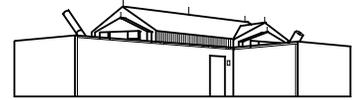


The Guide Star

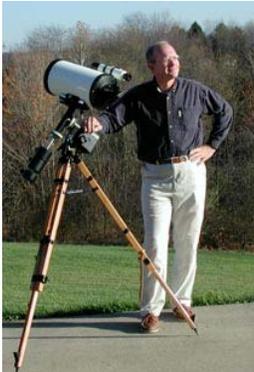
Newsletter of the Amateur Astronomers Association of Pittsburgh Inc.
A Section of the Academy of Science & Art of Pittsburgh
October, 2003 Vol. 37, No. 7



Nicholas E. Wagman Observatory

Tom Dobbins' Anthem At Oct. 10 Meeting

Oh Say Can You See the Craters On Mars?



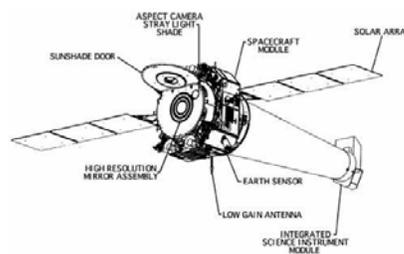
It's fun reading confidently-made, but now laughable, scientific predictions made many years ago. In more recent times and pertinent to astronomy, many predicted the demise of ground-based and amateur observing of the planets once the Hubble and planet-orbiting probes were in service. Not only has this prediction flopped, it turns out that spacecraft observations have actually encouraged and enhanced Earth-bound planetary observations. For example, under certain ideal conditions on Earth and on Mars, skilled observers have noted rare brightenings, markings, and atmospheric variations that are then confirmed by spacecraft images. Thus, the observer is given well-deserved credit, rather than that "Yeah...right" look.

At the club's **October 10, 2003** meeting (*Carnegie Science Center, 7:30 pm*), **Tom Dobbins** brings us up to date on achievements in observing craters and other seemingly too-small features on the Red Planet. How is this possible? Quoting from a paper co-authored by Mr. Dobbins: "Observing the planets has been compared to watching a movie with the projector thrown out of focus except for occasional sharp frames thrown in at random....expert visual observers recognized that fleeting moments of extreme clarity occurred when the air steadied momentarily, allowing their telescopes to perform at their theoretical diffraction limit". It's at these unique moments that exceedingly small details are sometimes seen and sketched. If you don't believe this is possible, come to the meeting and find out for yourself from a reputable source.

Tom Dobbins is well-known to AAAP members as a regular and popular presenter at Laurel Highlands Star Cruise and lives not far from the Pittsburgh area (Coshocton, Ohio). He is a Contributing Editor to *Sky & Telescope* magazine, having written many articles on difficult and rare planetary observations. Just recently he paid a visit to Wagman Observatory on his way through the area. Let's show our appreciation for his return visit with a large showing at the CSC (plenty of seats available).

Chandra Space Telescope Discoveries The Ultimate in X-Ray Vision Described at Joint AAAP/SSP Meeting

Imagine being on the research teams in charge of the other orbiting "Great Observatories": Compton Gamma Ray, Space Infra-Red Telescope Facility (SIRTF), and Chandra X-Ray. The folks who run these other instruments must be a bit jealous of the Hubble Space Telescope staff, which gets all the media attention, glossy coffee table books, TV specials, etc. Within the scientific community, discoveries made by Hubble's sibling observatories are just as important, if not more important, than Hubble's because so much more information is available at the non-visible wavelengths.



At the joint AAAP/SSP meeting on **October 15 (Duquesne University)**, you can learn much more about the Chandra X-Ray Observatory and its cutting-edge discoveries from one of the observatory's lead researchers. The quest speaker is **Martin Weiskoff**, Project scientist at NASA's Marshall Space Flight Center, Huntsville, Alabama. Complete details of Mr.

(continued on page 2, column 1)

Year's Final "Moonrise Special" Mars No Longer Alone At October 18 NEWO Star Party



It's as though the other naked-eye* planets went back stage this summer, so that Mars could stand alone at center stage. Mercury, Venus, Jupiter and Saturn have all been close to the Sun or only visible in the pre-dawn hours. That all changes by the time of our next-to-last Wagman public star party, **October 18**, starting at **sunset**. Venus will become more prominent in the post-sunset sky, while Saturn (at "full tilt") will be conspicuous in Gemini. Of course, Mars is still be dazzling, so expect a lot of public requests for planetary views at the 10-18 star party.

Member help at this year's Wagman events has been fantastic, with members vitally filling both of the sides of the observatory road from end to end with scopes. If we get clear-to-the-horizon skies, Moonrise will be spectacular as usual. Let's finish of this and next month's (Lunar Eclipse) Wagman events with the same high standard of help, including in around the observatory itself. And remember to bundle up....it's always 5 deg. colder with 5 mph faster winds at the site than elsewhere.

(continued on page 2, column 2)

*OK, for you "pit-nickers" out there, Uranus is sometimes naked-eye, as is Earth. :-)

Chandra Observatory Scientist Speaks At Oct. 15 Meeting

(continued from front page)

Weiskoff's lecture will be arriving in your U.S. mail courtesy of the SSP. The AAAP/SSP joint meeting starts at 8:00 pm in Mellon Hall (Falk Lecture Hall on the first floor). As in previous years, the main program is preceded by a "Tech Forum" dinner and lecture in the D.U. Student Union. AAAP members are welcome to attend this event as well; reservations info. will also be indicated in the SSP flyer.

