

Charlotte Amateur Astronomers Club

www.charlotteastronomers.org

Your Officer Team

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Next Meeting 7:00 p.m.
April 15, 2011

**MEETING LOCATION:
MASONIC HALL
500 NORTH SHARON AMITY
ROAD**

EAT WITH US: Please plan to join us on Apr. 15th prior to our meeting. If you care to eat with us ahead of time, several members will gather at The IHOP Restaurant in Cotswold Shopping Center on Sharon Amity Road, just south of our meeting place at 5:30 PM the night of the meeting. Won't you join us this time? We'd love to see you.

WHAT'S COOKING AT THE GHRO?

This month our featured speakers will be CAAC members Jim Gaiser, Phil Foust and Brad Draper. Each will be presenting a program detailing current projects they are undertaking at the Gayle H Riggsbee Observatory.

New Members

Matthew Banks, John Bryant

Observing Activities:

Star Party at GHRO Apr. 30, 2011
weather permitting

Public Outreach

GET LINKED UP!

Please link up with fellow club members by enrolling in the Charlotte Amateur Astronomers Yahoo Group website. The site and enrollment is free. The site allows you to keep up with the activities of fellow club members, post photos and e mails to all group members.

The link is

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/charlotteastronomers>

Hardware Corner

This informal CAAC activity takes place at 6:30 P.M. before our regular monthly meeting. The purpose of this meeting is to make available to all the wide expertise and experience within the club to help with your questions on scope upgrades or modifications, astrophotography, software, or anything astronomy related. Please take advantage of this valuable resource. You've got questions we've got answers.

Observatory Director's Corner

Don't forget the club has loaner telescopes to check out and use for a month at a time. See the Observatory Director Ken Steiner at the meeting or e-mail ken@steiner4.com or call 704-817-8607 to schedule your time with one of the scopes.

Secretary's Notes

Items or announcements from the newsletter? Please e-mail Tom Blevins @ gtblevins@att.net or call me at 704-442-0530. Don't forget to check off your attendance on the members sign in sheet when you pick up your name tag at the meeting. Please notify the Secretary of e-mail address changes or any other changes to your information.

From The Chancellor of the Exchequer: The Financial Report

Balance on March 1, 2011 \$75,576.14
Income in March 2011 \$4,012.00
Expenses in March 2011 \$ 3,639.13
Balance April 3, 2011 \$75,949.01

CAAC Dues & Fees

Annual dues are: \$35.00 for a family or individual. Students up to 18 years of age: \$6.00. Annual dues are prorated based on joining date. See the Treasurer for details.

Optional Fees:

Observatory key fee for members: \$10.00 annually.

Observatory pad fee for members with a concrete pad at the Observatory is \$25.00 annually.

Subscriptions

Discounted magazine subscriptions are available through the club at a reduced rate.

Sky & Telescope: \$32.95 per year
Astronomy: \$34.00 per year or \$60.00 for two years.

Please make checks payable to CAAC and give them to Treasurer Scott Holland at meetings or mail them to:

Scott Holland
500 Ethelyn Ave.
Lowell, NC 28098

Club members can also renew their own subscription to Sky & Telescope via mail, or telephone. Members may mail in their renewal notice with payment or telephone using a credit card. Indicate on the renewal notice that you are a member of CAAC. This is for subscription renewal only. The club Treasurer must still process new subscriptions and annually validate a subscriber's membership in CAAC. Subscriptions to Astronomy both new & renewals cannot be renewed directly by the subscriber and must still be processed through the club Treasurer to obtain the club discounted rate.

Sale Bopp Corner

From the telescope collection of Robert Ariail.

Meade 12" LX200 go to Schmidt Cassegrain Telescope with new upgraded electronics package, and new coatings on all the glass surfaces. Also included are a 9X50 right angle finder, a 32MM Televue plossl, 20MM erfle, and 12.5MM Ortoscopic Eyepieces. The telescope diagonal will accept 1 $\frac{1}{4}$ " & 2"

eyepieces. Telescope can be powered by either 115V AC or 12V DC battery. 18V DC converter & extension cord included. Operators' manual, getting started instructions & fom shipping box included.

Call Gayle Riggsbee @ 704-846-3136 if interested.

Please contact me via e-mail at gtblevins@att.net with the details of any item you would like to list for sale.

What's Up Now ?

Gemini, Orion Canis Major, Puppis, Canis Minor, Hydra, Cancer, Leo, Leo Minor, Ursa Major, Canes Venatici, Coma Berenices, Crater

Just Checking In

Virgo, Corvus, Bootes,

Lunar Highlites

April 11 First Quarter Moon
April 17 Full Moon
April 24 Last quarter.
New Moon May 3.

