



REFLECTIONS

of the University Lowbrow Astronomers

October 2000



The University Lowbrow Astronomers is a club of Astronomy enthusiasts which meets on the third Friday of each month in the University of Michigan's Physics and Astronomy building (Dennison Hall, Room 130 or 807). Meetings begin at 7:30 pm and are open to the public. Public star parties are held twice a month at the University's Peach Mountain Observatory on North Territorial Road (1.1 miles west of Dexter-Pinkney Road; further directions at the end of the newsletter) on Saturdays before and after the new Moon. The party may be canceled if it's cloudy or very cold at sunset. For further information call (734) 480-4514.



This Month:

October 20 - Meeting at 130 Dennison - Joe Bernstein, UM Astronomy grad presents "Distribution in Magnitude of the Brightest Cluster Galaxies".

October 21 - Public Star Party at Peach Mountain Observatory - Use the October Abrams Sky Calendar to find Neptune and Uranus (Printed last month).

October 28 - Public Star Party at Peach Mountain Observatory - Just a couple hours after nightfall Saturn and Jupiter rise.

Next Month:

Thursday Night November 16 . Starting at Sunset - Leonid Meteor Shower Event at Hudson Mills. We are calling this event "Star Gazing at Hudson Mills". The entrance is on North Territorial Rd. 1/3 mile East of the traffic light on Dexter-Pinckney Rd.

November 17 - Meeting at 130 Dennison - Night after the Leonids, will my head hurt?

November 18 - Public Star Party at Peach Mountain Observatory - Will it be clear? I'll bet it will be cold. Stick around and maybe we will see Orion tonight.

November 25 - Public Star Party at Peach Mountain Observatory - Night of the new Moon.

Aerial Photo of Peach Mountain by Peter Alway. At the top is the University of Michigan's 26 meter radio telescope. At the bottom is the observatory building housing the 24 inch McMath telescope. If you look really close nearby just visible is my missing eyepiece cap that I lost in November of 94.

Astro-Festering

September 22nd and 23rd, 2000
Pics by John Ridley

A handful of Lowbrows made the annual trek to the Chicago Astronomical Society's Astrofest in Kanakee, Illinois to join what should have been over 1,000 other amateur astronomers in an extended weekend of scopes, swapmeets, astro vendors, talks, and observing. While the assembled masses, numbering in the range of 800, did attempt to do all the above, they did it under mostly cloudy skies. John Ridley, Doug Scobel, Paul Walkowski, Chris Sarnecki, Doug Nelle, John Causland, and Tom Ryan made the most of mostly cloudy skies. John Ridely's picture essay illustrates this fun filled weekend. Next year this event adds a Thursday making this a full three days of Astrofest.



Pretty much what the sky looked like all weekend.



Camp Lowbrow minus Tom.



Scope built by a high school group from Saginaw, Michigan. This won an award.



Actually taken at home on Sunday. Rather out of focus, sorry. Through a new solar filter, with a Celestron Short-Tube refractor, with the camera just hand held at the eyepiece.



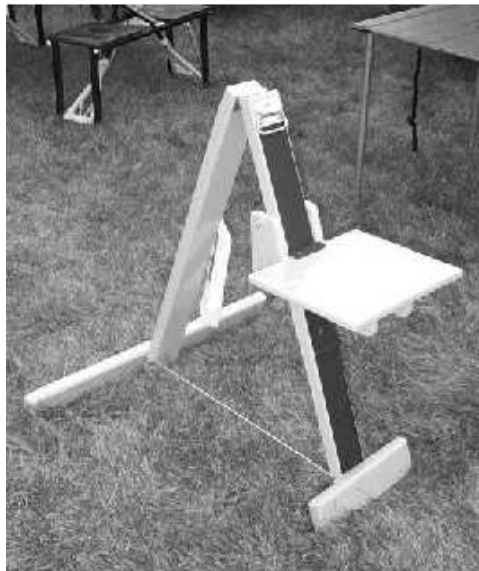
Solar observing with an 8" Astro-Physics Mac



Very interesting scope. Tube is tension wires (motorcycle spokes) threaded through cast rings.



More of the long reflector. This has a very small secondary.



