



EPHEMERALS SEPTEMBER 2008

DATE	WHEN	WHAT & WHERE
4	7:30p	BBAA Meeting @ TCC in Virginia Beach
5	7:30p	Night Hike @ NWRP
10	7:30p	Boardwalk Astronomy @ 24th St. Stage & Boardwalk
19	Dusk	Skywatch @ NWRP Equestrian Area
27	Dusk	Nightwatch @ Chippokes Plantation
T h a t ' s		
A l l		
F o l k s !		

Looking Up!

Those of us who have bathed in the light of amateur astronomy for more than a few decades or even a brief few months are familiar with our standard bearers "Sky & Telescope" and "Astronomy" magazines. Having read and studied these stalwarts of our hobby most of my life, I never believed I would ever have or even find the time to really indulge in our hobby and passion. I never dreamed that as a teenager reading and re-reading the advertisements for the great Unitron refractors that I would ever get the chance to view through one much less own a comparable sample. (Kent – get it out of that garage for a moon party, please.)

Time and age have conspired to make both those dreams possible for me and with the great advances in technology and the global internet for many other childhood dreamers. But just as we have come of age so has the niche magazine market that feeds our obsession. Many new and renewed magazines, both print and online versions are now available to "feed the need" so to speak. They further amplify and fill those ever growing fields in our hobby that are exploding in interest throughout the amateur 'astro' world.

A recent excellent review of these new resources was done by

CONTENTS

Ephemerals	1
Looking Up	1
August Meeting Minutes	2
Seneca Shadows Star Party	2
NASA Space Place	3
BBAA INFO	4
Skyquest V Star Party	5
Observer's Corner	6
Map to the TCC Meeting Place	7
Spitzer and W5	7
Monthly Calendar	8

amateur astronomer and author lecturer Rod Mollise of *Choosing and Using Schmidt Cassegrains* fame at Cloudy Nights, the internet astronomy equipment review site. His article entitled "Those Other Astro Rags" is a great introduction to these lesser known but equally readable magazines from all over the US and Europe. As a gear head astro buff **Astronomy Technology Today** has become my favorite with editions, both current and past, available in both electronic and print format. For our budding astroimaging crowd **AstroPhoto Insight** is fast becoming a must read. Rod also reviews 3-4 other lesser known but superb astronomy mags, so read more on those 'cloudy nights', so to speak! You can find Rod's review at:

http://www.cloudynights.com/item.php?item_id=1853

So BBAA'ers, I wish you happy reading about our great hobby on those off hours between work and those household chores.

Bruce "Doc" Bodner

The Back Bay Amateur Astronomer's Observer

August's Meeting Minutes

Members in Attendance:

There were approximately 16 members in attendance at the August meeting of the Back Bay Amateur Astronomers held at the Cox Communications campus in Chesapeake, VA. The following members were in attendance:

Neill Alford, Bruce Bodner, Jordan Bramble, Ted Forte, Mark Gerlach, Karen Jaffe, Chuck Jagow, Georgie June, Ben Loyola, J. E. McCreary, Matt McLaughlin, Bill McLean, Jim Miller, Sean Mullin (guest), George Reynolds, Lawrence Taylor, Kevin Weiner

Treasurer's Report:

The Club treasurer reported the following club fund balances.
\$4,276.28 Total
\$1,910.80 Scholarship Fund.

Secretary's Report:

Meeting minutes are posted on the club website.

Old Business:

None

New Business, announcements and observing reports:

Ben Loyola, Kevin Weiner, Barb Weiner, and Bill McLean were nominated and elected to serve on the 2009 scholarship committee.

Outreach :

Fort Story event. Members are asked to sign up and bring a scope. See Chuck Jagow for details. Also the following URL has some info as well:

<http://norfolkastronomical.org/vaas.html>

Moonwatch at Princess Anne Library. Approximately 50 people looked thru scopes at this club event.

