
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 website At www.avac.av.org
The A.V.A.C. is a Sustaining Member of The Astronomical League*



Up-Coming Events

- July 2:** Last Quarter Moon
July 10: New Moon
July 12: Monthly Club Meeting*
July 13: Star Party, Saddleback Butte
July 17: First Quarter Moon
July 20: Club Picnic, Crystallaire Country Club ([map](#))
July 24: Full Moon
July 30: YEA Essay Contest winners trip to JPL
Anytime: *Observe.*

* Monthly meetings held at the S.A.G.E. Planetarium at the Cactus School in Palmdale on the second Friday of each month. 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

Isn't it great that summer is here?! We can observe all night long without freezing our butts off.

The Poppy Reserve was for the most part a bust due to the wind, but some of our members did get a good start on their Messier list.

We have a new lunar program chairman in Jerry Prestel. Thank you and congratulations. Matt Leone is our Messier observing group chairman. We now have eight members with their pin for all 110 Messier objects. If you are interested in starting an observing group, please let us know.

I am currently looking for a property chairperson to take possession of the Club's property- other than the library- for purposes of storage. If you are interested, please contact me.

Deb and I are moving the weekend of June 29th and 30th, so it may be a little tough to get a hold of us for the next couple of weeks. Our new phone number will be 718-3963. Thank you to all who have offered their help. We will be having a housewarming party Saturday, July 27th, and everyone is invited.

The Annual Picnic is rapidly approaching and we need everyone's help in making it the best yet. If you have items to donate as raffle or door prizes, please contact Mary Andrus. Deb has a signup sheet circulating for food items. I think that this will be our best picnic ever! Finding the site should be easier with the new signs that Tom Koonce has made up. Check them out!

Vice President's Report*Matt Leone*

First of all, I hope that you liked Chris Butler's tour around the galaxy. July's speaker will talk about the Space Shuttle. I believe that you will enjoy the pictures and the talk about what it takes to run the Shuttle.

Getting on to food and fun, it is time for the Club picnic. I can hardly believe that another year has passed. I can still remember running from the sprinklers (which will be turned off this year for sure). At Crystalair Country Club we have rules which must be followed, so please heed these rules and we will all have more fun. (A link to the map to Crystalair is available in the Calendar section of this DSO or on the Club website).

Rules:

1. Fun- fun, and more fun!
2. Eat everything on your plate.
3. No yelling at golfers on the golf course.
4. If you want to take a walk around the golf course, you need to wear a collared shirt and the proper shorts or pants.
5. At the picnic area, T-shirts and cut-off shorts are no problem.
6. You must wear the proper bathing suit at the pool (no cut-offs).
7. You are allowed to fish in the lake next to the picnic grounds even if you don't have a fishing license (no boats).
8. The Club does not allow alcohol at Club events.
9. Terry Pedroza and I will not drink beer at the picnic.
10. Brian Peterson and I will cook all of the burgers for everyone.
11. Use bathrooms. Bushes and trees are not part of the bathroom area.
12. Bicycles are no problem except on the golf course.
13. If you would like to golf, please contact me at 948-1521 and we will talk about what you need to do.
14. No fowl language at Club events, please (the birdies get offended).

I look forward to seeing you there and don't forget that some of us are going to Mt. Pinos on July 5th and 6th.

Dir. of Community Development*Debora Pedroza*

Happy Summer Solstice Everyone! Summer is upon us and that means our annual Club picnic is just around the corner. Many Club members look forward to this event because each year our get-together just keeps getting better. The picnic will be held at the Crystalair Country Club campground area on Saturday, July 20th. The club has reserved this campground area (thanks to Matt Leone) and we will have "star party signs" to direct you to the right location. Since this is obviously an overnight event, there is plenty of space for tents, campers and motor homes. Many of us like to go on up early (around noon), relax under the trees and enjoy good company and conversation. There is also swimming, walking, golfing and fishing for the more active folks.

We tentatively hold our raffle and silent auction between 4:00-5:30 PM and start the barbeque at 6:00 PM. The club is providing hamburgers, hot dogs and cold drinks. We DO need club members to help by bringing salads, fruit and vegetable platters, chips, desserts or whatever you would like. I will have sign-up sheets available at the next Club meeting, or if you would prefer, you can e-mail me with what you would like to bring and I will keep track of the items.

Put July 20th on your "MUST-DO " calendar. This is not only an incredible site to stargaze but the opportunity to mingle and get to know each better is so rewarding. See you all there. Until then...take care.

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If you do not have the Internet and need directions to Crystallaire for the Club picnic, please contact one of the Board Members (contact information listed on Page 5 below).

