

The Photon Gazette

A quarterly publication of the Christian Association of Stellar Explorers (CASE)



Volume 1, Issue 2
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The Christian Association of Stellar Explorers
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Welcome from the President

Well, it's been quite a busy first year for CASE! We've been listed on numerous search engines on the web such as Yahoo, Excite and others. Our website has also been seeing lots of activity from people other than our immediate membership. With a first year like this, it will be interesting to see what the Lord has in store for us in the future.



CASE profiled on SPACE.COM

CASE was recently profiled on space.com, the premier website for space-based information. The article, written by Daniel Brannen, a member of the American Association of Variable Star Observers (AAVSO), was concise and very flattering to the cause of CASE and our position in the world of science and religion. It was almost too flattering, but some recognition is better than none at all, especially for a fledgling club such as ours. The article dealt with the formation of our group and our beliefs on science and religion. We also explained that we are not a theology club as such, but a group of believers that are banded together by two things: A love of Jesus Christ and Astronomy!

New Memberships Welcomed

We have received a few new members into the club since the last issue of the Photon Gazette, but

there is always room for more. Since our first year is past, I believe that now is the time to start building our member base. We have added some new members from our article on space.com, but there are still some local Siloam Springs and surrounding area people who have not yet joined! Let's see if we can increase our membership this year.

Monthly Meetings

Have you attended the monthly star parties? We are currently holding star parties twice monthly: once for the moon and the other for deep sky objects. Make the most of your time and take this opportunity to see things that you normally only see in magazines.

Other Happenings

There are other things happening in the local astronomical community, and CASE members have been there to participate. Look further into this issue to see what they have been up to.

Mount Magazine Star Party

The Mount Magazine Star Party will be held on the weekend of October 27 - 29, 2000. This is a great opportunity to drive over to Dover, AR to see some of the darkest skies in our area. CASE will have several members in attendance. See the article in this issue.

Until I see you at the next star party, God Bless and Clear Skies!

Patrick Carr
President/Editor

2000 Mount Magazine Star Party

The Mount Magazine Star Part will be held on the weekend of October 27 - 29 in Dover, Arkansas. Several members of our club will be attending. Please contact CASE for information on car-pooling to the event.

Cost for the event is \$15.00 plus hotel rooms. There will be vendors, great dark skies, and door prize drawings.

Astronomical League Holds MidCon 2000

Patrick Carr, President

The Mid-States region of the Astronomical League held their 50th annual gathering in Kansas City last June. In attendance representing CASE was Patrick Carr, David Cater and Brian Greuel. This year's MidCon was an exciting event with members from all of the Mid-States region in attendance. Highlight of the trip was observing at the Powell Observatory located in Kansas. As you may be aware, Powell is the observatory that has been trying to block the construction of a BMX track near their dark site location. MidCon 2000 brought in some great speakers including Fred Espinak, also known as Mr. Eclipse. He spent time showing the attendees all about one of the greatest astronomical events known to man -- the solar eclipse! Other events included talks about meteors, occultations sponsored by the Occultation and Timing Association, and various other beneficial sessions. David Cater, CASE member walked away with several door prizes, as did Patrick Carr and Brian Greuel. Make plans to attend the event in 2001, as it will be held in Central Arkansas, sponsored by one of the clubs in Arkansas. This is a great chance to meet other members of the Astronomical League and to compare and learn from members who have been doing this a long time. CASE would like to wish the Kansas City Astronomical Society another successful 50 years!

CASE Restores Antique Telescope for JBU

Dr. David Cater, member

Members of the Christian Association of Stellar Explorers have restored what may be the earliest telescope used for teaching science during the early 1900's at John Brown University. After restoration, the telescope was donated back to JBU to become a permanent part of the memorabilia which marks the history of the university.



David Cater, Mike Peterson and Patrick Carr with the Selsi Refractor.

The circumstances of the restoration make an interesting story: Some two years ago, Everett Easley, Director of Facilities Services, discovered an old telescope in the science building at JBU. It appeared as if the telescope had not been used for several years and Mr. Easley was concerned that the instrument might be put aside or forgotten. He took the instrument to his home near Flint Creek, OK, hoping there might be some use for it in the future. Shortly after CASE was founded, Mr. Easley contacted Patrick Carr, president of CASE and asked if the club might have some use for the old telescope. After a brief inspection of the telescope by Patrick and fellow CASE members, David Cater and



Michael Peterson, it was determined they could accomplish a fair restoration.

The restoration task was divided into parts. Patrick Carr took charge of the equatorial mount and conducted a search for any history associated with the old telescope. Michael Peterson restored the tripod parts. David Cater restored the telescope tube and cleaned and aligned the optical components. Some telescope parts had to be fabricated from equivalent modern materials, particularly the counterweight system. The telescope is mounted on a German equatorial head and the torque exerted by the optical tube in such a mechanical arrangement must be offset by a system of weights. These weights, and the shaft on which they traveled, could not be found at the time of the restoration attempt. These parts had to be made in such a way so as not to destroy the original form of the instrument.

Early on, it was noted by the members of CASE, that restoration would mostly consist of laborious cleaning and polishing. For example, the optical tube was a dark, deeply oxidized color and only intense buffing could restore the original golden brass shine. The equatorial head, made of sand cast bronze and iron parts, required sandblasting to obtain the original appearance. The oak tripod legs, having lost virtually all of their original paint, required numerous coats of modern black paint to appear acceptable again. CASE members had no original plans or pictures of the old instrument to use as guides.

