



THE STAR DIAGONAL

THE JOURNAL OF THE OGDEN ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY

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THE PREZ SEZ

Greetings Earthlings,

The following is a rundown of some of my favorite dark sky sites I have haunted over the years. I provide this as a service to those who would like some alternatives to their current sites.

I start first with Cathedral Gorge Nev. as I just spent three nights there the first week of this Oct. This is a campground 80 miles west of Cedar City on highway 56. This is where the Las Vegas Astro Club has their big annual star party the first new moon after Labor Day. There are about 20 trailer sites. There is fresh water through-out and a central restroom and shower area. No electricity or sewer but a dump station a mile away. What is really cool about this campground is the fact that they cater to astronomers. About six years ago they put in large level areas at each campsite just for telescopes plus a few dedicated observing areas elsewhere in the campground. You can put foil around the restroom lights as long as you remove it when you leave!! This area has been the most consistent observing-wise I have encountered. Of the dozen or so trips I have made there I have never been clouded out and generally the seeing is excellent. It is a six hour trip and it is So. Nevada so fall and spring would be recommended.

Newly discovered by OAS a few years ago is Curlew Campground four miles north of Snowville in So. Idaho on N. Stoneroad. This is a 20 site campground in the middle of flat So. Idaho farmland next to a small body of water called Stone Reservoir. Used mostly by local boaters during the weekend. You can usually get a spot. Primitive campsites but water is available and restrooms. I made three solo trips there this year, two in the spring and one in Sept.

The April visit was the best galaxy observing I have ever had. The faint galaxy clusters in Coma Bernices, Perseus, and Leo were amazing and M-51 was the best I had ever seen. In the fall it starts to dew up around 2:00 am. It is 70 to 90 minutes away and OAS is having a get together there the weekend of Nov. 5. Open year-round.

Dead Horse Point State Park 11 miles north of Moab Utah on highway 313 is another spot where you can get a little more of the southern deep-sky objects. There are two campgrounds in the area. The newer one, Horse Thief, has about 40 sites of varying sizes and is totally primitive. The other campground, Dead Horse, has only electricity at the sites and a couple of dimly lit restrooms. A few of the sites are to secluded for observing but most have a big flat area for something called a "tent", whatever that is. I have found it convenient to set up my telescope on this flat tent area. The campground is very popular and reservations are needed even into Oct. There are a few first come first serve sites. It is open year round and it takes about four hours from SLC. The skies are dark and steady and I would put it on par with Cathedral Gorge. You are by Moab so take a Mtn. bike, take a Jeep, take a kayak, take some granola....

Next month, more viewing sites. Maybe.

the Prez

OAS Minutes – October 2010

The Annual meeting of the Ogden Astronomical Society was held on October 14, 2010 in the Ott Planetarium at Weber State University.

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

Announcements

- OAS was in the Weber County section of the Standard Examiner.
- Farmington Jr. High Star Party on 10/19.
- Cook Elementary Star Party on 10/22.

Business

- Astronomical League (AL). There is interest by members of the club to be members of the AL. The AL has changed their rules and now allow clubs to be members without all members joining the AL. After a discussion, a motion was made that the OAS join the AL with only the members that wish to participate being added to the AL roster. OAS will pay the \$10 club dues. Each member will be responsible for the \$5 (\$7.50 if less than 95% of the club join) dues to the AL. This motion was seconded and a majority vote approved it. Approval was conditional upon the AL not having a minimum number of members in a club. This was confirmed by the AL after the meeting.
- School Teachers and Members, Stan Martin, Gregory Domgaard and Robert Hillier, all had the opportunity to fly on a Zero G weightless flight. Stan and Gregory gave a report on what the flight was like and how they ended out being able to have the neat experience.
- Mike Hess, the student at WSU that opens the planetarium and helps us with our meetings, is putting together a planetarium show. It is a Messier show and he needs pictures of the Messier objects to include in the show. If any members have them or would like to take some, he would really appreciate the help.
- A discussion was held on having either free or reduced memberships for students. This was deferred to discuss next month after a review of our budget to see if this is possible.

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.

Nov 5-7	Curlew
Feb 3-6	St. George

Year in Space Calendars

Lee Priest will be taking orders for the Year in Space Desk Calendars at the Nov 11th meeting. Anyone interested and not coming to the meeting can let Lee know at levae@aol.com. The calendars are \$9.95 each. He will place the order on the Nov. 12th and they should be available at the Dec meeting. If you want more information you can check it out at: <http://www.YearInSpace.com/desk-calendar.html>.

Comet 103P Hartley

I know a lot of folks have had trouble finding and observing 103P Hartley. Over the past month, I had made three visual observations, and although each time the comet was a bit brighter, Hartley never did appear as bright as predicted. On the third visual sighting, which was made October 9, I thought the comet appeared to be about 10th magnitude. I had given a small star party for a half dozen local charter school kids. I had planned to find the comet for them, but time passed too quickly and while trying to show them one or two example of each kind of object, I ran out of time as some of kids were not dressed for the upper 30's and had to call it quits. As I was packing away my 11" SCT, it dawned on me that I had not tried to see Comet Hartley. I still had my 10" Dob sitting in my driveway, so I pointed the Telrad where the comets should be and looked through the eyepiece. The comet was almost dead center in the field! Too easy.

I had also made a few poor attempts to image the comet during October. I tried some short exposure shots for stacking, but that made the comet look like a fat greenish out of focus star. Finally, on October 21, the coma was bright enough for my guider to lock onto. As an experiment, I decided to try two long exposure guided images combined with

a single dark frame (to remove hot pixels). As you can see from the resulting image, the guiding wasn't perfect (star trails are a bit curved), but the comet doesn't look too bad. This images consists of two five minute exposures and one five minute dark frame

Jim McCormick

