



November, 2001

At the **November 2** meeting...

Dr. Mark Matney
NASA

...will discuss meteors in general
and the upcoming November 17 Leonid meteor
shower in particular.

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.

HAS Web Page: <http://www.astronomyhouston.org>

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: 979-732-8861

★★★★★ *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 & Past President ★★★★★★

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Vice Pres: Bill Leach H: 713-863-8459
Secretary: Art Ciampi H: 713-665-5008

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Past President: Don Pearce H: 713-432-0734

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Larry Wadle 281-395-6290

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Field Tr./Obsg. Steve Grubbs 713-455-5701
Novice Warren Wundt 713-697-2960
Observatory Michael Dye 281-498-1703

Program Scott Mitchell 713-461-3020
Publicity Brian Cudnik 713-460-1093
Telescope Darin Palmer 713-223-3123
Welcoming Marg Nunez 713-529-2549

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Librarian Peggy Gilchrist 281-443-8773
Logo Mds Sales Judy Dye 281-498-1703
Long Range Plan Bill Leach 281-863-8459
Parliamentarian Kirk Kendrick 281-391-3834

Publ. Star Party Marg Nunez 713-529-2549
Rice U. Coord. Matt Delevoryas 713-795-0808
Schedule Obs'v't'y Steve Goldberg 713-721-5077
Texas Star Pty Steve Goldberg 713-721-5077

★★★★★ 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
Associate \$5.00
Sustaining . \$50.00

Student \$5.00
Honorary None

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 \$29.95/year, *Astronomy* mag \$29/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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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. You'll get monthly issues of the *GuideStar* newsletter, you'll get to vote and to serve the organization as an officer, and you will be supporting the local amateur astronomy community.

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
Comets	Don Pearce	713-432-0734
Lunar & Planetary	John Blubaugh	713-921-4275
Occultations & Grazes ...	Wayne Hutchison	713-827-0828
Advanced	Bill Leach	713-863-8459

President's Corner

October 2001

by Kirk Kendrick



A raft of events is occurring around astronomy in late October & early November in Houston.

To begin with, a City-wide Astronomy meeting of the four Houston clubs on October 26 at 8:00pm featuring guest speaker Stephen O'Meara of *Sky & Telescope*. The event is hosted by Kingwood College and is held in their Science Building – Teaching Theatre. See www.astronomyclub.org for directions. Our thanks go to Kingwood College and Bill Leach for arranging the venue and to Larry Wadle for convincing Stephen to join us!

On Saturday, October 27, the annual **Astronomy Day** will be held at the George Observatory at Brazos Bend State Park from 3:00-10:00pm. If you have never attended an Astronomy Day, this is a chance to visit with all your local astronomy buddies while bringing Astronomy to public.

And, last but not least: The **HAS meeting on November 2** has three events that night:

- The annual election of Officers, Board Members, and Committee Chairmen
- The readout of the Long Range Planning Committee, and
- Dr. Mark Matney of NASA to talk about meteors

I look forward to seeing all of you at the meetings!

Clear skies! And, let's go to Columbus to do Astronomy!

...Kirk

Houston Astronomical Society

***Meeting Notice
For Friday, November 2, 2001***

Dr. Mark Matney, of NASA

will discuss meteors in general and the upcoming November 17 Leonid meteor shower in particular. Dr. Matney plots out potential meteor hazards for spaceflight at NASA.

It is possible that the Leonid Meteor Shower this year will be a very good one (for observers). A large number of rocks falling from the sky is **not** good for astronauts and cosmonauts aboard the International Space Station. Learn about the prospects for a good meteor shower, and the associated observing opportunities at this month's meeting

Also... Annual election of officers.

Schedule of meeting activities:

All meetings are at the University of Houston Science and Research building. See the inside back cover for a map to the location.

