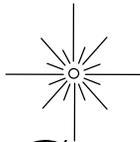




AAAP 75th Anniversary
1929 to 2004



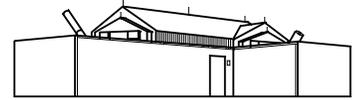
The Guide Star

Newsletter of the Amateur Astronomers Association of Pittsburgh Inc.

A Section of the Academy of Science & Art of Pittsburgh

November, 2004

Vol. 38, No. 8



Nicholas E. Wagman Observatory

NOVEMBER NEWS CRUNCH*

“Non-Listers” Especially Welcome At Brunelle Contest Meeting

If you're a subscriber to the AAAP's Internet "List-server" (still a minority of the club's membership), you get to enjoy a steady diet of great astrophotos by members such as Jerry Zhu, John Pane, Dan Peden and many others. If you're not on the Listserver, your best bet is to attend the club's **November 19, 2004** meeting at the **Carnegie Science Center (7:30 pm)**, where we will be holding the annual Kevin J. Brunelle Astrophotography Contest. At this meeting "Non-Listers" can get to see many of the fine images posted to the List over the past year. Of course, there are sure to be other images presented that no one has seen to date. Consult your October Guide Star for complete contest details.



Mark Arelt's winning "Summer Triangle" photo from last year's contest.

“First Use” of MCPO For Star Party



© David L. Smith
10" D&G Refractor

No space or time this month to describe all the construction progress on the club's new Mingo Creek Park Observatory (MCPO). From the outside, the building is essentially complete with most all external block, wood panel, trim and paint work complete. Efforts have now shifted to interior finishing, much of which is being performed by AAAP members. Contact any member of the MCPO committee if you would like to help with interior painting, electrical work, furnishings, etc.

Most notable, we conducted our first star party at Mingo on October 9 with large scopes temporarily set up in the two observing rooms. One scope included the 10" D&G refractor which will eventually become one of the permanent instruments. The club's modified 17.5" Coulter Dob was set up in the reflector room for the occasion. Thanks to the 16 AAAP members who staffed MCPO for this historic occasion.

Never Too Early To Plan for AAAP Holiday Party



Hey! If stores can start putting up their Christmas displays before Halloween, why can't we get an early start on preps for the AAAP's annual Holiday Party (**December 10, 2004** at the **Middle Road Fire Hall** in the North Hills). As always, contributions can include food, refreshments and door prizes. We'll have more about the event in the Dec. Guide Star, but if you have any questions in the mean time about what to bring, contact President George Guzik or any other club officer.

Cooperation Sought For Astronomy-Friendly Lighting Near “Mills” Mall

On September 16, Tom Reiland, Bob Kalan, Wade Barbin, Chris Genovese and George Guzik met with several representatives of the Mills Corporation to discuss the outdoor lighting plans for the Pittsburgh Mills development, a huge facility located just a few miles southeast of Wagman Observatory. In brief, we have been promised that astronomically-favorable lighting fixtures will be used on the exterior of the mall structure and in the parking areas. With the help of Frazer Township, lighting ordinances will also be enforced for the small businesses that will eventually pop up around the mall. For complete details on Pittsburgh Mills situation, please contact George Guzik.

On A “Non-Lighter” Note

Our thanks to member **Chris Genovese** for stepping forward as the new Chair of the club's Light Pollution Committee. If you would like to serve on this important committee, contact Chris at 412-422-6899, or speak with George Guzik.

On the Fast Track to Recovery

Nothing but good news to report on the medical front for several of our members:

- Our now longest-serving member, **John Schwartz**, is out of the hospital and back home after a short stay in rehab.
- It was great to see **Terry Trees** at the October 29 meeting after a stint at St. Margaret's for some hemo-related problems. The best get-well comment came from Flacc Stifel: "Sorry to hear you are out of circulation, Terry!."☺
- **Bob Kepple** reports he is back home and feeling much better after triple-bypass surgery and some post-op complications.

*Sorry for the abbreviated news section this month. Your News Editor fell into a Black Hole at work.