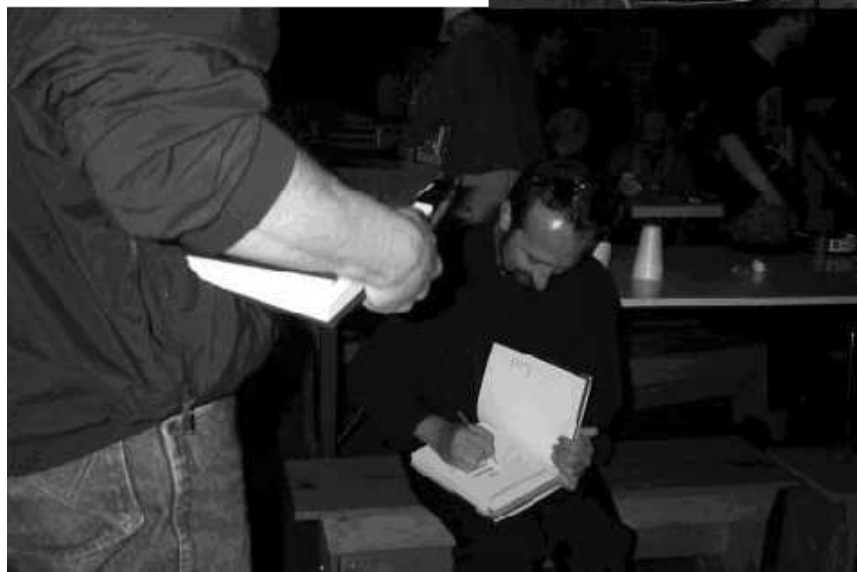
Interesting variation on a Denver observer's seat, with more support in the back and a shorter support up front, should keep the front support from hitting the tripod.



Found a walking stick at the Porta-Ball table.



BIG DOB! In the vendor area.



Judging another scope, this one built by a younger astronomer

Steven J. O'Meara signing after his volcano talk.



Back at Obsession's tent. I kept getting magnetically attracted to this tent, for some reason.

Group set up outside for the door prize drawing. The cup at the far side is a kitty. Everyone in the circle puts in a quarter, the first in the group to win a door prize gets the kitty.

Ask Doug Scobel to show you what he won.



Observing report October 4, 2000

John Ridley

<http://extra.newsguy.com/~jridley>

This is my first observing report. I've been sketching for a couple of years, but not really writing up a report. I've been inspired by many of the reports on S.A.A., so here goes my first attempt.

It's kind of moist, it's first quarter moon, and thin, wispy clouds are threatening, but the kids went to bed early and I'm in the mood, so here we go. Since this isn't going to be either a good or a long night, I thought I'd just pick off a few more Messiers that I hadn't gotten to yet. With the first quarter Moon, I'll stick to a couple of easy globulars.

I set up the scope etc in the driveway in front of the house. The neighbor's stupid lights are shining at me, but so is the Moon, so it's not all that bad.

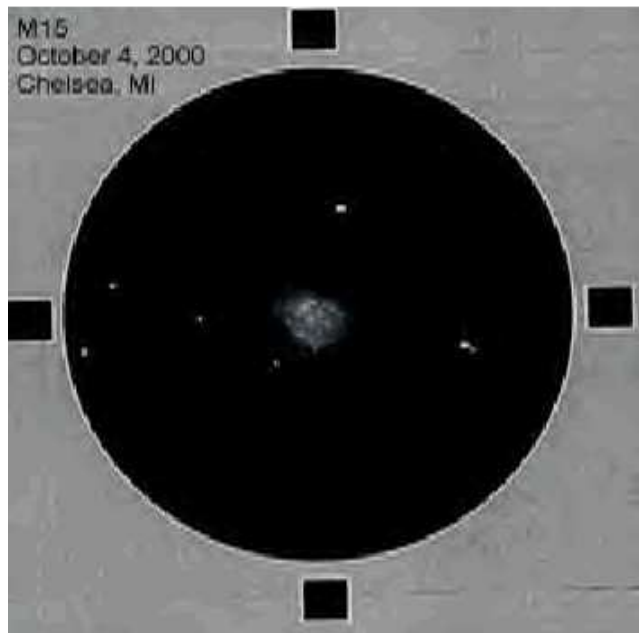
I pick up the S&T Messier card, pick a spot I can hit easily from the driveway, and find a few things I haven't seen before. Hmm, M15. Line up the Telrad, sweep a bit, there it is. Yuck, not many field stars. Probably wiped out by the combination of moon and haze. It's a little small in the 32, I try the 15. Fine, but no field stars to speak of. I drop back to the 20. I guess that will do. Sketch it.

