



# The Eyepiece

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## OCTOBER AT A GLANCE

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16th - 18th: Crivitz Observers Weekend  
21st: Newstar Monthly Meeting  
23rd - 24th: Parmentier Observing Weekend  
28th: Board Meeting-DeWitt Residence

## OCTOBER IN DETAIL

### MONTHLY MEETING

Our October monthly meeting will be on Wednesday, October 14th from 7:00 PM to 9:00 PM at the Neville Public Museum. This month's talk will be given by Ray Nancoz and the topic is "Mirror Grinding". We hope to see you all there!

### CRIVITZ OBSERVERS WEEKEND

Crivitz Observers Weekend or COW is all set for the weekend of October 16th through 18th. Please see the related article on page 3 of this newsletter for more details.

### NEWSTAR MONTHLY MEETING

The monthly NEWSTAR meeting will be on Wednesday, October 21st. Call Don DeWitt at 920-405-8534 if you are interested in going.

### PARMENTIER OBSERVING WEEKEND

There is a Parmentier Observing Weekend scheduled for Friday and Saturday, October 23rd and 24th. Call Ron at 336-5878 for directions.

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1) from the late 80's and 90's. Also, there are several books available. Among the notables, Burnhams Celestial Handbook. The magazines are free to anyone interested. Call us or come to the meeting to see the books.

For Sale: two Dobsonian telescopes. The first one is an 8" f/4.5 Coultier Optical which is good for deep sky. I have added an 8x50 finder and a removable 2" low profile rack and pinion focuser.

The second telescope is an 8" f/9. The mirror was figured by Ron Parmentier and it is an

### BOARD MEETING

We will be having a board meeting on Wednesday, October 28th from 7:00 PM to 9:00 PM at the DeWitt residence. Topics will include: the 1999 schedule, planning for the 2001 regional convention, the formation of a public relations committee and the Wildlife Sanctuary Woodlands Building project. If you have anything you would like to add to the schedule, contact Katrina at 405-8534 as soon as possible.

## NEW MEMBER WELCOME MAT

We had a not so new couple join in September. Long time club friends Dave and Julia Bachtell, 1901 S 10th, Burlington IA 52601. Welcome to the club Dave and Julia!

## FOR SALE/WANT ADS

Interested in filling in some cracks in your magazine and book collections? Don and Katrina DeWitt have many duplicate issues of Astronomy and Sky and Telescope magazines

About five hours down the road we arrived at the Astrofest grounds. We soon met up with Dave and Julia Bachtell and got our camp sites set up before taking a stroll down to the vendor booths. As always, we saw many old friends along the way and shared stories of the past year.

Before we knew it, the sun was setting and we were getting ready to observe. George McCourt had printed up a sheet of Iridium flare timings for our location and there was one that was going to happen in about 20 minutes. This particular one was going to go right past Polaris so it was rather

excellent telescope for the planets. It also comes with an 8x50 finder scope. It uses the same focuser as the f4.5 or I can remount the original helical focuser with it.

There are four eyepieces, a 9 mm Ortho, 12 mm Kelner, 24 mm Konig and 40 mm Plossl. Prices: \$475.00 each or both for \$850.00. Call Don DeWitt at 405-8534 if interested.

## A LOOK AT OUR PAST

### ASTROFEST '98

Once again a large group of about 16 club members made the annual pilgrimage to the sacred observing grounds of Camp Shaw-Wa-Nas-Se and Astrofest, the midwest's largest gathering of amateur astronomers.

Our journey started on Thursday night when I was supposed to meet Ted Kordes to pick up a borrowed "pop-up camper". Upon arriving at Ted's, I noticed that the van's hood was up and figured that he was just checking the oil. Unfortunately, the problem was a little more serious as he had a leaky hose that needed to be repaired before we left. Some quick thinking and a call to my brother and we had the camper at Ron's and were back in business.

Friday morning came and we were soon out the door, dropping off the baby at grandma's and off to pick up Mike Monfils before meeting at Ron's. Once everybody had arrived and we had everything loaded up, we were on our way with nothing but clear sky's ahead.

