

# Star gazers hunt for TNO

By Ron Thorkildson  
Correspondent

On the evening of June 10 a small group of educators, students and amateur astronomers gathered at Sisters High School in an attempt to detect the presence of a small, icy body located at the outer reaches of the solar system.

It was RECON's (Research and Education Collaborative Occultation Network) inaugural campaign to measure the size of objects orbiting the sun beyond Neptune, called Trans-Neptunian Objects, or TNOs. Telescopes and cameras at 60 communities stretching from Oroville, Washington to Yuma, Arizona were all focused on the same patch of sky, looking to see if the TNO would move in front of a pre-selected star, causing the star to wink out.

RECON is a citizen science program developed by Marc Buie of the Southwest Research Institute and John Keller of California Polytechnic State University



PHOTO PROVIDED BY JIM HAMMOND

Sisters RECON team members recording an event. Pictured left to right: Alex Burroughs, Rima Givot, Thomas Jeffrey and Ron Thorkildson.

that affords participants the opportunity to become involved in ground-breaking science. RECON's goal is to ascertain the size and shape of TNOs using the method of stellar occultation. Small bodies on the outskirts of the solar system are too dim to be seen except by the largest observatories, but when they move in front of a distant star, the star disappears for a time that is proportional to size of

the TNO. This is called an occultation, an event that can be observed through medium-sized amateur telescopes.

RECON plans to conduct many more occultation campaigns over the next five years. Sisters was invited to join RECON's network of communities last November, an effort supported locally by teachers and students of Sisters High School and the Sisters Astronomy Club.

## HARRER: Ballplayer is headed to Washington State University

Continued from page 5

called me on a conference call. They basically said that their picks were coming up in the next few minutes and told me they wanted to sign me in the fourth round with a signing bonus of \$500,000, plus all my schooling."

Justin told them he'd call them back in a few minutes with his decision, and shockingly enough, he turned them down.

"I'd prayed about it over the past few weeks, and talked and counseled with lots of family and friends," said Harrer. "I knew that they were probably going to offer me something, and if my gut said I was ready I'd know for sure 100 percent. When it came down to it, that feeling wasn't there."

If Harrer would have accepted the fourth-round pick, he would have been around the 100th player chosen overall, out of approximately 2,500 players.

"Honestly, it was probably the most stressful week of my life, deciding whether to become a professional athlete or a collegiate athlete. It definitely was a tempting offer, and in the baseball world a fourth-round pick is very good.

"I did sign with the Padres in the 18th-round," added Harrer. "It shows I haven't burned any bridges with the organization. The Padre's are still interested and have the 'rights' to me for the next three years. If I do change my mind and decide to go pro, I go to the Padres, but the signing bonus will be much less.

After my junior year in college I will once again be eligible for the draft."

Prior to the draft, Harrer was given a sweet offer by Washington State University, a scholarship very close to a full ride. Justin accepted, and instead of attending Oregon State, as previously planned, he will be trading in his Outlaws black-and-white for the Cougars gray, black, and crimson. WSU projects Justin to be an impact infield player as an incoming freshman.

**“ I knew that they were probably going to offer me something, and if my gut said I was ready I'd know for sure 100 percent. When it came down to it, that feeling wasn't there. — Justin Harrer**

"My goal is to go to WSU and work my butt off and become a better baseball player, and start my education," said Harrer. "Hopefully, I'll be drafted after my junior year. The Padres organization was amazing and I hope they draft me again, and they've expressed interest in doing just that."

## Sisters business at a glance

• **Faith, Hope, Charity Vineyards** will be closed for a private event Friday, June 26.

• **Deja Vu** announced that Karen Dorsey won the Rodeo weekend drawing for a \$100 gift certificate. She said she "was very excited to win and knew exactly what I wanted," and just moving into a new home, the timing was perfect. Deja Vu is located at 625 Arrowleaf Trail in Outlaw Station.

• **AeroVironment, Inc.** and Recargo, developer of PlugShare, has introduced a new easy-payment option for EV drivers charging on the West Coast Electric Highway fast charging network in Oregon and Washington.

EV drivers can now access and pay for AeroVironment's DC fast chargers and Level 2 charging stations through Recargo's PlugShare mobile app on a pay-per-charge basis.

There is no additional cost for this service.

AeroVironment's network in Oregon and Washington includes 55 DC fast chargers and 59 Level 2 charging stations forming the West Coast Electric Highway. A charging station is located at **Mainline Station** in Sisters.

• **Sey-Lah-Vie!**'s email address is seylahv7@gmail.com. *It was incorrectly noted in a story last week.*

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