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Amateur
astronomers
just get better
looking . . .

The logo for 'nightwatch' features the word in a large, bold, white sans-serif font against a black background. Above the text, a series of white lines radiate from a point on the left, creating a starburst or telescope beam effect against a dark, speckled background representing a starry sky.

Newsletter of the Pomona Valley Amateur Astronomers

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nightwatch

January 2007

President's Address

Recently, I have been reading about the deterioration of the night sky due to light pollution. As one who likes to look at the faint fuzzies, I know that some of my favorite observing sites are not as dark today as they were 10 years ago. It is predicted that by the year 2025 there will be no dark skies left east of the Mississippi. And the situation out west isn't much better. (See the International Dark Sky Association website: <http://www.darksky.org/news/press-2003-01-08.html>.)

Unfortunately, the Milky Way is a stranger to most people. The majesty of the heavens is unknown to them. This is a pity. I believe a major reason that young people are not more interested in amateur astronomy is that many of them have never seen the night sky in all of its glory.

However, this trend toward more and more light pollution can be stopped. Even now, it is not impossible to reverse it. One thing that we can do, is to support PVAA's public outreach events. For many more things that can be done to save our skies visit: <http://www.darksky.org/>.

Ron Hoekwater

January Speaker

Alex McConahay will kick off the year 2007 with a presentation on his trip to Egypt and his observation of the solar eclipse there. Alex has spoken to us in the past of his astronomical observing journeys to Greece and Costa Rica as well as other topics. Alex is a PVAA member and is also President of Riverside Astronomical Society.

Star Party Sites

- (MBC) Mecca Beach Campground
- (CS) Cottonwood Springs campground, Joshua Tree Natl. Pk
- (CC) Cow Canyon Saddle, near Mount Baldy Village
- (MS) Mesquite Springs campground, Death Valley National Pk
- (CWP) Claremont Wilderness Park parking lot
- (KD) Kelso Dunes
- (WM) White Mountains (Grandview)
- (CGT) Calico Ghost Town Campground

PVAA Events Calendar

Month	Star	Star	General	Board
December	12/16 (CWP)		12/8	12/28
January	11/13 (MBC)		1/5	1/25
February	2/17 (Death)		2/2	2/22

December Star Party

Rain forced the cancellation of the December 16th star party, which was to have been held at the Claremont Wilderness Park. But now it is a new year and we have another chance to go out and look at the stars! The January star party will be on the lucky 13th (not a Friday) day of the month so good weather may be anticipated. It will be at Mecca Beach on the Salton Sea. From my house Mecca Beach Campground is exactly 120 miles, which makes it nearly 10 miles closer than Cottonwood. Also, this time of year the temperatures at Mecca Beach are generally a little more comfortable than at Cottonwood. The southern horizon is flat and the other directions are pretty good too. There are some lights at the site, but it is difficult to find a site with absolutely no lights.

To get to Mecca Beach, take the 10 Freeway east to Indio/Coachella. Take Hwy 86S south to 66th Ave. Turn left on 66th Ave. then turn right on Hwy 111. Mecca Beach is the second state campground that you will come to, the first being the Headquarters/Visitor Center/Campground. I hope too see you there.

Ron Hoekwater

December Holiday party at Jouni's



PVAA e-mail and hotline

Those interested in getting information which was not received in time for the newsletter, please send your e-mail address to Ron Hoekwater at

astro.ron@juno.com

To get the latest news on star parties, club meetings, special events and astronomy happenings call

909/596-7274 or

visit our website at www.pvaa.us

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