

Hidden Hollow 2007

Hi all,

I drove to Mansfield Ohio Saturday morning for the last day of Hidden Hollow, and arrived shortly after Noon. As usual, I set up my camp and observing equipment with the Kiski group. (Bob Kalan, Bob Novack, & Denny Hill).

Spent the afternoon taking in the activities: Talks, workshops, a Starlab Planetarium, raffle prizes, solar observing, and touring the RAS's Rupp Observatory with it's 31" reflector!

The Richland Astronomical Society organizers put on a great list of speakers. While I missed some of the earlier presenters, (such as former LHSC speaker Ron Ravenburg), I caught the last half of a great presentation on observing and starhopping by Tom Whiting, who demonstrated later that evening with his 30" dob.

There was also Brent Archinal, professional astronomer for the USGS, who gave an update on NASA's return to the Moon plans, and the keynote speaker, Phil Harrington, renowned amateur astronomer and author, who gave a humorous presentation on the benefits of having a home observatory!

The day's presentations was concluded by announcing the various contest winners and the raffle drawing. The Kiski club won an award for having the most club members present. Bob Novak then won first place in the ATM contest! Bob also won several of the raffle prizes, and I won a copy of Sky&Tel's 'Pocket Sky Atlas'.

By then it had gotten dark, so everyone hurried back to their telescopes to start the night's observing. The clouds that were hanging around all day dissipated, and soon the Summer Triangle / Milky-Way region was hanging brightly above the Western sky. Cherry Springs it is not, with several light domes around the horizon, but the sky was certainly much darker than Wagman, and even better than Mingo. The usual bright naked-eye deep sky objects were visible, such as M31 and the Double Cluster in the NE, and the Sagittarius and Scutum starclouds in the SW. The Milky-Way nicely spanned across the zenith from the NE to SW.

There were a number of bright meteors, with one notable show stopper meteor that went sailing thru Cygnus, brightening and fading multiple times along its path, sorta like a rock skimming across pond! I spent a good deal of time just sitting in a chair and soaking up views of the Milky-Way. Speaking of soaking, the dew held off till about 11:30 PM, but then it hit hard, and in a matter of minutes everything was dripping wet! That was the end of the small telescope and binoc mount that I had brought, along with the rest of our group, as none of us had bothered to earlier plug in our dew heaters, coming

late from the raffle drawing. So at that point we packed in our scopes and decided to walk around looking for some of the larger covered truss dobs that were still holding back the dew, and of course to look thru the observatory 31" reflector. When we stopped in at the observatory, they were viewing the galaxy NGC7331 and Stephen's Quintet in Pegasus. As they were nearly overhead, you had to ride in a lift cage a good 20 feet straight up to reach the telescope's eyepiece! In the dark!! (like being at Kennywood!!).

It was well worth the wait in line and the ride, as that was the best view of Stephen's Quintet that I've ever observed. All of the galaxies in the group were easily visible, showing lots of detail. After that we wandered over to Tom Whiting's 30" dob, where he was showing all kinds of faint fuzzies.

By then it was getting close to 1:30 AM, and with my feet finally getting cold, I called it a night! The overnight temp dropped into the low 40's, a balmy night compared to the frost they had the night before.

This morning we were all up bright and early, packed up, and stopped at Cracker Barrel before heading back to Western PA.

While the Hidden Hollow number of attendees was kinda small for a major convention, (around 85 - they're going thru a rebuilding period after several years of not holding the convention), it was still a very enjoyable event, and the RAS did an excellent job putting it on. I highly recommend it for next year!

I didn't take any photos, but if you would like to learn more about the event, presenters, Rupp Observatory, or the starparty convention, go to:
<http://www.wro.org/hiddenhollow07.html>

So Hidden Hollow makes four of the six regional starparty conventions that I was able to attend this year. (missed AstroBlast and StarQuest).

Cherry Springs
Mason-Dixon
Black Forest
Hidden Hollow.

Not a bad start for being away for a few years from the convention scene.
Looking forward to 2008!!!

Larry