NCRAL BLOTTER

October 2026

MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF THE NORTH CENTRAL REGION OF THE ASTRONOMICAL LEAGUE

- **NCRAL 2027 Milwaukee Astronomical Society:** Mark your calendars for next year's regional conference, held May 14–16, 2027, in Waukesha, Wisconsin. Plan to join the Milwaukee Astronomical Society in celebrating 80 years of looking up together. Registration for the North Central Region of the Astronomical League annual conference is now open! Go to www.ncral2027.org to register, and reserve a hotel room block by following the link on the website. There will be a day of fabulous speakers, a starbeque at MAS's 95-year-old observatory grounds, and visits to the Experimental Aircraft Association Air and Space Hall of Fame and the historic Yerkes Observatory on Sunday. Don't miss out!
- **NCRAL 2028 Host needed:** We are still looking for an astronomy club to host the 2028 regional conference. Hosting is a great way for your club to showcase its members, facilities, and community. If you are considering stepping up as a host or have questions, please contact Alan Sheidler. Visit https://ncral.org/conventions/ for details.
- **Schedule of Future National Conventions:** During ALCON 2026, Chuck Allen, AL president, announced the schedule for future national conventions. The schedule is as follows: 2027: Billings, Montana, 7/28-31; 2028: Boise, Idaho, 7/12-15; 2029: Provo, Utah, no date set; 2030: open – host needed; 2031: Bryce Canyon, Utah.
- **NCRAL Award nominations needed:** NCRAL sponsors two award and two grant programs: the Region Award, the Newsletter Editor Award, the Membership Recruitment Mini-Grant, and the Affiliate Recruitment Grant. These honors are presented annually at the regional conference. As we look forward to NCRAL 2027, please consider nominating worthy individuals from your club. These awards are a wonderful way to recognize your members' accomplishments and support recruitment efforts. Learn more at https://ncral.org/awards/. Please send all nominations to your Vice-Chairman, Jim Dole (email address below).
- **Seasonal Observing Programs:** Now that we are officially into the Fall season, this is a great time to consider doing the **Autumn Seasonal Messier List.** Check off the objects on the list during this month's observing sessions to earn certificates and enameled star pins. Learn more at: https://ncral.org/observing/.
- **Updated NCRAL History:** NCRAL Chair Alan Sheidler, Webmaster Josef Chlachula, and Historian Carl Wenning, with input from others, have recently created an extensive listing of regional clubs and brief club histories. By visiting https://ncral.org/history/, readers can find information about past conventions, see a detailed listing of Chairs and other regional officers, view the history of clubs by date of founding, and peruse several historical documents and images. Please visit this webpage and let NCRAL leadership know if you see a need for any changes.
- **Northern Lights newsletter archive:** Since acquiring the history files of Stephen Peters of Marquette, MI, we have scanned past issues of NCRAL's quarterly newsletter dating back to 1971. Your webmaster, Josef Chlachula has added these to the newsletter archive which can be found on the NCRAL website: https://ncral.org/newsletter-archive/
- **Photo of the Month:** To promote camaraderie and celebrate the craft of astro-imaging, Josef Chlachula, your webmaster, has proposed having a new Photo of the Month project. If you want to submit a photo, upload at https://ncral.org/pom/. *Any suggestions for improvement are welcome. Webmaster.*
- **Fall Star Parties in the Region:** As we move into prime observing season, please remind your members of these upcoming regional gatherings: https://ncral.org/events/
  - **Illinois Dark Skies Star Party**, IL: October 8-10, 2026
  - **The 2026 Iowa Star Party**, IA: October 8-11, 2026
- **The Wenning Essays – Exploring the Universe:** Carl Wenning has written 40 essays on various aspects of amateur astronomy, drawing on his experiences with the TCAA. A consistent message runs throughout the collection: amateur astronomy is far more than looking at celestial objects—it is a way of seeing, learning, wondering, belonging, serving, and sharing the universe with others. You may access *The Wenning Essays* through this case-sensitive URL**:** https://bit.ly/4qmLFyt.

NCRAL WEBSITE: NCRAL.ORG *FACEBOOK PAGE: FACEBOOK / NCRAL*

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