



www.vbas.org

VIA STELLARIS

The Monthly Newsletter of the Von Braun Astronomical Society

VBAS Highlights

Public Programs for June

Our next society meeting will be held on Friday, June 18th at 7 PM. VBAS Meetings are held on the 3rd Friday of each month & they are open to the public!

Regular planetarium programs are held on Saturdays at 7:30 PM. This month, we explore the Constellations of the summer: Libra, Coma Bernezes, Draco, and Hercules. We'll have a special show: "Views of Earth from Moon, Mars, etc.". Admission to planetarium shows is free for VBAS Members, \$5.00 for Adults, \$3.00 for Students, and free for children under 6. Observation of the night sky through various telescopes will follow planetarium program, weather permitting.

Calendar of Events

On page 2, Messier Marathon and other events for June.

The Night Sky for June

On page 3, Saturn, Mars, Venus easily seen after dark!

Planetarium Public and Private Events

On page 4, Gena Crook highlights our 09&10 accomplishments

Stellar Events for June

On page 5, Doug Horacek's report on astronomical events

Spring Star Party

On page 5, Next star party is June 12th at Eric's!

Annual Meeting Report

On page 6, Election Results, Budget, and Board Report

Telescopes for Sale

On page 8, The Bridge's family have some scopes for sale.

Richard Norman
Via Stellaris Editor
astrodude@mchsi.com



In This Issue:

| | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| VBAS Highlights..... | 1 |
| Calendar of Events..... | 2 |
| The Night Sky..... | 3 |
| Planetarium Report | 4 |
| Stellar Events..... | 5 |
| Spring Star Party | 5 |
| Annual Meeting Report | 6 |
| Telescopes for Sale..... | 6 |

Calendar of Events

Saturday, June 5th, 12th, & 26th 2010, 7:30 PM
**Planetarium Show: “Constellations
 Libra, Coma Berneces, Draco, &
 Hercules”**

Location: VBAS

Join us for a family-friendly program as we explore these early summer constellations. Weather permitting, we will be viewing the night sky afterwards through powerful telescopes, too.

Friday, June 12th, 2010,

Adult Observing Night

Location: Tennessee

Presented by Eric Johnson.

This month Eric has invited VBAS to his dark site in Tennessee for a star party on the evening of the new moon. For more information and to make arrangements call Eric at 256-682-2401. For help with directions you can check the members section of the web site or call Eric at 931-628-6467. Bring your scopes for an excellent night of observing.

Friday, June 18th, 2010, 7 PM

Regular Monthly Meeting

Location: VBAS

Meeting & pizza social. Visitors are welcome!

Saturday, Jun 19th, 2010, 7:30PM **Planetarium Show: “Views of Earth from Moon, Mars, etc.”**

Location: VBAS

Join us for a family-friendly program to explore our Earth from other places in the universe. Weather permitting, we will be viewing the night sky afterwards through powerful telescopes, too.

Sunday, June 20th, 2010, 5:00 PM

Venus Visits the Bee Hive Cluster

Location: Doug’s Condo

Presented by Doug Horacek

The planet Venus will be less than one degree from M44 the Beehive Cluster in Cancer shortly after sunset. Bring your small telescopes and binoculars over to Doug’s condo to catch this event. Two pepperoni pizzas will be provided, feel free to bring what you wish. The event will start at 5 so folks can eat and get set up.

Directions to my Condo are: From Huntsville take 565 to Madison Boulevard, Old Highway 20, follow to Hughes Road turn right or North and follow to Old Madison Pike at the corner where Applebees and the Dollar store are, turn right on Old Madison Pike turn left into Madison Town Center, the first left after the Dollar store. The first left in Madison Town Center is Water’s Edge Lane, turn left follow the circle around to the South, you should see a mail box at the end, then take a right once you reach the mail box, my Condo is 289 Water’s Edge Lane, the top front Condo at the southwest corner of the complex next to the Dollar Store. Call Doug Horacek at 772-6788 for more information.

