

Saskatoon Skies

Vol. 38

No. 4

April

2007

The Newsletter of the Saskatoon Centre of the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada

TOTAL LUNAR ECLIPSE OF MARCH 3

At 6:45 pm on the evening of March 3, Ken Maher took his 2 yr old son just out of PA to see his first Eclipse. This picture was taken around 6:50-6:55 pm. (Try keeping accurate time with a toddler in tow)

It was also the last picture he took as about two minutes after this his lens fell off the camera and into a snowbank ... they watched the rest of the eclipse from the front seat of their van and capped off the evening with some ice cream

Photo by Ken Maher



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Saskatoon, SK S7N 4J8

WEBSITE:

www.usask.ca/psychology/sarty/rasc

E-MAIL: stonesw7@sasktel.net

TELEPHONE: (306) 857-4707

So Much to See ...

MEMBERSHIP? IT'S NEVER TOO LATE TO JOIN!

Regular: \$65.00 /year Youth: \$34.25 /year Lifetime: \$1100

The Saskatoon Centre operates on a one-year revolving membership. You will be a member for the next 12 months no matter when in the year you join. If you do not want to join at this time, ask to get onto our FREE 3-month Temporary Membership list. You will receive regular mailings of our Saskatoon Skies newsletter and will be invited to participate in Centre activities. Members are encouraged to renew early to avoid disruption in publications. Renew through the membership coordinator, Mike Clancy, or renew through the National Office and let Mike know that you did!

Benefits of Membership in the Saskatoon Centre

- knowledgeable & friendly amateur astronomers
- use of the Sleaford Observatory
- use of the U of S Observatory (after training)
- Saskatoon Skies Newsletter
- Observer's Handbook
- The Journal of the RASC (bimonthly)
- SkyNews Magazine (bimonthly)
- use of the Centre library

- rent the Centre's Telescopes

<http://www.usask.ca/psychology/sarty/rasc/telescopes.html>

- discounts to Sky & Telescope Magazine*
- free, no-cost, no-obligation, 3-month temporary membership if you don't want to join right now!

** New subscription or renewal of Sky & Telescope? Send new info or renewal notice, plus credit card # to Norma Jensen, 128 - 4th Street East, Saskatoon, SK S7H 1H8, or email her at njensen@scs.sk.ca.*

U OF S OBSERVATORY

The U of S Observatory is open to the general public every Saturday of the year. Admission is free. The observatory is located on campus, one block north of the Wiggins Avenue and College Drive entrance. On clear nights, visitors may look through the vintage 6-inch and tour several displays. Current events are recorded on the Astronomy Information Line at 966-6429.

Observatory Hours:

January-February	7:30-9:30 pm
March	8:30-10:30 pm
April	9:30-11:30 pm
May-July	10:00-11:30 pm
August	9:30-11:30 pm
September	8:30-10:30 pm
October-December	7:30-9:30 pm

SASKATOON CENTRE'S MAIN OFFICERS:

President – Garry Stone, 857-4707

Secretary – Al Hartridge, 373-0034

Vice-President – Barb Wright, 249-1990

Treasurer – Norma Jensen, 244-7360



BOTTLE DRIVE & CANADIAN TIRE \$

by Darrell Chatfield

Thanks to everyone we have collected \$188.75 in Canadian Tire Money! If you cannot make it to a meeting but would like to contribute, your Canadian Tire money please call me at 374-9278.

LIGHT POLLUTION
ABATEMENT
WEBSITE AT:
www.ras.sk.ca/lpc/lpc.htm

Newsletter Editors – Tenho Tuomi, Ken Maher **Copy & Collate**– Les & Ellen Dickson **Labels & Temps** – Mike Clancy **Web Posting** – Gord Sarty

