

NOVA

Newsletter of the Salt Lake Astronomical Society

Volume 36 No 1

Jan - Feb 2006

Happy New Year

Lowell Lyon takes reigns as President

Hello! I'm Lowell Lyon and I have the opportunity to serve as club president this year. This will be the fourth time in my long tenure as a member of SLAS that I will have this chance. I first joined the club in the early 1970's and in fact was one of the charter members of SLAS.

Before we actually started calling the club SLAS, it was known as the STAR Association. We met in a classroom that was in the basement of the Hansen Planetarium. John Mosely, staff astronomer of the Hansen Planetarium, was also one of the charter members.

I remember "Telescope Fairs" that we used to hold on the second floor of the planetarium before the building was remodeled to accommodate more exhibits upstairs. These events were to help new club members and the general public understand how to buy and use a telescope.

The early club newsletter was called, "The Scope Jockey's Journal," before eventually becoming the NOVA. If you ever have a chance to look at some of these old newsletters, I'm sure you would find them interesting.

I remember when Pat Wiggins and myself were officially "co-chairs" of the public star parties at Little Mountain. For many years, we would always find Bob Brundige with his big 12" Cave Newtonian reflector up at Little Mountain almost every Friday night showing the wonders of the universe to whoever came by. Sometimes the Hansen Planetarium's first director, Mark Littmann, would speak to the audience before it became fully dark.

My first telescope was a fabulous 60mm refractor I bought from the Sears store in Murray. A year or so later, a family moved into the home next door that had an old Edmund Scientific 4-1/4" Newtonian reflector with clock drive on a pedestal base. There were no optics or finder scope, so I purchased these from Edmund and off I went.

The jump from a 60mm to a 4-1/4" scope was a nice increase in aperture for me. After another year or so, I invested in an 8" RV-8 Dynascope from Criterion Manufacturing. "Aperture Fever" had struck and I was really into visual astronomy under the darkest skies could find near my home in Holladay.

I bought my first "piece of Schmidt" from John Mosely in 1977. It was a classic C-8 with a sand-cast fork mount and of course an orange tube! I used this scope at Little Mountain extensively for many years. I remember comments from Brent Watson and other club members who told me that my optics were some of the best ever seen in a Celestron scope. I eventually sold this scope to the University of Utah Physics Department for use with their astronomy classes.

Currently, I enjoy using a 10" Meade LX200 GPS and a 20" Obsession Dobsonian. I have always loved going to the Uintah Mountains, Rush Valley, Skyline Drive and southern Utah for some real dark skies!

I hope this year is a fun one for all of us. If you remember my campaign statement, I reiterate what I said before that I want to see SLAS reach out and help enrich the astronomy experiences for all club see **Lowell** page 2

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Lowell continued from front page

whatever their interests are; public outreach, private observing, research, general education or just socialize with fellow enthusiasts!! I will strive to have good meetings with interesting presentations. I hope you will all bring friends and family to the March meeting in particular as we have "Physics Family Fun Night" at the University of Utah. Thanks to a great tip from member Richard Tenney, we will have an exciting presentation from Robert K. Wilson of the Jet Propulsion Laboratory. Mr. Wilson is the Project Manager of the Spitzer Space Telescope. This talk will be on a Friday evening for the general public, sponsored by SLAS and the U of U Physics Department.

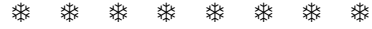
Some of the things I would like to see SLAS members team up to accomplish are:

- 1) Monthly "rap" sessions. These were popular back in the early days of the club. In addition to the monthly club meetings, members would gather at other's homes to talk about a specific topic of special interest to the attendees.
- 2) New member books. Karla van Hemert has graciously offered to spearhead this effort to have useful information to give to new SLAS members.
- 3) Membership cards/badges. To help us get to know each other better. Along with all of Erik Hansen's other talents, he's going to help here as well.
- 4) SLAstrofest new member weekend. It rained on us two years ago, yet we still had fun! The last weekend in July we will be going back to Wolf Creek to have a group campout with seminars/classes, workshops, a group dinner and observing sessions to practice what has been learned during the day.
- 5) Lectures at SPOC for the public. Bill Kennedy

has offered to work on developing public presentations at the SPOC public star parties to enhance everyone's learning experience.

