

The Night Sky

Astronomy Club of Akron
Akron, OH USA
<http://www.acaoh.org>

FEBRUARY 2004

Presidential Musings

By Gregg Crenshaw

Thursday, February 12 saw many of our members, including myself, make the trek to the Cleveland Museum of Natural History for a very informative, and entertaining lecture entitled "Magnificent Mars".

The speaker was author and astronomer Dr. Ken Croswell. He is on a national tour promoting his recently released book of the same name. The talk was part of the "Frontiers of Astronomy" free lecture series at the museum.

The next lecture in the series is entitled "Looking for Earths: The Race to Find New Solar Systems" by Dr. Alan P. Boss. It will be held Thursday, March 11 at 8 P.M.

Astronomy Day 2004 is coming up Saturday, April 24. For those of you who may ask what is Astronomy Day? Astronomy Day was founded in 1973 as a high profile way to draw attention to the science and hobby. Now clubs and institutions worldwide celebrate Astronomy Day.

In the past the ACA has marked this day by having an informational booth at Chapel Hill Mall. The past couple of years the public at the mall didn't seem too interested. Does the club need to change how we mark Astronomy Day? Should the club have an

event for Astronomy Day? Should the club continue to have a booth at Chapel Hill Mall or have a program at the Portage Lakes Observatory? Is the lack of interest at the mall due to not enough planning and/or not having eye-catching displays?

Come to the February meeting Friday, February 27 at 8:00 P.M. and voice your opinion.

Thanks so much for the kind words and cards of condolence at the passing of Debbie's father. It really means a lot to have so many good friends. Condolences also to Jay Svitko and his wife Mary in the loss of her father and to Mike Duncan in the loss of his Grandmother.

NEXT MEETING

February 27
8:00 PM

The next monthly meeting will be on Friday, February 27, 2004 at 8:00 pm at the Kiwanis Hall.

Editor Notes

By Jeff Hudson

I committed myself to only one year of The Night Sky newsletter duties for the ACA.

It has been fun and I have learned a lot about putting together a newsletter and meeting monthly deadlines.

Duties included: collecting articles, editing, assembling, getting the newsletter printed and getting it mailed.

The Night Sky newsletter needs to be mailed 7 to 10 days before the monthly meeting.

The newsletter is printed at AA Blueprint on Gilchrist Rd, just south of I76. They are only open from 8 am to 5 pm on Monday through Friday, so the next editor will need to make the necessary arrangements. They give our club a great deal on printing the newsletter, so I see no reason to go to another company.

If you have an interest in taking over the newsletter duties please contact myself or Gregg Crenshaw.

I will make sure the March and April issues get out the door and will be more than happy to assist the new editor with the May issue.

