2008 STELLAFANE CONVENTION
Beginner Talks

"Solar System Walk", by Thomas Gorka
Friday, August 1st, 4:15 p.m. & Saturday, August 2nd, 12:00 p.m., behind the Pink Clubhouse.

To illustrate the vast size of outer space, the Springfield Telescope Makers 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" starts up 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 at any time during the convention. However a guided **walk** is available at the times mentioned above when Thomas Gorka 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 1st, 5:00 p.m. in the McGregor Observatory.

Are you familiar with these terms: "The Pink", "Tent Talks" or "The Turret"? If not, or if this is your first Stellafane 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 this 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.

"Dipper Full of Stars: A Tour of the Night Sky", by Richard Sanderson
Friday, August 1st, 10:00 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. Following the indoor portion of the program, the group will step outdoors under the stars, weather permitting, where Richard Sanderson will use a green laser to identify some of the highlights of the summer night sky. The presentation is aimed at beginners of all ages.

"Telescope Field Walk", by John Vogt, David Britz and David Groski
Saturday, August 2nd, 11:00 a.m., meet in front of the Pink Clubhouse.

During the "Telescope Field Walk", John Vogt, David Britz and David Groski, all 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.

"Demonstration of Basic Optics, for Beginners", by John Briggs
Saturday, August 2nd, 1:00 p.m. in the McGregor Observatory.

The great American physicist A. A. Michelson, famous for his study of light waves, said "If a poet could at the same time be a physicist, he might convey to others the pleasure, the satisfaction, almost the reverence, which the subject inspires. The aesthetic side of the subject is, I confess, by no means the least attractive to me. Especially is its fascination felt in the branch which deals with light -- the beauties of coloring, the exquisite gradations of light and shade and the intricate wonders of symmetrical forms". In several demonstrations, J. W. Briggs, instructor at Clay Science Center, will share some of Michelson's favorite phenomena, especially as relevant in understanding telescopes.

"Using a Telescope With Your Child", by Glenn Chapel.
Saturday, August 2nd, 5:00 p.m. in the McGregor Observatory.

An interest in astronomy starts at an early age. With a child-appropriate telescope, and a list of kid-friendly sky objects to explore, you can launch a child into a lifelong adventure in astronomy. In this presentation, Glenn Chapel will cover telescope basics (optical types, mounts, and eyepieces), recommended telescopes for young astronomers and easy to find sky objects guaranteed to delight your child (and you!). This presentation is not only suitable for parents and their children age 10 and up, but also for beginners of any age, who want to learn the basics of choosing and using a telescope to explore the night sky.

"Discover and Enjoy the Sky", by John Briggs
Saturday, August 2nd, 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.