AAAP Event Retrospectives

Even with modern electronic publishing methods for the Guide Star, it's hard to keep pace with all the club-related events in the past several months. Belated and otherwise, here's thanks to all of our "activist" members and guests:

- ☛ At the Sept. meeting, **Dave Pesenstadler** gave us a fascinating look at one of our key benefactor organizations, the Spectroscopy Society of Pittsburgh (SSP). Dave reviewed the long and storied history of that venerable organization, its financial and material contributions to the AAAP over the years, and its participation in various chemistry-related conferences/conventions around the country (many of which are colossal in size!).
- ☛ At the joint AAAP/SSP meeting on October 20 (an event long-promoted by Dave P.), JPL guest speaker **Robert Anderson** took us on a "feel-like-you-are-there" tour of Mars' surface, courtesy of large and vivid images from the Mars Exploration Rovers. Evidence for past abundant water is still circumstantial, but very strong. A most interesting aspect of the lecture was super-careful steering of the rovers so that they don't get stuck on a crater wall and regularly place their solar panels at the optimum angle to the Sun for power generation.
- ☛ Our guest speaker at the October 29 meeting, Dr. **Donna Naples** of the University of Pittsburgh, presented an easily digested look at the history and current understanding of neutrinos (40 billion of which are passing through every square centimeter of your body as you read this). The "Big Mystery" of missing neutrinos from the Sun was solved several years ago when it was realized some of the little critters "flip out" (in a subatomic particle sense) on their way from the Sun, making them undetectable. This accounts for the reduced numbers seen in the huge underground water tank detectors around the globe.
- ☛ For the first time in several years, weather was favorable for the annual Allegheny Observatory Open House on October 22. AAAP members steered people and telescopes for the benefit of hundreds of visitors. Some of helpers included **Bruce Howard, Art Glaser, Jack and Janet Greenberg, Rose Chavez, Bob Kalan, Ken Kobus, Wade Barbin, Diane Turnshek, Fred Klein, Dave Smith, Les Johnson, George Guzik and, of course, Lou Coban**. Thanks to all for sacrificing your Friday night for this event.
- ☛ The **October 27** Lunar Eclipse star parties at Wagman and Mingo were terrific successes because (a) the sky was mostly clear, (b) it wasn't too cold, and (c) public turn-out was unexpectedly large despite this being a weeknight. In fact, we had several large special groups show up at Wagman (such as a skiing club), adding to the throng. In addition to the deep red Moon, many marveled at the background stars close to, and usually washed out by, the Moon. We don't have enough space here to list all the AAAP helpers at both sites. All we can say is "thanks" so very much to all. (See page 7 for more eclipse-related stories.
- ☛ Another thanks goes out to **George Guzik** and **Bill Moutz**, who traveled to Moraine State Park Sept. 27 to hold an astronomy lecture for a Boy Scout troop camped there. The troop leaders treated them to beef and chicken shish kebab, bacon-wrapped sea scallops, and fresh baked pineapple upside down cake.

(continued at right)

All About Calendars, Loaner Scopes, Tax Exemptions, Archives....

- ☛ Our new AAAP Merchandise Coordinators are **Rowen Poole** and **Kelly Fletcher**. Again, many thanks to **Mari-Jo Meyers** for handling our merchandising duties so well in recent years. Speaking of the merchandise itself:
 - 2005 "Observer's Handbook" orders are now being taken. The book is \$17.00. If you want to receive the book through First Class mail, add \$2.67.
 - 2005 "Deep Space Mysteries" calendars are available for \$10.00 each.
 - RASC astronomy calendars will also be available soon; contact Rowen for pricing and delivery information.

