



What's Up With the Astronomical League July 2025

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Compiled and edited by
Carroll Iorg,

Immed. Past President

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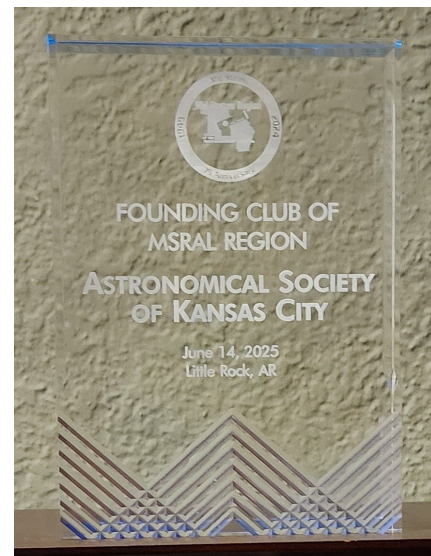
In this issue we emphasize regions with the Hidden Hollow Star Party announcement from the North Central Region. Also, we feature an outstanding article by Peggy Walker, Regional Representative from the Mid-States Region of the Astronomical League (MSRAL). The MSRAL Regional Convention held in Little Rock, Arkansas, June 13-15, 2025, celebrated this special 75th Anniversary milestone. To publish this issue in a timely manner, a late presentation of an acrylic award and certificate for the Astronomical Society of Kansas City, one of the founding societies of the Region, was made at its July 26th meeting, and is noted below.



Carroll Iorg, Immediate Past League President presenting the MSRAL Award and Certificate of Appreciation to the Astronomical Society of Kansas City at its Saturday night, July 26, 2025 meeting.

Dave Walden, president of the ASKC was the recipient on behalf of the Club.

ASKC was honored as one of the two founding clubs of the Mid-States region of the AL 75 years ago.



ASTRONOMICAL LEAGUE LIVE!

AUGUST 1, 2025 7:00 PM EDT



Bob King

*Special sights not to miss as
Saturn's rings narrow:
a visual observer's guide
to the Ring King.*



host Terry Mann (AL VP)

with

AL President Chuck Allen, MERAL Chair Don Knabb

also

Scott Roberts and David Levy

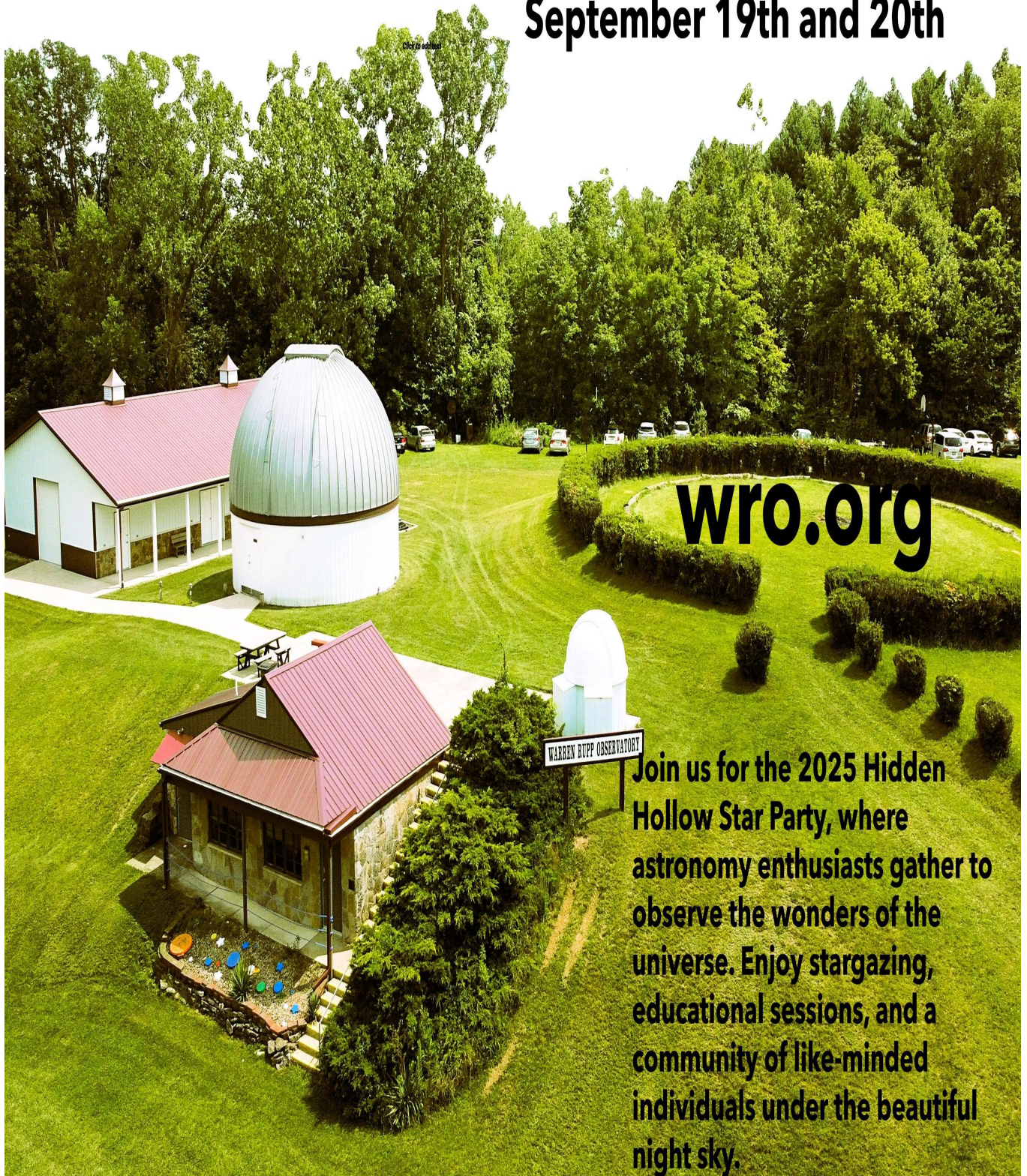
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2025 Hidden Hollow Star Party

