

# ASTRONOMICAL LEAGUE'S 2009 MABEL STERNS NEWSLETTER AWARD

By Carroll Iorg, Vice President

**M**abel Sterns was the Astronomical League's first newsletter editor. This is the eleventh year of granting the Mabel Sterns Newsletter Award in her honor. The award recognizes 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 2009 judges had a challenge in ranking these outstanding submissions. All of our judges are former newsletter editors.

Following are the top finishers for the 2009 Mabel Sterns Newsletter Award.

## First-Place Winner:

**John Hepler**

John is newsletter editor of *Observations*, the newsletter of the Chester County Astronomical Society, West Chester, Pennsylvania.

The cover of the submitted newsletter sample was well laid out with a prominently listed index of features in the issue. Another informative item on the front page was a listing of membership renewals due for the current month, as



well as for the next two months. Important astronomical dates for the months were listed here as well. The logos for the Astronomical League and the state lighting council were prominently displayed.

Another page showed "The Sky Over Chester County" sky chart for the month, with pertinent sunrise, sunset and moon phase information noted for the month. The observing chair for the club authored an article featuring observing highlights for the month. The submitted issue also contained an interesting article explaining zodiacal light.

A unique article informed readers about the upcoming 45<sup>th</sup> Annual International Astronomical Youth Camp being held in southern Poland. This issue also noted the club's introductory astronomy classes that are open to the public several times per year, with the nominal cost, topics and dates stated.

Finally, the last two pages of the issue were titled "CCAS Information Directory." This directory communicated information about magazine group rates, executive committee contacts, the telescope lending program and the option of electronic newsletter delivery via email.

The club's Web site is [www.ccas.us](http://www.ccas.us).

## Second-Place Winner: Dave Hutchison

Another outstanding entry was submitted by the Texas Astronomical Society of Dallas. Editor David Hutchison and Assistant Editor Andy Cheng certainly produce a fine *Spectrum*, the monthly publication of the club.

The submitted publication featured an outstanding photo of the Great Orion Nebula on the front cover banner. This first issue of the year was a summary of the past year's events with many photos of various club functions from 2008. A



novel idea contained in this issue was the index of newsletter contents for the past year with thumbnails of each monthly cover.

Another unique component was a selected listing of five of the Astronomical League's observing clubs, including the specific links to each club's information on the League Web site. "Lights on New Faces," an article featuring responses from new members, was a nice addition. "Gadget Geek II" and "Constellation of the Month" were other well-written articles in this publication. The *Spectrum* is produced monthly and is available to all members on the Web site, with additional copies available for those who have requested hard copies. One distinct advantage of the electronic version is the ability to include clickable

links throughout the publication for further study.

The club's Web site is [www.texasastro.org](http://www.texasastro.org).

## Third-Place Winner: Richard Bell

Richard Bell edits *Prime Focus* for the Kalamazoo Astronomical Society in Kalamazoo, Michigan.

The submitted newsletter featured an effective calendar of the month's astronomical events on the left side of the front cover. Meeting minutes and a book review were also part of this issue.

"The Almost Perfect Night" article chronicled a wonderful night of observing when the weather, the telescope and the stars came together to reward the author with one of his most satisfying nights ever at the eyepiece. For more information regarding the club, please visit the club's Web site, [www.kasonline.org](http://www.kasonline.org).

## Fourth-Place Winner: Dean Crabtree

A major portion of the featured monthly newsletter, also named *Prime Focus*, edited by Dean Crabtree, featured the 2009 celebration of the International Year of Astronomy. This article included specific instructions for participating in the GLOBE at Night campaign. In addition, this issue reported a special presentation by Dr. Neil deGrasse Tyson from Hayden Planetarium. He helped launch



the University of Texas-Arlington Physics and Planetarium IYA 2009 activities.

The cover featured an early morning photo of Jupiter, Mercury and the moon, taken by a local club member. The "Observing and Outreach Opportunities" gave members a listing of club outreach and other special events that club members could participate in during the upcoming month. Another interesting article informed readers about additional celestial objects besides the sun that can be observed during the day, including some of the brighter stars, planets and satellites. The colorful full-page calendar of astronomical events was most informative. The Fort Worth (Texas) Astronomical Society's Web site address is [www.fortworthastro.com](http://www.fortworthastro.com).

#### **Fifth-Place Winner:**

##### **Clark Thomas**

Editor Clark Thomas provides a most informative publication for the members of the Roanoke Valley Astronomical Society.

A major part of the submitted issue featured the winter constellations, with practical information for observing the major objects found in each one. Another article featured the International Year of Astronomy, mentioning the League's involvement and ways the local club could get involved with this worldwide celebration.

Another submission, by a local member, informed readers with specific plans for building an observing chair. Another in-depth article surveyed NGC 1514, the Crystal Ball Nebula. The organization's Web site address is [www.rvasclub.org](http://www.rvasclub.org).

