



THE OBSERVER

SAN BERNARDINO VALLEY AMATEUR ASTRONOMERS

Member of The Astronomical League

2009, International Year of Astronomy

<http://sbvaa.org/>



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Since 1958

August 2009

Meeting:

August 15, 2009

Location:

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

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

Annual Summer Potluck Barbecue

Summer Potluck Barbecue

Well, it's feast time once again for the SBVAA!! Instead of our regular indoor monthly meeting on Saturday, August 15, we'll have our annual barbecue/potluck out back behind the main museum building.

A gas barbecue will be provided by Tina and Randy Kromas for heating and cooking up hot and tasty goodies. Please bring something to share, and any and all kinds of food are welcome. We can also use paper plates, cups, plastic ware and napkins. There are plenty of picnic tables available. We will start setting up at 5:30 pm and the feast will begin in earnest right after 6:00 pm. We usually stay until 9:00 pm, or until the food runs out! Join us for the delicious food and the delightful company---see you there!



SBVAA Officers

President: James Butts 909-383-1443
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Star Party Coordinator: Tom Lawson 909-8828198
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Newsletter Editor: Jim Sommer 909-792-3587

Calendar of Upcoming Events

August 15, Club meeting at the Museum
August 20-23, Julian Starfest, Julian, CA
August 22, SBVAA Star Party, location to be announced
August 29, Moon Party outreach at the Museum
September 12, Club meeting at the Museum
September 19, SBVAA Star Party, GRANDVIEW
September 26, Public outreach at the Museum

August Moon Party

By Chris Clarke



On Saturday, August 29, the club will host another "Moon Party" at the Museum, from 8:00 to 9:30 pm. We'll set up at the south end of the parking lot as before, around 7:30 pm. A beautiful gibbous moon will be high in the south and a brilliant Jupiter, just past opposition, will be in the southeast.

Any and all scopes are welcome. These viewings provide the public with a wonderful opportunity to see what kinds of telescopes are out there in "amateur hands." Also, realize that most people have never even looked through a telescope before, and for them, this can be "significant moment" in their lives. As astronomers, we have a duty to share the wonder and beauty of the universe with those who might never experience it otherwise.

The last event had over 200 people in attendance, so the more scopes and volunteers, the better! These events are highly enjoyable for everyone, and usually we 'veteran' observers see something new, or different, too. No matter what, come join us for the fun that Saturday night!

Editor's Message

By Jim Sommer

August: The "Summer Triangle" is riding high and warm nights make observing much more of a shorts and t-shirt affair -- as long as you remember the bug repellent. Your club has two outreaches coming up. One on August 29 and one on September 26. Alas, I will miss the one in September. You see, I "volunteered."

The Redlands Conservancy is holding a wine tasting as a fund raiser that night in September and I happened to casually mention to their director that that night would be a good night for showing people some celestial sights in addition to tasting wine. The next thing I knew, I had committed to bringing my scope to the event. I have been told that the event was very quickly sold out. So while the rest of you are enthralled the public at the Museum I'll be trying to do the same on a hill between Redlands and Yucaipa.

I guess this just goes to show that the opportunity to do outreach can take many forms. Anyone can do it. Whether it is setting up your scope on your driveway, volunteering at a local school or participating in our club events, it's easy and fun. Opportunities abound. Ever thought of setting up at the VA Hospital, your local library, house of worship or senior center. If you set up, they will come.

CALENDARS

The 2010 “**Deep Space Mysteries**” calendars from Astronomy Magazine are here. It will be available for sale starting with the club meeting on September the 12th. We will have 30 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 before or after the meeting to make your purchase. Reservations are accepted.



Public Star Parties

Free public star parties are held monthly with the assistance of the Los Angeles Astronomical Society and the Los Angeles Sidewalk Astronomers at the Griffith Observatory from 2:00 p.m. to 9:45 p.m. They are a chance for the whole family to look at the sun, moon, visible planets, and other objects, to try out a variety of telescopes, and to talk to knowledgeable amateur astronomers about the sky and their equipment.

Public Star Parties remaining for 2009

August 29

September 26

October 24

November 21

December 19

Julian Starfest August 20 - 23, 2009

The second annual Starfest will be held on the above dates high in the Cuyamaca Mountains of San Diego County at the Menghini Winery.



