

The Bulletin – The monthly publication of the Indiana Astronomical Society

February, 2008  
Volume 75, Issue 2  
www.iasindy.org

# The Bulletin



**The February General Meeting, February 9, 2008 7:00 PM Holcomb  
Observatory on the Butler Campus**

## **Mercury – The Elusive Planet:**

*Daniel Cervantes  
NASA Solar System Ambassador*

Mercury, Venus, Earth, and Mars are the terrestrial (rocky) planets. Among these, Mercury is an extreme: the smallest, the densest (after correcting for self-compression), the one with the oldest surface, the one with the largest daily variations in surface temperature, and the least explored. Understanding this “end member” among the terrestrial planets is crucial to developing a better understanding of how the planets in our solar system formed and evolved.

On January 14, 2008, the MESSENGER spacecraft had its first encounter with Mercury. This flyby provided the first opportunity to continue the scientific investigation of Mercury since the Mariner 10 mission in 1974 and 1975.

Our talk will begin by reviewing the scientific history of Mercury. Next, we will review the early results of the recent MESSENGER flyby. Finally, we will discuss the future of MESSENGER as it continues on its course to eventually orbit Mercury.

Daniel is currently a manager with the Software Systems Integration Branch at Crane Division, Naval Surface Warfare Center in Crane, Indiana. He has a Masters Degree in Physics from Purdue University and previously taught Physics and Astronomy at IUPUI. Daniel is a NASA/JPL Solar System Ambassador and Vice-President of the Bedford Stonebelt Stargazers Astronomy Club.

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## **Election Night**

The elections are over. Last night we elected executive officers and three new Board members.

Officers:

President - Jeff Patterson

Vice President and Program Chairman - Doug Brown

Treasurer:- John Shepherd

Secretary - Betsy Brown

New Board of Directors Members

Tom Borlik

Ron Burgess

John Switzer

The Society wishes to thank those members that ran for an office. I strongly encourage you to seek offices and help run the Society. It actually is fun.

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## **Brian Murphy has Retired from the Office of Vice President and Program Chairman**

After five years of holding the office, Brian decided that his work and his children required a lot more attention and he needed a break. We all need to thank Brian for his dedication. It is work to get all the speakers lined up. I was lucky in that he was always there to help when he was needed and his advice was invaluable to me.

Thanks again Brian

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## **Bill Conner Retires from the Board**

After many years of service on the Board and as vice president and program chairman, Bill will be retiring and getting back to his astroimaging if he finishes his cabin in the woods. Bill will continue to act as our contact to the Astronomical League. I want to personally thank Bill for all his help and dedication to the Society. I can guarantee you we will continue to use his expertise.

Thanks Bill

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## **Thad Hatchett Retires from the Board**

After many years of service , Thad decided that he need to spend more time with his son and scouts and has retired from the Board. I want to thank Thad for his work and dedication to the IAS. Don't think you are getting too far away Thad. We know where you live.

Thanks again.

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## Seti at Home

[http://www.berkeley.edu/news/media/releases/2008/01/02\\_setiathome.shtml](http://www.berkeley.edu/news/media/releases/2008/01/02_setiathome.shtml)

SETI URL: <http://setiathome.berkeley.edu/>

The short story is that they now have 7 feeds at Arecibo instead of one and they don't have enough users to handle the amount of data they are collecting. (All totaled they have about 500 times the data coming in than they used to.)

If you have a computer that you leave on and want to contribute to the SETI work, consider setting it up. It costs nothing. If you have other interests, there are MANY research organizations that can use your computers space CPU cycles.

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## General Meetings to “Float” in 2008

The Board has made a major decision for the Society. In years past there have been major conflicts with star parties and other events and the General meeting which is held the second Saturday of the month. The Board has decided to “float” the date of the general meeting each year based on the phase of the moon. Basically the general meeting will be held close to third quarter moon. The dates of the general meetings will be published at the beginning of each year. We think this change will provide the following benefits:

1. Allow us to schedule NAG (New Astronomer's Group) meetings at McCloud on Saturday nights good for observing with the public.
2. Prevent conflicts with star parties that generally occur around the new moon which is early in the month in 2008.
3. Still provide observing opportunities at the Link during the Summer months.
4. We will continue to float the Observer's meeting at the Link to provide the best observing possible.

