

The Observer

SAN BERNARDINO VALLEY AMATEUR ASTRONOMERS

Member of The Astronomical League

<http://sbvaa.org/>



Volume #53, Issue 4

Since 1958

April, 2011

Meeting:

April 16, 2011

Location:

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

Pre-meeting Dinner, 5:00
p.m.,

The Sizzler
1800 So. Waterman
Ave.
San Bernardino, 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!*

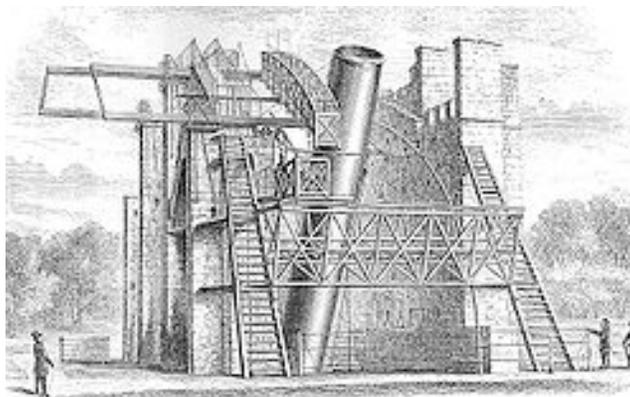
After viewing the group will
head for Coco's in Redlands,
Tennessee exit, I-10 Fwy.

Program

Leviathan of Parsonstown

The Great Telescope of Bir Castle

Our own Martin Carey will tell the engaging story of Lord Rosse's great reflector telescope which was, for a time, the largest telescope in the world.



Leviathan was the name it was given by the public. With its 72 inch mirror weighing 4 tons and a tube 54 feet long it was aptly named.



SBVAA Officers

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Calendar of Upcoming Events

April 9, public outreach at the Museum

April 16, club meeting at the Museum

May 14, Astronomy Day!

June 16, club meeting at the Museum

July 9, public outreach at the Museum

CANCELLED

July 16, club meeting at the Museum

Outreaches: Fun for All!!!

By Chris Clarke

The March 10 outreach at Lincoln School in Colton was a big success! Around 400 people converged on the playground to look at the moon, Jupiter and M42 that night.

We had just enough scopes, too. Martin Carey, Mike Radcliffe, Cliff Saucier, Fidel Hernandez and myself had a wide variety of scopes set up for the kids and their families to gaze through. As usual, Fidel's magnificent 6-inch Carroll refractor had the longest lines. No one seemed to mind and everybody just enjoyed the show. Also, on hand for support were Clyde King and Robin Hennen. Robin took many nice photos of the kids at the scopes. The weather was perfect too!



It was about 68 degrees, no wind and no clouds, plus very steady atmospheric seeing—you couldn't have asked for better conditions. Even M42 was fairly impressive from the middle of Colton!



(Photos by Robin Hennen)



www.rtmcastronomyexpo.org/general.html

Date

The 43rd annual RTMC Astronomy Expo will take place from Wednesday, May 25 through Monday, May 30, 2011.

Location

YMCA Camp Oakes, five miles southeast of Big Bear City on State Route 38 at Lake Williams Road between mileposts 44 and 45. This location is about 50 miles northeast of Riverside in the San Bernardino mountains.

Longitude 116° 45' 15" West

Latitude 34° 13' 50" North

Altitude 7250 feet (2210 meters)

Since its inception in 1969, the RTMC has expanded to encompass all aspects of amateur astronomy from beginning to advanced topics and from telescope making to "armchair" astronomy. Recently, the RTMC has included events for the whole family with horseback riding, hikes, activities for spouses and activities for the young kids. In 2000, the official name of the conference was changed to the "RTMC Astronomy Expo."

The camping is fun but the primary reason for attending is because it offers a chance to rub shoulders with a large number of people who know telescopes and like to talk about them. What is offered is a chance to see and look through a large variety of telescopes (with relatively dark skies and high altitude), attend talks by professional and amateur astronomers on different aspects of telescope construction and use, see some astronomical equipment and software in use, and buy astronomical equipment and software (often at reduced prices). The vendors contribute door prizes

Club Discount on Subscriptions

Attention **Sky & Telescope** magazine subscribers.

As of now you can re-subscribe to the magazine on your own. When you receive your renewal notice, just send in the proper paperwork along with a check for \$32.95. They said you don't have to go through the club treasurer to get the club discount.

Astronomy subscribers, you still need to send your renewal monies to Fidel, the club treasurer.

SBVAA
7799 21st Street,
Highland, CA 92346

S&T subscribers can still send their renewals through the club if they prefer. The cost is \$33.00.

