



Newsletter of the Pomona Valley Amateur Astronomers

Volume 34 Number 4

nightwatch

April 2014

President's Message

There will be a total eclipse of the moon starting on the evening of April 14 and ending in the early morning hours on April 15. I hope we have clear weather for it--I love a good eclipse.



The last time I caught a total eclipse of the moon was in February, 2008. I'd just gotten into astronomy, and I'd had my first telescope for about five months--and my second telescope for about two weeks! My first was a 6-inch Orion reflector, and my second was an Edmund Astroscan that I really got for my son, London. On the evening of the eclipse I set up both scopes on the back porch and the whole family watched the eclipse. London was 3 years old, and I think that eclipse helped fix in his mind the idea that the night sky was full of wonders. It certainly reinforced that idea for me.



There have been several lunar eclipses since then, but I've missed them, either from travel or being sick or having rotten weather. Fingers firmly crossed for this one.

Unfortunately I will miss this month's general meeting--I'm on a research trip in Oklahoma, looking at dinosaurs. But I'll be back for next month's activities. Until then, clear skies!

Matt Wedel

PVAA to Observe with 60-inch Scope

Get out your calendar and save the date Saturday, September 27, 2014. That is when Pomona Valley Amateur Astronomers will be returning to Mount Wilson Observatory for a night with the 60-inch telescope. If you have never spent a night in the dome with this famous old telescope, you won't want to miss out. If you have then you know what I'm talking about.

The 60-inch telescope was once the largest in the world, and is much larger than most amateurs will ever have an opportunity to use. Mount Wilson is renowned for the excellence of "seeing" there. Light pollution from LA is a problem but, if we are lucky the marine layer will mitigate the problem. Even without the marine layer the 60-inch can give fine views of many small, high surface brightness objects.

If you plan to attend let me know (astro4ron@gmail.com). The charge is \$100. We are limited to 25 people in the dome. We have the scope from dusk till dawn.

Ron Hoekwater

PVAA General Meeting 03/14/14

PVAA president Mathew Wedel opened the meeting going over the calendar of upcoming events. The next star party was March 22nd at Cottonwood Springs campgrounds at Joshua Tree National Park. The next Saturday PVAA had a table with the 2 Library Telescopes at the Claremont Library's Children's Festival. We have reserved the Mount Wilson 60 inch telescope for Saturday night, September 27th. The cost is \$100.00 per person. The maximum amount of people that are allowed is 22. I have been to 3 nights that PVAA rented the scope, and each night has been remarkable. The planets are extraordinary and most deep sky objects are just remarkable. If you have never been, you owe it to yourself to go at least once.

Also, nominations for PVAA President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer and other board members will be taken at the next PVAA General Meeting on April 11th.

Gary Gonnella then gave a short presentation about the Google Plus Virtual Star Party. It is hosted by Frasier Cain, and Gary is an integral part of it. You can check it out at:

<https://plus.google.com/100902337165997768522/posts>

During a star party you get live feeds from several amateur astronomers with some serious equipment. Gary Gonnella is one of the astronomers. He has a 14inch F2 Celestron on a pier mount with Hydrogen, Oxygen & Sulfur filters. If you miss the live show, you can always catch a re-play on the web site or You Tube. Gary specializes in deep sky objects, while others train their scopes on the planets, moon & the sun. Sundays at 8pm PDT.



Our main speaker for the meeting was Michael C. Storrie-Lombardi, M.D.. His topic for the evening was: Searching For Life in Extreme Environments: The Mojave, Antarctica, Mars & Beyond. Michael is a local Claremont resident who works with the Kinohi Institute, and is an associate professor in the Physics Department at Harvey Mudd College. He talked about Fermi's Paradox, which is: Our sun is a young star. There are billions of stars in our galaxy that are billions of years older. One could assume that intelligent life evolved from some of the planets of the stars billions of years ago. Eventually they would move out to other stars. So, where are they?

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fermi_paradox

He then talked about the contribution of NASA's Great Observatories: Compton X-Ray 1991-2000, Chandra X-Ray 1999-Present, Hubble UV/Visible/Near IR 1993-Present (launched 4/24/1990), Spitzer Mid-to-Far IR 2003-Present. The doctor then talked about cosmic dating and the Spitzer website data <http://www.spitzer.caltech.edu/> and the Milky Way Project <http://www.milkywayproject.org/>. He talked about his journey to Antarctica, planets like WASP-12B that was discovered by the SuperWASP telescope <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/SuperWASP> and the Mars Viking missions 1 & 2.

He stayed after the meeting for a very long time answering questions. Thank you Dr. Storrie-Lombardi!

