



The Night Sky

The Newsletter of
The Astronomy Club of Akron

www.acaoh.org

Volume 28 Number 6

June 2006

Ramblings of the President

by Dave Jessie

The weather has finally become truly beautiful. I'm writing this on June 6, 2006 – that right...06/06/06 and despite what the whacko's predicted, the world has not come to an end. Instead, it's in the low eighties, low humidity, and beautiful dark blue sky with a few puffy clouds – the quintessential spring day! With this kind of day becoming common now, you know what that means? Gorgeous nights for observing, and that's just what this Club is about.

On Saturday, June 3, we had our famous "Solar/Lunar/Hot Dog Roast". What a great time we had, too. Lots of members and loads of public were in attendance. Great Ball Park grilled hotdogs kept our appetites at bay while we observed the Sun in several scopes equipped for safe Solar observing – including two Hydrogen-alpha PST's and a brand spanking new Calcium-K PST brought by John Crilly. The Club's 14" SCT was set up for white-light viewing with the Kendrick-mounted Baader filter.

Truth be told, we had a tough time with the clouds covering the Sun, but most everyone got to see some prominences and filaments with the PSTs. There wasn't even a hint of sunspot visible in white light, however. Given that it had rained for the five days prior to this event, we were lucky to have such a perfect day and night for this event.

The Moon was at exactly first quarter and put on quite a show for the visitors...many 'Oooh!'s and 'Ahhh!'s were heard coming from first-time observers in the observatory. We used the piggybacked refractor for wide views and the 14" SCT for close views simultaneously. It was great seeing two visitors looking at the same time and comparing notes.

After dark, we shifted to Saturn and Jupiter – and what excitement that generated among the newbies! I've never heard such appreciative cacophony from visitors... it was a genuine thrill for me.

The hit of the night had to be Mike LeHere's 5½" TEC oil-spaced triplet apochromatic refractor on a computerized Orion Atlas GEM. Holly cow, what views that gave of Jupiter and the Jovian moons! That scope may very

Here's a picture taken at the Star Gaze hosted by the MVAS (Mahoning Valley Astronomical Society) which took place on Saturday, May 27, 2006 at Scenic Vista Park near Lisbon, Ohio. The event commemorated the 50th anniversary of the



founding of the OTAA (Ohio Turnpike Astronomers Association)

This photo is interesting because it shows Ron Kalinoski using Tim Derring's telescope which was built by Freddy Huffman, all members of the ACA. The ACA was represented by at least 16 members, which outnumbered those from any other group, including the host club! -Dave Jessie

well be the most magnificent instrument through which I've ever had the pleasure of observing. "Thou shall not covet" "Thou shall not covet" "Thou shall not..." If I say it enough, perhaps I'll forget the view of Jupiter's moon Europa transiting the planet along with its shadow. Wow. That's all I can say.

The Saturday before, on May 27th, at least sixteen ACA members found their way to Scenic Vista Park near Lisbon, OH for the 50th anniversary celebration of the founding of the OTAA, to which the ACA is a charter member. What a night we had, too! Scenic Vista Park is in the middle of nowhere and the skies are darker than we're accustomed to. Magnificent. Okay, perhaps not as dark as Hidden Hollow, but darker than at Portage Lakes, that's for sure. Rosaelena and I stayed until nearly 3:00AM and left when the majority of ACAers had de-

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OFFICERS 2006 – 2007

President		
Dave Jessie	330-688-9043	djessie@neo.rr.com
Vice President		
John Crilly	330-334-6668	jcrrilly@neo.rr.com
Treasurer		
Steve Rohweder	330-896-2849	srohwerd@neo.rr.com
Secretary		
John Shulan	330-836-0800	Pugman3@aol.com
Assistant Secretary/Treasurer		
Gregg Crenshaw	330-785-7377	gbcrenshaw@sbcglobal.net
Observatory Director		
Open position	N/A	N/A
ACA Webmaster		
Glenn Cameron	330-456-2022	glenn@cameronclan.org
Editor, Night Sky		
Pat & Justin Phillips	330-784-7922	jphillips1@neo.rr.com
Trustee		
Tom Mino	330-923-7704	tjmino@neo.rr.com
Trustee		
Freddy Huffman	330-535-8009	atmos@netzero.com
Trustee		
Peggy Stabholz (pending)	N/A	N/A
Statutory Agent		
Mark Kochheiser	330-882-3713	mkochheiser@neo.rr.com
OTAA Representative		
Lou Poda		

