



The Eyepiece

NEVILLE PUBLIC MUSEUM ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY

Volume 20, Issue 3

March 2008

Messier Marathon—New Location, More Fun

By Steve Mofle

Excitement is growing for this year's Messier Marathon, which will be held at a new location. Yes, believe it, after all these years we finally have a new spot. On April 5th, show up at the Calavera Springs Park in the Village of Suamico, on Flintville Road., or County Trail M. A map is included in the newsletter or on our web site. The sun will be setting around 7:00pm with Daylight Savings Time in place, so to get your scope up and running; one should show up about 6:00pm. If you cannot make it earlier, don't worry, we will still let you in. Please remember to turn off your car lights as you enter the park.

One of the features of Calavera Springs Park you

will enjoy is the large parking lot on the north side of the building. No more trekking way out to your telescopes. I would ask that once you have dropped off your scopes and gear, please park at the most northern part of the lot so that there is plenty of real estate next to the building for everyone's telescopes.

Since we have changed locations, let's change a few more things. In the distant past, the club supplied all of the chili and everyone brought something else to pass. The board has decided to go back to this most ancient of traditions for those

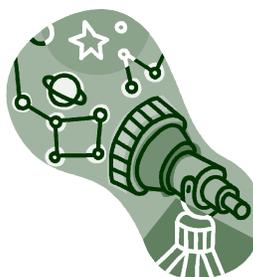
who stay all the way through until dawn. Right around 1:00am or 2:00am, one is in real need of something warm to put in their bellies to

keep them going, but usually by then all the warm food is gone. This way there will be warm chili to keep everyone going all the way to Sagittarius rising and completion of yet

another stellar marathon event. The park also has a kitchen available with a stove and oven which you can use to prepare your dishes.

For those of you who where out for the Lunar Eclipse and

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March Meeting

Please join us for the March monthly meeting. This month's presentation will be by Dick Francini. He will be talking about the Astronomical League Observing Pro-

grams including the Messier, Double Star, Caldwell, Hershel 400 as well as different observing skills you can learn by participating in them.

The meeting will be held from 7:00pm until 9:00pm, March 12th at the Neville Public Museum. See you there! ☐

Upcoming Events

Daytime Occultation of Venus

- MARCH 5TH—GERRY KOCKEN'S SHOP

Board Meeting

- MARCH 5TH—GERRY KOCKEN'S SHOP

March Meeting

- MARCH 12TH—PRESENTATION ON AL OBSERVING PROGRAMS

Messier Marathon

- APRIL 5TH—CALAVERA SPRINGS PARK, SUAMICO

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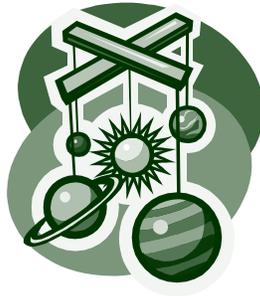
Eye in the Sky

March 2008	
3	Mercury is at Greatest Western Elongation, 27°
5	Occultation of Venus by the Moon—2:27pm
7	New Moon
20	Vernal Equinox—12:48am CDT Happy Astronomical New Year!
21	Full Moon
28-Apr 6	Smokey Mountain Star Gaze, Whittier, NC

April 2008	
Mar 23—7	Zodiacal Lights are Visible
5	New Moon
8	Moon Occults the Pleiades
20	Full Moon

Occultation of Venus

Wednesday, March 5th, a thin waning crescent Moon will slide in front of Venus. Club members are welcome to join us to watch the occultation. This is a daytime event and is a good chance to find Venus during the day. We will be



meeting at Gerry Kocken's office at 1519 Grant Street, DePere, WI 54115. The occultation is at 2:27pm CST. □

Board Meeting

The next NPMAS board meeting will be held on March 5th at 7:00pm at Gerry Kocken's office at 1519 Grant Street, DePere, WI 54115. All club members are welcome to attend. □

A Frigid Lunar Eclipse

By Brian Chopp

Over 35 club members and friends gathered together at Gerry Kocken's shop to view the February lunar eclipse. Mother nature cooperated by giving us clear, although rather cold, skies. Club members set up their binoculars and telescopes including Gerry's 10" Alvan Clark refractor. In addition to great views of the eclipse, Saturn was also close by showing off its rings and will continue to rise higher in the evening sky over the next few months. And of course there was plenty of good food on hand.

