



Astronomy Club of Akron

2011 Observatory Schedule

Portage Lakes State Park, 5031 Manchester Road, Akron, OH 44319

www.acao.org

- Our star parties are free and open to the public. Please join us for stargazing and educational activities. Star parties will begin promptly.
- Events may be cancelled if the skies are cloudy. If the skies are questionable, please call for the latest information: 330-837-5848
- This is an outdoor activity in an unheated environment. Nighttime temperatures drop rapidly, even in the summer. A general rule of thumb is dress for 20 degrees colder than the predicted nighttime low temperature.
- Please be considerate of those who bring their own telescopes. Children should be supervised at all times. Pets should be left at home.
- Smoke and expensive optics don't mix. Please, **no smoking** in or near the observatory, on the surrounding grounds where club members have set up their telescopes, and during star party presentations. Be considerate of your fellow observers.
- Come As You Are, Learn As You Go!

March 5 – 7:00pm

Observe The Great Orion Nebula. Seeing this stellar nursery through the observatory telescope is a stunning sight.

March 26 – 8:00pm

Binoculars Night – bring your binoculars and we'll show you some interesting celestial objects to view including: Beehive Cluster, Pleiades, and Hyades.

April 2 – 8:00pm

Special Event: Messier Marathon – stay all night to observe all 110 Messier objects with ACA club members. We'll have the best free coffee in Akron brewing all night.

April 30 – 9:00pm

Jupiter sets with the sun, but The Ghost of Jupiter is well-placed for observation. Come out to see this eerie planetary nebula.

May 21 – 9:00pm

View the Whirlpool Galaxy and Bode's Galaxies (M81 & M82) Also, an ACA member will take you on a sky tour of the Spring Constellations.

May 28 – 9:00pm

Observe galaxies in the Virgo Cluster and the most distant object within reach of the observatory telescope: Quasar 3C273 at a distance of 2.4 billion light-years.

June 4 – 8:00pm

Annual ACA Telescope Seminar Our members will describe the advantages and disadvantages of each type of telescope. If you plan on purchasing a telescope, don't miss this program.

June 11 – 6:00pm

Solar & Lunar Event / Hotdog Roast View sunspots, solar flares, and prominences on the sun and craters, mountains, and maria on the Moon. Enjoy a hotdog for a small fee.

Program 1: WRAO radio telescope demonstration

Program 2: The Moon Program 3: The Sun

June 25 – 9:00pm

*Program: Saturn**

Saturn's rings tilt 10 degrees for Earthling observers.

July 2 – 9:00pm

*Program: Mythology**

Learn the myths and legends behind the constellations.

July 23 – 9:00pm

*Program: Spectroscopy**

Find out how astronomers use light to discover information about the Universe.

July 30 – 9:00pm

*Program: Comets**

Learn more about these visitors from outer space.

August 6 – 8:30pm

*Program: Lunar Phases and Eclipses**

Find out what causes phases of the Moon and solar and lunar eclipses.

August 20 – 8:00pm

*Programs: Historic Astronomers**

Learn about the astronomers who set the foundation for our understanding of the Universe.

September 17 – 8:00pm

Globular Cluster viewing tonight

September 24 – 8:00pm

Planetary Nebulae viewing tonight

October 15 – 7:00pm

Serving the best free coffee in Akron tonight while observing the stars!

October 22 – 7:00pm

An ACA member will take you on a sky tour of the Autumn Constellations.

October 29 – 7:00pm

Observe Andromeda Galaxy and companion galaxy M32 in the same field of view.

November 19 – 6:30pm

View Jupiter and some straggler meteors tonight.

* listed program or make-up program

Getting Started in Astronomy

Getting started in astronomy as a hobby isn't necessarily as expensive as most people think. While it's easy to spend several thousand dollars on high-end equipment, most skywatchers begin their odyssey with little more than an inexpensive skychart and their own eyes. Taking it one step farther, a modest pair of 10x50 binoculars can be had for less than \$50. While binoculars are seemingly less glamorous than a telescope, the views offered are nothing short of incredible. Many deep-space objects are visible and the sheer number of stars that are revealed will delight and amaze.

While the temptation to purchase an inexpensive, department store telescope can be overwhelming, you should think twice before taking the plunge. The optical quality is often enough to discourage rather than encourage. Claims of super-high magnification are nothing but smoke and mirrors in the world of amateur astronomy. How much light your instrument can collect and effectively bring to your eye is what really matters. It's not at all unreasonable to expect pricing in the \$300 dollar range for a reliable and more importantly, useful telescope. It's really worth waiting and saving for such an instrument if need be.

The Astronomy Club of Akron (ACA) hosts public viewing events, also known as "star parties," throughout the year (see reverse side for dates and times). As a non-profit entity with public education as our goal, the ACA's mission is to bring astronomy to you! Our public events are designed to teach and to foster interest in amateur astronomy. This being the case, our permanent observatory facility at the Portage Lakes State Park houses a 14 inch, computerized, Schmidt Cassegrain telescope. This instrument is the centerpiece of our public star parties and everybody is welcome to have a look through the eyepiece at whatever happens to be targeted. We enjoy answering questions and requests to see astronomical objects are gladly accepted. In addition to our observatory, you will find members scattered around the property, expertly manning their own private telescopes and binoculars. Again, questions are welcome as is the opportunity to show you

astronomical wonders through a variety of brands and optical designs. If you don't currently own a telescope but are considering purchasing one, our public star parties are fantastic sources of information. Come and see the many choices and options available and see how much more informed a purchasing decision you can make afterward!

As a non-profit organization, the ACA exists and operates through a combination of charitable donations and membership dues. If you'd like to be a member, you will know that your dues help to support our recurring expenses and purchase of new and replacement equipment. You will also receive discounts on annual subscriptions to *Sky & Telescope* and *Astronomy* magazines and will be able to borrow ACA loaner telescopes. You will be invited to our members-only events and will be eligible to vote on club issues. Even more important, you will know that you are part of our effort to teach and enlighten those who may never have been exposed to astronomy in any other way.

