

The Objective View

Newsletter of the Northern Colorado Astronomical Society

January 2009

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Chamberlin Observatory Open House, 7 to 10 pm
Jan 3, Jan 31, Mar 7, Apr 4, May 2, May 30, 303 871 5172
<http://www.du.edu/~rstencil/Chamberlin/>

Longmont Astronomical Society Jan 17 LAS Members
Banquet <http://www.longmontastro.org/>

December 4 NCAS Meeting Cancelled Due to Weather

Observing Report, Mills Canyon NM, Dec 29 to 31 2008 From Dan Laszlo and Greg Halac

Dec 29-30 was a splendid night, no wind and temps in the teens F. We had the Rim Campground at Mills Canyon to ourselves. Dan Laszlo and Greg Halac arrived about 1500 and Dan Lafaive rolled in about 2330, but he was drawn to more southern skies after a few hours in NM. At sunset we had the chain of Mercury, Jupiter, the Moon and Venus. The Zodiacal Band was dimly visible Dec 29th, from horizon to blending with the Milky Way in Taurus. Fine views included the dark mottling in Cas-Per-Auriga Milky Way. The Horsehead Nebula made a dim appearance, best framed in the 17.5 scope with the H-Beta filter.

Sky Quality Meter was at 21.6 most of the night, not the best DL had at the site in past visits. This is a small mystery, because the sky seemed perfectly clear at sunset. GH tracked down dozens of objects with the Sky Commander constellation tours, including southern galaxies in Sculptor, Fornax and Eridanus. While views were extremely good, the darkest objects like the dark lanes in M31 did not seem their absolute best. Did we have some late clouds or airglow perhaps? Should have tried a photo. The only obvious clouds before 0100 on Dec 30 were low on the horizon. Saturn was up enough for a tantalizing glimpse of its slender ring. DL got up again to partly cloudy skies around 40% covered about 0500 on Dec 30. Saturn was in some turbulence, had been better on the horizon a few hours earlier. Within the next few hours a stiff breeze about 10 -15 mph kicked in and removed scope covers, rescued by GH timely awakening. There was a solid wave cloud overhead.

After the great night, we considered leaving if the forecast was bad. We had to drive to a few miles from Wagon Mound, NM to get a cell signal, and Dan's wife relayed a reassuring forecast from the Clear Sky Chart. Greg was able to use his Blackberry browser to confirm. Indeed the wind settled down late afternoon, but the clouds were more persistent, finally thinned around 1900 a couple hours late. We shifted to a site with some wind protection.

Dec 30-31 was a spectacular night. Zodiacal Band was more distinct, still lost in Taurus. Sky Quality Meter continued to drop. The best readings were about 11 PM: 21.90 21.88 21.90 toward the North, avoiding the Milky Way. GH continued the constellation tours. DL went through the southern parts of Steve Gottlieb's 527 list. Better views were

Next Meeting: January 8 7:30 pm

Update on Earth's Moon Dr. Dan Laszlo

Club Business with Officer Elections at 7:15 pm

Discovery Science Center 703 E Prospect Ave, Fort Collins

<http://www.ncastro.org/Sites/DiscoveryCtr.htm>

Club Brochure: http://www.ncastro.org/Contrib/2008_Brochure.pdf

NCAS Programs

Feb 5 TBA

Public Starwatch at Discovery Science Center, South Lot

Jan 9 6:30 pm
Jan 30 6:30 pm
Mar 6 6:30 pm
Apr 3 7:30 pm
May 1 8:00 pm

Dark Site Observing Dates

Jan 23 Pawnee-RAC

Other Events

CSU Madison Macdonald Observatory Public Nights
On East Drive, north of Pitkin Street
Tuesdays after dusk if clear, when class is in session

Cheyenne Astronomical Society Jan 16 7 pm
Cheyenne Botanic Garden.
<http://home.bresnan.net/~curranm/>

had of all objects, The Horsehead was more contrasty. NGC 253, GC NGC 288, Fornax objects 1097, 1316, and the group by 1350, the great planetary neb NGC 1360, and in Eridanus NGC 1535, high power helped distinguish the shells for that one. Galaxy structure was better than the previous night in even prominent targets M31, M33, NGC 891, M51, M81 and 82. The wispy outer arms in 81 were better, for example. What a glorious look at the Winter Milky Way by Canis Major. It showed a dim band of unresolved stars to the horizon. Good looks were had of IC 444 looking like the Cocoon Nebula, the Rosette Nebula and Hubble's Variable Nebula. Just gawking at the Milky Way overhead competed with scope time. Seeing was fair or good. Six stars showed in the Trapezium, and PN would take high power. Again Saturn was decent around 0100 on Dec 31. Greg was up before 0400 and found Saturn extra crispy at 260x, could take more. The slivery ring looks even more narrow in good seeing, and ring shadow was a hairline across the equator. That was the most otherworldly view of the trip.

