

Event Horizon

April 2001

Volume 8 Issue 6

Continuing saga of the Winter Star Party

At approximately 0953 hours, 15 February 2001, Starship Odyssey with its crew of two set out from that small outpost called Rockwood, and after 466 uneventful kilometres, landed in Perrysburg, Ohio. After a morning temperature of -6C, it was rather nice to feel some warmth, 0C. Well, relatively speaking.

Adhering to our plan, we leave the highway at 1700 hours and seek shelter for the night in some roadside inn, of which there are many. Clear skies.

On the road at 0932 hours, we travelled through the state of Kentucky where 10 kilometres into the state, it started to rain, and continued to do so all the

way through the state until we got into the state of Tennessee. After 679 kilometres, we stopped in Caryville, Tennessee.

636 kilometres later, we landed in Cordele, Georgia, bright sunshine, and a temperature of +2C. Aaah, things are beginning to look up.

After a great supper in one of our favourite eating places, my navigator and I studied our maps and discovered that at the rate we were travelling, we would not get to the Star Party before Monday noon. MAJOR ERROR. We should have left Rockwood on Wednesday 14 February instead of Thursday. We were a day behind. Soooo, logic kicks in, and after driving 17 hours, we arrived outside the gate entrance to the camp site, at 10 minutes before midnight on Sunday 18 February. We were 10th in line. Can you believe it, there were nine ahead of us, and guess who was numero uno, our own Liz. Surprise, surprise. We slept somewhat fitfully in the van, as being on the shoulder of the busy US 1, the trucks and headlights were quite disturbing factors.

For some strange reason, the gates were not opened until

noon, where previous years, 1030 or 1100 were the norm. But we did get in early and secured our favourite spot at the north end of the site.

Noon. Temperature 22C. Site: Camp Wesumkee. Location: N24d 39.013'

W81d 18.460'

We have arrived at the Winter Star Party.

Truthfully, it takes a little time to adjust to the new environment, because after all, it was only four days previously that we were in winter garb. So short pants, short sleeve shirts and sandals were somewhat strange to us, but rest assured, we adjusted quickly.

At our tent site, we had the group from Ohio, all six of them, to the north of us, and another Ohian, from Findlay, who has been our neighbour at the WSP for the last few years, to the south of us.

After everything was set up, we retired to the dining for our pre-paid supper, and after a scrumptious meal returned to the tent site for some serious viewing.

I can truthfully say that this has

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Chair's Report

Margaret Walton

<http://users.efni.com/~brentt/nbclub/nbclub.htm>

Summer is coming, and that means it's star party time again. This is a great way to get to meet other astronomers, peak through everyone's scopes, learn more about astronomy and have a great time. There are several great parties coming up:



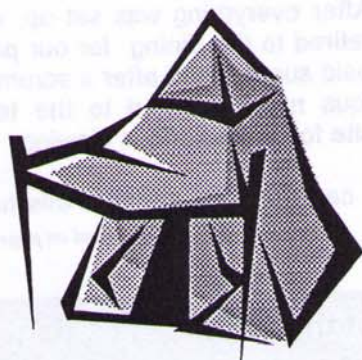
August 10 – 12 Syracuse Summer Seminar, Syracuse <http://www.syracuse-astro.org/>

August 16 – 19 Starfest, Mount Forest <http://www.nyaa-star-fest.com/>

August 21 – 26 Great Manitou Star Party, Manitoulin Island <http://www.manitoulin-link.com/starparty/>

June 14 – 17 Star Cruise 2001, Pennsylvania <http://www.members.home.net/lhstarcruise/>

July 20 – 22 Gateway to the Universe, North Bay



The Hamilton Spectator has confirmed our bookings for April, May and June. Our speaker for June will be Dr. Doug Welch, who has been working in California for the past year. He will tell us about his California adventures.

Have a great month

HAMILTON AMATEUR ASTRONOMERS

Event Horizon is a publication of the Hamilton Amateur Astronomers (HAA).

The HAA is an amateur astronomy club dedicated to the promotion and enjoyment of astronomy for people of all ages and experience levels

The cost of the subscription is included in the \$25 individual or \$30 family membership fee for the year. Event Horizon is published a minimum of 10 times a year.

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Viewing Mars Through Rose-Coloured Glasses (Using Filters to Bring out the Best in the Red)

Beginning next month, Mars will be visible in the evening sky. This year will be a good one for observing the red planet because Mars will be the closest to earth it has been since 1988. Mars will reach a diameter of 20.8" although it will be low in the sky and viewing conditions won't be as favourable as they were in 1988.