You can place your merchandise orders via Rowen's e-mail address: aaap@starglider.com, or call 724-443-0632. Rowen's new web site for AAAP merchandise is reachable at <http://www.starglider.com/aaap.html>
 - ☛ John Holtz is still marketing the photo-stocked "Year In Space 2005 Desk Calendar". Let him know if you want to place an order and the quantity you want. The cost will be \$10.00 each (\$9 each if 36 or more are ordered). Make checks payable to A.A.A.P. and provide the payment whenever (at pickup or prior meeting). The order will be placed after the Nov. 19th meeting, and the calendars will be available for pickup at the December 10th and January 28th meeting (or by special arrangements). John can be reached at jwholtz@aol.com or 724-352-7596.
 - ☛ We're pleased to announce that **Trevor Lewis** is our new Telescope Loan Coordinator, replacing **Joe McCafferty**, who did a fine job of managing the club's roster of instruments. If you would like to borrow an AAAP telescope, contact Trevor at 724-744-7710 or tjlewis6@yahoo.com. Note: Trevor has the distinction of entering the AAAP as the club's 500th member.
 - ☛ Ever-active member **Bob Kalan** and several others are doing some preliminary research on restoring Leo Scanlon's original Valley-View Observatory dome and 10-inch Springfield Telescope. The dome is currently in storage at John Holtz's home in Butler County, while the telescope is stored at Wagman Observatory. We hope to reunite the two in a resurrected Valley-View structure on the Wagman site. If you would like to join the Valley-View project team, contact Bob at 724-625-9016.
 - ☛ It's been awhile since we noted the existence of our now-extensive AAAP historical document archives, managed by Archivist **Art Glaser**. If you would like to conduct research into the club's history via the archives, contact Art at 412-341-5862. Note: Art is also Archivist for Allegheny Observatory and is researching the life and times of Dr. Nicholas E. Wagman. If you have any information to share about this great man, please contact Art.
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- ☛ Wagman Observatory Director Tom Reiland extends thanks to AAAP members who helped with a special scout troop star party at Wagman Observatory on October 26. The team on-hand included **Larry Sneider, Bill Hayeslip, Rowen Poole, Kelly Fletcher, Patrick "Glen" Rockhill, Bob Kalan, Frank Pastin, Jeff Kearns, Flacc Stifel** and, of course, Mr. Reiland.

Books and Resources

Three to Check Out

Recommendations by John Cheng

The long anticipated new edition of Antonin Rukl's *Atlas of the Moon* from Sky Publishing is slated to be available in mid-November, according to the Sky & Telescope web site. This book, despite its faults, is thought to be the best atlas "available" to amateur observers. However, it has been out of print since the late nineties. This has led to amusing incidents of price gouging on eBay, Amazon, etc. Many people, myself among them, have resorted to using foreign language editions. Price of the new Sky Publishing edition is \$44.95.

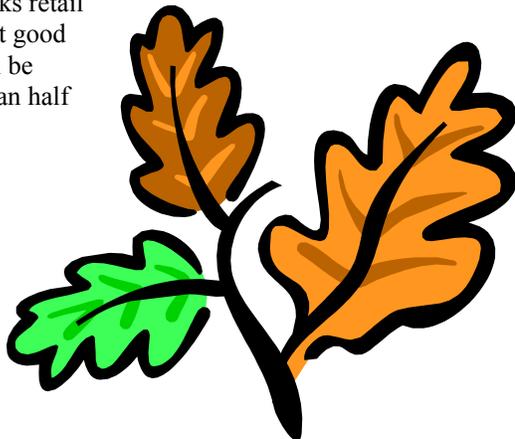
I'd like to mention two books in the Cambridge Practical Astronomy Handbooks Series:

The first is Kenneth Glyn Jones' *Messer's Nebulae & Star Clusters*, the most complete historical treatment of these objects I've seen. It is filled with drawings and descriptions of each object by celebrated early astronomers, both professional and amateur. It doesn't aim to be an observing guide like O'Meara's *Deep Sky Companions*; it's an armchair book, and quite a good one.

Second, with things Jovian about to gain prominence, my copy of John Rogers' *The Giant Planet Jupiter* will probably become dog-eared over the next few months.

When I got back into the hobby, I sought out used copies of Alexander's *Saturn* and B.M. Peek's *Jupiter* because I remembered just how rich and dense they were with real information...not fluff. Rogers' book, which has the advantage of data procured by spacecraft, is easily the equal of these two classic texts. I believe it to be the best contemporary planetary book, and maybe the best planetary book ever.

Unfortunately, both Cambridge books retail for \$120.00, but good used copies can be found at less than half this cost.



