

SIDEREAL TIMES



<http://www.austinastro.org>

2006

Meeting Date

7:30 p.m.

Location RLM 4.102
UT/Austin Campus

Speaker: TBA

January Topic:

TBA

(See Website
for latest details)

There will be a merchandise (formerly t-shirt design) contest at the February business meeting (Friday, February 10). Start thinking about an item and design you'd like to see the club sell and bring your ideas to the meeting.

Thank-You

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Sidereal Times is an official monthly publication of the Austin Astronomical Society.

AAS MEMBERS HELP AT SAN MARCOS STAR PARTY

Submitted by Ronald Carman



John shows how to use hi SCT to see a crescent moon



Viewing the moon's craters with an 8-inch Newtonian

Three AAS members, John Huntsberger, Larry Forrest, and Ron Carman, took their telescopes and showed views of the heavens at a star party held at the San Marcos Family Learning Center on Wednesday, February 1. The center is about four miles south of San Marcos, and the group met about sunset, where they were treated to a view of the 3-day-old moon before going inside to hear John talk briefly on the solar system and objects we can see with the scopes. Ron next showed the visitors proper use of a scope and discussed safety procedures to use while in the observing area. By this time it was dark enough to begin viewing outside, and out we went for a first-hand view of what we had been talking about. All three AAS members pointed out some prominent objects in the sky including Mars, which was now distant enough not to look very impressive in a telescope. However, Saturn soon was up high enough to see, and everyone enjoyed viewing the ringed planet. The weather actually cooperated for a change,

as earlier in the day we had some rain, but the clouds began clearing off before sunset! However, it was not to stay that way, since the clouds began to move back in shortly after 8 pm, and by 8:30 they had covered the sky again. It actually worked out well, since the party was a family event and was scheduled to end about then so young children could go home by bedtime.

All those present really seemed to enjoy it and talked about having another later in the spring when there will be other objects to see. I believe it's safe to say a good time was had by all!



Using Larry's big Dob to see the Orion Nebula



John demonstrates his SCT to a young visitor

(Photos courtesy of Robert Duenez)

Calendar of Events

- 10 February** Monthly Meeting, Regular & Young Astronomers
7:30pm & 7:00pm
- 18 February** AAS/COE Public Observing NightStar Party
- 22 February** Deep South Texas Star Gaze at Escondido Ranch
- 26 February**
- 25 February** AAS Members Only Night Star Party
- 4 March** AAS/COE Public Observing NightStar Party
- 10 March** Monthly Meeting, Regular & Young Astronomers
7:30pm & 7:00 pm
- 20 March** March Equinox
- 25 March** AAS Members Only Night Star Party
- 31- March** Central Texas Astronomy
01 April Weekend - Centex

Minutes – January 2006

Minutes of the General membership meeting on 13 January 2006

The meeting was called to order at 7:31 pm by vice-president Ana Chandler. There was a quorum present. The minutes of the November 2005 meeting were approved as published. Ana said that AAS president Leonard Harvey was out of state for a funeral, so she was presiding at this meeting. She also announced that due to Leonard's absence, the merchandise design contest judging was postponed until February. Then she announced that Julia Harvey is the new *Sidereal Times* editor, taking the place of the late Earl Carls. She gave a summary and showed a list of upcoming AAS events. AAS member Bill Tschumy will represent the AAS at a star party to be given at Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center in April, and that Bill will be asking members to participate in this event. The general meeting on May 12 will be at Wild Basin and the annual astrophotography contest will be judged then. Father Jim Fahey displayed a copy of the Spring 2006 edition of *Amateur Astronomy* magazine, which contains an article about AAS member Jack Estes.

Dave Clark, ALCOR, reported on the Eldorado Star Party held in November 2005. The share of profits to the AAS is \$720, and Dave recommended that the AAS return half, or \$360, to the X-Bar Ranch to help with future star parties (which the EC had also recommended) and the AAS retain the other \$360 to help with expenses at the Eagle Eye Observatory. Don Behrman moved and Jim Fahey seconded that this action be taken. The motion passed unanimously.

In accordance with the Bylaws, Ana announced the Nominating Committee for next fiscal year's officers: Anne Adkins, Bill Tschumy and Cecile Shopen. It was moved and seconded to approve this committee, and the motion passed unanimously.

Ron Carman, secretary, presented a proposal to amend Section 3 of the AAS Constitution to redefine the requirement for a quorum at general meetings. This proposal will be published in the club newsletter and a vote will be taken at the April general meeting. Dave Clark then made a presentation to John Huntsberger, who has earned the Astronomical League's Southern Skies Telescopic Club award. Dave also announced the upcoming Texas Star Party and showed a short video of a past Texas Star Party.