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2) two to three hours working on it until they finally got it into pretty good shape. The test would come later that night.

Soon it was time for the turkey dinner. Everybody had brought a side dish along and it was a fantastic meal with plenty for all. The unfortunate part of all the good food was cleaning up afterwards, but with everyone pitching in, it went rather quickly.

That gave us just enough time to relax for a little bit before heading up to the lodge for the door prize drawing. Jamming 875 people into a one area can get pretty hot, so we elected to sit outside and listen for our names to be called. While doing so, it was starting to get dark and there was another iridium flare. So we took that in when finally Steve Wicker's name was called. Somebody from our group actually won something!

Door prizes were done and it was starting to get pretty dark now, so it was time to observe. Wow! Two nights in a row and the sky's definitely saved the best for last as it was one of the clearest, steadiest nights we have seen in a long time. Jupiter and Saturn were rock steady, giving unbelievable detail. The lines to the refractors on site were all long!

The next morning we packed up and said our good byes. Another successful Astrofest had come and gone. Another year to wait for the next one! -Don DeWitt

### PUBLIC OBSERVING WEEKEND

As usual, our annual Public Observing Weekend got off to a rocky start. Looking out my window all day, I was not sure what to do. Mom nature

easy to be looking in the right place. Just as the sheet had predicted, suddenly there was a -3rd magnitude object slowly streaking across the sky! What a neat way to start out an evening of observing.

Steve Wicker had his 8 inch dobsonian set up and Tony Kroes was setting up his SCT and CCD camera, hoping to get some good images. Dick and Kerri Francini had their 4" and 8" telescopes set up and were busy cranking out Messier Objects. It was clear all night but I was rather tired and turned in around midnight. Tony was taking images until around 2:30 AM, making him the most dedicated observer in the group for the evening.

Saturday morning had arrived and that could only mean one thing, the swap meet and vendor booths were going full swing. Everybody had a good time checking out the booths and displays and everybody ended up buying something or another.

Around noon, we ate lunch and Dave Bachtell stared to cook dinner-a turkey cooked on a Weber grill.

A lazy afternoon was on tap as some went to listen to the talks, while others wandered the observing field, looking at the 200 plus telescopes. Still others kept checking out the swap meet while some played with their new toys. Kerri's telescope was severely out of alignment so George McCourt, Steve Mofle, Ray Nancoz and Steve Wicker worked on straitening everything out. They spent a good

Near the go/no go deadline, Don called our clubs resident meteorologist Jeff Last at the National Weather Service to get his opinion. Jeff said go, so we did. I called the Sanctuary and told them we were on our way.

Low and behold, by darkness (7:00 PM), the sky's had almost cleared off. A few straggling clouds stayed, but we could deal with them. I think this is was the first clear night for Public Observing since 1993.

We had approximately 10 telescopes and several binoculars set up in the observing field. Wayne Kuhn set up his telescope outside the gate right in the road to attract people. Attract people he did! He wetted their appetite for more.

Tammy Wicker, John Kordes and I took turns escorting people along the dark lane to the telescope field. As we walked and talked to the groups, we found out that many heard about our event from Baird School or at places like UPS and AMS.

Sue Wicker was also outside the gate handing out our club flier and Getting Started in Astronomy booklets, which many

seemed excited to receive. Although we had no official count, the general consensus is approximately 150 people. Not bad considering it clouded up completely by 9:00 PM. -Katrina DeWitt

## DOWN THE ROAD

### **CRIVITZ OBSERVERS WEEKEND**

C.O.W. or Crivitz Observers Weekend is scheduled for this coming weekend, October 16 through 18th. Club members are invited to camp out at our observing site on Dave Jorgenson's land west of Crivitz. The site offers several nice areas for camping as well as a couple of cabins that will house a few of those that are not quite interested in sleeping on the ground.

If you have not been up at all this year, you will be able to see the new observing spot that we cleared out this spring, complete with

likes to keep astronomers guessing. Especially when you combine a free stargazing party for the public.