Annual events such as Astronomy Day also gives SLAS a great opportunity for public outreach. Ann House and Tom Sevcik will do great things this year! I hope you will join me, along with an extremely talented Board of Directors, for an exciting year!

Thank You
Lowell Lyon



2006 Meeting Schedule

By Lowell Lyon

(editor's note: schedule is arranged by date on first line; presenter/organization, on second line and topic on third line).

January 24

**Seth Jarvis, Director, Clark Planetarium
Partnering to Promote Astronomy**

February 28

**Dr. Stacy Palen, Weber State University
Eclipsing Binaries & their Companions**

March 28

**University of Utah Physics Department
Physics Family Fun Night (UofU campus)**

April 25

**Jerry Foote, President, ScopeCraft, Inc.
Cataclysmic Variable Stars and Extra
Solar Planet Transits**

May 23

**SLAS membership
Summer Observing Kick-Off
See Schedule page 3**

SLAS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Name	Office held	Home Phone	General Assignments
Lowell Lyon	Presidnet	942-8735	Meetings & Events
Tom Sevcik	Vice President	860-5409	Public Relations
Erik Hansen	Secretary-Treasurer	253-2201	Member dues & renewals
Karla van Hemert	Board Member at Large	280-1847	School & Special S.P.'s
Bill Kennedy	Board Member at Large	964-6199	Public Star Parties

The NOVA is a publication of the Salt Lake Astronomical Society, a non-profit organization. The bimonthly newsletter contains minutes of the Board and General Meetings, Board member names and phone numbers, activities, reports, calendars and new member information. It also announces special events and dates such as speakers, field trips and conventions. The NOVA may contain advertising of equipment for sale, etc., by its members.

The editor of the NOVA is appointed by the Board and may serve until replaced or resignation. The editor may be a Board member, and publication of the NOVA lies within the responsibility of the Vice President.

Members are encouraged to contribute articles and participate in its publication. If you wish to help, please contact the Vice President, a Board member or the NOVA editor. The deadline for submitting articles or items of interest related to amateur astronomy is usually the last week of February, April, June, August, October and December.

Current NOVA editor is: Tom Sevcik; home phone no. (801) 262-6557; cell no. 860-5409. Email address: sfv1ts@hotmail.com.

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June 27

**Brent Sorensen, South'n Utah University
Spectroscopy & Diffraction Gratings**

July 25

**Joan Carman, past SLAS President
Constellation Mythology, Star Lore
and Meaning**

August 22

**Nowell Morris
Utah Valley State College
Archeoastronomy, Parowan Gap**

September 26

**Richard Erwin, College of Eastern Utah
Photography, CCD Imaging**

October 24

**Dr. Dale Ostlie, Weber State University
To Be Announced**

November 28

**Dr. Clark Christensen, BYU
Astrobiology**



Email Verification

President Lowell Lyon has noticed that a number of email addresses in the current SLAS roster are incorrect. Those with incorrect email addresses will not be able to receive his "SLAS Blast" meeting content notifications. Members are encouraged to verify their email address on the SLAS website. If not sure if SLAS has your current, correct email address, please contact Secretary/Treasurer Erik Hansen at ehansen@networld.com.



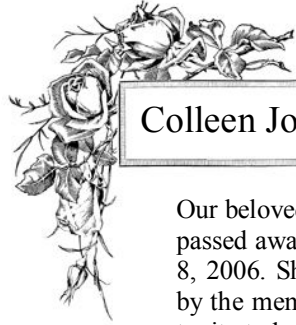
☺ **Please Welcome These** ☺

**Newcomers for Nov - Dec
Jason Elmer and Frederick Riemer**



NASA'S STARDUST WEBCAM

If you missed the reentry, you can watch live views of the Stardust Cleanroom at the Johnson Space Center in Houston, Texas as it's being disassembled. Images are updated every 60 seconds and time lapse moview are available. Check it out at <http://stardust.jpl.nasa.gov/mission/webcam.html> you'll be glad you did!
the Editor



In Memory..

