

Houston Astronomical Society

# GuideStar



March, 2005

At the March 4 meeting...

## Supernovae Dynamics

### Dr. Larry Pinsky

Professor & Chairman,  
Department of Physics  
Ph.D., University of Rochester,  
1973  
Physics Department  
University of Houston



Dr. Larry Pinsky

Editor's note -- since this issue of the GuideStar is late, the presentation will have been done.

Coming in April will be:  
**Tommy Greathouse - from LPI - "Titan Results"**

And... if that's not enough... check out the list of speakers at the Texas Star Party -- first week in May.

**Brent Archinal**, -- *A Place Like Home? Huygens Unveils Titan.*

**Halton C. Arp**, -- *Cosmology - Quasars and the Birth of Galaxies.*

**David J. Eicher**, Editor, Astronomy Magazine

**Stephanie McLaughlin**, -- *Amateur Observing Opportunities for the NASA Deep Impact Mission to Comet 9P/Tempel 1.*

**Robert T. Mitchell**, -- *Cassini/Huygens Mission to Saturn and Titan.*

Details at: [www.texasstarparty.org](http://www.texasstarparty.org)

### Highlights:

HAS Banquet Report ..... 3  
Minutes of February Meeting ..... 4

### HAS Web Page:

<http://www.AstronomyHouston.org>

See the *GuideStar's* Monthly Calendar of Events to confirm dates and times of all events for the month, and check the Web Page for any last minute changes.

### 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.

Site orientation meeting: ..... 7:00 p.m.  
Classroom 121

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

See last page for a map and more information.

## 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

President: Steve Sartor ..... H:281-370-3544  
 Vice Pres: Bill Leach ..... H: 281-893-4057  
 Secretary: Brian Cudnik ..... H: 832- 912-1244  
 Treasurer: Bill Flanagan ..... H:713-699-8819

### Additional Board Members

	Liaison responsibility
Steve Goldberg .....	713-721-5077
Don Pearce .....	713-432-0734
JayLevy .....	281-557-4920 .... Field Trip and Observing, Program
Kenneth Miller .....	936-931-2724
Kent Francis	

### Committee Chairpersons

Audit .....	Don Selle .....	281-391-5470
Education .....	Richard Nugent .....	713-524-1993
Field Tr./Obsg. ....	Kenneth Miller .....	936-931-2724
Novice George Stradley .....	281-376-5787	
Observatory .....	Michael Dye .....	281-498-1703
Program .....	John Blubaugh .....	713-921-4275
Publicity .....	Joe Khalaf .....	713-660-8219
Telescope .....	Mike Hamlin .....	281-489-2926
Welcoming .....	Susan Kennedy .....	281-376-3262
	Hannah Lange .....	832-715-7833

### Ad-Hoc Committee Chairpersons

Historian .....	Leland Dolan .....	713-688-0981
Librarian .....	Peggy Gilchrist .....	281-443-8773
Logo Mds Sales .....	Judy Dye .....	281-498-1703
Long Range Plan .....	Bill Leach .....	281-893-4057
Parliamentarian .....	Kirk Kendrick .....	281-633-8819
Publ. Star Party .....	Richard Nugent .....	713-524-1993
Rice U. Coord. ....	Matt Delevoryas .....	713-666-9428
Schedule Obs'v'ty .....	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.  
 Dr. Lawrence Armendarez, U. of St. Thomas

### Dues and Membership Information

Annual Dues:Regular .....	\$36.00
Associate .....	\$6.00
Sustaining .....	\$50.00
Student .....	\$12.00
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 \$32.95/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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## 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 Leach .....	281-893-4057
Comets .....	Don Pearce .....	713-432-0734
Lunar & Planetary .....	John Blubaugh .....	713-921-4275
Occultations & Grazes .....	Wayne Hutchison .....	713-827-0828
Advanced .....	Bill Leach .....	281-893-4057

## 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://www.fbac.org>

**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](mailto:bill.leach@nhmccd.edu). Web site: [www.astronomyclub.org](http://www.astronomyclub.org)

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# ***HAS Banquet Report***

*By Allen Gilchrist*

A total of fifty eight HAS members, other astronomy enthusiasts, and their guests enjoyed a great meal and a stimulating program at the Annual HAS Banquet on Saturday night, February 26. The event was held at the Marriott on the West Loop at San Felipe. The program was presented by Dr. Patricia Reiff of Rice University. Dr. Reiff talked about her work with the Houston Museum of Natural Science developing total immersion educational programs for planetaria. The work is being done under a grant from NASA, but is not specifically targeted on astronomy. Dr. Reiff and several of her students had brought an inflatable planetarium dome and a special projector where banquet participants could experience the educational programs first hand. Programs for local schools and other groups are available through the HMNS. Participating partners and licensees are offering programs in several other locations around the world.

