



**Longmont Astronomical Society**  
**October 2003**

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## **The View From Up Here**

Dear members and friends,

Thank you to everyone who went to the Firestone star party last month. Yeah, it clouded up once we got there; yeah, we had to deal with some sucker holes. But we also had quite a few enthusiastic locals come by, and several brought their scopes. So it turned into a friendly social gathering at the very least, and we did get a few peeks at Mars! I understand that once I left, the skies cleared up. So, I am available to be paid off to stay away from star parties! Send me an e-mail for my current rates!

Flanders had a good turnout, too. Lots of scopes and some rather good seeing off and on during the evening. We had some fun looking at cool stuff on the moon, as well as the usual suspects!

The club constitution has been changed to reflect splitting the office of Secretary/Treasurer into two separate offices, and adding responsibilities to the Vice President position. Club growth has made this necessary to spread the work around a little more evenly. This change has been made now in preparation for 2005 officer nomination, which will open at the November meeting. Please consider contributing your talents to the LAS by running for an office. It is fun and rewarding, plus officers pay no dues! New officers bring new ideas to the club, so please give this serious consideration.

Be sure to mark your calendars for Saturday, January 3rd for our annual banquet. After reviewing several alternatives, we will be returning to the Wayside Inn in Berthoud. See the announcement in this newsletter – hope to see you there!

Clear Skies,

Bob Spohn  
President

## **17th Annual LAS Banquet**

Saturday, January 3rd, 2004  
Wayside Inn, 505 Mountain Ave., Berthoud  
5:00 Social Hour  
6:00 Dinner  
\$20.00 per Person

Entrees:

Chicken Kiev – Herbed butter rolled up in a chicken breast – owner's favorite!  
Broiled Salmon Fillet  
12 oz. Rib-eye Steak  
10 oz. Prime Rib of Beef  
Vegetarian Lasagna

Includes salad, potato or rice, hot vegetable, drink & dessert. Cash bar available.

Bring your reservations and check to the meeting, or mail them in to:  
L.A.S.; P.O. Box 806; Longmont, CO; 80502

## Calendar

### **October**

LAS meeting 10/16 – Gilpin High School Star Party 10/18 - New moon & Star Party Pawnee 10/25

### **November**

Star Party Flanders 11/01 - LAS meeting 11/20 – Star Party Pawnee 11/22 - New moon 11/23 – Star Party Flanders 11/29

### **December**

LAS meeting 12/18 – Star Party Pawnee 12/20 - New moon 12/23

## September meeting notes

President Bob Spohn opened the meeting. Several new comers stood and introduced themselves.

### OFFICERS' REPORT:

Vice President Melinda Diehl reported she saw Steve Albers on television discussing Isabel.

Secretary/Treasurer Monica Martens announced that we are in the black. She has New Member kits with her and she encouraged all new comers to get with her at the break, or to contact her for more information. She reported that we reached 111 members.

Newsletter/Editor Philippe Bridenne announced that he needs more articles such as: book reports, star-hopping stories, astronomy related cartoons, and telescope experience stories.

A classified section has been added to the newsletter for people who want to sell or buy astronomy related items.

Finally, Philippe has been contacted by Sarah Stevens from the Gilpin High School to explore if we are interested in doing another Star Party on the High School site.

Publicity/Fund Raising: No report

Steve Albers: Reported that the directions to the Firestone Star Party were on the web.

Jim Crane: No report

### NEW BUSINESS:

There is a proposal for splitting the Secretary / Treasurer Position

Currently Monica has three jobs:

1. Fiscal – managing the club finances
2. Secretarial – managing the club roster and files
3. Communications – managing club announcements and information for new members

These duties of this position should be split among three people.

Our bylaws allow for two people to hold secretary / treasurer position. “The office of Secretary/Treasurer may be held separately or combined based on the majority vote of the membership.”

We need an amendment to our bylaws to specify the communication role.