### So for 2008 the General Meeting schedule is as follows:

January through March - will stay on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday at Butler  
April 26 at Butler  
May 31 at Link  
June 28 at Link  
July 26 at Link  
August 23 at Link  
September 20 at Link  
October 18 at Link (Hog Roast)  
November 15 at Butler  
December floats for the Christmas Party at Butler

We will review the success of this change at the end of the year and select appropriate dates for 2009.

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## IAS LIBRARY AVAILABILITY DURING THE WINTER AT BUTLER:

**Larry will not be at the February meeting and therefore the library will not be available.**

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Because of the size of the IAS library and the difficulty in transporting it, only a reduced selection of it (about 25%) will be available during the general meetings at Butler's Holcomb Observatory. If you have a particular book you want to be brought to Butler, examine the complete list (<http://www.iasindy.org/memonly/iasfiles.php>, which is password protected) and send a message to the librarian ([marcus@mwmacoustics.com](mailto:marcus@mwmacoustics.com)) and he will bring it to the meeting.

Larry A. Marcus

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## ALCOR OBSERVATIONS

### ASTRO NOTES -- Astronomical Vignettes

Astro Notes have been produced by the Astronomical League to assist members with matters relating to observing, pronunciation of the names of constellations, stars, planets, their satellites and prominent surface features, aligning a telescope, and reporting discoveries. There are also notes on the use of setting circles and accurate polar alignment. Additionally there are notes on astronomy, such as: basic astronomical data, the celestial coordinate system, and the different ways that time is measured in astronomy. Astrophotography notes include instruction on how to do "star trails" and projection systems. Lastly there are notes relating to organizing an astronomy club, fund raising and Astronomical League services.

The notes listed above may be accessed on the world wide web at: [www.astroleaguewww.org](http://www.astroleaguewww.org). Select "Site Map" in the left hand side index, near the bottom of the list. Page down to the bottom of the site list and you will see a section labeled, "Astro Notes -- Astronomical Vignettes." Under this heading you will see a list of the currently published notes.

### The 2008 GLOBE at Night Campaign 25 February - 8 March

Be aware that Note 8 (observing the Pleiades) has been superceded by a new international initiative, the "2008 Globe at Night Campaign," that asks you to observe the constellation Orion, compare what you see to 7 different magnitude charts and report the results. This initiative may be accessed at: [www.globe.gov/GaN/](http://www.globe.gov/GaN/). Society members are encouraged to check out this site and report the limiting magnitude at sites where you observe.

Bill Conner AlCor

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## Observer's Corner

This month we have an opportunity to observe a full lunar eclipse on February 20-21. Hopefully we will have weather to support it.

*The Pres*

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## IU Astro e- Bulletin

The IU Astronomy Department has started a new electronic bulletin to let people know about local astronomy activities and events. If you would like to subscribe, send an email to [astdept@indiana.edu](mailto:astdept@indiana.edu) and we'll put you on the distribution list. Information about activities and events to be included in the e-bulletin should be sent to [catyp@astro.indiana.edu](mailto:catyp@astro.indiana.edu).

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### Gadgets and Gizmos

I was reading through Astronomy Technology the other day and noticed an article about Heater Meals. Basically they are MRE (Meal Ready to Eat) packaged for the public. They contain a  $\frac{3}{4}$  pound entrée. You open the package and put it in the included bag containing the heater pad and pour in salt water which is included with the dinner. In 10-12 minutes you have a hot meal without a stove or microwave. They sound good for those late night snacks needed in the middle of an observing session. They can be obtained from [www.heatermeals.com](http://www.heatermeals.com) or at Bass Pro shops.

You might want to try one sometime.