A big thanks to Gerry for making the warmth of his shop available to us as well as to those who brought all of the



The Moon during totality. Photo by Brian Chopp

great food and snacks to share.

If you would like to share eclipse photos with the club, please feel free to add them to the Lunar Party album in



Larry Weyers admiring the view through the Alvan Clark. Photo by Ed Smith

the Photos section of the NPMAS Yahoo! newsgroup. □

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the cold temperatures that accompanied it, this is a nice reminder that dressing warm is a must for the Messier Marathon. Heavy clothes in layers, with the outside layer being something that can cut the wind, if there is any, will help to keep you nice and warm. Wearing a cap or hat will really help in keeping your hands and feet warmer, since your body will choose to keep that mighty brain of yours warm first. By not wearing a hat, the body will take warmth from the feet and



transfer it to your head.

Remember that this is an event that will occur whether the weather cooperates or not. If for some unusual reason there are clouds, bring yourselves, a dish to pass, and anything else you wish such as games, cards, or whatever to make a fun evening no matter what. □

Messier Marathon

For those of you new to the Messier Marathon, here is a brief description of this unique amateur astronomy event. The Messier objects are a collection of 110 of the largest and brightest star clusters, nebula and galaxies visible from the northern hemisphere. The list was compiled by French astronomer Charles Messier in the late 1800's while searching for comets. There are a few weeks in early spring when an ambitious and well prepared observer, observing from dusk until dawn, can view all 110 of these objects in a single night. This is the basis of the Messier Marathon. It is truly both an endurance race and a sprint. Whether you find 1 object, 10 objects or all 110, the challenge is to find as many objects as you can but most importantly, to have fun and enjoy the night sky! □

A Scopic View

By Dan Sheber

While it's too cold for many of us to get out and observe during the winter months, I'll be talking about my new 12" LightBridge telescope from Meade. Even though I still like my 8" Dobsonian as a portable telescope, I am reaching its limits on new faint nebulae to be explored. My 12.5" Newtonian is too big and heavy to transport by myself, so I have been planning to build or purchase a truss tube telescope for some time now.

When I saw the advertisement for the LightBridge, it looked like the telescope I was looking for, but I had to call Meade with a few questions regarding the optical quality of this telescope. The other thing was deciding between the 12" and the 16" models because the price seemed pretty good. By looking at sizes and weight, and what will fit in my car, I decided to settle with the 12", which was also more affordable for me. I was also impressed with the new type of coating on the mirrors which offer 93% reflectivity and more durability.

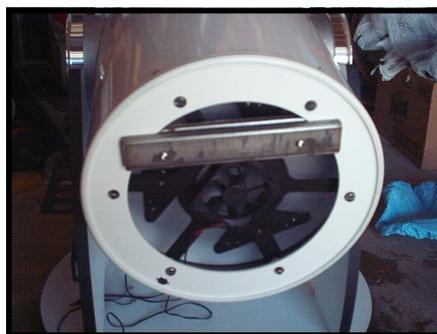
The telescope arrived in two boxes. The Dobsonian base was in one box, and the rest was in the other box. I also ordered a shroud and a bracket for a 50mm finder that I already had. The telescope came with a red dot type of finder with three other types of illuminated crosshairs. I noticed (later on) that this red dot finder and its dove bracket are from the Orion Telescope Company, or their providing manufacturer. Orion has a line of regular finders that will fit the same dove bracket. I didn't notice this until after I had installed my 50mm finder with the Meade dove bracket, as the Meade finder bracket does not fit the Orion dove mount. The only good side of this is that I can have both finders mounted at once.

