

SNAKE RIVER SKIES

MAGIC VALLEY ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY

No September MVAS Meeting this month

Because of the Idaho Star Party at Bruneau Dunes State Park, South of Mountain Home, we will not have a regular MVAS meeting.

For those not attending the Idaho Star Party, the Cen-

tennial Observatory will be open for public use. The Herrett Center, as always, appreciates any volunteer help with its star parties.

See you next month!

Message from the President: Phil Hafer

I want to thank Gary Rogers and the other members of the Jerome Club for the outstanding presentation on Mirror Grinding last month. For those who were unable to attend, we have copies of the handouts available upon request.

September 02, ended the summer sessions of solar viewing at the Centennial Observatory. If you did not have a chance to view the sun through the H α filter, you missed some very good solar prominences over the course of the last month. We want to thank Rick Widmer and Ken Thomason for their help during the solar viewing sessions.

Without the help of our members it would be much harder for Chris to conduct these sessions. For those who have not been trained on the observatory telescope, contact Chris Anderson so he can make arrangements to get you trained.

Chris has telescope sign up sheets for those who can help with his lecture night viewing sessions. They are for the telescopes in the observatory and are available on a first come basis. There are a limited number of telescopes, so sign up is essential. Those members who want to bring their own telescopes may do so. Those who help out with the viewing sessions do not have to pay the lecture fee. In the months to come, new observing sessions he will be added to the schedule. They will be the 1st & 3rd Tuesday of each month from November thru March. These will be family nights, to coincide with the Herrett Center's regularly scheduled "Mingle in the Jungle" nights. If you would like to help, let Chris Anderson know, so he can make out a schedule.

I would like to see more of our members helping to support the Observatory during the Star Parties,, whether they be our regularly scheduled 2nd Saturday of each month, or on the first Friday after the new moon to help with viewing after Chris' lecture.



Solar observing at the Herrett Center

I have received some feed back from members as well as from staff at the Herrett Center, and the public, that the some club members seem to control the Star Parties. The comments got me to thinking and I have met with members of the club and with some of the staff members at the Herrett Center. The consensus is, the monthly Star Parties are a function of the Centennial Observatory and Chris Anderson is in charge. We are asked to give our support in return for the use of the Rick Allan Community Room each month, and the opportunity to reserve the observatory in the future. Chris will do his best to have different members of the club, who are trained in the use of the telescope, help him on the observation platform during the Star Parties so that everyone gets an opportunity to work the telescope.

There will be no scheduled meeting this month because the Idaho Star Party falls on our regular meeting night. So I encourage you to attend the event at Bruneau Dunes State Park. For those who will be unable to attend, the monthly Star Party will take place at the Centennial Observatory, and your help would be appreciated. Until next month, wishing you clear nights and dark skies.

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If you would like to write an article or otherwise make an entry for the club newsletter, contact Jay Sneddon, 736-2447, jaysneddon@yahoo.com.

Yearly membership is \$20 per person, \$20 per family \$10 per student, Sponsor \$100

The Idaho Star Party—September 10-11th, Bruneau Dunes State

The Idaho Star Party will run Friday, September 10 through the morning of Sunday, September 12. Registration check-in will begin on Friday at 2:00 P.M. to 6:00 P.M. Then again on Saturday Registration will begin from 10:30 A.M. to 6 P.M. Boise Astronomical Society and Bruneau Dunes State Park will have Speakers giving their presentations Friday and Saturday. Also Saturday we will feature Children's Programs, and the drawing for Door Prizes. The Idaho Star Party will have our serious viewing on Friday and Saturday Evening, after the other events. Cleanup will happen as soon as people roll out of their sleeping bags on Sunday morning at 10:30 A.M. Checkout for the campgrounds is 12:00 P.M.

If you plan on camping at the Idaho Star Party 2004, you must reserve a spot at the Eagle Cove Campground (lower campsite) with Bruneau Dunes State Park. The park office can be reached at (208) 366-7919 for further information and to make reservations. Make sure you tell them that you'll be there for the Idaho Star Party.

- A small flashlight with a red filter (Red cellophane will be provided if you don't have a filter... just ask at the Registration tent.)

Do Not Bring (things that can ruin other's good times to be with):

- Dogs that are not 100% under your control at all times
- Coleman lanterns (bright lights damage night vision for viewers)
- Large or unfiltered flashlights (same as above)
- Anything that makes excessive noise between the hours of 11:00 p.m. and 11:00 a.m. These include generators and radios. Our goal is to provide a peaceful environment during the prime observing and sleeping hours.



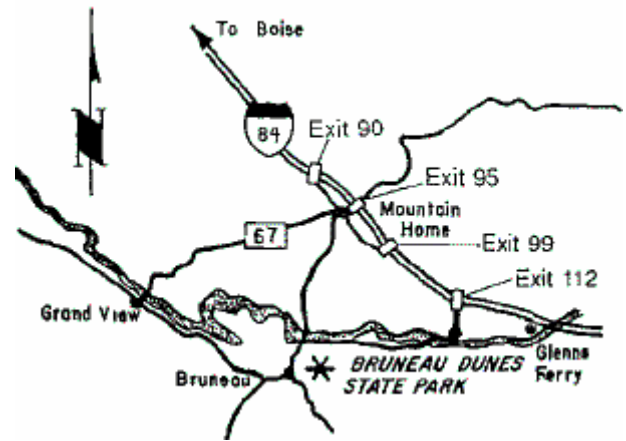
The **Star-b-que** will be on Saturday evening. The menu will include hamburgers, jumbo all beef hot dogs, Basque Chorizo and teriyaki chicken, all cooked on mesquite grills at the park. The buffet will include three salads, baked beans, corn on the cob, watermelon and strawberry shortcake for dessert. Drinks will be provided, and vegetarian alternatives available.