Out of the Mouths of Babes

(From the Internet)

A first grade teacher selected well-known proverbs. She gave each child in her class the first half of a proverb and asked them to come up with the remainder of the proverb. A couple of them are relevant to astronomy!

- ❖ Better to be safe than punch a 5th grader
- ❖ Strike while the bug is close
- ❖ A miss is as good as a Mr.
- ❖ A pen is mightier than the pigs.
- ❖ An idle mind is the best way to relax.
- ❖ If at first you don't succeed get new batteries.
- ❖ It's always darkest before Daylight Saving Time.

A TRICK 'R TREAT TRADITION

Tom Reiland: Just finished treating the neighborhood ghost, goblins and parents to views of Albireo, the Double Cluster in Perseus, and the Andromeda Galaxy through my 16-inch Dob. They look forward to it every clear Halloween night. We had about 60 kids and 25 to 30 parents tonight. Not bad considering that there was a football game going on at the same time. Way to go Steelers!

Phil M. Breidenbach: I had a great time this evening showing off the sky to the trick-r-treaters. It is amazing how many of them remember and look forward to seeing what I'm pointing at this year! (At least that's what they say....) The best thing is when they stop and thank you before they leave! I have to laugh; there are always a couple that get so involved that they forget about taking any candy.

Larry Curcio: Showed mostly the Andromeda Galaxy and the Double Cluster. My wife, handing out treats at our house down the street, avers that many kids were talking enthusiastically about the galaxy.



FROM NOVICE TO NOVAS! New Member Chris Genovese an AAAP Success Story* By Jeff Kearns

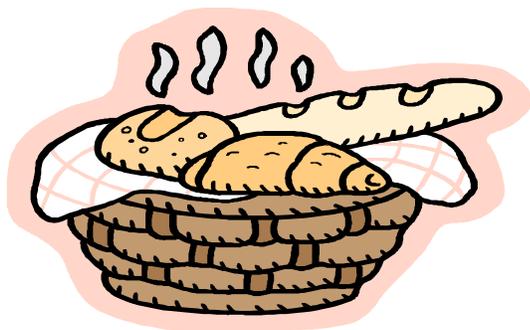
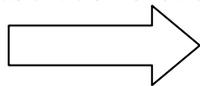
Anyone who has read the article by Chris Genovese in this month's *Guide Star* would be surprised to find out that he has only been observing for 7 months. At the risk of embarrassing him, I would like to comment on what I witnessed observing with him for over 150 hours since April. It is a success story that shows how great the AAAP is in promoting amateur astronomy.

I first met Chris at Wagman on a clear, cold Wednesday night in April. There were maybe six of us on the hill. He was by himself on the south side of the road until I walked over to introduce myself. I encouraged him to move over to where Larry Snyder and I were set up so we could continue talking while observing. Back then he patiently listened to our stories and advice. Now, if you would overhear him talking NGCs with Tom Reiland at a star party, you would think that he had been observing for decades! Just check out his blog to see what I mean: <http://signalplusnoise.com/archives/000413.html>

Chris is an exception to the rule that scientists rarely look at the stars they theorize about. As a professor in statistics at CMU he has recently co-authored a paper with leading cosmologists on the hottest topic of the day--dark energy. Chris loves to observe the galaxies that he models on a computer.

Chris traces his interest in observing back to Timothy Ferris's book *Seeing in the Dark*. After Googling to the AAAP website he, his wife Marsha (also a CMU professor) and young son, Nathan, attended Winterfest. He was impressed with how helpful and enthusiastic AAAP members and decided to become one. As a new AAAP member, the first decision he had to make was about what scope to buy. He surfed Yahoo! Discussion groups on Telescopes, talked to AAAP members, and eventually visited Tim Hagan.

