

*The View From Up Here  
Calendar*

*August Meeting Notes*

*Astronomy for beginners by Michael Hotka*

*Some Announcements*

*Video Documentary by Michael Hotka*

*Classified*

*October Sky Map*

*Constellation of the Month - Aquarius*

## **The View From Up Here**

Dear members and friends,

Time to say goodbye to summer! It was fun, but amazing just how fast the year is going.

Thanks to everyone who attended or sponsored or helped out with the various Mars-related star parties this past month. I know all of your efforts are appreciated.

I'd like to remind you of another big star party coming up this Saturday – the Firestone star party at Saddleback Golf Course. This is being heavily advertised, so I'd like to ask everyone to please make an effort to come out and help if you can – even if you don't have a scope. There is a lot of interest in astronomy in the tri-town area, and we can use this event to both our and the area's advantage. Plus, it will make up for getting rained and clouded out at Flanders!

Another avenue of public outreach being exploited is the club meetings being shown on Longmont Cable Channel 3 – thanks to the efforts of Michael Hotka. Hope you had a chance to check it out. The LAS on Channel 3 was popular when we did it years ago, too.

Clear Skies,

Bob Spohn  
President

**Front page photo explanation:** Even if the Moon really were made of green cheese it probably wouldn't look this bizarre. Still, this mosaic of 53 images was recorded by the Jupiter-bound Galileo spacecraft as it passed near our own large natural satellite in 1992. The pictures were recorded through three spectral filters and combined in an exaggerated false-color scheme to explore the composition of the lunar surface as changes in mineral content produce subtle color differences in reflected light. Familiar to earth dwellers, the lunar near side is on the left, but the space-based view looks down on the Moon's North pole located in the upper half of the image near the shadow line. Blue to orange shades indicate volcanic lava flows. The dark blue Mare Tranquillitatis at the lower left is richer in titanium bearing minerals than the green and orange maria above it. Near the bottom of the image and to the right of Tranquillitatis is the dark oval-shaped Mare Crisium surrounded by shocking pink colors indicating material of the lunar highlands.

## **Calendar**

### **September**

LAS meeting 9/18- New moon 9/26 – Star Party Pawnee 9/27

### **October**

Star Party Flanders 10/04 - LAS meeting 10/16 - 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

### **August meeting notes**

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

#### **OFFICERS' REPORT:**

Vice President Melinda Diehl reports that she is still a grand mother.

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 also noted that the time to renew dues and magazine subscriptions will be starting in September. She also said if a person wanted to pay early it was o.k.

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

Publicity/Fund Raising: Kirk Schneider, announced that he has LAS T-shirts, patches for sale.

**STAR PARTIES:** The New Moon Star Party will be at Fox Park in Wyoming, August 23rd.

There will be a huge star party at the Tri-City of Dacono/Firestone/Frederick on September 20th. We will set up at the Saddleback Golf Course. There will need to be more advertising on this, but it promises to be big.

We are also adding to our membership pool from Fort Lupton.

The BBQ and Star Party at Flanders Park was a huge success. Bob said there were 20 telescopes and binoculars at the party and a general great turn out. Our biggest yet! There are other possible sites to hold star parties, and folks are currently checking those out at this time. If anyone knows of a good place to hold a star party, please contact Bob Spohn.

Next star party will be Saturday, August 30th, at Flanders Park. Some members of the Unitarian Church of Boulder will be joining us for this star party.

Front Range Community College will be hosting a star party, particularly to look at Mars. It will be at Pike & Miler on their campus. All are invited.

Public Star Party being held at Mesa Elementary School in South Boulder, on September 12th. Leigh High and Hidleburg will also be attending. There will be a big crowd. Contact Archer if you are interested. There will be a heavy need for telescopes and high-power binoculars.

A series of star parties had been arranged by our newest members; Don Cerow and Lisa Michel at their home in Gunbarrel. They are looking for large telescopes to come out for the evenings of August 27, 28, 29, & 30th. On Wednesday the 27th, Channel 54 will be on site to do interviews with local amateur astronomers. If interested, please contact Don or Lisa at [starmyths@earthlink.net](mailto:starmyths@earthlink.net).

#### **ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

Terry Frazier announced an excellent book that he has read called "Origins". The author is a local professor at CU Boulder, Tommy Olson, and there could be a future program presented by this author at an LAS meeting.

It was announced that on September 11 at midnight, Neptune will be at 8.6 magnitude and a star near Neptune will be easier to view as well. More information on this event will be posted to the LAS website.

Bob announced that we collect aluminum cans for the telescope project. LAS members gather together and make mirrors and build 6" & 8" telescopes to be used as educational tools for local schools. Please note that you can bring your cans to the LAS meetings, and members will take them off of your hands.