Saturday, July 3rd, 10th, 17th, 24th, & 31st 7:30 PM

Planetarium Show:

Location: VBAS

Weekly public planetarium shows continue.

Friday, July 9th 7 PM

Location: VBAS Adult Observing Night under a waning crescent moon.

Friday, July 16th 7 PM

Location: VBAS Regular Monthly Meeting

...And as always, for the most up-to-date information about VBAS events, be sure to check the web site at vbas.org.

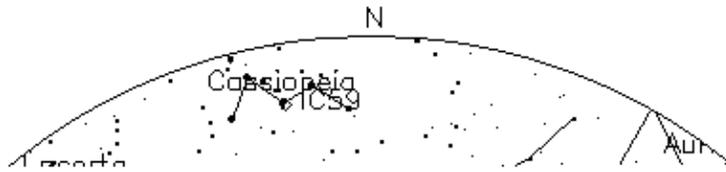
The Night Sky for June, 2010

Here is the view at 9 PM in June 6, 2010, at 34° N Latitude, 86° W Longitude.

Map courtesy of John Walker and YourSky (<http://www.fourmilab.to/yoursky/>).

June Meteor Showers, By Doug Horacek, VBAS Resident Astronomer

The most prevalent meteor shower for June is the Bootid Meteor Shower which will reach a peak of 10 per hour on the morning of 27 or 28 June. The parent comet is 7P Pons-Winnecke. On the Morning of the 23rd the Delta Piscid Meteor Shower is a minor shower with very few meteors. And on the Morning of the 29 is the minor shower f Ophuichids.



Planetarium Report

2009 and 2010 public and private shows
by Gena Crook

The year 2009 was designated as the International Year of Astronomy by the International Astronomical Union. Here at the Von Braun Astronomical Society we participated in the world wide celebration in several ways. One of our biggest projects for the year was to offer to the people of Huntsville and the surrounding area, a program in the planetarium followed by telescope observing EVERY SATURDAY NIGHT at the VBAS facilities. The topics for the first, second and fourth weekends planetarium shows were the same while the third weekend show featured a special topic.

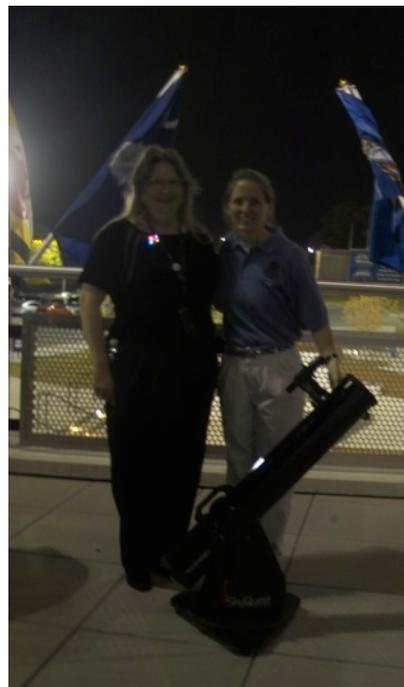
We thought you might be interested in a summary of our 2009 programs. Our dedicated planetarium crew conducted a total of 51 Saturday night shows and an additional 32 shows for private groups such as schools, scouts, and other organizations during the year 2009. Representatives from our phenomenal telescope operator crew were also present at every night program – even when the sky was cloudy. The Von Braun Astronomical Society can boast of 3418 recorded visitors to these programs.

Since we had so much fun and since our operations carried off so smoothly, the planetarium and telescope crews agreed to continue our regular Saturday night programs into the year 2010. For this year there have been 18 programs on Saturday nights and 10 other programs for private groups. And we're

still going strong. VBAS has logged 954 visitors to date during the year 2010.

