Editor’s Corner

Oct 12 is the remaining Mt Wilson 60-inch night. I highly recommend this opportunity to view through one of the largest telescopes we amateurs have access to. Even the eyepieces are extremely large, almost like looking at a smartphone. The views will be like nothing you’ve seen in any telescope!

Tim Thompson writes this month on Ford Observatory. He gives a good description of the history, and what the LAAS hopes to do with this unique facility. Please read his article and help the LAAS determine what we can do once we acquire this observatory.

In October we have two special events, the LAAS Open House and Barbecue Sat Oct 6th, and Science Night Wed Oct 24th, both at Garvey Ranch Park.

Please note that the October and November general meetings are scheduled later in the month than usual. See our Calendar of Events on page 15.

After two excellent speakers from our own ranks of observers, Tim Thompson and Herbert Kraus, we have a non-LAAS person speak on a more research oriented topic. See page 3 for details.

We’re still missing equipment from our Garvey Ranch Park facilities. If you know anything, please contact

(Continued on page 3)
David Sovereign; see page 10 for details.

The Lockwood Valley facility rules are available at:
http://www.laas.org/Lockwood_Valley_Public_Rules.pdf

Articles and photographs are always welcome. They should be focused on things of interest to our members. Please keep articles to 1,500 words or less. Please submit only a few images at a time, with a caption for each, and include such information as camera/equipment used, and exposure times. The deadline for submitting bulletin material is the 10th of each month. If possible, please submit through email to dinakamoto@hotmail.com

Material may also be sent to the LAAS address listed at the top of the column on page 2. ✿

David Nakamoto

October General Meeting
Speaker

Mariam Mkhitaryan will be the Guest Speaker for the General Meeting in October, 2012.

Mariam is a student at Pasadena City College and works at Helio Research (heliosearch.org). She is pursuing an undergraduate degree in Astronomy with specialization in Solar Astronomy. Mariam is currently researching newly active regions through analyzing a target from a Nov 7, 2010 dataset. Through the analysis of data collected from Solar Dynamics Observatory and the Dutch Open Telescope, Mariam has confirmed a result of Bruzek A.'s research "On Arch Filaments and Spotgroups" and she is still studying the region to understand Ellerman Bombs and their relationship with the magnetic field. Mariam will talk about the progression of this research at the October meeting. ✿

Soylent Co.

Proud to sponsor amateur Astronomical endeavors like the LAAS.
Providers of high protein supplements, made from seaweed and other high-yield protein sources.
Remember — Soylent Green is people.
LAAS has arranged for two half-nights and one full-night at the Mount Wilson 60-inch telescope this year. All three are New Moon nights. Half-nights are until 1:00 am.

Oct 12th, Fri (half night)

Only LAAS members are allowed to sign up. If there is still room two (2) weeks prior to the date, paying guests will be permitted. Everyone who shows up, whether family member, friend, or guest, will have to pay in order to be allowed in the 60-inch telescope observatory. The cost is $85 per person for the full night (no half night reservations on a full-night outing), and $45 per person for the half night. We are allowed to accommodate only a limited number of participants at each session, and your reservations are being accepted on a first come, first serve, basis.

To secure your reservation, send in your request AND A CHECK payable to LAAS to our Treasurer at:

P.O. Box 56084
Sherman Oaks, CA 91413

Any LAAS member who has not been to a 60-inch night at Mount Wilson should consider it as an opportunity to visit astronomy history. To see the location and equipment used by giants such as Shapley and Hubble will add to your appreciation of their contributions.

The scope will belong to LAAS for the time indicated. We mutually agree upon which objects to view. Often, a member is the operator, so it is a very comfortable environment. (Do bring a coat, however). The viewing is without a doubt the best you are likely to see in your lifetime.

If you need any further information about attending these nights on Mount Wilson, contact our Treasurer at treasurer@laas.org or by mail at P.O. Box 56084, Sherman Oaks, CA 91413. ✽
There are two observatories named after Clinton Baker Ford. One of them is owned and operated by Ithaca College, a private college located in Ithaca, New York, and is on the college campus. The other is owned and operated by the American Association of Variable Star Observers (AAVSO), and is located near Wrightwood, California. The Los Angeles Astronomical Society (LAAS) is in the process of acquiring the observatory near Wrightwood, as a donation from the AAVSO, and by the time you read this, that process may already have been completed. I will refer to the California observatory simply as Ford Observatory.

