



The Night Sky

The Newsletter of
The Astronomy Club of Akron
www.acaoh.org

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June 2002

ACA Picnic July 21, Craftsman Park



Chagrin Valley OTAA

By Guy Gillespie

On Saturday June 8th, Chagrin Valley Astronomical Society held their OTAA Star Party. About 25 people showed for the pot-luck dinner. A tour of the big scope in the observatory was given and the renovations progress was shown.

After night fall, we saw the space station go by twice. We also saw a few satellites, a Iridium Flare, the comet "Ikeya Zhang" (looked like a smudge as it was on its way out).

We were represented by, Lou, Gregg Crenshaw, and myself. New friendships were formed as people exchanged information about how they used their scope, or how they made their scope. A good time was had by all that I saw.

I'm looking forward to their next party.

Be sure to check the
Membership list
In this issue!

Scenes from the 2002 Telescope Seminar



The ACA Telescope Seminar for 2002 featured nice weather, lots of nice visitors and lots of hot coffee!

Above, Jeff Hudson explains the reflector; right top Ted Faix teaches about binoculars; right middle, thanks to Becky Kelly we had hot drinks; right bottom Rich Ruggles is lost in a sea of refractors; below Dave Jessie demonstrates the Schmidt Cassegrain.



Activities Calendar

Club

June 27, Firestone Park Program
July 6, Observatory Program
July 13, Quail Hollow Star Party
July 19, Aurora Astronomical Society Star Party
July 20, Observatory Solar Program
July 21, Club Picnic Craftsman Park
August 3, Cuyahoga Astronomical OTAA
August 9, Quail Hollow Star Party
August 10, Mahoning Valley OTAA
September 14, Black River OTAA
October 4 + 5, Hidden Hollow '02

Celestial

July 3, Mars & Jupiter 48 min. apart
July 10, New Moon
July 17, First Quarter Moon
July 24, 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.

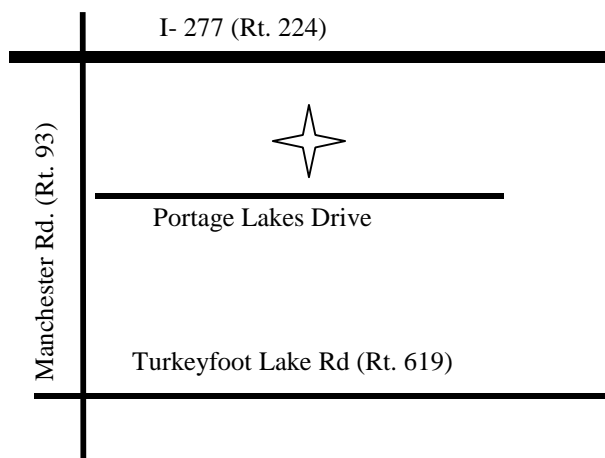
PLEASE SEND IN YOUR ARTICLES!!!!

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

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

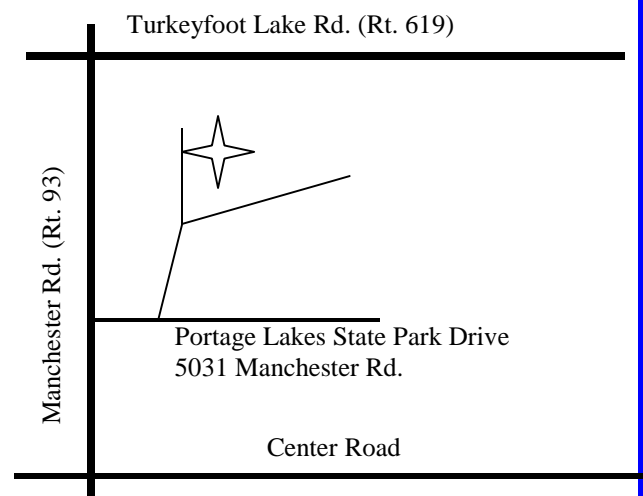
MONTHLY MEETING LOCATION:

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.





Ether Drag

By Jeff Hudson

I would like to start this month's column, by giving a big thanks to Gregg Crenshaw for a few things he has done for me this month:

1. He passed my name and number along to a Norton High School teacher.
2. On only two days notice he put together a slide show for Camp Christopher and did the presentation.
3. He reminded me about the Solar Eclipse.

