



You Know, I think the Prez is finally figuring out how to use the Camera!  
Picture taken at Crow Valley on April 14<sup>th</sup>,2007

**Longmont Astronomy Society Newsletter**  
**April 2007**

### **From the President:**

Hello astronomers! This past month The Home Planet Stellar views have been good and bad. First we had YMCA star night on Wednesday night April 4th , with 170 kids in Estes park retreat by Rocky Mountain National Park area, -beautiful place. I had to stop and wait for Elk to cross the road, deer were always hanging around the camp the rest of night. We got clouded out but Bryan White did his 3 D Aurora show in auditorium there. Thanks To Mark Badgy, Mike Prochada, Mike Hotka, Andrew Planck, and myself for trying to show the kids the heavens above. Clouds did us in so no views were had that night.

The week before that Andrew Planck and I did star night at Cal Wood retreat in Mountains west of here About 40 or so kids and parents from the Dawson school. Pretty dark skies and we did get some great views in. Saturn was awesome along with some galaxies and Orion nebula early evening. Andrew really has a way with kids, must be his lifetime of teaching them maybe? He is retired now but still loves to teach. I had fun. We also tried to do the FRCC astronomy class but got clouded out at the last minute, darn hard to hit them all right. We are doing FRCC class again Thursday 26th April 8 to 10 pm. anybody with the desire to share the skies come on over, email me. I need help doing these. 40 or so kids, I have several scopes to use, so just show up for fun night with kids, no long nights or long drives, yard views are OK from my yard here.

The big event of month was Crow Valley . Two nights of awesome dark skies. I was supposed to go to Sterling but last minute weather fears seemed to cancel the show. I was again sure that it would clear for Crow Valley for Friday night, so I took the chance. Dan Lafaive showed up after dark. We were alone all night, stayed up till 4:30 am, so good the skies we took pictures of Saturn with web camera. (note the leading picture – editor) Wow is all I can say, some of the best seeing skies ever. 9 out of 10 probably. We got the pictures to prove it. Dan's 9 1/4 inch scope with web camera, Saturn with low power of 460x, then we Barlowed it to 960x power and Saturn was still clear and steady. At those powers any poor seeing really comes thru on Laptop screen. It was so good we played around till batteries went dead, Darn, we wanted to do Jupiter later, but no way to run laptop without starting up my generator, at 3 am people in camp might not like us. I recharged laptop the next day then tried again on Saturday night , but seeing was back to normal then, about a 5 or 6 at times only. We still managed to get the red spot on Jupiter at 3:35 AM. Vern Raben caught the comet Lovejoy and even got it on stella cam about 5:30 am.

We managed to endure till dawn almost. I counted over 14 people with scopes for Saturday night. Pretty good for last minute star party. We were suppose to do Sterling once a year event , but ended up in the right place anyway. It seems I can never get away from the crowds with my big scope. We had 28 boy scouts and troop leaders and other campers showed up for spur of the moment star party for entire campground of people. We amazed many who never seen the skies like that. The next day the campground host wanted my number for future camp star parties, We are in demand , people are getting to know who we are . Too bad we can not get paid for this, good part time business maybe someday?? (Take a note: we'll never have to pay to camp again....)

Lots always going on. Science on a Sphere at NOAA for LAS monthly meeting this month, very cool indeed, a must see , outside the box presentation. You are there live it

seems. Check it out at Fiske also if you missed this chance. Thanks to Steve Albers, Vern and others for putting SOS on for us at LAS.

Astronomy Day April 21st at Twin Peaks Mall again ,so do not forget to show up and help out, I need Volunteers as usual . Also LTO Friday night April 20th for open house, Bring a scope if it's clear out . Fun event for your families, too.

Next month we are looking for the many comets that are up, Red spot on Jupiter . Saturn is leaving so get your last good looks for a while as we are already moving away from it. Vern's weekly planner is good advice for what to see. Thanks Vern I read it and do use it for red spot timings and other comet info. Keep it coming. I also love some pictures, We are always doing some great shots, Saturn on Friday night at Crow Valley was so good. I was at 7 mm nagler on 30 scope, that's about 571 power, and still large and steady, Wow!

