



The Night Sky

The Newsletter of
The Astronomy Club of Akron

www.acaoh.org

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RAMBLINGS OF THE PRESIDENT

by Dave Jessie

Astronomy Lectures at the Cleveland Museum of Natural History have been well worth the time and trouble to get there. The October and November events have been well-attended by ACA members who, fortunately, arrived in time to get seats in the packed auditorium. The November lecture, *The Quantum and the Cosmos*, by Dr. Edward 'Rocky' Kolb was one of the best lectures on any topic I've ever heard. It was the next day before I realized that Dr. Kolb is the Director of the Fermilab Particle Astrophysics Center in Chicago. We were honored to hear him. If there's anything I can say to encourage you to attend these lectures, please tell me what it is. You simply must go to these - they're that good. Three more to go and all extremely interesting.

Happy Winter Solstice! (well, almost) The date and time of the Sun's southern-most position in declination is Thursday, Dec 21, 2006 at 7:22pm. Mark your calendars! After this, the hours of daylight will slowly, very slowly begin to increase and most of us will notice the skies being not quite so dark on our way to and from work. Winter should be appreciated by us amateur astronomers since there's so much more darkness, but it's *so cold!*

Holiday gift ideas - for those amateur astronomers on your gift-buying list: A couple ideas come immediately to mind...***Pocket Sky Atlas***, by Sky Publishing and available from Amazon.com at a bargain price. This is one great little star atlas! Even if you have stacks of other atlases, this is simply a must-have. Easily handled in the dark, easy to read and fun to use. I won't ever be caught without one. If the

one you use in the field wears out, it's cheap enough to replace without hand-wringing. Another idea, to use with the star atlas, is a good red LED flashlight. I heartily recommend the ones from rigelsys.com - especially the Skylite with its adjustable-brightness switchable red or white LEDs. Just the best astro flashlight there is. Another must-have for admittedly higher price is a good nebula (aka 'light-pollution' filter). The best one I've ever used is the NPB filter (Narrow Pass Band) by DGM Optics. Check online by putting "DGM NPB" into Google. Lots of great reviews and a price substantially lower than competing filters. Truly a 'best buy'.

2007 Observatory Event Schedule! Ron Kalinoski, with input from his Observatory Staff, has finished a very ambitious schedule of events for next year. There's a copy of the entire schedule, front and back, in this issue of ***The Night Sky***. There are lots of great events and plenty of opportunity to come to the observatory for some great nights under the stars. Please read the header on page one of the schedule...we're asking that smoking at public Observatory events be held at a minimum and that folks who must smoke please excuse themselves to the downwind edge of the observing field so smoke doesn't make its way onto expensive optics or into the lungs of the non-smoking public. Of course, smoking in and around the Observatory is prohibited.

I'll end by wishing you a very happy and safe holiday season - Happy Hanukkah, Merry Christmas, and Happy Winter Solstice - the returning of the light.

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Activities Calendar

Club

Celestial

Jan. 13, Open House and Star Party 6:30 pm	December 20, New Moon
Jan. 26, ACA General Membership Meeting 8:00 pm	January 3, Full Moon January 3-4, Quadrantid Meteor Shower
Feb. 17, Open House and Star Party 7:00 pm	January 19, New Moon

The deadline for article submission is **the second Tuesday after each meeting**. All word processing files should be saved in straight ASCII text files or any version of Word to minimize import problems. We will not turn away **any** submission, as long as the article's subject is astronomy or a related topic. If you don't have access to a computer, don't hesitate to write something out long hand. As long as it is legible, I will slave over the keyboard and get it published.

PLEASE SEND IN YOUR ARTICLES!!!!

Send your articles, items for sale, and comments to: Justin Phillips 402 Crystal St. Akron Ohio
email phillipsaca@gmail.com



Vice President John Crilly demonstrates the process of reviewing a telescope at the November meeting.

Photo credit: Justin Phillips

Treasurer's Report: 11/1/06 - 11/30/06 Steve Rohweder, Treasurer

Total Beginning Assets	\$8,865.53
Income	
Interest on balances	\$5.73
50/50 Drawing	\$26.50
Dues	\$30.00
Telescope sale	\$45.00
Expenses	
Newsletter Expense	(\$12.00)
Observatory Upkeep	(\$54.46)
Total Ending Assets	\$8,906.30

OBSERVATORY REPORT

On November 25th, ACA held a public star party at Portage Lakes State Park. About 20 public attendees joined us including some members of the Cub Scouts. In addition to the 14" telescope, we set up a Celestron C5 in the observatory fitted with a 32mm 2" eyepiece. This arrangement provided the C5 with a 1.7 degree field of view. Although some thin clouds moved in from the west after sunset, we were able to find many open clusters in the north and east. The Double Cluster was a showcase for open clusters. The 14" telescope peered deep into NGC 869 while the C5 beautifully captured both components of the Double Cluster. Later we turned the C5 to the east to observe M45. With a span of 1.1 degrees, the Seven Sisters easily fit in the field of view. Around 8:30pm the skies cleared and we pointed the 14" telescope at M15, a globular cluster in Pegasus. What a view! To quote Lou Poda, "Wow! M15 is resolved right down to its core." Some of the public wanted to see galaxies so we aimed the 14" telescope at NGC

7331, a large spiral galaxy in Pegasus seen edge-on. In the eyepiece, the galaxy looked like a nebulous streak running north-south. We then captured NGC 488, a spiral galaxy in Pisces followed by NGC 720, an elliptical galaxy in Cetus. At this point Auriga had risen high enough to view the three bright open clusters contained within the constellation (M36, M37, & M38). We then returned to deeper space focusing on NGC 1023, a lenticular galaxy in Perseus. The 14" telescope revealed this galaxy as a fairly bright fuzzy object with definite elongation and a star-like nucleus. We ended the star party viewing the Orion Nebula. Since Orion was still low in the sky, we moved the C5 outside the observatory. Although the C5 was only working at 39X, it had enough power to resolve the Trapezium.