Activities Calendar

Club

Celestial

June 9, Camp CHOPS outreach event
 June 16, Camp Wunderlung outreach event
 June 17, Open House and Star Party 9:00 pm
 July 8, Open House and Star Party 9:00 pm
 July 16, Members-only picnic 2:00 pm
 July 22, Open House and Star Party 9:00 pm

June 11, Full Moon
 June 15/16, June Lyrid Meteors
 June 17, Conjunction of Mars and Saturn
 near M44
 June 25, New Moon
 July 10, Full Moon
 July 24, New Moon

The deadline for article submission is **the second Tuesday after each 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: Justin Phillips 402 Crystal St. Akron Ohio
 email phillipsaca@gmail.com

(Continued from page 1)

ceded it was time to head home. I heard nothing but praise for the event.

The Saturday prior, on May 20th, we had our annual telescope seminar. Again, the event happened smack in the midst of a week of thunderstorms, but we had good skies! Are we enchanted, or what? Attendance was down this year, probably due to folks doubting it would occur and making alternate plans. The members and guests in attendance were treated to some great views of DSO's in the Club's 14". Dust lanes in M51, the Whirlpool Galaxy, were readily evident, despite our less-than-perfect skies.

What's next for us? Friday, June 9th is our opportunity to show the Universe to children at Camp CHOPS. This event is special since these kids have cancer and anxiously await us and our telescopes. The event is at CYO Camp Christopher at the intersection of Ira Rd and Hametown Rd in Bath. The following Friday, we're invited to show the children attending Camp Wunderlung at the same location. These kids have severe breathing disorders and also look forward all year to our arrival. These kids have a tough time and we have the opportunity to make their camping experience even more special. Come on, bring your scope or binoculars to Camp Christopher and show these kids a good time. You'll be glad you did. As I stated in last month's column, absolutely **NO SMOKING AT THE PARK**, not even in parked cars, at either event.

Our next scheduled event at the observatory is Saturday, June 17th. An interesting coincidence, there's going to be a beautiful pairing of Saturn and Mars right next to M44, the Beehive cluster! This is going to look great in a low-power, wide field view in the piggy-backed refractor in the observatory. Be sure to come and see this, you won't be disappointed.

ACA Members-only picnic on Sunday, July 16, 2006 at 2:00PM. The Club will supply the hamburgers, hotdogs, buns and soft drinks, you supply your plates, silverware and a dish to share with your fellow picnic-ers! We are again having this at the beautiful home of members Carl & Betti. I'll not mention an address here since this will be read by anyone with access to our webpage. More news later – expect an individual email or phone call with details. If you have questions now, please call me!

Have a great summer observing – I certainly plan to!

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DON'T FORGET TO RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP TO THE ACA!!

Unless you've already renewed, **your membership expired on May 31st**. This will be your last newsletter unless you renew your membership. Simply fill in the JOIN form on the back of the last page of this newsletter and send it along with your check to:

Steve Rohweder
3981 Meadow Wood Ln
Uniontown, OH 44685-7785

Treasurer's Report 5/1/2006 - 5/31/2006	
Steve Rohweder, Treasurer	
Opening Balance as of 5/1/2006	\$6,958.00
Income	
Misc. Income	\$5.90
Merchandise Sales	\$12.00
Magazine Subscription Paid to ACA (expense to be listed in June 2006)	\$164.90
Dues	\$990.00
50/50 Drawing	\$39.00
Total Income	\$1,211.80
Expenses	
Public Event Expense	(\$10.50)
Observatory Up-keep	(\$5.84)
Newsletter Expense	(\$24.64)
Total Expense	(\$40.98)
Grand Total	\$8,128.82