The AAAP and SSP (Spectroscopy Society of Pittsburgh) have enjoyed a long and productive relationship for many years now with the SSP serving as one of our principal benefactors for our educational outreach efforts. For example, the popular "Star & Planet Finders" handed out free to the public at Wagman Observatory are purchased with SSP funding. If you happen to meet member Dave Pensenstadler at the joint meeting, or any other meeting, make sure to pass along your thanks for all the work he has done over the years to sustain the AAAP/SSP relationship.

(Recent Chandra X-Ray Image)



Nucleus of Galaxy NCG-3059

Rise to The Occasion: Attend Moonrise Special Star Party 10-18

(continued from front page)

Help Needed for School Group On 10-10

By Tom Reiland - "A group from fifth grade of Walnut Grove Elementary School in West Mifflin has booked Friday, Oct. 10 at Wagman Observatory starting at 6:45 PM. We will need two members to operate the scopes in the building and one or two with their own scopes to assist with the students and parents. Contact me ASAP."

Mingo Observatory Progress Includes New Building Design, Final Funding Push, Road Construction

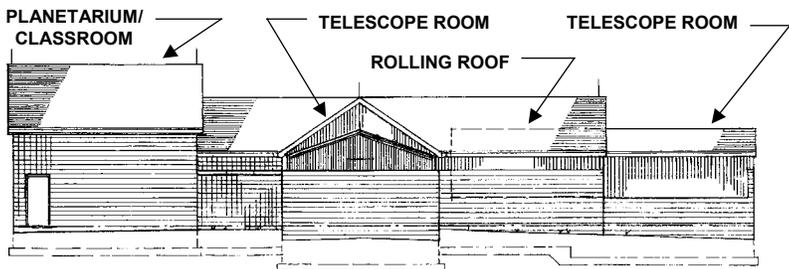
Unlike certain infamous PennDot road/bridge construction projects, which stall after a well-publicized start, the club's Mingo Park Observatory project continues to make steady progress. Most of the permit-related work is complete; the major emphasis is now on obtaining the balance of the major funding from various charitable foundations. Our deepest appreciation goes out to member Dick Haddad for handling this very demanding task. All of the organizations approached thus far have responded positively to our funding solicitation. The timing for the start of actual construction will depend on when these promised funds actually become available. We had hoped to commence construction perhaps this month or next, this this might be delayed until mid or late winter depending on the funds

timing. In the mean time, we have authorized contractors to proceed with grading of a new road to the site, and may also take the opportunity to have footers and telescope piers dug and poured with concrete.

The basic design of the building has been changed from the initial "Y" shape to a simpler "T" shape with two telescopes and the planetarium room making up the legs of the "T". The design of the movable roofs is a virtual copy of the Wagman design with the same rollers-on-rails, cranking mechanism and over/under roof retraction scheme.

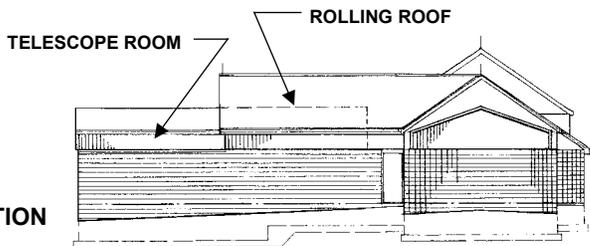
The entrance gate to the Mingo site will soon be equipped with a double combination locking bar that allows members and Mingo Park workers to independently access the site. If you would like to visit the site on a non-star party night, please contact Project Director Ed Moss for details on the operation of the new lock. Also, make sure to have your AAAP membership card, just in case the park patrol stops by.

(continued at right)



SOUTHWEST ELEVATION

Observatory Drawings
Courtesy of
John T. Keegan - Architect

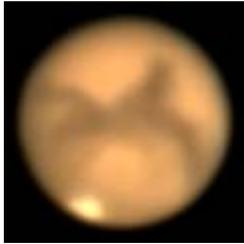


SOUTHEAST ELEVATION

AAAP's Martian Chronicles

Great Views of A Small Planet (and Its Much Smaller Moons)

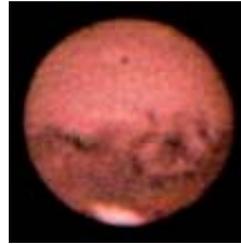
Bob Kalan



Dave Mueller



Mark Arelt



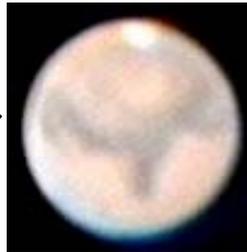
Jerry Zhu - 1



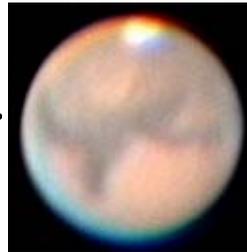
Jerry Zhu - 2



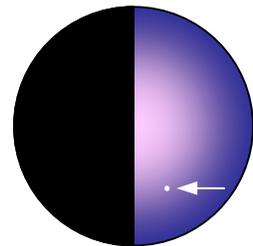
Jerry Zhu - 3



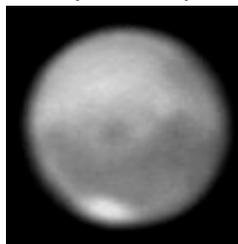
Jerry Zhu - 4



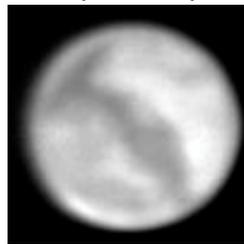
Eric Fischer



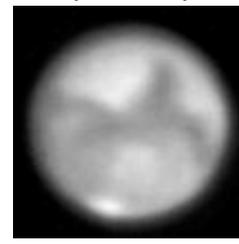
Larry McHenry-1



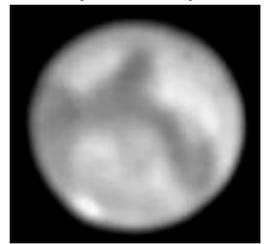
Larry McHenry-2



Larry McHenry - 3



Larry McHenry - 4



See page 4 for descriptions of these images.

