



# *A.S.E.M. Newsletter*

*April 2013*



## **THE MOON, CYGNUS & COMET PANSTARRS**

**PHOTO BY WILL DAY**

**APRILIS**  
**MONTH OF THE GODDESS APHRODITE**



Aphrodite, goddess of love

**APRIL NOTES**

**BY STACEY THATER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

Well, the vernal equinox has finally arrived and with it my plan for spring cleaning of the Park and facilities. I have decided to spearhead some major initiatives for our ASEM assets and facilities at the Park on the weekend of April 12-13. I am looking for team leaders and volunteers for the following activities:

1. Roll off observatory maintenance – Tasks will include checking the level of the roof, maintenance of the garage door opener and track, as well as general clean up and organization
2. Jones Bird observatory maintenance – Tasks include attaching a dust sweep, roller and building maintenance and optics cleaning. I will provide the cleaning supplies and containers.
3. Weed removal- I still have to clear this with the Park, but I am hoping that a general beautification can be included.

I will be happy to entertain any other ideas for cleanup and maintenance, please contact me to let me know if you wish to be a team leader or worker. I will lead the activities on Saturday starting at around 9, donuts and coffee provided. If we don't get everything done on Saturday before meeting time or the weather is bad, we will continue on Sunday starting at 10.

Additionally I would like to make a plea to the membership for meeting content. The meeting committee has done a fantastic job providing us with some quality astronomy material over the past months, but they could really use some help from you, our valued membership. Do you have a field of expertise or even interest that would make an interesting presentation? Have those astronomy related vacation digital photos that are aching to burn up some photons? Have an interesting project going that you would like to share? How about talking about a project that didn't go so well and helping someone else by letting them know where you went wrong (I could fill an evening with these personally)? Consider presenting to the rest of the membership, we rarely bite, except for the food at the potluck.

Here is looking forward to some clear skies for a change, hope to see you all soon.

Stacey Thater, AfA Executive Director

## APRIL CALENDARS

### Social

April 4 - 7pm Beginner Meeting Broemmelsiek Park

April 13 - 6pm Pot luck dinner. Featured dinner will be Barbeque Chicken prepared by David Lloyd.

7pm General Meeting. Weldon Spring, 7295 Highway 94 South, St. Charles, MO 63304

April 16 – 7pm DigitalSIG. Astrophoto group meeting Weldon Spring, 7295 Highway 94 South, St. Charles, MO 63304

April 24 – 7PM DIY-ATMSIG For the telescope maker to display his wares or those who wish to see what folks have been doing in their workshops. Weldon Spring, 7295 Highway 94 South, St. Charles, MO 63304

April 5, 12, 19, 26 8pm Broemmelsiek Park Public Viewing, weather permitting.

## VISUAL OBSERVERS PLANNING NOTES

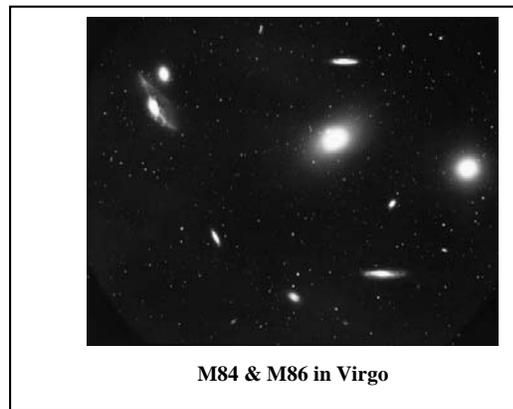
Comet PanStarrs is climbing towards the north but can still be a challenge to see early in the month. It's no longer naked eye (it was never prominent) but binoculars do reveal a wide tail. Jupiter is moving across the western sky after sunset, Saturn will be rising around 9pm early in the month. Here comes the parade of galaxies from Ursa Major to Virgo and farther south but it'll take a trip to dark skies to see the faint ones. Steve has great details on the brighter galaxies.

