

The Observer

SAN

BERNARDINO VALLEY AMATEUR ASTRONOMERS

Member of The Astronomical League

<http://sbvaa.org/>



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Since 1958

August, 2011

Meeting:

August 13, 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.,

B

B

Q

Program

Annual Club BBQ



As in year's past, we don't have a regular club meeting in August, instead having a social get-together. On Saturday, August 13, we'll meet outside the Museum under the trees out front (not in the back as in previous years). ***Set up will begin at 5:30 pm and eating will commence after 6:00 pm.*** We're usually there until at least 9:00 or 9:30, so you can show up a little later if you like.

Our esteemed treasurer, Fidel, has agreed to bring his portable BBQ so that we can cook and heat things on a hot grill. Bring any kind of food you like, and everyone usually shares what they have. If you can't bring food, we always need napkins, plasticware, paper plates and beverages too.

There are plenty of chairs and lots of shade, so it is a most pleasant place to be. Above all, it's a nice opportunity to simply chat and hang out with the members.

Good food and great companionship reign supreme at this club function---hope to see everyone there!

SBVAA Officers

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Vice President:

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Calendar of Upcoming Events

August 6, Public outreach at the Museum

August 27, Star party, Johnson Valley

September 3, Public outreach at the Museum

September 17, Club meeting at the Museum

September 24, **GRANDVIEW** star party

October 15, Club meeting at the Museum

October 28-29, Star party, Afton Canyon with
with Apple Valley & Pomona clubs

Grandview Star Party July 1-3 2011.

By Mike Ratcliff

This was a great star party with excellent weather. I enjoyed it, and it was well worth the drive. The July 4 holiday weekend didn't interfere with getting camping spots. There were some other clubs there too: Riverside, Pomona and Orange County, and others. Lots of telescopes on the north side of the campground.

Conditions were warmer than usual, high temps in the 80's during the day and comfortably cool in the night. Friday night had excellent transparency and good seeing. Saturday night not as good but still plenty dark and clear. No clouds visible at night, and just a few puffy clouds during the day that disappeared at sunset. On the Wednesday night before, however, a strong wind had damaged a 22" scope belonging to Ron of the Pomona club. He still spent some time with us chatting and taking peeks. Ron is a frequent observer at the various dark sites around S. California.

People who were present: Martin, Cliff, Steve, Chris, Fidel, Rudy, Robin, Clyde, Mike R., and two

newer members Mike and Esther. Plus some visitors from other camping spots coming over for a look. Fidel made breakfast for everyone on Saturday morning, and Martin and some others made a pizza run to Bishop for Saturday evening. We all had a good time.

One of the observing highlights was Saturday at dusk, with a very slim new moon visible, and later Mercury appeared as an evening star close to the horizon. Lots of people got a good look at Mercury through Fidel's 6" f/17 long focal length refractor. Fidel also got Jupiter during the morning daylight Saturday morning. And later at night lots of telescopes looking at deep sky objects and the summer milky way. Globulars, nebulae, and galaxies (oh my!).

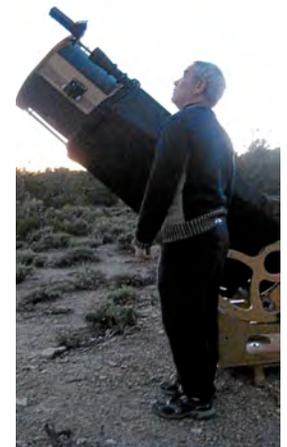


Photo by Robin Hennen

*Grandview Star Party,
June 2011
A Collage*



Photos by Robin Hennen



Glorious Grandview!

By Chris Clarke

Well another summer Grandview has come and gone, but ah, what memories linger on! The weather was beautiful, the stars simply stunning and the company most pleasant. Unfortunately, like previous years, not as many members were able to come up because of other commitments for the 4th of July holiday weekend. Overall, we had 11 people, and two were new faces who were eager to see what we do up there. We were a small, but mighty group! We had several instruments to “play” with, including three large Dobsonians, measuring 16, 18 and 20 inches of aperture. We

had a vintage 6-inch refractor too, plus numerous other scopes and binoculars.

If memory serves me correct, those in attendance were: Martin Carey, Fidel Hernandez, Steve Peeters, Cliff Saucier, Clyde King, Robin Hennen, Mike Ratcliff, Rudy Rodriguez, myself and visitors, Mike and Esther Gomez. We had incredible observing both nights, viewing lots of galaxies and everything worth seeing along the Milky Way.

Day and night, the skies were cloudless and there was no wind, at least from early Friday through Sunday morning. However, before and after our

visit, the weather was a different story! No matter, we were “smack-dab” right in the middle of the best weather you could ever wish for. Transparency and seeing were very nice, giving us sharp, undistorted views. It was quite comfortable, temperature-wise, as it got up to 87 during the day and down to the low 40s Friday night and just down to 51 degrees Saturday night—not bad for an altitude of 8600 feet.

On Saturday morning, Fidel played “Cookie” and prepared our hot breakfast, consisting of eggs, sausage, bacon and potatoes---Thanks for doing all that Fidel! Other goodies were added to the morning “buffet” and everyone ate well. Napping, ‘shooting the breeze’ and visits around the camp and up to the Bristlecone Forest kept members busy until supper Saturday night.

