

NOVEMBER
2006
Don't miss the transit of
Mercury on Nov. 8



HAC Welcomes New Members Skip Jubb, Dennis Hahn, and Amber Keene !!

HAC 's MONTHLY MEETING: THIS FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 3, 2006

TOPIC: HAC Observatories, Pt. 3: HAC Members Bob Kepple & Jim McCaw will give presentations on their individual observatories— Bob's Desert Starlight Obs. in Palominas and Jim's Wind Spirit Obs. near Benson.

******* HAC Elections (Officers & Board Members) *******

Plus a member vote regarding meeting nights

7 pm, Cochise College, Sierra Vista, Rm. 305

PLUS our monthly Show-N-Tells, upcoming event details, refreshments and a SUPER Door Prize

Star Party Corner by Keith Mullen, Star Party Coordinator

(520) 366-0049 email: repogazer@wavmax.com

**WE ENJOY & REQUEST YOUR PARTICIPATION IN OUR CLUB ACTIVITIES!!
MARK THESE DATES AS PRIORITY 1 AND COME ON OUT TO THE EVENTS!**

Friday the 13th was another cloudy night for the Public Star Party scheduled at JBO, but the month started to pick some steam with a highly successful Outreach Star Party at the Huachuca Mountain School on Thursday, Oct. 19; we had over 100 kids along with many parents out that night with Doug Snyder, Dave Healy, Rich Swanson, Hans Clahsen, Jeanne and Andrew Herbert, and Bob Gent with his big Dob. We also appreciated and enjoyed seeing Jim McCaw who came down from Benson to help. All in all, one of the best events of the year thanks to all those HAC members who came out to help. The 21st gave Dave another chance to shine as the weather was perfect for the HAC Picnic and Members Star Party where over 40 members and guests converged on JBO for some great eats and observing through several scopes and maybe Judy will grace us with another chapter of her "Adventures behind the eyepiece" series? Star Party & Outreach wise, some of us finished up the month (27th) with a visit over to Pearce (Crazy Ed Ebeck Jr.'s dark sky domain) to astronomically entertain and astonish the kids and parents from the elementary school there in Pearce. It was an excellent night for observing and everyone of us had a fun and worthwhile evening.

November Star Party schedule (Read this thoroughly, remember it and then simply DO IT!)

Saturday, Nov. 4th: Full Moon Telescope Workshop at Keith Mullen's, from 4:00 pm until 6:00 pm, we need some of the club's junior members to assemble the donated scope from Stellarvue. It will be their Scope to borrow and use and it is a good telescope! For more info, call Keith at 366-0049. Let's get your youngster involved in this!

Wednesday, Nov. 8th: **Transit of Mercury**, we will have solar scopes, including HAC's Hydrogen-Alpha PST out at Veterans Memorial Park in Sierra Vista from noon until 5 pm. An uncommon celestial event. Doug at 366-5788.

Saturday, Nov. 11th: Public/Members Star Party at Dave Healy's Junk Bond Observatory; Dave has the 32" up and running and we want to see a bunch of personal scopes out there this month too! Be a good HAC'er and come over!

Friday, Nov. 17th: Members Star Party and **Leonid Meteor Shower** at Bob Kepple's, Bob says "bring a cot or chair to lay on to watch what is promising to be the best Leonid Shower since 2001" No moonlight to interfere! Barb may have her now famous cookies baked for this one, so I'll be there ! As always, bring your telescope if you can—this is what we do! Our outgoing President expects to see lots of members & all officers & BOD members there!



More Adventures of the Neophyte Astronomer By Judy Sukol

Well, after a hiatus of several weeks, I finally unpacked the telescope at the Annual Picnic star party hosted by Dave Healy. I figured there would be many potential sources of advice on tackling my scope's "bugs." If you recall, in my last venture with the scope, a nasty backlash problem manifested itself. This apparently has something to do with "worm gears," but as I mentioned in a previous article, I'm a liberal arts major, so these terms are totally Greek to me. (But thanks, Rich, for the very well executed drawing of a worm gear that you drafted on a paper napkin at the last star party).

At the club meeting last month, Gary suggested changing the backlash setting to "positive 40" for alt and az. I wasn't sure what that meant, but as soon as I powered up the scope, I scrolled through the handset's menu until I found something that looked like the appropriate settings, and made the suggested changes. (I think). Anyway, the backlash glitch seems a little less problematic. Now there's still the challenge of figuring out how to use a Telrad as a finderscope. Either I can't see the "bull's eye," or I see "double stars" where there is only supposed to be one. Everyone assures me this just takes practice. (I guess this means I may have to actually try to use the scope at home without "adult supervision"! Gulp!)

