



# ECLIPSE



*The Newsletter of the Barnard-Seyfert Astronomical Society*

Organized in 1928

January 2007

**The Membership Meeting will be held on  
Thursday, January 18, 2007 at 7:30 pm at  
The Adventure Science Center**

Our January membership meeting will be held at its regular time at the soon to be demolished Adventure Science Center. January begins the first phase of the quest to redesign and upgrade the Sudukem Planetarium.

Our speaker this month is Dr. Scott Hawley. Dr. Hawley joined the Belmont faculty in the fall of 2006. He was previously a postdoctoral researcher in the field of numerical relativity, a discipline combining elements of computational physics, nonlinear wave mechanics, astrophysics and gravitation theory. He has also recently finished mixing his second studio album as a singer-songwriter. Dr. Hawley enjoys combining his enthusiasm for physics and music by teaching at Belmont, particularly in teaching physics classes for Audio Engineering Technology students.

Dr. Hawley received a B.S. in Physics from the College of William and Mary and a Ph.D. in Physics from the University of Texas at Austin. Don't miss his January program for BSAS when he will be speaking on the topic of Gravity and Black Holes.

## President's Message

My dictionary defines an astronomer as "One who is an expert in or a student of astronomy". I guess that we all fall into that category. My own definition is that we all are students of astronomy, learning what we can. This is especially true in the Barnard-Seyfert Astronomical Society, as we all are learning, and especially from the other members of the BSAS.

I would like to thank the hard workers in the BSAS in their efforts to make our Christmas party a great success. Pam Thomas, who is our new editor of the Eclipse, also obtained the meats, drinks and paper and plastic ware, a big job, to say the least. The covered dishes, brought in by all the rest of the attendees, rounded out the foods for the meals. I believe everyone enjoyed the feast. I sure did.

We want to thank Kris McCall for providing the place to meet and eat. Kris had also set up a "silent auction" of books, games and other items donated from our members. Kris told us about her recent trip to Japan to help decide which projector to purchase for the new, soon to be built planetarium. Kris then set up a "Constellation Shoot-out" in the Sudekum Planetarium where some of our brave members pointed out different stars and constellations. We all had a good time.

We will be having our first Board of Directors meeting on January 4. I want to thank the 2006 board for the hard work they did during the year. I will be asking the newly elected board members and officers to work just as hard, or even harder this New Year.

A special thanks to JanaRuth Ford who made the contacts and arranged the programs throughout the year.

I can not remember all of the people who have worked to do their tasks such as Ed and Mary English who faithfully bring the BSAS name tags to the membership meetings. And to Lonnie Puterbaugh with his wonderful TAC. If I have overlooked anyone, I am sorry. We really do appreciate all you do.

This year we plan to have nineteen star parties as a minimum. Some of the star parties will be public, outreach star parties, and some will be private BSAS star parties, just for our members. We are planning another Messier Marathon which Mark Manner, our immediate past president, has graciously invited us back again to Spot Observatory at his home.

**Continued on page 2**

## President's Message, cont. from page 1

We have applied to the Natchez Trace Parkway and have been allotted five nights for our Natchez Trace private Star Parties. The full list of Star Parties will be in the February issue of the Eclipse.

I have requested that Joe Boyd be our legal advisor pertaining to contracts and our relationships with TAG. The location of our annual TNSP-07 (same location as in 2006). This year I also want to set up a backup system to handle all the records of the BSAS. I really had a scare when my computer froze up and wouldn't start up. I suddenly realized this short coming so I want to set up the procedures so that everything is not in one computer or that is controlled by only one individual.

I haven't asked Lonnie Puterbaugh yet to continue with his wonderful TAC (The Astronomy Channel) but I will in the near future. Another goal is to increase our membership throughout the year. This will happen hopefully by continuing our good programs and inviting people to attend our meetings and star parties.

I am always open to suggestions for any improvements we can make. I hope to see you at the next membership meeting on January 18<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 at the Adventure Science Center.

## FREE TELESCOPE OFFER!!!

**Did someone say free telescope? Yes, you did read that correctly.**

The BSAS Equipment & Facilities Committee has free telescopes ranging in size from 2.6" to 8" that current members can actually have to use for up to 60 days at a time. We also have some other items in the loaner program such as a photometer, H-alpha solar telescope, educational CDs, tapes, DVDs, and books. Some restrictions apply. A waiting list is applicable in some cases. The BSAS Equipment Committee will not be held responsible for lost sleep or other problems arising from use of this excellent astronomy gear. For information on what equipment is currently available, contact Lonnie Puterbaugh at 615-661-9540.

