



THE STAR DIAGONAL

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OAS Executive Committee

Pres - Ron Vanderhule
(801) 726-8554
Vice Pres- Ron McCann
(801) 682-7174
Secretary- David Dunn
(801) 544-7705
Treasurer- Doug Say
(801) 731-7324

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THE PREZ SEZ

Greetings Earthlings,

Well not only has this month been crowded for me time wise, I am also having a severe case of writer's block. So Secretary Dave has graciously consented to allowing me to reprint in the column this month my account of first light on my 25"er. It reads as follows;

A Serious Report on First Light on my 25"er by Ron Vanderhule (what's wrong with this title?)

As some of you know Steve Dodds of Nova Optics finished and delivered this spring the 25 inch mirror I had recklessly attempted on my own. (When all your ronchi tests look like different letters of the Greek alphabet time to call in reinforcements).

I had been sketching some designs and built a couple of scale model mock-ups of some ideas but had no firm direction to proceed from. I liked Greg Babcocks design of his 24 inch ultra light and knew I would use some of those features, but the overall structure seemed a tad fragile.

Then the August issue of Sky & Tel arrived with an article about Mel Bartels 20 inch tri-dob. That was it! My inspiration and jumping off point for construction of "the big dob". I won't go into details about the construction other than to say that I cherry picked several ideas from prominent ATMers (including the renowned Doug Say of OAS) and half a dozen ideas from my own fertile mental stash.

I wanted to have it ready for the August Monte Cristo but evil forces beyond my control intervened. But hey, There would be a new moon in September and a star-party somewhere so I kept routing, drilling, cutting etc.

Finally by Sept 14 it was finished to a point where I could take it outside and tweak the truss lengths to

the focal length. I made two cuts on the trusses totaling 4 ½ inches resulting in a focuser height at zenith of eight feet one inch, just three steps up the ladder. Easy.

Even though the project was not quite complete (bare wood on Teflon for the alt. bearings, grabbers holding the spider to the secondary cage) we packed the trailer and scope and headed off to the dark skies of Cathedral Gorge, Nevada where the Las Vegas club holds an annual event.

I only used the 25 the first night because certain construction issues manifested, but what a first night! The scope is an f/ 4.3 so it bites off a good-sized chunk of stellar real estate. The first thing I noticed through the eyepiece as compared to my 16 inch was "more stars". That alone is worth the price of admission. But being a photon addict I wanted more.

The Double Cluster was at a convenient angle so I slid a Meade 40mm SWA into the focuser and guided the newly constructed scope toward the north for a look/see. Very nice, as I said earlier there were "more stars", and what were faint patterns in my 16 inch now manifested themselves quite prominently. Also there were more stars showing color. I made a mental note "awesome".

The next logical target was M-31 so off we went. Looking through the same eyepiece I am thinking "man this thing is bright!". I reach for my moon filter but decide against it. "Ptolemy never used his moon filter. Deal with it." The core was dazzling and compacted and I thought I could make out some of the galaxies brighter objects. Most impressive was the way the two prominent dust lanes were back-lit by the glow of the galaxy. It gave a great 3-D effect. I made a mental note "dude".

I decided to make M-51 our next target....arrrrgh! Trees in the way. Let's do M-13..... Arrrrrh! More trees! Fools! I thought. Why would you plant trees in a camp-ground?

Nobody needs shade at night! I rummage in the truck for a chainsaw.....

After I calmed down some I cruised over to M-57 "the Ring". You can leave your averted vision in the eyepiece case boys. This one's on the house.

I put the OIII filter in and tracked down the Veil SNR. It had nowhere to hide. Rich thick tendrils with regions of whispiness around them. I made a mental note " Chewy, angle the deflector shields!"

I spent some time with NGC-253, the giant galaxy Sculptor. Thick, bright, extended, with dust lanes swirled through it. I took a peek at M-1 "the Crab", "hey, this thing qualifies as a deep sky object after all" I said to my dog, who had been waiting all night for a look at something. I cruised back over to Cygnus and found the "Dumbell" " it's so bright " I thought. I made a mental note," that's an oxy-moron".

As the night wore on a thought kept coming over and over in the back of my mind, "the Hunter will become the hunted". It was about 3:30 in the morning when I realized the meaning of the cryptic mantra as I spied Orion sneaking silently up among the trees.

