



VERY thin crescent Moon on June 15th by Vern Raben

Longmont Astronomy Society Newsletter
June 2007

From the President:

Hello Astronomers!

You had five choices for new moon dark sky adventures this past weekend for new moon dark sky observing - no excuses would be taken. If you love astronomy this was the time to venture out to catch some ancient photons from beyond the local planets, deep space is way deep for sure. Like looking at quasar with Andrew Planck and Vern.Raben about 3 billion light years away, farthest view ever for me ??

The choices were, Pawnee grasslands, our usual place for dark sky new moon viewing, then Rocky Mountain National Park, Friday night Astronomy viewing in upper Beaver Meadows in park. Also going on over the weekend was the Rocky Mountain Star Stare by the Colorado Springs club. If you are a member of DAS or know somebody there, Deer Trail viewing was open for new moon views too.

Then there is Fox Park, my favorite high and dark sky viewing place. Well Vern Raben ,John Figoski , Carol and myself did the long drive to get the best possible Milky Way views in. I was amazed as John F. was showing how a shadow was cast by just the Milky Way alone. Maybe Jupiter helped some, being so bright in southern skies at the time.

Friday night views were awesome. clear skies all night , entire sky, what would you like to see or work on.?? Well John finished up some Virgo, Leo, Coma Bernices, etc , and got some last views of the winter Galaxies. Then we did Globulars in southern skies, so many good ones. Then of course we worked on all the Summer stuff. M51- awesome spiral galaxy with bright arms as easily seen features . M101- bright areas in spiral arms that only a very dark sky can bring out. I did NGC 4565 - edge on favorite along with M 104 low in sky now but still great view. The Veil nebula, The Ring, Dumbbell, M13, M92, M97 - owl nebula, Crescent Nebula, Blinking planetary, M 81 and M 82, M 31 early morning high in sky . We did so many more , just too many to name but you get the picture.

The seeing was very good on Friday at Fox Park, probably 7 or 8 out of 10 as the best, and pretty good transparency too. Friday night Jupiter views were probably my best of the year so far. Very bright in 30 scope with near excellent seeing, cloud bands and festoons in belts, even some color. Too bad no red spot timing for that evening - missed my chance once again. It did dew up early but that never slowed us down much. At 3:30 am I had frozen dew ice sheets coming off the wood of the scope, but my mirrors were not affected by the dew. Vern the die hard kept going with dew protection. Heater with infra red heat source to act as the dew buster is way better than Kendrick heat tapes.

Saturday we had rain in afternoon and skies were still clouded up by dark. When it got dark the winds were blowing some and we were hoping for clearing. The skies started to break totally open around 10:30 or so. We got going strong like a great night coming on. At midnight we tried for red spot on Jupiter, Vern got his web camera out, but seeing had gone from average to bad as a cold front was moving thru area at the time. We did attempt it but nothing worth showing off really. I tried for Jupiter with a digital camera on 30 scope. By 1 :30 AM or so it clouded back up so I broke down 30 scope, sure enough it cleared shortly afterwards but we were so tired by then we quit (early for us) around 2:30 A.M.

Vern also tried some dark sky Milky Way shots, I emailed one to the membership for checking out. The Whole sky Milky Way views are hard to beat anywhere else. How

come even in the summer months we are wearing our winter clothes?? Cold it is at high elevations. One good thing about the cold weather - the bugs quit bothering you then,.

Fox Park was the greenest I have seen it in a long time. Moose on the loose - friend Derek with 4 wheeler spotted them. I went to see but they were not there any more. He got some awesome pictures I will share this week when he sends me the pictures.

The LAS club dark sky marines are waiting for next New Moon adventures. Hope to see some of you in the dark next time out. Only so many fun tickets in life, I want to make sure I get to ride the roller coaster of life. Hope your Home Planet Stellar views are going good.

LAS friend, Suzanne Metlay is giving the talk this month on Venus flyby by the Mercury Messenger probe. Thanks Suzanne, we appreciate your efforts as always.

LAS is going strong, be a part of it, there is more to life than work, take the time and smell the roses as they say ??

Andrew Planck and Susan took trip to Alaska, Maybe we can get him to do a pictures and report when he gets back. See you all at LAS meeting, to get the rest of the news that I forgot to write up, bye, Gary



....after a looonnnngggg night of observing.....