Valerie Clark presented the Constellation of the Month: Taurus the Bull, after which the meeting adjourned for a ten-minute break. After the break, Don Behrman introduced the program, "The Early Universe as seen via Cosmic Microwave Background", presented by Dr. Eiichiro Komatsu, assistant professor of Astronomy at the University of Texas.

Respectfully submitted, Ronald R. Carman,
Secretary

EC Minutes – January 2006

Minutes of the Executive Committee Meeting 9 January 2006

The meeting was called to order at 7:13 pm by President Leonard Harvey. Also attending were Ron Carman, Secretary, Mark Lyon, Treasurer, Don Behrman, Equipment Committee Chairman, Jim & Ana Chandler, Fr. Jim Fahey, and Clyde Springen. A quorum was declared present. Leonard told the group that he must go to a funeral out of state, and cannot be at the January general meeting. Vice-president Ana Chandler will preside at that meeting..

The share to the AAS of receipts from the El Dorado Star Party totals \$720. After discussion, the EC decided to recommend to the members at the General Meeting that the AAS retain half, or \$360, to defray expenses at EEO and return the remaining \$360 for future El Dorado Star Parties.

The committee then discussed possible methods of orientation for new club members, including use of information packets and a possible group of experienced members to act as mentors for newcomers who want it. The officers will bring their ideas for an orientation packet to the next EC meeting.

In accordance with the Bylaws, a nominating committee is to be selected this month, and the EC discussed possible persons to contact to serve on the committee. Names of persons on this committee will be announced at the upcoming General Meeting.

The committee next discussed the next CentTex star party, to be held on March 31 and April 1. It was decided that the club host two public star party nights at EEO on both those dates, and not to hold any additional events during the day. The committee also discussed the "celestial passports" given out at both CentTex and Austin Under the Stars. Any members keeping any of these passports for the club should be contacted to ascertain what items and how many we have in stock before the club orders any more. The EC also discussed the newsletter and how many we send out in order to qualify for the bulk mailing rate.

Bill Tschumy, AAS member, will have a star party at the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center on the 20th of April and has requested to be allowed to officially represent the AAS at this event. The EC members agreed to approve this action.

Don Behrman, Equipment Chairman, gave a summary of the current status of hardware items and equipment at the Eagle Eye Observatory, including the fact that we now have a new computer there. He and Fr. Jim also gave a report on the status of the rotating rings for the Harlan Smith telescope.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:15 pm.

Respectfully submitted, Ronald R. Carman,

Treasurer Report – January 2006

By Mark Lyon, Treasurer

For the period of 01/01/2006 through 01/31/2006

Dues and subscriptions	894.90
Eldorado Star Party donation	360.07
Interest	.98

Total Deposits: \$1255.95

Expenses:

Sky and Telescope subscriptions	197.70
Astronomy subscriptions	136.00
Newsletter printing	200.00
Website hosting	57.00
Annual sales tax	23.97
IDSA membership	100.00
Newsletter postage	19.47
Annual PO box fee	50.00
Checking account maintenance	12.00

Total Expenses: \$796.14

February

Observing

Targets

by Brian Cuthbertson

The late winter and early spring skies aren't quite as dramatic as their summer and fall counterparts. Constellations like Cancer, for example, boast few deep sky objects. Nevertheless, some gold is there, and a few nuggets are discussed below. You'll even find a UFO if you look in the right spot! But don't bother reporting it as such - nobody would believe you anyway. Enjoy!

M67 rating EASY

open cluster in Cancer
RA 8h 50.4m Dec +11d 48.8' (2000)
Magnitude 6.9

Located in Cancer the Crab, M67 is a rich, old open cluster visible faintly to naked eye in the best conditions. There are a couple of ways to find it: one is the 6-star head of Hydra, high in the south. Move one binocular field north of Hydra's head to find M67. Alternatively you can move about two fist-widths SE from Castor and Pollox, which point at it from 20 degrees away. Once you're in the general area, you'll find M67, also known as NGC 2682, about 2 degrees due west of 4th-magnitude Alpha Cancri.

M67 is a compact group about 2500 light-years distant and 12 LY in diameter, containing 500 or more members from 10th to 16th magnitude. Its brightest member is a 10th-magnitude B9 star with a luminosity of 50 suns. And it contains about 160 stars brighter than photographic magnitude 15.6 within an 18' diameter. Most are faint; the average magnitude of the 6 brightest is 11.6. William Herschel counted more than 200 stars in the cluster with his 18" speculum metal reflector.

Binoculars will show an elongated, irregular misty glow with an 8th-magnitude yellow-orange star highlighting its NE edge. Giant binoculars (10x70s and larger) may even resolve a few points of light buried inside. These large binoculars give about as pleasing a view of the cluster as a 6-inch reflector, which shows about 50 stars brighter than 12th magnitude in a 15' area.

