RVAS Annual Picnic and Star Party

Food, Friendship and Fun!

by Frank Baratta

Friday night had been beautiful, the waxing gibbous
moon etched against the illuminated darkness. So
the totally overcast sky that greeted me the next
morning—picnic day—was a spirit-dampener, to say
the least. Yet, hope springs eternal. As the morn-
ing wore on and picnic preparations proceeded at
our house, a bit of blue here and there would break
through. By 1:00 p.m. the sun was joyfully shining
in a sky more blue than gray. But it didn’t last. By
2:00 p.m. the cover of cloud had returned. And we
were running late.

Quite a few people were already on hand, chatting
and setting up, when we pulled up to the Apple
Ridge Farm (ARF) pavilion shortly before 4:00.
The club’s Coronado and what appeared to be an-
other solar scope and a small equatorial reflector
were set up near the entrance to the pavilion.
Clouds and blue sky had competed for a while for
the earlier arrivals. But the blue was now all but
gone, so I left my solar scope in the trunk of our
old, but reliable, Hyundai. Out with the ice chest
and water, food, and numerous other picnic items
we had brought. Join in the set up. Stop and chat
with old friends and new. Picnickers continued
arriving. We would soon number 53 adults, teens
and children, a record for our annual event.

Early arrivers to the picnic enjoyed a mix of sun and
clouds

Photo by Greg Hemmings

As meal preparations proceeded, RVAS Past Presi-
dent Michael Good led a few of the picnickers in a
caravan up the ridge for a preview visit to the ARF
observatory. But it wasn’t long before the breeze
carried the aroma of charcoal, burgers and hot

(Picnic Continued on page 2)
dogs. Once again, Mark Hodges was our Chef du Jour, and his excellent skills were hard at the task. A few paces away, the food tables were laden with side dishes, salads and desserts too numerous to list. No one was going away hungry from this picnic! Shortly after 5:00 the first batch of meats reached the food tables and RVAS President Michael Martin called everyone to begin getting their dinners. The lines were already queuing up. He didn’t need to ask twice.

Mark Hodges, once again our picnic’s burgers and dogs master, grills the first batch.

Photo by Dave Thomas

It takes a while for 53 people to dress their hamburgers and hotdogs, fill their plates and move through the buffet when there are so many options to choose from. And in the diners’ eagerness to do so, the decibel level had noticeably risen. This persisted until most everyone was seated and had begun their feast. Then, just as noticeably, a relative quiet descended on the group, as attentions were directed toward savoring the first bites of the meal. Anticipations thus quelled, conversation returned to a level typical of 50-plus people, and an air of bonhomie pervaded the pavilion.

After allowing time for “seconds”—and, dare we say, some “thirds”—our after-dinner speakers and activities got under way. First to speak was

(Picnic Continued from page 1)
Michael Good, who, in addition to being our Past President, is also an ARF Board Member. Michael has had a long and deep relationship with ARF, including being one of the driving forces in the development, construction and maintenance of its observatory. For those less acquainted with ARF, he outlined its youth development mission and the emphasis it places on those from disadvantaged backgrounds. The organization has an expansive vision and has even attracted international recognition. Numerous RVAS members have contributed to ARF through their efforts and support, including helping construct the observatory and in other ways as well. Michael encouraged those present to also become supporters, and invited all to join him at the observatory after the picnic activities had concluded.

Ray Bradley, RVAS Executive Committee Member at Large and our Outreach Coordinator, spoke next on our upcoming outreach activities. Four more are currently scheduled for the remainder of 2019, plus two others in February 2020. October 21st at the Bent Mountain Library and February 1st and 15th are Intro to Astronomy and observing sessions. October 26th is the Science Museum’s Spooktacular. November 11th boasts two sessions: observing the Mercury Transit earlier in the day and STEM night at Back Creek Elementary in the evening.

Ray then called on his wife, Rene’, daughter Sierra and son Darien to join him for the presentation of Outreach Participation Pins to members of the RVAS. During 2018, the RVAS had conducted 26 outreach events, with a total of 24 members participating. Of the 24, 18 pins were awarded at the picnic to: Carolyn and Frank Baratta; Darien, Ray, Rene’ and Sierra Bradley; Carolyn and Dan Chrisman; Michael Good; Genevieve and John Goss; Greg Hemmings; Michael Hutkin; Josh and Robin Jones; Michael Martin; John Sheffey; and John Spruhan. Other members being awarded pins are Rand Bowden, Dwight Holland (former member), Roger Pommerenke, Rick Rader, Clark Thomas and Keith Wimmer.