Guests were also treated to “door prizes” consisting of astrophotos by local amateur astro-imagers and puzzle cubes with aurora images and earth's magnetopause images and some made by one of Dr. Reiff's students. Special thanks for the success of the evening go to committee members Judy and Mike Dye and Hannah Lange.

## ***Membership Renewals...***

**Your membership is can be renewed on January 1 of each year.**

If you paid your dues after the first of 2004, you will only owe for the fraction of the year remaining in 2005. For example, if your dues are paid through March, 2005, you'd owe for 3/4 of 2005, or \$24.

Total yearly dues are \$36.

Magazine subscriptions can be renewed at any time and the renewal does not need to be synchronized with your HAS dues.

Membership in the Houston Astronomical Society is one of the great bargains in Astronomy. For a regular membership of \$36 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.

Encourage other astronomy enthusiasts to join the organization as well. It's a great group.

***Thanks!***

# Houston Astronomical Society

## General Membership Meeting

Friday, February 4, 2005

University of Houston

### *Minutes*

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The Meeting was called to order at 8:12pm; this was followed by a welcome from the President and meeting information.

There were 8 new members and no visitors present.

A get well card for Jay Levy was passed around for the membership to sign.

The following announcements were made:

- Bill Flanagan asked the membership to get their e-mail addresses to him so that he can notify people about official H.A.S. meetings.
- Steve Sartor shared about the membership decline in the H.A.S. and proposed that the official membership be started at 0 members each January 1st, then build up from there.
- All members will get a post card via postal mail. Kirk Kendrick raised the possibility of getting e-mail notification without the post card, a topic to be discussed further at the next Board meeting.
- The adjusted dates for the 2005 General Membership meetings are as follows: May 13 (moved from May 6), July 1 (unchanged), and September 9 (moved from September 2).
- The 6" Criterion scope will be raffled at the March H.A.S. meeting, raffle tickets will sell at \$5 apiece.
- Kent Francis shared information about Randall's and Kroger share cards and how the H.A.S. benefits from their use.
- Judy Dye shared several examples of logo sales.
- Michael Dye made two announcements.
  - The annual banquet will be February 26 and will cost \$28 per person.
  - The observatory fund raised a total of \$6,039.06 from 71 donors, average donation per person was \$85, he thanked these donors for making the fund raising a success.
- Leland Dolan announced the occultation of the star Antares by the moon between 4:30 and 5 am later in the month.
- Jim Cate announced the McDonald Observatory 82" scope trip, Feb. 14 or 15.
- Don "Captain Comet" Pearce gave the comet report which included four comets (all the comet information is posted on the H.A.S. web page):
  - C/2004 Q2 Machholz is still visible at 4th magnitude and its discoverer, Don Machholz, will be the August speaker for H.A.S.
  - The Deep Impact mission is still on schedule to impact 9P/Tempel 1 on July 4.
  - Additional comets that Don shared included the following: C/2003 K4 (LINEAR), C/2003 T4 (LINEAR), C/2004 Q1 (NEAT), and C/2005 A1 (LINEAR).

Don Pearce introduced John Blubaugh who introduced the evening's speaker, Reggie Dufour of Rice University, who spoke on the "Hubble Space Telescope and the Shaping of Planetary Nebula".

Following the talk:

- A clarification to next month's raffle was made
- A training session on the 36-inch scope at George will be held soon; check the George observatory website for details.
- Check your e-mail address and make sure it is current with the H.A.S. !

The meeting adjourned at 9:48pm.

# March/April Calendar:



Photo by Scott Mitchell

Check the web site:  
[www.astronomyhouston.org](http://www.astronomyhouston.org)  
**Webmaster: Bob Rogers**  
[siteworkerbob@hotmail.com](mailto:siteworkerbob@hotmail.com)

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

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 [siteworkerbob@hotmail.com](mailto:siteworkerbob@hotmail.com).

