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Vice Presidents Report

Martin Ferlito

Usually we have our fearless leader John Rombi adding his Presidents report, However due to his wife Jenny's surgery things are not quite back to normal as yet and understandably there is a lot to do. Get well Jenny and we hope to see you soon.

Kicking off the first General Meeting for 2008 one of our members Chris Malikoff has visited Narrabri Telescope Array and will be sharing with us his findings and some images as well. February General Meeting we have Geraint Lewis from Sydney University, his talk is on Galactic Cannibalism, I personally am very interested in this topic and I'm sure many of you are too. I believe that it will be a fascinating talk.

I hope you all had a great Christmas and New Years Celebration.

Well, what can I say apart from I hope we all have a better year this year than the last (Astronomically Speaking) So far this year seems to have all the same symptoms as last year with clouds, rain and more rain.

There have been some un-scheduled viewing nights since the New Year however they have not been very productive.

So be ready for some more un-scheduled viewing nights and take advantage of them as this is perhaps the only way we can get some time in with our scopes.

The forest observing night on Friday 11th and Saturday 12th was still on. The old saying "the early bird catches the worm is very much alive and well. Friday night was the best night so far this year and the lucky few that were there on the Friday indulged in very nice dark skies after some brief cloud.

The few lucky ones stayed up until about 4.30 am. Wow, it must have been nice. It seems to be a recurring trend to have great skies on the Friday, so take note, get there early, this

way you are in with a better chance. We had a great turnout, Lloyd, Ned, Bruce & Wayne, were there on the Friday and Chris, Geoff, Ivan and Myself got there on the Saturday only to be confronted by Heavy cloud. The weather went from bad to worse as the day progressed. So we did what any other self respecting Amateur Astronomer would do and that was partake in alcohol, well, just a few. Then we went in to enjoy a Musical rendition of War of the Worlds. Although the weather was horrible, the MAS spirit was high as usual (not due to alcohol). The forest cabin is a great place to unwind so if the weather is not good for viewing, perhaps you would like to come along anyway and enjoy the company. There will be some photos on the website soon.

Speaking of the website, it is hoped that the New Look website will be happening soon. You may have noticed that the members section is not password protected due to the migration to another hosting company. All sensitive information has been removed temporarily but it will all be back to normal soon.

We now have around 10 or more members in our club which are doing Astrophotography and Imaging. Things have indeed changed since I joined the club. I'm not saying that this is because of me, I believe that it may be caused by the drop in camera and laptop prices in the recent times. Also due to our growing number of Computer driven telescopes and Imaging devices, Soon we will have to move towards looking at a way we can manage the light emanating from so many laptop computers in our club.

I'm not saying that this is a big problem, but it is a concern to some. Perhaps we can allocate an area at the forest and at Stargard for Go-To's and Imaging. Please do not misunderstand me; I don't want anyone to feel that they are doing something wrong by having a laptop at observing nights, just that we need to be aware of others.

We need your input for Prime Focus, so if you have anything to share, please forward it to Kate her email is cyberpiggy@optusnet.com.au

Some things for this year.

I have been in contact with a business which will be doing the embroidery for the MAS shirts and I would like to put it to the membership for ideas and suggestions for the design. If we have a few designs in consideration, we will put it to the Membership decide. Just remember it will be embroidered and must be simple and to the point. It must be no bigger than pocket size and B&W.

A decision will be made on the section leaders and put into place.

I am planning to hold some Image processing workshops perhaps at my home for those interested. All you would need is some images or photos and your laptop.

Last Note.

If you have recently purchased a telescope of any kind which you need some assistance with, Please just ask.

Clear skies for 2008!

Prime Focus Article Submission

Deadline for article submissions for the February edition of Prime Focus is

Monday 11th February 2008

All Articles can be submitted via email cyberpiggy@optusnet.com.au
Or via snail mail to the MAS Postal address

Thanks to all the contributors for this month.....

Seeing Double – Orion

David Hall

(refer to insert for star map)

Seeing Double takes us away from the southern constellations to Orion this time. I plan to do more of a mixture this year, not that the southern haven't been fun mind you because I will be visiting them again and soon. Anyhow, on to this edition of Seeing Double...

