



O.A.O.G. NEWS

Volume 5-5, June 1999

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1) About OAOG News...

Welcome to the fifth issue of OAOG News. The past month has been exciting for the OAOG as several observing sessions brought together many newcomers. With warmer nights now with us, many were glad to join us to observe at various sites around Ottawa such as Armstrong road, Casselman and at the Museum of Science and Technology during International Astronomy Day. Unfortunately, despite all our efforts, we had to cancel our much publicized OAOG public star party of May 8th on the grounds of the National Aviation Museum. The weather for that weekend did not cooperate.

The climax of May's observing sessions came on May 10th and 14th when a number of us headed out to observe under the very dark skies of Foymount (Ontario). The experience at Foymount was described by those who attended as "amazing" and "unforgettable". In this issue, you'll have a chance to read some of the email comments and reports from the Foymount adventure!

In June, the OAG plans a number of pre-determined Star Parties and informal observing sessions. Many of these quick sessions are often announced on the OAG web site at the last minute, according to changing weather forecasts. We invite you to join us at these sky-watching events. To come out observing with us or for more information, please refer to the contact list at the bottom of this newsletter. Also, keep looking at our web site as it is often updated on a regular basis.

2) REPORT: May 12th session at the Airport...

On Wednesday, May 12th, we held an impromptu observing session back behind the airport at Armstrong Rd., the official site of the OAG. This busy session went from 9:00pm to 1:15am, with several telescopes on site. In attendance were, Frank Bayerl, Jason Mainville and his kid, Rock Mallin, Denis Legault, Pierre Martin and newcomers Eric & Janet Cohen. Denis even had his homemade observatory on site. It was a cool and breezy evening, but enjoyable. A weak aurora made an appearance in the north with occasional greenish curtains. With clear limiting magnitude 5.8, we enjoyed nice views of Mars and Venus, and even some of the brighter deep sky objects (nebulae and galaxies). Everyone seemed to enjoy this get-together.

3) REPORT: May 10th and 14th Foymount adventures...

On Monday May 10th and Friday May 14th, we went to Foymount (a 1900feet peak located west of Renfrew) for an observing experience that won't soon be forgotten. In attendance to these all-night sessions were Mike Wirths, Attila Danko, Rock Mallin, Jason Mainville, Pierre Martin, and other friends who stopped by to join us for most of the night. Observing conditions on both nights were fabulous for all types of observing, under very dark and starry skies! Limiting magnitude was rated at around 7.0. Some of the more impressive telescopes were

present. Mike had his 5inch refractor that gave the sharpest and most detailed view of Mars I had ever seen. Excellent “seeing” on May 14th also helped achieve these incredible images. Attila brought his giant 25inch Dobsonian to watch the myriads of galaxies and other deep sky targets possible under such conditions. Looking at the M13 star cluster was like seeing an actual photograph in a book. Rock was also there for CCD imaging with LX200 12inch and doing visual with 16inch Dob. The night went by quickly, and by the time we were ready to head back home, the Sun was rising. The long (nearly 2 hours) drive back to Ottawa was most certainly worthwhile.

Here are some of the email comments that were exchanged in the days following the Foymount adventures...

Jason Mainville wrote:

“Well I’m very impressed. Just to let you know limiting magnitude of 7.15 tonight and did we ever find a nice place to set up the scopes for future events man-o-man was that nice.”

Rock Mallin wrote:

“Well, It has been done!! The final test for Foymount has been fully tested and approved! What a surprise we all got... The visual magnitude we obtained was “quickly done” and it stands at an easy 7.1 Mag!! We could have tried harder and probably would have got higher. The view is the most fantastic I have seen so far anywhere!! If you are serious about observing, this is the spot to be. To put in perspective, accordingly to Mike Wirths, The view of M51 in my 16” Dob, was equal to his observatory near Perth with his 25” Dob!! That’s like gaining an extra 9 to 10 inches of aperture, with the sky condition, at Foymount! Even an 4.5 “ would perform with extra ordinary result. I have NEVER seen a picture perfect of M51 like the one we seen tonight. Also, M13, M57, M81, M82 and ngc6207 were all liketext book perfect. It is by far the most awesome site in entire Ontario. We are very lucky to have such a site within less than 2 hours drive.”

Rock Mallin wrote (again):

“Ho boyIm I ever tired!!!!!! Only 2 hours of sleep... I do not recomend this trip to anyone, unless you sleep there.... FOYMOUNT IS IT!!!!!!!!!!!! The absolutely most best sky I have ever seen in my

life... I will never forget those images imprinted in my mind, and in splendid resolution..... one thing to say.... WOW WOW WOW!!!!” And there is so much potential with this site, only limited by our imagination. It gives me a whole new feeling about observing and it brought back awesome memories. It’s like starting all over again, and this time, objects are more defined, and more like we imagine it in our mind when young. I think any one that take the time to go to Foymount, will not be disappointed, but you will be spoiled!! And that is dangerous. Once you have a taste of that, you don’t want to go back to inferior sites.”