M2 is next, and pretty much the same story. I wind up dropping back to the 25 to get the range of field stars I want for the sketch. Clouds are moving in, mostly to the south, but they're starting to get up to the zenith. I think I'll do a little sightseeing. I haven't seen the Owl cluster for months, and it's pretty. Hmm, now where did He put that? As easy as this thing is to find, I still keep forgetting

exactly which limb of Cass it's off of. I looked up NGC 457 on the S&T Caldwell card, and popped right to it. Went ahead and drew a sketch. It's really pretty, and the sketch probably won't begin to do it justice, but here it is anyway.

Finally, to close out, I thought I'd look at a nice double star, so I just picked one off the top of the DeepMap 600. η Cass, "Gold/Purple, nice mag contrast." Yup, there it is, and it's very pretty. Glad I did that collimation earlier tonight, the fainter gold companion is a very sharp pinprick. The brighter star is bright enough to cause some spreading, but that's probably in my eye/glasses.

Time to pack up. Everything is dripping with dew, and it's getting hazy. Besides, the dog thinks I'm nuts. Here are tonight's sketches:





Sky & Telescope 1967 to 1976

If you like looking at articles of the Apollo Moon shots, great observatories of recent past, men in white shirts with pencil thin ties, advertisements for ridiculously cheap Jeagers lenses and Cave Astrolas, then I have just the thing for you. It seems that the Lowbrows have been given bound sets of Sky & Telescope magazines from 1967 to 1976. The magazines appear to be complete yearly collections bound in Sky & Telescope binders. Thanks to Mr. W. Paulsen, of Ann Arbor, for his contribution to our Library.

From the Prez...

If you haven't seen it, pick up a copy of the Ann Arbor News today (Sunday, Oct. 8, 2000) the front page has a wonderful article which features the Peach Mt Observatory and Master Tom Ridley (cute kid ... John). Its a very well written article and is worth a read.

CLEAR SKIES!!!

Mark S Deprest, President,
University Lowbrow Astronomers
msdpressed@mediaone.net
Dark Skies & Clear Nights

Saturday Morning Physics: Fall 2000

The Department of Physics is proud to present the Fall 2000 Saturday Morning Physics lectures. Each talk is illustrated with multimedia technology and live demonstrations. Each of these presentations for the passionately curious is independently understandable.

The first three lectures of the fall 2000 season celebrate the brilliant contributions to modern physics made by Marie Curie, and are presented in conjunction with the exhibition, "The Legacy of Marie Curie: 100 Years of Scientific Innovation" presented at the University of Michigan Media Union from October 9-November 3.

**1. Professor Myron Campbell presents:
"Scientific Discoveries since Marie Curie"**

**Saturday, October 14 at 10:00 AM:
NOTE THE SPECIAL TIME AND PLACE!**

**2. Professor Fred Becchetti presents:
"Mme. Curie: A Pioneer in Nuclear Medicine"**

**Saturday, October 21 at 10:30 AM:
Dennison 170**

**3. Professor Phil Bucksbaum presents:
"Modern Scientific Discovery Methods"**

**Saturday, October 28 at 10:30 AM:
Dennison 170
(AFTERNOON LAB VISITS)**

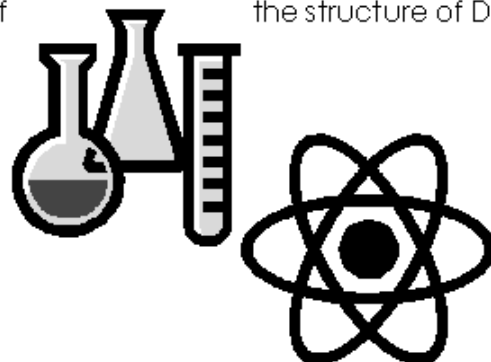
**4. Dr. Martin Sulknen presents:
"X-ray Astronomy's Golden Age:"**

