
Desert Sky Observer

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NEWSLETTER OF THE ANTELOPE VALLEY ASTRONOMY CLUB, INC
P.O. BOX 4595, LANCASTER, CALIFORNIA 93539-4595

*The Antelope Valley Astronomy Club Is A California Non Profit Corporation
Visit The Antelope Valley Astronomy Club Web Site At www.avac.ac.org
The A.V.A.C. Is A Sustaining Member Of The Astronomical League*



Up-Coming Events

April 01: First Quarter Moon at 10h 49m UT.

April 07-08: Poppy Festival from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Come out and visit the AVAC booth. It is held at Lancaster City Park at 10th Street East and Avenue K-8.

April 08: Full Moon at 3h 22m UT.

April 09: Monthly meeting, held at the S.A.G.E. Planetarium at the Cactus School in Palmdale. The meeting location is at the northeast corner of Avenue R and 20th Street East. Meeting starts at 7 p.m. Please note that food and drink are not allowed in the planetarium.

- **Speaker:** Member Dave Allen will talk on Astrophotography.

April 14: Star Party at Terry Pedroza's Dad's house.

April 15: Last Quarter Moon at 15h 31m UT.

April 21: Dark Sky Star Party at Redrock Canyon State Park.

April 23: New Moon at 15h 26m UT.

April 28: National Astronomy Day.

April 30: First Quarter Moon at 17h 09m UT.

May 11: Monthly Club meeting.

Anytime: Observe.

President's Report

Doug Drake

Welcome all of you. We are blessed with exceptional good people like you. I say that because in talking with any one of you I always coming away with something good. We all very much enjoy this science called astronomy; that is, we talk about how cold our toes get at night to

the wonders of the universe. And some how - you know - this thing called astronomy seems more like fun than an analytical mathematical theorem compellation.

This Month of April brings the Lyrid meteor shower the night of 21st (Saturday), This meteor shower is called the Lyrid shower because the meteors radiate out of the constellation Lyra, the harp. We have a start party at this time so we'll have more fun than a barrel of astronomers, or is that monkeys? Be on the lookout - Mars is a coming - Mars pops up from the horizon about midnight and becomes *fiery red* by the end of the month. And, for more exciting events read further on to find out what our board members and helpers are doing to enhance your membership. By the way, please contact one of our Board or Committee members to become more evolved with the fun.

Vice-President's Report

Terry Pedroza

By the time everyone reads this March will be gone and the Messier Marathon will be history. I hope everyone did as well or better than they had hoped in their search for those Messier objects we all have grown to know and love. My goal is ninety; let's hope for the best.

April's presentation will be by our own Dave Allen on astrophotography. Something that I don't mind saying Dave is very good at. This should be a very interesting talk that you won't want to miss.

While I'm on the subject of speakers, any donations towards our speakers would be greatly appreciated. We pay an honorarium to our non-club members to give their presentations and if you would like to donate you may. I'm sure that they appreciate it.

Our star parties have been a roaring success. We have been averaging about twenty-five people at each party and have all been having a great time. April's star parties are on the 14th at my Dad's house and the 21st at Redrock canyon. The Messier observing group will be getting together at Redrock on the twenty-first. I can hear the stories now, "I would have gotten all of them but my dog (wife, kid, ie) knocked my scope over." Ohh the tales we shall hear.

Member-At-Large Report

Errol Van Horne

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

The Community Development Committee now consists of Paul Gesiriech, Frances Grande, Debora Pedroza, Wes Thomas, and Janice Van Horne, with Doug Drake and Terry Pedroza serving as advisors. These members have been meeting each week to plan the dozens of tasks that must be accomplished to make the "Youth In Astronomy Essay Contest" a success. Each of them then spends many more hours (and dollars from their own pockets) to implement the various assignments they are responsible for accomplishing. Their commitment to the club and our youth is commendable but more importantly, they are making a meaningful contribution during a period in our national history, where violence and hurt fills the news about our schools. You can help by contacting us to volunteer your assistance or by contacting our club treasurer, Steve Trotta, to make a financial donation to the Youth In Astronomy Fund; anything you can do is vital to our efforts.

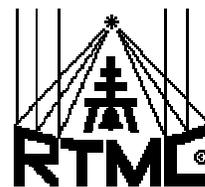
To bring you current as this process evolves, the Essay Contest will be held in

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conjunction with the Antelope Valley Air And Space Exploratorium kicking off on May 5, 2001 at the Antelope Valley Mall. Essay entries must be turned in to each student's school by May 23. Judging will be completed by June 6 and winners will be announced at the June 8 club meeting at Sage Planetarium. The contest will be open to all 6th, 7th, and 8th grade students throughout the Antelope Valley, with two from each age group selected as winners. Winning students will receive public recognition of their achievement, certificates memorializing that achievement, and a trip to several major science facilities where they will meet with scientists who will discuss current space projects with them and talk about careers in the scientific community. More on the specifics of this event as they are finalized.