Following the Outreach segment, President Martin declared that the time had come for our prize drawings. A total of 24 prizes were drawn, ranging from a vintage Selsi 4.5” Newtonian telescope, Orion binoculars, custom-framed images to books, free RVAS memberships and even special prizes for the children attending the picnic. Top winners for the evening were RVAS Vice-President Todd Atkins, who defied the odds to win both the telescope and binoculars (!), and Ray, Rene’, Sierra and Darien Bradley, all of whom won prizes, likewise defying the odds. Ed and Janet Dixon and John and

RVAS Past President and ARF Board Member Michael Good speaks to the group after dinner.

Photo by the Author

RVAS Executive Committee Member at Large Ray Bradley (left), wife Rene’, daughter Sierra and son Darien award an Outreach pin to Greg Hemmings.

Photo by the Author

(Picnic Continued on page 4)
Genevieve Goss each won prizes. Also winning a prize were Michael Good, Robin Jones, Diane Malpass, Leila Quinlan, J.R. Sheffey, John Spruhan, Remona Thomas, and Sierra Thompson. Children receiving prizes included Penny Durham, Lily Martin, Micah Mason, Alice Quinlan and Bryce Quinlan. A complete listing of the prizes and winners can be found elsewhere in this newsletter. Congratulations to all our winners!

Our sincere and deep appreciation goes to those who contributed prizes for our drawings. First and foremost, our thanks go to Charles Sheffey (brother of member John Sheffey), who’s a supervisor with Franken Frames, of Johnson City, Tennessee, for the outstanding custom framing of the astrophoto prizes, and to Michael Good and Michael Martin for each providing two of the photos. We also recognize and thank the following members for contributing prizes: Frank Baratta, Dan Chrisman, Bill Dillon and John Goss, along with anonymous donors of the Selsi telescope and the Sky & Telescope subscription.

There was still one more prize, and one for all to enjoy. As our post-dinner activities had proceeded, little by little the clouds that had besieged us were breaking up again and the late afternoon sky had begun to clear. (Just as Michael Malpass and his smart phone weather app had earlier suggested!) It appeared that all who stayed might be able to enjoy some night sky viewing. So, as afternoon moved into early evening and dusk, people swung into clean-up mode and to carrying telescopes and picnic paraphernalia to their cars. Some were soon heading up the road to the ARF observatory.

Michael Good, who had stayed at the pavilion stowing picnic tables and chairs and locking up, headed for the observatory a bit later and found about 20 picnickers awaiting him. None had set up a scope of their own. Michael spoke to the group about the facility’s operation (obtaining help from some of the visitors with opening the roll-off roof) and features of this site compared to Cahas Knob Overlook on the Parkway. He also talked about the nature of our vision, as well as the adjacent eBase, the USA’s first totally off-grid educational facility.
The sky was becoming partly cloudy as Michael turned the group's attention to observing. The ARF observatory houses two Meade Schmidt-Cassegrain telescopes on pier mounts, a 12" and an 8". The first target was Saturn, which was "tack sharp" in the 8". West of Saturn and more than 10° lower, Jupiter showed some equatorial banding, along with its Galilean moons. Meanwhile, Michael trained the 12" on an area about three-fourths of the way back from Jupiter to Saturn, where he located the grand globular cluster M22 using the scope's finder, a non-trivial act, given the skyglow from the rising, nearly full moon. The cluster was fully resolved at about 120 power with a 25mm eyepiece. At one point, the 12" telescope seemed to be having a power-related problem slewing (turning). Fortunately, new member Ed Dixon offered the use of a porta-pack battery he had with him that remedied the problem.

Unfortunately, before the moon could rise to a viewable altitude, the sky clouded over completely, so the group had to be content with observing three objects. But the three had been Saturn, Jupiter and M22, among the finest celestial objects visible.

As Michael and some of the group closed the roof and locked up, some drifted to their cars for the drive home. Soon Michael and the others would be on their way as well. It had been a fine day and enjoyable evening.

(See elsewhere in this issue for comments from members about the picnic and more scenes from the event.)
The club has held a lot of picnics and star parties over the years. But you'd be hard-pressed to find someone among the 53 people who attended the 2019 edition on October 12th who didn't head home with a smile on their face. Simply stated, we have a great club! A warm and welcoming bunch of friendly people—and a lot of great cooks! Here are the comments from picnickers who took a few moments to put their thoughts about our event in writing.

