

Andrew Lenzen

Andrew is the winner of the telescope the club raffled off.

Thanks to those club members who put forth the effort

to support the club

by selling or purchasing tickets.

Your participation is greatly appreciated.

CLUB STAR PARTY

June 27, 28 & 29

8:00 pm

Wildcat Hills Campground

Join members of the Panhandle Astronomy Club at the Wildcat Hills Campground South of Gering for a weekend of stargazing. Campout or just come out for an evening of observing.

Primitive camping is \$6.00 per night. A vehicle park permit is required for all vehicles entering the state park.

CLUB OFFICERS

President

Bruce Mues

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Vice President

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Secretary

Virginia Mues

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Bruce Mues, Chris Olsen & Jon Smith

Western Nebraska Star Gaze III

The third annual Western Nebraska Star Gaze is behind us. Mother Nature didn't provide clear skies at night, but we were able to solar observe and view the wildlife (plenty of deer and turkey's). Nebraska, Colorado and Wyoming were represented at this years event. We had 11 scopes set up on the observing field. Here are a few pictures from the event. For additional photo's log on to <http://panhandleastronomyclub.myphotoalbum.com/albums.php>



Moonlight Social & Campout July 11, 12 & 13, 2008 Lake Minatare

Club members are invited to join Bruce and Virginia Mues at Lake Minatare, in July, for a weekend of stargazing. Come out for the evening or stay the weekend. Do your own observing or better yet complete the Astronomical League's Lunar Club observing program. This event certainly does not demand darkness; in fact, it can't even be done in the dark! Much of it can be done early in the evening making it a family friendly event. This is a great opportunity to involve your children and your "better half". For more information on the Lunar Club go to: www.astroleague.org/al/obsclubs/lunar/lunar1.html.

Bruce and Virginia have reserved electric campsite #1, so catch up with them there. If you would like to campout, there is primitive camping near their site as well as electric sites. A park permit is needed on all vehicles entering Lake Minatare. Camping fees are \$6.00 per night for primitive and \$15.00 per night for electric. If you'd like to reserve an electric site near the Mues', log on to www.reserveamerica.com/ or call Lake Minatare at 308-783-2911.

"Bootes And The Bright Star That Opened The World's Fair Of 1933"

Greetings, greetings fellow star gazers. All throughout June if you go outside just after it gets dark out and look almost overhead you will see a very bright star which was very famous in the early 20th century because its light was used to open the world's fair in Chicago in 1933. Let me show you.

O.K., we've got our skies set up for the first two weeks of June just after it gets dark out facing north where just to the west of the North Star you will see the seven stars which make up the Big Dipper. Four stars mark its cup and three stars mark its handle. And as all you regular viewers know you can use the handle to find a very bright star. Simply draw a line through the handle and continue that line in the same curve or arc and you'll "arc to Arcturus", which is the brightest star of the constellation Bootes the Herdsman, but whose other stars are less bright than the Big Dipper's and if we draw lines between them would look something like a kite.

Now although astronomers usually call Bootes the Herdsman he is also called the bear driver because some legends say that he chases two celestial bears around the North Star. You see the Big Dipper is part of the constellation Ursa Major the big bear and the Little Dipper is part of the constellation Ursa Minor the little bear. Bootes is also called the plowman because some European cultures see the Big Dipper as a plow and Bootes as the plowman endlessly turning up celestial turf as he steers his plow endlessly circling the north star.

At any rate it's this brightest star Arcturus which was super famous three quarters of a century ago when it was used to open the World's Fair in Chicago. The reasoning behind this was that 40 years earlier in 1893, Chicago had also hosted a world's fair. And astronomers believed that Arcturus was 40 light years away. So someone came up with the bright idea that wouldn't it be nifty if the light of Arcturus, which left it in 1893, could be used to open the world's fair when its light arrived 40 years later in 1933. So a device was set up whereby the rays from Arcturus were passed through a telescope which focused this light onto a photo electric cell which then generated a small electrical current which was then used to turn on the lights of the fair. And it really worked!

Only one problem however, since then we have discovered that Arcturus is a bit closer, 37 light years away. So early 20th century astronomers got it wrong, but only by 3 years, which is pretty good. Arcturus is the 4th brightest star we can see and is 23 times wider than our Sun, a whopping 20 million miles wide. Plus it is 115 times brighter. It is actually speeding toward us and will do so for another couple thousand years. After which however it will speed away from us and fade from sight in only half a million years! So see it now before it disappears out of sight. Keep looking up!

