



NEWSLETTER OF THE MEMPHIS ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY

A NON-PROFIT, PUBLIC SERVICE ORGANIZATION PROMOTING INTEREST AND
EDUCATION IN ASTRONOMY AND RELATED SCIENCES. FOUNDED IN 1953.

NOVEMBER, 2009

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NOVEMBER MEETING

The Memphis Astronomical Society will hold its regular monthly meeting at 8:00 P.M. on Friday, November 6th, 2009, 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.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT * * The Nominating Committee will present the slate of candidates for Officers and Board Positions for 2010. Also, nominations from the floor will be accepted at this time. Remember, in order to vote or to run for office, you must have paid your dues.

MAS SHORT COURSE SESSION No. 3: Sun-Earth Moon Relationships * *

by William M. Wilson.

Bill will discuss the phases of the Moon, including the Moon's shape, the names of the phases, their times of rise, transit, and set; Earthshine, rotation and libration; solar eclipses (total, partial, and annular); lunar eclipses; and tides.

BREAK * * Time to refresh and mix and mingle.

THE MOON FROM PREHISTORY TO GALILEO * * by Ross Sackett.

Early views of the Moon as timekeeper, as a god, and as an object. Ross, an instructor of Anthropology at the University of Memphis, will examine the diverse significance of our Moon to early cultures, focusing on its role in the development of calendars, its varying depiction in world mythology, and the occasional speculation on its nature as an astronomical body and as a world.

NOVEMBER OBSERVING SESSION * * The November Observing Session will be held on Saturday, November 14th at 7:30 P.M.

MAS E-MAIL ADDRESS: info@MemphisAstro.org

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

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS * * The M.A.S. welcomes its newest members:
John Storms; 1148 Marcia Road; Memphis, Tn 38117; 682-5246; stormsfamily@bellsouth.net.

Robert Hill; 4571 Hudgins Road' Apt. 4; Memphis, Tn 38116; 756-1087; roberthill58@yahoo.com.

Tim Starck; 8822 Gainesway Drive; Germantown, Tn 38138; 405-1801; meerk@comcast.net.

Please help welcome John, Robert, and Tim to the Society and add them to your membership listing.

THE GALLOPING AMATEUR* * by Richard Moore.

...**Thanksgiving**... The pilgrims who sailed to America aboard the *Mayflower* were originally members of the English Separatist Church, a Puritan sect. They had previously fled their English homes and sailed to Holland in order to escape religious persecution. In Holland, while they did enjoy more religious tolerance, they yet eventually became dissatisfied with the Dutch way of life, considering it to be too ungodly. So, seeking a better life, the Separatists negotiated with a London stock company to finance a pilgrimige to America. Most, however, making the trip aboard the *Mayflower* were non-Separatists, hired to protect the company's interests. Indeed, only about one-third of the original colonists were Separatists.

So, on December 11th, 1620, the Pilgrims arrived at Plymouth Rock. The first winter was a total disaster. At the beginning of the following Fall, they had lost 46 of the original 102. The harvest of 1621, though, was a bountiful one. The remaining colonists decided to celebrate with a feast – including 91 Indians who had helped the Pilgrims survive the first year. Actually, the feast was more a traditional English harvest festival than a true “Thanksgiving” observance. It lasted three days. Governor William Bradford sent “four men fowling” after wild ducks and geese. It is not even certain that wild turkey was part of the feast. However, we do know that they had venison. The term “turkey” was used by the Pilgrims to refer to any kind of wild fowl.

In October of 1777 all thirteen colonies joined in a thanksgiving celebration for the first time. It also commemorated the patriotic victory over the British at Saaratoga. But this was a one-time only event. George Washington proclaimed a National Day of Thanksgiving in 1789, although some were opposed to it. There was discord among the colonies, many feeling that the hardships of the Pilgrims did not warrant a national holiday. And later, President Thomas Jefferson rejected the idea of a day of thanksgiving.

