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A SPECIAL CONGRATULATIONS TO TREVOR IRELAND FOR BEING NAMED PRESIDENT OF THE METEORITICAL SOCIETY

A special congratulations to PSF Member, **Trevor Ireland**, for being named President of the Meteoritical Society. Also this year is the 80th Meteoritical Society Annual Meeting, which will be held from July 24-28th in Santa Fe, New Mexico. Attendees will have the opportunity to discover the newest developments in Geology, Space Science, Solar System, Astronomy, Metamorphism, Meteorites and Geochronology at this meeting.



Sign-up for the Annual Members Meeting!

Saturday, September 9, 2017



1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.

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*A Special Tribute to Paul Comba—
Italian-American computer scientist and astronomer.*

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President's Message

The summer season is finally upon us and your Planetary Studies Foundation is busier than ever with our children's science programs, observing sessions, and the upcoming total solar eclipse. Diane Sipiera and her educational staff have four very interesting programs planned for children ages 7 through 12. Early enrollment is very encouraging with many returning children anxiously awaiting the opening sessions.

Out at our Doug Firebaugh Astronomical Observatory in Freeport, Illinois Jim Dole and his staff began their observing season on May 3rd. From May through October they will offer at each session both indoor programs and, weather permitting, telescope viewing. There will also be additional monthly May through October telescope viewing sessions out at the Woodbine Bend Golf Course and an August 12th Perseid meteor shower observing event at Horseshoe Mound with its spectacular nighttime view of Galena. Then there is the greatly anticipated August 21st "Great American Total Solar Eclipse"! Those people who have planned their vacations around this event will definitely be as close to the center-line of the eclipse path as possible and hope for the very best weather. If all goes well they will see over two minutes of totality and it will be an unforgettable moment. I have personally seen three total eclipses and can't wait to experience a fourth! The Sipiera Family will be heading toward southeastern Nebraska for our best chance at a clear sky and maximum totality. Joining us will be several members of the Doug Firebaugh Observatory staff and many other PSF members. Past experience shows that experiencing a total eclipse is much more enjoyable when it is a group event. Our PSF astronomers are also concerned about the general public that will not be able to position themselves on the eclipse center-line. Depending upon an observer's actual distance from the path of totality they will experience different amounts of coverage. These partial eclipses are still very exciting and worth observing, but people must use extreme caution and use proper solar-viewing devices. In PSF's immediate Tri-State region we are offering informational programs at select museums and libraries on how to safely observe the eclipse. On the actual day of the eclipse all our PSF astronomers will be on-site at various locations from Oregon to South Carolina and will report their experiences in the next newsletter.



I am pleased to report continued success with our meteorite research. Dr. Tony Irving, our senior research scientist, presented several papers at the annual Lunar & Planetary Science Conference this past March in Houston, Texas. He will also be presenting additional papers at the annual Meteoritical Society meeting this July in Santa Fe, New Mexico. One of these papers is a comparison study of 40 meteorites that were classified by PSF scientists. This particular paper was not only authored by our scientists, but included four other PSF members who made significant contributions to the discovery, sample preparation, and data organization that went into this study. I thank Christina Hollis, Randy Shaw, Caroline Sipiera, and Conrad Wragg for their individual efforts and dedication to our research program. I am very proud of the fact that PSF continues to conduct research that makes significant discoveries such as the extremely rare NWA 10952 EL4 enstatite chondrite. It must be remembered that PSF does this without the financial resources of a major museum or university. We truly make the most of our available resources and greatly appreciate the efforts of our dedicated members who contribute in so many different ways.

Mark your calendars to attend our Annual Member's Meeting at Woodbine Bend on September 9th.

