

Skywatchers

Newsletter of the China Lake Astronomical Society

Volume 44 No. 10

October 1, 2007

NEXT MEETING 7:30 p.m., Monday, October 1, 2007

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

PROGRAM FOR THE OCTOBER 1 MEETING – ROBERT BUCHEIM

Our speaker will be Robert Bucheim of Coto de Casa in Orange County, California.

Mr. Bucheim has constructed and operates his own backyard observatory, called Altimira Observatory. It contains an 11" Celestron SCT telescope with which he does his advanced scientific observations in cooperation with the Minor Planet Center. Mr. Bucheim has several scientific papers to his credit and has collaborated with professional astronomers worldwide. He is also a member of the Society for Astronomical Sciences and the Orange County Astronomers. His new book "The Sky is your Laboratory" has just recently been released and his talk will address several of the many ways that amateurs can make contributions to science using small telescopes.

DATES TO KEEP IN MIND

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

Thursday, October 11, Special Star Party at the Maturango Museum Observatory

Friday, October 12, 2007: Regular monthly Star Party, see details below

Wednesday, October 24, 2007: Deadline for next Skywatchers Newsletter

Monday, November 5, 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, 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.

Public star parties resume in March 2008.

THE SKY IN OCTOBER by Roger Brower (Ghost written by Carroll Evans)

1. The Moon is new on the 10th and full on the 25th.

2. Venus is in the morning sky, shining brilliantly before dawn.
3. Mars is back in the evening sky, rising in the late evening.
4. Jupiter is still visible in the evening sky for a while after sunset, drawing closer and closer to the sun.
5. Saturn rises about 2:00 a.m., and is visible the rest of the night.
6. Venus, Saturn, and the bright star Regulas form an early morning triangle for several days around October 13.

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 2nd 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.

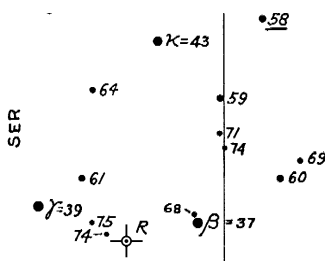
STAR WATCH FOR OCTOBER 2007 by Bob Stewart

There are no bright naked-eye variable stars this month that we can see from Ridgecrest. Listed below are the two brightest that you will want to check out in October.

R Scl

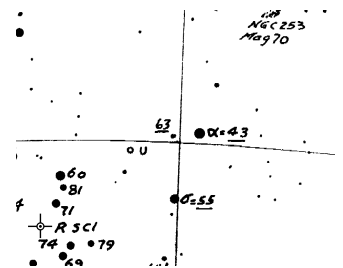
This Mira type red giant is located in the southern constellation of Sculptor just east of Alpha Sculptor and south of the well know Sculptor galaxy (NGC 253). It should reach its maximum brightness of mag. 6.0 on the 3rd, up from a minimum of 9.1 For a comparison chart go to:

ftp://www.aavso.org/charts/standard/SCL/R_SCL/



R Ser

This variable sits in the head of the serpent, right next to the constellation Ophiuchus. It should reach its maximum brightness of mag. 6.9 on the 29th, up from a minimum of 13.4. It is located just between Beta and Gamma Ser. For a comparison chart go



to: ftp://www.aavso.org/charts/standard/SER/R_SER

Beyond Albireo

Go to a summer star party and you can bet that at least one person is looking at Albireo. This double star is popular for three reasons. It's easy to split, the primary and secondary have a wide magnitude range and there is a spectacular yellow and green color difference. But Albireo isn't the only interesting summertime double. Here are two other nearby doubles that are as spectacular and provide a greater challenge.

Gamma Andromeda (Almach)

Gamma Andromeda has a second magnitude primary and a fourth magnitude secondary and is easily visible just east of the Andromeda galaxy. The two stars have a spectacular orange and blue color difference. However, this star is more difficult to split, with a separation of only 19" as compared to Albireo's 34".

Eta Cassiopeia

Eta Cassiopeia has a yellow second magnitude primary and a reddish fourth magnitude secondary and is easily visible between Alpha and Gamma Cassiopeia. This star is even more of a challenge to split with a separation of only 12" as well as a dramatic magnitude difference 3.5 for the primary as against 7.2 for the secondary.

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

MATURANGO MUSEUM OBSERVATORY

The China Lake Astronomical Society will open the Maturango Museum's observatory to the public on Thursday evening October 11. 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.

CHINA LAKE ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY STAR PARTY SEPTEMBER 7, 2007 by Alex Shlanta

It was a good night for viewing celestial phenomena at the dark site off of Brown Road on September 7, 2007. Viewing started at about 8:15 pm and there were about 25 attendees at the Star Party. Seeing was good with no clouds or pollution problems. There was a slight wind but it didn't affect observations. Some atmospheric turbulence made it difficult to do much resolving of double stars. There were four telescopes out for the Star Party. Jerry Ott was there with his 14" Starmaster truss Dobsonian GOTO reflector, Chuck Morgan had a Meade ETX 125 Matsutov Cassegrain and an 8" Orion XT8 Dobsonian reflector Intelliscope, Bill Weiss operated his Williams Optics Fluoro Star 110 mm apochromatic refractor, and I had my 10" Orion Dobsonian reflector Intelliscope.

We looked at Jupiter with four of its Galilean moons, seen with two on each side of the planet. Uranus appeared as expected, a very small blue-green disk. Primary emphasis at the Star Party was looking at nebula. Diffuse nebula looked at were M8 (Lagoon), M16 (Eagle), M17 (Swan or Omega), M20 (Trifid), NGC6992-6995 (Veil), NGC7009 (Saturn), and NGC7293 (Helix). Jerry had a view of one of his favorites on his telescope, Barnard 86 (a dark nebula, the inkspot). Planetary nebula looked at were M27 (Dumbbell) and M57 (Ring). Then there were open clusters M6, M7, M23, and NGC869 & 884 (Double Cluster). Globular clusters M5 and M13 looked good. Galaxies seen were M81 & 82 (in the same view), M51 (Whirlpool), M31 (Andromeda), and M110 (Andromeda companion).

By 9:30 pm the guests had departed. It was quite a while afterward that all the telescopes were packed up.

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)
TREASURER – Roger Brower - 760-375-1181 (email brower@iwvisp.com)
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 OCTOBER 1, 2007: “GUEST SPEAKER, ROBERT BUCHEIM” 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/>