Saskatoon Skies is published monthly by the Saskatoon Centre of the RASC. Distribution is approximately 100 copies per issue. Saskatoon Skies welcomes unsolicited articles, sketches, photographs, cartoons, and other astronomy or space science articles. Articles can be sent by mail in any format to the Centre's mailbox. Submitted materials can be returned upon request. Submissions may also be sent by e-mail – preferred as plain unformatted ASCII text files without line breaks. Images sent by e-mail should be attached .JPGs (.GIFs also accepted). Send e-mail submissions to the editor at <tuomi@sasktel.net>. Please send articles in “generic” formats with simple formatting – one tab at the beginning of paragraphs, one space after commas and periods. A separate by-mail subscription to Saskatoon Skies is available for \$15.00 per year. Saskatoon Skies is also posted on our Saskatoon Centre homepage as a .pdf file and can be downloaded free-of-charge. Members may choose to receive the newsletter by regular mail or via the Internet. Articles may be reprinted from Saskatoon Skies without expressed permission (unless otherwise stated), but source credit is requested. DEADLINE for submissions is the 26th of each month. Saskatoon Skies accepts commercial advertising. Please call the editor for rates. Members can advertise non-commercial items free of charge.

RASC CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Apr 13	Observers Group - 8:00 p.m., Sleaford Observatory	Larry Scott	934-5801
Apr 16	RASC Executive Meeting - 6:30 p.m., 175 Physics, U of S.	Garry Stone	857-4707
Apr 16	RASC General Meeting - 7:30 p.m., 175 Physics, U. of S	Garry Stone	857-4707
Apr 21	International Astronomy Day & RASC RAFFLE	Jeff Swick	373-3902
May 11	Observers Group - 9:00 p.m., Sleaford Observatory	Larry Scott	934-5801
May 14	RASC Executive Meeting - 6:30 p.m., 175 Physics, U of S.	Garry Stone	857-4707
May 14	RASC General Meeting - 7:30 p.m., 175 Physics, U of S.	Garry Stone	857-4707
May 22	Noctilucent Cloud watch season begins (until Aug 12)		
Jun 8	Observers Group - 10:00 p.m., Sleaford Observatory	Larry Scott	934-5801
Jun 11	RASC Executive Meeting - 6:30 p.m., 175 Physics, U of S.	Garry Stone	857-4707
Jun 11	RASC General Meeting - 7:30 p.m., 175 Physics, U of S.	Garry Stone	857-4707
Jun 28 - Jul 1	RASC General Assembly (Calgary)	http://calgary.rasc.ca/ar2007/index.htm	
Jul 13-15	Alberta Star BQ, Eccles Ranch Obs., Caroline, AB	Rick Huziak	665-3392
Aug 9-12	Saskatchewan Summer Star Party - Cypress Hills Interprovincial Park	Barb Wright	249-1990
Aug. 28	Total Eclipse of the Moon (morning)		
Sep 6-9	Alberta Star Party, Eccles Ranch Obs., Caroline, AB	Rick Huziak	665-3392
Sep 11-16	Northern Prairie Starfest, Black Nugget Lake, Toffield, AB	Rick Huziak	665-3392

Minutes of the Executive Meeting March 19, 2007 by Al Hartridge

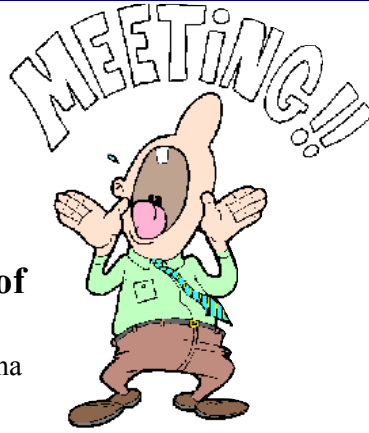
1. Meeting called to order at 6:30 p.m.
2. Approval of the minutes of the previous meeting. Moved by Norma Jensen, seconded by Jim Young and carried.
3. Treasurer's Report- will be given at the next meeting.
4. Display at Calgary GA: Barb Wright suggests using the SSSP Video produced by Shaw with their permission. Also a stationary table display may be set up.
5. GA 2009 - SSSP without annual meeting: We will be asking to host an entire GA or none at all. This idea has to be presented at the Calgary GA and decided, to give us adequate time to prepare.
6. Steak Night: could be held at Mulberry's restaurant on June 7. This in an ideal location.
7. Astronomy Day: display will be set up this year at the Farmer's Market provided there is approval. A star night will be held on Friday night at the Lakewood Civic Centre. Also a star night will be held at Beaver Creek on the Saturday night following a gastronomy event yet to be arranged.
8. Meeting Adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

