2010 STELLAFANE CONVENTION
Beginner Talks

"Tour of the Russell Porter Turret Telescope" by Brad Vietje and John Gallagher
Friday, August 6th, 3:00 p.m. & Saturday, August 15th, 11:30 a.m.
Meets at the Turret Telescope

Located at the summit of Breezy Hill, immediately to the North of the Stellafane Pink Clubhouse, The Russell Porter Turret Telescope is one of three known "turret telescopes". The primary advantage of this type of telescope is that the observers are inside of the observatory building, protected from the cold temperatures of long winter nights and biting mosquitoes of summer nights.

Brad Vietje and John Gallagher, both members and past presidents of the *Springfield Telescope Makers*, will talk about the history of the Turret Telescope, demonstrate how the telescope is used and observe the Sun, if the weather permits and the Sun obliges by displaying some sunspots.

"Solar System Walk" by Roger Williams
Friday, August 6th, 4:15 p.m. & Saturday, August 7th, 12:30 p.m.
Starts behind the Pink Clubhouse near the green shed

To illustrate the vast size of outer space, the *Springfield Telescope Makers* have constructed a scale model of the solar system, based on the Sun being 12 inches in diameter. At that scale, the Earth would be approximately 1/10 of an inch in diameter and 107 feet from the Sun. Jupiter would be 1.2 inches in diameter and approximately 560 feet from the Sun.

The "**Solar System Walk**" begins behind the Pink Clubhouse and proceeds down the road going towards the Stellafane camping area. At the appropriate distance, from the scale model of the Sun, there are stations with the appropriate planet, built to scale, and a short description of each planet. The Solar System walk can be taken on your own at any time during the convention. However, a guided walk is available at the times mentioned above, when docent Roger Williams will provide additional information about the "Solar System Walk" and each particular planet. The walk takes approximately 3/4 of an hour, if you walk all the way to the planet Neptune, with a total distance of 3232 ft, or a little over ½ of a mile.

"Stellafane for Beginners", by Kim Keegan & Dennis Cassia
Friday, August 6th, 5:00 p.m. in the McGregor Observatory &
Saturday, August 7th, 10:30 a.m. in the Pavilion

Are you familiar with these terms: "The Pink", "Tent Talks" or "The Turret"? If not, if this is your first time attending the Stellafane convention or if you are retuning and want to learn more about who the *Springfield Telescope Makers* are, as well as what is going on during the convention, then this presentation is for you. Topics include, but are not limited to: A short history of Stellafane, a description of our site, including the buildings and landmarks, descriptions of the scheduled talks and activities, services available at Stellafane, local services off site, etc., in addition to answering any questions you may have about the convention.

"Learning and Enjoying the Night Sky", by Alan French
Friday, August 6th, 10:00 p.m. in the McGregor Observatory

"Telescope Field Walk", by John Vogt and Cark Malikowski
Saturday, August 7th, 10:30 a.m., meets in front of the Pink Clubhouse.

During the "Telescope Field Walk", John Vogt and Carl Malikowski, experienced Amateur Telescope Makers, will guide small groups through the fields around the Pink Clubhouse, where the telescopes that will be participating in the mechanical competition will be set up. They will describe the various types of optical designs and mounting configurations that will be on display, point out the subtle details that go into award winning telescopes and be available to answer your questions.

"Dipper Full of Stars: A Tour of the Night Sky", by Richard Sanderson
Saturday, August 7th, 12:30 p.m. in the McGregor Observatory

Using stunning images of constellations, planets, and celestial objects, Richard Sanderson will lead an interpretive tour of the summer nighttime sky. He will describe how the sky appears to move throughout the night and from season to season, and explain the significance of the North Star. He will speculate about life on other worlds and show many of the prominent summer constellations. The presentation is aimed at beginners of all ages.

"Basic Collimation for Beginners", by Phil Harrington & Carl Lancaster
Saturday, August 7th, 1:30 p.m. in the McGregor Observatory

"Collimation", the process of ensuring that the optics of a telescope are aligned correctly, is critical to ensure that a telescope is providing the best images that it is capable of. This process may appear to be in the genre of advanced amateur astronomers but, in reality, is not nearly as difficult as you might think. This hands-on workshop will discuss the basic steps beginners can take to ensure that the optics of their telescope are properly aligned and adjusted.

If you are interested in learning how to collimate the optics of your telescope, set your telescope up in the observing field immediately to the South of the McGregor Observatory before 1:30 p.m. on Saturday, August 7th. Then, attend the brief class room lecture on basic collimation in the McGregor Observatory at 1:30 p.m. After this brief lecture, Phil Harrington & Carl Lancaster will escort the group, weather permitting, out to the observing field to inspect each participant's telescope and demonstrate the collimation process.

"An Introduction to Telescopes for All Ages", by Alan French
Saturday, August 7th, 5:00 p.m. in the McGregor Observatory

Adults and youngsters often become interested in astronomy and acquiring a telescope for exploring the heavens. With the plethora of telescopes on the market, buying your first telescope, or a telescope for a child, can be intimidating. In this program Sue and Alan French will cover telescope basics (types, mounts, and eyepieces), telescopes suitable for children, and introduce you to observing and finding sights in the night sky.

"Discover and Enjoy the Sky", by John Briggs
Saturday, August 7th, 10:00 p.m. in the McGregor Observatory

The beauty of the night sky is a driving motivation for telescope making, the Stellafane convention and astronomy in general. John W. Briggs, a physics & astronomy instructor at Clay Science Center, will show how to become oriented in the sky using popular references, recent new software and other tools of astronomy. The presentation will be appropriate for all ages. Weather permitting, after the program the group will use the historic 5-inch Alvan Clark refractor, originally installed at Abbot Academy in 1875.