

# NCRAL BLOTTER

June 2026

MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF THE NORTH CENTRAL REGION OF THE ASTRONOMICAL LEAGUE

- **NCRAL 2026 Wrap-Up:** A huge congratulations to the **Cedar Amateur Astronomers** for doing a truly fantastic job hosting the 2026 North Central Region Astronomical League conference (the Eastern Iowa Cosmic Conference) in Cedar Rapids. Everything from the presentations to the events at the Eastern Iowa Observatory was top-tier. We also want to extend a sincere thank you to everyone who attended and participated to make it such a memorable weekend!
- **Regional Award Winners:** Congratulations to our **2026 NCRAL Region Award** winners, **Steven Spangler** (Cedar Amateur Astronomers) and **Keith Short** (Rockford Astronomical Association)! We also extend our congratulations to **Jack Fitzmier** (Madison Astronomical Society) for receiving the **NCRAL Newsletter Editor Award** for his exceptional work. Thank you all for your outstanding dedication to our region's astronomy community!
- **MSRAL 2026 Around the Corner:** Our neighbors to the south are hosting the **76th Mid-States Region Astronomical League (MSRAL) Convention** from **June 26–28, 2026** in St. Charles, Missouri. Hosted by the Astronomical Society of Eastern Missouri (ASEM), the event features a Friday night StarBQ at Broemmelsiek Park and an astrophotography competition. Full itinerary and registration information can be found at [ASEM - 2026 MSRAL](#)
- **ALCon 2026 Fast Approaching:** Don't forget that the national ALCon 2026 convention is scheduled for August 12–15. Registrations and details are being finalized, so make sure your club members are aware and planning their summer travel accordingly. [ALCON 2026 CINCINNATI](#)
- **Call for Region Report Submissions:** Your NCRAL Chair (**Al Sheidler**) is currently preparing the annual **Region Report**, which will be submitted to the Astronomical League leadership council prior to the AL business meeting at ALCon. Recipients of this Blotter are asked to please submit any items of regional importance—including notable club accomplishments, milestones, or challenges/problems—directly to the Chair for possible inclusion in this report.
- **Summer Star Parties in the Region:** As we move into prime observing season, please remind your members of these upcoming regional gatherings: [Events 2026 | NCRAL Online](#)
  - **W O W 2026 (Wisconsin):** June 11–14, 2026
  - **Northern Nights Star Fest (Minnesota):** September 9–14, 2026
  - **Northwoods Starfest (Wisconsin):** September 11–13, 2026
  - **Eastern Iowa Star Party, IA:** September 11-13, 2026
  - **Illinois Dark Skies Star Party, IL:** October 8-10, 2026
  - **The 2026 Iowa Star Party, IA:** October 8-11, 2026
- **Seasonal Observing Programs:** Summer is nearly here, which means it's almost time to switch over to the **NCRAL Summer Seasonal Messier List**. Check off the objects on the list during your summer sessions to earn your certificates and enameled star pins: [Observing | NCRAL Online](#)
- **Calling All Club Historians:** Help us build a comprehensive archive! We're looking for club histories, old event documents, and past records connected to NCRAL for a new history section on our website. Send your documents to [Carl Wenning](#).

NCRAL WEBSITE: [NCRAL.ORG](#)

FACEBOOK PAGE: [FACEBOOK / NCRAL](#)



**Chairman:** [Alan Sheidler](#)  
**Vice-Chairman:** [Jim Dole](#)  
**Secretary-Treasurer:** [Carl Wenning](#)

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