Minutes of the General Meeting March 19, 2007

by Al Hartridge

1. Meeting called to order at 7:30 p.m.
2. Approval of minutes of the previous meeting: Moved by Mike Clancy, seconded by Ellen Dickson and carried.
3. Snowblower: donated to Sleaford by Mike Clancy in return for a tax receipt.
4. Report on GA 2009, SSSP and National Council: a meeting was held last Sunday at Craik with Regina. The T-shirt design will be ready to post on the web site soon. CASCA will fund a speaker for our star party who will also give a talk to the public. Costs for attending the upcoming GA in Calgary also discussed.
5. Events Committee report: Jeff Swick said we would likely get some good publicity from Shaw. The display this year will likely be held at the Farmer's Market, there will be star nights at Lakewood on Friday and at Beaver Creek on Saturday. A gastronomy event will also be organized.
6. Fundraising: Darrell Chatfield mentioned that the collection of bottles and Canadian Tire money is ongoing. The raffle tickets are about 2/3 sold at this time.
7. Membership: Mike Clancy stated that there are 82 paid up members at this time.
8. Observer's Group: Larry Scott said that a small group was out to Sleaford the previous Friday night. Larry also said he preferred to keep the laser pointer in town and that it would be readily available to those that wished to use it by contacting him.
9. Newsletter: Tenho Tuomi stated the deadline for articles for next newsletter would be Mar. 26th. The public library system would be willing to display a monthly copy of our newsletter. National Office will retain an online archive of all electronic newsletters from all centres.
10. Astronomy Books: Bruce will leave a sheet out. If anyone wishes to purchase a particular book please indicate this on the sheet. This will help him determine how many copies to order.
11. Presentations:
 - Rick Huziak, The Cypress Hills Dark Sky Preserve, SCN TV, shot at the 2006 SSSP
 - Al Hartridge, A review of the Advanced Imaging Convention, San Jose California Nov. 2006.
12. Meeting Adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

MONDAY, APRIL 16
7:30 PM ROOM 175,
U OF S



SKY BUYS & MIRROR CELLS

The Saskatoon Centre's Swap and Sale Page!

FOR SALE: Antares 12"DOB asking \$850.00 or best offer. Please contact Beverly Davis at 306-285-3639 or fadavis@sasktel.net

FOR SALE: Celestron FirstScope 70 EQ Refractor Telescope, model 21076. Any reasonable offer accepted. E-mail: Audrey Bayduza bayduza@sasktel.net

FOR SALE: 12" Orion SkyQuest Intellescope with object locator. Regular \$1400.00, first \$850.00 takes it, never used. Bob Johnson bjohnson53@shaw.ca

New developments in studies of Polar Mesospheric Clouds (noctilucent clouds) by Dr. Svetlana Petelina from the Institute of Space and Atmospheric Studies at the U of S

Note: There will be an executive meeting at 6:30 p.m. in room 175.

To Make a Charitable donation to RASC Saskatoon Centre

write a cheque out to RASC and place on the bottom that the donation is to the Saskatoon centre – a tax receipt will be issued in December of that year . Mail or give to the current treasurer.



BOOKS FOR SALE

by Bruce Brandell, Sales Coordinator

All items will be available at our next meeting or call 249-1119, or email bruce_brandell@yahoo.com

<i>Title</i>	<i>Author</i>	<i>#Avail</i>	<i>Price</i>
RASC 2007	RASC	6	\$14.00
Skywatcher's 07	S. Schadick	3	\$18.00
Skywatcher's 06	S. Schadick	1	\$5.00
Miscellaneous			
RASC Centennial Mug		2	\$5.00
RASC Stickers, blue or white		lots	\$1.00
SSSP 2001 Pin (Summer Triangle)		29	\$2.00
SSSP 2002 Pin (Comet)		17	\$2.00
SSSP 2006 Pin (10)		17	\$5.00
Books			
The Backyard Astronomer's Guide	Dickinson & Dyer	2	\$45.00
The Beginner's Observer's Guide	L. Enright	2	\$19.00
Observer's Handbook 2006	RASC	5	10.00
Observer's Handbook 2005	RASC	1	5.00
Isabelle Williamson Lunar Observing Program	RASC	8	\$10.00
Skyways – Astronomy Handbook for Teachers	M.L. Whitehorne	2	\$20.00

