
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

June 7: First Quarter Moon

June 13: Monthly Club Meeting*

June 14: Full Moon

June 21: Star Party, Prime Desert Woodlands

June 21: Last Quarter Moon

June 27: Brownie Troop 737 star party & talk

June 28: Mt. Wilson all-night observing trip

June 28: Star Party, [Red Rock Canyon](#)

June 29: New Moon

June 30: JPL trip for YEA winners

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

I can't believe that the 2003 RTMC is already here and gone! We had such a great time that I don't think I can put it into words. We cooked together, we talked, and we just had a lot of fun. There were twenty-plus AVAC members there, all leaving various quantities of cash. There were more vendors this year, making it ohh sooo easy to spend cold hard cash. I personally left LARGE quantities with Woodland Hills Camera, Astronomy to Go, and several individuals at the swap meet on Saturday.

I was disappointed in the selection of homebuilt telescopes this year. There did not seem to be near as many as in previous years. Those that were there were beautiful though. Nick Bennett won one of the door prizes **again** this year, winning a planisphere and Messier card. They picked the wrong ticket for the Grand Prize, it not being mine of course. We had a wonderful time looking thru the Coronado Solar scopes, the Hutech scopes, Tele Vue scopes, and on and on. Mary Andrus and Deb both bought Chris Butler prints- oh so nice! I think that everyone had a great time, if you didn't make it this year you missed a great time!

Our observing site is getting more use and we are working on making improvements. If you have ideas or suggestions, please let me or any of the board members know. We have concrete donated when we are ready, and the labor to do the job. We are looking at getting a cargo container to use as a warm/meeting/get together room, and installing a bathroom and lounge.

It may seem early, but elections are coming up and we need to get an idea of who would be interested in running for a Board position. I personally would like to not be on the board in 2004, as I have other projects that I would like to get going (radio telescope, large homebuilt equatorial mount, observatory, etc.). I would still like to be involved, just not as a Board member. If you are interested in a position, please see any of the Board members.

Vice President's Report

Tom Koonce

The featured Speaker for the June 13th Club Meeting will be Dr. Gary Peterson, a planetary geologist from San Diego State University, who will be presenting: "Mercury: The Forgotten Planet." Dr. Peterson is an excellent speaker who we've had to our meetings before. He presents detailed subjects in clear language that we can all understand. This is sure to be a great talk that you don't want to miss.

AVAC Beginner Class: Introduction to the Night Sky

*** Please Note - New Class Start Time ***

The 1 hour Beginning Astronomy "Introduction to the Night Sky" class will be held Friday, June 13th, at 5:50 pm at the SAGE Planetarium prior to the 7:00 meeting time. (Please try to show up a couple of minutes early, as the class will start and end on time.)

This class is MANDATORY for all NEW members that would like to check out one of the Club's telescopes or sets of eyepieces, and it is entirely optional for any other members. All that we ask is that you please respond to this message on or before Wednesday, June 11th if you are planning on attending so I can get the correct number of handouts printed up.

The complete course content can be found online at: <http://www.astro-tom.com> but you still have to come and take part in the class before you can check out a club telescope or eyepieces.

The AVAC Annual Club Picnic will be held Saturday, July 26th, at Crystallaire Country Club. In the past years, the Silent Auction and Raffle that we hold at this event has been a major fundraiser for the club because of the generous donations of our members.

We will be accepting donations for the Annual Club Picnic Silent Auction and Raffle at our June 13th meeting.

Any astronomical-related items (and most non-astronomical items) are welcome. If desired, you will get a donation letter for tax purposes. If you have items that you would like to have picked up, you may call me in the evenings at 661-943-8200. I'll arrange for the item to be picked up.

Dir. of Community Development*Debora Pedroza*

Greetings, club members. We have two items of interest for this month's article. The first is in regards to the 3rd Annual Youth Exploring Astronomy Essay Contest. We devoted most of last month's club meeting to the announcement and celebration of this year's contest winners... and what a celebration it was! Senator Pete Knight kicked the presentation off by announcing the winning names for each grade level (this information was known only by the judges and parents) and presenting each student with a beautiful state certificate. Afterwards, the surprised winners were treated to a photo shoot with the senator. Congratulations were plentiful from our two local mayors, Frank Roberts and Jim Ledford. The winners listened to motivational speeches filled with words of encouragement to pursue their future and embrace education in every capacity. The mayors also had on hand lovely personalized certificates for each winner.

We had 14 schools participate in our contest this year and the semi-finalists consisted of essays from six different schools. The judges are quoted as saying this was the toughest year so far in choosing the actual final winners. There were so many outstanding essays submitted. Sacred Heart School set a record by winning it all. Diane Knipple, Community Director for Lockheed Martin Aeronautics presented a monogrammed jacket and hat to the following students: Sixth Grade- Alicia Jimenez and Blake McBride; Seventh Grade- Christina Bessacini and Travis Copeland; Eighth Grade- Chris Stell and Caitlin Fitzgerald.