As the saying goes "Closeness counts in horse shoes and hand grenades". We can now add "planets" to that saying. Even though Mars is one of the smaller planets in the Solar System, it easily matched vastly larger Jupiter and Saturn for visual spectacle last month because of its close (34 million mile) approach to Earth. Even though we fought with haze, clouds and rain for much of the time, there were enough clear openings to give everyone a stunning view of the planet's surface markings and polar caps (both of them). At Wagman, both the Brashear and Manka scopes provided superb images (ironically, the depleted coating on the Manka kept the image from being too bright, thus details were good). The moons of Mars were also stunning in a different way, not for their brightness but because they were visible at all. Thanks to this opposition, both moons came within the nominal magnitude threshold of our larger scopes. (Our thanks to Flacc Stifel for installing an "Occulting Bar" on the Brashear telescope to yield the Photos and Deimos views.) As a result of all the Mars hoopla, we packed about 500 guests into the Wagman site on Sept. 5 and hundreds as well at other star parties. Here's a sampling of member's observations and reactions to this absolutely great apparition of the Red Planet:

John Diller - "I never really thought of Mars as being a particularly 'beautiful' planet...or place...until now. Until this current close and DUST FREE opposition. Wow! Mars is beautiful. Life is good."

(continued at right)

Ann Norman (August 28) - "On the night of August 28, I entertained my husband, my parents, and assorted neighbors with the "Mars show" from my own lawn. I am a great believer in the usefulness of Mars Previewer II, the computer freeware that gives you an idea of what Mars is supposed to look like at a particular time that you plug in. I had my computer running upstairs so the visitors could use it. Nobody wanted to use it. They all said, 'Well we can just look at what it actually looks like.' I had to INSIST they go upstairs and see it. Then they came back and took a second look through the telescope and it was like, "Hey, NOW I see it! That's cool!" Then they would stare at it a while, like you are supposed to, because suddenly the dark patches were apparent."

John Cheng (Sept. 12) - "Terry Trees mentioned that some have seen a brightening in the Hellas region. Add me to that list; it's plainly visible if looked for. The Northern area of Hellas is more translucent, while in the South, Mare Tyrrhenum seems a bit thin above Syrtis Minor in comparison to all the maps I have. I wish I had previously paid more attention to the area..."

Eric Fischer (Aug.30 at Wagman) - "I get watery eyes on a cool night. Despite this, I was able to see the marvelous pinprick of Phobos next to Mars (see above drawing). Afterwards, I went back into the reception room and gave 'high fives' to John Holtz and Pete Zapadka on this first-of-a-lifetime observation."

(continued on page 4, column 1)

Order Your "Year In Space" Calendar

by John Holtz

The Year In Space 2004 Desk Calendar orders are being taken now. In general, they are about 6-inch x 9-inch. The left hand page has a space or astronomy photo. The right hand page has an entire week with the Moon's phase for each day, interesting astronomical events (conjunctions, meteor showers, etc) and space anniversaries. There is ample space to add your own events. For complete information about this amazing calendar, visit the calendar's web site: <http://www.YearInSpace.com>.

The cost of the calendars will be \$10.00 each. (\$9 if 36 or more are ordered.) Make checks payable to A.A.A.P. The order will be placed after the November meeting, and the calendars will be available for pickup at the December and January meetings. (Although I use one every year, not everyone wants a desk calendar. Thus, these will be available by order only.) Orders can be placed by e-mailing me at JWHoltz@aol.com (not the List Server, please) or at a regular meeting.

Watch Out for Astronomy Mag. Scam

by John Holtz

The following "Urgent Warning" is from Kalmbach Publishing Company, the publisher of Astronomy magazine. This notice was in the renewal that I got from a member recently and is of interest to any member receiving Astronomy magazine.

"You may be contacted by unauthorized companies asking you to renew your subscription. Two that we are aware of are 'Publishers Service Exchange' and 'United Publishers Network'. These companies are NOT authorized to represent Kalmbach Publishing Co. and are NOT affiliated with us in any way. DO NOT RENEW your subscription with any phone solicitor. Authentic renewals will only come from a PO Box in Milwaukee or Waukesha, WI. Most importantly, do not give them your credit card information or payment of any kind."

Of course, AAAP members can renew through me to get Astronomy magazine at a discount rate of \$29, so hopefully no members have fallen for this apparent scam.