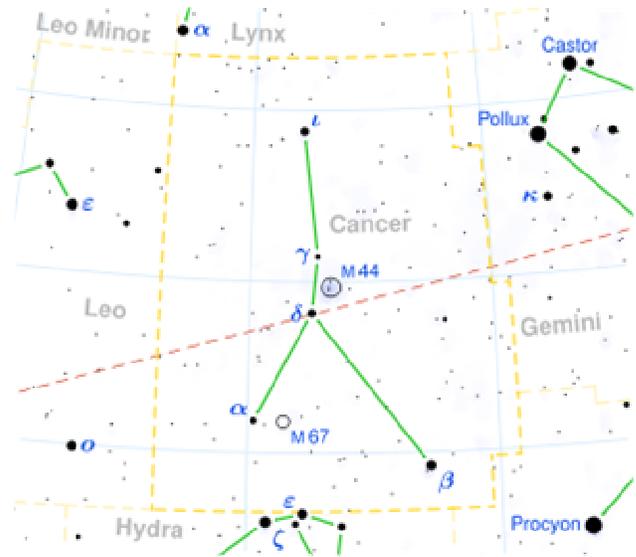


Constellation of the Month

Cancer

The Celestial Crustacean

The history of the Cancer constellation goes back to the Greek mythology. It is believed that the crab that is viewed in the constellation of cancer was sent by Hera (Greek God Zeus's younger sister and wife) to distract Hercules in his battle with Hydra. When Hercules was sent with 12 labors or trials, he came face to face with Hydra, a monster in the water. At this very time, Hera sent the crab to nip Hercules and help Hydra win the battle. But the crab got crushed and was killed by Hercules. Peculiarly, Hera was grateful for the crab's loyalty and hence, put it in the sky which later came to be known as the constellation Cancer.



Cancer

Binocular Highlight

The Beehive Cluster (of course)

Used in Ancient times as an indicator of the upcoming weather.

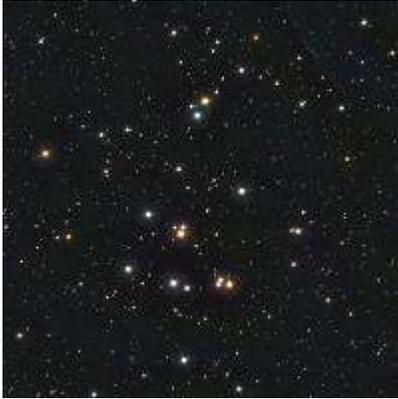
When visible the ancient sky watchers expected fair weather. M44 is visible to the naked eye at the GHRO as a hazy patch of light right in the heart of Cancer.

Ancient Greeks and Romans saw this object as a manger from which two donkeys, the adjacent stars Asellus Borealis and Asellus Australis, are eating.

Measurements of the cluster indicate that it contains at least 1,000. The total mass of the cluster is estimated to be 500-600 solar masses. 68% of these stars are M type dwarfs.

Mercury

Astronomers estimate the age of the cluster at 600 - 660 million years old. Hipparcos survey measurements place the cluster at a distance of 580 L.Y.



M44

Credit NOAO/AURA/NSF

Novice Challenge

Open Clusters 67

Overlooked and overshadowed because of the more famous Beehive cluster located to its north, M67 is just as impressive an object. When seen from a dark sky site, the cluster is an impressive mass of stars sparkling against a black velvet backdrop. The cluster is bright at magnitude 6.9 and shows well in even in small telescopes under urban skies. M67 is of interest because of the extreme age estimates of 3.2 - 4.0 billion years of the cluster. Usually clusters are tidally disrupted during their journey

through the galaxy. Because M67 sits above the plane of our galaxy the cluster has not undergone the gravitational disruption of clusters in the galactic plane.

Messier was not the first to stumble on M67. The cluster was first observed by Johann Gottfried Koehler sometime in 1779. Almost a full year before Messier.

The coordinates for M67 are 8 hrs. 50 min. R.A. and +11 degrees 49 Seconds Declination



M67

Credit Nigel Sharp/Mark Hanna/NOAO/AURA/NSF

Deep Sky Challenge

NGC 2775

Usually most Amateur Astronomers probably don't associate Cancer with galaxies. However there is an interesting but probably overlooked gem NGC 2775 hiding out in Cancer. The

Galaxy is viewed almost face on to us. NGC 2775 is unusual in that it has smooth central bulge surrounded by a series of tightly wound and complex spiral arms. The galaxy has hosted 5 supernovas in the past 30 years. Certainly a good reason to keep an eye on this beauty.

Distance measurements put the galaxy at around 42 million light years. As an added bonus if conditions are near perfect and you have enough aperture, you might haul in the 14th magnitude companion galaxy NGC 2777. The Coordinates for NGC 2775 are 9 Hrs. 10 min. R.A and +7 degrees, 2 sec. Declination.



NGC 2775

Credit Jeff Newton/Adam Block/NOAO/AURA/NSF

Double Delights

Iota Cancri.

Cancer is home to one of the most beautiful double stars in the spring sky. Iota Cancri is a spectacular color contrast pair. The primary is a beautiful 4.2 magnitude yellow/orange star while the secondary is a beautiful 6.6 magnitude blue. The spectra of the primary is G8 while the secondary is an A3 spectrum sun. These spectra agree nicely with the colors you see. The pair has a generous 30" separation so they can be split even in small telescopes.

The coordinates for the pair are 8 hours 47 min. R.A & +28 degrees 46 seconds Declination. Get out and enjoy this stellar gem.