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**Houston Astronomical Society**

P.O. Box 20332 • Houston, TX 77225-0332



**May, 1998**

*At the May 1 meeting...*

**Science Fair Winners  
&  
Texas Star Party Roundup**

Five students present their science fair projects  
and we'll see what went on at TSP98!

***Houston Astronomical Society***  
***GuideStar***

**Starline - 281-568-9340**

Houston Astronomical Society presents *Starline* -- a recorded message of Society events and astronomical happenings. This service is updated regularly, so call often to keep up-to-date on Society functions, new comets and more.

**H.A.S. Web Page: <http://spacsun.rice.edu/~has>**

**Schedule Changes & Up-To-Date Information**

See the Guidestar's Monthly Calendar of Events to confirm dates and times of all events for the month, and call Starline for any last minute changes.

**Observatory Site Telephone: 409-732-8967**

★★★★★ **The Houston Astronomical Society** ★★★★★

The Houston Astronomical Society is a non-profit corporation organized under section 501 (C) 3 of the Internal Revenue Code. The Society was formed for education and scientific purposes. All contributions and gifts are deductible for federal income tax purposes. General membership meetings are open to the public and attendance is encouraged.

★★★★★ **Officers and past president** ★★★★★

President: Don Pearce H: 713-432-0734	Treasurer: Bill Flanagan H: (713) 699-8819
Vice Pres: Kirk Kendrick H: 281-391-3834	Past-President: Allen Gilchrist H: 281-558-1190
Secretary: Matt Delevoryas H: 713-795-0808	

★★★★★ **Additional Board Members** ★★★★★

John Blubaugh ..... 713-921-4275	Liaison responsibility
Steve Goldberg ..... 713-721-5077	Publicity, telescope
Jay Levy ..... 281-992-2708	Novice, Observatory
Warren Wundt ..... 713-697-2960	Program, Field Trip/Observing
Tom Fox ..... 281-358-5419	Audit, Program, Field Trip/Observing
	Education, Welcoming

★★★★★ **Committee Chairpersons** ★★★★★

Audit ..... Mike Gumler ..... 409-938-4793	Program ..... John Chauvin ..... 713-981-8281
Education ..... James Benthall ..... 713-669-0838	Publicity ..... Marg Nunez ..... 713-529-2549
Field Tr./Obsg. .... Kenneth Drake ..... 281-367-1592	Telescope ..... Clayton Jeter ..... 281-383-1337
Novice ..... Mitchell/Goldberg ..... 713-461-3020	Welcoming ..... Susan Spore ..... 281-493-2614
Observatory ..... Michael Dye ..... 281-498-1703	

★★★★★ **Ad-Hoc Committee Chairpersons** ★★★★★

Historian ..... Leland Dolan ..... 713-529-0403	Publ. Star Party ..... Marg Nunez ..... 713-529-2549
Librarian ..... Peggy Gilchrist ..... 281-558-1190	Rice U. Coord. .... Matt Delevoryas ..... 713-795-0808
Logo Mds Sales ..... Judy Dye ..... 281-498-1703	Schedule Obs'v'ty ..... Steve Goldberg ..... 713-721-5077
Long Range Plan ..... Don Pearce ..... 713-432-0734	Texas Star Pty ..... Steve Goldberg ..... 713-721-5077
Parliamentarian ..... Kirk Kendrick ..... 281-391-3834	

★★★★★ **Special Interest Groups & Help Committees** ★★★★★

These are now listed on the inside of GuideStar (not every month). See the Table of Contents

★★★★★ **Advisors** ★★★★★

Dr. Reginald DuFour, Rice Univ.                      Dr. Lawrence Pinsky, U. of H.