- **Robert and Rhonda Capobianco** (Our Newest Members) -- We just wanted to communicate our appreciation to the picnic attendees who all made us feel very comfortable and welcomed. Thank you all.

- **Dan Chrisman** -- After dinner, members filled the Apple Ridge Farm Dark Skies Observatory, approaching the facility’s maximum occupancy. ARF board member Michael Good provided views of Jupiter and Saturn through the two pier-mounted telescopes to the members. We were also treated to observing the international space station in the south western sky.

- **Ed Dixon** (Our Next Newest Member) -- Thanks again for the club picnic at Apple Ridge, which is quite a place. It was good seeing so many there with families and stories. We went up to the observatory and got to spend some time there with maybe a dozen others who also made the trek up the hill. The two scopes there are really nice!

- **John Goss** -- Thank you for organizing and implementing what turned out to be a wonderful RVAS picnic! It takes a team - and good weather - to pull off such an event. The venue, the grilling, the presentations, the awards, the door prizes - and the food were all perfect! I’m sure that the sizable crowd agrees, and I’m sure that they all left with a good feeling. Genevieve and I did!

- **Greg Hemmings** -- I had a GREAT time! The food was excellent with many varieties to choose from! I was also very impressed with the high quality of the door prizes!
• Harry Kessler — Our daughter, Leila, and her children, Alice and Bryce, had a great time. Apple Ridge is a wonderful venue. Alice and I walked up to the observatory. We caught a ride with John from the cabooses on to the observatory. Alice was impressed with the scopes and view of the sky. We walked all the way back to the car. She talked non-stop down the mountain asking and explaining everything that was going on in her 8-year old brain. It was a great time for both of us. Thanks to all from me and Lynne for a stellar event.

• Eddie Leonard -- There was a warm feeling that overcame the chilly wind. A great place to have the picnic, my first time there. Thanks to all who planned the picnic and to Michael Good for the time at the observatory.

• Michael Martin -- The longevity and strength of our club is evident on evenings such as this. I was thrilled that we had a record number of people come out for food and fellowship. My thanks to all those who helped organize this event and those of you who helped Lauren and me chase and carry Lily around.

• John Sheffey -- Great time at the picnic! I enjoyed my first visit to Apple Ridge Farm. I especially like the volunteer work our club has put in with the camp over the years. It was special to see the sky open long enough for Michael Good to give us a quick tutorial on the observatory operations. He then lined up Jupiter, Saturn, and M-22 for a nice group of us to view. We even got a view of the ISS tracking across the lower skies for about 5 minutes. Truly a great night wind-down with good folks and fair skies.

• John Spruhan -- I enjoyed coming to the picnic, riding up and back with Eddie Leonard, as I can’t drive at night. It was a treat to go to the observatory and look at Jupiter and Saturn. I met some people that I hadn’t met before. This is the first picnic of the club that I have come to, and I will come again. I even won a prize!

• Vince St. Angelo -- Plenty of good food and companionship. Thanks to the RVAS team for all your effort in pulling this off. I enjoy the fellowship our picnic offers every year. It was about a 1:50 minute drive from my house each way. I took the parkway from Blue Ridge to where it intersects with 221 just north of Copper Hill to avoid the traffic in Roanoke and hopefully shave a few minutes. The drive on the parkway was beautiful and I did stop to snap a few photos on the way.

Use Our Message Line!

Want to check whether anyone is getting out on a scheduled observing session night or share that you’re planning to do so? Have questions about the club or need its assistance? Call the RVAS Message Line, 540-774-5651, and leave a message or listen for any information available.
RVAS 2019 Picnic and Star Party