<i>Title</i>	<i>Author</i>	<i>#Avail</i>	<i>Price</i>
Books			
Exploring the Sky by Day	T. Dickinson	2	\$9.50
Exploring the Night Sky	T. Dickinson	1	\$9.50
Night Watch	T. Dickinson	2	\$33.00
Summer Stargazing	T. Dickinson	1	\$18.00
Night Sky Atlas	R. Scagell	3	\$27.00
Stargazing with a Telescope	R. Scagell	2	\$14.00
The Moon Observer's Guide	P. Grego	2	\$14.00
Stars	Zim, Baker & Chartrand	1	\$10.00
Firefly Planisphere	Firefly	5	\$19.00
Firefly Astronomy Dictionary	Firefly	3	\$14.00
Pocket Sky Atlas	R. Sinnott	5	\$24.50
Patterns in the Sky	K. Hewitt-White	3	\$19.50
Binocular Highlights	G. Seronik	5	\$35.00
Deep-Sky Wonders	W. Houston	2	\$24.50
Mars Observer's Guide	N. Bone	2	\$14.00
Deep Sky Observer's Guide	N. Bone	2	\$14.00
Practical Astronomy	S. Dunlop	2	\$14.00
Field Map of the Moon	Sky & Telescope	1	\$12.50
Moon Map (laminated)	Sky & Telescope	4	\$6.00
Messier Card	Sky & Telescope	6	\$5.00
Saskatoon's Stone	W.K. Mysyk & C.L. Kulyk	4	\$3.00

The Almost-Marathon of 2007

by Mike Clancy

As ever, the times around the new moon in mid-March call out for a Messier Marathon and the gathering of friends for my first major observing event of the season. Weather permitting, of course, and there lies the rub this year.

We haven't had many good observing nights all winter long so why should March be any different? Both Friday and Saturday nights were marred by scattered clouds to full overcast conditions so I did what any self-respecting observer would do - I stayed home and celebrated St. Patrick's Day! Mind you, I did get out for an impromptu session all by myself in the driveway on Thursday night. The snow storm had blown itself out Wednesday, the clouds cleared off and the temperatures began to plummet (by Thursday morning it was -27°C). There was relatively little wind Thursday night and the temperature had warmed to about -8°C by 2100 hrs so I went out to see what there was to see.

A brief sweep of the southern sky from east to west showed Saturn, Orion, and Venus hanging like jewels. I could distinguish the Alcor/Mizar double in Ursa Major naked-eye, so I thought the skies worth a look as it were. I looked over the Orion Nebulae (M42/43) first and, as always, thought how beautiful that favorite object is. The Pleiades (M45) were a fine sight as always, and I thought I could detect a slight nebulosity although that may have been due to a slight haze in the air. I then looked through the Taurus star field and tried to find M1 without success. I did find all 3 Auriga Messiers (M36/37/38) though.

I then swung back down to Sirius in Canis Major and saw M41 but couldn't find M46 and 47 in Puppis. I also struck out with M93, but that may have been due to waste light from a southern "light factory" and poor seeing above the tree line. I swung back up and found M50 in Monoceros and M35 in Gemini. The Perseus Double Cluster and the Mirfak star field were also added to the night's work as was the Andromeda Galaxy (M31) and M34 in Perseus.

I did some observing around Cassiopeia and picked

off M103 near Ruchbah, but that pretty much ended my observing for the night. A slight haze was building as the humidity increased and I had to be far too early the next day to pull an all-nighter!

