



# The Meridian

The newsletter of the  
Quad Cities Astronomical Society

July 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

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Secretary's Notes - D. Hendricks

No meeting in July but here is a "brief" after the fact newsletter for the group.

Treasurer's Notes - D. Hendricks for Craig Cox (June number)

\$2055.24

## **July 30, 2011 Observatory Open House Report**

by Karl Adlon

I arrived at the observatory about 8:35 PM and saw 4 people setting up 3 scopes outside. Jeff Struve was setting up his 12" Meade dob. The other 3 people were not club members (yet). I saw the observatory wasn't open yet so I unlocked the door, turned on the lights, sprayed the wasp nest at the northwest corner where the lights were plugged in and waited for the commotion to "die" down.

About 5 minutes later I returned, gave the nest another spray, unplugged the lights, removed the roof corner clamps and opened the roof a few feet. Then I asked Jeff to help tug on the roof rope handles and we opened the roof the rest of the way. I started installing the Telrads when Dana showed up. We completed Telrad installation mounting. Dana collimated the optics to the two focusers as best as possible (with the laser centered in one focuser, the other was off about 2" so he took the average), aimed the scope at Arcturus, aligned the Telrads and initialized the digital setting circles. Then we waited for darkness.

This was a warm night with temperatures in the mid-70s. Mosquitoes seem to prefer my blood to others' but this night they were not as bad as I experienced there.

Thought it was not yet dark-dark, I aimed the 20" at M13 with the 38mm eyepiece and guests starting having a look. One guest took a look and shouted to a younger guest "have a look at M13 like you've not seen it before". He mentioned that he was from Muscatine, asked what it cost to join the club and

said he would be joining up (yes!). Then I put in my 14mm Radian for a look at higher power, which our guests also enjoyed (if I knew I'd be writing this report, I'd have copied their names out of the log – oh well).

Dana put the scope on M51 but found the collimation was off again. While he was adjusting the diagonal I thought about the installation of the replacement diagonal. The previous diagonal had been glued to the holder and I had to scrape the glue off to make the replacement. Since I didn't have glue with me, I stuffed some of the bubble wrap packaging behind the diagonal to hold it in place. After doing this the intent was to replace the bubble wrap with better material so I asked if this had been done (no, it wasn't). Then, Dana looked at the diagonal and noticed it was loose. *{August 3<sup>rd</sup> I returned to the observatory, glued the diagonal to the housing with a hot glue gun and collimated the west focuser to the east focuser after a sight tube showed it to be off. Hopefully this issue is now better – at least we don't have to worry about the diagonal mirror falling out and impacting the main mirror.}*

Anyway, the view of M51 was pretty good at times – some clouds of various opacity were forming and disappearing – but after 10 – 15 minutes they were gone and the sky was noticeably darker. With averted vision it was apparent that the galaxy possessed a spiral structure.

After our guests had gone, Dana demonstrated the imaging process to Jeff including some issues and solutions to focusing, such as focusing on a bright star and locating your target using the digital setting circles. A very nice image of the Bubble Nebula was obtained.

About midnight we closed up and headed home. I believe I can say that an enjoyable night was had by all.

### **Another offering from Karl -**

Faster! Better! Cheaper!

Here's an imaging set-up I want to try in my yard and here's why the title:



The piggyback mount is a piece of scrap oak that I drilled three holes in and used three ¼” bolts I already had. I didn’t even have to cut the wood. That’s fast!

I’ve seen piggyback mounts that that were about as stiff as a diving board (wish I had a pool) but this one is as stiff as a brick, but not as thick. That’s better!

My camera is a Canon 20D. How much does a 300mm f4.5 lens cost? A Canon 300mm F4 image stabilized lens is over \$1300. This used Olympus lens plus adapter is over \$1000 cheaper. That’s cheaper!

From the ground up:

- The mount is a Meade LXD75 I bought used – costs less than a fancy commercial “barn door” style tracker.
- The scope is an 80mm that I got used for use as a finder and will use in this configuration as a guide scope. The rail came with it.
- The reticule eyepiece is a Meade 12mm that came with an orange C8 I bought used in 1985.

How well does it all work? I’ll have to get back to you. (How about at our September meeting, Karl?)

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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* to Dale Hendricks at: [dhusna68@mchsi.com](mailto:dhusna68@mchsi.com). If Dale is not available, as backup, you may submit information to Joe Bannon at: [mzbannon@aol.com](mailto:mzbannon@aol.com) or [jbannon@midamerican.com](mailto:jbannon@midamerican.com)