



# Snake River Skies

February 2005

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## Messier Marathon at the Centennial Observatory

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Yearly membership is \$20 per person or family and \$10 per student. Sponsor memberships are \$100.

***This year we are going to try something new.*** We are really hoping for clear skies this Saturday night, because it is our intention to bring the Messier marathon into the city limits of Twin Falls. While others will be freezing under the dark skies of remote places away from city lights, we will use the new technology of video links and the incredible Centennial Observatory to see as many Messier objects as we can in one night.

There is little hope that we will see the entire Messier catalog of objects even with this technology, but with the use of telescopes on the observer deck and your help we will at least see as many as we can.

This is also a public night so we will need club member support to make this happen.

***Realize this is not technically a messier marathon,*** because we will be using tracking, go to

features and as much automation as we can to make this happen. It is also going to be a group not individual effort. ***Our goal is to make the public aware of the wonders of deep sky objects that make up the Messier catalog.***

If successful this could become a popular annual event and certainly a unique one for our club and community. Out meeting starts at the normal 7:00 pm and our race around the night sky shortly after.

## Coming Events

April 9, 2005 will be our local Astronomy Day. Be prepared to come to the Herrett center for a full day of fun activities. We will need help with a number of projects

with children and the public to make this event successful. Forrest and Tom will present some tips on Astrophotography. Are you interested in

dark site viewing? Let us know and we will organize some nights and find a place. In May the society will take a field trip to the Bruneau Observatory.

# Boise Astronomical Society

I had the pleasure to meet with the Boise Astronomical Society, BAS, for their February meeting. The Boise Astronomical Society meets the second Friday evening of every month, usually at the classroom at the rear of the Discovery Center, in Boise. I say usually, because in March there is an exception, they are meeting at the Bruneau State Park for their Messier Marathon. In February they had Bob Neimeyer speak on the NASA programs and update from Bruneau. As Bob did with our group, he gave a very good program.

The Boise Astronomical Society has some very interesting members, many of which work at jobs at the many tech-

nology companies located in Boise. They are a fun group and I encourage any of you who have a chance to meet with them to take it.

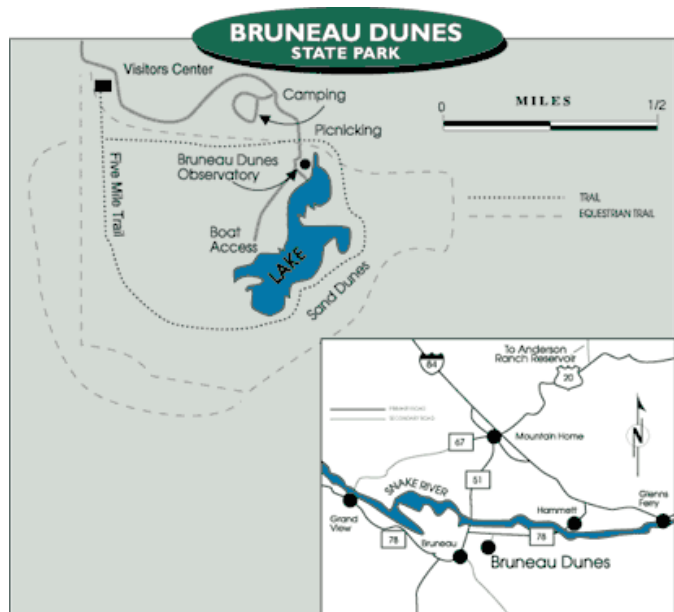
This Friday they are going to meet at the Bruneau Sand Dunes State Park at 7:30 pm at the Bruneau Dunes State Park Pavilion. Bob Schneider will give a program on the Messier Marathon and they will attempt to have their marathon that weekend.

For more information go to [www.scidaho.org](http://www.scidaho.org) for information on the Discovery Center and [www.boiseastro.org](http://www.boiseastro.org) for information on BAS.

## Bruneau Observatory Opens this coming Weekend

The Bruneau Observatory opens this weekend for the season. The Boise Astronomical Society will be having their Messier Marathon in the camping area, but the observatory will still be open to the public.

In May, our Magic Valley Astronomical Society will have a field trip to the Bruneau Dunes State Park. Details to be discussed in our future meetings.



## What's Up in the Sky January 2005

March is known as a month when clouds clear away for some good viewing. Yes we also sometimes have a little wind this time of year. Plan to cinch down your telescope and enjoy some great March Evening viewing.

The weekend of March 12 and 13 is the best for those wishing to try to see the entire list of Messier Objects in one night.

The prominent constellation in early evening is Gemini with the bright stars Castor and Pollux illuminating the heads of the Twins. Castor is the more westerly and northerly of the two. Saturn is nearby and is still a very impressive object. Look carefully and this month you may see the dark shadow of the planet on the rings as they pass behind the planet.

Just off the foot of Castor is impressive M35 an Open Cluster which shows well in Binoculars. Want a more impressive open cluster? Look for the Beehive cluster, M44. The Beehive is more impressive than the stars that make up the constellation it is in, dim Cancer which is located between Gemini and Leo.

Jupiter is in Virgo so you have to stay up a little later to see it, but it is very bright and this is a good month to see this planet.

Venus watchers will have to wait this month as this planet is currently hidden by the sun.

Mars is starting its impressive 2005 opposition which will be later this year in October. It is seen

in the early morning sky just before sunrise.

Mercury is low in the west shortly after sundown and your best chance to view it is now through about the 15th of March.

The March equinox happens at 5:33 a.m.local time on March 20.



M44, The Beehive Cluster also known as Praesepe

Check out our Web site [www.mvastro.org](http://www.mvastro.org) for the latest on the coming April Eclipses, Space weather and other fascinating links to Astronomy

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March is the Month we remember  
Charles Messier. Come to the Herrett  
Center March 12th for our first TF city  
Messier Marathon