I would end to-nights stellar safari by bagging the trophy M-42. The dawn would soon be upon me. I only had time for one shot I had to make it count.

As I waited for my prey I re-collimated the optics and adjusted the finder. Opening my eyepiece case I selected the Brandon 32mm widefield. " This baby hasn't let me down yet" I said under my quickening breath. I slid it silently into the focuser, turned off the red lights and waited. Moments later the Hunter cleared the cover of the trees. I made my move.

Deftly guiding the instrument I centered the middle object of the sword into the view of the finder and fired. Moving quickly to the focuser I peered into the eyepiece to see what was up. My jaw dropped to the ground narrowly missing my dog.

Had I ever seen this thing before? Super bright stars floating against a background of pinkish infolding clouds on one side, while dark dust lanes punctuated a turquoise region on the other side. The entire brightness of the region extended two fields of view. The impact was absolutely Biblical.

What a way to end the night. My lust for photons temporarily satiated, I gently cover my new eight foot friend. Picking up my jaw and my dog I retire to the trailer.

As I lay in bed next to my wife waiting for sleep to extinguish my ecstasy I make a mental note," I need a bigger scope".



Ron, Wolfie and the new 25" Telescope.

the Prez

OAS Minutes – November 2010

The Annual meeting of the Ogden Astronomical Society was held on November 11, 2010 in the Ott Planetarium at Weber State University.

President Vanderhule called the meeting to order at 7:30pm.

Announcements

- Cook Elementary Star Party on 11/19.

Business

- Members that wish to join the AL should pay their dues by the December meeting. After that, we will turn in our dues to the AL.
- Wayne Sumner needs help with the drive for his telescope at Northridge High. The Motor isn't working properly. Anyone with input can get with Wayne. He was given a place in Ogden that can rebuild the motor.
- Venus Transit in 6/2010. We should plan a event to view this.

This month's presentation was given by Dale Hooper. It was on the Radio Astronomy work he has been doing. Dale has a dish and receiver that he uses to look in the Cosmic Water Hole. He gave a great presentation showing how his system is set up and some of the data that he has taken.

The meeting adjourned. Many members headed to Village Inn in South Ogden to eat and visit.

David Dunn

Star Party Schedule

Our Private Star Parties are as follows.

Feb 3-6 St. George

Year in Space Calendars

I have the Year in Space calendars for those that ordered them. They will be available at the December 9th meeting or let me know if you need other arrangements.

Lee Priest

Green Laser Pointers

I still have some Green Lasers for sale... I will bring some of them to the meeting on the 9th.

Kay Hargis

Astronomical League

For those not familiar with the AL, the following is information for you to consider. More information can be found on their webpage at www.astroleague.org.

The mission of the Astronomical League is clearly stated in the masthead: to promote the science of Astronomy. The major benefit of belonging to this organization is receiving the quarterly newsletter, The Reflector, which keeps you in touch with amateur activities all over the country. The chance to meet the people you read about there occurs during

our annual National Convention, or at one of the ten regional conventions that the AL sponsors.

Astronomical League members can order astronomy-related books at a 10% discount through the Book Service. Books and other material published by the Astronomical League as well as clothing and jewelry can be purchased from the A.L. Sales Office. The Observing Clubs offer encouragement and certificates of accomplishment for demonstrating observing skills with a variety of instruments and objects. These include the Messier Club; Binocular Messier Club and the Herschel 400 Club.

List of Current Observing Clubs:

Arp Peculiar Galaxies Clubs
Asteroid Observing Club
Binocular Messier Club
Caldwell Club
Comet Observers Club
Constellation Hunter Club
Dark Nebula Club
Dark Sky Advocate Club
Deep Sky Binocular Club
Double Star Club
Earth Orbiting Satellite Observing Club
Flat Galaxies Club
Galaxy Groups & Clusters Club
Galileo Club
Globular Cluster Club
Herschel 400 Club
Herschel II Club
Local Galaxy Group and Neighborhood
Lunar Club
Lunar II Club
Master Observer Club
Messier Club
Meteor Club
Open Cluster Club
Outreach Club
Planetary Nebula Club
Planetary Observers Club
Sky Puppy Club
Southern Skies Binocular Club
Southern Sky Telescopic Club
Sunspotters Club
Universe Sampler Club
Urban Observing Club
Variable Star Club