

The Photon Gazette

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



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

WOW!! What else can I say about our great little club here in Siloam Springs. We've added a new family membership last quarter and I'm looking forward to more people being "welcomed to God's Wow!"



Second Quarter Results

It's been a great second quarter for CASE, now in its second year of existence. Our website is continually being accessed by others who are just finding that there is such a thing as Christian astronomy in existence. People are really amazed to find out that we are not a theology club, but that we have rallied around the Gospel to declare that the heavens are the creation of the Lord God Almighty.

We had our annual meeting last week and only four members were in attendance. I was re-elected as President, and Michael Peterson was re-elected as Secretary/Treasurer of the club. My first duty as club president was to re-appoint David Cater as our club awards coordinator for the Astronomical League. I want to challenge our members to take part in the many observing clubs that the AL sponsor. I am currently participating in three, and have found them to be both educational and enjoyable. Some are more difficult than others, but don't be afraid to go out and give these observing clubs a try!

As you will read in this newsletter, CASE has been honored by the Mid States Region of the Astronomical League (MSRAL) to host the 2002 MSRAL Convention here in Siloam Springs on the campus of John Brown University. What a great opportunity for our relatively small club (22 members) to be actively involved in the region.

These are great responsibilities for our club, as we will have to plan and pull-off the regional business meeting and the convention June 7-9, 2002. I am confident that our club can make this a huge success!

As the newly elected Chairman of the MSRAL, I am preparing to travel to Frederick, Maryland to attend the business meeting of the AL at ALCON 2001. I will report next quarter to you as to what business transpired at the regional.

WOW!!

Our last star party hosted about 10 people, both club members and visitors alike. I must say, this was the best night of observing that I have had in quite a while. We were able to take my 12.5" Discovery up to 375x on the globular cluster M22 in Sagittarius. When we were viewing the intricate structures of the globular, along with its thousands of bright stars, all that we could muster was "WOW!"

Remember to keep looking up! God Bless and Clear (preferably Dark, too) Skies!

Patrick Carr
President/Editor/ALCor & MSRAL Chairman

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.

Brian Greuel Family (4/30/01)
 Ken Knight (06/30/01)
 Stephen Sbanotto Family (7/31/01)
 William Leiser (8/31/01)

CASE Selected to Host Mid-States Region of the Astronomical League Convention in 2002

Dr. David Cater, MSRAL Vice-Chairperson

Hello, fellow CASE members and interested friends of the Siloam Springs astronomy club. I wanted to take this opportunity to report on a recent trip some of us made to the Mid-States Regional Astronomical League meeting, which was held in Conway, Arkansas. Hendrix College was the sponsoring site and Patrick Carr, Michael Peterson and I attended this conference over June 8th., 9th. and 10th. Around 70 persons attended and it was very exciting for us to get a chance to hob-knob with fellow amateur astronomers and to hear a number of invited speakers.

The highlight of the meeting for me was a trip to the local club's dark site. The weather was not very cooperative as a high haze hung over our attempts to view clearly. We did get to see Mars with a 9 1/4 inch scope and an absolutely magnificent 18 inch Ritchey-Chretien and we could see some detail, though there was considerable turbulence. The 18 inch was fitted with a state-of-the-art charge-coupled device and computer support. In 30 seconds, the owner obtained pictures of the Whirlpool Galaxy [M51] that would take me over an hour to obtain using film and guiding! I was absolutely amazed! I was also amazed with how much a set-up such as this costs--I won't even



CASE president and newly elected MSRAL officers Patrick Carr (chairman) and David Cater (Vice-Chairman)

mention it. I will say that I would need to get a second mortgage to even approach what it cost.

Patrick Carr and I had attended two previous MSRAL conferences before, one in Missouri, and one in Kansas. At each of the meetings, as well as the one we attended this June, we had contemplated hosting such a meeting here in Siloam Springs, using JBU as the host institution. Could we get the bid? Having gotten the bid, could we bring it off, being a new and small club?

To make a long story short, CASE won the bid to host the 2002 conference! We will, indeed, use JBU as the host institution and we will work very hard to use a site at New Life Ranch for dark observation. Patrick Carr has been elected chairman of the Astronomical League region for this year and I have been elected vice-chairman. These are big responsibilities, but we look forward to having a splendid conference right here in Siloam Springs!

Let me end by asking for your help in hosting MSRAL. There will be big and little jobs to do to bring this off well. We will be asking for specific help with well-defined projects as the whole conference turns from plans to actuality. If you think you would like to volunteer to help us, once you see a project you could do, call Patrick Carr or me at JBU and get on board! Looking forward to a great conference in 2002!

The Gallery . . .

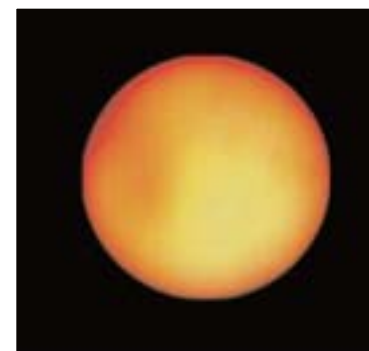
This area is reserved for photographs, drawings and musings from our membership. If you have an interesting thought, please be sure to e-mail it to thecarrs@tcac.net or by mail to the CASE office. If you have photographs or slides of interesting objects in astronomy, please get them to the CASE office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



Theophilus Crater on the Moon by Michael Cater



Lunar Appenine Mountain Range by Michael Cater



Mars by David Cater



Mercury by David Cater

Welcome New Members

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

Dr. Roger Youmans & Family

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

Treasurer's Report

Income (YTD June 30, 2001)	

