

Eugene Astronomical Society



Io

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PO Box 591 Lowell, OR 97452

www.eugeneastro.org



The Orion Nebula [1]

Bill Basham

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 Oggie Golub - Randy Beiderwell - Ken Martin -
 Jerry Oltion

- Our PO Box has changed!
PO Box 591
Lowell, OR 97452
 Annual Club Dues \$25
 EAS is a proud member of The
 Astronomical League.

Bill Basham, an Appreciation

BY JERRY OLTION

On February 13th we lost one of our more prominent club members, Bill Basham. We'd been losing him for a couple of years since he came down with Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS), an autoimmune disease that attacks muscle neurons, but before that he was one of our most active members, going out any night he could and usually staying out until dawn. He was a wonderful observing companion, even more gung-ho than I was, and often coaxed me out even on nights that didn't look promising.

"What's the worst that could happen?" Bill would say. "You get a nice night out in the woods." We spent quite a few cloudy nights on top of high ridges, but I enjoyed every one of them. And more often than not his optimism would be well placed and we'd have clear sky, often with a blanket of fog below us that shielded us from the distant city glow.

Bill's specialty was time-lapse videos. He would set up a camera and have it take photos once every few seconds all night long, from dusk to dawn, and then he would stitch the photos into a seamless video of the night sky wheeling overhead, of fog flowing through valleys and around hilltops like ocean waves, of eclipses, approaching storms, etc. He bought a small tracking mount so he could track the same part of the sky from sunset to sunrise, and he often had two cameras going at once, one tracking and one stationary.

He kept his cameras from dewing up by putting them inside plastic nut jars with just the ends of the lens hoods sticking out. The heat generated by the camera and its external battery would keep the inside of the nut jar just a degree or two above the outside temperature, which was enough to prevent dew. He called it his "Nutty dew shield," but it worked like a charm.

Bill pioneered the idea of keeping an uninsulated thermos of hot tea inside your coat on cold nights to keep your body's core warm. He would tie a cord to a loop in the cap and wear it around his neck with the thermos about chest level. When the tea cooled enough to drink, it warmed you one more time from the inside out.

He was generous to a fault. When I look through my astronomy toolbox I find all sorts of stuff he's given me over the years. If he found some piece of astronomy gear he liked he would often buy several and pass them around.

He shared his videos, too, on a YouTube channel under the name DrLapser. (Without ads, of course.) Here's the link: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCITxRFmjpzQgPsR7EMHEoDA>

Bill also got into telescope astrophotography, in part because I t took him all night to set up, shoot photos, and tear down. It gave him something to do while his cameras were taking time lapses. He became really good at it. His photo of the Orion Nebula is one of the best I've ever seen. We used it on the mirror cover for the club's 14.7" telescope (the scope we call "Orion"), and I used it for the lead photo of a feature article in Sky & Telescope magazine (January 2020).

His eyes seldom became dark adapted because he was always monitoring his cameras, but during long exposures he would stumble his way over to my scope and we would look at bright objects. He especially liked open clusters because they don't require much night vision, and he was always excited to watch a shadow transit on Jupiter. Often he would call me over to his scope to look at a particularly beautiful frame he'd taken, and I would sacrifice my night vision to do it because I knew it would be well worth the trouble.

Bill Basham, an Appreciation (continued)

He was an active outdoorsman, too, and led a group hike up Spencer's Butte every Wednesday, rain or shine. It was on one of those hikes in December of 2017 that he tripped and injured his face and his ankle, initiating the cascade of autoimmune responses that eventually led to his ALS. It affected his speech at first, leading several people to think that he was coming to club meetings drunk, but it quickly became apparent that it was far more serious than that. ALS attacks the nerves that control muscle movement, and in many cases leads to death within months. Bill was determined to fight it, though, and since he was a medical doctor he had a lot more knowledge of the underlying physiology of the disease than most people do. He devised a regimen of medication involving small doses of a steroid that inhibited the immune system and healed the blood-brain barrier, preventing further damage to the neurons. That treatment did slow the advance of the disease for nearly three years, a significant improvement over standard therapy. Even so, Bill was unable to get anyone else in the medical field to take his treatment seriously, so what he learned my have died with him.