VAAS will be held on September 20th in Croaker, Virginia. The event will include speakers and workshops. A picnic and observing session will be held that evening at York River State Park. Contact Lawrence "Bird" Taylor from VPAS for details.

The annual Girl Scout Jamboree will be held again this year October 4th at the Ted Constant Center in Norfolk. BBAA has been invited to attend once again. Workshops from 10-11AM and the main events from 11AM to 3 PM. See Ted Forte for details.

The program for this month's meeting was a video presentation of

the BBC's "The Sky At Night". The video was titled -- "The Battle Of The Giants".

The meeting adjourned at approximately 8:40 PM, Thursday, August 7, 2008.

Matt McLaughlin

Seneca Shadows Star Party

I had about a 1/2 dozen people ask me about going to the Seneca Campground in W.Va. this year. Any excuse to go to W. Va. Sooooo, on Sept. 23rd - 28th. (Tuesday - Sunday) if you have never been to this campground, you're in for a treat.

<http://www.seneca-rocks.com/seneca.shadows.html>

I have reserved site "E". There is no electric available on the field, but we have access to 120 VAC charging stations during the day. Brick and tile bathrooms, it is a beautiful State Park.

Cost is a small \$5.00 per night per camp site. Includes campsite, parking, restrooms and showers. This site has 5 "pads"; each pad will hold 2 8'x10' tents. Also there are 6 picnic tables and a grill, with rest rooms and showers within 100' from the site. Each parking area will accommodate about 3 or 4 campers plus cars, and up to 40 people. Registration each day is after 2:00 PM or when ever you get there. See Dale Carey at the site to register.

The mountains take away 15/20 degrees on the horizons but when night falls, WOW. The sky is the best I have seen anywhere on the east coast. It takes about a 5 hour drive from Virginia Beach. On a map just take 64W past Charlottesville, go N on 81 to Harrisonburg, then take 33W to Seneca.

During the day you can turn your scopes to scenic views of Seneca Rocks, giant 1000' rocks stick out of the mountains in the distance and they are a climber's paradise.

Also visit the [National Radio Astronomy Observatory in Green Bank](#) or take a ride up to the top of [Spruce Knob](#), both less than an hour away, and for a really good time, climb to the top of [Seneca Rock](#). You will not be disappointed with this park. Saturday we will have cook out.

If you would like to join in, sign up on the BBAA Yahoo site and click on "database" and look for "Seneca", or send me an e-mail at vbstargazer@verizon.net or call 431-8556 or, you can just show up.

SEE YOU THERE!!!!

PS - Space is limited, first come first served! Only have room for 10 tents on this site and 3/4 small campers in parking lot -there are plenty of nice shady campsites in the park though with electric and water if you prefer a more private site, call ahead to reserve those.

Dale Carey

The Back Bay Amateur Astronomer's Observer



A Google for Satellites: Sensor Web 2.0

by NASA & JPL

If you could see every satellite passing overhead each day, it would look like a chaotic meteor shower in slow motion.

Hundreds of satellites now swarm over the Earth in a spherical shell of high technology. Many of these satellites gaze at the planet's surface, gathering torrents of scientific data using a dizzying array of advanced sensors — an extraordinary record of our dynamic planet.

To help people tap into this resource, NASA researchers such as Daniel Mandl are developing a "Google for satellites," a web portal that would make requesting data from Earth-observing satellites almost as easy as typing a search into Google.

"You just click on it and it takes care of all the details for you across many sensors," Mandl explains.

Currently, most satellites are each controlled separately from the others, each one dauntingly complex to use. But starting with NASA's Earth Observing-1 (EO-1) satellite, part of the agency's New Millennium Program, Mandl and his team are building a prototype that stitches these satellites together into a seamless, easy-to-use network called "Sensor Web 2.0."

The vision is to simply enter a location anywhere on Earth into the website's search field along with the desired infor-

mation types — wildfire maps, vegetation types, floodwater salinity, oil spill extent — and software written by the team goes to work.

