International Astronomical Union (IAU) Office for Astronomy Outreach (OAO)



أسبو<mark>ع</mark> الجزائر Algeria's Week 2-9 October 2017

#NOCalgeria This week we welcome to our social media week Jamal Mimouni, our #NOC from Algeria. Stay tuned as we discover more about Algerian astronomy outreach & education activities!



Day 1: Monday 02, October

We welcome Jamal Mimouni, our IAU National Outreach Contact #NOC for Algeria. During the upcoming week, you can follow all the great national outreach news right HERE on our social media! Send him a message! #NOC algeria

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Hello everybody.

Starting with a Gift

Why don't we start with a gift to all of you. It is a picture from the deep South of Algeria. The Milky Way above rocky desert land.

Or see also in high resolution at: http://siriusalgeria.net/open.htm#1 Algeria as you may not know is the largest country in Africa and it contains a good part of the largest hot desert in the World: the Sahara desert. The picture has been taken by Aissa Oumoussa, an amateur astronomer from Guerrara in the Ghardaia Wilaya, in Southern Algeria, and member of the Sirius Astronomy Association.

In a sense, the Sahara is the **largest** continuous dark area in the World!



Algeria is a youthful country, and the next picture summarizes well this fact.



It has a striving astronomical community both amateur and professional but has unfortunately, no astronomical national except for various networks.

Amateur astronomers have clubs in every big city, yet the best well known association is the Sirius Astronomy Association located at Constantine city in Eastern Algeria which is holding the yearly National Festival in Popular Astronomy, possibly the largest amateur Astronomy in Africa and in the Middle East.

The Largest Amateur Astronomy Events in the Region

with lecturers from various places and countries. See the link to the latest Festival: http://siriusalgeria.net/salon017.htm http://siriusalgeria.net/salon017/participants.htm#3

To see the various Astronomy Festivals starting from 2002, see the link: http://siriusalgeria.net/salon017.htm#5

Various professional astrophysics meetings are also taking place, the latest one was on "Time Domain Astrophysics in the Multi-Messenger Era" last March at Khenchela, a city in the heart of the Aures mountain range where the Algerian War of liberation from French colonialism started:

http://acaa.na-observatory.org/

Where a Puzzle is given

We end up today's introduction with a puzzle (Isn't astronomy puzzle solving?): Who can best explain how this picture at an amateur astronomy meeting was taken? The answer tomorrow and the winner will receive a gift.



That's all for today folks. [AR]

مرحبا بكم فى هذا التقرير المختصر لبعض النشاطات الفلكية بالجزائر

Day 2: Tuesday, 04 October

Today's Gift

Today we shall explore one of the success stories of popular astronomy in Algeria, namely the activities which took place during the International Year of Astronomy 2009 (IYA-2009) which was crowned by an international award..

But before that, let us start with another gift. It is another picture of the sky from the Sahara with a star trailer by AbdelJalil Djarri.



and another of a visit by a group of amateur astronomers to the ancient Roman city of Timgad near Batna. I know there might be jealous people around, but too bad for them.



IYA-2009 was a great event by any standard and many great activities took place. Talking about it will enable us to talk about many kinds of activities which take place in Algeria following in particular a very gifted association along its path. Some IYA2009 activities by various associations across Algeria are listed here:

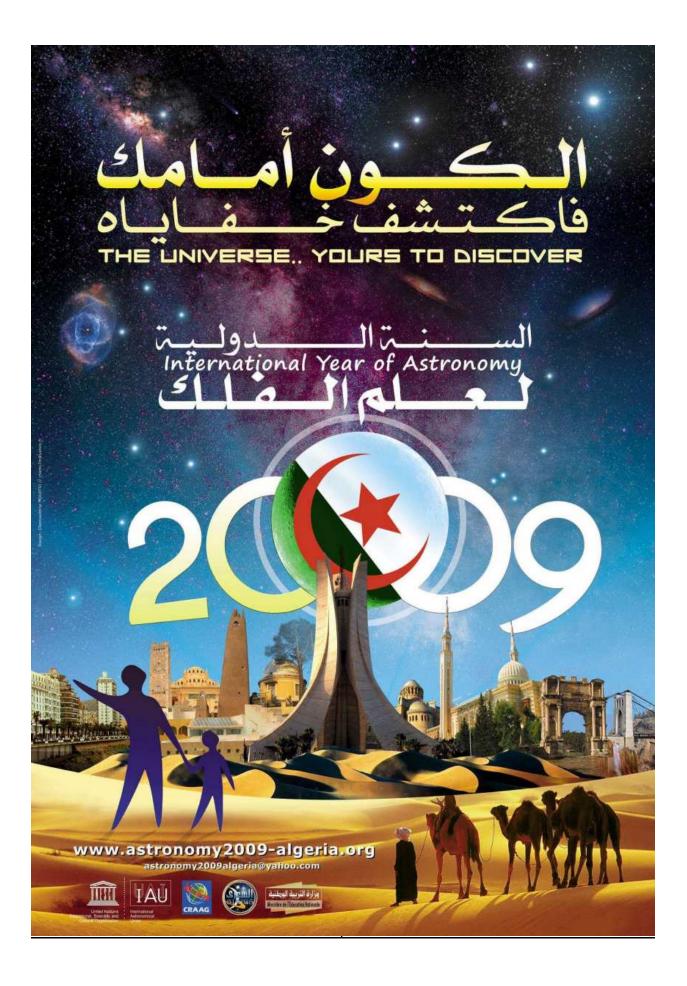
http://siriusalgeria.net/iya09/ProgIYA09Algeria.htm

It is during that year that the Sirius Astronomy Association won the Award Six for the "Most Publicized 100 Hours of Astronomy competition".

http://siriusalgeria.net/100hoursactivities.htm



Below is the poster made by Sirius and the CRAAG which was distributed nationwide and became the Algerian official poster of the year.



and here is the story of the poster's genesis and its significance: Indeed, all of Algeria is represented in it!

http://siriusalgeria.net/poster09.htm

as well as the Algerian participation at the IYA2009's Grand Opening at Paris: http://siriusalgeria.net/iya09.htm

Here are some Algerian astronomers at the UNESCO headquarter.



... Algerian participants with Bangladeshi and Sudanese delegates.





...and with Mrs. Cezarski, the Head of the International Astronomical Union at that time.

The Sirius association visited many places within Algeria to spread the good word of Astronomy.

http://siriusalgeria.net/sirius09.htm

Here are some visits in the South at El-Oued, Djemaa, and the M'zab Valley, allowing associations in the North to connect with people in other parts of the same country despite the Sahara desert barrier:

http://siriusalgeria.net/oued08.html http://siriusalgeria.net/deep.htm#2



And here:



and also on campuses like here at Constantine University: http://siriusalgeria.net/univ.htm#02



and at educational institutions: http://siriusalgeria.net/schools.htm#1



Visits to Friendly Lands like here in Tunisia:

Check the link: http://siriusalgeria.net/tunisalgerie.htm and to Shanghai, China for the total Solar eclipse of July 22, 2009: http://siriusalgeria.net/china.htm http://siriusalgeria.net/chinapict.htm



And more with Firas from Sirius at right at Shanghai befriending friendly people:



Organizing that year one of the biggest Arab astronomy gathering ever:



http://www.siriusalgeria.net/arabastro/



I should not forget to mention the Galilean Nights participation:

http://siriusalgeria.net/galilean.htm

By the way, check the Open Astronomy Day page:

http://siriusalgeria.net/open.htm

which is a great program coming in few days, organized in Eastern Algeria within World Space Week 2017 celebrations, and that I will be talking more about very soon.

As for the challenge picture posted yesterday, due to its late posting yesterday we will give you all one extra day to find the solution.

Who can best explain how this picture at an amateur astronomy meeting was taken? The answer tomorrow and the winner will receive a gift.

One More Gift:

That's all for today. But before quitting, one more gift. A vintage picture 2009 of the Sirius group during IYA2009



See you tomorrow for more on Algeria!

Day 3: Wednesday 04, October

Today's Gift

We will keep the tradition of starting with a gift for today. Here is a picture taken jalaleddine by Djarri and member of Sirius association : a total Moon eclipse sequence over the famous suspended Sidi M'cid bridge at Constantine.



Algeria and the International Year of Astronomy 2009, closing the file

Let us close the file on Algeria and the International Year of Astronomy 2009 with few more comments and pictures.

