

# Skywatchers

Newsletter of the China Lake Astronomical Society

Volume 44 No. 9

September 1, 2007

**NEXT MEETING 7:30 p.m., Monday, September 10, 2007**

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

## **PROGRAM FOR THE SEPTEMBER 10 MEETING – The appearance of the sky**

The motions we observe of the sun, moon, planets, and stars in the sky are confusing to most people. It was very difficult for earlier peoples to ascertain how our solar system, galaxy and universe must be structured for things to appear as they do in the sky. Even today there are still some phenomena which appear differently from the way we tend to think they should appear. At our September meeting, we will discuss where objects appear in the sky as distinct from their actual location in space. If you have some interesting insights, feel free to present them.

## **DATES TO KEEP IN MIND**

**Monday, September 10, 2007: Regular CLAS Meeting at the Maturango Museum, 7:30 p.m.**

Friday, September 7, 2007: Regular monthly Star Party, see details below

Wednesday, September 19, 2007: Deadline for next Skywatchers Newsletter

Monday, October 1, 2007: Regular CLAS Meeting at the Maturango Museum in Ridgecrest, 7:30 p.m.

## **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 come together to view the skies. If you have a telescope, bring it; if not, come and look through someone else's. They are held at a site in the open desert south of Ridgecrest. To reach the 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. Signs and cones 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, September 7: Signs out at 7:30 p.m., Viewing starts 8:00 p.m.**

Friday, October 12: Signs out at 7:00 p.m., Viewing starts at 7:30 p.m.

Friday, November 9: Signs out at 5:30 p.m., Viewing starts at 6:00 p.m.

## **THE SKY IN SEPTEMBER by Roger Brower**

1. Venus is in the morning sky this month and rises further ahead of the sun as the month goes on. Look for it in the east about 1 1/2 hours before sunrise at the beginning of the month and 3 1/2 hours before sunrise at the end of the month.
2. Saturn emerges from the sunlight into the morning sky this month. Look for it rising in the east after Venus.
3. Mercury moves to the evening sky but will only be visible very low in the west just after sunset.
4. Jupiter is still in the evening sky. After sunset, look for it in the southwest about 5 degrees above Antares, the heart of Scorpio.
5. For early risers, the Aurigid meteor shower is predicted to peak about 5 AM PDT on Sept. 1st.

## MATURANGO MUSEUM OBSERVATORY

The China Lake Astronomical Society will open the Maturango Museum's observatory to the public on Thursday evening September 6. Viewing will start about one hour after sunset, and continue until about 10:00 p.m. The public is invited, free of charge. The observatory's main telescope will be pointed at objects of interest, and members of the club will bring other telescopes, so that guests may observe a variety of objects.

## SECOND ANNUAL CERRO COSO COLLEGE ASTRONOMICAL BARBECUE & STAR PARTY

by Alex Shlanta

Please mark your calendars for the evening of Friday, 19 October 2007. This is the date for the 2<sup>nd</sup> annual Astronomical Barbecue & Star Party at Cerro Coso College. As well as fostering public outreach in astronomy, this event supports the development and maintenance of the College Observatory and its equipment.

The barbecue dinner is held from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. on the College Library's front lawn. Hamburgers and hot dogs will be cooked and served by members of the Ridgecrest City Council. "Yesterdaze," a popular local folk song group will provide entertainment during the dinner. Inside the Library, starting at 6:00 p.m. and repeated at half-hour intervals, a slide presentation offering a brief overview of astronomy will be given by CLAS charter member Carroll Evans. There will also be a drawing for several door prizes to be given away during the dinner.

The star party itself will begin at 7:30 pm. For those desiring transportation, a bus will be running continuously from the Library parking lot to the Observatory and back. Recorded music from Star Wars will be provided at the Observatory. Major stars and constellations will be pointed out prior to entry into the Observatory compound. There will be about 10 different telescope stations inside the compound for public viewing, with CLAS members giving explanations of what is being viewed.

Presale tickets are adults: \$10.00, children \$8.00, and family four-pack \$35.00. Tickets will be available at Red Rock Books, Ridgecrest Chamber of Commerce, and the Cerro Coso College Business Office.

## STAR WATCH by Bob Stewart

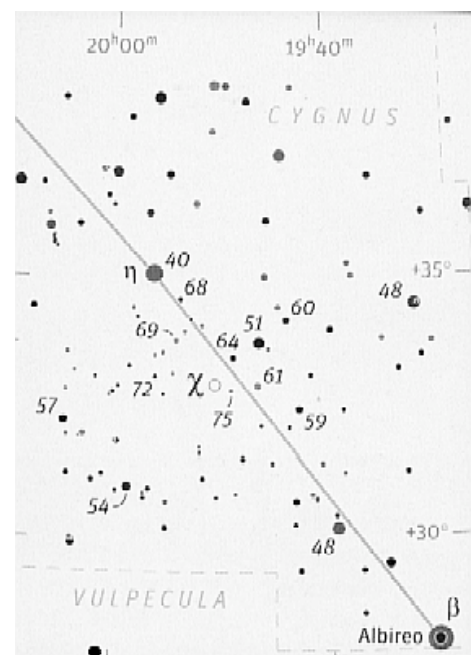
There is a large number of bright near naked and naked-eye variable stars this month. Listed below are a few of the brightest that you will want to check out in September.