Colleen Jo Fengins McNeil

Our beloved friend, **Colleen McNeil** passed away at her home on January 8, 2006. She will be greatly missed by the members who had the opportunity to have gotten to know her.

Our heartfelt *Sympathy* goes out to Boyd and family. Rest In Peace, Colleen.



Stardust in the printed news

While Stardust will receive a lot of international attention for some time to come, local coverage on the front pages of printed media on January 16th was well represented. **Celestial landing**, was written by *Greg Lavine* for the Salt Lake Tribune. A very nice photo by the Tribune's Chris Detrick complimented the article.

SLAS's *Joe Bauman* wrote **FIREINTHESKY** for the Deseret Morning News. A photo by Jeffery D. Allred taken at Wendover Airfield accompanied the article.

If any club member would like to write an article on their first-hand impression of Stardust's reentry, please forward it to the editor, sfv1ts@hotmail.com by the end of February.



Proclamation writer sought

International Astronomy Day chairperson, Tom Sevcik, is looking for a club member interested in writing a proclamation for Astronomy Week, April 30 to May 6th, and Astronomy Day, May 6th. An example, written by Ann House, for 2005 can be found in that year's edition of the NOVA for Mar-Apr, page 7. Wording of the proclamation can be similar or rewritten and will be left up to the discretion of the writer. The Astronomy Day committee will be in charge of final approval. If you would like to take on this project, please contact the chair at sfv1ts@hotmail.com.



Whirlwind Disaster

Where do these monster storms we call hurricanes come from? Why do they always form near the equator and only during certain times of the year? How do they come to be so organized and so destructive?

You can find answers to these questions and play an exciting hurricane word game called "*Whirlwind*" see **Whirlwind** page 4

Whirlwind continued from page 3

Disaster” at the **SciJinks** Weather Laboratory Web site. SciJinks targets young people of middle school age. It is a joint effort of the *National Aeronautics and Space Administration* (NASA) and the *National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration* (NOAA). The new “How does a hurricane form?” page and accompanying interactive game can be found in the How & Why menu on the SciJinks Weather Laboratory home page, <http://scijinks.gov>.

Forwarded by Nancy Leon, JPL



Fallen Heroes

Let us not forget that tragic event 20 short years ago, on January 28, 1986, when the space shuttle **Challenger** was torn apart by the detonation of one of its solid fuel boosters. Let us take a minute to pray for the families and friends they left behind.

CHRISTA MCMAULIFFE
FRANCIS (DICK) SCOBEE
MIKE SMITH
ELLISON ONIZUKA
JUDY RESINK
RON MCNAIR
GREGORY JARVIS



Transitional Meeting Minutes

The annual Transitional Meeting was held on December 12, 2005 at the home of Siegfried Jachmann. The meeting started at 7:13 p.m. with Siegfried, Lowell Lyon, Tom Sevcik, Bill Kennedy, Patrick Wiggins, Nate Goodman, Bruce Grim, Charlie Green and John Houser attending.

For 2006, Board meetings will continue to be held at 6:45 p.m. and General meetings to be held at 7:30 p.m. on the Fourth (4th) Tuesday of each month with the exception of December.

Dues for 2006 were discussed and weighed, with the general concensus that a slight increase would eventually be needed. The new dues structure would be as follows:

General fund, \$2.50 (\$3.00 for '05); Postage & Printing, \$4.50 (\$3.50 for '05); Entertainment, \$2.00 (\$2.00 for '05); Astronomical League, \$5.00 (\$5.00

for '05); Insurance, \$4.00 (\$3.50 for '05) and Public

Outreach, \$2.00 (new fund) for a total of \$20.00 (a \$3.00 per year increase per member). The proposal was seconded and passed.

