



December 8, 2010

To All BPAA Members:

Season's greetings! I am honored and pleased to send you BPAA's annual letter. This is your invitation to our Annual Meeting, held on **January 12, 2011 at 7:00 p. m.** at the Ritchie Observatory. This is a business meeting for BPAA members only. During the meeting members elect officers to the BPAA board, board members present annual reports, and we consider current club business.

This is also my opportunity to let you know what BPAA has accomplished this year. We've been busy.

### **Changes in Leadership**

Harry Colvin has stepped down as president of the BPAA. Since early this year, I (Steve Ruhl) have assumed his role while retaining the Education Director title. In October, Dave Fong agreed to take over my duties as Education Director. Dave Fong is a professional astronomer who has long supported our education program, lending his depth of knowledge to many of our presentations. Most recently, he was professor of Astronomy at Olympic College.

### **Awards**

Harry Colvin has been nominated to receive our annual appreciation awards in recognition of his many years of service to the BPAA. Harry is a long-time member who is a veteran of the BPAA board. Several years ago when the BPAA was going through some growing pains, Harry stepped up, took a leadership role, restored order and provided a vision for the future. Harry will be honored at a dinner to be held during the first quarter of 2011.

### **Telescopes**

The Ritchie Telescope dome is a major concern. The existing dome has dry rot and leaks. The telescope is threatened. The board is considering the best options for repairing or replacing the dome.

We continue to provide instruction on basic telescope use. Members may check out and bring BPAA telescopes home for use at home or at remote dark sky sites. We also offer workshop programs that teach members to operate the 27-inch Ritchie telescope. Once trained, BPAA members and their guests may use the Ritchie telescope for viewing on any clear night, not just at scheduled events.

### **Planetarium**

Overflow attendance is the norm. Our shows are drawing 50 - 90 visitors each month. With our ability to bring the planetarium projector and portable dome into the field, we continue to give astronomical shows at schools and for local groups such as the scouts. Our challenge continues to be finding enough trained volunteers to meet the demand.

### **Facility Improvements**

This year, thanks to a lot of hard work by Clifford Johanson for his Eagle Scout project, we have four new telescope pads, located on the mound on the north side of the observatory. Each pad has an embedded compass rose to help align equatorial mounts.

### **Library**

We are building a deep shelf for the big format library books. Library books can be checked out by members by filling out cards from the check-out box located on top of the Library shelf.

### **Solar Walk**

Russ Heglund, Dave Berfield and Dave Fong are putting together a Solar Walk for use during special events, such as Astronomy Day. Images and text are complete for Saturn, Jupiter, Mercury, Venus, and

Earth. These have been printed on thick paper stock for exhibit in the Observatory Meeting room. We would like members' comments before we turn them into permanent enameled metal plaques.

### **Sundial**

We put a full size wooden model of the proposed Sundial, built by Bill Baren-Mickle, on the north berm during the Bluegrass Festival last summer. Festival goers were enthusiastically in favor of the proposed installation. We are waiting on Park approval.

### **Membership**

Our total membership remains strong, averaging just under 100 members. Utilization of our online capability is expanding, with 60% of new memberships in the past year completed through our web site. In addition, each new member now receives a personal welcome phone call or email from the BPAA board, inviting them to become active members.

### **Newsletter and Publicity**

The BPAA newsletter is one of the best astronomy club newsletters in the nation. The credit for the high quality of the newsletter goes to the past and present editors, Bill and Anna Edmonds and Vicki Saunders, and to all the members who contribute original articles. BPAA's publicity efforts have continued to pay off, proven by the overflow attendance at many of our events.

### **Workshops and Public Outreach**

Bainbridge Parks & Rec. has hired a new director of Outdoor Program Coordinator. He has previous experience coordinating astronomy programs. We are looking forward to working with him to enhance our public and club offerings.

