

## 2020 May Observations from Big Woodchuck Observatory

----- Original Message -----

**Subject:**[kiskiastronomers] a Moonlit Night in the Backyard (plus new video) [2 Attachments]

**Date:**Wed, 06 May 2020

hi all,

Got out Monday evening in the backyard observatory, thinking I was going to do some observing. (yeah, I got fooled by sunny afternoon weather,,, lol)

But even with the thickening haze that moved-in shortly after sunset, I was able to get in an image of Venus using my travelscope setup.

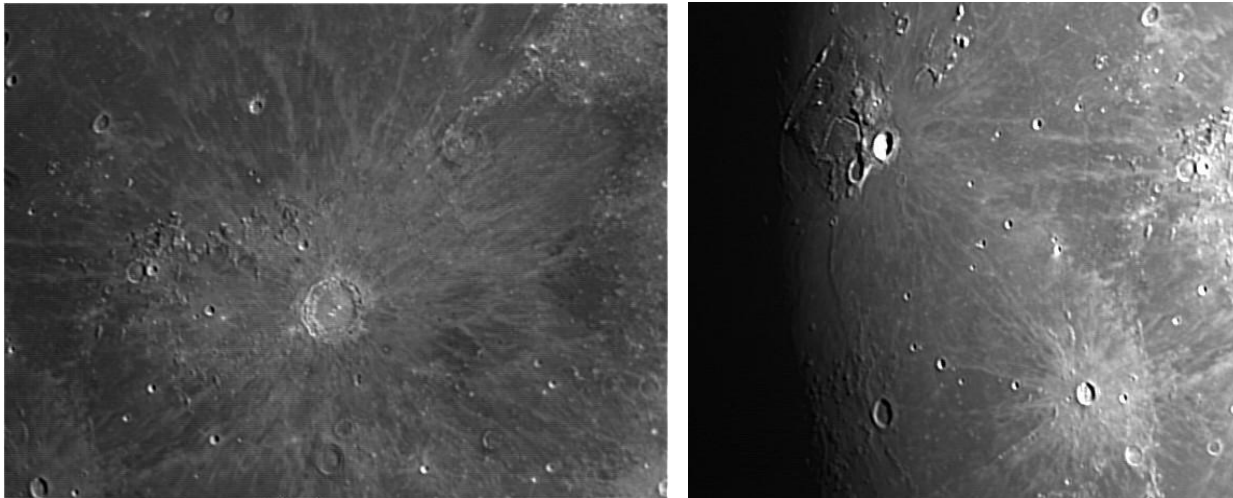
(8" Celestron SCT optical tube on a CGem mount using the ZWO ASI294MC camera):



(16 second AVI captured using SharpCap, and processed using RegiStax)

Also, used my permanently mounted observatory telescope, (8" Meade LX200 SCT with a StellaCam-3 analog videocam), to video-observe the Moon:

(Copernicus, and Kepler/Aristarchus both 20 second AVI's captured using SharpCap, and processed using RegiStax)



Still testing my new DIY allsky cam: (ZWO ASI224MC with a 1/3" 1.25mm IR MP fisheye lens)

Here's a video from Monday evening. - Frame capture every 30 seconds from the allsky cam with exposure & gain set to auto using SharpCap, individual images stitched into AVI using Startrails: <https://youtu.be/nQjXaP4mLuo>

While I'm having fun using the stock 'Photo' video-editor that comes with Win10, not happy about it throwing artifacts into the video.

Larry

----- Original Message -----

**Subject:**[ORAS] a few galaxies from Tuesday night

**Date:**Wed, 13 May 2020

hi all,

Last night, down here in Baldwin, we had a couple of hours of dark skies before Moonrise.

Spent a fair amount of that time spinning my wheels waiting for gaps in the lake effect clouds, but I was able to capture a number of faint Herschel galaxies in Ursa Major near the bowl of the Big Dipper. Most of the Herschel's were small smudges of fluff, but a couple did stand out!

NGC4013:



NGC4096:



Both imaged using my 8" SCT/CGEM and ZWO ASI294MC camera with ROI=1280x1024, stack of 30 subs at 20 seconds each equaling a 10 minutes exposure.

And to wrap-up the night, here's a cropped image of M101 (ROI=4144x2822, stack of 45 subs of 20 secs for 15 min)



Amazing what can be done from a light-polluted backyard observatory only eight miles from downtown Pittsburgh!  
I'll be heading back out again tonight!

Larry

----- Original Message -----

**Subject:**[ORAS] Wednesday night was good!

**Date:**Thu, 14 May 2020

hi all,

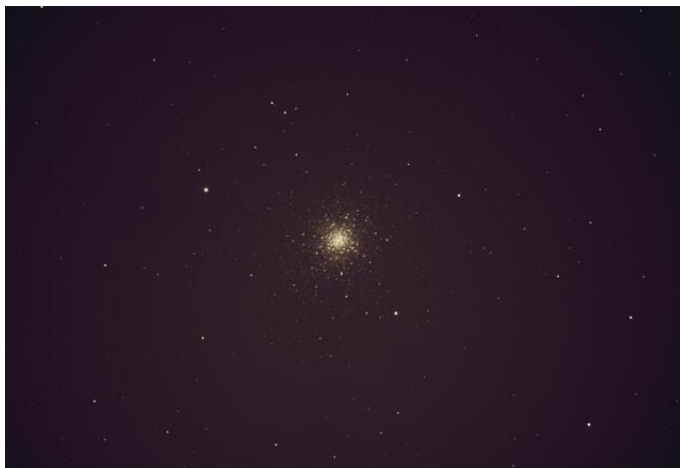
The clouds held off for Wednesday evening, and it was a pretty decent night.

