

NCRAL REGION REPORT
July 1, 2018 – June 30, 2019
Carl J. Wenning, Regional Chair

Region's Executive Officers:

Chair (2-year term expires 2021)

Carl J. Wenning (Twin City Amateur Astronomers)
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Vice Chair (2-year term expires 2021)

Bill Davidson (Rochester Astronomy Club)
3705 Halling Place SW
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Secretary/Treasurer (3-year term expires 2021)

Roy Gustafson (Popular Astronomy Club)
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Representative to the National Council (Interim 2019-2020)

Bill Davidson (Rochester Astronomy Club)
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Region Administrative Updates:

- Paid to remove advertising from our WordPress website: <http://ncral.wordpress.com/>
- Completed third year of publishing four consecutive issues of ***Northern Lights***, the region's quarterly newsletter. Back issues are accessible on the Region's website at <https://ncral.wordpress.com/newsletter-archive/>
- Approved \$250 allocations for both the Regional Chair and the Regional Representative to attend the AL National Council meeting. (Previously, only the Regional Representative was funded.)
- Chose a draft NCRAL logo using a contest in which there were 7 entries. The finalized logo has been adopted by a vote of the Regional Council.
- Developed a small grant program for membership recruitment for a selected affiliate.
- Developed a small grant program for affiliate recruitment for Astronomical League and by default NCRAL. (There were no applicants for this grant in 2019.)
- Developed the content for a draft NCRAL affiliate recruitment brochure

- Developed and conducted a survey of the NCRAL membership specifically focused on why many members do not attend Regional meetings and attempt to find what it takes to increase participation from the section of the membership.
- Developed and conducted its second post-regional convention survey of participants of NCRAL 2019 in an effort to conduct an evaluation and improve future offerings. The 33-item survey is available by contacting the Regional Chair.
- Updated its NCRAL *Convention Planning Guidelines* based on an NCRAL 2019 post-convention survey. Available online at <https://ncral.files.wordpress.com/2018/11/ncral-convention-planning-guidelines.pdf>

Notable Awards:

- Terry Dufek of Popular Astronomy Club (Illinois) received the Astronomical League's *Mabel Sterns Newsletter Editor Award* for 2018 during ALCon 2018 at Minneapolis, MN.
- Roy E. Gustafson of Popular Astronomy Club (Illinois) received the *2018 NCRAL Region Award*.
- John Heasley of the Iowa County Astronomers (Wisconsin) received the *2019 NCRAL Region Award*.
- Bill Davidson of Rochester Astronomy Club (Minnesota) won the (inaugural) *2019 NCRAL Newsletter Editor Award* for producing *Rochester Skies*.
- The Twin City Amateur Astronomers (Illinois) received the first *NCRAL Mini Grant for Membership Recruitment* (\$250). (The *NCRAL Mini Grant for Affiliate Recruitment* went unclaimed.)
- Dave Falkner and Valts Treibergs from the Minnesota Astronomical Society won the Astronomical League G. R. Wright Award for Volunteerism for their work on the 2018 ALCon event.
- Benedict Althoff, La Crosse, Wisconsin, won the Horkheimer/O'Meara Journalism Award for "Memories of the Great American Eclipse"
- Jean Napp, member of the Iowa County Astronomers of Wisconsin, won the 2019 Poetry Award – Adult Category sponsored by Astronomers Without Borders.

NCRAL Member Accomplishments:

- Four Regional authors had seven articles published in the Astronomical League's *Reflector* magazine during the past four quarters:
 - Jamey L. Jenkins, Twin City Amateur Astronomers, *Adventures of a Starlight Detective*, June 2018.
 - Carl Wenning, Twin City Amateur Astronomers, *Sea Changes in NCRAL*, September 2018.
 - Dave Tosteson, Chicago City, Minnesota, *White Snow and the Seven Dwarves*, September 2018.
 - Dave Falkner, Minnesota Astronomical Society, *ALCON 2018 in Review*, September 2018.
 - Dave Tosteson, Chicago City, Minnesota, *Things to a Void: Some Parts of the Universe are Eemptier than Others*, December 2018.
 - Jamey L. Jenkins, Twin City Amateur Astronomers, *Basic Small-Scope Lunar Imaging*, March 2019.
 - Dave Tosteson, Chicago City, Minnesota, *The Cosmic Web: I Life My Eyes to the Heavens Whence Comes My Joy*, March 2019.
- Numerous members earned AL observing club pins and certificates.

NCRAL 2019 Regional Convention:

Astronomical Voyages of Discovery: Past, Present & Future was the theme of the NCRAL 2019 Regional convention held May 3-5, 2019 at the Stoney Creek Hotel and Convention Center in Moline, IL. The event was hosted by Popular Astronomy Club. There were 87 registrants and guests in attendance. New this year were events on Thursday afternoon and evening and Sunday morning.

Affiliate Activities:

- The Minnesota Astronomical Society (Minnesota) hosted ALCon 2018 at Minneapolis, Minnesota, July 11-14.
- The Minnesota Astronomical Society celebrated Spring and Fall Astronomy Day with special daytime activities and observing.
- The Champaign-Urbana Astronomical Society (Illinois) had a regional park recognized by the International Dark-Sky Association as a dark-sky site.
- The Champaign-Urbana Astronomical Society (Illinois) hosted an *Astronomy Jamboree* for astronomy club members from around central Illinois during September.
- The Twin City Amateur Astronomers (Illinois) installed a 24" AG Optical telescope at their Waynesville Observatory.

- The Door Peninsula Astronomical Society (Wisconsin) replaced their 14" Celestron Schmidt-Cassegrain telescope with a 16" Ritchey-Chrétien telescope with a 7" Maksutov-Cassegrain piggybacked for planetary viewing in the Leif Everson Observatory.
- The Door Peninsula Astronomical Society (Wisconsin) also replaced its inflatable dome planetarium with a new Digitalis inflatable planetarium and has already provided both on-site and off-site outreach with this equipment.

Star Parties:

- The Wisconsin Observer's Weekend was held at Hartman Creek State Park near Waupaca, WI.
- The Iowa Star Party was held at the Whiterock Resort in Coon Rapids, IA.
- The Illinois Dark Skies Star Party was hosted by Sangamon Astronomical Society and held at the Jim Edgar Panther Creek State Fish & Wildlife Area in west central Illinois.
- The Minneapolis Astronomical Society hosted Camping with the Stars @ Eagle Lake Observatory in Norwood-Young America.

Objectives for 2019-2020:

The current objectives for 2019-2020 is to increase individual memberships in NCRAL-affiliated clubs, societies, and associations, to promote the regional affiliate's involvement in NCRAL events, and increase the number of astronomy clubs participating in the Astronomical League and, by default, the Region. At its annual business meeting at NCRAL 2019 in Moline, IL, the Region's leadership sought and obtained approval to set the following objectives for 2019-2020:

- Continue development of the *Astronomical Bucket List* and re-submit to the Astronomical League for re-consideration after being rejected earlier as being "not an observing list." If this proposal fails to be accepted a second time, then the Region will consider adopting the program as its own.
- Develop four check-off-list *Mini Messier Marathon* observing programs, each with a seasonal basis and including both pins and certificates. (The program's observations will not be designed to qualify observers for the AL Messier Certificate.) A detailed proposal will be sent to the Regional Council for approval.
- To update its Bylaws in order to make them more practical and comprehensible.
- To investigate and obtain, if possible, Federal 501(c)(3) non-profit status so that contributions to the Region will become tax-deductible to the extent permitted by law.

Respectfully submitted,



Carl J. Wenning
NCRAL Chair (2017-2021)