I don't know about you, but I had a busy time this month. I started the month off with the club's Telescope Seminar. You always learn a few things at these events and one of the things I learned that night was that my 8" dob needs to be re-collimated. Ok, I don't know the correct verb, but I am looking for someone to show me how to do this and what tools to use. From what I have read and heard the process can take a few hours.

Shortly after that event, I taught four sessions to ninth graders at Norton High School. I really enjoyed myself and had fun answering the questions. This opportunity came up so quick, that I just decided to do it solo in the club's name. If you are interested in doing presentations in front of groups, let me know. I want to build up a list and see if there is interested in doing more school programs.

That same week, we had a great

program for Camp C.H.O.M.P S. and I thank Gregg Crenshaw, Ray Hyer and Ken Goldinger for bringing their telescopes out and sharing them with the kids. As I recall, we had good weather that night and everyone at the camp appreciated our coming out.

Then on the following week, we went back out to Camp Christopher, for Camp Wonderlung. We were joined by Lynn Laux. As Lynn, Ray and Ken allowed the kids to look through their telescopes, Gregg gave a slide presentation and I directed the kids and adults between the two events.

One of the more interesting conversations I had was with a little boy as we approached the telescopes:

Me: Are you excited about looking through the telescopes?

Boy: Yes. You know what I am going to get me a girlfriend tonight or tomorrow. My friend, well his is not really my friend he is just my cousin got himself a girlfriend. I gave him a dollar to by a sucker, and he gave it to her and she likes him now. There is a girl who likes me, but she is only 7 and I am 9, so I am to old for her. I want a girlfriend who is 11, because I like older girls.

Me: [I was speechless, because he had said all that in about a span of 10 seconds. By then we were at the telescopes so I didn't have to respond]

That day had started out as bad weather but it cleared up as I got to the camp. My back-up plan

was Gregg with a slide show presentation. When we got out to the camp, the sky was clearing so I decided we could do both, have the telescopes set up in case the sky cleared and have a slide show in case it didn't. The sky did clear up enough in the west to get great shots of Venus and the Moon.

Between the two camp events was the solar eclipse. I watched it through welder's glass for only a few minutes before the Sun got lost in the evening clouds. I did manage to see a small bite taken out of the lower left.

It seems more people know their zodiac sign, then know that the Earth revolves around the Sun in one year. When the zodiac system were set up more than two thousand years ago, the sun's path was divided into twelve equally spaced "signs," each 30 degrees wide.

About 60 years ago, when the International Astronomical Union published the official constellation boundaries, a constellation was added to the zodiac. According to the official modern constellation boundaries, the sun passes through 13 constellations, not 12. The "thirteenth constellation" of the zodiac is Ophiuchus the Serpent Bearer, and the sun is in front of its stars during the first half of December.

When precession was discovered by the Greek astronomer Hipparchus in the second century B. C., astrologers had a problem. The sun was supposed to be in Aries as spring began, but it was really in front of the stars of



ETHER DRAG, Cont.

Pisces. The astrologers declared that the signs drifted with the sun and that the sun was still in the sign of Aries, even though it was in front of the stars of Pisces. So the constellations have stayed in the same direction, but the signs have drifted to the west (relative to the fixed stars), and they no longer coincide.

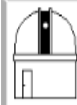
Why did I bring this up? Because Ophiuchus is right above Scorpius just after sun set and there are seven Messier objects, located in the big body of this serpent charmer.

With the completion of the latest shuttle mission to the International Space Station, two astronauts will have set new U.S. space flight records. Carl Walz will have the record for most cumulative time in space and along with Dan Bursch, both men will hold the single space flight endurance record. In 1995 Helena Kondakova set an endurance record of 437 days aboard the MIR orbital complex. Another cool fact, is that the ISS orbits the earth every 90 minutes at an altitude of 240 statute miles.

The next big event for our club is having a table at the Firestone MetroParks concert series. The first concert is on Thursday, June 27. This will be a great chance to promote the club and listen to some good music. If you have not signed up and are interested contact Gregg or myself.

Finally, I would like to thank our extraordinary editor Ray Hyer,

for putting up with my late submissions. I have been bending the submission deadline for two months now. I promise, next month this article will be submitted earlier. Until then ...



