

Skywatchers

Newsletter of the China Lake Astronomical Society

Volume 44 No. 8

August 1, 2007

NEXT MEETING 7:30 p.m., Monday, August 6, 2007

Maturango Museum, 100 East Las Flores Avenue, Ridgecrest, California

PROGRAM FOR THE AUGUST 5 MEETING – Cygnus

For our August 2007 meeting let's talk about Cygnus. Cygnus is one of the most spectacular constellations of the summer sky and it is loaded with special stars, nebulae, supernova remnants and a black hole. If you have any pictures or observing tips, bring them along.

DATES TO KEEP IN MIND

Monday, August 5, 2007: Regular CLAS Meeting at the Maturango Museum, 7:30 p.m.

Thursday, August 9, 2007: Star Party at the Maturango Museum, at dusk

Friday, August 10, 2007: Regular monthly Star Party, see details below

Tuesday, August 28, 2007: Deadline for next Skywatchers Newsletter

Monday, September 10, 2007: Regular CLAS Meeting at the Maturango Museum in Ridgecrest, 7:30 p.m. Note: One week later than usual, because of Labor Day.

STAR PARTY SCHEDULE FOR THE 2007 SEASON:

Star Parties will be held on the dates listed below. Star Parties are an activity where members and guests join together to share views of the skies. If you have a telescope, bring it. If not, come and look through someone else's. Star parties are held at a site in the open desert south of Ridgecrest. To reach the star party site from Ridgecrest, go south on China Lake Boulevard 6.5 miles from its intersection with Ridgecrest Boulevard. Continue straight across Highway 395 and you will be on Brown Road (Old Highway 395). Follow Brown Road as it curves to the right and goes west. After 2.3 miles there will be a 30-inch orange cone on the left. Turn left and follow the dirt road marked by 12-inch cones. The CLAS Star party is 0.5 miles along this road. Watch for signs and cones, which will be put out about a half hour before viewing starts. Call Carroll Evans 760-375-5681, or Bruce Churchill 760-375-7247, for more information.

Friday, August 10: Signs out at 8:30 p.m., Star viewing at 9:00 p.m.

Friday, September 7: Signs out at 7:30 p.m., Star viewing 8:00 p.m.

Friday, October 12: Signs out at 7:00 p.m., Star viewing at 7:30 p.m.

Friday, November 9: Signs out at 5:30 p.m., Star viewing at 6:00 p.m.

THE SKY IN AUGUST by Roger Brower

1. Venus moves from the evening sky to the morning sky this month, so is very close to the Sun. However, you can still see it low in the west after sunset at the start of the month and low in the east before sunrise at the end of the month.
2. Saturn is too close to the sun to be visible this month.
3. Mercury is in the morning sky and will be visible in the east before sunrise for the first week of August.
4. Jupiter is still in the evening sky. After sunset, look for it in the south about 5 degrees above Antares the heart of Scorpio.
5. Look for Comet LINEAR (C/2006 VZ) as it passes through Virgo. Check the finder chart in Astronomy magazine.

CLAS STAR PARTY 7/13/07 by Alex Shlanta

The weather cooperated for the Star Party. It was about 80 deg F with a slight breeze to make things reasonably comfortable for this time of year. We had some clouds to the south but they dissipated an hour or so after darkness. There was still some residual smoke from the wild fires north of us. The turnout was good with 17 guests in attendance at the star party.

There were seven telescopes set up for the event. Manning telescopes were CLAS members Peter Eiserloh with his Meade LXD 55 8" Schmidt reflector, Beverly Jacobson with her Meade 8" LX200 Schmidt Cassegrain, Chuck Morgan with the Club's 8" Orion Dobsonian Intelliscope and his Meade ETX125 Maksutov Cassegrain, Jerry Ott with his 14" Starmaster truss Dobsonian, myself with a 10" Orion Dobsonian Intelliscope, and Bill Weiss with his Williams Optics Fluoro Star 110mm apochromatic refractor. CLAS members Roger Brower, Bruce Churchill, Dave Matthews, and Ken Pringle were also in attendance. Ken used his laser pointer to educate the guests on the lay out of the July night sky, pointing out major stars and constellations, and also did an efficient job of keeping the guests moving between the various observing stations.

