

## Winter Observing

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with an 8" Dob on a motorized Meade mount, hooked up to a laptop running ECU. Behind him was Ken with a 5" Astro-Physics refractor. Others were using Schmidt-Cassegrains, dobsonians, and just binoculars, and I was using my 15" Dob with the Sky Commander. As soon as I could see some bright stars, I aligned on a couple of bright stars, and began to observe, starting with Jupiter and Saturn, then the Orion Nebula. There were always several people waiting to look through the eyepiece at the various telescopes, with "OOOOHs" and "AAAAAHs" all over the place.

It was a good night – one of my best. I looked at a lot of the usual objects like M81 and M82, the Beehive and M67 in Cancer. Then, open clusters in Monoceros, Puppis and Canis Major. However, when Leo was up, it was on to M95, M96 and M105, all three galaxies observed in the same eyepiece. Below were M65 and M66, both galaxies observed in the same eyepiece. When Ursa Major was high enough, it was time to begin looking for galaxies there. This was one of those nights when the Sky Commander was pointing perfectly. In all, I located and enjoyed 14 galaxies in the Ursa Major area alone, the largest of which was NGC 5457, (26.9 min), and the most spectacular being NGC 4258 (M106 in Canes Venatici). M106 had a definite bright nuclear bulge in the centre and my wows brought other observers over to see what all the fuss was about. The night was finished off with views of the Whirlpool and Sombrero galaxies.

The most memorable sight of the night for me was NGC 2392, the Eskimo nebula. While looking at the nebula, I could see the central star, but only if the focus was perfect. Moving the focuser slightly off focus would make the central star disappear. Although I have seen the Eskimo nebula several times before, I never noticed the central star. Finding something new or looking at something beautiful is what makes observing exciting for me. When I try to explain observing to non-astronomers, I am met with silence and strange looks. They look at me as though I have lost something. How can I explain that I have gained something which cannot be described? Winter observing is great!

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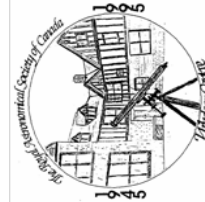
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# AURORA



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The Royal Astronomical Society of Canada - Windsor Centre  
April 2000

## Flyer

### Next Meeting

Tuesday April 18, 2000  
8:00 p.m.

at

St. Stephen's Church  
Howard Road, 1.4 kms. South of  
Highway #3

Speaker: Dr. William Baylis

Topic: TBD

### Upcoming Events

**Messier Marathon:** Saturday April 1 at Frank Shepley's house.

**Earth Day:** Sunday April 16 at Ojibway Park.

**May Day Observing:** Saturday May 6 at Dan Taylor's house.

**Windsor Center Picnic:** Saturday June 3 at Tim Bennett's house.

**Council Meeting:** Tuesday June 6 at Steve Pellarin's house.

## GENERAL MEETING MINUTES

February 15, 2000

The meeting was called to order by the President, Susan Sawyer-Beaulieu, at 8:10 p.m.

Ms. Sawyer-Beaulieu asked the membership to review the January 18, 2000 minutes as printed in the Newsletter. Moved by John Beaudoin to adopt the minutes as printed. Motion was seconded by Steve LeBoeuf. Carried.

### Reports

Correspondence Secretary - Joady Ulrich was absent.

Treasurer - Frank Shepley reminded members to advise him of any membership renewals they might do directly through National Office. Frank notes that, on average, about three individuals per month become members of our centre. Current membership stands at approximately 105.

National Council Rep. - Tim Bennett had no news to report.

Librarian - our new librarian, Tom Sharron, reports he is still reorganizing the library materials to his liking, and asks members to return any items, especially slides, to him for inventory purposes.

Public Education - Randy Groundwater reports he gave a successful presentation and observing session with teacher - candidates at the Faculty of Education - University of Windsor, on February 8, 2000.

Editor - Steve Mastellotto had nothing to report.

### Business

Susan Sawyer-Beaulieu announced upcoming meetings which include:

- Messier Marathons on Sat. March 4 and Sat. April 1.
- Earth Day 2000, Ojibway Nature Centre, on Sun. April 16th (an organizational meeting T.B.A.)
- May Day this year is Sat. May 6th at Dan Taylor's residence
- Windsor Centre Picnic is Sat. June 3rd at Tim Bennett's residence
- Council Meeting scheduled for Tues. June 6th

Director of Observing - Robin Smallwood discussed the upcoming Messier observing sessions, and also introduced a star map of the Canis Major region. 50/50 Draw was won by Steve LeBoeuf, who donated his winnings (\$18.10)

back to the Centre.

The major presentation of the evening was presented by our guest speakers, Walter MacDonald and Doug Clapp. Their comprehensive treatment of C.C.D. cameras in Astronomy was well received by the members present.

The President thanked the speakers at the conclusion of their talk.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 10:50 p.m.

## Observing in Winter by Joe Cambala

Winter observing usually brings thoughts of wind, snow, cold fingers and toes, and lots of hot coffee. I take my hat off to those brave souls who bundle up in snowmobile suits, and with observing plans in hand, go outside for two, three or more hours of observing. However, winter observing to me, means trading shorts and a t-shirt for jogging pants and maybe a sweater, and going either into the back yard, or packing everything into the truck and heading for the Everglades.

When the sky is clear and steady with low humidity, I do one of two things. I either put my scope on the driveway, right by the road, and stop couples out for an evening walk, inviting them to look through the eyepiece, or take my telescope into the back yard for a couple of hours of solitary observing. Both are enjoyable options. Stopping passersby and introducing them to Jupiter and Saturn together with some star clusters or the Orion Nebula is rewarding because one introduces people to wonders they never knew existed. It is also a good way to make new friends and gain new astronomers. Mary and I met Dick and Kitty from Minnesota this way. Kitty is a nurse, and Dick is a professor of calculus, both now retired. Dick is now an enthusiastic amateur astronomer.

Friday and Saturday, March 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>, were two good days. On Friday night, I pulled the scope into the back yard and began observing. Although the sky is not exemplary, it is sometimes surprisingly good. On January 11<sup>th</sup>, I found NGC 2022, a planetary in Orion with a magnitude of 12.8. This was unusual, but is indicative of what is sometimes possible. During the course of the evening of March 3<sup>rd</sup>, my list of objects located numbered 25 (using the Sky Commander, or course). It only whet my appetite for more. The following day, Saturday, March 4, was a scheduled observing night for the Southwest Florida Astronomical Society to be held in the Everglades at a place called Fakahatchee Strand. Saturday morning, I loaded the truck and prepared my observing "hit" list. At 5:15 p.m., it was off to the Everglades.

About 18 observers attended with a variety of telescopes. Behind me was Charlie

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