Paul P. Sipiera

Donor's Spotlight

Children's Summer Science Program

Apple River State Bank
 Illinois Bank & Trust
 Jo-Carroll Energy
 Carleton B. Moore
 Marilyn Quas
 Diane & Paul Szipiera

Doug Firebaugh Astronomical Observatory

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Meteorite Research

Ray Meyer

Member's Corner

Renewing—Sponsoring

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 Lu Paglin
 Gerald Speer
 Dan Tindell
 Winona Wellspring

New—Individual

Paul Levesque
 Dr. Sydney Meshkov
 Mark Rudy

New—Family

Dino Milani & Ellen Tsagaris

Congratulations

- Congratulations to **Alex Baranski** for graduating with honors from the University of Chicago, **Liz Scott** for graduating from River Ridge High School. She was valedictorian and received 10 scholarships. Finally, **Greta Dittmar** received her promotion from eighth grade.
- Congratulations to **John & Marsha Prieboy** for becoming grandparents twice this spring to a grandson and granddaughter.
- Congratulations to **Trevor Ireland** for being named President of the Meteoritical Society.
- Finally, a special congratulations to **Paula Szipiera** and her fiancé **Cole Feiner** on their engagement.

2017 Annual Members Meeting



Saturday, September 9, 2017



1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.

1:00 Lunch Buffet Menu

Choice of Pork or Beef
Includes Salad and Dinner Roll
Choice of Potato
Vegetables
Coffee/Soda

\$25.00 per person/gratuity included
Cash bar will be available
(Cancellation is non-refundable)

2:00 Annual Members Meeting

Presentation: PSF State of the Union & Awards Ceremony
Election of Board of Directors



Join Fellow Members, Make a Difference

We really hope you can join us on September 9th! Please RSVP to Diane Sipiera at dsipiera@planets.org or (815) 858-3362 by Thursday, August 31st.

PSF Member Name(s): _____

Address: _____

Choice of: _____ Pork _____ Beef (Please contact us if you have dietary restrictions)

Total # Attending: _____ Total Amount Owed: \$ _____

I/We cannot attend, but please accept this donation. \$ _____

Please make checks payable to the Planetary Studies Foundation and mail to:

Planetary Studies Foundation
10 Winterwood Lane, Unit B
Galena, IL 61036

Make it a day trip! Take the opportunity to enjoy the other exciting activities northwest Illinois has to offer.

Programming & Event Wrap-up

Elizabeth, IL
Spring Fling



50th Anniversary of the
Doug Firebaugh Observatory



Spain - Pablo Picasso
Activity

Paul & Caroline Sopera
at the Putnam Museum



A Busy Spring Season!

PSF was busy again with our spring programming. Paul Sopera was a guest speaker at the Putnam Museum in Davenport, Iowa with a meteorite display table for over 500 people. Paul also presented at the Lizzadro Lapidary Museum in Elmhurst, Illinois. Jim Dole and Tom Dunmore did a phenomenal job to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the Doug Firebaugh Observatory in Freeport, IL. Once again, PSF participated in the River Ridge Night at the Museums in late April, along with the Village of Elizabeth's Spring Fling. The last major event for the spring season was at River Ridge Middle School's "Career Days" which was orchestrated by PSF member Kim Thorsen. See photos above.

Children's Summer Science Program Starting

PSF is pleased to announce that the 2017 Children's Summer Science Program has started with great success! Repeating students for the last previous years were anxious to get started. The PSF board would like to thank Greta Dittmar, Janice Susner, Julie Bryan, Janet Moote, Christina Hollis and Beth Baranaski in helping to develop curriculum, being presenters, preparing healthy snacks, and being there to help when needed. So far we have completed the Flavors of Europe and Geology sessions. The kids loved the Pablo Picasso abstract art and the Watershed game! See photos above.

PAUL COMBA

A Personal Memorial by Herb Windolf



Paul was born in 1926 by Italian parents in Tunis, North Africa, where his father was an oil company executive. He came from a religious Waldenser background. At age eighteen Paul traveled to the United States to study theology. At first, living on the East Coast, he transferred a car on the then still existing Route 66 to the West Coast. There, he quickly changed his subject to pursue a PhD in mathematics with a minor in aeronautical engineering. He taught mathematics at the University of Hawaii, later worked on software research and development at IBM. Paul died this year at age 91 succumbing to Parkinson's.

My wife and I became friends with Paul and his first wife, Davida, a psychiatrist, whom he had married with her three pre-teen children, when the couple moved from Boston to Prescott, Arizona, my wife and I coming from Chicago in 1992.