(Continued on page 6)
The AAVSO was founded in 1911, primarily through the efforts of William Tyler Olcott. He was a “gentleman lawyer” by occupation, but an avid amateur astronomer as well. He had responded to requests from Edward Pickering, director of Harvard College Observatory, and began to submit his observations to Pickering in 1910. In August 1911 H.C. Wilson, editor of Popular Astronomy, had asked “What can amateurs do?” Olcott responded by announcing his establishment of the AAVSO, inviting other amateurs to join him. This was the beginning of a long tradition of amateur, eyeball observations of variable stars. By using standard finder charts including the magnitude of stars in the field, the observer can by comparison estimate the apparent magnitude of the target star. In some cases, a star can visibly and significantly vary in brightness over a single night, or even a few hours. Cepheid class variables change in brightness with periods of a few days. Some vary with longer periods. And some massive, unstable stars, red supergiants like Betelgeuse, will vary unpredictably. Large numbers of amateurs can observe large numbers of stars, and establish light curves (brightness as a function of time) which professionals can then use to plan their own observations, or perhaps test physical models of stellar variability. The AAVSO is one of the most successful examples of fruitful cooperation between the amateur & professional astronomy communities.

Clinton B. Ford was born on 1 March 1913 in Ann Arbor, Michigan. He never lost his youthful interest in astronomy and music, receiving an M.A. degree in astronomy from the University of Michigan in 1936, and performing in chamber music groups with violin & viola. He was on the faculty at Brown University and Smith College. He was an instructor in navigation and astronomy for the U.S. Navy during WWII. He was also a savvy investor, earned several million dollars in the stock market, and was generous with that money. In 1953, when the AAVSO lost its headquarters at Harvard College Observatory, the organization had only about $6000 on hand. The AAVSO would likely have disappeared, but Ford anonymously funded the AAVSO for many years, and in 1986, provided the money for a permanent AAVSO facility, which is now the Clinton B. Ford Astronomical Data and Research Center. When he passed away due to complications from diabetes, on 23 September 1990, he left substantial amounts of money to the AAVSO, the American Chamber Music Players, Inc., Ithaca College, and the Center for the History of Physics of the American Institute of Physics (this is the Clinton B. Ford Endowment, with a preference for projects in the history of astronomy). During his lifetime he submitted 62,754 variable star observations to the AAVSO database. He also used Ford Observatory for many of the observations used to create the standard finder charts for the AAVSO. Asteroid 3185 Clintford is named after him.

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Ford Observatory is named after Ford because he paid for it. Mount Peltier is named after another of the charter members of the “Mount Peltier Association”, Leslie Copus Peltier. He was born on 2 January 1900 on a farm near Delphos, Ohio. Unlike the younger Ford, he did not finish high school and so had relatively little formal education. He made his living as a designer of children’s toys and furniture. But he also amassed a significant library and became a self educated astronomer and naturalist, receiving an honorary Doctor of Science degree from Bowling State University in 1947. The high school in Delphos awarded him a belated high school diploma in 1975. He passed away on 10 May 1980. During his lifetime he submitted over 132,000 variable star observations to the AAVSO, and from the age of 16 did not miss a single monthly report. He wrote “Starlight Nights: The Adventures of a Star-Gazer” in 1965, and “The Place on Jennings Creek” in 1977, the latter written about his family’s own home and its natural surroundings, in the style of a 19th century naturalist. Harlow Shapley referred to Peltier as “The world’s greatest non-professional astronomer”. He also discovered 11 comets and 2 novae. Asteroid 3850 Peltier is named after him.

The third founding member of Ford Observatory in California was Thomas A. Cragg, a former President (1960) of the Los Angeles Astronomical Society. He was as solar observer at Mount Wilson Observatory and a guide at Griffith Observatory. In 1976 he moved to Australia and was chief night assistant at the Siding Spring Observatory until his retirement in 1992. Born in 1928, he passed away on 6 May 2011. During his lifetime he submitted 154,056 variable star observations to the AAVSO database. Cragg was particularly interested in cepheid class variable stars and was chair of the AAVSO cepheid committee. He was also an active member of the Association of Lunar and Planetary Observers (ALPO). Asteroid 5068 Cragg is named after him.

