

“Stars & Scopes”

Oct. 2008

Area-51 on September 3, 2008

While driving home from the monthly meeting at the Palm Beach Club (ASPB), I received a call from Fred out at Area-51, all excited about the great conditions ...no wind, no clouds, dark sky, no twinkling stars, and the bright Milky Way clearly visible across the sky. With my equipment already loaded in the truck (for the August Group Trek that didn't pan out), and with expectations that the ensuing storms would hinder any chances of imaging in the days to come, I made the decision to head out. I was not disappointed! I arrived around 11:30pm and joined both Ivan and Fred already imaging. I set up quickly to take advantage of the spectacular conditions and began an evening of imaging. First up was the Helix Nebula, followed by the very faint and elusive Comet C/2007 W1 Boattini moving through the Constellation Aries, and finally the Pelican Nebula. Clouds cut short my full imaging of the Pelican around 4:30am, as well as our plans to image through sunrise. We were back on I-75 on our way home at 5:30am.

Jay Messeroff



Comet C/2007 W1 Boattini



Pelican Nebula



Helix Nebula



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Meeting Minutes Wednesday, September 3rd 2008



The meeting was brought to order by President Jay Albert at 7:30PM. Guests included Kim Mohlenhoff from Gumbo Limbo, Jenn Cooper of the Science Museum, and Allen Jacobs, a visitor with interest in Astronomy. Approximately 30 were in attendance. The Minutes of previous meeting, as printed in the Newsletter, were accepted unanimously. Treasurer Jim McClean brought the financial statement: \$6954 in checking account, \$5612 in CD, and \$1952 in the Scholarship Fund. Jim said that he has changed the Scholarship Fund to a new account to avoid the \$12 monthly charge.

Committee Reports:

Planetary: Jerry stated that Jupiter was quite prominent in early evening, Venus visible low in the west at sunset, along with Mercury and Mars. Saturn gone behind Sun for now.):

Occultations: Charlie reported no grazes of note this month.

Comets: Jay Messeroff stated that he checks Heavens-above.com for comet updates; none currently visible at greater than 8th mag. He did have an image of Boattini, about 6th mag. at the time.

Scholarship: Tom Sarko reported that this year's recipient, Joshua Disatham, was now at Gainesville at UF. Since Fred Barch has taken a principal's position at the new Pine Jog school, the new contact person at the School District is Wendy Speilman. Tom also reported that the Scholarship award would now be open to HS Juniors as well as Seniors, and that the application was available on-line!

Night Sky Network: Tom S. reported that we have a new NSN kit, on Super Novae.

Science Museum: Jenn Cooper is our new contact person. She stated that the Planetarium would definitely be ready in time for a presentation at the November meeting.

Daggerwing Observatory update: Curtis McDonald reported that the funding for the observatory had been removed from the county budget, due to deep cuts in many programs.

Observing session reports: JD State Park: Sat., Aug. 23rd: clouds. Area 51: Fri., Aug. 29th: 5 went out, not a good night. Riverbend Park, Sat., Aug. 30th; rained out.

Upcoming observing sessions

Sugar Sand Park: "Eyes in the Sky", Fri., Sept. 12th.

JDSP: Saturday, Sept. 20th; Riverbend: Sat., Sept. 27th; Area 51: Fri., Sept. 26th.

Corbett: Girl Scout program, Sat., Oct. 4th ; may have several hundred girl scouts; 6 scopes committed so far according to Jay A.

"Night Explorers" at Gumbo Limbo Nature Center will begin Friday, Sept. 26th. Jim Mayes will coordinate for ASPB. Will run thru May 30th.

Upcoming presentations: Fred Lehman in October, Planetarium show in Nov., Members' show & tell in December. Jay Albert on ALPO in January 09, Caroline Simpson Feb. '09.

Announcements: 1) ASPB Board meeting on Tuesday, October 7th at 7pm at Atlantis Grill (Lantana & Congress). Non-Board members invited to attend on non-voting basis.

2) The Science Museum will be locked after the start of our meeting for security reasons. Please be in the museum by 7:30 sharp, or risk being "out".

Old Business: None.

New Business: 1) Charlie stated that the annual Astronomy Magazine Calendar order was imminent. \$10 per calendar is a discount on regular price. Note: 18 had signed up for calendars by end of meeting!