Telescopes with apertures of 3" and up will show surface detail on Mars. To highlight these subtle surface details, coloured filters can be used. (The most convenient filters screw into the bottom of the telescope's eyepiece.) Red or orange filters work best. Because these filters block blue and green light, Martian maria appear darker in contrast to the light reflected by surrounding desert areas. For smaller aperture telescopes, it's best to use lighter coloured filters because they don't dim the image too much. In my 4" scope, I like to use an orange filter (Wratten #21). (Wratten numbers are used to describe standard coloured filters.)

The following very help-

ful chart is from the Mars Observer's Handbook published by A.L.P.O. (Association of Lunar and Planetary Observers). It lists all the filters that can be used to highlight details on the red planet.

*Note #25, 29 and 47 filters are relatively low in light transmission, making them difficult to use with telescopes below eight inches in aperture.

If you'd like to learn more about observing Mars, I highly recommend "Introduction to Observing and Photographing the Solar System" by Dobbins, Parker and Capen; the May 2001 issue of Sky & Telescope; the Mars Observer's Handbook by Beish & Capen of A.L.P.O.; or try www.lpl.arizona.edu/alpo or elvis.rowan.edu/marswatch.

Don't miss this excellent opportunity to view Mars. We won't get another chance until 2003.

Ann Tekatch

Filter Colour (Wratten #)	Use
Red - #25, 29	Gives maximum contrast of surface features. Enhances fine surface details, yellow dust cloud boundaries and polar cap boundaries. Darkens green and blue surface features.
Orange - #21, 23A	Increases contrast between light and dark features, penetrates hazes and most clouds and brightens yellow dust clouds.
Yellow - #8, 12, 15	Brightens desert regions, darkens blue and brown features. Gives maximum brightness.
Green - #56, 57 & 58	Darkens red and blue features and enhances frost patches, surface ice-fogs and polar region ice projections.
Blue-Green - #64	Enhances ice-fog boundaries and polar hazes.
Blue - #80A, 38, 38A	Brightens blue and white atmospheric clouds and limb hazes. Darkens reddish surface features and yellow clouds.
Violet - #47	Brightens high-altitude discrete clouds, equatorial cloud bands, limb or polar hazes and polar clouds. Darkens yellow clouds and detects the violet-clearing phenomenon.
Magenta - #30, 32	Enhances red and blue features and darkens green ones. Allows comparison of surface details to atmospheric cloud positions.

POEM TO BE READ TO HALLEY, THE COMET, IN 2061

HAIL!

welkin-wayfarer, sun-circler, space-trotter

HAIL!

oval-orbiter, heliacal hero, cosmic-tourist.

WELCOME BACK!

I saw you in '86.

I think I saw you.

I co-ordinated your smudge to the northeast.

I tried to make eye-contact, at any rate.

I hope you felt my warm vibes
pulsing into your space from earth;
you must feel lonely at times
stuck in the inevitability of orbit!

I deeply regret
that I will be unable to attend your return.

I am angry actually
that I won't be able to make it
destined instead
to meet with a convocation of politic - but carnivorous - worms
or fated to kibitz on the fringe
of a gaggle of poker players in hell
or condemned to sing - in unison - forever!
with a host of heavenly harpies.

I am puzzled to be
designed to die
built to obsolesce
feeling rushed
from mystery to mystery
- demeaned - transcended - by you
(no offense intended!)
a mere haze of frozen gases, ice, and dust.

Fearful to be finite
geotropic
so casually obliterated
from Time and Space

I try to believe
the stories that say it's not true.

I would prefer to always be me
able - from here! - from earth!
to feel infinity on my face
imagine all of time and all of space
a microcosm of meaning, conscious of being conscious.



I would prefer
at least
to have hitched a ride
on your long, shining tail through our neighbourhood in the milkyway
for a millennium or so

I see us, just the two of us
- two long -haired hippies -
surfing the solar winds
galaxy hopping.

I repeat my regrets!
Halley, have a good orbit anyway.

David Hillen
hillen@attglobal.net

Four Edges of the Earth

- Sheila Overall

In Mayan culture, the Earth's surface was distributed into four sectors that recede from an imaginary centre and extend toward the four directions of the cosmos.

Cross-eyes, a large yellow face is a special being to the Maya today. The ancient Maya hung a small object from the hair of a child to force his eyes to cross. This was done to infants

whose lives were dedicated to the solar god, Kin.

Kin embraced all cycles and cosmic ages. Kin was represented by the colour yellow and the symbol of the sun. Kin had a concrete reflection in the physical reality of the Sun, Moon, Venus and Mars.

