



NEWSLETTER

Autumnal Equinox 2013

RITTENHOUSE
ASTRONOMICAL
SOCIETY

Founded 1888 WWW.RITTENHOUSEASTRONOMICALSOCIETY.ORG

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

7:15 PM

The Franklin Institute
20th Street and Benjamin Franklin Parkway

Upcoming Meetings Include:

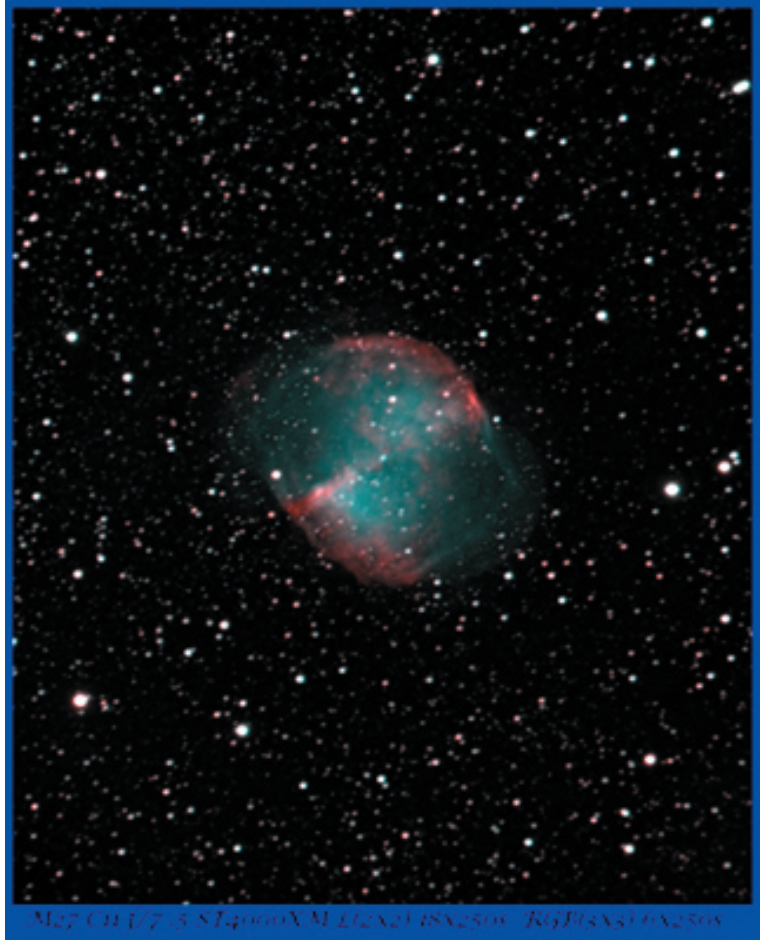
Date	Speaker	Topic
Oct 9, 2013	• Joe Seiber Wayne King	"I'm just starting to try this"

I'm Just Starting to try This!

Joe Steiber and Wayne King, fellow RAS members have generated a lot of interest in our membership as to how they take their "sky pictures." This is not really an astrophotography night since we are sharing how to start out taking some amazing sky pictures with no previous background. Joe will introduce some basic 'tricks' that can provide one some impressive sky pictures. Wayne wants to share a simple method to layer multiple pictures together to produce amazing deep sky pictures. Join us as we start learning to catch pictures of nearby heavenly bodies and sky phenomena, then travel a little further out to some Messier objects of interest!



Joe Steiber



Wayne King



Rittenhouse Field Trips, A new Initiative

Denise Vacca and Dan McCormick

You may wonder what your fellow members do while we take our two month recess in the summer. Usually we save one second Wednesday for a business meeting where we discuss upcoming events for the academic year – which by the way, everyone is allowed to participate – however, this time, after our meeting, fellow members gathered in Delaware for a new adventure. Thanks to fellow RAS member Lynn King, we were lucky enough to have a private tour of the Mount Cuba Astronomical Observatory in Greenville, Delaware. The way to the observatory was a long winding road deep in the woods overlooking a lake. There are multiple observatories on location, a 20 seat planetarium and a library with just about every astronomy magazine, book or article that you could ever imagine. The observatory hosts many public events and works in conjunction with The University of Delaware and the Delaware Astronomical Society. There are 2 domes on location. One dome has a 4 inch Refractor, which has supposedly extremely bright and crisp optics... it was cloudy the night we had our tour so we didn't get to view through it. The other dome housed their primary imaging scope with an 8" Celestron as the finder scope! To give you a reference of scale, an 8" telescope is what many amateur astronomers use to get great galactic views in our area...and it's their finder...whew!!