The Well Red Planet Delights All

(continued from page 3)

John Holtz (Aug. 29 at Wagman) - *"....The highlight for me was watching and 88-year old lady climb the metal steps to the Brashear and saying "I don't see anything... I don't see anything... OH THERE IT IS".....I thought there was a dark lane in the polar cap right on the eastern edge, leaving a sliver of cap sticking out by itself....The dark markings were rather distinct if not always sharp. The region of Sinus Sabaeus and Sinus Meridiani was quite distinct....."*

Tom Reiland (Sept. 6 at Wagman) - *"We we're able to see both Phobos and Deimos....John Holtz and Flacc located Deimos in the Brashear and I found Phobos....I was able to find Phobos and later I saw Deimos in my 16 inch Dob. I was amazed how easy Phobos was to find, though Deimos was a little harder to see even though it was three times the distance of Phobos which is almost three times brighter than Deimos. I believe that if the seeing were a little better, the humidity somewhat lower and the Moon wasn't so bright it would have been much easier to see them."*

"Mars From Mars" Event A Hit With the Locals

by Bob Kalan

The two night "Mars Planet Watch" from Mars PA was a great success. We had about 100 visitors each night and Planet Mars was visible from Mars both nights. The first night, Frank Pastin and I had our telescopes set up. This was not quite enough for 100 people even with my PC and 17" monitor. Frank was also very busy. People like to see the real thing through an eyepiece. We had good media coverage from the Butler Eagle and Post Gazette on night one, my picture with the glare from my thin spots on top made the front page of the Eagle.

We had good representation from 3AP on the second night. Frank Pastin, Bill Hayeslip, Buzz Kelly and the Colbert's joined the fun. We even had a visit from the Mayor of Mars to view the "Home Land". The public was very interested in joining our star parties. Some of our Mars residents brought their super 400 power scopes and kids and had a ball. My many thanks go out to the members that helped.

Mars Image Descriptions (See Page 3)

Bob Kalan - Best of what I have taken to date. Stack of about 5 shots.

Dave Mueller - Aug. 29, 12:40 AM. Discovery 203mm f/7 Newtonian on G-11 mount, 2x Meade Barlow. ToUCam Pro with 1.25" adapter. Best 750 of 1000 AVI frames. Heavy use of unsharp masking in Photoshop, no color or levels adjustment. (Copyrighted image)

Mark Arelt - Aug. 24. Best 105 images of 120 with a modified color webcam attached to 10" S.C.T. running at f/6.3 with a 7.5mm eyepiece used in a positive projection setup.

Jerry Zhu (Image #1) - Aug 19, 2:00 AM. Planet diameter = 24.8", CM=137. 400 frames.

Jerry Zhu (Images #2-4) - Sept 6. Showing Mars rotation. Planet diameter=24.6", CM=265--307. Note: Left-most image fuzziest because Mars was closer to horizon at that time.

Eric Fischer - Computer "sketch" of Phobos, just barely visible in the blocked-out glow of Mars with Flacc Stifel's occulting bar at the left.

Larry McHenry (Image #1) - Aug. 24. 8" SCT f/10 + Red filter at 2.8x barlow and 2x digital zoom. 30 images stacked (320 x 240).

Larry McHenry (Image #2) - Sept. 9/10. 8" SCT f/10 + 2.8x barlow + Orange filter and 2x digital. 40 images stacked (320 x 240)

Larry McHenry (Image #3) - Sept. 7. 8" SCT f/10 + 2.8x barlow + Red filter and 2x digital. 40 images stacked (320 x 240)

Larry McHenry (Image #4) - Sept. 7. 8" SCT f/10 + 2.8x barlow + Orange filter and 2x digital. 40 images stacked (320 x 240)

Brunelle Astro-Imaging Contest Approaching Fast

by Dave Conte

It's that time again.....time to get your entries together for the Kevin Brunelle Astroimaging Contest! We are looking for photos, digital images and slides of astronomical objects. Go through your images from this last year and pick out your best to compete for fame, honor and prizes. (See contest rules to decide what qualifies.) As always, the contest will be held at the November meeting, which will be Friday, **November 7** at the Carnegie Science Center. **The deadline for entry submission is 10 days before the meeting, October 29.** Please get your entries to me in one of the following ways:

- Hand them over at the Friday, October 10th meeting, 7:30 P.M at the Carnegie Science Center
- Mail them to me at 112 Bower Dr., Sewickley, PA 15143
- Drop them off at the above address, or at my office on McKnight Rd., #109, Northland Medical Bldg.
- E-mail them to allybiz@att.net

I will be happy to scan your negatives into a digital format for projection. Looking forward to your imaging efforts. (My phone numbers: Day: 412/366-4846, eve: 412/741-3216.)

Brunelle Contest Rules

1. The contest is open to all active members of the AAAP.
2. The contest date is the November meeting of the AAAP. Entries will be viewed and judged by all AAAP members present at this meeting.
3. All images entered must be originally captured by the contestant.
4. Entries are limited to images concerning areas of interest within the AAAP.
5. Images may be submitted as 35mm transparencies or negatives, photographic prints, or as digital media (in formats accepted by the AAAP Audio-Visual Committee).
6. Only images taken since the date of the previous contest (Nov. 15, 2002) are eligible.
7. There are 3 categories:
 - A. Astronomical images taken with optics no longer than 150mm.
 - B. Astronomical images taken with optics longer than 150mm.
 - C. Images of atmospheric phenomena
8. No more than 5 entries per contestant per category are allowed for each contest.
9. Entries must be received by the contest coordinator no later than 10 days before the contest date.
10. Entries will be judged for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place in each category, with each voting member assigning points respectively (3, 2, and 1). The entry with the highest total number of points in each category will be declared the winning entry, and will be eligible for prizes. Entries that place 2nd and 3rd in total points in each category will be recognized by the AAAP.



