

November 2016 Editor - Jack Fritz

The St. Petersburg Astronomy Club, has been the center of family astronomy in the Tampa Bay Area for decades. Its 280 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.

<u>President's Message</u>

KYLE BRINKMAN

I'd like to remind all our club members that the meeting nights change in November and December. The monthly meetings are held on the third Fridays rather than the fourth because of the holidays. The December



meeting, our annual Christmas party, begins at 7:00 PM.

This last month we elected officers for our club again. The same people have been working on the same things for a very long time. Our club needs to include new members in volunteer and leadership roles. These roles need not be a lifetime commitment. Come, attend and display your telescope at an outreach event as you are able. We could use some people to help with the hospitality at our monthly meetings. The OBSP is an ordeal. It takes volunteers to make the arrangements for this star party our premier annual event.

The astronomy season in Florida is just starting up. The nights are getting clearer and starting earlier. I was out observing last week and saw numerous shooting stars. This is a great time to share your love of astronomy with friends and neighbors. When you do,

please also mention our club and the support we offer to our members and community. Keep looking up.

New Members

We would like to welcome Mary DeGon & Joseph McGall to our family of members, and welcome back to Laura Ruacho.

General Meeting

This month's general meeting will take place on Friday, November 18th at 8:00 PM, at the Science Center of Pinellas County, 7701 22nd Ave. N, St. Petersburg, FL. **Please note that this is the third Friday**.

<u>Main Program</u> - Dave Valletta (NASA& FIT), Magnetic Reconnection as interplanetary propulsion.

Upcoming Programs

Please remember our General Meetings are the third Fridays in November and December.

December 16th - Christmas Party **January 27**th - No general meeting due to conflict with the OBSP.

March 25th - Spring Picnic at Withlacoochee. Please refer to the SPAC calendar on the website.

Member Appreciation

KYLE BRINKMAN

This month's member appreciation goes to Scott Walsh. Scott is a regular at our outreach events in Pinellas County. He can be found in Gulfport doing the sidewalk astronomy and at the Boyd Hill outreach events. Scott goes the extra mile by joining in at the Science Festival and ensuring we have brochures at each of these events to promote our club and the love of astronomy. Thank you, Scott, for all that you do.

From the Editor

JACK FRITZ

In last month's issue, I incorrectly stated that all our current officers had agreed to continue in their current roles. However, Mike Davis decided to step down from Director-At-Large and John O'Neill agreed to run. All the officers ran unopposed and were unanimously reelected.

I would like to thank Mike for his years of service on the Board of Directors, but don't worry, Mike isn't going anywhere. He will still be here to help as always.

I announced last month that we had signed a contract with the Science Center that gives us a home for the next two years. That contract included a doubling of our rent that covers the mirror lab and meetings. We felt that the increase in rent was justified by the fact that we had never had a rent increase since moving to the Science Center 20 years ago.

Due to this increase in our costs, we need to increase our club dues. Beginning with January renewals, our dues will be \$30 for a single member and \$35 for a family.

2017 Orange Blossom Star Party



Registration for our annual star party will be open until December 28th. You will want to register early to get a good spot. Please check the website for more information.

Examiner Subscriptions

JACK FRITZ

Please remember that beginning in January, membership renewals will include a \$25 subscription fee for those members electing to receive the newsletter via US Mail.

December Astronomical Events

STEVE ROBBINS

Saturday, December 5th, Saturn is in conjunction, only 3 degrees from the Sun. This is the opposite of opposition, where instead of being the closest possible distance from the Earth, Saturn is at the farthest possible distance away.

Monday the 12^{th} , Aldebaran will be .4 degrees south of the Moon.

Tuesday, December 12th, the Geminid Meteor Shower peaks just one day before the full Moon. I doubt the ZHR has a lot of significance in that light.

Sunday the 18^{th} , we find Regulus 1.1° north of the Moon.

The Winter Solstice occurs on Wednesday the 21st in the northern hemisphere.