We started off looking at the available planets. Venus with its waxing crescent phase was a surprise to the guests. Saturn was low on the western horizon with the ring system barely discernable. Jupiter could be seen clearly with its zones, bands and four Galilean moons. Later in the evening only three of the Galilean moons could be seen. We looked at the double stars Albireo, Mizar, and the green stars Mu Scorpio 1 & 2. We had good views of globular clusters M4, M5, M13, and M22, and emission nebulas M8 Lagoon, M16 Eagle, M17 Swan, M20 Trifid, and NGC 6992 Veil. Galaxies looked at were M51 Whirlpool, M81 and M82 in the same field of view, NGC 4565 side-on galaxy, and NGC 6688. Good views were obtained of planetary nebulas M57 Ring, M27 Dumbbell, and M97 Owl. Open cluster M11 Wild Duck and Bernard 86 Ink Spot dark nebula were seen as well as other objects.

STAR PARTY FOR CUB SCOUT PACK 848 7/12/2/07 by Alex Shlanta

A star party was held for Cub Scout Pack 848 and their families at the CCCC Astronomical Observatory. There were 10 guests in attendance. The weather cooperated, as there were no clouds. It was in the 80's but there was a bit of breeze that actually made things tolerable for this time of year. The atmospheric turbulence interfered with the seeing a bit, and there was still some residual smoke from the wild fires north of us, but we still had a good view of select celestial objects. The star party began at 8:30 p.m. with Scott Fuller taking the guests through a walk of the relative distances of the planets, set up with stakes north of the observatory. For this scale model of the solar system, Scott stopped at each stake to impart some information about that planet. When people experience this, they are surprised to see how relatively close together are the terrestrial planets Mercury Venus Earth and Mars, compared to the much greater distances between the Giant planets Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, and Neptune. Then at even further distances are the dwarf planets Pluto and Eris.

There were three telescope stations set up for within the Observatory compound for viewing.. Manning telescopes were CLAS members Ken Pringle using the College's 12-inch Orion Dobsonian Reflector Intelliscope, Bill Weiss using his 14-inch C1400 Celestron Schmidt Cassegrain, and myself using a 6-inch Celestron C7 Refractor. With these instruments, the Cubs were exposed to views with the three basic types of telescopes.

We started off our telescopic seeing by looking at the available planets. Venus with its waxing crescent phase was a surprise to the guests. Saturn was low on the western horizon with the ring system barely discernable. Jupiter could be seen clearly with its zones, bands, and four Galilean moons. We looked at the dual color blue and gold binary stars in Albireo, also referred to as the Cub Scout star because of its colors. Globular clusters were in full force and we had good views of M4, M13, and M22, and of M27 the Dumbbell planetary nebula, as well as the M8 Lagoon emission nebula, especially when an OIII nebular filter was used to highlight the structure. The M51 Whirlpool galaxy was seen in the slow process of cannibalizing its smaller companion galaxy NGC 5195

TILLIE CREEK PRESENTATIONS by Carroll Evans

This year's Tillie Creek Forest Service presentations are scheduled for Saturday evenings June 9, July 21 and August 18. If you can help by bringing a telescope, please do. Contact Carroll Evans at 375-5681.

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

Basic CLAS dues are \$20.00 per year, which includes the *Skywatchers Newsletter*. As a benefit of membership you may also receive *Astronomy Magazine* and/or *Sky and Telescope Magazine*. The fee schedule is as follows:

Basic membership	\$20.00 per year
Membership with Astronomy magazine	\$54.00 per year
Membership with Sky and Telescope magazine	\$53.00 per year
Membership with both S & T and Astronomy	\$87.00 per year

Send your check to: Roger Brower, Treasurer, China Lake Astronomical Society, P.O. Box 1783, Ridgecrest, CA 93556.

PRESIDENT – Earl Wilson – 760-876-5455 (email zearl.email@gmail.com)
VICE-PRESIDENT – Bruce Churchill - 760-375-7247 (email bchurchill@atsecure.net)
SECRETARY – Ted Hodgkinson - 661- 824-2738 (email ghodkinson@sbcglobal.net)
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NEWSLETTER EDITOR – Carroll Evans Jr. - 760-375-5681 (email clevans@ridgenet.net)

WESTERN AMATEUR ASTRONOMERS WEB SITE <http://www.waa.av.org/>

Meetings of the China Lake Astronomical Society are held at the **Maturango Museum** at 7:30 p.m. on the first Monday evening of each month, except when the first Monday is a holiday.

**SKYWATCHERS, Newsletter of the
CHINA LAKE ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY
POST OFFICE BOX 1783
RIDGECREST, CA 93556-1783**

FIRST CLASS

NEXT MEETING: 7:30 p.m., MONDAY AUGUST 6, 2007: “CYGNUS” AT THE MATURANGO MUSEUM, 100 EAST LAS FLORES AVE., RIDGECREST, CA
CLAS WEB PAGE <http://www.chinalakeastrosoc.org>
INDEX OF CLAS NEWSLETTERS <http://www.ridgenet.net/~clevans/clas/>