

Contributors

David Ratledge is an IT Manager living in Lancashire, UK. He built his first telescope more than 40 years ago and soon became hooked on photographing the night sky. That long apprenticeship served him well and provided a sound footing to embark on digital imaging when it arrived on the amateur scene more than 10 years ago. Since then many of his images have been published on both sides of the Atlantic. He has already written or edited three books for Springer: *The Art and Science of CCD Astronomy*, *Software and Data for Practical Astronomers* and *Observing the Caldwell Objects*. He is a regular contributor to *Sky & Telescope* magazine, for which he is an associate editor. He is chairman of Bolton Astronomical Society.

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David Haworth started astro-imaging with a Cookbook CCD camera he built in 1996, and since then he has used SBIG CCD cameras, digital cameras, digital SLR cameras, Web cameras, Meade LPI and 35mm film cameras to image the sky. David's images have appeared in *Lunar Photo of the Day* (LPOD), Astronomy.com Photo Gallery, Spaceweather.com, *Images of the Moon E-Book*, Orion Telescopes & Binoculars catalog and advertisements in both *Sky & Telescope* and *Astronomy* magazines. David is a member of the team of astronomers who produce the annual "Imaging the Sky" conference. He enjoys astronomical imaging and then processing his images to bring out details that cannot be seen by visual observing.

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Keith Wiley and Steve Chambers. **Keith** is a Ph.D. student studying computer science at the University of New Mexico. While he has followed the developments of webcam hardware modifications quite closely, he is primarily a computer programmer and, as such, spends much of his time writing image acquisition and image processing software oriented toward astrophotography-related imaging. **Steve** is a professional biochemist and keen amateur astronomer. His background in biochemistry has played an important role in the development of Steve's hobby by ensuring he never has quite enough money to buy off-the-shelf equipment. His DIY (do-it-yourself) astronomy projects include a half-meter computerized telescope and an automated sky survey. In 2001 Steve developed a method to allow modern webcams to be used for deep-sky astronomy – the rest, they say, is history!

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Johannes Schedler has been a pioneer of deep-sky imaging with digital SLR cameras and several of his stunning color images, taken with a Canon D60, have been published in *Sky & Telescope* magazine. He works as technical manager (chemical engineer M.Sc.) for the Austrian company CTP Air Pollution Control. He lives south of Graz, the Styrian capital, and is a keen astro-imager using webcams, digital cameras and CCDs. He has been imaging now for more than 5 years. His Panther Observatory houses a Celestron C11 Schmidt-Cassegrain and a 4-inch APO refractor on a heavy permanent GEM.

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Christian Buil could justifiably be regarded as the father of amateur CCD astronomy. He was probably the first amateur to build a working CCD camera and publish details on its construction and operation, as long ago as 1987. Originally only available in French, this was later expanded and translated into English as *CCD Astronomy*, published by Willmann-Bell Inc. An essential part of CCD astronomy is image processing software, and here too Christian has been a pioneer with his programs: MIPS, Qmips and now IRIS. His main interest has always been spectroscopy; he is one of a French team who have access to the 0.6-meter Newtonian and 1-meter Cassegrain at the famous Pic du Midi Observatory to carry out their work. In his professional life he is an optical engineer specializing in opto-electronics with the French Space Agency in Toulouse.

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Damian A. Peach is now widely regarded as one of the world's foremost high-resolution planetary observers. His images have graced the covers of many books, magazines, professional publications and Web pages. He has appeared several times on BBC television, and for their Mars Spectacular he produced fabulous images of Mars live on air. He is an assistant director of the BAA Jupiter Section, the BAA Saturn Section and the ALPO Jupiter Section.

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Brian Lula, a mechanical engineer by profession, is fortunate that his hobby has become his career. He is president of the U.S. subsidiary of Physik Instrumente, a world-leading manufacturer of high-tech nano-positioning products for scientific research including astronomical applications. Brian provides a unique perspective to the discussion of astronomical CCD imaging as he has designed and built observatory-class amateur telescopes and equatorial mounts. Brian has been building telescopes for more than 30 years, including a 20-inch f/5 Newtonian astrograph optimized for wide-field CCD imaging, a CCD Cookbook 245 camera, several observatories and a host of other smaller telescopes and mounts. Brian's astronomical images have appeared many times in leading magazines and prestigious Web sites such as NASA's "Astronomy Picture of the Day." His images have also been shown on CBS's *Sunday Morning News* and were selected for an exhibition highlighting Brian's work on telescopes and imaging at the Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum in Washington, DC.

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Robert Gendler has been an astrophotographer for almost a decade and has had images published in more than 200 magazines, books and calendars, including many front covers. He has achieved all this imaging from his home, in light-polluted suburbia, using creative imaging techniques. Twenty-six of his images have been featured on NASA's Web site "Astronomy Picture of the Day," which is more than any amateur astrophotographer in the world. He has also had his work featured on national TV such as the NBC *Today Show*, the CBS *Sunday Morning Show* and in an upcoming PBS *NOVA* documentary, "Cosmic Origins." His image of the Andromeda galaxy was selected as one of the greatest astronomical images of the last 30 years by *Astronomy* magazine in September 2003.

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Dale E. Mais has been involved in amateur astronomy most of his life. He is an endocrinology researcher working for a bio-tech company in the San Diego area. While his biology and chemistry degrees serve him well in his professional life, it is his chemistry background that he enjoys applying to spectroscopy. He is fortunate to have an observatory with a Celestron 14 as its primary instrument, CCD cameras and an AstroPhysics 5.1-inch. His location, 12 miles from Mount Palomar, means he benefits from outstanding seeing and relatively dark skies, which the Hale telescope enjoys. His primary interest is spectroscopy and photometry of long-period variables of the Mira class. These are stars of type M, which evolve into S- and C-type stars and are of great interest because of the peculiar heavy-metal abundances, which get cooked up within them and appear at their surfaces. In particular, he is monitoring these type of stars for potential flare-up events, which can be followed up with moderate-resolution spectroscopy.

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Tom Boles, who is originally from Glasgow, Scotland, spent many happy years as a telescope designer and maker for Charles Frank Ltd., from whom many amateurs in the UK acquired their first telescope. Today he is a retired computer and telecom support engineer, having held director-level positions with several multinational equipment marketing and support companies. He is currently president of the British Astronomical Association, a Fellow of the Royal Astronomical Society, a member of the Webb Society and The Astronomer. His devouring passion is extragalactic supernovae: their physics, appearance, demographics and, of course, their discovery. He patrols on every available clear night and monitors some 12,000 galaxies for supernovae. In the last year his total supernova discoveries passed the 80 mark, and he is well on his way toward a target of 100. Since he started patrolling, he has recorded more than a third of a million galaxy images and clocked more than 10,000 hours collecting and searching images.

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