

Q-C SKYWATCH

Q-C club to host astronomy convention

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Popular Astronomy Club

Dwarf stars, meteorites, and public outreach are some of the topics on the agenda of the North Central Region of the Astronomical League (NCRAL) Convention May 3-5 in downtown Moline at the Stoney Creek Hotel and Conference Center. The Popular Astronomy Club (PAC) of the Quad Cities is hosting the annual event with the theme "Astronomical Voyages of Discovery: Past, Present and Future."

NCRAL was formed in 1947 to promote amateur astronomy. There are 47 associations in the Upper Midwest: Illinois, Iowa, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Upper Peninsula of Michigan, North and South Dakota.

"Convention activities include all four cornerstones of amateur astronomy supported by the Astronomical League: the art of observing, the joy of outreach, the coolness of equipment, and the science of astronomy," says Mike Gacioch, chairperson of the PAC's planning committee. "We're offering seminars, presentations, a panel discussion, and field trips to planetariums and an observatory".

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One of the presenters is Dr. Steven Spangler, professor of astronomy at the University of Iowa. In his talk, "Different Views of the Sky," Spangler says: "The phenomena of astronomy have been observed by humans since deep prehistory. In fact, people in prehistory had a much greater awareness of the sky than most contemporary Americans. I will present a few stories of how different cultures viewed astronomical phenomena."

Some other topics are: radio astronomy, asteroid research, and involving students in astronomy. Visits to the planetariums at Augustana College are set May 3 and to the planetarium at Bettendorf High School May 5. The astronomy club will offer viewing in its own mobile observatory.

Pre-convention free activities are: visits to the John Deere Pavilion, John Deere Harvester Works and the Rock Island Arsenal



SUBMITTED

The Popular Astronomy Club mobile observatory will be at the North Central Region of the Astronomical League (NCRAL) Convention in Moline.

Museum at the Rock Island Arsenal, all May 3. A complete listing of convention presentations, hotel and convention registration, pricing and other activities, is listed at the official website www.NCRAL2019.org. Registration is open and encouraged before April 15 to ensure availability.

2ND MONDAYS

Alan Sheidler, president of the Popular Astronomy Club, invites the public to the club's free meetings on the second Monday of the month (except August and October) at 7 p.m. at Butterworth Center. "We explore various topics," says Sheidler. "Our club also sponsors free view-

ing nights at Niabi Zoo, libraries, and parks. Our members are all ages and come from all walks of life: teachers, sales associates, engineers—just folks who enjoy astronomy." See www.popularastronomy-club.org for a calendar of events.

Call 614-436-3531 for more information.