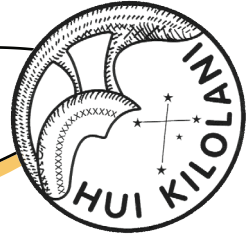


The Astronews



Volume 54, Issue 3

March 2006

www.hawastsoc.org

Back in the Day

Barry Peckham

This is a portrait of the past: the sort of story old folks try to tell younger folks in their vain attempt to dredge up a gone-by reality. Though the point of stories like this is usually lost on those who show up later, there is inherent value in historical context: the present is born of the past and it is wise to know who your parents are.

I started coming to meetings of the Hawaiian Astronomical Society in the early '90s. It was 6 months before I joined. From a beginner's viewpoint, the 40-50 people in the planetarium seats were intimidating. I was looking for stargazing buddies and these folks seemed standoffish, but they had knowledge I wanted and so I stuck around.

(Continued on page 6)

Upcoming Star Parties

Club Party	Mar 25	Dillingham
Public Party	Apr 1	Dillingham
Public Party	Apr 8	Kahala/Waikele
Club Party	Apr 22	Dillingham
Public Party	Apr 29	Dillingham
Public Party	May 6	Kahala/Waikele
Club Party	May 20	Dillingham

Inside this issue:

Club Information	2
President's Message	2
Observer's Notebook	3
Meeting Minutes	4
Meteor Log	5
Space Place	7
Treasurer's Report	9



Upcoming Events:

- The next meeting is at 7:30 p.m. on Tuesday, April 4th at the Bishop Museum.
- **NOTE: The subscription rate for Sky & Telescope is now \$34.00 per year.**

President's Message

Now that the Hawaiian Astronomical Society has an asteroid named after it (88297 Huikilolani), which club member will be the first to see or image it? It is fainter than Pluto, after all, so spotting it visually would be a challenge in any amateur telescope. However, someone adept at CCD imaging should be able to acquire an image.

The asteroid was at opposition last December at a distance of just under 1.48 A.U. Although it is still in our early evening sky, it is now more than 2 A.U. distant. The next best opportunity to observe or image it will be in April of 2007 when it next reaches opposition. At that time it will be only a little more than one A.U. from Earth. This is not the closest that it ever approaches, but there won't be a closer opposition until 2014. Like Mars, Huikilolani's orbit is elliptical enough that some oppositions are much closer than others. At its most distant opposition it is about 50% further than at the closest one. The one next year is about halfway between the extremes. Of course, between oppositions it gets much further from Earth, over 3 A.U. at its most distant solar conjunction.

These calculations are all based on an orbital animation provided by NASA at http://neo.jpl.nasa.gov/cgi-bin/db_shm?sstr=88297. The web page also has information for determining more precise and longer-term position predictions.

Since former HAS member Joe Dellinger did us the honor of naming this asteroid after the club, let's make use of it! I intend to learn where it is in the sky and pass that information on at star parties. Most people pay more attention to stories with a personal connection to the story-

(Continued on page 5)

**Hawaiian Astronomical
Society**
P.O. Box 17671
Honolulu, Hawaii 96817

President

Chris Peterson

956-3131

chrisp@higp.hawaii.edu

Vice President

Barry Peckham

524-2450

barry@litebox-telescopes.com

Secretary

Gretchen West

735-0482

gwest@pixi.com

Treasurer

Jim MacDonald

261-2162

jim.macd@verizon.net

Board Members-at-Large

John Gallagher 683-0118

gallaghej002@hawaii.rr.com

Steve Huffman

shuffman@sacredhearts.org

The **Astronews Editor**

Paul Lawler

395-8121

paul@kilolani.net

HAS Webmaster

Peter Besenbruch

prb@lava.net

The Astronews is the monthly newsletter of the Hawaiian Astronomical Society. Some of the contents may be copyrighted. We request that authors and artists be given credit for their work. Contributions are welcome. Send them to the Editor via e-mail. The deadline is the 15th of each month. We are not responsible for unsolicited artwork.