Door Prizes and Winners

Orion E-Series Astro Binoculars - Todd Atkins
Orion StarShoot USB Eyepiece Camera II - John ("J.R.") Sheffey, Jr.
Olympus Digital Voice Recorder (courtesy of Dan Chrisman) - John Spruhan
Sky & Telescope Subscription (courtesy of Anonymous) - Michael Good
Free 2020-2021 RVAS Membership - Sierra Bradley
Free 2019-2020 RVAS Membership - Ed Dixon
Gosky Smartphone Digiscoping Adapter - Genevieve Goss
Gosky Smartphone Digiscoping Adapter - Darien Bradley
Amer. Mus. Of Natural History Astronomy DVD Set - Janet Dixon
"Atlas of Central Solar Eclipses in the USA", by Fred Espenak (signed) - Remona Thomas
Framed Astrophoto - Robin Jones
Framed Astrophoto - Rene' Bradley
Framed Astrophoto - Ray Bradley
Framed Astrophoto - Sierra Thompson
"Einstein's Cosmos", by Michio Kaku - Leila Quinlan
"How to Find a Habitable Planet", by James Kasting - John Goss
Guy Ottewell Poster - Diane Malpass
Urban Light Filter - Bill Dillon
Special Telescope Drawing
Selsi 114mm, f/8.7 Newtonian - Todd Atkins
Special Youth Gifts
"Sally Ride", by Sue Macy - Penny Durham
"Luciana", by Erin Teagan - Alice Quinlan
"Peterson First Guide to Astronomy", by Jay M. Pasachoff and "Moon Wheel" - Micah Mason
Hot Wheels car - Bryce Quinlan
Stuffed Hanging Star - Lily Martin

NSN Outreach Award Pins

Presented at the October 12th Picnic

Thanks to everyone who volunteered for community outreach during 2018, our club was eligible to receive the Night Sky Network’s Outreach Award Pins for each member who participated in an outreach event during the year. The 2019 Outreach Award Pin was designed to honor the historic 50th anniversary of the Apollo 11 Moon Landing. And these pins are available only to clubs who complete at least five events each year. (We completed 26 events in 2018!!!)
So, kudos to all members who contributed to our outreach success!!!

Recipients: Carolyn Baratta, Frank Baratta, Rand Bowden, Darien Bradley, Ray Bradley, Rene' Bradley, Sierra Bradley, Carolyn Chrisman, Dan Chrisman, Michael Good, Genevieve Goss, John Goss, Greg Hemmings, Dwight Holland, Michael Hutkin, Josh Jones, Robin Jones, Michael Martin, Roger Pommerenke, Rick Rader, John Sheffey, John Spruhan, Clark Thomas, Keith Wimmer.
RVAS from the Past

By Bill Dillon

RVAS 25 Years Ago

Newsletter articles from November 1994

Remote Controlled Telescope at Mt. Wilson

The lead article in the November 1994 Newsletter by Fred Hoffman described a new Mount Wilson Institute and JPL program which gives students remote access to time on a 24" Mt. Wilson reflector in their schools with the aid of special computer software. This Telescopes in Education (TIE) program offers the telescope to teachers and children from kindergarten through 12th grade at no cost. During the first two months the program attracted "several hundred inquiries"

VAAS Input Sought from Members

As the November 1994 monthly RVAS meeting approached, the Club Officers continued to struggle over whether to host the next (overdue) VAAS meeting. The article described the "guiding principles" for a meeting as being "simple" and "low cost", held at the Science Museum, with maybe a (low cost) speaker or two, and no telescope display, to be held on Saturday, April 1st (Mmmm.....April Fool's Day). Members were asked to "vote" on this potential meeting either before or at the November meeting.

Spacecraft's mission Ends in Fiery Descent

In a follow-up article to one included in the October Newsletter, Fred Hoffman described the final days of NASA's very successful Magellan program. After more than four years and 15,000 orbits of the planet Venus, the spacecraft finally succumbed to the stresses of the Venus atmosphere. On October 11th its thrusters were fired to lower Magellan's orbit and perform the final "windmill" experiment before failing power, dynamic forces and atmospheric friction shut down communications. On October 12th (a day to remember another explorer), at 6:02 EDT the craft's signal was finally lost.

Clear Skies Draw Members

On a clear October 7th night nine Club members, Shawn and Mike McKenzie, Andy Clark, Frank Baratta, Roger Poe, Scott and Liz Petty, Lynn Slonaker, and Bill Jones (all the way from Covington) enjoyed a great night of observing at Cahas (above the valley fog) with five scopes. Saturn, M13, the Dumbell and Veil nebulae and the Andromeda Galaxy were all good targets that night. Frank and Roger were the last to leave at 1:00 AM, despite Orion's rising tempting them to stay.