Campsites, hotels, lodges and bed-and-breakfast inns are available for participants. There will be lots of activities including vendor exhibits, various speakers and a swap meet. Historic Julian offers a variety of daytime activities for attendees: Gold mine tours shopping and of course the famous Julian apple pie shops.



For additional information:

Mailing Address

Julian Starfest
P.O. Box 2007
Julian, CA 92036

Email Address

<http://www.julianstarfest.com/>

By Phone

(760) 765-1083

Johnson Valley Star Party Report

By Cliff Saucier

Dark sky events have been plagued of recent by the run of stormy weather. The star parties of the previous weekend by various clubs were scrubbed. A planned trip to dark skies in Nevada for a week scratched. The magnified views of the bottom of clouds just doesn't have appeal for most of us. And now, all week the weather sites online had nothing but the little thunderstorm icons for Johnson Valley and our star party. However, the Clear Sky Chart held out a little hope. Now we've all been caught in the deluge, and we've all had the experience of watching the clouds evaporate once deprived of the heat of the sun powering that storm engine. So off I went. It's going to be what it's going to be. My ten-inch accompanied me, it just was a little too uncertain to bring along my bigger scope. I felt the quandary that Martin Carey must feel when deciding which of his scopes to bring out.

Hesperia was clear, but the view down Bear Valley Road was wall to wall thunderheads. Beautiful and impressive! We just don't get clouds like these down in our valley, but not what I really wanted to see. Reaching Lucerne, about fifteen big fat raindrops fell on my windshield. A major cloudburst was darkening the sky about three miles to the North. Oh, well. Keep fingers crossed. Reaching the dirt road turnoff after the sun had set, I took the wrong road! Thinking to myself "this road is really getting bad" I tagged into the regular road and realized my mistake. Lights flashed at me from up the hill. Others had rolled the dice and come as well! Reaching the cattle crossing I met Bill Boyzk, a club member from Beaumont, along with his daughter, Kirstin, and her boyfriend Chad. He came up a different wrong road and got stuck in the sand. Luckily I showed up after that and missed all the work digging him out. They had set up down a side road, along with Randy Voyles from Yucaipa. He joined us out at Cottonwood the last time we went there. Coming after me (but up the correct road!) Was Jane Aneur, with her nine and ten-year old boys, Ethan and Noah. We've all gotten to know Noah from our club meetings as the youngster that asks all the questions -- good questions. He seems to have a deep thirst for astronomy, and I was glad to see him out in the desert where we can really see some celestial sights! Good for you, Jane, for taking the time to make the trek to Johnson Valley to encourage your son's interests!

I helped guide Jane as she turned her van around, I had thought she and her boys would be leaving early. Oh, so wrong! *Everybody* came with sleeping bags to spend the night! We've got a good group here!

The skies cleared as it. darkened. The Milky Way was glistening. (O ye of little faith, who didn't make the journey!) The night turned out to be wonderful! Jupiter was outstanding at 320 power, and we felt as though we were seeing a leftover dark area at the southern region, where the planet was struck by the comet(?), asteroid(?) the week before. The sky was very nice, and warm all night. Lows in the seventies. Shorts and T-shirts were the uniform for the evening. We observed until two-thirty, and Bill and Randy conversed for another half hour. All the summer sights were seen, and Mars was bright in Taurus, on the other side of the 'v' from Aldebaran. The two red objects looked very nice together!

We got up and out as the sun was rising. On the way back along the highway, I spied a male Prairie Falcon on a telephone pole. It jumped into the sky and dropped to the deck. I pulled over and grabbed my binos. He pumped along just grazing the tops of the creosote bushes, and a half a mile down, small birds scattered in front of him. He came up empty, but my heart was filled with the majesty of the moment, as well as the night before. Five cars, eight people, four telescopes and the cosmos. It was very nice!

Well, there's the tale.

PS - I really couldn't read my handwriting from that night. My apologies for butchering any names.

Cliff

For Sale

Do you have some equipment that you would like to sell, trade or give away?

Want to still "keep it in the family?"

Contact your newsletter editor and I'll put it in the club newsletter. It's free!