



# ECLIPSE



*The Newsletter of the Barnard-Seyfert Astronomical Society*

**September 2002**

## President's Message

*By Powell Hall, President*

The philosopher Alfred North Whitehead remarked somewhere that the only place one was likely to see unrelated topics on the same page was the editorial page of a newspaper. When I thought about what I would like to put into my final column here, Whitehead's comment came to mind. I wish to mention briefly several things not particularly connected to each other, which have in common only their relevance to BSAS.

As we get into September and come to the autumnal equinox, the zero hour angle will be highest at midnight. (When the Sun, at autumnal equinox, is below our feet at night, the vernal equinox is above our heads.) This is the region with the celestial ocean containing such watery constellations as Pisces, Aquarius, Cetus, and Piscis Austrinus. The lonely first-magnitude star Fomalhaut (don't fail to pronounce the "t") is shining in our southern skies, catching the water being poured out by dim Aquarius, for whom an age is named as a popular song reminds us. Prominent also are Pegasus, whose Great Square is a feature on autumnal evenings, along with Andromeda and the hero Perseus, who rescued the Chained Lady from the Sea Monster (Cetus) and married her. Venus has been getting closer, brighter, thinner, and greater in diameter. But this brilliant evening star is also, as it begins to overtake the Earth, lower in the sky as it gets dark. Venus is just under Spica on Sept. 1st, attains greatest brilliancy on Sept. 26, and comes to inferior conjunction on Halloween.

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## NOTICE BSAS ANNUAL MEETING OF MEMBERS AND ELECTIONS

The bylaws of the Barnard-Seyfert Astronomical Society were amended by a unanimous vote at the April 18, 2002 regular membership meeting such that this year's annual meeting of members occurs on Thursday, September 19th, 2002 at 7:30 pm at Dyer Observatory with the purpose of electing all officers and two board members.

### MAGAZINE SUBSCRIPTIONS FOR BSAS MEMBERS

We are always able to accept requests for new and renewal yearly subscriptions to SKY AND TELESCOPE and ASTRONOMY from our members in good standing.

The current yearly rates are as follows:

SKY AND TELESCOPE: \$29.95

ASTRONOMY: \$29.00

Checks or Money Orders should be made out to the Barnard Seyfert Astronomical Society (BSAS) and sent to the Treasurer at the following address:

BSAS  
Dyer Observatory  
1000 Oman Drive  
Brentwood, TN 37027

### DUES INFORMATION

On your Eclipse mailing label is the expiration date for your current membership in the BSAS. There will be a two month grace period before any member's name is removed from the current mailing list. You will be receiving a number of warnings informing you that your membership is expiring.

Dues are \$20.00 per year for Regular and Family memberships and \$15.00 per year for Seniors (over 60 years of age), and \$10.00 for students (under 22 years of age). Please call the Dyer Observatory (373-4897) if you have questions. Dues can be sent to:

BSAS c/o Dyer Observatory  
1000 Oman Drive  
Brentwood, TN 37027

### THE ECLIPSE NEWSLETTER

Editor: Rocky Alvey  
[r.alvey@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:r.alvey@vanderbilt.edu)

BSAS Officers:  
Powell Hall, President  
John Bradford, Vice President  
Evelyn Wright, Secretary  
A.G. Kasselberg, Treasurer  
Board of Directors  
Kris McCall, Ch.  
Mike Benson  
Douglas Hall  
Joe Boyd  
Lloyd Watkins  
Bill Griswold

Logo Photograph:  
Francisco Diego

## Special Meeting of the Barnard-Seyfert Astronomical Society Board of Directors on August 13, 2002

Board Chair Kris McCall called the special meeting of the Board of Directors to order 7:11 PM on August 13, 2002 in the Jefferson Square Clubhouse. Officers in attendance were Vice President John Bradford, Treasurer A.G. Kasselberg and Secretary Evelyn Wright. Board members Joe Boyd, Bill Griswold, and Lloyd Watkins were present. Others present were Webmaster Bill Collins and club members Rocky Alvey, JanaRuth Ford, John Harrington, Tom Murdic, Larry Southerland and new Dyer Director Dr. Rick Chappell. President Powell Hall (now graduated to a cardiac rehabilitation program) and Board member Mike Benson were not present.