Well here is shot of Saturn with just single shot digital camera on the 30 scope, so bright it was blinding at those powers. Dan L picture of red spot on Jupiter, Saturn too , enjoy, see you at Astronomy day, thanks volunteers We need you, bye, Gary

### **In the sky this month:**

April 23: First Quarter Moon

May 2<sup>nd</sup> – Full Moon

May 10 – Last Quarter Moon

May 19<sup>th</sup> – New Moon

**Meteor Showers** – the loose bits of Comet Halley (the Eta Aquarids) hit the Earth from April 21 thru May 12. Peak is around May 5<sup>th</sup>. East Southeast about 4 A.M. is the best time to look, radiant is about 20 degrees up.

### **Planets:**

Mercury puts on the best performance in May, with the greatest elongation and magnitude of -1.4 (like Sirius!). Try looking about 30 minutes after sunset below Venus. Move out from the mountains, if possible.

Venus is still gaining on us in its orbit, but won't reach the greatest elongation until June. With magnitude of -4.1, it's hard to miss!

Jupiter: rises at 11 or so at the beginning of May, then 9 at the end of May. Best viewing is 6 hours later, when it's at the maximum altitude. Good time to look is when you go out to get the paper in the morning, that's what I do.

Saturn: as you can see from the title page, the rings are as open as they are ever going to get for the next 5 years, so get out there and take a look! In good position right after sunset, then sets after midnight.

Interesting Stuff:

### **May 5 First American In Space**

Alan Shepard became the first American in space, aboard the suborbital *Mercury 3/Freedom 7*, 1961.

### **May 19 Moon and Many More!**

If you look to the west after sunset, and before about 11:00 PM, you can enjoy a spectacular display of celestial objects in one wide view.

The center of this show is east by northeast: the thin waxing Crescent Moon and, directly beneath it the brilliant flare of the planet Venus, suspended like a diamond set in a silver ring. Directly above this spectacle are the twin stars of Gemini: Castor and Pollux.

Directly to the left, and a bit farther off, is the bright white star Procyon, in Canis Minor-- and farther away yet, and upward, you can find the planet Saturn set close to the bright blue-white star Regulus.

### **May 25 Kennedy Declares Moon a Goal**

Those too young to remember can watch the video at:

<http://video.yahoo.com/video/play?vid=213567&fr=yfp-t-501>

In 1961, President John F. Kennedy declared the national goal of landing a man on the Moon and returning him safely to Earth by the end of the decade.

### **May 31 Moon, Jupiter, and Antares**

After sunset, look to the southeast to find the Full Moon, and not far away the planet Jupiter and the star Antares, heart of Scorpio.

### **Club Calendar:**

April 19: Monthly meeting. Scheduled is Science on a Sphere at Fiske – checking the availability.

April 20: Astronomy night at the LTO in Berthoud. They need some telescopes set up outside for a large crowd for Astronomy Day.

April 21: Astronomy Day for the LAS at Twin Peaks mall from 10-4. Solar scopes outside, table and talkers inside.

Thursday 26th April 8 to 10 P.M. FRCC astronomy class in Gary's back yard – help appreciated – email Gary.

May 17: regular meeting at FRCC

### **Coming Events:**

Rocky Mountain Star Stare June 14-17 near Colorado Springs.

[www.rmss.org](http://www.rmss.org)

Western Colorado Star Party 2007 June 15-17 near Grand Junction

[www.wcacastronomy.org/SP07.html](http://www.wcacastronomy.org/SP07.html)

### **Fiske Planetarium:**

Astronomy Day (Fiske / SBO) **April 21, 2007, 12:00 pm** Free. Exhibits, shows, giveaways. Free!

April 26-27: Aboriginal Skies – Dr. John Stocke & Paul Taylor