"Not only will it find the best sensor, but with proper access rights, you could actually trigger a satellite to take an image in the area of interest," Mandl says. Within hours, the software will send messages to satellites instructing them to gather the needed data, and then download and crunch that raw data to produce easy-to-read maps.

For example, during the recent crisis in Myanmar (Burma) caused by Cyclone Nargis, an experimental gathering of data was triggered through Sensor Web 2.0 using a variety of NASA satellites including EO-1. "One thing we might wish to map is the salinity of flood waters in order to help rescue workers plan their relief efforts," Mandl says. If the floodwater in an area was salty, aid workers would need to bring in bottled water, but if flood water was fresh, water purifiers would suffice. An early and correct decision could save lives.

Thus far, Mandl and his team have expanded Sensor Web 2.0 beyond EO-1 to include three other satellites and an unmanned aircraft. He hopes to double the

number of satellites in the network every 18 months, eventually weaving the jumble of satellites circling overhead into a web of sensors with unprecedented power to observe and understand our ever-changing planet.

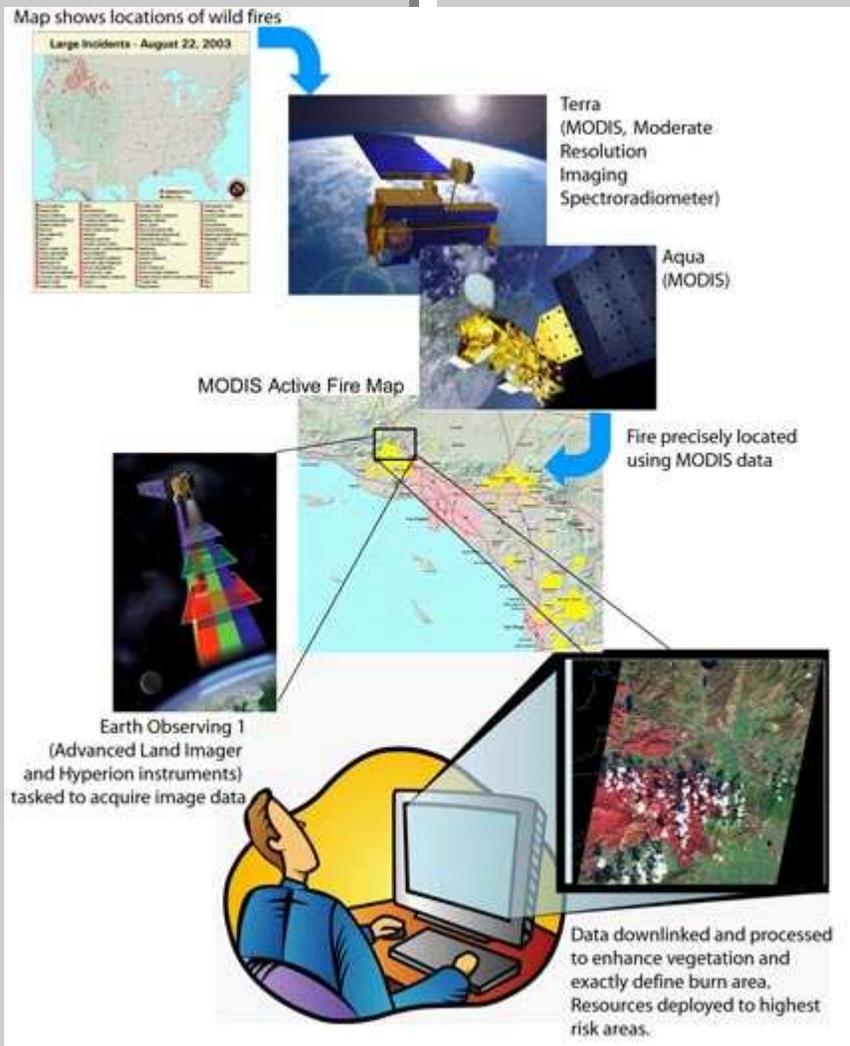


Image Caption:

A "Google for satellites" type of web portal will allow users to request real-time data from Earth observing satellites..

