



The Eyepiece

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APRIL AT A GLANCE

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FOR SALE-WANT ADDS

For sale, 10" Meade Starfinder Dobsonian Telescope with the following accessories: 9x60 Orion finder scope, Orion EZ Finder, 6 eyepieces, filter set, carrying cases. Like new condition. Paid \$1350.00, selling for \$950.00. Call Dave or Peggy Boncher at 337-9220

APRIL IN DETAIL

MONTHLY MEETING

Our April monthly meeting will be on Wednesday, April 8th from 7:00 PM to 9:00 PM at the Neville Public Museum. This month our topic is Double Stars and the talk will be given by Ron Parmentier. Hope to see you there.

NEWSTAR MONTHLY MEETING

The NEWSTAR monthly meeting will be on Wednesday, April 15th, 7:00 PM at the University of Wisconsin, Menasha Center. Call Don DeWitt if you are interested in going.

FIELD TRIP TO FERMI LAB

The field trip with NEWSTAR to the Fermi Lab will be Saturday, April 18th. If you plan on staying overnight you need to make a

reservation. We will have the phone number at the monthly meeting. Otherwise, call Don DeWitt at 405-8534. We will also have maps on how to get there.

ASTRONOMY DAY PLANNING MEETING

Our final Astronomy Day Planning Meeting will be held on Wednesday, April 22nd. The location for this meeting will be THE WILDLIFE SANCTUARY NATURE CENTER and the time will be 6:30 PM.

PARMENTIER OBSERVATORY WEEKEND

Our first Parmentier Observatory Weekend of the year is scheduled for Friday/Saturday, April 24-25. For directions to the observatory, call Ron Parmentier at 336-5878.

CRIVITZ SITE CLEANUP WEEKEND

The weekend of April 24-25 is also set aside as the "cleanup" weekend for our new observing site at Dave Jorgenson's place in Crivitz. We will be clearing out the old brush, building a fire pit and wiring up a box for electricity. Call Don DeWitt at 405-8534 if you want to help.

A LOOK AT OUR PAST

MESSIER MARATHON

Saturday, March 28th was a mild day with temps close to 65 degrees. There was a mix of sun and clouds throughout the day so you were never sure whether or not it would be clear for the Messier Marathon.

Finally around 5:00 PM, the sky over Neshota Park cleared for the pending observing session. About 40 people came out for the marathon and had fun looking at various Messier objects.

After a little break we will regroup at the Sanctuary's grounds on Danz Avenue for Phase 2. This will be our more traditional Public Observing session. The scheduled times for the evening session are from 8:00 PM to 10:00 PM.

We recommend people to be at the both sites about an hour ahead of time for general set up. Please note that we will be at the Nature Center on Friday May 1st at 6:30 PM to start setting up the various displays.

Any help you can spare on either day would be greatly appreciated. The more people we have, the smoother things will run and the more we can do with the public. Please mark your calendars for May 1st to help set up and May 2nd to help man our Astronomy

As usual, everyone brought a lot of interesting food dishes including chili, booyah, and several casserole type dishes. Also present were chips, dips, salads, cookies, brownies and many other goodies.

We were able to observe until 9:00 pm or so when the seeing turned very poor and the sky eventually clouded up. Wayne Kuhn brought his computer out and we all took turns blowing up Klingons with his Star Fleet Academy game while waiting for the clouds to break.

When we realized it wasn't going to happen we decided to call it a night. At least we got in a few hours of observing which is more than we can say about last year.

Oh yeah, I suppose you are interested in the Marathon results. Well here they are: Steve Mofle-35, Katrina DeWitt-28, George McCourt-19, Dan Arndt-18, Steve Dutch-16, Don DeWitt-15, Steve Wicker-14, Dan Sheber-13, Wayne Kuhn-12, Kerri & Dick Francini-8, Jon Jorgenson-6.

Thanks to all those that came out and made the 10th annual Messier Marathon a success. Hope to see even more of you next year!

