

The Sunset Gazette

Serving the Tri-Cities since 1975

Volume 9, Issue 12

August, 2012



Meeting information

Meetings are generally in the theater in the Delta College Planetarium in Bay City. The meetings will usually be on the 2nd Friday of each month at 7:00 PM. Watch the newsletter for changes in dates and times. Membership is not required to participate in meetings and activities. See last Page for this month's meeting site.

Membership Information

Our club has switched to e-mailing our newsletters. For those wishing to receive a hard copy mailed an additional dues of \$10.00 per year is required.

New Membership Rates Pending

Treasurer's address for renewals and subscriptions:

Tom Smith, 3423 Hidden Road,

Bay City, MI 48706-1243

This newsletter predominantly contain contributions form SAS club members which gives me plenty opportunity and time to think about some new interesting stuff for the upcoming newsletters.

The Editor

Here is a link from Gerard Jozwiak about the upcoming NASA Orion crew vehicle:

<http://news.yahoo.com/video/science-15749654/nasa-to-head-to-mars-30035757.html>

As you may have read NASA is readying the candidates for future crew vehicles so here is a link:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-19118764>

And of course the Curiosity rover landing on Mars is drawing ever closer: On August 5 will be the day to look out!

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-19107577>

For those who have missed Axel's and Mo's e-mail: Here is the link of Axel's time lapse video (plus some extra footage that Mo and Axel

took) of our observing night on the hill near Sue's home:

http://galaxy.phy.cmich.edu/~axel/misc/2012/20120720_ObservingNight/

Next page the group photo with all attendee's on Sue's Hill on the 20th July.



Do some observing this month

Garry Beckstrom

August should be a great time for SAS club members to get out and do some observing. I'd like to invite everyone out to the Beckstrom Observatory on Saturday, August 18th. In addition to observing with the 30-inch scope, if you have a telescope or binoculars, bring them along too. The more optics we have the more fun for everyone. More information and directions will be provided at the August 10th meeting and by email.

Don't forget that the Perseid meteor shower peaks on the morning of Sunday, August 12th. Meteors or "shooting stars" as some folks call them are actually bits of debris slamming into earth's atmosphere. On any night you'll see occasional "sporadic" meteors from random debris. When we experience a "shower," the earth is plowing through a stream of debris left along its orbit by a comet. We can predict each year when the earth is going to pass through certain comet orbits. The Perseid shower occurs when we cross the "littered" orbit of Comet Swift-Tuttle every August. Try to get out to a dark sky away from lights. The early morning hours are best. Bring a comfortable reclining chair, wear plenty of warm clothing, and enjoy the show. If you do go out, keep track of how many you see over time.

For evening observers, Mars and Saturn are low in the western sky. You'll see the star Spica nearby, nearly the same brightness as the planets. If you're up in the early morning watching the Perseid meteor shower, you'll be able to see Jupiter and especially brilliant Venus before dawn. If you'd like help finding the interesting things in the sky this month, go to <http://www.skyandtelescope.com/observing/podcasts> and download the Audio Sky Tour for August. You can then go out, get comfortable, and follow along on the tour.

For those with at least 8-inch telescopes, and who want a fun challenge, see if you can find Comet Petriew this month. Comet Petriew was discovered by Vance Petriew, an amateur astronomer, in 2001. Right now it's visible in the early morning hours in the constellation of Taurus. It's currently glowing at 11th magnitude, so you'll need a fairly dark observing site. It will appear as a small patch of light with no tail. On August 15th it will be about 5-degrees north of M1 and on the 19th, about a degree from M35. Use the finder chart to help you search for the comet.

Lastly, August this year is a month with two full moons, on the 2nd and 31st. One recent and popular definition calls the second full moon in a month a "Blue Moon." Impress your friends with your knowledge . . . and get out there and observe this month!