Monica announced that she has LAS name tags available to order for you at \$6 each. There was an announcement that members of LAS automatically become members of the Front Range Community College Astronomy Club also called FRAC. Discounts on Sky & Telescope and Astronomy Magazines are available through your membership dues to LAS as well.

STAR CONSTELLATION PRESENTATION: This month's presentation was by Monica Martens and she showed slides of Capricornus. This constellation is associated with the god/myth-Pan; half goat-half fish. She reminded all that on Christmas Day, at 7pm, Venus and our Moon will be in this star constellation!

ALCOR REPORT: Jim Crane announced that Brian Kimball received a certificate last month for observations of all the Messier objects, and two months ago, Andrew Plank received a certificate for his observations of Double Stars. Jim explained for our new comers, and so of us not so new, that certificates are presented for observations documented from members of astronomy clubs. Information can be found on <http://www.astroleague.org>.

PRESENTATIONS: Ray Warren entertained us with his slide show of David Levy Parade, sky watching and Martians & Mars. Several maps of Mars was compared and studied. Everyone went away with a better understanding of some of the names and characteristics of Mars.

Philippe Bridenne gave a presentation of using Starry-Night Software.

### **Astronomy for beginners by Michael Hotka**

You are new to the club and astronomy in general. You want a telescope, like others in the club, but are unsure as to what would be a good telescope to purchase. In general, you don't even know where to begin.

Our club has much expertise in many aspects of astronomy. Talking with any club member is always a good place to start. Ask many questions. Beware that you might receive the opinion of that person, whom may only like refracting telescopes and not talk kindly of reflecting telescopes. Sort out the facts and form your own opinions about what would be the best way to get started in our hobby.

First, you need to ask yourself, "What kinds of observing do I wish to do...now and in the future".

If your interests are to just get your foot into the door of astronomy, but you also like to, say, watch birds, a great place to get started is with a simple set of star charts, like those in the book *NightWatch: A Practical Guide to Viewing the Universe*, by Terence Dickinson, and a pair of 7x35 or 8x50 binoculars. This is an inexpensive way to get started, and the binoculars can also spot those elusive warblers. There are two observing programs, sponsored by the Astronomical League, that will aid you by providing a list of objects to find. The Binocular Messier and Deep Sky Binocular Clubs (see <http://astroleague.org/al/obsclubs/obsclub.html>) are excellent programs for the novice astronomer. After completing these two programs, you will know if you desire a telescope of your very own.

But don't forget, our club has a 10-inch telescope that can be checked out by club members, so purchasing a telescope is not necessary.

You have the binoculars, and now want to checkout the clubs' 10-inch telescope for some personal observing. By completing either or both of the binocular observing programs, you have a feel for how to use a star chart

and translate that to finding the objects in the sky. The binoculars' large field of view aided you in doing this. Moving to a telescope, the field of view shrinks down tremendously.

A word of advice at this point in your blooming amateur astronomer aspirations, beware of the Digital Setting Circle trap. I refer to the multitude of Go To type of telescope pointing systems available on the market. These systems are great, and can aid you in finding objects to see, right from the beginning. But, as I have seen many times, you do not learn the sky. By avoiding this trap early in your acquiring sky knowledge, you will learn the constellations, the stars and much more. Then, you can enter the trap and find more objects another day. Avoid the trap initially. You will be rewarded by being a person whom can look up at the sky and not only see stars, but constellations, star names and the lore of the constellations.

So, you have contacted Leigh Pierson, arranged to pickup the 10-inch telescope, and have heard that a group is headed out to Pawnee this weekend. Now what.

A nice program to start is the Astronomical League's Sky Puppy Club. This is a nice transition program from the binocular program(s) to more serious observing with a telescope. Once you have completed the Sky Puppy Club, consider the Messier, Lunar, Sun Spotter's and Double Star Clubs. All of these clubs are well within the grasp of the 10-inch telescope and will give you breath-taking views of the variety of objects that lurk in every part of the sky. Once completing all of the above clubs, if the hook is not set in you to continue on with our hobby, then you have a nice pair of binoculars.

At this point, if the hook has been set and the call of the stars are reeling you in, what next. You may want to consider purchasing your own telescope. But which kind and what size are right for you.

Visit places where amateurs go. Pawnee, Fox Park, Flanders Park. Look through their telescopes, comparing the ease of use, portability of the setup and the views the scope yields. Personal questions that you have to ask yourself include "How much do I want to spend on this hobby?", "What can I fit (the telescope, charts, camping gear, etc.) into my vehicle to take to a dark sky site (Pawnee or Fox Park)?", "Can I easily setup this telescope by myself (a weight issue)?". The answers to these three questions will dictate what telescope you will purchase.