2) E-mail to the website was received, requesting a live interview on radio, FM 100.3. Jay nominated Charlie to do that.

Presentation: Charlie Fredrickson gave the presentation "Astronomy as Art". It was a compendium of many expressions of astronomical art, from paintings, sculptures, astro photos including foreground, and high resolution digital images of distant galaxies and nebulae. A number of Charlie's original images, and some of Fred Lehman, were included. The work of "Space artists" such as Chesley Bonestell was also presented. They were our first space explorers, taking us, in their mind's eye, to places humans have never set foot. A number of Internet websites on this subject were also shown. Charlie also stated that great "astro-art" can be done with very modest equipment.

Adjournment: approximately 9:20PM

Respectfully submitted,

Respectfully submitted, Charlie Fredrickson Secretary

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ASPB Events for October 2008

Monthly Business Meeting (October 1, 2008)

The meeting will be held in the Motorola Science Theater at the South Florida Science Museum. All are welcome to attend. As always, sandwiches, coffee, cookies, and donuts will be served at a short intermission prior to the presentation.

Presentation: Fred Lehman

Girl Scout Astronomy Merit Badge Program at the Corbet (Saturday October 4, 2008)

The girls need to do 6 of the 10 requirements. We've been asked specifically to help with items 2, 3, 4, 6, and 7, although we can probably help with more. (Constellations, North Star Navigation, Planets, Parts of Telescopes, & the Moon) We will be at the clearing in the Youth Camp Area. We should enter the gate off Seminole Pratt Whitney Road just north of Northlake Blvd. Make a left into the management area and then follow the road to the youth camp which is on the right fork. The girls will be gathering around 8 pm. We might want to get there 15 to 30 minutes earlier to set up.

Quarterly Board of Directors Business Meeting (Tuesday October 7, 2008)

The meeting will be held at Atlantis Grill Restaurant located on the North West corner of Lantana Road and Congress Avenue. The meeting will commence at 7:00 pm and will run concurrently with dinner, drinks, and merriment. We will adjourn by about 9:00 pm. Members wishing to increase their level of participation in club activities are encouraged to attend. As always, significant others are welcome as well.

Saturday Night Viewing at Jonathan Dickinson State Park (October 18, 2008)

All are invited to attend. Meeting time is 7:30 PM at the Wendy's restaurant in Tequesta. After dinner, everyone present will depart for the park at 8:30 PM. Be sure to bring an adequate supply of mosquito repellent. Contact Gerry Niksch for additional information.

Friday Night Explorers at Gumbo Limbo (October 24, 2008)

The Night Explorers look for owls, stars, bugs, & animals while they hike the boardwalk and view sea life in the tanks. The ASPB setup telescopes in the front parking lot and the explorers come for an astronomy program after their hike.

Saturday Night Viewing at River Bend Park (October 25, 2008)

River Bend park is located on the south side of Indiantown Road about 1 mile west of the Jupiter exit of the Florida Turnpike. Signs for the park entrance are posted on Indiantown Road. This session is not open to the public. Our club is responsible for the security of the gate. Please contact Jay Albert (bocajay@bellsouth.net) or Larry Schlaefer (ls4503@bellsouth.net) for more details.

October 2008 Presentation by Fred Lehman

The presentation I hope to give will require clear skies. I will set up my telescope in the grass on the north side of the parking lot. I will start by showing how to go about the task of polar aligning a fork-mount telescope on a wedge. It is not likely that anyone really knows how to do it right. Next I will explain and demonstrate how to take a photograph of a deep sky object. I will have a 32" battery powered LCD panel attached to my laptop. This is the largest portable display that I have. People will have to gather around somewhat closely to get a good view. If things go well and we have enough time, I will demonstrate how to set up for autoguiding while imaging.

If the sky is yecchy I will simply set up my projector in the auditorium and show some of the pictures that I have taken in the past year. I might be able to contrast them against similar pictures from several years ago.

I have a few pictures that I can use to demonstrate the difference in resolution between a small telescope (like mine) and a large professional telescope on a mountain top.