After board member introductions to Dr. Chappell, Kris McCall asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the last board meeting as printed in "The Eclipse". The motion was made, seconded, and approved unanimously. A.G. Kasselberg reported that registrations for TNSP 2002 were coming in, and that postage costs for the Eclipse would be dropping due to the pruning of expired memberships after final notices had been sent. He noted that the the BSAS had approximately \$800 in the checking account, and \$2500 in CDs. The Astronomical League fees of \$300 had been sent, and the annual insurance fee of approximately \$300 will be coming due soon.

Mike Benson was not present, but Rocky Alvey described the long list of duties cited by the Astronomical League that earned Mike the AL's Distinguished Service Award at ALCon 2002 in Salt Lake City, Utah recently. More will be made of this at the next BSAS regular membership meeting, and hopefully AL President Chuck Allen can provide info and pictures to be included in "The Eclipse". Rocky also noted that ALCon 2003 scheduled for Nashville next year should probably not schedule speakers simultaneously. The ISS-AT presentation was scheduled at the same time as speaker John Dobson. Approximately 250 people attended ALCon 2002, with 125 - 150 registrations coming in at the last minute.

On the ISS-AT front, \$15,600 was approved by the AL to continue on, with Meade donating a 10" Schmidt Newtonian f/4. Lou Mayo, involved with the Telescopes in Education (TIE) program, is willing to donate money to provide solar capability at Dyer Observatory.

Lonnie Puterbaugh was not present, so the slate of candidates for the officer and board member elections was assumed to be the same, i.e.,

President	Joe Boyd
Vice President	John Harrington
Secretary	open
Treasurer	A.G. Kasselberg
Director	JanaRuth Ford
Director	John Bradford
Director	(if needed)

John Harrington passed around a draft of his letter to The Ensworth School Project to encourage cut-off lighting in the design and construction of the High School, asking for feedback.

The Girl Scouts 90th Jamboree was attended by volunteers from several local astronomy clubs, including the BSAS, almost the entire Cumberland Astronomical Society (Gallatin), and the Clarksville Astronomy Club. Fog and dew hampered viewing, and there were competing events scheduled, but quite a few telescopes showed up both nights, and even more Girl Scouts. A.G. noted that the Girl Scouts contributed \$200 to the BSAS.

Kris McCall asked that a notice of the annual membership meeting and elections appear in the September issue of "The Eclipse". Such a notice was printed in the August issue.

An ad for TNSP 2002 was printed in "The Tennessean" according to Rocky Alvey, and BSAS members should begin signing up before space runs out. Kris McCall is sending out TNSP 2002 notices with the Sudekum Planetarium starcharts. Rocky would like for BSAS members to post TNSP 2002 notices on supermarket and library bulletin boards.

ALCon 2003 status was skipped as Mike Benson was not present.

Tax-exempt status requires that the financial report must be within a few days of the application, so A.G. will be recalculating the financial sheets and giving them to Joe Boyd. A round of applause expressed the board's appreciation for Joe Boyd's work to prepare the 1/2" thick application.

With the business portion of the meeting out of the way, Kris McCall called upon Dr. Rick Chappell to discuss Vanderbilt University's plans for the future of Dyer Observatory and how the BSAS might fit in. Dr. Chappell expressed Dr. Ernst's interest in continuing the relationship between the BSAS and Dyer Observatory that Dr. Doug Hall was very instrumental in developing. As Dyer Observatory could only be marginally competitive in scientific research, Vanderbilt University intends to enhance and expand the public outreach activities of Dyer, with plans to apply for NASA and NSF funding related to public outreach connected to scientific research. Areas of