In any event, after a great deal of struggle, and with much assistance, I was finally able to get three stars aligned in the scope. (Well, to be perfectly honest, Keith was able to get three stars aligned in the scope). Then, 2 minutes later, the scope unplugged itself! (I'm really beginning to think this scope hates me, or at least has a mischievous sense of humor!) With the aid of some judiciously placed "duct tape," the power plug remained securely fastened to the scope. However, because it turned itself off, and I don't have a GPS device installed on it, I had to tell it what time it was again, plus go through the alignment process one more time! But once this painful process was accomplished, I could see some really clear images of M17, M22, and other interesting objects whose names and numbers I forget.

Which brings us to another subject. I have made a resolution to follow Doug's advice and start studying star charts, books on constellations, etc. As Doug has so patiently tried to explain to me, learning the night sky without the aid of a Go To Scope is an indispensable first step in becoming an Amateur Astronomer.

THE 'BIGGIES' IN NOVEMBER—SKY SIGHTS YOU DON'T WANT TO MISS

1. The transit of Mercury across the face of the Sun. It happened last on May 7, 2003, and won't occur again until May 9, 2016. This entire transit will be visible from most of Arizona and it will start with First Contact at 12:12 pm local time on Wednesday, Nov. 8. Greatest transit will occur at 2:41 pm and the end of the transit will take place at 5:09 pm, but the Sun will be very low in the west. Sunset is around 5:25 pm. Join us at Veteran's Memorial Park!
2. Comet Swan—On 10/28, this comet passed within 3° of the globular cluster M13. During November, the comet will be headed towards the constellation Aquila and the bright star Altair. On Nov. 11 (the night of our Public Star Party), the comet's position at 5 pm local will be 18h 32m and +19° 23'. Although it has recently brightened and then faded, it should be about mag. 8. You can find 'finder charts' at www.skytonight.com
3. Leonid Meteor Shower—See it all at our Member Star Party on the 17th. Will it be a boon or a bust? Although the peak is suppose to occur at around 10 pm local time on the 18th, who knows? Come on out to the Star Party in any case to enjoy the company of other HAC'ers and the night sky and perhaps a good shower! BTW, this meteor shower is caused by the stream of meteoroids left during the passages of Comet 55P/Tempel-Tuttle, which has a period of 33 years.

Huachuca Astronomy Club P.O. Box 922 Sierra Vista, AZ 85636 <http://r2d2.cochise.edu/astro>; email hac@palominas.com
Yearly Membership: Individual: \$25; Family: \$35; Military: \$20; student:\$10 (with restrictions)
President: Doug Snyder (520) 366-5788 (starhaven@palominas.com); Vice President: Wayne Johnson; Treasurer: Tim Doyle 378-5121;
Secretary: Jeanne Herbert; Star Party Coordinator: Keith Mullen 366-0049; repegazer@wavmax.com
Public Events Coordinator: Jeanne Herbert (jeanne_hrbt@yahoo.com) 366-5690 (early evenings); Loaner Scopes: Gary Myers 432-4433

This issue of NightFall can also be found on-line at <http://r2d2.cochise.edu/astro>. Click on the 'Newsletter' link. There is much more information about astronomy and our HAC activities on our club web site. *To join the HAC-LIST, send an email to haclist-subscribe@yahoogroups.com .

