

## Hidden Hollow Star Party - September, 2013

I've always considered Hidden Hollow to be the last 'official' astronomy convention of the year (at least for our area of the country). After this spring/summer of new moon weekend rainouts, I had high hopes that the year could be salvaged by one last camping outing. Unfortunately, the evil weather cycle that we're in once again dashed all hopes.

### Fri 10/04/2013:

After watching the dismal weather forecast for the weekend, around noon, I headed out for Mansfield Ohio and the Hidden Hollow campgrounds.

It was partly cloudy starting out in Pittsburgh, but as I got to the Ohio state line, the sky became overcast, and while driving thru the city of Akron, I ran into a rain storm.

Arrived at the Hidden Hollow campsite just past 4:00pm.

<http://home.comcast.net/~lemastro/conventions/HH2013-03.jpg>

The sky had gone back to partly cloudy, but off to the NW, there was a line of dark clouds and an occasional rumble of thunder.

<http://home.comcast.net/~lemastro/conventions/HH2013-04.jpg>

Bob K and Bob L were there setup in our usual spot. I quickly arranged my campsite, but held off assembling the telescope until after Bob L checked the latest weather forecast on his smartphone.

<http://home.comcast.net/~lemastro/conventions/HH2013-01.jpg>

<http://home.comcast.net/~lemastro/conventions/HH2013-02.jpg>

Once Bob pulled up the weather radar/satellite images we quickly realized that with the incoming storm sheading in our direction, there would be no observing that night, and probably the next as well.

All three of us decided to leave our telescopes in the cars.

We headed down to the lodge around 6:00pm to grab a bite of dinner from the food vendor.

After sitting around for a while, waiting out a rain shower and visiting with some of the Richland astronomy club members, we headed back to camp.

<http://home.comcast.net/~lemastro/conventions/HH2013-05.jpg>

Bob K headed in to watch a movie and Bob L to work on processing some images. I decided to walk up to the club's EDU building and take in a presentation on the Jupiter-Juno mission. There was about 20 in attendance, which was probably at least half the folks on site for the night.

The talk was interesting, with the presenter giving a very good explanation of how a gravity-assist slingshot maneuver works. It was a good thing I took an umbrella with me as it started raining during the talk. Later, after the shower had passed, the sky went partly clear, just enough to show a few northern constellations such as Cassiopeia, Perseus, and Andromeda. But it didn't last long enough for anyone to uncover a telescope, and the clouds soon rolled back in bringing sprinkles.

I headed inside my camper where I caught up on some reading.

In bed, asleep by 11:00pm. Overnight, I was awakened several times by rain drumming on the camper roof... ..

### Saturday 10/05/2013:

Woke to a hazy, dewy, wet morning.

After breakfast, headed over to the showerhouse and while there a thunderstorm rolled thru dropping heavy rain. Around 11:00am, the three of us walked down to the main lodge and dropped a few bucks on the door prize raffle. As usual, Hidden Hollow has the best / largest selection of door prizes.

Later back at camp, around 1:00pm, a series of heavy rain showers drove everyone back inside. At 2:30pm, we strolled, with our umbrellas, back down to the lodge to take in a 'geology' presentation on impacts & craters.

<http://home.comcast.net/~lemastro/conventions/HH2013-06.jpg>

It was a very interesting discussion, and we all learned a few things.

There are actually quite a few impact craters here on Earth that have been recently identified.

In addition to that big crater down in Mexico, there were actually two additional large impact craters over in Europe & Africa that occurred in the same time frame, 63 million years ago, and they think that it was the combination of all three that led to that mass die-off of the dino's.

The new paradigm in geology is that 'when in doubt about how a peculiar area formed - it must be an impact crater'.

After an early dinner, we all gathered at the lodge for the 5:30pm door prize drawing.

Once again, the Kiski Astronomers 'team' cleaned up, winning a total of eight items!

Bob K brought home a new Sky & Telescope Atlas, along with all Orion Solar System - IV planetary camera Bob II, picked off 4 raffles - an Astrozap 5" solar filter, all Orion camera strap, a 2" camera adapter-ring, and a 1.5" barlow! I rounded-out the Kiski winning streak by winning a DVD video titled: 'Undaunted - the story of Allegheny Observatory', and all Orion Dual Lock andymount bracket.

<http://home.comcast.net/~lemastro/conventions/HH2013-07.jpg>

<http://home.comcast.net/~lemastro/conventions/HH2013-08.jpg>

At the very end of the raffle, a huge storm blew thru bringing high winds and heavy rains.

Everyone waited it out in the lodge, and once it finally died down, we made our way back to camp.

As it was getting dark, with another round of looming rain, the "Bob's" decided to head in for the night.

After a phone call home, I walked up to the observatory around 7:30pm, where there was a guitarist playing inside. It was kind of nice, sitting in the darkened observatory, listening to the melodies being played, while overhead loomed the giant telescope dimly lit in the red lighting. Very relaxing!

After the guitarist finished up, I headed back to camp and stayed for about another hour reading.

Called it an early night and went to bed at 11:00pm.

Was again woken up several times overnight by the rain drumming on the camper.

### **Sunday 10/06/2013:**

After a quick bite of breakfast, packed up the inside of my camper and was ready to roll.

Made my good-bye to Bob II and headed home to Pittsburgh.

(Bob K had already pulled out before I was up).

So this ends the final star party convention for the year 2013.

Once again, it was a wash-out. Let's all hope that 2014 will be dryer!

Larry M dHenry

Astronomical Webportal: <http://home.comcast.net/~lsnch/>