“I would like to thank all that came along to Foymount on Friday/ Saturday, May 14-15, 1999. The memories are permanent, and unforgettable, as the night skies came to an incredible pitch dark, and with condition that we can only dream of. Most important of all, the presence of people I never observed with, or even talk to before, (barely) made this night unforgettable, and new friendship were born under the stars that we all shared. Among the finest arrays of telescopes, the knowledge we shared made that night even more interesting than I ever dream possible in the Ottawa Region. I truly hope more people will be able to experience such nights. With this finest group of people that came along, more and more observers will be able to attend to those star parties and get together.”

Mike Wirths wrote:

“I honestly think that was the peak of my Astronomical observing so far in my life! It was a perfect night....perfect seeing..perfect darkness..no wind and best of all great new friends!! I feel very proud to be included in such a fine group of enthusiastic positive people such as yourselves!”

4) REPORT: International Astronomy Day activities...

Astronomy Day activities for the public were held at the National Museum of Science & Technology on May 22nd. Events were held in the daytime with OAOG members displaying telescopes and handing out information outside the front museum lobby. We had a table with various documentation to all interested. Despite some cloud cover, we were able to do some solar observing during the clear breaks. It was a good opportunity to meet and chat with many people about astronomy and

observing. Overall, a good turnout.

That same evening, a public star party was held on the grounds of the Museum, near the observatory's 15inch refractor. Despite variable clouds, about 8-10 various telescopes were present. A surprising turnout of people had everyone at the telescopes busy! Enough people showed up that we could not keep count. In between the clouds, the public enjoyed crisp views of craters on the moon, Mars, Venus and double stars. Coffee and donuts were offered to everyone present at no cost. The event lasted until 11:00 PM (with some die-hards staying longer to enjoy Rock Mallin's intriguing CCD imaging of the moon and Mars).

5) Web site updates...

To visit our site, please go to:

<http://members.home.net/observers-group/>

Here are the updates currently under way on the OAOG web site. These updates should be all complete no later than Saturday June 5th:

- Several photos of various Star Parties and observing sessions held during May 1999. ("Star Party Pictures" section)
- A new article "Dealing with Dew" by Pierre Martin
- New links for satellite visibility at Armstrong Rd. and Foymount, Ontario
- Latest (May 14th) Meteor data from Pierre Martin
- New illustration for "Intro to Meteor Observing" section
- "Contact Info" page updated
- Some minor interface and graphical updates

6) June 5th OAG Star Party (Equuleus Observatory)...

Mike Wirths invites everyone to attend an OAG Star Party at his observatory, located near Perth (Ontario). Mike has a wonderful observatory housing a large 25inch telescope! On Saturday June 5th, everyone is welcome to attend (weather permitting only). The moon will rise only at 12:30am or so, but evening skies will be dark enough for all to enjoy many sky targets. People are invited to come early enough for supper if they wish, as a BBQ will be on site for hamburgers prior to setting up. A map with necessary directions to get to Mike's observatory will be available very soon on the OAG web site at:

<http://members.home.net/observers-group/>

If you plan to attend this OAG event or need more details, please let Mike know. You may call him at (613-267-7431) or send him an email at: <<mwirths@superaje.com>

7) June 11/12 get-together at Foymount...

We also discussed the possibility of a few of us returning to Foymount for dark sky observing on the weekend of June 11/12. This period will be around new moon to obtain darkest possible skies. We would like to explore and test some of the even more promising sites including one on a hill. Also, preparations would be done for a possible observing/camping event to be held in the near future for all those interested. If however, anyone would like to come with us in June to experience what all the excitement is about, please contact us for more information. You can refer to the list of contact info at the bottom of this page.

8) Our next meeting: Friday June 4th...

You are invited to join us at our informal meetings, if you wish to meet us and share ideas!

The OAG holds its monthly meetings on every first Friday of each month. Our next get-together will be on June 4th, at 6:30 PM. Location is at Burger King on St-Laurent Blvd, near the Museum of Science &

Technology. This time and location is ideal for many of us attending the RASC Ottawa Center 8:00 PM meeting at the museum's auditorium. Our meetings are held in an informal manner. We gather to discuss and plan our activities. We then head off to the RASC meeting, for a nice evening filled with astronomy talks and slides. Everyone is welcome to attend both meetings. Please send us a note in advance to confirm the location!

9) Contact information...

Ottawa Astronomy & Observers Group
P.O. Box 8285
Ottawa, Ontario,
K1K-0S1

e-mail : observers-group@home.com
Web : <http://members.home.net/observers-group/>
Phone : (613)-741-1612
Mon - Sat 10:00am - 9:00pm Sun 12:00pm -5:00pm

Other Contacts Within The Group:

Jason Mainville
e-mail : jmainville@home.com
Phone : (613)-741-0858 Mon - Sat 10:00am - 9:00pm

Rock Mallin
e-mail : adave@cyberus.ca
Phone : (613)-749-7592 Tues - Fri 10:00am - 4:00pm

Pierre Martin
e-mail : p.martin@cyberus.ca
Phone : (613)-834-2944

Roland Prevost
e-mail : rprevost@sympatico.ca
Phone : (613) 834-3050

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O. A. O. G. N E W S
Is produced by Pierre Martin,
Jason Mainville and Rock Mallin
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