After testing the telescope for optical performance, I wanted to start my modifications. At first light, I was worried when I had my first view because



Meade's 12in LightBridge

the stars were not very sharp. When the telescope adjusted to temperature, the stars became sharp, and nebulae were bright enough for that telescope size. The first modification was adding the 50mm finder and foam on the trusses. I also had a couple shower caps that seemed to fit both ends of the optical tubes...they were spare covers for my 8" telescope. With all this done, the telescope was top



Picture of the mounting bracket at the mirror end of the telescope used to attach the weights.

heavy. Meade supplied a tensioner for that type of situation, but I don't think its design included the extra weight of what I had added. The person at Meade told me that I could lose my warranty if I drill any holes down by the primary mirror, so I designed weights that will clamp just below the primary mirror cell.

At first, my design was elaborate, but I couldn't find a place to machine it for me at a price I would

be willing to pay. I made a more simple design in which I could do the machining myself.

When I went to the metal scrap yard to get the steel I needed, I decided to get stainless steel since the regular steel looked so rusty. I had my pieces cut right there at one dollar per cut to save some time for myself. All I needed to do was drill and tap. I found out how hard that is to do with stainless steel. I had to go out and purchase a couple cobalt drill bits to be able to finish the job. I also had to attach felt on the mounting ends of the steel to prevent scratching the telescope for its warranty. I made two sets of weights at 4 lbs each, but only one set was needed to correct the balancing. I might need the other set if I ever use my filter wheel. Pictures of the weight and the other modifications are supplied with this article, or can be posted on the club web page as well. I used the shroud to cover the trusses to keep dust out. I can also use it for closed tube viewing, but the telescope seems to work good enough without it.

Lastly, I made a little pull cart for the telescope for home use. The two pieces are easy enough to carry out, but since I store it below my larger telescope, the cart prevents me from dragging the telescope on the ground and damaging its feet.

The next thing was to see how to fit the telescope in my car for a dark observing site. I went to Tony's place for my first dark site, and the LightBridge performed well. The comet looked the same in his 12" telescope,

but I had to use a different eyepiece to get similar magnification. I only looked at some favorite objects including NGC 891 and NGC 253. Since NGC 891 is rather

faint, it was a good test object for this

I WENT TO TONY'S PLACE FOR MY FIRST DARK SITE, AND THE LIGHTBRIDGE PERFORMED WELL.

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telescope. In my 8" telescope this galaxy is an elongated faint blur requiring averted vision. It was still faint in the 12" Lightbridge, but the shape of the galaxy was well defined even without averted vision. I also tried

my comet filter (Lumicon Swan band) on comet Holmes, and we saw a fainter outer shell that was not visible without the filter.

All in all, I'm happy with this telescope, and I recently found out that I'm eligible for a rebate from Meade. I hope

to bring this telescope to Messier Marathon, and I plan to be writing more about deep sky nebulae in the future. □

February Meeting Minutes

By Amy Hannon-Drew

This month's meeting was a joint meeting with the Packerland Chapter of the American Meteorological Society. We had about 19 NPMAS club members present and 6 PCAMS club members. We started the meeting 7:00pm, however we held the business portion of the meeting after Gary Baier's presentation on 'Weather on Other Planets'. Gary gave a great talk about the weather on other planets and moons in our solar system.

The business meeting started at 8pm with club president Gerry Kocken chairing and VP Don DeWitt assisting.

The first order of business was a look back at past viewing and club events including the Holiday Party and mirror grinding class. Gerry gave an overview of the party and also mentioned the change in venue for the Messier Marathon. Several club members shared their observing experiences since the last meeting such as Mike Monfils who had fun watching a close encounter of Venus and Jupiter! Don DeWitt shared a printout from the 'What's Up Doc' (<http://www.astronomyclub.org/wud.htm>) website. This site gives an overview of the evening sky and what will be visible to the observer. It is to assist those completing an AL observing program, but is a great resource for anyone who may be planning an observing session.