The ancient Maya developed calendars based on the years of

the Earth (365 days), the Moon (260 days) and Venus (584 days). These calendars interconnected like cogs in a wheel. A cycle was completed when the same three cogs came into alignment.

The cycle of the three calendars, Sacred (moon), Solar and Venus coincided every 104 years. This day was known as

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Winter Star Party...

(Continued from page 1)

been the best Star Party ever. The skies were not only very clear, but totally transparent. An astronomers dream. At 1800 hours, while it was still quite light, we were looking at Jupiter and Saturn. With his 18 inch Dob, our neighbour from Findlay was looking at the planets at 400X. The others from Ohio were looking at Saturn at 600X. Not only could one see that ring divisions, but also the shadow of the moons on the surface. There were many ooohs and aahs at the sites that night.

The big Yard scope was there, and if anyone has never seen the Horsehead through that monster scope, you don't know what you are missing. Awesome is the only word I can think of.

There were many different types of scopes: big and little dobs, refractors, SCG's, and the usual number of very interesting home made jobs.

Ccd was a major entrant this year. From many of the tents and leantos one could see the glow from the computer screen. We did stay up to see the Southern Cross, Eta Carinae and all the other goodies one can only see from that far south.

Socially, we met a couple from Lancashire, England, also a new couple from Minnesota. We had good fellowship with those we have met over the past five years, and all in all, it was the best ever.

At the door prize event, yours truly won the latest Deluxe Version Sky Atlas 2000 by Wil

Tirion and Roger Sinnott. It is beautifully illustrated in colours. We seem to be lucky at the door prize events, having won a sighting scope last year, and my navigator winning an astronomy book the year before.

There were two grand prizes, an ETX, and a Meade LX50. Top draw prizes all around.

On the Friday our two friends from Ocala, Florida joined us which indeed added to the pleasure of the Star Party.

Every night the viewing was stupendous. It rained at 2.30 one morning, but as we retired at 2.00, we did not experience it.

We did some deep sea fishing, some touring, much visiting, much walking and a lot of basking in the sun. The morning temperatures ranged from 22 to 26, with the day temperatures from 32 to 34.

For those who can get away for a week of maximum fun and enjoyment, we certainly do recommend the Winter Star Party. Tippy D'Auria and his crew did a fantastic job seeing that all went well, and it certainly did.

Hated to leave, but at 1000 hours on Sunday 24 February, we were out of there, and after a Sunday service at a local church, we were on our way to our first free accommodations in Orlando. Stayed at the Comfort Suites for 4 nights, then on to the Cocoa Beach Hilton for 3 days. Then we started back 175.

At Dayton Ohio, we spent the day at the Air Force Museum, a very

worth while stop, much history there as well as some fabulous aircraft, both experimental as well as practical. After many many uneventful kilometres, we arrived safe and sound back in good old Rockwood, Ontario.

