



THE OBSERVER

SAN BERNARDINO VALLEY AMATEUR ASTRONOMERS
Member of The Astronomical League
Celebrating Fifty Years of Amateur Astronomy

Volume #50, Issue 8

Since 1958

August 2008

Meeting:

August 16, 2008

Main Feature:

Annual Club BBQ

Location:

San Bernardino County
Museum, 7:00 p.m.
Redlands, CA. California St.
exit, I-10 Fwy.

Pre-meeting Dinner, 5:00 p.m.,
Hometown Buffet, Loma
Linda, CA

After the meeting telescopes
will be set up for viewing and
members will be available to
answer questions. Bring your
telescope to observe with us.

*No telescope is too humble, and
beginners are always made
welcome!*

After viewing the group will
head for Coco's in Redlands,
Tennessee exit, I-10 Fwy.

Program

Annual Club BBQ



SBVAA Has 50th Birthday Party At Summer BBQ!

By Chris Clarke

To celebrate the 50th anniversary of the founding of the SBVAA, the club will have a "birthday party" at the August 16th Summer BBQ. A big birthday cake will be on hand and there will also be a free raffle of great prizes, including lots of binoculars and telescopes! I won't give away any particulars, but the quality and value of the prizes will be significant! This year marks a major milestone for the club, and here is an opportunity to observe it in high style. So be there to enjoy the summer feast and to commemorate the first half-century of the club!

SBVAA Officers

President: *Vacant*

Vice President: John Deems 909-584-7568

Treasurer: Fidel Hernandez 909-864-0615

Secretary - Educational Outreach: Chris Clarke
909-384-8539 Work
909-875-6694 Home

Star Party Coordinator: Tom Lawson 909-8828198

SBVAA Webmaster: Steve Miller 626-859-7776

Newsletter Editor: Jim Sommer 909-792-3587

Vice President John Deems is trying to put together a trip to Palomar in the near future. It would be limited to about 10 to 15 people and "reservations" will be on a first come, first served basis. Unfortunately, no small children are permitted in the observatory. As of this date (XXX) the exact date is yet to be determined but will be fairly soon. If you are interested, contact John as soon as possible for more information and to get on the list.



September 13-14, 2008
Pasadena Convention Center
Pasadena, California

Speakers Scheduled to Appear at PATS

[David Levy](#), author and discoverer of 22 comets

[Story Musgrave](#), six-time shuttle astronaut

[Todd and Robin Mason](#), documentary filmmakers

Terry Mann, president of the [Astronomical League](#)

[John Dobson](#), co-founder of the Sidewalk Astronomers

[Gary Palmer](#), solar imager

For additional information and FAQ's, go to:

pats@rtmcastronomyexpo.org

Click on the FAQ (frequently asked questions) page.
(This event is more like NEAF than RTMC.)

Calendar of Upcoming Events

August 2, Club star party, Johnson Valley

August 9, Moon Party public outreach at the Museum

August 16, Club's annual BBQ

September 1, Labor Day

September 13, Planet Party public outreach at the Museum

September 13 & 14, Pacific Astronomy and Telescope Show (see article below)

September 20, Club meeting at the Museum

September 26 28, Grandview star party weekend

(Watch for upcoming school outreaches starting in September. SBVAA is a popular guest at many of our local schools, several of which invite us back year after year.)

Summer Barbecue/Potluck

By Chris Clarke

Well, fellow members, it's time to put on the feedbag once again as we gather for the annual summer BBQ/Potluck on Saturday, August 16. As usual, we'll be "setting up"

in the area behind the main Museum building (by the old steam locomotive). There

will be a gas BBQ kindly provided by Tina and Randy Kromas to heat up your favorite dishes. Setup time is around 5:30 pm and the "main event" starts at 6:00 pm and goes

to about 9:00 pm. Bring down your favorite dish to share with your friends and then enjoy the feast that lies before you. The club will be also provide a cake for dessert

to help celebrate the SBVAA's 50th Birthday (see other article for more details). Remember, this takes the place of our monthly meeting. Join us for lots of delicious food, delightful conversation and a fun time!

