



The Meridian

The newsletter of the
Quad Cities Astronomical
Society

February 2011

<http://www.qcas.org>

Jens-Wendt Observatory – Quad Cities Astronomical Society – Located at Sherman Park in Dixon, Iowa

Monsignor Menke Observatory – St. Ambrose University – Located at Wapsipinicon River Environmental Education Center in Dixon, Iowa

Secretary's Notes - D. Hendricks

Jeff Struve	Jim Rutenbeck	Tom Bullock	Craig Cox	Dale Hendricks
Dana Taylor	Bill Mahoney	Karl Adlon	Cecil Ward	Jay Cunningham
David Anderson*				

Dale asked for member's contact information - address, home phone, cell phone and email addresses. There was more than a little confusion and communication leading to cancellation of the January meeting due to bad weather.

Treasurer's Notes - Craig Cox

Current balance - \$1,955.88

Jim Rutenbeck's company, 3M, will make a donation of \$250 as matching funds for a donation/work that was done for a civic activity. Others need to check with their employers to determine if this a common business policy. Nice to have the extra money in the coffers.

Thanks to Craig for taking a day of vacation to attend the meeting.

Eastern Iowa Star Party - dates were discussed for this activity considering moon phases, dates of other club and society meetings. We settled on 29-30 September and 1 October.

Presentation by Karl Adlon: Constellation of the Month - Gemini - Castor and Pollux -

Karl began his discussion/presentation on Gemini by showing "What's Up This Time of Year". He also highlighted the value of Sky and Telescope's "Pocket Sky Atlas". All members should have a copy of this excellent astronomy resource. Excellent, in-depth and educational presentation/lecture, Karl. Thanks.

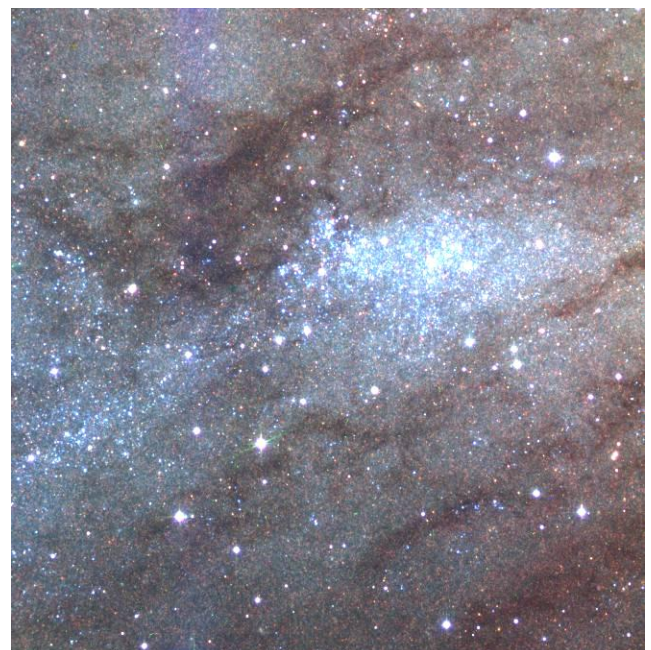
The Astronomical Junkyard -Karl Adlon

Some amateur astronomers, when the weather is too cloudy to do some observing or imaging, resort to resurrecting old work they've done and reviewing it. Maybe they are looking to see how to do something better next time. Or looking to see what they might find that they didn't see before. I decided to try something like that. Here's the image of the Andromeda Galaxy, M31, which I took last October.

See that bright clump left of and below the core? (Arrow added.) Turns out this is NGC 206, first identified by William Herschel on October 17, 1786.