September 19th and 20th



Join us for the 2025 Hidden Hollow Star Party, where astronomy enthusiasts gather to observe the wonders of the universe. Enjoy stargazing, educational sessions, and a community of like-minded individuals under the beautiful night sky.

CELEBRATING TOGETHER UNDER THE STARS FOR 75 YEARS AND COUNTING

The Astronomical League had early roots back to the 1939 Cushing, New York World's Fair, and was officially formalized after the second World War on August 30, 1947. The Mid-States Region formed in 1949 and became official in 1950 and joined the League in 1951.

The Central Missouri Amateur Astronomers met in Fayette, MO, at the Morrison Observatory of Central College under the leadership of Dr. Floyd Helton, Gene Waters, and Russell Maag. Included in this meeting were members from the Kansas City Astronomy Club (aka Astronomical Society of Kansas City). Photo courtesy from the archives of the Central Missouri Amateur Astronomers.

Some of the names and faces have changed, but the goal is still the same: to come together and share ideas, resources, and encouragement in this hobby of astronomy. Currently, the Mid-States Region contains many members who joined as a young adult and have recounted their great enduring relationships that they still enjoy today.

This year's 75th Anniversary was held at the University of AR at Little Rock, AR on June 13 to 15th, 2025, and was hosted by Central Arkansas Astronomical Society. This is the first convention in 22 years where there was a full complement of officers and convention chair working together, exactly how the region was established as reported in *Sky & Telescope* articles and convention archive minutes.

The major hurdle facing the convention process is the ever-increasing online meetings culture vs hosting in-person meetings and conventions. Although there is a place for that, MSRAL officers still value the coming together like a family reunion every June. In fact, the officers have decided to engage the regional youth with the mission to have them meet each other, present talks and participate in STEAM activities upcoming conventions. The best part is, a new officer position, Regional Youth Coordinator, will be in charge of a team of youth who will plan their convention.

One thing we know for sure is that according to Archives on Youth Activities, the Astronomical League had a successful model back at its inception in 1947, where a student league of youth astronomy clubs were connected nationally through a snail mail newsletter, and prepared talks/presentations, observing programs, and attendance at the ALCons. Through this Youth Committee, and its guidance from a coordinator, MSRAL officers will feel confident that there will be good stewards at the ready for the future.



Central Missouri Amateur Astronomers - Kansas City, Missouri



Celebration time after the Saturday night banquet at UALR Meeting Room. Cake with Half vanilla with raspberry cream and chocolate with chocolate cream.

From left to right: Jackie Beucher, Betty and Past President Carroll Iorg, Clare and MSRAL Regional Chair, Rick Heschmeyer.

As stated on page 1, Central Missouri Amateur Astronomers and Kansas City Astronomy Club met 75 years ago and hammered out what we have become today. The current MSRAL officers felt it was vital to acknowledge and celebrate the Founding Clubs and the people who have been keeping MSRAL relevant as well as providing a great respite for astro-friendships through the years.

Along with 75th MSRAL logo totes and pins, acrylic awards and certificates were also issued with Chair Heschmeyer's and Carroll Iorg's signatures.

The awards were designed for the two Founding Clubs, the first being Central Missouri Amateur Astronomers with new logo and given with a paper certificate. No one from CMAA was present so theirs was sent to them. The second Founding Club awarded was to ASKC: their attendees came forward to receive their award.



