



SACnews

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2006 ALL ARIZONA MESSIER MARATHON

By AJ Crayon

Despite the quiet cloudy weather there was an excellent turnout of marathoners, observers and folks just wanting to get out of the city. As it turned out the clouds provided marathoners with an additional challenge by altering the suggested viewing sequence. Despite my absence, because of work, both Jack Jones and Rick Tejera filled in admirably, thanks ya'll. Jack with T-shirt sales and collecting the observing lists and Rick with the sunset pep talk. For this article I'm taking information from e-mail postings and hope this will help cover the salient topics.

Out thank go out, again, for Ray Farnsworth and Jet Ray farms for permitting use and access of the site. And a great crowd upwards to 150 people and 100 vehicles (I like that number)

For the observing there were 10 that qualified for the first three places and a telescope plate, see the results table elsewhere. Of all objects missed, M74 was missed by all but one observer, Gilbert A. Esquerdo who found 105. Tom Polakis, also with 105, posted the following analysis for those with 100 or more objects.

"All 24 people who saw 100 or more, Messier objects missed M110. Ten of those 24 were able to spot M31, and 5 of them saw M32. Only one observer looked at the right time to see M74. The next problem object was M33, which shut out 18 people. Nine observers did not see M72 and M30 was missed by only 7 people. At least 16 of the 24 used GO-TO telescopes. The smallest aperture in this club was 60mm. I'm sure Meade never expected an ETX-60 to ever get as much use as this one does."

Other observers making their presence know were Don Machholz, amongst one of the first to suggest a Messier Marathon and the only one to do the marathon by memory. He gave up GPS, GoTo, PushTo, analog setting circles and star hoping. And. And. And, he still managed to get 102. To repeat he remembered the sequences and locations by memory. Besides this he treated many to M&M candies in honor of the event. Thanks Don! From Tucson there was, as always, Andrew Cooper and his trusty observing side kick Carter Smith. I really missed their almost constant chatter the marathon. Speaking of Andrew and if you have chance, check his web site at: <http://www.siowl.com/index.html?marathon2006> for more information and some nice pictures and don't miss the one of Rick giving the sunset talk. Another site I can suggest is Jeremy Perez at <http://www.perezmedia.net/beltofvenus/archives/000548.html> and check his picture of Don Machholz and Brent Archinal.

This marathon should be noted for the large number of first time marathoners and their high counts. Checking the table we find Keith Schlottman had 108; Jimmy Ray, 107; Jeremy Perez, 100 and Dan Gruber with 99.

We are also awarding 41 certificates to 41 observers who found 50 or more objects. Another interesting fact about this marathon was the number of observers turning in lists with less than 50 objects. These five observers will be awarded with honorable mention certificates.

(Continued on page 3)

NASA Space Place

Planets in Strange Places

By Trudy E. Bell

Red star, blue star, big star, small star—planets may form around virtually any type or size of star throughout the universe, not just around mid-sized middle-aged yellow stars like the Sun. That's the surprising implication of two recent discoveries from the 0.85-meter-diameter Spitzer Space Telescope, which is exploring the universe from orbit at infrared (heat) wavelengths blocked by the Earth's atmosphere.