**Date Time Event**

## March 2005

3	11:37 a.m.	Last Quarter Moon
4	7:00 p.m.	Novice Presentation - UH
	8:00 p.m.	General membership meeting - UH
		Dr. Larry Pinsky, "Supernovae Dynamics"
5		Prime Night-Columbus
10	9:39 p.m.	New Moon
12		Members Observatory Night- Columbus
17	1:19 p.m.	First Quarter Moon
20	6:33 a.m.	Spring Equinox-sun moves north of celestial equator
25	2:59 p.m.	Full Moon

## April 2005

1	7:00 p.m.	Novice Presentation - UH
	8:00 p.m.	General membership meeting - UH
	6:50 p.m.	Last Quarter Moon
2		Members Observatory Night- Columbus
3		Jupiter at opposition
8	5:11 p.m.	Partial solar eclipse maximum
	3:32 p.m.	New Moon
9		Prime Night-Columbus
16	9:38 a.m.	First Quarter Moon
24	5:07 p.m.	Full Moon

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

## Special "Help" Volunteers

Any member who wants specific information on an astronomical topic may call special help volunteer (listed in most issues of the *GuideStar*). If you have a moderate knowledge of a special subject and would be happy to have others ask you about that subject, let the editor know and your subject, name and phone will be listed in *GuideStar* in the future.

**At the HAS meeting, please remember to park across from Entrance 14 because of the construction in the parking lot of the Science and Research bldg.**

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**GuideStar deadline**

**for the April**

**issue**

**is March 15**

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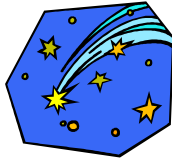
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## Observations... of the editor

by Bill Pellerin, GuideStar Editor

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When you see the Southern Cross for the first time  
You understand now why you came this way  
'Cause the truth you might be running from  
Is so small  
But it's as big as the promise  
-- The promise of a comin' day

### Stephen Stills

Well, since my last issue, I've seen the Southern Cross for the first time. Since February 11, I have been on a trip to Australia (work) and New Zealand (visiting friends). The truth is that I've never been in the southern hemisphere before, and certainly never been in the southern hemisphere to observe. I didn't bring a telescope or other equipment with me,



Venus Transit Observatory  
Queen Victoria Park  
Melbourne, Australia

and I didn't allocate any time specifically for observing. Wednesday, (March 2) it happened that we were out of town (Nelson, New Zealand) and I got a brief opportunity to observe the sky. High overhead, and to the north was the constellation Orion,

accompanied by Canis Major and Canis Minor. Taurus and the Pleiades were hidden by trees or the horizon.

It was interesting, and somewhat disorienting, to see Orion standing on his head ready to do battle with the invisible Taurus. Nearby was the constellation of Gemini with Saturn shining nearby.

Unfortunately, I didn't have a sky map with me last night, but it was easy to recognize the southern cross shining high in the southern sky. Wow... I was very pleased to see the constellation, having never seen it before. Without a sky map I was not equipped to find anything else. I managed to see the Large Magellanic Cloud with the help of my *Sky & Telescope* southern star chart. Large - yes; bright - yes. I could also see the Milky Way coming up across the southern horizon and passing near the Southern Cross... all VERY nice.

Prior to being in New Zealand, I was in Melbourne, Australia. This was the 'work' portion of the trip, and I didn't have a car, so I didn't get out of town to try to observe. I did see an observatory in the Queen Victoria Park (in Melbourne) that was set up for the Venus transit observation in the late 1800's. This was for the purpose of measuring the distance to the sun. At the time of this observation the relative distances of the planets from the sun was well known, but the absolute distance from the earth to the sun wasn't known. By accurately timing the transit of Venus from two locations on earth it would be possible to determine the earth - sun distance.

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It has been my pleasure to edit and write for the GuideStar for the last few years. I have tried to assure that the *GuideStar* gets to you on time, but this month, the *GuideStar* is late as the result of this trip. My apologies for any inconvenience associated with the lateness of the *GuideStar*. I'll need to get to work on the April issue right away.

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

*..Bill*

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# Observatory Duty Roster

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by Michael B. Dye, Observatory Chairman

This is the duty list for March, April and May. 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.

