



The Prez shows that Vern's talk did him some good



and Phillippe checks in with a view of the French eclipse!

Longmont Astronomy Society Newsletter

March 2007

From the President:

Hello spring astronomers, You know this is the month when we try to do the Messier Marathon. The weather has been getting nicer now and maybe there is a chance we could do something at Pawnee or Crow Valley. I will keep watching FRAC and LAS emails for next dark skies star party, maybe this Saturday March 17th for the new moon adventures.

Most of us have not done much through out the winter months. It has been too cloudy, cold or snowy to do more than Yard views, (and standing knee deep in a snowbank isn't a lot of fun - ed). I have done some work in Pete Petersen's dome scope, Celestron 11 inch with equatorial mount, good tracking. Vern Raben gave the presentation on web camera use at last LAS meeting and has been helping me along. I am having fun doing Saturn pictures, seeing is the trick I found out and then getting good focus, not that easy sometimes. I also have been doing some moon shots with web camera, mostly poor seeing nights so not too many good shots to share yet, but I will be trying out Jupiter when it comes up at a better time. Mars will be fun when that happens again next winter I think. The Home Planet Stellar views have been lacking, I hope to make up for lost viewing time this spring.

Next Star party will be for FRCC kids with Joe Flasher, the astronomy teacher there. I will keep you posted with e mails. The other big event is Sterling Star party. We are on again for this year, despite the winds we will try again for dark sky viewing. April 13th and 14th, with Saturday the 14th the public night for showing the locals the heavens. I am always amazed at how good a turn out they have for the many local families and kids who are thrilled to see the stars. We have dazzled them before and hope to excite a few more again this year. Bob Loomis, the State park ranger offers same deal as in past, bring scope for free camping but must pay for daily state park pass each day you are there.

We still need a club fund raiser, guy or gal, to sell tee shirts books etc at club meetings and events. Volunteers get paid in atta boys so come get yours, when you give it always comes back to you sooner or later, so build up your account, for fun tickets in life. We are also looking into Astronomy day again at the Twin Peaks mall. Brian K and Bob S., Vern R, Dick M, and Marc W and so many more always help with this one. Solar scopes again for daytime views at Mall and night time views at Flanders to top off the day. We usually get a few new members out of these public sessions. We will have things to give away again on Astronomy Day. I still have some posters and things from last year. I have fun talking with the public sometimes, kids especially who show some smarts and interest, always a treat to get to pick their brains, makes it fun.

Hope your all getting in some yard views at least, summer is coming and new moon dark skies adventures will return. There are a few comets to look at. Comet McNaught was brightest in many years, too bad it was so short lived here. Challenge is finding the faint ones. Vern and I will be trying again next Dark Sky Pawnee adventure. Vern will have over 20 soon I think, only Mike Hotka and few others have done so many. I have near that amount, but never really kept good records of anything, but they all there in my mind. See you in the dark, bye, Gary

North Sterling Annual Spring Star Party

Date: 4/14/2007

Time: Dusk to ?

Location: Chimney View Campground south of dam

Have you ever looked up at the night sky from home and wished it were dark enough to REALLY see the stars and planets? Join David Coles from NORTHEASTERN JUNIOR COLLEGE SAT. APRIL 14TH - DUSK TO ??, at the west end of CHIMNEY VIEW CAMPGROUND, south of the dam, at NORTH STERLING STATE PARK. Look at stars through a large telescope provided. Vehicle passes are required. Questions? Call (970) 522-3657

In the sky this month:

Meteor Showers:

Eta Virginids February 24–March 27 Peak Around March 18 ZHR:1–2

Beta Leonids February 14–April 25 Peak Around March 20 ZHR:3–4

Lyrids April 16–April 25 Peak 21-22 ZHR: 10–20

Gamma Virginids April 4–April 21 Peak April 14–15 ZHR: up to 5

Things to see:

March 20: Crescent Moon and Venus 4 degrees conjunction at 6:07 PM MDT

March 21: one more chance, but the Moon is above Venus tonight.

March 22-23: Moon in the Pleiades ('Subaru' in Japanese, take a good look at that hood ornament....)

March 23: Happy Birthday, Werner von Braun (1912)

March 29: Mariner 10 flyby of Mercury (1974)

April 1: First weather satellite launched (Tiros 1, 1960)

April 3: Full Moon

April 9: 3rd quarter Moon

April 11: Apollo 13 launched in 1970. Visit the capsule in the Kansas Cosmosphere in Hutchinson.

April 13: Yuri Gagarin is the first man in space (1961)

First launch of the reusable space shuttle Columbia

April 14: Happy birthday, Christian Huygens (1671) - Saturn has rings!

April 17: New Moon

April 19: Crescent Moon, Venus and the Pleiades do their thing yet again

April 20: first Astronomy Day in 1973, Northern California Astro Club

April 23: First Quarter Moon

Visible Planets

Mercury: lost in the glare for the whole month

Venus: Looking good in the western sky at sunset. It takes a pass at the Pleiades on April 11th, then the Hyades on April 18th.

Mars: low in the ESE at dawn. Visible, but not very good.

Jupiter: rises about 1 AM on April 1st, then improves to 11 PM at the end of the month.

Saturn: high in the south at nightfall. This is the most open the rings will be (15 degrees tilt) for the next 5 years.

Club Calendar:

April 4: Astronomy night for 170 seventh graders at the Y in Estes Park, from 7 to 10, roughly.

April 14: Sterling Star party – see info in newsletter

April 17: Crow Valley? Pawnee? More later.

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.

Fiske Planetarium (selected programs here):

Colorado Skies: Spring Skies March 22, 2007, 7:30 pm

Cosmic Collisions March 23, 2007, 7:30 pm

Space Storm March 28, 2007, 1:00 pm

Adventures Beyond the Solar System March 29, 2007, 10:00 am

Exploring the Unseen Universe April 5, 2007, 7:30 pm and repeat April 6

Colorado Skies: Galaxies April 12, 2007, 7:30 pm

The Milky Way: A City of Stars April 13, 2007, 7:30 pm

Deep Impact April 14, 2007, 2:00 pm

Astronomy Day (Fiske / SBO) April 21, 2007, 12:00 pm

Internet Resources:

There's a new solar observatory up – a pair of satellites called Stereo, which has two satellites preceding and trailing the Earth in orbit. Last week it watched as the Moon transited the Sun. Watch the movie at

http://science.nasa.gov/headlines/y2007/12mar_stereoclipse.htm?list937934