Paul had been interested in astronomy since childhood in which I was also interested, although to a more general extent. When we met he had a 22" telescope on order for an observatory and home to be built. In 1993, when Paul and Diane Sipiera married, the wedding was attended, among others, by Paul Sipiera's New Zealand friend, Trevor Ireland, his wife and myself. To my mentioning to Trevor that Paul Comba had a 22" telescope on order, Trevor exclaimed: "But the biggest in New Zealand is only 18 inches." As it turned out, the final telescope to be installed by Paul was also 18".

Paul's specialty became the finding and tracking of Belt asteroids. In the course of his observations he discovered more than 1,000 and was able to

name many of them once they had been observed two more times for their orbits to be determined.

When, at a meeting, he announced that he had named one each for me and my wife, I thanked him, saying that this would likely be the only way I would ever make it to the heavens. In due course I was able to induce him to name two more for Paul and Diane Sipiera. When the Shoemaker-Levy asteroid fragments struck Jupiter I was able to view some of the impacts on his telescope.

Paul had an encyclopedic knowledge and musical talents for which I told him once that he was the closest to a polymath I had ever come. Having been born in Tunisia, North Africa, I called him facetiously my African-American friend.

Paul's efforts in discovering asteroids were initially made the old-fashioned way by a Blink Compensator, later by means of a CCD, a Charge-coupled Device. He once ranked in the top three of best asteroid discoverers and in 2003 received the Leslie C. Peltier Award from the Astronomical League for amateur astronomers who have made contributions of lasting significance. Eventually, larger astronomical outfits with more sophisticated equipment eclipsed his efforts.

When his wife Davida died after having fought cancer for 25 years, he was devastated, and we walked the woods talking about life's imponderability. A few years later he found a new love in Capi, and life brightened again. I was honored to be the best man 15 years ago.

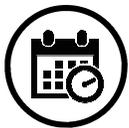
With advancing age and declining health, Paul Comba wanted to move to a less remote location and dispose of his telescope. I was able to bring him and Paul Szipera together for the latter to pick up the instrument to take it to Chicago. Eventually, the telescope was transferred in 2014 to the Doug Firebaugh Astronomical Observatory, in Freeport, Illinois, where it was named the Comba-Windolf Telescope.

Paul Comba, the Asteroid Man, is remembered for his kind-heartedness.

Interesting Facts About Paul Comba

- He discovered more than 1,000 asteroids.
- In addition to being a mathematician and astronomer, he also played the harpsichord and was skilled at woodworking.
- As an IBM software developer and member of the IBM Cambridge Scientific Center, he developed a multiplication algorithm for large numbers, which reduces the multiplication time to as little as 3% of the conventional algorithm.

An Easy Guide to Viewing the Total Solar Eclipse



Commit to watching the eclipse. Mark your personal and work calendars (the eclipse takes place on a Monday) so that you take the time to try and watch the eclipse.



Mobility

Every eclipse enthusiast should have a plan for being flexible in terms of location. This means mobility if you need to drive to a new spot. Even in the sunniest locations, you'll want to avoid getting caught under a cloud during the two minutes of totality.



Weather

The most important thing to consider when viewing an eclipse is weather. After all, you can't see the eclipse if the skies are too overcast or the weather is poor. Consider a location with dry or mild weather conditions.

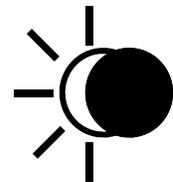


Safety

The only safe way to look directly at the eclipsed or partially eclipsed sun is through special-purpose solar filters, such as eclipse glasses or hand-held solar viewers. This special eyewear is affordable and available on Amazon. (\$10-15 for a 10 pack)

Brush up on the basics.

There are many tips out there to help enhance your eclipse viewing experience. Here's a few to get you started!



HAVE FUN!

Share your story. Reach out to us on social media the day-of and let us know where you're watching! We'll be giving shout-outs to participating members. Send us your favorite photo from your viewing party and we'll publish it in the fall issue of *PSF News!*

MEMBERSHIP FORM

Regular Membership ___ \$ 20.00 1 year or ___ \$ 35.00 for 2 years
 Family Membership ___ \$ 35.00 1 year or ___ \$ 60.00 for 2 years
 Sponsoring Membership ___ \$ 50.00 1 year or ___ \$ 90.00 for 2 years
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SELLING ORIGINS OF THE SOLAR SYSTEM

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