



Astronomy Club of Tulsa

OBSERVER

July 2004

<http://www.AstroTulsa.com>

ACT, Inc. has been meeting continuously since 1937 and was incorporated in 1986. It is a nonprofit; tax deductible organization dedicated to promoting, to the public, the art of viewing and the scientific aspect of astronomy.

What

The Astronomy Club of Tulsa Star Party

When

16 July 2004 at 8:00 P.M.

Where

RMCC Observatory

President's Message

Craig Davis

It appears that we may never see a continuous run of perhaps a week or two of good clear nights. It's been quite some time since that has occurred and needless to say so many of us are putting up with an incurable itch. An itch that won't be fully eliminated until the weather clears way and allows us several "clear skies" nights. There have been a few decent nights over recent weeks gone by but not enough. Most of them have been interrupted and shortened up by either wind, clouds or dew. Just as our last club star party was beleaguered with a persistent wind out of the south Unfortunately some members ran into more ocular "dancing" lessons, per say, than ever needed and without doubt an accident here and there. Steady and gusty winds can play with us in more ways than one. I'm sure we all know that very well. Even so, it was great to see so many of you there and having a good time be there wind or not. (Preferably no wind this month)

In the not so distant future there will be a lot of work that is going to be done to the observatory. A new coat of paint - both inside

and outside - is going to be accomplished this summer along with the same for the dome. The dome, in and of itself, is going to be a true challenge. But that alone is something to look forward too. Once it has a new coat of paint it will look almost brand new. Compared to what it is looking like right now, yes, it will look so much better. So with a new coat of paint inside and out, walls, doors, trim etc., don't you think that that alone would add such a newer, fresh look to the entire building? Yes, I'm sure you would.

An open invitation now stands for assistance from any club member. Those of you that may have a few hours to sacrifice over the next couple months will truly be appreciated. Be it one or two hours the open invitation will always remain as the summer goes by. There is much that needs to be done and a reminder word will be spread for volunteers from time to time.

Hopefully many of you will be open to helping out when the time comes. It's going to be a chore, but the end result will be well worth it. New paint, outside outlets so that many of us will not have to bother with running extension cords inside. And if all goes well, there will also be three permanent piers set for use by anyone. Keep your fingers crossed, they would sure make it easier since you may not need to bring your own tripod or portable pier. Load up the 'scope and mount and head on out. I'll pass more detail concerning this as we work it through.

I owe everyone an apology for having not posted anything in last month's newsletter. My wife and I have been extremely tied up with attending to her mother who is very close to passing. This situation has been both very tiring and an emotional roller coaster. It unfortunately has kept us away from our normal day-to-day activities. It isn't easy at all. I'm sure many of you understand. *(Editors note: Deb's mother passed away Tuesday evening, 29 June)*

Clear skies to all,
Craig D. Davis

Astronomical Serendipity

By Neta Apple

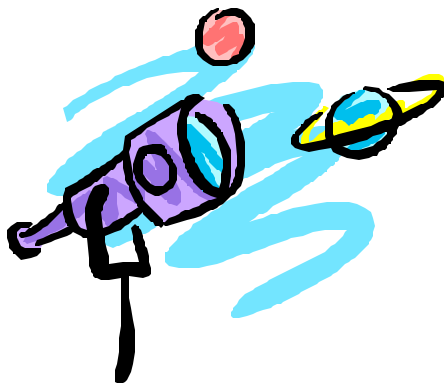
Sometimes one can have the most wonderful experience come of something that has been less than perfect. As amateur astronomers we are plagued with less than perfect weather, bugs and even wildlife at times, not to mention the failure of technology. A recent technological failure turned out to be a great opportunity for our club to gain some recognition and for me to perhaps gain some much needed help for our local schools.

As many of you by now know Tony White and I decided to try for the Transit of Venus Observing Certificate that was offered by NASA and the Astronomical League. We overcame the weather, and later managed to get images downloaded from observatories on the east coast in spite of overloaded computers at NASA. (I later found out they had over 50,000,000 hits on their computers in two days, nearly bringing down their biggest and best server.) I got the calculations done and sent them off in e-mail to the appointed contact at NASA thinking at last I am done. But the e-mail bounced back. It bounced five times in three days. With nowhere else to turn, I e-mailed KC Lobrecht and Scott Kranz for advice. Both suggested contacting Bob Gent so I sent him an email. To his credit he answered me that same day telling me he would find out about the problem. I later found out that he had taken action and contacted NASA right away as well. One of the teachers at our local school has NASA ties and suggested looking for another way into the department at Goddard Space Flight Center that was in charge of this activity. As a result I was able to find the office phone number of Lou Mayo, the contact for the certificate. I called and left a voice mail message even though it was after five in Maryland, thinking I might get a call the next day if I was lucky.

To my surprise, about an hour later Lou called me from his home, on his own time. He was very concerned that I was having trouble and gave me his home e-mail address so I could send my

work to him there. He was eager to hear about my impressions and somewhere during the conversation we started to talk about the work that I have been doing as a volunteer at our local school here in Chouteau. He began to tell me about this new thing that NASA is trying to promote called Family Astronomy Nights. Seems they send out flyers inviting whomever to come to the home of someone who lives out where the skies are darker. They do potluck dinner, have a short program and then look at the night sky. I told him about the ACT Mars Watch and Comet Watch. He was so excited that the club had done those two events and was especially impressed when I told him how many had attended the Mars Watch last fall. There was an audible gasp and then he repeated it back to confirm what I had said. I sent him the address of our club web page and directed him particularly to look at the gallery so he could see the photos from both events. He was highly complementary and told me repeatedly that this is exactly the sort of thing that NASA is trying to promote.

