

FIRST LIGHT VOL. 2 #?

Several #sciastro-ites have been busy this past month, both behind the eyepiece and the camera. And July was full of star parties as well; in the next issue we hope to get reports from those that went star partying last month (hint, hint!!)

ON MERIDIAN

BY SABER

CAMELOPARDALIS: GIRAFFE-IC PARK
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Sorry. That's really reaching for an astro-article title. But certainly no more of a stretch than visualizing a 'camel-leopard' in this dim and often overlooked region of our night sky.

With way too much time on his hands, the 17th century theologian Petrus Plancius is responsible for giving us this questionable crossbreed - as well as many others that did not survive the wrath of the IAU (only 2 of Plancius' imaginative figures remain- the other being Monoceros).

The Camelopardalis region is actually quite large, as only 17 constellations displace more area of space. Starting near Mirfak (alphaPer), its boundaries carve a wide path which ends over 40 degrees away at the open bowl of the Little Dipper.

Charles Messier balked on a couple of the interesting non-comet treasures in Camelopardalis. Ngcs2403 and 1502 in particular would have made great additions to his list. Large and 8th magnitude, ngc2403 rivals many of the best Messier galaxies in brightness, detail, and beauty. It can be found about 5 degrees northwest of omicronUMa. ngc1502 is fine open cluster in western Camelopardalis. Its dusty appearance is highlighted by several 8th mag. stars. Herschel 400 hunters will find this cluster quite refreshing after a long haul of dim 'fuzzies'.

In addition, a few nice double stars and a decent planetary will make a casual visit to our circumpolar Giraffe well worth a side-trip from the wonderful summer Milky Way.

VITAL STATISTICS:

Camelopardalis (kam uh low par' dah liss)

Possessive: same as above

Meaning: The Giraffe

Abbreviation: Cam

Bordering constellations: Auriga, Cassiopeia, Cepheus, Draco, Lynx, Perseus, Ursa Major, Ursa Minor

Midnight culmination date: 23 Dec

Rank in size: 18th (756.83 sq. deg.)

Visibility: completely visible from latitudes north of +5

completely invisible from latitudes south of -37

Must-See NGCs: 1501, 1502, 1961, 2403, 2655

Double-Vision: 1Cam (5.7+6.8@10.3"), Struve1051 (7.1+7.8@31.0"),

OStruve36 (6.8+8.6@46")

BYTES AND PIECES

StarGazr is now the proud owner of a new 10" LX50. Congrats, Star!

StarGazr, Sealth, comets, rickstr, Rorshach, and longship were just a handful of the nearly 1000 people that attended the Table Mountain Star Party in Washington this past July. comets was one of the featured speakers at the event. Sealth also took possession of his brand-new 18" f/4.5 StarMaster, which rickstr delivered in person. Sealth now joins johnv and AstroCady and Portia as the third #sciastro-ite to own an 18" StarMaster. Sealth reports that Mrs. Sealth would much rather observe with the 18" than she would with Sealth's 8" LX-200, because it's so much easier to use. So buy her one of her own, Sealth!!

Dave_J went to his first star party ever - the Nebraska Star Party. Good one to pick as your first time out, Dave! except that the weather sorta sucked most of the time. Dave won first place in one of the astrophoto categories for his picture of lightning. Does this tell you what the weather was like? Congratulations, Dave! Here is Dave's award winning shot.

Carbon went to the Montana Star Party, held the same week as Table Mountain and Nebraska. Less of a crowd there, and a lovely area for a star party.

Saber spent Monday nights in June and July with the Boy Scouts. Every year Saber and some of his colleagues in the Quad Cities assist their local troops of Scouts in getting their astronomy merit badges. This year the weather seldom cooperated, however, and the Scouts were reduced to slide shows much of the time. This did have an up side, however; Saber didn't have to worry about the Scouts demolishing the new C-14.....:)

Hankster and a friend made a 900 mile one-way drive to CosmicOne's store, Lymax's Earth, Sky, and Astronomy and bought an 8" Celestron SCT. Hot dog! Hankster (on the right) and his friend are pictured here drooling over a Meade 12" LX-200, which was a leetle out of their budget.

Rob_in_NJ and algenib both attended Stellafane in Vermont. Rob won first place in the junior division for his 8" f/6 Dob. Congratulations, Rob! He will furnish us with pics for the next issue (hint, hint!!)

losmandy got married on June 25, 1998. Congratulations, los!

skygazer and Mrs. skygazer have a new baby girl! Born May 31, 1998, her name is Ashley Noelle and she is absolutely adorable! She was only a few hours old when the proud papa had her web page up!!! Get sky to give you the URL for Ashley's web site. Your miserable excuse for an editor has lost it... :(

erg got his Arp certificate, #4-V (for visual). He used his trusty C-8 for it, which takes REAL courage! Congratulations, erg! Only the 4th person ever to get the visual Arp certificate!!