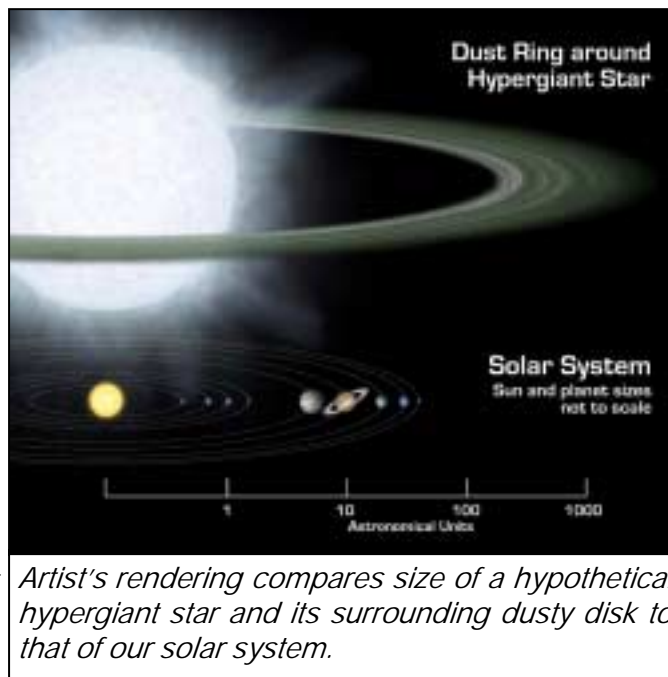
At one extreme are two blazing, blue "hypergiant" stars 180,000 light-years away in the Large Magellanic Cloud, one of the two companion galaxies to our Milky Way. The stars, called R 66 and R 126, are respectively 30 and 70 times the mass of the Sun, "about as massive as stars can get," said Joel Kastner, professor of imaging science at the Rochester Institute of Technology in New York. R 126 is so luminous that if it were placed 10 parsecs

(32.6 light-years) away—a distance at which the Sun would be one of the dimmest stars visible in the sky—the hypergiant would be as bright as the full moon, "definitely a daytime object," Kastner remarked.

Such hot stars have fierce solar winds, so Kastner and his team are mystified why any dust in the neighborhood hasn't long since been blown away. But there it is: an unmistakable spectral signature that both hypergiants are surrounded by mammoth disks of what might be planet-forming dust and even sand.

At the other extreme is a tiny brown dwarf star called Cha 110913-773444, relatively nearby (500 light-years) in the Milky Way. One of the smallest brown dwarfs known, it has less than 1 percent the mass of the Sun.

It's not even massive enough to kindle thermonuclear reactions for fusing hydrogen into helium. Yet this miniature "failed star," as brown dwarfs are often called, is also surrounded by a flat disk of dust that may eventually clump into planets. (Note: This brown dwarf discovery was made by a group led by Kevin Luhman of Pennsylvania State University.)



Artist's rendering compares size of a hypothetical hypergiant star and its surrounding dusty disk to that of our solar system.

Although actual planets have not been detected (in part because of the stars' great distances), the spectra of the hypergiants show that their dust is composed of forsterite, olivine, aromatic hydrocarbons, and other geological substances found on Earth.

These newfound disks represent "extremes of the environments in which planets might form," Kastner said. "Not what you'd expect if you think our solar system is the rule."

Hypergiants and dwarfs? The Milky Way could be crowded with worlds circling every kind of star imaginable—very strange, indeed.

Keep up with the latest findings from the Spitzer at www.spitzer.caltech.edu/. For kids, the Infrared Photo Album at The Space Place (spaceplace.nasa.gov/en/kids/sirtf1/sirtf_action.shtml) introduces the electromagnetic spectrum and compares the appearance of common scenes in visible versus infrared light.

This article was provided by the Jet Propulsion Laboratory, California Institute of Technology, under a contract with the National Aeronautics and Space Administration.

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There were a few observers observing Friday night and,

amongst them were Steve Gifford who imaged 99 objects in the Messier catalog. Also Steve Jaynes found 109 Messier objects, missing only M31.