As it was, in about 30 - 45 minutes I found 12 Messiers, struck out on another 10 or 12, observed some fine star fields and planets - the rings of Saturn are a fine sight at the moment - and promised myself I would do more observing in the future (yeah, like I haven't said THAT before!). Altogether a nice evening but not my best Messier Marathon; I think I need to share the experience to enjoy it fully.

Explore the Universe

by Ken Maher

At the Meeting on February 12th I received the RASC's "Explore the Universe" certificate promptly 8 months after it was issued by the RASC Observing Committee. A long wait? Sure. Granted, there was the lull over last summer, and a series of meetings where Ron and I failed to connect. But then again, I wasn't too worried either. Indeed, I had completed my observing requirements over 1 full year before I got around to even sending in my forms!



Photo by Tenho Tuomi

By now you may be asking yourselves what the point was. Did I even remember it any more? I hope I haven't given the impression that this

certificate wasn't worth getting. Nothing could be further from the truth!

In fact, while I was working on this certificate I had so much fun that I ended up cataloging over 100 of the 110 available objectives even though you only need 55 to be certified. And best of all ... I did the whole thing with my two eyes and a good pair of binoculars!

This certificate provides a great all-around knowledge of the night sky. I highly encourage everyone in our club to consider trying for it ... Especially since I see on page 10 that only 3 of us have received it so far. I know that every single member could do it (if they haven't already completed the requirements in the course of their regular observing) and have a lot of fun getting back to the basics as they did so. So what are YOU waiting for? Why not get out there and Explore the Universe.

Snow-covered Adventures with Polaris

by Nicole Dancey



The welcoming sounds of a crackling fire are heard and the sweet smell of wood smoke lingers in the autumn breeze as my eyes are fixed upwards into the beautifully dark night sky. The air temperatures are cooler now than they were in the

summer months. The sounds of coyotes across the lake and the distant cry from the Great Horned Owl reinforce my love of the nocturnal world. As the nights pass, my deciduous friends lose their leaves and I am soon joined by incredible white snowflakes... and lots of them. As winter joins me, 'mercury' continues to drop (not out of the universe, but in the thermometers). The wonderful, clear dark skies continue to spoil me as I am rendered breathless night after incredible night here in the Dark-Sky Preserve I call home ... Cypress Hills Interprovincial Park.

'Polaris' is my name and astronomy is my game... well, partly. I am a Park Interpreter here in the Cypress Hills. I have spent the past two summers on the Saskatchewan side of the park, and I now continue my astronomical adventures in Cypress Hills Alberta.

Visitors throughout this fall and winter season have been able to join me for many exciting new programs. We have created wonderful memories together, throughout our regular 'Night Visions' fall astronomy programs and 'Snowshoers of the Night' winter programs. We even had a special guest appearance for our 'Constellations & Campfire' holiday program by Mimi (aka Thuban - my out-of-this-world interpreter counterpart from Cypress Hills Saskatchewan)!



In our park's efforts to help improve, secure and preserve the dark skies of the Cypress Hills, we have also developed several new astronomy and dark-sky based school and special group

programs. These additions include 'Dark-Sky Voyage'

(a Kindergarten to Grade 3 in-school program) and our Grade 6 Sky Science in-park night program. We also welcome groups to book an astronomy (or other) program with us to make your gathering in the Cypress Hills even more memorable!



All of us in the Interprovincial Park are excited for another wonderful summer of park visitor programs and astronomy. Here in Cypress Alberta, our new visitor centre is nearing completion and we encourage you to join us in celebrating our spring grand opening or just stop in for a tour next time you're in the park. This year also marks the 75th Anniversary of Alberta Parks & Protected Areas, so keep your ears open for exciting events throughout the province. We invite you to join us under the stars this summer and create memories that will last a lifetime. We welcome you to share the Dark-Sky Preserve we call home!

