



The Night Sky

The Newsletter of
The Astronomy Club of Akron
www.acorn.net/aca

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January 2002

See You at the Holiday Dinner on January 19th!



FROM THE PRESIDENT

Happy New Year!! Here it is the second year into the new millennium! It seems like the turn of the century was just last year. Anyway, I hope each of you had a safe and enjoyable New Year. I'm looking forward to the Holiday Dinner. It will be Saturday January 19, 2002, at the Kiwanis Center. We'll eat at 7:00PM. There will be a short presentation based on the columns I wrote the last year. Please come and see your fellow club members in the light. One of my problems is, when I'm able to come to the observatory for a program, many of the members are there and I have to almost ask, "Who are you?" (Maybe it has something to do with getting older.)

We will have a need for a new publications secretary this year. Ray has informed me he is stepping down at the end of his term. THANK YOU Ray for the great job you have done. The duty of the Publication Secretary is to create the newsletter, copy, and mail it. While we are discussing the newsletter, it is much easier if the editor has too

much stuff to include rather than having to publish eighteen (Frank's emphasis) pages of other club's upcoming events.

I will be there. I have arranged to have the night off, so I'll SEE YA AT THE DINNER!



I Saw It Raining Fire In the Sky

By Rich Ruggles

I now know what that line in John Denver's song, "Rocky Mountain High" means. In the early morning hours of November 18th I witnessed my first meteor storm, and what an incredible sight it was.

The adventure started a week earlier. While talking astronomy and asking about dark sky spots at work, a coworker told me about their campsite in the Wayne National Forest. From his description I figured it would be a perfect spot for star-

gazing. The next day he told me it would be OK to use the site and by the end of the week I had a map to the site.

By this time, everyone had received their newsletter and knew about our observatory open house the same night. I knew some of our members were going to seek out a dark sky site, to view this once in a lifetime meteor shower, so I put out a call on the ACA Info Email to inform any members heading to dark skies that they were welcome to come along. (If you are not on the ACA Info email list, send me an email and I'll put you right on it: astronomylon1@cs.com).

I got a call from Vic DeChristofolo who was looking for dark skies and thought this would be a good one.

We had planned to leave my house at 4:00 in the afternoon to give us time to find the site in the daylight. Vic was almost to my hose when he realized he had forgotten an important item. So he headed back to get it. At 4:00 I got a call saying go ahead and leave and we'll meet up down there via cell phones.

(Continued on Page 3)

Activities Calendar

Club

January 19, Holiday Dinner and Meeting
February 9, Observatory Program 7:30 PM
February 22, Monthly Meeting
March 9, Observatory Program 7:30 PM
March 22, Monthly Meeting

Celestial

January 28, Full Moon
February 10, Jupiter's Moons 8" apart
February 12, New Moon
February 20, Moon occults Saturn
February 21, Mercury at greatest elongation
February 27, Full Moon

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The deadline for article submission is **two weeks before the next meeting**. All word processing files should be saved in straight ASCII text files or any version of Word to minimize import problems. We will not turn away **any** submission, as long as the article's subject is astronomy or a related topic. If you don't have access to a computer, don't hesitate to write something out long hand. As long as it is legible, I will slave over the keyboard and get it published.

PLEASE SEND IN YOUR ARTICLES!!!!

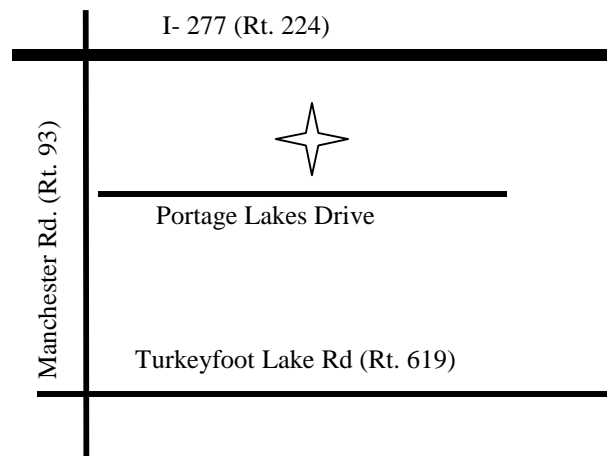
The newsletter (and the club) will be much richer with your contribution. Thanks to all who have used their valuable time to author or collect material for the Night Sky. (Editor)