2006 All Arizona Messier Marathon Final Results

Num	Name	Scope	Org.	Notes
108	Larry Brown	LX-200	TAAA	M74 M110
108	Keith Schlottman	LX-200	TAAA/SAC	M74 M110
107	D Turner &G Golden	LX-200	MO	M74 M110 M33
107	Jimmy Ray	8" SCT	SAC	M74 M110 M33
107	Rick Tejera	ETX 60 f5.8	SAC	M74 M110 M33
106	Deborah Cooper	Nexstar 11	TAAA	M74 M110 M33 M32
106	Randy Peterson	10" SCT	EVAC	M74 M110 M31 M32
106	Russell Peterson	10" SCT	EVAC	M74 M110 M31 M32
106	Chuck Shields	8" LX200	EVAC	M74 M110 M33 M32
105	Bob Christ	9.25" SCT	SAC	M74 M110 M31 M32 M33
105	Gilbert A. Esquerdo	6" f3.6	PSI	M110 M31 M32 M33 M73
105	Tim Jones	9.25" SCT	SAC	M74 M110 M31 M32 M33
105	Tom Polakis	70mm Pronto	SAC	M74 M110 M31 M32 M30
105	Dick Tobiason	Nexstar 8	OR	M74 M110 M31 M32 M33
104	Andrew Cooper	6" f5 Newt	TAAA	M74 M110 M32 M33 M75 M72
104	Ken Shaver	16" DOB	TAAA	M74 M110 M32 M33 M75 M72
103	John Moeschinger	8" Newt	AZ	M74 M110 M32 M31 M33 M72 M30
103	Carter-Thaxton Smith	10" DOB	TAAA	M74 M110 M32 M33 M75 M72 M73
102	John Holmquist	8" SCT	EVAC	M74 M110 M31 M32 M33 M76 M34 M40
102	Don Machholz	6" f8 Criterion	Clf	M74 M110 M31 M32 M33 M72 M73 M30
101	Butch Miller	LX-90	EVAC	M74 M110 M31 M32 M33 M77 M79 M72 M30
100	Kevin Jones	8" SCT	TAAA	M74 M110 M31 M32 M33 M77 M55 M72 M73 M30
100	Jeremy Perez	6" Newt	CAS	M74 M110 M31 M32 M33 M76 M75 M72 M73 M30
100	George Robinson	10" F4.7 DOB	AL	M74 M110 M31 M32 M75 M15 M2 M72 M73 M30
99	Dan Gruber	12" DOB	AZ	
97	David &Katie Kroeppler	80mm ref	AL	
95	Brian Jackson	Nexstar 8	CA	
93	James &Delia Brix	16" DOB	AZ	
93	Marie Bruhns	11" SCT	NAU	
93	Rick Rotramel	10" f5.8 Newt	SAC	
88	David Trogan	LX-200	EVAC	
85	Bill Loftquist	12.5" DOB	TAAA	
84	Melvin Harrison	10" DOB	EVAC	
82	Thomas Watson	8" Newt	TAAA	
75	Scott &Heather Saari	8" DOB	SAC	
74	Steve &Rosie Dodder	C8 SCT	SAC/TAAA	
74	Randall Stark	LX-90	EVAC	
72	Michael Douglas	10" DOB	AZ	
71	Brent Archinel	6" f10 ref	CAS	
70	Tony Velasques	8" SCT	AZ	
68	Joan McGue	8" DOB	SAC	
66	Stewart Cramer	Nexstar 11	SAC	

Club Affiliations: SAC: Saguaro Astronomy Club; EVAC: East Valley Astronomy Club; CAS: Coconino Astronomical Society, TAAA: Tucson Amateur Astronomy Association; PSI: Planetary Science Institute; NAU: Northern Arizona Univ. OR: Cental Oregon Astronomical Association, Bend, OR; At Large Observers from: CA; Santa Monica & Colfax, California, MO; Weatherby Lake, Missouri; AL Astronomical League

Last Call For Observations–Puppis

By A.J. Crayon

Puppis was originally part of the large constellation Argo Navis. When the International Astronomical Union officially defined the 88 constellations and their boundaries, they split Argo Navis into 4 parts: Carina (the keel), Vela (the sail), Puppis (the poop), and Pyxis (the compass). So much for that, let's get to the observations, as there's a lot to be covered in this month's installment.

M46

8" f6, Newtonian, 60X; Charlie Whiting: M-46 is a very rich and very dense OC. There are about 30 stars of 9th to 11th mag. There are at least that many 12th mag stars. There are many more 13th – 14th mag stars. All contained in 27' diameter! And to top it off, it has a PN superposed on it, NGC-2438.

10" f4.5, Dobsonian, 70X; Ken Reeves: Very large, pretty bright, very rich, very condensed, 3 levels of stars, quite a few chains. Fairly even, count about 150 stars, elongated slightly E/W.

20" f4.5, Dobsonian, 60X; Ken Reeves: Very large, pretty bright, very rich, somewhat condensed, 2 levels of stars, pretty well detached with the edges being fairly distinct. About 210 stars counted. Stars are well resolved though many come in with averted vision. The planetary nebula is very obvious.

