

The Observer

SAN

BERNARDINO VALLEY AMATEUR ASTRONOMERS

Member of The Astronomical League

<http://sbvaa.org/>



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Since 1958

October, 2011

Meeting:

October 15, 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.

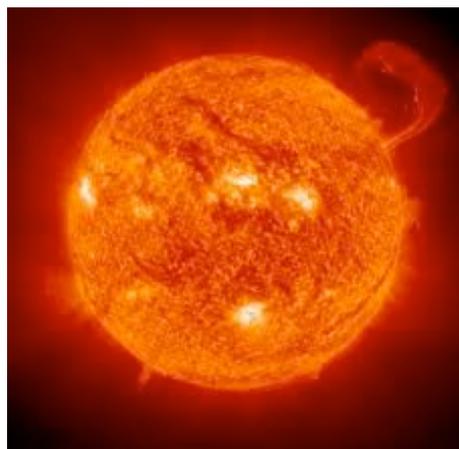
*No telescope is too humble,
and beginners are always
made welcome!*

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

Program

Dynamics of the Sun

Mark Wagner, owner and manufacturer of "Solar Spectrum" solar filters, will do a presentation on the sun and its interesting phenomena. He will explain what causes all manner of solar activity, including spots, prominences and flares. To illustrate these fascinating features, he will have images and movies of solar activity as shown through different kinds of filters. He will also discuss how white-light, hydrogen-alpha and Calcium filters function and what details they reveal. Mark has been involved with the development and manufacture of solar filters for over 30 years.



Join us for a very enlightening talk about our nearest star and how you can see what's going on across its surface from your own backyard.

SBVAA Officers

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Calendar of Upcoming Events

October 15, Club meeting at the Museum

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

October 29, *alternate* Star Party, Wildlands
Conservancy site, Oak Glen (next to Los
Rios Rancho)

November 12, Club meeting at the Museum

November 26, Star Party, Johnson Valley

December 10, Club holiday get together at
Roberto's Italian Restaurant

August 6, our club, as you know, had a public outreach at the County Museum. Some good publicity brought out close five hundred people! Cliff Saucier brought along a box of brochures promoting and encouraging people to get into amateur astronomy. This is a great example of how individuals can make a big difference, even influencing other clubs. It makes astronomy better for all of us.

Below is a picture of the dedicated couple who took the initiative to apply for and successfully acquire a grant for the publishing of the brochures. Alas, I wasn't able get their names with the picture. They are members of the High Desert Astronomy Society. A hearty thanks to them for their inspired action.



Alternate Near-by Star Party Site for October

By Chris Clarke

On October 29, club members will have the opportunity to try a new “close-by” dark sky observing site. Arrangements have been made with “The Wildlands Conservancy” in Oak Glen to have a site available for members to observe. Depending on sky conditions, the area can provide some quality deep sky views. In early May, Fidel Hernandez, Jim Sommer and myself were out there doing an outreach for some school children. We saw that the site was very nice and offered lots of potential.

Many members do not, or can not, go to the farther sites, like Afton Canyon, Johnson Valley or Grandview, mainly because of distance or the overnight stay required. This means that they miss out on the better dark sky observing, as the local outreach events are spoiled by heavy light pollution.

Well, here’s a chance to actually see some deep sky objects from a location that isn’t too far away from home and is easy to get to. Once you are on Oak Glen Road, you’ll be on your way to it! There is a paved parking area and some restrooms available too. I will be there to help “supervise” the event, so a “senior” club member will be on hand. If you are interested, contact me for directions. Tom Lawson should also be sending out a formal e-mail announcement with directions as well.

If things work out, we might have ourselves a nice dark sky site close by, so let’s give it a try!

The address is

39611 Oak Glen Road
Oak Glen, CA 92399

The driveway is on the west side of the Los Rios Rancho parking lot.

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.

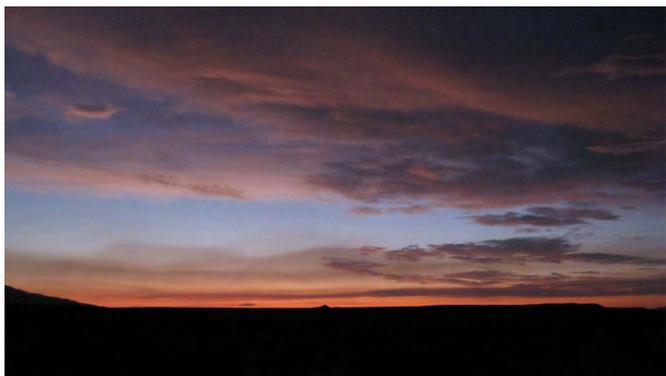


M33 Photo by Jon Talbot using combined Ha + LRGB captures. Jon’s “day job” is a hurricane hunter but his avocation is astrophotography. Scopes used were a SV115T and SV80.

