

Impromptu Stargazing Party on Brockway Mountain

written by Chris Guibert | August 22, 2022

When the Keweenaw Mountain Lodge was [designated as an International Dark Sky Park](#) in June individuals passionate about astronomy reached out to congratulate the Lodge. One gentleman from Marquette called us and said he would like to donate his telescope for our [telescope lending program](#). On August 11th Steve Mahaffehy and his brother Merv drove to Lodge to deliver the [Orion AstroView 90mm EQ](#). What a joy it was to meet the brothers and accept this generous gift. I put the Steve-Scope, as we now call it, on the shelf in the [OAC \(Outdoor Activity Center\)](#) and returned to helping guests plan their day.



Steve Mahaffehy donates his Orion AstroView 90mm EQ telescope to the KML Telescope Lending Program.

On August 16th there were multiple families staying at the Lodge that were interested in Astronomy. There was a chance for Northern Lights that night and the OAC decided to throw an impromptu Star Gazing Party at the West Overlook on [Brockway Mountain](#). At 10pm we loaded the new telescope, a few blankets and some camp chairs and headed to the viewpoint. Star gazing parties are respectful outings with people minimizing their flashlights, preferably using [red lights](#), and looking through telescopes and talking about stars and planets.



The West Overlook is a popular spot for sunsets and stargazing

and you never know who will be there. To our delight there were a few vans and cars, all of which had their lights off and were there to stargaze.



Vehicles are silhouetted against the moonlit clouds on the West Overlook on Brockway Mountain.

I pulled out the Steve-Scope and set it up in the dark. I can now advise that it is probably best to first set up a new telescope in the daylight. I fumbled with the adjustments and was able to get Saturn in the viewfinder through a break in the clouds. It was small but the rings were visible. The wind kicked up and the group took turns trying to look at Saturn but some struggled with the sensitive viewfinder and shake of the scope from the wind.

After about an hour some of the group headed back to the Lodge, and shortly after the clouds cleared and we put the scope aside. The Milky Way loomed overhead. We pulled out the chairs and

blankets, laid back and took in the universe above us. It was a spectacular show. Around midnight the moon rose. We looked at the third quarter moon briefly in the Steve-Scope and decided to call it a night.



Keweenaw Mountain Lodge guests count shooting stars as they layback at the Star Gazing Party.

The OAC staff learned a lot from our first star party and opened our eyes to how we can continue to improve these celebrations of dark skies.



[Chris Guibert](#)

Chris Guibert: I have a strong passion for all things outdoors and have worked as a tour guide and professional photographer for the last twenty five years. As the Lead of Outdoor Activities at the Mountain Lodge I want make sure you and your family have a great experience while staying and playing. Please feel free to ask me any questions about the trails, regional activities and local secrets.

