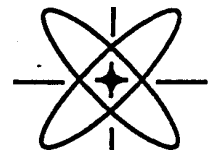


# METEOR WRITE



NEWSLETTER OF THE MEMPHIS ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY  
A NON-PROFIT, PUBLIC SERVICE ORGANIZATION PROMOTING INTEREST  
AND EDUCATION IN ASTRONOMY AND RELATED SCIENCES. FOUNDED IN 1953.

December, 2006

VOL.40 NO.12



## MERRY CHRISTMAS

### DECEMBER MEETING

The Memphis Astronomical Society will hold its regular monthly meeting at 8:00 P.M. on Friday, December 1<sup>st</sup> 2006, in the Science Auditorium on the campus of Christian Brothers University at Parkway and Central. Members are urged to attend and to bring guests; the public is welcome.

### PROGRAM

**WELCOME** \* \* President Moore will greet the members and guests and outline the evening's program.

**BUSINESS** \* \* The Treasurer's Report will be given by Treasurer Bill Wilson and the Minutes of the November Board of Directors Meeting will be read by Secretary Brenda Harris.

**ELECTION OF OFFICERS AND BOARD OF DIRECTORS FOR 2007** \* \* The M.A.S. will hold its annual election of its Officers and Board of Directors for the upcoming year. Remember, in order to vote or to run for office, you must have paid your dues. Since there are no contested positions, the voting will be by acclamation. The Nominees are:

<b>PRESIDENT:</b>	Richard Moore	<b>VICE-PRESIDENT:</b>	Lee Dunn
<b>TREASURER:</b>	Bill Wilson	<b>SECRETARY:</b>	Carrie Armus

### BOARD POSITIONS:

Lee Cole	Tom Emons	Tom Lawrence
Mark Matthews	Randy Roy	Mark Thomas

**MAS E-MAIL ADDRESS:** info @ MemphisAstro.Org

**MAS WEB SITE URL:** <http://www.MEMPHISASTRO.ORG>

**THE STAR OF BETHLEHEM** \* \* \* by Lee Dunn.

Come and hear about this “Christmas Star”, its lore, and possible explanations.

**BREAK** \* \* Time to refresh and to mix and mingle.

**HOW TO BUY A TELESCOPE** \* \* by Tom Emons.

Tom will tell us how to buy a telescope and what criteria you should look for in choosing one.

**DECEMBER OBSERVING SESSION** \* \* The December Observing Session will be held on Saturday, December 16<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 P.M. at our observing site near Lagrange, Tennessee. Maps and directions will be readily available at the December Meeting.

**WELCOME TO NEW MEMBER** \* \* The M.A.S. welcomes its newest member:

Ross Sackett; 788 Charles Place; Memphis, Tn 38112; 327-4727; [rsackett@memphis.edu](mailto:rsackett@memphis.edu). Please help welcome Ross to the Society and add him to your membership listing.

**THE GALLOPING AMATUER** \* \* by Richard Moore.

*...Observing Comets for Amateurs: Communication of Observations...Part Two...* When it comes to the communication of observations, all astronomical telegrams are divided into the following five groups.

Discoverer    Object    Observer    AAAAB

- 1) Name of the discoverer(s) and/or other description e.g., year and letter for a comet, constellation for a nova, galaxy for a supernova (N=NGC, I=IC, M=Messier), etc.
- 2) Type of Object (Comet, Object, Nova, Supernova, Variable Star=VSTAR, etc.)
- 3) Name of Observer(s) and/or Computer(s)
- 4) AAAA= equinox (assumed to be the mean equinox of the beginning of the year specified)
  - B=1 for an approximate position;
  - B=2 for an accurate position;
  - B=3 for orbital elements of an object moving about the sun;
  - B=4 for an ephemeris

Middle Groups for a Position

- 1) Approximate: CDDEE FFFGH IJJJ LMMNN PQRRS TUUUU VWWXX
- 2) Accurate: CDDEE FFFGH IJJK KKKLM MNNPP PQRRS TUUUU
- 3) Date of Observation:
  - C = final digit of year
  - DD = month (01=January...)
  - EE = day (U.T.)
- 4) FFFGH = time of observation in decimals of a day (U.T.)
- 5) Approximate Position:

R.A. II<sup>h</sup> JJ<sup>m</sup> .J  
 Dec. LMM<sup>o</sup> NN'  
 P = φ

6) Accurate Position:

R.A. II<sup>h</sup> JJ<sup>m</sup> KK<sup>s</sup>.KK  
 Dec. LMM<sup>o</sup> NN' PP''.P

L = sign: 2=positive, 1=negative.