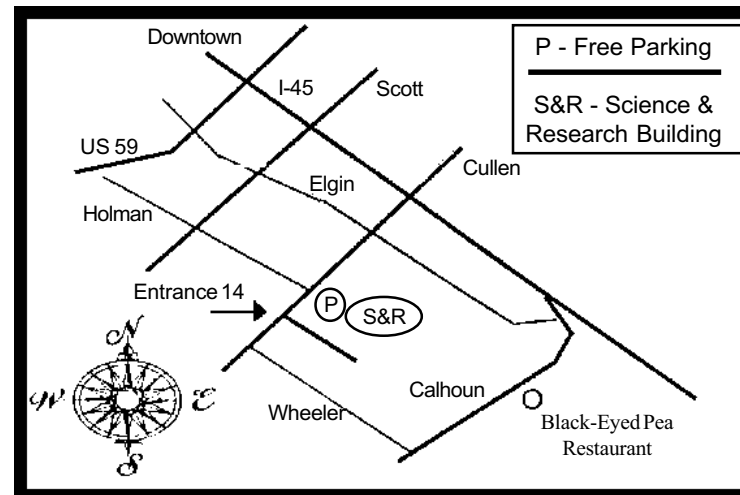
★★★★★ **Dues and Membership Information** ★★★★★

Annual Dues: Regular .... \$33.00	Student ..... \$5.00
Associate .... \$5.00	Honorary ..... None
Sustaining . \$50.00	

All members have the right to participate in Society functions and to use the Observatory Site. Regular and Student Members receive a subscription to *The Reflector*. Regular, Student, and Honorary Members receive *The GuideStar*. Associate Members, immediate family members of a Regular Member, have all membership rights, but do not receive publications. Sustaining members have the same rights as regular members with the additional dues treated as a donation to the Society. *Sky & Telescope* mag \$27/year, *Astronomy* mag \$24/year -- see club treasurer.

Membership Application: Send funds to address shown on outside cover of *Guidestar*. Attention - Treasurer, along with the following information: Name, Address, Phone Number, Special Interests in Astronomy, Do you own a Telescope? (If so, what kind?), and where you first heard of H.A.S.

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**General Membership Meeting**

The Houston Astronomical Society holds its regular monthly General Membership Meeting on the first Friday of each month, unless rescheduled due to a holiday. Meetings are in Room 117 of the Science and Research Building at the University of Houston. A Novice Presentation begins at 7:00 p.m.. The short business meeting and featured speaker are scheduled at 8:00 p.m. Also typically included are Committee Reports, Special Interest Group Reports, current activity announcements, hardware reviews, an astrophotography slide show by members and other items of interest.

**Board of Directors Meeting**

The Board of Directors Meeting is held on dates scheduled by the board at 7:00 p.m. in Room 106 of the Space Science Building at Rice University. Call StarLine for Board Meeting information. Information provided to GuideStar will be published. The meetings are open to all members of the Society in good standing. Attendance is encouraged.

**GuideStar Information**

The H.A.S. *GuideStar* is published monthly by the Houston Astronomical Society. All opinions expressed herein are those of the contributor and not necessarily of Houston Astronomical Society. The monthly Meeting Notice is included herein. *GuideStar* is sent via bulk rate mail to Regular, Student, and Honorary Members of H.A.S., selected individuals and recent visitors to the General Membership Meeting. Contributions to *GuideStar* by members are encouraged. Electronic submission is helpful. Submit the article in ASCII text, MS-Word (preferred), or WordPerfect format on an IBM format floppy or via AOL (BILLP10566). Mail copy to the address shown on the outside cover or to the editor at 256 East 5th Street, Houston, TX 77007. Copy must be received by the second Friday of the month for inclusion in the issue to be mailed near the end of the same month. Or, bring copy to the General Membership Meeting and give it to the Editor, or phone to make special arrangements.

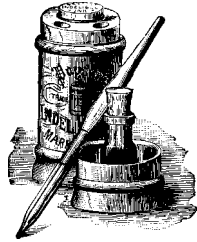
Editing & Production: Bill Pellerin, 713-880-8061; FAX: 713-880-8850;  
AOL: BILLP10566; Internet: BILLP10566@AOL.COM

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Advertising: Advertisers may inquire concerning ad rates and availability of space.

## B&Ps from the IAUCs

by Matt Delevoryas



This month, we have a potpourri of short items, both new and updates.