The remaining founding members of the Mount Peltier Association are Larry C. Bornhurst, Claude B. Carpenter, Ernest Lorenz and Arthur Stokes. Bornhurst is an electrical contractor who went on to be superintendent at Mount Wilson Observatory and at Kitt Peak. He is the only surviving member of the group and now lives in Tucson, Arizona, but did not respond to my attempts to contact him. Carpenter owned the 18-inch f/7 Newtonian reflector telescope. Lorenz was a solar observer and worked at Caltech. Stokes specialized in photoelectric photometry (PEP) and had intended at one point to do PEP on cataclysmic variable stars at Ford Observatory.

Ford Observatory was dedicated on 24 August 1965 and sits 7473 feet above sea level on informally named Mount Peltier, formally known as Hill 7473, east of Table Mountain, in the Angeles National Forest west of Wrightwood. The observatory is built around an 18-inch f/7 Newtonian reflector, optimized for

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variable star observing, and mostly made by Clifford Seauvageau of Detroit Michigan. Claude Carpenter donated the telescope to Ford Observatory, in view of deteriorating conditions of light & seeing at his home in Menifee Valley. The dome is a roughly 20-foot Ash Dome. It’s a two story building with the telescope upstairs. There is a bunk room & sitting room downstairs and there is electric heat downstairs. There is an Incinolet brand electric incinerating “toilet”; it works, but the smell is not always appreciated and most people don’t bother with it. There is limited ground around the observatory, so this is not a facility like the Steve Kufeld Astronomical Site in Lockwood Valley, that can handle large numbers of people. Rather, it is a much smaller and more specialized facility.

Personally, I would like to see Ford Observatory become the focus for a special interest group in the LAAS for observing variable stars, with observations submitted to the AAVSO, which is now a long standing amateur partner to the professional astronomy community. This is a great opportunity for the LAAS and its members. But the acquisition of Ford Observatory is really a long term investment for the LAAS. There will be significant discussion about how the LAAS should include Ford Observatory amongst its assets & membership structure. At the moment, the board has established a Ford Observatory Membership, similar to the more familiar Star Membership, at $150 per year in addition to regular member dues. Just as Star Members gain regular access to the Steve Kufeld Astronomical Site in Lockwood Valley, Ford Observatory Members will gain regular access to Ford Observatory. But unlike the Lockwood Valley site, Ford Observatory requires training & preparation before one can expect unfettered access. A core of observers already using Ford Observatory is now working on detailed plans for this, and the LAAS Board of Directors has appointed me as chairman of the Ford Committee. So, if anyone out there has any ideas about Ford Observatory, or is interested in becoming a Ford Observatory Member, then by all means tell me.

The 18 inch f/7 Newtonian telescope is the heart of Ford observatory.
LAAS will have our annual Open House and Star BQue on Saturday October 6, 2012. We have reserved the picnic and barbecue area at Garvey Ranch Park for the day and will move into the Community Center classroom and observatory in the evening. We have not yet decided on a specific starting time but we’ll get those BBQ grills heated up and ready to go at around 4:00 PM. (Sunset is at 6:30 PM.)

In the past, this event was called the New Members Potluck. It is still a potluck and we hope that you will bring a dish to share with the group. We are asking those of you who enjoy cooking to help us at the grills, cooking your favorite meats or vegetables. Salads of all kinds are welcome and remember that we will be eating outside so bring something that can be served safely at room temperature. Last year the desserts were enjoyed by all which will be served in the classroom area. Our group loves their sweets! Anyone interested in a cake bake-off contest?

Hot dogs and hamburgers will be provided for all members along with buns. Charcoal will be provided along with paper plates, plastic utensils, napkins, and ice. We’ll need drinks (non-alcoholic) and whatever else you’d like to bring along.

Volunteers! We need volunteers! We need someone to organize the food, help with set-up and clean-up, putting up chairs and tables, and greeting people. Please contact Sadie DeStefano if you would like to help out. Sadie will be organizing the event as the New Member Coordinator. There will be a Speaker later in the evening and some other activities of interest. She can be reached at: newmembers@laas.org. If people are planning on bringing telescopes, email Sadie also. We definitely could use a solar telescope or two.

Save October 6 on your calendar! We hope you’ll join us for an evening of food and fun at Garvey Ranch Park. Come on by and meet the Board members and other Officers of LAAS. We encourage all NEW members to attend and please feel free to bring your family members. Bring your scopes along for a star party out on the lawn.