DOWN THE ROAD

ASTRONOMY DAY AND PUBLIC OBSERVING NIGHT

This is our last notice and call for help for Astronomy Day and Public Observing Night. Saturday May 2nd is the day, the Wildlife Sanctuary, is the place. Phase 1 will start in the Nature Center at 10:00 AM and last until 4:00 PM.

(Continued from page 2) but let's not travel there.

In November of 1983, I saw the Andromeda galaxy like I have not seen it since. While lying on a blanket in 40-degree weather about 60 miles south of the Twin Cities, I saw the silent, majestic star city with a borrowed pair of 7 x 35 binoculars. The sky-glow of the Minneapolis/St. Paul rose a fist-width above the northeast horizon, but otherwise the sky was calm, and the darkness deep.

I don't recall the precise field of view of those small binoculars, but it must have been between two and three degrees. The central hub of M31 glowed like a lighthouse across the emptiness of space, and I remember being amazed at the enormity of the star city as I swept the binoculars from one spiral arm, across the galaxy's hub, to the other spiral arm. In the outer edges of the galaxy, I could easily tell when M31 began and ended; the transparency of the earth's atmosphere, a small pair of binoculars, and my mind arrived at an unforgettable moment.

No, I didn't see dust lanes in the galaxy, but for the first time, I sensed the size and power of M31. I can still see it in my mind.

Today, I own a small wide-field refractor (80mm objective), a small long-focus refractor

Day activities. Hope to see you there!

N.C.R.A.L. CONVENTION

The North Central Region of the Astronomical League, which our club is a member of, will be holding it's annual convention on the weekend of May 08-10. This year's convention is in Des Moines, IA. Registration is \$39.00 before April 17th, and includes a Saturday Night Banquet. After April 17th the price is \$45.00.

This years speakers include Dr. Tony Marston of the Drake University, Dr. Le Anne Willson of the Iowa State University and Dr. Louis Frank of the University of Iowa. For more information please contact Don DeWitt for a registration form.

EYEPIECE FEATURES

IN PERFECT SILENCE

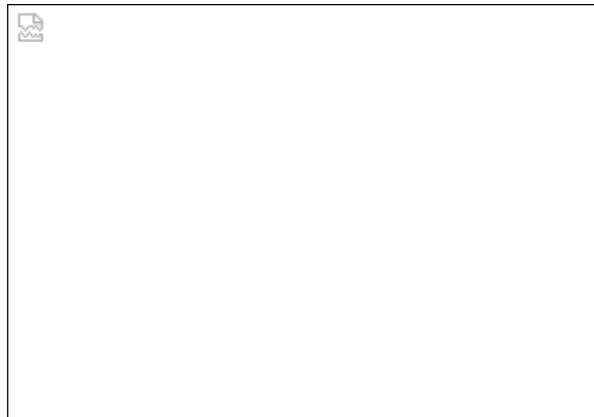
by Roger Dier

This is a confession.

Some of my best views of things in the night sky came with no or limited optics. When in my 20s, I had aperture fever, a common ailment among amateur astronomers (mostly male) who believe the bigger the optics, the better the rewards. Had Sigmund Freud been an astronomer, he may have made a connection between man's propensity to equate large optics with better performance,

When I sitting heard the astronomer where he lectured with much applause in the lecture room,
How soon unaccountable I became tired and sick,
Till rising and gliding out I wander'd off by myself,
In the mystical moist night-air, and from time to time,
Look'd up in perfect silence at the stars.

SCENES FROM THE MESSIER MARATHON



(60mm objective, F-15), and a pair of 7 x 35mm binoculars. Before I settled with these modest optics, I purchased and resold Newtonian reflectors with 3-, 6- and 18-inch mirrors. There is nothing wrong with coveting or owning advanced optics with large apertures, but there are rewards in the night sky when humble optics become wedded with curious minds.

A Walt Whitman poem always reminds me that we need so little to experience so much. Penned in 1865, Whitman's poem shines back to us across time, just like the light of M31.

WHEN I HEARD THE LEARN'D ASTRONOMER

When I heard the learn'd astronomer,
When the proofs, the figures, were ranged in
columns before me,
When I was shown the charts and diagrams, to add,
divide, and measure them,

