

President's Report

by Dave Scherping

OBSERVING...

The Mahoney Star Party on June 2nd was a huge success. There were 15 telescopes set up, including Tom Miller's 30", the PAC 13", 5 or 6 SCT's, and several 8"-13" dobs. There were 9 PAC members and about 15 Omaha astronomers there, plus about 50 or so visitors dropped by. Although there was one brief period of clouds and varying degrees of haze & fog, it was a good night of observing. The seeing was exceptional. Every scope showed incredible detail on Jupiter as we watched a transit of Io. In Tom's 30", we were able to clearly make out the disk of Io, just to the east of its shadow. The seeing also made double star observations a lot of fun. Using Tom's 30" with a 9mm Nagler, it seemed you could drive a truck through the dark gaps between the pairs of stars in Epsilon Lyrae. It didn't even take any imagination to split Antares.

If you're unfortunate enough to drive to the Beaver Crossing site, only to find someone camping there, I have a solution. Head south on the main road past Beaver Crossing to Friend. Stay on the road (it turns to gravel) & go 10 miles. Head east a couple of miles on Hwy 41. On the left is Swan Creek #2. The entrance is on the left after you cross the water. You can bypass the 10 miles of gravel road by taking a paved road 4 miles east of Friend. The site is small but pretty dark except for occasional cars on the road 1/4 mile to the south. Also, trees obstruct part of the southern horizon. But it's only half the distance from Beaver Crossing to the Atlas site as is a pretty good alternate site for those rare times when there's someone camping or fishing at Beaver Crossing.

NEBRASKA STAR PARTY...

As NSP quickly approaches, the planning committee is taking care of the final details. As of June 15th, there were 156 people scheduled to attend NSP plus 36 who say

they're coming but haven't registered. We should easily break 200. Also, we're extremely pleased with the response from the vendors we wrote to. In addition to the substantial number of door prizes we'll give away, we're pleased that Astro-nomical Innovations, Astro-Systems, ELB Software, K.C. Woodsmith, & Obsession Telescopes will be at NSP. So bring lots of spending money.

Also, we need volunteers to help with registration/check-in, parking & traffic control, security, & assisting with the meeting room. If you haven't signed up on the volunteer list, please do so at the June PAC meeting or call the NSP Hotline. All we ask for is an hour or two of your time. A shortage of volunteers will lead to an executive order to enact the draft!

OTHER COMMENTS...

- If you have Internet access, check out the PAC index at <http://www.infoanalytic.com/pac/index.html> (lower case, no spaces).
- For those building a truss-tube scope and looking for black Kydex to use for the upper tube assembly, I've been looking for a local source. I found none in Lincoln, however Cadillac Plastics in Omaha carries both Kydex & ABS. They look identical but ABS is cheaper, since Kydex has fire retardants added. ABS comes in .062" thick sheets at \$25 per sheet or custom cut for \$2/sq. ft. For Kydex, a .062 thick sheet runs \$76 and a .026" thick sheet is \$33. Another option is to purchase .026" thick Kydex from Astro-Systems at \$3/sq. ft. I bought some of the .062" ABS & it's great.
- The club picnic will be held on Saturday August 19th.
- The July 1995 meeting of The Prairie Astronomy Club is cancelled due to the Nebraska Star Party. We will resume in August.**

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The Prairie Astronomer

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Observing Chairman's Report

by Douglas Bell

June 27th, For July observing.

Next star party: June 30th
 New Moon: June 28, July 27
 Lunar object: Armstrong, Aldrin, Collins
 Planet: Uranus & Neptune
 Messier monthly: M 92
 Top 40: M13
 Deep sky: NGC 6572
 Challenge: Pluto
 Errata of the month: Someone's slipping. No errata reported last month.
 Quote: "I've finally found the NGP!" - Overheard at 1994 NSP.

Lunar feature: **Armstrong, Aldrin, Collins** "Tranquillity Base here. The Eagle has landed."
 These small craters are a good test of optics and seeing. Located (where else) in the Sea of Tranquillity near the Apollo 11 landing site. Probably the only lunar features who's namesakes are still alive.

Planet of the month: **Uranus and Neptune**
 The gas giants dominate the Southern sky this year. Uranus and Neptune are slowly moving out of Sagittarius where they had an extremely rare conjunction a few years ago. Good binocular targets and fun to say that you've seen them.

Top 40: **M 13**
 The great globular cluster in Hercules. This rates along with my first telescopic view of the Moon and Saturn as one of those "Oh wow!" experiences. If you've never seen it, my words won't do it justice.

Messier Monthly: **M 92**
 The other globular in Hercules. It's very nice even if its "lost in the glow" from M 13.

Deep Sky: **NGC 6572**
 A small (8") blue planetary in Orphiucus. Look for this the same night you look for Uranus and Neptune. You'll never forget why their called "planetaries".