### MAGAZINE SUBSCRIPTIONS FOR BSAS MEMBERS

We are always able to accept requests for new and renewal yearly subscriptions to SKY AND TELESCOPE and ASTRONOMY from our members in good standing.

The current yearly rates are as follows:  
SKY AND TELESCOPE: \$32.95  
ASTRONOMY: \$34.00

Checks or Money Orders should be made out to the Barnard-Seyfert Astronomical Society (BSAS) and sent to the following address:

BSAS  
P. O. Box 150713  
Nashville, TN 37215-0713

### DUES INFORMATION

On your Eclipse mailing label is the expiration date for your current membership in the BSAS. There will be a two month grace period before any member's name is removed from the current mailing list. You will be receiving a number of warnings informing you that your membership is expiring.

Dues per year are \$20.00 Regular (1 vote); \$30 Family (2 votes); \$15.00 Student (under 22 years of age)(1 vote); \$15 Seniors ( 65 years or older)(1 vote); \$25 Senior Family ( 65 years or older)(2 votes).

Contact [president@bsasnashville.com](mailto:president@bsasnashville.com) if you have questions. Dues can be sent to:

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### THE ECLIPSE NEWSLETTER

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BSAS website: [www.bsasnashville.com](http://www.bsasnashville.com)

BSAS Logo by Tony Campbell

## HAPPY BIRTHDAY LESLIE PELTIER

by Robin Byrne

This month we celebrate the life of an amateur astronomer without parallel. Leslie C. Peltier was born January 2, 1900 on the family farm outside of Delphos, Ohio. When Leslie was five years old, his mother pointed out the Pleiades to the young child, and his love of the night sky began. With the help of library books, Leslie soon knew his way around the sky. While a teenager, Leslie picked 900 quarts strawberries on his father's farm to earn the \$18 necessary to purchase a 2 inch refractor.

Although Leslie dropped out of high school to work on the farm, his interest in astronomy never waned. One of his first official associations began at the age of 18, when he joined the American Association of Variable Star Observers (AAVSO). Through that organization, Leslie was able to borrow a 4 inch refractor, which he placed on a pedestal in the farm's cow pasture. Later, his father built a housing for the telescope, which became the Peltier Observatory (although it wouldn't be the only observatory so named). Until his death, Peltier never missed sending in a monthly report to the AAVSO.

In 1921, with the aid of a loaner telescope from Princeton University, Peltier began comet hunting. It was four years before his efforts paid off. On November 13, 1925, Peltier found his first comet. Over his lifetime, Peltier would discover a total of 11 comets, as well as two novae.

In 1933, Peltier married Dorothy Nihiser. After living with Leslie's uncle for a while, they settled into their own home in Delphos. At this time, Leslie was working as a designer at the Delphos Bending Company. In 1937, the skills learned on the job allowed him to build his truly "revolutionary" observatory: The Merry-Go-Round Observatory. Rather than just a dome that rotates to follow the sky, the entire building rotated! Peltier like it so well that when he and Dorothy moved to a new home, they took the observatory with them.

In 1959, the Peltier's son, Stanley, was attending Miami University in Oxford, Ohio. While there, Stanley learned that the school was going to tear down its observatory. After some persuasion, the school was convince to transfer the observatory and its 12 inch refractor to the custody of Leslie Peltier. After arriving at his home, in several parts, Peltier was able to get help in the assembly from a local construction crew and their crane. For the next 20 years, the observatory would host innumerable school children and community members for public observations.

Despite his lack of education, Peltier's reputation as an astronomer won him recognition and many honors, including: an honorary high school diploma from Delphos Jefferson High School; an honorary doctorate from Bowling Green State University; the mountain that houses Ford Observatory renamed Mt. Peltier; Harlow Shapley dubbing Peltier the "world's greatest nonprofessional astronomer;" and an appearance on To Tell The Truth. Peltier also wrote three books: "Starlight Nights: Adventure of a Stargazer" (for which he won the Ohio Author of the Year Award in 1966), "The Place on Jennings Creek", and "Guidepost to the Stars: Exploring the Sky with Binoculars."