The following proposal was presented by Monica:

Fiscal responsibilities – keep with treasurer:

- ❖ Balance checkbook and pay bills
- ❖ Provide accounting of monies taken in on club merchandise
- ❖ Send out renewal notices for dues
- ❖ Process deposits from meetings – new members, club merchandise sales, new subscription payments
- ❖ Manage subscriptions to the magazines
- ❖ Get petty cash for meetings

Secretarial responsibilities – keep with secretary:

- ❖ Take notes at meeting / minutes and give to Newsletter Editor
- ❖ Maintain the lists of members
- ❖ Notify the Astronomical League of new members (need to amend bylaws, as this is assigned to the AICOR rep)
- ❖ Keep track of and organize the club files

Communication responsibilities – assign to VP or to a new officer:

- ❖ Send out Emails about club events
- ❖ Send out Emails about updated member lists
- ❖ Put together and give out new member kits at meetings
- ❖ Mail new member kits if we run out at meetings
- ❖ Handle incoming announcements from club members for distribution from club members
- ❖ Act as the unofficial new member liaison via Email and at meetings
- ❖ Order and pick up name tags for members (or assign pick-up to someone near Loveland)

Monica proposed wording for the bylaws amendments.

He/She will send out Emails to the club membership about events, membership lists, and member / club announcements. He/She will also prepare new member kits for meetings and hand them out. As a result, he/she will most likely be a liaison to new club members. He/She will also either handle or delegate the name tag orders for the club.

This is not specified anywhere in our bylaws yet.

Proposed wording change for handling of roster list for the Astronomical League:

Currently under AICOR:

He/She shall represent The Society with The Astronomical League. He/She shall, through a liaison with the Secretary/Treasurer, provide to The Astronomical League an updated roster of the membership and pay annual dues for each paid member of The Society. He/She shall insure that each paid member of The Society receives "The Reflector" (the newsletter put out by The Astronomical League).

Move to secretary / treasurer position:

He/She shall provide to The Astronomical League an updated roster of the membership and pay annual dues for each paid member of The Society.

The motion was approved by the majority of the meeting participants.

Dues renewal statements will be mailed to you next week. It will also include the magazine subscription renewals, calendars offers and an option to donate to the telescope fund.

Magazine subscription renewals. Our two magazines are “Sky and Telescope” and Astronomy. If you want to start a new subscription through the club discount plan, talk to Monica.

Magazine pricing

- ❖ The Sky and Telescope annual subscription will go up to \$32.95
- ❖ The Astronomy annual subscription will be \$29

The club makes no money.

Calendars renewals: You can buy the following calendars

- ❖ The Year in Space 2004 (spiral day planner)
- ❖ Astronomy calendar (wall calendar)
- ❖ Skywatch 2004 (observing guide)
- ❖ Astronomical calendar 2004 (also wall)

Based on number of orders (ex: \$8.95 if 8+ orders; \$10.95 1-7 orders)

Calculated price based on number of last year's orders

Club may make or lose a little money

If you are planning on doing a magazine subscription or buying a calendar or observing guide, please pay ASAP. We need to renew by end of year otherwise to avoid missing any Astronomical League publications.

2004 LAS banquet:

Meeting participants approved the raise of the banquet price from \$15 to \$20.

We will ask for a child menu at \$10.

For the last two years, we had our banquet at the Wayside Inn.

Bob is also looking at other locations such as the Anderson farm on 52 and the Raintree in Longmont.

If we select the Wayside Inn the date will be January 3<sup>rd</sup>.

Bob will make the final selection and report next month.

Bob received a couple of emails for Longmont park officials related to charging our club \$20 for each Star Party taking place in Flanders. Bob to follow-up.

STAR PARTIES:

The next big event will be the Town of Firestone Star Party on September 20<sup>th</sup> from dusk to 1:00AM

The Town of Firestone, Longmont Astronomical Society, and Saddleback Golf Club are sponsoring a Star Party on September 20, 2003, from dusk to 1:00 a.m. at Saddleback Golf Club at 8631 Frontier Street in Firestone. If the weather does not cooperate, this event will be re-scheduled for October 12<sup>th</sup>. If you need more information about the Star Party please call Kirk Schneider at 303.833.0997.