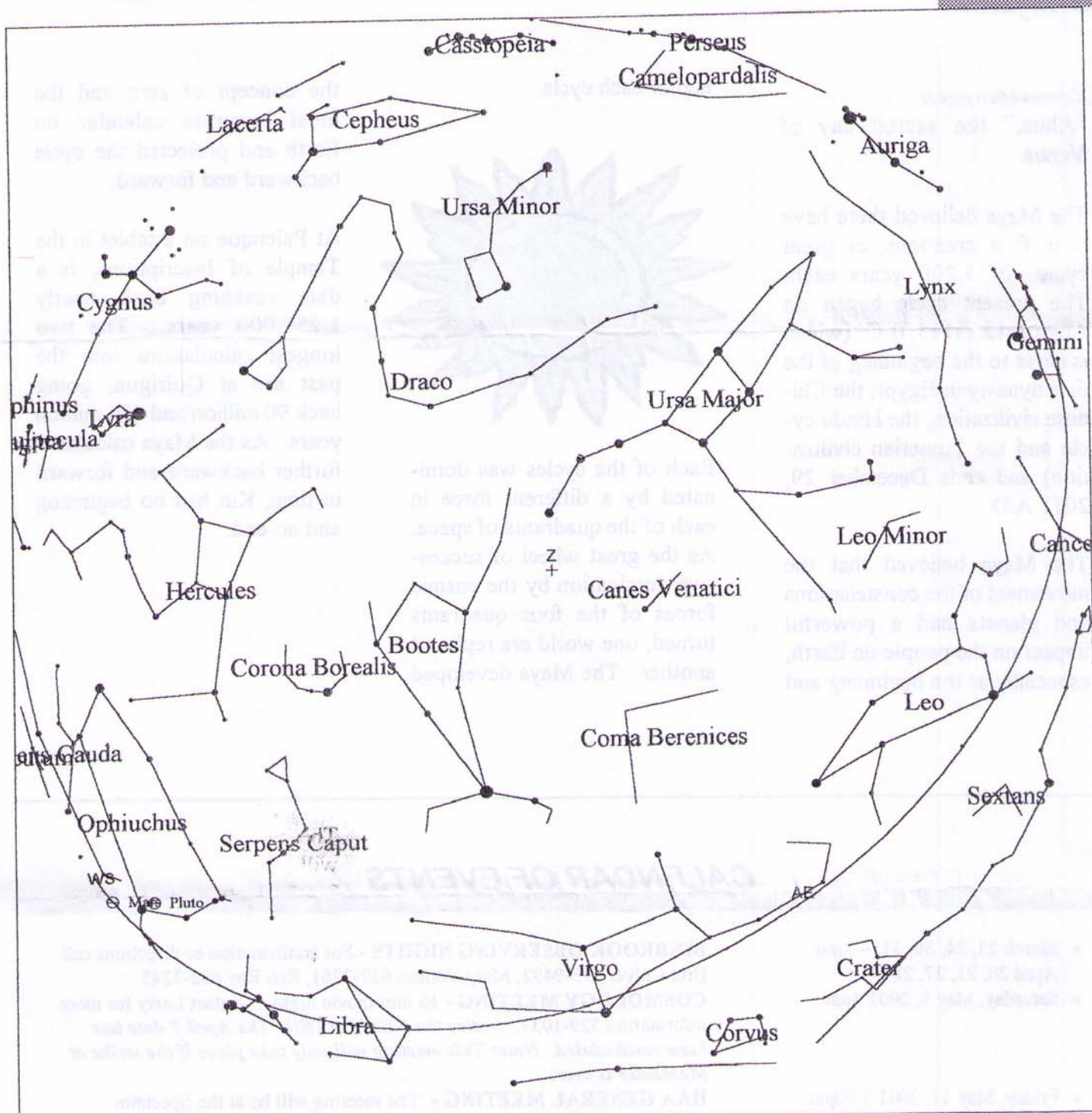
Clear skies to everyone
Oksana and Lou Darcie
Astronomaires Extraordinaire

Cosmology Discussion Group

**** change in date****

The next cosmology meeting will be Saturday, May 5th, 2001, 8pm. In McMaster's Burke Science Building room B148. Note: The meeting will only take place if the strike at McMaster is over. The meeting will be a 16mm movie night. There will be free coffee, ginger ale, cola, and timbits. We welcome our members to bring a small entree. Everyone welcome, open discussion. For further information call Larry at 529-1037.

May Night Skies



ECU V3.0 (Star Atlas Mode) - May Night Skies

UTC: 2001/05/16 at 03:30
LMT: 2001/05/15 at 10:30pm

RA=13h46.0m Dec=+43°17'
Field=180.0° Azim=355°31' Alt=+90°00'

Maya...

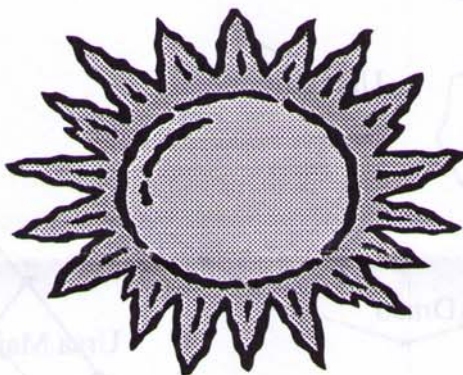
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"Ahua," the sacred day of Venus.

The Maya believed there have been four creations, or great cycles of 5,200 years each. The present cycle began on August 12, 3113 B.C. (which is close to the beginning of the first dynasty in Egypt; the Chinese civilization; the Hindu cycle and the Sumerian civilization) and ends December 29, 2011 A.D.

The Maya believed that the movement of the constellations and planets had a powerful impact on the people on Earth, especially at the beginning and

end of each cycle.



Each of the cycles was dominated by a different force in each of the quadrants of space. As the great wheel of successive domination by the cosmic forces of the four quadrants turned, one world era replaced another. The Maya developed

the concept of zero and the most accurate calendar on Earth and projected the cycle backward and forward.

