

THE STAR DIAGONAL

THE JOURNAL OF THE OGDEN ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY

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Star Party Schedule

Meeting Announcement

Our meeting this month will be held in Planetarium at Weber State. The meeting will begin at 7:30. We will be watching a video about the changing magnetic poles of the earth.

OAS Minutes – May 2010

The March meeting of the Ogden Astronomical Society was held on May 13, 2010 in at classroom near the Ott Planetarium at Weber State University. The meeting was called to order by President Dustin Klein at 7:30.

Several star parties are planned.

5/14 – Boy Scouts Jamborall at Weber County Fairgrounds

5/15 – Booth for the Jamborall

5/18 – Adams Elementary

5/21 – Crestview Elementary

6/3-6/6 – Craters of the Moon.

Ron Vanderhule was also interested in going to Curlew on Saturday night. Any interested were asked to let him know.

Our presentation this month was on mirror cleaning and collimation. Doug Say and Dave Dunn gave the demonstration using Dustin's telescope.

Proposed Public Parties

June 12	Antelope Island
August 14	Antelope Island
September 11	Antelope Island
October 2	Antelope Island

Our Private Star Parties are as follows.

June 3 – 6	Craters of the Moon
July 6-11	Monte Cristo
Aug 3-8	Monte Cristo
Sept 1-6	Campout TBA
Nov 5-7	Curlew

Green Lasers for Sale

Kay Hargis has Jasper green laser pointers for sale. Kay purchased them at a volume discount. They are \$31 each and come with 2 AAA batteries and a plastic case. You can reach Kay at n7kh@juno.com.

For Sale

Wayne Sumner has the following:

4 – 9X50 right angle erect image finders scopes. They are \$45 each.

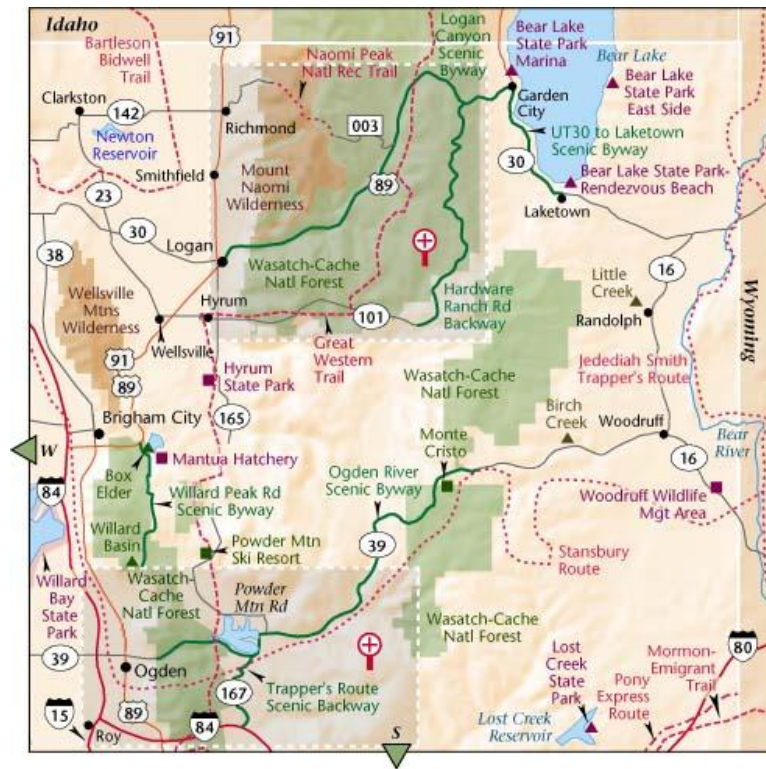
12 – Laser collimators for \$25 each.

Please contact Wayne if you are interested.

