

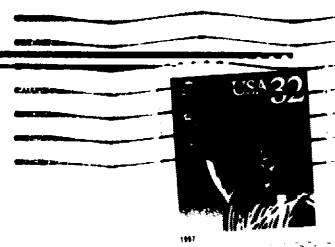
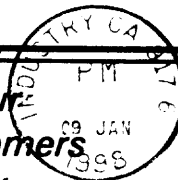
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# nightwatch

Newsletter of the Pomona Valley Amateur Astronomers

Amateur  
astronomers  
get better  
looking...



**Happy New Year to one and all!!**

Volume 18 Number 1

*nightwatch*

January 1998

## *President's Message*

The first-ever PVAA Holiday Dinner was a great success! There was plenty of excellent food, expertly prepared by Jack Gardner's wife, Lorraine. Nelly Branch, Bob Branch and Jack Gardner provided help to get things set up and served. There was a great deal of social interaction, that, judging by my own table, was both stimulating and satisfying.

But now it's a new year, with new challenges and new rewards awaiting all of us. New NASA space missions will keep our senses attuned to the great "out there", and, who knows, maybe this will be the year that the SETI searches will finally detect a genuine signal from an alien source. If that happens (and it's a big IF), all of us here on earth will have some serious soul-searching to do to decide how to respond. What do you think we should do? I would love to see member's responses to that question showing up in *nightwatch*.

**Special event coming up!** PVAA has been invited back to the Rancho Santa Ana Botanical Garden in Claremont to put on a "Family Star Show" in February. The site will be much improved over our earlier visits:

- we will be next to the "Outdoor Classroom", where we can use their back-lighted screen to project slides.
- the area immediately south of there is clear and flat, ideal for a telescope field.
- the date of the Star Show is: February 7th (Saturday).

Please mark it on your calendar, and plan to attend, if you can.

I have received photographs as potential candidates for publication on our web site from several members. Thank you to all who contributed! If your photo does not immediately appear, please be aware that I must limit both the

size and number of images on the site, in order for it to "load" on viewer's computers in a reasonable time. Meanwhile, I offer these guidelines for those who may submit pictures:

- Pictures must be absolutely sharp, in focus, with no blurring! Reduction to GIF or JPEG format already costs some resolution, so we need to start sharp.
- Keep the layout compact with subjects close together. Probably no more than three faces in a picture, if they are to be recognizable.
- Astrophotos need to be of compact objects with good contrast with the surrounding sky. A globular cluster is good, but a loose open cluster may be hard to spot against a starry background.

In any case, keep the pictures coming! The more we have to choose from, the more interesting our web site will be.

Have you noticed an increase in authorship in the latest *nightwatch*? We have excellent articles by both Janis Seaton and Ron Hoekwater. For those of you who happen to go to a different viewing site, or visit another club--or anything "astronomical"--we would welcome and encourage you to submit an article on your experience. With alternate star party sites coming up during the next three months, we will need more people writing articles for all the sites to be covered.

It's unfortunate that the February total solar eclipse falls entirely out of our area. It looks like a wonderful opportunity, if the weather is good. Are any members planning to use this for an excuse to visit beautiful Aruba, Curacao, or Antigua? If so, please let us know, and be prepared to share your experiences with us after you return. I am confident that every member who attended the presentation by Don Weisbrod and his wife on the eclipse in Southeast Asia will be eager to see something similar. How about another trip, Don?

This is the season when the sky looks the most

familiar to me. With big, bright constellations over a large part of the sky, and long, dark nights ahead, it's a wonderful time to be an amateur astronomer. How many of you tried looking for the offbeat sights Roy Schmidt mentioned in our November meeting? I did--got about half of them. It would be interesting to get some feedback from others, to see how many of you actually pick up the challenge and go out searching for those "What's Up?" objects. Keep in mind that the objective of "What's Up?" is to encourage members to broaden their horizons and look for something other than familiar Messier objects.

Although the nights are wonderfully dark and long, they are also getting bone-chilling cold! At least to someone as poorly insulated as I am! So, don't forget to dress warmly, take extra warm clothes, and remember to protect your head and feet. Being comfortable is a major part of enjoying star parties. Next one up is... Death Valley, January 23, 24.