CORONADO'S Ca-K PERSONAL SOLAR TELESCOPE

Despite the fact that the sunspot cycle is just now coming out of its period of lowest activity, Solar observing has experienced a large boost in activity in recent years. Coronado Filters has contributed to this by offering high-performance narrowband filter systems at substantially lower prices than have been offered in the past by other vendors. Wide-band (whitelight) filters have always been available at a modest cost, but those permit viewing only extremely high-contrast features such as sunspots. When there are no sunspots available, only a blank Solar disk is revealed. Narrowband systems makes it possible to observe features of the Sun even when no sunspots at all are present. Nearly all currently-available narrowband filters operate near the Hydrogen-alpha emission line, deep in the red portion of the visible spectrum, with a bandwidth of from .5 to 1.5 Angstroms. Even the widest of these filters permit observation of prominences on the limb (edge) of the Sun. Far larger than the Earth and extremely energetic, prominences are dynamic and can be observed to change over even a brief observing period. The narrowest Ha filters also permit observing details on the surface of the Sun, including flares and plage. A Sun completely devoid of detail in a whitelight filter will nearly always offer something interesting to view through a narrowband filter.

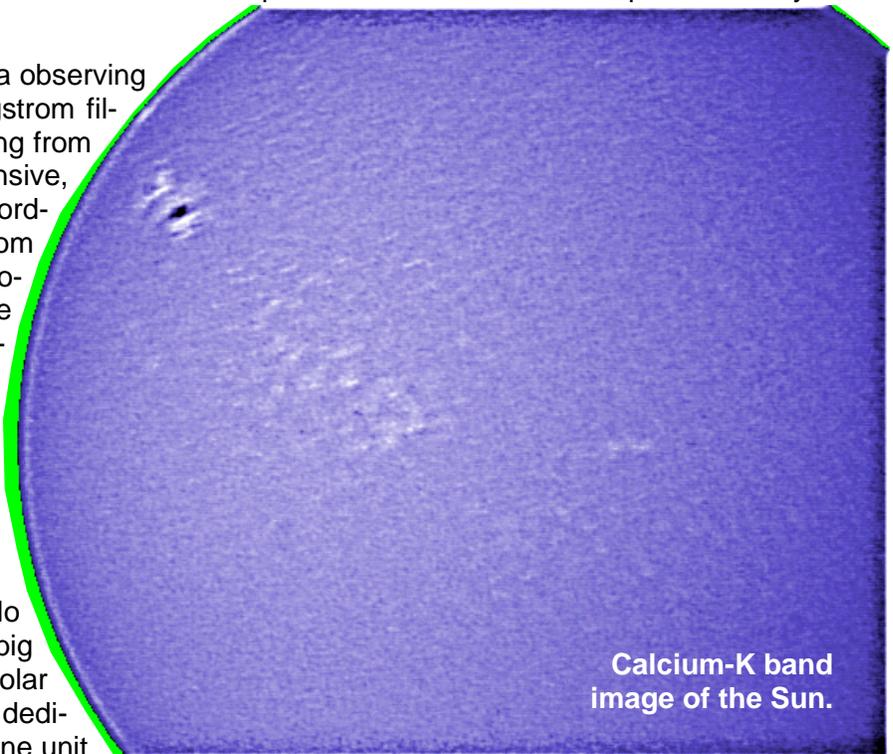
Coronado helped fuel interest in Ha observing by offering very effective, sub-Angstrom filter units (.5 to .7 Angstroms) ranging from \$1500 and up. While still expensive, they were (and are) much more affordable than comparable units from other sources. Other sources of economical Ha filter systems have been Thousand Oaks and Lumicon, who offer filters in the .9 to 1.5 Angstrom range. These wider filters do a great job on prominences but don't divulge much in the way of low-contrast surface details.

More recently, Coronado broke the \$1000 price barrier in a big way by introducing the Personal Solar Telescope (PST) at \$499! This dedicated Solar telescope is a standalone unit

with an aperture of 40mm and a bandwidth at the Ha line of about .7 Angstroms. This permits great prominence viewing plus limited surface detail at an amazing price.

With Hydrogen-alpha systems, the challenge has been to obtain great views of subtle surface details. Only the most expensive systems (\$5000 and up) have done a really good job at this difficult task. It's possible to attain terrific surface detail but limited prominence availability by using a filter at the Calcium-K emission line, which is well into the ultraviolet end of the visible spectrum. Such systems work well with bandwidths of about 20 Angstroms, which is much easier to attain than the sub-Angstrom bandwidths required for Ha surface observation. The downside of Ca-K observing is that many (most?) people have limited sensitivity at this extreme wavelength; it is primarily used photographically. Most imaging systems have good sensitivity well past ultra-violet, requiring the use of cutoff filters when imaging with refractors because they rarely manage to focus both visible light and UV at the same point. CaK imagers can take advantage of this.

