



Sky Watch

Issue #7-07
July

The Newsletter of the Brevard Astronomical Society

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Summary of June meeting:

- 1) Presentation on Variable Stars by Wyck Hoffler
- 2) Outreach coordination discussion by Oscar Sifuentes & John Small.
- 3) Discussion on potential trip to Chiefland in July.
- 4) Status of BAS ByLaw change review by members; Bill Manley

Upcoming BAS Meetings & Agenda:

July 18 – Andy Wheeler - Homemade 10" Telescope

August 15 - Roy Uyematsu - Measuring Variable Stars with CCD Equipment (Camera's)

September 19 – Chuck Greenwood - Kitt Peak

Moon Phases:

New: July 14th
Full: July 29th

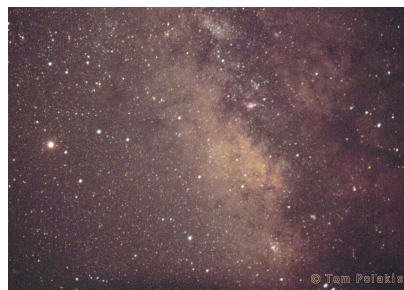


What is in the Sky in July?

July marks the beginning of summer and promises great vistas of the Milky Way for star gazers. The Summer Triangle begins to rise in the late evening in July and hosts summer favorites such as M57 in Lyra, Albireo, and the Veil Nebula in Cygnus if you are lucky enough to get to a dark site and have a UHC or OIII filter handy (won't see it without both, but worth the effort). The faint planetary nebula Dumbbell M27 in Vulpecula is east of Albireo if you like a challenge. If you can see the Veil Nebula, you can see M27... July is a great time of year to hunt for Globular Clusters. There are "scads" of them (Messier & NGC) as we begin to look back toward the center of the galaxy and the halo that surrounds it (where most globulars reside). Oscar Sifuentes sent out a Messier list for July by e-mail, and can be obtained at the following website:

<http://www.seds.org/messier/xtra/12months/m-jul.html>

July marks the time on the calendar to let the distant galaxies in Virgo, Coma Berenices, and Ursa Major fade west during twilight and turn focus to the beauty of our host galaxy. If you are able to get to a dark site, I would suggest that once your gear is set up, spend 15-20 minutes "just looking up" unaided and enjoy the spectacular view as a river of stars paints the sky white up from Scorpius and Sagittarius South, overhead through Scutum, Aquila, Cygnus and Cassiopeia North. You will not be disappointed in the view. The only better month to observe the Milky Way is August when the stars are overhead earlier in the evening. There is so much to see that observing can easily become a 3 month journey. Start in July, get serious in August, and finish what you missed in September! Most of all; enjoy.



Note: the bright "star" toward the left of the teapot asterism in the above photo is Jupiter

PLANETS:

Venus remains visible in the evening to the west but not for long, setting at approx 10:20 by mid July but already low. It will be setting with the sun by early August. **Saturn** has now passed by Venus on its trek toward the western horizon and will be gone until the early bird viewers can observe it again before sunrise in December. Saturn was within 0.8 deg of Venus this past weekend, but the weather was not good.

Jupiter begins to rise while dinner is on the table and transits by 10:30pm by Mid July and is always a treat. **Neptune** and **Uranus** rise at 10pm and 11:30pm respectively by mid July, and transit near dawn to the south. **Mars** rises approx 2am, so it is about 40 deg above the east horizon in Aries.

Mercury rises before dawn to the E-NE and reaches greatest elongation on the 20th. Oh yes, and for those who like to observe **Earth**, it reaches its farthest distance (aphelion) from the sun at 94.5 million miles at midnight this Saturday, 7/7/07! (tonght).

Upcoming BAS Star Parties:

John Powell invited BAS and MAS to his house on June 16th. John lives about 6 mi south of Harmony as the crow fly's in Osceola County. We all had a great time and appreciate the invitation. The viewing was real good. Some skyglow to the W-NW from Orlando, but east & SE are great. The Milky Way was clearly visible, which is great for central Florida. **(thanks John!)** Oh yeah, and the bugs or lack thereof were great too! See John Small's excerpt on Camp Zyxlor.

A few of us are considering a trek to Chiefland next weekend (13 July). Keep an eye out for e-mail traffic if you are interested.

The Shilo North Site and South site are not conducive for observing this time of year unless to want to be carried off by mosquitoes.....



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Club News:

John Small has volunteered to pickup the duties of Secretary for the club for the remainder of 2007. The officers appreciate him stepping up to this task.

Two of the three loaner scopes are at the Planetarium and available for use by club members in accordance with the BAS Loaner scope procedure. I believe Gary Scott has borrowed the 8" dob.

Oscar Sifuentes keeps us up to speed on observing with his Messier list each month. Thanks Oscar!

Dave Guibert remains in close contact with a past member of BAS, **Rick Beno**. Rick and his wife Vikki now live in astronomy heaven – SE Arizona Sky Village. I had the pleasure of knowing Rick as well while he was here and was my mentor for observatory training. Below is a picture Rick took of M101, but it doesn't do it justice. Please see the e-mail forwarded to all by Dave Guibert to get the true beauty of the picture. To Rick and Vikki if you are out there; BAS members wish you both the very best in AZ.....