"Jack Horkheimer: Star Gazer"
www.jackstargazer.com/

Panhandle Astronomy Club Minutes of Meeting

Meeting: The May Meeting was held on May 13, 2008 at the Gering Runza. Members present were Bruce Mues, Amanda Mues, Jon Smith and Manuel Strauch. The meeting was called to order at 7:06 pm by president, Bruce Mues.

Minutes: A motion to accept the May minutes was made by Bruce Mues and seconded by Jon Smith.

Treasurer's Report: The financial report was given by Jon Smith. It was reported that we have a balance of 1655.97. The motion to accept the annual financial report was made by Bruce Mues and seconded by Jon Smith.

Presentation: None

Outreach: None

New Members: None

Observing:

Western Nebraska Star Gaze III

Old Business: Star Gaze Meals were discussed. Jon offered to check with Quizno's for the BBQ Beef. A motion was made to pay for the Star Gaze food out of club account by Jon Smith. It was seconded by Manuel Strauch. Bruce will contact Roger about the challenges and then get Jon a list of challenge categories for the certificates. It was suggested that an email questionnaire be sent to members to find out who is planning on attending the Star Gaze.

New Business: An email from Spotted Lizard graphics about t-shirts was discussed. The club has the opportunity to participate in Telescope.com affiliate program. It was decided to pursue this avenue. Astronomical League dues expire July 1, 2008, will be discussed at the June meeting. Astronomical League Ballot was discussed and it was decided to vote as listed. KAAQ/KCOW will run some spots about the star gaze if we email info. to them.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 pm through a motion made by Bruce and seconded by Amanda.

MSRAL

The 2008 convention of the Mid-States Region of the Astronomical League (MSRAL) will be Saturday, June 21, 2008 at the St. Charles Community College campus in Cottleville, Missouri. Family registration (one or more) has been set at \$15. For more info. log on to: www.msral.org/

BENEFITS OF MEMBERSHIP

- Members receive the SCOPE, our monthly newsletter.
- Participation in monthly club observation nights and annual star parties.
- Each member is automatically a member of the Astronomical League, the only nation-wide organization for amateur astronomers.
- Free subscription to the Astronomical League's quarterly publication "The Reflector".
- 10% discount on astronomy books when purchased through the Astronomical League.
- Participation in both regional and national conventions through the Astronomical League.

The Panhandle Astronomy Club
is a member of the following organizations:



June 2008

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 <i>Western Nebraska Star Gaze III</i>	2	3	4	5	6 <i>Astronomy BBQ Meeting & Observing Weather Permitting at the Mues'</i>	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21 <i>Mid-States Region of the Astronomical League Conference in Missouri</i>
22	23	24 <i>July Newsletter Deadline</i>	25	26	27 <i>CLUB STAR PARTY Wildcat Hills Campground</i>	28 <i>CLUB STAR PARTY Wildcat Hills Campground</i>
29 <i>CLUB STAR PARTY Wildcat Hills Campground</i>	30					

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Panhandle Astronomy Club
The Scope

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PANHANDLE ASTRONOMY CLUB

The Panhandle Astronomy Club was founded in the Fall of 2005. Anyone with an interest in astronomy is welcome. Members are not required to own any equipment or have prior knowledge of astronomy. For more information on the Panhandle Astronomy Club log on to any of the following:

PAC Email: info@panhandleastronomyclub.com

PAC Website: www.panhandleastronomyclub.com

PAC Photo's: panhandleastronomyclub.myphotoalbum.com/albums.php

PAC Yahoo Group: tech.groups.yahoo.com/group/PanhandleAstronomyClub

2008 Western Nebraska Star Gaze: tech.groups.yahoo.com/group/Western_Nebraska_Star_Gaze/

The Scope

Virginia Mues, Newsletter Editor

The Scope is an official monthly publication of the Panhandle Astronomy Club.

Submissions to *The Scope* are due by the Fourth Tuesday of the month. Guest columns are welcome.

Subscriptions for *The Scope* are \$20.00 per year for Individual Membership, \$15.00 per year for Student Membership and \$30.00 per year for Family Membership. *The Scope* is printed year round, January 1 through December 31.

Contact the Panhandle Astronomy Club c/o Virginia Mues, Newsletter Editor at P.O. Box 987, Scottsbluff, Nebraska 69363-0987; 308-641-1201.

The views and opinions expressed in *The Scope* do not necessarily represent the views or opinions of any of the members of the Panhandle Astronomy Club. All mistakes are included for your entertainment!

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