

JON TALBOT – Ocean Springs, Mississippi

I live in Ocean Springs, MS with my wife and two daughters. All my observing is done from my “other house” as my wife calls it, in my backyard. My skies are partly light polluted from the many casinos in the city of Biloxi, 10 miles to the west and the Northrop Grumman ship yard 10 miles east. Luckily I live close to the Gulf of Mexico so my skies are fairly dark to the south. Limiting magnitude is 4.5 to near 5.0 on the best of nights.

For my day job, I am a Flight Meteorologist with the Air Force Reserve’s “Hurricane Hunters”. We are the crazy ones you hear about on TV when a hurricane is brewing over the ocean. Our job is to fly into tropical cyclones for the National Hurricane Center and collect the data that is used in forecasting where these storms will go. This is a very rewarding and exciting job and quells any thirst for excitement. I’ve earned the name “Astro” from my flying buddies. The best view I’ve ever had of the night sky was at 2am while 18,000 ft. over the Southern Bahamas. The Milky Way was so bright it cast a shadow in the cockpit.

My interest in Astronomy dates back to when I was in grade school. I remember looking through a telescope my uncle bought for my cousin. We spent some interesting hours trying to figure out how the polar mount worked. My interest waned in the coming years through college and raising a family. Just before my first daughter started college the astronomy bug hit again and I purchased a Meade Newtonian reflector and started observing the sky. Not long after, I purchased a 8” Meade LX200 in the fall of 2001 and my first CCD camera in May 2002 after seeing the wonderful amateur images in *Sky & Telescope*. Just recently I upgraded my mount to a Mountain Instruments MI 250.

The imaging learning curve was steep but I was fortunate to be able to meet and spend a day with Al Kelly at his home in Texas a few years back. He imparts some of his wisdom about image processing that sticks to this day. In this wonderful hobby the hours are long, nights are cold and the learning curve is never ending. Sleep, well that’s for some other time. The reward is seeing your image come alive on your computer screen.

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<http://www.starscapeimaging.com/>