



Snake River Skies

February 2005
Volume 6 Issue 2

Astronomy Day Twin Falls April 9, 2005

Club Officers

- Cheri Lowman, President, 736-7293
- Ken Thomason, Vice President 324-4532 ktst@pmt.org
- Rick Widmer, Secretary Webmaster 539-5162 rwidmer@developersdesk.com
- Tom Gilbertson, Newsletter Editor 734-04383 palo@pmt.org

Write to MVAS at P.O. Box 5101, Twin Falls, ID 83303

Yearly membership is \$20 per person or family and \$10 per student. Sponsor memberships are \$100.

We've moved up our local Astronomy day to April 9th 2005. The national Astronomy Day will be a week later on April 16, but because of a scheduled event at the Herrett Center it was necessary to move our day up a week.

We need many volunteers for a variety of events. This is

one of the highlights of the year so plan to attend. The Schedule of Events is on the next page.

Rick Greenawald would like volunteers for the "make and take" activities. This involves Water Bottle Rocket construction (2 to 3 volunteers)

Asisting kids with other "make and

take" activities (another 2 to 3 volunteers) and someone to oversee the Rick Allen Room during the rocket launches.

If you have not been to one of our Astronomy Days be sure to make this one. These events are a lot of fun and generate a lot of interest for our Society.

The First Annual Twin Falls City Messier Marathon

Charles Messier would have been very pleased with the Herrett Center's innovative Messier Marathon for the public. Typically Messier Marathons are a very individual events for those brave souls freezing under a cold March night from sundown to sunup and trying

to bag as many objects in the Messier Catalog as they can. Probably no where else in the world has there been a Messier marathon sponsored for the public to witness until March 12, 2005, in Twin Falls, Idaho. Chris Anderson, Rick Widmer,

and Ken Thomason and a number of other volunteers put on a live show of the Messier Objects with the video and phone links from the Centennial Observatory to the Rick Allen room. Some 80 people witnessed this historic event.

Share is coming to the MVAS

Some of you may remember that Chris Anderson had a friend in the Boston Massachusetts area that was a member of the North Shore Amateur Astronomy Club. This is an innovative group as evidenced by their creation of a video system to show handicap people views through their telescope.



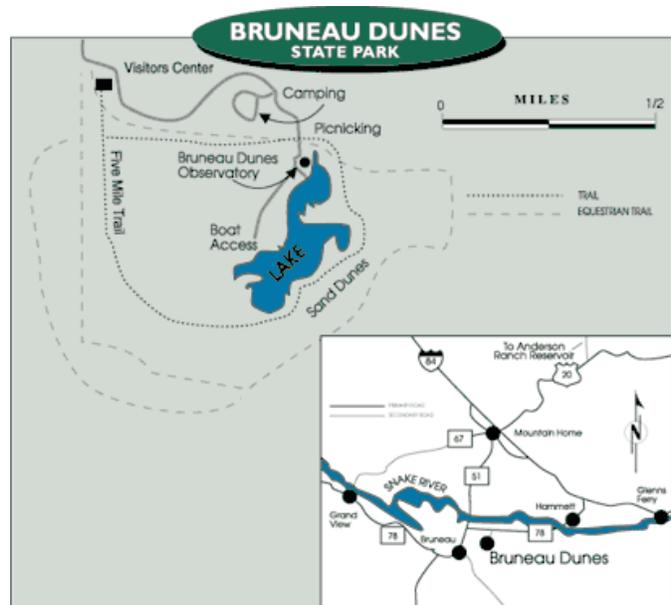
Share stands for "System for Handicap Accessibility, Recreation, Education. In recognition of our commitment to show the public the views from our telescope the Board of NSAAC voted to send the MVAS for the price of shipping their SHARE system.



Bruneau Observatory Field Trip May 8th, 2005

The Bruneau Observatory will be the official site of our May meeting. For those not able to make the trip to Bruneau please come to the Herrett Center and help with the monthly star party.

Those wishing to car pool should make arrangements to meet at the Herrett Center parking lot. Others will be spending the day and camping is available. If you wish to camp be sure to reserve a camp site ahead of time.



Astronomy Day List of Events

Make and Take Activities for Kids in the Rick Allen Room:

- 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm Water bottle rocket Building
- 2:30pm to 5:00 pm Water bottle Rocket Launches
- 1:00 pm to 5:00 pm Build your own Saturn
- 1:00 pm to 5:00 pm Various make and take activities

Solar Viewing in the Centennial Observatory:

- 1:00 pm to 5:00 pm View the Sun safely through telescopes

Scale Solar System Walk along North College Road:

- 1:00 pm to 5:00 pm Walk the entire length of scale model of the solar system

Magic Valley Astronomical Society Meeting in the Rick Allen Room

7:00 pm Award winning photographers Forrest Ray and Tom Gilbertson will display their work and give you tips on Astrophotography and how to enter photos and win ribbons at the Twin Falls County Fair and other photo competitions

Star Party in the Centennial Observatory:

- 9:15 pm to 12:00 am Enjoy telescopic views of celestial wonders

I'm hoping for the day that we can observe the heavens in any kind of weather, but until we have that technology available all events are subject to Saturday's weather.

Coming this September 9, 2005 the Great Debate on Astrology. Chris Anderson and Tom Gilbertson will face off on this fascinating topic. I have consulted my sky charts and this night should prove to be very entertaining and informative. You will not want to miss it.

What is up in the Sky for April

Jupiter is continuing its impressive show for this year as it just recently passed opposition. It is a very impressive telescope object in almost any size instrument even spotting scopes and binoculars. Saturn continues to shine in the western sky shortly after nightfall. Early risers can view Mars in the southeastern sky a few hours before sunrise.

On April 24th there will be a slight penumbral eclipse of the full moon. It is not easily placed for us as it happens very early in the morning 3:30 to 4:20 a.m.

The Solar Eclipse on April 8th will not be visible from our Latitude, but will be a partial eclipse over much of the southern U.S.

This is the month that Leo shines brightly directly overhead in the evening sky. There are a number of Galaxies in this part of the sky including the "Realm of Galaxies" or Virgo Galaxy Cluster. Virgo is the constellation directly to the east of Leo with its famous bright star Spica which means "Ear of Wheat" in Latin.

The constellation of Coma Berenices was once part of Leo, but is now a constellation of its own right and contains the very impressive Coma Berenices Star Cluster.

April is a great time for star gazing and is not as bitter cold as our previous months have been.