
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.av.org
The A.V.A.C. Is A Sustaining Member Of The Astronomical League*



Up-Coming Events

March 5: Last Quarter Moon

March 8: Monthly Club Meeting*

March 9: Star Party, Poppy Reserve ([map](#))

March 13: New Moon

March 16: Messier Marathon, Crystallaire Country Club ([map](#))

March 21: First Quarter Moon

March 21: Media Night, YEA Essay Contest

March 23: Star Party, Mt. Wilson ([map](#))

March 28: Full Moon

Anytime: *Observe.*

* Monthly meetings 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. Monthly A.V.A.C. meetings are open to the public.

President's Report

Terry Pedroza

My dream is to never have to turn anyone down when they request the AVAC to do an astronomical event... to have the available manpower and resources to do any event when requested! We (the AVAC) have the means to accomplish this dream!

We have been asked to do several events so far this year and we are having a hard time meeting the manpower requirements for these events! We are the Antelope Valley Astronomy Club and we have the means and the **will** to do this! So far, we have gotten by. But, we **CAN** do better. My wife, Debora, is very enthusiastic about our Club and our Communities. She has my dream and we see the pitfalls. We need everyone's help to make our club the "TALK OF THE TOWN". The group that everyone knows and wants. The club that every parent wants their kids to be a part of! The "**Antelope Valley Astronomy Club**". Can you tell that I love this club? You bet I do! If I didn't, I would not be your President! Please volunteer, help, or give input at the next event; or, the one after that!

March will be a very busy month, with the Messier Marathon primer at the Poppy Reserve on the 9th, the Messier Marathon at Crystallaire Country Club on the 16th; the mid-way media push at Sage Planetarium on the 21st, then the Mount Wilson Star Party on the 23rd. If you are planning to join us at Mount Wilson, please e-mail me so that I can let the Mount Wilson Institute know.

At the Messier Marathon at Crystallaire Country Club, we will be holding a raffle for some great items! Don't miss out! This is a great dark sky spot that the AVAC is very thankful to have the use of! Thank You Matt! Good luck to all you Messier Marathoners!

One last note, Dues need to be paid by the last day of February or you will be dropped from the club roster. Don't let that happen! See you at the meeting.

Vice President's Report

Matt Leone

The skies are dark and my mirror isn't back yet. Hopefully, by March 9th, it will be back in time for the Messier Marathon. Please make plans to be there at the Messier Marathon. It will be great and you will learn the sky like you never have before. It is cool seeing the whole sky in one night. If you can, stay up the whole night and you will see the whole sky. You will be tired, but satisfied. You and others all over the world stayed up to see all 110 objects. We will work together so you will be able to see every object, trust me.

For all of you members who need to build up your arms, back, and abs, we can help. All you have to do is grind your own mirror. My son and I have been making a 13-inch mirror for the past month; soon I will have Hulk Hogan arms. We can pump you up! Ahhhhh! Terry Pedroza, Tom Koonce, Matt Jr., Bob McCord and I are having fun making mirrors. I, of course, am taking the longest because I am weak; that's what Bob says. In a few months, I might be able to beat Debora Pedroza in arm wrestling.

And on that note I say, "Hasta la vista" and see you March 8th at the Club meeting.

Dir. of Community Development

Debora Pedroza

Hello Everyone! Here is an update on what's happening around our desert community. (Isn't our pre-spring weather just gorgeous?) We kicked off our second annual Youth Exploring Astronomy Essay Contest on Friday, February 15, 2002. With seven out of eight school districts AND ten private schools committed to participating, it should be an exciting event to watch! We'll keep you posted.

As I mentioned in last month's newsletter, the Poppy Festival is just around the corner. We have decided to make our historical theme focused on Galileo- the famous astronomer, not the JPL spacecraft! We are looking for additional creative ideas on how to make our booth both memorable and fun. We will be running shifts on both Saturday and Sunday. The Poppy Festival is being held this year on April 20th and 21st at the Lancaster City Park from 10am to 5pm. We will need telescopes and people to man the scopes, club members to run our information booth, and someone to promote and handle the "opportunity drawing" raffle tickets for a new telescope!

As you can see, we will need your help. I can only tell you from experience (rain or shine) that this is a fun and rewarding experience. We generate new members at each event and this is something entire families can become involved in. We get to know fellow club members better, and best of all, we get to share the phenomena of our sun and sunspots. Watch a child's eyes light up and you will see!

Our club president said it so well above...we are part of a great club and we all need to get more involved. We are a Team! Until next time...take care.

*Minutes of the Antelope Valley Astronomy Club, Inc.
Club Meeting*

February

Call To Order:

Terry Pedroza, President, called the meeting to order at 7:01 pm.; Terry welcomed four visitors; Brian Peterson read the minutes from the January Club meeting; Terry presented the calendar: (*see Page 1 of this DSO*)
Club Library: Terry announced that he is no longer the Club Librarian. That title now belongs to Paul Gesiriech.