I would like to offer some advice for other new AAAP members, drawing lessons from Chris's experience. (For simplicity my comments are presented as declarations. Please do not interpret any of my comments as criticism of other approaches to



(continued from column 1)

Tips for New Members:

1. Buy a simple scope with great optics. (Chris bought an 8-inch Discovery PDHQ Dob.)
2. Buy one high quality wide field eyepiece. A short focal length eyepiece is useful but can be purchased later.
3. Buy a Telrad rather than an optical finder.
4. Buy a detailed, 9th magnitude or fainter, set of star charts. (Chris has used his considerable computer programming skills to MAKE his own star charts from several very large dataset downloaded for free from websites.)
5. Learn the sky by star-hopping rather than Go-To. Although the learning curve for star hopping is steep at first, the long-term benefits of knowing the sky are great. It is necessary to take the time to study star charts prior to observing.
6. Have some specific goals for each observing session. The AAAP certificates, Scanlon, Mullaney/McCall, and Messier, are great places to start. (Chris has found nearly all the Caldwell Objects visible from Pittsburgh and has just begun the Hershel 400.)
7. Observe whenever possible, including weekday nights, even if for only for an hour or two.
8. Check the Clear Sky Clock daily.
9. Observe under less than ideal conditions. It is surprising how much can be seen under mediocre transparency with a nearly full moon.
10. Observe with a buddy or a group at Wagman or Mingo. Particularly for beginners, observing with others is a great way to learn. Socializing adds so much to the experience of observing. Don't hesitate to walk over and say Hi! The encouragement of others motivates you to get out and stay out when it's late and cold.

**Editor's note: A similar story could be told about the author of this piece, who I met about a year ago, back when HE was learning. Sorry Jeff!*

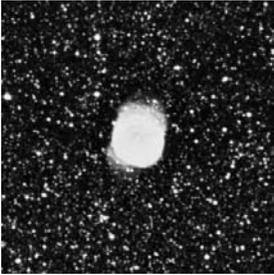


FROM THE DEEP SKY NOTEBOOKS of Chris Genovese

NOTE: This article has been excerpted from Chris's September 10 observing log. The entire text covers seven nights of deep-sky observing and can be found on Chris's blog, The blog includes hyperlinks to maps/pictures of the objects discussed:

<http://signalplusnoise.com/archives/000413.html>

All through the dewy nights of August when I sat hand pumping air over my eyepiece, all through the foggy nights when I stood submerged in moisture on a hill top under a beautifully clear sky



all through the cloudy nights when the Clear Sky Clock showed white across the board no matter how many times I clicked it -- all those times I was thinking of September. For the ten years I've lived in Pittsburgh, I've noticed it. Beautiful. Temperate. Reliable.

Now, I know I shouldn't romanticize it. Relationships end badly when you come into them with too many expectations. I've been friends with September for a long time, and now I wanted to take it to the next level. Was I setting myself up for disappointment? I suppose so, but I was still determined to make the most of what we had together.

Day 1 (Fri 10 Sep, Wagman): When I see the thick fog flash across my headlights and under the streetlights along the orange belt, my stomach tightens. Done so soon? The fog is thick in the valley, but amazingly it stays below the hilltop all night and even helps by damping nearby light pollution. When I arrive around 10 p.m., the sky is noticeably darker than usual, with Milky Way structure clearly visible. Even better, the sky is clear, and as I'll find out, transparency is excellent.

I'm chilled and awake, having blasted my A/C on the trip up to give my scope (an 8" f/7 Dob) a head start at cooling. The outside air feels downright balmy in comparison. While I pull my scope and gear out of the car, I chat with Jeff Kearns and Larry Snyder, who had already gotten to work. A few other members are up there as well.

Larry, Jeff, and I get to talking about M 75, which is fading low in the western sky. Just for a hoot, I glance at my charts and guesstimate its position relative to alpha and beta Capricorni. After a short scan, there it is: class I globular in the corner pocket. Not much to look at when it's so low in the sky, but it gets me wondering what we could see close to the horizon. With Sagittarius set, it seems a fitting end to summer to do a quick romp through Aquila. Jeff and I are looking in particular for a few small planetaries there, but I can't resist a stop at the carbon star V Aquilae, easy to find in the eagle's tail. The B-V color index of V Aquilae is 4.2, making it one of the redder stars in the sky, but I'd describe it as rusty. In contrast, U Cygni, my current favorite among carbon stars, looked blood red at its best this summer. Planetary nebula NGC 6781 stands out surprisingly well against the rich background of faint stars, given its low

surface brightness [3]. At 55x, it's easily detectable but there is no trace of color; a UHC filter improves contrast somewhat. NGC 6790 is a much smaller planetary, only about 10"x 6". I find it by star hopping using my detailed charts (although there are few really salient patterns) and by blinking, with averted vision and by flashing my filter in front of the eyepiece. Then, I notice NGC 6760 on my charts and hunt it down. It's a faint but pleasing low concentration (class IX) globular.