Editor's Message

By Jim Sommer

As this issue was going to press I read of a "new" type of object discovered by a Dutch teacher and amateur astronomer. Reading it I thought of Timothy Ferris' book "Seeing in the Dark." The sub-title is in tune with this latest news: "How Amateur Astronomers Are Discovering the Wonders of the Universe." Very appropriate, eh.

Whether it be the Zoo Project cited below or SETI or any of several other projects and programs available for amateur participation, we obscure observers can still participate in great discoveries! Meanwhile, the professionals continue their quest for understanding.

What an age we live in! I believe Goethe summed it up quite well: "Rapturous is the night."

And speaking of rapturous sights, Jupiter is currently well placed in the later hours of the evening. It is riding a bit lower than we would like but still its lunar transits, cloud belts and multiple great storms are still visible. A what fun it is to watch the Jovian moons ply their dance.



*"Up through the darkness,
While ravening clouds, the burial clouds, in black masses
spreading,
Lower sullen and fast athwart and down the sky,
Amid a transparent clear belt of ether yet left in the east,
Ascends large and calm the lord-star Jupiter."*

Walt Whitman



Upcoming Outreach Information

By Chris Clark

August 9, Moon Party outreach at the Museum. Setup about 8:00 p.m. with public viewing from 8:30 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.



2009 Astro Calendars Order Now

Club Treasurer Fidel Hernandez wants us to know that reservations are now being taken for Astronomy Magazine's 2009 Calendar. "Deep Space Mysteries." Orders will begin being taken at the July club meeting. See Fidel or Chris. Store cost is \$12.95 plus tax, **your cost through the club is just \$10**. Deliveries will probably begin in Sept.

Star Party Planning

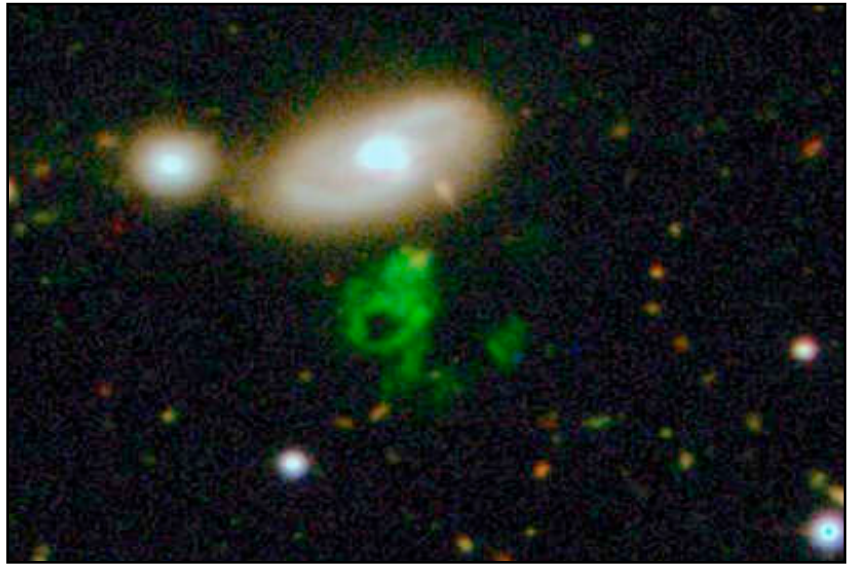
From Tom Lawson

As of this time the following Star Party date are:

September 26-28	Grandview
October 25	Cottonwood Campground
November 29	Johnson Valley
December 13	Roberto's Italian Restaurant Holiday Get Together
December 27	Johnson Valley

As a side note, it is proposed that those wanting to save some gas and willing to brave the poor road conditions to consider Angelus Oaks as an alternate Star Party site. This is a good option with level ground and reasonably dark surroundings. However, once the first heavy winter rains/snow arrives, you'll need 4x4 drive.

What Is It?



A Dutch primary school teacher and amateur astronomer has discovered what some are calling a "cosmic ghost," a strange, gaseous object with a hole in the middle that may represent a new class of astronomical object.