Vice President's Report:

Matt Leone was unable to attend the meeting until near the end- no report;

Treasurer's Report:

Mary Andrus, Club Treasurer, announced the following numbers:

Beginning Balance:	\$1,597.30
Credits:	\$1,411.00
Debits:	<u>\$ (576.75)</u>
Ending Balance:	\$2,431.55

As of the last meeting, we had 47 members, which puts us ahead of schedule for last year, when we completed the year with 100 members.

Director of Community Development:

Debora Pedroza discussed the 2nd Annual Essay Contest. She also thanked Jeremy Amarant for his help. Posters are being put up in the schools around the valley. The contest opens February 15 and will remain open for two months.

We are confirmed for the Poppy Festival, April 20 & 21.

Special Business:

The Keith Lawson Award was given to Errol Van Horne for his contributions to the Club. The presentation was made by Tom Koonce.

Old Business:

Jeremy Amarant brought up that he would like to receive input from members regarding our thoughts on speakers. This will allow those who choose speakers to know what subjects and speakers the Club prefers.

Lucy Ainge would like to see the Club give more money to speakers as compensation for their efforts, which often includes travel.

New Business:

The Executive Board is considering the purchase of an AstroCam for functions (i.e., looking at the sun at the Exploratorium).

Dr. R. Mahadevan recommended that we should lobby the city of Lancaster to put up "dark sky friendly" lights at the new fairgrounds. Terry Pedroza stated that we should put together a committee to that end.

Speaker/Presentation:

Our own Tom Koonce gave a presentation about our Milky Way and important principles that astronomers and scientists have developed over the centuries in order to better understand our universe.

Tom mentioned the importance of such men as William Herschel and Edmund Halley. Tom explained the difference between apparent and absolute magnitude, the movement of stars in relation to each other, and determining a star's temperature by using the spectrum.

The technical presentation helped the members understand hypotheses on which astronomical beliefs were based through the centuries. Some of those hypotheses were later proven incorrect, some were proven correct. After the presentation, a Q&A session followed.

In lieu of Jeremy Amarant's 10-minute "Star Talk," attendees were treated to a view of the sky from a Stella-cam.

Close of Meeting:

The meeting was adjourned at 8:52 pm.

Minutes written and respectively submitted to the Executive Board, February 11, 2001.

Sincerely,
Brian Peterson
Secretary

Astronomical League Coordinator Inputs

Tom Koonce

I am very proud to announce the first woman in the Antelope Valley Astronomy Club to have completed the documented observation of at least 70 deep-sky Messier objects! Mindy Peterson received Messier Certificate Number 1916 at the January meeting. This is quite an accomplishment! Please join me in congratulating Mindy the next time you see her on a job well done. As of this writing, she's closing in on the 110 objects needed for her Messier Pin!

Our annual Messier Marathon star party will be held on March 16th at Crystal Air Country Club (please call Terry Pedroza or Matt Leone for directions or visit the club website at www.avac.av.org) Our esteemed Messier Observing Group Chairman, Terry Pedroza, and I will be handing out Messier log sheets that afternoon and giving a brief talk on the rules of the contest, which are mostly to have fun and not turn on any white lights... Anyone who logs at least 70 objects that night will be eligible for the Messier Certificate and a prize will be awarded to the person(s) who observe(s) the most objects. Plan on coming out for a real fun night that you won't soon forget.

The **Observing Clubs** offer encouragement and certificates of accomplishment for demonstrating observing skills with a variety of instruments and objects. These include the Messier Club, Binocular Messier Club and the Herschel 400 Club, the Deep Sky Binocular Club, the Southern Skies Binocular Club, the Meteor Club, the Double Star Club, and the Lunar Club.

Each Club offers a certificate based upon achieving certain observing goals. These are usually in the form of a specific number of objects of a specific group with a given type of instrument. Occasionally there are multiple levels of accomplishment within the club. There is no time limit for completing the required observing, but good record keeping is required. When you have reached the requisite number of objects, your observing logs are examined by the appropriate authority and you will receive a certificate and pin to proclaim to all that you have reached your goal.

Please check out <http://www.astroleague.org/al/obsclubs/obsclub.html> for more info on the following clubs. If you're interested in participating in any of these clubs, or better yet, setting up one of these observing groups for our own club, please contact me, Tom Koonce, at 943-8200 home or at work 572-5972.

Learner

Lunar Club
Urban Observing Club
Universe Sampler Club

Binocular

Binocular Messier Club
Deep Sky Binocular Club
Southern Skies Binocular Club

Telescopic

Messier Club
Herschel 400 Club
Herschel II Club
Caldwell Club
Arp Peculiar Galaxy Club

Topical

Asteroid Observing Club
Double Star Club
Earth Orbiting Satellite Observing Club
Master Observer Club
Meteor Club
Planetary Observers Club
Sunspotters Club

Astronomy Links on the Web

<http://antwrp.gsfc.nasa.gov/apod/archivepix.html> (Astronomy Picture of the Day)

<http://www.galaxies.com/> An out-of-this-world site, yuk yuk

<http://www.projectsandhobbies.com/howtolearnastronomy.htm> Getting started in Astronomy...

http://encke.jpl.nasa.gov/whats_visible.html (visible comets)

<http://www.spaceweather.com/> (Weather you don't get on television)

<http://www.avac.av.org/> (Hey, that's us! So go there!)