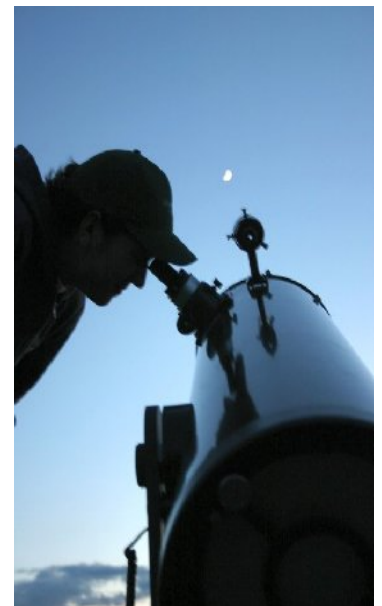
For more information, please visit our website at www.cypresshills.com.

Cypress Hills Alberta
(403) 893-3833

Cypress Hills
Saskatchewan (306)
662-5411

Fort Walsh National
Historic Site (306)
662-2645 / 662-3590

We look forward to seeing you with our night vision in 2007!



George Moores Memorial Award for Excellence in Public Education

from an email by Orla Aaquist, Edmonton Centre's outgoing president

This year the George Moores Memorial Award for Excellence in Public Education will be going to the entire Dark Sky Preserve committee.

The DSP Committee, led by Rick Huziak, was instrumental in creating the Beaver Hills Dark Sky Preserve and leading a public awareness campaign focused on light pollution. It was Rick's initial contact with Parks that started the ball rolling.

The original committee included John Cliff, Sherrylin Jahrig, Bruce McCurdy, Warren Finlay, Scott Henderson, Orla Aaquist, Paul Campbell, Howard Gibbins, Dave Robinson, and Rick Huziak. All members on this list will receive a printed certificate.



Rick Huziak stands proudly by the Beaver Hills Dark-sky Declaration at the September 3, 2006 ceremony in Elk Island National Park.

Review: The Scientific American Book of the Cosmos, edited by David Levy

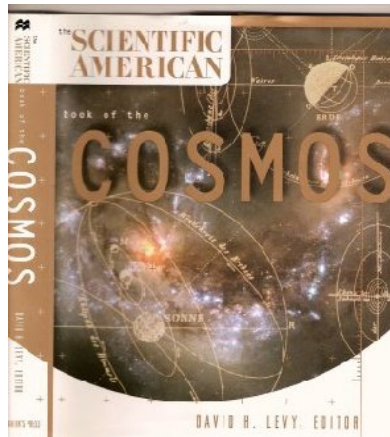
by Jeff Swick

This rather large collection (416 pages) of essays from Scientific American made for some great winter reading.

As this book is a series of essays, I found much more value in what I was reading since when I finished what is basically an "article" I would have time to think back over what I had just read and contemplate what I had absorbed. Starting with a couple of essays of historical importance from Ingalls, Einstein and Schrodinger. (Think of them as the Crosby, Stills and Nash of physics) one is given to understand the implications of their work to the scientific thinking of their time.

The reader is then led through the birth of the universe, the evolution of galaxy clusters and the lives of quasars and down through to the genesis of our solar system; down in to the microverse and finishes with some speculation on endings and beginning of the universe.

Given as David Levy edits the book it was particularly
Saskatoon Skies



interesting to read his essay on comet Shoemaker-Levy 9 and it's breakup and collision with Jupiter as well as the scientific results gleaned from spectroscopic observations and chemical analysis.

I had initially suspected that this book might be a long read but I found I read it in about a week and a half or so. I'd be able to read one or two chapters while on the bike at the gym, a chapter or so after work or while in between cities on the plane. As it's a series of

articles it was easy to budget the reading time. It was actually like having one giant Scientific American on my favorite subject.

I can say for sure that there are articles I will re-read just for pleasure in the summer while sitting out in the back yard....nice short articles and lots of 'em .

Suggested retail price is 47.00 Cdn dollars but you can get it from Amazon.ca for 31.00

Activities Coordinator Report

by Jeff Swick

So here we are with another winter out of the way. The weather has been pretty decent for observing here in my little light polluted area of the city.

Hopefully Sleaford will get more visits as the weather warms and we will also perhaps get to that re-scheduled Messier Marathon.

Spring also brings International Astronomy Day and as usual our center has some activities planned.