Send your articles, items for sale, and comments to:

Ray Hyer, 725 Brewer St. Akron, OH 44305 Email: rhyer@neo.rr.com

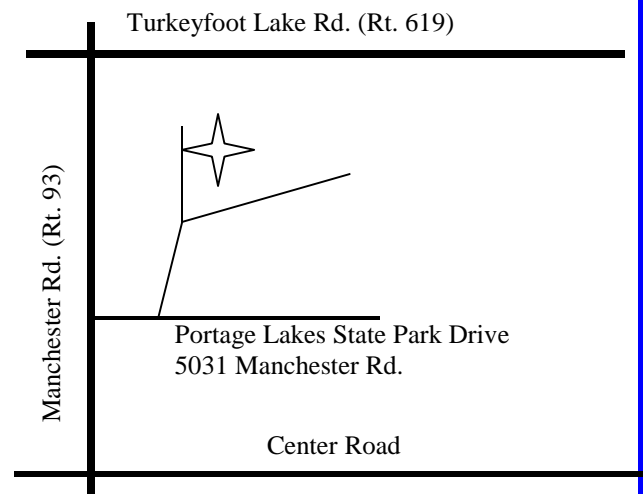
MONTHLY MEETING LOCATION:

The Astronomy Club of Akron meets at 8:00 PM at the Kiwanis Hall, 725 Portage Lakes Drive.



OBSERVATORY LOCATION:

The ACA Observatory is located within the Portage Lakes State Park on Manchester Rd. (Rt. 93). Turn left off Manchester Rd, then left at the first drive. Observatory is across the street from the Park Office.



The 2 ½ hour drive took about 3 ½ due to the vague map. It was well past dark by now and I found out later that I drove past the driveway three times in my search. I ended up stopping at a farm house in the area and asked if he knew of this piece of property. After about ten minutes of looking at the map and hearing my description of an older man living right next to the drive, he pointed down the road about ¼ mile to a house with its lights on and said "That's Old Jim's place. I think it's next to him. Tell him Harry sent you down."

As I pulled into Old Jim's driveway I thought, "I know this driveway." I turned around in it on my first attempt to find the site. As I walked up on the porch I heard Old Jim say "Come on in and sit down." I did just that and found Old Jim to be a very cordial and friendly guy. I told him what I was looking for and sure enough it was right next to him. He put on his boots and said "Follow me." He lead the way along his side yard and over to the driveway that went back to the site. He said, "If you need anything just ask," then he headed back home.

As his headlights got lost in the trees I looked up at a clear star filled sky. I set up all my stuff and started to observe a little. **Hey! Where's Vic?** He hadn't called yet and enough time had passed for him to be in the area. I called home to say I had arrived here and told my wife to set the alarm for 4:30 AM to get up and see the showers. I also wanted her to call Vic's home to make sure he had my cell phone # since I didn't have his. It wasn't long that I

got a call from him. He was only ten miles away and soon arrived following the ACA signs I had set up for him.

It was about 10:30 by the time we got Vic set up. The meteors were still quite rare. So we pointed our scopes skyward and started picking off the very faint object in the crystal clear and almost black sky. Through the night we had a lot of wet dew settling but no fog. For the first time in my life I was able to see, quite clearly, the section of the Milky Way that goes along side Orion, called the Nile. I turned my scope to it and just scanned it finding many clusters and faint nebula.

After a few hours of observing we noticed two things: 1. The dew was getting more and more troublesome and 2. The amount of the meteors was growing more and more frequent. It was time to count meteors.

It is now about 2:00AM. Our sky and horizons were all still clear as a bell. We could see the meteors between the trees going all the way down. From short faint ones to long, (clear across the sky) bright ones. We saw many of them skip across the sky and at one point, many large bright ones that would explode like a flash bulb and came in such a barrage that we felt like the paparazzi had surrounded us. We saw one streak about 20 degrees then explode and left its burn mark in the sky for over five minutes. Nothing could prepare me for what we witnessed that night.