Gilpin High School Star Party: Philippe will contact Sarah Stevens to check if October 12<sup>th</sup> is a good date for the school. This event may be re-scheduled in case the Town of Firestone is re-scheduled.

Archer reported on a nice Star Party with quite interesting experience with a 10 years-old fan.

Archer also reported on his recent trip to San Jose and his visit to Mount Hamilton Lick observatory.

He was able to perform few observations of the sky and Mars in particular with his friend 10" and with the observatory 36" telescope. See article later in this newsletter.

PRESENTATIONS:

Ray Warren showed an exciting and humoristic short video tape explaining the specific characteristics of infra-red light.

Tim Brown showed a short but dramatic animation of pictures of Mars (taken with 10" telescope). Tim took these pictures 20mn apart last Monday during a 4.5h observation. He used a Logitech webcam to capture the images.

Don Cerow did an excellent presentation of constellation Draco.

Finally, Bob's oldest daughter, Courtney, presented a quite scientific presentation related to the radial structure in molecular and stellar disks of BIMA SONG galaxies.

## Some announcements

### Denver Museum of Nature & Science Space Science Events

#### Events, Lectures, and Programs

Saturday, October 18–Sunday, October 19

#### Astronomy Campout

6:30 P.M.–9:00 A.M., Evergreen, CO

Cost is \$40 for members, \$50 for nonmembers, \$20 for children, ages 6–13

Join DMNS astronomy educators for a fun evening under the stars at the Jefferson County Outdoor Lab School Observatory. Camp, hear astronomy lectures, and observe the heavens using various telescopes throughout the night. The Museum will provide hot beverages, punch, and snacks. Participants provide their own camping gear and, due to the draught, cold meals only. Rest rooms and water are available on-site. Details sent with confirmation. An adult must accompany children under 18. Call 303-322-7009 for reservations.

Friday, October 24

#### 60 Minutes in Space: Beyond the Headlines

Curator from the Space Sciences Department

7:00 P.M., Ricketson Auditorium, Denver Museum of Nature & Science

Free, no reservations required

Space Science curators Dr. Steve Lee and/or Dr. Dimitri Klebe will take you behind the headlines and give you the spicy details of breaking news in space science. Find out what's happening in the cosmos with reports of breakthroughs and events in astronomy and space exploration.

#### Upcoming Events

Tuesday, November 11

#### Lonely Planets

David Grinspoon, astronomer

7:00 P.M., Ricketson Auditorium, Denver Museum of Nature & Science

Cost is \$10 for members, \$13 nonmembers, and \$8 for students

Join Dr. Grinspoon as he considers some of the age-old questions about the possibility of extraterrestrial life. Is life on Earth an accident or in some sense the “purpose” of this universe? How can we even begin to think intelligently about life on distant planets? By examining scientific data, reviewing historical records, and sympathetically analyzing folk beliefs, Dr. Grinspoon shares a history of ideas about extraterrestrial life and offers provocative new scientific speculations. Book sale and signing of his book *Lonely Planets* follows the lecture. Call 303-322-7009 for reservations.

Saturday, November 15–Sunday, November 16

#### A Journey through Space Camp-in for Families

5:30 P.M.–9:00 A.M. Denver Museum of Nature & Science

Cost is \$27 per person

Bring your family for a memorable overnight adventure at the Museum. Explore Space Odyssey without the crowds, fly through space in the all-new Gates Planetarium, and participate in crafts and science demonstrations throughout the Museum. Then sleep among your favorite dioramas. This experience provides a fun way for families to spend time together. For families with children in first through fifth grades. Call 303-322-7009 for reservations.

### **Report from RMNP Star Party by Gary Garzone**

My wife and I went up to Rocky mountain National Park Friday night for the star party. I had to check out the site and see if it is darker than Pawnee. It is pretty dark except for east sky which is total light pollution, but south and west and north were good.

