

By Carroll Iorg, Vice President,
Astronomical League

2008 MABEL STERNS

Mabel Sterns was the Astronomical League's first newsletter editor. This is the tenth year of granting the **Mabel Sterns Newsletter Awards** in her honor. The awards recognize one of the most important people in any club, a person who is a primary source of beneficial information to club members.

Most of the time, newsletter editors don't get much recognition as they do their steady task of keeping the membership informed about what goes on in their astronomy clubs. They publish newsletters despite often not having enough articles to fill the edition, magically creating interesting articles at the last minute.

Our 2008 judges had a challenge in ranking all of the newsletters submitted for consideration. All of our judges are former newsletter editors.

**First-Place Winner:
Dana Koch**

Dana is newsletter editor of *Sidereal Times*, the newsletter of the Austin Astronomical Society in Austin, Texas.

The cover of the issue includes much information including meeting times and agenda, and a table of contents. The League's logo is prominently displayed. The "President's Corner" appears in the center. Below that is a

reminder about a club gathering and a teaser for star party pictures inside.

Inside, members are kept up to date on the club's finances, and the minutes of club meetings – both general and executive

committee – are reprinted.

One article in the submitted issue picks targets for observing that month and describes the history of each. Another article explores the history and science of the "Constellation of the Month."

Yet another interesting article advertised an event sponsored by the mentoring committee inviting all interested members, but especially new members, to learning sessions for people who want to learn more about astronomy. This particular session's topic was "How to plan an Observing Session," presented by one of the club's more experienced members.

A map inside directs members exactly where they need to go for the monthly

2. Dean Crabtree



meetings.

The newsletter's back cover includes contact information for all club officers and the executive committee, including phone number and e-mail address. A clip-out membership form is provided to make joining the club easy.

The club's Web site is www.austinastro.org.

**Second-Place Winner:
Dean Crabtree**

Dean edits *Prime Focus* for the Fort Worth (Texas) Astronomical Society. *Prime Focus* includes articles, club notes and lots of color throughout in photos and graphics.

The newsletter cover includes a nebula photo. Below that is a section with club notes about outreach, the International Year of Astronomy, observing equipment for sale, and an upcoming star party.

Inside, a full-page calendar lists Moon phases, the Leonid meteor shower and other astronomical events. A Stargazers' Diary submitted by two club members describing a visit to

1. Dana Koch



AWARDS

another club's month meeting "under the stars" was a nice touch.

The back page includes basic club information such as officer names, meeting times, Web site, subscriptions to E-group or astronomy magazines, and League membership information. The submitted issue includes a book review of *Diary of a Cosmonaut: 211 Days in Space*. For a light touch, the newsletter includes a cartoon and astronomy-related word search.

The club's Web site is www.fortworthastro.com.

Third-Place Winner: R. Christian Bruggeman

R. Christian is the editor of *Gazer's Gazette* for the Oklahoma City (Oklahoma) Astronomy Club. A table of contents on the cover details what appears in the issue. Two photos of Comet Holmes grace the cover of the submitted issue, along with an article about the comet's centennial year.

The newsletter includes a new feature, a section that alerts members to materials in the club's library. One article discusses the Okie-Tex star party, and several pictures are included. Other items include the president's message, a recap of the club's activities, monthly sky highlights and meeting minutes.

The club's Web site is www.okcastroclub.com.

Fourth-Place Winner: George Hatfield

George edits the *High Desert Observer* for the Astronomical Society of Las Cruces (New Mexico).

The submitted newsletter's cover has the president's message, which includes a photo. Light pollution is one major topic in this newsletter.

One article talks about imaging with light-pollution filters, with several graphs to demonstrate. Another article discusses the effects of light pollution.

Other information in the newsletter includes meeting minutes, officer names and e-mail addresses, a book review, and a preview of an upcoming Messier marathon.

The club's Web site is www.aslc-nm.org.

Fifth-Place Winner: Denny Hill

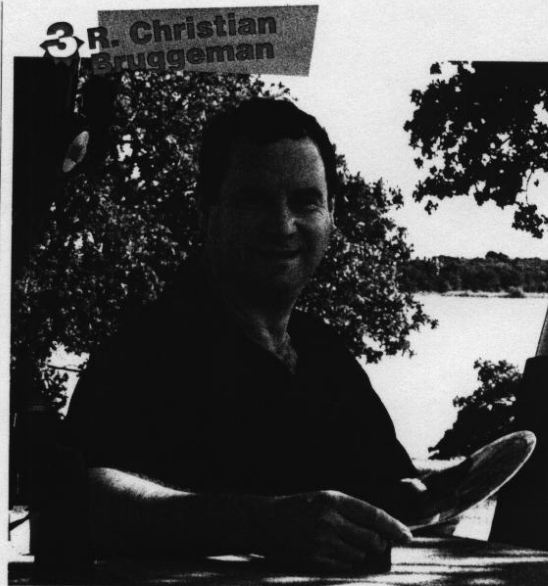
Denny is editor of the *Galactic Gazette*, the newsletter of the Kiski Astronomers in New Kensington, PA.

The submitted issue includes a front page article entitled "Double Vision!" which summarizes the completion of the Large Binocular Telescope (LBT) located on Mt. Graham, whose technical director is also a member of the club. The "Galactic Humor!" column features "politically-correct astronomical names." For example, a minor planet was defined as a "mass-challenged solar system object."

The monthly calendar is entitled "nocturnal notables." Another interesting article was entitled "Comets Present and Future," in which comet Holmes was featured along with information describing an historic eruption of the comet that occurred in 1892 when the comet reached a magnitude of 4 or 5.

The Web site is <http://home.comcast.net/~kiskiastronomers/>

For information about the 2009 Mabel Sterns Award program, please contact Mr. Carroll Iorg, vice president carroll-iorg@kc.rr.com (816) 444-4878, or visit the League's Web site: www.astroleague.org.



The deadline for submissions is March 31, 2009.

The president of the club should send *four paper copies of a recent newsletter*, along with *four copies of a letter of recommendation* to the League's Vice President, 7241 Jarboe St., Kansas City, Missouri 64114. A photo of the newsletter editor, preferably taken in an astronomical-type setting, should also be submitted. In addition, the postal address of the newsletter editor should be included.

It is strongly recommended that the Astronomical League's logo be prominently displayed in the newsletter, preferably on the front page. *