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development would include astronomy, solar physics, the solar/terrestrial connection, and space exploration. Vanderbilt University would like to form partnerships with local organizations such as TSU (remote telescope operation), Cumberland Science Museum (Sudekum Planetarium), and national groups like NASA (Marshall Space Center), and the Astronomical League (ISS-AT). Dr. Chappell also mentioned activities similar to Aspen's "Music on the Mountain" celebration, hide-away retreats, and exhibits of the astronomical history of Dyer University and Vanderbilt University. Also in the plans is the renovation of Dyer Observatory, including an Operation Center, exhibits of the astronomical history Dyer Observatory and Vanderbilt University, resurrection of the planetarium above the library, and repair and upgrade of other buildings on the grounds. Dr. Chappell then asked for questions and suggestions. Improving the science capability of teachers and students is a big concern, leading to the suggestions of teacher and student camps, a Dyer activity "badge", and making astronomical equipment available for student science fair projects. Kris McCall asked about continued BSAS involvement regarding Dyer, including using it as a meeting place, the C-14 Bergquist telescope, and public nights. Dr. Chappell noted that he was aware of these activities, and expected that there would only be expansion and enhancement of them. Dr. Chappell ended his remarks by stating his willingness to meet with the BSAS board or its membership whenever it is convenient.

Kris McCall asked if there was any other business to discuss, and Rocky Alvey noted that John Froeschauer of Long Hunter State Park has set up a star party for Friday, September 13, 2002 that will need BSAS volunteers with telescopes.

John Harrington asked if there was any input on the draft of his letter to The Ensworth School Project. Due to time constraints imposed by the design and construction timetable, a motion was made that John should go ahead and send the letter, signing it on behalf of the BSAS President with the authority granted to him by the board of directors. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously. John still needs to find out the name of the architect involved with the project.

Kris McCall brought up the subject of how the club should recognize Dr. Doug Hall for his service to Dyer Observatory and the BSAS. Tom Murdic suggested a plaque and reception. John Bradford volunteered to arrange for the plaque. Since the September meeting will have no program, it was decided that would be a good time to hold a potluck dessert reception. An announcement will be made at the Thursday meeting, emphasizing that it should be a SURPRISE.

A reception for Dr. Chappell was considered, possibly at the joint picnic. Lonnie Puterbaugh has not reported whether the date of October 26 would work for MTAS, and there was some confusion as to whether Cumberland Astronomy Society had been contacted about the picnic.

A motion was made to set the next board meeting for the regular date of Thursday, September 5, 2002 at 7:00 PM. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 9:01 PM.

#### 2002 Upcoming events

Fri	Sep	13	8-10 pm	Long Hunter State Park	public star party
S-Su	Sep	28-29		Bays Mtn. Starfest	
F-Su	Oct	4-6		Camp Nakanawa	TNSP 2002
Sat	Oct	26?		Barfield Crescent Park	picnic with MTAS?
Fri	Dec	13	730-930 pm	Warner Park(Geminids)	public star party

#### 2003 Upcoming events

Fri	Feb	7	8-10 pm	Warner Park(Jup,Sat)	public star party
Fri	Apr	25	8-10 pm	Warner Park(Astro Day Eve)	public star party
T-Sa	Jul	8-13?		Nashville	ALCon 2003
Sa	Aug	23	8-10 pm	Warner Park (Mars)	public star party

Respectfully submitted,  
Evelyn Wright, Secretary

**TNSP 2002 is less than ONE MONTH AWAY !!!**  
**Find information at [www.bsasnashville.com](http://www.bsasnashville.com) or call Dyer Observatory 615-373-4897**

## Minutes of Regular Monthly Membership Meeting of Barnard-Seyfert Astronomical Society on August 15, 2002

President Powell Hall called the meeting to order at 7:35 PM on Thursday, 15 August 2002 by President Powell Hall in the library of Dyer Observatory. Approximately 30 members and 2 visitors were present.

Powell asked for a motion to adopt the agenda he had prepared, and that the meeting's program start no later than 8:15 PM. Bill Griswold so moved, Bill Collins seconded it, the vote was unanimously in favor. Powell also asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the July meeting in the August issue of "The Eclipse", a motion which was also unanimously approved. Treasurer A.G. Kasselberg reported that the club account had \$1650.92 of which \$400 was earmarked for TNSP 2002. A.G. noted that the Girl Scouts had made a \$200 contribution to the BSAS. There was also about \$2500 in CDs. Joe Boyd was not present, but he and A.G. are in the final stages of filing for 501(c)(3) (tax-exempt) status.