NGC2438

8" f6, Newtonian, 160X; Charlie Whiting: While observing M-46 the sky got mushy and the stars gradually disappeared. So, I had to wait for a clearing to observe NGC-2438. It is visible without a filter, but filters do enhance it by increasing the contrast and helping it be more defined. The O-III had a slight edge over the narrowband filter. At 160 X it was a small roundish glow. Sometimes it was solid and sometimes it had a donut hole. Sometimes it appeared oblate. No color noted.

10" f4.5, Dobsonian, 70X; Ken Reeves: Very obvious against M-46, on N side of cluster. At **140X** annular and central star is suspected.

16" f4.4, Newtonian, 200X; Rich Rotramel: PN - pL, fB, oval donut shaped nebula, with star inside it off-center.

18" f4.5, Dobsonian, 86X; Peter Argenziano: this PNe is small and circular set amidst the open cluster M46. At **229X** the central star becomes visible continuously. The nebula appears round, with even brightness and soft edges. At **343X** the image scale is increased slightly, central star obvious, as is a field star imposed on the nebula. At **411X** there is a definite outer circle that is lighter than the darker central region. At **514X** the view is occasionally too soft, but in fleeting moments it is the best magnification used on this night. At **686X** the

nebula is much too soft - clearly the conditions tonight will not support this magnification.

20" f4.5, Dobsonian, 180X; Ken Reeves: On the edge of M-46, pretty bright, pretty large, slightly elongated ENE/WSW, annular, one star in the middle (central star?) one star on the SW edge. May be slightly brighter on the N edge with some detail and it may also be slightly flattened on this edge. Using the O-III filter shows some brightening on the S edge as well. Increasing power to **380X** doesn't show any more detail but does show a possible star just inside the ring on the WSW edge.

M47

8" f6, Newtonian, 60X; Charlie Whiting: This is a large OC with about 20 bright sparklers of 7th to 9th mag. In a 2nd level there are about 30 stars of 10th to 12th mag. Suspect a dimmer 3rd level of 13th and 14th mag stars. Cluster stars are loosely arranged in long strings.

20" f4.5, Dobsonian, 60X; Ken Reeves: Very large, very bright, somewhat rich, somewhat loose, well detached but edge is not well defined. 3 levels of stars, about 150 stars counted. There are several nice strings. The brightest star is an unequal double. Further E is a very nice equal double. There is no background haze. There are a lot of voids between the stars.

NGC2539

8" f6, Newtonian, 60X; Charlie Whiting: Fifth mag 19 Puppis marks the southeastern edge of this OC. It is likely a foreground star since the cluster stars are all very much dimmer. This cluster is very rich and pretty evenly distributed. About 100 stars of 9th to 13th mag huddle together. It is 22' in diameter and its boundary is fairly distinct from the background. The cluster stars seem to form a broad arrowhead shape.

10" f4.5, Dobsonian, 70X; Ken Reeves: Very large, pretty bright, somewhat rich, somewhat condensed and very well resolved. Elongated about 2:1 WNW/ESE. There are 2 levels of stars, no background haze, many little arcs and strings of stars. On the S side is a very bright star, which is probably not part of the cluster. The cluster disappears when clouds move in front of it. Count about 75 stars. This is a very spectacular cluster.

16" f4.4, Newtonian, 200X; Rich Rotramel: OC - vL, pB, pRich, with bright star 19 PUP in SE edge.

20" f4.5, Dobsonian, 60X; Ken Reeves: Quite large, somewhat bright, pretty rich, pretty condensed, kind of triangular shape. There are 2 layers of stars with about 135 stars counted plus mag 6 (19 Puppis) to the E of the cluster. The cluster is well detached. No haze, stars are in interesting groups and strings.

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NGC2527, also named NGC2520

8" f6, Newtonian, 60X; Charlie Whiting: is a small, fairly dense OC. It is only 22' in diameter. Its boundary is hardly distinguishable from the rich background where it's located. There are about 15 stars of 9th to 11th mag in the 1st level. There are 10-15 stars of 12th mag in the 2nd level. I didn't take note of any dimmer stars because the seeing / transparency was variable due to a light to medium haze moving through.