Novice meeting: 7:00 p.m.
Across from Room 117

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

General meeting: 8:00 p.m.
Room 117

**See the inside back cover for a map
and more information.**

November/December Calendar:



Photo by Scott Mitchell

<i>Date</i>	<i>Time</i>	<i>Event</i>
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November 2001

2		HAS Club Meeting
	7:00 p.m.	Novice Presentation - U of H
	8:00 p.m.	General membership meeting U of H. 2001 elections.
8	6:21 a.m.	Last Quarter Moon
10		Members Observatory Night-Columbus
13	7:30 p.m.	Advanced SIG Mtg. Rice Univ., contact Matt Delevoryas, 713-795-0808
15	12:40 a.m.	New Moon
17		Prime Night-Columbus
18	2:00 a.m.	Leonid meteor shower should have peaked by this time. Begin looking for activity starting the night of Nov. 16 th .
22	5:20 p.m.	First Quarter Moon
30	2:49 p.m.	Full Moon

December 2001

7	1:52 p.m.	Last Quarter Moon
		HAS Club Meeting
	7:00 p.m.	Novice Presentation - U of H
	8:00 p.m.	General membership meeting U of H.
8		Members Observatory Night-Columbus
14	12:01 a.m.	Geminid meteor shower maximum; often bright, plentiful, and slow.
	2:47 p.m.	New Moon
		Members Observatory Night-Columbus
15		Prime Night-Columbus
18	7:30 p.m.	Advanced SIG Mtg. Rice Univ., contact Matt Delevoryas, 713-795-0808
21	1:22 p.m.	Winter Solstice. Sun reaches furthest southern limit.
22	2:57 p.m.	First Quarter Moon
30	4:41 a.m.	Full Moon

Send calendar events to JBlubaugh@aol.com

or call 713-921-4275.

H.A.S. Nominees for 2002!!!

The nominating committee, chaired by Don Pearce, and staffed by the following H.A.S. members, John Blubaugh, Bill Flanagan, Hannah Lange, George Stradley, presents its list of nominees for Society offices for 2002. Floor nominations are accepted.

Officers:

Pres.- Kirk Kendrick-incu.
V. Pres-Bill Leach-incu.
Secretary-Brian Cudnik
Treasurer-Debbie Moran-incu.

At-Large Board Members (5 positions available)

George Dolson-incu.
Bill Flanagan-incu.
Howard Leverenz-incu.
Jay Levy-incu.
Christopher Mendell
Steve Sartor

Committee Chairpersons:

Audit-Matt Delevoryas
Education-Richard Nugent-incu.
Field Tr./Obsg.-Steve Grubbs-incu.
Novice-George Stradley
Observatory & At-Large Board Member-Michael Dye-incu.
Program-Co-Chairs- Scott Mitchell-incu. & Don Pearce
Publicity-Warren Wundt
Telescope-Darin Palmer-incu.
Welcoming-Co-Chairs-Marg Nunez-incu. & Hannah Lange

incu.- incumbents

Early Amateur Astronomers in Houston

by Thomas R. Williams

Interest in astronomy was at a high level in early twentieth century America. The world's largest telescopes were operating on the peaks of western mountains. The science of astrophysics was emerging more rapidly in the United States than elsewhere as a result of that instrumental prowess. Alvan Clark and Sons, of Cambridgeport, Massachusetts capitalized on their fame as makers of the world's largest refractors by supplying smaller telescopes to a market of amateur astronomers that resulted from that high popular interest in astronomy.

As the city of Houston emerged along the banks of Buffalo Bayou in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, it attracted residents with diverse interests including astronomy. Thus, it should not be surprising that a Houston resident would possess a Clark refractor that was characterized at the time as the largest telescope on the US Gulf Coast. The owner of that telescope, Warren Fay Carothers, was an attorney, and civic leader in Houston. Carothers founded the Houston Real Estate Board and served as its Executive Director for many years. Carothers purchased a 6-inch Clark refractor in 1909 and for at least the next six years remained actively interested in observational astronomy. He was a member of John Mellish's informal network of observers that stretched from the Gulf Coast to Toronto. He was also well known to the founder of the Society for Practical Astronomy, Frederick C. Leonard, of Chicago.