Monte Cristo

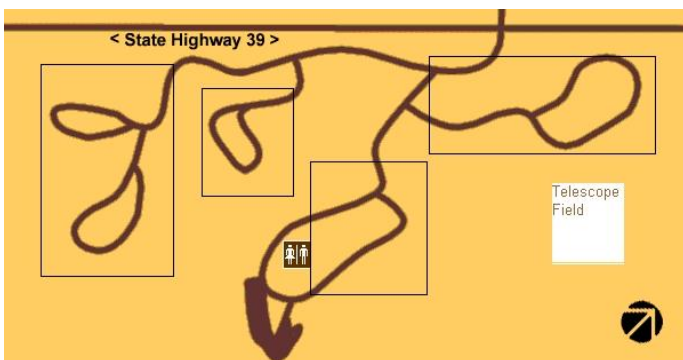
For those that are new to OAS, our Monte Cristo Star Parties are one of the highlights of the year. This is a star party where we go camping at the Monte Cristo campground on highway 39 in Rich County. The formal star party is Friday and Saturday nights. Many of us arrive as early as Tuesday to get more observing time. When the weather is nice, this can be a great place to observe from. We are at almost 9000 ft. The light domes from the cities are far away so they don't interfere with our observing. When the air is stable, we have seen really neat detail in galaxies like M101 and M51. The dust lanes in M31 are real nice as well.

We obtain a permit to use a meadow to the north of the campground. We set up our telescopes there. We have potluck dinners on Friday and Saturday night. We also have "Tea Parties" each day at around lunch time. These are fun events where we sometimes discuss different astronomy topics or just enjoy each other's company. We usually have several snacks prepared for the tea parties. They have included chips and salsa, cookies, chips and Doug Sandwiches (Ritz cracker, Salami, sharp Cheddar cheese and a Jalapeño pepper).



RTMC Review

I hesitated on going to the Riverside Astronomy Expo (RTMC) this year because it was not on the Memorial Day weekend. I think some RTMC planners thought that the reason attendance has been going down is because deep sky viewing was hindered by non-dark sky weekends, i.e., folks went to Big Bear California to view the stars. I flew into California and drove to Big Bear (I usually drive and camp) on Friday. I went for the Saturday events and the swap meet. This year RTMC attendance was probably down by more than 50%. I cannot judge accurately but the tickets handed out for the Sat. prize drawing totaled about 350. I believe the usual is around 800. You got a better shot at winning but the crowd was definitely lighter. The swap meet vendors were down maybe 30% but some good deals were had. The commercial vendors were also down more than a third. The owner of Williams Optics had a small stand and sold a few items at killer prices, but I got the impression he just wanted to sell his wares and go home. The telescope field was down by more than half and I believe there were only 8 scopes up for awards. I talked with a guy from a local club who said there would usually be 20



Map of Monte Cristo campground. There are more restrooms than noted. You want to try to get in the small loop by the Telescope field. The other loop near the field is also close.

from his group and there were only 2 who showed up this year. Their excuses were kids couldn't get out of school, people had to work and most relied on the holiday time off to be able to attend RTMC. One highlight on the telescope field was a 42" folded dobsonian that was a trip to see and to look through. It had a honeycomb mirror and was transported in an SUV. You could almost look at the Zenith while standing on the ground. Meade had the usual scopes but none equatorial mounted. Their big item was the new 6" and 8" lightswitch SCT's (as easy as turning on a lightswitch). Planewave had two new scopes and a new mount. One mount of special interest was one from Europe without any gearing. The pointing accuracy was 5 arcseconds and the RMS tracking accuracy is .25 arcseconds for 5 minutes and .4 arcseconds for 15 minutes. The encoders are accurate to .02 arcseconds and it moves with arcsecond accuracy at 15 degrees per second. Loading ranges from 20 to 150 kg and you can view this mount at

http://www.astrosysteme.at/images/DDM85_E_300508.pdf. With such tracking accuracy, the big concern is polar alignment and the tracking is said to be limited not by the mount but by how well the mount is polar aligned. Optcorp is the US distributor and there have only been two sold in the USA so far. This mount may revolutionize amateur astronomy. The RTMC prize drawing on Saturday night was a bit of a bust. One fellow won an item in the regular drawing, then his wife won an item and then he won the grand prize. Bit of a bummer there. All in all I was happy to go this year, mostly because my wife went with me (her first time). She quite enjoyed it. Next year the Memorial Day weekend is on a moonless night so attendance should rebound. I think the organizers had a wake-up call because of the lower numbers but as they said, it was an experiment.

Aaron Barson