*Patrick Nicholson*

**PVAA 24 HR. Hotline..**

Get the latest news on the star party, club meetings, special events and astronomy happenings.

**call 909/985-1684**

Visit or website at [www/cyberg8t.com/patrick/pvaa.htm](http://www/cyberg8t.com/patrick/pvaa.htm)

**PVAA Events Calendar**

Month	Star Party	General Meeting	Board Meeting
January	31	9	2
February	28	13	6
March	28	13	6
April	5	18	4

**December General Meeting**

The December General Meeting was a first ever for PVAA: a Holiday Dinner! Originally planned as a potluck, it evolved into a dinner open to all PVAA members, free of charge, with all food provided and prepared. You can't match that kind of a deal, anywhere! It could only have been the competition from a multitude of other holiday events [*or illness in the case of our home—ed*] that kept attendance down to about 35. To those who missed it: you missed a lot of good, friendly fellowship, in addition to a satisfying meal put together by Jack Gardner's wife, Lorraine.

I was not surprised to find Bob and Nelly Branch involved in the preparations, when I arrived. Nelly was arranging food items, while Bob served as official greeter at the door. Jack was the overall maiordomo in charge. It was wonderful to see how smoothly Lorraine put that meal together, so it all came out at the same time, done to perfection, and beautifully presented!

As usual, most members arrived within 5 minutes of start time, so we quickly sorted ourselves out, listened to a very few opening words and announcements by your president, and then lined up for food.

It was interesting to note that most of the attendees were those who normally attend our General Meetings, but there were a few exceptions: Amelia Tremblay came out, assisted by her nephew, after many months in absentia. Others present were: Joe Hillberg, Owen Robbins and wife Judy, Darrell Smedley and wife from North Hills, John Viselli and wife, Bill Bray and wife Frances, Stan Clark and daughter, Tom Desy, Dave Gardner and wife, George Gerlach, Ron Hoekwater and roommate, Pavel Jaros, Gene Kosaka, wife and daughter, Dennis and Suzy Lumbert, Roy Schmidt and

**PVAA Officers and Board**

**Officers**

President.....Patrick Nicholson.....909/626-1528  
 Vice President...Joe Hillberg.....909/985-5617  
 Secretary..... Janis Seaton .....909/899-2197  
 Treasurer.....Jack Gardner.....909/626-2665  
 VP Facilities.....John Seaton .....909/899-2197

**Board**

Ron Hoekwater..... 909/391/1943  
 Ray Magdziarz..... 909/626-8303  
 Dorene Hopkins..... 909/983-5584  
 Bob Branch..... 909/982-8015

**Directors**

*nightwatch*..Michael McFadden.....909/392-0581  
 Membership...Jack Gardner.....909/626-2665

Web address: [www/cyberg8t.com/patrick/pvaa.htm](http://www/cyberg8t.com/patrick/pvaa.htm)

wife, Joe Vlietstra, and Ray and Irene Magdziarz.

Our thanks to everyone who came for assisting in the cleanup afterward, moving tables and chairs, carrying out garbage bags, organizing the left-overs, and especially to Irene Magdziarz for washing the cooking and serving dishes. Fortunately, individual plates and "silverware" were all disposable plastic, quickly tossed into available garbage bags. Jack and Lorraine know how to organize a meal to minimize clean-up!

There were two objectives planned for the Holiday Dinner: (1) to put a little variety into our meetings, with the hope of creating more interest, and (2) giving our members a chance to have a little more social interaction than is possible at the typical General Meeting. With the latter objective in mind, we asked each member present to introduce himself or herself, together with any accompanying guests. Since we also asked for "brief" comments about recent experiences related to the Club, we got a number of short biographical stories that greatly improved our knowledge and appreciation of our fellow members. It was a fun meeting. Your feedback is requested.. Shall we do it again, next year?

*Patrick Nicholson*



Christmas Party attendees Joe Hillberg, Suzy and Dennis Lumbert

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