



March 2016

Editor -Jack Fritz

The St. Petersburg Astronomy Club, has been the center of family astronomy in the Tampa Bay Area for decades. Its 292 adult members are dedicated to promoting and sharing the wonders and science of astronomy. We host dark-sky and local star parties, telescope-making workshops, science / astronomy lectures, educational outreach sessions and much more.

President's Message

KYLE BRINKMAN

★ What a great time we had at the Orange Blossom Star Party. The field was full of over 100 astronomers, scopes, campers and tents. I enjoyed spending time with friends from last year and meeting some new friends.



We are going to have a recap presentation at the March meeting to remember the fun we had.

The weather was mostly clear. We had some terrific nights in the dark skies of the park. One night was a bust for viewing but on the up side there was no rain and we had a good time anyway.

There were some great pictures taken. Only some of them made the photo competition. I've been seeing some others appear on Facebook. There was some impressive work done that week.

Next year's OBS is going to be different. Jack Fritz has been leading the OBS for years and is now stepping back. He is still our Vice President and editor of the newsletter. Jack has shared all his planning information and decentralized the planning for next year. We owe him appreciation for all he has done for

the star party. It has built our party as a destination for people from as far as Michigan. All the tasks needed to make the OBS happen have been distributed to different volunteers. We still need to replace the chairperson, but it won't be a lonely job. Many clubs have seen their star parties fail for lack of volunteers. We need to make sure that doesn't happen to our club.

We have a great club full of friendly people. There is a lot going on. I met with Michael Daily of the Science center who is planning upgrades to our home. A big change is coming to our auditorium. He is planning a remodeling to a state of the art teaching auditorium. This means nicer seats. It sounds wonderful.

If you have been receiving this newsletter and looking for a way to get involved, please come to our events. Come and enjoy the benefits of your membership.

See you soon.

New Members

We would like to welcome Brian Roth, Anthony Staiano, Brian Williams, Dave Olsen, Christopher & Janice Potter and Mark Hardies & Diane Prekup to our family of members.

General Meeting

This month's meeting will take place on

Friday, March 25th at 8:00 PM, at the Science Center of Pinellas County, 7701 22nd Ave. N, St. Petersburg, FL.

"The Wow Signal." Dr. Antonio Paris of MOSI, and St Petersburg College, will present his new publication on the signal received by SETI back in the 1970s. The signal was remarkable in that it didn't match known natural phenomenon. Dr. Paris has decoded the message and published his findings. Come find out where it came from and what it means. Did the little green men have something to say or is this a natural event?

Upcoming Programs

April - To be announced.

Member Appreciation

KYLE BRINKMAN

★ This month we can appreciate Antonio Paris. Tony is a member of our club and also holds an important role in Tampa Bay astronomy circles. As a professor of Astronomy at St Petersburg College he instructs students on the science of astronomy. They soon find out it is more than stargazing. At MOSI he runs the planetarium and space programming further enlightening the next generation of astronomers and aspiring astronauts. We have already benefited from his membership by having additional outreach opportunities and a FREE planetarium show at MOSI. He has even achieved a degree of celebrity with appearances on TV programs you might have heard of. Somehow he has time to do independent research on his own projects. This month we will hear all about his latest publication. Thank you Tony for all that you do.

Membership Chair Request

SHIRLEY VUILLE

★ Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or concerns about your membership. svuille@aol.com

Please refer to the SPAC Calendar on our website for upcoming events or rain date changes.

April Astronomical Events

★ April 18 - Mercury at Greatest Eastern Elongation. The planet Mercury reaches greatest eastern elongation of 19.9 degrees from the Sun. This is the best time to view Mercury since it will be at its highest point above the horizon in the evening sky. Look for the planet low in the western sky just after sunset.

April 22, 23 - Lyrids Meteor Shower. The Lyrids is an average shower, usually producing about 20 meteors per hour at its peak. It is produced by dust particles left behind by comet C/1861 G1 Thatcher, which was discovered in 1861. The shower runs annually from April 16-25. It peaks this year on the night of the 22nd and morning of the 23rd. These meteors can sometimes produce bright dust trails that last for several seconds. Unfortunately this year the glare from the full moon will block out all but the brightest meteors. If you are patient, you should still be able to catch a few good ones. Best viewing will be from a dark location after midnight. Meteors will radiate from the constellation Lyra, but can appear anywhere in the sky.

The Moon

- New Moon - April 7
- First Quarter - April 14
- Full Moon - April 22
- Third Quarter - April 30

2016 Range Blossom Special Star Party

March 2016

Editors -Kelly Anderson & Steve Robins



From Your Chairman

JACK FRITZ

★ I hope everyone had a great time at the 2016 Orange Blossom Star Party. I know I did, and from the feedback I received, that seems to be the case.

