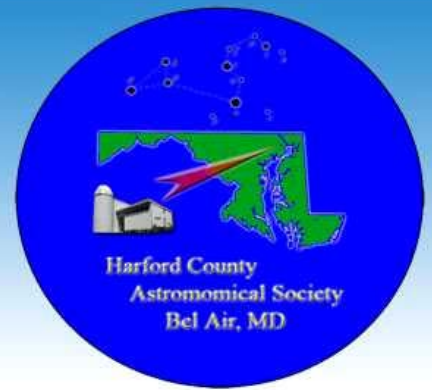


Astro Views

Harford County Astronomical Society
Bel Air, Maryland
www.harfordastro.org



Volume 31 Issue 3

March 2005

“For what could be more beautiful than the Heavens which contain all beautiful things? Their names make this clear; *Caelum* (heavens) by naming that which is beautifully carved... So if the worth of the arts were measured by the matter with which they deal, this art ... which some call astronomy,... would be by far the most outstanding.”

Nicolas Copernicus (1473-1543)
De Revolutionibus Orbium Coelestium
(On the Revolutions of the Celestial Spheres,” book one)
1543

General Meeting: Saturday, **March 26, 2005 7:30pm (19:30)
Public Star Party (Open House), **March 19, 2005** at dusk**

Club Calendar for 2005

<u>Meeting night</u>	<u>Open House/Public Star party</u>
January 22, 2005	January 15, 2005
February 26, 2005	February 19, 2005
March 26, 2005	March 19, 2005
April 23, 2005	April 16, 2005
May 21, 2005	May 14, 2005
June 18, 2005	June 11, 2005
July 23, 2005	July 16, 2005
August 20, 2005	August 13, 2005
September 17, 2005	September 10, 2005
October 15, 2005	October 8, 2005
November 19, 2005	November 12, 2005
December 17, 2005	December 10, 2005

Meeting time is 19:30 (7:30pm) unless noted otherwise. Dates and times are taken from the HCAS website.

<http://www.harfordastro.org>

Check the HCAS website for other club events.

**Minutes: General Meeting, Harford County Astronomical Society
26 February 2005**

President Larry Armstrong opened the meeting at 7:30PM and welcomed the good turn out. Weather has conspired to delay out meetings since last November, so it was good to see old friends again!



Minutes from November, 2004 (our last meeting due to weather conditions) accepted.

Treasurer's report: \$2704.86

Regular Agenda:

1. Observatory Operations: Last certification class held in November. Current list of members approved for access to observatory is posted with HCC Security.
2. Public Open Houses: Very cold for the last several open house events. Thanks to the hardy members that have participated...the weather will only improve with the coming months!
3. Star Parties:
 - Hands On Optics Swap Meet, Damascus, MD 2 April.
 - Delmarva Stargazers, April 8 through April 10 2005 at Tuckahoe State Park near Queen Anne, MD..see: <http://www.delmarvastargazers.org/archive/sg2005/index.html>
 - Almost Heaven Star Party and the "Year Long Star Party"...access to the darkest sky in the eastern US! See: <http://www.novac.com/>

Old business:

1. Warren Hoover Estate: Closed...thanks to all for the help
2. Rocks State Park access: it appears that we may not be able to have a key for access to the Rock State Park site as was promised for our support for their astronomy night/lunar photography workshop. The members voted not to pursue the issue. The Park calls for our help again, we'll consider it favorably in light of our outreach mission.
3. Broad Creek Signal Flag: Joe Manning is still considering options to alert members that the Broad Creek key is present (or not) from our storage site. The idea is to make it easier for folks to tell if someone has already opened the site for a particular evening. With some signal present, you could just proceed to the viewing site rather than have to stop and check for the key.
4. Eden Mill Outreach: On 18 March, 7:00 PM we will support an adult outreach at the Eden Mill State Park (off of 165, directions will be EMAILED). Tom Rusek is to present his lecture and members are asked to bring scopes and set up for a special "seeing" session. **PLEASE NOTIFY Tom Rusek of any requests for outreach sessions...he is our coordinator!



New Business:

1. Astronomy Day, 16 April, 2005. Members are asked to consider what we may do in support of National Astronomy Day. In the past we've had observatory tours, viewing parties and similar. This is also our scheduled Public Open House and we may want to expand that into an earlier start. WE'LL DECIDE AT THE MARCH MEETING WHAT WE WILL/WILL NOT DO SO PLEASE THINK ABOUT WHAT YOU WOULD SUPPORT FOR THE DAY.
2. Spring Cleaning: 23 April, 2005 is our scheduled General Meeting. **WE WILL MEET AT THE OBSERVATORY AT 1:00PM THAT AFTERNOON TO CLEAN OUT OUR STOREROOM AND LIBRARY, AS WELL AS GENERAL CLEANING OF THE OBSERVATORY.** There is a lot of "stuff" that we frankly need to remove from the store room. WE WILL BE CATEGORIZING THE ITEMS AND THOSE THAT THE MEMBERS PRESENT BELIEVE SHOULD BE DISPOSED OF WILL BE REMOVED. The members, in concert with the general meeting that evening, will vote to offer those items for sale or disposal. **ANY ITEM THAT SOMEONE BELIEVES TO HAVE PARTICULAR VALUE WILL BE ASKED TO PRESENT A RATIONALE AND PLAN FOR PUTTING THAT ITEM TO USE FOR THE CLUB OR SELLING IT AND RETURNING FUNDS TO THE CLUB TREASURY. The membership will vote on any proposals and disposition. PLEASE READ THAT LAST SENTENCE AGAIN!** We are in a position now to enjoy increased support from the college and increase use of the observatory. There is a crying need to reorganize and streamline our holdings so we can respond effectively to this "new era"! We will order in pizza that afternoon to feed the working members....PLEASE COME OUT AND HELP CLEAN UP THE ROOMS AND GROUNDS.
3. Harford Community College: Sal Rodano brought us up to date on the long awaited improvements to the observatory road and access. Plans include drive way pathways and similar additions that will make public safer and more effective. Sal will check into seeking our Public Open House events that MAY reduce out It is important to remember that this speaks only to properties. Our current public open house location is not anticipate changing that location until the improvements sanction from the HCC has been documented. Sal was very enthusiastic about the renewed interest in the sciences at HCC, and we've already seen evidence of that with out tree trimming and access road improvements! IT IS A NEW ERA!!



"pull outs" red lighted access to the observatory "official" sponsorship of liability insurance requirements. events that occur on/in HCC on HCC property and we don't have been completed and official

4. Solar Viewing: There has been LOTS of EMAIL discussion about providing a means for solar viewing to interested club members and the public. WYANE FRENCH will take the lead to determine the utility and function of our present DayStar H-alpha system. He'll report back to the club on how we may better use that equipment. New member Monroe Hardin brought and demonstrated his new Coronado PST (Personal Solar Telescope)...a sweet piece of instrumentation that brings H-alpha viewing into the affordable range! The club is excited about providing some solar viewing options that are transportable and easily used for public events...who knows, if we do a good job cleaning out the storeroom we may just find money there that we could use for a PST, eh? ☺ Monroe has contributed an article for the newsletter on the PST to be published in a later edition.



5. Roberto Ramos has signed up to help the Boy Scouts in their astronomy merit badge training. If he needs some help, members are ready to pitch in...good on ya, Roberto!

DOOR PRIZE: Tom Rusek won the door prize...but I don't know which of the two options he finally selected...an astronomical atlas or the viewing guidebook?? Nice to have options! ☺



“Wild Bill” Geertsen brought a new book he is reading: “The Book Nobody Read”. It accounts for the distribution and history of Copernicus’ pivotal work on planetary motion...Bill reports it is a fascinating story that combines history and detective work!

Speaking of BOOK REPORTS: Her reaction when asked about her report on the book she WON at that LAST MEETING??!!!! See Cathy’s response: [She’s either embarrassed, or President Larry is running a real “sleeper” of a meeting, eh? :)]



Some members asked about astro imaging using web cams. Some sites I found useful are listed:

<http://www.astrosurf.com/benschop/APEquipment.htm>

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/QCUIAG/>

<http://www.astrosurf.com/re/qc.html>

<http://www.usno.navy.mil/pao/QuickCamAstro.shtml>

6. Observing by members

Phil Schmitz:

Observation Date: Friday, Jan 28, 2005

Location: Maryland Science Center

Instrument: Alvan Clark 8" Refractor (computer controlled)

Eyepiece: 26mm (about 120X)

Temperature: 26 Degrees F. at 5:30 PM, 15 Degrees F. at 10:00 PM

Seeing: Turbulent until after 9 PM

Transparency: Excellent.

Observations: Saturn displayed multiple bands on the disk. Cassini's Division was visible all around the planet except for where the disk of Saturn blocked the rings, also used a 17mm on Saturn (about 180X). Five satellites were seen. Titan, Dione, Tethys, Rhea and surprisingly Iapetus. Searched for Enceladus, but the turbulent air keep it from visibility. Satellite positions verified using The Sky Software.

Theta 1 Orionis, also known as the Trapezium. Only four members of this stellar system were seen. the fifth and sixth members were not seen due to the turbulence of the atmosphere. M42, which surrounds the Trapezium showed quite a bit of nebulosity. Iota Orionis, the bottom star in the sword of

Orion (Na'ir al saif is its official name) is an interesting triple star. The bright secondary star was at 12:00 (directly above the primary star) and the third star was around three and a good distance away from Iota A (Iota A is a close spectroscopic binary making this a quartet). Considering the Turbulence, I did not expect Rigel to split, but its close secondary was seen at about 11:00 (above center and to the left of Rigel A). Moved to Beta Monocerotis, a beautiful triple star in Monoceros, all three are around 5th magnitude. All three components were easily seen. The Pleiades, M45

was actually viewed through the 70mm Ranger telescope at 30X. Comet Machholz was a faint glow, with no visible tail. Closed out the observation with the waning gibbous Moon which was 90% lit.