The weekend kicks off with our Sidewalk Astronomy event at the Lakewood Civic Centre. This will be our third year at this location and when the weather is good we have a pretty good turn out as the facility contains a gym, swimming pool, basketball courts and a library. The viewing location is perfect in that you can pull right up and unload your scope. Set up is usually around 7 to 7:30 is and will be nailed down as the date approaches.

A new venue this year for us is the Saskatoon Farmers Market located in the old Adilmans building. The people who run the market tell me that the traffic count runs between one thousand to fifteen hundred people so I'm confident we will be able to move some books and of course raffle tickets for the quilt.

I believe that evening we will be having a gastronomy event sometime after the market and details will be forthcoming via the Yahoo group.



March 3 eclipse at 7:29 PM, by Garry Stone

Saturday night finds us again out at Beaver Creek from about 7:00 till Midnight. Last year Ron gave a short slide presentation and it would be great if someone would volunteer to give a short presentation this year.

Remember that the reason we plan and execute these events is to grow our membership so tell your friends and neighbors to come on out and see what it is you do all night. We are able to offer interested parties a 3-month trial membership at no charge. If you are

unsure of the procedure just shoot an email to Mike Clancy and he will fill you in.

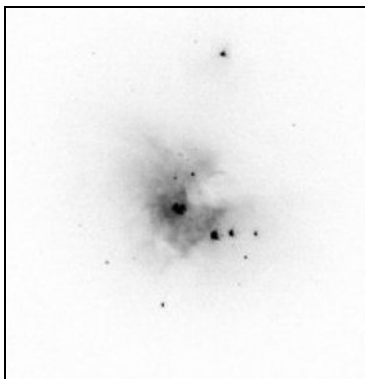
I know also that Norma and Darrel are working on another steak night for a fundraiser in May so details will be forthcoming from the fundraising committee.

That's it for this month...even on time to Tenho this month. Almost late but not quite.

See you all out under the stars.

Observer's Group Notes

by Larry Scott



One of our newest astronomers Jeff Vollmer tried his hand at astrophotography by taking a picture of the Orion Nebula with his Canon A610 camera through Garry Stone's C8.

For a change of pace we were able to get out for the Observer's Group on March 9th, as scheduled, under relatively pleasant conditions. Clear skies and mild temperatures brought out Norma, Bill and myself as well as two new potential members, Terry and Paula Wowk. Sky conditions were not ideal but we got in some viewing with Terry and Paula and

they picked up a few things. (i.e. you can't bring too many clothes even when it's nice out).

I was personally very pleased to get my first light with our new 16" scope and am looking forward to using it under a better sky. Our next Obs. Grp. date is April 13th. We will hopefully be taking another crack at the Messier Marathon for those who are interested as our previous efforts on March 16th were clouded out.

The following Observer's Group date falls on May 11th which I will be unable to attend. We're looking for a volunteer to host this group so if you're able and interested, call me at 934-5801.

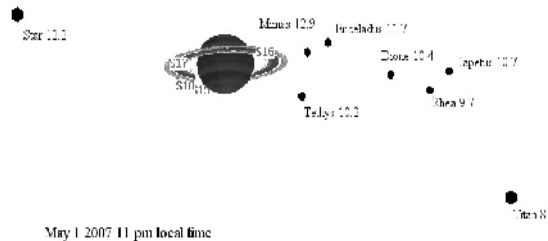
See you out there.

The Planets This Month, April 2007

by Murray D. Paulson, Edmonton Centre

This month the effects of summer twilight and Day light savings time erode our dark space, leaving just a taste of the late spring skies for us to enjoy. At least a few planets are up there to keep us company.

Mercury swept out to a poor morning elongation, and over this month swings back toward its date with the sun on May 3rd. This passage is a superior conjunction, (Mercury behind the sun). You can easily find Mercury in the daytime with a GOTO scope, or by using setting circles. With Setting circles and a solar filter, first locate the sun and establish the coordinates for your RA and Dec and most importantly, focus the scope. Do not adjust focus or change eyepieces! Find the current coordinates for Mercury and move off to them, and only then remove the solar filter. If your polar alignment is good, you should have Mercury in the eyepiece. I tend to have a problem locating it in the field when Mercury is fainter than magnitude 1. Mercury is preceding the sun, so be very cautious and ensure that there is no chance that the scope could inadvertently catch the sun. White canes and star hopping don't mix!



target for the early risers. It transits the meridian in twilight and usually in the steadiest seeing of the morning sky. Jupiter starts out the month at magnitude -2.3 and in the eyepiece you will see its 40" oblate disk. Over the month, it will grow to 44" and the brightness increases to magnitude -2.5. Near month's end, check for M19, just 3.6 degrees below Jupiter.