An Evening at Indian Hill

By Gregg Crenshaw
Saturday night, June 8 was the date set aside for the Chagrin Valley Astronomical Society / Ohio Turnpike Astronomers Association star party and picnic at CVAS's Indian Hill Observatory. I had heard the skies were dark there so, since I had never been there I thought I would make the trip. Long time member Lou Poda voiced an interest in going so he joined me.

Indian Hill Observatory is about 3 miles West of the small town of Huntsburg in Geauga County. Lou had been there a number of years ago so he remembered some of the area. Even with Lou's help we still got a bit lost. Missing the rustic entrance to the observatory. It seemed that the CVAS had set up signage for people coming from the opposite direction. Once we realized we had gone too far and turned around we had no trouble finding the entrance. Although we missed the picnic we arrived before dark. The observing field had a number of scopes and people ready for astronomical twilight to end so they could pick off faint fuzzies. As we began to make our way we came upon ACA member Guy Gillespie. He was there with a friend with an 8" Dob enjoying the view.

After looking though a few scopes Lou and I made our way to the end of the observing field. I asked Lou "where is the observatory?" He told me we would have to climb up to it. Into the woods and up the hill we trekked. In the dark I could see a white handrail running up the hill. Following the

handrail led us up the hill to the observatory.

Indian Hill Observatory houses a 16" f = 6 Newtonian telescope on a German Equatorial mounting. CVAS has recently upgraded the mount to be "go to" but seem to be having some problems with tracking and pointing accuracy. Hopefully they will solve these problems as the scope has excellent optics. There also is a 14" f = 5 Dobsonian stored in the observatory on a cart that they roll out by the building for use. I was able to observe Comet Ikeye - Zhang through this instrument. Unfortunately the stepladder they had was too rickety and short for Lou to reach the eyepiece. I was a bit surprised that Comet Ikeye - Zhang was still visible in amateur size scopes.

After a bit we trekked back down the hill to the rest of the attendees. Lou finally got a look at Comet Ikeye - Zhang through a nice 12.5" dobsonian. We also had a nice view of M51 through that scope. From the ACA Observatory all you can see of M51 is two little bright spots. At Indian Hill a bit of the spiral structure of the Whirl Pool was evident.

As the time was reaching 1:00 A.M. and I knew we had an hour and twenty-minute drive ahead of us we bit goodbye to Indian Hill Observatory and headed for home.

Don't miss the up coming O.T.A.A. stars parties:

Cuyahoga Astronomical

August 3

Mahoning Valley

August 10

Black River (new date)

September 14

Hidden Hollow '02 (Richland)

October 4 - 5

There will be more information, as these dates get closer.



For Sale

4 1/2" f 7 Dobsonian with Red Dot finder 1 1/4 Helical focuser and a 26mm eyepiece
\$150.00 Rich 330-644-5912

60mm f 700mm Meade refractor
Altazimuth tripod mount w/ slowmo

10mm and 25mm eyepiece
\$75.00 Rich 330-644-5912

10 x 50 Stellerview binoculars
Coated optics With hard case
\$50.00 Rich 330-644-5912

4" f 3 Rich Field finder
By Black Forest Optics
With 1/4-20 mounting plate
\$40.00 Rich 330-644-5912



Loaner Scopes

Back in January I ran this notice for ACA loaner scopes, but no one responded. We have just finished our dues renewal for the next year and have picked up many new members. So I will run this notice again. The ACA Loaner program is for ACA members only. The scopes are signed out for 3 months. I will provide training on the use of the scope at sign out and do at least one follow up, more if requested, during the period. This program is for members that currently do not have a telescope. It will give them an opportunity to view the night sky at their leisure and become acquainted with viewing techniques.

Now Available are: 4 1/2" f8 Dobsonian
8" f7 Dobsonian
5" f5 Rich field refractor on Equatorial mount

To sign any of these telescopes contact Rich Ruggles at 330-644-5912 or Email to astronomy1on1@cs.com



Astronomy On the Road

By Rich Ruggles

1) Saturday July 6th 8:30 ACA Summer Constellations Program
This program is an introduction to the Summer Constellations of Hercules, Lyra, Ophiuchus and Cygnus. With viewing of all the deep space items within. The program will be held at the ACA observatory located in the Portage Lakes State Park on SR 93 2 mi south of SR 619.