Planets Close To the Moon

Times are Hawaii Standard Time









- Feb 28, 18h, M 3.3° SSE of Mercury (16° from sun in evening sky)
- Mar 5, 20h, M 2.9° NNW of Mars (83° from sun in evening sky)
- Mar 10, 10h, M 3.8° NNE of Saturn (135° from sun in evening sky)
- Mar 19, 00h, M 5.0° SSW of Jupiter (130° from sun in morning sky)
- Mar 25, 17h, M 5.5° SSE of Venus (46° from sun in morning sky)
- Mar 25, 17h, M 3.6° SSE of Neptune (46° from sun in morning sky)
- Mar 27, 07h, M 1.3° SE of Uranus (24° from sun in morning sky)
- Mar 27, 13h, M 2.1° SE of Mercury (23° from sun in morning sky)

Other Events of Interest

Times are Hawaii Standard Time

- Mar 1, 01h, Uranus at conjunction with sun (Passes into morning sky.)
- Mar 11, 17h, Mercury at inferior conjunction (Passes into morning sky.)
- Mar 14, 13:35h, Moon Full
- Mar 20, 08:25h, Vernal Equinox
- Mar 24, 21h, Venus at greatest elongation (46.5° west of the sun in morning sky)
- Mar 25, 01h, Moon 0.73° NNW of Ceres (55° from sun in morning sky)
- Mar 26, 02h, Venus 1.8° NNW of Neptune (47° from sun in morning sky.)
- Mar 27, 13h, Mercury 1.5° NNE of Uranus (24° from sun in morning sky.)
- Mar 29, 00:17h, Moon New

Planets in March

<p> Mercury</p> <p>visible in the evening sky at the first of the month and in the morning sky at the end of the month.</p>	<p> Venus</p> <p>shines very brightly in the morning sky, reaching greatest elongation on Mar 24. Mag. -4.4.</p>	<p> Mars</p> <p>high in the west at dusk and is about the same brightness as the nearby star Aldebaren.</p>
<p> Jupiter</p> <p>rises a couple of hours before midnight and is best observed in the early morning hours.</p>	<p> Saturn</p> <p>very well placed for evening viewing. It shines brightly in the southwest at a magnitude of about 0.0.</p>	<p> Uranus</p> <p>too close to the sun for easy viewing in March.</p>
<p> Neptune</p> <p>visible in the morning sky near Venus.</p>		<p> Pluto</p> <p>rises a little before midnight and can be observed in the early morning hours.</p>

The February 7, 2006 general membership meeting of Hawaiian Astronomical Society was called to order by Chris Peterson at 7:36 p.m. The meeting was held at the Atherton Halau on the grounds of the Bishop Museum. There were 36 members and five visitors in attendance.

Of Recent Interest - President Chris Peterson spoke briefly about current missions and on-going projects of interest. The Horizon Mission to survey Kuiper Belt objects and the planet Pluto is proceeding on time. A portion of the ashes of the late astronomer and discoverer of the planet Pluto, Clyde Tombaugh are on board the spacecraft journeying to the outer limits of our solar system.

A new object within our own Solar System, a possible new planet, an object with greater mass than the tiny Pluto but with more mass than our Moon has been discovered. An extra-solar planet was recently discovered through the use of planetary microlensing. This extra-solar body is five times the mass of Earth and in relation to its star is not at a comparable distance to its sun. It is however discussed as an Earth-like satellite of its own star.

Asteroid Huikilolani - Former HAS member and current astronomer, Joe Dellinger only just informed the club that he has graciously named a recently discovered asteroid in honor of the Hawaiian Astronomical Society. The asteroid named *Huikilolani* is a 16th magnitude Asteroid. We are thrilled to receive such an honor from such an old and valued friend to the club.

Visitors - We were happy to host five

visitors at the February 7th meeting. We are always happy to welcome enthusiasts and newcomers to our meetings.

