

# Penobscot Valley Star Gazers

An Astronomical Society of Central Maine

<http://www.gazers.org>

April 2009

## All Atwitter

The April 2009 meeting of the PVSG will be on Monday the 13th at 6:30 p.m. in room 310 at John Bapst Memorial High School. Last month we had sweets for the sweet; this month it is tweets for the sweet. New member Don will tell us about Twitter, the social networking and micro-blogging service that is all the rage.

Thanks for last month's program go to everyone who contributed to the delicious array of desserts we all enjoyed. Perhaps we can do it again sometime.

## Planning March 9, 2009



The meeting was called to order by Wade at 6:42 pm. Fifteen members and two guests, Donald and Robin, were present. Certificates and pins were presented to Bill, Doug, and Wade from the Night Sky Network for their successful outreach work. Congratulations to them all. Wade reported that since April of

2004 the club has logged 27 separate events with the Night Sky Network. The floor was then turned over to Alan to discuss the upcoming Club event, "Stella-baloo."

We went over the 10 events planned, who was assigned to them, and the schedule (See Carolyn's Stella-baloo planner). Alan presented a draft of the brochure planned for visitors. Posters were handed out by Doug to be placed in libraries, town offices, businesses and anywhere else the public might see it. It was decided that setup would begin at noon (though you can arrive earlier, just coordinate with Alan). Alan discussed reserving some parking space between the Observatory and the Student Union for us. When that is confirmed, an email will be sent out.

Important things and dates to remember: 1) Send to Alan the description of your station by the 23rd of March. 2) Handouts and worksheets need to be to Alan by the 25th. If your handouts fit well on an 8 1/2 X 11 sheet in B/W, possibly they can arrive by the 29th. But the 25th is much better. 3 Get to Alan your electrical needs, i.e. number of outlets needed (bring your own extension cords and power strips).

Carolyn and Shirley will be bringing cookies. David will be arranging hot and cold beverages. If there are any other members that would like to bring some

refreshments for both the daytime and nighttime visitors, please write Alan, Carolyn or David.

Starting on the 16th of March and going to the 26th, the Globe at Night organization is conducting another survey of the night's sky. For more information visit the <http://www.globe.gov/GaN/index.html> website. It is a very interesting and easy to complete project.

On March 20th (rain day the 21st) Doug is conducting an open house from 7 to 10 pm. We are invited to view Comet Lulin and check out Saturn with its gorgeous rings nearly edge on. There will be light refreshments. This is a very gracious invitation from Doug and his family to see his work.

On March 26th (a Thursday), at the Challenger Learning Center, the staff is hosting a "Celebrating Saturn" event and have asked the club for some assistance with viewing. They would like us to be there to set up around 6:30pm. If you would like to assist, please contact Wade.

On Thursday the 23rd of April, the Boy Scouts of the area are hosting boys from around the world. They would like us to assist them by providing some viewing opportunities. This function starts around 7:30pm. If you are interested, please contact Wade for coordination.

The minutes were not voted on this month due to the fact there weren't any. The treasurer's report was made.

There was discussion about our insurance policy.

## On the Schedule

(Items Subject to Change)

### PROGRAMS

June: Bill, Hubble Upgrade

### STAR PARTIES

?April 23: Boy Scouts, Camp Roosevelt, 7:30 pm

?September 18 - 21: Night Sky Festival, Acadia National Park

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

The current policy was ready to expire and we still haven't received a quote from the Astronomical League. There was discussion concerning the need for coverage during the "Stella-baloo" event. A vote was made to renew our current coverage and vote on the quote from the Astronomical League next year.

There was discussion about providing door prizes at "Stella-baloo." The Galileoscopes making the most obvious choice. The price would be \$10.00 per scope by combining them with the Planetarium's order. It was voted on that five scopes would be purchased and that certificates would be handed out to winners with the scopes being shipped out or delivered sometime in May. Total cost - \$50.00.

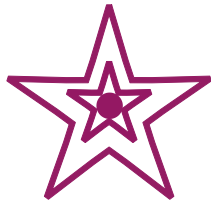
At 9pm the meeting was ended. After the meeting there was coffee, cake, cookies and good conversation as the club had a pot-luck-dessert.

David

---

---

## Stellar Stella-Baloo!



Perhaps 200 to 300 people visited at least some of the Stella-baloo! sites, and about 35 kids completed the Astro Cat Prowl and were entered in the prize drawing. The weather could have been better; clouds and a foggy mist precluded solar observing, but at least it didn't rain outright.

The Telescope Exhibit and Clinic saw a few folks with telescope questions, but the Shopping for Telescopes talk was lightly attended. Most of the day's visitors were kids who were eager to move on to the other stations and were probably not planning to buy any telescopes.

The Astro-Science Demo Show did draw a crowd and received good reviews from young and old alike.

At the observatory several groups of kids came and went. They crowded around the venerable Clark waiting their turns to be photographed at the eyepiece. The photographer snapped about 75 pictures, though some were doubles. Outside, visitors walked the solar system as far as Jupiter and sketched the view through a telescope. Later in the afternoon the mists grew heavier and forced the telescope to close down, but not many came after that anyway.