Garvey Ranch Park
781 S. Orange Ave.
Monterey Park, CA. 91755

Andee Sherwood
A few items are missing from the Garvey Ranch Park facility. Parts of the LAAS solar telescope can not be found. These include the aluminum mounting plate with attached Vixen style dovetail bar and counterweight for the Orion mount. Also missing is a 16.3mm eyepiece made by Galand that is used with the 8" refractor. If anyone has seen these items call Mary Brown at (626) 791-2740 or David Sovereign at (626) 794-0646.

ALERT!
Missing Items from Garvey Ranch Park

Brendan Fisher and his 20-inch Dobsonian at the August 18th dark sky night at Lockwood Valley. Brendan is a brand new member, and a new life member. Image taken by Herb Kraus.
**New Members**

The new members approved at last month’s board meeting are:

- Soseh Melkonian
- Stephen Mullin
- Nicole Prado
- Clarissa Rodríguez
- Barry Taylor
- David Valdez
- Maxwell Ward

Welcome to our club, and we hope you’ll enjoy your Astronomy with all of us! ♡

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**Loaner Telescope Program**

Due to the relative in-activity in the loaner program, the Loaner Corner has been dormant for the last several months. Due to the recent activity this has been awakened. The spring and summer star seasons are just around the corner and now is the time to consider borrowing a telescope from the LAAS. The following instruments are currently available.

- LAAS-1: Celestron 4.5" f/8 reflector on a genuine Polaris equatorial mount.
- LAAS-2: Upgraded Tasco 4.5" f/8 reflector on an Edmund equatorial mount with an internal clock drive.
- LAAS-4: Telescopics 6" f/5 reflector on a Dobsonian mount.
- LAAS-6: Discovery Instruments 10" f/4.5 reflector on a Dobsonian mount. This is a large instrument especially good for deep sky observation. It is rather large. Therefore anyone considering this instrument should have access to a small truck, van, or SUV.
- LAAS-7: Meade 80mm f/15 refractor on an Orion Sky-View Deluxe equatorial.
- LAAS-9: 80mm refractor on a Celestron heavy duty camera tripod. This is a good Rich Field Telescope.
- LAAS-10: Meade 70mm f/10 refractor on a light equatorial mount. This instrument is currently under development and will include 3 eyepieces and a star diagonal.

For more information call David Sovereign at (626) 794-0646. ♡
Griffith Observatory
Public Star Party Procedure

Before 6:00pm, show your LAAS badge or card to the traffic control person at the fork at the top of Vermont road just before you reach the tunnel. You’ll be allowed to drive up East Observatory Ave. After 6:00pm, no one is allowed to drive up East Observatory Ave, and you’ll need to drive through the tunnel, up West Observatory Ave., and through the public parking lot to the traffic control person at the end of the lot. Show the person there your badge and they should let you through. Once at the U curve in front of the Observatory, temporarily park your car on the side nearest to the observatory and unload your equipment. A cart will be available to facilitate moving your equipment. Unload your equipment at the spot where you wish to set up. Mary will oversee your equipment while you park along East Observatory Rd. Then set up your equipment.

Volunteers without equipment are also needed. We especially need help with crowd control with the LAAS 26-inch telescope.

Those who volunteer should remember that the main focus is to be of service to the patrons at Griffith Observatory and show them the nighttime sky. New Members are not expected to adhere to this policy.

Please check the LAAS website and Yahoo group messages for changes and updates to any LAAS event.

To be trained in moving, setting up, and preparing the 26-inch, please attend one of the Griffith public star party events. We normally start setting it up around one hour before sunset, weather permitting. We’d like as many members to be trained and comfortable handling the telescope.

Have fun and enjoy! ☀️

PJ Goldfinger & David Nakamoto
Outreach Program

We've got a large number of requests despite the Recession and the cutback in school funding.

We especially need people living in the San Gabriel Valley to go to outreach events there. Nearly all of the regular volunteers live in the San Fernando Valley, so the need in the “other” valley is great.