He also has since sent me e-mail with a copy of the flyer for one of their Family Astronomy Nights and information on how to apply for a grant to buy equipment for the after school astronomy club that I am working on getting started here in Chouteau. He has also promised to send more materials by snail mail, which I am sure will be very helpful. I have been very impressed with his efforts and his willingness to help. And to think that all this would have been missed had the NASA e-mail server been working properly.



Astroland Tidbits

by John Land

Change in Email - Due to the large amount of Spam coming in on my astroland account. Please send any inquiries about your membership or other club matters to **membershipATastrotulsa.com** - Replace AT with the usual @. (The reason for the bizarre address is that these web spy engines are picking off addresses from our web site newsletters and spinning them off to spam networks.)

Looking for a little bit of heaven on earth? Try the Oscar Monnig Meteorite Gallery at Texas Christian University in Fort Worth, Texas. This collection houses the world's 13th largest collection of meteorites including specimens from the Moon and Mars. In fact you can even touch one of the meteorites from Mars. You can't even do that at Neiman-Marcus! For more information call 817-257-6277 or website at <http://monnigmuseum.tcu.edu>

Discover - The Innovative and affordable solar optics instruments



Solarscope is an affordable projection telescope instrument designed to allow sun observation for individuals or groups in safety with relative ease. The telescope collapses into a board game sized box. With a suggested retail price of \$59 for the standard edition and \$89 for the educational edition, Solarscope is affordable to individuals, schools, clubs, and makes an excellent gift for both kids and adults. <http://www.solarscope.com/us/index.en.html>

Welcome to our new members: Ron Patrick, Shelly Duer

Sky & Telescope announces new magazine for beginning astronomers. <http://nightskymag.com/> The club has coupons for a free issue - Send a self-addressed stamped envelope or pick one up at a club event.

MSRAL 2004 Report- Three members of the Tulsa club were present at the June at Springfield this year. John Land, Steve Chapman and Denny Mishler The Springfield club reported 72 registered for the event. the sky did not cooperate Friday for observing but we had a nice time visiting with new and old friends. We did get to see a demonstration of a prototype telescope the switches quickly from Dobsonian to Equatorial mounts with simple yet innovative rotation rings. Dr. Evans from SMSU gave an interesting presentation on scientific evidence for a new impact crater site in Missouri. seems there are 4 or 5 impact craters on or near the 38th parallel in the Midwest. The keynote speaker Charles Armstrong form NASA serves on the committee to recertify the Space Shuttle for flight. He gave an extensive review of the causes for the Columbia failure and a review to the steps being taken to reestablish Shuttle flights by March 2005. He also had some slides of new propulsion systems for deep space travel that are well into the production and testing phases. As usual there were a number of vendors present and the Tulsa bunch did our fair share of keeping the economy strong. All three of us did well on the door prizes also. Changes were approved to hold the 2005 MidStates Convention in Kansas City in conjunction with the 2005 National Astronomy convention July 2005.

The **Okie-Tex Star** party in the Oklahoma Panhandle will be held Oct 10th to Oct 17th, 2004 You'll enjoy some of the darkest sky in America. <http://www.okie-tex.com/>

ON LINE Club Memberships and Renewals :

Club memberships are \$25 per year for adults and \$15 per year for students.

We now have an automated on line registration form on the website for new AND renewal memberships plus magazine subscriptions. You simply type in your information and hit send to submit the information. <http://www.astrotulsa.com/Club/join.asp>

You can then print a copy of the form and mail in your check.

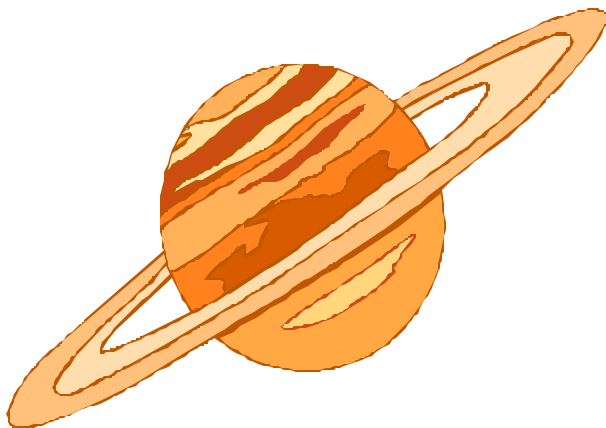
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Magazine Subscriptions: If your magazines are coming up for renewal, try to save the mailing label or renewal form you get in the mail. Do NOT mail renewals back to the magazine! To get the club discount you must go through the club group rate.

Astronomy is \$29 for 1 year or \$55 for 2 years. www.astronomy.com

Sky & Telescope is \$33 / yr www.skyandtelescope.com **Sky and Telescope** also offers a 10% discount on their products.

Address Corrections - Email changes - Questions: You may forward questions to the club call our message line at 918-688-MARS (6277) by email membershipATastrotulsa.com - Replace AT with the usual @. Please leave a clear message with your name, phone number, your question - along with address or email Please make email subject lines that address your question. The spam filters may DELETE emails without clear identification!



Astronomy Club of Tulsa membership (\$25/year) includes membership in the Astronomical League and subscription to ACT's "Observer" and AL's "Reflector". "Astronomy" (\$29/year) and "Sky and Telescope" (\$33/year) are also available through the club. For more information contact John Land at 918.357.1759. Permission is hereby granted to reprint from this publication provided credit is given to the original author and the Astronomy Club of Tulsa Observer is identified as the source.

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