Once the winners had the chance to sit down and unload their prizes and escape the flashing camera lights, we were all treated to a fascinating Mars demonstration presented by Captain Bob Redman. Bob explained in detail the mission to Mars, complete with robots and visual modules. Thank you, Bob!

Last but not least, our planetarium director Jeremy did a planetarium show especially for the winners (and me) that made us feel like we were on the 'tilt- a whirl' ride at the fair. So fun! Jeremy also showed each essay winner exactly which constellation their birthday is in and where in the sky, they would find it. What a special night. A warm thanks goes out to each and every person who helped to make this project such a rewarding success (committee members, special project handlers, judges, local dignitaries, media and school personnel and all of the club members who came out and showed their support. THANK YOU!

Our club picnic is coming up soon on Saturday, July 26 at the Crystallaire Country Club. We need to start planning. The Board will be providing hamburgers and hotdogs to barbecue. We will need salad side dishes, fruit, condiments, chips and dips and dessert. There will be a volunteer list passed around at the June club meeting to help generate these items. We will also be holding our annual picnic raffle and silent auction. These two events get bigger and better each year. Think about what you would like to bring for the meal and what items you would like to donate for the raffle and silent auction. Together we can make this a truly memorable event. To volunteer, you can e-mail or phone me or wait to see me at the meeting. Until next time, take good care.

Doug Drake's *Planet Watch*



Venus and Mercury

Venus and Mercury are the early *morning* objects seen in the east just before sunrise. Venus is very bright with a dimmer Mercury just off to the right.

Mars

Mars will be going through more than half its apparent full size this month, as we on Earth speed ever closer to this bright orange planet in the Solar system. Mars will rise in the southeast just after midnight and will be at about our southern meridian just before sunrise. Start observing Mars so you can *train* your visual acuteness for the subtle hues seen on the Martian surface. Then in August, at Mars opposition, you should be able to see more detail and subtle features that come from a trained eye.

Jupiter

As Venus is the *morning* bright object just before the eastern sunrise, Jupiter is our *evening* bright object just after the western sunset. You can still watch Jupiter's moons as they change their position around Jupiter.

* * Advertisement * *

Saturday, June 7th is SPACE ROCK DAY at the Seaside Gemboree National Show - Seaside Park in Ventura, California

Click here for more details: <http://www.afms-cfmsgemshow.org/>

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Did you know? ?

On August 26th and 27th, Mars will be closer to Earth than it has been in the last 60,000 years (34.6 million miles away).

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Director of Community Development Debora Pedroza poses with the winners of the YEA Essay Contest: Chris Stell, Caitlin Fitzgerald, Christina Bessacini, Travis Copeland, Blake McBride, and Alicia Jimenez.



Captain Bob Redman addresses the Club meeting and encourages the winners to pursue the sciences.



Kellee and Matthew Koonce pose beneath a rather large telescope at the RTMC.

Astronomy Links on the Web

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

(Steve Trotta's website)

<http://www.astro-tom.com/>

(Tom Koonce's website)

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

(Astronomy Picture of the Day)

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

(Yo, that's us)



The AVAC gang who couldn't see straight.



Al Nagler yuks it up with Terry Pedroza.

A.V.A.C. Membership Information

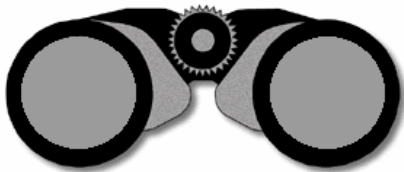
Membership in the Antelope Valley Astronomy Club is open to any individual. The Club has three categories of membership.

- 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) 718-3963 res1atuo@verizon.net**Vice-President:** Tom Koonce(661) 943-8200 takoonce@aol.com**Secretary:** Lu Shoomliansky (661) 945-8900 lace.s@as.net**Treasurer:** Mike Presswood (661) 949-8718 mikeymash@yahoo.com**Director of Community Development:**Debora Pedroza (661) 718-3963 res1atuo@verizon.net**Newsletter Editor**Brian Peterson (661) 273-1693 cybrpete@sbcglobal.net**Club Librarian**Terry Pedroza (661) 718-3963 res1atuo@verizon.net**Astronomical League & Club Historian**Tom Koonce (661) 943-8200 takoonce@aol.com**Webmaster of Club Site**Steve Trotta (661) 269-5428 sstrott@prodigy.net***A Look Ahead...*****July Calendar****July 13:** Club Meeting**July 26:** Annual Club Picnic, Crystallaire**August Calendar****August 8:** Club Meeting**August 16:** Star Party, Prime Desert Woodlands**August 30:** Star Party and BBQ, Steve Trotta's estate**September Calendar****September 12:** Club Meeting**September 20:** AACAA, George Lane Park**September 27:** Star Party, Mt. Pinos

Our Sponsors

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

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

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.

High Desert Broadcasting: General Manager, Vicky Connors (661) 947-3107; They assist us in advertising our Club.

Woodland Hills Camera: 5348 Topanga Canyon Blvd., Woodland Hills. 888-427-8766.
www.telescopes.net Please welcome our newest sponsor and see the ad above.

Thanks for your generous support!



The first shots of Earth from our neighbor, Mars