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Staff

The AstroCamp staff have diverse astronomy interests, but they claim one trait in common--enthusiasm for sharing the night sky with youths. AstroCamp annually enlists a talented corps of observers and educators to bring astronomy down to earth. Some AstroCamp counselors have taught in planetariums, discovered a comet, written astronomy books, built telescopes, or observed hundreds of deep space objects.

AstroCamp counselors are equally eager to get out under the stars, and they often bring their own impressive telescopes and accessories. Yet, while the staff's accomplishments are noteworthy, the focus is always on the kids. Here are some of the past members of the AstroCamp team, several of whom will be returning for this upcoming session.



Join Us

Are you an astronomy educator with an interest in sharing your passion for the night sky? To be considered for the AstroCamp team, contact AstroCamp Director [Chuck Bueter](#).

Staff Forms

AstroCamp Counselors must complete the [YMCA Volunteer Application](#), the [YMCA Consent for Criminal Record Search](#), and the approval for a background check from their respective resident state, below.

[Michigan Central Registry Clearance Request](#)

[Indiana Request for a CPS History Check](#)

[Illinois Authorization for a Background Check](#)

Is your state form not shown? See all [State Registries](#).

Please send forms by June 15 to:

Debra Osborn
YMCA Camp Eberhart
10481 Camp Eberhart Road
Three Rivers, MI 49093

DARREN DRAKE
Astronomer-In-Residence

Darren Drake is the Astronomer-In-Residence for summer at the Yarger Astronomy Center at Camp Eberhart. In this support position, Darren will be a resource person for campers all summer long, present each night at the observatory to assist campers in their quest to gain proficiency in the Astronomy program. Since 2006 Darren has assisted Kids Astro Camp as well. Darren holds a Bachelor of Science degree from Illinois State University; his specialty is Astronomy. He has a Teaching Certificate in Science, and has taught on the Elementary, Jr. High and High School levels in the Chicago area. In addition, Darren is Planetarium Operator at the Cernan Space Center at Triton College in River Grove. Darren owns an awesome 18-inch diameter reflector telescope (which requires a step-ladder for viewing), and is active and well-known in Astronomy outreach in the Chicago area.

CHUCK BUETER

Chuck has been a skywatcher since he began working on boats on the Great Lakes. An ardent sailor, he loves going out on the waters of Lake Michigan to seek the darkest skies. He is President of Michiana Astronomical Society Inc. and a 20-plus year member of the Great Lakes Planetarium Association. Chuck's notable outreach efforts have included Paper Plate Education; the 2004 and 2012 transits of Venus; the 2009 International Year of Astronomy dark skies awareness, including Let There Be Night; and the 2013 Comet Festival. His public astronomy face is at [Nightwise.org](#).

LOU SANDOCK

Lou is the founder of today's Kids AstroCamp! He loves the night skies and loves introducing the campers to them. He is mentor to the teachers and friend to all campers who share his interest. He tells the best Camp Eberhart stories – just ask him during a campfire!

TOM SCHULTZ



Tom has been an amateur astronomer for over 50 years, with a focus on deep-sky observational astronomy. He was the first AstroCamp volunteer and has been a volunteer for most of the years of AstroCamp since its inception. He is most known for the 12.5" Portable and his "couch potato" binocular chair he brings to the camp each year. Tom has a B.S. degree in Applied Math & Physics. Tom is also an adjunct professor at Lewis University, teaching accelerated night-time classes in math and computer science.

JOAN SCHULTZ

This is Joan's 4th year as an AstroCamp volunteer. Joan provides much assistance to the AstroCamp astronomy instructors and assists with the various projects and activities throughout the week. You'll see her preparing smores for everyone on non-observing nights and helping kids "dark-adapt" their flash lights by putting a red balloon or red cellophane over them. She also leads the effort to safely walk kids back to their cabins at night. Joan is 1/4th of the way to obtaining her Messier certification.

LINDA MARKS

Prior to her move to South Bend, Linda Marks taught astronomy on the high school level in Milford, Connecticut, where she also acted as astronomy club advisor, adult education astronomy teacher and planetarium director. A serious observer, Ms. Marks owns a 13-inch Coulter Odyssey reflector telescope, and has developed her skill in astrophotography and astro-imaging. Linda held the position of President of the Astronomical Society of New Haven, Connecticut, from 1991 to 2001. In 1998, she was recognized as Astronomer of the Year by the society. She was director of the annual Connecticut Star Party from 1991 to 2004. We are pleased to welcome Linda Marks to the local astronomy community, and look forward to her input and participation in the future.