I worked the tea pot, Cygnus and, and summer time favorites. We did Mars of course all night. The best views of Mars were about 1:30 am.

Dave Larson and Steve and Ireen Little along with RMNP Ranger Jeff Maugans set up some great scopes and guy and girlfriend forgot their names, sorry, with a 5 inch refractor set up next to me for some pretty awesome wide field views thru the night. As elk herds wandered around valley and bugled all night. It was quite the star gazing experience and a very good star night. Clouds cleared hour or two after dark but Mars was up thru out the cloudy time, then by 10 or so it was totally clear for entire sky viewing. I stayed up till 3 am, was trying to do Saturn but could not stay awake any longer. I did have time to get some more Mars pictures, of course.

The Elk are in rut and bugling, so awesome time of the year to be in rocky mountain National Park. The herd of elk was by our dark sky site and kept around all night long, in fact they circled around in middle of the night right behind where I was set up. I have never been charged by a big elk and wanted to keep it that way. Park Ranger Jeff Maugans was very nice and I love what he has started up there to introduce the sky to many people thru the summer at these events. We had well over a hundred people who came from town to see Mars at the star party.

I was awoken at 6 am from some Lady Ranger who told me I was getting a ticket for spending the night, even after I told her I was with star party and was invited up to help entertain their guests until 3 am in morning.

I told her I had permission to stay the night from Ranger Jeff Maugans, but she did not believe me and was a real bitch. I had her call up Jeff and check my story. Then she told me I should have let other rangers know. I guess she did not know there has been star parties there for over ten years now, it was even in their own paper and local paper about event.

I do not get these guys who have star parties then expect you to pack up and go home before the night even starts to get good, Do they not understand astronomy gets done through out the entire night , not 7:30 to 9 :30 pm.

I will never go back there again now, as far as I can see they do not have a clue about astronomy and star parties with cars and people coming and going all night. Steve Little is right, this is a social event for their PR. Then they give us a ticket for enjoying the area, I am the only person left at area, so what is the harm in staying the night. Should I load up and drive motor home and trailer home in dark after late night and fall asleep at wheel is what they expect I guess. Clueless in RMNP. bye, gary

### **Report on Fox Park by Gary Garzone**

Fox park was awesome once again. Total clear sky for us both Friday and Saturday nights . Steve L and Dave D. showed up on Thursday for maybe last chance at viewing from over 9000 feet elevation this year. Judy and Tom, new friends from Loveland, Co., who just happened to show up back in May at Fox park and found Steve , Dave and myself on one of our new moon star parties and here we meet again. She set up her scope with us and stayed up late both nights, pretty tuff girl . We made up for the Weekend Under The Stars summer event which ended up weekend under the showers. I stayed up till 2:30 am on Friday and 3 am Saturday night.

Terry Frazier came up on Saturday afternoon for the night and was not sorry for long drive. Terry who lost his two legs in Vietnam, but still gets out to star gaze with us. He is an inspiration to many with his letting nothing stop him. He even flew a glider, sail plane, coast to coast several years back and now is trying to figure out why we all stay up all night looking at faint little fuzzie's. He even climbed up my 10 foot ladder for 30 views, strong arms too. I brought my 8 inch from LAS club project and he used that thru the night.

Well as far as what we saw the list is long. We started about 7:30 pm , gets dark much earlier now, for very long night of viewing. We had low temperature of 24 degrees but not much frost because it was so dry. The seeing totally sucked Friday, despite the very transparent skies. but Saturday night was much better with

transparent skies and good seeing, awesome combo at 9000plus feet elevation. The cold kept all bugs away, very nice after long summer of mosquitoes, and listen to elk bugle several times in forest near us. Does it ever get any better than this??? Wow! The best Milky Way views all summer, working its way down to ground through the trees branches. You can only do that at true dark sky places which is why we drive so far to Fox park. I am still a little star struck with so many photons still racing around in my brain. Best views were probably NGC 253 galaxy, very big edge on Galaxy with views spreading out of eyepiece. New Comet was also found both nights now just a little east of Triangulum. Mars was very good at times and also made it to see Saturn which was rising in east along with great views of Orion nebula for parting shots. It's hard to do astronomy at Fox park then try to settle for less than perfect sky in my yard. Have scope will travel seems to work for me, bye, aperturemon

