

# NORTH HOUSTON ASTRONOMY CLUB

## NORTH STAR NEWSLETTER

February 2012

Volume XII No. 2

### NHAC General Meeting

January 27, 2012

#### NOVICE PROGRAM

“A Novice’s Approach to Astrophotography”  
by Allan Hall

6:30 - 7:15pm in the Cosmic Forum, upstairs in the CLA building

#### MAIN PRESENTATION

Beginning at 7:30pm in the building CLA Teaching Theater, featuring:

- NHAC news and announcements
- “What’s Up Doc?” by Aaron Clevenson

#### FEATURED SPEAKER

Dr. C. Renee James

Associate Professor of Physics

Sam Houston State University

Author of “Seven Wonders of the Universe”

*“Why You Should Give a Rat’s @\$ About Pure Astronomical Research”*



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**The Deadline for submissions for the March 2012 newsletter is February 15, 2012.**

**NHAC is a proud member of:**



☆☆

# THANK YOU!

☆☆

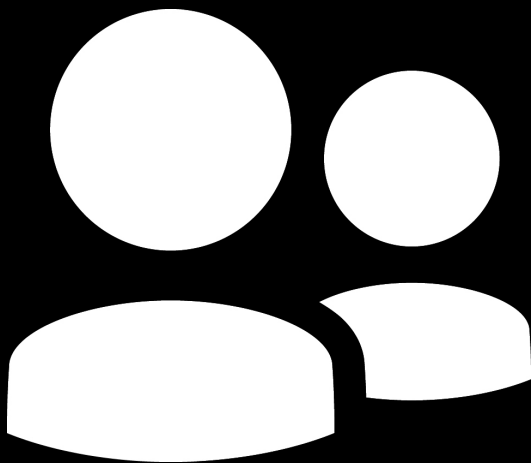
At the December general meeting, Dr. Aaron Clevenson spoke about the Kepler Mission and search for other Earth-like planets. He explained how Kepler finds the planets using the transit method by examining a star's brightness over a period of time, then various calculations are made to determine whether or not the planet falls in the star's habitable zone. He also provided detail about a few of the more promising planet candidates, and explained how the Kepler spacecraft works. Very exciting mission.  
Thank you Aaron!!



## ***Bring-A-Friend Night***

*The January general meeting on*

**Friday, January 27th is  
Bring-A-Friend Night!**



We have a great club, folks! So spread the astronomy love and invite a friend to learn about NHAC, partake in our Featured Speaker's presentation, and enjoy some tasty refreshments! They'll be glad you did!

# ★ CONGRATULATIONS TO THE 2012 NHAC BOARD MEMBERS!! ★



## 2012 NHAC Officers



**PRESIDENT**

**Bruce Pollard**

*president@astronomyclub.org*

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**EDITOR**

**Jamie Martin**

*newsletter@astronomyclub.org*

**PROGRAM COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSON**

**George Marsden**

*program@astronomyclub.org*

# News and Tidbits

## Stargazing Night at Jesse Jones Park - February 4th, 5:30 p.m.

Saturday, February 4th, Jesse Jones Park in Humble will once again host Stargazing Night from 5:30 to 9:00 p.m. Any NHAC members are welcome, especially if they can bring a scope and help expose attendees to more celestial objects. There are usually 30-40 interested novices, including quite a few young people. This is always a great opportunity to introduce stargazing to a new audience.

## Got a Favorite Piece of Equipment

If you have a favorite piece of equipment, a novel way of solving a problem, or a shortcut for making observing easier, bring it to the monthly meeting for the "Show-And-Tell" segment. Each presentation should take about 3 - 5 minutes and all ideas are welcome. Please submit your idea to Program Committee Chair, at [program@astronomyclub.org](mailto:program@astronomyclub.org) before the next meeting so that he can reserve a spot for your presentation.

## Special Club Rate Magazine Subscriptions

Club rates for personal subscriptions to ASTRONOMY and SKY & TELESCOPE magazines save about 25% over the normal subscription costs. Each magazine has its own procedure to subscribe based upon initiating the order through the club treasurer.

For ASTRONOMY magazine, write your check to NHAC (or pay in cash) for \$34 (or \$60 for 2 years). The Treasurer then validates your membership by writing a club check for the same amount to the magazine and sending them your address. Renewals must also be processed through the club. Please save your renewal documents for this process.