The Back Bay Amateur Astronomer's Observer

BBAA INFO

The BBAA meet the first Thursday of every month. While school is in session we meet at the VA Beach TCC campus.

The September meeting will be on Thursday September 4th at 7:30 PM at the new Science building of the Advanced Technology Center on the Virginia Beach TCC campus in Virginia Beach. The meetings are usually held in classroom JC12 or the Planetarium.

WHERE IS THE MEETING?

TIDEWATER COMMUNITY COLLEGE CAMPUS

The TCC Campus is located in Virginia Beach off of Princess Anne road. The following should help you locate the campus.

FROM Interstate I-64:

Proceed to the I64 / I264 junction and take I264 East .
Take the S. Independence Exit, 17A, right hand lane and proceed (.000000040879639 AU) (3.8 mi).
Turn **LEFT** onto Princess Anne road and proceed (.000000011833579 AU) (1.1 mi).
Turn **LEFT** onto Concert Drive and proceed (.000000001426233 AU) (700').
Turn **LEFT** and then turn **RIGHT** on University Drive go (.000000002151559 AU) (0.2mi).
Proceed to College Crescent and then park in one of the lots in front of the Advanced Technology Center.

The Science Building is immediately south of the ATC building. Walk toward the ATC entrance, but bear left, the Science building is straight ahead. Find the rounded part, this is the Planetarium. Locate the stairs nearest the planetarium and upstairs you will find classroom JC12 on the next floor.

COX COMMUNICATIONS CAMPUS

The COX Communications Campus is located in Chesapeake's Greenbrier section. The following should help you locate the facility.

FROM Interstate I-64:

Take exit 289B (between the Indian River & Battlefield exits). South on Greenbrier Parkway (.7382 miles).
Turn **RIGHT** onto Eden Way West (.9231 miles).
Turn **RIGHT** on Crossways Blvd (.88901 miles).
Turn Right into the Cox Campus

The meeting is usually held in the Silver room located on the North side of the facility. Enter and tell the guard that you are with the BBAA and they will issue a badge and direct you to the room.

BBAA INTERNET LINKS

BBAA WEB SITE

<http://www.backbayastro.org>

YAHOO GROUP

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/backbayastro>

BBAA OBSERVER NEWSLETTER

<http://www.backbayastro.org/newsletters/newsletter.shtml>

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What do you want to do?

OBSERVER INFO

The BBAA Observer is published monthly, the monochrome version is mailed to members who do not have Internet access. Members who do have Internet access can acquire the full color version on the Internet at:

<http://www.backbayastro.org/newsletters/newsletter.shtml>

Please submit articles and items of interest no later than the 15th of September for the October issue. Please submit all items to:

ObserverBBAA@cox.net / chuck@jagowds.com

OR

BBAA Observer

P.O. Box 9877

Virginia Beach, VA 23450-9877

The Back Bay Amateur Astronomer's Observer

STARQUEST V STAR PARTY

If you have never attended a star party, other than perhaps Kent's East Coast Star Party, and you are a bit curious as to what other star parties might be like, I would highly suggest the trek to Green Bank West Virginia next summer. It was



Upper Observing Area.

very well organized and a very well run event. You may remember that last year I attended the Almost Heaven Star Party and I did not have very many nice things to say about how that star party came off. The difference between these two parties was like night and day! There were only two bad things that



The Lower Observing Area.

could be said about STARQUEST this year and none of them had anything to do with the staff or facilities. Similar to last year we had only one night of observing, and what a night it was! I was dead tired from driving up there and setting up TWICE, but I still managed to stay up until almost sunrise. I finally hit the sack about 4:45, when I awoke I noticed the dark grayness outside. Clouds everywhere, and that is pretty much

how it stayed for the next four days. So that was one bad thing.