**" Discoveries by Chandra"
Saturday, November 4, 11, and 18:
Dennison 170**

In less than a human lifetime, x-ray astronomy has evolved from the first crude detection of x-ray sources beyond the solar system to precision x-ray imaging and spectroscopy. In 1999, NASA launched the Chandra X-Ray Observatory, the most powerful x-ray telescope ever built. In these three lectures, Sulkanen will discuss cosmic x-ray sources, how x-ray telescopes and detectors work, Chandra's first year of discoveries, and future advanced technology x-ray observatories.

**5. Dr. David Reis presents:
"X-rays: A Century of Discovery"
Saturday, December 2, 9, and 16:
Dennison 170**

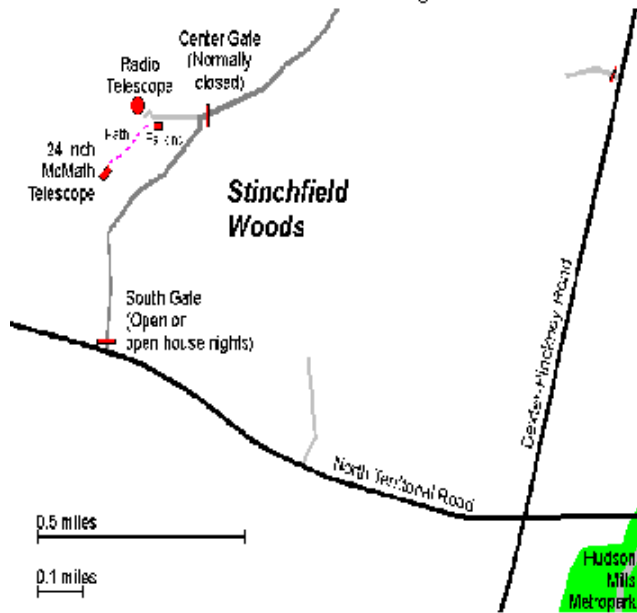
Immediately after the discovery of X-rays in 1895, this new light had become both an important research tool and part of the popular culture; yet to this day, most of us associate X-rays only with Superman or a trip to the Doctor or Dentist. Applications and discoveries associated with X-rays span nearly all fields of scientific research including astronomy, biology, chemistry, geology, material science, medicine, and physics--research so important that it has been the subject of fourteen Nobel prizes as well as for their use in determination of the structure of DNA.





Places and Times:

Dennison Hall, also known as The University of Michigan's Physics and Astronomy building, is the site of the monthly meeting of the University Lowbrow Astronomers. It is found in Ann Arbor on Church Street about one block north of South University Avenue. The meeting is held in room 130. Monthly meetings of the Lowbrows are held on the 3rd Friday of each month at 7:30 PM. During the summer months, and when weather permits, a club observing session at Peach Mountain will follow the meeting.



Peach Mountain Observatory is the home of The University of Michigan's 25 meter radio telescope as well as the University's McMath 24 inch telescope which is maintained by the Lowbrows. The observatory is located northwest of Dexter. The entrance is on North Territorial Road, 1.1 miles west of Dexter-Pickney Road. A small maize-and-blue sign marks the gate. Follow the gravel road one mile to a parking area near the radio telescopes. Walk along the path between the two fenced in areas (about 300 feet) to reach the McMath telescope building.



Public Star Parties:

Public Open House/Star Parties are held on the Saturday before and after each new Moon at the Peach Mountain Observatory. Star Parties are canceled if the sky is cloudy at sunset or the temperature is below 10 degrees F. Call 480-4514 for a recorded message on the afternoon of a scheduled Star Party to check on the status. Many members bring their telescopes and visitors are welcome to do likewise. Peach Mountain is home to millions of hungry mosquitoes - bring insect repellent, and it does get cold at night so dress warmly!

Amateur Telescope Making Group meets monthly, with the location rotating among member's houses. See the calendar on the front cover page for the time and location of



next meeting.