Several club members are still grinding away at their mirrors! Bob Prust is getting close to the polishing step in the process.

Next up was upcoming events. Please contact Gerry if you have any questions about any event.



Gary Baier (left) giving his presentation on "Weather on Other Planets" and Gerry Kocken (right) presenting awards from the Night Sky Network. Photos by Ed Smith.

by Kevin Nasal: Omicron 2 Eridani B, visible with a 4 1/2" or 6" scope.

A surprise award was given to the following: Gary Baier, Kevin Keinholtz, Don DeWitt, Julie Mofle, Kevin Nasal, Darcy Varona, Steve Mofle, George McCourt, Gerry Kocken, Katrina DeWitt and Bob Nelezen. This was on behalf of the Night Sky Network in recognition for the volunteer time these club members have given to help educate the public using Night Sky Network resources. Through their efforts we remained qualified to use the Night Sky Network programs available.

The Sheboygan Astronomical Society invited us to participate in an equipment swap/sale session at UW Sheboygan. The event will be held on May 6th at 7pm.

NASA news was presented by Gary Baier. The Hubble has picked up the oldest galaxy ever recorded and Cassini is taking a look at Titan.

Next month's viewing opportunities include the moon near the Beehive, the moon near Mars, and Mercury and Venus close together on the 26th. For more information on any of these events, consult your Observer's Handbook 2008 or call Steve Mofle! □

March 5th: Board Meeting at Kocken & Associates, Grant St., DePere. All are welcome!

March 5th: Occultation of Venus at Kocken & Associates, Grant St., DePere. All are welcome!

April 5th: Messier Marathon, Calavera Springs in Suamico.

April 18th—19th: NCRAL in Port Washington, WI.

June 28th—Club Picnic.

Tonight's Deep Sky object presented

Wintertime Fun at Camp U-Nah-Li-Ya

By Brian Chopp

Here are some real pictures from the Camp U-Nah-Li-Ya weekend, held January 3rd through the 5th in Suring, Wisconsin. Everyone had a great time! There was plenty of snow for sledding and skiing. We even got in a little observing before the clouds rolled in. A special thanks to George McCourt for organizing the weekend and to Gerry Kocken and Mary for their magnificent job cooking!

□



NPMAS Board Meeting Minutes

By Amy Hannon-Drew

The following are the board meeting minutes for December. Just a reminder that all members are welcome to attend.

Board Members in Attendance: Brian Chopp, Don DeWitt (VP), Katrina DeWitt, Gerry Kocken (Pres.), Amy Hannon-Drew (Sec.), Dick Francini (Treas.), George McCourt, Gary Baier.

Board Members Absent: Chris Schroeder.

Quorum: Yes

Club Members in Attendance: Julie Mofle, Steve Mofle, and Tom Cashman.

Meeting came to order at 7:10pm. Chaired by Club President Gerry Kocken.

Board Meeting minutes from November 21st 2007 meeting were reviewed and approved.

Treasurer's report by Dick Francini: Our Checking account carries a balance of \$4,254.17 as of 12/19/2007.

With the deposits from dues, magazine sales and Camp Unie less the expenses associated with those events, AL dues, Messier Marathon, Picnic and misc. supplies we have a net increase in cash over last year by \$301.36. We are anticipating additional dues payments of \$150.00 which would bring the increase up to \$451.36.

Treasurer's Report was reviewed and approved.

The status of two upcoming club events was reviewed. The Holiday Party scheduled for January 10th is at Wally's Spot. So far 20 to 30 people have signed up. Katrina will send a reminder after Christmas. Camp Unie scheduled for the first weekend in January has no people signed up as of this board meeting date. Money is due December 22nd and should be sent to Dick Francini. Gerry will send email reminders out to the club.

Club Library Cart: One is being constructed by Commercial Interiors. It will be 4' x 2' x 3'. It will be enclosed and locked and stored at the museum. We will keep the nametags there as well.