He describes his theory and treatment here: <https://drbillbasham.org/>

I don't have many photos of him, but here's one him scrunched up beneath his setup shooting M51 as it went straight overhead. Here's his Orion photo, too, and one he took of the solar corona during the 2017 eclipse. And one that seems especially fitting now that he's gone: A meteor streaking by our Eagle's Ridge observing site. Memories are a poor substitute for the flesh and blood presence of a friend, but at least he left us with lots of great memories.



Bill Basham shooting M51 [2]

Jerry Olton

March Meeting - Thursday, Mar. 18 7pm

PLEASE NOTE THAT ALL MEETINGS ARE CURRENTLY VIRTUAL

Ski Safari - presented by Jerry Oltion

SkySafari has become one of the most popular planetarium programs among amateur astronomers, for good reason. It's a beautiful, incredibly useful, and insanely powerful tool for exploring the night sky. One of the things it isn't, however, is intuitive. The program is so packed with features that even experienced users continue to find new functions long after they've become familiar with the more basic ones.

Jerry Oltion has been a SkySafari user since version 3. We're up to version 6 now, and in a somewhat surprising development, given his natural antipathy toward "upgrades," Jerry has actually kept up with the new version and has puzzled out how most of its features work. At our March 18th meeting, he will demonstrate the program's most common and/or useful functions and will entertain questions from the audience about features they might need help with. He'll be using version 6 Pro for the demo, but can run version 5 if there are any 5-specific questions.

Even if you're not a SkySafari user, join this meeting to find out why you should be.

The meeting starts at 7:00 on Zoom. An invitation will be sent via our email list a week or so before the meeting.

February Meeting

Triton and Neptune: Time for a Return Visit - presented by Bernie Bopp

Bernie Bopp gave a terrific presentation on Triton and Neptune, with information on the knowledge obtained by Voyager 2 on its historic fly-by.

Bernie always gives great talks, and this was no exception. He covered the fascinating things we learned about Triton and provided us with ideas on why a possible NASA mission to more deeply study the moon of Neptune would be a worthy subject.

You can see the meeting video at:

<https://youtu.be/a1FhzbCynOo>



Corona [3]

Bill Basham

Do you have something for the newsletter?

If you have an article, photo, meeting notes, stories, etc. that you would like to share with the members, please contact me, I'd be happy to add them to the newsletter. If you have photos you would like to submit, I'm trying to include more information about the process and equipment used.

Astrophotographers: I want to offer these pages as a way to not only show off your terrific photos, but to provide us with information on how they are taken and processed. Seeing the amount of work that goes into these amazing images is always fascinating, and makes us appreciate them even more!

Bruce Sackett - bruce@busymind.net



Meteor - Eagles Ridge [4]

Bill Basham



Crescent Moon [5]

Alan Gillespie

Member Astrophotography in this issue

[1] The Orion Nebula - Bill Basham

[2] Bill Basham shooting M51 - Jerry Oltion

[3] Corona - Bill Basham

[4] Meteor - Bill Basham

[5] Crescent Moon - Alan Gillespie

On the morning of 2/8/21 I was not expecting to get a break in the clouds so I was not prepared. I happened to look out the window and see the moon. So I quickly got dressed and carried EAS's Vixen ED80 outside at about 7:20am. Just in time to see the moon disappear behind some more clouds. So I waited around, but the sky was getting lighter, making the moon impossible to see. finally at about 8:07am I shot this frame at 1/125 sec at Iso100.

I had hoped to be able to get enough frames to be able to stack them, but between the clouds and the lightening sky that did not happen. I selected this particular frame because the placement of the clouds worked well with the crescent moon. Image #8881 was processed with DxO and Affinity Photo.