2) Saturday July 13th Quail Hollow State Park star party.
Quail Hollow State Park has once again asked the ACA to bring out the scopes for this public star party under the dark skies of the park. In years gone by the ACA did a few star parties at Quail Hollow. With the park doing the publicity this program always drew a large crowd which brought in new members to the ACA.

Quail Hollow State Park is located on Congress Rd just outside Hartville Oh.
From Akron: take SR 619 East to Hartville and follow the, Brown, Quail Hollow signs
Please let Jeff Hudson know if your going. 330-668-6881
jeff@hudsonstuff.com
(a 2nd Quail Hollow star party is planned for August 9th)

3) Friday July 19th 7:30pm The Aurora Astronomical Society

monthly meeting & star gaze. AAS meetings are held at the Moore Outdoor Education Center, 525 Bissell Rd. off Aurora-Hudson Rd. in Aurora Oh. A presentation of deep space objects will be given.

4) Saturday July 20th 6:00 pm
ACA Solar/Lunar Program
6:00: Solar viewing. In the past we were able to view the Sun in 5 different ways:
Projection, White light, Hydrogen Alpha, Infra Red and Radio waves. Interesting stuff.

7:00: Hot dog roast and other culinary delights. Come hungry and eat while we wait for the sun to set.

9:00: Lunar Viewing: We will study all the craters along the edge of the moon.

This program will be held at the ACA Observatory in Portage Lakes State Park

5) Friday July 30 7:30 pm The Wilderness Center Astronomy Club's Meeting & star gaze.
There is a talk on astronomy before the meeting with a refreshment break between. The WCAC meetings are held at The Wilderness Center in Wilmot Oh.
Located 25 mi south of the ACA observatory south on SR 93 to East on SR 62 to north SR 250 to the entrance of the Wilderness Center.

For more info on any activity call or Email:
Rich Ruggles 330-644-5912 astronomy1on1@cs.com



Apollo Rendezvous 2002

By Rich Ruggles

This was our first visit to the Apollo Rendezvous. The Miami Valley Astronomical Society has hosted this event for the last 32 years and always draws amateurs from all over the United States. The event was held at the Boonshoft Museum of Discovery, home of the Apollo Observatory housing a 20" Cassegrain. Since the sky didn't cooperate this year the speakers, vendors and BBQ more than made up for it.

Friday after registration we hit the vendor's tables, 15 in all. Every thing imaginable and some things you never thought of. Then the speakers started. First up was Jim Stewart, no not Jimmy, who talked about how to build a portable 17 1/2 "telescope. Next up was Tam Czarnak talk on the soon (in our lifetime) manned mission to Mars. Then Charlie Shirk spoke on Astrovideography how digital camcorders are taking over in the digital imaging field of astrophotography. Since the sky was cloud covered, a 20 mile trip to the observatory was called off. We headed out to eat and return to the hotel.

Saturday started with another trip around the vendor tables then off to the planetarium for the first of 5 talks.

Terry Mann, currently is the Operations Chair of the International Space Station-Amateur Telescope (ISS-AT). She talked about the project of placing a telescope on the ISS to use exclusively by amateur astronomers around the world. A space telescope just for us. Any

one can put in for time on it for research or just to image an item from space.

At the break after Terry's talk I ran into Dr. Don Parker and was lucky enough to talk with him for a while about, what else, Mars. I met and talked to Don twice before at the Hidden Hollow OTAA gathering outside of Mansfield Ohio. Don knows more about Mars than the martins. His talk would be later in the day but gave me this bit of information. Next year when Mars is at opposition it will be the closest to the earth since the year 57,537 B.C. Its always fun talking with Don Parker, if you get a chance, don't pass it up.

Mark Trueblood was next. He runs the most advanced, productive, fully robotic observatory in the world. He is located in a remote area of Arizona and houses many large robotic telescopes. It is the testing facilities for the ISS-AT as well as the home for the U. of Iowa and U. of Washington telescopes. All of the scopes are operated robotically by its owners from their home location. If no one is there, who opens and closes the observatory in case of foul weather? The observatory, which is the size of a 4 bedroom ranch house, is fitted with wind, rain and cloud sensors; yes a cloud sensor, to automatically close the thing up if conditions turn bad. The slides of this "Telescope Farm" were amazing. Rent per year is \$200,000.00 to put your scope in it if you're interested.

