

NCRAL blotter

Vol. 3, No. 6

The AL Live, originally scheduled for this evening (Friday, January 23rd), has been rescheduled to 6:00 PM CST on January 30th. 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 his research, as well!

William's talk is designed for general audiences, so you will be brought up to speed on anything you might not understand. William Gottemoller is a Harvard

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>

**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

February 2026

January 30, 2026 7:00PM EST

ALCON 2026 CINCINNATI **LIVE 2026!!** 

William Gottemoller
"New Challenges to Our Model of the Universe"

with host Terry Mann

also Chuck Allen,
Don Knabb,
Bryan Simpson,
Scott Roberts,
and David Ley



plus Gordon Baustian & Chris Kardos from the Cedar Amateur Astronomers will discuss the "Cosmic Conference" on May 15-17 in Cedar Rapids, Iowa

Watch Live Stream or Recorded:
Explorescientific.com/live, or
www.facebook.com/Astronomical.League

 **Astronomical.League**

AlCon 2026:
hosted by the Cincinnati Astronomical Society at the
Marriott RiverCenter, Covington, KY, August 12-15, 2026

University student and a member of the Milwaukee Astronomical Society. He is an accomplished 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 astro-imaging 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 studying theoretical physics and dark

matter in college. He also hosts a podcast called “Learning by William” that explores astronomy, physics, history, and the arts.

In addition, the Cedar Amateur Astronomers will also provide an update about their NCRAL 2026 Eastern Iowa Cosmic Conference. Gordon Baustian and Chris Kardos from CAA will give us a rundown on all the exciting plans for the North Central Region’s 2026 conference. Below is a link to the conference website: www.ncral2026.org

Registration for NCRAL 2026 will open soon. Use the above link to stay up to date. Attend this AL live to find out more. A link will be posted on the AL website and FB page a day or two before the event.

- ★ 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 15th. Visit <https://ncral.org/awards/> for details.
- ★ After a long period of honorable and dedicated service to the membership of the North Central Region, Secretary-Treasurer Roy Gustafson (PAC) has indicated his desire to step down from his position. We thank Roy for his many contributions. We are now seeking one or more candidates to run for election to the position of Secretary-Treasurer. If you are so inclined, please contact NCRAL Chair Alan Sheidler, and we will add your name to the ballot.
- ★ 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.
- ★ Now available: PDF slide presentation for **getting started with the AL’s Observing Programs**. It is available on the main [Observing Program Division](#) web page and on the [Night Sky Tools](#) web page on the AL website.
- ★ 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.
- ★ **Wanted:** The Observing Program Division is looking for Observing Program Coordinators. There are multiple positions open, including a Herschel II Observing Program Coordinator and an Outreach Observing Award Coordinator. Please email Aaron Clevenson at aaron@clevenson.org if interested.
- ★ **ALCers Take Note** – Nearly every month, the Astronomical League Coordinator (Carroll Iorg, the Astronomical League’s immediate past president) issues a set of announcements that ALCers 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](#).
- ★ **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](#). Also, if there is additional information you’d like shared, please email carlwening@gmail.com.

- ★ 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.
- ★ 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 and currently has about 540 followers. Don't miss it!
- ★ **Library Telescopes UPDATE:** The Astronomical League has announced that the next iteration of library telescopes will be available soon. “Our new partnership with High Point Scientific means new telescopes will be available soon - to ship in February! Now is a great time to order extra scopes or to tell your library friends to get in the game! Contact us [here](#) to place your order!” Please note that your donation to the Library Telescope Program can help more people around the world explore the night sky. Become a monthly Star Supporter to make your donation have an even bigger impact. Donate today!