The two newest Uranian moons (see the January, and last December, articles) 1997 U 1 and 1997 U 2 are back in the news. IAU Circular 6869 reports the brighter one, 1997 U 2, has been recovered, but a half minute of arc from where predicted on IAU 6834. Although there were some uncertainties in the orbit, it didn't make sense for the moon to turn up so far away. The old data used for the prediction constrained a family of moderately ordinary (eccentricity 0.34 was the best guess) orbits enough that the moon couldn't possibly be so far off. It turns out that the old data also allowed a range of much less ordinary ( $e=0.51$ ) orbits which are "much more strongly perturbed by the sun." The recovery data proves that only the high eccentricity family can be the right family.

By contrast with 1997 U 2, IAU 6870 reports recovery of 1997 U 1 three minutes away from the best guess. However, this time three minutes was within expected tolerances, and the recovery information confirming it really is in the originally assumed, mundane,  $e=0.04$  orbit.

Supernova 1998S continues to make news in the Circulars, although mostly reports of observational information. It ought to be of interest for some of the month. Check Starline for latest reports. The supernova is in the edge on spiral galaxy NGC 3877 in Ursa Major. Relative to the nucleus of the galaxy, it is 46" south and 14" west. The galaxy is photographic magnitude 15, with at least one source indicating visual magnitude 11.8, at  $19^h 47.1^m +59^\circ 55'$ . Charts with comparison star magnitudes are available by arrangement with this author, at the number listed inside the front cover.

Also, talking of "new" stars, Nova Sagittarii 1998 appears in Circulars, and it too should be of continuing interest for at least some of the month. IAU Circular 6846 reported the discovery by William Liller, using PROBLICOM photographs. It was discovered just brighter than magnitude 8, and as long as it stays observable, Starline should have recent information. The nova is located at  $18^h 21^m 40.47^s -27^\circ 31' 38.0''$ . At magnitude 9 - 10, locating it without a chart is difficult but possible. 19' to its west-northwest is a magnitude 7.3 star, and 23' to its east is a magnitude 8.1 star. There are no other bright stars within 35' of the nova. Charts are available, with comparison magnitudes down to 10.5, by contacting the author at the number on the inside cover of *GuideStar*.

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**Call the Starline, 281-568-9340 for updates and changes**

## Welcome to New Members!

The Houston Astronomical Society encourages you to join our group of active amateur astronomers and take advantage of the benefits of membership. As a member you'll have access to the club observing site near Columbus, Texas. (You're required to participate in a site orientation meeting before you get the gate lock combination.) The site has concrete pads for setting up your telescope, restroom and bunkhouse facilities, and areas set aside for camping. No new members this month.

## Special Interest Group Listing

Any member who wants specific information on a SIG listed below may call the listed individual. Also, see the "Ad Hoc Committee Chairpersons" on the inside front cover and the "Special Help Volunteers" listing (not in every issue).

Advanced .....	Bill Flanagan .....	713-699-8819
CCD .....	Tom Arnold .....	281-495-0142
Comets .....	Kenneth Drake .....	281-367-1592
Lunar & Planetary .....	John Blubaugh .....	713-921-4275
Occultations & Grazes ...	Wayne Hutchison .....	713-827-0828

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## The President's Message



This month I would like to focus on the possibility of obtaining a large telescope for all the members to use at our Columbus site.

A little over a year ago, while presiding for Allen at a General Membership Meeting, I conducted an informal straw poll of the members to determine if there was an interest in obtaining a large visual instrument for the use of all our members at the Columbus site. To my surprise, there was an overwhelming positive response (roughly 30 + were for the acquisition of such an instrument, while 7 were opposed).

For many years we have been limited to what I have been calling the "14-inch aperture barrier." I think we have to look at the history of the telescopes at Columbus to properly understand the situation. When the Columbus site was undergoing planning and development, astrophotography with equatorial mounted telescopes was considered the standard that influenced what we have. It was subsequent to our planning and acquisition of those instruments, that the "visual revolution," with the development of large aperture telescopes at affordable prices combined with wide-angle eyepieces and light -pollution filters, occurred. This has led to a whole different concept of large aperture observing. Meanwhile, some of our members have acquired larger visual (Dobsonian) telescopes on their own. Unfortunately, this momentum has never been carried out at the Society level; hence, we are still using telescopes basically designed for astronomy in the 1970's (except for the 12 1/2 inch Dobsonian). Other astronomical societies (clubs) have large visual instruments for the use of their members, and in most cases these are smaller societies than HAS.