The private and public star and sun party schedule was discussed and was approved by the Board as follows:

March 24th & 25th, Messier Marathon at SPOC (members only).

April 7th, Public star party at Harmons in Midvale. **8th**, public star party at SPOC. **15th**, Sun party at Jordan River Parkway.

May 5th, Public star party at Harmons in Tayorsville. **6th**, Astronomy Day - Public daytime activities TBA, Public star party at SPOC. **13th**, Public Sun party at Jordan River Parkway. **20th**, Public star party at SPOC.

June 2nd, Public star party at Harmons in Midvale. **3rd**, Public star party at SPOC. **10th**, Public Sun party at Jordan River Parkway. **17th**, Public star party at SPOC. **21st - 24th**, Public star parties at Bryce Canyon National Park. **30th**, Public star party at Harmons in Kearns.

July 1st, Public star party at SPOC. **8th**, Public Sun party at Jordan River Parkway. **15th**, Public star party at SPOC. **28th - 29th**, SLAStrofest at Wolf Creek (members only).

August 4th, Public star party at Harmons in Midvale. **5th**, Public star party at SPOC. **12th**, Public Sun party at Jordan River Parkway. **19th**, Public star party at SPOC.

September 1st, Public star party at Harmons in Brickyard. **2nd**, Public star party at SPOC. **9th**, Public Sun party at Jordan River Parkway. **16th**, Public star party at SPOC. **29th**, Public star party at Harmons in Midvale. **30th**, Public star party at SPOC.

October 7th, Public Sun party at Jordan River Parkway. **14th**, Public star party at SPOC. **28th**, Public star party at SPOC.

November 8th, Public Mercury transit watch (approximately Noon to 5:00 p.m.), at Harmons in Midvale?

December 9th, Winter Solstice Festival (location to be announced). **12th**, Transitional Board meeting (location and time to be announced).

All star parties are to start around dusk while the Sun parties will start at 10:00 a.m. and end at Noon.

Duty assignments were designated upon acceptance as follows:

Nate Goodman, star party schedules.

Ann House and Tom Sevcik, Astronomy Day chairs.

Tom Sevcik, NOVA editor.

Karla van Hemert, school and special star parties.

Bill Kennedy, public star parties.

see **Transitional** page 5

Transitional continued from page 4

Don Colton, private star parties.
 Erik Hansen, Astronomical League coordinator.
 Rob Oliver, Loaner scope custodian.
 Patrick Wiggins, Historian.
 Ron Ford, Solar scope custodian.
 John Houser, Librarian.
 Ken and Kathleen Warner, Webmasters.
 Bruce Grim, Observatory director.
 Ann House, Night Sky Ambassador (NASA).

The following will be the SPOC committee for the year 2006; Ron Ford (chair), Lowell Lyon, Bruce Grim, Kim Hyatt, Patrick Wiggins, Roger Butz, Ken Harris, Mark Bloomenthal and Kevin Bushnell (representative for Harmons). One opening remains on the committee and any member may volunteer.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:06 p.m.

Proposed 2006 Private Star Parties

From Don Colton

March 31 – April 1, *Wedge Overlook*

April 28 – 29, *Wedge Overlook*

May 26 – 27, *Gravel Pit*

June 21 – 24, *Bryce Canyon* (Gravel Pit for those not attending Bryce Canyon Astronomy Festival)

July 21 – 22, *Wolf Creek*

July 28 – 29, *Wolf Creek* SLAStrofest

August 25 – 26, *Wolf Creek* and possibly *Capitol*

Reef or *Great Basin National Park*

September 22 – 23, *Wedge Overlook*

October 20 – 21, *Wedge Overlook*

Refractor Level 1 classes

There are still limited openings left for those who are interested in taking the Refractor Level 1 class. Details of this and other classes follow this notice. The level 1 classes are on March 4 and March 11 and start at 7:00 p.m. at the observatory. Please contact **Mark Bloomenthal**; markbloomenthal@yahoo.com.