Photo at right: starting from the Left: Jackie Beucher, Gil and Kathy Machin, Betty and Carroll Iorg and Regional Chair Rick Heschmeyer.



LEGACY CLUBS RECOGNITION

**Saint Louis Astronomical Society
and
Astronomy Club of Tulsa**

The second group of awards were the Legacy Clubs and also went to two clubs. Both immediately started to host a regional meeting very early in the 1950s. The first club that is also a major backbone to this region partnered with the Amateur Astronomical Society of Emerson Electric at their Auditorium and Observatory in September, with the Saint Louis Astronomical Society. So far, SLAS has hosted the most conventions.

The other club was the Tulsa Astronomy Club (aka Astronomy Club of Tulsa-ACT). Since no members were present, award and certificate will be delivered when they start up their meetings again in August.

ACT hosted the 5th convention in 1953 with the Wichita Astronomical Society at Grand Lake of the Cherokees, at Grand Lake in Oklahoma. These two clubs would continue to partner for 8 conventions. The early version of Amateur of the Year Award started at this convention.

Photo at left: SLAS members Larry Campbell, Cook "Yoda" Feldman, Mark Jones, Regional Chair Rick Heschmeyer, and Jim Small





CLUBS THAT SHARE THE VISION

After recognition of the Founding and Legacy clubs, Certificates of Appreciation were given to any club or society that has hosted a regional convention during the 75 years of operation of the Region. A few were not present, and sadly a few of the clubs no longer exist.

The Astronomical Society of Eastern Missouri-ASEM first hosted in 2008 at the St. Charles Community College, Cottleville, MO. They will be hosting MSRAL 2026 next June. The attendees came forward for their certificate. **Photo on left:** Larry Campbell, Jim Twellman, Stacey Thater and Chair Rick Heschmeyer.

Photo on right: Stacey Thater, Board Director for ASEM, gave President, Chuck Simms ASEM's certificate at their July meeting.



The Astronomical Society of NW Arkansas hosted their first convention in 1982, which was held at the Jones Center for Families in Springdale, AR.

President Elliot Neel accepted his club's award. Additionally, he was a presenter at the convention with a talk called, "Homage to the Porter Garden Telescope" that was built in the 1920s by Russell Porter, artist, engineer, architect, cartographer, amateur astronomer and Arctic explorer and founder of Stellafane held annually in Springfield, VT.



Central Arkansas Astronomical Society first hosted in 2015 at the University of AR at Little Rock. It was well attended, complete with several vendor tables.

This year's hosting members present from left to right in photo at left: John Reed, Rocky Tongi, Chris Lasley, Bruce McMath, Carl Freyaldenhoven, Michael Borrelli, Bill Engberg, Jim Dixon (who is also MSRAL's 2025 Amateur of the Year Award recipient), and Darcy Howard along with Regional Chair Rick Heschmeyer.



The first hosting by Omaha Astronomical Society was in 1973, and later partnered with Prairie Astronomical Society. Their convention was hosted at Creighton University in Omaha, NE. **Receiving the award are OAS members in the photo at left: starting left to right: John Johnson, Bill Bond, Mike Modrcin and presenter, Regional Chair Heschmeyer.**

The next hosting club was the Prairie Astronomical Society in Nebraska, who hosted their first convention in 1970, which was held at the Wesleyan University, Lincoln, NE. They would also partner with OAS for another events. Fellow Nebraskan, Mike Modrcin from the Omaha Astronomical Society received it on their behalf.



Last but not least is the Sugar Creek Astronomical Society which hosted in 2018 at Explore Scientific in Springdale, AR. It was at this meeting that MSRAL had a Horkheimer youth recipient named Abigail Bollenbach from the Bartlesville Astronomical Society who still is an astronomy influencer. No one from Sugar Creek Astronomical Society was present, so the Regional Representative sent it to Past President Kent Marts, who gave it to the current President, Molly Ussery, at their July meeting.

MSRAL's DEDICATED VOLUNTEERS

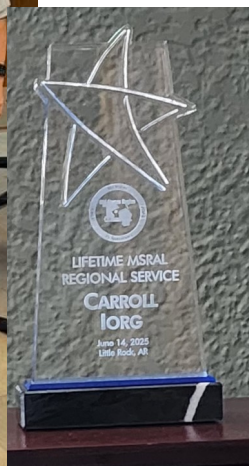
Another Regional grouping of awards were given to those who had spent many years volunteering in the Mid-States or at the National level or both.



Currently, the only service award MSRAL offers is the Amateur of the Year Award started in the early 50s. In light of the 75th celebration, and based on review of countless archives of National, MSRAL, and various regional club minutes, there were a few names that seemed to be in the limelight for over 30 years.

