

Howard Astronomical League



February 16th, 2017

Introductions

Treasury Report

Bob Savoy

HAL 2016 Financial Summary

- 2016 Starting Bank Balance: \$5,358
- 2016 Income
 - Memberships: \$4,485
 - Donations: \$1,000
 - Other: \$ 119
- 2016 Cash added to Bank: \$5,604
- 2016 Expenses
 - Recurring: \$2,235 (note 1)
 - Non-recurring: \$1,098 (Note 2)
- 2016 Cash spent from Bank: \$3,333
- 2016 Ending Bank Balance: \$7,629

Note 1: AL, Insurance, Website, Mailbox, IDA, CSC

Note 2: Materials and supplies needed to keep HALO operating and in good condition

HAL Membership Stats

12/31/14: 178

12/31/15: 234

12/31/16: 219

HAL Librarian Needed

Not overly demanding

Great first time position on the Board

Great way to become involved with the observatory

Speak to any HAL officer, or send an email to leaders@howardastro.org

Upcoming Events

- February 20-26 - Winter Star Party, Florida Keys.
- March 4th - Public star party, Alpha Ridge Park.
- March 22-26 - Chaos Spring Star Party, Scottsburg, VA.
- March 25th - Members Only star party, Alpha Ridge Park.

Night Sky Summary

Sun sets at 5:46 on Feb 16. Daylight savings begins Mar 12. Sets at 7:16pm on Mar 16.

Moon: |☾ Feb 18 | ☉ Feb 26 | ☾ Mar 5 | ● Mar 12 |
Best earthshine view is around Mar 1.

Planets: **Venus** reaches peak brightness on Feb 17-18 in the western sky, and begins to fall off in early March. It appears as a waning crescent, rapidly increasing in apparent size. Find **Mars** near Venus, decreasing in apparent size. **Jupiter** is a morning object, rising around midnight and still approaching opposition. **Saturn** is a morning object rising shortly after dawn.

Constellations: Orion, Taurus, Pleiades are well up by sunset.

Observing Challenge

Bi-daily Observations of Venus

Venus reaches inferior conjunction on March 25th as it ends its present evening apparition, and passes into the morning sky. On this particular conjunction, Venus will be near its maximum ecliptic latitude, meaning that it will be about 8-degrees north of the sun. In this configuration, bi-daily, or morning and evening of the same day, observations of Venus are possible within a few days of the conjunction.

Look for reminders that this opportunity is coming, get out and observe, and look for a call for observations just prior to the April meeting.

HAL Social Media

Website:

<http://www.howardastro.org>

Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/howardastro/>

Yahoo Group (mailing list):

<https://tech.groups.yahoo.com/group/howardastro/>

Guest Speaker

Dr. Ira Thorpe

The 100-year History of Gravitational
Waves, and the LISA/LISA Pathfinder
Missions

Member's astrophotos and sketches

Brad Sheard



Brad Sheard







Orion Nebula
by Duane Dehnert

Special Topic

HAL Star Party Etiquette

Before you leave home...

- **Pack everything that you need**
Batteries, cables, eyepieces, tools, camera(s), red light
- **Dress for the weather**
More layers of clothing than you think you'll need.
- **Bring snacks/drinks**
- **Have an observation/photography plan**

Consider the type of star party...

- **Public**

- Scopes set up by members to share views with the public and other members

- **Members Only**

- A member benefit

- Members usually pursue personal observing/astrophotography programs

- Scopes may or may not be available for sharing views

- **Impromptu**

- When that rare clear sky pops up!

- Members only

- Look for keyholder announcement (members, if opted in)

Once you arrive...

- **Select a space that works for you**
 - Alpha Ridge vs. Carrs Mill
 - What do you want to observe?
 - Near the entrance if leaving early
 - With people or on a quiet edge
- **Turn off/cover trunk and door lights**
- **Take advantage of the remaining daylight to set up**
- **Take some time to get to know the people around you**

Once it gets dark...

- Enjoy that rare clear sky that you have waited so long for
- Enjoy the company of like-minded amateur astronomers
 - Conversation is always welcome, but loud noise can be distracting
- Protect your neighbors' night vision with red lights/screen covers
- Refrain from running automobile engines until you are leaving

When it is time to leave...

- Parties generally end at 11pm
 - Host's discretion, will announce
- Maintain red light discipline of others are still observing, except...
- Turn on headlights when driving out
 - Required for safety reasons
 - Let observers around you know so that they can cover up as needed
- Do not leave cars in the park!

Most importantly...

Show up!

- Jim-ism: 85% of life is showing up

Enjoy your evening

- Star parties can be a heckuva lot of fun

Enjoy sharing astronomy with others

- Rewarding - you're hooked the first time that you amaze a youngster!

Astronomy Humor

You Matter.

Unless you multiply yourself by the speed of light squared. Then, of course...

You Energy.

$$E=MC^2$$

Thank You!

Next month's meeting is on Thursday,
March 16th, 2017 7 PM

Guest Speaker:

Elizabeth Warren

Director, UMD Observatory