



The Shoreline Observer



Newsletter for the

Shoreline Amateur Astronomical Association

April 1996

President - Phil Sherman

Vice President - Pete Burkey

Secretary/Treasurer/Editor - Mike Henry

- April Meeting**
The April meeting of SAAA
will be held on Thursday April
18th at 7:00 PM in the West
Ottawa Middle School
Planetarium.
- ◆ Business Meeting.
 - ◆ Sandy will give a tour of the
April night sky.
 - ◆ Bob will speak on Corvus &
Crater.
 - ◆ Mark will show us Hydra.
 - ◆ Arlin will be bringing
refreshments.
 - ◆ Everyone will have fun.

Comet Hyakutake is certainly the topic of the season this year and will be at our next meeting also.

If you have any photo's of the comet PLEASE bring them with you. Pete has taken some and will be showing them to all, as well as, giving us a summary and update on the comet.

Treasurers Report

As of April 13, 1996: \$286.15

This Month's Observations

Venus, which has been dominating the western sky all spring, is getting lower each night as it approaches inferior conjunction on June 10. Venus sets 3-4 hours after sunset on May 4, 2 hours after sunset on May 24, and by June 1 the planet sets just one hour after the sun. Venus is still visible in the daytime right before sunset, reaching its greatest brilliancy on May 4. The planet's crescent phase can be observed with binoculars throughout the month. Although the crescent becomes thinner, the disk of the planet appears larger because it is approaching us. Try to observe the crescent either in the daytime or right after sunset, before it contrasts too much with the dark sky.

Jupiter can be found in the southern sky one hour before sunrise. Saturn begins the month very low in the east at sunrise, climbing higher as the month progresses. Dawn on Monday, May 13, should find Saturn close to a crescent moon low in the ESE. Mars becomes visible toward the end of the month.

Uranus, Neptune, and comet Hale-Bopp can be found between Sagittarius and Capricornus 2 hours before sunrise in the SSE. See the May Sky Calendar for a star chart. More information on Hale-Bopp can be found on the Internet at

http://encke.jpl.nasa.gov/hale_bopp_info.html

- PETER BURKEY

A Busy Month

A big thank's goes out to Bob for having our annual star party at his house. He says over 30 people visited all in all. The reason for the large crowds could have been because of a newspaper article in the Lakeshore Edition that was covering Comet Hyakutake. In it, it explained that SAAA would be having a star party and to call Bob for info. He got a lot of calls.

It also could be because of Peter Chan being at our last meeting. A lot of people other than our members were there. A quick head count came to 35. Peter gave us all an excellent talk and slide show on the Aurora Borealis. I was surprised to find out that you can see them from as far south as we are.

Back to the star party. It started shortly after dusk, of course. Then everyone started to pour in slowly. And what a show they got. The Comet that most had come to see, was brilliant. It was easy to see that the tail was at least 18 degrees long. At one time the comet appeared to slit in two, when viewed at very high magnification. In fact what was happening was that the star had passed very close to a star and you could actually see the comet pass by it because it was moving so fast. I wish I could have seen that, but I didn't show up until 2:30AM.

Of course many Messier objects were viewed and some members added them to their Sky Log books, hoping for their Messier Club Certificate and Pin from the Astronomical League. - MIKE HENRY