Tim Kamel:

Thursday the 27th was clear but was very cold and I did not go out. On Sunday the 30th, it was a clear night and I could not really get excited about installing my Turbo Tax and starting to use it, so I went out.

This night I used my Orion Skyview Deluxe 8", f/4 scope and set it up on my patio. My patio is reasonably sheltered from the street lights and the neighbors' front porch lights, but it is still bright enough that I can not see the Milky Way. I did my viewing for about 40 minutes, from 9:50 till 10:30.

I viewed 4 objects in that time at various magnifications. I started off with Saturn, working my way up to about 90 magnification with a 9 mm Plossl, which is about all that viewing with allow. At 133 power with a 6 mm Orthoscopic, the view shook too much. I could barely see some banding on the planet and could not see the Cassini division. I could see one of the moons, just outside of the rings.

I spent some time with M42, Orion Nebula. I could see four components of the Trapezium and the filaments of the nebula around them. Mostly, I was using the 9 mm Plossl and a 15 mm RKE.

As a parting view, I checked out the Pleiades with a 32 mm Brandon. Beautiful. I had a dark background with 8 or so bright stars and many dimmer ones.

As I began to pack up, I saw that the Big Dipper was over my neighbor's house. I looked at Mizar and slip the double using the 15 mm RKE. I tried to check out the colors but both seemed white to me with a slight touch of blue.

On the whole, I thought the viewing conditions were sub par. Views at higher power danced in the eye piece and I was having a very difficult time bringing Saturn into focus.

NEXT MEETING: 26 March, 2005

Meeting adjourned by President Larry Armstrong at 9:30pm (21:30).

April Messier Objects

Between RA 9h 00m and 10h 59mm

- | | | | | | |
|--|----------|------------|--------------|---------|------------------|
| M81
NGC 3031 | RA 09-56 | Dec +69-04 | Size 16'x10' | Mag 6.9 | Spiral galaxy |
| One of the best galaxies in the sky. Forms a pair with M82 in Ursa Major. Both are easily visible in the same low magnification field of view. Bright and large, a "must see pair". | | | | | |
| M82
NGC 3034 | RA 09-56 | Dec +69-42 | Size 10x2' | Mag 8.7 | Irregular galaxy |
| Large, not as bright as M81. Look for a grainy texture and dust lanes. In Ursa Major. | | | | | |
| M95
NGC 3351 | RA 10-04 | Dec +11-42 | Size 7'x5' | Mag 9.7 | Spiral galaxy |
| Low surface brightness and contrast, large, nearly round face-on SG. With very low magnification you may get M96 in the same field of view. In Leo. | | | | | |
| M96
NGC 3368 | RA 10-47 | Dec +11-49 | Size 7'x5' | Mag 9.2 | Spiral galaxy |
| Large, relatively bright, companion to M95 in Leo. | | | | | |
| M105
NGC 3379 | RA 10-48 | Dec +12-35 | Size 4.5x4'' | Mag 9.2 | Spiral galaxy |
| Relatively bright, circular galaxy in Leo. With M105 you get a bonus of two other galaxies in the same field of view. They are NGC 3384, a bright magnitude 9.2 type E7 galaxy and NGC 3389, a dim magnitude 11.8 type Sc galaxy. All three can be seen on a dark night. | | | | | |

<<<If you have looked at M-44, the "Bee Hive Cluster" you have a start on the Messier list. Send in your observations!!>>>

Stellar Parallax

This is an interesting and informative animation.

<http://instruct1.cit.cornell.edu/courses/astro101/java/parallax/parallax.html>

There are mail restrictions (number of pages) on the snail-mail version. To get the most out of your Astro Views, you are encouraged to subscribe to the e-mail version. This is easily done by contacting Steve Channel at srcac2@comcast.net and adding your e-mail address to his mailing list.

This e-mail issue contains a detailed listing of objects in Leo (which are visible in scopes of 10" or smaller aperture. Many are listed in the AL observing programs. Using the list will get you started on the AL observing-certificate programs.).

Astro Views is the official publication of the Harford County Astronomical Society, P.O. Box 906, Bel Air, MD 21014. For the year 2005 any items for publication in any issue are due to the editor by the 15th of the preceding month. Please send all contributions (electronic format is STRONGLY encouraged) to Bill Geertsens at (EMAIL):izar@juno.com, regular mail at: 36 Northwood Drive, Timonium, MD 21093. Permission is not necessary for non-profit use of this material, although proper acknowledgement is required. Address changes should be brought to the attention of the editor at the address given above.

Home Page Web Site: <http://www.harfordastro.org> Webmaster: Charles Jones

HARFORD COUNTY ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY

P.O. BOX 906

Bel Air, MD 21014

FIRST CLASS

Address Correction Requested