



It was like the Pony Express, bolting out of a model train session held under moonlit conditions (as described in part 1 of my day, [HERE](#)) in Palm Bay to race back to Orlando, swap cars, pile in binoculars, planispheres and lawn chairs, and then run up to Geneva for the star party there. Unfortunately I got there after dark. This meant we were fumbling our way out onto the driving range pad with no idea where the scopes had set up (every time we go out there, they move for some reason). Worse, we were in the Jetta and the only way to shut off the headlights is with a brick. Swung one way to park so I could get out to look and there in my beams were a bunch of disgusted astronomers protecting their precious night vision. Oops. Swung the car almost into a ditch to save them and heard someone say, "Another newbie". Shit. We probably need to set up reflectors so cars can find parking without running over refractive telescopes. That's the problem with dark-sky sites. They are also dark-parking sites.

Anyway, after enduring the ringing shame of my arrival, we found that there were quite a number of scopes in play. I hadn't brought mine - there just hadn't been time, but I got to play on some of the others. Interesting to sight out the various clusters and galaxies in space (saw Andromeda several times that night, each time more breathtaking than the last). Also saw several clusters of the sort I'd never viewed - all very beautiful.

Still, after all those high powered scope-views, the best view of the night came while JB and I sat on the bumper of her light-happy Jetta, making out the constellations and looking at things with the noks. Really, the Pleiades are nice enough in a scope but in binoculars they really shine. Just gorgeous, like blue stones on a velvet backing (and all that writer rubbish). But it was fun, wrapping up my day of two nights.

Good weekend, all together.

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