On May 10, 1980, Leslie Peltier died of a heart attack. To honor his life, the town of Delphos placed a memorial sundial on the grounds of the public library, where Peltier had served on the Board for over 30 years. Also, the Astronomical League created the Leslie C. Peltier Award to honor amateurs who make contributions of lasting significance to astronomy. Peltier is recognized as a great among amateur astronomers, but he had a self-deprecating sense of humor about what he did, once saying, "I feel it is my duty to warn others...that they approach the observing of variable stars with the utmost caution. It is easy to become an addict, and as usual, the longer the indulgence is continued the more difficult it becomes to make a clean break and go back to a normal life." The world of astronomy is a better place due to Peltier failing to make a "clean break." All astronomers, amateur and professional, have much to learn from this month's honoree: Leslie Peltier.

### References:

AAVSO: Leslie C. Peltier

<http://www.aavso.org/aavso/membership/lcpeltier.shtml>

Peltier, Leslie C.

<http://www.ohiohistorycentral.org/entry.php?rec=1825>

**Barnard-Seyfert Astronomical Society**  
**Minutes of a Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors**  
**Held On Thursday, December 7, 2006**

The board of directors of the Barnard-Seyfert Astronomical Society met in regular session at the Cumberland Valley Girl Scout Council Building in Nashville, Tennessee on December 7, 2006. A sign-in sheet was circulated in lieu of a roll call. Board members Tony Campbell, Keith Burneson, Bill Griswold, Bob Rice, and Randy Smith were present. Board members Mike Benson, JanaRuth Ford, Kris McCall, Mark Manner, Pam Thomas, and Gary Wilkerson were absent. Also attending were BSAS members Terry Reeves and Steve Wheeler. Since a quorum was not present, Vice-President Keith Burneson called the meeting to order at 7:47 P.M for only a brief discussion of business that would require no voting.

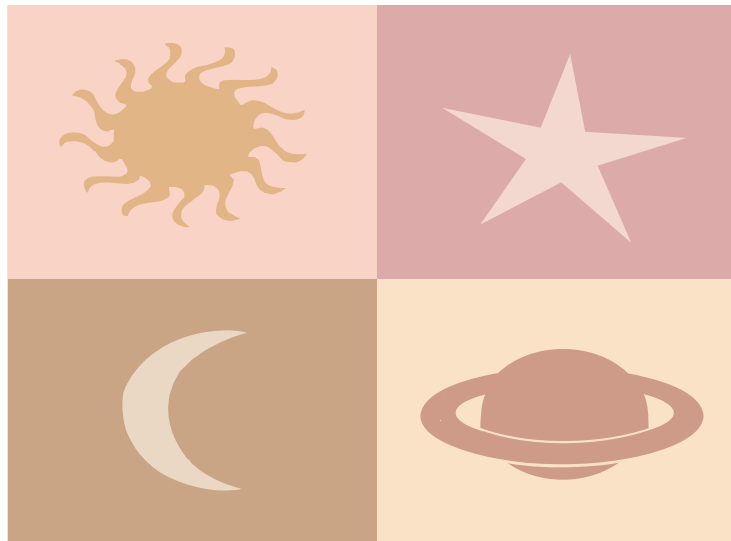
Treasurer Randy Smith reported that the Society's bank balance was \$3,789.77. Bill Griswold reported that Pam Thomas was the new editor of the BSAS' *Eclipse* newsletter. Keith Burneson reminded the group to bring books and other items for the silent auction to be held at the annual holiday supper on December 21st. Mr. Burneson noted that he would contact the TAG Camp management, where the 2007 Tennessee Star Party (TNSP) will be held, to determine exactly when cabins would be considered to be "opened" and thereby incurring a rental charge. Bill Griswold suggested that he also seek a remedy for the glaring spotlight that was a nuisance at the last TNSP. Mr. Griswold asked the group if they favored continuing to have board meetings at the Girl Scout Council Building and all indicated that they did.

Since there was no further business to discuss, Vice-President Burneson declared the meeting adjourned at 8:09 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Bob Rice

Secretary



**Barnard-Seyfert Astronomical Society**  
**Minutes of the Monthly Membership Meeting**  
**Held on Thursday, December 21, 2006**

BSAS members gathered in the Adventure Science Center (ASC) at 6:30 PM for the Society's annual Christmas potluck supper and related activities. President Mark Manner called the group to order at 6:37 P.M. for a brief business meeting and to recognize guests. The minutes of the previous meeting held on November 16 were approved without exception as published in the December 2006 edition of the *Eclipse* newsletter.

