

Cache Valley Clear Skies

The Journal of the Cache Valley Astronomical Society



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www.cvas-utah.org

Meeting Announcement

Our monthly meeting will be held on **Wednesday**, April 16, 2014 at 7:30pm at the Physics Conference Room (room 244) in the Science Engineering Research (SER) building directly east of the library. We will be having a talk about astrophotography presented by Pres. Tom Westre.

President's Corner

Hi everyone,

We often get caught up in our daily activities. Life gets really busy. Our daily and weekly calendars quickly fill up with all sorts of events and commitments. I hope this doesn't mean we shelve our hobbies. Astronomy gives us a time to sit back and view the heavens. This can be a very full filling time in our lives. One of the aims of CVAS is to **"encourage observational work."** Many of our club members are fairly new when it comes to astronomy. To that end we are trying to promote experiences in observation. Our April 16th meeting will deal with the "very basics of astrophotography". If you have never thought about this, now is the time to consider the possibilities. Visual observing is a joy but this can be extended in capturing those photons in your camera that may have travelled across the universe for millions of years.

Another aim of our club is to **"promote interest in all aspects of astronomy."** We encourage everyone

to let your neighbors and friends know of our club and to invite them to our meetings and star parties. We believe astronomy is a hobby that attracts all age groups. If you have any contacts with our area schools we ask that you let them know we are willing to share our knowledge of astronomy with their students.

I don't know about you but I am looking forward to April 15 and the lunar eclipse that evening. The penumbral eclipse will begin about 10:54 pm, Maximum eclipse at 1:46 am (April 16), the penumbral eclipse ending at 4:38 am. If you have a camera set it on a tripod at take some pictures. Now that spring is here, the winter constellation Orion is setting in the west in the evening. Orion has



Figure 1- Photo of M65 and M66 in Leo courtesy of Tom Westre

been a photographic favorite of mine this winter with its bright Messier 42 Nebula. That is an easy first target, it's bright and easy to photograph. But, now we have Leo and Coma Berenices rising in the east with their vast galaxy fields. My favorite here is M65 and M66 with the nearby NGC 3628 almost in the same field. All three can be seen in the same low power field. Another galaxy NGC 3593 is not far away.

Jupiter is well placed high above the southern horizon with Mars rising in the east. Saturn is heading towards opposition on May 10 and is brightening and should be rising in the east by 8:30 pm at the end of April. Our star parties will have plenty to show the public this year.

CVAS Minutes – March 2014

The March meeting of the Cache Valley Astronomical Society was held on March 19, 2014 at 7:30pm in Room 244 of the SER Building.

Vice President Dell Vance conducted the meeting. John Fleming was a new attendee and he mentioned that he would like to get to know the constellations. If you have something for the newsletter such as an article, review of a website, article about your observations, article about your observatory, astrophotos, list of surplus equipment to sell, a write up about an observing site or just about anything else related to astronomy we would love to include it.

Please send any of this to Dale at dchooper5@gmail.com and he will include it in the newsletter.

Byron Ray donated a couple of boxes of CVAS business cards to the club. Monthly star charts from skymaps.com were passed around as well as a list of loaner books to create a book library. It was noted that you need to be a dues paying member to borrow books from the club library. Everyone was also reminded of the total lunar eclipse on 14-15 April.

The remainder of the time was turned over to Tom Westre for a talk about the Messier Marathon. Tom gave us a great introduction to Messier's life. As a young man Messier became interested in astronomy

from two primary events. The first was a six-tailed comet in 1744 and the other was an annular solar eclipse in 1748. Tom told us that Charles Messier was very good at details and became an avid comet observer. He devoted his life to comet hunting and discovered thirteen comets. He wanted to create a list of non-cometary objects that would help other comet hunters avoid confusing them with new comets. He discovered his first object (M1 – the Crab nebula) on August 28, 1758. He collaborated with Pierre Mechain another comet hunter. Messier used more than a dozen telescopes.