The real action was in the Union's multi-purpose room. Club members there were busy throughout the afternoon. At one time the crowd spilled out into the hallway. The kids enjoyed all the activities, especially comparing views between two different telescopes.

They exhausted the supply of 50 planisphere kits along with the refreshments.

After the hullabaloo was over, several club members dined in the Union's cafeteria. At 7:00 they returned to the multi-purpose room for the Who's Up There? talk. That began with the drawing of the lucky winners of the Galileo-scopes. The talk was meant as a lead-in to the planned star party, but since that wasn't happening only a few visitors came. When the talk was over a few people wrapped up the day at the planetarium watching the Plan-B night sky tour.

## Were You Busy on April 4, 2009?

If this was the case you might have missed "Around the World in 80 Telescopes" but you can always review the results. One of the more interesting offerings was from

**Mr. Astronomy**



NASA's Spitzer Space Telescope. An image of M33 has been released.

The image was taken by Spitzer's multiband imaging photometer and infrared array camera then released in two versions.

One version uses the combined infrared light of 3.6 and 4.5 microns as blue

light, 8 microns as green light, and 24 microns as red light. The other version uses 3.6 microns as blue light, 4.5 microns as green light, and 8.0 microns as red light. I like one version better than the other; however, it is a matter of preference and you will have to see which one you like better. To find these images go to: <http://www.spitzer.caltech.edu/>. They are available in several sizes and formats.

M33 is located in the constellation Triangulum therefore it is sometimes also called the Triangulum Galaxy. It is about 2.9 Million light years away and is one of the three large galaxies in our local group of galaxies. These infrared images show many more stars than a visual light image; therefore, M33 looks much larger than it is usually shown. Foreground stars in our galaxy, dust regions, star forming regions, and even many background galaxies are all found in this Spitzer image. In many ways this image is more interesting than Hubble images of the same galaxy.

Mr. Astronomy

## **E-mail Excerpts**

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

### **September at Acadia**

Hi folks, Got this from Peter of Island Astronomy Institute. Acadia Park is having an event in late September. I took the liberty of saying that we would be interested in helping. Cadillac is not the only site for setup. Hope I wasn't too far off base. Later, Wade

Hi Wade I hope you're as ready for warmer nights as we are. Our project with ANP continues to grow. A chamber of commerce committee just started working on a night sky festival planned for late september ~ 18th - 21 st ( new Moon weekend). The purpose is to celebrate (& promote) the quality of Acadia's Night sky through science and the arts. ANP has requested support for a Public Viewing on cadillac. Is this a program PVSG would be interested in helping with? Best Regards Peter

### **NSN News**

Dear Night Sky Network, 400 Years of the Telescope is debuting April 10th on PBS. Check your local listings for air date.

Glass and Mirrors ToolKit: Many of you have already qualified to receive the Glass & Mirrors ToolKit, the perfect accompaniment to the 400 Years of the Telescope PBS Special. Included in the ToolKit is a special NSN exclusive screening copy of the full documentary.

Upcoming Telecons: Mark your calendars for these two exciting upcoming telecons in our Monthly IYA 2009 Series (all beginning at 6 PM Pacific 9 PM Eastern) starting with: Tuesday, April 21st - Our Sun with Dr. Laura Peticolas: [http://nightsky.jpl.nasa.gov/download-view.cfm?Doc\\_ID=3D304](http://nightsky.jpl.nasa.gov/download-view.cfm?Doc_ID=3D304) fol-

lowed by Friday, May 28th - Clusters of Stars with Dr. Steve Stahler: [http://nightsky.jpl.nasa.gov/download-view.cfm?Doc\\_ID=3D305](http://nightsky.jpl.nasa.gov/download-view.cfm?Doc_ID=3D305)

If you have any questions, please contact the Night Sky Network Administrators at: [nightskyinfo@astrosociety.org](mailto:nightskyinfo@astrosociety.org)

Marni Berendsen, Kenneth Frank and Vivian White, Night Sky Network Administrators, Astronomical Society of the Pacific, (415) 337-1100  
Night Sky Network: <http://nightsky.jpl.nasa.gov/>

### **Thanks**

I would like to thank all for the excellent presentations, organization, food, and dedication shown for the stellar success of Stellaballo. Special thanks to the main organizers Alan, Carolyn, and David. Also to Dave for his talks, and Alan's crew for their assistance. Wade

### **AL Insurance**

Hi all, It was an outstanding event on Saturday. I think that the public had a great time keeping us all very busy. I suppose we should all be happy that we did not have clear skies as I think that we would all be dead from exhaustion!

The Astronomical League's insurance bill arrived. It is likely to be on the agenda for next Monday's meeting. The premium is quoted as \$320 and does not include a state surcharge or terrorism binder. We have until May 1, 2009 to make a decision, i.e., decide on a reply. I realize that we already have an insurance policy. I will need to know how we should respond to this quote. Where are the clear skies?!?!?!? David