



## First HCAS General Meeting of 2004 will be held at the Observatory, Saturday, January 10, 2004

In addition to our regular Business Meeting, we'll have a "look what I got for Christmas" show and tell. Bring your new toys and share with your friends!

This will be an abbreviated Astroviews since our December Meeting and Pot Luck dinner was snowed out! However, we'll certainly entertain any dessert items/snacks that anyone cares to bring to this meeting... Hey, it's a chance to unload that fruit cake!!!

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### A capture of some "old business" issues:

**Insurance bill due:** Carol paid the insurance bill since it was due 31 Dec. We have been unable to meet with the college to clarify the position on insurance requirements...although I know that Sal Rodano has been working hard to get a meeting established (thanks Sal, we'll keep trying)! Even if the HCC coverage is adequate for our events held on school grounds, one consideration remains what our liabilities may be for off site events, such as Broad Creek and Steppingstone.

**Astronomy Class Support:** Dr. George Thomson expresses his gratitude for the support he has enjoyed for his astronomy class. His schedule for the new quarter follows.

### SPRING 2004 Observation Schedule

#### February

Feb. 2, 2003

(Nearly Full moon - Hold Familiarization session)

Feb 9 (Nearly Full Moon - no session)

Feb 16 (moonless)

Feb 23 (moonless)

#### March

Mar 1 (3 Days past 1st quarter - will hold)

Mar 8 (Full Moon - NO SESSION)

Mar 15 (NO SESSION - College Closed for Spring Break)

Mar 22 (moonless)

Mar 29 (1 Day past 1<sup>st</sup> quarter - will hold)

#### April

Apr 5 (Full Moon - No Session)

Apr 12 (moonless)

Apr 19 (moonless)

Apr 24 (4 am session - moonless)

Apr 25 (4am session - will hold only if preceding Morning's session clouded out)

Apr 26 (1<sup>st</sup> quarter - will hold only if prior 1st Quarter sessions are clouded out)

#### END SEMESTER

There certainly have been some members that have been consistently supporting Dr. Thomson (especially notable are; Larry/Fran A., Jeremy K. and Joe M.) George sent:

"I appreciate the club's efforts this past semester and look forward to the next. As usual, the sessions drew rave reviews from the students. A couple seem motivated to join the club."

## Some New Business Items:

**NASA Night Sky Network:** A broad solicitation went out -- apparently nation wide -- for Local/Regional astronomy organizations to join the "NASA Night Sky Network". The selection of clubs is said to be limited, however it is free. As described by the announcement:

Clubs that are selected to join the network will receive FREE OUTREACH TOOLKITS from NASA on a variety of astronomy and space-related topics. The first Toolkit, called "PlanetQuest", includes a number of hands-on activities related to the SEARCH FOR EXTRASOLAR PLANETS.

Jointly developed by NASA, the ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY OF THE PACIFIC, and an advisory team of amateur astronomy club members, the program also includes training, special opportunities for working with NASA scientists and educators, access to a dedicated website for communicating with other Night Sky Network participants, and public recognition by NASA for their outreach activities.

I contacted President Wayne and VP Rusek for their thoughts on the matter, and then contacted the organizers to get the application. There needs to be some discussion of this, as it is very apparent from the material that they are expecting consistent and expanded public outreach that we may not be prepared to provide. As it is, we already receive materials from JPL/NASA that we distribute at our events. The application process specifies a primary AND secondary responsible individual in the club to be the interface. Those members primarily interested in public outreach, and who are willing to devote the time required to serve in this capacity, should identify themselves at the meeting. For more information, please consult the web site: <http://nightsky.jpl.nasa.gov/apply.cfm>

**Observatory Training Classes:** So far, we've had no additional requests for another training class for observatory operations. I certainly will open the observatory for Dr. Thomson's class observing sessions, but members who would like to try their hand on the large scope are encouraged to contact the HCAS secretary to schedule training.

**HCAS Display at the Bel Air Library:** Grace W. spearheaded the effort to construct our display for the month of January at the Bel Air Public Library. Assisted by Steve and Carol C., Larry A., and Steve K., Grace once again is "getting the word out" about astronomy and HCAS. Please drop by the library and check out the display if you can. I'll try to include a photo in the next newsletter.

## Odds and Ends:

**Jeremy sends this tip:** For those interested in conversing with other amateur astronomers, check out the Florida Star Gazers Forum.

<http://floridastargazerforums.ipbhost.com/index.php?act=idx>

At least 20 veteran star gazers from all over the US (and a few from UK). Several great astrophotographers. A roll off roof observatory or two. A bunch of 8" dobs (1 22" and an 18") and a bunch of 8" or 10" SCT users. Best astronomy resource i have found. Introduce yourself once you've joined in the "Welcome!..." forum and mention your from HCAS.

**From Bill G.:** Here are two calendars listing anniversaries and upcoming astronomy events for 2004.

<http://www.jpl.nasa.gov/calendar/#1099>

<http://vesuvius.jsc.nasa.gov/er/seh/dates.html#JANUARY>

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