

The Observer

SAN BERNARDINO VALLEY AMATEUR ASTRONOMERS

Member of The Astronomical League

<http://sbvaa.org/>



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Since 1958

January, 2016

Meeting:

December 5, 2015

Location:

First Christian Church
2102 E. Foothill Dr.
San Bernardino, CA

7:00 p.m.

Pre-meeting Dinner,
5:00 to 6:30 p.m.,

Pepper Steak
Restaurant
26589 Highland
Ave.
Highland, 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!*

Program

Unexplained Mysteries

Once again Chris will bring one of the wonderful DVDs from “The Universe” series. Unexplained mysteries include speculation about a “Death Star” which might be responsible for periodic extinctions on Earth, possible life on Mars, possibility of time travel and what started the “Big Bang.”



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Calendar of Upcoming Events

Feb.6, Star Party, Johnson Valley

Mar. 5, Messier Marathon, GMARS site

Apr. 9, Star Party, Johnson Valley

May 7, Star Party, Johnson Valley

May 26-29, RTMC, Camp Oaks, Big Bear

Jun. 3-5, **Grandview**, dark and starry!

*Other star parties, outreaches and events for
2016, TBD*

Happy New Year!

I hope all of you had a wonderful holiday time and that the spirit of that season will be with you and yours for all of 2016. Let us all make it one of our New Year resolutions to get out and observe more; attend more star parties; participate in more outreaches. Astronomy is beautiful, awe inspiring, thought provoking and just plain fun. Let's make it a goal to share it more with others.



(Photo credit: NASA APOD)

Club Meeting Dates, 2016

January 23

February 20

March 19

April 23

May 21

June 18

July 16

August 20, (Ann. BBQ)

September 17

October 15

November 12

December (Ann. holiday pizza TBD)

2016 Is Banner Year for Space Stamps



"Star Trek" is one of several space themed stamps that the USPS will release in 2016.. The USPS also will send out "Views of Our Planets" showing full-disc views of the eight planets in our solar system, and a commemorative stamp showing the disc of [Pluto](#), first visited in 2015 by New Horizons.

The moon, the planets and Pluto will appear on United States postage stamps in 2016, the U.S. Postal Service (USPS) has revealed.

The USPS unveiled the [designs for three separate stamp sets](#) highlighting Earth's natural satellite, the eight planets in our solar system and the distant dwarf planet that was the focus of a historic spacecraft flyby in July 2015.

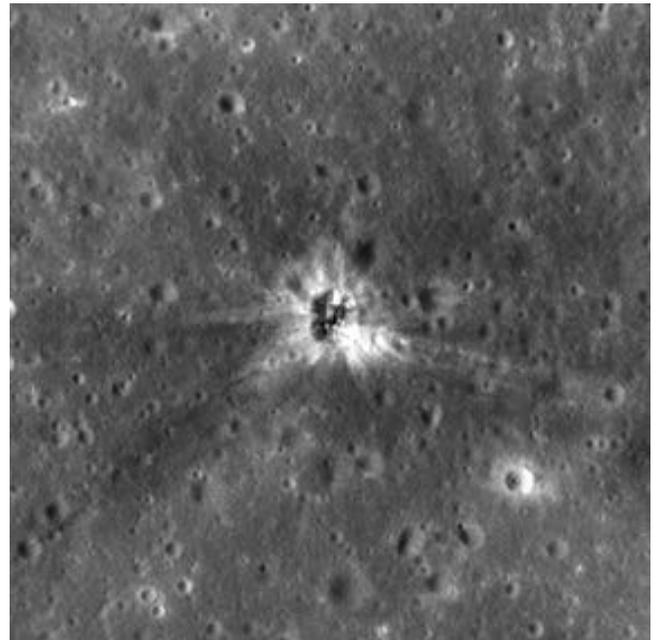
(For more info, go to [space.com](#))

Here's a Challenging Lunar Feature to Observe

A sharp-eyed NASA spacecraft has spotted the final resting place of part of one of the rockets that took astronauts to the moon, more than 43 years after the booster slammed into the lunar surface.

The space agency's Lunar Reconnaissance Orbiter (LRO) has finally found the crater created by the impact of the Apollo 16 mission's S-IVB rocket stage back in April 1972, NASA officials announced last month.

The impact crater, which is about 130 feet (40 meters) wide, lies on the moon's Mare Insularum, about 160 miles (260 kilometers) southwest of Copernicus Crater, one of the most famous and prominent features on the lunar near side, said team members with LRO's Lunar Reconnaissance Orbiter Camera (LROC).



The spot is just south of Mare Imbrium, the large circular dark area first visible when the moon waxes to about half-full. (A mare is a dark basaltic plain on the moon caused by long-ago volcanic eruptions.)

(For more info, go to [space.com](#))

Mars or Bust! Boldly Planning To Go Where No One Has Gone Before

For nearly one hundred years science fiction books and movies have entertained us with tales of Martian exploration, marooning, fantastic civilizations and, of course, The War of The Worlds. Not all that long ago, NASA began talking about a manned mission to the red planet. Skeptics snickered and most people thought it was ridiculous -- impossible, just the stuff of science fiction. Nevertheless, NASA kept the subject on the table. Increasingly, in the last decade, the "Mission To Mars" has gained more and more press and the ranks of the doubters seem to be thinning rather rapidly. NASA put out a call for volunteers for what is most likely to be a one-way mission -- hundreds responded! The proto-type Orion mission module has been built and as successfully undergone initial testing.



While there are still many technological issues to sort out but the mission is currently a "go." What an age we live in! The Mission to Mars may not happen in my (your editor's) lifetime there are some who witnessed the first lunar landing who may witness the first Mars landing.

What new discoveries will be made there? What new advances in medicine and technology will come forth?

When I for one think about the mission I pause with wonder at what humankind can do when it steps away from petty politics, bigotry and war. It

brings to mind a section from Angela Morgan's poem "Today."

"To be alive in such an age!
When man, impatient of his cage,
Thrills to the soul's immortal rage
For conquest -- reaches goal on goal,
Travels the Earth from pole to pole,
Garners the tempests and the tides
And on a Dream Triumphant rides,
When, hid within the lump of clay,
A light more terrible than day
Proclaims the presence of that Force
Which hurls the planets on their course.
O age with wings
O age that flings
A challenge to the very sky,
Where endless realms of conquest lie!
When earth on tiptoe, strives to hear
The message of a sister sphere,
Yearning to reach the cosmic wires
That flash Infinity's desires."

President Rue In "The Reflector"

I don't know how many of you receive the Astronomical League's publication "The Reflector" but if you do, did you notice our president's article on page 16 in the December issue? It's the letter first published right here in "The Observer" in which she describes her trip to Grand View for our semi-annual star party last Spring. Congratulations madam president!