In a 10-inch scope, M67 resembles Messier 11 (NGC 6705 in Scutum), but isn't as bright. You'll see roughly 20 9th-magnitude stars distributed over a host of fainter stars down to 14th. One interesting feature of M67 is a small dark area near its center, supposedly conspicuous in larger reflectors.

M67 is very old for an open cluster. Of the 750 open clusters listed in Sky Catalog 2000.0, only 8 have estimated ages older than M67. A recent study found scores of white dwarfs in M67. open clusters listed in Sky Catalog 2000.0, only 8 have estimated ages older than M67. A recent study found scores of white dwarfs in M67 as faint as magnitude 25, and their spectra suggested a cluster age of around 4.3 billion years. A second peculiar feature is M67's great distance above the plane of the galaxy, nearly 1500 LY. The majority of open clusters are distributed generally along the central plane. It turns out these two quirks are apparently related. In the early 1980s

Sidney van den Bergh and Robert McClure studied the oldest open clusters in the Milky Way. There are only about a score of truly ancient

open clusters known, ie, those older than a billion years. The study showed that the older a cluster is, the more distant it is likely to be from both the galaxy's plane and from the nucleus. Why? One possible reason is cluster disruption by giant molecular clouds along the galactic plane. For an open cluster, the key to longevity seems to be to spend most of its life in the outer reaches of the galaxy, far away from disruptive forces.

NGC 2683 rating MEDIUM

nearly edge-on spiral galaxy in Lynx
RA 8h 52.7m Dec +33d 25.0' (2000)
Magnitude 10.0
NGC 2683 is the brightest galaxy in Lynx, located almost on its southern border with Cancer about 10' north of a trapezium of magnitude 9-11 stars. At a distance of 16 million light-year NGC 2683 is a relatively nearby neighbor. Due to its shape, it's been nicknamed the "UFO galaxy". It appears nearly edge-on from our perspective, with a sharply defined 6x2' oval disk elongated NE-SW.

Although 9' long on images, it appears only 2/3 this length in most

amateur scopes.

Under good conditions you can see NGC 2683 with moderate-sized binoculars mounted on a tripod. (In general, a loss of 1.5 or 2 magnitudes occurs when a rigid stand is not used.) In giant binoculars and all telescopes NGC 2683 is clearly visible, and you can pick up its distinctive shape even when sweeping.

An 8-inch scope will show a sharply defined oval disk set off by a bright nucleus. In a 10-inch scope bright and dark spots start to appear, mostly on the periphery of the core. And in a 12-inch the smooth core and inner halo stand out, while a dark lane appears running 1.5' along the NW flank of the galaxy's center. In images, the light from the galaxy's center appears yellowish due to thousands of light years of intervening gas and dust in the outer arms. And the core can just be glimpsed through the last wall of dust in the center.

NGC 2371-2 rating HARD

planetary nebula in Gemini
RA 7h 25.6m Dec +29d 29.1' (2000)
Magnitude 11.3

Easily located just over 3 degrees SW of Castor, NGC 2371-2 is one of a select group of double-lobed planetaries, each of whose lobes has its own NGC number. Because it appeared double in William Herschel's telescopes, it received 2 entries in his catalog. This catalog later evolved into the NGC. Perhaps the most famous double-lobed planetary is M76 in Perseus, also known as NGC 650/651. NGC 2371-2 is actually fairly easy in a 4-inch refractor. You can see the double nucleus (lobes), but averted vision necessary for the 14th-magnitude central star.

A 10-inch scope clearly shows an obviously pale green planetary with two patches connected by a faint haze. Aligned NE-SW, the patches exhibit differing character: the SW lobe (2371) is brighter and more concentrated with a stellar center. The two patches are almost in contact. A slight wedge of darkness, seen best with averted vision, separates them.

In a 12-inch scope a faint haze fills a roughly circular 50" area surrounding the two lobes. Both of the parts are about the same size, but NGC 2371 is again much brighter with a stellar nucleus. At 225x the central star is visible, sparkling faintly between the two bright lobes.

In a 20-inch reflector at 260x the 2 wedge-shaped lobes can be seen plainly connected by a thin waist and surrounded by a large, faint common envelope. The central star is clearly visible without a filter. Early in the 20th century H.D. Curtis photographed NGC 3271-72 with the 36-inch Crossley reflector at Lick Observatory. His 160-minute exposure on very slow film showed faint sections of an outer ring about 2' in diameter surrounding the planetary. Its brightest sections are at right angles to (rather than in line with) the nebula's two easily seen lobes. This outer ring has since appeared in deep amateur images of the nebula, but has not yet been reported visually.