## VIEWING HIGHLIGHTS THIS MONTH—APRIL 2013

### BY STEVE BOERNER

Well it had to happen some time. We're at the point in the Messier's List that we've bumped up against Leo, Virgo and Coma Berenices. That means galaxies, galaxies, and more galaxies. For the most part, all of them are dim and it will be a challenge to see them from Broemmelsiek unless you have no moon, good transparency, and lots of aperture. Dave Lloyd says that the club's super 25x100 binoculars can get them from the park, but I know that I resorted to the C14 when I worked on this part of the List. You'll notice below that I left out the bino difficulty column because they are all difficult.

You won't have too much luck finding these objects without a bit of prior planning with an atlas or computer program. Planning your star hops in advance will keep you sane while you find the things below. I talked with Jim Twellman a few times before I started working on this area. You will use galaxies to star hop to other galaxies and your starting point is VERY important. If you have an Alt/Az mount or binoculars try starting half way between Denebola in Leo and Vindemiatrix in Virgo. You'll find M84 and M86 almost exactly between the two. If you have an EQ mount you'll find it easier to start at Denebola. M98 is almost due east in RA with 6 Com a bright stop sign



M84 & M86 in Virgo

that tells you that you've gone too far. Once you've found the starting place you are on your way. M40, the only non-galaxy in the group, is easy but you'll ask yourself why he put it in the List.

Messier Number	Constellation	Type	RA Hours	RA Min	Dec Deg	Dec Min	Mag	Size arcmin
109	Ursa Major	GAL	11	57.6	53	23	11	7 x 4
98	Coma Berenices	GAL	12	13.8	14	54	11	9.5 x 3.2
99	Coma Berenices	GAL	12	18.8	14	25	10.5	5.4 x 4.8
106	Canes Venatici	GAL	12	19	47	18	9.5	19 x 8
61	Virgo	GAL	12	21.9	4	28	10.5	6 x 5.5
40	Ursa Major	Double star	12	22.4	58	5	9	0.8
100	Coma Berenices	GAL	12	22.9	15	49	10.5	7 x 6
84	Virgo	GAL	12	25.1	12	53	11	5
85	Coma Berenices	GAL	12	25.4	18	11	10.5	7.1 x 5.2
86	Virgo	GAL	12	26.2	12	57	11	7.5x5.5

Good luck and see you out there in the dark!

## ASEM MARCH MEETING

BY STEVE BOERNER



ASEM's Astronomical League Award Coordinator Jim Twellman presents Dan Crowson a certificate and pin signifying completion of the [Local Galaxy Group and](#)

## Neighborhood Program.

Dan completed the program by imaging at least eighty-eight objects from a long list. He is the twenty-second person to complete this program. Congratulations Dan!

Erica Gibb from the AFA board and UMStL did a presentation on PanStarr.

## **BROEMMELSIK PARK OBSERVATORY AND THE C14 BY STEVE BOERNER**

The calendar says that spring the snow storm on March 24<sup>th</sup> otherwise. As the real spring time to beat the Broemmelsiek warmer and hopefully clearer bring out more people to our Open Houses (FNOHs). We'll we can get showing the public the night sky. Help can be anything and operating your personal binoculars, greeting and taking crowd, pointing out constellations or simply crowd control. We will help on nights the ASEM



is here although seemed to say approaches it is drum. The weather should Friday Night need all the help wonders of our from bringing telescope or pictures of the and bright stars, especially need Calendar

mentions larger groups like scouts or classes. The more people who are willing give up a monthly Friday night to help, the better chance the regular operators will have to relax a bit and avoid burn-out. Remember, if you log your hours you'll be in line for the Astronomical League's Outreach Award.