Mike Benson was not yet present, so Rocky gave a brief report on ALCon 2002, revealing that Mike Benson had been presented with a distinguished service award from the Astronomical League at the conference. As Rocky described the list of services the Astronomical League cited on Mike's behalf, Mike arrived at tonight's meeting to a long round of applause, and said that he wished he had had the presence of mind at the presentation to say "Why do you give me an award for doing things I love?".

Powell Hall encouraged everyone to sign the attendance list, the Dyer Observatory Public and Youth Night volunteer sign-up sheet, and the sympathy card for Mike Abramchik (BSAS member who died recently), all of which were circulating through the group.

The Girl Scouts not only gave a contribution, they sent a thank you note which Secretary Evelyn Wright read to the group, and which Powell suggested putting in the next issue of "The Eclipse".

Mike Benson reported that he will be signing a contract with the Embassy Suites to host ALCon 2003 here in Nashville. The dates for the convention are July 8-12, 2003. Mike mentioned that the suites are all double rooms and a full sitdown breakfast and happy hour are included. Mike now needs people to step forward and volunteer to chair committees for publicity, speakers, outside activities, food, logistics/registration, and he needs a treasurer who can set up a separate banking account and do double-entry bookkeeping. Mike noted that at the AL Executive Council meeting that it was decided the AL would host its own conference starting in about 2 years' time so that it would be either in the east, west, or midwest, and handled by an experienced crew each year. Mike has already approached Phil Plait ("The Bad Astronomer") and Don Parker (planetary imager) as speakers. Mike hopes to have monthly meetings soon with committees and subcommittees. He emphasized that the whole membership voted to host ALCon 2003 here in Nashville, and it is going to take a group effort, keeping the lines of communication open. Outgoing AL President Chuck Allen has indicated his willingness to come to talk to the BSAS board or membership about ALCon. Mike also mentioned he took advantage of ALCon 2002 to line up a speaker for the BSAS December potluck dinner.

Moving on to new business, Powell explained that the next meeting is designated as the BSAS business meeting for the election of officers for the coming year. Also, Dr. Doug Hall, Dyer Observatory's past director, will be honored. Vice President John Bradford has arranged for a plaque, and everyone is to bring a dessert of some sort. Rocky Alvey mentioned that Dr. Hall's preference is chocolate cake, and that Dr. Hall has been a staunch supporter of the amateur astronomer, bringing those in the club up-to-speed in various astronomical areas including photometry.

Powell mentioned several upcoming star parties including Shelby Bottoms on August 30, a private BSAS one at the Natchez Trace dark site on September 7, and a public one at Long Hunter State Park on September 13. Also mentioned was Bays Mountain StarFest near Kingsport, TN on September 28-29.

TNSP 2002 is coming up October 4-6, and Rocky Alvey urged all club members to come to this major fundraiser for BSAS which will be at Camp Nakanawa this year. Richard Berry will be talking about how to process CCD images, and the ISS-AT will have a live demonstration of a robotically controlled telescope. He asked those present to take flyers to distribute at supermarket and library bulletin boards, and wherever else anyone might be interested.

Powell noted that John Harrington is writing to The Ensworth School Project to encourage cut-off lighting at the high school that is to be built near the Warner Park model airplane field. The BSAS volunteers for star parties there several times a year.

Powell gave a short description of the inferior planets Venus and Mercury before introducing Lonnie Puterbaugh who gave an excellent presentation on "Video Astronomy". Lonnie related his learning curve over the past year as he moved from visual to video astronomy, a move necessitated by the light-pollution in his neighborhood. He described the different types of astrophotography from film to digital, giving advantages and disadvantages of each. For him, the ability to stack good images and discard the rest gives video astronomy a major advantage over other

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types of astrophotography. Lonnie also described a basic system and the free (or almost free) software available for processing images. Astrophotography is a large topic, and it is hoped that Lonnie will come back and talk again in more detail.