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### Meet Our New Members

The Society wants to welcome each of you and if you have any questions do not hesitate to ask.

Barney Allen Rockville  
Jeffrey Clemens Carmel  
Gregory Pfau Fortville  
Richard Rhodes Indianapolis  
Therin Showalter Lebanon

Seek out new members out and see if you can help them out.

*The Pres*

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### Mentor Program

We are reinstituting the mentor program which will provide the new member with lots of information and help them assimilate into the Society. Thad Hatchett has volunteered to lead this program. We need your help. If you are interested in becoming a mentor please contact me at Jeff Patterson [KB9SRB@hotmail.com](mailto:KB9SRB@hotmail.com) or Thad Hatchett at [astronomynut@sbcglobal.net](mailto:astronomynut@sbcglobal.net). We will put your name on the list and assign a new person to you. Our goal is to retain people and make this hobby a lot more fun.

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### Upcoming Star Parties and Registrations

**Winter Star Party** – February 4-10, 2008- Registration has opened. Tickets are generally available on Astromart and elsewhere.. Check [www.scas.org](http://www.scas.org) or call the registrar at 386-362-5995. This party is always sold out and you need to get a ticket early. This is a premium party and the weather is generally fantastic in the Florida Keyes in February.

**Smokey Mountain Stargaze** Just outside Smokey Mountain National Park - March 28-April 6. This is a new party. Should be pretty that time of year.  
<http://www.smokymtstargaze.com/index.php>

**Tennessee Spring Star Party** - Fall Creek Falls State Park Apr 4 - 6  
<http://www.personal.bna.bellsouth.net/s/p/spsmith/default.htm>

**Mid-South Stargaze** Apr 4 – 6  
The Observatory is one mile southeast of the Natchez Trace Parkway at French Camp. French Camp is about half-way between Jackson and Tupelo, Mississippi, at Natchez Trace mile marker 181. Mississippi <http://www.rainwaterobservatory.org/stargaze/index.htm>

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**Indiana Astronomy Day** (IAS/PGO) - May 2 - 4

<http://jmmahony.home.insightbb.com/pgo/schedule.html>

**Hidden Hollow Star Party** – Mansfield, Ohio May 2-4 [www.wro.org](http://www.wro.org)

**JEPC Star Gazing Event** IL May 29-June 1

<http://www.mikewolford.com/JEPC%20Event.htm>

**Apollo Rendezvous** – Dayton, Ohio June 13-14, 2008

<http://mvas.org>

**Cherry Springs Star Party** Cherry Springs State Park, PA May 29- June 1

<http://www.astrohbg.org/s4>

**Texas Star Party** West Texas June 1-8,2008. This is a premier party with very dark skies and a great site. Just a long way. Online registration will open November 15. [www.texasstarparty.org](http://www.texasstarparty.org)

**Heart of America Star Party MO** June 26-June 29 (Possibly stay until July 5th)

<http://www.hoasp.org/>

**Nebraska Star Party** – July 27-August 1 - North Central Nebraska - 950 miles 18 hour drive. This is a premier dark site and has fantastic observing. However, the weather is brutal. Temperatures can reach 105-110 degrees. However you can cool off in the shade of the tree. All activities will be at the Snake Creek Campground again this year. (I wonder why they call it Snake Creek). No activities will be at the resort. <http://www.nebraskastarparty.org/>

**EPOCH 2007** The 21st Century Midwest Star Party Jul 29 - Aug 3

Beaver City, Indiana This is a new star party put on by 20-20 Telescopes.

