

## Hidden Hollow 2008

Hi all,

This year, the folks at the Richland Astronomical Society moved up their starparty camping convention (Hidden Hollow) from the fall season to the spring, and made it one of the first events out of the gate. I was looking forward to the opportunity of observing the spring galaxies with the RAS's 31" newtonian at the Warren Rupp Observatory.

The weather report for the weekend wasn't very promising, but having already registered in advance, and catching the enthusiasm of some of the Kiski members at the Thursday club meeting, I committed to going regardless of the forecast.

I finished loading up the new camper Friday morning and made the drive to Mansfield Oh, arriving mid-afternoon. I joined several other Kiski members who were already on site - Bob Novack and Bob Kalan.

Here's a few photos of our group site:

(Bob Novack has the A-frame camper, Bob Kalan has the smaller teardrop, and my camper is the larger teardrop with the tent canopy)

<http://home.comcast.net/~kiskiastronomers/images/conventions/HH2008-01.jpg>

<http://home.comcast.net/~kiskiastronomers/images/conventions/HH2008-02.jpg>

<http://home.comcast.net/~kiskiastronomers/images/conventions/HH2008-03.jpg>

Here's a few additional photos of my new camper & LX200. I've installed video equipment, computers, and a small library in the back hatch for easy access:

<http://home.comcast.net/~kiskiastronomers/images/conventions/HH2008-04.jpg>

<http://home.comcast.net/~kiskiastronomers/images/conventions/HH2008-05.jpg>

Unfortunately, for once, the weather forecasters were accurate!! :(

It started raining right after I drove past Akron, and kept raining pretty much the entire weekend.

This was the preferred attire of the convention goer's:

<http://home.comcast.net/~kiskiastronomers/images/conventions/HH2008-06.jpg>

While most of the time, the outdoors looked like this:

<http://home.comcast.net/~kiskiastronomers/images/conventions/HH2008-07.jpg>

<http://home.comcast.net/~kiskiastronomers/images/conventions/HH2008-08.jpg>

Indoors, there were various activities including talks, workshops, a Starlab Planetarium, and raffle prizes:

<http://home.comcast.net/~kiskiastronomers/images/conventions/HH2008-09.jpg>

<http://home.comcast.net/~kiskiastronomers/images/conventions/HH2008-10.jpg>

In between activities, (and storms) we killed time back at the camp talking astronomy - telescopes and accessories, observing, starparties, and the weather. Here's a photo of Bob and Bob discussing Bob's latest purchase:

<http://home.comcast.net/~kiskiastronomers/images/conventions/HH2008-11.jpg>

We also 'pun'ished each other with a few times with bad jokes.

<http://home.comcast.net/~kiskiastronomers/images/conventions/HH2008-12.jpg>

I actually did get a few minutes of dark sky observing in!

Friday night, around 11:00 pm, it cleared off for about an hour.

No one had any scopes setup, but the RAS opened up their observatory, and a few lucky attendees got to look thru it before the clouds came flying back in. Late Saturday afternoon, once the last major squall line with straight line wind gusts had blown thru, the Sun came out, and it cleared off! I got the 8" LX200 out of the car, set it up, and connected the video and computer. Then more clouds and light rain rolled thru, forcing me to cover up. But around 8:00 PM, after the raffle prizes were given out, it cleared off long enough for me to get in a quick visual observation of the Beehive starcluster thru the LX200, and a video observation using my stellacam of globular cluster M3. Then, once again, a wind came up and the clouds quickly filled the sky. After about an hour of waiting to see what the weather was going to do, I finally called it a night, unplugged things and bagged the telescope. (Bob and Bob had, perhaps wisely, packed up and went home before sunset).

The next morning, the few of us who stuck it out were greeted to a nice sunny sunrise!

<http://home.comcast.net/~kiskiastronomers/images/conventions/HH2008-13.jpg>

Figures, Sunday, the day the convention ended, was a nice day, and we had great skies later that evening in Pittsburgh!

Still, the trip was worth it. It was good to get out with my Kiski friends and enjoy the company of other amateurs from around the region. We kept up the Kiski tradition of winning some of the doorprizes, Bob Novack got a Tele-Vue 25mm Plossl, and I won a Meade Series 5000 Super Wide Angle 20 mm eyepiece!

I was also able to test out and learn a few things about my new teardrop camper and 8" LX200 telescope in adverse conditions. That will make Cherry Springs, Mason-Dixon, Black Forest, and other conventions go more smoothly and enjoyable later this Summer.

If you would like to learn more about the Hidden Hollow event, presenters, Rupp Observatory, go to: <http://www.wro.org/HiddenHollow2008Files/HiddenHollow08.htm>

Larry