Saturn has been a real treat on the nights of good seeing. I have been chasing the fainter of the major moons, and Mimas has eluded me. Enceladus shines at magnitude 11.7 and is a bit of a challenge depending on how far it sits from Saturn. Mimas on the other hand, shines at magnitude 12.9 and is closer than Enceladus. No easy feat! (I need a bigger scope!) I will have to try out an occulting bar eyepiece. We were skunked on the alignment of Saturn's moons last month, but I have searched for another equally interesting arrangement. This occurs on May 1st with all Saturn's visible moons west of the planet. If you are hunting for Mimas and Enceladus, April 16 and 25 are also good nights to hunt them down.

Till next month, clear skies!

Venus is brilliant in the west and contrasts nicely with the twilight sky. It is well placed to set up and view it in the early evening sky as it precedes the sun up the ecliptic. At the beginning of April Venus shines at magnitude -4.0 and it sits 37 degrees elongation from the sun. In the eyepiece Venus is a 14" gibbous disk. By the end of April that gibbous phase will slim up and expand to 16.5" and it will brighten imperceptibly to magnitude -4.1. Venus has been changing so gradually but it now is changing pace and the view will change more dramatically from month to month until its conjunction with the sun later this summer. On the night of April 20th, the Moon and Venus are 2.4 degrees apart. Should make for a nice view in Binoculars.

Mars is in the constellation of Aquarius this month and shines at magnitude 1.0. If you find it low in the south in the morning sky in you telescope, you would see its 5.0" very gibbous disk. It rises a little over an hour before the sun, but the morning twilight makes sighting it difficult in the extreme. In one months time Mars will expand very slightly to 5.4" and its reddish magnitude 0.9 orb will sit on the border of Aquarius and Pisces.

Jupiter is brilliant in the morning sky, and makes a great

FUND RAISING DINNER



Mulberry's (sturdy stone) - 124-3rd Ave North
June 7th, dinner at 7:00 pm - cocktails at 6:00

\$12.00 per person
ticket sales at April and May meetings.

Silent auction and Door Prizes

contact Barb (249-1990) wrightb@sasktel.net,
or Norma (244-7360) njensen@scs.sk.ca.

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Brent Gratias	96
Mike Oosterlaken	93
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Darrell Chatfield	290
Richard Huziak	211

The Messier & Finest NGC lists can be found in the Observer's Handbook. The Explore the Universe list is available on the National web site. The Herschel 400 list is available at the web site listed below. The Binocular List will be available at each general meeting or can be mailed out on request to distant members.



On-line Messier and Finest NGC lists, charts and logbooks - check out:

<http://www.rasc.ca/observe.htm>

On-line Herschel 400 List - check out the official site at:

<http://www.astroleague.org/al/obsclubs/herschel/hers400.html>



Many hours of hand work went into the making of this very fine looking quilt. Most of the work on the star was done on a treadle machine, for those of you who know about quilting. The side of this quilt is 85" x 101", which is large enough to fit a queen size bed! (value\$2500)

RASC RAFFLE

(Lic. # L06-0213)

by Darrell Chatfield

The RASC RAFFLE is now on, I will have ticket booklets at all the meetings from now until April/07. The other two prizes are a Viewsonic 19" flat screen monitor, and a Weitzel scratch art "Owl" print. The raffle is to raise money to house our new 16" Meade scope. Pick up your books of tickets today!

Ticket prices are: \$2.00 each, or three for \$5.00.

Draw Date: April 21, 2007 at Saskatoon, SK.

See our web page for more information:

<http://www.usask.ca/psychology/sarty/rasc/raffle.html>