Membership:

Membership dues in the University Lowbrow Astronomers are \$20 per year for individuals or families, and \$12 per year for students and seniors (age 55/+). This entitles you to the monthly REFLECTIONS newsletter and the use of the 24" McMath telescope (after some training). Dues can be paid to the club treasurer Charlie Nielsen at the monthly meeting or by mail at this address:



6655 Jackson Road #415
Ann Arbor, MI 48103

Magazines:

Members of the University Lowbrow Astronomers can get a discount on these magazine subscriptions:
Sky and Telescope: \$29.95 / year
Astronomy: \$29.00 / year

For more information contact the club Treasurer. Members renewing subscriptions are reminded to send your renewal notice along with your check when applying through the club Treasurer. Make the check payable to "University Lowbrow Astronomers".



Newsletter Contributions:

Members and (non-members) are encouraged to write about any astronomy related topic of interest. Call or E-mail to Newsletter Editors at:

Bernard Friberg (743)761-1875 Bfriberg@aol.com
Chris Samecki (734)426-5772 chrisandi@aol.com

to discuss length and format. Announcements and articles are due by the first Friday of each month.



Telephone Numbers:

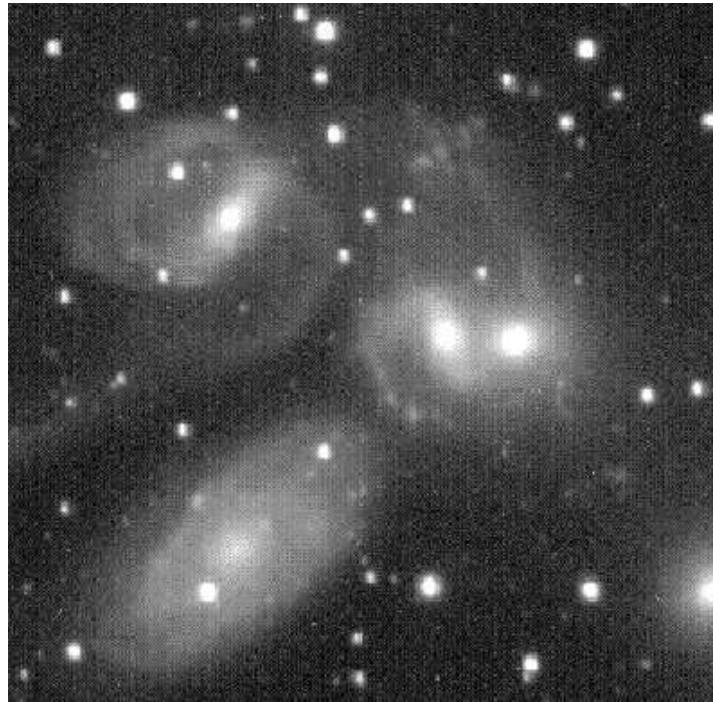
President:	Mark Deprest	(734)662-5719
Vice Presidents:	Dave Snyder	(734)747-6537
	Paul Walkowski	(734)662-0145
	Doug Warshow	(734)998-1158
Treasurer:	Charlie Nielsen	(734)747-6585
Observatory Director:	Bernard Friberg	(734)761-1875
Newsletter Editors:	Chris Samecki	(734)426-5772
	Bernard Friberg	(734)761-1875
Parking Enforcement	Lorna Simmons	(734)525-5731
Keyholders:	Fred Schebor	(734)426-2363
	Mark Deprest	(734)662-5719



Lowbrow's Home Page:

<http://www.astro.lsa.umich.edu/lowbrows.html>
Dave Snyder, webmaster
<http://www-personal.umich.edu/~dgs/lowbrows/>

Monthly Meeting
October 20, 7:30 pm
Room 130 Dennison Hall
Physics & Astronomy Building
The University of Michigan
Joe Bernstein
UM Astronomy
Distribution in Magnitude of
the Brightest Cluster
Galaxies



A Quintet of Galaxies

Credit: W.C. Keel (University of Alabama) and
R.E. White, III

Explanation: Five closely grouped galaxies are visible in this image made using the Kitt Peak National Observatory 2.1 meter telescope. Astronomy Picture of the Day for November 15, 1995



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Lowbrow's WWW Home Page:
www.astro.lsa.umich.edu/lowbrows.html

Check your membership expiration date on the mailing label!