<http://www.2020telescopes.com/EPOCH2007.html>

**Indiana Family Star Party** Camp Cullum, Frankfort, IN Jul 31 - Aug 3

<http://jmmahony.home.insightbb.com/pgo/starparty/>

**Black Forest Star Party** PA Date To be announced

<http://www.bfsp.org/starparty/>

**Astrofest** Kankakee, IL September 5-7<sup>th</sup>, 2008

<http://www.chicagoastro.org/>

**Prairie Skies Star Party** – Kankakee IL – September 25-28, 2008

<http://www.prairieskies.org/>

**Illinois Dark Skies** Jim Edgar Panther Creek State Fish and Wildlife Area IL.

September 25-28 <http://www.sas-sky.org/>

**Twin Lakes Star Party** Pennyville State Park, Western KY Sep 27 - Oct 5

<http://www.wkaa.net/>



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**Okie-Tex Star Party**  
<http://www.okie-tex.com/>

Camp Billy Joe, OK    Sep 27 - Oct 5

If you know of events coming up let me know and I will get them in the Bulletin

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## Public Outreach Programs

Gerald Venne is our Public Events Coordinator. He will be responsible for coordinating Public Events for the IAS. He needs your help. Let Gerald know if you would like to show the public our sky.

We need people to help at Link and elsewhere. It is actually a lot of fun.

To schedule a public event contact Gerald Venne 1 317 826-2680 or Jeff Patterson at 1-317 882-8055.

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## Astro Ads

Are you changing or upgrading your equipment? Do you have or are you looking for astronomical materials and equipment? The Indiana Astronomical Society as a service to its members, will publish non-commercial ads at no charge. The ad will stay in the Bulletin for 4 months and may be renewed at the owner's request.

### To place an ad contact:

Bulletin Editor

Jeff Patterson  
1780 S. Morgantown Rd.

Greenwood, IN 46143  
(317) 300-0449

E-Mail: [KB9SRB@Hotmail.com](mailto:KB9SRB@Hotmail.com)

**For Sale** – I have two Meade DSI II Pro Monochrome cameras with CCD Filters (RGLB) for sale. These are brand new and have never been used. (I am upgrading to the DSI III). I will be willing to let them go for \$570.00 each. (They list for \$699.00 each). They come with the Drizzle and Envisage software in the Autostar Suite. You can check out pictures taken with the Color and Meade DSI II Pro Monochrome cameras on my telescope at: <http://n9bk.org/2006-08-09-Astro-LX200-GPS-14/> and see my observatory at <http://n9bk.org/2006-08-23-N9BK-Observatory/>

You don't need to have a Meade telescope to use these camera.  
E-mail me at [n9bk@yahoo.com](mailto:n9bk@yahoo.com) or call 317.332.9471

### **For Sale** – Astro-Physics 400 German Equatorial Mount

Near new condition. Used less than a dozen times.

9 lb. Stainless Steel Counterweight  
6 lb. Stainless Steel Counterweight  
Wooden AP case

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Encoders  
NGC-MAX DSC Computer

\$1995

Contact: Jim Rinehart 317-881-3475 or [jrine33@comcast.net](mailto:jrine33@comcast.net)

**For Sale** - Astronomy photographic prints for sale. The prints are displayed at <http://www.dougsastro.net>. 12" X 18" prints are \$25.00 and 8" X 12" are \$15.00. All of the images were taken by Doug Sanquetti. Most were taken locally near Cicero, IN but a few were taken at Star Parties. Any print on the web site may be ordered by contacting Doug at [drsanqun@gmail.com](mailto:drsanqun@gmail.com)

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## Onions and Orchids

An orchid for our Board members going off this year. Thanks to Bill Conner, Doug Brown and Thad Hatchett. They all worked hard to keep this Society going.

A big bouquet of orchids to Brian Murphy. For years Brian has worked hard to bring the programs to you. I could always count on him to be prepared.

The Pres

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## The Loaner Program

The Loaner Program has been helpful to those new to the hobby and others in need of observing equipment. We consider offers of equipment you may not have need for any longer.

Did you know you can borrow a scope or piece of astronomy equipment from the Society and take it for a test drive? The Society has a program where members who are trying to determine what kind of equipment to buy can borrow one of the Society's scopes for a month or two and see how they like it. John Molt is the chairman of the program and can arrange for your pickup and training on the use of the particular instrument. This is a great way to see what telescope you want to purchase. We have several scopes, eyepieces and binoculars to loan.