10" f4.5, Dobsonian, 70X; Ken Reeves: Somewhat bright, pretty large, fairly poor, little condensed. Not well detached from the Milky Way. There are 3 levels of stars. Dominated by 2 parallel strings of stars running N/S. Count about 30 stars. Edges are very subjective. The 2 strings are nice.

16" f4.4, Newtonian, 200X; Rich Rotramel: OC - L, pB, fRich, ~ 100 stars.

20" f4.5, Dobsonian, 60X; Ken Reeves: Pretty large, somewhat bright, slightly rich, somewhat loose, 3 levels of stars, about 50 stars counted, not well detached. Main feature is a serpentine string of stars. A bright (mag 7) star is to the E.

Collinder 135

Finally, the most southerly of this batch and located towards the west side of the constellation is **Collinder 135**, a large bright open cluster that included π Puppis. At magnitude 2.1 and about 50 arc-minutes, can you see it with your naked eye? I wish we had time for more, as there are enough clusters and nebula for more visits. For now, enjoy this tour. I like Ken's "extreme cluster" description!

8" f6, Newtonian, 60X; Charlie Whiting: seen naked eye; is seen as a very large and sparse OC. π Pup, NW & NV Pup, and SAO 197790 outline a triangle that seems to define the cluster's boundary. Yellow π Pup is due south of the center of the cluster. It has a blue 8th mag companion. 5th mag blue SAO 197790 is due north of the center. The twin 5th mag blue NW & NV Pup are a little north of due east of center. There are twenty to thirty 8th to 12th mag stars widely distributed within the clusters 50' boundary. The grouping looks more like a chance alignment than a gravity-bound cluster.

20" f4.5, Dobsonian, 60X; Ken Reeves: An "extreme" cluster - extremely large, extremely bright, extremely poor, extremely loose, not at all detached. 4 levels of stars, 3 brightest stars form an equilateral triangle. Brightest star, π Puppis is yellow with a blue companion. About 25 stars, many of which look like background field stars. In the largest field of view in the 20" scope (1 degree), doesn't look like much of a cluster.

Call for Observations

In one of my files with notes for objects to find I discovered a note attached to Corvus that said, "spend some time here, you will be surprised." So it is time to surprise not only myself but also the rest of us. I haven't observed much here, other than the *Ring Tail Galaxy* and a nice planetary nebula. So let's get some time under our observing belt for this little studied constellation and its inhabitants. For starters find the 11th magnitude barred galaxy **NGC4027**, which is 30' northwest of 5th magnitude TY Corvi. For an extra object, see if you can spot **NGC4027A** 4' to the south. It is 15th magnitude. Slewing just 41' northeast brings you to the *Ring Tail Galaxy*, a popular duo that is in the midst of colliding with each other. They are 11th magnitude spirals **NGC4038** and **NGC4039**. Can you determine the angle between the two galaxies and what does its tail look like? From here sweep a little more than a degree to the north of northwest to **NGC4033** an 11.7 magnitude galaxy. Next is **NGC4361** a rather bright and large planetary nebula that is almost 2.5° southeast of γ Corvi. It is quite a hop but there are several nice formations of 7th magnitude stars within a degree to help you locate the correct spot. Your observation should include a description of its interior. With **NGC4462** it is back to galaxies, this one towards the southern extremity of the constellation. It is a little more than one degree west of northwest from β Corvi and is rather faint at 12th magnitude. **NGC4783** brings us to the northeastern part of the constellation near Virgo. This is an 11.5 magnitude galaxy in a delightful field. Included are **NGC4782**, almost as bright and in contact just to the south. **NGC4792** is 7' to the northeast and **NGC4794** is 9' to the east of southeast. They are 15th magnitude and 14.5th magnitude respectively, so put on your challenge hat.