Vice President Matt Leone (right), with famed “sidewalk astronomer” John Dobson.



Club President Terry Pedroza gives CPR to his mirror.



Club member Bob McCord discusses the finer points of mirror making as Terry Pedroza listens.



Astronomical League Coordinator Tom Koonce works on his mirror.

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Warning! Warning!

If you have not paid your dues for 2002, this will be the last Desert Sky Observer that you receive. Please contact Mary Andrus pronto! (Mary's contact info is found below.)

* * * * *

Did you know? ?

The length of one year on Uranus is 84 earth-years, but a Uranus day is only 17.24 hours.

? ? ?

Executive Board Minutes Summary for February...

- Treasurer Mary Andrus reported that the Club now has 60 members;
- Director of Community Development Debora Pedroza is requesting assistance and input for the “midway push,” the media day for the Youth Exploring Astronomy Essay Contest; the “midway push” is March 21st;
- The Board discussed conducting classes for new members to make them more comfortable at star parties and more familiar with telescopes and star party etiquette;
- A tiered system of sponsorship was discussed in order to provide a solid return for sponsors' investments in our Club;
- The Club will be buying two Telrads for Club telescopes;
- President Terry Pedroza will soon build a tri-fold “wall” that will accompany the Club at public events; The wall will include the listing of sponsors who attain a certain level of sponsorship;

For Sale

For Sale: 'Sirius' brand 17mm, fully coated super plossl, 1 1/4" eyepiece, Sold as is, but hardly ever used, gorgeous optics. Good eye relief, tack sharp. If you're looking to expand your eyepiece collection, you won't be disappointed with this excellent addition. \$20 with dust case. Selling to fund a bigger scope. Call Tom Koonce, 943-8200.

Got something you want to see in the *Desert Sky Observer*? Whether it's a website, a type of story (i.e. stories about the Mars *Odyssey* mission), or astronomy jokes (please, no Uranus jokes), then e-mail Brian Peterson at cybrpete@sbcglobal.net and he'll be happy to consider your request.

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 \$30.00 per year.
- Individual membership at \$25.00 per year.
- Junior membership at \$15.00 per year.

Membership entitles you to...

- Desert Sky Observer—monthly newsletter.
- The Reflector—the quarterly publication of the Astronomical League.
- The A.V.A.C. Membership Manual.
- To borrow club telescopes, binoculars, camera, books, videos and other items.

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

A.V.A.C. Board Members

President: Terry Pedroza (661) 949-6975 - mres0hqoz@verizon.net

Vice-President: Matt Leone (661) 948-1521 - als@hughes.net

Secretary: Brian Peterson (661) 273-1693 - cybrpete@sbcglobal.net

Treasurer: Mary Andrus (661) 946-0372 - mfandrus@aol.com

Director of Community Development: Debora Pedroza (661) 949-6975 - res0hqoz@verizon.net

NEWSLETTER COMMITTEE

Brian Peterson (661) 273-1693 - cybrpete@sbcglobal.net

Steve Trotta (661) 269-5428 - sstrott@prodigy.net

CLUB LIBRARIAN

Paul Gesiriech (805) 358-3613 - kingphoto@antelecom.net

ASTRONOMICAL LEAGUE

Tom Koonce (661) 943-8200 - takoonce@aol.com

WEBMASTER of CLUB SITE

Steve Trotta (661) 269-5428 - sstrott@prodigy.net

You **DO NOT** want to miss our speaker at the March club meeting at the S.A.G.E. Planetarium. We had the privilege last year of hearing John Dobson speak at a Club meeting, and the “Pied Piper of Astronomy” is baaack. John Dobson will return to the Antelope Valley Astronomy Club for an encore presentation. For more info on Mr. Dobson, click here:

<http://www.geocities.com/CapeCanaveral/6389/Page1.htm>

If you want both your brain and your funny bone stimulated with Mr. Dobson’s knowledge and wit, don’t miss out.

Our Sponsors

Al’s Vacuum and Sewing: 904 West Lancaster Blvd. (661) 948-1521. Stop by and say “hey” to Matthew and Suzanne.

Darkrooms Plus: 20th St. W. near Pep Boys in Lancaster. (661) 945-1444. They offer all club members a 10% discount on all purchases. Stop by and say “hey” to Dean or Hank.

King Photo: 749 W. Lancaster Blvd. (661) 948-8441. As a telescope dealer, they always support the AVAC. Stop by and say “hey” to Stokely or Paul.

QNET: 1529 E. Palmdale Blvd., Suite 200. (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. (661) 945-7003.

Thanks for your generous support!

Don't forget to take one more look at the first page of the DSO for our busy March schedule. Make plans to attend at least one of the events. And remember, with your help, we can have an impact in our community for the advancement of astronomy and the sciences.