Enter Dr. Don Parker. He gave a very amusing and informative talk about bright flashes coming from the red planet. Did

the Martins get a green laser? Are they testing A booms for the invasion? Could it be the Japanese sent a tour up there with flash cameras? No to all the above. These flares were first seen as far back as 1894. With today's technology Don and a team of researchers have determined that the flares are a reflection of the sun off an icy mountain range. Laced with much comic relief Don's talk kept us listening intently as well as laughing out loud.

Finally Tom Dobbins the coordinator of the Historical Section of ALPO, writer for Sky & Telescope and co-author of 3 books with Don Parker talked on the Bicolor aspect of Saturn's "A" ring. The difference in the rings color was demonstrated by putting a red then a blue filter in front of the projector and we could all see the changes in the rings shading. He also brought out many other findings about the rings.

Well in between all the speakers we did get a lunch break which gave us yet another opportunity to cruise the vendor's tables. This trip it was my wife that made the only purchase. I'm holding out for Astro Blast in Oil City Pa. in August. We also had a chance to go in the Apollo observatory to check out the 20" Cassegrain.

At the end of the talks came the door prizes. From a 90mm ETX to The Sky software. We didn't win anything (boo hoo).

It was now time to head to the last event of the convention. The BBQ at the MVAS operated observatory in John Bryan State Park about 25 miles

east of the museum. Well our map was not too good and we got lost for about 2 hours. We finally got there just in time to get the last of the dogs and all the fixings. It wasn't long before it started to rain, so everyone finished eating inside the observatory. The observatory was very large, with 6 rooms. I counted about 20 scopes, 8", 10", 17", 20", 24" all over the place. In the dome they had a 12 1/2" f8 and in the roll of they had a 16" truss Dob. That was being replaced with a Mead 12" LX200 GPS. Unfortunately, part way into the setup they found that some parts were missing and had to stop. There was a class room, a large workshop for telescope building, a large dark adapt room with eating booth and microwave, a large storage room, a bath room and a large central hall way 8' wide with a 8" f 11 refractor hanging on the wall. Out side was what looked like a upright freezer but when opened we found that it was a weather cover for the EQ mount that the refractor sat on. There was a smaller square box about 10 feet from the mount. I asked what it was. It was Leslie Peltier's original Merry-go-round observatory. The MVAS acquired it and restored it to its original working condition, and are still using it for observations.

It had long since stopped raining and we were treated to a beautiful double rainbow. By now it was getting late and we had to head back to Akron, a final word with Terry, Mark and Don and we were off.

The next Astronomy convention is the first weekend in August. That's Astro Blast in

Oil City Pennsylvania. I hope some of you can make that one.

Have you had a good experience observing some were? How about righting about it and share your experience. Send it to Ray Hyer at rhyer@neo.rr.com



Laurel Highlands Star Cruise 2002

By Rich Ruggles

For the last 3 years The Amateur Astronomers Association of Pittsburg, aka AAAP, has hosted this 5 day convention in a dark sky location near Hazelton W. Va.

This year was my 2nd trip to Laurel Highlands and what a trip it was. Also attending was Vic DeChristoforo and family. Vic has attended all 3 Star Cruise conventions.

I arrived at the camp at about 7:00pm and the first thing I noticed was all the mud. Remember the heavy rains we got on June 5th and 6th? Well so did they. Some of the campers said it was the hardest down pour they ever saw. The observing field was covered with heavy grass and was not muddy at all, only the road leading into the field.

I picked a prime spot to camp and made sure there was enough room for Vic to set up.

He was only about an hour behind me so I had plenty of time to set up camp and get the scopes ready. I took 2 scopes with me this year, the 8" f7 Cri-

terion on the EQ mount and the Unitron 60mm refractor on the EQ mount. Vic showed up and we were able to get him set up just before sunset.

As twilight dwindled the satellites became very apparent. Every so often someone in the field would holler out "SATELLITE" and give the location. We also received 2 visits by the ISS with the shuttle docked to it making it a bit brighter. Well by now the milky way was looking like a long stretch of clouds about 35 deg. in the eastern skies. The Skies were incredible. The Seeing and Transparency was terrific.

