

## HEAVENLY NEWS

### **“2009: The International Year of Astronomy”**

**By Chief Docent, Frank Dibbell, Cameron Park Rotary Club Community Observatory**

The Cameron Park Rotary Club Community Observatory is hosting a special event on Saturday, January 24th, 2009, at 6:00pm to view Venus in the night sky. As part of the International Year of Astronomy (IYA), the Cameron Park Rotary Community Observatory is hosting a series of evening events throughout the year focusing on sky objects and themes from the NASA IYA calendar.

While we are open every weekend evening, we want to welcome amateur astronomers and enthusiasts of all ages and skill levels to join us on the 24<sup>th</sup> for this special event. Our docents will be operating a number of telescopes looking at Venus and other celestial objects, explaining what we will be seeing and answering visitors' questions. Additionally, we will be presenting a formal demonstration on how telescopes actually work every half hour throughout the evening. And did I mention this is free?

The International Year of Astronomy is a global celebration of the 400th anniversary of the first use of an astronomical telescope by Galileo Galilei. Each month in 2009, NASA focuses on a different astronomical event or heavenly body. The Cameron Park Rotary Community Observatory will be hosting a special event each month in conjunction with these themes at the Observatory. Future Heavenly News articles will cover each of these events in turn. Additional information on each month's theme can be found on our website at [www.communityobservatory.com](http://www.communityobservatory.com).

January's theme is “Telescopes and Space Probes: Today's Starry Messengers” and focuses on our nearest planetary neighbor, Venus. In January, Venus is the brightest object in the night sky when looking to the west. The event's educational activity is “How Telescopes Work”. Using models, lenses, and mirrors, visitors will be able to touch, feel, and see how telescopes actually work! Additionally, visitors will find out how the eye works, discuss how to use the most powerful part of the eye to see more detail, and review what to expect when observing through a telescope. These activities are all designed to enhance one's experience at the telescope.

To see what Galileo Galilei saw 400 years ago, the public is invited to view the night sky with volunteers from Cameron Park Rotary Community Observatory. Join us for a fun-filled look at the stars!

**Where:** Cameron Park Rotary Community Observatory, El Dorado Center, Placerville

**When:** Saturday, January 24th at 6:00 pm

**What to bring:** Plenty of questions

**How to dress:** You'll be outside so a warm jacket, hat, and gloves are recommended.

**More information:** Cameron Park Rotary Community Observatory website: [www.communityobservatory.com](http://www.communityobservatory.com)

The Cameron Park Rotary Community Observatory is a member of the NASA Night Sky Network, administered by the Astronomical Society of the Pacific (ASP). The ASP is grateful for the support from NASA Science Mission Directorate, Space Telescope Science Institute, the Origins Forum, and the National Science Foundation. You can learn more about the ASP's IYA activities and programs online at: <http://www.astrosociety.org/iya/> and the US IYA initiatives at: <http://astronomy2009.us/>