I continued my hunt for Herschel Objects in Ursa Major, the majority of which were faint little galaxies, but there were several nice large bright ones.

The best one was NGC3718:



M3:



8" SCT/CGEM and ZWO ASI294MC camera with ROI=1280x1024, stack of 60 subs at 20 seconds for a 20 minute exposure.

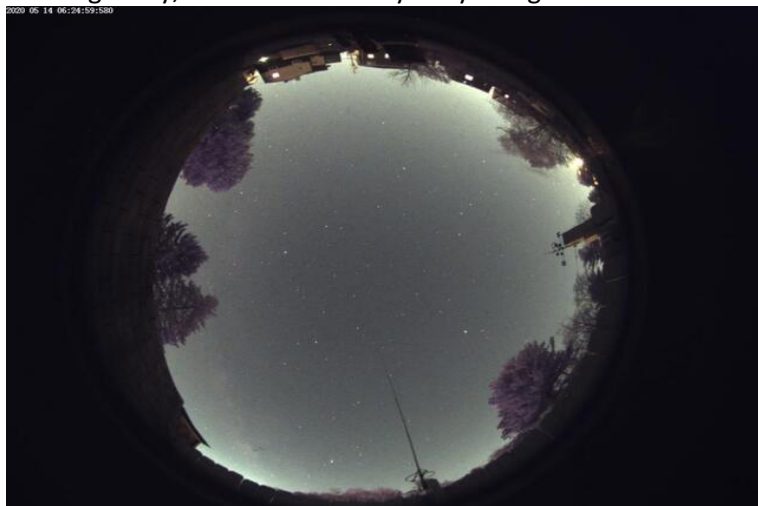
My last catch of the evening was a pretty little one-arm galaxy - NGC3978. I believe with that galaxy I have now completed the entire Herschel Catalog!

(I need to cross-check my list, process the images from the past several days, and update my website)

to wrap-up the evening prior to 3rd Quarter Moon Rise, I spent a few minutes visiting one of my favorite globular clusters - M3 (8" SCT/CGEM and ZWO ASI294MC camera with ROI=4144x2822, stack of 40 subs at 15 sec for 10 min).

Also, here's a short video from the allsky domecam. <https://youtu.be/9cj83vCoD3k>

Nothing fancy, but note the Milky-Way rising at the end of the avi. Here's a single image:



ZWO ASI224MC camera with ROI=1304x976, single image at about 18 seconds

Looking forward to creating a new video when the Summer Triangle hits the zenith!

Larry

----- Original Message -----

**Subject:**A Fair Night,,,

**Date:**Mon, 25 May 2020

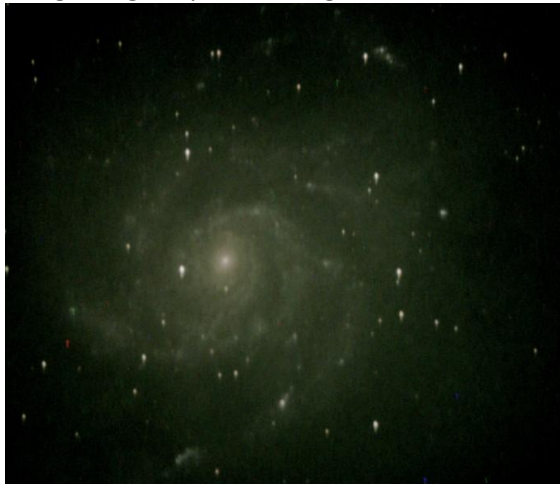
hi all,

Sunday night was a fair night here in Baldwin. So I socially distanced myself to the backyard observatory.

Spent some time after it was dark enough redoing my polar and GOTO alignments on my telescope, which I last did back in early April when I setup in the backyard.

I then used the 8" Celestron SCT / CGem mount and ZWO ASI294MC camera to image several of the brighter Messier galaxies that were well placed. My main goal of the night was to have another go at M87's relativistic jet based on the interesting observing article about it in the April 2020 Sky& Tel magazine - "A Curious Straight Ray".

Here's my image from the night - the 'jet' is the tiny streak heading straight-up from the galaxies core.