I have seen meteor showers before and have been watching them for many years and the most I saw was about 100 per

hour max. Our counts, this night, went from 200 per hour to 2000 per hour and that was only the ones we saw. Vic and I figured that for every one we saw we missed 50-75 at the peak. We didn't just sit and look in one direction. We stood and about every 20 sec. Or so would pivot about 45 degrees. When we got tired we sat, but only for 5-10 min. then up and pivot again, trying not to miss a thing. Just with our peripheral vision we would see 5-10 at once.

At around 5:30 I sat once more and looked straight up and saw the textbook radiant. There were hundreds of very short meteors radiating from Leo. It truly looked like "fleas" jumping off the Lion's back. A most remarkable sight.. We kept watching, even as dawn was breaking and the east was getting brighter, we could still see several bright ones.

It was about 6:30 when we turned in for a few hours sleep before breaking camp and heading home around 11:00AM.



LOANERS, LOANERS

Start the New Year off with a loaner scope for the A.C. A. You can sign out a telescope for 3 months with 2 eyepieces and a star book. The scopes we now have available are:

- 4 ½" F8 DOB,
- 5" F5 Richfield refractor on a E.Q. mount
- 8" F7 DOB

To sign out any of these scopes please contact Rich Ruggles, 330 644-5912 as-
tronomy1on1@cs.com



LAST CALL

Have you ever wanted to help out the ACA but didn't know how? Now you can. We have a double order of the **YEAR in SPACE** weekly desk calendars and need help in selling them. You can start by buying one for yourself. Use it to keep track of meetings, observatory programs, outreach programs, OTAA star parties, club only star parties, birthdays, anniversaries, etc.

You can even keep a log of astronomical sightings and descriptions, use it as your astronomy log book. This desk calendar also lists all the NASA scheduled launches for 2002. All the planned ISS missions, Hubble missions and 2002 Planetary missions. All this in an easy to carry size.

Then see if you can sell one to a friend or coworker. The cost of the Year In Space is \$10.00. That's a savings of \$5.00 off newsstand price and the club will make a dollar on each sale. Your help will be greatly appreciated.

We also have the **2002 Observers Handbook** for \$15.00. This handbook has all the predicted astronomical event highlights from eclipse to asteroids. Edited by Rajiv Gupta, and now easy to read and understand containing basic data about time, optics, sun, moon, planets, satellites, meteors, comets, stars, nebulae, and galaxies. ACA price - \$15.00. You save over \$8.00 compared to newsstand price.

ACA Jacket Order

An order for ACA jackets will be going in soon. If you

would like one or wish to replace the one you have, now is the time to order. **LIGHT LINED** jackets are \$28.00 and the **HEAVY QUILTED** jackets are \$48.00. Call Rich at 330-644-5912 or Email to astronomy1on1@cs.com

You will benefit from the savings the club has to offer and the club will benefit from our small profit line. The easiest way to help out the club is to buy something from it. All prices on all items the club sells are lower than any store price. With your help we can close out the year with a sellout of 2002 items. Thank You!

Rich Ruggles Merchandise and Benefits, 330-644-5912
Astronomy1on1@cs.com



FOR SALE

6" f 4.5 Newtonian on a Vixion E.Q. mount with Dual slow motion controls and built-in Polar scopes, 3 eyepieces, 2x Barlow \$350.00
Rich 330-644-5912

4 1/2" f 8 Dob w/ red dot finder and 25mm eyepiece 1 1/4 helical focuser \$200.00
Rich 330-644-5912

8" f 6 Discovery Dob w/ Telrad 25mm & 10mm Plossel eyepieces, eyepiece rack, modified with altitude bearing spring tension and dust cover \$450.00
Rich 330-644-5912

Welcome 2001 New Members

The year 2001 brought the ACA 24 new members. They are:

Bob Burns

Matt Church

Ella Bittikofer

Frank Graeser

Louise Hookway

Les Halasz

**Hank Kenimond
Ray**

Steve

Eloise Holland

Gary Smith

Bruce & Landra Libengood

**Gregory Kawiecki
try**

Clyde Pet-

Jay & Mary Svitko

Dale, Yvonne, Sean & Cory Rafferty