

The Photon Gazette

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



Volume 1, Issue 4
(April • May • June 2001)



The Christian Association of Stellar Explorers
1005 Hunter Ridge
Siloam Springs, AR 72761
www.christian-astronomy.org



Welcome from the President

Well, we sure had a tough time getting our Messier Marathon in! The weather just wasn't up to providing the clear skies that we were anticipating. Since this event can really only be done once a year, usually around the dark of the moon in March, we'll have to pass and try next year.



Don't forget that as members of the Astronomical League, you are entitled to discounts on astronomy-related magazines. Make sure and tell the magazine publisher that your club is a member of the AL to receive your discount.

The AL also sponsors many different observing clubs for amateurs of all levels. These observing clubs can be a fun, yet challenging way to systematically view the heavens. As a member of the AL you are entitled to participate in any of these clubs, which include Messier Objects, Solar Observations, the Moon, the Planets and others. Visit their website at www.astroleague.org for more information.

Astronomy Day and the Mid-States

The first annual Northwest Arkansas Astronomy Day will be sponsored by CASE and held at the new Wal*Mart Super Center on Highway 412 in Siloam Springs on Saturday, April 28 from 9:00 am until 5:00 pm. We will have several telescopes available with approved solar filters to show visitors the sun. We will also take this time to help

and educate the public on different concepts in astronomy, including our sun, star formation, the moon and others. I would like to see as many of our members as possible show up for a photo depicting our participation. The days events will be followed by a public star party starting at 8:00 pm. This should be a great opportunity to share our love for the Lord and astronomy at the same time. Don't forget to wear your CASE t-shirts!

CASE will be teaching the astronomy section of New Life Ranch's Creation Nation in April and May. If you can help, please give me a call. We can use a hand to help these young people gain an understanding of the night skies, and the beauty and awesomeness of God's creation.

The Mid-States Region of the Astronomical League will be holding their annual meeting in Central Arkansas in June of this year! Be sure to stay tuned to the CASE website for more information on how to register. I highly recommend going if at all possible. It is a great way to meet other astronomers and a lot of fun, too

We Want to Hear From YOU!!

Let me know what each of you are doing in your specific areas of the country. We are always looking for fresh content for the website and the newsletter. Remember, this is YOUR newsletter. It will only get better if you submit your ideas.

Remember to keep looking up! God Bless and Clear Skies!

Patrick Carr
President/Editor

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Memberships Coming Due This Quarter

Membership in CASE is based on a calendar year. The following members listed will be responsible for renewing their memberships on or before the date listed beside their name.

Patrick Carr Family (1/31/01)
Mike Peterson (1/31/01)
Jon Peterson (1/31/01)
Brian Greuel Family (4/30/01)
Ken Knight (06/30/01)



David Levy and David Cater in front of the University of North Texas Planetarium

together atop Mount Palomar in California. Their purpose was to patrol for and photograph asteroids which might develop near-Earth orbits or might even be a threat to Earth by collision. One night, using film which had been mishandled and partially exposed, they managed to get an early image on the film plate of the comet that was to bring national notice to both of them.

Soon after the initial image was captured, several other observatories took other photographs, and the orbital characteristics of the comet became known. It was appreciated early on that this comet just might strike Jupiter! Over several months, the orbit was refined and it was shown that comet Levy-Shoemaker would collide with Jupiter. Many astronomers, both amateur and professional, tuned up their instruments to see the big event. As the comet approached Jupiter, the tidal effects of Jupiter's gravity caused the comet to break up into several distinct pieces. Each of the impacts of these pieces became major observing events! I can remember very clearly observing Jupiter with my 8-inch Celestron just after two large pieces had hit Jupiter. These impacts made large dark circular marks on the clouds of Jupiter and the two marks together made Jupiter look like an absurd and gigantic Happy Face! Really a wonderful experience to have seen in my little amateur instrument... Professional astronomers learned a great deal about the inner atmosphere of

CASE Members meet amateur astronomer David Levy

Dr. David Cater, member

Patrick Carr and I had a wonderful opportunity given to us at John Brown University and I thought a brief report on this opportunity might interest Photon Gazette readers because of the astronomical links we had as part of our adventure. Early in March, Patrick and I were invited to attend the honoring of Mr. John D. Monroe at the University of North Texas at Denton. Mr. Monroe is a kindly local entrepreneur in the Fort Worth area who gave a large parcel of land so that UNT could construct a dark-site observatory and research station in the Denton area. We were invited to participate, along with many others, in the ceremony and presentation thanking Mr. Monroe for his generosity.

As a very important part of the honoring process, David Levy was invited to give an address recounting the discovery of comet Levy-Shoemaker. What is the significance of comet Levy-Shoemaker? Comet Levy-Shoemaker was the first comet ever found and tracked as it crashed into another heavenly body other than the Sun--in this case, Jupiter [comets collide with the Sun all of the time, often without being noticed]. David Levy and Eugene Shoemaker often operated the 18-inch Schmidt camera

Jupiter, that which lies under the nearly opaque surface clouds, by studying what kinds of gases were churned up by the comet impacts.