One of this month's visitors is mainland visitor and an officer and the outreach director of the Tacoma Astronomical Society. another visitor joins us from a Georgia Club.

Bumper Stickers - There were no motto or slogan submissions for club bumper stickers made by the beginning of this month's meeting. Jim MacDonald presented the Board's submission. The proposed bumper sticker reading "JOIN US UNDER THE STARS, Hawaiian Astronomical Society, www.hawastsoc.org" was introduced to the general membership and displayed to at the front of the room. The bumper sticker also features the club seal.

Molokai Report - Stephanie Choquette recounted the events the latest trip to Molokai Ranch's Kaupoa Beach Village. 33 individuals spent a relaxing weekend beginning January 27th relaxing during the day and enjoying enviable night skies. Friday night was great for galaxy viewing and Saturday, despite a few clouds was quite enjoyable, with steady seeing. Viewing went on that night from sunset until dawn.

Litebox Shine - Barry Peckham brought two versions of his well-like scopes. The Corvus, with a Coulter mirror, is an early version of his truss design scope. His latest creation is a comfortably light 15" scope. Discussion of the design and construction ensued.

Stardust Mission - The Hawaii Space

(Continued on page 5)

Low sporadic rates sugared by a few minor shower are the show for March.

Early March-early April the **Virginids**. Radiant (Position is for March 24th)-13h00m -04 deg. Generally less than 5 meteors per hour. A whole series of minor showers with a cluster of near-ecliptic radiants, not all active together typifies the lesser sources, such as the Virginids. In general they emanate for a large area around 2h in RA by 20 degrees in Dec. The best activity may occur in early March. Activity is generally low.

That is about it for this March the only other shower is the Gamma Normids which is very minor and mainly for the Southern Hemisphere. A full Moon will destroy this shower this year..

If you are interested in observing meteors contact Tom Giguere on Oahu at 672-6677 or write to: Mike Morrow, P.O. Box 6692, Ocean View, Hawaii 96737

Notice

HAS will publish a complete listing of Club members in the May 2006 issue of the Astronews. This publication is required by Club by-laws, Article III, Section 2 Para C(e) and Article VIII, Section 1B. Unless notified otherwise, this list will include all member's names, addresses, and phone numbers. If you wish to have some or all of your data excluded, please notify the Club Treasurer, Jim

MacDonald before April 15, 2006 by e-mail at jim.macd@verizon.net or by written notice to the Club's post office box listed on the back page of this newsletter. Please be advised that this listing is intended for Club members' personal use only in contacting one another. HAS does make this list available to, nor do we sell its contents to anyone for any purpose.

Lecture Series will feature Dr. Gary Huss; planetary scientist, who will speak on February 28th, 2006.

Nite-Sky Network - John Gallagher spoke briefly regarding the recent NASA sponsored Teleconference. Printed materials were displayed for members.

Video Presentation - Steve Huffman presented a portion of a NiteSky Network DVD video presentation, "Search for Orion."

The meeting was adjourned at 9:41 p.m. and refreshments were served.

President's Report (Continued from page 2)
teller, so this may be another valuable tool in our ongoing quest to inspire more people to appreciate the wonders of the night sky and our place in the universe. Huikilolani imagers, let the hunt begin! .

Chris

Respectfully submitted,
Gretchen West, HAS Secretary

Back in the Day (Continued from page 1)

The big guns at the time were 3 Peters (Peter Galloway was president), a Mike (Big Isle resident for a decade now), a Ray (long-time president and asteroid hunter), a scholarly Jay (still our leading astro-imager) and a young gun named Kevin (future creator of 2Sky Palm software).. Mike Morrow and his flock of meteor watchers formed a sub-group that talked about the radio equipment they would some day use to “hear” meteors. I gravitated toward the folks who were looking up a lot. Two of the

Peters were in their prime observing years, though neither knew it at the time. One of them, Peter Michaud, attended meetings because he was paid to do so as planetarium manager. His passion was the night sky and his frequent invitations to “go viewing” in Mokuleia with a new homemade 12.5” scope wore down my resistance to obsessive observing.

