

The Night Sky

Astronomy Club of Akron
Akron, OH USA

[HTTP://WWW.ACAOH.ORG](http://www.acaoh.org)

Presidential Musings

By Gregg Crenshaw

"What have we gotten our selves into!!?" May have been what many of the club members who attended the Mars public program August 23 at the observatory thought or said. I think I speak for those members by saying WOW, WHAT A NIGHT. If you haven't heard by now the ACA hosted the largest attended public program in the 15-year history of the ACA Observatory. The last estimate by the park that I heard was 2,500 to 3,000 people were in attendance. A huge ACA thanks to all the members who weathered the throng of Mars watchers and Martians to show the red planet through scopes both visually and on monitors, directed traffic, parked cars, cooked and sold food, sold t-shirts, and cleaned up afterward. If I tried to name names I'm sure I would forget someone. I would be remiss to not thank the Portage Lakes State Park Rangers who were on duty that evening. Without their help I know this event would not gone as smoothly as it did. A big thanks also to Tom and Kathy Erickson. Tom for giving the ACA celebrity status on his radio show, attending and speaking at the program, and Aunt Bea for pitching in and helping out.

September has begun and with the fall season the ACA monthly meetings resume. The meeting

this month is September 26 at 8PM at the Portage Lakes Kiwanis Civic Center, 725 Portage Lakes Drive. We will be recapping the events of the summer with images and video. Hopefully some of our members had success imaging Mars and can present their results.

The Kiwanis Rose Remembrance Day is October 4. The Kiwanis Club of Portage Lakes has been so gracious over the years to allow the ACA to meet in their hall for free. We need to show our appreciation by buying roses. Make that special someone happy with a dozen roses only \$15. Delivery is free to any address in Summit County. The Kiwanis also need folks to drive and deliver roses on October 4. See me if you are interested in volunteering. ✨

Mars Program

By Debbie Crenshaw

WOW! Who would of thunk it! I was so amazed with the droves of people who showed up. From 1 year to 90, all came to view the planet that has always had a grip on us. From our imaginations to reality Mars has always seduced us.

As you all know if there's food to serve that's where you'll find me. I really want to thank Pete. He was my shining star at a desperate hour. For those of you who haven't met Pete, he

stopped by the picnic to inquire about Mars and the ACA. He joined on the spot and has been at the observatory most clear nights.

Also a big thank you to Tom Ericson's wife Kathy (Aunt Bea). Thanks also to Carl and Betty Hervol for cooking hot dogs on their grill when I could not keep up. I figured there were 100 people or more lined up to buy hot dogs. We ran out of food and pop by 8:30. I couldn't have done it without you guys.

About 200 cups of coffee later things started to wind down. We were all amazed at the turn out.

All I can say to the members who missed this event is you missed an amazing and memorable time at the ACA Observatory.

I hope to see you at future programs. Keep looking up. ✨

CLUB MEETING

September 26
8:00 PM

Videos of Mars from
the opposition this
past summer

On The Road

By Rich Ruggles

September 19-21
Astro-Tour Tiffin OH

This is the Sandusky Valleys annual star party convention held at the Ballreich Observatory outside Tiffin Oh. For all the info. Go to there web site:

<http://www.friendlynet.com/astronomy/starparty/index.htm>

Click on ABOUT US then at the bottom of that page click on MAPS

September 23-28
Astro-Blast Oil City PA

This is the Oil Region Astronomical Society annual convention and Star party. Located in north east Pa. this gathering offers excellent dark skies and a most unusual observatory. For all the info and maps go to www.oras.org

September 27
Black Rivers OTAA Star Party

The Black River Astronomical Society will once again hold there OTAA star party and pot luck dinner at the Strawberry Mountain Convention Center in Birmingham Oh. Directions-- Take the Ohio Turnpike and exit at 7A (Baumhart Road). Go south on Baumhart to Route 113, then head west to Birmingham. Turn left(south) at the first street over the bridge as you enter Birmingham. Continue on

South Street as it curves to the right, and the meeting hall will be on the left. For more info go to <http://apk.net/~arstar50/BlackRiver.index.html>

October 4
Scope Out 2003 Cincinnati OH

Great speakers, great deals, great observatories. This was the birth place of Astronomy in the US, and has the oldest daily used telescope in the world. Go to www.cincinnatiobservatory.org for maps and info on Scope-out

October 25
Fall Dark Sky Star Party

The Star Party was to be held in Kilgore Ohio but due to popular demand we will be going back to the Sherwin-Williams Sportsmen Club outside Middlefield Oh. The location is in the middle of Amish county on the Trumbull Co. line.

Directions from Akron are:

SR 76 East 15 mi to SR 44

SR 44 North 27.7 mi to SR 87

3. SR 87 East 10.1 mile to BUNDYBURG RD (look for ACA sign)

4. turn Right on BUNDYBURG RD . follow it 1.8 mi to the entrance. (look for ACA sign)

Hope to see you there! ✨

Meridian Software

By Jeff Hudson

Meridian Astronomical Software is freeware that is very useful to plan or verify the observations of planetary surfaces and of natural satellites for some planets.

Meridian offers the following features:

Simulation of the position of planets in the sky and provides:

- visual magnitude
- apparent diameter
- distance to Earth
- illumination of the disk
- inclination of the poles
- central meridian
- rise, transit and set
- heliocentric position
- geocentric position.

And for some planets, when appropriate:

- phases (Moon, Venus, Mercury)
- satellite position (Jupiter, Saturn)
- Jupiter's satellite phenomena
- transit hours of the great red spot on Jupiter
- seasons on Mars.