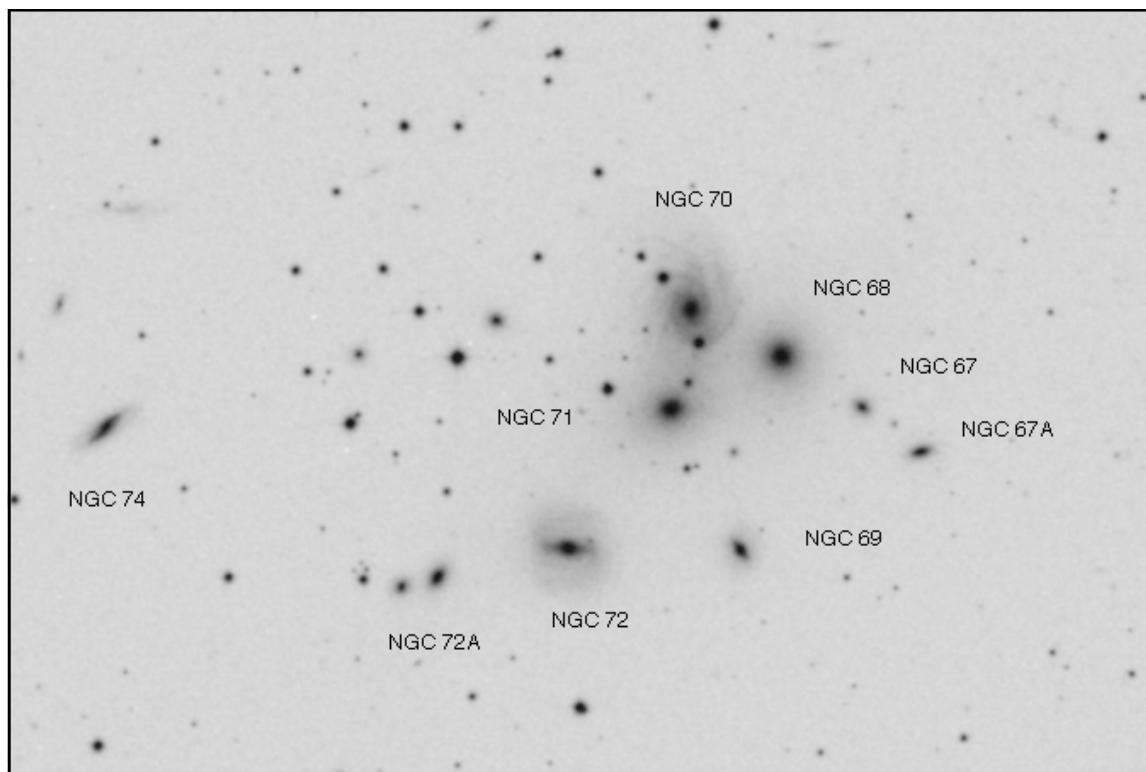
Travels on the Celestial Sphere

G. Robert Kepple and Glen Sanner

Bob and I observed a nice galaxy group the evening of September 28, at DSC with the 22" DOB. It is a group of galaxies centered around NGC 68 in the constellation **Andromeda**. This group is at RA 00hr18m19s and DEC +30° 04m. We used the 16mm Nagler eyepiece and Televue Big Barlow at various times for different views.

NGC 68, an SAO galaxy at 14.5mag. is the brightest and largest of the group appearing fairly bright and fairly small with a bright core spanning perhaps 1' in the eyepiece. NGC 68 is located just west of a crescent of 9 evenly bright stars. NGC 72, an SB galaxy at mag. 14.6 appears second brightest in this group. NGC 72, located 3' SE of 68 and 2' south of the crescent asterism of stars is fairly bright and fairly small with a brighter core and a slight (1') elongation E-W. NGC 71, an SAO galaxy at mag.14.8 is next seen between 68 and 72. It appears as a fairly faint and fairly small oval elongated NW-SE with a brighter center and fairly bright core. NGC 72A, an elliptical galaxy at mag. 15.5 is next seen 1.5' E of 72 and appears smaller than the first three galaxies and is fairly faint but obvious with a slight central brightening. NGC 70, an SA galaxy at mag. 14.5 forms a triangle with 68 and 71 and appears faint with an even concentration and a slight central brightening. NGC 70 is slightly elongated N-S and is in the crescent asterism of stars. NGC 67 is a slight oval with uniform surface brightness 1' SW of 68. NGC 67A is a small spot 1' SW of 67. NGC 69 appears 1.5' SSW of 71 and is a very faint small smudge with no central brightening, averted vision helps here. These three galaxies are at magnitudes 15.2, 15.9, and 15.8 respectively. NGC 74 is the easternmost of the group, about 7' E. of 68. It is at mag. 15.6 and is very faint and fairly small elongated 3-1 E-W with a uniform surface brightness. CGCG 499-103 at mag. 15.7 lies 7' S. of 68 and is fairly faint but held with direct vision, perhaps somewhat elongated with averted vision. It is a smudge without detail and lies near 3 fairly bright stars. There are several other galaxies appearing nearby. This group of galaxies provided viewing for well over an hour on a nice late September evening.

To learn about galaxy classification, visit this site: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Galaxy_classification