For SKY & TELESCOPE, pay the club \$33 (or \$32.95 if by check). As above, we write a club check to validate your membership and start your subscription. SKY & TELESCOPE renewals are processed directly by the subscriber.

*Be sure to include a clearly printed name and address sheet for any new subscriptions.*

## FOR SALE

Selling 8" Meade Schmidt-Cassegrain.  
Mirrors in excellent condition (Scope Stored in A/C).

Includes:

- Heavy-duty field tripod and wedge
- 6x30 right-angle finderscope
- Telrad
- Hardside carrying case w/wheels
- R.A. & Dec. motors work
- Battery and house current adaptor wiring included
- Star diagonal
- Original manuals

\$300

Sue Wheatley

936-582-6684



# From the Treasurer

## Don't forget to renew your membership!

Dues for regular members expired at the end of December. You may pay 2012 dues now. They will be delinquent at the end of January and if you haven't renewed by the end of February, you will be dropped from the roster. Dues for 2012 remain the same, \$25.00 for an Individual and \$30.00 for a Family.

Student memberships are \$5.00 and are valid for one year from the date joined.

If you have any questions about your current status, please see Mary Moore before or after any meeting or email her at [Treasurer@astronomyclub.org](mailto:Treasurer@astronomyclub.org).

**The 2012 calendars are in and spectacular! They are \$10.00 each  
and you can purchase them at any meeting!**

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**Remember to check out the North Houston Astronomy Club  
Facebook and Twitter pages:**



<http://www.facebook.com/NorthHoustonAstronomyClub>



[http://www.twitter.com/NHAC\\_Info](http://www.twitter.com/NHAC_Info)

# Observation Sites

## STAR PARTY - Saturday, February 18

Come on out for Socializing and Stargazing to the first official NHAC Monthly Star party of 2012!

### O'Brien Observing Site

Have you been to O'Brien site yet? This is a great site that is available to NHAC members. It has open fields with a treed horizon in all directions at 5 degrees and is located in Montgomery, Texas (heading west on Highway 105).

If you would like to use this site in the future, please read the use policy on the NHAC web page (click on the "Star Party!" link from the Home page), and please follow this process:

- Tim and Wanda O'Brien and their family are our hosts. They are on Netslyder, the email list server.
- To request use of the site, send an email out on Netslyder to: [NHAC@mail.netslyder.net](mailto:NHAC@mail.netslyder.net) (you must already be a member of the Netslyder mailing list)
- Requests must be made more than 24 hours in advance.
- Wanda or Tim will reply on Netslyder to let you know it is ok.
- Other members are welcome to also attend that night. Once approved, another request is not necessary at that point.
- The site is open to members and their guests (only when the member is present).

If you have any questions, please contact Mike Kramer or James Billings at [observation@astronomyclub.org](mailto:observation@astronomyclub.org)



# Observation Sites

## White Eagle Lodge (WEL)

The White Eagle Lodge is a private church retreat in Montgomery, TX. It has an open field with dark western and northern skies, although the east does suffer from light pollution. The north and east have good low horizons, while the west and southwest are somewhat obstructed by trees.

Other notes and the procedure for reserving a night in addition to the regular monthly NHAC star parties may be found [here](#).

The property owners (St. John's Retreat Center) request that all users sign a [Release of Liability Waiver](#).

Additional information and Directions are available online at [www.astronomyclub.org](http://www.astronomyclub.org).





# Revisiting the 'Pillars of Creation'

by Whitney Clavin



Far-infrared: ESA/Herschel/PACS/SPIRE/Hill, Motte, HOBYS Key Programme Consortium; X-ray: ESA/XMM-Newton/EPIC/XMM-Newton-SOC/Boulanger

search for young stars over a much wider region, and come to a much fuller understanding of the creative and destructive forces inside the Eagle nebula.

In 1995, NASA's Hubble Space Telescope took an iconic image of the Eagle nebula, dubbed the "Pillars of Creation," highlighting its finger-like pillars where new stars are thought to be forming. Now, the Herschel Space Observatory has a new, expansive view of the region captured in longer-wavelength infrared light.

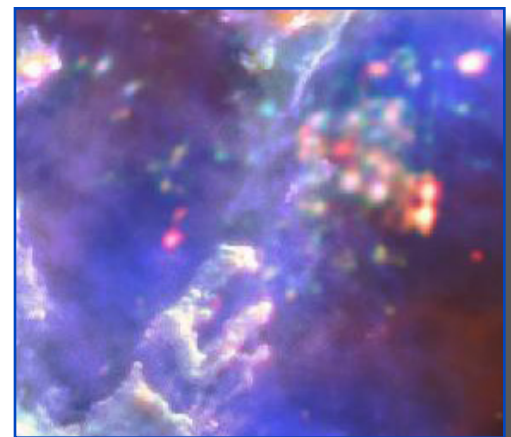
The Herschel mission is led by the European Space Agency, with important NASA contributions.