For June we're going to divert from the normal constellation selection and follow a different path. For this we will study the only outstanding unsolved mystery of the Messier Catalog and that is, is M102 a duplicate observation of M101 or not, and if not, what are the likely candidates? The short story is there isn't enough information to make a correct decision; at least not with the information available. Our assignment is to go out and observe M101 and a number of other galaxies that are thought to be M102 and report your results. To start with we must observe M101, a magnificent face on spiral galaxy, which Méchain described as,

101. 13h 43m 28s (208d 52' 42") + 55d 24' 25"

(March 27, 1781) `Nebula without star, very obscure & pretty large, of 6 or 7

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President's Message

By Rick Tejera



Whew, It sure has been a busy month. As always happens to astronomers, March Madness takes hold as the time comes for the Messier Marathon. As usual, this years event was coordinated by AJ Crayon & Jack Jones. In an unfortunate twist of fate, AJ would be unable to attend the event he worked so hard to make happen due to work priorities. Fortunately, he had things so well planned that Jack & I were able keep things on an even keel. Jack handled collecting the waivers & selling of T-shirts and again collecting the check off lists at the events conclusion. I had the honor to step in and give the twilight pep talk made famous by AJ. While I hope I did a credible job, I just don't think it's the same with a Lawn Gyland accent.

After the talk, Steve Coe announce he counted 107 cars on the field at twilight. Several more came in just after the talk. My estimate is 150 people in attendance. What a great turnout!

This year although 110 objects were possible, the fickle finger of Meteroa, the unchained goddess of the weather threw a monkey wrench into the plans of those looking for 110 objects. While disappointing on the face of things, I was proud & pleased with the way observers turn these lemons into lemonade. Folks took the challenge to alter the normal order of things and shoot the sucker holes that teased us all night. Several first

time observers had scores over 100 including Keith Schlottman with 108; Jimmy Ray, 107; Jeremy Perez, 100 and Dan Gruber with 99. My hats off to them, well done.

In addition to all the first timers we had the familiar faces with us, Andrew Cooper from Tucson who convinced his wife to marathon and had to bow to her higher score. Also from Tucson was 13 year old Carter Smith who again bettered 100 objects, star hopping no less. I believe this is Carters 4th marathon, all which he's found 100+. I truly believe had the weather cooperated, he'd have seen all 110. It's great to see a young man with the passion for astronomy he has.

As has been the norm the past few years, we have guest from out of state joining us. This year Kansas City, Mo & Wisconsin & California were among the states represented. Among the California contingent was Don Machholz, who in addition to having discovered 10 comets, was one of the main forces that popularized Messier Marathoning, Don marathoned entirely from memory and found 102 objects. He also inspired the crowd by handing out M&M candies prior to sunset. As President of SAC, I consider his presence a privilege and honor. I hope you had a chance to meet him and chat. A nicer fellow you couldn't meet.

After All was said & done, I'd have to say we beat Meteroa. I consider this event one of the most successful to date. Everyone I spoke with thanked us for staging a great event and all assured me they had fun. That is the greatest measure of success.



Club President, Rick Tejera points to the spot where M 30 will rise in morning twilight while filling in for AJ Crayon during the twilight pep-talk.

Photo by Jeremy Perez



Don Machholz of Colfax, CA. Don was instrumental in popularizing the concept of the Messier Marathon. We are pleased he chose to marathon with us this year and hope to see him in Arizona again.

Photo by Tom Polakis

May 2006

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

Schedule of Events for May 2006

May 5th	Moon at first quarter at 0513 mst
May 6th	Thunderbird Public Star Party at Thunderbird Park, Glendale.
May 12th	SAC General Meeting at Grand Canyon University at 1930, Speaker TBA.
May 13th	Moon is full at 0651 mst.
May 20th	Moon at third quarter at 0921 mst
May 20th	SAC Star Party at Cherry Road Sunset 1902, End Ast. Twilight 2108 Moon-rise 0157.
May 26th-28th	Riverside Astronomy Expo . Goto http://www.rtmcastronomyexpo.org/ for more details
May 27th	Moon is new at 0526 mst.

