



SHENANDOAH ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY

December 2010



Program for December 13

LFCC 7:00 PM

We agreed at the last meeting to have a holiday season meeting in December again as we have done for the past several years. So whoever wishes to bring some simple goodies of some sort may do so. We do want to keep it pretty simple but we have the big table as well as a small side table to put stuff on. I plan to provide coffee.

For the program we will have a shortened presentation from the Universe series of programs. I am going to select a part of some presentation so we have some time just for some astro and small talk. This can be a good thing so we hope a lot of you will come out for the meeting.

Observing Sessions

We will participate in the monthly session at the Shenandoah County Park on Saturday evening, December 4, weather permitting.
(Jim Adkins, Editor)

JUPITER'S MINI-ALBIREO!

Mid-evening, November 20th, when Europa and Ganymede in my telescope were just a hair's breadth apart, I was surprised to see Europa as pale blue while Ganymede was golden. They looked like a mini-Albireo! This was in a steady sky at 80X in my 8" SCT.

At the time I was doing my "street" telescoping routine, so I asked my next dozen or so passerby lookers if they saw any color in the "top one". Without any color prompting, 4 or 5 of them said it looked blue, telling me my observation was objective.

I'd never before noticed any color differences in the Galilean moons. At 80x, which is my working magnification for Jupiter, they simply look like white stars. I emailed my observation to S&T editor Alan MacRobert asking for his opinion. He replied that in double-star observations genuine color differences can appear exaggerated and if there is a significant brightness difference, false colors appear. He added, "The faint star seems to take on some of the complementary color of the bright one, and it also takes on a bluer shade as well, and these mix with (or overpower) the faint star's real color. But Ganymede and Europa are only 0.7 magnitudes apart. However, the astronomical Almanac says their color indexes are almost identical: Europa 0.87, Ganymede 0.83, meaning Ganymede is just a trace bluer-on paper."

I invite any Shenandoah club members who are observing when Europa is just a "hair's breadth" from another moon, to please look closely to see if they can repeat my observation. I'll keep working at it, too. Jupiter's moons can be individually identified via the monthly charts in S&T and Astronomy.

(Herman Heyn, the Baltimore Sidewalk Astronomer)