Fortunately, the advent of CCD technology has not made the HAS telescopes obsolete; but this still does not address the problem of upgrading our equipment to meet the needs of the 1990's visual observer. Wouldn't it be nice to observe a dim galaxy or comet in a 32-inch instrument? Next month I will discuss what I think it will take to make this happen.

Clear skies and le croissant lunaire

*Don Pearce*

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## Observatory Duty Roster

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by Michael B. Dye, Observatory Chairman

This is the duty list for May, June and July. Be sure to contact your supervisor for any information that you may need and the date and time to be at the site. You may change from site duty to open house or from open house to site duty by pre-arrangement with the Site Supervisor for that month. Changes between months require Observatory Chairman coordination.

**For May supervisor ..... Robert Rogers ..... 281-997-9682**

Howard Leverenz ..... Site  
Mary Lockwood ..... Members Observatory Night 05-16-98  
Michael McLellan ..... Site  
Robert C. Menius ..... Site  
Larry Mitchell ..... Members Observatory Night 05-16-98  
John J. Mitscherliing ..... Members Observatory Night 05-16-98  
Jeff Moore ..... Site  
Debbie Moran ..... Site

**For June supervisor ..... Matt Delevoryas ..... 713-795-0808**

Ben Negy, Jr. .... Members Observatory Night 06-13-98  
Johnny Norris ..... Site  
Richard Nugent ..... Members Observatory Night 06-13-98  
Ralph Overturf, Jr. .... Site  
Don C. Pearce ..... Site  
Michael D. Peters ..... Site  
Sim Picheloup ..... Members Observatory Night 06-13-98  
Leonard W. Raif ..... Site

**For July supervisor ..... Dana Lambert ..... 281 933-4627**

Gary Ray. .... Site  
Glenn L. Ray ..... Members Observatory Night 07-18-98  
George E. E. Reder ..... Site  
Henry Schneider ..... Site  
Carl Sexton ..... Members Observatory Night 07-18-98  
Steve Simpson ..... Site  
Larry C. Wadle ..... Site  
Mark R. Watson ..... Members Observatory Night 07-18-98

Please remember that Site work can be done anytime and does not have to be done just before Members Observatory Night. Contact your Site Supervisor for details. Names are selected for Site Duty using the current Alphabetical listing for Observatory Key Holders. If any member knows of a conflict please call me before your name is listed.

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## *An Open Letter on GuideStar*

*...from previous page*

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because its professional printing would be more expensive, this is not even being seriously considered. However, now is the right time to consider it; Band-Aid fixes, such as the recently-approved Board measure, will no longer suffice.

*GuideStar* needs a new lease on life. To do this, the Board should approve the funds for a more attractive, higher-quality publication whose delivery is not jeopardized. If we do not, its appeal will decline, articles from a wider base of members will not materialize, and its regular delivery may become a thing of the past.

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### *~ Want Ads ~*

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**For Sale** - 1. Orion 2" lt.blue filter,new,\$25.00. 2.Orion LARGE eye piece case,brand new, \$50.00. 3. Home Made star chart light box, 12vdc oper, with laminated field charts 2000, very nice unit, \$65.00. 4. Meade 2045D 4" f10 cas,with all std. accessories, new drive control board, and a Tuthill solar filter, With pelican case \$675.00 or w/o pelican case \$600.00. Call Bill Christian 409-755-0736 or e-mail w5bc@juno.com.