Here is a picture of the students representatives of the various countries taking a picture with Ms. Cezarski the head of IAU.

Next to Ms. Cezarski at her left, making a victory sign is Hamid Hamidani, member of Sirius who did a Master in Astrophysics at Constantine University. He just completed last year a PhD from Tokyo University on GRB's and Galactic astrophysics and is also working at Miraikan.



On that year, an Algerian astronomer (By the way it was me) was requested to give a lecture at the French Senate at Paris during "Les Journées du Patrimoine".



http://siriusalgeria.net/iya09.htm#se

We also forgot yesterday to include a picture of a 30 strong group of amateur astronomers who went to that year at Djerba Island in Tunisia to participate to an Astronomy gathering there. The picture at left is a rainbow over the capital Tunis while travelling to Djerba.



More recently, another visit of Algerian astronomers took place last year at Kelibia, Tunis, showing the amazing ability of amateur astronomers to transcend frontiers! http://siriusalgeria.net/tunis016a.html

Ah, what's a great year 2009 was!

Let us discuss now professional astronomy in Algeria, and in particular the teaching of it. We will discuss later the research part of it.

Astrophysics studies at Algerian Universities

Till recently, there was no full academic program in astronomy at the Algerian Universities. A brief attempt was made at Blida University in the early nineties lead by Dr. N. Guessoum but it didn't last long due to the difficult political situation then. Then an "Ecole Doctorale d'Astrophysique" (A kind of integrated undergraduate and graduate program) started few years ago at Constantine University, but since Algeria engaged itself in the LMD system following the European countries implementing the Bologna process, it stopped after two years of activity when the classical system was phased out.

http://www.siriusalgeria.net/EDA/





There is now several Master programs in astrophysics in Algeria the most prominent one being the one at Mentouri University at Constantine.

http://fac.umc.edu.dz/fse/astro.html

(In the picture appears the joy of teaching to motivated students...)

but also at Médéa University and Bab- Ezzouar University both in the central part of Algeria. Yet few astrophysics courses are taught within the physics curriculum at various Universities, and quite few PhD thesis are on theoretical astrophysics and cosmology.

A big hindrance is that we have no, till now, any workable observatory in Algeria, although one in the Aures mountain range is being build. The other observatory is the historical Bouzareah Observatory dating from the colonial era and standing proudly on a hill overlooking the capital Algiers, but due to the extreme closeness of the city, it is no more functional for research.

Day 4: Thursday, 05 October

Thursday Gift

Here's another gift to start the day. It is a picture from our faithful Aissa Oumoussa the astrophotographer from Guerrara, Algeria who already provided the gift picture of the first day, and a member of the Sirius Association. The picture taken at the Hoggar mountains in the enchanting Sahara:



The Peregrinations of the Constantine Cosmos Caravan

Today's topic is a simple one, the peregrinations of the Constantine Cosmos Caravan" (CCC), a moving venture made of a portable planetarium, an astronomical exhibit and some observing material (weather permitting). In addition, initiation sessions on astronomy are given to groups and at times, public lectures are organized along the track of the caravan.



It crystallizes our commitment to spread scientific culture through astronomy to the people of all walks of life, even those living in isolated locations.



A great way for popularizing science!



... and get people acquainted with the Universe



More at the special page here: http://siriusalgeria.net/ccc2.htm

and here's the caravan at various Universities: http://siriusalgeria.net/batna2.htm http://siriusalgeria.net/ccc1.htm

http://siriusalgeria.net/ouargla.htm

Just go through the links and enjoy!

I couldn't resist from posting three more pictures:







Pondering on the wonders of the Cosmos:

Check also this nice video clip of inside a planetarium: http://siriusalgeria.net/ccc2/Journey.mp4

More on the Puzzles

The solution to the puzzle of the first day is coming... and I am cooking up another puzzle for later today. Stay tuned.

And now the answer:

As some of you found it, indeed there is a mirror in the scene and the photographer mistakenly didn't shut off the flash. Here is the result with the flash off (Part of the mirror frame appears at left).