THE HAC INFORMER—CLUB NEWS FROM THE PRESIDENT & NEWSLETTER EDITOR

- **Congratulations** and our Best Wishes are extended to HAC Members David Patterson and Helen Resop on their recent marriage—made in the stars! David and Helen Patterson will continue to reside in Sierra Vista.
- **Congratulations** to HAC member Dean Salman for his his stunning full page image appearing in the December 2006 ASTRONOMY Magazine. Dean took an LRGB image of IC 4603 and IC 4604 in the Rho Ophiuchus complex and it is an image you've just got to see!
- **HAC ELECTIONS** (November 3, 2006): News from the HAC Nomination Committee: The current candidates for office are: President: Wayne Johnson; Vice President: Keith Mullen; Secretary: Jeanne Herbert; Treasurer: Tim Doyle. The current candidates for the four positions of the HAC Board of Directors are: Hans Clahsen, Del Gordon, Helen Patterson, Judith Sukol. In 2007, former HAC President Doug Snyder will serve on the Board as an ex-officio member. Notice: ANY CURRENT AND ACTIVE MEMBER 18 YEARS OR OLDER MAY HAVE HIS or HER NAME PLACED ON THE BALLOT FOR ANY ELECTED POSITION BY DECLARING THEIR NOMINATION OR NOMINATED BY SOMEONE ELSE PRESENT AT THE MEETING AND FROM THE FLOOR ON ELECTION NIGHT. NOTES FROM THE HAC CONSTITUTION: "The general membership of the club shall elect the members of the Board." "Absentee ballots will be accepted no later than the time of voting at the annual business meeting". "Newly elected members shall take office on December 1st following their election at the November General Meeting." "Proxies are not allowed." Come to the meeting, and vote! Because.....
- **....MEETING NIGHTS TO CHANGE?** During the meeting, another vote that we will be taking is to possibly change the 2007 club meeting nights for at least half of the year. There will be three options presented. One option will be to have our HAC meetings on a Saturday night for the first half of the year (January through June) and on a Friday night for the second half of the year (July through December). One policy that will not change is having the meetings as close to Full Moon as practical. To find out about the other two options, you will have to attend this meeting! We do have reasons, brought forth by other members, for suggesting this change.
- **HAC'S STANDING APPOINTMENTS:** Aside from elected club officers and members of the Board of Directors, we also have non-elected members who fill very necessary positions within the club. We extend our thanks and appreciation to these members who have accepted these 'standing appointment' responsibilities. Neal Galt: Publicity Director; Jeanne Herbert: Public and Outreach Events Coordinator; Bob Kepple & Glen Sanner: Chief Observers; Dave Healy: Astronomical League Coordinator and Public Star Party Host; Keith Mullen: Star Party Coordinator; Keith and Teresa Mullen: Refreshment Committee starting in 2007; Helen Patterson: New Member Packet; Gary Myers: Loaner Scope Program Coordinator; Doug Snyder: Web Master and Newsletter Editor/Publisher (note that the appointment for newsletter editor/publisher will be open for a volunteer or committee in January 2007). We again want to thank the Sherwood family for their years as HAC's Refreshment Committee! We are hoping that Ward and family will consider another Standing Appointment position, but not one which can be so strenuous! Members, please note that there are other Standing Appointments that we would like to fill as soon as possible, so don't hesitate to speak up and volunteer! These include HAC Publications/Literature, Junior Astronomers Division, Astro-imaging & photography SIG (Special Interest Group), Amateur Telescope Makers SIG, Light Pollution SIG—I want to stress that this is an incomplete list, but we need members to step up and share the responsibilities as one or two or five folks cannot carry the burden for all of the interests and activities an astronomy club of our size, stature and capability is being asked of us.
- **MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS:** The good news: club dues are not being increased next year. The bad news: the existing dues are due in January. Beat the rush and send in your HAC renewals now or in December. The dues structure is shown on page two of the newsletter as well as our mailing address.
- **WALL CALENDARS FOR 2007:** We will be selling the new 2007 astronomical calendars at the next few meetings or as long as they last. The price is \$12.00 each. This year, we have an improved calendar over the usual one from ASTRONOMY. We ordered calendars from the RASC (Royal Astronomical Society of Canada) and right now we have a limited supply on hand. If you go to the RASC web site, you can get more information.
- **NEWSLETTER SKY MAP:** The sky map that has been included in the newsletter each month will be discontinued in 2007. Members that were present at the October meeting voted to discontinue it. The HAC version that was included cost \$50.00/yr, but if you want that chart for personal use and for free, visit <http://skymaps.com>
- **A PRODUCT REVIEW—Sky & Telescope's POCKET SKY ATLAS.** I recently received my copy of this new atlas and although somewhat larger than the average pocket (the atlas measures 6" x 9"), I have found it to be an excellent resource and tool for observing. With over 100 pages total, there are 80 charts covering the entire sky plus close-up charts expanding into the Pleiades, the Orion's Sword region, the Virgo Galaxy Cluster and the Large Magellanic Cloud (which I hope to view someday!). The atlas contains over 30,000 stars to mag. 7.6 and 1500 color-coded deep sky objects. Printing with crisp detail, the atlas is spiral bound and softcover. I'll have it at the meeting this Friday for Show-n-Tell, so one more reason to attend our November meeting!