Club Volunteers: Librarian: Tom Cashman, Lunar and/or Planetary Object of the Month: Kevin Nasal, Newsletter Editor: Brian Chopp. The Star Party Coordinator position needs further definition before we secure a volunteer. The Astronomy Tidbit of the month is open, though Gerry offered to fill in if no one else volunteered. Also not assigned is an Equipment coordinator/maintenance.

Club Survey: Will wrap up and will have a summary to the club by the February Meeting.

Newsletter: Brian Chopp wants to publish monthly by the first of the month. Article deadline will be by the 20th of the month. A brief discussion regarding the newsletter and how to distribute convened. In an effort to reach as many club members as possible it was decided to mail to everyone initially. A request will be made as to who would like to continue with the mailing or view online. Gerry motioned to mail to all. Dick seconded. The motion passed with 7 ayes, one nay.

Membership list: Would like to put the membership list on the Yahoo site, or password protected on the NPMAS site. Inclusion on the list would be subject to approval from the members. We will also provide a hard copy of the list at meetings. The list will include: Name, Address, Phone #, Email address and viewing equipment owned.

No email access: Members who do not have email access will be called individually by Steve Mofle in the event of a 'between meeting' event. For example if there is an impromptu viewing night at Parmentiers, or if a club event is cancelled or moved.

2008 Calendar: May—Duane Clausen will speak with Steve Mofle as a back

up.

June – Steve Mofle will present Observing the Outer Planets

June 28th – Club Picnic at Bay Beach

July – Meeting at the Barlow

August – Jim Sentowski will present Extra Solar Planets

September 6th will be Public Observing

December 10th will be Movie Night with popcorn!

2008 Brochure: Will be trifold with much the same format as last year. Don and Katrina will put it together now that the calendar is complete.

Yahoo Site: A suggestion was made that we follow some 'playground rules' in regards to the Yahoo site. George McCourt presented a sample of rules that took a lighthearted look at the site as a playground where we all need to be respectful and non-combative. Further discussion on the 'rules' will take place at the next board meeting. In the mean time, site administrator Don DeWitt will have the authority to remove anyone from the site who is being disruptive. George motioned to accept the playground rules conditionally until we can further discuss them. Brian seconded. Passed unanimously.

Thank you: Amy brought up the issue of thanking club members who give their time and expertise to the club. When those members step down from a position of leadership within the club, the board needs to recognize them and thank them for their efforts. All agreed. Katrina will put together a list of those who stepped down in the last year and announce at the Holiday Party.

Meeting Adjourned at 10:10pm.

Notes taken by Amy Hannon-Drew.

Next Meeting January 16th at Gerry Kocken's in DePere at 7:00pm. □

Club Member Services

LOANER TELESCOPES

NPMAS members are welcome to use, free of charge, for a one month period, one of the three club telescopes available. Please contact Gerry Kocken at 920-676-6363 or at gerryk@kockenwi.com to make arrangements. The three telescope available are:



- 10 inch Dobsonian Telescope
- 8 inch Triple Axis Newtonian Telescope
- 13 inch f/4.5 Dobsonian Telescope

Club Library

NPMAS has a collection of astronomy related books and videos covering a wide variety of topics including observing, the solar system, stars and more. Items can be checked out at monthly club meeting or by contacting Tom Cashman at 920-432-2261.



NPMAS OBSERVING SITES

NPMAS members have access to two observing sites located on private land and belonging to members of our club.

Crivitz Observing

This is the private residence of Dave Jorgenson and Carol Eggleston. Located in the north woods of Wisconsin on 100 acres of land, this site offers some of the darkest skies around. The field is equipped with electricity and the far cabin is available for use. Please call ahead to make arrangements.

Dave Jorgenson and Carol Eggleston
Home—715-757-3296



Cedar Drive Observing

This is the private residence of Tony and Tara Kroes, located Southwest of Pulaski on 10 acres of land. Members are welcome anytime but please call ahead to make arrangements.

Tony Kroes Home—920-822-4959.

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