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Upcoming Events

ARGOS Lock-In UT Astronomy Dept/LBJ High School March 4, 2006

The next ARGOS lock-in date is tentatively set for the night of March 3/4 at LBJ High School. Contact Leonard Harvey or Anne Adkins for further details and see following article.

ARGOS Lock-In Night a Success!

By Chris Cotter

Thanks to everybody who helped out and/or attended Friday night and Saturday morning's astronomy lock-in in the LBJ Omega Lab. Searching for planets around pulsating white dwarf stars and learning about the physics of white dwarfs is exciting stuff indeed and it was evident that the students thought so, too. The lock-in went very well with clear nights here in Austin and at McDonald Observatory. We had 17 LBJ students attend and two college students (including Jorge Bernal, a Lanier graduate, and David Reaves, a junior at UT. Both have worked with Don in the astronomy department).

Two folks from the Austin Astronomical Society made it out (Anne Adkins and Leonard Harvey) and were very helpful with showing the kids how to use telescopes and spot some interesting nighttime objects (Mars, Saturn, nebulae, etc.) and showed the kids some photographs. Brad Armosky (from UT/Stardate and McDonald Observatory) had some interesting activities for the kids to do and brought along some great demonstrations. We had the videoconferencing system set up in advance so we could see and talk to Fergal Mullally (the astronomer on duty at the 82-inch telescope) and Fergal could see and talk to us in real time as well. Don Winget (head of the UT astronomy department) made a presentation on several topics in his always masterful way. Numerous people helped out behind the scenes, and Jonathan and I handled the logistics of encouraging kids to come and taking care of the planning for the lock-in.

LBJ Ranch Star Party

March 18, 2006

The next LBJ Ranch Star Party is scheduled for Saturday, March 18, 2006! Bring your telescope and join us as one of the AAS volunteers for this great event!

Invited guests (50-100) of LBJ Ranch National Historic Site will have an opportunity to look through our telescopes. Afterwards, we can enjoy the dark skies from this great site located at the end of LBJ's private runway, west of Johnson City.

We will caravan as a group from Southwest Austin near the "Y" at US 290/71 at approximately 5:30 p.m. and observe until about 11:00 p.m. Sunset is at 6:41 p.m. and moonrise is at 10:24 p.m.

If you were interested,— the deadline for signing up was January 15, 2006.

Yes, the US Secret Service will be checking you out since Lady Bird may be in the vicinity.

Starfari

Coonabarabran, Australia
March 24-31, 2006

Ever dared to go where few AAS'ers have been before? Have you imagined seeing with your own eyes those floating marshmallows known as the Large and Small Magellanic Clouds; the granddaddy globular of them all, Tucanae 47; Omega Centauri and Omega Centaurus A — at 75 degrees in the sky; eta Carina NEBULA; NGC 2070, aka Tarantula; NGC 3918, if planetaries are your thing; or the Silver Coin Galaxy, NGC 253? And that's just to whet your appetite!

The intrepid Down Under explorers have set the date for their next adventure to March 24-31, 2006 at a dark sky site just minutes from the world famous Siding Spring Observatory near Coonabarabran, New South Wales. This year's date has the good fortune of hooking in nicely with the South Pacific Star Party — the big 'un in Australia — scheduled March 31 – April 2 so you can even add another star party notch to your belt. If you are interested in learning more about this trip, just

email anne at hadkins dot com for more information on the trip details, or call 451-8895 (day) or 451-0339 (evenings).

28th Annual Texas Star Party

April 23-30, 2006

Submit your Reservation Request Form before January 14, 2005 to enter the TSP drawing. Just go to www.texasstarparty.org/draw/htjml for additional information and to find the form. Participants at the Texas Star Party can select from a variety of accommodations on the Prude Ranch, including bunkhouses, private cabins, trailer hookups, and campsites with convenient bath-houses. All accommodations include access to a tv lounge, a western-style dining room, and an indoor swimming pool. And, of course, the convenience of three observing fields. The TSP Registration Fee (this is separate from and does not include your accommodations charge) is \$50 per person if you preregister before March 25, 2006. Each additional family member is just \$310 more.)

The drawing for names is in late January and, if your name is drawn, you will get a TSP Registration Form (and optional Prude Ranch Reservation Form) to send in with your payments in February/March.

Sign up now! Go to the website at texasstarparty.org for all the latest details. We look forward to seeing you next April!