One of the great resources at the park is our Celestron 14. With a focal length of almost **THIRTEEN FEET** it is great for planetary viewing and it is no slouch on deep sky objects either. Once the FNOH crowds start to pick up we'll want to have the C14 going every Friday night possible. The C14 has some great advantages for the operator. Foremost is that the only thing you need to bring to use it is yourself and your knowledge. It is a GOTO scope and with 3x5" note card "cheat sheet" with objects that are well placed for viewing you are good to go. You can typically open the observatory and be viewing in ten minutes.

If you need training or a refresher on use of the C14 and Broemmelsiek Observatory I'll be available before FNOHs at the park between April 19<sup>th</sup> and May 10<sup>th</sup> at 7 PM. We'll cover all the bases: opening and closing the roof, one star alignment, GOTOs, combinations, scheduling, and dealing with the FNOH public. Send me an email at [admin@asemonline.org](mailto:admin@asemonline.org) if you are interested in attending a training session. If the selected dates don't work for your schedule, drop me an email and we'll see about working something out at a different time.

The C14 can be controlled with the SkyCommander hand controller or the computer that is in the observatory. Both are in place and it is pretty easy to switch between the two. It would be better to concentrate on only one of the two, so let me know your preference before training. Between now and the start of training I'll make sure that the observatory is clean, mouse free, and both alignment and collimation are good after the long winter layoff.

See you out there on a Friday night.

## MARCH DIGITAL SIG MEETING NOTES BY DAN CROWSON



**NGC 2403 BY DAN CROWSON**

The theme of March's Digital SIG meeting was "Comets and DeepSkyStacker". Eleven people attended a presentation on how to make images of comets. Other topics included getting a look at Mike Clemente's new SBIG STT-8300 camera, how to track NEO objects using EQMOD and the want for an imaging getaway to somewhere dark in the future.

"Comets and DeepSkyStacker" Notes - <http://tinyurl.com/cpbjv7u>

SBIG STT-8300 - <https://www.sbig.com/products/cameras/stt/>

EQMOD NEO Tracking - [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vTQFoPC\\_i3s](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vTQFoPC_i3s)

EQMOD Yahoo Group - <http://tech.groups.yahoo.com/group/EQMOD/>

The next Digital SIG meeting will be Tuesday, April 16<sup>th</sup>, 2013 at 7 PM at the Weldon Spring Interpretive Center. The topic of the night will be planetary imaging presented by Jim Melka. Jim's one of the best around, anywhere. We really appreciate him taking the time to come out. See Jim's web site here - <https://sites.google.com/site/trailtopastronomy/home>. Check out the Yahoo Group(s) for updates as the date gets closer.

Building on what we've learned over the last few months, April will give us another opportunity to put things into practice. An imaging party will take place at the Danville Department of Conservation site on Friday, April 12<sup>th</sup> or Saturday, April 13<sup>th</sup>. I'll probably head up other days around the new moon if the skies are clear. This is a good time to see some dark skies, get help and spend time with others doing the same. We'd really like to see some new people come out. Visit the Yahoo Group for more up to date information including weather backup plans (link below). The latest news can always be found in the ASEMDigitalSIG Yahoo! Group - <http://tech.groups.yahoo.com/group/ASEMDigitalSIG/>

## DIY-ATM GROUP

### 2011 JULY 27TH MEETING

#### SUBMITTED BY TOM RICHARDS, SIG COORDINATOR

Our meeting in July of 2011 was very busy with lots of show'n'tell of re-building, fixing, and use of old Coulter telescopes, including show'n'tell of a homemade Binocular (parallel) mount. Check out the write-up and photos (below). A special thanks to all who participated, especially to those who hauled their big Coulter dobs (during a very hot summer evening - whew) into the back meeting room at the Weldon Springs Interpretive Center (and no one could top what Wayne Clark brought in - you have to see the pictures to believe it!) AND to those who gave presentations on their DIY projects, modifications (to) and rebuilds (of) their Coulter dobs:

- Steve Boerner on his recent DIY binocular (parallelogram) mount that supports his heavy 80mm bino's. Nice work there Steve.
- John Beaury for presentation/demo of his Coulter "Odyssey 8" (inch), that included an interesting change to the mirror mount for better adjustments, air flow and fan (built-into the mirror mount), power/battery inverter, and collapsing leg stand for the rocker box.
- Mark Jones for presentation/demo of his 13 inch traveling (scope) dob design and a slide show on his (nearly completed and improved) 17 inch version of the same. Wayne Clark on his truly homemade MONSTER 17 inch dob (or shall we say coffin or walk-in closet there Wayne?), with quick removable mirror box, homemade 3 inch focuser slide/tube and 80mm (?) finder scope. Amazing work. Thanks for bringing that to the meeting Wayne.
- Thanks also to Bill Jones for bringing in his recently acquired, and in great condition, blue-box Coulter Odyssey I (13 inch) that gave an interesting comparison to my unmodified (thats need modifying) "red-tube" Odyssey 13 inch.

#### **The DIY-ATM SIG Meeting on July 27, 2011**

After the presentations we had time for a detail look-see and Q&As, and, since the skies, for a change, followed the forecast of "mostly clear", we continued the fun at 9 PM by hauling our dobs over to Broemmelsiek Park for a few hours of some visual observing fun and performance comparison. Don Ficken showed off his (in good working condition) Odyssey 13 inch there.

This combined meeting/event turned out to be a very informative and beneficial experience. I know I certainly enjoyed it. Thanks again for all the Coulter owners for joining the DIY-ATM meeting and sharing your work; you are certainly welcomed to return to the DIY-ATM group meetings, where building/modifying/improving scopes and gear is what we are all about. Don and I both feel that we ought to make the "Coulter/Dob Round-Up" an annual event for sure.

#### **OBSERVERS REPORTS**

There are many members who observe from their backyard, Brommelsiek Park, Danville, and other locations. A paragraph or two of your observations sent in for the monthly newsletter will get you published and folks would appreciate reading about your experiences.

No one sent in a report this month



## CLUB CONTACTS

### Membership

Membership issues can be addressed through our executive director Stacey Thater (pronounced “totter”) at these addresses:

Email: [stthater@stchas.edu](mailto:stthater@stchas.edu)

Snail mail:

Alliance for Astronomy (ASEM)

PO Box 141

New Melle MO 63365

### Committees

Comments, questions, suggestions and money (just kidding) may be sent to the following addresses:

[programs@asemonline.org](mailto:programs@asemonline.org)

Use this address to communicate with the program committee. If you have something to present at a meeting or wish to contribute and let someone else perform, send it here. Questions and/or suggestions about programming etc. Remember, they are here to help you. This is a user friendly society and we like to see members get up and share.

[equipment@asemonline.org](mailto:equipment@asemonline.org)

This address is used to find out about ASEM loaner equipment. If you find something amiss at BPark by all means report it here. If you are curious about borrowing an item, put in a request via this address.

[hospitality@asemonline.org](mailto:hospitality@asemonline.org)

Got a main dish you’d like to bring to the potluck? We sure could use it AND you will be reimbursed for your expenses.

[newsletter@asemonline.org](mailto:newsletter@asemonline.org)

Primary contact for the newsletter. Got an article or notice you’d like to see published? Send it here and be famous!

[Outreach@asemonline.org](mailto:Outreach@asemonline.org)

Special requests for groups at Broemmelsiek Park including:

- Notice of large party (more than groups of twenty)
- Request for specific requirements needed (school assignment, merit badge requirements, etc.)
- Requests for Star Party / Telescope event at another location

[steve.boerner@asemonline.org](mailto:steve.boerner@asemonline.org)

Web page and all other communications not covered above

## ENTERTAINMENT

Late breaking news and member adventures (or shenanigans as the case may be) can usually be found at

STLAstronomy in yahoo groups. If you aren't a member, you should join. Go to <http://tech.groups.yahoo.com/group/STLAstronomy/> and click "Join"

***Think Clear, dark skies***