

# NCRAL blotter

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

[Alan Sheidler](#), PAC, Chairman

[Eric Claeys](#), NAA, Vice Chairman

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

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

[Carl Wenning](#), TCAA, Publications Editor

[Josef Chlachula](#), RAC, Web Administrator

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- ★ **New NCRAL Web Administrator:** The North Central Region has a new webmaster! **Josef Chlachula** of the *Rochester Astronomy Club* (MN) replaces Jeff Setzer of the *Northern Cross Science Foundation* (WI), who has managed our website for many years. Thanks to Josef for stepping in and to Jeff, without whom we might never have had a Regional website. Jeff did a fantastic job building and maintaining the Region's many web pages over the years. The [NCRAL website](#) is an essential communications feature of the Region. In addition, it is a repository of crucial NCRAL documents.
- ★ Affiliate leaders and members-at-large should keep abreast of **What's Happening** in the Astronomical League. Each month, updates are posted on the [landing page of the A.L. website](#). For instance, the following posts can be found there as this issue of NCRAL blotter is readied for publication: AstroCon 2025; A Note to Master Observers; 3-D Printer Tools; A.L. Live – Kevin Shindler; *The Sun – An Observing Manual*; and Observing Program Division – Notice to Award Submitters, and more. ALCors should check this page for regular updates to share with their affiliates' members.
- ★ Though the A.L. landing page does not yet note it, it should soon mention that NCRAL's **Matt Ryno will be on the next A.L. Live** on June 6. Matt is president of the Milwaukee Astronomical Society. If nowhere else, keep your eyes on the A.L. [Facebook page](#) for details.
- ★ **NCRAL Speakers Bureau** has been *updated with new speakers and offerings*. New entries have been placed at the end of the document. Check it out and contact the folks listed there for high-quality talks.
- ★ The TCAA's Guidebook web page has been updated again, with the addition of the promised **TCAA Guide #12 – Introduction to Video-based Astrophotography** (version 1.3). All twelve TCAA Guides are freely available from the [TCAA website](#). Consider using TCAA Guide #1 – *Introduction to Amateur Astronomy* – to present a late-summer/early-autumn *Introduction to Amateur Astronomy* course this year. This course is a proven method of acquiring and retaining new members!

June 6, 2025 7:00PM EDT

**LIVE 2025!!**

**Matt Ryno**  
"Explore the Universe with a Global Scientific Network of Citizen Astronomers"

also  
Chuck Allen,  
Terry Mann,  
Don Knabb,  
Scott Roberts,  
and David Levy

Watch Live Stream or Recorded:  
[Explorescientific.com/live](https://explorescientific.com/live), or  
[www.facebook.com/Astronomical.League](https://www.facebook.com/Astronomical.League)

**Astronomical.League**

ASTROCON 2025:  
Bryce Canyon, Utah, June 25–28, 2025

- ★ The **MSRAL 2025 Conference** will be in Little Rock, Arkansas, June 13-15. They have a fine list of speakers and are finalizing the schedule now. Consider attending your neighbors to the west for their regional conference. The Mid-States conferences are always good, according to NCRAL members who attend. Find out more at: <https://msral2025.caasastro.org/index.php>
- ★ **NCRAL 2026** will be hosted by the [Cedar Amateur Astronomers](#) in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. The convention theme is *Mission Possible*. The tentative date for NCRAL 2026 is May 15-17.
- ★ The North Central Region has 36 affiliates because **the Quad Cities Astronomical Society has just joined the Astronomical League!** Welcome QCAS! By the numbers, the Region now has the following affiliates: Iowa (6), Illinois (14), Michigan (1), Minnesota (3), Wisconsin (12). There are no affiliated astronomy clubs in ND and SD. According to the latest count, NCRAL has some 2,500 affiliate members (including members at large). Before the addition of the QCAS, we had 2,413 members with the following membership counts by state: Iowa (350+5), Illinois (772+15), Michigan (17+3), Minnesota (783+3), North Dakota (0+1), South Dakota (0+2), and Wisconsin (449+13).
- ★ Do you need a summertime observing program? While the Astronomical League has dozens of observing projects, most take weeks, months, or even years to complete. NCRAL has created a series of **seasonal mini-Messier Marathons**, each with its certificate and pin! What's great about these programs is that they can be completed in an hour or two and allow the use of "goto" telescopes. Observers only need to record the time of each observation. All observations must be completed during a single dusk-to-dawn interval. Each season has only 27 or 28 objects, all bright and easy to find. Learn more about our Region's mini-Marathons by going to the [NCRAL observing programs](#) page of the Regional website, where observers can find the rules and required recording sheets.
- ★ Please encourage your members to sign up to receive electronic notification of the availability of each **Northern Lights** issue. Only about 21% of the membership gets direct notification, and this number has hardly changed in years. **Northern Lights** is a benefit of membership, so it's only right that members know about it and read pertinent feature articles that can affect their enjoyment of amateur astronomy. In the past nine years of publication, NCRAL's **Northern Lights** newsletter has had 36 quarterly issues with dozens of feature articles, many full of helpful advice from astronomical techniques to astronomy club management. These nine years of issues total approximately 600 pages, 325,000 words, and 1,500,000 characters.

Sign-up takes only about a minute. Affiliate members and members-at-large should resubscribe if they recently changed their email address and are not receiving our notifications. Subscribers must provide their name, email address, and astronomy club affiliation (or indicate A.L. membership-at-large) and let us know if they hold specific positions within a club. Go to the following case-sensitive URL to add information to the NCRAL email database at <https://tinyurl.com/NCRAL> today so you won't miss critical future communications.

- ★ The summer 2025 edition of **Northern Lights** will be disseminated on the summer solstice. The editor is assembling this issue now. If you or your affiliate has any news or a feature article to share, please send it electronically to the [NCRAL editor](#) by June 15. The editor also gladly accepts short announcements for inclusion in this publication, the **NCRAL blotter**.