Constellation Of The Month

"Orion"

(The Hunter)

By Mark Johnston

History & Mythology:

Orion has through out history been envisioned as some important person or deity because of its distinctive star pattern. The medieval Arabians called him Al Jabbar, "The Giant." Likewise, the medieval Hebrews knew the star-group as Gibbor, "Giant," and identified him with Nimrod, whom Genesis calls "the mighty hunter before the Lord." The Babylonians and Sumerians had called our Orion Sipazianna, "Steadfast Shepherd of Heaven," his sheep being the stars in general. (The planets were "Wandering Sheep.") In Greek and Roman Mythology Orion was the son of Neptune/Poseidon, god of the Sea, and the sea-nymph Euryale. He was a handsome man of gigantic size and strength, so tall he could walk through deep water without wetting his head. Orion had no fear of any animal and threatened to exterminate all the animals on Earth. When Gaia, the Goddess of the Earth, heard of this threat, she became furious and sent a scorpion to kill him. The scorpion stung Orion, mortally wounding him, but the legendary hero Aeschulapis / Ophiuchus, founder of medicine, gave him an antidote for the poison which saved his life. Thus in the sky Orion sets as Scorpius rises, but Ophiuchus stands upon the Scorpion, Trampling it underfoot. Now that was a good story. There are actually a few more stories of Orion ,but that would take up a lot of space.(no pun intended just came to that way) Orion does take up a large area of our sky from Earth's view.

Constellation:

Orion, astrides the celestial equator and is seen from all over the world, and is perhaps the best-known constellation in the sky. Orion offers and outstanding variety of showpiece celestial objects for binoculars and telescopes. Its show piece par excellence is the Great Orion Nebula, perhaps the finest diffuse nebula in the sky and one of the most beautiful objects visible through a telescope and captured in a camera. Orion contains several outstanding double, triple and multiple stars, most of which are a beautiful bluish-white because they are young stars that have been only recently born in the Orion Complex. Orion is nearly as well known as the Big Dipper asterism in Ursa Major.

Stellar Objects:

The Belt of Orion is made up of a line of 2nd magnitude stars cutting the celestial equator. From west to east the Belt stars names are Mintaka , Alnilam, and Alnitak. Orion's right shoulder is the 1st magnitude Star Betelgeuse (Alpha Orionis) is a Red Supergiant / Variable Star about a billion miles in diameter and a absolute magnitude of about -5.5 with a luminosity of 13,000 Earth Suns, if it were at the center of our Solar System it would extend out to almost the orbit of Planet Jupiter and is about 590 light years from Earth. And his left shoulder the 2nd magnitude Bellatrix (Gamma Orionis). The right knee is Rigel (Beta Orionis) and left knee is Saiph (Kappa Orionis). And hanging from the belt is a North -South line of stars that includes the Great Nebula M42 and Triple star Iota Orionis. As mentioned earlier in the Constellation section there are a lot of double and triple stars with pretty colors, here are some of the of the most popular. Bet Orionis =19 Orionis (Rigel) a supergiant appears as a bluish-white & is a double with a separation of 9.5" at 150x in 8"- 10" scopes. Rigel has a luminosity of 58,000 and 110 Suns respectively and if it were as close as Sirius is to Earth it would be about as bright as the quarter Moon, which would surely put a dent in our observing in the winter season and early spring. Delta Orionis =34 Orionis a double star with separation of 52.6" at 100x in 8"-10" scopes. Eta Orionis = 28 Orionis (Dawes 5) a Triple star but you need 250x in 8"- 10" scopes separation is 1.5" to split the AB pair which appear as two white disk in contact. Iota = 44 Orionis a Triple star in 8"-10' scopes at 100x is split easily. Zeta = 50 Orionis another Triple with a separation of 2.3" at 100x in 8"-10" scopes, Zeta lies in a bright field of several emission and reflection nebula NGC 2024 and IC 434. Sigma= 48 Orionis a quadruple with a brilliant white primary and three bluish companions the two brightest at mag 7.5 and 6.5 stars are not physically involved with it. Now the most famous multiple star system in the sky lies in heart, the Orion Nebula /M42, it consist of six stars with good skies and high magnification ,but the famous four known as the Trapezium are easy to see in small binoculars (40mm aperture and up maybe smaller Im not sure you sky would depend on it). In 8"-10" scopes at 125 the four stars are easily seen with higher magnification starts to show separation of a fifth star and even higher mag will show a sixth star under right conditions, Theta -One = 41 Orionis is the proper name for this location of stars, separation stars at 13".4" for the CD pair and 8.8" for the AB pair.