Powell Hall declared the meeting adjourned at 9:35 PM.

Respectfully submitted,  
Evelyn Wright, Secretary

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## Girl Scouts' thank you note to BSAS volunteers at their 90th Jamboree Star Gaze at Camp Sycamore Hills:

August 8, 2002

Dear Members of Barnard-Seyfert Astronomical Society,

Thank you so much for giving your time and talent to the Girl Scout Jamboree. The stargazing was a huge hit - many girls talked about how great it was throughout the weekend. I was especially impressed with your ability to give information to the girls in a way that was interesting to them and easy for them to understand. Who knows - you may have influenced a 21st century female Galileo!

Thank you,  
Krissie McReynolds  
Director of Program Services

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(President's Message, continued from page 1)

Let me recommend, from the October 2002 issue of Sky & Telescope magazine, the well written article on "The Fate of the Earth." The author points out that although our Sun will not reach its red giant phase for another 7 billion years, it will make life impossible in only one billion, at the distance of one A.U. It closes by suggesting how our remote descendants may be able to cope.

The regular September meeting of the Barnard-Seyfert Astronomical Society on Thursday the 19th will be the annual business meeting and will include the election of officers for the coming year. If there is only one nomination for a given post, the proper parliamentary procedure for electing that nominee is not the motion to close nominations, which is proper for mass meetings with thousands and with multiple nominations. The correct way in a regularly organized society such as BSAS is a motion to elect A.B. by acclamation. The chair should put such a motion before the house only after there has been time for other nominations, if any, to be made.

As I finish my year as BSAS president, my wish list for our society has 3 priorities:

1. An active committee on light pollution;
2. A regular plan of instruction and encouragement for amateur astronomers, particularly beginners;
3. Wide sharing of the various jobs involved with our hosting the ALCon in July 2003 and with preparation for doing so.

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## AICon '03 Planning Goes Into High Gear!!

*by Mike Benson*

As everyone knows by now, BSAS has agreed to sponsor the annual National convention of the Astronomical League from July 8 through July 12, 2003. I have agreed to accept our Board of Directors appointment as Chairman of the AICon '03 Committee and I have asked Joe Boyd to act as Vice-Chairman.

As many of you know we agreed to host the convention about six months ago when prior arrangements didn't work out. Since conventions of this sort have a two or three year lead-time, this means we need to do some fast catching up to get on track. The initial task of choosing a site for the convention has been completed. After a thorough search of the Nashville area and a couple of false starts, contracts have been signed with the Astronomical League and with the Embassy Suites Hotel which is located in Century City off Elm Hill Pike. Now comes the exciting task of filling that hotel with interesting activities and events to pique the fancy of 150 to 300 expectant amateur astronomers.

I am now asking you to determine the committees and positions you wish to participate in so that the work can begin immediately.

The AICon '03 Executive Committee will consist of the Chairman, Vice-Chairman, and Treasurer, plus Sponsorship, Registration, Publicity, and Program Committee Chairpersons. This group will meet at least monthly for now, and more frequently as the convention date approaches.

Brief descriptions follow:

Utilizing normal bookkeeping principles, the Treasurer maintains books separate from club finances.

The Sponsorship Committee will compile a list of possible sponsors for events, speakers, and the convention, itself.

Registration will handle all sign-up records, confirmations to registrants, and inquiries before and during the convention. From the registrants perspective, the folks who staff that table will BE the Barnard-Seyfert Astronomical Society and will set the tone for the entire convention.

The Publicity Committee has several aspects: 1.) Establishing and maintaining a presence on the World Wide Web, 2.) Local publicity, and 3.) National ads and articles. Tasks will include design of a logo, artwork, text preparation, contact with local and national media and establishing and maintaining a website and appropriate links.

The Program Committee will be a broad undertaking which will include acquiring, confirming and facilitating speakers and presenters and a variety of other convention activities, including tours and food events.

