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η CARINAE

A. Damineli, Instituto de Astronomico e Geofísico, Universidade de São Paulo, reports that spectroscopic observations collected at the Southern Astrophysical Research Telescope (La Serena, Chile) by Damineli, J. Steiner, J. H. Groh, and L. Fraga indicate that η Car reached the phase of minimum excitation on Jan. 11, on schedule with the predictions (Damineli *et al.* 2008, *MNRAS* **384**, 1649). This supports the 2023-day period and the binary nature of the system. The doubly ionized forbidden lines and the narrow components of He I and [N II] lines disappeared from the spectrum. P-Cyg absorption in permitted transitions (He I, H I, and Fe II) became more enhanced. The He II 468.6-nm line, which had been increasing rapidly through 2008 December, has now collapsed abruptly to $\sim$ 300 mÅ, the same level as it was a month before. The radial velocity reached -3204 km/s and seems to be still shifting toward the blue. Such results are corroborated by observations taken at Observatório do Picos dos Dias (Brazil) by M. Teodoro; at the Complejo Astronómico el Leoncito (Argentina) by E. F. Lajuz, F. Gonzalez, and R. Gamen; at the European Southern Observatory 2.2-m telescope by M. Borges Fernandes, C. B. Pereira, C. A. P. C. O. Torres, and M. I. Zevallos Herencia; and at Las Campanas Observatory by N. Morrell. Figures and additional details can be found at the following website URL: `www.etacarinae.iag.usp.br`.

COMETS C/2008 R8–R12 (SOHO)

Further to *IAUC* 9006, additional near-sun presumed comets have been found on SOHO website images — all Kreutz sungrazers except for C/2008 R8 (non-group). C/2008 R8 (peak mag $\sim$ 7), C/2008 R9 (mag $\sim$ 7), and 2008 R11 (mag $\sim$ 6.5) were small and stellar in appearance. C/2008 R10 was elongated (mag $\sim$ 5.5) in C3 images, and quite diffuse with a very faint short tail in C2 images. C/2008 R12 was slightly elongated (mag $\sim$ 6–6.5) in C3 images, and diffuse with a very faint, diffuse, short tail in C2 images.

Comet	2008	UT	α_{2000}	δ_{2000}	Inst.	F	*MPEC*
C/2008 R8	Sept.	3.629	$10^h46^m.2$	$+6^\circ02'$	C2	RK	2008-X24
C/2008 R9		4.904	10 32.1	+ 5 34	C3	JR	2008-X24
C/2008 R10		7.904	10 38.0	+ 4 00	C3/2	RK	2008-X24
C/2008 R11		7.904	10 43.1	+ 4 35	C3	BZ	2008-X25
C/2008 R12		11.905	10 54.5	+ 2 40	C3/2	BZ	2008-X25
C/2008 R13		14.596	11 16.4	+ 2 29	C3	HS	2008-X25

2009 January 20 *Daniel W. E. Green*