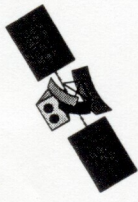
Challenge: **Pluto**
 This only counts if you've looked at Pluto... and known what you're seeing. A dim 13th magnitude star, it can only be identified by looking over several nights and marking its movement. Having someone else point it out is cheating.

Monthly trivia:
 Star A is 100 times as bright as Star B. How many magnitudes is that?

BTW:
 Einstein won the Nobel prize for his work explaining the photo-electric effect (the effect of photons ejecting electrons from certain materials). His work with relativity was never so honored.

The Prairie Astronomer is published monthly by the Prairie Astronomy Club, Inc., and is free to all club members. Membership status and expiration date are listed on the mailing label. Membership dues are: Regular Members...\$10/yr; Family Memberships...\$12/yr; Address all new memberships, renewals, or questions to THE PRAIRIE ASTRONOMY CLUB, INC., P.O. BOX 80553, LINCOLN, NE 68501. For other club information contact one of the following: John Bruce (Lincoln) 483-0389, Lee Thomas (Lincoln) 483-5639, John Lortz (Omaha) 496-1122. All newsletter comments and articles should be sent to Newsletter Editor JOHN LORTZ, 11684 MEREDITH AVE., OMAHA, NE 68164 no later than 10 days before monthly club meetings. Club meetings are held the last Tuesday of each month at Hyde Observatory in Lincoln, NE.

JULY 1995

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<p>Comet d'Arrest (See July issue of Astronomy pg 59)</p>	<p>Southern Delta Aquarids July 8 - Aug 19 Peak on July 29th 20 per hour</p>	<p>June 27 PAC MEETING 7:30 pm Hyde Observatory !!!</p>	<p>June 28</p>	<p>June 29 NSP PLANNING MEETING 7:00 pm Miller Grass Seed 1600 Cornhusker Hy</p>	<p>June 30 Star Party at Beaver Crossing Site</p>	<p>1 Star Party Rain Date</p>
<p>2 </p>	<p>3</p>	<p>4 INDEPENDENCE DAY Moon 4° South of Mars</p>	<p>5 1ST QUARTER MOON</p>	<p>6 Principia published by Isaac Newton 1687</p>	<p>7 </p>	<p>8</p>
<p>9 Moon 2° North of Jupiter Voyager 2 flies by Jupiter - 1979</p>	<p>10 Telstar launched 1962</p>	<p>11 Skylab destroyed upon re-entry 1979</p>	<p>12 FULL MOON</p>	<p>13 NSP PLANNING MEETING 7:00 pm Miller Grass Seed 1600 Cornhusker Hy</p>	<p>14 Mariner 4 flyby of Mars 1965</p>	<p>15 Apollo-Soyuz, 1st US/USSR space project, launched 1975</p>
<p>16 Apollo 11 launched 1969</p>	<p>17 Moon 6° North of Saturn Apollo-Soyuz link-up 1975</p>	<p>18 </p>	<p>19 3RD QUARTER MOON</p>	<p>20 Apollo 11 landed on Moon 1969 Viking 1 landed on Mars 1976</p>	<p>21 </p>	<p>22 Friedrich Bessel born 1784</p>
<p>23 NSP EARLY BIRDS Thin crescent Moon near Hyades (4am)</p>	<p>24 NSP EARLY BIRDS</p>	<p>25 NEBRASKA STAR PARTY</p>	<p>26 NEBRASKA STAR PARTY</p>	<p>27 NEBRASKA STAR PARTY NEW MOON</p>	<p>28 NEBRASKA STAR PARTY</p>	<p>29 NEBRASKA STAR PARTY</p>
<p>30 NEBRASKA STAR PARTY</p>						

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TIP OF THE MONTH...

Have you ever had an object you could see in binoculars, but couldn't locate with your Telrad? Do you have a Telrad but no finder scope? A very useful technique that works quite well is to use binoculars behind the Telrad. It gives you the magnification to see the object while maintaining the advantages of a Telrad.

MEETING ADJOURNED...

Secretary's Report, by Bryan Schaaf

The June PAC meeting generated quite a bit of discussion about the shielding of obtrusive lighting at the Atlas Site and at the 2nd Annual Nebraska Star Party site at Merritt Reservoir. Dave Scherping and Tom Miller reported that a new light is in place by the dirt road west of the Atlas Site and the house that has been under construction for several months nearby is also structurally complete. Furthermore, the house has five alternately spaced half levels with several windows on the side facing the observing pad. Pine trees that were recently planted in the yard could someday provide a natural light shield, but it will be years before they are grown and the house is rather large anyway. A motion was proposed and carried for PAC to offer to shield the bright light so that the Atlas Site would be useful again. The shield is to be the same or similar to those that have already been approved by the Game and Parks Commission authority for use at the Merritt Reservoir.

Weeds that are growing in the concrete pad will be chemically dealt with in the near future to avoid the potential for more cracks in the concrete.

Treasurer John Bruce reported that "We still have money". He provided the balances of the checking account, money market account, and N.S.P. checking account.