Carothers' primary astronomical interest was in the sun and solar sunspots. He visited Yerkes Observatory in 1915. From Yerkes Director Edwin Brant Frost's reaction to his visit, it appears that Carothers' interests in astronomy reflected his deep religious beliefs as a leader in the Bruner Pentecostal Tabernacle in Houston. Such a combination of interests was common in the early decades of the last century. Many individuals sought evidence of a design in natural systems that would confirm their religious faith and perhaps offset burgeoning belief in Darwinian evolution and other new scientific theories. Carothers remained interested in the relationship between science and religion for the rest of his life, but apparently gave up the Clark telescope after owning it for over ten years. In that period, however, Carothers had shared the glories of the night sky with thousands of other Houston citizens.

(To be continued)

Observations... of the editor

by *Bill Pellerin, GuideStar Editor*

October 21, 2001

It has been clear for most of this week, and just the kind of weather that begs you to get out under the stars with your telescope. And, the moon is mostly out of the way... Too bad that most of us can't shirk work and family responsibilities any time we want and zoom out to our favorite observing site. It's painful, in a way, to step outside at night, during the week and see a clear sky above and to know that I can't take full advantage of it.

Having said all that, I did manage to enjoy some observing last night (Saturday). The summer constellations are all but gone now, with Lyra and Cygnus now in the western part of the sky. Taurus now rises in the east with the beautiful Aldebaran's redish glow lighting up the eastern sky.

Imbedded in this constellation, right between the horns of the Bull is the planet Saturn, always an observer's favorite. The air was damp, however, and there appeared, to me, to be some dimming of the stars because of it. I went looking for a 11th magnitude galaxy, and I'm not confident that I saw it. By morning the equipment had dew all over it and I had to dry it out before I packed it away.

I saw several meteors last night, too. Maybe it was a case of looking at the right place at the right time, or maybe there were in fact more meteors falling than usual. The November meeting presentation is about meteors. I don't know about you, but I've gone out on 'meteor shower' nights, and have enjoyed watching the rocks fall through the atmosphere and burn up. I'd sure like to see a meteor storm someday, though.

I hope that you were able to get out and observe during this interval of good weather.

Next Saturday is Astronomy Day, and I'll be participating by setting up a table to discuss telescopes with the visitors. Telescopes are like cars, everybody has his or her opinion about what's good and what's not. My hope is that I'll be able to show the visitors the types of telescopes available and give them some information they

Continued...

Observations... from page 4

can use to make their own selection. Of course, the telescope most of us would choose to use depends on the type of observing we intend to do. You need a large aperture telescope for dim, deep sky objects, but one with high resolution for the moon, planets, or double stars. Most newcomers don't know what kind of observing they want to do, so a general-purpose telescope is generally right for these folks.

Last month's meeting featured a talk by Eli Maor, author of *June 8, 2004 -- Venus in Transit*. It was an outstanding talk about a very interesting subject. I read the book prior to the meeting and enjoyed it thoroughly. I was unaware of the history associated with this event and with the efforts that were taken to measure the distance to Venus by observing the transit from two places on the earth. Knowing the distance to Venus would allow the calculation of the distance to the sun which wasn't determined with any accuracy until these transits were observed.



Eli Maor

Eli Maor gives you the information you need to witness the next Venus transit in 2004. If you get to see this event, keep in mind that no person currently living has seen a Venus transit. There will be a repeat of the event in 2012, but the next Venus tranist after that is in 2117.

Until next time... clear skies and new moons!

..Bill

Marg's Star Parties

by Marg Nunez

Here is a schedule of upcoming star parties in your neighborhood. Please be generous with your time. It won't be a star party without you!! Please contact Marg. at 713-529-2549 or Marg10@flash.net to help.

- November 16 7:30 pm Johnson Middle School (Chimney Rock and Willobend area)

Please contact Marg Nunez to volunteer. 713-529-2549

Other Meetings...

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. Web site: <http://rampages.onramp.net/~binder/>

Johnson Space Center Astronomical Society meets in the the Lunar and Planetary Institute on the 2nd Friday of each month. Web site: <http://www.ghgcorp.com/cbr/jscas.html>

North Houston Astronomy Club meets at 7:30 p.m. on the 4th Friday of each month in the Teaching Theatre of the Student Center at Kingwood College. Call 281-312-1650 or E-mail bill.leach@nhmccd.edu. Web site: www.astronomyclub.org

HAS Web Page

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

The address is: <http://www.astronomyhouston.org>

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. (You can click on my name on the HAS home page). Or, you can call Steve Goldberg (WebMaster), at 713-721-5077.



