



THE STAR DIAGONAL

THE JOURNAL OF THE OGDEN ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY

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OAS Minutes - 13 Mar 03

John Sohl prefaced the meeting by describing his and Doug Say's recent model rocket launches. They are currently using a small "F" motor. They plan to use a larger "I" motor soon, but since they would be able to hit about Mach 1.3 and 6,000 feet, they'll have to go to somewhere like the Pony Express test range, south of Tooele. Sherry was able to catch the launch just as the rocket cleared the launch rail - quick shooting indeed.

President Lee Priest opened the meeting at 7:41.

Announcements/Discussion

Last Thursday, John Sohl spoke on astronomical time calculations at the Astro Workshop. The next workshop is tentatively scheduled for the 27 March.

Lee asked for an update to e-mail addresses for OAS members. They are used to send rapid notifications of star parties and other events. (See "Address" below)

There are 7 or 8 people ordering the green laser to be used as a star pointer. Ten orders are needed to get the 5% discount. They are \$124 each, full price, and all would be shipped under a \$10 fee.

The solar scope will be made available to the members, but will require a training session to protect both the telescope and the users - there are real risks associated with observing the sun. The goal is to get everything ready in time for the first of the summer's star parties on 19 April or perhaps some Saturday



afternoon, weather willing. One thing to consider is the SolarMax 40's value; whoever uses it will be responsible for it.

The widow of Rob Meyers, who used to belong to our club, donated his collection of astronomy related books to the OAS. The club has decided to establish a library so that all members would be able to borrow them. In the discussion on where to establish the library, John Sohl mentioned that the Ott Planetarium Director's office has spare shelf space and Stacy Palen agreed that it could be made available. With this sort of access, others may be able to donate books and make them available to all.



Lee reminded the members of the Huntsville star party on 26 March and the Dead Horse Point star party on the nights of 4 and 5 April. Cliff Peterson will not be able to go and has volunteered the camping space that he has reserved.

On May 1st, there will be an OAS star party at Adams Elementary School and on the May the 2nd, there will be an unofficial, non-OAS one at the Farr West LDS church.

John Sohl will be holding a star party at the Weber State observatory tomorrow night (14 March).

Dr. Stacy Palen, the new director of the Ott Planetarium, then spoke on her research interest - surveying planetary nebulae in other galaxies. Her talk provided insight into what it's like to observe in Chile and was full of wonderful astronomy and really neat stuff like Andean condors, a mystery meat buffet, and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons.

Doug Say then demonstrated the new filter slider he's made for BOB, the big Ogden Bucket.

Red LED Flashlight

I was in need of a couple of Red flashlights and I came across the following web page. I spent \$12 dollars buying a set of three flashlights at Wal-Mart and some LEDs and Resistors at Radio Shack. It was an easy project. This was only the second time I have ever soldered anything. I made a Red and a Green and plan to buy a couple more flashlights so that each of my kids will have one.

<http://www.dma.org/~wagner/led.htm>

Dave Dunn

From the Utah-Astronomy mailing list

Utah-Astronomy@mailman.xmission.com

<http://mailman.xmission.com/cgi-bin/mailman/listinfo/utah-astronomy>

(Dave will bring a couple of his LED flashlights to the April meeting.)

Addresses

We try to maintain current e-mail addresses for all the OAS members so that news of astronomical interest can be quickly circulated. The list is not current, though. Because I was late in getting it out last month, I sent PDF versions of the newsletter to all members in addition to the paper copies. Many of the e-mails bounced, though. If you didn't get an electronic newsletter last month, please call or e-mail me with your current e-mail address.

Upcoming Events

4, 5 April	Dead Horse Point star party
10 Apr, 7:30 P.M.	OAS meeting, Ott Planetarium
19 Apr	Antelope Island star party
1 May	Adams Elementary School star party
3 May	Antelope Island star party

Jim Seargeant's Images

Well, it isn't very astronomical, but the best I can do for an image this month is a hole in the ground. I've decided to finally replace my trusty old wooden tripod with a steel pier and this is the hole for the concrete foundation. The idea is that the steel pier will remain stable after a really careful polar alignment. The old tripod, which was bolted to our wooden deck, moved as the weather changed and caused the alignment to shift. Sometimes my telescope would track well and sometimes it wouldn't. This pier won't be as ambitious as Cliff's, since it will be only about 7' tall from the concrete base. I've located a piece of 12 1/2" x 3/8 wall steel pipe that should be plenty stiff for that length. The re-bar and plate for the base and gussets have been ordered and the concrete can go in as soon as the re-bar is set into place.

In the meantime, the telescope is in the basement where the poor thing will be subjected to all of the



modifications that have been accumulating over the winter. The interior of the OTA and dew shield will be lined with Protostar flocking material. A mount is in the works for a digital indicator capable of measuring to .00005" that I got from eBay - it's to improve focusing precision. I want to take the LX-200 mount apart again to make some drawings; I'm studying on how to modify it to improve the bearings and add a better RA gear set. I'd like to mount the telescope to both the Meade wedge that I've been using and then the new (really heavy duty) wedge that I've made and measure vibration damping times. Anyone know how to set up an accelerometer? There are a few more odds and ends to take care of.

So - no more pictures with the LX-200 for a while. I guess it's time to try imaging with the 12 1/2" NGT.