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nightwatch

Newsletter of the Pomona Valley Amateur Astronomers

Amateur
astronomers
just get better
looking . . .

**The general meeting will begin at
7:30 P.M. in Galileo Hall**

Volume 24 Number 8

nightwatch

August 2004

President's ADDRESS

In Claremont on July 24th, at the home of Ken and Linda Boyer, the first PVAA "Front-yard Star Party" was held. It was scheduled to coincide with first quarter moon. The summer nighttime temperature was pleasant and the event was well attended by both the public and by club members with their telescopes. In addition to the Moon; Jupiter, Alberio, M13, and the Ring Nebula were available to view. Our hosts served banana splits and a good time was had by all.

We had a chance to chat with many interesting members of our local community. One attendee is Homer Davis, a Claremont resident and a retired teacher. Mr. Davis uses a cane and needs some assistance to walk, but twice he climbed the stepladder, observing both the Moon and the Ring Nebula through the 22-inch scope. At age 91 he undoubtedly held seniority among those present.

I believe that we should make the "Front-yard Star Party" an annual PVAA summertime event. Thanks to the Boyers and to all of our PVAA members who helped to make this attempt at public outreach such a success.

Lastly, remember that August is the month in which we elect our club officers. Return the ballot attached to this newsletter or vote in person at the August general meeting.

Ron Hoekwater

August Speaker

In August our speaker will be Alex McConahay of the Riverside Astronomical Society. Mr. McConahay is an educator and the editor of RAS's newsletter. As one of the Riverside Amateur Telescope Makers he has built two telescopes and earned an RTMC Merit Award. He traveled to Greece to observe the recent transit of the Sun by Venus. He will speak on that observing experience.

Star Party Sites

(MBC) Mecca Beach Campground (see page 4)
(CS) Cottonwood Springs campgrnd, Josua Tree Ntl. Pk
(CC) Cow Canyon Saddle, Mount Baldy Village
(MS) Mequite Springs campgrnd, Death Valley National Pk
(CWP) Claremont Wilderness Park parking lot
(KD) Kelso Dunes
(WM) White Mountains
(CGT) Calico Ghost Towm Campground

PVAA Events Calendar

Month	Star Party	Star Party	General Meeting	Board Meeting
August	CS	14	27	19
Sept	CGT	11	24	16
Oct	CS	9	29	21
Nov	MBC	13	19	11

July General Meeting

Remember that yearly membership renewals are due August 30th. Individual membership is \$30, \$12 for a person under 18, and \$40 for our new family membership category. We hope you will all join up again for another year of interesting lectures, Club and public star parties, and our annual December holiday dinner. Don't miss the upcoming October lunar eclipse with the PVAA!

Lee Collins spoke to us about the sky around the constellation of Scorpius and the nearby center of our Milky Way galaxy where numerous star clusters are found. At the recent PVAA hosted Girl Scout star party, with few objects to be seen from our site in northern Claremont, we turned the binoculars to Antares, the brightest star in the scorpion. Its closeness to the horizon makes it an interesting object to watch as the light passing through our thick atmosphere at that point makes it appear to flash in a rainbow of colors - white, red, green, yellow, and blue.

Featured Speaker

Our speaker was Victor Aniceto, Director of Sales from Celestron since 1988.

Tom Johnson and Alan Hale founded Celestron in 1957 as Valor Electronics, after Tom unsuccessfully tried to find a telescope to buy for his son. They manufacture Schmidt Cassegrain telescopes ranging in size from 5" to 22." They began adding computerized controls way back in 1984 and have recently come out with a fully integrated GPS scope system.

Victor also spoke to us on recommended telescope cleaning procedures. After the first advice to only clean if absolutely necessary and to start with the outside of the collector plate, we learned to look for an alignment scratch on the plate before removing the retaining ring. It should be in the 3-o'clock position and be returned to that same position before reassembly. Start by using a can of compressed air to remove any pieces of dirt or lint. If more cleaning is still needed, use a solution of 60% isopropyl alcohol and 40% distilled water. Wipe the plate from center to edge using white unscented Kleenex brand tissue. If necessary, use the compressed air again to remove remaining dirt, grime, or cleaning solution. Victor headed to the west parking lot to assemble an 11" Celestron after

his talk. We soon followed for some observations after a presentation by Ray.

Ray brought us pictures of his June 8th observations of the Venus transit from the Adler Planetarium in Chicago. Ray's roots in the area go way back as he used to be president of the local amateur group that met at the Planetarium. Observers arrived before dawn to watch – using a wide variety of telescopes, binoculars, and even solar filter glasses. Ray was able to share his observations with a wider audience as one of the TV stations filming the event interviewed Ray for the early morning news. Autographs were given to club members after his talk!

Thanks to Ray and to Victor for an entertaining evening .

Claire Stover

PVAA 24 HR. Hotline.
Get the latest news on the star party, club meetings, special events and astronomy happenings.call
909/596-7274

Visit our website at
<http://pages.pomona.edu/~aka04747/pvaa/>

PVAA Officers and Board

Officers

President.....Ron Hoekwater.909/391-1943
Vice President...Joe Hillberg.....909/985-5617
Secretary.....Claire Stover....909/988-9747
Treasurer.....Ludd Trozpek...909/624-3679
VP Facilities.....Bob Akers.....909/946-0228

Board

Lee Collins..... 626/852-9442
Ray Magdziarz.....909/626-8303
Spencer Crump.....909/624-4893
Larry Pall.....909/949-2323

Directors

Nightwatch....Ray Magdziarz....909/626-8303
Membership...Ludd Trozpek 909/624-3679
Publicity.....Dorene Hopkins..909/983-5584
Programs.....Roy Schmidt.....909/980-1867
Speaker.....Walter Brown.....909/989-6535

John Jacobs move.