Future Planning

June 17th-24th	Grand Canyon Star Party. Go to http://www.tucsonastronomy.org/gcsp.html for more details
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A Messier Marathon Gallery



Cater Smith of Tucson, The youngest observer to marathon with us. Photo by Andrew Cooper



The Domes of Kitt Peak beckon in the distance. Photo by Tom Polakis



The Observing Field Saturday afternoon. Things would get a bit more crowded by sunset



*Rick Tejera fills in for AJ during the Twilight Pep Talk
Photo By Andrew Cooper*



Another view of the observing field.

Photo by Jeremy Perez

A Messier Marathon Gallery



Left: Steve Dodder & his 8" SCT on the Pieramid

Photo by Tom Polakis

Right: Larry Brown & the telescopes he & Keith Schlottman used to observe 108 objects

Photo by Keith Schlottman



And you thought Dave Fredericksen's truck was loud when it was yellow!

Photo & Chicanery by Tom Polakis

The moon rises through the clouds to bring the marathon to a close. Photo by Keith Schlottman.

For more images and Marathon blogs, goto the following observers websites:

Jeremy Perez:

<http://www.perezmedia.net/beltofvenus/archives/000548.html>

Andrew Cooper:

<http://www.siowl.com/index.html?marathon2006>

Look to the SAC website in the near future for more images from the 2006 All Arizona Messier Marathon



Stone Haven Pot Luck Star Party

By Steve Dodder

I'd like to invite members of SAC and their families to a pot-luck dinner/star party at our Stone Haven Observatory, located south west of Maricopa on Saturday, April 22, 2006. We'll provide soda and a barbecue grill. Bring something to throw on the grill and something to share. Chairs and a small table would be good, too. Well behaved children are welcome, and we'll have a "solar system walk" as the Sun sets. Our "special guest" will be Joe Orman, who will show us some of his wonderful astronomical slides after sunset.

Kindly arrive around 4:00 PM, with a call to the cell number below to verify weather conditions. (We'll be there, cloudy or clear, but rain may affect the event.) We have dogs, so if you're afraid, let us know.

Directions are as follows:

TAKE I-10 SOUTH TOWARD TUCSON. EXIT AT QUEEN CREEK ROAD TOWARD MARICOPA. PROCEED THROUGH MARICOPA, PAST THE HARRAH'S AK-CHIN CASINO 2 MILES. TURN WEST (RIGHT) ON PAPAGO ROAD. PROCEED WEST 5 MILES. PAPAGO TURNS SOUTH (LEFT) AND BECOMES WARREN ROAD. APPROXIMATELY 4 MILES, YOU'LL SEE BARNES RD. FOUR STREETS PAST BARNES IS PRICKLY PEAR. TURN WEST, (RIGHT), 0.6 MILES, ACROSS DEER TRAIL. YOU CAN'T MISS THE DOME.

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Bits & Pisces, Minutes of the March 10th General Meeting

The March 10, 2006 meeting was opened at 7:30 by President Rick Tejera, who welcomed all visitors and members. He invited the visitors to introduce themselves and sign the guest book and receive a copy of the SAC newsletter. Paul Dickson gave the Treasurer's Report—the club has a total balance of \$5772.36. He again reminded members about renewing their 2006 memberships and ordering their discounted subscriptions to Sky and Telescope and Astronomy magazines. If those who have been receiving the mailed newsletters don't renew, they will no longer get the mailed copy.

Announcements: A.J. Crayon again gave the information about the upcoming Messier Marathon on March 25-26, 2006 at the Farnsworth Ranch near Arizona City. He said that sunset would be 6:46 pm, and advised members to get there early to set up and eat before dark. He said that all 110 objects would be available for observations and the Webmaster has put the information on the website—at least 200 people are expected to attend and Jack Jones has ordered 2 porta-johns. Peter has supplied the check-off list forms. A.J. mentioned that there would be awards (1st, 2nd, and 3rd place), but that everyone should set their own goals. He will have the waiver forms to be signed and all observations have to be turned into him before leaving the site.

Jack Jones said that T-shirts will be available and there are sign-up sheets to order ahead of time—the shirts will be dark forest green—similar to the one he was wearing.

