

# NCRAL blotter

Vol. 3, No. 5

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

Alan Sheidler, PAC, Chairman

Jim Dole, PSF, Vice Chairman

Roy Gustafson, PAC, Secretary-Treasurer

John Attewell, RAC, Regional Rep. to the A.L.

Carl Wenning, TCAA, Publications Editor

Paul Levesque, PAC, Associate Editor

Josef Chlachula, RAC, Web Administrator

January 2026

- ★ The availability of the Winter 2026 issue of ***Northern Lights*** was announced on January 1. If you have not received the download link for this issue, you may download the newsletter from the NCRAL website's [newsletter archive](#). Please share this information with your membership. The current issue is 23 pages long and contains a wealth of interesting information to benefit your membership.
- ★ Mark NCRAL 2026 on your calendar. **NCRAL 2026**, hosted by the Cedar Amateur Astronomers (CAA) in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, will run from May 15 to 17. CAA leadership will present on NCRAL 2026 during the Jan 23<sup>rd</sup> *AL Live* program. You may watch it live-streamed (starting at 6:00 p.m. CST) or recorded at [Explorescientific.com/live/](#) or via the Astronomical League's Facebook page at the following URL: [www.facebook.com/Astronomical.League/](http://www.facebook.com/Astronomical.League/). Also, be sure to watch CAA's *Mission Possible* descriptive [video](#).
- ★ We need nominations for the NCRAL Region and Newsletter Editor Awards, as well as applications for the Region's two mini-grants. These awards will be presented at NCRAL 2026, so nominations and applications are due by April 15<sup>th</sup>. Visit <https://ncral.org/awards/> for details.
- ★ Mark ALCON 2026 on your calendar. ALCON 2026, hosted by the Cincinnati Astronomical Society, will be held in Covington, KY, from August 12 to 15. Visit their [convention webpage](#) and complete their pre-convention topics survey today. Registration will open soon.
- ★ The *Milwaukee Astronomical Society* has volunteered to host **NCRAL 2027**. In keeping with NCRAL tradition, the Milwaukee group will present a "formal proposal" at the Region's NCRAL 2026 annual business meeting in Cedar Rapids next May. The assembled membership will then vote on whether to accept the offer.
- ★ **Affiliate leaders**, please send the dates and details of your affiliate's star parties and other special events to Josef Chlachula (NCRAL webmaster) so he can post them on the NCRAL website [events page](#).

**Save the Date!**  
May 15-16-17, 2026

**Cedar Amateur  
Astronomers  
present**



**The Eastern Iowa Cosmic  
Conference**  
North Central Region  
of the Astronomical League  
DoubleTree Convention Complex  
Downtown Cedar Rapids, Iowa  
<https://www.cedar-astronomers.org>

- ★ Regarding updates, the NCRAL leadership is once again asking our regional affiliates' leadership—**particularly presidents and ALCors**—to keep the lines of communication open by updating their club's record. Names of presidents, ALCors, and editors, along with their contact information, will be used to update the [affiliates page](#) on the NCRAL website. Since affiliates typically hold elections around this time of year, please send any leadership changes to Chair Alan Sheidler.
- ★ **ALCors Take Note** – Nearly every month, the Astronomical League Coordinator (Carroll Iorg, the Astronomical League's immediate past president) issues a set of announcements that ALCors should read and share with their members as appropriate. See the latest announcements on the AL website home page and in the follow-up [news section](#).
- ★ Remember that NCRAL now has an [official YouTube page](#). Regional webmaster Josef Chlachula has been interviewing the NCRAL leadership and affiliate leaders. These Zoom re-based recordings will introduce them to the Regional membership. NCRAL also has a [Facebook page](#), which Sara Sheidler of PAC regularly updates. It contains many postings from around the Region. Don't miss it!
- ★ If affiliate leaders need educational resources for outreach, they should familiarize themselves with the Astronomical League's [outreach page](#). There, they will find a variety of ready-to-use articles that can be shared freely.
- ★ The December 2025 issue of *Reflector* arrived in member mailboxes shortly after Christmas. An electronic version might be available on the [AL website](#) soon. The September 2025 issue was posted to the website a few weeks ago. The delay might have been intentional, as only current AL members receive access to the most recent issue in a timely manner.
- ★ If you are available at 6:00 PM CST on January 23<sup>rd</sup>, William Gottemoller will give a talk as part of the next installment of the Astronomical League's "AL Live" series! If you join, you will learn about new results that challenge our current model of the universe, including "evolving dark energy," potential recent direct detections of dark matter, and other big questions we have about the universe. All these results and questions are related to my research, as well! The talk is designed for general audiences, so you will be brought up to speed on anything you might not understand.

*Note that William Gottemoller is an accomplished 18-year-old astronomer and astrophotographer from Menomonee Falls, Wisconsin. He's known for taking breathtaking space photos that rival those taken by the James Webb Space Telescope. Gottemoller has won numerous awards for his work, including the Astronomical League's prestigious Horkheimer/Smith Award and the Horkheimer/Parker Award for astroimaging in 2022. He's the youngest board member in the 90-year history of the Milwaukee Astronomical Society. He's passionate about exploring the universe and plans to study theoretical physics and dark matter in college. He also hosts a podcast called "Learning by William" that explores astronomy, physics, history, and the arts.*