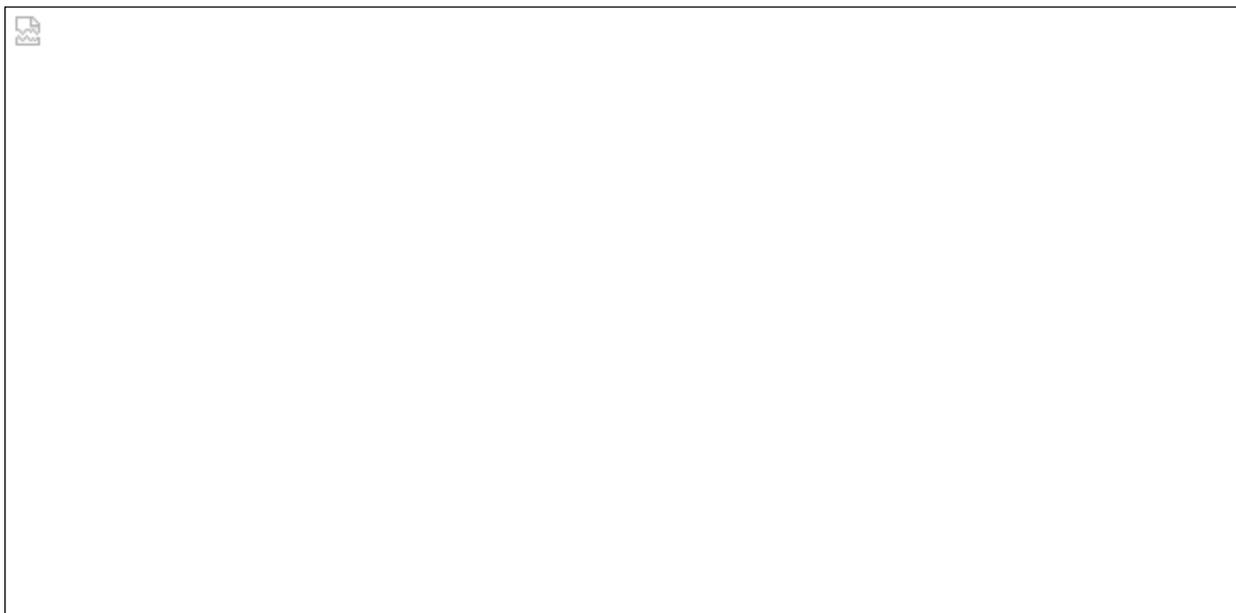
Friday was a mixture of sun and clouds. It was enough to make me question whether to call the Wildlife Sanctuary to cancel for the evening, or to tell them to be ready for us. Either way-I had to let them know by 4:30 PM so they could get the phone recording ready.

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3) parking and an electrical outlet for the telescopes!

Now, I suppose you are wondering how to get there. Here are written directions-checkout a map for more details. Take Highway 141 north to Crivitz, turn left on W, (west) Take W approximately 15 miles and turn right on Caldron Falls Road (follow signs for Camp Bird). Go past Camp Bird and Fish Hatchery Road. Go over bridge and turn right on Jorgenson Road (dirt road). Keep following main dirt road bearing right. We will try to have some type of signs for you to follow also. For more information, call Don DeWitt at 405-8534

### **LEONID METEOR PARTY**

Steve Mofle has invited the club to his house to watch for the peak of the Leonid Meteors on the nights of November 17-18. This is the shower that people have been predicting will "storm" this year. Meteor activity associated with this shower has been increasing steadily over the last 5 years and last years shower was averaging a rate of 70-80 per hour-better than the Perseids and equal to the Geminids. There will be more information in the November issue of the newsletter so stay tuned for more details.



Astrofest '98 left to right seated: Steve Mofle, Dick Francini, Don DeWitt, Katrina DeWitt, Kerri Francini, Ron Parmentier, Dave Bachtell. Middle row: Janice Francini, George McCourt, Brian Dickson, Sue Wicker, Julia Bachtell. Back row: Ted Kordes, Mike Monfils, Ray Nancoz, Steve Wicker, Tony Kroes.