**For Sale** - Meade DS-10 10" f4.5, 110vac drive (no eye piece) \$500.00, Oneal Ozan 409-860-3792. (Beaumont)

**For Sale** - Coulter 13.1" f4.5 w/ telrad and a rack and pinion focuser, kept in house and well cared for - Call Roger Wheatley 409-866-4433 (Beaumont)

**For Sale** - Meade Starfinder 12.5 inch f.7 Dobsonian mount reflector "light bucket" telescope for sale. Excellent condition, rarely used. Great telescope for the serious astronomy beginner. Comes with finder scope, 3 eyepieces, star charts and instructions. Also comes with homemade mount for pickup truck transport. Bought for \$1400, must sell for \$850. Dan Perez, 713-521-3186

Want ads are published free of charge as a service to Houston area astronomers. See the inside back cover for instructions on submitting ads.

**GuideStar deadline for the June issue is**

**May 8**

## *Houston Astronomical Society*

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*Meeting Notice*

*For Friday, May 1, 1998*

# *Science Fair Winners & Texas Star Party Roundup*

***The Science Fair students are:***

*Jennifer Golightly, Seabrook Intermediate (Clear Lake I.S.D.)*

*Ingrid Lindstrom (School not given)*

*Sarina Hickey, St. Mary's School, Orange, Texas.*

*Hannah Pierce-Carlson, Klein Oak High School*

*David Williams, St. Mark's Episcopal School*

***The Texas Star Party Roundup -***

*will consist of astronomical and site photographs taken at T.S.P.  
and reports by the various attendees.*

**Schedule of meeting activities:**

**Novice meeting: ..... 7:00 p.m.**

**Everyone's welcome at the Novice meeting... even veterans. Scott and Amelia are reviewing the Universe Sampler, an observing program for newcomers and old hands. Completion of the program (recorded observations of all the objects) entitles you to a Universe Sampler pin.**

**Site orientation meeting: ..... 7:00 p.m.**

**General meeting: ..... 8:00 p.m.**

**See the inside back cover for more information.**

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## May Calendar:

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Date	Time	Event
1		HAS Club Meeting
	7:00 p.m.	Novice Presentation - U of H
	8:00 p.m.	General Membership Meeting - U of H
3	5:05 a.m.	First Quarter Moon
8	7:00 p.m.	JSCAS Meeting (info: <a href="http://www.ghgcorp.com/cbr/jscas.html">http://www.ghgcorp.com/cbr/jscas.html</a> )
9	8:55 p.m.	Lunar occultation of mag 4.7 74 Virginis, call Wayne Hutchinson, 713-827-0828
11	9:31 a.m.	Full Moon
12	7:00 p.m.	Advanced SIG Mtg. - Rice Univ., topic TBA, contact Bill Flanagan, 713-699-8819
16		Members Observatory Night-Columbus
18	11:37 p.m.	Last Quarter Moon
23		Prime Night
25	2:24 p.m.	New Moon
1 June	8:45 p.m.	First Quarter Moon
5 June		HAS Club Meeting
	7:00 p.m.	Novice Presentation - U of H
	8:00 p.m.	General Membership Meeting - U of H

Send calendar events to [JBlubaugh@aol.com](mailto:JBlubaugh@aol.com) or call 713-921-4275.

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## HAS Web Page

The Houston Astronomical Society Web page has information on the society, its resources, and meeting information.

The address is: <http://spacsun.rice.edu/~has>

Want your astronomy work and name on the Internet for the whole world to see? Have some neat equipment? Pictures in film, CCD, hand drawings or video format are all welcome on the page. Do you have an idea to improve the page? I'm listening. Send me Email at [goldberg@sccsi.com](mailto:goldberg@sccsi.com). (You can click on my name on the HAS home page). Or, you can call me, Steve Goldberg (WebMaster), at 713-721-5077.

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## An Open Letter On GuideStar

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By John Blubaugh, Board Member

*GuideStar* needs professional help—literally. An obvious problem is that too many issues typically reflect the writings of too few members. Another more serious problem has been a shortage of volunteers willing to insure that *GuideStar* is “done” every month.

We owe thanks to those who have written and continue to write faithfully within these pages, and to our editor as well, but contributions from a wider cross-section of our membership are needed. *GuideStar*'s unique appeal has traditionally come from the broad scope of topics it has presented. Currently, general interest articles do not appear more often from more of our members. This can cause the undesired effect of limiting *GuideStar*'s appeal. However, comparatively advanced, but regularly printed items, are regular features.