I started with the Unitron and scanned the milky way finding a bunch of open clusters that sparkled like diamonds. I came across the Omega nebula and was surprised how well it popped out at you in the small scope. With this sky condition I decided to put in the OX 3 nebula filter to see if it would bring it out better or wipe it out in the small scope. I was very surprised when I saw that filter worked perfectly.

This calls for a quick trip to the Ring Nebula. Once again the view was quite pleasing. It was now time to move to the 8" to see what there is to see. Using a 32mm Brandon wide field eyepiece I felt like I was looking through a bay window when I pointed it towards Sagittarius.

This incredible clear night and the wide view of the Brandon made scanning the milky way a truly religious experience. I

moved over to the galaxy cluster in the tail section of Leo and was amazed as to how many I could see in the 8". We then put a 40mm wide field 2" eye piece in Vic's 12" Discovery and got an eye popping view of about 15 of them. What a view. The 40mm also rendered an amazing look at M81, M82 and NGC 3077 in the same field of view. Just for fun I went after M31 and the double cluster when they were just over the trees, about 20 degrees up. They also looked exceptionally well.

The rest of the night was full of spectacular sights. I finally packed it in around 3:30am and Vic kept going till the sunrise washed everything out.

Saturday brought out the swap tables with everything imaginable from a tripod for a 16" Schmidt to H Bata filters. The vendors were there too. All the name brand stuff at show cost and no shipping or tax. Quite a savings and one that Vic took advantage of. He is now the proud owner of his first Nagler eyepiece.

I was able to work out a deal on Telrad Dew Shields and 6" mirror sets with focuser. Info to follow. I ran into Joe Hanson, a friend I met last year at the Star Cruise. He showed me his latest creation, a solar prominence scope. Made from an old 60mm Tasco and parts from Home Depot. It had a H Alpha filter and a occulting disk. You don't have to wait for an eclipse to see the prominence any more.

The speakers were very good

and quite informative. From astrophotography to the search for other solar systems, the day was full of information.

At 6:00 they had the door prize drawing. Every thing from Nagler Eyepieces, astronomy software, 70mm binoculars to 90mm ETX and an 8" Discovery Dob.

All that made us hungry, so its off to the Outback for supper. By the time we got back the sun had set and it was time for more viewing.

The sky this night was a little hazy up about 25 degrees but the rest of the sky equaled the night before. All of a sudden someone hollered "FLAIR IN CYGNUS". As we turned we saw a -4 magnitude flair that looked like a motorcycle coming at you with its bright lights on. We were also treated to another passing of the ISS a little earlier and much brighter than Friday night.

Since we toured the sky with our scopes last night, it was time to roam the field. There were many unique scopes of all shapes and sizes, with owners eager to share the view and talk scopes. The 2 that really caught my eye was a 12" f15 refractor. This thing was monstrous. The tripod was made of 6" steel pipe and stood 9 feet high. Yes the view knocked your sox off.

During the day we were looking at the Sun with it and you could almost touch the sun spots. The other item that I had trouble leaving was a Fujinon giant binocular. The owner turned me

loose on them and encouraged me to change the power by dropping in other eyepieces. He had matching sets of Telview and Naglers. The stereo view of telescopic binoculars was the most impressive experience in this hobby I have ever had. The view is 3-D and the star clusters have depth. The time I spent on them will never be forgotten, and made the trip worth while.

It was about 2:00am now and time to make a few observations with my own scope. When I got back to my site there was another Criterion Dynascope owner looking over mine. He has an 8" but its on a Altazimuth mount. I handed him the 9mm Nagler and said "enjoy". For the next hour we talked Dynascopes and picked off obscure NGC objects. By now Vic got back from his roaming and started working his scope with his new Nagler.

Well, being on my feet all day and night finally caught up with me and it was time to hit the sack. Once again Vic was still at it till sun up.

Sunday morning came too soon and along with it came the end of another fantastic Star Cruise. If you can, plan on attending this one next year. If you would like to see the pictures of this and the past Star Cruise gatherings, go to there web site at lhstarcruise.org. Look close; you just might see Vick or myself among the crowd.

Clear Skies