

Charlotte Amateur Astronomers Club

www.charlotteastronomers.org

Your Officer Team

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Next Meeting 7:00 p.m.
February 18, 2011

**MEETING LOCATION:
MASONIC HALL
500 NORTH SHARON AMITY
ROAD**

EAT WITH US: Please plan to join us on Jan 21st prior to our meeting. If you care to eat with us ahead of time, several members will gather at The IHOP Restaurant in Cotswold Shopping Center on Sharon Amity Road, just south of our meeting place at 5:30 PM the night of the meeting. Won't you join us this time? We'd love to see you.

"Satellites in Our Solar System: Considerations for Life."

This month we will be privileged to have as our speaker club member Bob Cantu.

A member of CAAC since 1990s, Bob has made presentations at the annual Southern Star 1998, Discovery Place, BobFest 2010 and over 10 to CAAC dating back to the 1990s. For this specific talk, he has corresponded with Astrophysicist Dr. Richard Greenberg of the University of Arizona, where Dr. Greenberg is the Professor of Planetary Science. Using Dr. Greenberg's book "Unmasking Europa" as a reference, Bob has put together a graphics, videos embedded PowerPoint presentation titled "Satellites in Our Solar Systems: Considerations for Life."

Bob concentrates his talk not only on Europa, one of the Galilean moons of Jupiter, but on another large moon in our Solar System: Titan, main moon of Saturn. This will be a fast-paced presentation with a lot of current information. Do expect to be entertained while you're transported to those moons.

New Members

Larry Zaino
Craig Clickner
Jared Suttle

Observing Activities:

Star Party at GHRO Mar. 5, 2011
weather permitting

Public Outreach

None scheduled

GET LINKED UP!

Please link up with fellow club members by enrolling in the Charlotte Amateur Astronomers Yahoo Group website. The site and enrollment is free. The site allows you to keep up with the activities of fellow club members, post photos and e mails to all group members.

The link is

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/charlotteastronomers>

Hardware Corner

This informal CAAC activity takes place at 6:30 P.M. before our regular monthly meeting. The purpose of this meeting is to make available to all the wide expertise and experience within the club to help with your questions on scope upgrades or modifications, astrophotography, software, or anything astronomy related. Please take advantage of this valuable resource. You've got questions we've got answers.

Observatory Director's Corner

Don't forget the club has loaner telescopes to check out and use for a month at a time. See the Observatory Director Ken Steiner at the meeting or e-mail ken@steiner4.com or call 704-

817-8607 to schedule your time with one of the scopes.

Secretary's Notes

Items or announcements fro the newsletter? Please e-mail Tom Blevins @ gtblevins@att.net or call me at 704-442-0530. Don't forget to check off your attendance on the members sign in sheet when you pick up your name tag at the meeting. Please notify the Secretary of e-mail address changes or any other changes to your information.

From The Chancellor of the Exchequer: The Financial Report

Beginning Balance - 11/18/10
\$50,088.37
Receipts - \$653.00
January Expenses \$1765.86
Ending Balance \$48,975.51

CAAC Dues & Fees

Annual dues are: \$35.00 for a family or individual. Students up to 18 years of age: \$6.00. Annual dues are prorate based on joining date. See the Treasurer for details.

Optional Fees:

Observatory key fee for members: \$10.00 annually.
Observatory pad fee for members with a concrete pad at the Observatory is \$25.00 annually.

Subscriptions

Discounted magazine subscriptions are available through the club at a reduced rate.

Sky & Telescope: \$32.95 per year
Astronomy: \$34.00 per year or
\$60.00 for two years.

Please make checks payable to CAAC and give them to Treasurer Scott Holland at meetings or mail them to:

Scott Holland
500 Ethelyn Ave.
Lowell, NC 28098

Club members can also renew their own subscription to Sky & Telescope via mail, or telephone. Members may mail in their renewal notice with payment or telephone using a credit card. Indicate on the renewal notice that you are a member of CAAC. This is for subscription renewal only. The club Treasurer must still process new subscriptions and annually validate a subscriber's membership in CAAC. Subscriptions to Astronomy both new & renewals cannot be renewed directly by the subscriber and must still be processed through the club Treasurer to obtain the club discounted rate.

Please contact me via e-mail at gtblevins@att.net with the details of any item you would like to list for sale.

Sale Bopp Corner

From the telescope collection of Robert Ariail.