In the News...

Flood on Mars Carved Instant Grand Canyon, Researchers Say

By Paul Recer
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) Water roaring out of an overfilled lake carved an instant Grand Canyon, a valley more than mile (1.6 kilometers) deep on the surface of Mars some 3.5 billion years ago, according to a new analysis of pictures taken by spacecraft.

Researchers at the National Air and Space Museum said the flood of water originated from a huge lake large enough to flood both Texas and California that overflowed into a nearby impact crater.

When that crater filled up, said geologist Ross Irwin, the water eroded away a ridge-like barrier and was sent rampaging across a plain. Within a short time, a deep and wide gully called Ma'adim Vallis was carved from the Martian surface.

"Imagine more than five times the volume of water in the Great Lakes being released in a single flood and you'll have a sense of the scale of this event," said Irwin, the first author of a study appearing in the journal Science.

The force and volume of the water was enough to carve a valley 6,900 feet (2,070 meters) deep and 550 miles (885 kilometers) long within a matter of months, he said.

Irwin said the study presents more evidence that Mars, now a cold, dusty place with water existing only as buried ice, was once wetter and warmer. He said some researchers have estimated that up to 40 percent of the Martian surface could have been covered with water, although that estimate will take more research to confirm.

A ridge on the edge of a crater gave way, suddenly releasing the flood that carved Ma'adim Vallis, said Irwin.

Unlike Arizona's Grand Canyon, which was carved over millions of years by the Colorado River, Ma'adim Vallis was made "within a matter of months, certainly less than a year," said Irwin.

If Mars was once so wet, where did all the water go?

Irwin said nobody knows for sure, but theories suggest that some of the water was chemically split into its constituent parts, hydrogen and oxygen. The hydrogen could then have escaped to space. The oxygen stayed on Mars, rusting iron minerals and giving the planet its reddish color. Based on recent studies, at least some of the water was frozen and remains on Mars as sort of a permafrost underlying the planet's polar regions.

Asteroid 2002 MN: Second Closest Asteroid Approach to Earth

(from NASA's Near Earth Object website)

The 100 meter-sized asteroid 2002 MN passed within 0.3 lunar distances of the Earth on June 14, 2002, some three days prior to its discovery. According to its most likely orbital path, this object came within 120,000 km (74,000 miles) of the Earth, a close approach that is second only to the Earth approach to within 105,000 km (65,000 miles) by the 10 meter-sized asteroid 1994 XM1 on December 9th, 1994. Asteroids of this relatively small size are frequently discovered near the time of their close Earth approaches because then they are relatively bright and have a characteristic rapid apparent motion across the sky.

The MIT Lincoln Laboratory's LINEAR team discovered Asteroid 2002 MN. Although only 14 observations of the object during two evenings were used to compute the orbit of this object, its future motion can be computed several decades into the future. According to our SENTRY system analysis, while there are some [additional close Earth approach possibilities in 2061 and beyond](#), none of these Earth approaches are of particular concern.



Thanks to Club member Errol Van Horne for this photo of the recent solar eclipse.

Astronomy Links on the Web<http://www.astro-tom.com/>

(Tom Koonce's website)

<http://pages.prodigy.net/sstrott/>

(Steve Trotta's website)

<http://www.projectsandhobbies.com/howtolearnastronomy.htm>

(Getting started in Astronomy...)

<http://antwrp.gsfc.nasa.gov/apod/archivepix.html>

(Astronomy Picture of the Day)

<http://www.badastronomy.com>

(Debunks urban legends and poor reporting)

<http://www.skypub.com>

(a great magazine and resource)

<http://www.avac.av.org/>

(Hey, that's us! So go there!)

Did you know? ?

At noon in Los Angeles on the Summer Solstice, 7'1" Shaquille O'Neal's shadow was only 16 inches long. **On the same day** in Buenos Aires (Winter Solstice there), at noon his shadow would have been 11'4" long.

? ? ?

* * For Sale * *

Nothing. Not a darned thing this month.

If you want to sell astronomical equipment through the DSO, please contact Brian Peterson with a description of the items.

Got something you want to see in the *Desert Sky Observer*? Whether it's a website, a type of story, or astronomy jokes, send an e-mail to 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 res0hqoz@verizon.net
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Webmaster of Club Site

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

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!

August Calendar

August 9: Club Meeting, Sage Planetarium;

August 10: Star Party, Mt. Pinos;

August 12-14: Perseid meteor shower;

September Calendar

September 7: Star Party and BBQ at Steve Trotta's house;

September 13: Club Meeting, Sage Planetarium;

Tell a friend about the Antelope Valley Astronomy Club!