With a gap in MSRAL minutes from 1975 to 1992, the first recipient stepped in as a regional chair in 1994 to 1996, became Regional Vice Chair in 1999, Regional Chair in 2000 and Convention Chair in 2005, all the while serving as an executive officer either Vice President or President of the Astronomical League.

A Lifetime MSRAL Service Award and Certificate of Appreciation went to Past President Carroll Iorg.



LET'S HEAR IT FOR THE GIRLS!

The second Lifetime MSRAL Service Award and Certificate of Appreciation went to a longstanding member of the Astronomical Society of Kansas City. Starting in the 1990s, Jackie Beucher served as National Executive Secretary for several years, served as President of ASKC several times, became Regional Chair in 1992, and then served as MSRAL's Secretary-Treasurer for 7 years, stepping down in 2019.



The main project that she worked on in the 90s of which the Astronomical League is still a beneficiary was receiving all the data and information of the clubs and individual members from former Executive Secretary Janet Stevens. All memberships were entered into the MS Access Data Base software, which was the genesis of the current files used by Mitch Glaze today. Along with a few others, this team received the League's Service Award for all their hard work. Great Woman, Great Legacy.



OUR UNSUNG HEREOUS—BEHIND THE SCENES

There are three other well-deserving people who are more behind the scenes, and they too are members of the Region's largest astronomy club, the Astronomical Society of Kansas City. The first recipient was the previous manager of the League store for many years. During that time, Denise Moser, set up this vital facet of the Astronomical League with products and merchandise. She was recently appointed as the League Historian and has started to organize documents, files, all the many archives, including Regional archives and documentation, at the League headquarters in Kansas City.

The second recipient is a faithful worker as well and works the store merchandise tables at ALCONS and maintains member-at-large membership records, hard files, etc. He has been working for 10 years, so congratulations to Mike Stoakes. Mike's fellow coworker who has demonstrated the same work ethic on-site for the past five years is none other than Judith Riley. Their selfless dedication may often impact their personal time, but they take what they do very seriously and it shows.

They indeed are the unsung heroes of the National Office. Since Mike and Judith were preparing store merchandise and booth equipment for Bryce Canyon, they were not able to have time to attend the MSRAL Convention in Little Rock, AR.

At the banquet, Carroll Iorg received all their certificates with new MSRAL logo pins and totes and delivered them on behalf of the MSRAL Region.

Meriam-Webster defines dedication as: self-sacrificing, devotion, and loyalty. If the dictionary had photos, there would be these three.

Photos: Left Denise Moser, Center Mike Stoakes, Right Judith Riley (all from ASKC).



MORE REASONS MSRAL HAS BEEN SUCCESSFUL FOR 75 YEARS PLUS



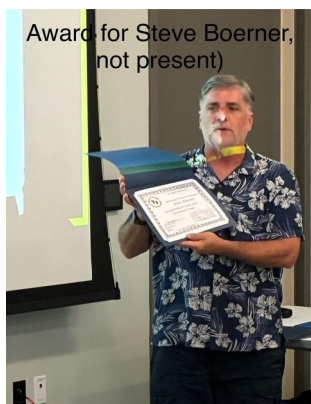
Scott Kranz, AL Awards Coordinator, from the Astronomical Society of Kansas City, was awarded for his management of the Master Imaging, Comet, Meteor, Messier and Sun Spotter Observing Programs.

The Omaha Astronomical Society received an award for the genesis of the observing programs by creating the Messier Observing Program for their 45 students back in 1963.

The first AL coordinator, Brad Young from the Astronomy Club of Tulsa, who manages Alternate Constellations, Solar Eclipse and Earth Orbiting Satellites, was honored with an award. He was not present, so his will be delivered to him at their August club meeting.



Mike Modrcin from the Omaha Astronomical Society was awarded for his National position as Astronomy Day Coordinator.



Steve Boerner, Member-At-Large, is being given an award for managing the Astronomy Before the Telescope, Spectroscopy and Radio Astronomy programs for the AL.



Kathy Machin, also from the Astronomical Society of Kansas City, oversees the Dark Nebula and the Southern Skies Observing Programs for the League.



Robert Togni from the Central Arkansas Astronomical Society manages the AL Carbon Star, and authored the Variable Star and Variable Star Binocular programs. He also proposed and wrote the Lunar Evolution Observing Program.



Dan Crowson, AL coordinator from the Astronomical Society of Eastern MO, handles the Foundations of Imaging Program.



Cook "Yoda" Feldman, Regional Vice Chair, from the St. Louis Astronomical Society was awarded for Oversight of the MSRAL Bylaws, Convention Planning Guide and development of a regional budget for future projects.



Article submitted by Peggy Walker, STEAM and Accessible Astronomy Coordinator and MSRAL Regional Representative