The photographer is Bakir Haffar and the speaker at this weekly astronomy gathering is Dr. Abderahmen Zoghby, a Cambridge graduate in astrophysics from Algeria, and right now a research fellow at the Astrophysics Department, University of Michigan. Check also this nice video clip of inside a planetarium: http://siriusalgeria.net/ccc2/Journey.mp4

As for today's (Thursday) puzzle:

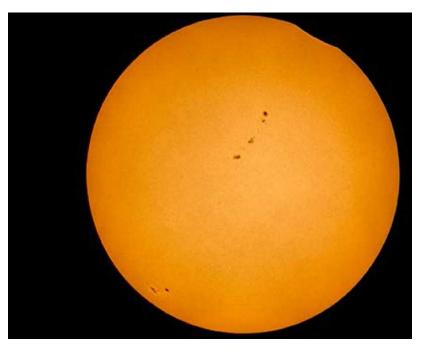


Can you find out why so many people seem to have face injuries?

Day 5: Friday 06, October

Friday's Gift

The gift to our readers today is this eclipse picture taken by an astronomer. Algerian amateur More will be said below about Chamseddine Mouatsi. the author of this shot, but a keen observer will notice a bit of the upper corner of the Sun missing, signaling indeed the start of a solar eclipse, in addition to quite few Sun spots. The eclipse was the US total solar eclipse of this Summer (August 21, 2017), and the place was the Saluki stadium at Carbondale, II. in the US.



World Space Week 2017 (4-10 October)

It is about time to talk about World Space Week of this year.

http://www.worldspaceweek.org/

It celebrates the opening of the space age and indeed the fact that the human being has becoming a spacefaring species. It all started out with the launching in 1957 of Sputnik by the then USSR. This momentous event, since the UN resolution passed by the General Assembly in 1999, is celebrated during 4-10 October of every year. The theme this year is : "Exploring New Worlds in Space"

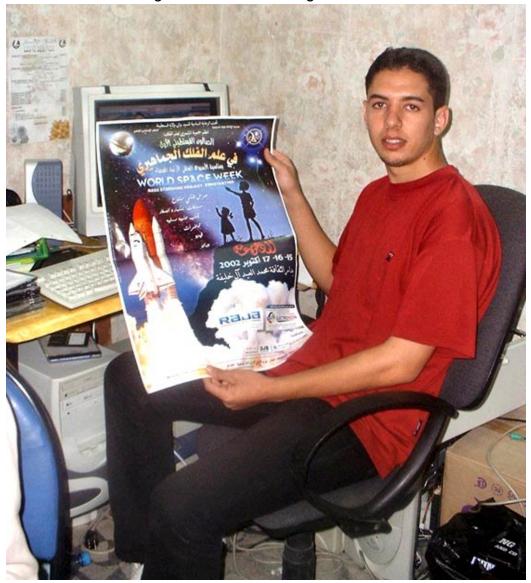
Algeria has been participating to this international event ever since it started. It even got a prize in 2002:

https://siriusalgeria.net/WSW2003-Award.htm

And for the Arabic speaking people, here is what got us the prize: A program realized entirely in Flash by Chamseddine Mouatsi, the young amateur astronomer aged 18 about the solar system, very handy and very complete. Here is the "Chef d'oeuvre": http://www.siriusalgeria.net/wsw02/index.htm

The sad story is that he was refused a visa to receive his prize in the USA! The US Embassy officer who interviewed him for visa didn't know Flash programming and he couldn't believe that a young Algerian could master something he didn't know. Here is

Chamseddine at that time i.e. 2002. He also designed the poster of that year WSW 2002 celebration in Algeria that he is holding in his hands!:



"Open Doors to the Cosmos" WSW 2017 program

This year, a big event will take place for WSW2017 at Constantine, Algeria this Saturday 7, October with a multifaceted activity, "Open Doors to the Cosmos" (At the Malek Haddad cultural complex).

http://siriusalgeria.net/open.htm

And the poster here:



Worldwide, here are some highlighted activities during that week: http://www.worldspaceweek.org/highlights/

Thousands of km to watch Darkness at Midday

Then, why not talking a bit more about the *August 21 Eclipse 2017* of this Summer in the country of Uncle Sam. A group of twelve Algerian amateur astronomers from Sirius went last month there to view the great American eclipse and among them, not only the laureates of the Cirta-Science contest that is organized every year at the level of the High Schools in Eastern Algeria, but Chamseddine Mouatsi himself coming from

Canada (He got the right of entrance this time!). Here he is who produced this beautiful eclipse sequence from Carbondale, Illinois (See below) along with two other members of the team (At his right Khaled from Morocco and at his left Smail from Algeria).