There are about 60 N.S.P. registrants so far as of May 30th and a few more are expected since advertising has appeared in *Sky & Tel* and *Astronomy* magazines recently. There is still a lot to be done for the N.S.P. Organizational meetings are held at Miller Seed Company, 1600 Cornhusker Highway. For the next scheduled date and time, look elsewhere in this newsletter.

There are quite a few registrants and non-registrants that haven't ordered N.S.P. T-shirts. Since the shirts are multi-colored with a "white Nebraska positioned inside a photographic quality North American Nebula" the opinion is out that there may be a trend of purchases during or after the star party. A second order of T-shirts is planned

very soon, so it isn't too late to order, but don't wait or you might miss your chance. If you want to order contact either Dave Scherping or John Bruce ASAP!

The club (13" Dobsonian) scope is frequently available for any club member to use. Interested? Call Dave (477-2596) for available times and check out details.

The new club librarian...that's me...Bryan Schaaf (438-4285) has many astronomy books and magazines available for check out. Call or leave a message, if you're interested. A listing of all the library materials appeared in last month's newsletter. The books "Entering Space", "The Cambridge Atlas of Astronomy", and "LIFE in Space" were presented at the meeting.

June 23-25 are the dates for the Mid-States Convention in Arkansas. Contact Dave if you need a registration form.

Mahoney Star Party ads have been distributed at locations in the Mahoney State Park, so we can expect a good showing each month when the weather is nice. We need continued telescope and volunteer support. If you don't attend the monthly public star party, you are missing out on a lot of fun!

Regarding Astronomy Day last month Jack Dunn expressed thanks for all the help to those that participated. It was probably one of the best, if not the best Astronomy Days we have had in a long time. Jack requests that anyone that might have pictures of last month's event, please let him know. He would appreciate a chance to have copies made for his Mueller planetarium archives.

The PBS show entitled "Apollo 13...To the Edge and Back", which aired last July just prior to the Jupiter-comet collision event, was the featured program after the meeting. It was about the failed 1970 mission to the moon that endangered the lives of the three man crew after the explosion of an oxygen tank inside the service module. A new movie "Apollo 13" directed by Ron Howard and starring Tom Hanks is due to be released at the end of this month.



Astro-Man

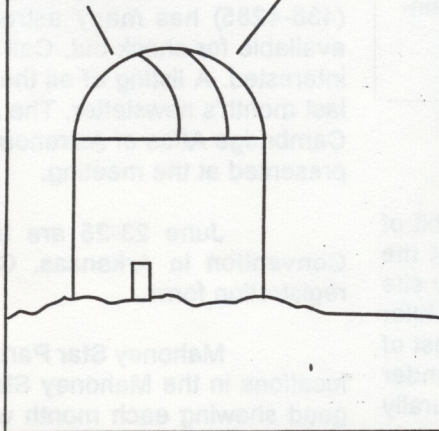
BY DAVE SCHERPING

ASTRO-MAN'S THEORY ON GAMMA RAY BURSTS & SUPERNOVAE:

AS SEEN FROM EARTH...

HEY JOE... WE'VE DETECTED ONE OF THOSE WIERD "GAMMA RAY BURSTS" IN M31 !!

YEAH.... AND LOOK, THERE'S A SUPERNOVA RIGHT NEXT TO IT !!

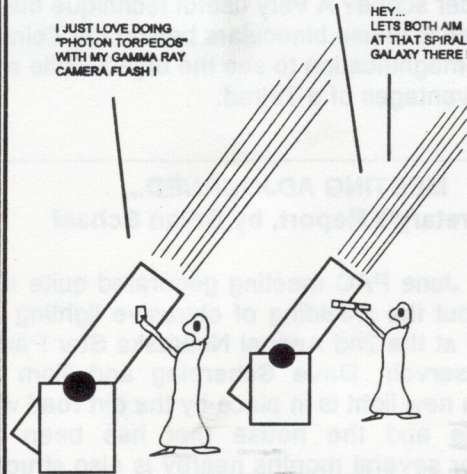


AS SEEN FROM M31...

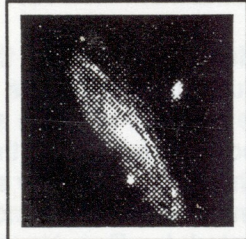
I LIKE TO SHINE MY 6-CELL MAG LITE THROUGH MY SCOPE

I JUST LOVE DOING "PHOTON TORPEDOS" WITH MY GAMMA RAY CAMERA FLASH !

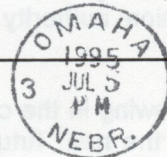
HEY... LETS BOTH AIM AT THAT SPIRAL GALAXY THERE !!



Editors Note: Nope, it wasn't the post office that made your newsletter late, it was ME!!! Sorry! Busy time of year and I ended up popping out of town during the days I typically work on the newsletter. So, don't go taking a baseball bat to your friendly postal person next time they drop off the mail. It wasn't their fault! — John Lortz



The Prairie Astronomer
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First Class Mail

Next Meeting
June 27, 1995

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JUNE

inside...

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