Deep Sky Objects:

Oh boy where do we start? Ok M42 The Great Orion Nebula a birth place for stars as you know buy now is quite famous and can be seen in small bins in your backyard with somewhat light pollution. Another famous nebula is Barnard 33 located in IC 434 known as the Horse head Nebula , this takes a little more to see ,large scopes and a H- Beta filter and dark sky. NGC 1977 combined with NGC 1973 and NGC 1975 make up the running man Nebula located just north of M42 some nebulosity can be seen 8"-10" but 12" and up is better and dark skies. NGC 1982 /M 43 and emission ,reflection nebula is directly north of M42 separated buy a dark lane and easily seen also in small scopes. M78 located a little ways above the 3rd belt star Alnitak is a emission and reflection nebula with two 10th magnitude stars imbedded in it , M78 is a little harder to see it is small but at 100x in 8"-10" it is a bright van shape. NGC 2024 and emission nebula lies just east of Zeta Orionis which interferes with observation of it. NGC 2024 can be seen in bios under dark skies, in 6" scopes at 75x and if Zeta is outside the field of view. In 16"-18" scope using an OIII filter at 125x the nebula is full of striking detail when sky conditions are good. There is one Planetary Nebula that I know of it is NGC 2022 and can be seen in 8"-10" scopes but is very faint grayish disk but in 12" and up the nebula is very obvious and has a greenish tint. There are plenty more Nebulas and star clusters to see in this Grand Constellation but 8" scope and larger are best suited for pleasing views. As always a detailed star chart is best to have around in the dark.

Location:

Orion is large and is up a little ways from horizon at 18:00 hrs . Look for three bright stars in a diagonal (Orions Belt) and your in the middle of Orion. You have till the end of February to observe the wonders located within this area of Space from our location. Happy viewing and Clear Skies. That's it.

Reliving the 1882 Venus Transit Expedition

By Kelley Knight

After reading a couple of times about the Venus Transit Expedition of 1882 historical markers being dedicated, I decided I'd take an adventure to see them. An adventure it was. I was told to go to "Shopette" after entering from the George Beach entrance to the Fort Sam Houston. The people at the Shopette directed to me to a very nondescript turn of the century building known as The Fort Sam Houston Museum.

The volunteers/staff who run the museum told me where the markers were and gave me a map which I studied with tired eyes. Then one of the docents showed me on this old 3-D map of the base where it was.

As I looked at all the displays in the little museum (about the size of 1.5 Eagle Eye Obs), my eye zoomed in on 1870's officer's field glasses (target acquisition device as the card said). I had acquired a pair of the same era just recently so I went to the car and grabbed them to see if the museum staff could help me figure things out. Apparently they are Navy officer's glasses, made in France and are 3x50's. They also had a display of famous people born/lived on the fort. Pershing, Eisenhower, Patton, Teddy Roosevelt and a few other military notables were stationed there but I looked twice at the photo of Ed White. I didn't know he was born in San Antonio on Ft. Sam Houston. Kind of fitting that he being one of the first astronauts to be across the aisle of the display about the first military flight.

I was tired after getting up a 5 a.m. to run in the Race for the Cure and figured I'll just walk over there and take a looksee because I thought the buildings were closer than they were on the maps. They weren't to scale. I went the following week to capture some better photos and I recommend driving to the places. Well after seeing where Pershing lived in the Staff Row houses built circa 1885, where the Eisenhowers honeymooned and fed the critters in the Quadrangle, I finally made it to the marker where the U.S. Navy set up their equipment. About 300 yards in almost a straight line in behind of this beautiful Edwardian house, you could of sort of figure out where the Belgian expedition set up their stuff.

I kind of had a feeling that they shouted back and forth to each other "Wow did you see that...." Much like we do today during the dances of celestial bodies known as edipses, transits and occultations.

I wondered down to the Bullis Bed and Breakfast along the road inside the fort. To the point where the Belgian expedition marker was. Then I went to see Pat's grave. Pat was a horse that served 26 years in the Army. He died in the early 50's at the ripe old age of 45.