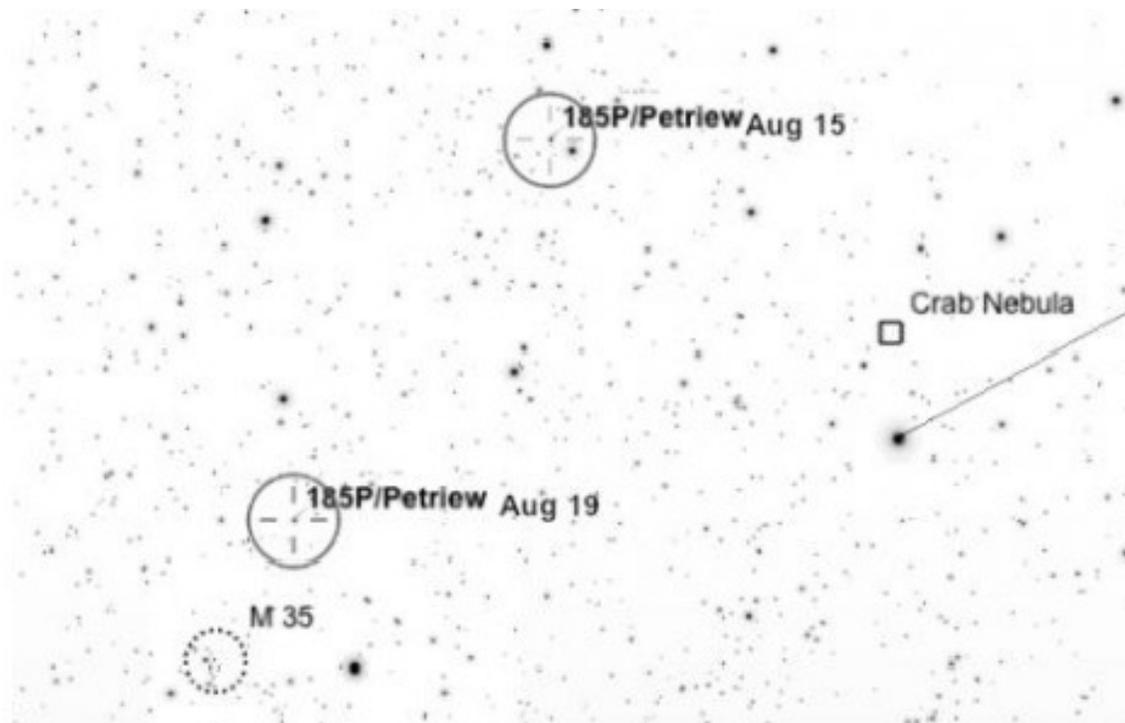


Chart by C. Beckett / Sky Safari

Please have a look into **The Upcoming Events** section on page 4 of this newsletter issue for some great upcoming **Observing Opportunities!**

SUNSET ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY
THE SUNSET GAZETTE
SERVING THE TRI- CITIES SINCE 1975



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This issue can be accessed in color on the website of the SAS!!!

<http://www.sunsetastronomicalsociety.com>

SAS Meeting

Start: 7:00 PM

Friday, August 10th, 2012

Delta Planetarium

Welcome members and guests

New and old business

Club Business

Treasure report

Refreshments Break

Presentation:

The Lives of Stars — Part 2

**If clear we will observe on
the observation deck.**

What's up in the Sky

Aug 11 Dawn: Watch the full Moon forming a tight triangle with Jupiter and Aldebaran.

Aug 11-12 Late Night: Do not miss the Perseid meteor shower which peaks after midnight.

Aug 12 Dawn: Venus shines below the thin crescent Moon.

Aug 12 Afternoon: The Moon occults Venus in bright daylight.

<http://www.lunar-occultations.com/iota/planets/0813venus.htm>

See also: Page 51 of Sky&Telescope Aug 2012

Aug 13,14 Dusk: Look for Mars threading through the narrow gap formed by Saturn and Spica in the west-southwest.

Aug 14-22 Dawn: Best of Mercury's dawn apparitions. The planet can be found >10 deg above the eastern horizon ca 1/2 h before sunrise.

Aug 16 Dawn: A very thin crescent Moon can be seen well below Mercury very low in the east ca 12 h before sunrise. Binoculars!

July 21 Dusk: A nice quadrangle is formed by the Moon, Saturn, Spica and Mars low in the west in late twilight.

Aug 17: New Moon

Aug 31 Dawn: Regulus can be observed through binoculars just 13/4 deg lower right of brighter Mercury low in the east-northeast 20 min before sunrise.

Sep 8 Dawn: Jupiter ca 1 deg above 3rd quarter Moon.

UPCOMING EVENTS

August 18 (Saturday)

Observing at Beckstrom Observatory

September 7 (Friday)

Observing at Beckstrom Observatory

**September 13 - 16
(Thursday - Sunday)**

**Great Lake Star Gaze 10
Registration is now open !**

<http://www.greatlakesstargaze.com/register.php>