

NCRAL blotter

Monthly Tidbits from NCRAL Officers, A.L. Representative and Appointees

[Alan Sheidler](#), PAC, Chairman

[Bill Davidson](#), RAC, Vice Chairman

[Roy Gustafson](#), PAC, Secretary-Treasurer

[John Attewell](#), RAC, Regional Rep. to the A.L.

[Carl Wenning](#), TCAA, *Northern Lights* Editor

[Jeffrey Setzer](#), NCSF, NCRAL Webmaster

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- ★ The North Central Region released its most recent issue of the *Northern Lights* newsletter just after the September equinox. If you have not received the newsletter and wish to receive notifications about it electronically, read about signups with the NCRAL email distribution list in the Autumn 2024 issue, which may be downloaded from the [NCRAL newsletter archive](#).
- ★ Do you or your affiliate have anything to contribute to the Winter 2025 issue of the NCRAL quarterly newsletter, *Northern Lights*? It can be an article, a picture, an announcement – anything of potential interest to the membership of the Region. Email your contribution to our editor, Carl Wenning, at al.north.central.region@gmail.com. Contribution deadline is December 21. NCRAL reserves the right to edit all submissions for accuracy, brevity, and suitability. The Winter 2025 issue will be disseminated after Christmas but before New Year's Day.
- ★ **Amendment to NCRAL Bylaws Passed:** If you missed the announcement in the Autumn 2024 issue of *Northern Lights*, ten NCRAL affiliates approved the amended bylaws as proposed. One affiliate had questions about three of the proposed changes, and explanations by the Region's officers seem to have addressed them. Proposals for additional amendments at the Region's next business meeting in the spring during NCRAL 2025 can address any remaining concerns.
- ★ **Next North Central Region Convention:** An NCRAL steering committee will manage the regional convention next year because we do not have an affiliate willing to host until 2026. The committee has been meeting bimonthly throughout this summer to organize initial plans. This group wants to recruit new members into the amateur astronomy community and highlight new ideas and discoveries. Accordingly, the conference theme will be *First Light: New Frontiers, New People*, and half a dozen speakers have already been recruited. The conference location will be in the Minneapolis/St. Paul area. The exact site has yet to be determined. The committee welcomes John Martin from The Rochester Astronomy Club as conference webmaster and technical expert. Stay tuned for other requests for help from the steering committee as planning continues. Contact NCRAL Chair Al Sheidler for answers to any questions you might have.
- ★ It's never too early to **make nominations** for NCRAL's Region award, Newsletter Editor award, and other regional and Astronomical League awards. Please start thinking about who you want to recognize for their significant contributions to the science of astronomy and their clubs. Also, don't forget that two **mini-grants are available** each year for up to \$250 each. Regional Award and Mini-Grants information can be found on [NCRAL's Awards Page](#).

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- ★ **ALCON 2025 ANNOUNCEMENT:** “The 2025 Astronomical League convention will be held June 25 - 28, 2025, at Bryce Canyon, Utah. The committee has been working hard to plan a convention that will be “ASTRONOMICAL”!! They hope to have the 2025 website up and running soon. Watch for updates and keep these dates open on your calendars!”
- ★ Is your affiliate’s contact information up to date on the NCRAL website? Over time, contact information for [affiliates listed on the Region’s website](#) becomes outdated. Please visit the NCRAL website and verify the accuracy of your information. If incorrect, please provide the correct information to NCRAL Regional Chair Alan Sheidler at adsheidler@gmail.com.
- ★ Since 2002, the Sangamon Astronomical Society has hosted the **Illinois Dark Skies Star Party** at Jim Edgar Panther Creek State Fish and Wildlife Area, Illinois’ largest recreational site. You are invited to join SAS for the 2024 edition of the IDSSP, Oct. 3-5. It’s an observer-oriented event at a great facility offering acres of land for observing. You can camp right at your observing site. However, an extensive camping facility is adjacent to the event site, including onsite electricity, water, sewer for campers, and self-contained R.V.s. Special astronomy talks are planned with accredited presenters. The IDSSP also has quality food services, or you can bring your food. For details and registration, www.sas-sky.org.
- ★ **2024 Iowa Star Party!** Some of the darkest skies in Iowa will again be the home for this year’s Iowa Star Party from Thursday, October 3 through Sunday, October 6. The party will be in the picturesque Whiterock Conservancy near Coon Rapids. The Conservancy is a 5,500-acre land trust with over 40 miles of trails for walkers, hikers, runners, mountain bikers, equestrians, and paddlers. In addition to trails, Whiterock offers accommodations, camping, fishing, stargazing, and many other outdoor activities. The Conservancy has carved out a large star field with plenty of room for nearby parking and dark star gazing. The program is hosted by the Ames Area Amateur Astronomers and co-sponsored by the Des Moines Astronomical Society. The Conservancy is slightly over an hour west of Des Moines and Ames. Accommodations include tent camping, R.V. campsites, lodging rooms at the Oakridge Guesthouse, and two nearby motels. For paid registrants, a banquet and guest speaker will be held on Saturday evening before stargazing. The public is invited (free) to the star field on Saturday evening for stargazing and interactions with amateur astronomers and their many telescopes. Registrations can be made at www.iowastarparty.com/ispregration.php