Mr. Levy, who has just written a fine biography of Eugene Shoemaker, delivered an enthralling lecture on the discovery of the comet, using his own comments, films, simulations, and news tapes to recount the discovery and the enthusiasm it generated. Afterward, Mr. Levy answered questions from the audience and participated in a book signing. Mr. Levy has a number of books out in print that he has authored. He is one of the most prolific amateur astronomers as a writer presently living in America today.



David Levy and CASE president Patrick Carr in front of the University of North Texas Planetarium

The day after the presentation, Patrick and I were shown the new planetarium at UNT, and we got to see a number of telescopes and set-ups which, for us, inspired dreams of what could be done if our club grows and especially if our club could obtain monies as a non-profit organization.

Patrick and I came home full of ideas and goals for amateur astronomy in Siloam Springs and full of dreams and ideas for the Christian Association of Stellar Observers. We are always interested in you dreams too! Take time to drop us a letter or give us a call--what do you want for your club?

Our website is interactive and you could send us a message anytime. Keep an eye out for club

activities, and join us at the Wal-Mart Supercenter parking lot in Siloam Springs to observe Astronomy Day. This will take place on April 28th. from 9:00a.m. until 5:00p.m.

See you there!

Important Club Activities Dates for 2nd Quarter

April:

April 13 - 8:00 p.m. (Lunar Party)
April 28 - 8:00 p.m. (Star Party)

May:

May 4 - 8:00 p.m. (Lunar Party)
May 25 - 8:30 p.m. (Star Party)

June:

June 15 - 8:30 p.m. (Lunar Party)
June 22 - 8:30 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 before one of our regularly scheduled observing parties.

There will be a door prize drawing for an observing book for all paid members in attendance. Check the website for exact locations and times.

Mid-States Regional Astronomical League Meeting

The Mid-States Region of the Astronomical League will be holding it's annual star party/meeting on June 8, 9 and 10. Check the CASE website for more information. We will be organizing a caravan of people to attend. Costs are relatively inexpensive, and this year it will be held near Conway, Arkansas.

Make Plans NOW!!

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 hecarrs@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.



Comet Hale-Bopp taken in Siloam Springs by David Cater



The Trifid Nebula taken by David Cater

Welcome New Members

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

Michael Cater, Santa Ana California

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



Star map for the spring sky drawn by student-member Jon Peterson of Siloam Springs.

Treasurer's Report

Income (YTD March 31, 2001)	

Membership Dues:	\$30.00
Total:	\$30.00
Expenses (YTD March 31, 2001)	

Postage:	\$1.02
Total:	\$1.02
Total Cash Reserves:	\$ 101.78

What's Up This Quarter?

Mike Peterson, Treasurer

The Realm of the Galaxies

In April, Saturn and Jupiter are still up, but not for long. They are quickly approaching the western horizon earlier and earlier in the evening, along with the Pleiades, Orion, and, toward the Northwest, the Double Cluster between the constellations Perseus and Cassiopeia. The Galaxies M81 and M82 are fairly high up in the Northern sky, along with M51 and M101.

Rising in the east is the Realm of the Galaxies between Leo and Virgo. Not far away is M104 the Sombrero Galaxy. Dropping down closer to the eastern horizon Hercules can be found coming up with M13 and M92. a couple of globular star clusters. Later in the evening Vega, and the Ring Nebula comes up in the constellation Lyra.

In the south, a large number of open clusters can be seen in the neighborhood of Canis Major.

As we approach the later half of May and the dark of the Moon Mercury may be able to be seen just after the sun goes down. In fact on May 14th Mercury will pass within a few degrees of Jupiter.

In the south, if your timing is right, and it's a good clear night with a very low horizon, you might be able to find Omega Centauri, a very well known globular cluster.

In the east – late in the evening - the constellation Cygnus comes up, and near by is the Dumbbell Nebula. Also, the planet Mars can be seen, again if you are up late enough.

By the dark of the Moon in late June, the Summer Triangle can be seen in the east. The Summer Triangle is formed using the stars Vega, Deneb, and Altair. M 57, a globular cluster, can be found between the constellations of Lyra, and Cygnus. Mars is up in the southeast not far from Sagittarius. Around Sagittarius can be found a wealth of objects like the Lagoon, Trifid, Omega, and Eagle Nebulae. You can also find a great many open and globular clusters like M6, M7, M22, and M11 the Wild Duck cluster. By this time of the year the Realm of the Galaxies can be found in the western half of the Sky. It is exciting to think of what can be found this time of year, especially since the summer Milky Way will be returning during the next 3 months.

The summer Milky Way is so much brighter than the winter version. Sometimes it is fun to just cruise some of the Milky Way clouds with a telescope, so keep looking up.

Current CASE Membership

(Current dues up to date)



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

Total Paid Membership - 17

* = Mailing name on all newsletters.

F = Family Membership I = Individual Membership

S = Student Membership