John Jacobs has moved to Briarwood Manor Apartments. Room 210, 9656 Exeter, Montclair, Ca 91763. Telephone (909) 626-2553. He is not able to come to the meetings. I'm sure that he would welcome cards or visits from the membership. Be sure to call ahead before visiting.

Ray Magdziarz

Barnes & Noble Public Star Party

PVAA and Barnes & Noble will be having the final public star party of the summer at the Barnes and Noble on the North side of Foothill, (next to Best Buy) in Rancho Cucamonga. The date will be Tuesday, August 24. It will start at twilight. We have had good turnouts from the public and have gained some new members from these star parties in the past. I hope many of you will be able to attend.

Ron

Hoekwater

I want to thank **Bob Akers** for all his help in making my presentation of the Venus transit possible last month.

Ray Magdziarz

Mount Palomar Tour

On October 16th at 2:00 PM PVAA will be given a guided tour of the fourth and final of the great telescopes built by George Ellery Hale, the 200-inch telescope on Mount Palomar. For those wishing to go there will be a signup sheet at the general meeting. If you have never visited the Mount Palomar Observatory (or even if you have) make your plans to attend. This should not be missed.

Ron Hoekwater

Help Needed for Scouting Event

Glenn Blakeslee of the Boy Scouts has invited us to a star party at Holcomb Valley Scout Ranch on Labor Day 2004. The star party will be on Saturday night (September 4th). If you will be able to help with this event contact Ron Hoekwater: 391-1943, astro.ron@juno.com.

Ron Hoekwater

ELECTION OF PVAA OFFICERS

Once again it's election time for the Pomona Valley Amateur Astronomers. The board asks that you mark your ballot in the prescribed manner so that it might be counted. Your ballot is important as it will help decide the next slate of officers. Select the nominee of your choice by marking an "X" in the appropriate box, and on unopposed nominees mark each office with an "X" in the yes box to elect the nominee or a n "X" in the no box to reject the nominee. Remember every ballot carries the same weight in this election.

Rules for voting

Please follow the rules accordingly so that your ballot is validated and counted in the election. Ballots will be distributed in the August newsletter to the membership eligible to vote (according to paid dues). Additional ballots can be obtained at the general meeting of August 27th. In the event that a member submits more than one ballot, the last ballot received by the treasurer prior to "closing of the polls" will be counted with all previous ballots being destroyed. Any ballots submitted at the August 27th meeting will supercede any mailed ballots with the mailed ballots being destroyed prior to counting.

Each ballot must be returned to the treasurer of the P.V.A.A. either by mail (as described below) or by personal delivery at the August 27th meeting. Nothing is to be written on the ballot other than selection markings. Do not sign the ballot or add any additional notes or comments or the ballot will be declared invalid.

Ballots returned by mail must be sent to: P.V.A.A.

Attention treasurer
P.O. Box 162
Upland, California 91786

August Star Party

The August star party at Cottonwood Spring was sparsely attended. In fact I was the only PVAA member there. But the observing was good and I was glad that I went.

When I arrived (a little before sunset) there were thin clouds overhead. Before leaving home I checked the Clear Sky Clock which predicted that the transparency would be very good. As I set up the Starsplitter, I was hopeful that conditions would improve. Around 10:00 PM the sky cleared. As the campground was nearly empty, lights were not a problem. The days are hot, but the summer nighttime temperature at Cottonwood is very comfortable.

I decided to look at a constellation, which I have rarely observed before, Delphinus. First I observed two planetary nebulae, NGC 6891 and 6905. NGC 6905 was relatively easy to find, but NGC 6891 is so small (approximately 7" x 15") that I had to increase power and use an OIII filter. It finally showed itself as a faint fuzzy bluish star.

Next I turned to a pair of globular clusters in Delphinus. NGC 6934 is magnitude 8.8 and about 6 arc minutes diameter. The tougher of the two is NGC 7006.

It is believed to be about 150,000 light years away making it one of the most remote globulars of the Milky Way. At magnitude 10.6 it was not terribly difficult to find in a 22-inch scope. The diameter is a little less than 3 arc minutes. I also looked at NGC 7027 in Cygnus. It is a bright (10th magnitude) blue-green ovoid southeast of the North America Nebula.

The Perseids are still active and so I spent quite a bit of time lying down and looking at meteors. One was especially interesting. It traversed about 60-70 degrees of sky. It was not especially bright and it did not leave a trail, but it was traveling so fast that I don't know what else it could have been. It didn't look like space junk, or at least not like space junk that I have seen in the past. I wonder if it could have been a meteor skipping off the upper atmosphere. It probably took about two seconds to cover about 60 degrees of sky. Then it disappeared. If anyone has seen something similar to this or has a little bit more explanation I'd be interested to hear about it.

Ron Hoekwater

**Official ballot of the Pomona Valley Amateur Astronomers
for the term of officers 2004-2005**

YES

NO

President

Shall Ron Hoekwater be elected President of the P.V.A.A. _____

Vice President

Shall Joe Hillberg be elected Vice President of the P.V.A.A. _____

Secretary

Shall Claire Stover be elected Secretary of the P.V.A.A. _____

Treasurer

Shall Ludd Trozpek be elected Treasurer of the P.V.A.A. _____

V P Facilities

Shall Bob Akers be elected V P of Facilities _____

Board members at large serving a two year term

Shall Lee Collins be elected as a board member at large _____

Shall Ray Magdziarz be elected as a board member at large —