Scope Training at SPOC for the 2006 Observing Season

from Mark Bloomenthal

We are currently offering the following classes during the 2006 SPOC observing season. All SPOC telescope training classes are free of charge.

200mm Bogdan Refractor Level 1: This introductory class consists of a single session at SPOC lasting between 1 and 2 hours. Can be

repeated. There are no prerequisites for taking this class, and you do not need to be a member of SLAS.

200mm Bogdan Refractor Level 2: Intended to qualify students for solo use of the Bogdan Refractor. This hands-on class consists of multiple sessions at SPOC, each lasting between 2 and 3 hours. The number of sessions required for a student is determined by the instructor. **Prerequisites:** 200mm Bogdan Refractor Level 1 *and* SLAS membership.

16" Ealing Level 1: This introductory class consists of a single session at SPOC lasting between between 1 and 2 hours. Can be repeated. There are no prerequisites for taking this class, and you do not need to be a member of SLAS.

16" Ealing Level 2: Intended to qualify students for solo use of the Ealing telescope. This hands-on class consists of multiple sessions at SPOC, each lasting between 2 and 3 hours. The number of sessions required for a student is determined by the instructor. **Prerequisites:** 200mm Bogdan Refractor Level 2, Ealing Level 1 *and* SLAS membership.

16" Ealing Refresher: This class is intended to re-familiarize students with the operation of the Ealing telescope at the beginning of the observing season. This class is not required for the operation of the Ealing this season, but it is highly recommended. Single sessions at SPOC lasting between 2 and 3 hours. **Prerequisite:** Ealing Level 2.

32" Grim Scope Level 2: Intended to qualify students for solo use of the Grim Scope. This hands-on class consists of multiple sessions at SPOC, each lasting between 2 and 3 hours. The number of sessions required for a student is determined by the instructor. **Prerequisites:** Ealing Level 2 and current SPOC key holder status.

32" Grim Scope Refresher: This class is intended to re-familiarize students with the operation of the Grim Scope. This class **is required** for each Grim Scope operator at the beginning of each observing season. **Prerequisite:** Grim Scope Level 2.

Fees: All SPOC telescope training classes are **free of charge**. However, upon completion of all required training, the annual SPOC key holder fee (currently \$25) must be paid to the SLAS Secretary/Treasurer before solo access to the facility is granted. Students should **not** pay the SPOC key holder fee until **after** they have passed a level 2 scope class.

Note: The annual SPOC key holder fee covers the entire facility; there is **not** a separate fee for access to each telescope. However, operators will have access only to those scopes on which they have successfully completed training.

Becoming a SPOC Key Holder: In order to become see **Scope Training** page 7

WINTER SOLSTICE FESTIVAL ENDS YEAR OF CHANGES

from the editor

The year 2005 ended with a Bang, and rightfully so. It started with a new meeting place, the Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church, the dedication of the new Harmons Observatory and Grim Telescope and ended with the club leaving for a new location.

What better way to end it all than with the annual Winter Solstice Festival? More than 70 members and family shared a pot luck dinner, fun, prizes, awards and those famous “SLASmas” carols led by Mark Swain. Decorations of glittering stars, pinecones and holly adorn the tables. In a unusual twist, Lowell Lyon played back a video of past SLAS events and had Cindy Dodds, David Bernsen and Tom Sevcik add slapstick lines to the otherwise “silent movie.” As usual, leftovers were dying to be taken home.

Let’s give a “Thank You” to the festival committee: Ann House, chair; Tom Sevcik, co-chair; Josephine Grahn, Lowell Lyon, Mark Bloomenthal, Guy Malmborg, Ivo Stutznegger, Bill and Jacquie Kennedy, Kim Hyatt and John Peterson. Also to those who added prizes to the pile and helped out in other ways. In addition, the club gave a gift of \$100 to church custodian Brad Nielson and \$25 to the church as a “Thanks” for their hospitality to the club.