Next, to Cygnus. The Blinking Planetary (NGC 6826) is an old friend by now, and I visit it often. My star hop begins from the naked-eye visible theta Cygni, which is the center star in a miniature replica of Sagitta ("little Sagitta" is the technical term). Following the line from theta just outside the dimmer of the feather stars leads to a bright pair (which includes 16 Cygni), with 6826 just beyond. Other such mini-constellations serve as handy star-hop patterns. Following the perpendicular bisector of omega and 27 Draconis toward the dragon's neck leads you to a "little Cepheus" and right on the Cat's Eye, NGC 6543. With a little stretch, I see eta Piscium as the center of a "little Orion," one who has dropped his sword belt to the floor, perhaps in preparation for a visit from Artemis. Following the shoulders toward Aries leads easily to M74, which has low enough surface brightness that it is not always immediately apparent.



NGC 7027, just a hop off the midpoint of the line between nu and xi Cygni, is small but bright. It's usually listed as a planetary nebula, but might better be called a "proto-planetary" because we are seeing it during the brief transition from dying star to full blown planetary nebula. I see a hint of greenish-aqua color, and at 158x, I convince myself that it's slightly oblong. Nice object, worth looking for in a bigger scope.

While I search around for some new (to me) open clusters in Cygnus (for instance, NGC 7086 and 7128, both quite nice), Jeff views the Veil through his OIII filter. It's the best view I've seen from Wagman, deliciously wispy and structured. As we each search out other objects, Jeff, Larry, and I move among all the scopes to view and compare. Jeff studies the North American and Pelican Nebulas; "Mexico" is particularly prominent. The Pacman Nebula (NGC 281) shows up nicely in both my UHC and Jeff's OIII filter, but a little better with the latter. The tight triple star and leaning Y marks the sparse cluster in the midst of the nebula; it's a simple object but quite appealing.

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We check in on M33, M31, and M110. M33 shows a trace of spiral arms, and M31 seems to extend out forever. The edge-on spiral NGC 891 in Andromeda repays careful study. The transparency is good enough that Jeff and I both find it without too much work. I cover up with a hood, increase the magnification, and let my eyes adapt. With surprising suddenness, the shape leaps out at me, and I even think I detect a darkening along the middle where the dust lanes are. NGC 185 and 147 are dwarf elliptical satellites of M31; not much to see but fun to find off the bright pair including omicron Cas. 185 is easy to see tonight as a roundish blur; 147 takes work but is detectable as a background brightening with averted vision.

Later, Jeff and I venture into the wild lands of Camelopardalis and Lynx. NGC 2403 lies roughly halfway between L Cam and o Ursa Majoris (the tip of the bear's nose). I follow the line from delta Cas to epsilon Cas to gamma Camelopardalis to L. Look also for the nearby wide pair 42 and 43 Cam; 51 Cam near the galaxy is barely visible from dark sites. 2403 reveals a bright halo peppered with foreground stars--and a supernova. We've looked at 2403 several times over the past week and, especially given Tom's recent messages, I'm convinced we found the supernova.

Editor's note: Chris also observed objects in Cepheus and Pegasus on Sept 10. (For surprising info on Chris see pg 4.)

A Beginner with Binoculars by Glen Rockhill

I think I've finally got the Pittsburgh weather figured out. It's just teasing us. A beautiful day changes to partly cloudy a few hours before day gives way to night and continues to be tauntingly overcast with every dash outside to check the conditions during the commercial breaks. Finally, as the hours tick by with no break in sight, I resign myself to another lost opportunity to take in the night sky, shake my fist at the weather channel and turn in to prepare my mind and body for the new day to come.