Come on out to the school and show all the enthusiastic kids, parents, and teachers the night sky. They always appreciate it. And if you get WOW's when they look through you scope, you'll feel good. If no scope, come out anyway and help up set up or answer questions from the kids. So, Outreach volunteers, let's pitch in. I'm sure the kids and adults will appreciate our effort. Thanks!

outreach@laas.org   (213) 673 - 7355 ✤

(Editors Note: Be aware that often these requests come with very little advanced notice. Therefore, we won't post any events in the bulletin. The best way to get news of these events is to use the Internet and join the LAAS Yahoo group. To join the LAAS Yahoo group, see below.) ✤

Heven Renteria
LAAS Email Lists

The LAAS maintains two E-mail lists, for LAAS members only, a general list and an announcements list. Instructions for joining either list can be found in the LAAS web pages under Resources → Newsgroups.

Or look at the bottom of this article for instructions.

The announcements list is intended for announcements of events such as upcoming speakers, special star parties, or other functions planned by the LAAS board. General members are not expected to respond on this list, just to receive announcements. It is a very low traffic list. Every member should join this group.

The general list is intended for use by all LAAS members to communicate with each other; ask questions about events, ask questions about astronomy or the LAAS, plan your own events, ask for help with a telescope, or just talk about something relating to astronomy. Traffic will vary greatly depending on member interest & current events.

The LAAS does not automatically put anyone on an E-mail list; you have to choose to do it. E-mail is the most efficient way for the board of directors to communicate quickly with the members, and for the members to communicate with each other. We ask all members to join the announcements list, and ask all members to consider joining the general list.

The group is private, and therefore does not come up in a search. To join, send email to: LAAS-subscribe@yahoogroups.com. Include your full name so the moderator can verify your LAAS membership. If approved, you will receive further instructions via email. ✩
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<th>Date</th>
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| Oct 3rd (Wed) | Board Mtg                    | Garvey Ranch Park  
See map pg 13                                                               |
| Oct 6th (Sat) | Open House & Star BBQ        | Garvey Ranch Park.  
Starting 4:00pm  
See pg 9.                                                                 |
| Oct 12th (Fri) | Mt Wilson Night              | See pg 4.                                                                     |
| Oct 13th (Sat) | Dark Sky Star Party          | Lockwood Valley  
| Oct 20th (Sat) | Public Star Party            | Griffith Observatory  
2:00pm to 10:00pm  
Procedures and Rules on pg 12.                                                |
| Oct 22nd (Mon) | General Meeting              | Griffith Observatory Event Horizon Theater  
8:00pm to 9:45pm.  
Speaker and topic on pg 3.                                                      |
| Oct 24th (Wed) | Science Night                | Garvey Ranch Park  
7:00pm to 10:00pm                                                            |
| Nov 7th (Wed)  | Board Mtg                    | Garvey Ranch Park  
See map pg 13                                                               |
| Nov 10th (Sat) | Dark Sky Star Party          | Lockwood Valley  
| Nov 17th (Sat) | Public Star Party            | Griffith Observatory  
2:00pm to 10:00pm  
Procedures and Rules on pg 12.                                                |
| Nov 19th (Mon) | General Meeting              | Griffith Observatory Event Horizon Theater  
8:00pm to 9:45pm.  
Speaker and topic unknown.                                                      |
Membership Annual Dues:

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<td>Senior Citizen (65 and up)</td>
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Additional fees:

- Charter Star member: $30.00
- Star member, with pad: $70.00
- Star member, no pad: $60.00
- Printed Bulletin: $15.00

(Membership due date is indicated on the mailing label)

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**Handy Phone List**

- LAAS Answering Machine: (213) 673-7355
- Griffith Observatory: (213) 473-0800
- Sky Report: (213) 473-0880
- Lockwood Site: (661) 245-2106
  - (not answered, arrange time with caller.
  - Outgoing calls – collect or calling card)
- Mt. Wilson Institute: (626) 793-3100

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Sky and Telescope Subscriptions

Sky and Telescope subscriptions renewals should be sent directly to Sky Publishing. To start a Sky & Telescope subscription at club rates, send a check payable to “Sky & Telescope” in the amount of $32.95 for a one year subscription to:

**LAAS treasurer**
P.O. Box 56084
Sherman Oaks, CA 91413

Be sure to include the exact name and mailing address for your subscription.

Then thereafter send the renewal bills directly to Sky Publishing.

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Astronomy Magazine Subscriptions

For a club rate subscription to **Astronomy**, send a check payable to Kalmbach Publishing Co. in the amount of $34 for one year or $60 for two years to:

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Sherman Oaks, CA 91413

Be sure to include the exact name and mailing address for your subscription. That magazine also requires later subscription renewals to be handled through the LAAS Treasurer.