Star-Hopping Through News Items

➤ Many thanks to **Bruce Howard**, our guest speaker at the September meeting, for a most “illuminating” lecture on astronomical photometry. This is the science of collecting star light for precise magnitude measurement; it’s one area of research where amateur astronomers can make a contribution to the professional field. Among the most interesting and challenging aspects of photometry is the simple position of the target star in the night sky, as well as seeing conditions. For example, light from a low-altitude star must pass through more of the Earth’s atmosphere than a higher-placed star, thus affecting its magnitude reading. This constantly changes as the star ascends from the horizon. Note: In addition to being a Pittsburgh resident once again, Bruce Howard is a newly minted AAAP member. Welcome!



➤ Congratulations to **Ann Norman** and **Tom Reiland** for being the focal points of a Sept. 23 Pittsburgh Post-Gazette column by Ann’s husband, **Tony Norman**. Tony attended a recent Wagman star party and got to observe his wife as she observed the stars. Among his comments: “....*she was in her element in a way I've never seen before. At home where she's often wrenched from her reverie to deal with the primordial disaster of three boys and a husband, she is never as relaxed as she is when she's peering at primordial light from an exploding nebulae.*” When Tony noted Tom Reiland’s on-the-spot prediction of an ISS pass, he noted “*Given the fortuitous timing of the question 20 seconds before the object appeared, Reiland was, briefly, the contemporary equivalent of Hank Morgan “summoning” the solar eclipse of 528 A.D. in Mark Twain's ‘A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court.*”

➤ We’re still the market for a Coordinator to handle next year’s 75th Anniversary events. Please contact the “Prez” (George Guzik) if you want to manage this program.

➤ “*Here he comes to save the day.*” (actually, night). At the Sept. 5 Wagman star party, Buhl Director **John Radzilowicz** stopped in with his family for a relaxing evening of Mars-gazing. As soon as he stepped out of his car, we pleaded with him to speak to a group of 30 cub scouts (other AAAP members were tied up handling the 500+ crowd). John did a brilliant job on the spur of the moment, and covered a lot of celestial territory in spite of the early haze and clouds. We’re in your debt, John.



➤ If you possess one of those white name tags we wear at meetings and other events, you can keep them, rather than return them to John Holtz. With the club’s activities expanding to more venues, such as the Mingo observing site, it’s becoming impractical for John to distribute and collect these. But if you lose yours, please don’t ask John for a replacement; simply make your own replica.

(continued on page 6, column 1)

See "Cebriones" and "Alfaterna" (Upcoming Asteroidal Occultations)

by John Holtz

There are two good asteroidal occultations predicted for our area at the end of October and beginning of November. Updates on these events could move the occultation path closer or farther away. If the conditions are very favorable, I will post finder charts on my website (<http://members.aol.com/jwholtz>). And now, the upcoming occultations are

- ☐ Tues, Oct 28, asteroid 2363 Cebriones will occult an 11.5 mag star (R.A. 7h 20m 40.01s Dec -10° 24' 2.1") at 3:14 am EST (8:14 UT).
- ☐ Tues, Nov 4, asteroid 1191 Alfaterna will occult a 9.8 mag star (R.A. 5h 35m 23.45s Dec +0° 14' 21.3") at 2:33 am EST (7:33 UT).

News Capsules

(continued from page 5, column 2)

- ☛ Speaking of getting to know your fellow AAAP'er, the "New Members Reception" at last month's meeting was a very nice affair with virtually all the attending members spilling out into the lobby for talk and refreshments. Our thanks to the CSC staff for the pop (a.k.a. "soda").
- ☛ And speaking of meeting-related activities, remember to bring your old 35 mm slides (typically 5 to 10 slides) for the "Images" section of the meeting. Chances are 90% of the attendees never saw or don't remember your old slides.
- ☛ This note from Deb Banach: "*Congratulations to Jerry Zhu for having one of his many fine photos(see below) published on the Science@NASA Website, this one of the moon and Mars.*"



- ☛ Star party brochures for the 2004 season (think Spring!) are now available. Pick them up at any upcoming AAAP meeting or public event.
- ☛ George Guzik extends thanks to **Bill and Maureen Moutz**, **Mark Orstatti** and his wife, and **Charlotte & Jim Tunney** for helping with the Raystown star party. More about this event in the October On-Line Features section of the G.S.

"Benvenuto" To New Members

The following new members were gladly voted into the AAAP:

Greg Alheid	Michelle H. Lee	Patrick Plunkett
Dan Arnold	Stephanie Long	Sean Plunkett
Richard F. Berdik	Thomas A.	Bob Saut
Mary E. Burton	Mclaughlin	Mary Jean Saut
Steve Celento	Thomas F.	Robert Saut
Bruce Cloutier	Mcmanus	Judith A. Schomer
Paul D. Conley	Bruce Miller	Mark G. Schomer
Michael Fallon	James E. Moody	Gerard C. Schuster
Jan Ferguson	Sandy Nagy	Simon Sloan
Bruce Howard	Jeffrey C. Nelson	John Turack
Nancy A. Kancel	George T. Newman	Joseph Valchar
Joe Kann	Ruth S. Oakes	John H. Vareha
Jeff Kearns	Lloyd Pettit	Paul A. Wright

Member Anniversaries A Plenty

<u>20 Years</u>	<u>5 Years (cont'd)</u>
Edward S. Honkus (11/83)	Kenneth W. Johnson (10/98)
	Mary Jean Kancel (10/98)
<u>10 Years</u>	Daniel T. Mckee (10/98)
Oscar Miller III (10/93)	Matthew McSparrin (10/98)
Mary E. Kelley (11/93)	Timothy V. Polaski (10/98)
Tim Hagan (12/93)	Gloria Monks (11/98)
Robert M. Sowa (12/93)	Wayne W. Peternel (11/98)
<u>5 Years</u>	John G. Radzilowicz (11/98)
Lynn Brown (10/98)	Ronald F. Sammel (11/98)
William L. Burton (10/98)	Charles H. Sekera (12/98)
Gilles Clermont (10/98)	Will Simpson (12/98)
Myriam Clermont (10/98)	Timothy H. Teres (12/98)
Melissa Dececco (10/98)	

Amateur Astronomers Association of Pittsburgh, Inc.