He also said that the next Public Events would be March 28 at the Garden Lakes elementary school in Avondale; April 1 will be the public party at Dreamy Draw Park in Phoenix, and the May 6th public party will be at Thunderbird Park in Glendale.

Steve Dodder announced the next semi-annual Potluck Star Party would be held at Stonehaven observatory in Maricopa on April 22 and everyone is encouraged to bring their telescope and a potluck food dish. There will be a surprise guest star at the party—the Binocular Chair! A map will be in the newsletter.



March Guest Speaker: Dr David Burstein

Show 'n Tell—Steve Coe had issued a challenge for the Sentinel site—How many planets can be observed? Rick Rotramel was the winner. Steve also showed some recent slides of the skies and wanted to be remembered as the last person to actually show real film slides (*Ed note: I've got a roll of slide film for the marathon, so not today Steve ☺*).

After the break, Professor David Burstein from ASU was the speaker—his topic was “Chemical Composition of Globular Clusters—High spectra numbers for Nitrogen—Where does it come from?” The meeting adjourned at 9:45 pm and members went to the JB.'s restaurant at Northern and 35th Avenue for fellowship and food.

The next meeting will be on Good Friday, April 14, 2006.

(Continued from page 5)

minutes [of arc] in diameter, between the left hand of Boötes & the tail of the great Bear [Ursa Major]. It is difficult to distinguish when one lits the [graticule] wires.' (diam. 7')

For the observation of M102, wherever it is, Méchain described M102 as,

(Méchain) `Nebula between the stars Omicron of Boötes & Iota of the Dragon [Draco]: it is very faint; near it is a star of the sixth magnitude.'

(Handwritten position added by Messier in his personal copy: 14h 40m, +56.)

In all of your observations, look for the 6th magnitude star. Where is it? Remember, though, this is a visual observing estimating the magnitude of a star. Could it be

off by a magnitude or so?

So much for the introduction now let's move on to the objects for us to study. We start with the obvious **M101**. The NGC candidates are a selection of the brighter galaxies in the area. The first galaxy takes us into Boötes, is mag 12.5 **NGC5899**. Magnitude 12.8, **NGC5908** follows. The third is magnitude 11.1 **NGC5907** a late type spiral. Second to last **NGC5879** another spiral galaxy at magnitude 12.2. Finally, the last is a popular pick for M102, is magnitude 10.8 **NGC5866**, an early spiral. Some of the above galaxies have other field galaxies included. Just for the observational fun of it, let us know which ones you can identify.

Include your opinion of which object you believe is M102 and don't let the popular pick sway your selection.

SAGUARO ASTRONOMY CLUB

April 2006

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Videmus Stellae



SAC Schedule of Events 2006

SAC Meetings

January 13th, 2006 July 14th, 2006
February 10th, 2006 August 11th, 2006
March 10th, 2006 September 8th, 2006
April 14th, 2006 October 6th, 2006
May 12th, 2006 November 3rd, 2006
June 9th, 2006 December: TBA

ATM & Astro-Imaging Group Meetings

January 10th, 2006 July 11th, 2006
February 7th, 2006 August 8th, 2006
March 7th, 2006 September 5th, 2006
April 11th, 2006 ? October 3rd, 2006
May 9th, 2006 November 7th, 2006
June 6th, 2006 December 5th, 2006

SAC Star Parties

Date	Sunset	Astronomical Twilight Ends	Moonrise	Site
Jan 21st, 2006	1752	1919	0044	F
Feb 18th, 2006	1818	1942	2335	F
Mar 18th, 2006	1842	2005	2230	F
Apr 22nd, 2006	1908	2037	0347	F
May 20th, 2006	1928	2108	0157	C
Jun 17th, 2006	1943	2129	0029	C
Jul 22nd, 2006	1938	2117	0346	C
Aug 19th, 2006	1911	2042	0240	C
Sep 16th, 2006	1854	1958	0135	C
Oct 14th, 2006	1759	1921	0033	F
Nov 11th, 2006	1723	1850	2316	F
Dec 16th, 2006	1725	1854	0449	F

F = Flat Iron; C = Cherry Road