Research Committee report for August 2015

August has been dry and mostly clear with occasional steady seeing.

The Moon has been imaged by Clif Ashcraft and Helder Jacinto who also took a close-up of the terraced walls of Crater Copernicus on August 25.

The sun and some of its prominences were captured by Tolga Gumusayak at an outreach day on August 22 at Jenny Jump.

A beautiful image of Saturn was taken by Tony Sharfman on August 14. The details and color were striking, despite Saturn being low on the horizon.

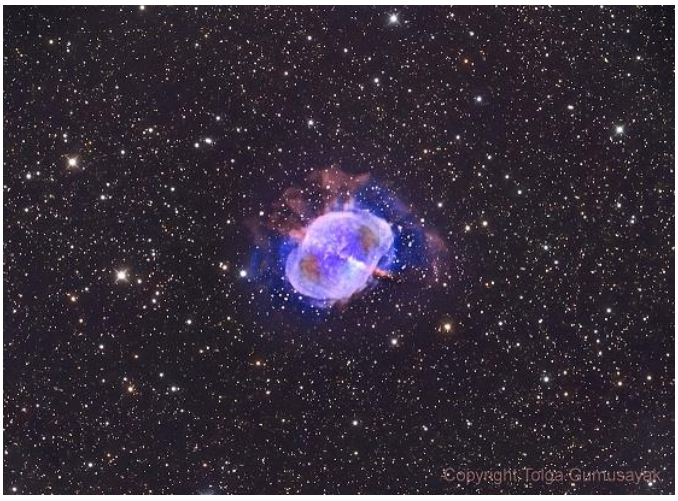
Several deep sky objects were imaged by Tolga, including the young open star cluster NCG 6997 on the "east coast" of the North American Nebula, M27 the Dumbbell Nebula, and the ghostly Crescent Nebula, all in narrowband filters. For excitement he represented AAI at a huge star party on the deck of the Intrepid Air and Space Museum in New York harbor on August 28. For entertainment he made a music video for a time-lapse sequence of the Milky Way rising behind his telescope and imaging rig, catching a Perseid meteor in the process. See https://flic.kr/p/wqLVDA . Check it out.

The most promising research project is Clif's new venture into speckle interferometry. The new cameras, telescope optics, and reduction analyses are very powerful and allow the resolution of close double stars which could not be seen clearly before.

At Jenny Jump on August 14 Mary Lou West took the first spectrum (Altair) with her new Shelyak Alpy spectroscope. The exposure was only 20 seconds with a 178 mm (7") Astro-Physics refractor there.

Also note that the Research Committee is going to try something new this year. We will present two classes this fall for AAI members only. "Astrophotography for Beginners" will be offered on Sunday September 20 from 2 PM to 3:30 PM at Sperry by Steve Lowe and Tolga. "Introduction to Spectroscopy" will be given on Sunday October 25 at 2-3:30 PM by Mary Lou and Steve.

Saturn by Tony Sharfman



M 27 by Tolga Gumusayak

Respectfully submitted, Mary Lou West, Research Committee Chair