A section of the Academy of Science and Art of Pittsburgh
 Founded June 9, 1929 by Chester B. Roe and Leo J. Scanlon

2003-2004 Officers:

President:	George Guzik	724-863-8008
Vice President:	Bill Yorkshire	412-793-9552
Treasurer:	John Holtz	724-352-7596
Corresponding Sec:	Charlotte Tunney	412-441-3958
Recording Sec:	Dennis Derda	724-224-4688
Membership Sec:	Brent Hudock	724-437-5990
Guide Star Editors:	Eric Fischer (news)	412-487-7011

AAAP Homepage: 3ap.org

AAAP Webmaster: Kenn Lippert (lippert@nauticom.net)

Guide Star Associate Editors

Ann Norman (412-242-6806) Cathy Rivi (412-782-4605)
 Guide Star Classified Ads: Cathy Rivi (crivi@mindspring.com)

AAAP Member Dues***:

AAAP Dues:	\$18.00
Junior Member (under 18):	\$13.00
<u>Sky & Telescope Magazine:</u>	Add \$33.00
<u>Astronomy Magazine:</u>	Add \$29.00

***Basic Procedure for Paying Dues:

1. Make check payable to "AAAP Inc."
2. Send check to John Holtz, Treasurer, 176 Hidden Hill Rd, Sarver, PA 16055-8907



Why Can't Everybody Just Get Along? A Defense of GoTo*

Comments from an Internet newsgroup, paraphrased and compiled by Larry McHenry (*The video guy who no longer uses eyepieces*).

Is it "cheating" to have a telescope that points itself?

GoTo is a tool. It is quite helpful for some, and unnecessary to others. Nothing more; nothing less.

The majority of GOTO owners prefer GOTO because THEY DON'T ENJOY THE HUNT! They feel that hunting for an object to view is a waste of their time. All they really want to do is view the object, not necessarily find it. That said, there is nothing wrong with you if you enjoy the hunt more than viewing the object.

There are a couple of good reasons to consider a GoTo scope. First, a lot of us put in a LOT of hours at work. With pedal-to-the-metal 2-career families, many of us would rather spend what little time we have observing rather than hunting. Sure, the hunt is fun, but many of us have been doing this for 30 years or more, and at this point are more interested in "looking at" than "looking for." Second, if you're forced to observe much of the time from heavily light-polluted environs, GoTo can be a godsend. Looking for Virgo galaxies when the brightest guide star for hopping is mag 4 ain't fun. And yet, the galaxies are there for the picking in the scope if you can find 'em.

There's NOT just "one way" to enjoy the night sky. Enjoy it your way for yourself, and let the binocular user enjoy it her way...and the planetary fanatic enjoy it his way...and the CCD maven enjoy it her way...and...the deep sky hawk enjoy it his way...and...

My reason for wanting a goto scope is simple. I've been hanging around astronomy for nearly 40 years and have owned telescopes for more than 25. My first was a 6" Criterion Dynascope. But now I'm pushing 60, and find that I can no longer perform the contortions needed to use a Dob or Newtonian--even a long refractor is a pain near the zenith. Also, I no longer have the endurance for all-nighters. A GoTo will allow me to comfortably observe many more objects than I could ever find by hopping. I don't need to learn the skies--what little I know now will suffice.

I believe the GoTo scopes have helped to significantly expand the number of active amateurs. More people in the hobby means more companies making more and different neat products to satisfy a larger market. A rising tide lifts all boats, and scopes.

Whatever gets the backyard observers of the world to observe more often and enjoy this great hobby of ours more often...I'll support it 100%. Be it using GoTo, digital setting circles, plain old setting circles, or star hopping...it's ALL good. It all boils down to looking through the eyepiece and that's what it is all about.

[GoTo critics] never attack Dob owners with digital setting circles. They never attack German equatorial mount owners who "star hop" by going to a nearby object then using the axes to make fairly simple field-of-view movements on the N-S axis then the E-W axis (or vice versa) to get to desired object --very little need for pattern recognition here. They never attack users of analog setting circles--another simple, non-star hopping way to move around.

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They never mention that they are entirely dependent on computer-generated databases and maps and would be helpless without them. They view themselves as advocates of some kind of "natural viewing system" that requires great knowledge and personal virtue. Yet they fall all over themselves (with fairly rare amateur-telescope-maker exceptions) to buy precision mirrors made with computerized equipment and tested with computer software.

They never attack the amateur astronomers of the 1960s and 1970s who used German equatorial mounts and analog setting circles and thus, we assume, did not know the sky? All those ads for extra-large engraved setting circles with red lights in the old Sky & Telescopes were for who?