The other was MY choice of roads on the way up there. Let me explain a bit. I sold my sleek little teardrop trailer and purchased a little bigger 17' camper trailer to pull with my Honda Pilot. I chose what appeared on MapQuest as the most direct route via highway 250. Now I was born and raised in the mountains of Colorado where I grew up driving a truck without



The Green Bank Radio Telescope.

power (hahahaha did I say power what?) steering or brakes pulling horse trailers up and down and around twisty mountain roads. Let me just say that route 250 was my little Honda's most taxing adventure yet. I counted seven twisting passes I traversed most of which were at speeds under 30 mph. The trip took me over seven hours from Chesapeake. That is a lot of



Bruce's home away from home.

sunflower seeds and diet Mt. Dew by anyone's measure. It was a great deal of strain and stress on the Honda and a bit on the folks behind me I am sure as they waved so emphatically when they finally passed—but not with their whole hand.

(Continued on page 6)

The Back Bay Amateur Astronomer's Observer

OBSERVERS CORNER

August 2008 - I took Bill Mclean's advice and cleaned my dob base and turtle waxed it, it glides smoother than it did when I got it! I observed at two different places last night, I started off at Robert Harris's place, we mostly got clouded out until I went to leave and we only saw 2 meteors!

Then I came home and reluctantly set up, but I am glad I did. Because the air was extremely steady and transparent, I've never been able to see so many stars from my house even though the moon was out. My sister came out and observed with me so I showed her M13, M92 (for the first time at my house), M15, and M2. I also found M73 for the first time. Then taught her how to



find some easy Messier objects. She would point out meteors every now and then but I kept missing them.

Perseus, Cassiopeia, and Andromeda were at a great spot. So I started off with Melotte 20 an easy open cluster surrounding Mirphak, with my finder scope. Then I decided to try M34, something I haven't found since January, then M103 and M52. then I did the Double cluster in Perseus, something That I have always liked since I found it by accident back in January. then I did M31 and m110, My sister really liked these.

Also I found M76 in Perseus for the first time, I had to break out Sky Atlas 2000 after a few failed attempts at locating. I realized that once I found it wasn't even visible with direct vision, I had to use averted vision.

Also for the first time was NGC 7662 in Andromeda, looks very much like a blue snowball! This planetary is bright and tiny.

All in all I saw more satellites then meteors, but it was still worth setting up, by the time A went to bed around 3, the Pleiades and Aldebaran were up high, with Capella just rising. Seeing Aldebaran and the Pleiades gave me a familiar feeling of the fall and winter. In fact I can't wait for the winter constellations to come back.

Jordan Bramble

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(Skyquest, from page 5)

Once there I found Dr. Bruce who had already been up there for another conference so I set up next to him. Unwittingly (read that stupidly) I setup almost in front of the NRAO visitor's observation deck for the big dish. I was almost finished setting up the camper when the NRAO staff suggested that I move. I looked about and realized, what a foolish place to setup, there are going to be visitors tromping through here every forty five minutes, it must have been the foaming barley water that Tom Crowley forced upon me. So I moved about half a parking lot away from Dr. Bruce. Did I mention that I got stung by a wasp on my thumb as I unplugged my power cable!

I already mentioned the glorious first night of observing we had. Followed by days of clouds and rain. At any other star party this down time would be spent on kibitzing and searching for sucker holes and perhaps the perfect box of wine. But not at Starquest. There just was not enough TIME for that stuff! The beauty of Starquest is that they hold it in cooperation with the National Radio Astronomy Observatory in Greenbank WV. This afforded them the use of the Visitor's Center including the auditorium and classrooms. The type of programs offered varied from children's to adults with a myriad of subjects including eight different children's programs, over twenty astronomy and science based programs and a nightly movie in case of inclement weather. This included an actual hands-on class where you were able to use the 40' radio dish and do real radio astronomy. And did I mention our own Dr. Michelle Shinn's program on Dark Matter, which was excellent, despite her dog troubles which almost kept her from coming.

