



VCAS, P.O. Box 982, Simi Valley, CA 93062

WWW.VCAS.ORG

VCAS ALCor INFORMATION

Planetary Observers Club / Certificate



Planetary Observing Club Logo

Introduction:

Welcome to the Astronomical League's *Planetary Observers Club*. The P.O.C. is a list of twenty-seven selected projects designed to introduce you to the pleasures of planetary observing. Observing skills come only with experience and P.O.C. projects help train the eye to see in better detail.

Dark skies and moonless nights are not a priority for any of the listed projects. If you are intrigued by the enclosed projects, please consider the [Association of Lunar and Planetary Observers](#). ALPO members regularly observe solar system objects and contribute significantly to scientific research and our understanding of this corner of the universe. For more information you may contact:

ALPO Membership Sec./Treas.,
P.O. Box 13456
Springfield, IL 62791-3456.

Rules and Regulations:

To qualify for the AL's Planetary Observers Certificates and pins, you need only be a member of the Astronomical League, either

through VCAS or as a Member-at-Large, and complete 25 of the suggested projects. Complete details for each project are available online at <http://www.astroleague.org/al/obsclubs/plantery/plnobscl.html> or e-mail VCAS ALCor to receive all pertinent info on a single Word file. Record your sketches and observations on copies of the included log. Make as many copies of the log sheet as you will need. Fill in information appropriate to that project.

The following is a list of suggested projects:

Sun and Moon:

SUN: Sunrise, Sunset Azimuth Positions
MOON: Maria
MOON: Highlands
MOON: Crater Ages
MOON: Scarps
MOON: Occultation's

Inner Solar System:

MERCURY
VENUS: Low Power Crescent
VENUS: Daytime Observation
VENUS: Phases
MARS: Albedo Features
MARS: Retrograde Motion
ASTEROIDS: Course Plotting
ASTEROIDS: Measuring their Movement

The Projects for the Outer Solar System:

JUPITER: The Great Red Spot
JUPITER: The Galilean Satellites
JUPITER: The Cloud Belts
JUPITER: Satellite Discovery
JUPITER: Satellite Shadow Transits
JUPITER: Satellite Transits
JUPITER: Satellite Occultation's/Eclipses
SATURN: The Rings
SATURN: The Cassini Division
SATURN: Disk Markings
SATURN: The Satellites
URANUS: Locating
NEPTUNE: Identifying

To receive your Planetary Observer Certificate and pin (or if you have any questions



Mars and Phobos

or need assistance), simply send your sketches and data along with your name, address, and phone number to the VCAS ALCor at :

Tom deBoisblanc
972 Cedarcliff Court
Westlake Village, CA 91362
(805) 857-4908
e-mail: tomdeboisblanc@ieee.org

Some Suggested Resources:

Observing & Photographing the Solar System,
Dobbins, Parker, Capen
The Backyard Astronomers Guide,
Dickinson & Dyer
Stars & Planets, Peterson Field Guides,
Pasachoff
Encyclopedia of the Solar System, Academic Prs
Weissman, McFadden, Johnson

www.astroleague.org

They have a great online bookstore, logsheets, and pertinent information on the various observing programs.

The Sky Software

PROJECT LOG:

NAME OF PROJECT _____

Project Begun _____ Project Ended _____

Seeing Conditions _____

Binocular Size _____

Telescope: Type _____

Aperture _____

Focal Length _____

Eyepiece Focal Length _____

Observational Notes, Comments and Impressions:

Add pages with copies of any supplementary sketches.

ASTRONOMICAL SEEING

LEVEL ONE

Severely disturbed skies: Even low power* views are uselessly shaky. Go read a good book

LEVEL TWO

Poor seeing: Low power images are pretty steady, but medium powers are not.

LEVEL THREE

Good seeing: You can use about half the useful magnification of your scope. High powers* produce fidgety planets.

LEVEL FOUR

Excellent seeing: Medium-powers are crisp and stable. High-powers are good, but a little soft.

LEVEL FIVE

Superb seeing: Any power produces a good crisp image.

* The **PRACTICAL LOWEST** power magnification for any telescope is approximately 7 times for each inch of aperture.
Example: 28X for a 4-inch (100mm) diameter telescope.

* The **PRACTICAL HIGHEST** power magnification for any telescope is approximately 50 times for each inch of aperture.
Example: 200X for a 4-inch (100mm) diameter telescope.