At Palenque on a tablet in the Temple of Inscriptions, is a date reaching back nearly 1,250,000 years. The two longest calculations into the past are at Quirigua, going back 90 million and 400 million years. As the Maya calculated further backward and forward in time, Kin had no beginning and no end.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- March 23, 24, 30, 31 ~ 8pm
- April 20, 21, 27, 28
- Saturday, May 5, 2001 8pm

- Friday, May 11, 2001 7:30pm

- Friday, May 18, 2001 7:30pm
- Friday, June 8, 2001 7:30pm

BINBROOK OBSERVING NIGHTS - For confirmation or directions call Bret Culver 575-9492, Marg Walton 627-7361, Rob Roy 692-3245

COSMOLOGY MEETING - 16 mm movie night. Contact Larry for more information 529-1037. *Notice the NEW DATE!!! The April 7 date has been rescheduled. Note: This meeting will only take place if the strike at McMaster is over.*

HAA GENERAL MEETING - The meeting will be at the Spectator Building auditorium. Speaker to be announced.

HAA COUNCIL MEETING

HAA GENERAL MEETING - The meeting will be at the Spectator Building auditorium. The speaker will be Dr. Doug Welch.

Hamilton Amateur Astronomers Millennium Messier Marathon Sponsor Sheet

The Messier Catalogue is a list of 110 deep sky objects (galaxies, nebulae, star clusters, etc.) that are visible in backyard telescopes. Each year, during early spring, it is possible for an observer to see all 110 objects in a single night. This is a challenge that few have mastered! The person you are sponsoring has accepted the challenge to find as many Messier objects as they can in a single night sometime between March 10, 2001 and April 30, 2001. On the back of this sheet, they will note the objects they found, the date they attempted the marathon, and the equipment (telescope, binoculars, naked eye) they used.

The Hamilton Amateur Astronomers is a registered charitable organization. The money raised by this marathon will enable us to continue our work in public awareness and astronomy education. Donations of \$10 and more will receive a tax receipt. Thanks for your support!

Name	Address	Phone No.	Pledge per Object	Flat Donation	Paid?
1.					
2.					
3.					
4.					
5.					
6.					
7.					
8.					
9.					
10.					
11.					
12.					
13.					
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15.					
16.					
17.					
18.					
19.					
20.					

Cheques should be made payable to:

**Hamilton Amateur Astronomers
P.O. Box 65578
Dundas, ON L9H 6Y6**

Hamilton Amateur Astronomers Millennium Messier Marathon

Participant's Name:
Location of Marathon: (show location you observed from. e.g. Binbrook Conservation Area, backyard in Hamilton, etc.)
Date of Marathon:
Equipment Used:

Messier Objects Observed:

(Listed in order of appearance from West to East. Objects visible in binoculars are marked * and those visible to the naked eye are marked **)

Object	Seen?	Object	Seen?	Object	Seen?	Object	Seen?
1) M77		29) M95		57) M87		85) M62*	
2) M74		30) M96		58) M89		86) M6* Butterfly Cluster	
3) M33*		31) M105		59) M90		87) M7*	
4) M31** Andromeda Galaxy		32) M65		60) M88		88) M11* Wild Duck Cluster	
5) M32		33) M66		61) M91		89) M26	
6) M110		34) M81*		62) M58		90) M16* Eagle Nebula	
7) M52*		35) M82*		63) M59		91) M17* Swan Nebula	
8) M103*		36) M97 Owl Nebula		64) M60		92) M18*	
9) M76 Little Dumbbell Nebula		37) M108		65) M49*		93) M24*	
10) M34*		38) M109		66) M61		94) M25*	
11) M45** Pleiades		39) M40*		67) M104 Sombrero Galaxy		95) M23*	
12) M79*		40) M106		68) M5*		96) M21	
13) M42** Orion Nebula		41) M94*		69) M13** Hercules Cluster		97) M20 Trifid Nebula	
14) M43		42) M63*		70) M92*		98) M8* Lagoon Nebula	
15) M78*		43) M51 Whirlpool Galaxy		71) M57 Ring Nebula		99) M28*	
16) M1 Crab Nebula		44) M101 Pinwheel Galaxy		72) M56		100) M22*	
17) M35*		45) M102		73) M29*		101) M69	
18) M37*		46) M53*		74) M39*		102) M70	
19) M36*		47) M64* Black Eye Galaxy		75) M27* Dumbbell Nebula		103) M54	
20) M38*		48) M3*		76) M71		104) M55*	
21) M41*		49) M68		77) M107		105) M75	
22) M93*		50) M83*		78) M12*		106) M15*	
23) M47*		51) M98		79) M10*		107) M2*	
24) M46*		52) M99		80) M14*		108) M72	
25) M50*		53) M100		81) M9		109) M73	
26) M48*		54) M85		82) M4*		110) M30*	
27) M44* Beehive Cluster		55) M84		83) M80*			
28) M67*		56) M86		84) M19*			

Return completed form with donations to Barb Wight, Treasurer or Ann Tekatch, Messier Marathon Co-ordinator