Other than the Star-b-que you will need to bring your own food to the ISP. For restaurant dining, Mountain Home (25 minutes from the park) offers a variety of options from fast food to regular restaurants.

You can prepare in a number of ways to help you and everybody else get the most out of the ISP. There are a few things that you should definitely remember, and a couple of others that will be helpful to forget - here's a short list:

Do Bring (things that can ruin your good time to be without):

- Mosquito Repellent
- Sunscreen
- Drinking Water (Water is plentiful at the campground and observatory, but be sure to have some for any outings that you may take. Hydration is an important consideration in planning events at Bruneau.)
- A sweatshirt and a warm jacket (It can get downright chilly at night!)



Fall Craters of the Moon Star Party,

The week following the Idaho Star Party, the Idaho Falls Astronomical Society will be hosting the semiannual Craters of the Moon Star Party, at the Craters of the Moon National Monument near Arco, ID. Because of road maintenance, observing may not be in the Caves Area as usual. Possibilities are the Devil's Orchard or the North Crater parking area, just below the campground. Check in with the park ranger and they will direct you to where you need to go.

Camping is available at Craters of the Moon National Monument for \$10 per night. RV parking is available but without hookups.

Observing begins at dusk on Friday September 17th and goes through the morning of Sunday September 19th. For more information, contact Fritz Frauenholz at misty60@pcf.net.



MVAS at a previous Craters of the Moon Star Party. From left: Chris Anderson, Rick Greenawald, Ken Thomason, and Tom Gilbertson.

Space Probe Fails to Deploy Chute, Slams into Earth (courtesy space.com)



This image from television shows the Genesis space capsule after it crashed in Utah's west desert at the Dugway Proving Ground, Wednesday, Sept. 8, 2004.

DUGWAY PROVING GROUND, UTAH -- A NASA spacecraft spun out of control and crashed into the Utah desert this morning, putting a disastrous end to a years-long mission to bring back samples of the Sun.

The probe was supposed to deploy a parachute and be snagged by a helicopter for safe recovery. The capsule, carrying tiny particles from the solar wind that scientists were eager to study for the first time, was half buried in the sandy surface and "appeared to be intact," said a NASA mission controller. Closer inspection showed the flying-saucer-shaped ship had cracked in two, however.

100 mph impact

Genesis and its solar cargo slammed into the ground at about 100 mph. Scientists are optimistic there will be some particles to recover.

"We've lost something," said Roger Wines, science team flight payload leader from Los Alamos National Laboratory. "Now we'll have to analyze the pieces."

Since its launch in August 2001, the \$264 million Genesis mission flew to a point just under one million miles (1.5

million kilometers) from Earth. Once there, the spacecraft deployed sample collectors to "soak up the Sun" -- entrapping particles carried into space by a constantly streaming "solar wind," for return to Earth. The particles were obtained by sets of collectors that were exposed to space over a period of 850 days.

Out of control When the helicopters lifted off, Genesis was above the atmosphere, roughly halfway between the United States and Hawaii, screaming toward the planet. A few minutes before Noon ET powerful radar and visual instruments here at the Test and Training Range spotted the Genesis capsule sliding through the atmosphere over the western part of the country. The probe was spinning 15 times a minute, looking like an out-of-control garbage can or some space boulder as it flew in at high speed.

"I just had a big pit in my stomach," Wines said of watching Genesis plummet toward the ground. Live video taken from the surface followed the probe all the way down, while NASA officials noted that the parachute had not opened, as planned. The helicopter crews, including a Hollywood stunt pilot, were to spot the capsule and latch onto it with a long hook. Instead, they landed near the crash site to inspect the damage. But NASA engineers feared the explosive for the parachute might still be alive and ready to fire, so the crews were advised to keep a safe distance.

A slogan spotted on one of the mission control computers at the Utah ground facility this morning proved prophetic. It read, "Genesis: Utah or Bust."



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Planet Roundup courtesy skyandtelescope.com

Mercury (brightening from magnitude +1 to 0) can be found low in the east during dawn. Look for it glimmering far to the lower left of bright Venus about 45 minutes before sunrise. (You can find your sunrise time by entering your location and current time zone into our [almanac](#).) The later in the week you look the better.

Regulus (magnitude +1.4) is also in Mercury's vicinity: to its lower left through the morning of September 9th, very close to Mercury (about $\frac{1}{4}^\circ$) on the morning of the 10th, and to Mercury's upper right thereafter. Binoculars will help.

Venus (magnitude -4.2, in Gemini) is the "Morning Star" shining brightly high in the east before and during dawn. Look for dimmer Saturn above it. **Mars** and **Jupiter** are hidden behind the glare of the Sun.

Saturn (magnitude +0.2, in Gemini) glows above much brighter Venus before and during dawn. Although Saturn is by far the bigger of the two planets, it's so much dimmer than Venus for two reasons: it's much farther from us, and it's also much farther from the Sun (so it's illuminated much less brilliantly).

Uranus and **Neptune** (magnitudes 6 and 8, respectively, in Aquarius and Capricornus) are in the southeast to south during evening.

Pluto (magnitude 14, at the border of Ophiuchus and Serpens Cauda) is in the southwest right after dark.

Dawn, Sept 9-11 *60 minutes before sunrise*



Club & Star Party Calendar

The Magic Valley Astronomical Society meets the second Saturday of each month at the College of Southern Idaho, Herrett Center at 7pm. Star Party at the Herrett Center follows.

There is no MVAS meeting for September because of the Idaho Star Party. However, the Centennial Observatory will be open to the public as scheduled.

STAR PARTIES

September 10-12th Idaho Star Party, Bruneau Dunes State Park.

September 17-18th Fall Craters of the Moon Party, Craters of the Moon National Monument.