

November 2015 Editor - Jack Fritz

The St. Petersburg Astronomy Club, has been the center of family astronomy in the Tampa Bay Area for decades. Its 285 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

The seasons are changing and most of us are thinking of the upcoming holidays. The next one, of course, is Thanksgiving. We all have some things we should be grateful for as Americans. We have a country that is



prosperous enough for us to pursue happiness in whatever form that takes.

As astronomers, we should be especially grateful to be living right now. The modern age offers a wealth of information about the universe. New discoveries are made all the time. The telescopes and cameras we have today are dramatically better than the ones made just a few years ago. This puts quality astrophotography in the hands of those with even a modest budget. Telescopes with electronic mounts can now find thousands of objects quickly.

Another thing to be thankful for is our new friends and expanding network. That network brings new opportunities to our members. One such opportunity is the free and private planetarium show for SPAC members coming up in January. We will be taking reservations for the first 50 for a show at MOSI

in Tampa. The show is scheduled for Saturday January 23<sup>rd</sup> at 5PM. Reservations will be taken on a first come, first serve basis. Reserve a space to bring a friend.

### **New Members**

We would like to welcome David Jones, Richard & Alicia Munson, Antonio & Cherish Paris, and Lisa Casarez to our family of members.

#### Annual Meeting

This month's meeting will take place on Friday, November 20, 2015 at 8:00  $_{PM}$ , at the Science Center of Pinellas County, 7701  $22^{nd}$  Ave. N, St. Petersburg, FL.

This month's meeting will be all about our astronomy equipment auction. Bring your checkbook or cash for some spectacular bargains on astronomy equipment.

#### **Upcoming Programs**

December - Winter Solstice Party.

**January** - What's Up There and How Do I Find It? This program is geared for the beginner. Bring your scope and we'll see what we can find.

**January 23<sup>rd</sup>** - Planetarium show at MOSI with Dr. Paris.

### Member Appreciation

KYLE BRINKMAN

One of the things I am thankful for is the contributions of new members. New members are the lifeblood that keeps the club going. One such new member who is contributing to our success is Dave Richmond. Dave joined our club in 2012 and has been joining in at outreach events. Lately he is helping out with the Orange Blossom Star Party planning. We are looking forward to another great time. Thanks Dave, for stepping up and pitching in.

# Orange Blossom Special Star Party

JACK FRITZ

Registration is now open. Mark your calendars for our 22<sup>nd</sup> Orange Blossom Special Star Party, March 2nd through the 6<sup>th</sup>. Our star party is a month after the Winter Star Party and therefore, you could attend both.

You must register on line just like last year. You will be able to pay on line or by check if you prefer. You will want to register early this year, as we are expecting a sell-out.

Details are available on the website. Please click here to view.

#### Change in Magazine Subscriptions

JIM HUNTER

For decades the SPAC treasurer has received checks for renewals along with Sky & Telescope and Astronomy magazine subscriptions. Those checks require a trip to the bank and a written letter to the publishers to renew the subscriptions. This costs the club; a stamp, envelope and lots of time. It also creates a time delay for the double mailing, and high potential for errors.

In the past the publishers gave members a discount if the renewal came through the club. Now if you mention SPAC on your Sky &

Telescope renewal, you will get the same discount. Kalmbach Publishing (Astronomy) has a website where you can renew online.

Since there is no savings to our members, we plan to discontinue this service. We will continue, for tradition sake, until the end of December.

The Astronomy magazine Renewal Key code is RCLUB069. Please use the link below to renew your subscription:

http://subscribe.astronomy.com/ecare

#### Outreach

JIM HUNTER

Scott Walsh sent me this report on October 17th Gulfport viewing. Greg Simpson, Diane, and Scott Walsh set up solar scopes for a double header viewing. The Sun was showing a large sunspot and various prominences for all to enjoy. Only a dozen people were interested in viewing our nearest star, somewhat disappointing. We put the solar scopes away and set up for night time viewing. Many people enjoyed views of the moon, Saturn, Vega, and Albireo. Hundreds in fact, which made it all worthwhile.



Sidewalk Astronomy at Gulfport

On November 2<sup>nd</sup>, Steve Gaber, Tom Spano, Wally Vazquez and I set up for the fourth "Reading under the stars" at Eisenhower Elementary in Clearwater. Wally found Uranus, the Ring Nebula, and Andromeda. We viewed the parts of Summer Triangle with Albireo being the favorite. About 50 viewers, many too young, but some interested parents.

Wally arranged a solar viewing event on November 4<sup>th</sup> at Folly Farms Nature Preserve in Safety Harbor. Wally, Kelly, Steve and I, each had a white light filters and Tom diagnosed the focus problem with my Coronado. It has a bad diagonal. It was difficult to compete with a bounce house for a crowd of about 60 very young kids. We probably should not do solar for elementary and younger ages.

