

The Observer

SAN BERNARDINO VALLEY AMATEUR ASTRONOMERS

Member of The Astronomical League

<http://sbvaa.org/>



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Since 1958

September, 2011

Meeting:

September 17, 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

Jupiter

The program for September will be a fascinating video about the planet Jupiter. The video, titled "Jupiter: the Giant Planet" is an episode from the renowned Universe series and is a show filled with incredible satellite imagery and computer effects describing many of the planet's famous features.



(Photo: CNET.com)

Find out what makes the famed Great Spot go, what the clouds are made of and what the bizarre weather conditions are like. See also the dynamics of its magnetosphere, its vast gravitational effects and what the Galilean moons are like. Learn about the unusual experimental probe being developed to determine if there could be life in Europa's ice covered seas. All of this and more can be seen in this breathtaking video!

SBVAA Officers

President:

Vice President:

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

Calendar of Upcoming Events

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

November 12, Club meeting at the Museum

Museum Moon Parties

By Chris Clarke

Mark your calendar for the upcoming "moon party" at the Museum, Saturday, September 3. We will set up our scopes on the pavement at the south end of the parking lot. The event begins at 7:30 pm, with setup around 7:00, and goes to 9:00 pm. We'll enjoy a first-quarter moon and maybe a last glimpse of Saturn. Other objects, like the blue/yellow diamond-like 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!

Attention Newsletter Photographers

In a effort to avoid the problems Jim, our newsletter editor, had with the August 2011 newsletter I am requesting that all photographs that are being submitted be sent to me first for resizing. Please email or mail a CD with the pictures to the following address:

Tom Lawson
P.O. Box 2481
San Bernardino CA 92406

or E-Mail to: tlawson@linkline.com

Because of the size of the picture these new cameras take with 6 -12 MPixels they make the file size of the newsletter very large. By resizing them the overall size can be reduced and more pictures can be included for our enjoyment. For example, the first newsletter, actually the second; the first never got out of Jim's computer, was 30 MB in size. After some help from a friend and some powerful software the same newsletter was reduced in size to just under 1 MB with on loss of quality. So please help by sending the pictures to me first.

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.



Gear For Sale

Celestron wedgepod (combination wedge and tripod) free to a good home. This is sturdy enough to hold up to a C8 fork mounted telescope. It is not adjustable in height and is a bit low unless used from a seated position. Contact me (Tom Bennett) at tbennett1975@att.net to arrange pick-up.

A STARGAZING ADVENTURE

By: Steve Peeters

On Sunday, July 31st my son (Ryan) and I headed out to Mahogany Flats campground in Death Valley for two nights. The campground there is at 8,100' so temperatures are quite pleasant during the summer. Weather forecasts called for some monsoon activity, but with evenings clearing up nicely. As predicted there was some monsoon activity. Sunday night cleared off shortly after sunset, but there was dew falling. I don't like Dew, everything gets wet so I didn't bring out any charts or books and stored my eyepieces in the back of my van. Conditions Sunday were good, other than the dew. Monday night at around 7:30 P.M. rain with a thunderstorm commenced. After covering up my gear I went into my tent to wait out the storm. At 9:00 P.M. the rain subsided and I went outside, but couldn't see a single star. So, back in the tent; soon the rain resumed along with thunder and lightning. When I say thunder, I am putting it mildly, this thunder roared and made very loud rolling noises that lasted for up to a couple of minutes at a time! The lightning was not so intense,

although it sure lit up the inside of my tent when it flashed. Shortly after ten o'clock the rain, thunder, and lightening stopped. At 10:30 I went out and saw the beginning of a clear and lovely night, a night of great transparency and steady seeing. I stayed out observing until 2:00 A.M. Overall, except for the three hour monsoon delay conditions Monday night were excellent. I wanted to observe until dawn Tuesday morning, but, there was a problem... And, due to the problem, I called it a night at 2:00 A.M.

The problem was the condition of the dirt road for the last five miles up to Mahogany Flats campground. Last summer the road was fine, but not this summer. On previous visits here, over quite a few years, Ryan said he had never seen the road so bad. Although the road has always been steep for the last 1.5 miles (after the charcoal kilns) it is now full of very sizable ruts, some up to a foot deep, and washed out areas, plus other areas with high spots, not to mention some small boulders lying here and there. To drive this one really needs at least a high clearance vehicle, and, a 4X4 would be best. My guess is the winter snow, with Telescope peak being 11,200,' was much heavier than normal and caused a lot of erosion. I am pretty stubborn and going up my only thought was on getting to my site. Well I did so and without damaging my vehicle, but it was a very challenging and a scary drive. Once there I started to realize that the other, more difficult, part of the drive would be going down the five miles of mutilated dirt road. I don't recommend my thought process, it would have been better to be thinking about a round trip! On Monday morning a maintenance worker came by to see me and was very surprised that I made it up with my low clearance mini van. He said he didn't think I could make it back down and he asked me when I'd be leaving. I told him we'd be leaving about noon the next day, he said, "I'll let them know." "Them," I think, meant the park rangers. I was already worried about this situation and this guy caused me even greater concern. Other than the maintenance worker only one other person was at the primitive camp ground and he had a 4X4 with oversized tires. Well with such a big drive lying ahead I turned in early. We started down on Tuesday morning at 11:30 A.M. It wasn't a fast trip, we traveled very slowly and averaged only 1 mile per hour for the first mile down. We had to stop often and place rocks into the ruts in the road and at other times clear off high spot or tear down part of the embankment, on either side, to avoid ruts. As I drove up on to the side embankments my vehicle would tilt way up, at times around 20 degrees. I was hoping this wouldn't break an axle or something. What a terrifying mess I got myself in to. I won't be going back to Mahogany Flats again unless the road is well serviced first, and that information is not easily obtainable. A couple of other club members, Mike R and Cliff S, had considered signing on for this trip. Maybe Cliff's truck would have sufficed, but, Mike's sedan would have been about as

impossible to drive on the eroded dirt road as my vehicle. I consider myself very lucky guy to have gotten out of this without a mega repair and towing bill.

Speaking of luck, I give a lot of the credit for my safe trip down the road to God. As I was storm bound in my tent early Sunday evening I had plenty of time to pray, and pray I did.