### **Report on Niwot high school astronomy by Gary Garzone**

Niwot high school astronomy students all showed up, it was mandatory is what teacher Al Huck said to me, most had true interest in astronomy except the few stoner types who were just out to be out. They all named ten objects each written on every kids list checked by me or teacher. Easy stuff like Mars, Pegasus, Cassiopeia, Polaris, Lyra, stars like Vega, Altair, Deneb, summer triangle stars, Hercules, M13, M31, M57 ring, M27 Dumbbell and many more that you probably never knew you could even see on a full moon night. Teacher was afraid new moon nights would be too dark for keeping kids in line.

Joe Meckle and Philippe Bridenne showed up. I early in the evening found two boxes that fit over the Wall pack lights on building and had Janitor maintenance guy shut off parking lot lights. We set up behind the high school, north side. Mars seeing was super good early evening easily seeing the K or X mark on planet along with smaller now, Ice cap.

I have even done Leonids on full moon night at Martin Butley's place with LAS die hards for a rather disappointing meteor shower, but add that to my list of astronomy nights, Had lots of fun with kids would do it again next time too, bye, gary

### **MESA MARS PARTY A HUGE SUCCESS by Archer Sully**

Over 130 people came to this fun evening event for a chance to view Mars "up close and personal." 12 telescopes ranging in size from 70mm to up to 15 inches in diameter as well as two pairs of mounted binoculars were set up by volunteers. The volunteers, eager to share their love of astronomy with young students and their families, loaded their scopes in their vehicles and drove to Mesa Elementary from all over the front range. They came from north and south Boulder, from CU, from LaSalle, Longmont and Englewood. And the ages of these professional and amateur astronomers ranged from retired individuals to Mesa first graders. It's true, the stars are there for all of us.

The Mars Party began at Sunset on Friday the 12th of September and went until around 10:15PM. Amateur and Professional Astronomers began pulling their cars into Mesa's north playground by the cement circle and setting up their telescopes around 7:00PM and the Mesa families and friends began rolling in soon afterwards. As did the clouds. It was hide and seek for Mars as it peeked up in the eastern sky from behind the trees and as the cold wet clouds rolled in from the west. But the spirits of the Mars enthusiasts never flagged. Families kept arriving in waves every half hour until over 130 people had an opportunity to view Mars through the numerous telescopes. All the excitement about Mars in the media these past few months is due to the fact that Mars is currently the closest it has been to the Earth in 60,000 years, and the next time it will be this close to us is in 280 years, odds are good most of us will miss that one. NASA and the European Space Agency have both launched Mars probes, so look for Mars in the news again in January 2004, as images from these probes get sent back to Earth. Good internet sites to check out for images are: [www.skyandtelescope.com](http://www.skyandtelescope.com) and try <http://antwrp.gsfc.nasa.gov/apod/> for their Astronomy Picture of the Day, and an excellent book to get you and your family started on backyard astronomy is, Nightwatch by, Terrance Dickerson.

The Mesa Mars Party was put together by Archer Sully, a Mesa parent and avid astronomer who presented the idea to Mesa principal Mike Medina on the first day of school, and once he had the OK, started calling his Astronomy friends: Alan, of Astro Systems in LaSalle, CO, Tim Brown, who works in Astrophysics with CU, Leigh Pierson from the Longmont Astronomical Society, Doug, Summit Middle School's astronomy teacher, Stephanie, of S& S Optica in Englewood, CO, Steve Hartung of Boulder, CO, as well as Mesa students and their folks with telescopes.