Visit

<http://www.merid.cam.org/meridian/>

Thanks to Rich Ruggles for recommending this software to me. ✨

Book Review

By Jeff Hudson

Sticky Night Skies
Softcover, 256 pages
First printing: February 2003
ISBN: 1568582536

My daughter received a most interesting book for her birthday, called "Sticky Night Skies: Learn 6 constellations, 4 stars, a planet, a galaxy, and how to navigate at night-in one hour, guaranteed."

The book is interesting because it leads the reader through a step-by-step process for identifying the constellations and stars.

You start out by learning to find Orion and Betelgeuse, next you are shown how to find Cassiopeia and the Big Dipper. After that you learn how to follow the pointer stars to Polaris and figure out which way is north.

The next part of the book adds the constellations Cygnus, Taurus and the Pleiades, and the stars Sirius and Vega. Also, it discusses the Milky Way galaxy.

The book ends with a section on the top 12 night sky objects, free star maps, web links, and more.

More information can be found at www.sticky.com ✨

Facts

The Galileo mission will end when the spacecraft impacts Jupiter on September 21, 2003. Galileo has been in orbit around Jupiter since December 1995.

The Cassini spacecraft, will arrive at Saturn in July 2004.

On October 4th 1957 the USSR put Sputnik 1 into orbit. This first manmade object to be placed in Earth orbit was the pioneer to the many satellites that followed and caused the USA to rethink its lack of commitment to space sciences.

So, on the 1st of October 1958 Congress established the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA). NASA will mark its 45th anniversary this year.

Because of the speed at which Earth moves around the Sun, it is impossible for a solar eclipse to last more than 7 minutes and 58 seconds.

Phobos means Fear and Deimos means Panic ✨

Universe Today

Here are some recent stories from Universe Today.

SHUTTLES WILL RETURN TO FLIGHT IN MARCH

Sep 8, 2003 - NASA representatives met with the media on Monday and announced that the space shuttle would begin operations again some time between March 11 and April 6. Several safety changes are going to be made

before the first shuttle, Atlantis, launches to visit the International Space Station: the bipod ramp (which shed foam on the Columbia launch) will be redesigned, and launch windows will only be in the day so cameras can track the launch. Perhaps the biggest changes, however, will come from NASA's attempts to change its culture to improve safety. "We will be safety driven, not schedule driven."

ELECTRONS SURFING ON A SOLAR WIND

Sep 10, 2003 - New research indicates that electrons may surf on magnetic waves driven by the solar wind, and get accelerated to the point they can cause some serious damage to spacecraft orbiting the Earth. The process is a result of the interaction between the Earth's magnetic field and fluctuations in the density of the solar wind. As the density of the solar wind changes, it causes waves in the magnetic field to ripple back to the Earth. Electrons can be caught in these ripples and surf back to the Earth so fast they can damage delicate electronics in space.

NASA APPROVES MIRROR FOR JAMES WEBB TELESCOPE

Sep 10, 2003 - NASA announced today that it has selected a beryllium-based mirror technology for the 6.5 mirror on the James Webb Space Telescope - the successor to the Hubble Space Telescope. The primary mirror will actually be made up of 18 hexagonal-shaped segments, giving it 2.5 times more surface area than Hubble's mirror; but it will be one-third the weight. Construction of the mirror will begin next year, and the telescope is expected to launch some time after 2011.

Universe Today, is a free daily email of space exploration news.

More information at <http://www.universetoday.com/> ✨

China Space Mission

Posted on www.cnn.com 9/16/2003

BEIJING, China -- China's first manned space mission is well on course to lift-off before the end of the year, the country's science minister has said.

Without giving a date for the much-anticipated launch, Science and Technology Minister Xu Guanhua said preparations for the mission were proceeding "extremely smoothly."

There had been some speculation that China would aim to launch the spacecraft, named Shenzhou V, on October 1 to coincide with Chinese national day.

However, observers say that date now looks unlikely with final preparations pointing to a lift-off closer to the end of the year.

A successful manned space mission would make China only the third country in the world capable of putting human beings in space -- an achievement China's leaders hope will be an immense source of national pride.

However, tight security surrounds China's space effort, which has close ties to the military.

Details such as launch dates and mission objectives are never announced in advance.

Another closely guarded secret

is the identity of China's first group of astronauts.

In all China is thought to have a group of about 14 men groomed for future space missions, drawn from the elite of Chinese air force pilots and trained with Russian assistance.

The first mission is expected to carry one or two of these men into space and into China's history books.

To date the Shenzhou space capsule has had four unmanned test launches, all of which have been described by state media as successful.

The massive cost of the space program has been criticized by some in China as wasteful in a country where many millions of people still struggle to earn a basic living.

However, Xu said he hoped that the growth of China's space program would spur advances in other technologies.

"On the one hand, we are paying close attention to the important achievements in space research and development our astronauts can make while in flight," he said.

"On the other hand, we are looking forward to these technologies playing an even greater role in various aviation fields."

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Editor's Notes

By Jeff Hudson

First off, you will notice that several of the articles were either written by me or found by me. If you are sick of seeing my name on the by-line, that would be a good indication you need to write an article yourself.

Thanks to Gregg, Debbie, Rich and Jay for getting me material.

I am not sure how long it takes to put together the Constellation of the Month pages, but Jay is usually the first one to have materials to me for the newsletter.

Here are some ideas off the top of my head that would make great articles for our newsletter.

- How to find and observe the GRS on Jupiter?
- How to buy used eyepieces?
- How to answer the question, "What power am I seeing this at?"
- News about astronomy in Ohio and the surrounding states.
- Review your favorite astronomy website or astronomy software.
- Review astronomy tools or an astronomy book.

Don't worry about length, spelling or grammar — I will fix all of that. ✨