Thus, some of the restoration involved educated guesses as to original appearance. CASE members were also keenly aware that restoration was not their expertise. This awareness served well, especially when it came to the optical tube. Over the years, the tube had absorbed some very noticeable dents. Should the dents be removed, or left as momentos of use? It would have been an extremely delicate matter to work the thin brass tubing so as to remove the marks of hard use. It was decided that dent removal was beyond the capabilities of CASE members.

What appears now is a restored telescope with many marks of very active science education, including the usual mishaps such use always

incurs. Research during the restoration project did unveil that the telescope was likely manufactured sometime between 1900 and 1920 by the Selsi Optical Company, located near Paris, France. The telescope is a refractor [it uses lenses] and is very like many brass instruments of the era, usually purchased either by wealthy amateurs or by colleges and universities to teach fundamental astronomy, common in the usual college curriculum in those days.

Exactly how the instrument came to be owned by John Brown University is a mystery. One speculation is that it was an early donation to the University early after the school was founded. Or, perhaps it was purchased outright for science instruction by early science faculty at JBU. If there are readers who recognize the old instrument and know something about its origins and use, please contact Ms. Jan Lancaster, the JBU Archivist, at 501-524-4610. She would be very interested in any pertinent history about the telescope and its use in early science education at JBU.

Upcoming Meeting Dates

October:

October 6 - 7:00 p.m. (Lunar Party)
October 20 - 7:00 p.m. (Star Party)

November:

November 3 - 7:00 p.m. (Lunar Party)
November 24 - 7:00 p.m. (Star Party)

December:

December 1 - 7:00 p.m. (Lunar Party)
December 29 - 7:00 p.m. (Star Party)

The monthly meeting for last quarter was not held due to scheduling conflicts. The regularly scheduled quarterly meeting will be held on Thursday, October 19 at 7:30 p.m. at John Brown University. There will be a door prize drawing for an observing book for all paid members in attendance. Check the website for exact meeting location at John Brown University.

The Gallery . . .

This area is reserved for photographs, drawings and musings from our membership. If you have an interesting thought, please be sure to e-mail it to thecarrs@tcac.net or by mail to the CASE office. If you have photographs or slides of interesting objects in astronomy, please get them to the CASE office for inclusion in our quarterly publication.



Nearly full moon, taken by Patrick Carr



The Wild Duck Cluster. Taken by Mike Peterson.



M31, the Great Nebula in Andromeda. Taken by Mike Peterson. Actually, it's a spiral galaxy, similar in size and composition to our own Milky Way.



Barnhard's S Nebula, a patch of dark nebulosity, taken by David Cater

Welcome New Members

The following people have paid their membership dues for the current year.

William D. Leiser, Jr. of Bethlehem, PA

All dues paid will be good for 1 year from the date of payment.

What's Up This Quarter?

Mike Peterson, Treasurer

The Fall Night Sky

Fall has arrived! I no longer have to wait until 9 or 10 PM to go out and look at the starry sky. It is also not so hot as it was in July & August. It makes it so much more pleasant when I pull the 'scope out to look at the night sky.

In late October, when moonlight isn't washing our we can still see some of the summer objects in the sky. For example we can still see M13 the Great Cluster in Hercules, M57 the Ring Nebula, M27 the Dumbbell Nebula. In the southern sky the constellation Sagittarius can still be seen, along with the many object around it like the Lagoon Nebula, the Trifid, the cluster M22, the Eagle Nebula, and the Omega Nebula.

In the West, Venus can be seen just after sundown. It's not up for long, so don't wait very long after sunset to see it.

In the northeast, M31 the Andromeda Galaxy, and the Double Cluster are moving higher and higher into the evening sky making it easier to see them.

In the southeast, in the constellation Capricorn, the planets Uranus and Neptune can be found.

By about 11 PM the Pleiades, and the planets Jupiter and Saturn can be seen in the eastern sky.

Once we reach early November, the Pleiades, Jupiter and Saturn, the Crab Nebula can easily be

seen by 10 PM. Although the constellation Orion is closer to the horizon, It also is visible by 10 PM. With Orion coming up we will be able to see the Great Nebula in Orion: M42. In the west, Hercules (with the cluster M13) will be setting, The Ring Nebula, and the dumbbell will not be far behind.

As the weeks go by, all the newer objects can be seen earlier in the evening. So you have to be out so late in order to see the planets or Orion, it's Nebula, the Pleiades, or the Christmas Tree Cluster which comes up above the horizon shortly after Orion.

Treasurer's Report

Income (YTD September 30, 2000)

Membership Dues:	\$145.00
Club Scope Donation:	210.00
Misc. Donation:	20.00

Total: \$375.00

Expenses (YTD September 30, 2000)

Astronomical League Dues:	\$ 31.00
Club Scope Purchase:	210.00
Website Registration:	70.00
Postage:	6.00

Total: \$317.00

Total Cash Reserves: \$ 58.00



Current CASE Membership

(Current dues up to date)

- Patrick*, Adriane and Rachael Carr (F) - 3
- David Cater* (I) - 1
- Brian*, Jane Greuel and Family (F) - 4
- Ken Knight* (I) - 1
- Mike*, John Peterson and Family (F) - 5
- Stephen*, Elaine and Pete Sbanotto (F) - 3
- William D. Leiser, Jr. (I) - 1

Total Paid Membership - 18

* = Mailing name on all newsletters.
F = Family Membership I = Individual Membership