***GuideStar deadline
for the December
issue
is November 15***

Observatory Duty Roster

by Michael B. Dye, Observatory Chairman

This is the duty list for November, December and January ('02). Some names may have been moved from one month to another to accommodate some conflicts. If you are listed in this roster, please 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.

November Supervisor Logan Rimes 713-681-5397
Arnie Kaestner Members Observatory Night 11-10-01
David Kahlich Site
Bill Krell Members Observatory Night 11-10-01
Howard Leverenz Site
Jay E. Levy Site
Mary Lockwood Members Observatory Night 11-10-01
David Herlinger Site
Robert C. Menius Site

December Supervisor Logan Rimes 713-681-5397
Christopher Mendell Site
Larry Mitchell Members Observatory Night 12-08-01
Jeff Moore Site
Debbie Moran Site
Mark K. Mulrooney Site
Ben Negy, Jr. Members Observatory Night 12-08-01
Johnny Norris Members Observatory Night 12-08-01
Richard Nugent Site

January Supervisor To be Announced
Margaret Nunez Members Observatory Night 01-xx-02
Ralph Overturf Site
Don Pearce Members Observatory Night 01-xx-02
Sim Picheloup Site
Glenn Ray Members Observatory Night 01-xx-02
Mike Reynolds Site
Henry Schneider Site
Steve Simpson Site

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.

Logo Sales

For H.A.S. Logo merchandise, call:
Judy Ann Dye - 281-498-1703

Hooded Sweatshirts

M	\$31.00
L	\$31.00
XL	\$31.00
XXL	\$33.00



Judy shows the logo on the back of the new hooded sweatshirts.

These are the prices for our new hooded sweatshirts. These are made from heavy sweatshirt material and were very popular at the September and October meetings. If you want one, come to the November meeting -- cash and checks accepted.

Membership Renewals...

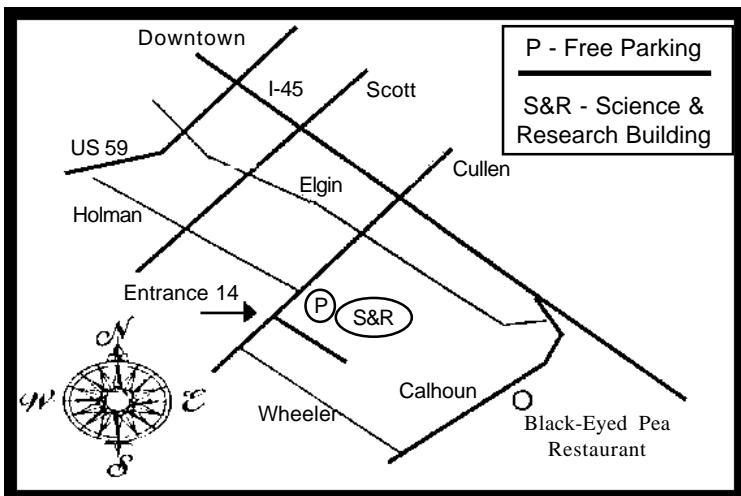
Please check the mailing label on your copy of the *GuideStar*.

It'll tell you when your membership expires. If it expires soon, please send your renewal to the address on the outside cover of *GuideStar*. The dues information is on the inside front cover.

Membership in the Houston Astronomical Society is one of the great bargains in Astronomy. For a regular membership of \$33 you get the opportunity to support an active and growing organization, you get the monthly *GuideStar* newsletter, and you get access to the outstanding H.A.S. observing site near Columbus, Texas. (You must attend an orientation, given monthly, to use the site.) And, after two months of membership you can borrow, at no charge, one of the Society's loaner telescopes. It's the best deal in town, we think. Please renew your membership when it expires.

Thanks!

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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 15th 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.

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AOL: BILLP10566; Internet: BILLP10566@AOL.COM

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Houston Astronomical Society

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