Here is the sequence:



And here it is in higher resolution: http://siriusalgeria.net/ecl017/ec09v2.jpg

The adventure is worth telling and you can follow the moving moments here: http://siriusalgeria.net/Midwest1.htm#4

Here's the Algerian team interviewed by the WTHITV, an American TV channel from Terre Haute, OH wondering why people would travel from Algeria in the other side of the World to the US just to view a 2mn40s eclipsed Sun!

http://www.wthitv.com/story/36219123/video-check-out-the-eclipse-webcast-shot-in-carbondale-il

Check the segment from 18mn to 24mn.

Till tomorrow, with more news and surprises,... and the answer to yesterday's puzzle (Why so many people seem to have face injuries?) But remember: no attempted answer from you people, no answer from my side. Waiting eagerly for your answers.

Day 6: Saturday 07, October

Saturday's Gift:

The gift to our readers today is this picture taken by Younes Boudiaf, an Algerian astrophotographer in the Ahaggar mountains in Southern Algeria.



Saturday's Puzzle:

As for today's puzzle...



Today's puzzle is not too difficult; in any case, it is simpler than tomorrow's one!! Here is the question:

What are those people spread on the esplanade doing? Would they be planting something in the concrete? Most certainly not! What else?



The Cirta-Science Contest in Scientific Culture

As for the subject matter of today, it has to do with this wondrous competition in scientific culture organized by the Sirius Astronomy Association

http://siriusalgeria.net/

every year since a decade now among the some 60 High Schools across the Constantine area.



The site is at: http://www.siriusalgeria.net/cs/ while the various editions of the contest are at: http://www.siriusalgeria.net/cs/#ba

Luckily, I don't have to do much showing, as there is a document ready which was indeed presented at CAP2016 at Medellin, Colombia: http://www.siriusalgeria.net/cs/CAP2016-CirtaScienceContest.pdf We may add that the prize this year was for the laureates to go watch the 2August 21 total solar eclipse from Chicago (The picture below is the three laureates at the Saluki stadium at Carbondale, II the day of the eclipse),More at: http://www.siriusalgeria.net/Midwest1.htm



and the one the year before was a visit to Cambridge University, the Greenwich Observatory, Newton's house and the Jodrell Bank radio-telescope in Manchester, all this in the UK. The previous ones are described in the pdf document I mentioned above.



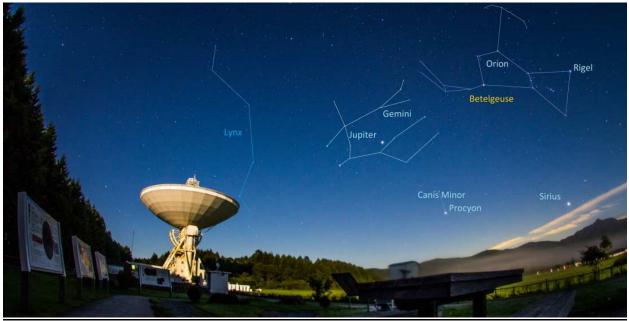
Here the laureates for the 2014 contest at the CMS detector of the LHC at CERN, Geneva.

As for the special Japan trip, it was with the 2013 laureates and here is the link to it: http://www.siriusalgeria.net/tokyo1.htm

with a visit to the Nobeyama Radio Observatory, the Megastar Company producing planetariums along with his founder the genial Dr. Akayuki Ohira, Miraikan, Sky Tree ...



And here a picture taken from the night sky at Nobeyama Observatort with constellations superimposed (Taken by Younes Boudiaf from Sirius and Tikuya).



The review of the Algerian collaboration with the Palestinian astronomers has been reported to tomorrow.

Explanation of Wednesday's puzzle

As for the explanation of yesterday's puzzle (Why so many people seem to have face injuries?), remember, yesterday topic was about the mobile Planetarium shows of the "Constantine Cosmos Caravan", and indeed one person only found the answer (Zakaria

Hamdi from El Oued, Algeria). It is the dark spots from the nebula projected on the dome as the people stand inside it, exposed to the projector's light. Not too hard.