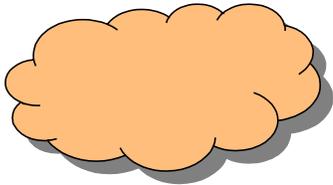
So what if the other guy uses a GoTo. He will learn the other stuff in time, and while that is happening, he will also be able to view something. I see absolutely nothing wrong in that. In fact, technology is what is introducing new people to astronomy. Don't dis technology just because you don't like it. The only constant in life is change. If you don't move with the times, you'll get left behind.

Some of us (like me) use GoTo scopes for imaging from light polluted skies where you can't see the target even if your scope is dead on it. As you know, GoTo is far more accurate than digital setting circles, and for this purpose, only GoTo will do the trick. I've used digital setting circles before and frequently found that I've been guided to a point in the sky...but no target. GoTo, on the other hand, will put the light cone on a 1/4" (or smaller) CCD chip about 95% of the time.

[They say,] "GoTo technology cannot compete with knowledge of the sky and years of experience." Conversely, inexperience and a total lack of sky knowledge cannot compete with GoTo. The average Joe who can figure out how to program a VCR, cook with a microwave oven, and wire up the house with Christmas lights, can setup a GoTo telescope and be observing objects left and right, within the hour. For many beginning or casual amateur astronomers, that's enough to make them happy.

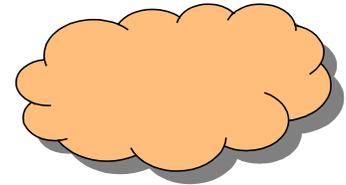
Some people enjoy the thrill of the hunt...others enjoy the thrill of the kill. Horses for courses. If I was guaranteed clear skies every night and if I lived in a place where the skies were dark every night and if I was able to observe every night...sure I probably wouldn't mind spending 20 minutes finding each object. But when I can (on average) only get out 1-3 times a month (for 2-3 hours at that), using GoTo makes the best use of my time.

[Express yourself! Send your opinions, stories, observations, book reviews, jokes, and cartoons to *Guide Star* (Ann Norman, redmarsmom@aol.com). Everyone is welcome!]



AstroBlast a Splash!

by Wayne Meyers



"AstroSplash" was just a little joke at the expense of Oil City annual star party, AstroBlast. At the Oil City annual star party, AstroBlast, it rained so hard and so long that every one there started to call it AstroSplash. If you didn't have water proof shoes and rain gear you didn't dare venture out. Even after the heavy rain eased up some we were "blessed" with strong winds. One poor attendee left his tent and then his tent left him. He found it down in the woods the next morning after having to spend the remainder of the night in the back of his van. Mary Jean Kancel and her Mom were brave souls who weathered the entire weekend in their tent that had a bad case of "flap and smack". Picture a flag in a brisk wind and that's sort of how all the tents looked Saturday night.

We still managed to have a great time. The speakers were excellent, including our very own Eric Fischer. Given the small
(continued at right)

number of die-hards that stuck it out, there was a lot of camaraderie. We all had some good laughs sharing rain and mud stories. The Oil City guys were very gracious hosts and did everything they could to make us as comfortable as possible.

Larry McHenry took pictures of all the AAAP gang in all our rain-drenched glory. There were a good many AAAPers that stuck it out to the end. What a hearty bunch of astronomers we are. Must be all those years surviving Winterfest. At least it was just rain and no snow--although it was getting cold enough! We thought we'd see some of those little white demons falling at any second.

We all had a good time and I think this will be one of those events we'll be talking about for years to come: "You think this is rain? You should have been at AstroSplash in 2003. Now that was a rainy weekend!"

My Attitude toward *Latitude*: A Book Review

by Tim Colbert

(Review of *Latitude: How American Astronomers Solved the Mystery of Variation*, by Bill Carter and Merri Sue Carter. \$24.95.)

In a nutshell, this book discusses the problem of the variation of latitude (polar axis "wobble") and how it was solved by Seth Chandler, Jr. of the United States. It provides a good explanation of the phenomenon and the interacting factors that made a solution so difficult.

Essentially the text is a long magazine article with biographical "fill" on the principals involved in the process and their florid Victorian correspondence so as to make a book. I would have preferred a more direct "this is the problem and this is how we fixed it" (just the facts, ma'am) approach.

Enjoyable, nonetheless. 222 small pages. Contains resource info for those more interested in the technical aspects of geodetic matters. 3 stars out of a constellation of 5.



Classifieds – For Sale from Rich Hansen

A. SKY ATLASES

1. Tirion 2000, 2nd ed. - \$40 each, or
2. Tirion 2000, field ed. - \$70 both
3. Norton, 19th ed. - \$15
4. Becvar Atlas Coeli, 1950 - \$5

B. SCOPE OPTICS

1. Finder in 2-ring mount, 10x40 - \$30
2. 6-mm eyepiece - \$20
3. Eyepiece projection unit, variable magnification. Fits into 2-in. drawtube. Has 12.5-mm ocular in adjustable holder. Has 2-in. adjustable coupling tubing with Olympus or Nikon bayonet fitting. - \$25

C. FILTERS

SOLAR

1. Metal-on-glass, N.D. = 5, 4-1/8 in. dia. 4-3/4" mount. - \$40
2. Metal-on-glass, N.D. = 5, 2-1/2 in. dia., 2-9/16" mount - \$30
3. Miscellaneous Mylar and double-exposed x-ray film - FREE

C. FILTERS (cont'd)

Lumicon Narrow-Band - all 48-mm thread (2" dia.)