If you would like to join in this effort we would love to have your participation. Volunteering for the planetarium shows is a great way to learn more about Astronomy. Set-up and operation of telescopes is also a vital part of our outreach to the general public. On cloudy nights our visitors are always disappointed that they won't be able to experience gazing through an eyepiece at a beautiful planet or deep sky object. We simply tell them, "Please come back on a Saturday night when the sky is clear. We'll be here."

That's right, loyal volunteers at VBAS will be here – EVERY Saturday night !!! Come join us. Contact Gena Crook, gena@hiwaay.net and she will point you to the right coordinator.



Doshia Wilson and Melissa Snider
at Yuri's Night

Stellar Events June 2010

by Doug Horacek

1st: Morning. The largest Asteroid Ceres passes through part of Messier 8 the Lagoon Nebula in Sagittarius.

3rd: Mars passes within two degrees of Regulus in Leo Thursday evening.

4th: Last-Quarter Moon at 5:13 PM CDT

6th: Jupiter and Uranus seven degrees to lower right of waning crescent Moon.

6th: In evening Mars is 50 minutes, less than one degree from Regulus in Leo.

8th: Uranus is less than a degree, 26 minutes above and slightly to the left of Jupiter. This morning is their closest approach, and they are less than a degree apart for the first half of the month.

10th: Mercury will be visible an hour before dawn roughly 9 degrees below and to the left of a thin crescent Moon.

11th: Friday morning a waning thin crescent Moon will be six degrees to the left of Mercury. Friday evening Venus, Pollux, and Castor form a straight line almost 10 degrees long in the evening sky at dusk.

12th: New Moon 6:15 A.M. CDT

14th: Venus is four or five degrees above a thin waxing crescent Moon.

16th: Mars and Regulus (Leo) form a triangle with the waxing crescent Moon..

18th: Saturn is nine degrees above the waxing crescent Moon. Ceres in opposition.

19th: First-Quarter Moon 11:29 PM CDT.

20th: Venus is less than one degree from M44 Beehive Cluster. See it at Doug's condo.

21st: Longest Day on Summer Solstice.

26th: Full Moon at 6:30 AM CDT. Partial Lunar Eclipse not visible in Alabama.

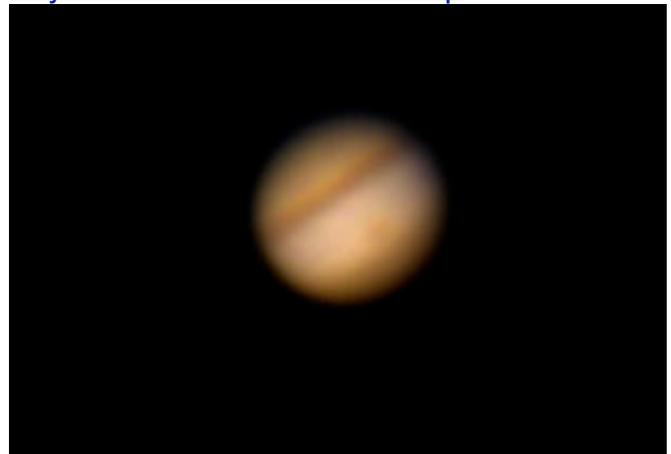
Spring Star Party

by Richard Norman

The third in our series of three spring star parties was Friday, May 14th, and coincided with our Youth and Adult Observing night. Although the weather kept many of the adult observers away, it did not stymie the enthusiasm of the youth observers. It was the best turnout for the youth observing night to date. They kept David, Doug, Jared and Richard hoping to keep up. Wherever the clouds parted the skies were not too bad. Views of good ol' Saturn never disappoint in the C-16.

If you missed the first three sessions, we'll kick summer off with a star party at Eric Johnson's dark sky site on June 12th, and we will have another observing session at VBAS on the 9th of July. Perhaps Jupiter's Southern Equatorial Belt (SEB) will have reappeared. Check out the story on NPR:

<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=127042112&sc=fb&cc=fp>



Using my Sigma SD10 SLR at prime focus on the C16 at 1/15th sec at ASA 100, I caught Jupiter's missing SEB with the great red spot transiting at 4:44 am CDT Sun May 23, 2010. Focus is soft because focusing is hard to do.