Work on today's puzzle (See above), and get ready for tomorrow one, it will challenge the best minds!

Day 7: Sunday 08, October

Sunday's Gift

A picture of some Algerian amateurs from Sirius in the Hoggar mountains in the Sahara desert at sunset:



And the Sunday's Puzzle

Today's puzzle is a bit harder than the three previous ones. It consists in interpreting this picture of strange creatures on stage. What are they doing and why are they mummy- like? Also, why are those mummy- like people so thin? Sorry, any hint from my part would spill the beans. Yet I will venture to say that it is related to a planetary event. For an answer to yesterday's puzzle, pursue the reading...



World Space Week 2017 Event in Algeria

We first report on the WSW2017 event which took place yesterday at Malek Haddad Cultural Palace in Constantine, Algeria this Saturday 7, 2017. It was a whole day multifaceted event with many hundreds in attendance from among the public. Here are some pictures of the event.



World Space Week 2017 Events in Algeria







It was an all public event with a clear bias to youngsters with many hands on activities, but also lectures on the fifties and sixties's race to space which started up with Sputnik, to the Cassini mission and its beautiful ending, to the Nobel prize in physics for the discovery of the gravitational waves, and more...





Honoring some of the team who worked for the success of the World Space Week 2017 at Constantine

See more soon at: http://siriusalgeria.net/open.htm

Developing Strong Ties with Others across the Borders

As promised, we will also be talking today about the strong relationship of Algerian astronomy, not with its immediate neighbors like Tunisia (SAT, Association Jeunes-Science,...)

http://siriusalgeria.net/tunisalgerie.htm

or even France with the yearly participation of the French Astronomical Society (SAF, and also ACF,...) to our Popular Astronomy Festivals, but with the Palestinian community of astronomers.

Not forgetting the brave Gaza's astronomers who, save for places like RDC, Yemen, Burma.., are carrying activities under the most challenging conditions on Earth. Blockaded by land and sea, they can only look up to the sky for relief... and just beware of not be a too big observing party, least some drone or Apache fall upon them. Algeria has indeed throughout the past decade established a strong working association with astronomers both in the West Bank and in the Gaza strip. And every opportunity is good to strengthen this association with each other. Here's some joint activities during the celebration of the remake of the Eratosthenes measurement of the Earth size at Summer solstice.

At the Al-Aqsa Mosque plaza (Kids showing their instruments of measure):



... and at Gaza:



By the way, this was related to the answer to **yesterday's puzzle**: the youngsters you see on the esplanade of the Emir AbdelKader Mosque below were indeed carrying out a measurement of the Earth diameter at Summer solstice. Nothing less!



Two recent actions in this regard. During the last big Astronomy Festival we welcomed (And partially funded by Sirius) the coming of six amateur astronomers from the occupied West Bank. We wished to have some amateurs from Gaza, but unfortunately, the total blockade they are facing made it impossible for them to get out of the "largest open sky prison in the Galaxy" as used to say our colleague Dr. Suleiman Baraka from

Gaza. Here the six astronomers rewarded at the end of this year National Astronomy Festival at Constantine:



Here' below is a picture by Dr.Suleiman Baraka from Al-Aqsa University in Gaza after a lecture on "Physics of Space Weather" at the Theoretical Physics Department at Constantine University in Algeria



And here lecturing to Middle School students at El-Khroub about Astronomy and the Space sciences.



The other action was the campaign of solidarity with the Universities in Gaza which was carried out by a group of Algerian and Jordanian astronomers in solidarity with them after the havoc left by the last war which resulted in the incapacitation of quite few academic facilities and put the scientific community in disarray. Some highlights of the visit:

We also had the honor to preside to the opening ceremony of the Astronomy Center at the Al-Aqsa University in Gaza related to the UNESCO Chair of Astronomy and Astrophysics:

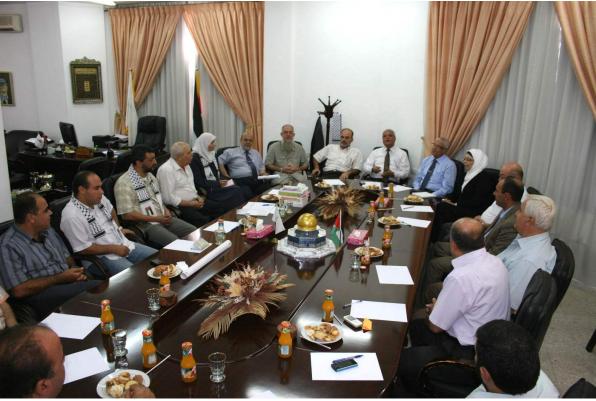


Holding together the scissors with Dr. Agha, President of the Al-Aqsa University (Black suit):



The Algerian team observing with the Gaza's young astronomers of the Diwan Gaza:

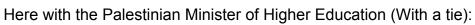




At a meeting with the Scientific Council at the Al-Aqsa University:

A lecture (In French, bien sûr) on astronomy at the French Cultural Center at Gaza:







A book on Cosmology authored by the present writer, presented as a gift to Dr. I.Haniyeh, a senior political leader and former Deputy Prime Minister of the Palestinian National Authority.



More on this academic visit of solidarity at: <u>http://siriusalgeria.net/kafilapict2.htm</u>

Back Home: The Bouzareah Observatory and More Outreach Actions

We wrap up the Algerian week by mentioning the CRAAG, the Research Center in Astronomy Astrophysics and Geophysics, which is the main research center of astrophysical in Algeria.

http://www.craag.dz/

with its several active research divisions:

http://www.craag.dz/divisions.php

Here's a talk on HE Cosmic Rays given by Prof.R.Attallah from Annaba University at the Observatory's historical library:



and an old transit telescope at the Observatory:



Two Algerian astronomers in front of one of the domes at the Observatory:



... and here the 80cm telescope at the Observatory overlooking the Bay of Algiers:



Closing Up

We close up with this series of pictures of outreaching to High Schools, Scout Camps, University Campuses throughout Algeria.

Outreaching series:



at astronomy Salons:







Here watching the 2005 annular solar eclipse from Batna, Algeria



at High Schools... And at Universities:



At Emir Abdelkader University



Here at Mentouri University:



- At scout meetings:



... and astronomy association meetings:



And finally next page, a group picture of amateurs from Sirius at a winter astronomical retreat in the Rhoufi Canyon in the El-Kantara area.



Latest News!

A picture of the setting up two days ago (October 5, 2017) of a small dome for a site testing telescope at Mount Aliness in the Aurès mountain range for the future National Astronomical Observatory.



A Group Picture

A group picture of participants at a recent Astronomy gathering last Mars with the participation of Prof. Piero Benvenuti, the General Secretary of IAU (Can you find him at the center of the picture?)



A higher resolution picture can be found at: http://siriusalgeria.net/salon017/im/f0170n.jpg

So much more could be said about astronomy activities in Algeria. There are many active amateur Astronomy associations and clubs we could have talked more about, like El-Battani at Oran (the first established astronomy Association in Algeria), Amnir at Ghardaia, Ibn Haitham at Oum El-Bouaghi, El-Birouni Club at Algiers, El-Bousdjani at Medea, El-Qutb at El-Oued, Association Sirius à Bejaia, Aster from Kherrata, Angham El-Hayat at Guerrara, Ennajm Ethakib at Mostaganem and few more... Not forgetting AAJAA (Association Algérienne des Jeunes Astronomes Amateurs) at :

http://aajaa-dz.org/

Unfortunately, for quite few of them, they don't have a Web site so that we can refer to.

That's all folks, nothing more, we closed the week. And no puzzle anymore!!

As a Way of Concluding...

For the past seven days, you have been getting, the Algerian way, your daily dose of gifts, puzzles and action packed descriptions of events taking place in this part of Africa. I hope you enjoyed it all. We were happy to be the first African country to be part of this series of the NOC-IAU get- acquainted weeks, and you will hear more in the future of accomplishment from other African countries, whether Ethiopia, South Africa, Morocco, Ghana, Kenya...

Thanks for having followed us daily, and a great clapping to Lina for having faithfully and timely (Modulo the time lapse between Japan and this part of the World) uploaded the content.