I would like to thank everyone who had a hand in helping out with everything from set-up to tear-down. Nancy Huff is always my right hand, and I could not do what I do without her consult. Wally Vazquez did a great job with the door prizes. Joe Canzoneri, Kelly Anderson, Chris Curran, Jim Hunter, Kyle Brinkman, and Wally Vazquez, all jumped in to help with set-up and tear-down. My wife, Roni helped with the registration packages and both she and Nancy covered check-in. I know I have left out some others that helped but my brain is fried.

From Your Editors

KELLY ANDERSON
 STEVE ROBBINS



Aerial shot from Joe Canzoneri's drone.

★ The Orange Blossom Special 2016 was another great success, blessed with lovely weather and mostly good seeing. One hundred seventeen people attended, which included ten children. The weather for the event was delightful throughout, with highs in the 70s and lows that were a little brisk but improved as the week progressed. The only precipitation for the week was a light rain shower in the wee hours Thursday morning. Seeing was fairly good except for Wednesday evening,

which was completely clouded out, but cleared about 4:00 AM. The upper air was humid and a little murky following the rain, but improved into the weekend.

Two hayrides were enjoyed on Saturday, one after lunch, the other in the early evening. The latter took us out of the Park boundaries and across the Lanier Bridge for a stunning view of the Withlacoochee River. To the south the river flowed lazily towards us past stately cedars. To the north lay the Green Swamp, dark and forbidding, no doubt teeming with alligators, snakes, fairies and swamp apes. All of this contributed to a fun trip through the wilderness in comfort on our hay bales.

That same day were two trips through the park for a closer look at the natural wonders, one by bicycles led by (puff-puff!) Kelly Anderson, the other a guided nature walk led by Mike Davis. After an exhilarating ride and a brisk walk, we were ready for (what else?) lunch.

On Thursday Mike led a demonstration of mirror grinding, helping to lift the veil of mystery from this process of taking a plate of glass and turning it into a parabolic wonder of near perfection.



Mike Davis on mirror grinding

On Friday afternoon our President, Kyle Brinkman, led a group through a walkabout, viewing a variety of scopes, from the whimsical (Shark Dob) to the diminutive (3 and 4-inch refractors) to the amazing (26-inch Dobsonian with go-to and auto-guiding), and many

in-between those extremes. Each demonstration included an invitation by the owner to return after dark to look through these optical wonders.



Tom Spano's infamous shark Dobsonian.

Bob Stelmock demonstrated his state-of-the-art imaging equipment (his "electro-telescope") and process for getting superior images with less pain and effort than conventional techniques.

Saturday morning Allen Force gave a comprehensive presentation on stellar photography for those of us who are newcomers as well as more experienced but still struggling imagers.



Allen Force's Presentation

The week culminated in the gathering at the Lecture Tent for the Wrap-up and awards presentation.

The John Dobson Award Committee awarded a Life-Time achievement award to

John O'Neill for his considerable contribution to SPAC and the Astronomy Community in general.



John O'Neill receiving a Life-Time Achievement Award

The winners of the astro-imaging contest were Joe Canzoneri for his deep-field image of **Messier 51, the "Whirlpool Galaxy,"** and Allen Force for his wide-field image of **Barnard 33, the "Horsehead Nebula."**



Joe's winning deep-field image.



Alan's winning wide-field image.

The winner of the **50/50 drawing** was Mary Garner, and husband Richard won the drawing for the replica of **Newton's telescope**, lovingly crafted by Tom Spano. Big day for the Garners ... Congratulations!



Handcrafted Newtonian

Door Prize Winners

Celestron Rechargeable Hand Warmer

Elizabeth Wood

Celestron 2 in 1 Solar Panel Device

Steve Robbins

Lowell Observatory Admission Tickets

Tom Spano

Astronomy Magazine Subscription

Matt G. Labadie

Bob's Knobs Gift Certificate

Joyce Waters

Sky and Telescope Pocket Atlas

David Swann, Charlie Hoffman, and
Kyle Brinkman

Sky and Telescope Binocular Highlights

Brent Hilker and Kathy McAlvy

Tele Vue 40 mm Plossal Eyepiece

Ellen Roth

Vixen 25mm Eyepiece

Natalie Anderson

Agema Astro Products 20mm Eyepiece

John O'Neill

Scientific Direct Atlantis Space Shuttle
Frame

Steve Biondo

Explore Scientific 8 x 50 Illuminated Polar Finder

Ron Wayman

Howie Glatter Parallizer Adapter

Linda Hoffman

Chiefland Fall Star Party Gift Certificate

Brian Roth and Cal Waters

Observer's Handbook

Walter Tripp, Richard Garner, Alex Velez, Chris Craig, Mary Favaro, Dario Diaz, John Galle, David, Tylor Fox, Mary Garner

Astronomy Calendar

Jackie Tobergte, Penny Hunter, Mike Davis, Diann Morningstar, Steve Burner, Keevy McAlavy, and Matt Terry

Good Eats Provided by Kickin Caribbean

Kickin' Caribbean catered our food this year, and it was a notch above the ordinary. If you took your own food you were rightly kick-in' yourself for not buying the best meals served in recent OBS history. Hope she comes back next year and appreciative people can leave her a review at <https://www.facebook.com/Kickin-Caribbean-785503311570173/timeline>.



