



THE STAR DIAGONAL

THE JOURNAL OF THE OGDEN ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY

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Vol. 34 Number 06

March 2005

<http://physics.weber.edu/palen/oas/>

The President's Message

Hi All:

The Weather is starting to turn a little warmer and the bug to get out and observe is kicking in so if you have the bug bad enough make plans to come to our Messier Marathon on the 11th and 12th of this month up at Golden Spike National Monument. I will be providing the stew for the 1:00 AM break. Hopefully we will have skies as good as last year but if not we will have fun anyway.

For our meeting this month Dave and I would like to go through the Messier Marathon list one by one with the MEDIAGLOBE and give some tips on how to find objects.

Clear Skies

Craig Browne

Messier Marathon

The Messier Marathon is an all night observing session where the goal is to see all 110 Messier objects in one night. From Mid March until the beginning of April, the Sun is in an area of the sky that doesn't have any Messier objects. You don't need to do the whole marathon in order to come out and observe. It is a fun activity even if you don't want to rush through the objects. The Messier Marathon will be at Golden Spike National Monument on 3/11 and 3/12. We will set up after the Monument closes at 5pm. We are going to set up on the walkway behind the Visitor's Center. They have added some lights to the entry way in the front of the building. Craig and I took a quick trip up there Wednesday night. They still have about a foot of snow on the ground. We couldn't see any light from behind the building so we still should be able to have a great time. The lights are in the rail on both sides of the entrance. They point up and light the ceiling. We couldn't see any light coming out above the building. In fact we couldn't see any lights until we were past the tracks and about to turn into the parking lot. We will need

to move our telescopes back out to the parking lot after we are finished because they will need the walkway to be clear.

- David Dunn

OAS Minutes, Feb 2005

The meeting of the Ogden Astronomical Society was held on Feb. 10. President Craig Browne called the meeting to order. The Star Party that was held near Fort Pearce was a great success. All those that attended had a great time. We will want to go there again next year. David Dunn provided some slides of the observing site. Thanks to all that supported the Davis School District Star Party. They are planning to schedule another party in the future. The Messier Marathon is scheduled for March 11 & 12 at Golden Spike. Instructions were given on how to join some of the email list groups. Robert Hillier announced that he would like help with a Star Party at Sunset Jr. High on March 30.

The rest of the meeting was a discussion about the 24" mirror that SDL has in storage. Several different options were presented on ways that we could build a telescope around this mirror. The most favorable option appears to be building a folded optics Dobsonian with a barlow to lengthen the f-ratio. It was proposed and adopted that we set an initial estimate that we would be willing to spend \$1000 on the telescope. Jim Seargeant and Dale Hooper are going to write up a proposal to SDL that they donate or loan the mirror to us in return for advertisement and a Star Party.

To join the email groups send and email to the following. For OAS_News, Please identify yourself so that we can keep it private.

OAS_News – oas_news-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

Northern-Utah-astronomy -

northern-utah-astronomy-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

Utah_Astronomy enroll at the following link -
<http://mailman.xmission.com/cgi-bin/mailman/listinfo/utah-astronomy>

- David Dunn

Saint George Star Party Report

On February 4th Dave Dunn, Craig Browne and myself traveled to St. George. Joe Bauman from SLAS and Debbie Whitaker who lives in the St. George area joined us. When we arrived it was t-shirt weather. This was much different than the temperatures in the teens for the star party I had for some Webelos and the star party at the school Dave and Craig attended; the night before.

We were going to have the star party near Fort Pearce but on the way we came across some deeply rutted tire tracks, so we decided to set up in a field just before the rutts. This turned out to be a great site and all of us felt that we should have more star parties there in the future. Dave brought several of his scopes including his mega-size 10" f/10 Newtonian. Craig had the 10" Orion Intelliscope. Joe brought his 12" LX200GPS and Debbie brought her 15" Obsession.



Figure 1 - Telescopes set up for the night.

The location was pretty incredible and it had a really nice horizon all the way around. There was absolutely no sky glow to the south and the only sky glow of any significance was to the northwest toward St. George. We started off doing some solar observing with the club's Coronado Scope and we saw some nice looping prominences. After dark, Saturn looked fantastic in Dave's 10" f/10 and it was able to take a lot of magnification. With such a great southern view the winter Milky Way was very prominent. We were able to do some good observing with the club's 10" Orion Dobsonian.

But, the show was certainly stolen by the objects we were able to observe through Debbie's 15" Obsession. She showed us several barred-spiral galaxies in Fornax and Eridanus and, of course, M42 and the Flame Nebula looked great. Debbie is quite the expert observer of planetary nebulas. We were treated to fantastic views of quite a number of them.

She showed us NGC 1360, a large egg-shaped planetary, NGC 1535, a bright blue planetary, Hubble's Variable Nebula in Monoceros, the Eskimo Nebula and Medusa nebula in Gemini and my favorite was Thor's Helmet in Puppis.

This star party was certainly well worth it and we finally gave up around 11pm when the temperature reached about forty. But, we had been out in it for about five hours.

Saturday morning, Craig, Dave and I went on an excursion through Snow Canyon. We were treated to a lot of different and amazing geological formations, from petrified sand dunes to lava caves and cinder cones. Dave took a lot of great pictures and I've included a few of them. This trip was a lot of fun and I hope that we can make this kind of winter star party an annual event.



Figure 2 - Cinder cone just north of Snow Canyon



Figure 3 - Spelunking in the lava cave



Figure 4 - Petrified Dunes in Snow Canyon

- by Dale Hooper