Once you have decided what scope to buy, shop around. Look at new and used equipment. The Denver club has a nice For Sale section, as does [www.astromart.com](http://www.astromart.com). S&S Optika, down in Lakewood, deals in new and used equipment. Look for a good deal. I read this morning that people are buying telescopes for Mars viewing. Look for great deals on used equipment in the months to come. This same thing happened with the comet Hale-Bopp passage. People purchased expensive astronomical equipment, just to have it sit around after the comet left. Then they sold it. What a missed opportunity for these people who had this nice telescope and didn't know what to do with it after the event had passed.

Don't let that happen to you. Our club is full of people that can help you learn how to use your telescope as well as how to use star charts and find the objects in the sky. Don't become frustrated, for some telescopes can push you to that. Once you know how to use the scope, the fun begins.

## **Some announcements**

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

#### Events, Lectures, and Programs

Friday, September 26

60 Minutes in Space: Beyond the Headlines

Curator from the Space Sciences Department

7:00 P.M., VIP Room, Denver Museum of Nature & Science

Cost is \$7 for members, \$10 for nonmembers, \$5 for students

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 up-to-the-minute reports of breakthroughs and events in astronomy and space exploration. Call 303-322-7009 for reservations.

Saturday, September 27–Sunday, September 28

Astronomy Campout

6:30 P.M.–9:00 A.M.

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 drought, 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.

#### Upcoming Events

Saturday, October 4

Astronomy Day

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

Included in the price of Museum admission

Celebrate astronomy with special updates from Dr. Steve Lee, curator of planetary science, in the Space Odyssey exhibition, solar viewing on the sky terrace, and through meteorite displays and hands-on activities in the west atrium. Guest lecturers will speak throughout the day. Call 303-322-7009 for more information.

Monday, October 6

Buying a Telescope

Bryan White, astronomy educator

6:30–8:30 P.M., Classroom 301

Cost is \$20 for members, \$25 for nonmembers

Learn what kinds of telescopes are available, what features to look for, and which will best meet your stargazing goals. Good for beginning and advanced astronomy hobbyists alike. Call 303-322-7009 for reservations.

Saturday, October 18–Sunday, October 19

Astronomy Campout

6:30 P.M.–9:00 A.M.

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 drought, 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 31

60 Minutes in Space: Beyond the Headlines

Curator from the Department of Space Sciences

7:00 P.M., VIP Room, Denver Museum of Nature & Science

Cost is \$7 for members, \$10 for nonmembers, \$5 for students

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 up-to-the-minute reports of breakthroughs and events in astronomy and space exploration. Call 303-322-7009 for reservations.

### **Video documentary by Michael Hotka**

After 8 hours of editing a program about Mars, it is ready for broadcast on the Longmont Public Access Channel 3.

The program will air on Sept 10<sup>th</sup>, at 11:00 AM, Sept 19<sup>th</sup> at 9 PM, Sept 29<sup>th</sup> at 10 PM and Oct 11<sup>th</sup> at 9 PM.

There is a copy that will be in our club library for people to checkout also.

This program is basically a documentary about club members and their efforts to view and take pictures of Mars. It starts out with Ray Warren's presentation at last month's club meeting and progresses to show pictures from Gary Garzone, Brian Kimball, Tim Brown, an amateur from Houston, TX and some of my sketches. It runs about 38 minutes in length and was a blast to put together.

You see those blooper shows and say, right, how hard can that be. WELL...let me tell you. Even with a script right in front of my face, I had to redo this one section about 8 times before I got out what I wanted to say. It is not as easy as it looks ;-)

Enjoy the show. Let me know any feedback you have.

I plan to do many more shows to not only promote our club, but our hobby. Any ideas for shows would also be greatly appreciated. Topics I have in my head right now are:

- A show about the MER rovers that are headed to Mars.
- A set of shows, interviewing club members about how they got started in astronomy, what interested them and what keeps them going. These shows will be about 10 minutes in length, and will be more like a public service announcement than anything else. With these shows, I hope to get the viewing audience more involved in astronomy, showing them it is not that hard to get started.
- A show about people who have observatories in their back yards, and what they do with them. I know Brian Kimball and Kevin Brose have observatories in their yards...anyone else???
- A show on how to purchase a telescope for Christmas.