Coronado recently introduced a Calcium-K version of the PST. Like the Ha PST, it is a dedicated Solar observing instrument with an aperture of 40mm and sells for \$499. I was eager to get a look through one, and also at another relatively inexpensive dedicated CaK scope offered by Coro-



Calcium-K band image of the Sun.

nado, which has an aperture of 70mm. I was able to try both at Neaf this Spring, and was disappointed (but not surprised) to find that I couldn't see much in either one. Since I enjoy imaging, I decided to go ahead and get one anyway. I set up the new CaK PST and, sure enough, couldn't see anything. I brought the CaK PST to the Club's Solar-Lunar party this month and during the few openings in the clouds was able to offer some of the Club members an opportunity to try it; so far as I know none of them saw much either! A quick check with the digicam at the eyepiece, however, demonstrated that the camera sees it just fine and I look forward to some images of surface detail when the weather permits.

Now - for anyone interested in a PST, especially a CaK version, there is an amazing deal being offered at this time by Kansas Wind Power. They are offering a free CaK PST with the purchase of two Ha PST's at the regular price (plus shipping). You end up with three PST's for \$1073. I know what kind of markup there is on this kind of gear and it doesn't sound right - but I have three PST's here that I acquired in that fashion so I can prove it's true. Find a couple of buddies, contact Kansas Wind Power, and make a group buy - you'll all save.

Flash: Kansas Wind Power changed their website Tuesday, June 6 to show that the three for two PST special (\$360 each) mentioned above is now over and has been replaced by a four for three PST special (\$400 each).

The Veep

Just wanted to drop a congratulatory note to Jupiter. Jupiter had a baby. In other words, the red spot spawned another one. (see attached photo taken 5-27 in Akron) - John Shulan

The ACA would like to extend a warm welcome to the following new members...

Vincent Burns
Kevin Brant
Dave Steele

We are thrilled to have you as members and look forward to seeing you at ALL club meetings and events!

CLASSIFIEDS

UNIVERSITY OPTIC MIRROR SET FOR SALE

8 inch, f-6 PYREX finished mirror set including 1:6 thickness ratio 8 inch PYREX primary mirror, 1.55 inch major axis secondary mirror, aluminized and overcoated ready to install in your cell. Very high quality PYREX mirror set from University Optics, not plate glass. Check out Fred Huffman's or my 8 inch DOB which have the same mirror set. Contact Gregg Crenshaw \$150.00 firm

EDITOR REQUESTS ARTICLES

I would like to start out with a warm thank you to everyone who has submitted articles. Keep them coming! This newsletter needs a continuous supply of new content from the club members. If that is not available, then who knows what it will start munching on to satiate its hunger! Remember, keeping the newsletter interesting, entertaining, and educational is not only the responsibility of the editor, but of the entire club! So keep your eyes to the skies and the articles rolling in, folks. Oh, and don't forget to pay your dues! - The editor

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Newsletter of the Astronomy Club of Akron

c/o Justin Phillips, Editor
402 Crystal St
Akron, OH 44305-3116

To join the ACA, **or to renew your membership**, please fill out the form below, place in an envelope and mail to the address shown in the return address area of the form.

Please be sure to enclose payment for the membership level desired.

The Astronomy Club of Akron
c/o Steve Rohweder, Treasurer
3981 Meadow Wood Ln
Uniontown, OH 44685-7785

Yes! I want to become a member of the Astronomy Club of Akron

www.acaoh.org
(PLEASE PRINT)

NAME: _____ PHONE: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

EMAIL ADDRESS: _____

Astronomy Club of Akron annual memberships renew in the month of May.

ADULT (ages 18 and older)..... \$30.00

JUNIOR (ages 12 to 17).....\$15.00

ADDITIONAL ADULT member \$15.00

FAMILY MEMBERSHIP\$40.00

I realize the full color version of *The Night Sky* newsletter is available for download by members from our web page at www.acaoh.org, but I would rather have the B&W version mailed to my address via USPS.