The Air And Space Exploratorium will also provide us with an opportunity to showcase Astronomy to the general public through our displays in conjunction with the Sage Planetarium. This year Terry Pedroza is working on having more telescopes available for community members to view solar activity by inviting other clubs to join us. We are also finalizing our displays and will report more next month, again, as plans are finalized. Please contact either Terry or me to volunteer for duty at the telescopes and the display area inside the mall. Again the date is May 5 and the hours are 8am to 5pm.

In The News



Next month, May, signals the arrival of another gathering of amateur astronomers at Big Bear. A registration form can be downloaded from their web site and there is a slight discount for early registrants.

The event starts Friday, May 25, and runs through Monday morning, May 28. The Monday morning is when everyone packs up until the next year's event. There are plenty of vendors selling items. On Saturday morning is the swap meet, also fondly known as the "feeding frenzy"

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to many. In the evening there is the traditional "Door Prizes" that are handed out after dinner. The participation in this event is worth it, even if you do not win. Yells of "out back", "out front", and "inside" are heard if too many raffle winners seem to come from the different locations. After the raffle there are more lectures and that is the time that attendees head to the telescope field. This year the Moon will not be a hindrance to observing. The article below is taken from the RTMC web site.

ABOUT THE RTMC Astronomy Expo

Originally called the Telescope Makers Conference, the Riverside Telescope Makers Conference (RTMC) began in 1969. In 2000, the name was changed to "RTMC Astronomy Expo". Founded by Clifford W. Holmes, it was a way for amateur telescope makers to share their craft. In 1975, the RTMC Astronomy Expo found its current home at Camp Oakes, a YMCA camp east of Big Bear City. Located 50 miles northeast of Riverside in the San Bernardino Mountains, the site offers space for camping, several dormitories and 18 three-sided shelters, a meeting/dining hall, and the Charles Walker Observatory. The camp is located at an elevation of 7,600 feet.

Since its inception, the RTMC Astronomy Expo has expanded to include all aspects of astronomy, from beginners to advanced and from telescope makers to telescope users and 'armchair' astronomers. Recently, the conference has included events for the whole family with horseback riding, hikes, activities for spouses and activities for the young kids. For those who ache after walking around, we even have a masseuse!

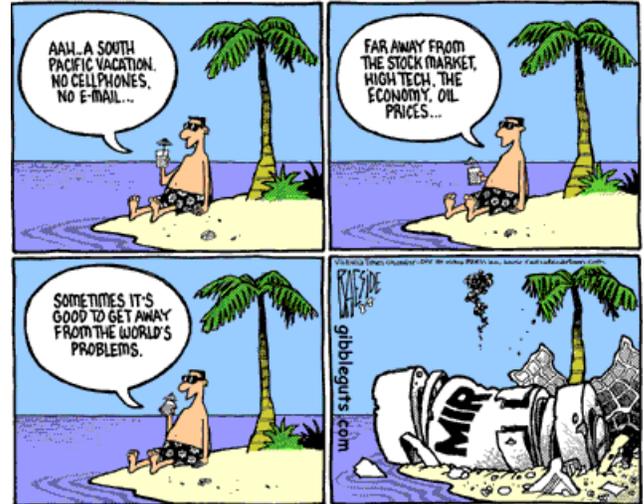
If you have any questions about the Riverside Telescope Makers Conference or would like to request additional registration materials, please call (909) 948-2205, or e-mail to rstephens@foxandstephens.com (that's Bob Stephens in case you're interested).

Address:

Desert Sky Observer

Riverside Telescope Makers Conference
8300 Utica Avenue, Suite 105
Rancho Cucamonga, CA 91730
(909) 948-2205

Humor



A.V.A.C. Membership Information

Membership in the Antelope Valley Astronomy Club is open to any individual.

The Club has three categories of membership.

- Family membership at \$25.00 per year.
- Individual membership at \$20.00 per year.
- Junior membership at \$15.00 per year.

Membership entitles you to our monthly newsletter, the Desert Sky Observer, and to borrow one of the Club's two telescopes. We currently have an 8-inch and 10-inch Dobsonian reflector for loan.

The Desert Sky Observer is available as a separate publication to individuals at a cost of \$10.00 per year. Subscription to the Desert Sky Observer does not entitle the subscriber to

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membership in the Antelope Valley Astronomy Club and its associated privileges.

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Our Sponsors

Al's Vacuum and Sewing: 904 West Lancaster Blvd. They can be reached at (661) 948-1521. Stop by and say hi to Matthew and Suzanne.

Darkrooms Plus: 20 St. W. near Pep Boys in Lancaster. They can be reached at (661) 945-1444. Darkrooms Plus offers all club members a 10% discount on all purchases. Stop by and say hi to Dean or Hank.

King Photo: 749 W. Lancaster Blvd. They can be reached at (661) 948-8441. As a telescope dealer, they always support the AVAC. Stop by and say hi to Stokely or Paul.

QNET: 1529 E. Palmdale Blvd., Suite 200. They can be reached at (661) 538-2028. As an Internet provider, they are kind enough to provide us with a free website.

Vista Golf: 43517 N. 13th Street West, Lancaster. They can be reached at (661) 945-7003. Thanks for your generous support.



Antelope Valley Astronomy Club, Inc.

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Monthly Meeting: April 13.