Gabe Sully, Mesa first grader, shared views of Mars through his Newtonian "Star Blast" telescope, Erin Gillespie, a Mesa second grader and her father, Don shared their Schmidt Cassegrain with viewers, and Teddy Chalfen, a Mesa third grader and his father, Danny shared views through their refractor telescope. The Cub Scouts of Pack 171 also helped out by serving bite sized hors d' oeuvres in the form star themed candy bars to the gathering crowds at twilight.

The telescopes on hand for everyone to look through were of all makes and sizes, both home made and factory produced. There were four Dobsonian telescopes with mirror diameter sizes of 8", 12.5", 10", and a whopping 15", (three of these were home made). Three Schmidt Cassegrain telescopes showed up in sizes of 5", 8" and 8". There was a Mead ETX to look through, a 4" apochromatic refractor, a 70 mm refractor, an 80 mm refractor and a 4.5" Newtonian telescope. Using the various sized telescopes viewers were able to see with their own eyes definition on the surface of Mars. Many viewers that evening were able to see the Southern Polar Cap of Mars, Syrtis Major was seen, and one astronomer even reported seeing a hint of Mars' carbon dioxide clouds. No Martian spaceships were seen however. Too bad - maybe next time.

Thank you to everyone for showing so much enthusiasm for this event! All of you: the volunteers who brought your scopes and all the budding astronomers with your curiosity, delight and questions, you made the Mesa Mars Party a resounding success. We would like to host another star party in spring of 2004 so everyone can have a chance to view galaxies, globular clusters, nebulae and all kinds of amazing things. Archer Sully, (303)717-4005 is happy to be a resource for you and your family, answering questions, connecting you with local astronomy clubs, etc. and he almost always has a telescope set up in the yard which he would be pleased to share views of the stars by night or sun spots by day with those of you who would like stop by. And naturally Archer would be happy to organize more astronomy viewing get together for those crisp clear Boulder nights...

### **Classified**

#### *To sell:*

Sell Compaq Presario with Windows 98, keyboard, mouse, monitor, speakers and a lot of software including Starry Night Pro.

CPU AMD-k6-2 350MHz with 128Mb memory and 7.468Gb disk

Include StarryNight Pro application

Price: \$300 send email to [philippe\\_bridenne@yahoo.com](mailto:philippe_bridenne@yahoo.com)

10" Sears Craftsman table saw

Price: \$200 send email to Brian [bnimball@msn.com](mailto:bnimball@msn.com) or call him at 303-678-0525