Star Party Report

By Mike Ratcliff

The Johnson Valley star party this past August 2011 was a success despite the extensive cloud cover created by afternoon thunderstorms in the Big Bear area. It was mostly cloudy at dusk and I was set for a long wait for any clearing. But it actually started clearing overhead almost right away and was mostly clear the whole night. The weather was hot in the afternoon. At dusk at Johnson Valley the temps were still in the mid 90's.



No cold weather gear needed that night, for sure. So with the heat I didn't feel like loading up any heavy glass. A lot of others felt the same and just brought the more lightweight scopes. But there were definitely enough scopes around. There were about 8 to 10 observers including new member Rich and a visit from Cliff's brother-in-law (also named Cliff).



(Photo by Neil Heacock, Aug. 11, 2011)

Observing-wise the highlight had to be the Garradd Comet, officially known as Comet 2009/P1 Garradd. It was easily seen in the constellation Sagitta. Happened to be close to one of the brighter constellation stars (zeta), making an interesting

view. There was no obvious tail, though I thought I saw the start of one.

[Comet Garradd (C/2009 P1) is visible as soon as darkness falls, high in the western sky in southern Hercules, where it will reside for the next few months. The comet is now brighter than magnitude 7, meaning that it is a good object in binoculars from dark sky sites, and displays a short tail. Ed.]



The summer milky way and its swarms of stars, star clusters, and nebulae were also observed. Plenty of things to look at. All in all an enjoyable night.



Warm August Nights (Another Look at August's Johnson Valley Star Party)

By Cliff Saucier

Boy it had been hot! 111° at five in the afternoon when I left my home in San Bernardino to head up to Johnson Valley. The monsoon flow, and the thunderstorms it engenders, had all of us checking weather predictions and calling the others. "You going?", "I'm thinking about it!", "Maybe the weather will be better than the Clear Sky Charts show!" Finally most decided to bring along the smaller scopes, or even large binoculars. Too hot to spend much time packing, and we may have to be able to take everything down quickly if the weather takes a bad turn.

Getting to the spot early, it wasn't long before others started to show up. My truck was down, and my brother-in-law was good enough to come out for the night. After us came new member, Rich Miller (I sure hope that is right), with an eight-inch Meade SCT. It's goto feature was wonderfully accurate. He originally showed up at our bar-b-que with the intention of finding a buyer for his largely unused scope, and was talked into becoming a member. Way to go guys! Next was another newer member John from Hemet. This is the first time I was out observing with him, though I've met him at many meetings and outreaches. A surprise was an appearance by Tom Lawson, with his converted moving van that he uses to transport his Berkshire steam locomotive. This night it was turned to astronomy use in a trial run for our September Grandview extravaganza. He had rigged a wheelbarrow setup to get his big Dob down the van's ramp, and with some modifications he will have it working well and hopefully joining us more often. Tom was always to be counted on to show up at a star party. Then the rest came up the road. Michael Ratcliff, Steve Peeters, Robin, and a little later Martin and his son Matthew.

Clouds were obscuring the sky as it got dark, but they looked thin, and we had high hopes. Passing the time, Matthew had a few of us on a scorpion hunt, with a UV light. He only found one, but that was one too many for some of the group. Tom Lawson wanted to get a pair of the lights to mount on his shoes! The Summer Triangle was starting to peek through the schmutz, and the fun was just beginning. Mike Ratcliff found Comet Garrard for us in his six-inch, and Tom made it look good in his twice as big scope. It was supposed to be a binocular object, but those predictions are notoriously iffy. At least the sky predictions were better than predicted, we only needed shorts and T-shirts all night, and enjoyed ourselves with cosmic marvels and the occasional deep philosophical conversations. Most of us left rather early, midnight or so, but it was good to get out under the stars again. A nice turnout for a desert trip during a heat wave.

October Observing Highlights

By Jim Sommer

By Jove! It's time for Jupiter again. This month Jupiter will be much better placed for observing than in the last few years. It reaches opposition on October 28th in the constellation Aries. For the past half dozen years, Jupiter has reached opposition while located south of the celestial equator. But in February of this year Jupiter crossed the C.E. heading north. On October 28th it should lie 12* north of it. This means it should be well placed for astrophotography work. At a magnitude of -2.9 you certainly can't miss it!

Look for Jupiter's southern belt regaining its prominence. A dark site will really allow a detailed look.