While at the observatory, we got a behind the scenes tour, a lesson, Q & A session and an impromptu planetarium show by the Observatory manager, Greg Weaver & RAS members Lynn & Wayne King. Lynn surprised us with Cookies & Lemonade in the Library to wrap up a great

night. Even though the skies were cloudy outside, inside the skies and company were brilliant! Visit their webpage for more information. <http://mountcuba.org/>

You may be wondering... why have I not heard about this field trip? I attend the meetings! Well, that's a good question. We plan all of our field trips online through our virtual members site, Ning. With our Ning page (<http://rittenhouse.ning.com>), members of our organization are able to receive private information about what the society is up to and our future plans. Right now we are planning a trip to the 2nd International Dark Sky Park in the word, Cherry Springs. Observing at Cherry Springs State Park is a dream for many astronomers. This park offers skylscapes that you thought you could only see by taking a boat into the middle of the Ocean. The Milky Way shines extremely bright overhead every night with the nebulous of the galaxy showing all its majesty. The park sits atop a 2,300ft mountain and caters to star gazers. They also offer camping, which is what many of us are looking to do. All lights at the park have been shielded and have been converted to an astronomy friendly red glow. While you are on the field no white lights are permitted, only red. They even have observatories that can be rented cheaply for the evening. As an added benefit, if you are really looking to get away from things, cell phones do not work so you can truly connect with the heavens!

We are also hoping to get a few day/night trips together to local observatories, and possibly a launch at the new Launch facility in nearby Virginia.

So, come one, come all. Join the field trip group on Ning. Our Field Trip officers are in the planning stages now of our adventure and we welcome everyone to join in the fun & conversation!



Take it to the Next Level

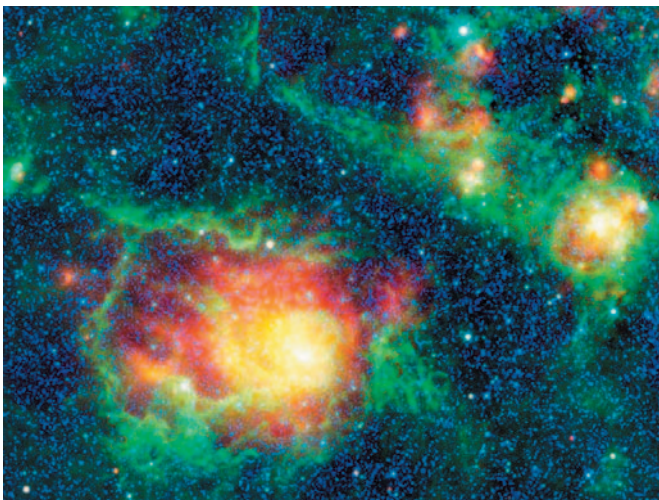
Rittenhouse Astronomical Society opened its 2013-2014 meeting year with a theme of “Take it to the Next Level”. The focus was to help members with ideas of how they can further their participation with the Rittenhouse Society.

The evening started out with a “Sky Today” update from Alan Daroff, Society Vice- President. He talked about the media hype of the “Super Moon” that occurred over the summer. Photographs were being published which totally misled the public to thinking the moon was really going to be “HUGH” in the sky. Alan then mentioned some “new

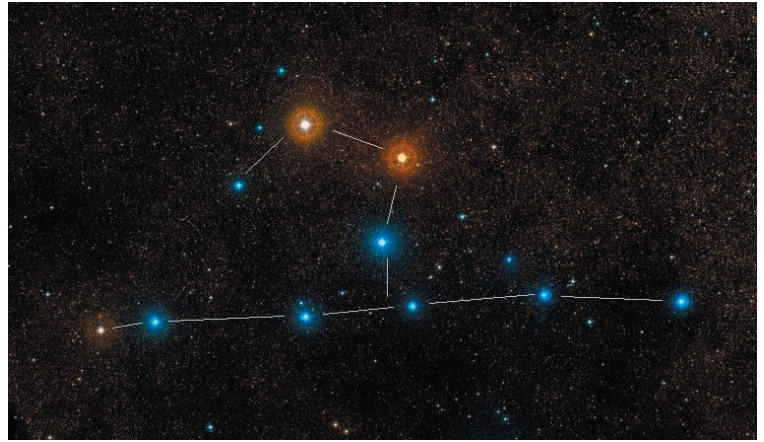


stars” that are now visible in our night skies with the aid of binoculars and telescopes. These are newly formed stars whose light is just now reaching Earth for use to view them. There was also mention of the Perseid meteor shower which occurred in August.

Ted Williams followed Alan and took us on a tour of some beautiful clusters and nebulae visible in recent months of this year. He highlighted the Lagoon Nebulae (inspired by member Vernell Gethers who said it looked like the glittering lights of the New Year’s Ball at Times Square in New York City. He then moved on to M71, the “Heart of Sagitta:.



