

January 2007

HAC's 25th
Anniversary Year!



Extra! Extra! New HAC web page <http://hacastronomy.com>

++++ *HAC MEETING: THIS Saturday, January 6, 2007* ++++

*Speakers: Mr. Mike Shade (Sonoita Hills Observatory) and
Mr. John Gross (Sonoita Research Observatory)*

7 pm, Cochise College, Sierra Vista, Rm. 305A/B

PLUS our monthly Show-N-Tells, upcoming event details & refreshments

Be Sure To Bring \$\$ and Checkbook for HAC Renewal Dues and the HAC Raffle!

Star Party Corner

by Keith Mullen, Star Party Coordinator
(520) 366-0049 email: repogazer@wavmax.com

Participation is the Lifeblood of the Club

The transition of the new Officers and Board is going smoothly (with Doug's help) and the Star Party Schedule for 2006 was wrapped up with some good outings on the Outreach and Public event board, on the 8th. Patterson Observatory was the site of a Cub Scout Star Party from a Sierra Vista scout den, several showing up with their parents. Wayne along with myself, Tim, Doug, Hans and Jeanne, and of course Andrew, our Chief Junior Astronomer, all showed up to help, we had a great time with these youngsters; they were respectful and asked good questions too.

The weather yielded just enough for the Public Star Party held at JBO on the 9th to go ahead as scheduled, Glen Sanner brought out his 12.5" while Dave worked the 32" thrilling some local attendees.

The long awaited year ending Members Star Party scheduled for December 22nd at Glen and Deanna Sanner's was called off at the last moment due to heavy clouds, Hans Clahsen and John Cassella did show up to help put a dent in Deanna's pot of now famous "SP Chili", we can be sure that it won't be the last pot of her chili served during a Star Party at Discovery Observatory West either!

The following evening, December 23rd, saw over two Dozen HAC members and 5 guests converging on the Mullen's for a Pot Luck Christmas Party which included a wild White Elephant gift exchange, Wow, Teresa can throw one Heck of a Party! RGO was opened and several guests braved the cold for some observing with Keith on both the 20" Obsession and 6" refractor. Just in case you WEREN'T there, here is a list of THOSE who were: Neal and Butch Galt were the first to arrive followed by Tony and Debbie Selover, Steve, Jeanne and Andrew Herbert, Scott and Kim Turner (future Members) Tim and Paulette Doyle, Past President Doug and wife, Jean Snyder along with new President Wayne and wife, Arlene Johnson, Dave and Cheryl Healy with son Tom were here too, Hans and Joanne Clahsen, John Cassella, Tom and Dee Russell and of course Judy Sukol and hopefully future member Jose, all of whom brought heavenly dishes and a plethora of deserts, this one will be talked about for months !

January Star Party Schedule

Friday, January 12th: Public/Member Star Party at JBO, let's start off the year by showing Dave and Cheryl a whole bunch of HAC faces! Dave's observatory always attracts a great group from the public—Don't let them outnumber HAC Members!

Saturday January 20th: Members Star Party at Keith and Teresa Mullen's RGO, the winter Milky Way will be at the Zenith early in the evening with some spectacular views of the Orion complex and all those Winter Galaxies too, so come on out with your scope and Participate, and as always there will be plenty of Pizza and snacks to go around.

PRESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVE

Happy New Year, fellow HAC members! The year 2007 promises to be a good year for our club. I am not currently anticipating any big changes to our activities, other than experimenting with the order of events at our general meeting, but that can change at any time as our new board begins to imprint their personality on our group.

One of the first and probably most important items to accomplish is to be sure that assignments are made to competent and interested individuals so that important club tasks get done. Most of those assignments have already been made so that the typical HAC member doesn't have to hide or "go on vacation"! I would like to stress that most of these assignments are simple if they are done in a timely and responsible manner. Life becomes difficult when someone starts taking on too many tasks because someone else, who had the original assignment, decided they are "too busy" doing something else. Please, if you accept responsibility to oversee a task, see it through or ask for assistance! If you decide that the task is not possible for you to do, give me adequate warning so that someone else can be found to do the job without disrupting the club too much. Given those caveats, if asked to help out on a task, please make an effort to help. A club composed of spectators rather than participants is no fun for anyone.

Unplanned issues always occur in our lives, and this hobby is meant to be enjoyable. I know that each one of you will do the best job you can to further the goals and well-being of the Huachuca Astronomy Club.

If you have suggestions or questions feel free to contact me (email: mrgalaxy@juno.com or home phone: 520-586-2244) or any of our new board members.

We're looking forward to another great HAC year with more Clear Skies!
Wayne (aka Mr. Galaxy), your resident president

Neal Galt's "What's Up?" January 2007

Here's a small project. The "Quadrantids" will peak on the evening of January 3rd. And the radiant will be just about center of the constellation of Quadrans Muralis. Hmmmmm????? Where is that constellation? (Hint) It is in the northern hemisphere and it will be up in our skies on Jan. 3rd. Someone research and let all of the backyard astronomers know what the story is with this constellation. Then you can almost forget about the shower.....too much moon!