Q=1 for "total" magnitude (m<sub>1</sub>) for a comet

Q=2 for "nucleur" magnitude (m<sub>2</sub>) for a comet

Q=3 for visual (m<sub>v</sub>) ) magnitude for a object

Q=4 for photographic (m<sub>pg</sub>) ) of stellar appearance

Q=5 for photvisual (m<sub>pv</sub>) ) (including minor planets)

RR= magnitude; if the magnitude is negative, add 100

S = appearance according to the table below:

	Nothing Reported About Tail	Tail<1°	Tail>1°
Stellar Appearance	0		
Nothing Reported about Appearance of object	1	2	3
Object Diffuse, without central condensation	4	5	6
Object Diffuse, with central condensation	7	8	9

7) For Comets and Minor Planets, the Daily Motion:

In R.A. T UU<sup>m</sup>.UU  
 In Dec. VWW<sup>o</sup>.XX

For Supernova, the offset from the nucleus of the parent galaxy:

In R.A. T UUUU''  
 In Dec. VWWXX''

T, V=sign=2=positive (east or north), 1=negative (west or south).

**THE PLANETS FOR DECEMBER, 2006\* \* by Richard Moore.**

PLANET	DATE	R. A. DEC			MAG.	RISE		SET		
		H	m	o		h	m	h	m	
Saturn	12/01	09	51	14	12	0.7	10	30 pm	11	50 aM
	12/05	09	51	14	13	0.7	10	15	11	35
	12/10	09	51	14	14	0.6	09	55 PM	11	15
	12/15	09	50	14	16	0.6	09	35	10	55
	12/20	09	50	14	20	0.6	09	15 PM	10	35
	12/25	09	49	14	24	0.6	08	54	10	15
	12/30	09	49	14	29	0.6	08	34	09	55

**COSMIC CHUCKLES \* by Richard Moore.**

Woman Who Invented Ether... Anna Sthetic.

**WHAT'S UP \* \* by Richard Moore.**

**DECEMBER, 2006**

**Visible Constellations**

Cassiopeia	Andromeda	Triangulum	Aries	Taurus
Perseus	Orion	Eridanus	Cetus	

**Visible Planets**

Venus... low in evening twilight last half of month.  
 Saturn... rises near 9:00 P.M.

**Good Objects to Observe**

$\psi$ Draconis	double star	Praesepe Cluster
M81	galaxy	Rosette Nebula

**Miscellaneous Notes**

...*Winter Solstice*... The sun reaches the point where it is furthest south of the celestial equator. So, the days are shortest and the nights are longest. The sun enters the astrological sign Capricornus, but astronomically it has only entered Sagittarius.

*NOVEMBER 2006 M.A.S. BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING*

November's Board meeting was held at the home of the host, Mark Matthews, on November 17. President Moore opened the meeting at 8:01 P.M. Present were Lee Cole, Lee Dunn, Tom Emens, Brenda Harris, Tom Lawrence, Mark Matthews, Richard Moore, Mark Thomas and Bill Wilson. Neyle Sollee was absent.

September minutes were read and approved with a correction to note Bob McCarty has not moved.

The treasurer reported a previous balance of \$1220.33 with deposits totaling \$379.12, and disbursements totaling \$313.15. Current balance is \$1286.30 and \$55.00 is in petty cash.

Meteor Write circulation will be 78. President Moore reported a decrease in postage expense with email distribution.

Village Creek observation will be held November 18. The Cordova Elementary School observation was a success with a total of about 200 students and parents. Students were offered extra credit for writing a report on what they saw. Tom Emens shared some of the reports.

Lee Cole reported a successful Boy Scout observation at Tunica. He expressed thanks to Earl Griffin and Bill Wilson for their assistance.

Bill Wilson, Freddy Diaz, Janet Howard and Randy Roy met at Shelby Farms to view the transit of Mercury on November 8th which attracted the attention of a number of interested spectators in the park.

Nominees for the new 2007 board are Richard Moore, President; Lee Dunn; Vice-President; Carrie Armus, Secretary; Bill Wilson, Treasurer, and Lee Cole, Tom Emens, Tom Lawrence, Mark Matthews, Mark Thomas, and Randy Roy as directors.

An application for membership was received from Ross Sackett. After discussion, a motion was made by Brenda Harris to accept the application. Motion was seconded and carried.

Report for the December, January, and February programs was given by Vice-President Lee Dunn.

President Moore adjourned the meeting at 8:30 P.M.

~Respectfully Submitted, Brenda Harris, Secretary