None of these activities will stand alone. A successful AICon requires strong communication, cooperation, coordination and assistance between the Committees. There will be lots of creativity, personal satisfaction, work, much fun, comradeship, chances to meet famous (and infamous) astronomers, and a chance to put BSAS fully on the national scene. I just had the urge to say, "Be There or Be Square."

Please contact me, Mike Benson (883-6571 or [Ocentaurus@aol.com](mailto:Ocentaurus@aol.com); or Joe Boyd (386-3134 or [Boydjoe@aol.com](mailto:Boydjoe@aol.com)) to let us know which of your interests and talents you want to share. To make this work we will need a group of 20-30 people. I expect the first committee meeting will be on Sunday, 9/8. The time and place will be determined among those volunteering to participate. We hope to hear from you soon.

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## HOT FLASH

*by Jerry Lappin*

To paraphrase the weatherman's excuse for faulty forecasts "when a butterfly flaps its wings in Kashmir tornados hit Kansas". We know that random events anywhere on earth may affect the weather at far distant places. However, we have usually assumed our weather systems were immune from alien attack. Some speculated that sunspots somehow affected terrestrial weather but no good correlation could be found. Now we know that we are at the mercy of our cosmic neighbors. Solar activity levels do influence the speed at which storms travel across the world. Now atmospheric scientists believe that we are not safe from even the remotest cosmic events. Of course, a nearby supernova would fry us all but even two black holes colliding a few billion light years away and a few billion years ago might cause significant changes in the earth's climate.

A New York professor has suggested that cosmic rays may interact with clouds to change their structure and density. In turn, this would affect the amount of sunlight reaching the earth and therefore change the temperature. The number of cosmic rays hitting the earth depends on how many are being generated by high-energy events anywhere in the universe and also on the level of solar activity. The solar winds act as a shield of sorts for the earth. When activity is high fewer cosmic rays get through. The data appear to show that global warming occurs at times of increased solar activity and lower level of cosmic rays. On a personal level, this all means that you can keep on driving that polluting old jalopy because global warming isn't your fault. It's that darn sun acting up and maybe a lack of colliding black holes in galaxies far, far away. Don't worry. When Congress learns of these facts they'll pass a law requiring setting a legal lower limit for these cosmic accidents.

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## Happy Birthday John Dobson

*by Robin Byrne*

This month we honor an amateur astronomer well known for his methods of telescope making and his controversial cosmological ideas. John Dobson was born in Peking, China on September 14, 1915. His grandfather, on his mother's side, was the founder of Peking University. His mother was a musician, and his father was a professor of Zoology at Peking University. He had three brothers: Ernest, Lowry, and Harrison. In 1927, when Dobson was 12, social unrest in China forced his family to move to San Francisco. His father took a teaching job at Lowell High School, where he remained until his retirement in the 1950's.

In college, Dobson majored in Chemistry. He graduated from the University of California at Berkeley in 1943. His first job was related to the war effort and was connected to the development of the atomic bomb.

Dobson had rejected Christianity in his youth and was searching for an alternative. In 1944, he attended a lecture by a monk from the Vedanta order, which is based upon Hinduism. Dobson found something he could believe in. He left his job and joined the Vedanta Monastery in San Francisco as a monk of the Ramakrishna Order.

With his background in science, one of Dobson's first assignments as a monk was to try to reconcile astronomy with the teachings of Vedanta. Dobson felt that in order to do this properly, he should see what the universe looked like, so he built his first telescope. It was a 2-inch refractor made from a lens he got at a junk store and an eyepiece from an old pair of Zeiss binoculars. Another monk told him about grinding mirrors, and Dobson made his first mirror from a 12-inch piece of glass from a porthole. His first view of the Moon inspired him to share this view with others.

In 1958, Dobson was transferred to the Monastery in Sacramento, where he continued making telescopes on the sly-taking astronomy to the masses was not considered an appropriate activity for a monk. Dobson made his own rouge out of supplies from the Monastery garden. To keep down the noise of mirror-making, he ground his mirrors under water. Since, as a monk, he had no money, he became very resourceful at finding scrap materials from which his telescopes were built. This was the beginning of what is now known as the "Dobsonian" mount. Dobson did not invent this type of mount, but he certainly revolutionized telescope making by promoting this easy-to-use, affordable telescope style. As his telescopes got larger, he added wagon wheels to the design, and would roll the telescope around the neighborhood, offering views of the sky to anyone who was interested.