Late in the day, Martin, Rudy, Cliff and myself piled into Martin’s van and rode down to Bishop to pickup three large pizzas for the group to feast on. The joke when we returned was that we’d actually bought 10, but Rudy and Cliff had eaten seven on the way back and had littered the road up to camp with the empty boxes! With a few added goodies, we all had a delicious dinner and then waited for darkness to fall. The International Space Station even appeared both nights, brilliantly zooming overhead during twilight.

Through the big “Dobs,” objects like the Veil Nebula, The Cat’s Eye Nebula, various globular star clusters, open star clusters, and other favorites were just spectacular! The beautiful “Swan” nebula floated across a dark stellar pond, while the “Ring” nebula appeared like a luminescent thumbprint on black velvet. The great “Dumbbell” nebula looked like a great big cotton puff! We even had an exceptionally clear view of the currently visible nova in the Whirlpool Galaxy. Numerous other galaxies were seen sharing their incredible shapes and forms too.

For planet watchers, Saturn was gorgeous in Fidel’s classic 1953 vintage 6-inch Carroll refractor, while Martin’s 7-inch Mak-Newt had a slightly smaller, but razor sharp view. Other planets were visible, as we saw Jupiter late (and then again in daylight through the Carroll), while after sunset, Mercury appeared as slightly gibbous. We also enjoyed an extremely slender crescent moon about 43 hours “old,” softly hanging in the evening twilight. On Saturday morning, Fidel set up the Carroll with an H-alpha solar filter, but only a single small sunspot group was visible.

For me, this was my 28th trip and definitely one of the best I’ve ever had, and many others agreed! ***Remember, we return to Grandview again in September!***

Museum Moon Parties

By Chris Clarke

Mark your calendar for two upcoming “moon parties” at the Museum. August 6, and September 3 (both on Saturdays) are the dates and we will set up our scopes on the pavement at the south end of the parking lot. The Aug. 6 event starts at 8:30 pm, with setup around 8:00, and goes to about 10:00. The Sept. 3 event begins at 7:30 pm, with setup around 7:00, and goes to 9:00 pm. We’ll enjoy a first-quarter moon for both parties. We’ll also get in our last view of Saturn in August too. Other objects, like the pretty blue/yellow pair of stars that comprise Alberio in Cygnus, the famed “double-double” pair in Lyra and maybe a few other goodies will be within our reach under the bright skies of Redlands.

During this time of year, we can see anywhere from 100 to over 300 people show up, so the more scopes, the better! The weather is usually clear and warm and everyone has a great time. Afterwards, several members usually head on over the Coco’s for dessert and additional conversation, making it a very pleasant evening out. Outreaches are a great way to share our hobby with folks who never have the opportunity to even look through a telescope. Even if you don’t have a scope, come on down for the fun!

Afton Canyon June, 2011

By Robin Hennen

In the Mojave Desert the weather was warm on Friday, June 3. Afton Canyon was empty except for one family, with one loud dad, and myself. By evening, nobody else had arrived, which was fortuitous since the cloud cover did. I mean we were fully engulfed. Not a twinkle to be found. But, by about three A.M. the sky was wide open. However, I placed my hopes on Saturday night, and had a good night's sleep.

Saturday morning I took off on my usual rockhound hunt, and came back in time to find Cliff setting up his 18" dob on the mesa. He gave me an old turtle shell that he had found up there and told me who were expected to join us for the star party. Bob arrived and told us that he needed to use his tripod to help anchor his small tent, and so he wouldn't be setting up a scope that night. In the meantime, a young Dutch couple had set up camp with their rented motor home on the mesa. They were quite excited about the opportunity to stargaze from our side of the world. Soon Rudy arrived, and set up his 12" Dob.

Sadly, Martin wasn't able to make it out this time.

Then we waited for the night sky, and watched with trepidation to see how far the clouds would roll into the desert. The wind had been coming from the east all day, but then it turned and blew in from the west by evening. However, by dark, the heavy cloud cover just seem to stop right above the western horizon. Then the discovery began. Cliff and Rudy were great tour guides of the Universe. Per Cliff,

"The couple had just come from Death Valley and were amazed at how dark our skies are." The Netherlands is apparently like living in a large city. We showed them all the big stuff; M81 and M82, the great globular M13 in Hercules, the Ring, M57, the Veil, Albireo, everyone's favorite double star. The Sombrero and the Swan. However, conditions were not up to snuff. A slightly hazy sky and

strong winds, with the accompanying poor seeing."

But I would like to finish with a hopeful note, that since the young man was working on his PHD in environmental studies, that maybe, in some small way, we helped to save the world!



Photo by Robin Hennen

CALENDARS

The 2012 "Deep Space Mysteries" calendars from Astronomy Magazine are here. It will be available for sale starting with the club meeting on September the 25th. We have 40 for sale on a first come first served basis. The retail for this calendar is \$12.95 plus \$1.00 tax or \$13.95 altogether. Your cost, through the club this year, is \$8 a savings of \$6. See Fidel, the club treasurer, at the back of the room to make your purchase. Reservations are accepted.

