



# The Night Sky

The Newsletter of  
The Astronomy Club of Akron

www.acaoh.org

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## RAMBLINGS OF THE PRESIDENT

by Dave Jessie

**ACA meetings are in full swing.** Our first meeting of the season was a couple Fridays ago. Honestly, attendance was a bit disappointing and I'd really like to know why. Were you not aware that we were meeting? Wasn't sufficient warning given? Please let us know by calling or emailing any member of the Board and letting us know. On the other hand, we had a great turnout for the Open House at the Observatory this past Saturday evening...lots of members and lots of public. The sky wasn't all that clear, making the large turnout even more rewarding. The skies cleared up nicely not long after dark and those that stayed were treated to many fantastic views through the Club scope and members' scopes on the field. Dave Steele and Freddy Huffman are getting more and more dangerous! Each of them can leave the best goto scope in the dust when it comes to finding those faint deep sky objects. They remind me of the main-turret gunner on the B17 of WWII days. Firing a brief burst of green laser followed by a delicate alteration in ALT and AZ of Freddy's 130mm Petzval refractor on his beautiful homemade mount. It's a sight to behold.

You really need to see these two in action if you haven't already done so.

### **Kiwanis Rose Remembrance Day was a big success:**

Thanks to all the members for really coming through and buying those Kiwanis roses! Steve Rohweder, our Treasurer, delivered 20 orders along with the \$300.00 payment to the Kiwanis folks a couple days after our meeting. Steve said they were surprised and happy at the size of our order. I know that at least two other orders were placed making our total 22 dozen and \$330. It would appear that we've got a place to meet for another year. Life is good.

### **Night Kite Flight at Silver Springs in Stow:**

This is an annual event and well worth the effort to get there! This event occurs at 5:00pm Saturday Oct 27, 2007 at the Silver Springs camp ground at 5238 Young Rd in Stow. I've got full details on the webpage at: [http://home.neo.rr.com/davejessie/2007-10-27\\_event.htm](http://home.neo.rr.com/davejessie/2007-10-27_event.htm)

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ACA's display at the Cleveland Museum of Natural History's Astronomy Day event

Photo by: Jason Shinn



(Continued from page 1)

We'll be setting up telescopes at the request of the Parks and Recreation Department in conjunction with the Ohio Society for the Elevation of Kites for their annual Halloween Night Kite Flight. The Moon will be a day and a half past full and located exactly in the middle of the Pleiades for a highly unusual sight. We had a ball at this event two years ago and expect to do the same this year. In 2005, the Night Kite Flight folks were great - and they welcomed us with enthusiasm exceeded only by the awe expressed by us astronomy folks at the magnificence of their illuminated kites. What?! Astronomers awed by illuminated kites? I'm entirely serious about this; you have to see them to believe it. Come out and share the joy - you won't be disappointed. Did I mention that food will be provided free of charge? We hope to see you there!

**Great Skies just thirty miles south of the Observatory:** I've mentioned this before, but I'm going to mention it again. Less than an hour south of our observatory location is a fantastic location for star gazing - at the Inn at Amish Door in Wilmot, OH. Rosaelena and I were there the day and night following our Observatory event on Oct 6. I've not seen the Milky Way look that good in a very long time. The Scutum Star Cloud was distinct and

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

Catherine Loboda

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

glowing over Sagittarius. The ring of stars around Sadr in Cygnus was so thick with the mist of countless thousands of Milky Way stars it resembled a wide collar. M57 was an easy 50mm binocular find as were seemingly countless objects in all parts of the sky. It was fantastic. Would anybody be interested in an overnight group stay at this Inn? I'm told discounts for groups are available, but we'd need some idea of expected participation. I realize that a clear moonless night would be required and it's a little late in the year to arrange this, but give it some thought. An even darker location is available a few miles southwest of Wilmot - in Millersburg near the "Time and Optics" store owned and operated by one-time member Robert Hershberger.

**Donated equipment:** I got a call from Dr. Baker in Kent asking me if the Club would be interested in a domed observatory and contents that belonged to her late husband, Robert. Freddy Huffman, Dave Steele and I have removed the 10" Cave Astrola reflector telescope and a case of Tele Vue Plossl eyepieces. Jeff Kreidler is assisting Freddy and Dave Steele with the renovation of the telescope and the case of eyepieces is in the hands of the Trustees. We're currently looking for a safe storage location of the 10ft 3in aluminum dome. We're considering using this equipment at a remote Club site in West Branch State Park but a lot of details will have to be worked out. One thing for certain, we won't be storing any of this gear in our Observatory since we've just recently gotten it all cleaned out to Ron's satisfaction.

**Treasurer's Report: 9/1/07 - 9/30/07**

Steve Rohweder, Treasurer

Total Beginning Assets	\$9,024.08
Income	
Interest on balances	\$1.89
Total Ending Assets	\$9,025.97

# OBSERVATORY REPORT

*Ron Kalinoski*

They say if you want the weather to change in Ohio, just wait a half hour. That was certainly true for our October 6th star party. NOAA forecasted mostly cloudy skies for the night of our star party. Regardless, we decided to get together to hear Dave Jessie's presentation on Open Clusters. At 6:30pm the sky at the observatory was clear and it looked like we were going to have a great night for observing. Dave's presentation started at 7:00pm with a few clouds peeking over the horizon. Dave gave a comprehensive discussion about open clusters from their birth in places like Eagle Nebula and Orion Nebula to their eventual dispersion within the Milky Way Galaxy. Dave displayed many showcase open clusters including Pleiades, the Jewel Box, and the Double Cluster. As Dave finished his presentation the sky had 70% cloud cover and after a few observations of Jupiter, the sky was over 90% cloud cover. After waiting a half hour,

the clouds started to dissipate and by 8:30pm the sky was clear and remained clear the rest of the night. The public attendees were patient and waited out the clouds and they were rewarded with observations of many celestial wonders including many of the open clusters Dave discussed during his presentation. Double stars were among the celestial observations. Epsilon 1 and Epsilon 2 in Lyra, better known as the Double Double was split at 194X using the Meade 5000 series 18mm eyepiece. We also observed Albireo and Delta Cepheus, an Albireo clone. Delta Cepheus is a little dimmer at mag. 4.2 and 6.1 compared to Albireo at mag. 3.4 and 4.7. Stars of Delta Cepheus have the same color as Albireo, orange and blue. Delta Cepheus and Albireo have similar separation at 40.6 seconds and 34.7 seconds, respectively. Both double stars are well placed in the Autumn sky.