Orion! A hunter among the stars. This constellation is probably *the* best know and most familiar in the sky. Home to the famous and much photographed Great Orion Nebula (aka messier 42) and the extremely difficult to see Horse Head Nebula this area is rich enough stars and DSOs to keep every amateur in awe for ages.

It is said about Orion that he is hunting Taurus the bull with his two hunting dogs (canis major and canis minor), chasing the bull across the sky from east to west... it is too bad that from the southern hemisphere he does this standing on his head! Down here the belt and sword make up what we call the saucapan. Mythology on Orion spans many different cultures and periods in time from the ancient Sumerians who saw him as a shepherd to the Greeks of whom he was a god to. Orion is one of the first known constellations in the sky.

There are many double and multiple stars in Orion, so many in fact that I could write pages and pages about them. Instead I have given you but a handful this time and may come back to do a "part 2". These aren't my favorites nor are they the best but like any double I like them.

Before we move on to the list it is worth noting that I read in a article somewhere that [Betelgeuse](#) or Alpha Orion may not in actual fact be there any more... quite a headache producer this one, but when you consider that what we are seeing when we look at it is soooo far in the past it may very well have gone supernova or maybe not. But won't it be spectacular!

Anyhow, here's the list:

1. rigel (stf 668) 0.30/ 6.80 : see attached picture. rigel is a fave among the orion constellation and one of the main stars forming the feet of Orion. And easy split in good conditions the main star can often bee a bit too bright, drowning out its smaller friend.
2. sigma orionis (stf 3135) see attached picture: a beauty in the area just above atlitak in the belt. This system of stars contains four. A medium aperture will resolve them all.
3. alnitak (stf 774) 1.88/ 3.70 2.6"/: forming part of the belt alnitak is a triplet... to the average telescope thou it is a double of brilliant white and blue (A and B respectively) although fairly close and slowly moving apart it is a pretty easy split.
4. H 5 25 3.60/10.97 33.7"/ : yup, its a wild goose chase! back up near rigel again you'll find this one. More of a challenge for really small scope but fine for my 8er! The primary is a bright white and the secondary an indistinguishable (long word huh!) dim color.

5. theta orionis... the trap! There are so many guides to the trap on line that I won't post anything much. I counted six stars on a breezy night. How about you!

6. stf701 6.13/ 8.09 6.0"/: a nice easy split of white primary and blue secondary which is a small hop from rigel.

7. knt3 4.57/ 8.62 2.9"/: I am not sure why i had troubles with this one but i did. its not super close but i had to use fairly high magnification on it. the primary appears white or light blue and secondary might be orange or red.

8. STF 728 4.44/ 5.75 1.3"/: this is a hard one if the conditions aren't right. I have done this one before under favorable conditions but due to the bad seeing at the time of typing this and the closeness of the double I couldn't see the split this time. Give it a go thou if you are up to the challenge - from memory both stars are white.

9. stf 378 3.51/ 5.45 4.3"/: just for reference numbers 8- were done on 7.1.07, a particularly bad night of about 3/10 seeing but as these are desperate times and it could be some time before i get clear skies again i gave it a go. This double is not a hard one at all, but due to the seeing the gap was close to closing at times. A star and the dimmer B are both white in bad seeing.

10. stf 817 8.68/ 8.93 18.6"/: an easy split under just about any conditions it seems. Both stars look almost identical to my eyes so its hard to know which to call the primary. just as well they both showed as the same yellow color too in my scope.

Sharp splitting everyone

Naming the Moon

Ian Cook

A Dutchman Michael Florent van Langren in 1645 who was the Royal Cosmographer and Mathematician drew the first maps of the moon surface.

He attempted to determine longitude at sea by the movement of the terminator on the Moon surface illuminating and darkening lunar mountains. He prepared maps of 30 phases of the moon including when it was full, and named these prominent lunar features after the Spanish Royal family and court officials.

Like many other famous names of his time, he did not succeed in establishing longitude by this method; therefore, his maps did not figure large in public or official consciousness.

Six years later, the Italian Giovanni Riccioli published a series of maps and as Langren's names were considered inappropriate, all were abandoned.

Today we have Riccioli's names for most of the moon features, however the large crater Langrenus on the eastern rim of the Sea of Fertility was named in honour of Langren himself.

Transient Lunar Phenomena (strange lights and movement –TLP's) flare inside the crater from time to time. ***Mikey may be hanging out in his place!***