Here are the events we have scheduled so far:

Nov 19 - Jimmie Keel Library - Bearss Ave - N Tampa.

Nov 21 - Boy Scouts Flaming Arrow Scout Reservation in Winter Haven.

Dec 11 - Astronomy Night at Boyd Hill.

<u>Dec 18</u> - New Springs El. - Busch Blvd NE Tampa.

<u>Jan 9</u> - Brooker Creek - 3940 Keystone Rd Tarpon Springs - 2<sup>nd</sup> year.

<u>Jan 19</u> - Canterbury School - 990 62<sup>nd</sup> Ave NE St Pete - New.

<u>Feb 20</u> - Moccasin Lake Nature Park in Clearwater.

 $\underline{\text{Feb } 18}$  - Stewart Middle - 1125 Spruce - Tampa -  $4^{\text{th}}$  year.

Please check the SPAC calendar for more details, and contact me if you can help with any of these events.

#### December Astronomical Events

STEVE ROBBINS

December 1<sup>st</sup> Venus is at greatest elongation, 43.3° W of the Sun. So it rises in the morning before the Sun.

Friday December  $4^{th}$ , the Moon and Jupiter are separated by  $2^{\circ}$ .

Saturday, December  $5^{th}$  Saturn will be  $1^{\circ}$  N of the Moon.

Monday, December 7<sup>th</sup> Venus will be .7° 5 of the Moon.

Monday, December  $14^{th}$ , the spectacular Gemenid Meteor Shower (ZHR~120) is three days after the new moon. Be there or be square!

Wednesday, December 23<sup>rd</sup> Aldebaran will be .7° S of the Moon.

December 28<sup>th</sup> Mercury will be at greatest elongation 19.7° E of the sun. So this will be an evening observation.

December  $29^{th}$  Regulus will be  $2.9^{\circ}$  N of the Moon.

December 31<sup>st</sup> Jupiter will be 1.6° N of the Moon.

December's Full Moon is the Full Long Nights Moon. Nights are longest and the Moon is higher in the sky as the low Sun angle is what makes winter cold!

#### The Moon

- Third Quarter December 3, 02:40
- New Moon December 11, 05:29
- First Quarter December 18, 10:14
- Full Moon December 25, 06:11

# <u>Learn to Use Your Telescope Observing</u> Night

SHIRLEY VUILLE

Bring your telescope and all of its parts, its accessories, and an appropriate battery for your scope if it needs power. Also, if you are very unfamiliar with your scope, bring the telescope's manual as well. The event will be held in the grass field at the Science Center on Saturday, November 21st. Setup time for this month will be about 5:30 PM because sunset that evening is just before 6pm. This will allow time to learn tripod placement, telescope-tripod assembly, finder alignment, scope adjustments, and get familiar with procedures before it gets dark.

This event is scheduled monthly on the Saturday that falls closest to the first quarter moon. It is free and open to the public. Owning a telescope is not necessary. Anyone is welcome to come and look through our telescopes and see the wonders of the night sky.

Please email Shirley, <u>svuille@aol.com</u>; or John, <u>john@oneilladvertising.com</u> with your questions.

#### Mirror Lab

We have one new mirror-maker this month. Richard is grinding a 10" f/5 mirror. He is using one of Mike's mirror blanks.





Just getting started.

We also had a visitor from Bradenton, Lou, who had picked up a 24" f/2 aluminum mirror from government surplus. It was used for environmental monitoring of smokestack emissions. He is looking at different options on how to use it or possibly figuring it.

More pictures are available on the mirror lab web page at: <a href="www.telescopelab.com">www.telescopelab.com</a>, on Mike Davis's web page at: <a href="www.mdpub.com">www.mdpub.com</a>,

and also on Allen Maroney's web page: www.knology.net/amaroney.

The award winning Mirror Lab welcomes interested visitors to their facility at the Science Center's rear annex. The lab is open on Saturdays between noon and 4:00 pm. Several experienced and skilled tutors are there to give you support, help & instruction. For more information call Ralph Craig 727 384-2086; Paul McNabb 727 345-5713; or Allen Maroney 727 867-4781

If you have any surplus telescope parts, the mirror lab could use them for various projects.

#### For Sale

Orion XT10 Intelliscope Dob with hand controller, viewfinder, 2 eyepieces, upgraded 2 inch, 2 speed, low-profile focuser, cooling fan, solar glass sun filter, light shield, padded scope case, storage cover and custom elevation stand. \$599. Excellent condition.

Contact Scott Walsh at (727) 378-4355 or <u>sawmann55@yahoo.com</u>.

Steve Robins has a Coulter 17.5" mirror set, never used for \$700. You may contact him at <a href="mailto:Steve\_Robbins@cfl.rr.com">Steve\_Robbins@cfl.rr.com</a> or (386) 736-9123.