RVAS 10 Years Ago

Newsletter Articles from November 2009

"Go To" Scopes Go To the October RVAS Meeting

As described by John Goss in the lead article, "Five brave members lugged their GoTo equipment to the 5th floor lecture room for an evening of "show and tell". And tell they did that night to more than 30 members. Mark Hodges had his Celestron 11 inch

(Past Continued on page 11)
SCT with built-in GPS; Jiri Kolejka explained his variation, a “point-to” 10 inch Dobsonian scope; Dave Thomas described that without GPS his Meade 8 inch SCT was still accurate by using the hand-controller to enter time and location information; David Thaler explained how a product infringement legal battle between Celestron and Meade caused the experience with his Nexstar 8 inch “SkyAlign” system to be less than optimal; Last on the show and tell was Larry Hill with his Meade 6 inch EXT-LS with goto controller, built-in camera, GPS, coma-free optics and a speaker. In John’s words, “Almost like this thing is watching you”.

Take the Mira Challenge

Always ready to present members with an observing challenge, John Goss offered the brightest of the long period variable stars, Mira, or Omicron Ceti. From the beginning of November at about magnitude 5.0 to near 3.0 at Thanksgiving Mira offers a detectable change in a short period of time. A binocular observing project, John suggests would be to follow Mira until mid-March when the star will have dropped to well below 7th magnitude. As always, John’s challenge is accompanied by a chart and clear instructions as to how to locate Mira.

Changing Stars from Blobs into Star Points

In his article Michael Good describes (with before and after photos) how he used Noel Carboni’s Astronomy Tools for Photoshop to sharpen and “jazz-up” images he has taken of M27. Reprocessing his original image with the Carboni tool and stacking the luminance and color data using Registax v5 resulted in “a much more natural looking image”. He was especially pleased with the diffraction spikes he added.

Asterisms—Part Trois

In the last of his three-part series on Asterisms, Jack Gross suggests that we might consider “most of the distinctive patterns we see in the night sky as asterisms.” Jack also offers ten more asterisms for the reader to enjoy. These include “Kemble’s Cascade”, the “Toadstool”, and the “Mini Coathanger”. All ten of his examples include photos or pictures, location as well as informational history on the asterism. At the end he also offers a chart with over 100 points, for readers to create their own asterisms.

FOR SALE

Skywatcher 8” collapsible truss Dobsonian telescope.
Like new condition; pristine mirror. Two inch focuser with fine focus adjustment, StellarVue 9x50 illuminated finder, 25mm eyepiece, and laser collimator.
$400. Pickup only in Lexington, VA. If interested, email greg.hemmings2@gmail.com.
Welcome Mat

The Society bids a warm and cordial welcome to Robert, Rhonda and Robert, Jr. (Rob) Capobianco, from Huddleston, who joined in October with a Senior Family membership. Robert’s originally from Canton, Ohio; Rhonda’s a Huddleston native, but grew up in Chesapeake. His work life had been focused on plant management in the food industry; hers, in accounting, including becoming a Certified Public Accountant. The Capobiancos lived in Philadelphia for thirty years until about a year ago, when they shifted to living full-time at Smith Mountain Lake. Astronomy-wise, Robert recalls his childhood—sleeping out with friends, gazing at the stars and wanting to know more. It was also a time when science fiction, especially through such movies as “First Men on the Moon” and “When Worlds Collide”, captured his imagination. In more recent times, seeing the stars from the North Rim of the Grand Canyon and the Perseid meteors from Cape Hatteras added fuel to his interest. Then, about four Christmases ago, Rhonda bought him his first telescope, a 6-inch Orion Starseeker reflector, whose programmable capabilities he still puzzles over. Robert’s also gotten deeper into the subject, reading a lot about such mind-bending topics as quantum entanglement. This summer he learned about the RVAS while attending a program at Smith Mountain Lake State Park presented by some of our members. Now he’s looking forward to opportunities to learn and share, and the camaraderie of others similarly interested.

Robert, Rhonda and Rob, we’re glad to have you as members! Thanks for joining the RVAS. We hope you’ll find everyone to be welcoming and eager to hear about your experiences and tell you about their own. And maybe we can all learn how to program that scope of yours!

RVAS November Anniversaries

Membership Milestones

Welcome to the eighth installment in which we highlight our current members who are celebrating their anniversary with the club in November. As it happens, among current members, November takes the prize as the month when the largest number joined or rejoined—a full dozen! (Only July comes close, with 11.)

The November joiners and rejoinders, and their respective years of doing so, include: Ed Stinson (1989); Genievieve and John Goss (1995); Michael Good (1999); Gary Hatfield (rejoined 2002); Jeff Wood (2002); Rick Rader (2005); Larry Hill (2007); John Overstreet (rejoined in 2007); Mary Crouch (rejoined in 2012); Joel, Lindsey and Carson Ray (2014); Bill Emory (2015) and Mike, Robin, Jacob and David Shorter (2018).