#sciastro has a new channel OP; Scotty^, who in another life, works with the adaptive optics system and does other research at Mt. Wilson Observatory, has graciously agreed to OP the channel, particularly during the wee hours when most of us have called it a day. Welcome, Scotty^!!

Flash_CA was sent to Australia on business, and took his 4" ITE kit refractor with him. He did manage to hook up with neptunium while "down under". Here are some of his observing notes:

On Tuesday, July 21, 1998 at approximately 6:20 p.m. local time, I was able to observe Omega Centauri high overhead from downtown Sydney. Using a 4" ITE kit refractor, I first observed the spectacular double Alpha Centauri. This is easily the most dramatic double I have seen. These are bright stars (mag. 0.0 and 1.2, yellow and yellow-orange), which appeared yellowish at 20x and reddish at 30x in the semi-apo refractor. Easy split at 30x at 16. Following this, I was able to locate the Jewel Box in Crux, right next to Beta (Mimosa). This open cluster is easy at 20x and at 30x shows stars appearing greenish, bluish and red in close proximity. This is a very colorful arrangement.

Finally, I located Omega Centauri by star-hopping from Epsilon Centauri northwest along a line from Beta Centauri (Hadar). The globular cluster appeared diffuse and very symmetrical at both 20x and 30x in the semi-apo refractor. The sky is was very bright and it was not possible to see it at 120x. I believe, though, that I might have been able to resolve it at least partially at 60x.

Both Flash_CA and Carbon purchased and built the 4" ITE kit refractors. Here are pictures of each of their efforts. They both report that the scopes are performing beautifully. Nice work, you two!!

CRAWLING THE WEB

Due to the large number of photos and images we have in this issue, your editor is keeping this section short.

Check out M13's site at <http://www.arrowweb.com/m1/atm/> He has complete instructions for building your own Dob! Very nice!

Alareth's page is at <http://surf.to/stellar-visions> This wonderful piece of work is updated monthly, to feature various observing treats and objects of note. Thanks, Alareth!

Here's a great animated gif of the moon, showing libration as well as phases. <http://www.geocities.com/capecanaveral/5409/lunation.gif>

PHOTO GALLERY

#sciastro-ites have been busy this summer photographing and imaging. Here is a sample of their work. Keep 'em coming, folks! This is GREAT!

M3 by Sealth. Taken at prime focus of an 8" f/10 LX-200 with Kodak Royal Gold 1000 and a 4 minute exposure.

M13 by Sealth. Same setup as above; 10 minute exposure.

The Sun, by Sealth. Same setup as above, 1/500 sec exposure through a full aperture Thousand Oaks Type II solar filter.

Todd^ got this CCD image of Jupiter on June 28 at 5:00 a.m. It is an average of 3 .3 sec images using a 5" EDF refractor. At Sys2 long. 297. More of Todd^'s (and others) fabulous Jupiter images can be seen at <http://www.weatherman.com/jupiter/htm>

This is an image Todd^ got of Saturn. It is a .4 sec exposure with his 5" EDF working at f/40.

neptunium sent us these images, taken through his 45 cm Newtonian with an Apogee AP-7 CCD camera. The image of NGC 5139 was a compilation of 5 10-second exposures. The Helix is a combination of 3 30-second and 1 20-second exposure. M22, shot while 25 degrees from the full Moon, is a combination of 10 5-second exposures. Copyright 1998 by Gordon J. Garradd.

Flash_CA sent in these two of the Moon and M13. The image of the moon was taken on July 2, 1998, with an ST-7 CCD camera, using a .2 second exposure through a #38A dark blue filter. Your miserable excuse for a newsletter editor apparently forgot to write down the particulars for the image of M13, but it is a beauty, nonetheless.

|JSC| snapped this shot of the moon using eyepiece projection, with a 9mm Plossl, a tele-extender, and a Nikon 70 camera. It is a 1/4 sec exposure through a 10" f/10 LX-200 on Kodak Royal Gold 125.

joe3 took these two beauties at prime focus of a 6" AP refractor, using Kodak PJM. The Lagoon (M8) was a 30 minute exposure; M13 was a 50 minute exposure. He used a comparator knife-edge focuser to achieve focus.

losmandy got this beauty of NGC 5128 using an ST-7 and 5 300-second stacked exposures. WOW!

Comet Stonehouse made its somewhat unspectacular apparition in Ursa Major during June. Although it wasn't much visually (CosmicOne described it as a Q-tip with most of the stick cut off), neptunium nonetheless got a nice image of it. This is a composite of 5 40-second exposures that were shifted to register the comet, which was moving over 7"/minute. The field of view is 8' and north is up. neptunium used a 25 cm Newtonian and a HI-SIS 22 CCD camera for the image. It was taken from his backyard in Loomberah, NSW, Australia. Copyright 1998 by Gordon J. Garradd.