#### American Astronomical Society

The winter meeting of the American Astronomical Society will be held in Kissimmee, Florida from Monday, 1/4/16 through Friday 1/8/16. Members might be interested in volunteering if they have some free time. Those who volunteer for 16 or more hours are granted full registration privileges.

http://aas.org/meetings/aas227/volunteer

## Dark of the Moon weekend for October

KELLY ANDERSON

I have a mixed review of our Dark of the Moon this month at Withlacoochee River Park. On Friday, Chris, Joe and I arrived with our travel trailers and high hopes for a good weekend of sky gazing. We had a good weekend, but sky gazing was a bit hit and miss. The clouds cleared out for us nicely late Friday afternoon after a brief shower, and we were joined by Alex and his big dob for the evening. Joe graciously loaned me his Celestron 102 mm refractor so I could compare its imaging performance to my Celestron C8. We had soso visibility until the high layer of clouds finally cleared out by about 10:00 pm. I got a couple of fairly good images of NGC 253 (Sculptor Galaxy) and M45 (the Pleiades). For the first time I was able to capture some of the nebulosity around the Seven Sisters, so I have to give Joe's refractor a 5-star rating!



The Pleiades

Alex had a lot of fun (we did too) finding all manner of celestial wonders with his excellent Dobsonian. A couple of nearby campers joined us ... they came for a quick peek and stayed for a couple of hours.

Saturday evening started out very promising, with almost all the fair-weather cumulus clearing out, leaving a mostly clear sky. We were joined by Guy and Lance for the evening. I had switched to my C8 and was getting good results on M33 (Triangulum Galaxy) when a cumulonimbus (big honking thunder bumper) began to rapidly develop south of us. Before too long, we were surrounded by scary lightning storms. So deciding that discretion was called for, we shut down and packed up. By the time we were done the sky was completed clouded, but, oddly enough, we didn't get any rain. Go figure.

Temperatures during the day were fairly beastly for November, but things cooled down nicely at night. Once we get past this warm snap I think the weather will improve significantly (yeah, the eternal optimist), so plan on joining us December 11 - 13 for the next DOTM. Even if you can only come out for the evening, we're only an hour's drive from the greater Tampa Bay metropolis, so join us.

#### NASA News

STEVE ROBINS

Dawn, having completed two months of observation from its intermediate parking orbit 950 miles from Ceres, began firing its ion engine to descend to its final low altitude mapping orbit. This one will be at an altitude of under 235 miles at a resolution of one pixel to 120 feet. The maneuver will take seven weeks.

New Horizons has <u>executed a series of engine burns</u> to add some velocity and change course for Kuiper Belt object 2014 MU69, approximately 10AU distant. It will arrive early in 2016 with the goal to pass much closer than the 7,500 mile distance it approached Pluto.

Rosetta has been orbiting Comet 67P/Churyumov-Gerasimenko for over a year now and is still making surprising discoveries about our rubber ducky comet. Lately, it has sent solar system theorists back to the drawing board with its discovery of much more molecular oxygen outgassing from the comet than anybody predicted, between 1% and 10% compared to the number of detected water molecules. Scientists were not expecting to find any molecular oxygen at all.

# SPAC Business Meeting



The Business Meetings are normally held on the second Wednesday of each month. Our next meeting is Wednesday, December 2<sup>nd</sup>, 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:	<u>Kyle Brinkman</u>	727 455-6931
Vice Pres.:	Jack Fritz	813 508-5680
Secretary:	Paul McNabb	727 345-5713
Treasurer:	<u>Jim Hunter</u>	813 909-7013
Dirat-Large:	Mike Davis	727 474-6785
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Public Relations	John O'Neill	727 637-5945
Membership Chair	Shirley Vuille	727 864-2624
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		
Tommy & Amy Ming	Benefactor		
Alexie & Yanira Velez	Patron		
Gustav J. Waffen	Patron		
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Lindsey & Yanira McKeown	Patron		
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Robert Myers	Patron		
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#### Examiner Staff

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Assistant Editor	Nancy Huff	813 621-3606
Mirror Lab	Ralph Craig	727 384-2086

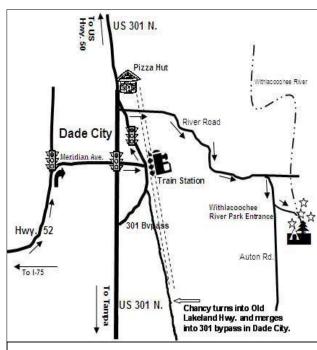
#### Withlacoochee New Moon Weekend (Cont.)

Our next New Moon Weekend falls on November  $11^{th}$  and  $12^{th}$ .

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. <a href="mailto:starhopr3@msn.com">starhopr3@msn.com</a> 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:	me: Telephone Number:						
Spouse: _			Children ( <i>Under 18</i> ):				
Address: _			City:		St	Zip:	
E-Mail add	ress	:	Newsletter Pr	reference: I	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 an	nd privilege	s.		