### **Finance**

BPAA's finances continue to be managed in a conservative manner by maintaining over two years of operational reserves. In spite of the continued economic downturn, our current assets have remained stable at \$21,812. Current assets include all checking, Paypal, and money market fund totals as of 11/30/09. One Call For All, member dues, and direct contributions represented 52%, 33%, and 15%, respectively, of 2010 operating revenues. However, we have seen a decline in One Call for All revenue in absolute dollar terms from \$4390 in 2009 to \$3573 in 2010, and expect further decreases in 2011 as lower contributions are divided among more recipients. A continuing challenge for the BPAA will be to develop additional revenue sources to maintain current offerings and fund additional program demands.

### **Fund Raising**

After pursuing smaller grants, the BPAA decided to focus its resources on larger opportunities. After a survey of available funding sources, we settled on the National Science Foundation-- known for large and recurring sponsorships for science education and outreach. Further, the NSF grant process dovetails nicely with our new UW intern program activities.

The BPAA developed a proposal with the support of the University of Washington, Pacific Science Center and our local Congressman. After an initial review we were encouraged to submit a full grant request. However, at the final review we learned that the National Science Foundation prefers organizations overseen by University or College department heads who can verify correct use of funds. We will incorporate this knowledge into future grant requests. The BPAA would like to expand our fund- raising team, so if you are interested, please contact us. We would appreciate your help.

### **Intern Program**

The BPAA's first intern was Jeff Acquino. The BPAA continued to support Jeff after his internship by providing industry connections and references. Jeff is now employed at Microsoft. While at BPAA, Jeff helped us with grant proposals and promoted remote astronomy programs.

### **Partnership with Local Organizations**

The BI Parks organization has been working on a formal planning process for Battle Point Park. The BPAA has participated in all the planning stages. We learned more about the BI Parks organization, developed

personal relationships critical to our future facility plans, and were able to gauge community interest in our programs. It's abundantly clear that BPAA is a valued part of Bainbridge Island.

The BPAA supports a number of organizations which share our education and service outreach mission, including the recent BI Turkey Trot for Helpline House, the Museum of Flight in Seattle, and the Muscular Dystrophy Association Summer Camp.

### **Goals and Objectives**

As you can see we have had a productive year, and the BPAA board is looking forward to greater accomplishments in 2011. To help in measuring our success next year the BPAA board has established Hold 9 beginner sessions with attendance greater than 25 attendees

- Sponsor 4 professional astronomy related public lectures
- Publish 4 newsletters
- Sponsor 2 astronomy related workshops.
- Train 2 volunteers to do planetarium shows
- Sponsor 5 youth or scout events
- Identify and raise grant funds with other organizations.
- Train two additional Ritchie and Losmandy operators
- Resolve Dome leakage and rot issues
- Install kitchen sink shelving and hot water system
- Install solar walk and sundial.

I encourage you to attend the Annual Meeting. We want to hear your ideas and how you can help. The slate of officers, nominated by the board, is as follows:

- Steve Ruhl for the office of President
- Mike Browning for the office of Vice-President
- Russ Heglund for the office of Secretary
- Frank Schroer for the office of Treasurer
- Malcolm Saunders for the office of Chief Astronomer
- Nels Johansen for the office of Facilities Officer
- Dave Fong for the office of Education Officer

Nominations from BPAA's membership may also be considered at the Annual Meeting. Under the bylaws, the names of additional nominees proposed by BPAA members must be submitted to the President 15 days before the annual meeting. Members may also propose referenda if they obtain the signatures of 20 percent of the membership and submit the text of the referenda to the President 15 days before the annual meeting. The President will then provide notice to the membership of any additional nominees or referenda five days before the annual meeting.

If you have questions about the annual meeting please feel free to email me at [sfruhl@gmail.com](mailto:sfruhl@gmail.com) or call me at 206 855-7883. The BPAA bylaws may be found on our Web site at [www.bpastro.org](http://www.bpastro.org). The agenda is included for your review.

Hope to see you at the Annual Meeting on Wednesday night January 12th.

Sincerely,

Stephen Ruhl  
BPAA President