I can't imagine what it would have been like if we would actually have had more than one actual night viewing under those skies! I will for sure plan this star party in my fuel budget for next year! But, I know a much more pleasant route to get there now, same amount of time but much less stress. If anyone is "on the fence" about going, I saved my schedule and materials so folks could see the extent of this event.

Chuck Jagow



Packed up and saying goodbye.

The Back Bay Amateur Astronomer's Observer

SPITZER AND W5

By Tom, @ Tom's Astronomy Blog
<http://tomsastroblog.com/>

Here's the latest Spitzer image (Credit: NASA/JPL-Caltech/L. Allen & X. Koenig (Harvard-Smithsonian CFA))

A Spitzer Space Telescope press release:

Generations of stars can be seen in this new infrared portrait from NASA's Spitzer Space Telescope. In this wispy star-forming region, called W5, the oldest stars can be seen as blue dots in the centers of the two hollow cavities (other blue dots are background and foreground stars not associated with the region). Younger stars line the rims of the cavities, and some can be seen as pink dots at the tips of the elephant-trunk-like pillars. The white knotty areas are where the youngest stars are forming. Red shows heated dust that pervades the region's cavities, while green highlights dense clouds.

W5 spans an area of sky equivalent to four full moons and is about 6,500 light-years away in the constellation Cassiopeia. The Spitzer picture was taken over a period of 24 hours.

Like other massive star-forming regions, such as Orion and Carina, W5 contains large cavities that were carved out by radiation and winds from the region's most massive stars. According to the theory of triggered star-formation, the carving out of these cavities pushes gas together, causing it to ignite into successive generations of new stars.

This image contains some of the best evidence yet for the triggered star-formation theory. Scientists analyzing the photo have been able to show that the ages of the stars become progressively and systematically younger with distance from the center of the cavities.

This is a three-color composite showing infrared observations from two Spitzer instruments. Blue represents 3.6-micron light and green shows light of 8 microns, both captured by Spitzer's infrared array camera. Red is 24-micron light detected by Spitzer's multiband imaging photometer.

This article is part of a new source of information being made available to astronomy newsletter editors. The AAVSO collects astronomy related material and makes it available for republication as long as the author is given credit, their blog or original publication is credited and a link is displayed to their blog or publication is provided.

Chuck Jagow



MAP TO THE TCC BBAA MEETING LOCATION

Don't confuse the Adult Learning Center with the Advanced Technology Center, they are **NOT** the same buildings. The Adult Learning Center is the building that will be in front of you when you first turn off of Concert Drive, ignore it and turn right on University Drive and proceed to College Crescent where the parking lots begin. Then just walk South of the ATC and go in the Science Building and find the stairs closest to the planetarium and go upstairs to classroom



The Back Bay Amateur Astronomer's Observer



SEPTEMBER 2008

BBAA EVENTS	SPECIAL OUTREACH	ASTRONOMICAL EVENTS
04 = BBAA Monthly Meeting @ TCC Campus, Virginia Beach, 7:30 PM		
05 = NIGHT HIKE @ NWRP, Chesapeake, VA @ 7:00 PM - POC: Chuck Jagow Contact Chuck First as the NWRP limits # of people.		07 = FIRST QUARTER
	10 = BOARDWALK ASTRONOMY @ 24th Street Stage Boardwalk, Virginia Beach Blvd, Virginia Beach, VA @ 8:00 PM- 11:00 PM - POC: Dale Carey	
		15 = FULL MOON
19= SKYWATCH @ NWRP, Dusk		
20 = CLOVERWATCH @ Franklin Fairgrounds, Dusk - POC Cliff Hedgepeth ON HOLD!!!!		22 = LAST QUARTER
27 = NIGHTWATCH @ Chippokes State Park, Dusk		
		29 = NEW MOON