Miraculously, every night this weekend, by 10 or 11 p.m., the clouds blew off and presto, clear, beautiful skies. So yes, I took many opportunities this weekend to grab my 7x50's, step into the shadows of my home, cautious not to look at the obnoxiously bright street light 60 feet away, and find my landmarks.

If I lucked out and caught some good skies early, I could continue to enjoy and find new things among the summer triangle. I finally found the "coat hanger" and took in the double star in Lyra. My binocs still aren't enough to split Albireo in Cygnus.



Out after midnight early Saturday and Sunday, I delighted in discovering the pair of star clusters to the upper right of Cassiopeia and the single cluster just above her. With Andromeda nearly

overhead I pulled in the murky blur of the Andromeda galaxy. Better yet, beautiful Pleiades is now gracing the heavens. They look awe inspiring through the binocs; I can't wait to get them into the eyepiece on my scope. Below them looms Taurus, it's double star and the Hades cluster of stars.

Had the opportunity Saturday morning to try and find the Orion Nebula with the binocs, but I can't make out anything. I'll have to try again when it's higher overhead.

As if the weekend of observing couldn't get any better, I was able to share the moments with several small groups of friends. I pointed out the asterisms and constellations where the objects hid and gave them directions from the landmark stars. Then shared the 7x35's and 7x50's we own and let them find the objects described on their own. It made me remember back to the night John Holtz gave us a tour of the night sky out at Wagman last month. I think he would have been proud. :)

They were all equally amazed at what could be seen with a mere set of binoculars. Sure they look up from time to time, but they dismissed being able to see anything interesting if they didn't have a telescope. It was nice demonstrate this was not the case. I think the revelation of what one can see with just a pair of economical binocs and a steady hand may have spurred their interest in stargazing.



Only time will tell. By the way, the objects I spent time viewing over and over again this weekend were presented in the "Night Sky" magazines for September & October and for November & December. I guess I'm still new enough to this hobby to not tire of seeing the same things over and over again, night after night. Now, if I can only get the better of my scope instead of it getting the better of me, I'll be set. :)



The Dark Side of the Milky Way Recommendation by Paul Gray

Anyone who has observed, or is interested in observing, any of E. E. Barnard's Dark Nebulae will be interested in this website: <http://www.library.gatech.edu/barnard/index.html>

It is a complete scan of EE Barnard's Photographic Atlas of Selected Regions of the Milky Way. It includes all the forwards, plate notes, charts, and an image of each plate. Since only a few thousand, at most, of these were ever produced and a single copy is now worth \$10,000, this is the only way most of us will ever see this work. It is a joy just to read Barnard's notes about each plate and just gaze at the beautiful images he made of the Milky Way.



UNDER THE BIG RED MOON

(From the AAAP listserver)
(photo by John Pane)

My apologies and condolences to all those who reported only clouds on lunar eclipse night. You are not featured in this digest! (Ann Norman, Features Editor)

Jerry Zhu: With my naked eye, I can see the PENUMBRAL phase is in progress (8:45 pm), with bottom left dimmer.

Jeff K.: As of about 15 minutes ago, the moon was about 1/3 "gone" with a bit of orange on the bottom left rim as viewed through my binoculars.

Pete Zapadka: Nice soft reddish color in the middle of the moon . . . lighter on top, darker to the 7 or 8 o'clock position, but the entire moon still is visible.

Mary Jean Kancel: Great display! Looked like a giant Mars with a polar cap.

Mark Orsatti: I was out The Kiski School in the bustling metropolis of Saltsburg with a 5" Celestron. I counted about 25-30 students and teachers who stopped by for a peak, asking the standard questions ("Isn't it dangerous to look right at it during an eclipse?" "Why is it getting a rusty color?" etc.). Once I explained the Earth's shadow and all, I asked a few (high school) students "Has any of you ever stood in the Earth's shadow?" Answers included "Once, when I was on vacation" and "Never" or "I don't think so". My question was dubbed the "Duh" question of the day, once they heard the answer. ;-) As a teacher, I had a blast with

that one! A couple of kids tried their luck with a photo, holding their digital camera up to the eyepiece. They got a photo and it was not too bad! They were thrilled!

