#sciastro NEWS

We need a TITLE for this newsletter! Several people were kind enough to propose some ideas, so here they are. But we need YOUR help! Please vote for your favorite title by e-mail by June 30, 1997. The title with the most votes will appear on the next issue of this newsletter.

AstroNotes
Point of Light
Averted Vision
Diffractions
The Cosmic View
Photon Phix
Newtonian Nuggets
The Lighter Side of Dark Matter
StarHopper
Stellar Happenings
Accretion Disk
Binary Mass
Matter Transfer
Cosmic String
Stellar Reflections
ProtoStar
Occulted Reality
First Light
The Lighter Side of the Dark
Ocular Impressions
Pier Pressure
Wave Front
Limiting Magnitude
Emission Lines
Post Perihelion
Sidereal Times
The Precession
Blue Shift
The Pulsar

Lots of good ones here, folks, so take your pick and let us know! Send your votes to: #sciastro at scarroll2@pipeline.com

UPCOMING FORUM

There will be a forum on #sciastro on Sunday, June 15, at 7:00 p.m. EDT (1100 UT) entitled "Observing the Deep Sky With Smaller Telescopes, conducted by erg. erg has been an amateur astronomer since 1958, and holds both a Messier and a Herschel certificate. He will be on hand to give us advice on how to get the most out of our smaller aperture telescopes. So don't miss out - pull up a chair and take advantage of a seasoned observer's tips and experiences! More information on the forum is posted elsewhere on this website.

OBSERVATIONS

By Todd Gross

Seeing was about a 6-7 (0-10 scale) on Thurdsay night 6/5/97 in Massachusetts last week, skies were clear, limiting magnitude at my suburban site finally

towards it's limit.. about 5.3 near the zenith. M57 was riding high, and I tried for the central
star - successfully !!!!!!(Personal first!)

The stars viewed through this 16" scope near the ring nebula included the 13th magnitude star near the tip (this is listed as 12.4 or so, but erroneously in many sources, if you are looking it up). Then diagonally across from the 13th magnitude tip star was what looked to be a 15th magnitude star on the other tip. This was "new" to me, never seen or even looked for before. The 14.6 magnitude double was visible too, as were the two other 14.5 mag. stars on the same side (see Brian Skiff's article on www.weatherman.com, equipment review section) so I went for the central star. At 350x I saw it fleetingly with averted vision only..but it was definitely there amongst the nebulosity. No doubt about it.. exact center. The other central star I could not make out, suspected it, (in the right place in retrospect) but didn't confirm it.

At 570x, it was even easier, and despite only marginally very good seeing, I was pleased at how bright and clear everything looked in the 16" at this magnification, I rarely have skies that can support high power in the scope.

I think that that star of approximately 15.3 magnitude (my personal guestimate) at the very tip of the ring nebula (opposite from the bright tip star) is a good test star to see if you are going to have luck at finding the central star that night.

Here is what I have been able to see magnitude wise in the Ring Nebula area in suburban skies, when using various apertures:

78mm Takahashi: 13th magnitude star near tip barely visible with averted vision, very tough

4" Traveler: 13th magnitude star near tip easy

8" SCT: 13th magnitude star near tip easy, 14.2 magnitude star nearby (see Brian Skiff article) visible only with averted vision in best circumstances, very tough

14" SCT: 14.2 magnitude star easy, 14.6 magnitude star (upper right in article) fairly easy

16" Dobnewt, enhanced coatings: 14.6 magnitude star, and others nearby 14-15 magnitude easy,
15th magnitude star near tip (opposite tip of 13 mag.) visible with direct vision. Central star very tough, visible with averted vision at times, and easier at highest possible magnification

BYTES AND PIECES

Sealth and other members of the Squak Mountain Telescope Gang held a public observing session at Marymoor Park, near Redmond, WA, on June 7, 1997. They had 8 telescopes there, including 5 SCT's and 3 Dobs; one of the Dobs was a very nice 18" built by one of the club members. Clouds moved in after sunset and the group spent the first hour chasing sucker holes. This public viewing session was put on for the Bellevue Community College astronomy class, but only about six of the students showed up. Well - their loss! The Squak Mountain Telescope Gang maintains a website at http://www.front-street.com/comorg/squakmtn/telescop.htm.