Hope we have more travelers next time; it was a quick but most rewarding trip in spite of the 5 to 6 hour drive. A little drama with the wind, soon forgotten under that intense Milky Way.

Dan Laszlo and Greg Halac
NCAS Fort Collins

Robert Zubrin Speaking at the Boulder Bookstore From Andrea Schweitzer

<http://boulderbookstore.booksense.com/NASApp/store/Product?s=showproduct&isbn=9780307407184>

How to Live on Mars

Thursday, January 15, 7:30pm

Straight from the not-so-distant future, this hilarious collection of tips for physical, financial, and social survival on the Red Planet covers how to get to Mars, selecting a habitat, and even Mars-centric pickup lines. How to Live on Mars seamlessly blends humor and real science.

Tell NASA Your Ideas About Podcasts From Andrea Schweitzer

The Astrophysics Science Division at NASA Goddard is seeking your feedback about what potential listeners would want to hear on a podcast. These podcasts are intended to highlight NASA science, missions, and people.

Here's the survey:

<http://www.knowitbetter.com/limesurvey/index.php?sid=12765>

Please feel free to pass this announcement along to other astronomy enthusiasts.

Enceladus Jets – Cassini/UVIS From Bill Possel

The Cassini Ultraviolet and Imaging Spectrograph (UVIS) instrument was built and is being operated by CU's Laboratory for Atmospheric and Space Physics (LASP). There's an article from the journal Nature – Nov 26 2008.

<http://www.nature.com/news/2008/081126/full/news.2008.1254.html>

http://www.nasa.gov/mission_pages/cassini/whycassini/cassiniif-20081126.html

Quadrantid Meteor Peak January 3

Mira in Cetus Just Past Mid December Peak

Best Looks

Moon By Pleiades morning 1/7
by Saturn Jan 14-15; by Antares Jan 21
By Mars Jan 24 by Venus 1/30
Mercury In SW dusk first week.
Venus In SW in evening all month
Mars Difficult in SE end of month predawn
Jupiter In SW in evening first week
Saturn High in S predawn. Rings very thin
Uranus In Aquarius, early evening. By Venus 21-23

Beware of ISS Boost Jan 14 2009

Date	Mag	Starts			Max. altitude			Ends		
		Time	Alt.	Az.	Time	Alt.	Az.	Time	Alt.	Az.
6 Jan	-1.6	05:32:17	53	E	05:32:17	53	E	05:34:42	10	ESE
6 Jan	0.3	07:06:10	10	WSW	07:06:45	10	SW	07:07:20	10	SW
7 Jan	-1.3	05:58:11	31	SW	05:58:20	31	SW	06:00:56	10	SSE
8 Jan	1.2	04:52:31	11	ESE	04:52:31	11	ESE	04:52:35	10	ESE
9 Jan	0.7	05:18:31	11	SSE	05:18:31	11	SSE	05:18:38	10	SSE
16 Jan	-1.4	18:24:48	10	SSW	18:27:29	33	SE	18:27:29	33	SE

<http://www.heavens-above.com/main.aspx?lat=40.4997&lng=-105.05736&loc=Fort+Collins+CO+USA&alt=0&tz=MST>

Iridium Flares for Discovery Center, Fort Collins

Date	Local Time	Intensity (Mag)	Alt.	Azimuth	Distance to flare centre	Intensity at flare centre (Mag.)	Satellite
07 Jan	17:59:51	-1	30°	188° (S)	28.4 km (W)	-7	Iridium 83
08 Jan	17:53:42	-1	31°	186° (S)	26.7 km (E)	-7	Iridium 56
12 Jan	17:38:36	-5	29°	196° (SSW)	7.6 km (E)	-7	Iridium 53
14 Jan	05:51:09	-1	45°	344° (NNW)	29.3 km (W)	-8	Iridium 52
15 Jan	05:45:12	-1	43°	345° (NNW)	24.9 km (W)	-8	Iridium 10
15 Jan	17:23:46	-0	29°	201° (SSW)	38.9 km (E)	-7	Iridium 91
16 Jan	05:39:12	-8	42°	347° (NNW)	2.2 km (W)	-8	Iridium 13
16 Jan	17:23:34	-6	27°	205° (SSW)	4.3 km (W)	-7	Iridium 10
17 Jan	05:32:38	-8	40°	347° (NNW)	3.4 km (W)	-8	Iridium 91
17 Jan	05:33:13	-2	41°	349° (NNW)	19.5 km (E)	-8	Iridium 50
18 Jan	05:27:15	-0	39°	350° (N)	37.6 km (E)	-8	Iridium 53
18 Jan	18:47:19	-4	33°	164° (SSE)	12.2 km (E)	-8	Iridium 43
19 Jan	17:14:37	-0	24°	212° (SSW)	41.7 km (W)	-6	Iridium 84