Our main goal has always been to control its cost so *GuideStar* has been reproduced and assembled by volunteers, until now. Because of a serious volunteer shortage, its on-time delivery may be in jeopardy. If volunteers willing to reproduce and assemble *GuideStar* are not forthcoming, yet *GuideStar* is still deemed needed, an alternate method of publication may become necessary. Cost controls have also meant that most photographs, especially those showing a fair amount of detail, cannot be printed very well. For instance, when was the last time a good photo of a person was printed? Imagine how much more informative and attractive *GuideStar* would be if articles were accompanied by good-quality photos from members' CCD cameras, HAS picnics, or Astronomy Days.

What about the argument that *GuideStar* is just about right in its current form? If it ain't broke, don't fix it, right? In answer to this, the words of a wise man seem apt: “Even a stopped clock is right twice each day.” In other words, it might look just right but it still needs fixing; its outward appearance gives little indication of other serious flaws.

The time has come for us to produce a much more attractive and professionally printed and assembled *GuideStar*. This would almost guarantee its uninterrupted production. Additional contributing writers would undoubtedly gravitate toward it, and by implication, prospective members toward the Society. Unfortunately,

*Continued...*

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## ***Observatory Corner... from previous page***

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If you want to help with this or any activity at the Observatory Site, please call me at home (see front cover of *GuideStar*) or E-Mail me at MBDye@aol.com.

Sometime about 5th or 6th of April, one our members called to tell me that the Observatory Roof was jammed. The member had attempted to open the Observatory Roof without first allowing the locking bar to drop into the OPEN position. You would not believe how bent that 1/2 steel rod had become. When the roof finally stopped moving the rod was firmly jammed in the very small space between the roof and the locking assembly. I went out last Thursday (April 9th) to fix the problem. I first removed all the bolts that hold the locking bar in place and attempted to remove the rod. Was not moving. I then attempted to use the motor to close the roof in order to remove the stuck bar. Roof was stuck also. Since the motor would not close the roof (It was only open about 4 or 5 inches) and I had to use the EMERGENCY Procedure to pull the Roof closed. By moving the roof to the closed position, the rod became less jammed in the small space between the roof and the locking assembly. This caused the metal bar to fall down to the floor (remember I pulled all the clamping bolts). I spent the next 30 minutes or so beating the rod back into shape. I had brought an anvil and vise especially for this purpose. Everything was reinstalled and now works. I even opened the roof a few feet to make sure that it still opens. The reason I relate this story is to reinforce the reason we have rules and procedures at the Observatory Site. We don't have nearly as many rules as some of the members want. Please follow the ones we have.

The last item I need to attend to is a statement I put in the last *GuideStar* about the Boy Scouts putting all the clay/rock in the Lawn Mower House. I received a correcting message by E-Mail from Charles Barnes shortly after the last *GuideStar* came out. I wish to apologize to Charles Barnes and his family Cindy, his wife, Will and Daniel, his two teenage sons and Haley his seven year old daughter. It seems that Charles had Site Duty that month (February) and he checked with Bob Rogers (the Site Supervisor for that month) and got a list of items that could be done when Charles and Family went out to the Observatory Site. It seems that the scouts were only able to move a few loads of dirt/gravel into the Lawn Mower shed before the rain started and they (the scouts) left. The Barnes family finished the job (later, not during the rain). Even Haley helped by walking around the Observatory Site picking up trash. Again, I beg the forgiveness of the Barnes family for the oversight and hope this corrects the false impression that the last article left.

*Please fill out the appropriate log form when you use the site,  
even if you do not observe.*

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## ***HAS Logo Sales***

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*by Judy Ann Dye*

Come to the meeting and pick up one of the following items, or call Judy Dye to place your order.