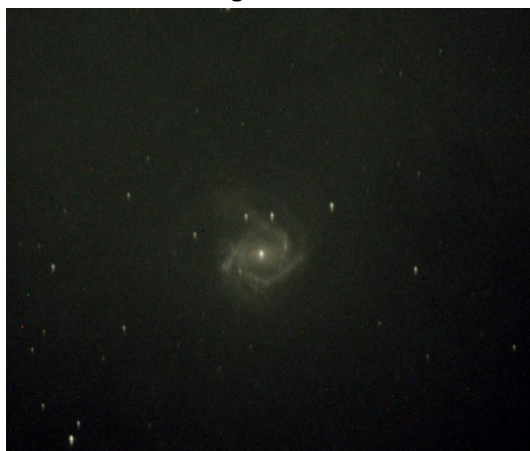


ROI=2072x1410 (cropped), stack of 30 subs at 20 seconds equaling a 10 minutes exposure.

I then spent some time with M101 using the article in the June 2020 Sky& Tel 'Galaxy Hop Around M101' to identify all the NGC numbered HII star forming regions that are visible in M101's spiral arms. (Sky & Telescope magazine always has great observing articles!) (ROI=2072x1410 (cropped), stack of 120 subs at 15 seconds for a 30 minutes exposure).

Over the course of the early evening, there were a number of times that the sky went hazy and a breeze kicked-up. Between the breeze and what looks like a possible balancing issue with the mount, most of the images suffered from not so round looking stars. Oh well!

Here's a few more galaxies from the session: M61 and M51:



And finally, another allsky-cam video! <https://youtu.be/NXRPoZdeizl>

Looks like tonight should be a good evening, hopefully folks are out observing. But I'm going to skip it and rest-up for an all-nighter Tuesday evening! Larry



----- Original Message -----

**Subject:**Last night a Bust!

**Date:**Wed, 27 May 2020

hi all,

Well, for the past several days, the weather forecast for Tuesday night was showing beautiful clear skies.

And Tuesday afternoon/early evening was, up until around Moonset,,,,,

Here's a short video with an appropriate title: <https://youtu.be/DxeXyvFHSmU>

Larry

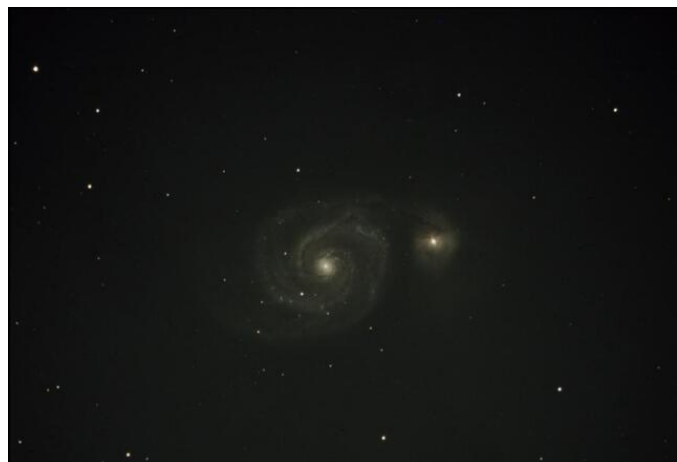
----- Original Message -----

**Subject:**[ORAS] Observing under the Moon

**Date:**Sun, 31 May 2020

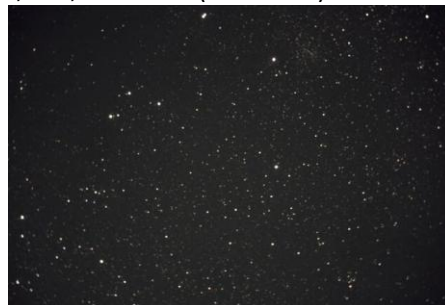
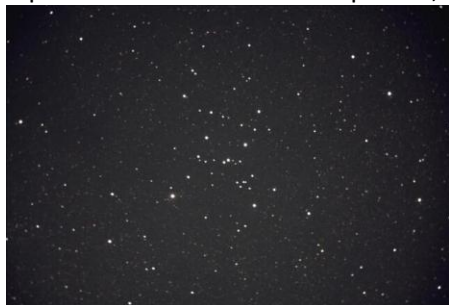
hi all,

Even though there was a bright Gibbous Moon overhead, It was still a good night for galaxy hunting, at least the brighter ones! I've been working on my CGEM mount for the past week resolving a tracking issue with the RA drive and wanted to test out the fix. Here's an image of M51 - "Whirlpool Nebula" in Ursa Major, followed by M64 - "Blackeye Nebula" in Coma Berenice:



Both imaged using my 8" SCT/CGEM and ZWO ASI294MC camera with ROI=2072x1410, stack of 240 subs at 15 seconds each totaling a 1 hour exposure.

Wanted to image M101 again, but a cloud bank heading down from Lake Erie was pushing a little light haze ahead of it's arrival. So I instead went after a few open clusters that wasn't impacted, M6, M7, and M24 (starcloud)



All three imaged using my 8" SCT/CGEM and ZWO ASI294MC camera with ROI=4144x2822, stack of 12 subs at 15 seconds each totaling a 3 minute exposure.

And here's the video from the evening: <https://youtu.be/jpj7-ohCQjo>

A bright Gibbous Moon setting around 2am. Watch for the Milky-Way rising afterwards.

Larry