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Seeking optical counterparts to gravitational wave event candidates JONAH KANNER, University of Maryland, LIGO SCIENTIFIC COLLABORATION, VIRGO COLLABORATION — Large, kilometer scale gravitational wave (GW) detectors are now operating in the U.S. and Europe. Potential GW sources include compact object mergers, supernovae, and other energetic astrophysical events. Many such sources of gravitational waves would also be expected to emit electromagnetic radiation promptly and/or as a fading afterglow. The on-going search effort can be aided by the use of wide-field optical telescopes promptly imaging sky regions associated with gravitational wave signal candidates. Capturing the image of the optical counterpart to a GW emitting event would yield valuable astrophysical information, and could help confirm a GW signal candidate as a real event. This talk will discuss the methods and status of the effort to capture and interpret relevant image data.

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