*The Otter Creek Astronomical Observatory*

# The Observer

*March 2005 (#1)*

Welcome to the 1st edition of Otter Creek Observatory's email newsletter. The newsletter will start out small – just a way to let interested members of the public know what's new at Otter Creek Observatory. We will see how it grows with time.

## Upcoming Public Programs

**Evening Programs --** Join the observatory staff for a tour of what is visible in the night sky, including the moon, stars, and planets.

***All evening programs are "weather permitting"--if the sky is not clear enough for celestial objects to be visible the observatory will not be open.***

March 19, 2005 – 7:30 to 9:30 pm EST

April 16, 2005 – 9:00 to 11:00 pm EDT

**Daytime (solar) Programs --** Daytime programs are "open house" at the observatory. Come safely observe of the Sun, with its prominences and sunspots. Walk the model solar system trail and get a sense of the size of things in space. And learn about the observatory -- after all, you can't really see what's in the observatory when it is dark.

***Daytime programs are held "rain or shine"--the observatory is open regardless of weather.***

March 5, 2005 – 11:00 am – 1:00 pm EST

April 2, 2005 – 11:00 am – 1:00 pm EST

April 30, 2005 – 11:00 am – 1:00 pm EDT

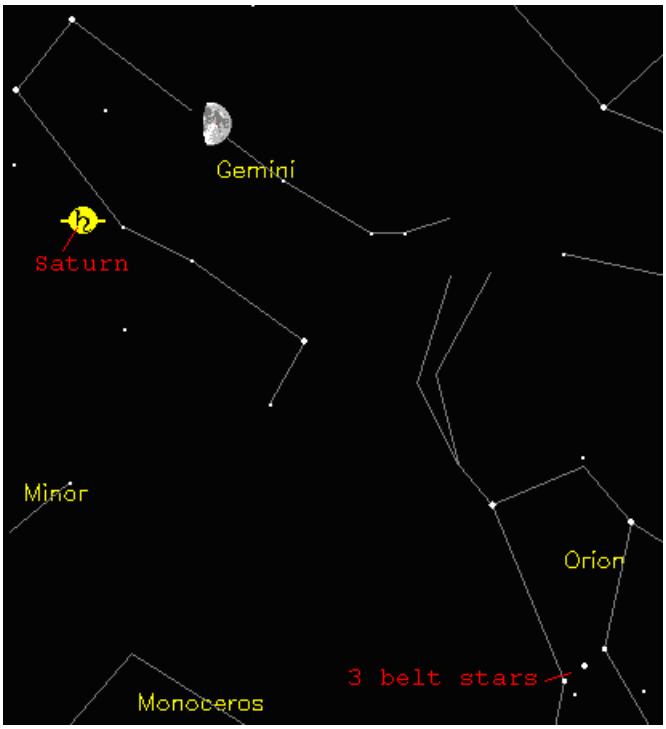
## A New Telescope for Otter Creek Observatory

Thanks to the Wal-Mart Vision Center of Elizabethtown OCO has a new small telescope – a Meade ETX-125EC. This telescope has an aperture of about 6" and is conveniently portable. Current plans are to use it as part of OCO's Mobile Telescope program – it will be much easier to cart around than the 8" telescope that is currently used for the Mobile Telescope.

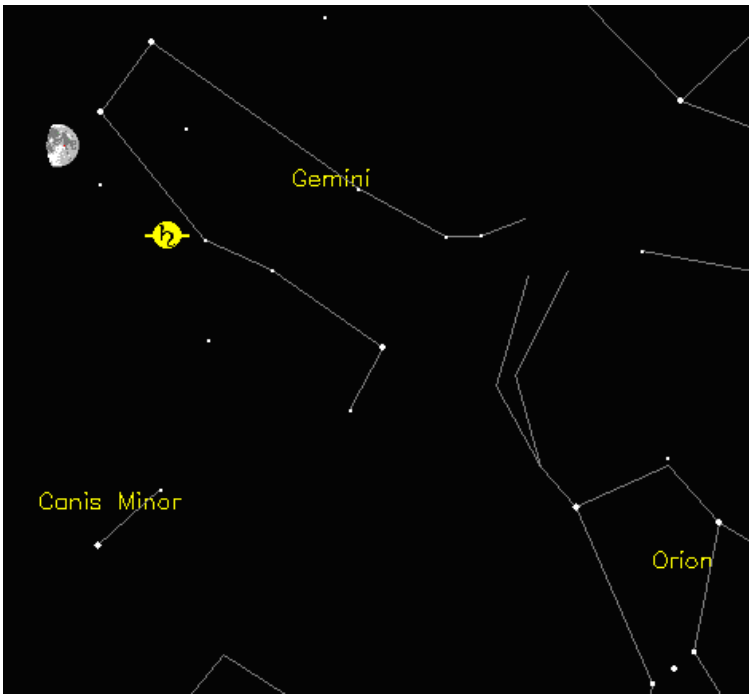
## Find Saturn this March

A lot of people would like to be able to locate planets but have a hard time doing so. After all, despite all the tales about how to recognize a planet, the fact is that to the average person they pretty much look like bright stars – and some are not even particularly bright. Saturn is one planet that is not bright enough to catch your attention. A good time to find it is when the Moon is near by. This will occur during mid-March. Look for the moon the evening of the 19th or the 20th. Also look for the constellation Orion which has three stars in its "belt". Use these two "landmarks" and the maps below to figure out which of the "stars" in the vicinity of the Moon is Saturn. While Saturn doesn't look like the symbol in this map it does have a pale yellowish hue. Keep in mind the Moon is constant creeping along among the stars – look how much it changed between the 19th and the 20th! Depending on when you look these maps will be more or less accurate.

**March 19**




**March 20**




Maps made using YourSky public domain software http://www.fourmilab.ch/yoursky/

## *Saturn: Lord of the Rings* at the Challenger Learning Center

The Challenger Learning Center of Hardin county is an educational facility which offers an exciting adventure for students in which they participate in a simulated space mission, fashioned after actual space missions flown by NASA.

April 4th through 7th we will be hosting a spring break camp, which will highlight the Cassini-Huygens Mission. Campers will learn about Saturn and its moons, create their own edible Cassini craft and lots more!! This camp will be for grades K-5 and will have a limited number of spaces. For more information or to reserve a space for your child please call 270-351-7827.

## Dr. Mark Chantell at Jefferson Community College's Southwest Campus

Otter Creek Observatory and the Jefferson Community College Southwest Speaker Series are co-hosting Dr. Mark Chantell, who will be speaking at Jefferson on **"The Age of the Universe (and how do you even begin to measure such a thing)"** the evening of April 20, 2005. An observing session with Otter Creek Observatory's Mobile Telescope will take place afterwards. Watch the observatory's web page for details. Dr. Chantell, who currently works in the University of Chicago's teaching labs, is an avid amateur astronomer as well as being listed by the NASA Astrophysics Data System abstract service as being the author or co-author of over thirty papers in leading scientific journals such as *Physical Review Letters*, *The Astrophysical Journal*, and others.

Visit the Otter Creek Observatory web page at
**www.ottercreekpark.org**