1. H-beta and O-III: 486,496 & 501 nm - \$140
2. H-beta, O-III, H-alpha: 486,496,501 & 656 nm - \$140
3. Unknown wavelength: 34-mm dia., 47-mm mount - \$10

Filter Wheel: 4-position, 1-7/8" removable filters \$3

D. SCOPE COUPLING TUBINGS & ADAPTERS

1. Nikon bayonet/ 2-in. diam. tubing, 1-1/2" long - \$10
2. Olympus bayonet/2-in. diam. tubing, 4" long - \$10
3. Olympus/Celestron female thread ring - \$10
4. Eyepiece adapter 1-1/4" to 2" - \$15
5. Two-inch rack & pinion focuser, flat base - \$20

E. CAMERAS

1. Leica, 35 mm, with 75 mm, f/1.0 lens (image-tube design. A picture of the Southern Cross taken with this lens is in S&T June, 1988, p. 672) - \$100

(this Classified Ad continued on page 10, column 1)

OCTOBER 2003

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	<p>The universe expects every man to do his duty in his parallel of latitude.</p> <p>Henry David Thoreau (1817–1862)</p>		<p>1 NASA established by act of Congress 1958</p>	<p>2 </p>	<p>3 Star Party Mingo Park Allegheny Observatory Open House</p>	<p>4 2nd Light Brashear 11" Refractor 1994 Star Party Wagman & Mingo</p>
<p>5 Edwin Hubble identifies Cepheids in M31 1923</p>	<p>6</p>	<p>7 </p>	<p>8 Draconid Meteor Shower</p>	<p>9 Draconid Meteor Shower (Peak)</p>	<p>10 AAAP Meeting 7:30 p.m. CSC </p>	<p>11</p>
<p>12</p>	<p>13</p>	<p>14</p>	<p>15 Joint AAAP/SSP Meeting Duquesne University, Mellon Hall, 8:00 PM</p>	<p>16</p>	<p>17 Allegheny Observatory Lecture Quasars 7:30 p.m. RSVP 412-321-2400</p>	<p>18  Star Party Wagman (Dark Sky/ Moonrise)</p>
<p>19 </p>	<p>20</p>	<p>21</p>	<p>22 First recorded Solar eclipse (China) 2136 B.C. Orionids (Peak)</p>	<p>23</p>	<p>24 Blackwater Falls Astronomy Weekend Sept. 24 – 26 www.kvas.org</p>	<p>25 </p>
<p>26 Daylight Savings Time ends 2 a.m. EDT</p>	<p>27</p>	<p>28</p>	<p>29</p>	<p>30 </p>	<p>31 </p>	

<p>Looking ahead: November 8 Lunar Eclipse Wagman Winterfest: March 2004</p>		<p style="text-align: center;"><u>AAAP Long-Range Meeting Schedule</u></p> <table> <tr> <td>Nov. 7</td> <td>Mar. 5, 2004</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Dec. 5 Holiday Party</td> <td>Apr. 2, 2004</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Jan. 9, 2004</td> <td>May 7, 2004</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Feb. 6, 2004</td> <td>Summer Picnic</td> </tr> </table>	Nov. 7	Mar. 5, 2004	Dec. 5 Holiday Party	Apr. 2, 2004	Jan. 9, 2004	May 7, 2004	Feb. 6, 2004	Summer Picnic
Nov. 7	Mar. 5, 2004									
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Classifieds – For Sale from Rich Hansen (cont'd)

- 2. Olympus OM-1 with 50 mm, f/1.8 lens; Winder; magnifying finder 1.2 and 2.5x; three different focusing screens, one with clear center; - \$300. Adaptall-2 custom mount; removable "hot" shoe; (make offer for coupling ring individual pieces)
- 3. Nikon FE-2 with sigma 21-35 mm f/3.5; Tamron 35-80 mm f/2.8 w/macro down to 1:1.25 @ 80 mm. - \$550. Tamron 80-210 mm f/3.8 w/macro down to 1:2.8 @ 210 mm (make offer). Winder MD-12; B-15 flash - needs repair; for individual pieces)
- 4. Hoya Polarizing filter, 62-mm - \$20. Hoya Fluorescent-daylight filter, 62-mm - \$20. Camera case (holds all the above) - \$30

F. MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS

- 1. Two tripods - \$15 each
- 2. Bogen ballhead with quick-change hexplates - # 3055 - \$30
- 3. Tripod camera mount, 40 degree polar surface, 3" offset from tripod center - \$2
- 4. Two irises with shutters:
 - * 2 1/2" dia. compound, 1-1/50 sec, T, B, (Ilex #5) - \$10
 - * 2 1/2" dia. compound, 1-1/50 sec, on 2" dia. tubing - \$10
 - * 2" shutter (no iris) - \$5

F. MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS (cont'd)

- 5. Focusing eyepiece mounted in fitting w/prism & lens - \$10
- 6. Filar micrometer - Make offer
- 7. 12 Vdc low-power dryer dew-chaser w/cig. lighter plug \$10
- 8. Observing stool, adjustable height - \$30
- 9. Daylight film-changing bag - \$15

Contact Rich Hansen: 412-824-6792, rhansen@bsn1.net

Classifieds – For Sale from Dan Peden

Orion EQ-1M & EQ-2M Single Axis DC Motor Drive Systems (#7826, 7827). Never opened, still in box. This can be used for Orion EQ-1 and EQ-2 equatorial mounts. Uses 4 D-cell batteries. Best offer. Contact Dan Peden
Betelgeuse@pobox.com

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