

April 2017 Editor - Jack Fritz

The St. Petersburg Astronomy Club, has been the center of family astronomy in the Tampa Bay Area for decades. Its 282 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 lectures, astronomy lectures, educational outreach sessions and much more.

President's Message

KYLE BRINKMAN

When we think of heroes today we often think of action heroes in movies. There are other, like sports heroes who win the big game for their team. There are tragic heroes like our soldiers who sacrificed everything, including



their lives, in service to our country. It is rare that a hero is recognized by everyone and is not built on someone's loss.

When I was a boy, my heroes were astronauts. Astronauts had the courage to journey to space in a dangerous adventure. They were brave and strong men (women came later) serving our nation by pushing the limits of human achievement. Now there are hundreds of astronauts from around the world. It has become harder to be a hero in the expanded field of talent. It is harder to be a hero when success means everything goes according to plan.

We lost a real hero not long ago. John Glenn was laid to rest at Arlington National Cemetery. Today's astronauts owe a great debt to John Glenn. He was the very first American to orbit the Earth. He may have been little more than cargo on that Mercury

rocket, but that trip paved the way for the rest of the manned missions. His survival proved that it could be done safely. This was not a given and came at an extreme personal risk. When astronauts sign up at NASA, they give away their rights to their medical history. NASA was able to study the impact of time in space upon the long-term health of astronauts. John Glenn became the earliest and oldest test subject making space safer for future travelers. His life after NASA became a legacy of service as a US Senator for 24 years. Like all good heroes, he had the medals to prove he indeed had the "right stuff."

It is sad to see his passing. We can all look forward to the next generation of heroes as NASA plans further missions to more distant destinations. Keep looking up!

New Members

We would like to welcome Stephanie Larson, Peter Brown, Blake Harding, Pete Zapadka & Amy Johns, Andy Demartini, and Kevin & Patricia Dowden to our family of members.

General Meeting

This month's general meeting will take place on Friday, April 28^{th} , at 8:00 PM, at the Science Center of Pinellas County, 7701 22^{nd} Ave. N, St. Petersburg.

<u>Main Program</u> - Winter Star Party - John O'Neill

Spring Picnic at Withlacoochee River Park

Our annual spring picnic was a big hit again this year. More than forty members and guests attended. Thank you, Shirley, for those wonderful hamburgers.



Kelly mans the grill

Thanks, Kelly, you did a great job.

We had some solar observing thanks to the newly donated solar telescopes. Gayle Nance has donated two solar telescopes in memory of her brother, David Glackin.



Gayle & Tim Nance

Thanks, Nancy, we all share your pride in your brother's accomplishments.

Hillsborough Outreach

JIM HUNTER

Penny and I went to the group camp at Withlacoochee for a Cub Scout Pack on March 31st. The leader is a fellow docent at Cracker Country. There were about 20 Scouts and ten adults. Seeing was OK but deteriorated.

I went to Mabry Elementary School in south Tampa on April 6th at the invitation of Ray and Jill McDonald. They sponsor the astronomy club at Plant High School. She is a teacher there. They both have 12-inch Dobs and have done viewings at Mabry for 15 years. I am adding them to our Outreach crew for Tampa. There were about 50 students and 15 adults. Seeing was great, given the city lights.

Pinellas Outreach

SCOTT WALSH

We had gusting winds, but a clear sky for our Gulfport Outreach-viewing on April 7th. Jupiter was very bright and along with our Moon, made excellent targets under Gulfport's heavily light polluted skies.



Patrons with Greg Simpson

Greg Simpson brought his 8-inch custom Dob. Diane and I used our 8 inch Meade LT SCT. Patrons, estimated at 150, lined up for a glimpse and info about Jupiter at opposition, our neighbor the Moon and M42 in Orion. All had a good time.

National Weather Service

SHIRLEY VUILLE



There are two more opportunities in May for National Weather Service SKYWARN Spotter Training. These will take place in Citrus & Hillsborough counties. Go to their webpage for more information:

http://www.weather.gov/tbw/skywarn

May Astronomical Events

STEVE ROBBINS

Thursday, May 4th find the Moon .6° North of Regulus. The evening of the 4th is the peak of the Eta Aquarids Meteor Shower with a ZHR of about 60. The waxing gibbous moon will hinder viewing of this one.

Wednesday, May 17th, Mercury is at greatest Western elongation, 25.8° west of the Sun.

Tuesday, May 23^{rd} the Moon will be 1.6° north of Mercury.

On Monday, May 29th the Moon 3.4° north of the Beehive Cluster.

On Wednesday, May 31st, the Moon will be .3° north of Regulus.

May's full Moon is the Full Flower Moon. Lots of wildflowers in May in areas that aren't sanitized by lawnmowers.

May's Moon Phases:

- > 2nd Moon at First Quarter
- > 10th Full Moon
- > 18th Moon at Third Quarter
- > 25th New Moon

Mirror Lab

Devin completed the tube for his 10-inch telescope on Saturday with some amazing artwork. He painted



it on a wrap that they put on the sides of boats and RV's and then applied it to the tube. He has assembled the optics and experienced first-light at the lab.