I joined a band of hard core observers featuring Peter Besenbruch (now our ethereal webmaster), with his super-sharp 8”, f/7.5 reflector (owned currently by our treasurer)

Treasurer’s Report

by Jim MacDonald

HAS Financial Report as of February 15, 2006

Initial Balance:.....	\$4,453.64
Receipts:	
Astronomy Payment.....	68.00
Donations.....	63.00
Dues Received.....	210.00
S&T Payments.....	65.90
Telescope Fees.....	100.00
Total Income:.....	\$506.90
Expenses:	
Astronews.....	127.24
Magazine Subscriptions.....	154.80
Refreshments.....	8.12
HAS Website.....	99.95
Postage.....	43.05
.....	1.20
Total Expenses:.....	\$433.16
Ending Balance:.....	\$4,527.38

We welcome six new members this month. They are **Gerald, Rebecca, Jonathan** and **Andrew Miyasato** who recently re-joined the club along with new members, **Robert** and **Michele Kesler**. A special thanks to **Paul Erickson, Robert Kesler** and **Diane Kellett** for their generous donations. Many thanks also to those renewing their membership this month. Clear skies to all!

and Glenn Nanamori, using a 10", f/5.6 Coulter mirror in a homemade dob mount. I had a faster (f/4.5) 10" Coulter dob at the time and tried to keep up with these guys as they sequentially pegged target after target, hour after hour, with nary a setting circle among us.

Of these 3 mentors, Besenbruch was the equipment critic, Glenn was the directions expert and Michaud was cheerleader/observing coach. The true value of an astronomy club is access to knowledge and motivation possessed by guys like these. I was and am grateful for the concentrated doses, stretching across several years.

All 3 of these guys, it must be noted, had built their own scopes. The 2 Peters took opposing approaches: Michaud in the Dobson mode with self-made large mirror and cheap eyepieces, Besenbruch with his equatorial tracking, customized stock components and premium eyepieces. Glenn synthesized the 2 approaches with a mid-sized manufactured mirror, a Dobsonian mount based on Michaud's version, and premium eyepieces.

I must tell you that Peter Michaud did have a very large and heavy equatorial fork mount for his 12.5" scope, but the effort of set-up and take-down, loading and unloading, sapped the vigor from his observing obsession. The big mount was left in Dillingham bushes and it eventually disappeared. I may not need to tell you what a powerful lesson that was for me.

Another one was the quality-verses-quantity wars waged by the 2 Peters. Besenbruch optimized contrast for planetary viewing with a superb

mirror in a size that minimizes atmospheric turbulence, and in a focal length that fit in his car while minimizing coma (present in all fast optical systems). Michaud made the best mirror he could make in the largest size he could afford.

There were constant comparisons of who had the best view. Michaud made his mirror smaller and better by masking the edge. Besenbruch eventually bought a bigger mirror. So did Glenn. These were formative demonstrations in my early stargazing years. I was learning the sky on my own, but learned it more quickly when surrounded by these guys.

With experience in the field, internet newsgroup research and printed advice from Tectron Telescopes' Tom Clark, I built my first scope in '94, used it to find all the Messiers for my second time, and then sold it to a club member we no longer see. That was more than 50 telescopes ago, not counting the 15" Tectron dob I bought in '95, or the Televue refractor through which I could get no satisfaction.

The years go by and I see more and more clearly what a valuable resource this club has been, is now, and can be for those who want to play with their universe. If you find yourself waiting for the club to "do something" for you, please take a moment to remind yourself that the core of H.A.S. is frequently "doing something" with the night sky. All you need to do is join us... for starters!

Barry

**H.A.S.
P.O. Box 17671
Honolulu, HI 96817**

Place stamp
here. Post
Office will not
deliver mail
without proper
postage



Several HAS members are blinded by the milky way on Molo-kai during two nights of great viewing.