

QUAD-CITIES POPULAR ASTRONOMY CLUB



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Bettendorf native Katie Melbourne was guest speaker at the PAC banquet on Oct. 11.

What's up in local astronomy

PAUL LEVESQUE
Popular Astronomy Club

Popular Astronomy Club annual banquet

The Popular Astronomy Club held its annual banquet on Oct. 11 at the Riverfront Grille in Rock Island. The PAC banquet is traditionally held in October to commemorate the club's founding date of Oct. 29, 1936.

The guest speaker at the banquet was Katie Melbourne, a Bettendorf native and Pleasant Valley High School graduate who joined PAC while in high school. Her involvement in the club sparked her interest in space science and also helped her earn the Horkheimer/Smith Youth Service Award for astronomy outreach from the Astronomical League, a scholarship which she used to help advance her studies at Yale University in New Haven, Connecticut. Along with her degree in astrophysics from Yale, Melbourne also holds a master of science degree in aerospace engineering from the University of Colorado.

The subject of Melbourne's presentation was "Orbital Mechanics and Political Dynamics: The Physics and Strategy behind Space Warfare." During the presentation, she discussed how the U.S. is developing its doctrine for the possibility of warfare in space, how space is evolving from a sup-



porting domain to a warfighting domain, and why it's necessary to deploy defenses against possible space attack.

During the banquet, PAC's Member of the Year Award was presented to Megan Warren, while Rusty Case was presented with the Carl Gamble Award. Both are active members who often participate in public outreach sessions; Case also serves as the club's Observatory Director and has diligently maintained and upgraded the Paul Castle Observatory in Milan and the PACMO mobile observatory.

Visit to Springfield

During a visit to Springfield in October, Alan Sheidler of PAC was presented with the Donald C. Jardine Service to Amateur Astronomy Award by the Sangamon Astronomical Society. The award, named for the founder of the club based in Springfield, honors individuals for their contributions to



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Alan Sheidler is presented with the Donald C. Jardine Service to Amateur Astronomy Award by the Sangamon Astronomical Society at the SAS observatory in rural Springfield.

the science and hobby of amateur astronomy.

Sheidler was cited for his efforts

to instill an interest in and appreciation of astronomy to fellow club members and the public, and his willingness to provide guidance to those participating in amateur astronomy activities. He is past president of PAC and serves as the club's Observations Coordinator. In addition, Sheidler is chair of the North Central Region of the Astronomical League; PAC is a member of NCRAL, which include astronomy clubs in Illinois, Iowa, Wisconsin, Minnesota, the upper peninsula of Michigan, North Dakota and South Dakota.

Observation sessions at Niabi Zoo

PAC will host its final public observing session of the year at Niabi Zoo on Nov. 15. The club holds observing sessions at the zoo on the third Saturday of each month (weather permitting) from March through November.

Sunset on Nov. 15 is at 4:45 p.m., and observing will begin soon after. It's free to attend, and everyone is welcome. Hope to see you there!

Want to learn more about PAC?

You can keep up with the Popular Astronomy Club by visiting the PAC website: popularastronomyclub.org. You can also find

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Skywatch

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PAC on Facebook, here: [facebook.com/QCPAC](https://www.facebook.com/QCPAC).

Want to learn more? PAC always welcomes new members! You don't need to own a tele-

scope to join; all you need is an interest in the wonders of the night sky. Go to the website or the Facebook page to learn how you can join.

You're invited to join the Popular Astronomy Club at their monthly public observing sessions, held

on the third Saturday of the month at sunset at Niabi Zoo. The next Niabi Zoo observing session is scheduled for October 18; sunset is at 6:15 p.m. To learn more, follow the Popular Astronomy Club on Facebook or visit the PAC website: popularastronomyclub.org.