Wrap painting



Wrap applied

Allen is polishing his 16-inch thin mirror. Paul and Ron are working on two 14-inch mirrors that Mike re-melted from 12.5-inch-thick blanks. Dimitri is about ready to start polishing his 12-inch, and Jean-Paul is also coming over from Orlando to work on his 10-inch mirror every chance he can get. Brad has been out of action as he bought a new home.

More pictures are on the mirror lab web page at www.telescopelab.com and Mike Davis's web page at www.mdpub.com, and also on Allen Maroney's web page www.knology.net/amaroney.

March Dark of the Moon

KELLY ANDERSON

🗡 This month's Star Party was a great time with mostly pretty good seeing and lots of friends. It started on Friday, with Joe Canzoneri, Robby Smith, Mike Partain & Friends, Jack & Roni Fritz, Ron & Dee Wayman, Charlie & Linda Hoffman, Nancy & Bill Huff, Dave Richmond, and Blake Harding setting up camp. Blake, by the way, is a brand-new astronomer, arriving late to the party, but I think we've got him hooked! I arrived later than planned because my day started with a flat tire on my travel trailer. Funny how a nail through the tread can make things difficult. Mike Partain had "one of those days" at work, and didn't have time to pack his camping gear, with the important stuff (scopes, etc.) and a few friends for the evening, then drove home in the wee hours. Happily, he could rejoin us Saturday afternoon, with camping gear, and spent the night.

Seeing was mostly OK at sunset, with scattered, high-level cirrus occasionally annoying us. The air was pretty clear though, and after 10:00 it got almost completely free of clouds, although an upper-level haze seemed to hang in the East. Some of our imagers posted their pictures on the Club's Facebook page. Take a look; they're pretty good.

Saturday brought out a bunch more. I'm sure the Spring Picnic had something to do with it, but we were joined by Claire Smith (Robby's significant other), Allen & Betsy Force, Jim & Penny Hunter, Wally & Ramona Vasquez, Richard & Mary Garner, Elizabeth & Roy Ward, Shirley Vuille, Kyle Brinkman, and others. Sorry if I missed noting your presence in these modest scribblings, but there were a lot of folks joining us for a great weekend.

We had somewhat more than 40 participants in the Spring Picnic. Jack and I grilled the Shirley burgers and hot dogs. Despite our best efforts, the burgers were terrific! If

you've never had one of Shirley's burgers, you've been grossly neglecting your taste buds. Lots of other culinary delights were available, and no one left hungry. At least if they did, it was their own fault!



It gets quiet when the food is served.

Later that evening Dr. Kevin McKay, head of the Astronomy Department of USF, joined us with about a dozen or so of his students. They were really enjoying themselves, many of whom hadn't actually looked through a telescope before! Lots of "Wow!" and "OMG!" were heard emanating from the field of scopes. They eagerly soaked up our (hopefully) good advice. For viewers it was a great night for star gazing, being able to avoid the occasional cloud passing. Because of occasional clumps of thin, high-level clouds, imagers required a little more patience than usual. The air was more stable than usual, allowing me to get 5-minute exposures!

I think I can say without fear of contradiction that we had a very good weekend of food, fellowship, and star gazing. Mark your calendars, the next New Moon weekend is April 21 - 23, and the next Spring Picnic is only 12 months away!

SPAC Business Meeting



Our next meeting is Wednesday, May 10th, 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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Librarian:	Ralph Craig	727 384-2086
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Recognition of Patrons & Benefactors:

Click on the name to send email

Clifford B. Benham	Benefactor
Jack & Roni Fritz	Benefactor
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Andy Demartini	Patron
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Gustav J. Waffen	Patron
Joe Ortiz-Bradley	Patron
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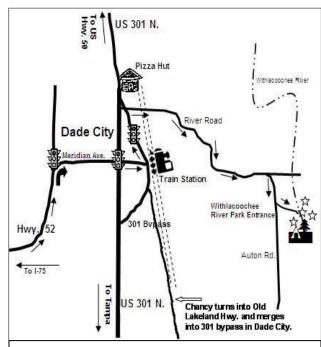
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Reporter	Kelly Anderson	813 672-2751
In the News	Steve Robbins	386 736-9123
Mirror Lab	Ralph Craig	727 384-2086

Withlacoochee New Moon Weekend

Our next New Moon Weekend falls on April 21^{st} through the 23^{rd} .

The park gate is locked at Sundown, so you will need to arrive before then. The yearround 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 (<i>Under 18</i>):			
Address: _			City:	St	Zip:	
E-Mail add	ress	:	Newsletter Preference: En	nail[]	US Mail [] \$25	
Single:	[]	\$ 30.00/YR.	Includes one adult, minor children, the "SPACE" newsletter, and leges of membership.	all the ri	ghts and privi-	
Family:	[]	\$ 35.00/YR.	Includes two adults, minor children and the above rights and priv	ileges.		
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US Mail:	ſ 1	\$ 25.00/YR.	Please include \$25 if you choose to have the newsletter via US M	fail.		