In the sky this month:

Meteor Showers –have the Bootes starting June 22, then a bunch of little ones in July but nothing major to speak of

Planets:

Mercury: up in the morning in July, above the horizon from the 8th or so, best near the 20th

Venus: fading in the evening sky (but, boy – it has really been something to watch for the last month, hasn't it?) 43 degrees at the beginning of July, only 26 at the end.

Mars: finally catching up to it in orbit – it rises after midnight and is 60 degrees up in the morning sky, improving to 72 degrees by the end of July.

Jupiter: pretty much straight up at sunset, you should take a good look on clear nights.

Saturn: fading quick – near Venus on July 1st, but only 18 degrees above the western horizon at the end of the month, which will put in behind those big bumpy things obstructing the view.

Club Calendar:

Talk June 21 at FRCC:

MESSENGER Fly-By of Venus

On its way to Mercury in 2008, NASA's MESSENGER mission tests its equipment on closest approach to Venus in early June 2007. What do the new data mean and how does it tie in with ESA's on-going Venus Express mission? Join Dr. Suzanne Traub-Metlay of Fiske Planetarium to explore the inner worlds of our solar system.

This month's meeting will feature an ISS pass: Thur. Jun 21 is another bright magnitude -0.5 pass for [ISS](#). It won't be quite dark yet, but still should be good. It rises in NW at 9:06 pm, it passes through Draco and disappears in the ESE at 9:12 pm

July 14 – New Moon and it's off to Fox Park or someplace....

Next Meeting: Thurs July 19 at FRCC

Other calendars:

Nebraska Star Party - Merritt Reservoir near Valentine, Nebraska on July 15-20.

www.nebraskastarparty.org for the details.

Fiske Planetarium:

Cosmic Collisions Friday, 6.22.07, at 8:00 pm

Kids in Space Tuesday, 6.26.07, at 1:00 pm

Deep Impact mission Thursday, 6.28.07, at 1:00 pm

Space Shuttle 118 to ISS Thursday, 6.28.07, at 8:00 pm

DAWN Mission to Asteroid Belt July 5 & 6, 2007, 8:00 pm by Dr Suzanne again

Galaxies July 12, 2007, 8:00 pm

The Milky Way: A City of Stars July 13, 2007, 8:00 pm

The 'Apollo Moon Hoax' Hoax July 19 & 20, 2007, 8:00 pm

Extraterrestrial Life July 26, 2007, 8:00 pm

Searching for Distant Worlds July 27, 2007, 8:00 pm

Internet Resources:

Sunspot #960 blasted loose on June 6 - you can watch the movie at <http://www.spaceweather.com/swpod2007/07jun07/palmer1.gif> (courtesy of spaceweather.com)

Saturn's rings are composed of 'clumps' of particles, with major dark spaces between. Read the whole story, see the pictures from Cassini at <http://www.jpl.nasa.gov/news/news.cfm?release=2007-062>.

This month's field trip:

If you ever get to Washington, DC (maybe to get interrogated by a Congressional panel about those bright lights you saw one night, eh?) – check out the two Smithsonian Air and Space museums. The classic original on the mall <http://www.nasm.si.edu/museum/flagship.cfm> and the new one out in the country near Dulles airport <http://www.nasm.si.edu/museum/udvarhazy/> .

The one on the mall contains the Spirit of St Louis, a mockup of the SkyLab that you can walk through, the Apollo 11 capsule and the suits, the original 1903 Wright Flyer, and a few other important bits and pieces... Make sure you pay the big bucks and watch the 3-D shuttle movie if it's playing – it's very cool! Hint: join the Smithsonian Society and save on trinkets and admission. If you're taking the kids and buying some stuff, it pays and you get the Smithsonian magazine for free. While you're on the mall, visit the original Smithsonian museum, the Museum of the American Indian, and all the other museums around (pretty full day or two). If it's the weekend, buy tickets to a Capitol Steps show and die laughing. Visit Arlington across the river and watch the changing of the guard at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. If you're the right age, visit the WWII, Korean War, and Vietnam War monuments. To get to everything, stay in the suburbs and ride the metro – parking and traffic is impossible, and the roads are junky. Best unknown museum: the Naval museum at the Washington Navy Yard – it's got the Trieste, and there's only one of those!

The one out in the country has the Shuttle Enterprise, a SR-71 Blackbird (no big deal, I have seen about 4 other ones), the Enola Gay B-29 (dropped the first A-bomb) a couple of dozen other sample planes, and it's supposed to be getting Space Ship One. It's about 45 minutes out in the country, and you have to take a toll road to get there.