

2009 Leslie C. Peltier Award Recipient – Gerard (Gerry) Samolyk

The recipient of the 2009 Leslie C. Peltier Award of the Astronomical League is Gerard (Gerry) Samolyk of the Milwaukee Astronomical Society. The MAS has a long history in the Astronomical League. Ed Halbach was one of the founders of the League in 1947. Through the years, the MAS has been a great supporter of League activities.

When informed of his selection, Gerry said: “This is quite a surprise. I'm aware that Ed Halbach was the first recipient of this award and that Bill Albrect and Walter Scott Houston (all from the MAS) had also received it. Unfortunately, I will not be able to attend the convention in NY.” Gerry will be in China chasing the Sun during the total solar eclipse.

Gerry first became interested in astronomy as a result of the early space program. He still has a copy of the summer 1958 issue of Space Journal that covered the launch of Explorer I. He first met Ed Halbach while in high school. Like so many others, he was infected Ed's enthusiasm and energy. Ed got him involved in observing lunar occultations and grazes. In the early 1970's, Gerry started observing eclipsing stars and a few years latter, RR Lyr stars. He has followed in Ed's footsteps and has served as the observatory director for the Milwaukee Astronomical Society (MAS) since 1980.

In the AAVSO, Gerry teamed up with Marvin Baldwin on the EB and RR Lyr committees. They developed a computerized system for the reduction and publication of EB times of minimum. As a result, over 15,000 times of minimum were published. For many years Gerry did visual observing by setting up as many scopes as they had at the observatory, setting each scope on a different target and following 12 or more stars simultaneously. Over 10 years ago, he has gotten involved with CCD photometry. Between club and personal equipment, he can run up to seven CCD rigs and continue to make time series observations on multiple targets. To date he has probably made over 250,000 observations of EB and RR Lyr stars. The INTERNET now allows him to set up multi-site observing campaigns coordinating with observers in Europe, Australia, and Japan. This results in very long observing runs.

Notably, on April 4th Gerry was in the twin cities for the celebration of Ed Halbach's 100th birthday.

Obviously, Gerry Samolyk is a worthy recipient of the Leslie C. Peltier Award of the Astronomical League.

We are very grateful for the support of Scott Roberts and *Explore Scientific* for the sponsorship of this award.

The other members of the committee and I look forward to receiving nominations for the 2010 *Leslie C. Peltier Award*.

Roger S. Kolman, Chairman
L.C. Peltier Award Committee
Astronomical League



Gerry's Facilities



Gerry Receiving the Award



An Award Well Deserved