John Molt ([1stargazer@indy.rr.com](mailto:1stargazer@indy.rr.com)) or (317) 989-1875

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## List Server Online - Don't be left in the cold - Sign up!

This service is our main communication tool. The list server is in the "Members Only" section of the site and is accessible only by IAS members. Make sure we have your correct e-mail and you will have access for late updates to events and functions.

Being a member does **not** mean you are automatically entered into the "Members Only" section and the have the List Serve available. If you are a new member please go to the "Members Only" section and fill out an application. The webmaster will set you up and notify you that you can get into the system.

Note: The list server is for use of Society business. It can only be used according to the rules as outlined previously. Members abusing the service will be eliminated from the service.



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## **Board Meeting – Board Meeting February 14, 2008**

The IAS Board Meeting is being held at 430 Massachusetts Avenue in downtown Indianapolis. The building is at the point of convergence of Mass. Ave., Vermont and Alabama Streets. There is a Starbucks located in the frontage of the building. The coffee shop stays open late into the evening. Try to park as close to Starbucks as possible, preferably in a metered space. On-street parking is free after 5pm. Handicapped parking is directly in front of Starbucks entrance. The main entrance to the building is to the right of Starbucks, but it will be locked. To get into the building, go to the shop Silver in the City. Tell them you are here for the astronomy meeting and go through the back door of the shop into the office building. We meet in the basement. Ride the elevator (around the corner to your left) to the basement. Turn right as you exit the elevator and go through the first door on your right. This is the conference/meeting room. If you need further assistance, please contact Brian P. Murphy, IAS Vice-President on his cell phone 716-8124.

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## **General Meeting Dates 2008**

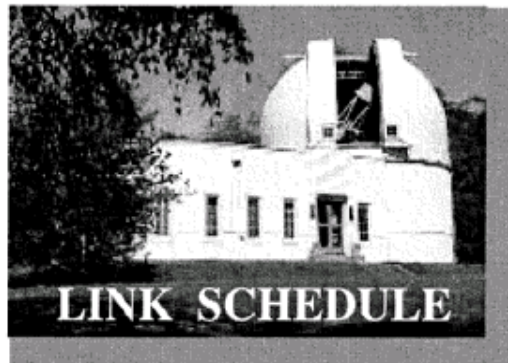
January through March - will stay on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday at Butler  
April 26 at Butler  
May 31 at Link  
June 28 at Link  
July 26 at Link  
August 23 at Link  
September 20 at Link  
October 18 at Link (Hog Roast)  
November 15 at Butler  
December floats for the Christmas Party at Butler

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## **Goethe Link Observatory Observatory Address**

**Goethe Link Observatory  
8403 N. Observatory Lane  
Martinsville, IN 46151**

**Observatory 's Phone:  
(317) 831-0668**



This schedule is being published to assure proper access to the Link Observatory for programs that are designed as observational, general education, astronomy conferences or amateur research projects. Training programs are tentatively scheduled for Saturday evenings only. Although other requests can over-ride these sessions. It is the purpose of this listing to prevent activity conflicts.

If you need to acquire use of the 36-inch telescope: remember two important IAS guidelines: 1) *There has to be two or more IAS members present.....* 2) *contact the Observatory Manager: Gary Schoppenhorst (317)297-1405. DON'T WAIT UNTIL THE LAST MINUTE TO MAKE YOUR REQUEST OR YOU MAY NOT GET ACCESS.*

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## **Link Activities for February:**

None planned for the month

## **No Planned activities at McCloud –**

### **Observing Activities**

We are able to go to the Link, Prairie Grass Observatories and McCloud Nature Park at non scheduled times if they do not conflict with reserved activities:

For those interested in going to The Link Observatories for observing call Gary Schoppenhorst 1 317 297-1405.

For those interested in going to Prairie Grass Observatories for observing call Hoppe at 1-765-296-2753.

