



Northwest Skies

The Official Newsletter of the Tacoma Astronomical Society
Tacoma, Washington State, USA

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78 Years of Amateur Astronomy in the Pacific Northwest

August 2009

Preface to the August Newsletter

by Dave Norberg

Due to time constraints, this edition is a bit short. The star party season is upon us, and so far the weather has been quite good this summer. So, if you haven't checked the calendar in a while, stop by the TAS website at <http://tas-online.org>, as there are many TAS outreach and member events this summer. There are also a number of regional events and star parties hosted by other clubs.

The newsletter is still a work in progress for me, so please let me know what else you'd like to see here. I'm currently working to tie parts of the newsletter to the webpage. My goal is to make the webpage more dynamic and consistently up-to-date. Feedback is encouraged!

Summer Star Parties and Events

by Dave Norberg

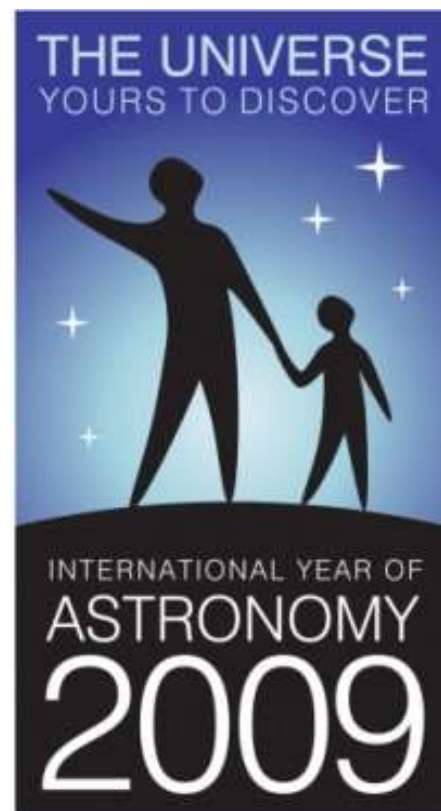
As noted, there are many events and I apologize if I missed some. Please let me know about them, and I'll add them to the TAS website. For details, visit the TAS website or send us an email.

Here is the current list:

- Mt. Rainier Star Party at Paradise 8/14
- Gold Mountain Star Party 8/15
- Mt. Kobau Star Party 8/15 - 8/23
- Oregon Star Party 8/20 - 8/23
- OAS Star Party at Camp Delany 9/17 - 9/20
- TAS Observing Night 9/18

TAS will also be at Jazz Under the Stars at PLU on the following evenings:

- 7/30
- 8/6
- 8/13



Monthly Messier Objects for August

This is the month that we begin to sneak into the summer Milky Way and the heart of our galaxy as we find 12 more objects. Some are visible to the naked eye, all are possible in binoculars. There are six globular clusters, four open clusters, and two diffuse nebula. Many of these objects also appear to be in pairs, either in visual appearance or location.

M10, M12








This pair of globular clusters in the middle of Ophiuchus are easily swept up in binoculars looking like small blue snow balls. Through an 8" telescope M12 is well resolved while M10 is slightly more fuzzy looking. Both become very bright towards the center.

M107

A small, fairly faint globular cluster in Uphiuchus. It is a tough binocular object, appearing as a very small faint patch of light possibly requiring averted vision. In a telescope, M107 is a larger and brighter fuzzy patch of light than what can be seen in binoculars.

(Continued on page 3)

August 2009

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2	3	4	5	6	 7	8
						
9	10	11	12	13	 14	15
16	17	18	19	20		21
23/30	24/31	25	26	27	 28	29
						

- **August 4th: General Meeting.**
Please note we are meeting at Wyatt Hall, Room 109 at UPS 7:30 PM.
- **August 8th: Public Night**
9:00pm at Pierce College.
- **August 29th: Astronomy Fair**
Details TBA
- **Outreach Events**
Too many to list!
Please see the website for the current list.

Monthly Messier Objects for August Cont.

M9

Another small, relatively faint globular cluster in Ophiuchus. M9 is very similar to M107, only slightly brighter. Another tough, but possible binocular object.

M19, M62

Another pair of globular clusters in Ophiuchus separated by about four degrees. Fairly easy to find in binoculars, they are smaller than M10 and M12 thus not quite as obvious. These clusters are not resolvable through small scopes, and appear as round fuzzy patches brightening towards the center. M19 is slightly brighter than M62.

M6, M7

This is a pair of large, bright open clusters in Scorpius visible to the naked eye. Binoculars provide the best view of these clusters. Both are completely resolvable in 10x50 binoculars and can be fit into the same field of view. M7 is the larger and brighter of the pair.

M8

This is a bright emission nebula in Sagittarius, easily visible to the naked eye. The common name of M8 is the Lagoon nebula. In binoculars M8 is an oval cloud of light larger than the full moon with several bright stars embedded within it. A telescope makes this nebula larger and brighter but does not really improve the view.

M20

Another diffuse nebula in Sagittarius only 1.4 degrees northwest of M8 and is called the Trifid nebula. This is easily seen in binoculars looking like a cloud of smoke around some bright stars. A view through a telescope appears much the same, although try to pick out the three dust lanes that gives M20 its name. This is a somewhat difficult object to see right away, at first glance it looks like the optics are in need of cleaning and are causing the light from the bright stars to "smear".

M21

This is a small, but bright open cluster in Sagittarius right next to M20. Binoculars show a very small bright patch partially resolvable. Small telescopes easily resolve all of the clusters members. M8, M20, and M21 are all within the same binocular field and lie in a very rich region of the Milky Way. This view is one of the finest to be found.

M23

The last object of the month is a large open cluster in Sagittarius. through binoculars M23 is a large, hazy patch of light almost the size of the full moon. A telescope at low powers easily resolves this cluster among a rich background of other stars.

Northwest Skies is a bi-monthly publication of the Tacoma Astronomical Society. All opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the contributors and not necessarily those of the Tacoma Astronomical Society.

Original article contributions are strongly encouraged and may be submitted as an email attachment to editor@tas-online.org

People to Contact

You can also contact us via email through our website at

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Membership Subscriptions for 2009

Membership subscriptions for 2009 are now due. Please mail your membership renewal to

**The Tacoma Astronomical
Society
PO BOX 8881
Tacoma, WA 98419**

or bring your check along to the next General Meeting.

Membership dues are the primary income for the society and it allows us to fund member activities and parties as well as the Outreach and Student Programs. Your membership is very important to us.

The annual fees are:

Family: **\$35.00**
Adult: **\$25.00**
Student: **\$15.00**
Senior: **\$10.00**

Mount Rainier Star Party

The public star party at Paradise on July 24th went well and received a very positive review in the Tacoma News Tribune. The article can be found at <http://www.thenewstribune.com/adventure/outdoors/story/828046.html>

The next public event at Mount Rainier will be on August 14th.