JIM HOPKINS

Jim is a retired teacher having taught physics and astronomy at the high school and college level for nearly 40 years. He is also an experienced amateur astronomer who has three telescopes that are used for outreach at schools, park districts, churches, etc. Jim knows the sky well enough to mentor many other amateurs, and routinely speaks at astronomy clubs and star parties on various aspects of astronomy.

LEE KEITH

Lee's interest in astronomy began in 3rd grade. In middle school, Lee got a job as a newspaper carrier to save the \$100 to buy a 4 inch telescope. In high school, Lee ground and polished his own telescope optics for a 6 inch telescope, which he still has. He then bought a 10 inch telescope and was the 20th person in the country to earn the coveted and prestigious Herschel Certificate for observing 400 celestial objects. Lee spent 15 years teaching Astronomy classes for adults and children at UW-Sheboygan and UW-Waukesha and has had an article published in Astronomy magazine. He is active in the Milwaukee Astronomical Society, serving 6 years on the Board of Directors and as President.

DAVE VANCE

Dave was Head of Astronomy at Camp Eberhart in 1971/72 after being on the Astro staff from 1967-1970. Following his love of astronomy, he went to MIT to pursue astrophysics but discovered he enjoyed political science and economics even more. Dave has doctorate from Notre Dame in Economics, a masters from Indiana in Business Administration and a bachelor's degree from MIT in political science. He was Chief Economist and head of Business Intelligence for Caterpillar Inc. before founding Caterpillar University in 2001 which provides training and education for Cat employees. Dave retired from Caterpillar in 2007 and now lives in Colorado with his wife and their two dogs where he consults and writes.

STEVE ACCUOSTI

Steve is our telescope fix-it man! He has been into astronomy for 10 years and can find a few things in the sky. He is still learning to navigate the night sky. He loves to look at M13, the Hercules Cluster. He will help us when we launch our water bottle rockets on Friday.

RUTH CRAFT

For the past ten years Ruth has been the director of the Kennedy Planetarium in South Bend providing astronomy programming for students in grades K - 6. She is also involved with the Michiana Astronomical Society and have been very active with public outreach events, sharing her love for the night sky through telescope viewing and interactive astronomy activities with children and adults.

FRANKLIN MARSH

From Sycamore, IL, Franklin has segued from an AstroCamper himself to an AstroCamp counselor while still in high school. Franklin [reflected on his AstroCamp experience](#) in his college application essay. He's the founding member and president of the astronomy club at Sycamore High School, and is a member of the Northwest Suburban Astronomers in Illinois, and is now off to Pomona College. He has been interested in astronomy since he was 10.

JASON BLASCHKA

I am a long time amateur astronomer, Cloudy [Nights.com](#) Administrator and Lead Volunteer/Coordinator for Fox Park Public Observatory near Potterville (teaching Astrophotography and Astronomy basics). Spend my free time imaging our night sky using all sorts of equipment, most recently with a Modified Canon DSLR or attending the many events that my wife and 5 children are involved in.

ELLIOTT PEARSON

Elliott has been an astrocamper for at least 5 years, and in 2011 he was the CIT for AstroCamp. He has earned many certificates for his efforts, and is a proficient observer. He hails from Detroit, MI, and it is hoped that he will continue to be part of the fold here at Camp Eberhart!

NATHAN WRIGHT

My name is Nathan Wright and I am an avid amateur astronomer living in Northern Illinois. I am an active member of the "Northwest Suburban Astronomers", a club in the Chicago land area and have assisted/participated in public star parties and Astronomy Day programs. I have worked on teacher/student educational astronomy material at Yerkes Observatory in Wisconsin including making computer animations for use with the Kuiper Hemisphere: a 3D planet visualization aid originally built to un-stretch film images of the moon taken near the limb. I have shown the moon planets and deep sky objects through my telescopes to many adults and children at home and at star parties. I have extensive deep-sky observing experience and can locate most messier objects and several NGC objects from memory. I also do solar, lunar, planetary, and wide-field astro- imaging with digital cameras.

CHUCK RUPLEY

DEBRA LAZAR-PEARL

See bio at <http://www.campeb.org/tempfile/astrotemp.htm>.

PETER BURKEY

See bio at <http://www.campeb.org/tempfile/astrotemp.htm>.

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