MAY 2006 New moon: 26th; Full moon: 12th Huachuca Astronomy Club of Southeastern Arizona

# *HAC MONTHLY MEETING: FRIDAY, MAY 12, 2006* 7 pm, Cochise College, Sierra Vista, Rm. 305 Guest Speaker: Mr. Lou Boyd, Director of Fairborn Observatory (Patagonia, AZ) PLUS our monthly Show-N-Tells, a neat 'astro' item raffle + a door prize surprise!

<u>May Star Party Schedule (compiled by Keith Mullen):</u> Support your HAC by attending & helping at these events ! Saturday May 6<sup>th</sup>: Public & Member Star Party at JBO—Help our Mr. Minor Planet! Large public turnout expected! Saturday May 20<sup>th</sup>: Member Star Party at Gary Myers Desert Coyote Observatory! Gary has fought the weather for two years and his 30" DOB has some of the best optics I've ever seen. Let's see a lot of members there! (enjoy!) Friday May 26th: 8pm Patterson Observatory Public Viewing to celebrate Sierra Vista's 50th anniversary weekend. Saturday May 27<sup>th</sup>: (Day Time) Astronomy Day at the Park. This will be an all day event specializing in HAC Outreach Exhibits and Solar Observing; come out to Veterans Memorial Park and check out the Club's new PST (Personal Solar Telescope) and help with the exhibits; Doug can use all the help you can give him that day.

# **Observing Spring Galaxies** (Contributed by Bob Kepple)

Our view of the night sky in spring is between the winter and summer Milky Way giving us an unobstructed view to deep space where the sky is full of other galaxies similar to our own galaxy which is known as the Milky Way. The winter Milky Way is nearly gone now as it is getting low in the west and the summer

Milky Way doesn't rise until after midnight this time of the year, so lets take advantage of this and observe some galaxies. Constellations that are well placed in the sky and rich in galaxies are Ursa Major, Canes Venatici, Coma Berenices, Leo and Virgo. Most of these may be just "faint fuzzies" but keep in mind that they are vast star cities containing hundreds of billions of stars and we are only seeing the combined glow from all these stars since they are so far away. The Coma-Virgo cluster, one of the largest "nearby" galaxy groups to us, is still a fantastic 65 million light years away. That light started its journey toward us when the dinosaurs were ruling the Earth.

### Galaxies for small telescopes.

Aim your scope at NGC 4565 in Coma Berenices (12h36.3m +25° 59'). This is a huge edge on galaxy at magnitude 9.6 elongated 14' x 1.8' (arc-minutes) with a bulging center and a distinct dust lane. The extensions fade rapidly toward the edges and is seen best with increasing aperture. For comparison, go to NGC 4244 in Canes Venatici (12h17.5m +37° 59'). I like this galaxy even better than NGC 4565 because its extensions are more visible. It is a magnificent shaft of light at magnitude 10.4 and is elongated 15' x 1.5' with a highly extended core and a mottled texture throughout.

While were looking at objects that have "wow" power, go to Messier 106, also in Canes Venatici (12h19.0m +47° 18'). This 8.4 magnitude galaxy is elongated 20' x 8.4' with a well concentrated 5' x 3' central region, a 1' diameter core and a bright non-stellar nucleus (non-stellar means larger than stellar). With averted vision you may see hints of spiral structure and some dark streaks.

### Galaxies for larger telescopes.

The other night I was observing some of the Herschel II objects and the list brought me to the NGC 5044 Galaxy Group, a nice group that I hadn't visited for some time. NGC 5044 is the largest and brightest of the group at mag. 10.8. It has a bright core with a stellar nucleus (SN) surrounded by a 3' diameter halo which fades smoothly to a diffuse periphery. Lying 8.5' east of the flagship object is NGC 5049 a faint 13th magnitude galaxy with a SN embedded in a well concentrated core and a faint halo elongated 1.5' x 0.5'. Lying 10' SE of 5044, is 5047 a 12.7 mag. edge-on galaxy elongated 2.5' x 0.5' with a SN. Lying 10' SW of 5044 is 5035, a 12.8 mag. galaxy elongated 1' x 0.5 with a bright SN. Beyond this is 5037, another edge-on galaxy lying 13' SSW of 5044. 5037 shines at mag. 12.2 and is elongated 2' x 0.5' with a small circular core and a SN. Faint stars dot each tip, the one at the NE tip being more conspicuous than the other. The more aperture you use the more "faint fuzzies" you will see in the surrounding area. This is a nice area, so be sure to check it out. (*Continued on back page.....*)

'Spring Galaxies' continued....