Ann Norman: I was at Cupples Stadium on the South Side for my son's soccer game when I noticed the eclipse was starting. I ran up and knocked on the door of the announcer's booth. Soon the announcement came: "A science person has just informed us that we are having a lunar eclipse." The whole crowd looked up at the moon in unison.

Tom Reiland: We had a near perfect night a Wagman Observatory. It was clear when I arrived at a few minutes before 6 PM and it stayed that way until about 10:30, but then it was only partly cloudy with scattered cirrus clouds. It started clearing out again on my way home. I'm just watching the Moon leave the Umbra right now from my dining room window. It's just left the Umbra We had about 35 members at this event to help at least 250 visitors enjoy the eclipse. We were able to show them Uranus, Neptune, the supernova in NGC 6946, deep sky objects, variable and double stars. It's nice to be able to observe deep sky objects for an hour or two during Full Moon. We also watched the last couple of innings of the World Series. Way to go Red Sox!

John Cheng: The seeing being pretty darn good, as the shadow retreated, it was possible to get in a high-powered look at Flamsteed P, the ghost crater. Also, the limb was tilted just right to feature the contours surrounding Mare Humboldtianum. Sweet....

Larry McHenry: The last AAAP star party of the year at the Mingo Creek Park Observatory was a success! Thanks to the help of the 15 club members present, we were able to push open the roofs and operate telescopes in both wings for the 72 public visitors in attendance. The evening started off promising, but a band of clouds steadily progressed out of the southwest, eventually obscuring the early to mid portions of the partial eclipse phase. Thankfully, there were plentiful "sucker holes" to allow us to follow the

eclipse progress. Finally, a few minutes prior to the onset of totality, like the curse of the bambino, the clouds lifted and allowed us to observe the total eclipse.

Brett Day: I'm like such a slug. I didn't pay attention to the times and thought I was going to miss it, as I already had plans to go see a movie with the Missus. Consequently I was surprised to see it in 3/4 totality in a clear sky as we left the theatre. I presumed it was coming to a close, but we arrived home to find the moon growing darker instead. So, I broke out the telescope, and showed my wife my absolutely favorite view of the moon. It was one of those rare opportunities to see it appear as an actual globe hanging impossibly in the sky—magnificent! (Followed by a Jimmy Stewart impersonation a la Its a Wonderful Life -- it will win ya a kiss every time.)

Howie: Out here in Plum a bunch of neighborhood kids and some of their parents crowded round my C8 to view the eclipse. Most were blown away with the amount of detail visible on the moon It was first light for my 30mm Ultima EP, which very nicely framed the entire moon. One boy, around 8 years old, commented that he felt like he was about to fall into the eyepiece ☺

Al Paslow: [At Mingo] the sky began to clear nicely after totality. After our guests left, Dave Smith and I decided to take advantage of the clear sky and the totally eclipsed moon and look for deep sky objects with Mingo's new 10-inch refractor. Before long we bserved Albireo, M27, M15, the double cluster in Perseus, and the Pleiades, and even got a good look at M42 rising in Orion--all during a full moon!!! The images were good and crisp. This was our first real chance to really use the 10-inch refractor. Our opinion? . . . We're happy.



NOVEMBER 2004

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3	4		6
7	8	9		11		13
14	15	16	17	18	 AAAP Meeting 7:30 PM CSC	20
21	22	23	24		26	27
28	29	30				

Fridge Calendar by Cathy Rivi

<p>Also this month: Nov 19 Lecture: Intergalactic Space: What's Out There?. Allegheny Observatory. Free. RSVP required. 7:30 PM. Univ. of Pittsburgh (412)-321-2400.</p> <p>Looking ahead: Winterfest!!! Saturday, Feb. 12, 2005. Winterfest 2005 will start at 4 p.m. with solar observing.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>AAAP Long-Range Meeting Schedule</u></p> <p>Dec. 10 Holiday Party Mar. 25, 2005</p> <p>Dec. 17 if Snow Apr. 22, 2005</p> <p>Jan. 28, 2005 May 20, 2005</p> <p>Feb. 25, 2005 Summer break</p>
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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

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