

April 2nd, 2005
Passo del Giovà
Appennine Mountains
Italy

Public observation of Saturn
by Paola Battaglia

On Saturday, April 2nd 2005, the Circolo Astrofili di Milano (Amateur Astronomy Group of Milan) organized a star party on the Appennine Mountains (at about 2 hrs and half from Milan). The place, named Passo del Giovà, is still in Lombardy and has an altitude of about 1500 meters.

Two to three weeks before the event, a brochure was distributed to give people all the informations they needed for reaching the place and be prepared to an astronomical observation. The night was quite cold (about 6 degrees Celsius below zero, i.e. 21 degrees Fahrenheit), but the sky was clear and the seeing exceptionally good. Stars were still spots inside the telescopes and Saturn looked great. It showed its magnificent ring system; it was possible to see even the shadow of the rings on the planet surface. Many moons were visible, too: Encelado, Mimas, Dione, Thetis and, more distant, Titan and Rhea.

There were about 30 people, ranging from 25 to 65 years old who stayed there from 7.30 p.m. 'till the first light of dawn. 15 telescopes were at people disposal. There were refractors and reflectors of many sizes and for many of the people there, it was the first time they observed a planet or a galaxy through a telescope.

Hereafter some images of the place and of the people during the star party.



Image 1 – The sunset.



Image 2 – A telescope under the night sky.



Image 3 – One of the participants with its 14" reflector



Image 4 – Little relax before the long, cold observing night!



Image 5 – Mounting a 16" Dobson