While you are in Virgo, if you like seeing multiple objects in one eyepiece field of view, go to NGC 4365. This is a nice bright 9.6 mag. galaxy elongated 5.6' x 4.6' with a conspicuous core and a SN. Pan to the SW of 4365 and you will find a nice v-shape formation of five galaxies. IC 3259 lying at the V's apex is a rather faint object at 13.5 mag. with a small halo elongated 1.7' x 0.9'. The two brightest galaxies form the west side of the "V". NGC 4342 is a mag. 12.5 galaxy elongated 1.2' x 0.6', while 4343, the brightest and largest galaxy forming the "V" is a 12.1 mag. object highly elongated 2.5' x 0.7'. The eastern side of the V is formed by 4341 shining faintly at mag. 13.2 and elongated 1.7' x 0.6'. The end of the V's eastern side is a faint galaxy with a feeble 13.4 glow and a circular 1.2' halo. The entire region is filled with galaxies, especially to the NE and SW but you better have a copy of Uranometria with you if you want to identify all the objects, otherwise just have fun and see how many you can sweep up. Happy viewing! (Have questions about terminology mentioned in this article or techniques to accomplish the viewing? GOOD! Let's discuss and answer them at the meeting on 5/12 or at our star parties— that's why we have these events, folks!

## Star Party Corner—Keith Mullen, Star Party Coordinator (520)366-0049; repogazer@wavmax.com

April has come and gone and Orion has settled down in the West for the summer. Our public star party on April 1 drew a large public crowd, but only a few members (and 1 scope). Very disappointing, people. A few members were able to WOW the kids at the Huachuca Oaks campground for a third outreach Star Party on the 24<sup>th</sup>; but we were clouded out for the scheduled After-Meeting-Viewing Event at Patterson Observatory on the 21st . Doug and I set up a booth at the Earth Day Farmers Market on the 22<sup>nd</sup> with the club's Hydrogen-Alpha solar scope and an 8" with a solar filter. We had a line of people most of the day, until the wind took over and almost blew us all off the lot.

The major event of the Month was our 6<sup>th</sup> annual **Telescopes for Telethon** Star Party held on the 29<sup>th</sup> at Veteran's Memorial Park. Over 300 people attended our event and so far in the 2006 T4T campaign, we have raised over \$900.00 towards combating muscular dystrophy. The campaign will run until the end of August, so let's continue donating and bringing in more outside donations! With the aid of an anonymous donor, the final amount will be tripled and all funds donated to the Muscular Dystrophy Association. We **greatly** appreciate the 24 HAC members who participated this year with and without telescopes—they made this event very successful, but as the HAC President said, "It would have been nice to see ALL of the officers and Board members participate in this one major HAC event of the year, as well as many more members. We could have used them!" There were lines behind every scope out there. We even had binoculars and three of the loaner scopes out on the field, including the 8" Dob in the hands of **new member Josh Crimens and son Brion**. Thanks also to the ladies who manned (womanned?) the gates all evening.

For Sale: Questar Birder 3.5" with Pyrex Mirror, Broad-band and Low reflection coatings. It is in like-new condition and comes with all of the original accessories including lens cap, integrated 256mm finder spotting scope, 32mm eyepiece (8x-40x-60x), star-diagonal prism, Barlow lens for eyepiece port, rapid focus, blue anodized dew cap, basic camera coupling set, soft black caps on finder, front lens and eyepiece, waterproof carrying case. Questar list price is \$4,025. Asking price is \$2500. My email is bobluce@earthlink.net and phone # is 520-459-8604. For photos, see www.questarcorporation.com/questar.htm

For Sale: An Astro Dome for \$5,000.00. I purchased it from Astro Haven Astronomical Ltd. on July 9, 2004. I decided that it is dark enough to view the stars here in Quail Creek, so I do not need it anymore. The dome is seven (7) feet in diameter and with the 1-foot riser; it is seven (7) feet tall. It was painted tan at the factory. My total cost including freight, import tax, and installation was \$6,475.00. It weighs about 350 pounds. It opens like a clamshell. I have it installed on a level cement foundation. Included with it are two stepladders for easy access, a cabinet of six drawers, and a rubber grommet to prevent water from seeping underneath the dome. If this is something you've always wanted, PLEASE call LARRY M WOOD at 520-398-7156 to view this dome in person.

Huachuca Astronomy Club P.O. Box 922 Sierra Vista, AZ 85636 http://c3po.cochise.edu/astro; email hac@palominas.com Yearly Membership: Individual: \$25; Family: \$35; Military: \$20; student:\$10 (with conditions) 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; Public Events Coordinator: Jeanne Herbert (jeanne\_hrbrt@yahoo.com) 366-5690 (early evenings)

This issue of NightFall can also be found on-line at <u>http://c3po.cochise.edu/astro</u>. 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*.