Thanks to Mark Kochheiser and Lou Poda for assisting with this event.

Ronald Kalinoski

BACKYARD OBSERVATORIES (CJE CONSTRUCTION)

My home is in the very center of a small city. Observing here requires dealing with a number of issues (light pollution, high horizons, tiny yard) in addition to the usual setup/teardown process. In 2002 I had determined that I was going to improve those matters I could and learn to deal with the rest. The solution for me was to add a mezzanine to my garage with a roll-off observatory inside. This would greatly improve my horizons, and eliminate nightly setup and teardown. I found a local carpenter who was willing to tackle the project and he began the inside work that Fall. Sadly, he ran into health problems and his appearances became more and more erratic. During the winter he suffered a heart attack and was forced to retire from construction work. The project was stalled until I could find someone to complete it.

Later that Winter, I advertised some eyepieces on Astromart. I received a response from a local astronomer, Scott Horstman, who wanted to buy a couple of them. We talked about various astronomy issues and he mentioned his roll-off observatory. He invited me to visit him and to see his setup, which I quickly accepted.

During the visit, I learned that he was a carpenter and had built his observatory himself. Obvious questions came to mind - had he done other such projects? Would he be interested in completing mine? He expressed interest and agreed to come over to my place and take a look. He came up with a design that utilized the portions of the work already completed and blended them into a solid structure that was well integrated into the existing building. The end result for me is that I have a new friend and observing buddy, as well as a great observatory!

Another end result was the creation shortly thereafter (April, 2003) of backyardobservatories.com. Scott realized that there were probably plenty of other folks who wanted or needed a home observatory but lacked skills, tools, or time (all three in my case) to build one. Having done residential construction for many years, he knew just what would be required. He set out to create a set of engineering drawings that could be followed by any competent carpenter and would result in an attractive, solid building. Rather than copying and adapting a garden shed construction, Scott decided to use resi-

dential construction. It's a little more work and uses some additional materials, but with 16" spacing for wall studs and wallboard plus siding it yields a substantial and attractive structure which should last indefinitely.

The next step was to decide precisely what products to market. The plan set was an obvious candidate. Since the rollers Scott uses were carefully chosen for rolling resistance and load bearing capacity, he decided to also offer a set of them along with plans for those wanting to be assured of using appropriate rollers. Scott also realized that he could pre-build wall panels and deliver them to a site for one-day construction onto a poured slab, so that option was added as well. Prefab kits are available in three sizes; 7' 6", 11' 6", and 15' 6". Custom sizes or installations are also available. Since then he has added some ancillary items, including a motor operator system for the roofs and a pier plate for those adding a concrete or steel pier to their observatory.

A visit to Scott's website now reveals that one can purchase any of the above items, from a set of engineering drawings to an installed and operating observatory (so long as the site is within Scott's liberal interpretation of driving distance). He has installed observatories as far East as Long Island, as far West as Chicago, and as far South as North Carolina. Many plans and roller sets have been delivered, resulting in customer-constructed buildings, and a number of prefabricated as well as custom observatories have been constructed by Scott and his crew. Photos of the results of both types of sales - along with their smiling owners - are shown on the website..

The advantages of having a home observatory would be difficult to overstate. I have my gear set up and aligned, waiting for me whenever time and weather permit. My imaging equipment is there, cables ready, for any opportunity. The wind and local light sources are blocked. Best of all, when I give up for the night, I push a button, close the roof, and go to bed!

John Crilly
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THE ANTENNAE GALAXIES



Hubble Space Telescope view of a pair of colliding galaxies, known as the “Antennae,” in the constellation Corvus.

Credit: [NASA](#), [ESA](#), and the [Hubble Heritage Team \(STScI/AURA\)](#), [ESA](#)/Hubble Collaboration

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c/o Justin Phillips, Editor
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Akron, OH 44305-3116

To join the ACA, **or to renew your membership**, please fill out the form below, place in an envelope and mail to the address shown in the return address area of the form.

Please be sure to enclose payment for the membership level desired.

The Astronomy Club of Akron
c/o Steve Rohweder, Treasurer
3981 Meadow Wood Ln
Uniontown, OH 44685-7785

Yes! I want to become a member of the Astronomy Club of Akron

www.acaoh.org
(PLEASE PRINT)

NAME: _____ PHONE: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

EMAIL ADDRESS: _____

Astronomy Club of Akron annual memberships renew in the month of May.

ADULT (ages 18 and older)..... \$30.00

JUNIOR (ages 12 to 17).....\$15.00

ADDITIONAL ADULT member \$15.00

FAMILY MEMBERSHIP\$40.00

I realize the full color version of *The Night Sky* newsletter is available for download by members from our web page at www.acaoh.org, but I would rather have the B&W version mailed to my address via USPS.