# Gadgets for Imaging

*John Crilly*

I'd like to share my experiences with and impressions of some of the devices offered by Shoestring Astronomy ([www.shoestringastronomy.com](http://www.shoestringastronomy.com)). I've been using and recommending their stuff for years but they don't appear to be generally well-known. That's a shame because their interface gadgets can really make things easy for the amateur astro imager. They don't tend to be terribly complex devices, and someone with electronics skills could certainly fabricate similar devices at home, but they are priced so the convenience of simply buying them is very attractive.

The first Shoestring Astronomy device I acquired (and, I believe, the first they offered) was their GPINT-PT (\$35). This is a quadruple electronic switch which accepts pulses from a computer's parallel printer port and converts them into the switched outputs required by an imaging mount's autoguide port. Most guiding software can accommodate such a device. The primary advantage is that instead of tying up a computerized mount's communications port to send guide commands and relying on command decode times to be consistent, the precise guide pulse required is applied directly to the mount. A secondary advantage is that the software setup is generic – all mounts use the same autoguide port protocol so there's nothing to change in setup when switching mounts.

For those using late model laptops lacking parallel ports, the same functionality is available from a USB port using their GPUSB module (\$66). This is a little more complex internally, as it must act as a USB device and then strip out the desired bits and convert them to switched outputs. This is by far the more popular of the two autoguide interface products despite its higher cost. The reason I switched to this from the GPINT-PT was that it eliminates one cable from the computer to the mount. I use a USB at the pier and split off the GPUSB signal there rather than having a separate cable just for guiding.

I recently acquired a Shoestring Astronomy DSUSB interface (\$66). This is similar internally to the GPUSB; it connects to a computer's USB port and strips off one bit which is converted to a switched output. All DSLR control software is compatible with such a device; it's used to operate the shutter of a DSLR for long exposures. I switched to this from a Hap parallel port adaptor for the same reason I switched to the GPUSB – I can connect this device to a hub on the pier and avoid a cable run to the computer.

Their most recent product arrived the other day and I haven't had an opportunity to try it, but it has the potential to be the most useful of them all. It's their FCUSB focus motor controller (\$70). This permits either handbox or computer control of any of the popular DC motor-driven focusers on the market, as well as any of the add-on DC motors used to drive existing focusers. Use of the handbox permits much finer focus adjustment than manual operation even with two-speed focusers – and avoids any vibrations of the telescope caused by turning the focus knob by hand. Computer control is even better because it opens up two new opportunities. It permits remote focus operation (great for those of us who operate our gear remotely). It also permits automatic focus when used with a variety of software packages (great for those of us who struggle to achieve critical focus). Since there is no provision for positional feedback from the focuser this lacks some of the sophistication of dedicated focus motor systems such as Robofocus, which can remember and return to preset positions, or automatically compensate for focus shift with temperature. Still, it's easy and inexpensive – just like their other products.

Shoestring Astronomy is a small outfit; they don't send free product out for testing. I've purchased all of the above products myself (at full retail) so there's no pecuniary interest in writing this. I'm just a very satisfied customer who would like to see Doug succeed with his great offerings.



John Crilly discussed astrophotography software at September's meeting. Here, the onscreen image is of a photograph on the wall seen in real time through the camera/telescope setup.

Photo by: Justin Phillips

## (Non-ACA) Astronomy Events in October/November:

### Currently Showing at the Hoover-Price Planetarium:

*Radio Eyes*—September 22nd thru November 4th—Saturdays at 1pm, Sundays at 2pm

### Coming Soon to the Hoover-Price Planetarium:

*Celestial Light*—November 10th thru December 29th—Saturdays at 1pm

*Star of Bethlehem*—November 11th thru December 30th—Sundays at 2pm

[http://www.mckinleymuseum.org/hoover\\_price\\_planetarium](http://www.mckinleymuseum.org/hoover_price_planetarium)

**NASA Glenn Third Saturday Series Event: 50 Years of Exploration.** Celebrate the 50th anniversary of Sputnik's launch into space and find out how it ushered us into the space age. October 20, 2007 at NASA Glenn Research Center

<http://www.nasa.gov/centers/glenn/home/index.html>



Freddy Huffman describes ACA member's astrophotos on display at the Cleveland Museum of Natural History astronomy day event.

Photo by: Jason Shinn



M42 - The Orion Nebula - 09-16-07

Peter Clausen sent these astrophotographs to demonstrate the difference between normal RGB images and color mapped images. In his words:

I shot the Orion Nebula with both the normal HaRGB filters and mapped color filters. The mapped color image is composed similar to images from the Hubble telescope using Ha as Green, the SII as Red and the OIII as blue. The interesting part is that you can see the different types of gases in the nebula but of course the colors are artificial.

Thanks for the photos, Peter!



M42 - Orion Nebula - Mapped Color - 09-22-07



NGC281 - Pacman Nebula - Mapped Color - 09-22-07

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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](http://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](http://www.acaoh.org), but I would rather have the B&W version mailed to my address via USPS.