Merrill Wright



Bob Stelmock explaining easy astro imaging



Chris Craig setting up for Meet-n-Greet



We look forward to seeing everyone next year. Be sure to mark your calendars for January 25th through January 29th, 2017.

SPAC Business Meeting

The Business Meetings are normally held on the second Wednesday of each month. Our next meeting is Wednesday, April 13th, at 8:00 PM at the Science Center. All interested members are invited to attend. All club business decisions are made at the business meeting so as not to encumber the general meeting.

Officers & Directors

President:	Kyle Brinkman	727 455-6931
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Outreach Chair:	Jim Hunter	813 909-7013
Librarian:	Ralph Craig	727 384-2086
Club Webmaster:	Chris Curran	813 653-2604

Click on the name to send email

Recognition of Patrons & Benefactors:

Clifford B. Benham	Benefactor
David & Mina Swan	Benefactor
Jack & Roni Fritz	Benefactor
Antonio & Cherish Paris	Benefactor
Tommy & Amy Ming	Benefactor
Alexie & Yanira Velez	Patron
Anthony Staiano	Patron
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Joe Ortiz-Bradley	Patron
Kyle Brinkman	Patron
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Matt Labadie	Patron
Robert Myers	Patron
Robert & Debora Csere	Patron
Ruggero & Carla Santilli	Patron
Thomas Tobin	Patron

Examiner Staff

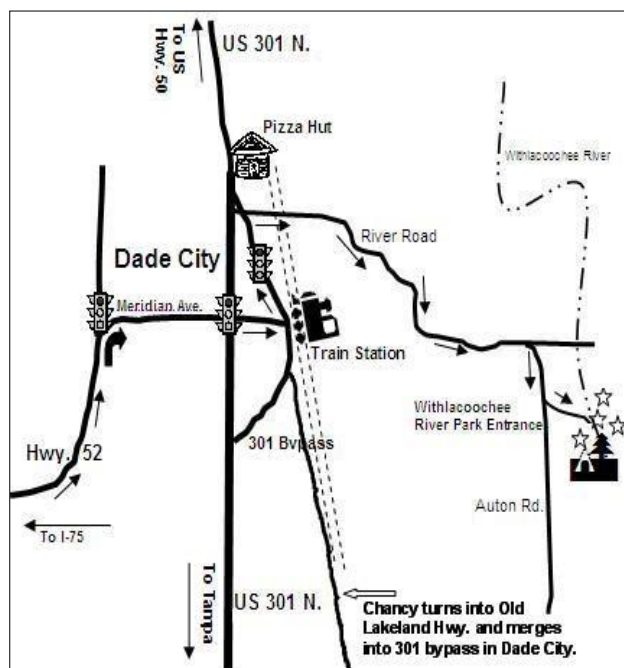
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Reporter	Kelly Anderson	813 672-2751
In the News	Steve Robbins	386 736-9123
Mirror Lab	Ralph Craig	727 384-2086

Withlacoochee New Moon Weekend

Our next New Moon Weekend falls on April 8th & 9th.

The park gate is locked at Sundown, so you will need to arrive before then. The year-round camping fee with electrical use is \$10/night for club members, and \$20 for non-members. Tent camping without electric is \$5/night.

Be reminded that if you are not camping, you must pay the \$2/vehicle fee. Vehicles displaying the handicap parking tag are exempt. For further information, contact Bill or Nancy Huff. starhopr3@msn.com or 813 621-3606.



Withlacoochee River Park - Dade City, FL

Detailed directions can be found at:

www.StPeteAstronomyClub.org



15406 Stonecreek Lane
Tampa, FL 33613

SPAC, INC. MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

Membership in St. Petersburg Astronomy Club, Inc. is open to anyone, regardless of age, who is interested in astronomy. Dues are considered donations and are non-refundable. Membership options are available as listed below:

To join or renew your membership:

Complete the following form and return it with your payment to: Jim Hunter - Treasurer, 17316 Oak Ledge Dr., Lutz, FL 33549-7626 - Telephone number (813) 909-7013 (checks should be made payable to SPAC, Inc.)

Name: _____ Telephone Number: _____

Spouse: _____ Children (*Under 18*): _____

Address: _____ City: _____ St. ____ Zip: _____

E-Mail address: _____ Newsletter Preference: Email ☐ US Mail ☐

Single: ☐ \$ 20.00/YR. Includes one adult, minor children, the "SPACE" newsletter, and all the rights and privileges of membership.

Family: ☐ \$ 25.00/YR. Includes two adults, minor children and the above rights and privileges.

Patron: ☐ \$ 50.00/YR. A Patron member is entitled to the above rights and privileges.

Benefactor: ☐ \$100.00/YR. A Benefactor member is entitled to the above rights and privileges.