From Rick:

Here's my latest shot of M101 with the Starlight Express. I think it's pretty cool. It's 2-15 min 2x2 luminance and one 12m color shot. It would have been 3 luminance shots except for the satellite that burned right through the core of the galaxy.

Photo next column.....



Rick Beno M101 - 2007

BAS Outreach News:

The following is a synopsis from John Small:

BAS Solar /Star Party at Space Coast Stadium June 9, 2007

Members of Brevard and Melbourne Astronomical Societies participated in a Sidewalk Astronomy event at Space Coast Stadium in Viera on June 9, 2007. Telescope volunteers for BAS were Oscar Sifuentes, Wyck Hoffer, Greg O'Neill, Doug Sumerlin and John Small. Also on hand were Peter Scheuter and Ron Netzley from MAS. There was little cloud cover and no wind as solar observation began at 4:30pm. Wyck was using his 8 inch Celestron SCT (Schmidt-Cassegrain Telescope) on equatorial fork mount, with wedge, clock driven with slow motion on both axes, Thousand Oaks 90mm sub diameter solar filter and his Coronado MaxScope 40, double stacked (0.5 Angstrom), mounted and collimated with the Celestron for observation in H- Alpha light and 18mm Cemax eyepiece. The Sun was very active this day and Wyck's setup provided two distinctly different views of old Sol. There were prominences appearing in different places all afternoon and a couple of well defined sun spots near the center of the solar disc. Fans entering the stadium were wowed by the view from Wyck's scopes. Solar viewing was also done by Oscar with his 10 inch Newtonian and 14 inch truss Dobsonian, Peter with his 10 inch SCT on equatorial mount, Doug with his 10 inch Dobsonian and me with my 10 inch LX 90 SCT.

Steve Bevan and Pedro Bragance from www.astrosports.com did video interviews with our members during the event. They travel to astronomy events all over the country and report on them. You can go to their website and see pictures of the May 19, 2007 International Sidewalk Astronomy Night at Space Coast Stadium.

As the Sun set Venus was blazing in the western sky at quarter phase and Saturn began to appear. Greg O'Neill had his 10 inch SCT set up and added a nice touch to the evening with a radio tuned to a station that plays space music. Jupiter was rising over the Southeast corner of the stadium as the fans exited the game. Using a 30mm eyepiece I managed to get a good view of the planet and all four moons for our guests.

During the game, Kyle Smith (stadium events manager) dropped by and we presented him with a certificate of appreciation from BAS. We would like to thank Kyle and his staff for their hospitality and allowing us to have our star parties at the SCS.

Ron Netzley brought along his home built 10 inch f5.6 Dobsonian he has named "The Phoenix" because it has been torn apart and rebuilt so many times. It was made from a 12 inch PVC water pipe and scroll cut to resemble a truss tube design. This is truly a beautiful well crafted instrument. Ron has taken this scope to the Nebraska, PA and West VA star parties and the Hidden Hollow and Apollo Rendezvous in Ohio several times.

The star party ended at 10:30pm and as usual our guests, all 427 of them, were very complimentary of our clubs and the work we do. Thanks to our volunteers, we put on a great show!



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From John Small:

A Night To Remember At Camp Zyxlor June 16, 2007.....

On June 16, 2007 John "Zyxlor" Powell invited BAS and MAS to his home in St. Cloud for dinner and a star party. John lives on ten acres 30 miles west of 195 and 6 miles south of 192. When you turn off 192 you are transported back in time to what Florida was like when I was growing up. He has an acre of land cleared behind his house and it affords good viewing in all directions except to the west, which is not important since there is a modest amount of sky glow from Kissimmee. Most of us arrived around 6pm and had a fine dinner with covered dishes provided by each attendee. Those attending were as follows: Gary, Jennifer and Krystina Scott, Dave Guibert, Bill Manley, Gordon Schafer, and John Small. Peter Scheuter and Rick Young from MAS were also present.

Just before dark the sky was partly cloudy, but it cleared by 8pm. The wind was light and skeeters were not much of a problem. Gordon Schafer brought his 18 inch Obsession Truss Dobsonian, Bill Manley had his 8 inch Dobsonian, I had my 10 inch LX90 SCT and John Powell had his 10 inch LX 200 set up for imaging.

This was a glorious night for observing. The Milky Way appeared as a cloud that stretched from the Southeast horizon Northward. Views of the Swan, Eagle, Lagoon, and Ring Nebulas were amazing through Gordon's 18 inch Obsession. We also used his scope to view M13, M5,

and Jupiter. Later in the evening Peter and Rick found Omega Centauri through Gary Scott's 15X70 binoculars. Using his SBIG and LX200 John Powell captured a nice image of the Eagle Nebula with the Pillars of Creation very well resolved.

Toward the end of the session Bill found an unidentified luminosity near [\[the lagoon nebula, M8\]](#) that he sketched. [\[it turns out I was looking at a 7.8 mag globular cluster, NGC 6544\].](#) Gordon and I observed an extremely bright flare from a satellite in the East moving from the North to South. These are just a few of the objects we encountered on this perfect night under the stars. The party wound down at 1:35am as we packed up and headed for home.

Members of our club should try to make as many of these outings as possible. You never know what you're going to see and learn. Gordon was kind enough to lend me some of his Nagler eyepieces. With the Naglers and my scope I saw things more clearly than ever and learned I needed to buy some. [Thanks to John Powell and his family for sharing their beautiful dark sky with us.](#)

John Small