White sweatshirt with blue stars .....	\$ 13.00
Grey hooded sweatshirt (M to XL) .....	\$ 25.00
Grey hooded sweatshirt (XXL) .....	\$ 27.00
Blue satin jacket w/logo only .....	\$ 36.00
Blue satin jacket w/logo and name .....	\$ 40.50
Observer's Guide -- Essential guidebook to 1998 astronomical events. These books are here and will be at the February meeting....	
.....	\$12.00

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## ***Other Meetings...***

**Brazosport Astronomy Society** meets at 7:00 p.m. on the 2nd Thursday of each month in the Planetarium of the fine Arts Center at Brazosport College. Call Steve Lamb for program details (409) 297-3984

**Fort Bend Astronomy Club** meets the third Friday of the month at 8:00 p.m. at the First Colony conference Center. Novice meeting begins at 7:00, regular meeting begins at 8:00

**Johnson Space Center Astronomical Society** meets in the the Lunar and Planetary Institute on the 2nd Friday of each month.

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## Scott Mitchell Explains Van Gogh

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by Bill Pellerin, GuideStar Editor

Art history and astronomy came together as part of the April novice meeting. Scott Mitchell ended the monthly segment by discussing a theory that explains the large swirl in Van Gogh's painting *Starry Night*.

There is reason to believe that the swirl in the painting is the result of Mr Van Gogh having seen a drawing of M51 produced by William Parsons, the Earl of Rosse. His 72 inch reflector telescope, the largest telescope in service at the time, permitted him to see and draw the spiral arms of galaxies. These objects weren't known to be island universes, separate from our Milky Way galaxy until Edwin Hubble in 1924. According to Scott, Parsons' drawing of M51 (and its companion, NGC 5195) had been published widely by the time Van Gogh painted *Starry Night* in 1889.



Scott Mitchell



Starry Night

Clearly, the swirl in the painting resembles M51 and its companion. See for yourself... M51 is well placed for viewing in May. The galaxy is in Canes Venatici, but I always find it by reference to the Big Dipper asterism -- it's below (toward the bowl) Alkaid, the end star of the dipper handle. You'll need a very good night and a larger telescope will be helpful (mag 9.2). It's bright, (for a galaxy) but it's also large (11 min x 7 min), so its light is spread out over a large area.

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## Observatory Corner

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By Michael B. Dye Observatory Chairman

July 1st will be the official Observatory Site Combination change date. This means that on that date, I will go out to the Observatory Site and change all the Common Access combination locks (both gates, pump house, and electrical boxes). I have not yet determined the new combination number, but should have sometime by the latter part of April. I will generate individual envelopes for each member and I will take these envelopes to the next two (May and June) General Membership meetings. These envelopes will contain the new combination and other information for Members who have taken the Observatory Site orientation course. Sometime in June, I will mail the remaining Combo change information to those members who have not picked up their envelopes. Save the Observatory Committee some postage and come to pick up your envelope at the General Meeting.

I hope everyone has noticed that we (the Observatory Committee) have started our 1998 Fundraising Drive. You don't have to contribute much. Even twenty-five dollars will help. We have enclosed a pre addressed envelope to make sending your donation to the Houston Astronomical Society easier. Please mark your check for "Observatory Committee" so that the Treasurer will deposit the money in the proper account. As most of you know, I try to keep the drives down to one every other year. This year we have big expectations for the Observatory Site Telescopes and Facilities. As everyone should know, all members of the Observatory Committee and the Board of Directors are volunteers and we do what we can when we have the time. I know we (the Observatory Committee) are behind in getting the new Dob telescope on-line, but we are working as fast as we can. We are also trying to get two Bar-B-Q grills built over by the Bunk House. We are also working on a storage building for the Society and for the new Dob. Please contribute so that we can finish these programs. Remember no donation is too small and all donations are Tax deductible. We will send out receipts before January 31st 1999.

The new building roof is almost complete. I would like to thank Charles Foyt, and Gene Horr who helped put up the rafters. I also want to thank both Ralph Overturf and Charles Foyt for working on the roof first weekend of April by finishing the decking for the roof and by installing the black felt and the starter strip around the edge of the roof. All we need to do now is put the shingles on. I'm still looking for volunteers to help. Right now all it has covering the plywood is a 15 weight Felt, which unfortunately now has a rip in it at the peak. I am still looking for help to finish the roof.

Continued...