The teacher, Hanny van Arkel, discovered the object while volunteering in the Galaxy Zoo project, which enlists the help of members of the public to classify galaxies online. "At first, we had no idea what it was. It could have been in our solar system, or at the edge of the universe," Yale University astrophysicist Kevin Schawinski, a member and co-founder of the Galaxy Zoo team, said in a statement.

The find, nicknamed "Hanny's Voorwerp" (Dutch for object), soon had scientists training their telescopes on the object. "What we saw was really a mystery," Schawinski said. "The Voorwerp didn't contain any stars."

Made entirely of very hot gas, the eerie green object is illuminated by remnant light from the nearby galaxy IC 2497.

"We think that in the recent past the galaxy IC 2497 hosted an enormously bright quasar," Schawinski said.

He said light from the past still illuminates the ghostly object, even though the quasar shut down some 100,000 years ago and the galaxy's black hole went quiet.

"It's this light echo that has been frozen in time for us to observe," said Chris Lintott, a co-organizer of Galaxy Zoo at Oxford University in the United Kingdom, said in a statement. Researchers will soon use the Hubble Space Telescope to get a closer look.

"It's amazing to think that this object has been sitting in the archives for decades and that amateur volunteers can help by spotting things like this online," van Arkel said in a statement.

Van Arkel is one of more than 150,000 amateur astronomers who have assisted in classifying more than 1 million galaxies over the past year as part of the Galaxy Zoo project. The next stage of Galaxy Zoo will ask volunteers to search for more unusual astronomical objects.

Galaxy Zoo can be found at www.galaxyzoo.org.

(Reuters, August 5, picked up from AOL news. This article appeared just as this issue of your newsletter was going to press.)

The Challenge of Barnard's Galaxy: And other “fun” targets.

By Cliff Saucier

When we were up at Grandview at the end of June, Rudy Rodriguez was searching for Barnard's Galaxy, NGC 6822. That object has been on my list for a while, so we both started working on it, two nights but no success. Reading up on it some more, it seems that it can be rather difficult, but seeing it isn't dependent on aperture alone, so you may wish to give it a try while it is placed optimally for the next month or so.

Edward Emerson Barnard, one of the best visual observers to come down the pike, first found it in a five inch refractor in 1884. Historically it is famous as the first "nebula" that was proven to actually be another galaxy by Edwin Hubble in 1924, the year after Barnard's passing. Hubble found it difficult to see in the 100-inch, but "fairly conspicuous" in the four-inch finder. A member of our local group of galaxies, it is classed as a “small irregular.” Kepple and Sanner in their *Night Sky Observer's Guide* recommend a 16" or 18" scope, but say that it can also be glimpsed in 10x50 binoculars! So in theory it should be available to all of us. Under the dark skies at Grandview, I couldn't nail it in my 10", and neither could Rudy using his 12", which has a very nice mirror. The galaxy is located in Sagittarius, almost at the border with Capricorn, so it is placed well in our skies at this time of year. Using binoculars, I found the proper star fields, but in retrospect should have used John Simpson's mounted 25x100 binoculars and maybe would have had more luck in seeing the dim galaxy. It's diameter is 15 arc minutes, so it is fairly good size, about half the diameter of the full moon. Paul Littlecoyote had us looking at the Veil and North American nebulas in Martin Carey's new little refractor. In a 31mm eyepiece we saw the whole Veil at once, and the North American was the best view I've ever had, though it was unfortunately mirror-imaged, so it didn't really look like it's namesake. That combination, or a 40mm eyepiece, would probably have turned the trick as well. So, use a low-power eyepiece, under a dark sky, and good luck! Almost in the same field is an aquamarine planetary, the Little Gem, NGC 6818. Very bright and very blue, but also very small. It is 41 arc minutes north-northwest of the galaxy.

A quick mention of a couple of other things that I like to observe this time of year. The first is the open cluster NGC 6520 and Barnard 87 (called the Ink Spot). Located right next to each other, I find the contrast of the two very pleasing. Someone commented that they look like a small city lit up at night on a dark harbor. It can be found just above Sagittarius' teapot spout. The other item is the little globular NGC 6441, visually right next to the star that is the stinger of Scorpius. Easy to find, and the contrast of the cluster and the star is very pretty and well worth searching out.

See... your newsletter editor does know how to use something other than a refractor.