Gary Thompson



SuperWASP telescope

Cottonwood Springs Star Party

The March PVAA star party was on the 22nd at Cottonwood Springs Campground in Joshua Tree National Park. Mike Heller and I arrived at the campground in the late afternoon. A walk around both A and B Loops of the campground revealed no unoccupied campsites. Fortunately, Perry Hacking and a group from El Camino College had one of the group campsites. I met Perry Hacking, an astronomy professor at El Camino College, about 5 years ago up at Grandview in the White Mountains. He kindly agreed to let us spend the night in El Camino's campsite.

Mike and I unloaded our stuff, which included the 10-inch "Harvard Pennington Memorial Telescope." This fine scope was built by the former PVAA president and after his passing was donated to the club by his widow. It is available for club members to borrow.

As evening settled over Joshua Tree, the sky was clear, air calm, and temperature mild for March. A great night of observing was in store.

Mike Heller joined PVAA about a year ago and this was his first club star party. Besides the club's 10-inch scope, we spent much time at the eyepiece of Perry's 28-inch scope. He teaches a telescope building class and built the 28-inch scope himself for a fraction of what it would have cost to buy. We enjoyed wide field views of the sky through the 10-inch and breathtaking high-power views through the 28-inch.

We went to sleep about 1:00 AM and awoke at dawn. In my case, this was because I'm no longer accustomed to sleeping on the hard ground. For the last several years, at star parties I've slept in Laura's little trailer "Sweet Pea." On arising we packed up and hit the road.

We made the traditional stop at Travel America in Indio for a Country Kitchen breakfast. Unfortunately, Country Kitchen no longer has the breakfast bar. That was a disappointment, but the food was good. Then it was off for home with a very pleasant evening to look back upon.

Ron Hoekwater

Club Events Calendar

April 11, General meeting, Joann Eisberg
April 26, Star Party, Anza Borrego State Park

May 8, Board meeting, 6:15
May 16, General meeting, Vatche Sahakian
May 22-26, RTMC

June 5, Board meeting, 6:15
June 13, General meeting
June 28, Star Party, White Mountain, Bishop

July 3, Board meeting, 6:15
July 11, General meeting
July 26, Star Party, Mt Baldy, Cow Canyon Saddle

August 7, Board meeting, 6:15
August 15, General meeting
August 23, Star Party

September 4, Board meeting, 6:15
September 12, General meeting
September 20, Star Party
September 27, Mt Wilson Observing

October 2, Board meeting 6:15
October 10, General meeting
October 25, Star Party

October 30, Board meeting, 6:15
November 7, General meeting
November 22, Star Party

December 4, Board meeting, 6:15
December 5, Christmas Party, Sizzlin' Skillets 7:00pm
No scheduled Star Party

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PVAA Officers and Board

Officers

President	Mathew Wedel	909-767-9851
Vice President ..	Joe Hillberg	909/949-3650
Secretary	Howard Maculsay	909/624-1667
Treasurer	Gary Thompson	909/935-5509
VP Facilities	Jeff Felton	909 622-6726

Board

Lee Collins (2014)	626/852-9442
Ron Hoekwater (2014).....	909/391-1943
Jim Bridgewater (2013).....	909/599-7123
Karl Rijkse (2013)	909 428-1884

Directors

Membership / Publicity.....		
	Gary Thompson	909/935-5509
Outreach	Jeff Schroeder	818/298-3965
Programs	Ron Hoekwater	909/391-1943
Nightwatch	John Stover	909/988-9747

PVAA to Build Telescope at RTMC

Usually PVAA members attend the Riverside Telescope Makers Conference only because it is a wonderful gathering of amateur astronomers from all over the world with telescopes, speakers, and terrific fun filled activities for the whole family. But in 2014 we have another reason to be up at Camp Oakes on Memorial Day weekend. Pomona Valley Amateur Astronomers will be outside, building a telescope during the conference. That's right! We will be grinding, figuring, and polishing a mirror; building a Dobsonian mount, and assembling the whole thing for people to look through before the end of the conference. It is after all, the Riverside Telescope Makers Conference.

Ludd Trozpek will be heading up the mirror making aspects of the enterprise and John Stover will be in charge of building a place for that mirror to live. PVAA will have a booth where this will all take place. What a great way to bring attention to our hobby and to our club.

So be sure to attend RTMC May 23 - 26. Stop by the PVAA booth and watch the activities or better yet pitch in and lend a hand. Ludd and John will show you what to do.

PVAA, putting the Telescope Builders back in RTMC!

Ron Hoekwater