2022 December Observations from Big Woodchuck Observatory

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

Anyone see Geminid meteors last night? (12/14/2022)

hi all,

I was out observing last night till about 1am, and had my AllSky camera running, hoping to catch a few Geminid meteors.
After reviewing thru the captured frames, all I got was a single shooting star!

Guess the thin clouds, wanning gibbous moon, and all the neighbor xmas lights did them in. :-(
Hope someone else had better luck.
Larry

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

testing my new EVO-50mm refractor (12/14/2023)

hi all,

Thanks to a black Friday sale, I 'acquired' a new wide-field EAA imaging scope - a Skywatcher EVO-Guide 50mm ED refractor.

(here's an interesting video from Skywatcher about their little scope: https://youtu.be/CeCwuxSbeRo)

My plan is to use it as a standalone scope on my little Skywatcher StarAdventurer mount for solar eclipse imaging, and as a wide-field EAA obseving scope with my main ZWO camera and filterwheel. (this will replace the old Canon 25-100mm CCTV lens that I've been using).


or

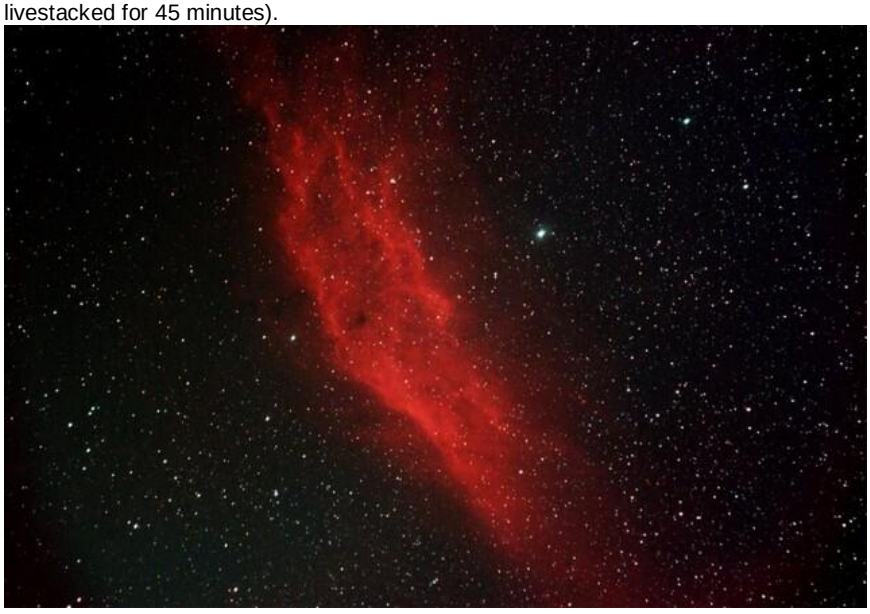

So after spending several cold nights outside tweaking the backfocus (they are't kidding about it needing 55mm! LOL), with the ZWO ASI294MC & filter wheel attached to the EVO-50mm, piggybacked on top of my 8" SCT on its Atlas Gem mount setup in my backyard, I finally have a few images to share.
While last night wasn't the best of sky conditions, occasional lite haze & scattered clouds, gibbous moon rising later, and several of my neighbors trying to win a holiday decoration contest, or just leaving their backyard lights on, It was as good of a testing night that we'll probably get over the next week or so.


(neighbor house to the south of my observatory)

So I uncovered and powered-up the main scope mount and headed inside the observatory to huddle over the propane heater. Outside the temp dropped to 28 deg.
My first deep-sky object of the night was the Pleaides - M45, in Taurus. (60 second exposure livestacked for 1 hour, using the L-Pro broadband filter).

And here's the Andromeda Galaxy - M31 (same exposure as above).

I then switched over to the L-eNhance narrowband filter to observe a few nebula.
NGC1499 - "California Nebula" in Perseus, and IC405 - "Flaming Star Nebula', along with IC410. (both were 180 second exposures livestacked for 45 minutes).



With the clouds starting to thicken and bright moonlight reflecting off of them, I couldn't call it quits without one more 'test'.
The Horsehead Nebula - B33, along with the 'Flame Nebula' - NGC2024. (180 second exposures livestacked for 15 minutes, before the clouds really washed it out).

Overall, I'm pretty happy with how these came out. The stars are mostly 'round' across the FOV, though my backfocus is several mm short of the required 55mm and I ended up cropping a slight amount off of each side. Need to get a 2 or 3 mm spacer ring.
Also, the flats that I created during the daytime didn't work the best, and I'll need to redo those when i get a chance.

Looking forward to new adventures in EAA wide-field observing during the next dark-of-the-moon, whenever we get one,,,,, ;-)
Larry

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

HARRP asteroid bounce (12/28/2022)

hi all,
Any of you radio amateurs out there catch the HARRP asteroid bounce test yesterday of asteroid '2010 XC15'?
Using my Kenwood R1000 shortwave receiver and a 40' vertical antenna wire, I was able to pickup the faint signal from Alaska at 11:15am on 9602 MHZ (31m band).
The signal sounded like a high-pitched repeating chirp. I was able to listen to it for several minutes before loosing it to noise.
Spaceweather has several audio recordings of the signal on their
website: https://spaceweather.com/archive.php?view=1&day=27&month=12&year=2022

More info about the experiment here:
https://uaf.edu/news/haarp-to-bounce-signal-off-asteroid-in-nasa-experiment.php
https://www.arrl.org/news/amateur-radio-operators-invited-to-participate-in-asteroid-bounce-experiment

Larry

Hi all,
Just to clarify, it was the shortwave transmission from the HAARP facility in Alaska that I heard. Not the bounce back from the asteroid.
Larry