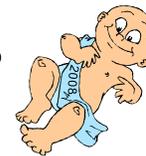




Penobscot Valley Star Gazers

An Astronomical Society of Central Maine



<http://www.gazers.org>

January 2008

Return to Saturn

The next meeting of the PVSG will be on Monday, January 14, 2008 at 6:30 p.m. in room 310 at John Baptist Memorial High School. As January returns so does NASA intern Jesse, who will report on his continued work of detecting Saturn's non-seasonal low-latitude stratospheric temperature oscillations:

Two summer internships at the California Institute of Technology Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL) were spent reducing and analyzing data on the temperature fluctuations within Saturn's stratosphere. Based on the discovery of Jupiter's non-seasonal temperature fluctuations, the initial assumption is made that Saturn also has these non-seasonal fluctuations. The process for reducing the data will be discussed, as well as the analysis and findings, which suggest that the predicted temperature fluctuations may indeed exist.

Since Dave, the scheduled speaker, was unable to attend, thanks for last month's program go to Wade for presenting the outreach toolkit "Exploring the Solar System" and giving us an online tour of Stellafane's award winning telescopes.

Stellafane Scopes

December 10, 2007



December 2007

but had to leave. The rest of us also picked up our new PVSG attire.

Wade gave a short presentation of the new Night Sky Toolkit. The newest package is called "Exploring the Solar System." In the package is a large picture of

The PVSG Party and Entertainment Committee decided to hold a Valentine's party rather than a Christmas party. It is tentatively scheduled for February 9th at Scott and Julie's.



The last meeting of 2007 was opened by Wade at 6:37 PM. We had 8 members show up for the whole meeting. Dave was unable to attend the meeting, Carolyn was sick but was able to get our PVSG clothing order to the meeting so it could be picked up, and Doug showed up to pick up his PVSG clothing

the sun with a solar system map on the back side of the poster. Wade also showed us the other items that made up the Solar System package.

Wade then gave us a presentation on his trip to Stellafane this past August. Wade's first trip to

Stellafane several years ago was exciting and mind-opening for him to see the many different ways to make telescopes. Wade repeated his recommendation that all members of the club should try to make at least one trip in their lifetime to Stellafane. Wade took us on a tour of Stellafane by using the Internet. The new Web address for Stellafane is: www.stellafane.org

We then went on a tour of the different telescope award winners from the years that Wade has attended the annual meeting. Wade provided comments on the telescopes he remembered seeing at the meetings. The swap tables were one of Wade's favorites for the many astronomy items which could be found at reasonable prices. Wade has made video tapes of this and previous visits and has them available for any members who would like to view them.

Old Business: The secretary's report was accepted. Bill did not have the total we have in the treasury and emailed the total to me, but right now I can't find it. If

On the Schedule

(Items Subject to Change)

PROGRAMS

February: Bill, Okie-Tex Star Party

STAR PARTIES

?February 9: Scott's, potluck
?March 15: Telescope Clinic, UMO

First date is primary, second is rain date; ? Tentative; (rs) rain or shine; (co) clear only

I remember correctly there was roughly in the treasury the same amount we had last month. This did not stop us from approving his report.

Bill also reported that he still had calendars for sale at \$6.50 each, and was able to sell two more by the end of the meeting. If you still want one check with Bill.

The question of putting old newsletters online was discussed again. It was decided to try and put newsletters on the Web site that are several months old, so that the current one and one month back would not show but older ones would. The discussion was somewhat hampered by the absence of Alan. Ralph said he would email Alan some PDF versions of the old newsletters.

There was then a discussion of the club's Christmas Party. Scott said he would be willing to hold the party, but with the short time left before Christmas talked turned to holding it after Christmas. As discussion ended the general feeling was that we might hold a Valentine's Party.

Mailbag & New Business: Wade had an email from the Challenger Learning Center inviting us to come and speak on December 13th and attend a book signing at 6:30 PM. Wade was going to see what he could do on short notice. Bill reported that a teleconference he listened to last Monday was very interesting.

Alan, Bill and others answered telephones for the MPBN fundraising since our last meeting.

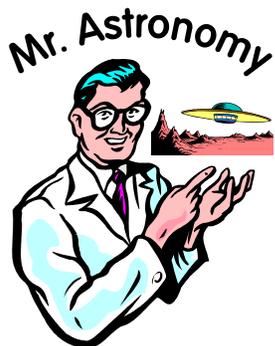
Wade reported that he had a note from the Night Sky Network that the club had reported hosting four events using Night Sky Network materials in the past year; if the club made one more presentation the club would receive 3 pins and a certificate. With Wade's presentation tonight and another made by Scott at John Bapst we have two more events to report and we will reach the goal.