Highlights from NASA Space Calendar – October 2008

- Oct 02 - Asteroid 2002 GM5 Near-Earth Flyby (0.011 AU)
- Oct 04-10 - World Space Week
- Oct 09 - Draconids Meteor Shower Peak
- Oct 10 - Comet P/2001 J1 (NEAT) Closest Approach To Earth (0.980 AU)
- Oct 21 - Orionids Meteor Shower Peak
- Oct 22 - Mercury At Its Greatest Western Elongation (18 Degrees)



Please see <http://www2.jpl.nasa.gov/calendar> for more information

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Jupiter and Lunar Images, thanks to Hanna

By James Riches

One of the benefits of Tropical Storm Hanna, besides the fact it avoided South Florida, is it left us with two nights of clear skies on September 5th and 6th. Added bonus is these were weekend nights! Since I had done absolutely no webcam imaging of Jupiter this summer, I knew I had to take advantage of this. Below are stacked images of Jupiter using my SPC900NC Philips webcam, and 10" Meade LX90.



Since the moon was too low Friday night, the only lunar shots I took were with my Canon 40D DSLR mounted on the LX90. These are a mosaic of 2 to 3 stacked images, 10 each from Friday and Saturday nights.

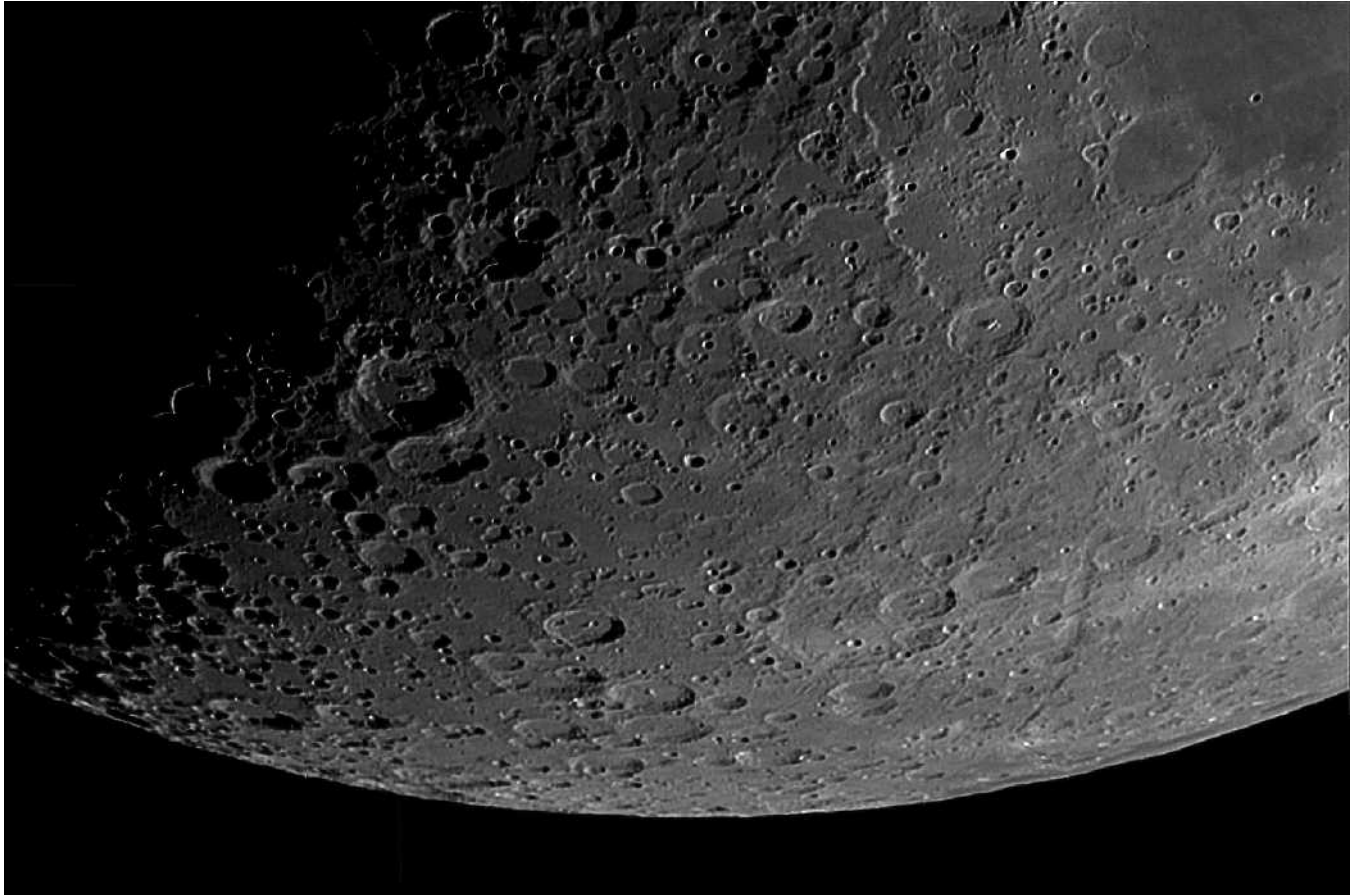


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Jupiter and Lunar Images, thanks to Hanna (cont.)

By James Riches

On Saturday, the moon was high enough such that I was able to do some higher power webcamming of a heavily cratered southern region of the lunar surface. Below is a mosaic of about 10 to 12 images, with about 400 frames stacked each. Visible are craters Piccolomini, Riccius, Rabi Levi, Zagut, Maurolycus near the terminator, Barocius and Fracastorius with Mare Nectaris, to name a few.



Outstanding Natural Area

I heard on the radio this morning (9/25/2008):
That President Bush signed a Bill making the land north of the Jupiter Light house an "Outstanding Natural Area".

Which will bring it under the management of the Bureau of Land Management and protect it from encroachment from developers. There are only two other areas so protected, one in Oregon and one in the state of Washington.

James McClean

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Summer Milky Way

I have finally completed my first attempt at stitching together a mosaic of the Summer Milky Way. The picture covers a 35 degree strip of sky from the stinger of Scorpius to the first star in the "W" of Cassiopeia, a span of almost 130 degrees. The far south-western (right-hand) edge is somewhat contaminated by light pollution from being so near to the horizon. The spatial resolution is approximately one arcminutes per pixel.

