

# NCRAL blotter

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

[Alan Sheidler](#), PAC, Chairman

[Eric Claeys](#), NAA, Vice Chairman

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

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

[Carl Wenning](#), TCAA, Publications Editor

[Josef Chlachula](#), RAC, Web Administrator

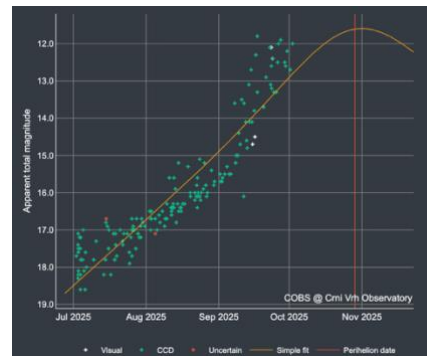
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- ★ The September issue of **Reflector** was mailed in late October. As of October 24<sup>th</sup>, it was not yet available on the Astronomical League website. Stay tuned for updates at <https://www.astroleague.org/reflector/>
  - ★ Did you know that NCRAL has been sponsoring Zoom-based **online observing sessions** recently? Our host is Josef Chlachula, NCRAL web administrator. These events are usually promoted through the [NCRAL Facebook page](#). Here is a recording of the event on October 5: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZhRxJwwH1hM>
  - ★ The next **NCRAL virtual observing session** is scheduled for Sunday, October 26, from 8:00 to 8:30 p.m. Check it out at <https://ncral.org/zoom/>
  - ★ The **RASC's 2026 Observers Handbook** and **2026 Astronomy Calendar** are now available through the Astronomical League's online store. Get them while they last! <https://store.astroleague.org/>
  - ★ Did you know that the Astronomical League frequently issues **Observing Challenges**, each accompanied by a certificate and/or a pin? Most recently, an award was associated with *International Observe the Moon Night*. Read about this award and other extant challenges at <https://www.astroleague.org/al-observing-challenge-special-observing-award/>
  - ★ **Observing Program Division Announcement** – Updated lists for the Herschel Society and the Open Cluster Observing Program (2025): If you are working on either of these certifications, please be sure to use the latest object lists that are provided on their Observing Program web pages. Some errors were identified on both lists.
  - ★ Several times each month, the AL distributes **Night Sky Tools**. Some are produced in both English and Spanish. For instance, during October, the following Night Sky Tools were made available through the AL website:
    - *Navigating the mid-October Night Sky* as a PDF
    - *Navegando por el Cielo Nocturno de Octubre* as a PDF
    - October morning Sky as a PDF
    - *El Cielo Matutino de Octubre* as a PDF
    - *Big Moon Illusion* as a PDF
- You may view and download these and many other files at <https://www.astroleague.org/navigating-the-night-sky-guides/>
- ★ **ALCors Take Notice** – Each month, the Astronomical League Coordinator (Carroll Iorg, Immediate Past President) produces a set of announcements that ALCors should read and share with their membership. See the latest issue here: <https://www.astroleague.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/Whats-Up-with-Astro-League-August-29-2025.pdf>

★ Don't forget that NCRAL now has an **official YouTube page** at <https://www.youtube.com/@NCR-AL>

★ Comets such as C/2025 R2 (SWAN), C/2025 A6 (Lemmon), and 3I/ATLAS have been in the news frequently of late. Need to keep up to date on what's happening? Check out the **Comet Observations Database**: <https://cobs.si/home/>



*Light curve of 3I/ATLAS as of October 6*

★ Be sure to have **NCRAL 2026** and **ALCON 2026** on your calendar. NCRAL 2026 will be hosted by the Cedar Amateur Astronomers in Cedar Rapids, IA, from May 15 to 17. See the *Mission Possible* descriptive [video](#). ALCON 2026 will be hosted by the Cincinnati Astronomical Society in Cincinnati, OH, from August 12 to 15. Check out their [convention webpage](#) and complete their pre-convention topics survey today. Registration will begin soon.

★ **Astronomical Equipment for Sale:** *The Twin City Amateur Astronomers are divesting themselves of a considerable amount of unused and unwanted astronomical equipment.* They have added another dozen items and so have nearly four dozen items available for sale. Reserve prices start at 25% to 40% of original pricing. Many items are in "like new condition," and everything will be sold as "used" and on an "as is" basis. Contact Carl Wenning at [carlwenning@gmail.com](mailto:carlwenning@gmail.com) to view the most up-to-date materials list and learn more about the bidding and acquisition process.

★ **NCRAL Chair Alan Sheidler officially received recognition from the SAS.** In a recent communication, Alan noted, "Sara and I made the trip down to Springfield, IL on the afternoon of October 16<sup>th</sup> to have dinner with members of the Sangamon Astronomical Society and to attend their club meeting and observing session at the SAS observatory. During the meeting, I was honored to receive the *Donald C. Jardine Service to Amateur Astronomy Award*. In the group picture are Sara Sheidler, Don Walker, Matt Will, me, Bruce Patterson, and Lenny Dunbar. After dark, a few others also joined the group on the observing field. Comets Lemmon and Swan were early targets. I was able to bag Lemmon using my DSLR coupled with a 24mm lens." Congratulations once again to Alan.



★ After nearly 10 years of service, **NCRAL editor Carl Wenning has tendered his resignation** from *Northern Lights* and the *NCRAL blotter*, effective with the Spring 2026 issue of the Region's newsletter. After serving as NCRAL Editor from 2016-2026, NCRAL Chair from 2017 to 2023, and as convention chair in 2010, 2017, and 2023, Carl wants to spend more time observing and imaging and less time serving others. Most recently, Carl served as president of the Twin City Amateur Astronomers during 2024-2025. Turning 73 on November 3, Carl would like to spend what time he has left enjoying his lifelong hobby more fully. Regardless, he has had a most enjoyable time serving others in the amateur astronomy community. **The Region is now seeking a new editor, and Carl is willing to assist during the interim. If interested, contact Regional Chair Alan Sheidler.**

- ★ Another note from Chair Alan Sheidler: “Below are images of the **two bright comets** visible in the skies last night (Oct. 19) from Lost Grove Lake, Iowa. These were obtained using Scott Community College's 12" LX600 with a ZWO ASI2600 MC duo color camera. I also used a 0.63 focal reducer, yielding f/5 focal ratio. It was a great observing session with PAC members, QCAS members, astronomy students from Scott Community College and visitors. We were also able to show these comets during the NCRAL virtual observing (Zoom) session. Thanks to everyone for attending.”



- ★ Did your club participate in the **International Observe the Moon Night on October 4?** This annual event is an opportunity for the community to come together with fellow Moon enthusiasts and curious people worldwide. Everyone on Earth is invited to learn about lunar [science](#) and [exploration](#), take part in celestial observations, and honor cultural and personal connections to the Moon. The next such event will be held on September 19, 2026.