

NOVA

The Newsletter Of The Sheep Hill Astronomical Assn.

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		Program	Open	http://www.sheephillaastro.org	
<i>To Schedule Observatory Qualifications: contact Ray Smith (regular) or Andy Monka (advanced)</i>					

GREETINGS

The next business meeting of SHAA will be held on May 2, 2010 at 7:30 P.M. The meeting will be held at the Boonton Senior Center. The program for the evening will be a guest appearance by individuals connected with the UACNJ activities at the observatory site at Jenny Jump State Forest.

Executive Board Meeting

The next executive board meeting will be held on May 2, 2010 at 6:30 P.M. All members are invited to attend.

Club Night

The next Club Night will be held on Saturday, May 15, weather permitting.

Public Nights

The next Public Night Open House will be held on Friday, May 21, weather permitting.

Upcoming Events

May 16, 2010 – Grazing Occultation of 9 Geminorum by the moon. See the SHAA Yahoo Group for more details.

Qualification Reminder

There aren't many rules in SHAA, but an agreement was reached in 2001 about participation required for the maintenance of qualified observer status. The issue was discussed and it was agreed that a minimum of five events combined (Public Nights, Club Nights) and three business meetings per year are necessary to retain your qualified observer status. Please review your recent participation and make the appropriate adjustments, if necessary.

SHAA Observatory Dome Repair

Rust grinding season is about to begin! Warren will be organizing the dome repair work for 2010. Look for details via the Yahoo message board as the weather begins to warm up.

A Telescopic Tour for May:

R.A	Declination	Description	R.A	Declination.	Description.
13h 26.7m	-47d 18s	ω Centauri globular cluster	14h 45.0m	+27d 04s	ε Bootis, double star
2h 29.0m	+67d 24s	ι Cassiopeiae, triple star	15h 18.5m	+2d 05s	M5 globular cluster
7h 34.6m	+31d 54s	Castor, double star	15h 39.4m	+36d 38s	ζ Coronae Borealis, dbl
8h 40.4m	+19d 41s	Praesepe cluster	16h 41.7m	+36d 27s	M13 globular cluster
9h 55.6m	+69d 04s	M81 Galaxy	17h 14.7m	+14d 24s	α Herculis, double star
10h 19.9m	+19d 51s	γ Leonis, double star	17h 32.2m	+55d 11s	ν Draconis, double star
11h 14.7m	+55d 01s	M97, Owl nebula	17h 41.9m	+72d 10s	ψ Draconis, double star
12h 30.8m	+12d 23s	M87 Galaxy	18h 44.4m	+39d 40s	ε Lyrae, double-double
12h 40.0m	-11d 36s	M104, Sombrero galaxy	19h 30.7m	+27d 58s	Albireo, double star
12h 41.7m	-1d 26s	γ Virginis, double star			

Sky Views

Throughout May, observers get a chance to see all of the planets in the Solar System, although none of them are especially good apparitions. Venus is first noticeable in the West-Northwest sky at sunset and remains at generally the same height throughout the month. The disk is in a gibbous phase, just 85% illuminated at mid-month, and it shines at magnitude -3.9. Mars remains high in the South at sunset but continues to shrink in size as the red planet's orbit takes it further away from Earth. At the beginning of the month, Mars' disk is only 7" wide with a magnitude of +0.7. Saturn is also well-placed at sunset in the South-Southeast in the constellation Virgo. Saturn's narrowing rings reach a tilt of just 1.7° by the end of May. After this month, the rings will begin to open up again and will continue the trend for the next several years. The morning sky is dominated by Jupiter which rises earlier each day. By month's end, Jupiter rises around 3am in the constellation Pisces, shining at magnitude -2.3. It also approaches Uranus, coming within 1° of the 5.9 magnitude planet. Neptune remains in Aquarius which is fairly low in the Southeast before dawn's first light. Mercury emerges into the morning sky in late May, but at magnitude +0.4, you will need binoculars to see the planet in the brightening morning sky.