Treasurer Randy Smith reported that the Society's bank balance was \$3,789.77 and noted that he still had copies of the Observers Handbook and the Deep Space Mysteries Calendar for sale. Joe Boyd reminded the audience to keep an eye out for Dyer Observatory's missing (and presumed stolen) solar telescope. Mark Manner then jokingly presented a floppy rubber gavel to President-Elect Bill Griswold who graciously accepted the gift with dignified amusement.

Kris McCall announced that the holiday supper would be followed by a constellation shootout and a laser show in the Sudekum planetarium. Powell Hall delivered the blessing and recognized Pam Thomas for her hard work in ordering and delivering the entrees for the evening meal. There being no further business to discuss, President Manner declared the business meeting adjourned at 6:46 P.M.

Dining soon began with the Society providing the main course of sliced ham and turkey along with eating utensils, plates, and soft drinks. Members provided a sumptuous variety of side dishes including salads, casseroles, and desserts. The previous year's highly successful silent auction was repeated with members shuffling among the donated books and other astronomy related materials to look and record their bids. Toward the end of the meal, Kris McCall gave a brief description and PowerPoint presentation of her recent trip to Japan to help select a new projector and other equipment for the soon-to-be-rebuilt planetarium

After the meal, the group adjourned to the Sudekum Planetarium for the Constellation Shoot-Out. There six brave volunteers - Powell Hall, Donna Hummell, Chuck Schlemm, Danika Wellington, Theo Wellington, and the team of Steve and Mary Catherine Wheeler - used a red laser pointer in a timed attempt to identify announced stars, constellations, and other objects on the overhead dome. Theo Wellington emerged triumphant as everyone expressed amazement at the difficulty of spotting even well known patterns under the simulated dark skies. A flashing Laser Holidays presentation accompanied by familiar Christmas songs followed this fun contest. At the conclusion, having enjoyed a wonderful evening of fellowship, everyone exchanged good-byes and best wishes for the holidays.

Respectfully submitted,  
Bob Rice, Secretary

## Activities and Events

## January 1 — 31, 2007

- 1/1 NEW YEAR'S DAY  
 1/2 Dark-sky committee, 7:30 McKendree Tower  
 1/3 FULL MOON  
 1/4 Quarantid Meteor Shower: Jupiter 4° N of Antares  
 BSAS Board of Directors mtg., 7:30 p.m. at  
 Girl Scout Office  
 1/6 Conj. Moon & Saturn; Regulus 1.2° S of Moon  
 1/7 Conj. Sun & Mercury  
 1/11 LAST QUARTER; Spica 1.1° N of Moon  
 1/15 Antares 0.5°N of Moon; Conj., Moon & Jupiter  
 1/16 Conj., Moon & Mars  
 1/18 NEW MOON; Conj. Venus & Neptune  
 BSAS monthly meeting at ASC: 7:30 p.m.  
 1/20 ISLAMIC NEW YEAR; Conj., Moon & Neptune,  
 Moon & Venus  
 Outreach Star Party at Warner Park, 7:30-10:00  
 1/22 Conj., Moon & Uranus  
 1/25 FIRST QUARTER

## February 1 — 28, 2007

- 2/1 BSAS Board of Directors mtg., 7:30 p.m. at Girl Scout  
 Office  
 2/2 FULL MOON, conj. Moon & Saturn  
 Star Party MTSU 6:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.  
 2/4 Zodial light visible in W after evening twilight for  
 next 2 weeks  
 2/7 Venus 0.7° S of Uranus  
 2/8 Conj. Sun & Neptune  
 2/10 LAST QUARTER, Saturn at opposition  
 2/12 Jupiter 6° N of moon  
 2/15 BSAS monthly meeting at ASC: 7:30 p.m.  
 Mars 4° N of moon  
 2/17 NEW MOON  
 Public Star Party Long Hunter State Park 7:00 p.m.  
 2/19 Venus 2° S of Moon  
 2/23 Moon 1° N of Pleiades (M45)  
 2/24 FIRST QUARTER

\*All times listed are Central Time

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