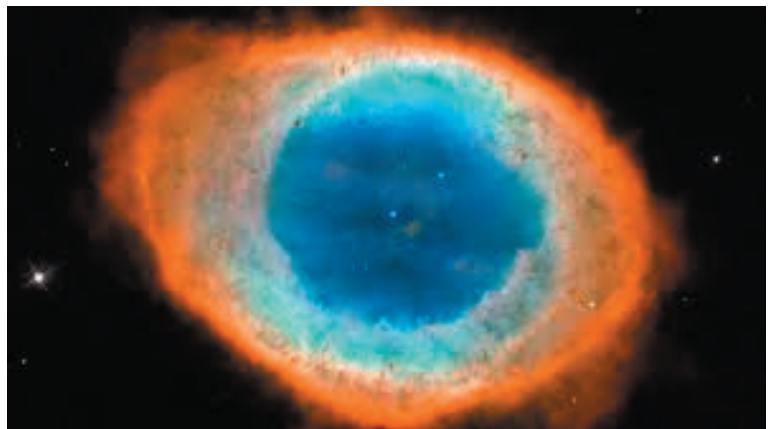
The microphone and laser pointer was then passed to some other Rittenhouse members who wanted to share some of the night objects that they had recently been enjoying over the summer months. Denise Vacca started off with the “Coathanger” also located in Sagitta.



Dan McCormick continued our viewing with ET cluster which many of our older members know as the “Owl cluster”.



Alan then jumped back in to share the Ring Nebula.



Mike Mountjoy then jumped in to add the Great Globular Cluster M13 to the list of those sights visited.

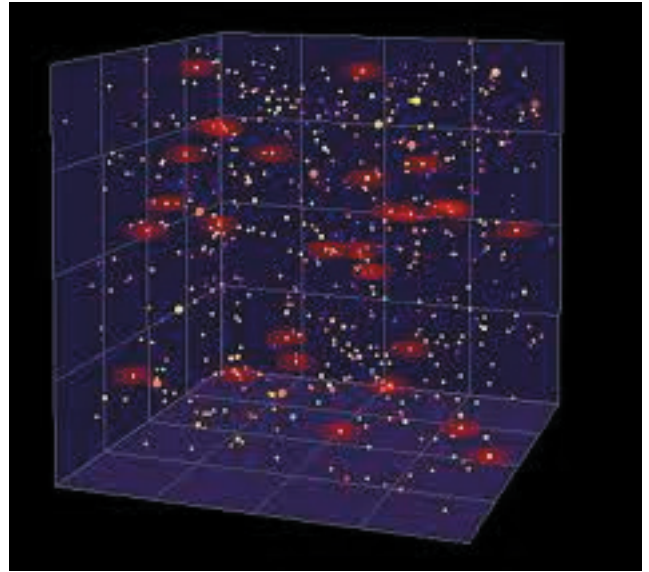


Ted then rejoined in our visual journey by adding M3 and M5 to the M13 cluster to make a great globular triangle found in our galactic halo. These being among the 3 brightest globulars in our sky



We then took a brief pause and were once again entertained by Dan McCormick with great music while we traveled through our local neighborhood in space.

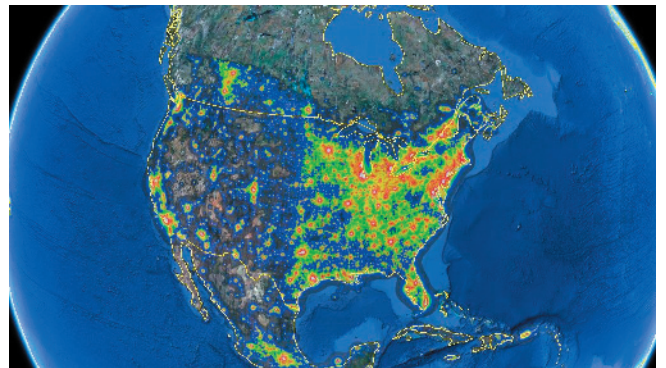
A special guest was added to our nights presentations by "Princess" one of the many girls from Girls Inc. who stepped up to help at the Science Festival on the Parkway. She shared how inspired she was touch some many people



that day with knowledge of what is in our sky. She extra touched by working with you students, inspiring them to become future scientists of the worked.

City wide-telescope night was revisited with several accounts of how well they were received last year and an intent to increase participation next year in either more people helping at established sites, or possibly increasing our reach by adding new sites or relocating some sites to new locations.

In conclusion, we wrapped it up with Mike Mountjoy showing us how to use the software Google Earth to help find some "dark sky" areas for better viewing of all these magnificent sites in our night skies. We concluded to the observatory to do some views of the sky from the rooftop of the Franklin Institute. It was a jam packed agenda, but there was something there for everyone.



Rittenhouse Astronomical Society

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