



The Faint Fuzzy

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The Official Newsletter of the West Kentucky Amateur Astronomers

January 2008

From the Editors:

Happy New Year! We hope everybody had a good holiday and we are looking forward to what 2008 has in store for all of us!

—Bob & Melissa

UPCOMING MEETING:

Next meeting: Jan. 5th, at 7:00pm. If it is clear, we'll observe afterwards!

Last Meeting Highlights: December 8th

There were 5 people in attendance, and as there was no official club business to discuss, we had a short and informal meeting. Cloudy and foggy weather was not conducive to observing so the meeting adjourned early.

TREASURER/ALCOR REPORT

David Paessler reports that there are three ALCoR certificates and pins to hand out at the next meeting:

- ★ Messier Honorary Certificate to Harold Meyers
- ★ Binocular Messier Certificates to Bob and Melissa Vickers.

David adds, "I guess it is now time to look at expanding our wall of certificates!"

He also reports that the Club finances remain steady.

The Night Sky Naturalist, by Bob Vickers

The Trapezium

The cold and frosty nights of January bring the bright constellation of Orion back to our skies. Its familiar shape, including the three belt stars and sword, is like an old friend. Easily visible to the naked eye, the Great Nebula lies in the middle of Orion's sword, and is usually one of the first deep sky objects that new amateur astronomers observe. It is a large and magnificent nebula of glowing gas and dust. Close study with a telescope is rewarded with views of delicate intricacy more beautiful than any ever created by an artist's brush. But, of course, that is often the way with nature. The brightest parts of the nebula look a little like the outstretched wings of a bird, while near the middle is an indentation or void pointing like a finger to the west and open to the east. This dark bay is also called the Fish's Mouth. Just to its northwest is a group four stars easily visible in most any telescope at 30-140x, called Theta 1 Orionis. More popularly known as the Trapezium, these four stars range in brightness from magnitude 5.1 to 7.9. Even the closest are an easy-to-split 8.7". The four components of this multiple star system are lettered in order of right ascension rather than in sequence of brightness as follows:

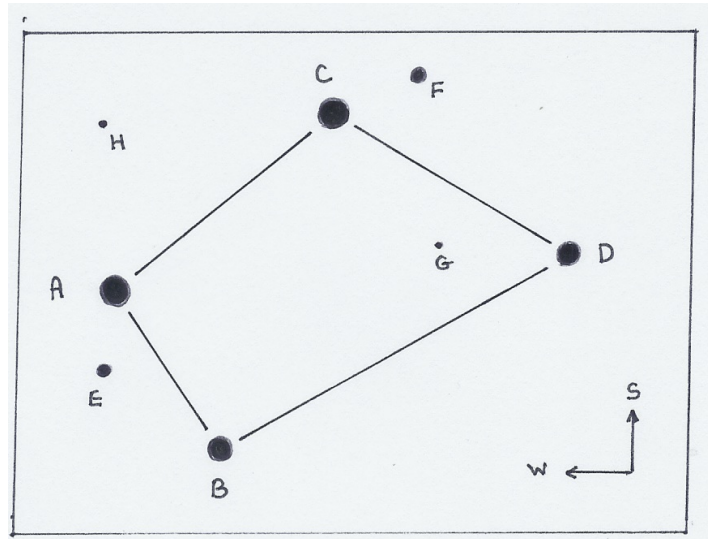
A – mag 6.7

B – mag 7.9

C – mag 5.1

D – mag 6.7

Looking deeper, with a moderate size scope, two more stars of the system can be seen. The E component, at magnitude 11.1 is about 4.1" north of A while the F component, at magnitude 11.5 is about 4.0" east-southeast of C. In my 12.5 inch Dob both of these were a bit of a challenge to find but readily apparent when located. (Wait for a good dark night with steady seeing.) There is also a G component about 6" west of D, and an H component about 8" south of A. Both of these are in the 16th magnitude range and require large apertures. I have tried and failed with both.



To my eyes the four brighter stars of the trapezium look white to yellow-white while the two dimmer stars seem to be a grayish lilac. After my recent Twin Lakes Star Party experience where six otherwise rational adults could not agree on the color of the same star, I would be interested to know what colors other people see. Email me at [cosmosbob\[@\]hotmail.com](mailto:cosmosbob[@]hotmail.com)

ASTRONOMEDIA

TLSP Gets a Plug in S&T!

Check out page 84 in the February 2008 *Sky & Telescope* for an article about TLSP attendee, Chris Krauskopf, and his YoMax telescope. He mentions having had an exceptionally clear view of the Horsehead Nebula at the party through this homemade scope. It's a nice plug for the dark skies of the TLSP! For more information on Chris's YoMax scope, see Carl Anderson's website: <http://www.geocities.com/stressedglass> Thanks to Ross Workman for spotting this TLSP reference.

Looking for a Spring Star Party?

Scott Smith, from the Cumberland Astronomical Society, has asked that we pass along information about their annual spring star party:

Fri, 4/4/2008 - Sun, 4/6/2008

Location: Fall Creek Falls State Park

Pikeville, TN 37367

Description: Sponsored by the Cumberland Astronomical Society and Astronomy in the Parks Society, TSSP 2008 will be held at beautiful Fall Creek Falls State Park in Tennessee, April 4-6. There will be speakers Friday evening and all day Saturday, with all night observing on both nights. The speakers promise to be very enjoyable and interesting to novices and experienced amateur astronomers alike.

Admission to TSSP 2008 is free, with attendees responsible for lodging and meals. Fall Creek Falls State Park will be offering a discounted star party package for lodging on April 4-6, 2008.

Contact Info

Lloyd Watkins watkinslk[@]comcast.net

Allen Ball mistal[@]bellsouth.net

Scott Smith spsmith[@]bellsouth.net

Website: <http://CumberlandAstronomicalSociety.org>

If you see an interesting website, article in the news, or upcoming tv show you think club members would like to know about, please send it to us at [vickers\[@\]aeneas.net](mailto:vickers[@]aeneas.net)

CLUB RESOURCES

Loaner Scopes/Imager

The club has two Dobsonians (6", 8") and a Meade Deep Sky Imager available for club members to borrow. Anyone who has been a club member for six months, completes a training/safety session, and signs a written agreement may borrow one of the scopes or the imager.

Library

The club has several books and magazines available to members for reference or checkout. Take a look and see what we have at the next club meeting.

Magazine Discounts

Club members who subscribe to *Sky & Telescope* or *Astronomy* magazines through the club receive a discount! Annually you can save \$10 on *Sky & Telescope* and \$9 on *Astronomy*. Contact David Paessler for more information.

CLUB OFFICERS

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