**March Supervisor.....Robert Rogers..... 281-460-1573**  
Roger Lee.....Site  
Jay Levy.....Site  
Mary Lockwood.....Members Observatory Night 03-12-05  
Robert Menius.....Site  
John Missavage.....Members Observatory Night 03-12-05  
Larry Mitchell.....Members Observatory Night 03-12-05

**April Supervisor.....Allen Gilchrist..... 281-443-8773**  
Debbie Moran.....Site  
Mark Mulrooney.....Site  
Johnny Norris.....Members Observatory Night 04-02-05  
Richard Nugent.....Members Observatory Night 04-02-05  
Ralph Overturf.....Site  
Don C. Pearce.....Members Observatory Night 04-02-05  
Sim Picheloup.....Site  
Scott Poteet.....Site  
Leonard Raif.....Site

**May Supervisor.....Brett Maiwald..... 281-259-3694**  
Eric Rothgeb.....Site  
Henry Schneider.....Site  
Carl Sexton.....Site  
Linda Sternbach.....Site  
Larry Wadle.....Site  
Mark Watson.....Members Observatory Night 04-28-05  
Tom Williams.....Site  
Barbara Wilson.....Members Observatory Night 04-28-05  
Buster Wilson.....Members Observatory Night 04-28-05

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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## Want Ads

**For Sale: Astronomical Camping Trailer.** 1985 Starcraft Nova (pop-up). 24' long when set up. Has a King size bed on one end, a Double size bed on the other end, and the table folds down to sleep a couple of kids. (or short adults) I bought this camper new, it has ALWAYS been stored indoors and is in EXCELLENT condition. Comes with air-conditioning (roof mounted) a small heater that helps some, electric refrigerator, porta-potty, clothes closet and lots of storage space. The interior lights are set to operate on red, white, or both. The porch light is red. \$2500.00 Steve Sartor [steve@sartor.com](mailto:steve@sartor.com) I know I have a picture somewhere, but can't locate one. Come see it!

**For Sale: Meade ETX 90EC Telescope,** and Meade tripod. Used once. Includes Autostar controller. Paid \$850 new 6 months ago – no time for a new hobby. Includes all original boxes and manuals, and carrying case for scope and tripod. Before I put it on eBay, I'd like someone local to enjoy this scope. I'll take \$500 or any reasonable offer. Contact Bill at [beley8@houston.rr.com](mailto:beley8@houston.rr.com).

**Wanted: High quality photographs** of the constellations Andromeda, Cassiopeia, Orion, and Ursa Major for use by my company. Call Richard Braastad at 713-529-4050.

**Wanted: Flexible slow-motion controls** for a light duty alt-az or German mounted scope. Call Clayton @ 281-573-1337

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## HAS Logo Sales

If you are interested in any of the club merchandise items (t-shirts, golf-shirts, sweatshirts, books, and other merchandise) please attend the next meeting or contact Judy Dye at 281-498-1703. To reduce Logo Sales inventory many items are being sold at reduced prices.

The list of available items appears regularly in the *GuideStar*.

### 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. Parking is NOW across from Entrance 14, by the stadium.

### Board of Directors Meeting

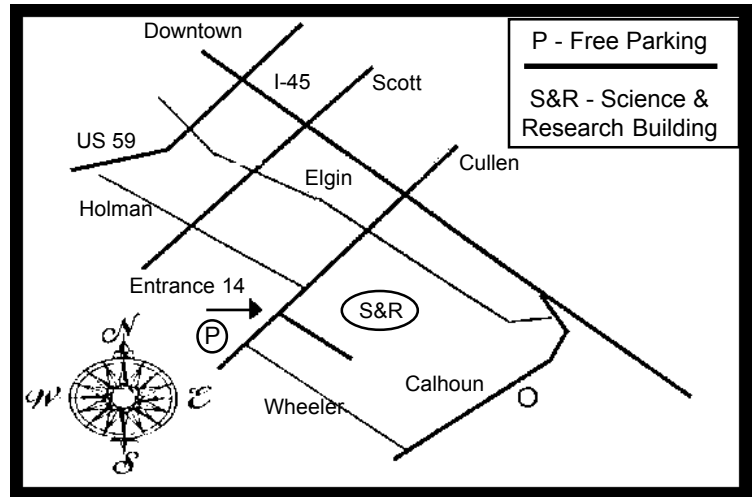
The Board of Directors Meeting is held on dates scheduled by the board at 7:00 p.m. at the University of St. Thomas. Information provided to GuideStar will be published. The meetings are open to all members of the Society in good standing. Attendance is encouraged.

### 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 by 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 text, MS-Word format via email BillP10566@aol.com. 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.

Editing & Production: Bill Pellerin, 713-880-8061; FAX: 713-880-8850;  
Email: Billp10566@aol.com

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



## **Houston Astronomical Society**

### **Meeting**

**March 4, 2005**

**7:00 Novice & Site Orientation**

**8:00 General Meeting**

**University of Houston**



## **Houston Astronomical Society**

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