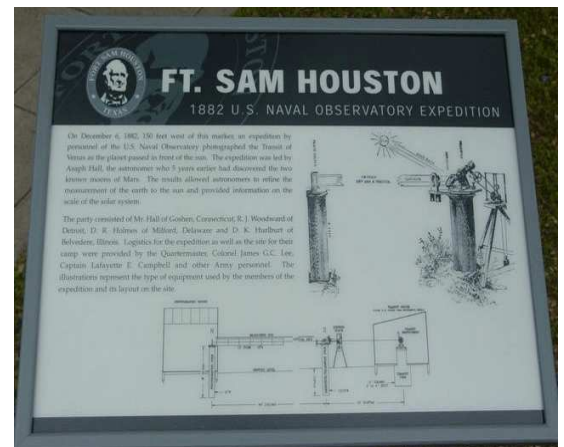
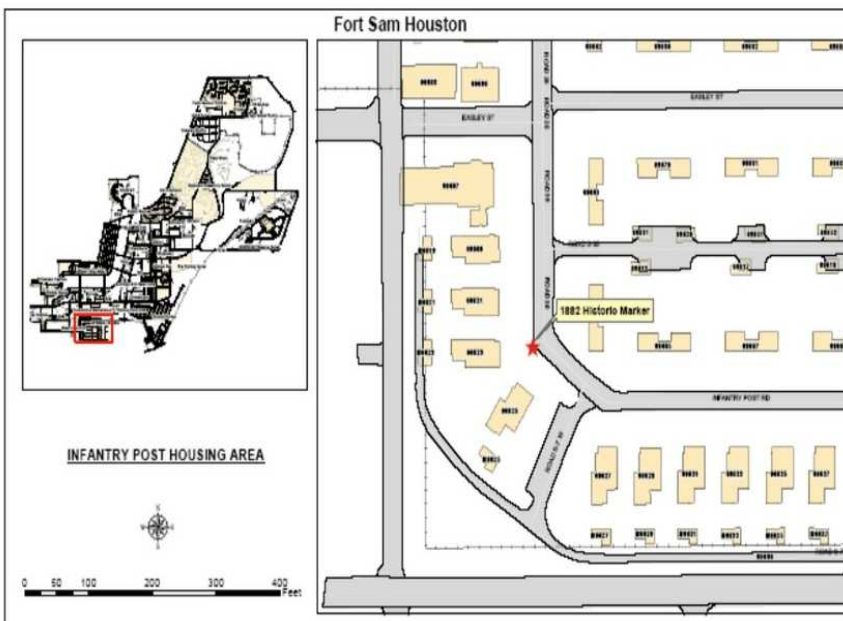
Then I went back to my car to go to the Bullis B&B. Due to Sept. 11, 2001, the original entrance that you saw in the old silent flick "Wings" was closed off so I just couldn't just tottle down to the site and snap a few pix.

I went out the same way I went in and was back on I-35. After winding down the feeder road, I finally figured out how to get to New Braunfels and to the Government Hill area of San Antonio. I was saddened that these great homes of the late 19th century were in disrepair and in a down-trodden area. It as if parts of Hyde Park were all of a sudden a slum. Any rate, I finally made my way back to Bullis B&B and found the marker. The family across the street were kind of in shock that someone came all the way from Austin to see a historical marker about some astronomy thing. I told them that Venus doesn't transit the Sun very frequently and that I doubt anyone would put up a marker for me in Nova Scotia where I went to see the Venus Transit 2004.

My feet were hurting and my body was wanting to be on a horizontal plane after about 4 hours of walking around so I went to get Drew and we headed back to Austin.

It is worth the jaunt to see these sites and take in the history of the fort. Whether you are a military, architecture, flying, or astronomical history buff, you'll have a good time. Of course there is always the chance to feed a bunch of deer, peacocks, geese, ducks and chickens in the Quadrangle (there are big signs saying don't feed the critters bread, crackers and such so bring bird seed or acorns).

Johnson Space Center adventure to follow in the March newsletter.



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WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Lee Cox, Albert and Linda Dungan, Randy Hagman, Jason Hargenrader, Thomas Kiehne and Debra Whiddon, John Makis, Madison Martinez, Vijay Parekh, Rex Goodstein, and Matt Richardson

We now have 254 members!

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Monthly meetings of the AAS are held at 7:30 pm on the second Friday of each month, in the RLM 4.102 on the University of Texas/Austin campus. See the AAS website, www.AustinAstro.org.

You likely noticed the odd form for eMail addresses. Just change the "at" to "@", the "dot" to "." and remove any spaces. The editor has made this change because we publish all issues on the web and there are programs that can scan those documents to pick out the eMail addresses for unsolicited eMail. Our method may not be very effective, but every little bit helps.

Monthly Observing Sessions are held on the Saturday nearest the New Moon at Canyon of the Eagles. Membership in the Austin Astronomical Society is open to anyone interested in Astronomy or the Space Sciences. Membership includes a subscription for the *Sidereal Times* and membership in the Astronomical League (Southwest Region) with a subscription to their newsletter, *The Reflector*.

The masthead and month pointer use Russell Croman's M45 image. Deadline for the *Sidereal Times* is two weeks prior to the monthly meeting. Send articles/notices/comments/suggestions to:

Earl Carls, *Sidereal Times* Editor, phone/fax 281-573-3808
eMail: eeze@ISP.com

The Austin Astronomical Society is a non-profit corporation organized under Section 501(c)3 of the Internal Revenue Code. Contributions and gifts are welcome and are deductible for federal income tax purposes.

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Please Note New Rate

If you are newly subscribing or resubscribing to *Astronomy Magazine*: the yearly rate is now \$34.00 (not \$29.00) and a two year subscription is now \$60.00 (not \$55.00). If you send in the old amount, I will contact you for an additional five dollars. The club makes no profit whatsoever on magazine subscriptions.

