

# 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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- ★ 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](mailto: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 electronically after Christmas but before New Year's Day.
- ★ 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](#).
- ★ **Save the Date!** The NCRAL Conference Committee has been working hard to plan an exciting and enjoyable conference. Anyone interested in Astronomy, including clubs not affiliated with the Astronomical League, is welcome to attend. Look for updates in the upcoming *Northern Lights* and *Reflector* magazines.

## NCRAL 2025

- April 25/26, 2025
- Minneapolis Marriott Southwest, 5801 Opus Parkway, Hopkins, MN, 55343
- Agenda
  - April 25<sup>th</sup>, tour of Eagle Lake Observatory, Star-B-Q, evening observing (weather permitting)
  - April 26<sup>th</sup>
    - Talks by 6 speakers
    - NCRAL business meeting
    - Banquet Meal
    - Awards: Region Award, NL Award, Mini Grants
    - Astro-Photo Contest
    - Door prizes
    - Vendor displays

- ★ **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!" **ASTROCON 2025** workshops are as follows:

- *Astrophotography/Digital Imaging*—Novice: This section provides help for those who are just getting into photography for the first time. It covers what equipment may be needed and basic photography techniques unique to astronomy.
  - *Astrophotography/Digital Imaging*—Advanced: This course is for intermediate and advanced imagers who want to hone their skills and learn about the latest techniques and equipment.
  - *Observing: Personal Program/Journal*: Set up your observing program, including Astronomical League Observing Programs, to consider. Starting and keeping your journal.
  - *Observing: Tips & Ideas/Eyepieces/Filters*: Observing tips, including how best to use your eyes, what to wear, and equipment ideas. Understanding eyepiece selection. Using filters for visual and photographic work.
  - *Observing: Charts/Books/Observing Lists*: Using star charts (digital and paper) and reference books/star atlases. Creation of observing lists for different types of objects.
  - *Sketching*: This workshop will give attendees hands-on experience with drawing what you see at the eyepiece.
- ★ Is your **affiliate 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](mailto:adsheidler@gmail.com).
- ★ ALCors are hereby reminded that membership rosters should be provided to the Astronomical League four times a year so that the membership database can be updated. These updates are critical if the membership is to receive their mailings from *Reflector* magazine. Databases should be sent to Mitch Glaze at [rosters@astroleague.org](mailto:rosters@astroleague.org). For those not receiving hard copies of the magazine, back issues of *Reflector* can be found here: <https://www.astroleague.org/reflector/>
- ★ The Astronomical League is pleased to announce its newest observing program: The **Extragalactic Objects Observing Program**. This is not a galaxy program but an observing program featuring very Deep Space Objects (other than galaxies). These are the familiar objects from our galaxy (Open Clusters, Globular Clusters, etc.) but are part of other galaxies (such as Andromeda). Check out the new program, its requirements, and its object list: <https://www.astroleague.org/extragalactic-objects-observing-program/>
- ★ **AL on Facebook and YouTube**—Did you know that the AL has a presence on [YouTube](#) and [Facebook](#)? These platforms provide lots of good information. Be sure to check out these resources. They are incredibly comforting during the winter when we can't view them due to constantly overcast skies.
- ★ The AL's Observing Program Division is pleased to announce the inclusion of a new **Observing Program Relationship Graphic**. It represents the Universe, the Milky Way, and the solar system, with the Observing Programs grouped and superimposed to show how they relate to the cosmos. It is available through our menus by using Observe>Observing Program Division and scrolling down to the bottom of the Observing Program Planning Tool section by clicking on [this link](#) to go directly to that page or by [clicking here](#) to see it directly. The explanation of the graphic is contained on the Observing Program Division web page. Enjoy.
- ★ The Astronomical League recently sent out a "*What's Up with the Astronomical League*" newsletter that is sent out from time to time to Astronomical League Correspondents. [The November 2024 issue can be accessed here](#). There are essential notifications concerning: (1) Reflection only a digital publication as of March 2025, (2) new A. L. Historian appointed, and (3) information about Astrocon 2025.

Astronomical League

**on Facebook ...**

Monthly sky maps,  
Observing activities,  
AL LIVE sessions,  
League news & a whole lot more!



AL YouTube Channel

**Observing Program Previews:** What a program requires of the Observer.

**Our View from Earth:** How to find interesting celestial objects in three minutes. Perfect for club viewing.