Special thanks and our congratulations go to Ed Stinson, of Roanoke. As you can see, Ed’s another of our members who has reached the admirable milestone of 30 consecutive years with the club! In fact, he’s our 4th most senior member (after Mark Hodges, Frank Baratta and Bob Richert). Thank you, Ed.

Others who have reached milestones are Michael Good, 20 years, and the Ray family, 5 years. In addition, the Gosses are nearing their 25th; Rick Rader, his 15th; and Bill Emory, his 5th. Among our rejoinders, John Overstreet has 12 years in since coming back to the club in 2007, but at least 7 additional years from 1983 to 1990! Meanwhile, Mary Crouch had a bit over two years from 2007 to 2009 before rejoining in 2012. And Gary Hatfield and family had about a year and a half with the club from 200 to 2001 before rejoining in 2002.

Congratulations and thanks to all our November joiners and rejoinders!
Photographing M31, the Andromeda Galaxy, using a DSLR with a 300 MM zoom lens

By Dave Thomas

The above photo was made on October 18, 2019 using a Canon T7i DSLR equipped with a 300 mm zoom lens. The camera was mounted on a tripod with a iOptron Sky Guider Pro to track the object. A total of 11 exposures of 120 seconds each were stacked to make the final photo. The stacked photo was processed in GIMP software to bring out detail. The photo also shows the Andromeda satellite galaxies M110 and M32.
MONTHLY MEETING: Monday, November 18, 2019, 7:30 p.m., Classroom B, 3rd floor, Center on Church, Downtown Roanoke. This year we've been celebrating the 50th anniversary of Apollo 11. As such, 2019 has been labeled the “Year of the Moon.” During the past several months, John Goss, RVAS member and past president of the Astronomical League, has kept our focus squarely on the Moon with his Lunar Questions of the Day. John is our November meeting's featured speaker, and his program, “Observing at the Edge”, continues keeping our focus on the Moon, but perhaps not quite so squarely. See page 5 for details! Along with our featured program, we'll bring everyone up-to-date with announcements, observing and other reports, our monthly sky review and who knows what else? Join us on November 18th and find out!

RVAS WEEKEND OBSERVING OPPORTUNITIES: RVAS members observe from various sites, with Cahas Knob Overlook, at milepost 139 on the Blue Ridge Parkway, being our traditional location. For updates on members' observing plans, log onto the RVAS Yahoo Group (RVAS members only) and/or call the RVAS Message Line, 540-774-5651, about an hour before sunset on the indicated dates.

-- Friday and Saturday, November 22nd and 23rd. Sunset is at 5:05 p.m. Astronomical twilight ends at 6:37 p.m. The Moon sets at 2:25 and 2:58 p.m., respectively. (All times EST.)

-- Friday and Saturday, November 29th and 30th. Sunset is at 5:03 p.m. Astronomical twilight ends at 6:35 p.m. The Moon sets at 7:55 and 8:53 p.m., respectively. (All times EST.)

-- Future Weekend Observing Opportunities: December 20th and 21st; 27th and 28th.

ROANOKE CITY PARKS and RECREATION PUBLIC STARGAZE: Saturday, November 23rd, 6:00 p.m., Cahas Knob Overlook, milepost 139, Blue Ridge Parkway. Nonmembers must register with Parks & Rec. at 540-853-2236. Members can call 540-774-5651 for information. (Next session: December 21st, 5:45 p.m., Cahas Knob Overlook.)

Astro-Quiz

Two systems for labeling stars introduced in historical celestial atlases remain in use today. The first, Johann Bayer's of 1603, uses Greek and Roman letters. The second system, adopted over 100 years later, uses numbers. What are these numbers called and why is this ironic?

Answer to Last Month’s Quiz: Last month we asked about two interesting anomalies among the hundreds of known moons orbiting other bodies in the solar system. In particular, these two moons, Proteus, a moon of Neptune, and Hyperion, a moon of Saturn, are the only ones with a longest dimension exceeding 300 km lacking a spherical (or nearly so) shape. Proteus, named for an ancient Greek sea god, has a maximum dimension of 424 km and an irregular box-like shape. Hyperion, named for one of the Titans of Greek mythology, has a maximum dimension of 360 km and a shape reminiscent of a pock-marked baking potato. Have an answer to this month’s quiz (or a future question and answer to suggest)? E-mail it to astroquiz@rvasclub.org!