### Chi Cyg

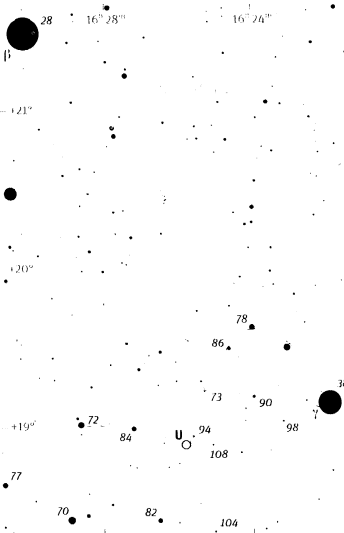
This Mira type red giant is located just north of the well know variable Albireo. It should have reached its maximum brightness of mag. 5.2 on the 22nd, up from a minimum of -13.4. Last year, however, the star quickly blew past its normal maximum to reach magnitude 3.4, brighter than nearby Eta Cygnus. There is an excellent article in the July 2005 Sky and Telescope on the star and a finder chart in the September 2007 issue

### RR Sco

This variable sits in a spectacular star field between Scorpius and Sagittarius, right next to M62. It reaches maximum brightness of 5.9 on the 7th, and then fades to 11.8. It is located NE of Epsilon Sco. and SE of Antares. For a comparison chart go to: [ftp://www.aavso.org/charts/standard/SCO/RR\\_SCO](ftp://www.aavso.org/charts/standard/SCO/RR_SCO)



## V Cvn



Canes Venatici is in the west now, just south of the handle of the Big Dipper. This star reaches maximum brightness of 6.8 on the 19th. V CVN sits just below M5, the Whirlpool Galaxy. For a finder chart go to:  
<http://www.aavso.org/charts/Constellation/CVN.GIF>

## U Her

High in the summer sky, U Her will reach maximum brightness of 7.5 on the 1st. It's located at the foot of Hercules just below Beta and near Gamma Hercules. The variable is at the end of a pretty arc of 7 and 8th magnitude stars that extend to the west of Gamma Hercules. For a finder chart go to:  
<http://www.aavso.org/charts/Constellation/HER.GIF>

Next Month: More variables plus some colorful doubles. And don't forget to send in your observations and pictures to your web site ([www.chinalakeastrosoc.org](http://www.chinalakeastrosoc.org)).

## CHINA LAKE ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY STAR PARTY AUGUST 10, 2007 by Alex Shlanta

At the Maturango Museum star party on Thursday August 9, we had apprehensions about the seeing for the following night. At the Museum, there was a considerable amount of smoke and clouds in the air. However, for the Friday CLAS star party the air was fairly clear, with no clouds, but still some residual smoke in the air, which didn't appreciably affect seeing. The temperature was about 85 deg F and there were light winds.

There were about 30 enthusiastic guests at the event. Manning telescopes were Milt Entres with his 6" Cave equatorial reflector, Jay Chun with his 10" Meade LX200 Schmidt Cassegrain, Peter Eiserloh with his 8" Meade LX55 Schmidt reflector, Chuck Morgan with an 8" Orion XT8 Dobsonian Intelliscopes, and myself with a 10" Orion XT10 Dobsonian Reflecting Intelliscopes. Peter Eiserloh brought his laptop with the [www.stellarium.org](http://www.stellarium.org) download. Stellarium is a free open source planetarium for a computer which shows a realistic sky in 3 D, displaying what you see with the naked eye, binoculars or a telescope. In addition, Ken Pringle wandered about, instructing guests on the layout and lore of the night sky.

Jupiter was viewed along with its four Galilean moons Io, Europa, Ganymede, and Callisto. Uranus and Neptune could be seen as small bluish disks. Stars viewed were Albireo, the blue and yellow double star in Cygnus, and Mizar A and B and Alcor in Ursa Major. Looking at emission nebulas through an OIII filter was impressive. We looked at M8 Lagoon nebula and the M20 Trifid nebula in Sagittarius and the NGC 6992-95 Veil nebula in Cygnus. Planetary nebulas viewed were M57 Ring nebula in Lyra and M27 dumbbell nebula in Vulpecula. Also seen were globular clusters M13 in Hercules, M22 in Sagittarius, and M4 and M80 in Scorpius, as well as open clusters M6 and M7 in Scorpius.

Galaxies viewed were M81 and M82 in Ursa Major, M51 Whirlpool in Canes Venatici, and M31 Andromeda.

## TELESCOPE FOR SALE

Meade Schmidt Cassegrain f/10 F=1000 (102 mm diameter) telescope with accessories, \$600. Contact George Hupp, 760-376-6250.

## RESEARCH QUALITY OBSERVATORY AVAILABLE TO CLUBS

The following is presented for your interest, without endorsement. The Sierra Stars Observatory is an automated robotic observatory system offering imaging time to organizations and individuals using a research quality telescope and CCD camera. Please visit <http://www.sierrastars.com/gp/About.aspx>.

## 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](mailto:zearl.email@gmail.com))  
VICE-PRESIDENT – Bruce Churchill - 760-375-7247 (email [bchurchill@atsecure.net](mailto:bchurchill@atsecure.net))  
SECRETARY – Ted Hodgkinson - 661- 824-2738 (email [ghodkinson@sbcglobal.net](mailto:ghodkinson@sbcglobal.net))  
TREASURER – Roger Brower - 760-375-1181 (email [brower@iwvisp.com](mailto:brower@iwvisp.com))  
NEWSLETTER EDITOR – Carroll Evans Jr. - 760-375-5681 (email [clevans@ridgenet.net](mailto: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 SEPTEMBER 10, 2007: “APPEARANCE OF THE SKY”  
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/>**