However, his time spent away from the Monastery drew suspicion. The monks didn't believe that all Dobson was up to was showing the night sky to people. They were convinced that he was breaking his vow of celibacy. Dobson was kicked out in 1967, after 23 years of being a monk.

Dobson (with a few of his telescopes) hitchhiked to San Francisco, lived off the kindness of friends, and continued his mission to bring astronomy to the people. He would set up his telescope on a busy corner every clear night and offer views to anyone who passed by. This was the beginning of what would eventually become the San Francisco Sidewalk Astronomers. Many of the people who looked through Dobson's telescopes on that corner went on to become members.

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### THE BERGQUIST C-14 TELESCOPE STEWARD LIST

Our club telescope is available for use by club members on a first-come basis. To use the telescope please call the person who is assigned for that night you choose. Please give the stewards as much notice as possible.

Monday - Mike Benson 615-883-6571  
 Tuesday - Lonnie Puterbaugh 615-661-9540  
 Wednesday - A.G. Kasselberg 615-661-0231  
 Thursday - Lloyd Watkins 615-824-3005  
 Friday - John Bradford 615-871-9542  
           & Powell Hall 615-872-0162  
 Saturday - Jim Reid 615-595-6589  
 Sunday - Tom Murdic 615-794-6029  
 Alternate - Dudley Pitts 615-837-2696

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#### (Happy Birthday - John Dobson continued)

Dobson began to gain a certain amount of notoriety and was able to support himself by teaching telescope-making and astronomy classes at the California Academy of Sciences and the Jewish Community Center.

More recently, Dobson has been a vocal opponent to the Big Bang theory. "I'm allergic to the Big Bang," he said. His own ideas are based more upon Vedanta spirituality than astronomy, and likely go back to his first assignment as a monk to reconcile the two. Dobson has written, "If the world is indeed apparitional, then underlying it there must exist something which is not in space and time, and which must therefore be changeless, infinite and undivided (not in time, and not limited or divided by space)." In other words, he doesn't think the universe had a beginning. His ideas are more along the lines of Steady State theory, which was the popular theory before observational evidence helped to solidify the Big Bang. However, Dobson believes that his ideas will eventually be accepted and that he will, one day, be seen as a genius.

John Dobson, for all his controversy, is most definitely a maverick. From disobeying the Monastery to changing how amateur astronomers view the heavens to challenging modern astronomical ideas, Dobson holds firm to being his own man. Love him or hate him, either way, John Dobson has already left his mark on the world, and for that we honor him on his birthday.

#### References:

John Dobson: Amateur Astronomy's Revolutionary [http://www.space.com/scienceastronomy/astronomy/dobson\\_astronomer\\_000507.html](http://www.space.com/scienceastronomy/astronomy/dobson_astronomer_000507.html)

John Dobson Web Page  
<http://tie.jpl.nasa.gov/tie/dobson/bio.html>

Los Angeles Sidewalk Astronomers: John Dobson, A Biography <http://www.sidewalkastronomers.com/articles/dobson.html>



## Girl Scout Jamboree Star Party

*by Chuck Schlemm*

On Friday and Saturday, August 2-3 the Cumberland Valley Girl Scout Council held their annual Jamboree at Camp Sycamore in Ashland City. Krissie McReynolds, Director of Program Services, requested the assistance of area astronomy clubs to conduct star parties for the Girl Scouts on those two nights. We had a terrific response from the Barnard-Seyfert Astronomical Society, Cumberland Astronomical Society (Gallatin), and Clarksville and Western Kentucky Amateur Astronomers. We had over 200 Girl Scouts and leaders visit our telescopes and displays during the weekend event. Following are Chuck Schlemm's experiences (Ed note: Bill Collins.)