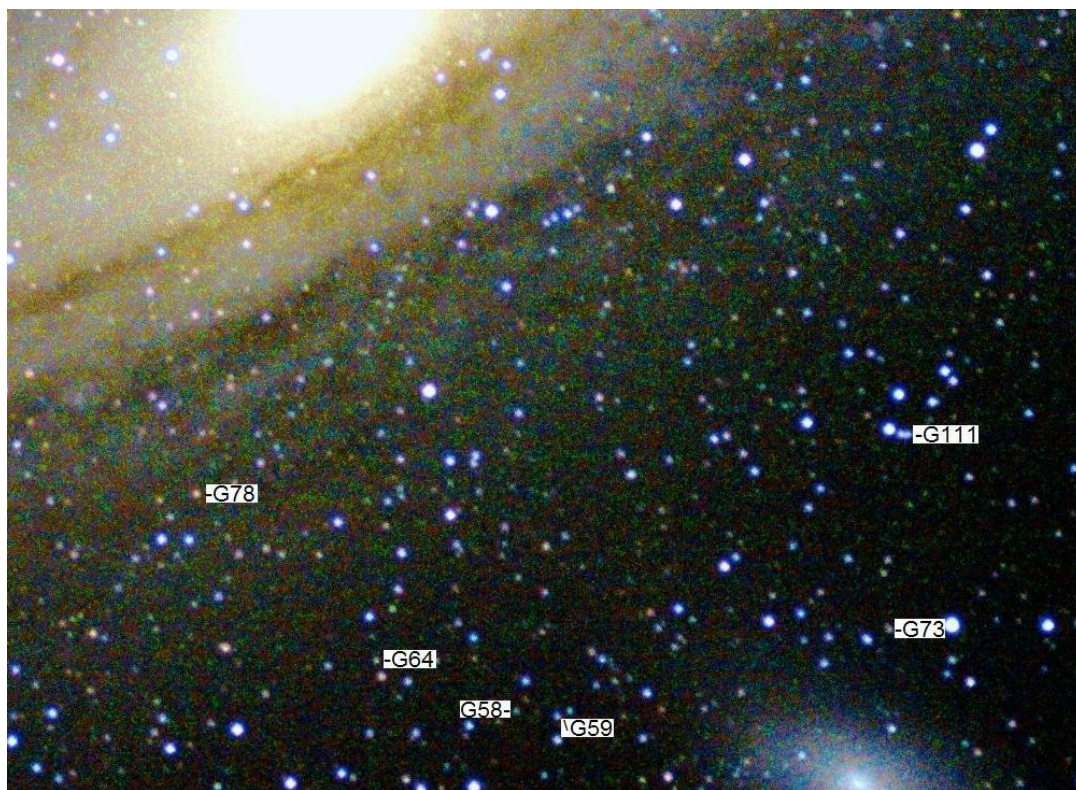
At right is the April 2, 1999 Astronomy Picture of the Day, from which: *Explanation: Nestled within the dusty arms of the large spiral galaxy Andromeda (M31), the star cluster NGC 206 is one of the largest star forming regions known in our local group of galaxies. The beautiful bright blue stars of NGC 206 betray its youth - but close, systematic studies of variable stars in and around NGC 206 will also accurately reveal its distance. Astronomers are searching for variable stars in NGC 206, particularly pulsating stars known as Cepheids and eclipsing binary star systems. Distances for these types of stars can be effectively determined by following the periodic changes in their brightness and spectra. About 3 million light-years away, an accurately known distance to NGC 206 and thus M31 is critical to the larger understanding of galaxy formation, galaxy evolution, and ultimately the distance scale of the Universe.*



You should be able to see it in the 20" or in medium sized telescopes from dark sky locations.
 NGC 206 is the brightest star cloud outside of the Milky Way that can be seen from our planet.

What else?

Globular clusters!
 I've seen globular clusters, but they've all been in our galaxy. In the summer, it's M13. (Wish it was summer.)
 One spring I saw Omega Centauri from North Carolina. Low. Not a great view, but I saw it. But a globular in Andromeda? Not me. Apparently, they can be visually identified in really large amateur scopes. Here are a few I marked using the first image:



Try this website: <http://dva.org/AData/M31GC.html> if you want more information.

If it stays cloudy, maybe you'll dig out your old work, too, and see what you can see!

Upcoming Celestial and Club Events

(Some repeats here from the calendar below)

17 MAR	Messenger spacecraft arrives at Mercury for a yearlong mapping mission.
3-4 APR	Saturn starts rising in the east at sunset and reaches peak visibility but is "viewable" all month long.
APR	Venus bright in eastern sky in the morning.
22/23 APR	Lyriad meteor shower up to 10/hr - requires dark sky.
End of APR	Mercury/Jupiter close to Venus. Mars, Uranus, Neptune gathered nearby but viewing will be "challenging".

MARCH

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1	2	3	4 NEW MOON	5 1512 – Gerardus Mercator born
6 1787 – Joseph Fraunhofer born	7 1792 – John Herschel born	8	9	10	11	12 First-Quarter Moon
March 13 – 16 – Easiest chance to observe Mercury this year! Take a picture!						
13 Daylight Savings Begins 1855 – Percival Lowell born	14 Birthdays: 1835-G. Schiaparelli 1879-A. Einstein 1934-G. Cernan	15 1932 – Alan Bean born	16 1750 – Caroline Herschel born.	17 1930 – Jim Irwin born	18	19 Full Moon
March 17 – 28 – Mercury still observable.						
20 Spring begins.	21 7:30 QCAS Mtg	22	23 1840 – First photo of the Moon 1912 – Wernher von Braun born	24	25 1655 – Christiaan Huygens born	26 Last-Quarter Moon QCAS Star Party
27	28	29	30	31	1	2
3 NEW MOON	4 Saturn at opposition.	5	6 Moon is below the Pleiades	7	8	9

QCAS Contacts

Elected Officers			Volunteers and Committees		
President	Dana Taylor	dana@nelsontaylor.com	Facilities	Jim Rutenbeck	jrutenbeck@frontier.com
VP	Chris Hebel	Chrishebel57@yahoo.com	Web Master	Dana Taylor	dana@nelsontaylor.com
Secretary	Dale Hendricks	dhusna68@mchsi.com	Outreach	Joe Bannon	mzbannon@aol.com
Treasurer	Craig Cox	Admiralcox2000@yahoo.com	Programming	Jim Rutenbeck	jrutenbeck@frontier.com
Director	Karl Adlon	Kmja79@yahoo.com			

All other contacts can be sent to the club at P.O. Box 3706, Davenport, IA, 52808.

Members – be reminded that you can submit articles for *The Meridian*. Submit articles to Dale Hendricks at: dhusna68@mchsi.com. If dale is not available, as backup, you may submit information to Joe Bannon at: mzbannon@aol.com or jbannon@midamerican.com