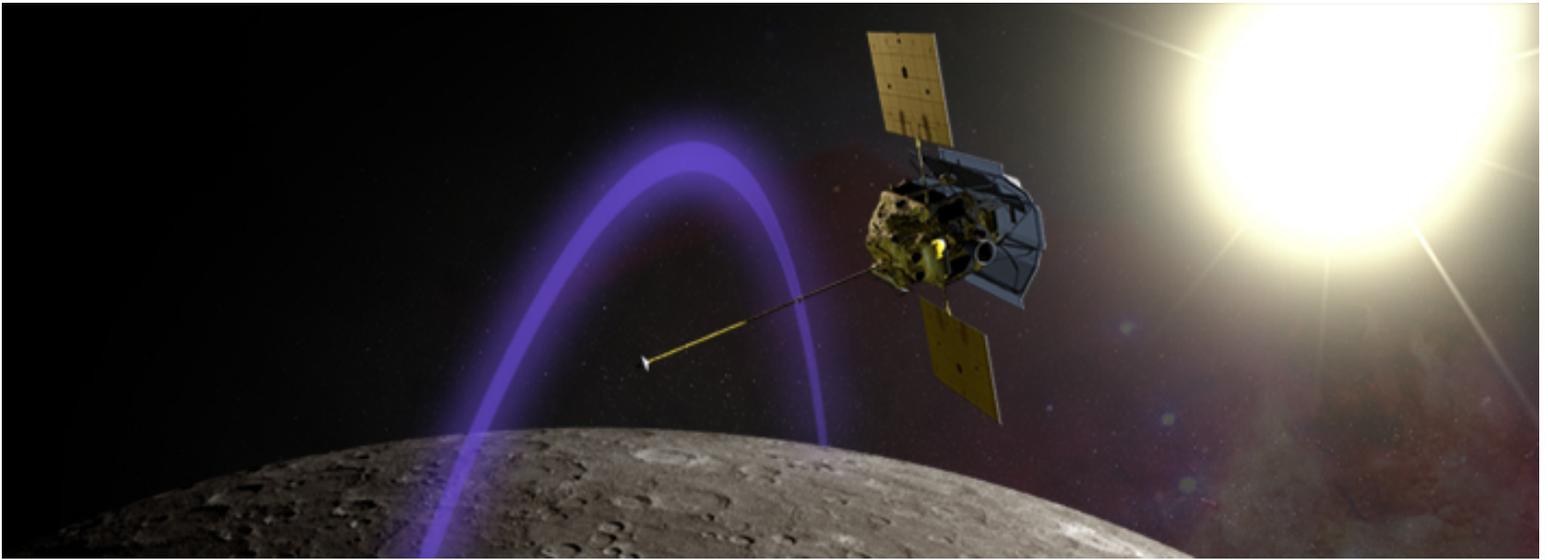
for Saturday and Sunday evenings. We don't know exactly what prizes we'll have in advance, but in the past there have been telescopes of 8 to 12 inches in aperture.

General admission includes entry to the conference grounds for five days (Wednesday through Sunday) and camping for four nights (Wednesday through Saturday nights). Meals and dormitory lodging are not included but may be purchased separately.

People coming for a single day (or any part thereof) may pay for a Single Day Admission. **Single Day Admission does not include camping, meals, or dorm lodging.** Day Users arriving after 9 AM Saturday will be directed to special parking areas.

Questions about registration should be directed to:

Robert Stephens
8300 Utica Avenue, Suite 105
Rancho Cucamonga, CA 91730
registrar@rtmcastronomyexpo.org
(909) 948-2205



MESSENGER probe first spacecraft to enter orbit about Mercury.

At 9:10 p.m. EDT, engineers in the MESSENGER Mission Operations Center at the Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory (APL) in Laurel, Md., received radiometric signals confirming the successful insertion of the MESSENGER probe into orbit around the planet Mercury. MESSENGER's main thruster fired for approximately 15 minutes at 8:45 p.m., slowing the spacecraft by 1,929 miles per hour (862 meters per second) and easing it into the planned eccentric orbit about Mercury.

"Achieving Mercury orbit was by far the biggest milestone since MESSENGER was launched more than six and a half years ago," says MESSENGER Project Manager Peter Bedini, of APL. "This accomplishment is the fruit of a tremendous amount of labor on the part of the navigation, guidance-and-control, and mission operations teams, who shepherded the spacecraft through its 4.9-billion-mile [7.9-billion-kilometer] journey."

For the next several weeks, APL engineers will be focused on ensuring that MESSENGER's systems are all working well in Mercury's harsh thermal environment. Starting on March 23, the instruments will be turned on and checked out, and on April 4 the primary science phase of the mission will begin.

"Despite its proximity to Earth, the planet Mercury has for decades been comparatively unexplored," adds MESSENGER Principal Investigator Sean Solomon, of the Carnegie Institution of Washington. "For the first time in history, a scientific observatory is in orbit about our solar system's innermost planet. Mercury's secrets, and the implications they hold for the formation and evolution of Earth-like planets, are about to be revealed.

MESSENGER (MErcury Surface, Space ENvironment, GEOchemistry, and Ranging) is a NASA-sponsored scientific investigation of the planet Mercury and the first space mission designed to orbit the planet closest to the Sun. The MESSENGER spacecraft launched on August 3, 2004, and after flybys of Earth, Venus, and Mercury will start a yearlong study of its target planet in March 2011.

First photo of Mercury's surface. 
(Text and photo courtesy of NASA)