Do you connect the terms meteors and meteorites? I've heard some say that a meteorite is a meteor that has hit the earth. NO NO! Meteors are those small streaks you see flashing across the sky....for the most part they come from cometary debris and are often no larger than a grain of sand before hitting our atmosphere. Meteorites are much larger and for the most part come from the asteroid belt. Only backyard astronomers know these facts. Don't spread them around to the general public. Let them keep thinking that we are "special"!

Venus starts January very low in the SW at dusk. But, during the month it climbs higher each night. By the end of the month it will be up for almost two hours after sunset. Watch it brighten during the next few months as earth and Venus narrows the gap between them.

Late in January, Mercury will enter the evening sky in the west just below Venus. It will get to within 7 degrees below Venus before it starts to move back towards the morning sky. That's the way it is with the swift messenger. It's in the evening sky one month, and the morning sky the next.

Saturn rises by 8 PM at the start of the month and rises just after sunset by the end of the month. This is a good time to view Saturn in telescopes. Attend a few star parties and make sure you look at this amazing gas giant with the incredible ring system.

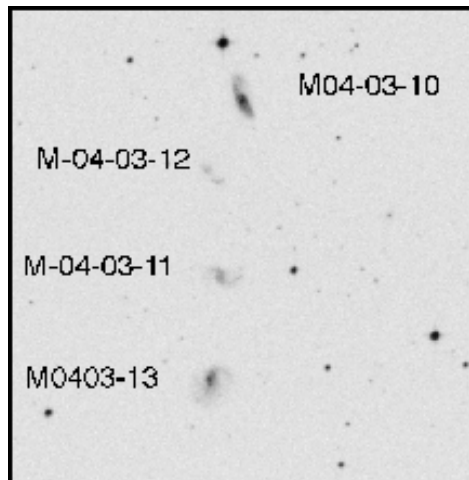
Jupiter rises at 5 AM at the beginning of the month and by 3:30 AM by the end of the month. Look for it low over the eastern horizon.

Mars rises during the hour before dawn in the east, and is dim and difficult to observe in January.

Huachuca Astronomy Club P.O. Box 922 Sierra Vista, AZ 85636 <http://hacastronomy.com> email: mrgalaxy@juno.com
Yearly Membership: Individual: \$25; Family: \$35; Military: \$20; student:\$10 (with restrictions) ,
President: Wayne Johnson (mrgalaxy@juno.com) Vice President: Keith Mullen 520.366.0049;
Treasurer: Tim Doyle 378-5121; Secretary: Jeanne Herbert;
Star Party Coordinator: Keith Mullen repogazer@wavmax.com ;
Outreach Events Coordinator: Jeanne Herbert (jeanne_hrbrt@yahoo.com) 366-5690 (early evenings);
Loaner Scopes: Gary Myers 432-4433

Travels on the Celestial Sphere *By Glen Sanner*

Bob Kepple, Tim Doyle, Tom Russell, and myself observed several galaxies in Cetus this past week (11-13-06 & 11-14-06) at DOW with the 18.5" and the 22" at DSO. While observing NGC 247, the well known giant galaxy in the Sculptor group, we happened across a chain of not-so-well known MCG galaxies. While checking Uranometria 2000 for galaxies near 247, I noticed a group called Burbidge's chain. Going to this group we easily found two of the members. The first of these is MCG 04-03-10 the northern most member of this chain. It is just 1' SSW of an 11th magnitude star and appears as the brightest member of this chain at magnitude 14.1 according to NED (NASA Extragalactic Database). NED also lists it as an SB(s)b pec? galaxy. We saw it as being stretched 1'x.4'. The next brightest southern terminus of the chain 6' away is MCG 04-03-11 at magnitude 14.7 and is an SB(s)c pec: object. This galaxy is at magnitude 14.7 and is an SB(s)c pec: object. About 1.5' north of 04-03-10 is MCG 04-03-12 at magnitude 15.8. It is our next brightest galaxy at magnitude 15.8. It is an ephemeral object appearing just east of a 14th magnitude star. It is an ephemeral object just above the threshold for my 18.5". Averted vision helps here seen with averted vision and the then gone. The last galaxy was the 22" telescope. This galaxy is addition of scope movement in MCG 04-03-10 and MCG 04-03-11 at magnitude 17. I could see MCG 04-03-12 only about 20% of the time and Bob could get it a little better but a difficult object at best, nothing more than a faint smudge. I believe Tim and Tom also saw this galaxy but with difficulty. I might note here that you really need to have your night vision at its optimum to properly view these galaxies or any faint fuzzy for which you might be looking. I try to preserve my night vision with an inexpensive cloth eye-patch (\$2.00 at any pharmacy or drug emporium). I cover my observing eye with the patch until I am ready to view the object. I have been told by many seasoned deep sky observers that this simple eye-patch technique will give you at least half a magnitude if not more. That makes a great deal of difference at the eyepiece. We used several eyepiece combinations on this chain and we found the higher powers revealed more detail than the lesser powers. The 16mm Nagler with the Big Barlow (2x) yielded the optimum view in Bob's 22"(280X) and the 7mm Pentax XW gave the best view in the 18.5"(335X). This chain of galaxies was studied by Margaret and Geoffrey Burbidge (her husband) and many other prominent astronomers. Margaret Burbidge has been awarded many laurels for her research and is one of the foremost women in astronomy.