If you have any questions or comments about the price increase or other magazine/membership/dues related matter, please let me know.

Mark Lyon, AAS treasurer



Austin Astronomical Society's Membership Form

Name _____
Address _____
City, State Zip _____
Phone _____ eMail _____

- Change address (current members only).
 Include my contact information (phone & eMail) in the roster.
 I want to get fast breaking information and read what members are up to, add my eMail to the broadcast list (members only).

Sign me up for:

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The Austin Astronomical Society operates a members-only mail list. Please use the "CONTACT US" link on the web page for more information. We will mail you a summary of the list, explaining how/why to use the list and what it contains.

Austin Astronomical Society
Information Line:
512-323-5574

Current Rosters Available via email.

Contact Mark Lyon for more information.

Longtime club member, Bill Tschumy, has started a new business, "Think Astronomy". According to Bill, Think Astronomy will conduct private star parties and computer-facilitated classroom talks about astronomy in the greater Austin area. Bill will come to your location and guide your group on a tour of the night sky. He is also available to come to your classroom and present engaging talks about astronomy, using hands-on learning methods and computer-based planetarium software. And, finally, for those individuals needing just a little help getting started in astronomy, Bill will come to your house or meet you at a prescribed observing location, and help you become familiar with your equipment and the night sky.

Start an Astronomical League Observing Program Tonight!

After finally finding some time under the stars, have you ever thought, "What should I observe? There's so much up there!"

The Astronomical League offers nearly 30 observing programs to help in just that situation. Some are designed for the novice such as Constellation Hunters, Universe Sampler, and Lunar Clubs. Other programs, including the Messier, Urban, and Planetary Observer Clubs, are better suited for intermediate observers. More experienced deep sky hunters can hone their skills with the tougher selections of the Herschel, Arp Peculiar Galaxies, and Galaxy Groups and Cluster Clubs. Truly, there is a program for everyone!

Upon completion of each club, the observer is presented a certificate suitable for framing and a nifty lapel pin. There lists are a low stress way to enjoy the many wonders of the night sky.

Check out which program is right for you! Visit www.astroleague.org/observing.html!



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Calling All Young Astronomers !!

The next AAS Young Astronomer meeting will start promptly at 7 pm on Friday, 10 February 2006 in the R.L. Moore Building on the UT campus, room RLM 5.126.

New members will receive a planisphere to start them on their journey across the heavens !! Our Astro-Imaging/Art Contest has been rescheduled to the May meeting to coincide with the AAS member contest. Come to this Friday's meeting for information on contest categories. The first prize is a bound Star Atlas 2000 - a tremendous asset to astronomers of all ages.

ClassWork: We will study "Star Hopping", Lesson 6 from the Astronomical League's Universe Sampler booklet. If the clouds cooperate we will go outside and do a little actual sky work. Bring your planisphere and Universe Sampler book.

The YA Astronomy Library has many books and star charts that are available to check out. Remember to return them the next meeting. If no one has reserved your selection, it may be rechecked. There are a number of copies of the Bright Star Atlas - a great way to begin using star charts.

SkyWork at Home: Locate a large constellation in the sky using your planisphere or star chart. Draw the constellation and write a description explaining how you would "steer" a fellow observer to the stars in the constellation. Use the tools learned in Lessons 4 and 5 in the Universe Sampler. Hint: it is easier to learn the constellations if you study your planisphere or star charts first and then go outside.

Copies of the Universe Sampler booklet may be obtained for \$10 at the meeting. If you haven't yet started a notebook for your astronomy files, now would be a good time.

Remember to bring your 2005-06 Young Astronomer Membership form, if you have not already done so. It is available at www.austinastro.org in the AAS Youth Activities pages.

See You Friday the 10th - Bring a Friend !!

YOUNG ASTRONOMERS' SCHEDULE:

- March's meeting is Friday, 10 Mar.
- March's Mini Messier (date TBD)
- April's meeting is Friday, 14 April
- May's meeting is Friday, 12 May
- Rescheduled YA Astro-Imaging/Art Contest
- First prize is a Star Atlas 2000 !! Many other prizes.**
- May Observing Camp Out - Eagle Eye Observatory
- Summer '06 Trip to a Planetarium !

Item of Interest

One of our newer members, John Gerboc has his photo of solar sundogs published in the March 2006 issue of Sky and Telescope on page 107 of the advance copy they sent him. He was with UT Geophysical expedition for the 2004-5 season.

Check it out!

Sincerely,
Pam Keightley



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Pizza
After the Meeting!**



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Sidereal Times

2006 February

The February Austin Astronomical Society Club Meeting

Place: RLM 4.102 on the UT/Austin campus

Date: Friday, February 10, 2006

Time: 7:30 pm CST

Check our Web Site for Latest information