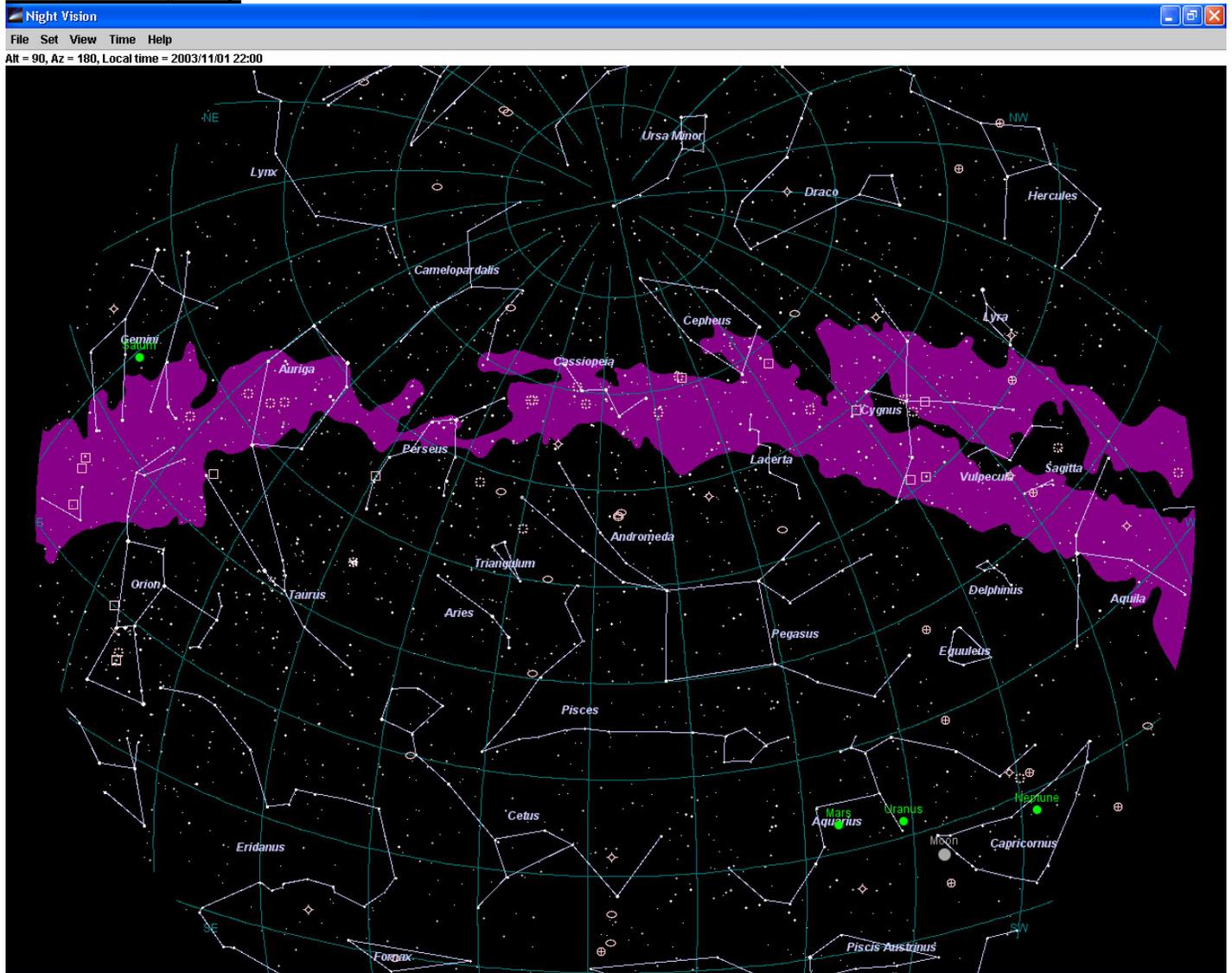
#### *To buy:*

I am looking to buy a 1 1/4" rack and pinion focuser. It is for a 10" Dobsonian scope.

Send email to Bob Spohn [jviews@mindspring.com](mailto:jviews@mindspring.com)

If you have stuff to buy or to sell, send an email to your newsletter editor [philippe\\_bridenne@yahoo.com](mailto:philippe_bridenne@yahoo.com)

## November Sky Map



### Constellation of the month - Pegasus

Although this constellation has no really bright stars, it is easy to spot because its three brightest stars, with Alpha Andromedae, form the Great Square of Pegasus.

The winged horse has been found on ancient tablets from the Euphrates Valley, and on Greek coins minted in the fourth century BC. According to Greek legend, when Perseus decapitated the Gorgon Medusa, Pegasus sprang up from her blood. When Pegasus was brought to Mount Helicon, one kick of his hoof caused the spring of Hippocrene to flow – source of the inspiration for poets.

M15: One of the best of the northern sky globular clusters, M15 is 34,000 light years away. Although it is visible through binoculars as a nebulous patch, in a telescope it is a real showpiece!

NGC 7331: The spiral galaxy is the brightest one in Pegasus, but is still only 9<sup>th</sup> magnitude

Stephan's Quintet: This very faint group of galaxies lies 0.5 degree south of NGC 7331. Even though faint streamers of material seem to connect the largest galaxies to the others, detailed study indicates that this galaxy is probably closer to us than they are. These galaxies are not really targets for the beginner, as they need at least a 10 inch telescope (250 mm) telescope to be seen clearly