I arrived at the Girl Scout Jamboree at Camp Sycamore about 7:30 Friday night. There were already about ten telescopes and binoculars setup in a line in the viewing field, so I pulled into the next spot. It turned out to be the "head of the line" for the girls that came from the campsites. My setup was a table with 12 small posters of the major constellations, a lighted and moving model of the solar system and my 70mm GO-TO telescope. It was only the second time I've used this new-to-me scope, so it took me a little while to get it aligned with only a compass and Venus showing above the tree line. When it got a little darker I was able to go directly to Arcturus and then Vega which were now visible. By that time a few of the scout leaders arrived to get organized for the coming troops. As the girls arrived, I began my presentation by showing them the solar system model with the planets revolving around the sun. I set the planets up into their real positions for that night. I had to put it away once it got dark.

Using red lights, I then showed them the constellation posters, specifically one with Cygnus, Aquila and Lyra, and a second with Ursa Major and Minor since all were fairly visible even after the valley fog began to build up. Then they looked through my scope at Vega and Epsilon Lyrae, the Double Double star. I described this system of 4 stars and how many stars we see with the naked eye are actually binary star systems. I told them with 4 suns, a planet may never have a night time! Then I pointed out the Swan and the Eagle. I described the constellations, the Summer Triangle, Northern Cross and the stars Vega, Deneb and Altair. We also looked for the Big and Little Dipper and Polaris.

I also brought along a list of satellites for viewing that night. Many of the groups got to see two satellites fly almost directly overhead on 4-5 minute passes. They also saw an Iridium satellite flare which was about magnitude -5 or -6 during part of it's 10-15 second pass. That brought on a chorus of "oohs" and "ahhs". I explained to my group that it was Iridium satellite #52 which I call the "Schlemm satellite" because my brother wrote all our family names on the inside of a cover of a piece of equipment that he worked on for that particular satellite.

Several meteors, "shooting stars", graced the night too. I told the girls to watch for a lot more during the Perseid meteor shower the next week, but that the best time to see them was from 1-4:00AM around 8/12 so they would have to get their parents to set the alarm for the show.

As the girls began to leave around 10:30, several adult leaders stopped by to give many praises and thanks to all the volunteer astronomers that came. I was very happy to be able to do this and had a lot of fun sharing astronomy with so many eager minds.

## Happenings & Events Sept & Oct 2002

### September

- 7 Picnic with MTAS
- 7 Private star party, Natchez Trace site
- 10 BOD at Jefferson Square, 7:00pm
- 12 Dyer Public Night, 7:00pm
- 13 Longhunter Star Party, 7:00pm
- 19 BSAS meeting at Dyer, 7:00 pm
- 26 Dyer Youth Night, 7:00pm

### October

- 4-6 TNSP 2002 at camp Nakanawa
- ?? BOD at ??, 7:00pm
- 10 Dyer Public Night, 7:00pm
- 17 BSAS meeting at Dyer, 7:00pm
- 24 Dyer Youth Night, 7:00pm

### Lunar Phases

9/6	New Moon
9/13	First Quarter
9/21	Full Moon
9/29	Last Quarter
10/6	New Moon
10/13	First Quarter
10/21	Full Moon
10/28	Last Quarter

### Conjunctions

9/1	Moon & Saturn
9/4	Moon & Jupiter
9/8	Moon & Mercury
9/9	Moon & Venus
9/17	Moon & Neptune
9/18	Moon & Uranus
9/27	Mercury & Sun, inf.
9/28	Moon & Saturn
10/2	Moon & Jupiter
10/4	Moon & Mars
10/8	Moon & Venus
10/14	Moon & Neptune
10/15	Moon & Uranus
10/26	Moon & Saturn
10/29	Moon & Jupiter
10/31	Venus & Sun, inf.

### Other celestial occurrences

9/22	(11:55 pm Central) Autumnal Equinox
9/26	Venus, gr. brill.
10/13	Mercury, gr. elong. W.

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BSAS c/o Dyer Observatory  
1000 Oman Drive  
Brentwood, TN 37027