The Night Sky

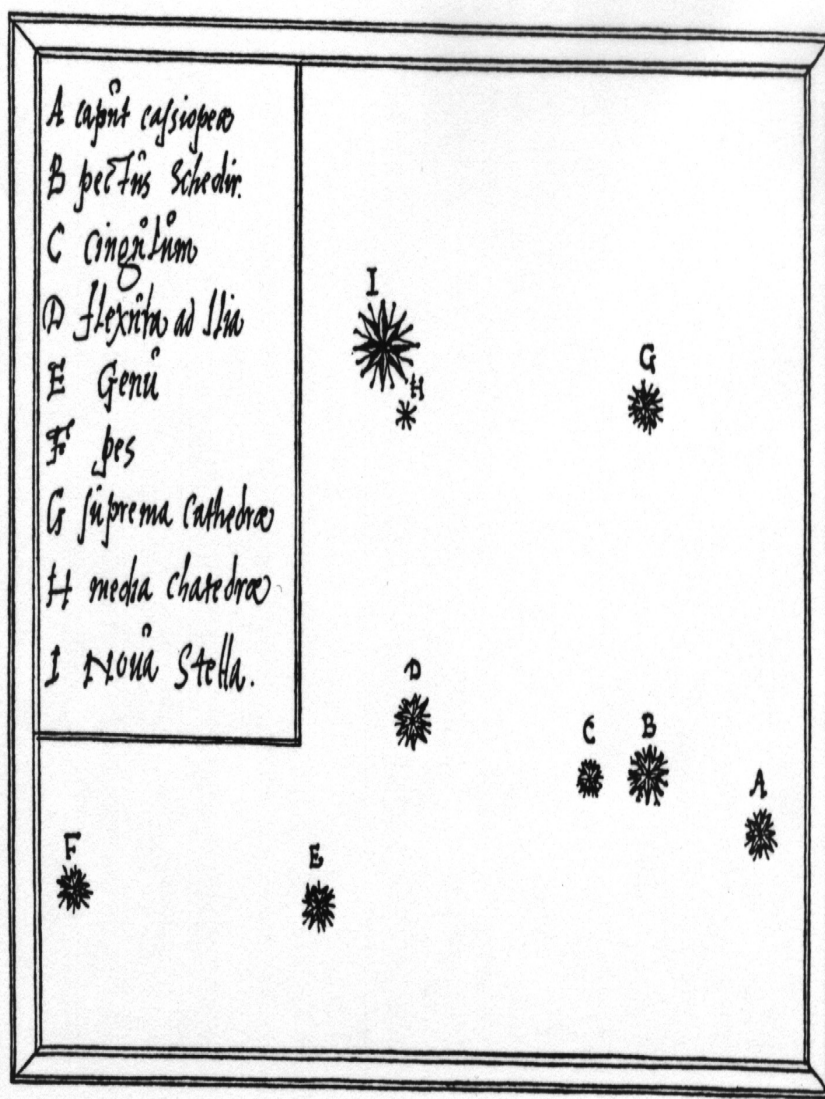
Editor / Layout	Jeff Hudson
Contributors	Jay Svitko
	Gregg Crenshaw
	Rich Ruggles
	Jeff Hudson

The Night Sky is published monthly and contains information on upcoming meetings, observing sessions, and articles by members.

Submission Deadline
March 12, 2003

March 2004 Meeting

Eric Wertz, President of the Northeast Ohio Chapter of the AMS will talk about Severe Storms.



Frontiers of Astronomy

A free lecture series at the Cleveland Museum of Natural History

This free lecture series features the latest astronomy research. Sponsored by the Museum with Case Western Reserve University and The Cleveland Astronomical Society.

On clear evenings, the Museum's observatory is open after the program. Selected Thursdays, 8 pm. No tickets or reservations required. For more information, call (216) 231-4600, ext. 362 or 253.

Looking for Earths: The Race to Find New Solar Systems

Dr. Alan P. Boss, Carnegie Institution of Washington

Thursday, 03-11-2004, 8 pm

The search for planets outside our solar system had a long and dismal history until 1995. Since then, astronomers have identified more than 100 extrasolar planets. Alan Boss reviews what's been discovered to date: gas giants, like our Jupiter and Saturn. He then presents the next set of challenges: finding ice-giant planets, similar to Uranus and Neptune, and Earth-like planets that could support life. He also talks about the array of ground- and space-based telescopes that NASA had designed to carry out this search over the next two decades.

The Birth and Death of Galaxies

Dr. Robert Kennicutt, University

of Arizona

Thursday, 04-15-2004, 8 pm

Understanding the life cycles of galaxies is one of the major scientific challenges of the 21st century. Enormous progress is being made, thanks to new information from space telescopes and a new generation of ground-based telescopes combined with powerful supercomputer simulations. All are providing important clues to the physical processes that build and transform galaxies and trigger star formation within them. Robert Kennicutt highlights recent discoveries, discusses what remains to be found and looks ahead to what a new series of telescopes may reveal about the future of galaxies such as our own.

ASTRONOMY ON THE ROAD

Saturday February 28th is the first Astronomy Outing of 2004.

It's the "Winterfest" at Wagmen Observatory in Russelton, PA, hosted by AAAP. The event is held rain or shine. There will be tents with vendors, food concessions, and (weather permitting) observing through their 11" refractor and 22" reflector.

You can find a map with excellent directions at www.3AP.org.