Month at a Glance

May 2010

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1
2 Business Meeting 7:30 P.M.	3	4	5	6 Last Qtr. Moon	7	8
9	10	11	12	13 New Moon	14	15 Club Night
16 Grazing Occultation	17	18	19	20 First Qtr. Moon	21 Public Night	22
23	24	25	26	27 Full Moon	28	29
30	31					

Future Meeting Dates (Mark those Calendars)

May 2

June 6

July 11

August 1

September 5

Constellation Clues

Coma was once a tuft on the Lion's tail; flattering priests then pretended it was Queen Berenice's hair. Coma is a cluster of stars, and far beyond it a cluster of galaxies. The richest area in the sky for galaxies extends from Ursa Major down through Coma into Virgo. Virgo: a somewhat shapeless Maiden. Spica is an "ear of wheat" she is holding in her left hand. Hydra continues, under the little constellations of the Sextant, the Cup (Crater), and the Crow (Corvus). (Constellation Clues from the Astronomical Calendar 2010 by Guy Ottewill).

SHAA on Facebook

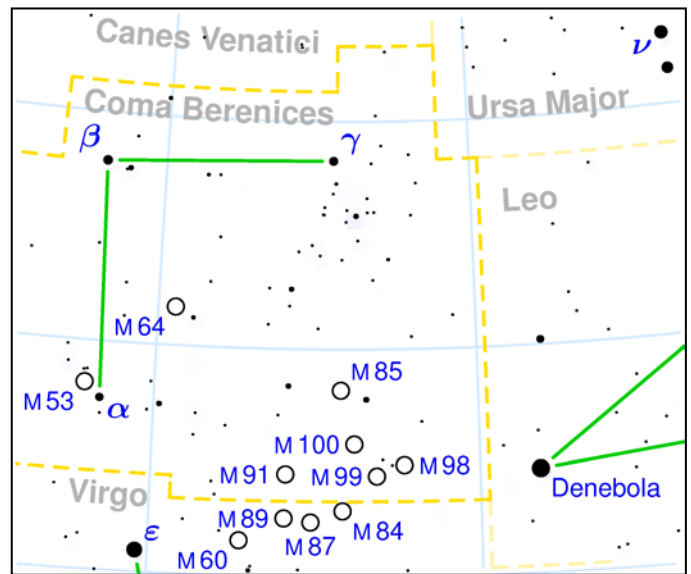
SHAA can now be found on Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Sheep-Hill-Astronomical-Association/355149227377?ref=mf> This page can be viewed by anyone. They do not have to be a club member and they do not need to be registered on Facebook. It contains information about the club as well as real-time updates on events such as Public Nights and club meetings. If you have ideas for additional content, please contact Ted Winsch.

Club Elections

Elections are due to be held during the June meeting for officers for the coming club year. Anyone wishing to stand for club office, or current officeholders wishing to step down for next year, should make their desires known at the next meeting.

Focus On... Coma Berenices, Berenice's Hair

It is hard to believe that there is a constellation in the seemingly barren area of sky between Arcturus in Bootes and Denebola in Leo. Nonetheless, Coma Berenices is tucked in there and it is full of interesting deep space objects. Under good conditions, the first thing you will notice in this area is the Coma Berenices Cluster. It is a loose, open cluster of 38 stars that is spread out over an area of 5° making it an ideal target for binoculars. On the other end of the spectrum, M53 is a bright, globular cluster situated near α Com that is excellent through any size telescope at high powers. But the real treasure of Coma Berenices is the collection of galaxies that spill over from Virgo as part of the Coma-Virgo Galaxy Cluster. There are 7 Messier galaxies within its borders, including M64, the Black-Eye galaxy. This aptly named galaxy has a distinctive dark lane of dust running along the NE periphery of the core that stands out against the relatively bright background.



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