Tom also explained the origin and history of the marathon. He stated that in the 1960's Don Machholz realized that all the objects could be observed in March. In 1978 Machholz invited the San Jose Astronomical Association to join him in a marathon. Then in March 1979, the late prolific deep sky observer Walter Scott Houston wrote an article in *Sky and Telescope* about the marathon. In 1895 an Arizona group was able to observe all 110 objects in one night. Tom also mentioned that the marathon date is determined by when the new moon occurs and since it is an all-night star party it occurs over a weekend. Lastly, Tom mentioned the importance of dressing warmly and being prepared for early spring weather conditions.

- Dale Hooper

Free Downloadable PDF Observing Guides

During the winter I came across a website with some really helpful information for us amateur astronomers. But, with it being winter I forgot about it until I saw it referenced in the March-April 2014 issue of the magazine *Astronomy Technology Today*. Here is a link to the part of the website that I wanted to bring to your attention:

<http://www.faintfuzzies.com/DownloadableObservingGuides2.html>

This website has over a dozen free downloadable PDF observing guides. There are guides for smaller telescopes (small galaxy groups, galaxy trios,

globular clusters, planetary nebulae), guides for large telescopes (interacting galaxies, the local group, ring galaxies, etc.), deep sky forum object of the week guides and a Texas Star Party Advanced Observing Guide. These observing guides are very well done. They include an index of the objects, a finder view which usually includes a “telrad” finder perspective, a negative image of the object (i.e. black stars on a white background) and a detailed view of the object area.

These guides are not little pamphlets, most of them are one hundred to two hundred pages long! The planetary nebulae guide for smaller scopes is 322 pages long and discusses over 350 objects.

And did I mention that these guides are all free!

Figure 2 is the introductory page for the globular cluster observing guide.

I hope you get a chance to check out, download and use some of these guides.

Clear skies,
Dale Hooper

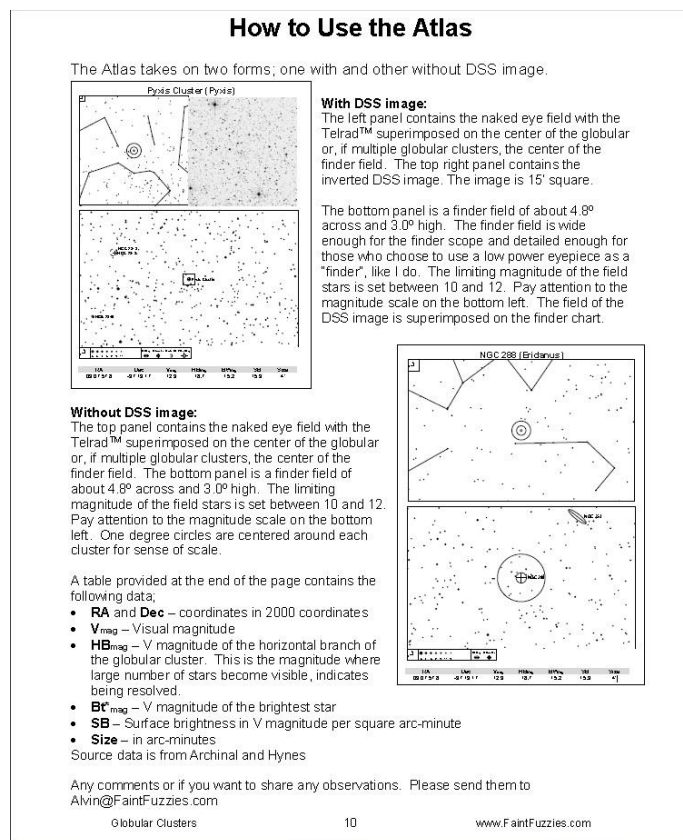


Figure 2 - Globular Cluster Guide Intro Page

Upcoming Star Parties

April 11th & 12th (11am) Solar Party – Logan Library
 May 16th & 17th Solar Party

Upcoming Events

April 14th – Total Lunar Eclipse
 April 15th
 (Approximate Times (all MDT) – from S&T)
 11:20pm Penumbra First Visible?
 11:58pm Partial Eclipse Begins
 1:07am Total Eclipse Begins
 1:46am Mid-Eclipse
 2:25am Total Eclipse Ends
 3:33am Partial Eclipse Ends
 4:10am Penumbra Last Visible?

May 10 Saturn at Opposition