Doug_B hosted the 14th Annual Summer Solstice Star Party on his place near Fenton, MI. About 60 attendees enjoyed clear skies Saturday night and observing went on until dawn. On Saturday afternoon, some of the folks helped Doug_B re-furbish the foundation on one of the observatories. Doug reports, however, that only about 6 or 7 people stayed for Sunday brunch. Okay, Doug - where are those leftovers you promised us?

STOP THE PRESS!! RichC took delivery, on June 12, of his new long-awaited 14.5" StarMaster Dobsonian! Of course, the skies were cloudy.... CONGRATS, Rich!!!! Those clouds won't be there forever....!

Rob_in_NJ and NebM42 both attended the New Jersey Star Quest during the weekend of June 6-8, 1997. This was Neb's first star party ever! Rob reports cloudy skies Friday night, but Saturday cleared up at about 2:00 a.m. About 90 people were in attendance, but several left Saturday afternoon because the weather looked chancy. Rob said his recently acquired SkyCommander worked like a charm and he got in a good bit of time at the eyepiece.

STOP THE PRESS!! AGAIN!! DragoSani, a #sciastro-ite who hasn't been around in awhile, breezed in with the reason why - he got married!! The ceremony took place on May 31, 1997, with the honeymoon in Cancun, Mexico. Congratulations, Drago!

Check out these sites for news on the Oregon Star Party (OSP) at http://www.teleport.com/~ospinc/ and the Table Mountain Star Party, at http://www.tmspa.com. These are fabulous star parties, held in July and August respectively. The Table Mountain Star Party website will be up as of June 15, 1997.

MEET OUR CHANNEL USERS

Say hello to FireCapt, from Palmetto, FL! FC's interest in astronomy began when he was a little kid looking through his father's 60mm refractor. It came to a peak in 1994 during the crash of Comet Shoemaker-Levy into Jupiter. A week after the crash, FC acquired his first telescope, a 6" f/8 reflector.

Since then, FC has acquired and re-built a 13.1" Coulter into a truss tube scope, and is working on his Messier Certificate. He's been to a number of star parties and is a member of the Local Group of Deep Sky Observers, in Sarasota, FL. His current project is re-working an 8" f/6 Celestron Dobsonian that was damaged during shipping, and fitting digital setting circles to his 13.1".

FC is indeed a fire captain and an EMT, is married, and has two teen-aged daughters and two dogs. Glad to have you on the channel, FC!

CRAWLING THE WEB

On June 12, 1997, in an article in Nature, the world learned of the strange orbit of near-Earth asteroid 3753 (1986TO). This asteroid shares Earth's orbit in a highly unusual pattern called a "horseshoe" orbit. A fascinating description of horseshoe orbits in general, and this asteroid in particular, can be found at http://www.asteroid.yorku.ca/companion Thanks to Kore for finding this nifty site.

There has been a lot of interest in the recent polar image theory of comets that "spray" Earth's atmosphere with cometary fragments. Information on this

fascinating theory can be found at http://pao.gsfc.nasa.gov/gsfc/newsroom/flash/flash.htm Check this one out! Thanks to Joe3 for this info.

And on the lighter side - TPrinty shared this one with us. If you want some good laughs, check this site out. It's full of cartoons debunking UFO's! Some of these cartoons are a riot! Find them at http://www.mcs.com/~kvg/smear.htm

This beautiful painting was done by algenib, and is entitled "Celestial Music". It is a 21" x 28" watercolor. algenib hails from Montreal, Quebec and has exhibited her space art in galleries there. Thanks so much for this visual treat! This one has not been sold yet......at least for the nanosecond.