



NCRAL blotter

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Monthly Tidbits from NCRAL Officers, A.L. Representative, and Appointees

[Alan Sheidler](#), PAC, Chairman

[Bill Davidson](#), RAC, Vice Chairman

[Roy Gustafson](#), PAC, Secretary-Treasurer

[John Attewell](#), RAC, Regional Rep. to the A.L.

[Carl Wenning](#), TCAA, *Northern Lights* Editor

[Jeffrey Setzer](#), NCSF, NCRAL Webmaster

February 2024

- ★ About this time of year, many clubs have elections for officers. If there are new officers in your affiliate, please let NCRAL Chair Alan Sheidler know. Also, please provide contact information as well as your Facebook and website hyperlinks so we can keep our NCRAL [affiliates web page](#) current.
- ★ Did you know that only 43 of 69 (62%) affiliate leaders receiving our *monthly NCRAL blotter* are subscribers to the Region's *quarterly* newsletter, ***Northern Lights***? Only 433 of the Region's 1,900 (23%) members are subscribed. While there are multiple ways to access issues of our newsletters, the quickest is by subscribing. If you are not getting our newsletter notifications quarterly, please add your name and email to our database at <https://tinyurl.com/NCRAL>, so you won't miss out on this important membership benefit. Please share this information with your membership as well!
- ★ Does your affiliate's newsletter and website have links to the [NCRAL website](#) and [Facebook page](#)? Lots of Regional benefits get overlooked because affiliate members don't know about them. Please help spread the "good news" of NCRAL by sharing this information today. (See the January issue for our logo.)
- ★ If there are unique events in NCRAL (such as club anniversary celebrations, special awards to members, VIP visits, etc., please let ***Northern Lights*** editor Carl Wenning know and even send some images, as these might be good items to include in our next newsletter.
- ★ If your affiliate will be hosting a 2024 Regional event such as a star party, now is the time to have your information updated on the NCRAL Events web page at <https://ncral.wordpress.com/events/>. Please send your information to webmaster Jeff Setzer.
- ★ It's never too early to start thinking about who your club might want to recommend for the prestigious *NCRAL Region and Newsletter Editor Awards*. Nominations are due by March 30th, and the awards will be presented at our 2024 Regional convention. While you are at it, consider applying for an NCRAL mini-grant! Information can be found on our [Awards & Mini-Grants](#) web page.
- ★ NCRAL 2024 is coming and will be here before you know it! It will be hosted by the [Neville Public Museum Astronomical Society](#) at St. Norbert's College in De Pere, Wisconsin, May 17-18. Stay tuned to our Winter 2024 ***Northern Lights*** newsletter and the Region's [Facebook page for details](#).
- ★ NCRAL is looking for convention hosts for 2025 and beyond. Even if your astronomy club has never hosted a Regional convention, please realize that hosting can be fun and has many benefits, including indemnification for unanticipated losses and a 50-50 share of the profits. Assistance is also available through our recently updated ***Convention Planning Guidelines*** on our [NCRAL Conventions](#) web page.

- ★ Do you have any information you'd like disseminated to the affiliates of NCRAL? Send your information to editor Carl Wenning, and it will be included in future issues. Feature articles with images can be included in ***Northern Lights***. The newsletter is directly disseminated to some 430 Regional members seasonally – with a prospective readership of 1,900. That is about 23% of all NCRAL members. It is best to provide a one-paragraph description and a link for details in the ***NCRAL blotter*** which is disseminated to 69 affiliate leaders at the start of each month.
- ★ A recent conversation between NCRAL Chair Alan Sheidler and the AL's roster manager Mitch Glaze shows that three NCRAL affiliates (one large, two small) have dues payments for the 2023-2024 year in arrears. Dues are payable each summer for the coming year. Alan has reached out to these affiliates in an effort to keep them as members of the fold. If your affiliate is one of them, please be reminded to get your dues payment so your members aren't dropped from the roster and lose other benefits of membership.
- ★ NCRAL's elected leadership (Sheidler, Davidson, Gustafson, and Attewell; assisted by Wenning) met via Zoom on January 24th to continue working on amendment proposals for the Region's bylaws. These efforts are being undertaken to bring the Region's bylaws into alignment with the Astronomical League's recently-revised bylaws, and to increase accuracy and clarity. A document outlining the proposed amendments will be sent to affiliates prior to NCRAL 2024 where questions and concerns will be addressed during the business meeting. Voting on amendments will take place on an affiliate-by-affiliate basis after the convention. Stay tune for details in future issues of ***NCRAL blotter***.

FROM THE AL HOME OFFICE

To Our Valued Societies,

Astronomical League society membership dues are increasing. While we know that a dues increase is a topic no one wants to discuss, it has been an extremely long 18 years since dues were last increased in 2006.

The costs of operating the League have increased substantially in that time. Observing programs and publications, award programs, website improvements, the Library Telescope program, office space, insurance, and contractor costs have all increased. Printing, paper, and postage have more than doubled. The US Inflation Calculator shows that over the last 18 years, the overall average cost of goods and services has increased 51%. The increase in AL dues falls far below this inflation rate.

The League has always strived to provide big value for limited cost to its members. We have a vast array of observing programs, youth and national awards, the Library Telescope program, website improvements, outreach support materials, and many other programs to support our members.

Even though the costs of operating these programs have gone up, the new dues rates are still very low compared to just about anything else you can get! The Astronomical League strives to bring all its members a value far in excess of our low dues rates.

The new dues rates for clubs starting with the 2024-2025 membership year will be as follows:

- The flat club fee of \$10 per club per year is unchanged.
- The per-member rate for clubs that have all members participating in the AL will be \$6.00 per member per year.
- The per-member rate for those clubs that have less than 95% of their members participating in the AL will be \$9 per member per year.

These rates are in effect for the upcoming 2024-2025 membership year.

Thank you for making note of this. The new rates will be listed on the dues bills that go out in approximately April.

Mitch Glaze
Astronomical League
Office Manager