

Figure 3. 60'x60' POSS image centred on the triple cluster.

looks like a triple cluster, in fact only NGC 189 [mag. 8.8, RA = 00^h 39.6^m, DEC = +61° 04'] and NGC 225 [mag. 7.0, RA = 00^h 43.4^m, DEC = +61° 47'] are physically close together, at a distance of about 700 parsecs. Both were first discovered by Sir William Herschel's sister, Caroline. The third member, Stock 24 [mag. 8.8, RA = 00^h 39.7^m, DEC = +61° 57'] is about four

times as distant. Despite being close together physically and apparently, NGC 189 is much younger than NGC 225, with NGC 225 being about 130 million years old and NGC 189 being just a baby, at 10 million years old. Stock 24 is similar in age to the middle-aged NGC 225. Open clusters lose members due to tidal interactions as they age, so, being the youngest, NGC 189 has the most stars, with two or three dozen being visible depending on the size of your scope. The two older clusters appear to have 10-20 stars, depending on your telescope's aperture, while professional telescopes find NGC 225 has about 30 members.

Finally, if you don't like lists, take your favourite star atlas, pick a constellation and try observing every deep-sky object shown on your atlas in that constellation. Or buy one of the many books about the deep sky, open it up to the pages where tonight's objects are culminating, and observe those objects.

Whatever your deep-sky observing preferences, there is an observing program out there that will fit your interest. So pick a program, grab that scope, and go observing! ●

Acknowledgements. Figure 3 is a Digital Sky Survey image produced at the Space Science Institute under U.S. Government grant NAG W-2166.

Having completed most of the above deep-sky lists, Warren Finlay is currently keeping astronomical apathy at bay by working on David Levy's Deep-Sky Gems. Doug Hube is a professional astronomer actively retired from the University of Alberta, and Associate Editor of this Journal.

Through My Eyepiece

Some EnChanted Evening

by Geoff Gaherty, Toronto Centre (geoff@foxmead.ca)

When I think of Chant Medalists, I think of Grandmasters of the astronomical arts, the medal being a kind of lifetime achievement award. In the last issue, I described the first two Chant Medal recipients who influenced my young observing life, both with decades of observing behind them. Much to my surprise, the next Chant Medalist I met was only five years older than I was, Earl Milton of the Edmonton Centre.

Earl joined the Montreal Centre as a teenager, and, like both David Levy after him and myself, was inspired by Isabel Williamson to become a diversified observational astronomer. When his family moved to Edmonton, he transferred to the Edmonton Centre and brought the Montreal Centre's observing program with him. He soon became leader of their observing team and eventually the first national observing committee



Figure 1 — East meets west: Geoff Gaherty (Chant 2008) and Earl Milton (Chant 1959) in front of Queen Elizabeth II Planetarium, 1960 (Photo by Ian McLennan)

chairman. Earl was only 23 when he received his Chant, the youngest recipient in the Medal's history.

It was eight years before the Chant Medal was presented again, this time to my friend Ray Thompson of the Toronto Centre.

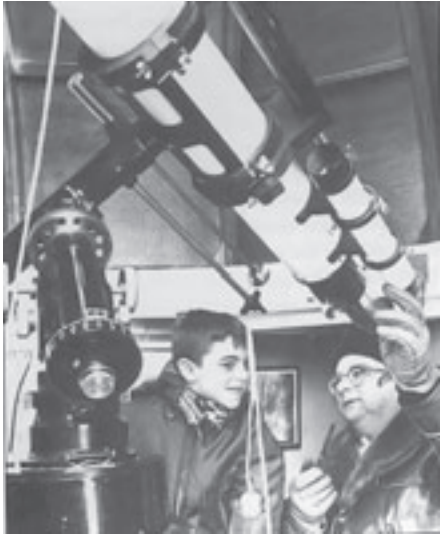


Figure 2 — Ray Thompson (Chant 1967) with son David, 1963 (Photo by Toronto Telegram)

Ray was a music teacher (now retired to Halifax) who observed many objects, but whose special love was variable stars. He's pictured in Figure 2 in his backyard observatory in Maple, Ontario, with his son David. My visit to his observatory was a double thrill: first, that an amateur astronomer could have his own domed observatory, and second, that a real person could actually own a Unitron refractor, the Astro-Physics of its day. Ray's personality was wonderfully summed up by the plaque on his observatory wall that read: "The heavens do *not* declare the glory of God; they declare the insignificance of Man, *and* his gods!" Ray became a pioneer in the photoelectric photometric observation of variable stars.

If it was eight years between Earl's and Ray's Chant Medals, it was a further twelve years before the Chant was presented again, this time to the Ottawa Centre's Rolf Meier in 1979. I'm not clear on why the Chant seemed to have been almost forgotten for two decades. Since Rolf's award, the Chant Medal has been presented quite regularly, and the recipients read like a Who's Who of contemporary amateur astronomy. I'd like to single out one man who has been a strong mentor and good friend to me, Richard Huziak.

Rick is a typical Chant Jack-of-all-trades, but, like Ray Thompson, his special love is variable stars. In 2002 he issued a challenge to Canadian observers to observe at least one variable star during the coming year: http://homepage.usask.ca/~ges125/rasc/The_Great_Canadian_Observing_Challenge.html

I had always found variable-star observing to be something



Figure 3 — Richard Huziak, pictured here with his Chant Medal (Chant 2001)

of a bore, but Rick made it sound intriguing. Soon I was hooked: variable-star observing is now my principal observing activity.

As many of you know, I recently underwent major abdominal surgery. This has slowed me down a bit, but I soon expect to be back out observing here at Foxmead Observatory. Once again, I thank the Society for honouring me with the Chant Medal.

Thanks also to Peter Broughton for his history of the RASC, *Looking Up*; to the London Centre for inviting me to give the talk on which this column and August's were based; and to Peter Jedicke and David Levy for nominating me for the Chant Medal. ●



Figure 4 - The Chant medal

Geoff Gaherty is the recipient of the Society's Chant Medal for 2008. Despite cold in the winter and mosquitoes in the summer, he still manages to pursue a variety of observations, particularly of Jupiter and variable stars. Though technically retired as a computer consultant, he is now getting paid to do astronomy, providing content and technical support for Starry Night software.