## **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

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

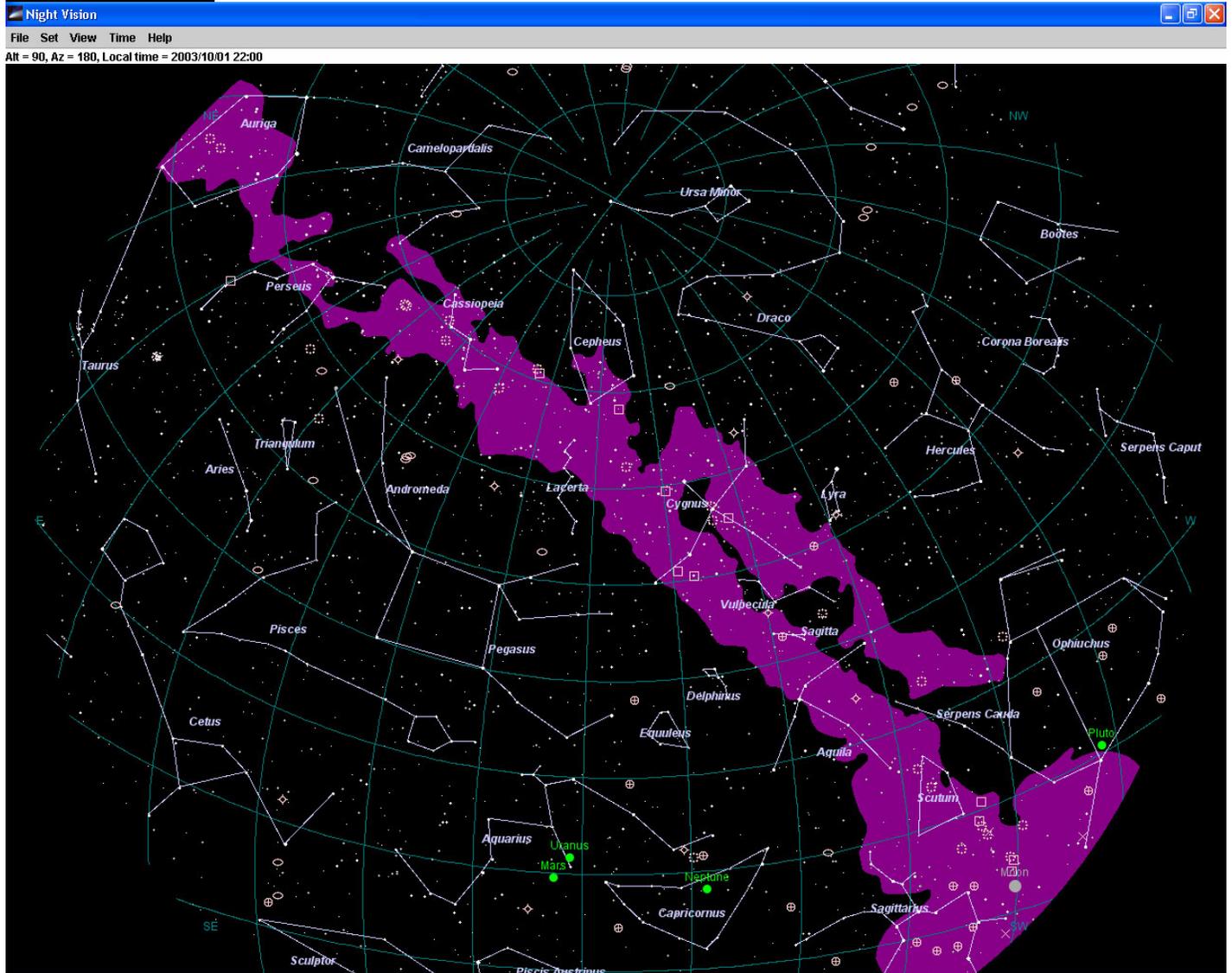
To buy:

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)

# October Sky Map



Aquarius

## Constellation of the month

### Aquarius – The Water Bearer

The Water Bearer dates as far back as Babylonian times and is appropriately placed in the sky not far from a dolphin, a river, a sea serpent and a fish. Of its many mythological associations, it was at times identified with Zeus pouring the waters of life down from the heavens.

M2: This fine globular cluster appears as a fuzzy spot of light through binoculars and small telescopes. It is possible, however to see the cluster's mottled appearance through a 4 inch (100mm) telescope and to resolve it into stars through a 6 inch (150mm) telescope



The Saturn Nebula (NGC 7009): This small planetary nebula was named by Lord Rosse, who with his large reflecting telescope, first saw the protruding rays that made it look like a dim version of Saturn with its rings. It is visible through a telescope as a greenish point of light.

The Helix Nebula (NGC7293): The largest and closest planetary nebulae, this cloud takes up half the angular diameter of the Moon in the sky. Because of its brightness is spread over a large area, it appears best with a low-power, wide-field telescope or binoculars under a dark sky.



Delta Aquarids: This strong meteor shower peaks very year on July 28<sup>th</sup>.