



Charlotte Amateur Astronomers Club
www.charlotteastronomers.org

**CAAC December 2020 Newsletter
“Special Edition”**

From the President:

This year has been one of extreme challenges with the impact of the pandemic along with a tumultuous political environment. None of us have been able to escape the turmoil of 2020.

The good news is that we now have a vaccine that promises to tame the pandemic beast. The sobering news is the reality that we will most likely face another 4-6 months of living with the pandemic before it is conquered and we are able to return to a semblance of “normal”. Vigilance will be needed in spite of our “pandemic fatigue”.

The Charlotte Amateur Astronomers Club (CAAC) remains strong thanks to the support of our members. The virtual meetings have enabled us to continue learning about our magnificent Cosmos while also retaining a sense of community so important in this challenging time. I want to thank those who have continued to support the CAAC with their membership renewal. It is vital that we maintain a healthy club during this pandemic crisis.

GHRO, the club observatory, has continued to be a strong positive for our members during these negative times. Be sure to note Observatory Director Jim Gaiser’s comments concerning the GHRO and the Infrastructure Capital Campaign. Thank you for your support of this very important part of the CAAC.

Finally, I want to again remind us of the Cosmic Perspective, the oneness and connectedness of all things. We are all a part of this wonderful Cosmos. The Cosmic Perspective makes our petty insurmountable differences pale in significance.

Thank you all again for your support this year. May you and yours have the happiest of Holidays and a Hopeful New Year.

Peace,
Ken

A Note from the CAAC Treasurer

Annual Dues Reminder!

Our fiscal year began on October 1. Dues collections have been slow so far, so please consider renewing. We would hate to lose you .

-Benton Kesler
CAAC Treasurer

News from GHRO

1. While scheduled star parties are on hiatus due to Corona Virus concerns, GHRO is open for your personal use. It is also open for ongoing maintenance.
2. Given the recent surge in COVID 19 cases in the area, the use of masks and social distancing are even more important. Our membership is of an age where a lot of us are in the “endangered” group...meaning we’re over 65. To this end, we are am limiting the number of people in the warm-up room to 3, and masks must be worn at all times while inside, even if no one else is in the building. This measure is not taken lightly and I ask for your cooperation. If these new guidelines are not adhered to, we will have no option except to close the outreach center until the pandemic is better contained.
3. We’re going to try another telescope training on Saturday, January 16. Again, a limit of 6 members will be enforced and masks will be required. Preregistration is required, so reserve your spot by writing me at jegaiser@gmail.com. The training will start at 4:30 PM.
4. The GHRO Infrastructure Improvement program - 2020-2021 Capital Project is in progress and we are close to meeting our goal. If you have contributed already, thank you for your support...If you have not and wish to make a contribution, it is not too late. Please contact the CAAC Treasurer at benton.kesler@gmail.com with your pledge or check. The matching proposal will expire at the end of December, so please consider donating now. A complete list of projects at GHRO was outlined in the September newsletter and can be obtained by contacting me at jegaiser@gmail.com.

JUPITER – SATURN conjunction Live Stream

The Jupiter – Saturn conjunction is ongoing and will be at closest approach on the Winter Solstice, Monday, December 21. This extraordinarily close conjunction will be live streamed on the CAAC Facebook page from GHRO, beginning at 6:00PM. Mark your calendar and keep this URL close by...

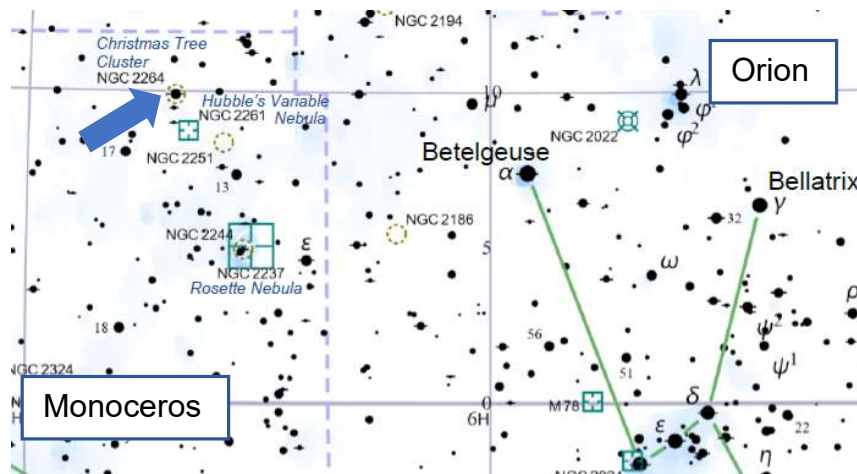
<https://www.facebook.com/CharlotteAstronomers/live/>

December Sky Challenge

Free Christmas Tree*

Holiday Special !

***Full Disclosure....** OK.. it's not a real Christmas tree. As you might suspect, it's really a cluster of stars that LOOKS like a Christmas tree. Besides, you wouldn't be able to get it into your house – or even your front yard. It's hundreds of light-years tall !! You can look all you want...for FREE! The tree is "pre-lit".



NGC 2264, the Christmas Tree Cluster, is a large and scattered cluster easily visible in **Monoceros**, using finder scopes and binoculars. It is composed of about 20 bright stars arranged in a pattern that resembles a Christmas tree, which measures half a degree long. The "tree" is seen upside-down in the sky,

but is reinverted by most astronomical instruments. Because of its large size, low power is needed to see the entire cluster in a single field of view. The nebulosity seen is designated as the Cone Nebula. Two objects in one view!

Just in time for a Merry Christmas!!

Acknowledgements:

NightSkyInfo www.nightskyinfo.com/archive for target descriptions, adapted.

Mag Star 7 Star Atlas Project © 2005 Andrew L. Johnson for star maps (clipped)

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