#### **Sixth-Place Winner:**

##### **R. Christian Bruggerman**

R. Christian Bruggerman edits the *Gazer's Gazette* for the Oklahoma City Astronomy Club. Extensive coverage of the last Okie-Tex star party was

provided in the sample newsletter, including comments from attendees and many photos chronicling this yearly event sponsored by the club.

In another section of the newsletter, a club member's astronomy trip to Australia that was one of the monthly featured programs is presented. Topics discussed included why Southern Hemisphere constellations rise backwards, how Earth's rotation affects how celestial objects are view, aboriginal myths, the Coriolis effect, Southern Milky Way gems, and the Aurora Australis.

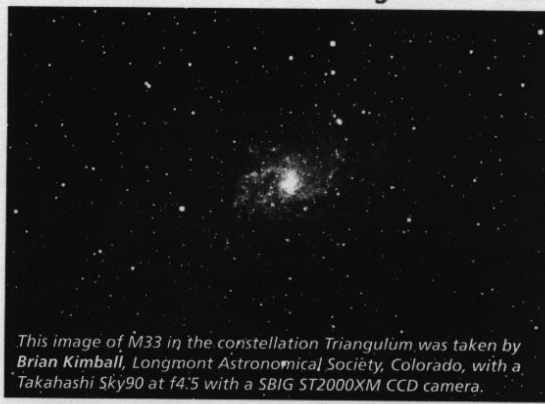
The president's message informed the membership of the recently completed observatory building with the benefit of being able to present public outreach at that facility.

Web site address is [www.okeastroclub.com](http://www.okeastroclub.com).

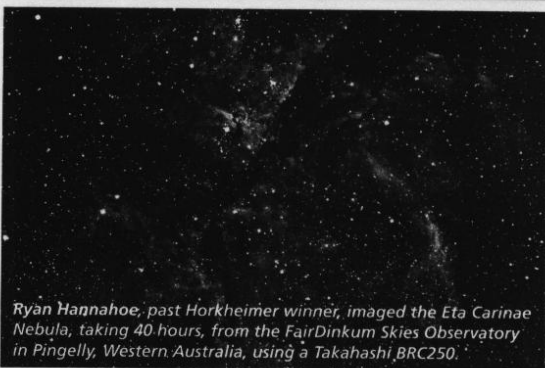
**For information about the 2010 Mabel Sterns Award program**, please contact Mr. Carroll Iorg, vice president, [carroll-iorg@kc.rr.com](mailto:carroll-iorg@kc.rr.com), (816) 444-4878 or visit the League's Web site: [www.astroleague.org](http://www.astroleague.org). The deadline for submissions is March 31, 2010. 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 listing of the club's Web site where electronic copies of past newsletters are posted would also be helpful. A **photo of the newsletter editor**, in jpg format, preferably taken in an astronomical-type setting, should also be submitted in the packet. **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. \*

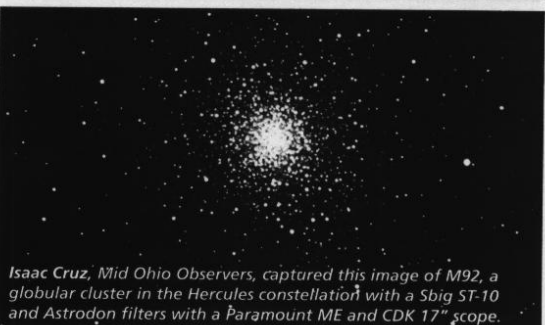
## Photo submissions from League members



*This image of M33 in the constellation Triangulum was taken by Brian Kimball, Longmont Astronomical Society, Colorado, with a Takahashi Sky90 at f4.5 with a SBIG ST2000XM CCD camera.*



*Ryan Hannahoe, past Horkheimer winner, imaged the Eta Carinae Nebula, taking 40 hours, from the FairDinkum Skies Observatory in Pingelly, Western Australia, using a Takahashi BRC250.*



*Isaac Cruz, Mid Ohio Observers, captured this image of M92, a globular cluster in the Hercules constellation with a Sbig ST-10 and Astrodon filters with a Paramount ME and CDK 17" scope.*

### CALL FOR NOMINEES FOR LEAGUE OFFICER POSITIONS

The terms of three of our national officers end in 2010. These are the **President**, **Vice President**, and **Executive Secretary** positions. The President and the Vice President serve two-year terms, while the term of the Executive Secretary position lasts for three years. If you would be interested in using your talents in one of these positions, we would like to hear from you.

To get a general idea of the duties and responsibilities for each of these positions, please refer to the League's bylaws which can be accessed on the League website at [astroleague.org](http://astroleague.org). Some of the specific duties of the Executive Secretary have changed as many of that office's duties have been centralized at the national office.

Candidates should send me background statements explaining why they are interested. Please limit this to approximately 250 words. We need all the nominations, statements of acceptance, photos for the Reflector and biographical statements by **January 15, 2010**.

**Terry Mann**, Chair of the Nominating Committee & President  
[starsrus@infnet.com](mailto:starsrus@infnet.com)