For caravan and car pooling call Rich Ruggles.

Hope to see you there.

NEO CAMS

Eric Wertz is the president of the Northeast Ohio Chapter of the American Meteorological Society (NEOCAMS). He will be speaking at our March club meeting.

Eric Wertz has extended an invitation to members of the ACA to attend the next NEOCAMS meeting on Saturday, February 28, 2004 at 1:00 p.m.

The meeting is being held in the Ellet Library on 2470 East Market Street in Akron, Ohio (Near the intersection of East Market Street and Canton Road beside Walgreen's).

The guest speaker will be Annette Petranic, Coordinator Summit County Emergency Management Agency who will be speaking on the Summit County Emergency Management Agency's (EMA) disaster preparedness plan.

The primary responsibility of the (EMA) is to provide professional mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery services that save lives, reduce injuries and economic loss, and improve recovery from disasters. The focus of this meeting will be on disaster preparedness.

They will meet for lunch (on your own tab) after the presentation at the Bob Evans Restaurant at 2449 Gilchrist Road

Greek Alphabet

Lowercase letters of the Greek alphabet are used in star designations

A	α	alpha
B	β	beta
Γ	γ	gamma
Δ	δ	delta
E	ϵ	epsilon
Z	ζ	zeta
H	η	eta
Θ	θ	theta
HI	ι	iota
K	κ	kappa
Λ	λ	lambda
M	μ	mu
N	ν	nu
Ξ	ξ	xi
O	\omicron	omicron
Π	π	pi
P	ρ	rho
Σ	σ	sigma
T	τ	tau
Y	υ	upsilon
Φ	ϕ	phi
X	χ	chi
Ψ	ψ	psi
Ω	ω	omega

Comet C/2002 T7 (LINEAR)

Comet C/2002 T7 (LINEAR) is approaching Earth and is getting brighter every day. It's not yet a naked-eye object, but the 7th-magnitude fuzzball is easy to see through backyard telescopes. The comet lies not far from Venus in the western sky after sunset.

For the next three months, the comet will continue to brighten as it nears Earth. May 19th is the date of closest approach (0.27 AU). At that time C/2002 T7 might glow brighter than a 1st magnitude star--easily seen with the unaided eye. Now is the best time for northern hemisphere observers to look, before the comet plunges south, because in May the comet will only be visible from the southern hemisphere.

See <http://spaceweather.com>

Space News

Rosetta Set To Launch

The European Space Agency's Rosetta spacecraft is all set to launch on February 26, 2004. The spacecraft will meet up with Comet 67P/Churyumov-Gerasimenko in 2014, and then journey alongside it to see how comets change as they fly towards the Sun. It will deposit a lander onto the surface of the comet, which will use a two-meter arm to investigate its surroundings.

Venus and the Moon

Try not to miss the pairing of Venus and a crescent Moon in the Western sky on the early evening of Monday, February 23, 2004. The Moon will only have 15% of its surface illuminated, and Venus is so bright right now, that the two objects may look equally bright. You might even be able to see Earth shine.

Beagle 2 Search Called Off

It was announced on February 12, 2004 that the search for the Beagle 2 lander, which was supposed to have landed on Mars on December 25, 2003, has been called off. The spacecraft stopped communicating when it entered Mars's atmosphere, and months of searching with several Mars orbiters and Earth-based radio telescopes have failed to turn up any signal.

Telescope Performance

Aperture Inch	Limiting Magnitude	Dawes Limit	Max. power
2.0	11.2	2.3"	X100
2.4	11.6	1.9"	X120
3.0	12.1	1.5"	X150
4.0	12.6	1.2"	X200
4.5	13.0	1.0"	X225
5.0	13.2	0.9"	X250
6.0	13.6	0.8"	X300
8.0	14.2	0.6"	X400
10.0	14.7	0.5"	X500
12.0	15.1	0.4"	X600

Limiting magnitude refers to the faintest star visible.

Dawes limit refers to the closest stars resolvable.

Maximum practical power for any given telescope is typically 2 times the aperture in millimetres although in practice powers over about 400 times are not always useful.