Meade 12" LX200 go to Schmidt Cassegrain Telescope with new upgraded electronics package, and new coatings on all the glass surfaces. Also included are a 9X50 right angle finder, a 32MM Televue plossl, 20MM erfle, and 12.5MM Ortoscopic Eyepieces. The telescope diagonal will accept 1½" & 2" eyepieces. Telescope can be powered by either 115V AC or 12V DC battery. 18V DC converter & extension cord included. Operators' manual, getting started instructions & fom shipping box included.

Call Gayle Riggsbee @ 704-846-3136 if interested.

What's Up Now?

Evenings Planets
Jupiter

Constellations

Taurus, Auriga, Eridanus, Perseus,
Camelopardalis, Orion,
Canis Major, Monoceros, Canis
Minor, Gemini,
Puppis

Just Checking In
Cancer, Leo, Hydra

Constellation of the Month Canis Major The Big Dog.



LUNAR HIGHLIGHTS

Feb. 18, Full Moon
Feb. 24, Last Quarter
Mar. 4, 2011 New Moon
Mar. 12, 2011 First Quarter
Mar. 19 Full Moon



Constellation of the Month Continued

Binocular Highlight

Open Cluster Collinder 140

Collinder 140 is one of my favorite open clusters for binoculars. The cluster is tucked away in the southeast corner of Canis Major,

Mercury

the cluster is easy to locate. Simply locate Aludra, Eta Canis Majoris, the star that marks the tip of the dog's tail. Once you center that drop due south until you come across a nice group of stars arranged in a triangular pattern. The cluster contains about 30 stars grouped in an area about $\frac{3}{4}$ of a degree across. The cluster was possibly first observed by Lacaille during his observations of the southern skies. The group was identified as a true cluster by Per Collinder in 1931. Collinder 140 is about 1,000 L/Y distant and shines at magnitude 3.5

Novice Challenge

Open Cluster NGC2362

The winter Milky Way flows across the sky from Cassiopeia, past Orion and Canis Major and on down through Puppis. Because of this is one of the galactic arms it is rich with open clusters. Being a cluster aficionado, I love to steer observers to some of my overlooked favorites. One of the best clusters in my humble opinion, and easy to locate is NGC 2362. Finding the cluster is easy because it is centered right on 4th magnitude Tau Canis Majoris a rare blue type O9 giant star.

Tau is surrounded by a clan of about 60 members with approximately 500 solar masses. The distance to the cluster seems to be somewhat uncertain. I have seen distances listed anywhere from 3,200 to 5,400 light years from earth. Giovanni Batista Hodierna was the first to record observing the cluster sometime before 1654.

The cluster has a magnitude of 4.1 and is located at 7hrs. 18.8 min right ascension -24 degrees 51 sec. declination



NGC 2362
Credit NASA

Deep Sky Challenge

NGC 2207/IC2136

Most of us Amateur Astronomers don't equate the winter constellations with galaxies. Surprisingly Canis Major host

several galaxies with range of current amateur telescopes. NGC 2207/IC 2136 is especially interesting because they are an interacting pair. The pair shines at a magnitude of 10.8 which should make it an easy catch out at the GHRO in any of the club scopes as well as many members' scopes.

Current astronomy theory speculates the two galaxies collided approximately 40 million years ago. NGC2207 is the eastern member of the pair and is the brighter of the two objects. The pairing is located at 6 hrs. 16 min. right ascension, -21 degrees 22 sec. declination. For star hoppers, the galaxy pair is just four degrees south and a little east of Beta Canis Majoris.



NGC 2207/IC2163 Credit:
NASA/STScI/Hubble Heritage

Double delights

Mu Canis Majoris

While we all know that the separation of Sirius is widening now and that we may have a shot at splitting the pair under perfect conditions, there are other doubles in Canis Major worth a look. One of these is 5th magnitude Mu Canis Majoris. Mu is located inside the triangle of stars that makes up the big dogs' head.

Mu has a much closer separation, 3.2", than Sirius but is a much easier split due to the smaller magnitude difference. The primary is a 5.3 magnitude golden colored G5 Star while the secondary is a blue white A2 star.

Mu is located at 6 hrs. 56 min. right ascension, -14 degrees 3 sec. declination. For star hopping, Mu is located about halfway between Gamma & Theta Canis Majoris, a little west of a straight line running connecting the pair.