The Eagle nebula is 6,500 light-years away in the constellation of Serpens. It contains a young, hot star cluster, NGC6611, visible with modest backyard telescopes, which is sculpting and illuminating the surrounding gas and dust. The result is a huge, hollowed-out cavity and pillars, each several light-years long.

The new Herschel image shows the pillars and the wide field of gas and dust around them. Captured in far-infrared wavelengths, the image allows astronomers to see inside the pillars and structures in the region. Herschel's image also makes it possible to

## An 'Eagle's' Nest of Stars

This view of the Eagle nebula combines data from almost opposite ends of the electromagnetic spectrum. Herschel captured longer-wavelength, or far, infrared light, and the space telescope XMM-Newton imaged X-rays. The X-ray data show the hot young stars in the center of the cloud, which are sculpting and interacting with the surrounding ultra-cool gas and dust, seen in infrared. Both wavelengths would be blocked by Earth's atmosphere, so space telescopes such as these are critical to our understanding of the life cycle of stars.



*Image credits: far-infrared: ESA/Herschel/PACS/SPIRE/Hill, Motte, HOBYS Key Programme Consortium; X-ray: ESA/XMM-Newton/EPIC/XMM-Newton-SOC/Boulanger*

# The Insuperity Observatory at Humble ISD



*The Insuperity Observatory at Humble ISD, 2505 S. Houston Ave., Humble, TX 77396 281-641-STAR*

## 2012 Public Nights at the Observatory\*

- February 3, 2012 @ 6:00 p.m.
- March 2, 2012 @ 6:15 p.m.
- April 6, 2012 @ 7:45 p.m.
- May 4, 2012 @ 8:00 p.m.
- June 1, 2012 @ 8:15 p.m.
- July 6, 2012 @ 8:30 p.m.
- August 3, 2012 @ 8:15 p.m.
- September 7, 2012 @ 7:30 p.m.
- October 5, 2012 @ 7:00 p.m.
- November 2, 2012 @ 5:30 p.m.
- December 7, 2012 @ 5:30 p.m.

*\*Dates and times are subject to change.*

# Refreshment Committee Chairman Needed

## Your hungry club members need YOU! Yes, YOU!!

Have you been thinking about getting more involved with the club, but weren't quite sure what to do? Well, this would be a great way to help out! We are looking for someone to be in charge of the meeting refreshments each month.

Your job would be to see that the refreshments are ordered, picked up and delivered to the meeting each month. They would need to be set up prior to the meeting and taken down after the meeting. You would also need to see that all of the necessary utensils were kept on hand.

As Chairman, you may choose to delegate this monthly, or handle it yourself with a few bodyguards. :)



*Position:* Available immediately

*Salary:* We will pay you on Tuesday for the hamburger today

*Satisfaction:* Priceless

**Contact** [board@astronomyclub.org](mailto:board@astronomyclub.org)

## We need YOU!!

# About NHAC

The North Houston Astronomy Club (NHAC), was formed for educational and scientific purposes, for people of all races, creeds, ethnic backgrounds and sex, for the primary purpose of developing and implementing programs designed to increase the awareness and knowledge of astronomy, especially for those living near the north side of Houston Texas.

NHAC is a non-profit organization dedicated to providing the opportunity for all individuals to pursue the science of astronomy, by observing in a dark-sky site, learning the latest technology, and sharing their knowledge and experience. Thus, our “Observe-Learn-Share” motto.

*North Houston Astronomy Club is Sponsored by:*



## Membership Benefits

- Loaner telescopes
- Borrow from the NHAC “Library”
- Observe from Dark Sky Observing Sites
- Learn from experienced amateur astronomers
- Share your knowledge at club hosted picnics and star parties
- Discount magazine subscriptions (contact our Treasurer)
- Includes membership in the Astronomical League
- The quarterly Astronomical League magazine “Reflector”
- Eligibility for NHAC Executive Board

[www.astronomyclub.org](http://www.astronomyclub.org)  
[www.nhac.info](http://www.nhac.info)

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Observe - Learn - Share