Outreach Biz **By Jeanne Herbert**

Outreach calendar:

Science Camp—**February 22nd, March 1st, April 26th and May 3rd** at the Huachuca Oaks Camp Site in Hereford. HAC has been invited to Science Camp to share our love for the night sky with all its wonder and awe. Everyone (from beginner to veteran) is encouraged to participate in these events. The Science Campers are 3rd through 6th grade and will be in groups of 10 for observing and hearing tales about the night sky. These Thursday evening events will usually last about 2-2 1/2 hours. So bring your scope or bino's and enjoy a thrilling evening sharing your passion with these youngsters. Call 366-5690 or see me at the meeting for more information and sign up!

THE ASTRONOMICAL LEAGUE'S OBSERVING CLUBS, A CONTINUING SERIES**The Arp Peculiar Galaxy Club****- By Dave Healy**

Although membership in many of the AL's current 28 observing clubs requires more persistence than experience or instrumentation (The Constellation Club, for instance), membership in the Arp Peculiar Galaxy Club requires all three, and all in good measure. Membership requires either CCD imaging or visual observation of at least 100 of the 338 members of the Arp Catalog of Peculiar Galaxies. The club has been in existence since 1998 yet boasts only 64 members—18 of which, including your author, earned his certificate by CCD-imaging 100 galaxies. The other 46 used the visual observation method. By contrast, over 2400 observers have earned their Messier Certificates.

I am aware of only one HAC member, Glen Sanner, who is working toward his (visual) Arp Certificate. GO GLEN!

Book Plug: longtime astronomical publisher Willmann-Bell, Inc. is currently publishing "The Arp Atlas of Peculiar Galaxies—A Chronicle and Observer's Guide." Let me make it clear that the book is not necessary for completing the Arp Certificate, but does a wonderful job of explaining what all this Arp fuss is about, and includes photos of all 338 Arp galaxies, some of which were imaged by yours truly.

Disclosure: no royalties to Healy, but I will get a free copy of the volume. It is on sale at an introductory \$34.95, and well worth it. To quote Willmann-Bell, "In 1966 astronomer Halton Arp compiled his Atlas of Peculiar Galaxies, which featured 338 images of some of the strangest looking galaxies and galaxy groups then known to exist. [Arp had access to the Palomar and Mt. Wilson instruments]. The purpose of the Atlas, Arp stated in his preface, was to graphically present structural peculiarities in galaxies . . . the Atlas was comprised of the 'Elephant Men' of galaxies, and their deformations challenged and defied astronomers' attempts at galaxy classification.

The subtext of Arp's galaxy study was to find and identify "discordant" redshifts and discredit the conventional wisdom that redshifts were proportional to distance, and, if possible, discredit the Big Bang itself.

Arp's scientific theories are increasingly beyond the fringe, but he has left us with a collection of some of the most bizarre objects in the universe, many of which are bright enough to be accessible in moderate-to-large amateur scopes. About 100 of Arp's 338 are magnitude 13.5 or brighter

The Arp Club page has a link to a page entitled "The 15 Best Arp Objects for Visual Observation." I'm going to list them here (along with their associated constellations) because they will be old friends to many of the eyepiece jockeys in the club, and may motivate a select few of you to attempt a leisurely pursuit of the whole list. Glen, you're too lonely out there!!!

The 15 Best:

M77 (Arp 37, Cetus)	NGC 1097A (Arp 77, Fornax)	M82 (Arp 148, Ursa Major)
NGC 3395/6 (Arp 270, Leo Minor)	M65 (Arp 317, Leo)	NGC 3994/5 (Arp 313, Ursa Major)
NGC 4038/9 (Arp 244, Corvus)	NGC 4631 (Arp 281, Canes Venatici)	M60 (Arp 116, Virgo)
NGC 5128 (Arp 153, Centaurus)	NGC 4485 (Arp 269, Canes Venatici)	M51(Arp 85, Canes Venatici)
NGC 5426 (Arp 271, Virgo)	NGC 5560 (Arp 286, Virgo)	NGC 3623/28 (Arp 317, Leo)

The Astronomical League's web site can be found at: www.astroleague.org

Z HAPPY NEW YEAR EVERYONE! Z