Ralph M. and Scott said that they would speak to Alan about hosting a Telescope Clinic in March. If something can be put together it should happen. Bill said that we could also open the observatory the same day. The tentative date is March 15th.

Observing reports: Dick reported that he had done some indoor observing to check out his eyepieces. Dick was trying to determine what the field of view was with his different eyepieces and how clear the view was edge-to-edge. Dick determined that using a Barlow seemed to get rid of astigmatism and gave much better edge-to-edge viewing.

Wade reported that the Hampden freshman class outing to view the sky did not happen, but in the process of laying the groundwork for the event he found a nice dark sky spot. The people who own the land gave

Flying on Mars



Classic 10/02

Out of all the spacecraft which have landed on Mars, none have explored more than a few feet from their landing points. To expand the scope of future Mars explorations, mobility is crucial. Apollo astronauts had their rover and were able to expand their exploration considerably but Mars does have an atmosphere which should

allow some type of flying exploration. The Mars atmosphere is thin so where would one go to test such a craft? The answer is only 19 miles away. Straight overhead. At this level Earth's atmosphere is the same pressure as the atmosphere on Mars.

On September 19 a high-altitude balloon released a half size prototype of a Mars explorer called Eagle. It was encased in an aeroshell with the wings and tail folded away as if it was on its way to Mars. At the proper altitude Eagle unfolded and completed a 90 minute preplanned flight demonstrating its abilities in a Mars-like atmosphere. Later that day the airplane landed safely at the airport from which it had been launched. On Mars the aircraft will be propelled with a hydrazine-powered rocket. Such a craft could be flying in the Martian skies as early as 2008.

This aircraft was developed by Aurora Flight Services Corporation in Manassas, Virginia who worked with a team led by NASA Langley Research Center in Hampton, Virginia.

Mr. Astronomy

Wade permission for us to use it another time. Wade had asked the couple if he could view from this new spot and offered them views through his telescope. A little good deed yields dividends.

Several members reported viewing Comet Holmes and felt that the best views were with binoculars. The meeting adjourned at 8:27.

Ralph

Future Speakers and meetings: February 11th - Bill will speak on his trip to the Star Party in Oklahoma.

To be determined - Dave will speak on 6 numbers.

E-mail Excerpts

Club news sent by e-mail since the last meeting.
Simply for the record and for those for whom we have no e-mail addresses.

Space Talk

For those of you interested in the future of space exploration (read "aeronautic missions") there was a conference in September at Cal Tech that is now archived online with separate webcast videos for each presenter. The space industry and science investigation sides are both represented during the hours and hours of talks. 50 Years of Space Exploration. Alan

AustraliaSpace

Hi PVSGers, The following post came my way and I am asking all to respond as to what you would like to do. Do we need to discuss this at a meeting?
Dave

Dear Astronomical Society / Club, My name is Raymond Palmer and I would like to invite your Club to become part of our astronomy website - www.MyAstroSpace.com. Our site welcomes astronomers of all skill levels from all over the world. We have placed many diverse features throughout the website which we hope keeps you entertained. Membership is 100% free. You can join up by using the following link -<http://www.myastro.space.com/forums/register.php> Our forums are growing all the time. Many more categories will be created as the demand grows for them eg: Solar Imaging, Meade, Filters, Celestial Events etc. If any of your members

have an idea for a new category that they would like to see and / or be involved with, we would love to hear from them sometime. We simply invite your group to consider MyAstroSpace.com next time they are surfing the net.

Raymond Palmer, Founder of MyAstroSpace.com,
www.MyAstroSpace.com, Support@MyAstroSpace.com,
Astronomical Society Western Australia, Astronomical Group Western Australia, Perth Observatory Volunteer

I don't know if everyone has had a chance to look at the site forwarded by Dave, but it seems as though you could join it as individuals, instead of as a club. There is a ton of stuff on the site, of interest to all levels of astronomy. Check it out and bring your ideas to the next meeting - or just reply to the e-mail! Wade

Ann

Hello all, Just talked to Ann and Dave (Maine Medical Center- Portland) and both are doing well!! Ann is a little tired and uncomfortable but otherwise OK. They are coming home either tomorrow or Sunday. Doug

Hello all, Flowers were sent to Ann (at home) from the group today - because of the holiday, they may not arrive until Dec 26. On the card it said: "We are thinking of you - best wishes for a speedy recovery" your friends at PVSG. Doug