Balance Forward from FY '00:	\$72.80
Membership Dues:	\$100.00
Money Returned from AL:	\$9.00
Total:	\$181.80
Expenses (YTD June 30, 2001)	

Postage:	\$4.32
National Astronomy Day Materials	\$26.00
Astronomical League 2001-02 Dues	\$45.00
Total:	\$75.32
Total Cash Reserves:	\$ 106.48

National Astronomy Day

Patrick Carr, President & MSRAL Chairman

CASE members decided to try their hand at their first National Astronomy Day event. Four members of CASE, Michael and Jon Peterson, David Cater and Patrick Carr set-up their telescopes at the Wal*Mart Super Center in Siloam Springs at 9:00 am to show visitors the active sun. By 3:30 pm, over 200 people stopped to look at the sun through three different types of mounted telescopes. Some of the reactions of the viewers ranged from "wow" to "is that a picture in front of the telescope"? Many people found it hard to believe that using the full aperture glass solar filters mounted on the front of the scopes made it safe to view our nearest star.



Members in front of Wal*Mart

Since this year's National Astronomy Day coincided with NASA's Sun-Earth Connection, the solar viewing took on a new meaning. After showing the active sun and sunspots to several visitors, some had been told in the past that it was never safe to look at the sun, no matter who was offering to help them see it. These CASE members spent a lot of time dispelling the fallacies and myths associated with the sun and solar viewing. CASE took this time to educate visitors on the inner workings of our nearest star, and to explain solar prominences and phenomena, such as auroras and radio interference witnessed here on earth.

Other items of interest that were displayed by CASE included information on Gamma Ray Bursts (GRBs), the Chandra X-Ray Universe, and Solar Weather and the Active Sun. These were presented on display boards with photos attached that was designed to help the public better understand these astronomical areas. Astrophotography supplied by David Cater that had been set out on a display table included photos of Jupiter, Saturn, Mars, the Pleiades, M42, Comet Hyakutake, and a spectacular shot of the moon.

Another of the story boards displayed explained to people that "You Can't Buy A Star!!" Many visitors believed that they could name stars after children of loved ones. This story board helped to dispel the myth that stars can be purchased or named. Several visitors had admitted to purchasing a star name as a gift, and were disappointed to learn that this wasn't possible.

CASE distributed coloring sheets of Mars, Jupiter and Saturn to the children in attendance, along with a cut-out mobile of the solar system that could be put together, colored, and hung in a room using string or thread. Sky & Telescope Magazine even supplied CASE with a full-color pamphlet entitled, "Getting Started in Astronomy" that was distributed free to all in attendance. Over 40 applications for CASE membership were taken, along with 35 issues of the CASE newsletter, the Photon Gazette, to interested visitors.

After the solar viewing was over, CASE members reconvened four hours later to show visitors the wonders of the night sky. Visitors in attendance were shown the 5 day old moon, Jupiter, the globular cluster M13, the galaxies M81 and M82, the double star system Mizar and Alcor, the double cluster in Perseus, M42, the Great Orion Nebula, and the Owl Planetary Nebula. This was a great sampling of the universe for all to see, along with the individual instruction on the formation of each object and its significance in the night sky.

Important Club Activities Dates for 3rd Quarter

July:

July 13 - 8:30 p.m. (Star Party)

July 27 - 8:30 p.m. (Lunar Party)

August:

August 17 - 8:00 p.m. (Star Party)

August 31 - 8:00 p.m. (Lunar Party)

September:

September 14 - 7:30 p.m. (Star Party)

September 28 - 7:30 p.m. (Lunar Party)

What's Up This Quarter?

Mike Peterson, Treasurer

Summer Wonders

Summer is one of my favorite times of the year for looking at the night sky. There seems to be so many interesting things to look at.

Early in July, the Moon will be brightly shining, providing a lot of opportunities to observe it. By mid-July, the Moon will be moving out of the way and there will be more opportunity to see other objects. For example, in the West, the Realm of the Galaxies and the Sombrero Galaxy is still visible. As you turn toward the North, you can see Ursa Major with M51, the Whirlpool Galaxy, and M81 and 82.

In the East, in the constellation Lyra is the Ring nebula. Also near Lyra is a star that is one of the darkest red you will ever see. Not too far away is the Dumbbell nebula. This is near the constellation Cygnus, but is really in the constellation Vulpecula. You will also be able to see the summer triangle formed using Vega, in the constellation Lyra; Deneb, in the constellation Cygnus; and Altair in the constellation Aquila.

In the southern sky, around the constellations Sagittarius and Scorpius, there are a great many open clusters, globular clusters, and nebulae to look at. I could spend the better part of an evening looking at the southern sky this time of the year. Some of what could be viewed is M8 the Lagoon, M20 Trifid, the M6, M7 and M20 star clusters. Other objects include the Wild Duck, Eagle, and Omega Nebulae. Also seen in the southern sky is the planet Mars. If you look straight up, you can see the constellation Hercules where you can find the globular clusters M13 and M92.

By mid-August the Andromeda Galaxy is on the rise in the northeast. Not too far away is another pretty sight: the Double Cluster that can be found between the Cassiopeia and Perseus constellations. Toward the southeast you might be able to find the planets Uranus and Neptune in the constellation Capricornus.

There is another reason I like the night sky in the summer. The Milky Way star clouds. The summer Milky Way is so much brighter, and more visible than the winter Milky Way. Sometimes it is fun to just cruise the Milky Way with a pair of binoculars, or a telescope. It is amazing how many stars can be seen in one small magnified area.

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

Roger Youmans* (F) - 5

Total Paid Membership - 22

* = Mailing name on all newsletters.

F = Family Membership I = Individual Membership

S = Student Membership