Steve Dodds received the honors of improving the famous “Mickey Mouse” telescope for 2006. Will it now become a “Go To?” We’ll find out December 9th. Now, let’s get on to the pictures....

“When SUV’s Attack”...



Scope Training continued from page 5

a SPOC key holder and gain solo access to the observatory, you must pass a level 2 class to the satisfaction of your instructor, have paid the annual SPOC key holder fee, and have been a member of SLAS for at least 6 months.

Minutes of the Salt Lake Astronomical Society General Meeting

for November 22, 2005

Editor's Note; there was not a Board meeting held in the absence of the President.

Vice President Bill Cowles opened the General meeting at 7:30 p.m. with an introduction of the Board. Bill announced that the treasurer's report was posted and is as follows: General fund, \$7,780.83; Printing & Postage, \$117.51; Entertainment, \$442.48; Astronomical League, \$212.25; SPOC, \$5,681.27; H-Alpha scope, - \$25.00 and Insurance, \$252.50 for a total of \$14,461.34.

He then announced that the Winter Solstice Festival was coming to the church location on December 10th. A brief discussion about details followed.

Lowell Lyon followed with announcing a new location for the first of 2006. Those included the Main Street Library, Salt Lake Community College in downtown and the University of Utah. He had also talked to Larry Miller about meeting venues. Also mentioned was KJAZZ with two large rooms. Lowell also announced that he had all but one month filled with speakers for the meetings. He briefly described each meeting's agenda. Lowell has experience in television advertising. One attendee asked about the accessibility to eateries and Lowell assured them that each venue has establishments for Advanced Training.

Don Colton followed with an announcement about the Bryce Canyon Astronomy Festival to be

held on June 21 – 24. There will be a limit of 40 scope from the society as Chad Moore and Kevin Poe are trying to enlarge the festival and are attempting to recruit members from other clubs as well.

Patrick Wiggins notified the attendees that the calendar orders were available.

Guest speaker Dave Bernsen then took the floor. He started off with a description of various star charts and how he compared their usefulness.

Using slides, he showed various objects like open and globular star clusters, nebula and galaxies. He also highlighted the planets and pointed out that one can see the crescent of Venus with the naked eye. In addition, the use of a blue or purple filter will help show cloud structure when used with a telescope. He also described and showed how Mars can be shrouded with dust. Dave also uses the deep-sky filter from Lumicon and others to bring out more details on the Red Planet's surface. He also noted that to see the detail, a scope should be where the air is tranquil.

Also covered in his presentation were double and multiple star systems, galaxies and nebula. All-in-all everyone was enthusiastic of Dave's presentation.

Patrick Wiggins made the announcement that at 3 a.m. on January 15, the Stardust space craft would re-enter the atmosphere and would be visible over Wendover. Those interested would contact Patrick.

Don Colton won the monthly contest in which the subject was Mars. Don was awarded \$10 for his entry by photo contest organizer Ken Warner.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Messier Marathon

March 24th and 25th

Get ready to party "all-night-long" with a group of marathoners from dusk to dawn. A red flash light, a checklist, warm clothing, some hot chocolate or coffee and rested eyes is all that's needed besides your scope of course. Messier Marathons are held at SPOC, so be sure to arrive early enough to set up your scope *before* the skies go dark. Guidelines for entrance beyond the gate can be found on page 4 of the Jul-Aug 2005 issue of the NOVA under **Attention all SLAS club members**. Clear skies!

Eyepieces for sale

(1) Tele Vue 7.4mm Plössl and (1) Orion 12.5mm MC illuminated eyepiece with single cross-hairs. Both have 1-1/4" barrels and been rarely used. \$50 each. Contact Tom Sevcik at sfv1ts@hotmail.com or (801) 262 – 6557 if interested.

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