Annual Meeting Report

May is the yearly annual meeting where VBAS elects the officers and presents the budget. This year we also discussed the results of a special board meeting to spend the remaining grant money on needed repairs and improvements to better serve the community.

The slate of officers presented by the nominating committee was approved by acclamation. The following elected board members will take office effective July 1st, 2010:

VP & Pres Elect: Tom Bursleson Jr.

Secretary: Nazirah Jetha

Student Director: Andrew Courtney

Dir. of Planning and Research: Jeff Delmas

The budget as approved by the board was presented by Gena Crook. Members questions about the budget were answered. The budget is very similar to last year's budget. The budget should be posted in the member's section of the web site along with the full board and member's meeting minutes.

The board called a special meeting to deal with the need to spend the remaining grant money. A list of potential items was screened and prioritized by the board with the leading items being approved for funding out of the grant money. The leaking Angele roof was the number one issue needing immediate attention. An architect's plan to fix the roof with a warranty was approved. Also approved was an emergency exit for the planetarium. See the website for more details.

Telescopes for Sale

Al Bridges caught the astronomy bug while attending a VBAS show for scouts. Al acquired several telescopes over the years before his health prevented him from continuing the hobby. Al and his wife Reba recently donated a Celestron orange tube C8 to VBAS, and they have a few other items left that they would like to sell:

Item 1:

Celestron 31062

8" newtonian reflector telescope with CG-5GT computerized EQ mount

20mm eye piece,

Celestron 2x barlow

Asking: \$ 650



Telescopes for Sale (cont)

Item 2:

Sky-Watcher

150 mm (6") Maksutov-Cassegrain telescope

32mm Erfle eyepiece,

Celestron 2x barlow, No mount.

Asking: \$400



Item 3:

Celestron C80ED-R 80mm refractor telescope

with 13 mm eye piece and 1 1/4" diagonal,

No mount.

Asking: \$260



Item 4:

Meade Telestar mount for DS-2000 scopes
has Autostar controller. Asking: \$30

Item 5:

12.5 mm reticle and 9mm ortho eye pieces

Asking \$20 each.

If interested in purchasing any of the items,
contact Reba Bridges at 880-7443 or
Rebamae81@gmail.com



Contributions to Via Stellaris

We welcome contributions to our newsletter that may be of interest to the astronomical community. Contributions are best sent by email to Richard Norman at astrodude@mchsi.com.

Membership and Renewal

The VBAS currently has four categories of membership. All four include free admission to the planetarium shows; subscription to this newsletter; membership in the Astronomical League; and use of VBAS library and equipment. The four categories of membership, and the dues for each, are: REGULAR at \$24.00 per year, FAMILY at \$36.00 per year, STUDENT (must be full-time student) at \$12.00 per year, and LIFE at \$500.00. Newsletter Only is also available for \$12.00 per year. Membership renewal occurs for all members annually on March 1st.

All VBAS memberships came up for renewal on March 1, 2010. If you have questions regarding membership, please contact a VBAS officer.

Please send your renewal to the Membership Secretary at VBAS, P.O. Box 1142, Huntsville, AL 35807. Make checks payable to the Von Braun Astronomical Society.

Reprints

Permission is hereby granted to any non-profit astronomical association to reprint, in whole or in part, any article in this or past *Via Stellaris*. We ask that credit be given to the *Via Stellaris*, Von Braun Astronomical Society, date of issue, and author of article used.

Via Stellaris



A Publication of the
Von Braun Astronomical Society

A Member of the Astronomical League
P. O. Box 1142
Huntsville, AL 35807-1142

Address Service Requested

We are trying to limit the paper copies we generate, to save costs, clutter, and a lot of work for everyone.

Richard Norman, Via Stellaris editor