Rotating, aligning, and color balancing this large an expanse of sky is much more difficult a task than I had originally anticipated, so any critical analysis should be toned down to a low roar so as to not hurt my feelings too badly. I'm sure that I will be re-stacking, re-processing, and re-stitching these images at least a couple more times before I will be satisfied with the results myself. A JPEG rendition of the image is available for inspection at:

http://www.starfred.com/images/mw_080903.jpg

Image has been rotated to better fit the page. LJW

Fred Lehman

First, I must apologize for missing the meeting last night. My [feeble] excuse is that we had a few hours of clearness between these two hurricanes, so I decided to spend the evening alone with my telescope instead of together with the rest of you. Not necessarily the best choice, but here is one of the pictures taken somewhere around 2AM. Most of the evening was spent capturing a mosaic of the Milky Way. If I am able to stitch the individual frames together adequately, the resulting picture will be 30 degrees high and 140 degrees wide. I started shooting in Scorpio just after sunset and continued on to Cassiopeia as the night progressed. With a little luck, I'll send that one along in a couple of days.

Fred Lehman



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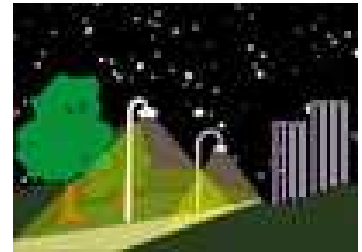
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ASPB is a Member of the International Dark-Sky Association (IDA)
<http://www.darksky.org/>

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<http://nightsky.jpl.nasa.gov/>

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Astronomy as Art Internet Links

After the presentation I gave on "Astronomy as Art", a number of people suggested that I follow up with some suggested links to good Internet sites on the topic. Here is a start:

The International Association of Astronomical Artists

<http://www.iaaa.org/>

The World At Night (TWAN)

<http://www.twanight.org/newtwan/index.asp>

Novaspace: Space Art Gallery

<http://www.novaspace.com/Gallery1.html?menu>

BONESTELL SPACE ART

<http://www.bonestell.org/index.html>

"Curious About Astronomy" site

<http://curious.astro.cornell.edu/astroart.php>

Astronomy Picture of the Day (APOD)

<http://antwrp.gsfc.nasa.gov/apod/astropix.html>



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