It was Sarah Josepha Hale, a magazine editor, whose efforts led to what we recognize as Thanksgiving. Hale wrote many editorials in the *Boston Ladies' Magazine*, and later, in *Godey's Lady's Book*. Finally, after a 40-year campaign of writing editorials and letters to governors and presidents, Hale's obsession became a reality when, in 1863, President Lincoln proclaimed the *last* Thursday in November as a national day of Thanksgiving.

Thanksgiving was proclaimed by every President after Lincoln. The date was changed a couple of times, most recently by Franklin D. Roosevelt, who set it in the week of the next-to-last Thursday in order to create a longer Christmas shopping season. Public uproar against this

decision caused the President to move Thanksgiving back to its original date two years later. And, in 1941, Thanksgiving was finally sanctioned by Congress as legal holiday, as the *fourth* Thursday in November.

WHAT's UP * * by Richard Moore.

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Visible Constellations

Pisces	Cetus	Pegasus	Ursa Minor	Ursa Major	
Andromeda		Triangulum	Auriga	Taurus	Gemini

Good Objects to Observe

NGC6905	planetary nebula in Delphinus	C1	open cluster in Cepheus
C52	elliptical galaxy in Cetus	NGC7009	planetary nebula in Aquarius

Minutes of the MAS Board of Directors Meeting, October 16, 2009

The Memphis Astronomical Society Board of Directors met at the home of Bill Wilson on October 16, 2009. President Moore called the meeting to order at 8:17 PM. Present were Richard Moore, Bill Busler, Mark Matthews, Freddy Diaz, and Bill Wilson. Absent were Ric Honey, Carrie Armus, Brenda Harris, Tom Emens, and Lee Cole. Because a quorum (six members) was not present, no business could be transacted, but information was given on a number of items.

Bill Wilson gave the Treasurer's report. The balance in the checking account at the time of the last Board meeting on September 18 was \$1743.82. Short Course manuals and Messier Guide sales at the General Meeting on Oct. 2 brought in \$240.00, less printing costs of \$180.00 for a profit of \$60.00. There have been three deposits since September 18, totaling \$1106.80. There has been one disbursement of \$180.00 to Bill Busler for printing costs of the Short Course manuals. The current balance is \$2670.62.

In Old Business, Brenda Harris was unable to attend, but sent the following information by email: A star party was held for All Pro Dads at Overpark Middle School on 9/26/09. About 35 people attended. Brenda received high compliments from the organizer, who asks that we do another one for them in the future. On October 1, Brenda and Earl Griffin attended the Pink Palace Crafts Fair held at Audubon Park. They set up outside the Sharpe Planetarium tent and assisted Dave Maness while also the MAS. They showed the sun to at least 250 visitors over about four hours. Interested parties took a lot of brochures and other handouts, sky charts, etc. and many were interested in the short course too.

A sidewalk astronomy event planned on October 4 at City Park in Olive Branch was cancelled due to clouds/rain. The public observing at Village Creek State Park on October 10 also had to be cancelled because of clouds.

Bill Wilson and Freddy Diaz will show the Moon and Jupiter at Shelby Farms on October 31 to help raise funds for the Shelby County Equestrian Alliance at the park. Ric Honey has an event planned for Boy Scouts at Chickasaw Council, the Centennial EXPO on November 7, with or without clouds, also at Shelby Farms

The next Night Sky Network teleconference is on Tuesday, October 27th. The subject is "The Lives of Stars" and the presenter is Dr. John Bally. Brenda will send an e-mail and place a webpage notice with instructions on accessing the conference. Mark your calendars to be in attendance.

In New Business, President Moore appointed Bill Wilson to serve as the Nominating Committee for the Board of Directors election to be held in December.

Membership applications were received from John Storms, Robert Hill, and Tim Starck. Because a quorum was not present, Board members were polled by e-mail, and all three applications were approved. Welcome, John, Robert, and Tim!

The program was set for the November general meeting
President Moore adjourned the meeting at 8:47 PM.

William M. Wilson
Secretary Pro Tem