



Obs~server

Newsletter of the Racine Astronomical Society

March 2008

www.rasastro.org

~Presidents Message~

You may have noticed a change in the way we schedule Star Parties for the year. From now on they will only be held on Saturday nights and will have only one rain date. We are hoping that this will make it easier for people to attend and plan for, and will certainly increase the odds of there being a different weather system in place if the first date is rained or clouded out. Our first Star Party for the year is March 29th with a rain date of April 5th.

~Dave Mogensen~

~Vice Presidents Message~

Spring is nearly here and our first star party of the year is scheduled for the end of the month. This will be a good chance to take a last look at the winter sky and see Saturn and the spring sky rising in the east. There is still a lot of ice and snow at the observatory, but hopefully we'll have a thaw soon. Things will begin to get busy next month. The sign-up sheets for public nights, member's nights, and lawn mowing are printed and ready at the observatory.

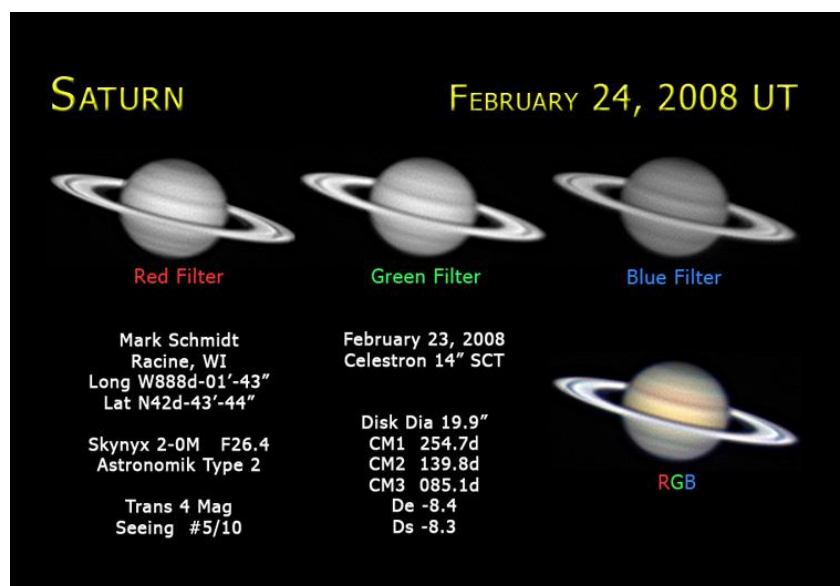
~Dave Finch~

~Saturn reached opposition on February 24th~

Mark Schmidt was at it again, and took these great images of Saturn at opposition.

Saturn will be a good target for the next several months, including our first few public nights.

The inclination (tilt) of Saturn's rings are increasing slightly between now and May. After May the ring inclination will continuously decrease throughout the year. The Earth passes through Saturn's ring plane in September 2009 at which point the rings will be edge-on and nearly invisible.



~Lunar eclipse images~

Chris Tobias and Dave Mogensen braved the bitter cold to take these excellent pictures of the lunar eclipse on February 20th. I was not so brave and watched the eclipse from home, running outside every 15 minutes or so with my binoculars. It was a good clear night in February, so I suppose the cold temperature was to be expected.



2008 Event Calendar

March

29 - Spring Star Party

April

5 - Spring Star Party (Rain Date)

12 - Work Party (9 AM)

19 - Work Party (Rain Date)

19 - General Meeting (7:30 PM)

25 - Public Night (8-11 PM)

May

10 - Astronomy Day

2-5PM (Solar) & 8-11 PM

June

6 - Public Night (8-11 PM)

July

11 - Public Night (8-11 PM)

19 - General Meeting (7:30 PM)

26 - Summer Star Party

August

2 - Summer Star Party (Rain Date)

16 - Picnic

22 - Public Night (8-11 PM)

September

19 - Public Night (8-11 PM)

October

18 - General Meeting (7:30 PM)

25 - Fall Star Party

November

1 - Fall Star Party (Rain Date)

15 - Work Party (9 AM)

22 - Work Party (Rain Date)

December

20 - Christmas Party (7:30 PM)

~Opening on the board of directors~

We have one opening on the board of directors for a member at large. This is a great opportunity to become more involved with RAS decisions and event planning, and gives us something to do on the first Monday of each month. No experience is required! If you are interested in being on the board or have questions, please send an e-mail to: rasastro@wi.net.

~ From the Editor~

If you have submissions for the newsletter, questions, comments, or ideas, please send me an e-mail.

Also, if you are still receiving you're newsletters via postal mail and have access to e-mail you can opt to receive them in a PDF format via e-mail instead. You'll get them a little faster and save the RAS a few bucks. If you would like to change you're delivery method or receive a sample PDF newsletter, please let me know.

Dave Finch

The free Adobe Acrobat reader can be downloaded here:

<http://www.adobe.com/go/BONRM>

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