Observing Newsletter – Sep. 2010


Astro-Cafe

Welcome

Welcome to The Sunshine Coast Astronomy Club's September 2010 Observing Newsletter. Through the newsletter we hope to raise interest in stargazing on The Sunshine Coast. I encourage you to forward the newsletter to friends and family who express an interest in stargazing.

The Astronomy Club meet every 3rd Friday of the Month at Pier 17, Davis Bay at 8.30pm for The Astro-Café. Club members and members of the public are invited to join us for tea/coffee and snacks, before setting up telescopes at the seawall for casual stargazing if skies are clear.

Astronomical Seeing and Transparency

By Neil Sandy – Sunshine Coast Centre

Those new to the hobby and new to sky watching may hear more experienced members comment on the present nights sky conditions with the terms Seeing or Transparency. At first glance these terms may appear interchangeable but in reality they are distinctly different.

The term Seeing refers to how steady or turbulent the atmosphere is at the time. Transparency refers to dark or clear the sky is. For example if you ask someone how the sky was last night a typical answer might be as follows: The seeing was terrible, to the naked eye all the stars were twinkling, anything over 50x magnification was blurry through the telescope and none of the planets showed any detail. The Transparency though was excellent, to the naked eye the milky way above shone brightly against a jet black sky and fainter objects that I don't usually see through my telescope were clearly visible.

So there you go! Simple right? Now that you know the differences go on out one night and check it out. You don't need a telescope to judge sky conditions. Its fun and its all part of how we learn to look at the nighttime sky!

The Sunshine Coast Astronomy Club

- ***CoastAstronomy.ca***
- ***youtube.com/user/Coastastronomy***
- ***Starchasers.ca***

Next Events

- *Regular meeting – October 8th, 7.30pm – Chatelech High School, Room 119*
- *Astro-Café – October 15th, 8.30pm, Pier 17, Davis Bay*
- *Astronomy Day – October 16th, Sunnycrest Mall, 10.00am – 4.00pm*


Trail Bay, June, 2010

Deep Sky

M81 Galaxy in Ursa Major, near The Big Dipper
12 Million Light years Distant (photo James)

Although M81 is 12 Million light years away, the photons that arrive at Earth have not aged 12 Million years. Because they travelled at the speed of light they have not aged at all during the Journey. For them, the journey was instantaneous.

Astronomy Never Gets Old

On a recent trip to Scotland I inherited my Uncle William's Astronomy Encyclopedia

'Larousse Encyclopedia Of Astronomy' revised edition 1966.

I was fascinated to see images of Andromeda taken by the 'then' worlds leading observatories – Mount Wilson, and The Yerkes observatory.

The Mount Wilson Image was taken with the 100 inch reflector in 1910.

The Yerkes image was taken with a 22 inch telescope in 1901.

I was imaging Andromeda last month and it was interesting to compare my fresh images with those from over 100 years ago.

See the comparison below – the 3rd image was taken from Sechelt with an 8" telescope.

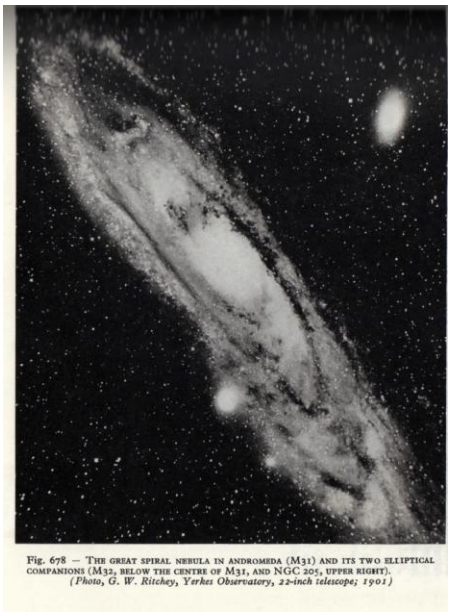
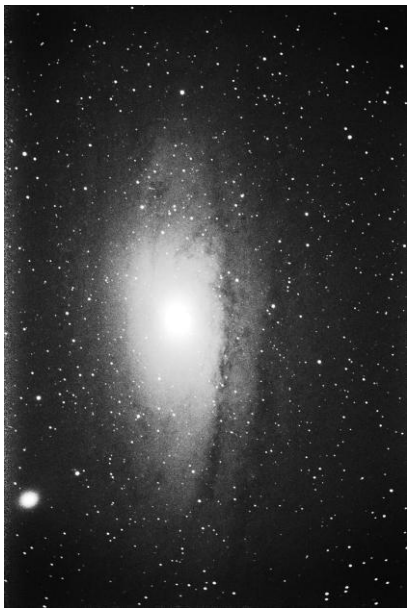


Fig. 678 — The great spiral nebula in Andromeda (M31) and its two elliptical companions (M32, below the centre of M31, and NGC 205, upper right). (Photo, G. W. Ritchey, Yerkes Observatory, 22-inch telescope; 1901)

Yerkes – 1901 – 22 inch

Fig. 679 — Central region of the Andromeda nebula, showing the numerous dark clouds of obscuring matter analogous to the dark nebulae of the Galaxy. (Photo, Mount Wilson Observatory, 100-inch reflector, exposure 9h; 1920)

Mount Wilson 1910 -100 inch



Sechelt – 2010 – 8 inch