For those interested in going to McCloud to observe, please call the park caretaker, Jim Holtsclaw, at the park office 765 676 5490 before 4PM on the day you want to go out. He will give you permission to be there at night and cut off the lights.

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## **Bulletin Stats**

### **Accessing the Bulletin**

The current bulletin can be found on the website [www.iasindy.org](http://www.iasindy.org)

### **Bulletin - Bulletin deadline on the 20th of every month**

The monthly newsletter welcomes articles of local astronomical interest information and want ads:

Please submit to

The Indiana Astronomical Society, Inc

Jeff Patterson, editor

1780 S. Morgantown Rd

Greenwood, IN 46143

Phone: (317) 300-0449

[KB9SRB@hotmail.com](mailto:KB9SRB@hotmail.com)

### **Membership information**

Contact any IAS officer or the Treasurer

John Shepherd (317) 862-3442

### **Link Observatory**

Latitude: 39 degrees, 33 minutes North

Longitude: 86 degrees, 24 minutes West

Phone: (317) 831-0668

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IAS Internet address

<http://www.iasindy.org>

### **Executive Officers**

President: Jeff Patterson (317) 300-0449

Vice-President and Program Director: Doug Brown (317) 872-4050

Secretary: Betsy Brown 1-317-872-4050

Treasurer: John Shepherd (317) 862-3442

### **Board of Directors**

Gary Schoppenhorst (2009)

Gerald Venne (2009)

Tom Borlik (2010)

John Switzer (2010)

Ron Burgess (2010)

Marion Hakes (2008)

John Molt (2008)

### **Public Event Coordinator**

Gerald Venne [gvenne@iquest.net](mailto:gvenne@iquest.net) 1 317 826-2680

### **Library Committee Coordinator**

Larry Marcus [marcus@mwmacoustics.com](mailto:marcus@mwmacoustics.com) 317 842-6658

### **Astronomical League Coordinator**

Bill Conner [wmtconner@sbcglobal.net](mailto:wmtconner@sbcglobal.net) 1-812 828-0449

### February Calendar, 2008

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			2		1	2
3	4	5	6 ●	7	8	9 General meeting at Butler
10	11	12	13 ☾	14	15	16
17	18	19	20 ○	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28 ☾	29	

## Membership Application to the IAS

### Benefits:

- Use of the Goethe Link Observatory
- Formal monthly programs with guest speakers
- Local and regional astronomical functions
- Discounted Astronomy publications
- New Moon observing activities
- Access to IAS member experts and problem solving
- The Bulletin monthly newsletter
- Membership in the Astronomical League
- Free admission to the Holcomb planetarium
- Star party events and observing sessions

Please mark whether this is a new or renewal application

New

Renewal

Note: Magazine subscription renewals forms and payment must be submitted to the Treasurer in order to maintain publisher's club discount.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

How do you want to receive the IAS monthly newsletter?

Downloadable from Website  Hard Copy\*

\* Please note that hard copy costs the Society about \$1.50 per issue. Please consider this when selecting mode of receiving the newsletter.

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Annual Regular Membership (\$30.00)	
Annual Student Membership (\$10.00)	
Astronomy Magazine Renewal (\$34.00)	
Sky and Telescope Magazine (\$33.00) (New Subscription)	
Total Enclosed	

Make checks payable to: The Indiana Astronomical Society, Inc

Please complete Member Profile and include with the application

Mail Application to: John Shepherd, Treasurer

4609 Callahan St.

Indianapolis, IN 46239



### Member Profile

Spouses Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Children's names and ages: \_\_\_\_\_

Education: \_\_\_\_\_

Occupation: \_\_\_\_\_

How many years associated with Astronomy? \_\_\_\_\_

Special astronomical interests or projects: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

-

Equipment: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What can the Society do for you? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What can you do for the Society? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Note: Profile information is not a requirement for membership to the Society. This information is entered into the IAS database and is not given nor sold for solicitation purposes. It does provide for a brief welcoming article for new members and may be used by the society to match people with similar interests.