December's full Moon is the Full Long Nights Moon. Sounds logical!

The Moon

- First Quarter December 7, 04:03
- Full Moon December 13, 19:05

- Third Quarter December 20, 20:55
- New Moon December 29, 01:53

Outreach

JIM HUNTER

Jack writes, "Scott & Diann Walsh, Shirley & Sam Vuille, John O'Neill, Steve Gaber, Wally & Ramona Vazquez, Greg & Liz Simpson and I spent Saturday the 22nd of October showing off our closest star to hundreds of viewers. There was a line at every telescope all day long. It was great to see such enthusiasm. We look forward to doing it again next year and hope you will join us."



Steve with a line.



More fun at the festival.

Gulfport Sidewalk Astronomy - Scott Walsh reported the following from the October event. Approx. 100 patrons attended our SPAC Sidewalk viewing. Greg Simpson, Diane and Scott Walsh were present. We viewed a crescent Moon, Venus, Mars, Saturn, and Albireo, under perfectly clear skies. We combined Sidewalk Astronomy with the Arts and Crafts displays. Local restaurants provide good food, drinks, and music. A fantastic venue for SPAC Club exposure.



Crowds at Gulfport



More photographs from Gulfport

Please check our calendar at www.stpe-teastronomyclub.org/calendar.php for upcoming outreach events.

Annual Meeting and Fall Picnic

JACK FRITZ



It gets quiet when the food arrives.



Jim presents the annual budget.

Our annual meeting and fall picnic were a great success; lots of food, fellowship, and fun.

The slate of officers was unanimously elected. They are: Kyle Brinkman, President; Jack Fritz, Vice President; Paul McNabb, Secretary; Jim Hunter, Treasurer; and John O'Neill is our newest Director-At-Large. The annual budget presented by Jim was also unanimously passed.

Mirror Lab

It's amazing what a little bit cooler weather will do around the mirror lab. Allen started grinding on a thin



16-inch mirror, Paul is grinding a 14-inch mirror, Dimitri is grinding a 16-inch mirror, Mike is grinding one of his new and improved 12 $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch hex-backed mirrors (3rd generation?), and I'm grinding an 11-inch mirror.



Everyone's working, including Paul.

We also have a new grinder this month, Jean Paul Aliaga, who has started a 10-inch mirror.



Jean Paul is just beginning his adventure.

Thanks to several of the mirror lab members for cleaning up the picnic area around the mirror lab for our Annual Meeting and Fall Picnic. Also thanks to Paul for manning the grill for burgers, brats, and dogs.

Pictures are on the mirror lab web page at www.telescopelab.com and on Mike Davis's web page at www.mdpub.com and also on Allen Maroney's web page www.knology.net/ama-roney.

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

New Moon at Withlacoochee

KELLY ANDERSON

This Dark of the Moon weekend actually started a week early. Joe Canzoneri, Franklin Matos and I decided to run up to Withlacoochee last Friday, October 21st because the forecast was for clear skies and the moon wouldn't be rising until a few hours before sunrise. We were rewarded with the best seeing we've experienced in a long time. It was awesome! Mike Partain joined us Saturday evening and entertained us with the wonderful sights through his Meade 10" SCT, while Joe, Franklin and I had a great time exposing our digital capture devices to photons that left their sources a long time ago from galaxies far, far away. Sorry, you missed it.

This weekend, the official DOTM had a great turnout with less-than-outstanding seeing, but nonetheless a wonderful weekend experience. Joe, Jack & Roni Fritz, and I set up our RVs on Thursday afternoon, and Elizabeth Ward with friend Karen pitched a tent under their favorite shade tree. Alas, total cloud coverage!

Friday brought out a few more hardy souls, Bill & Nancy Huff, and Ron & Dee Wayman arrived late that afternoon. Jack, Roni and I drove down to the Science Center to attend our Club's annual meeting and election of officers (the ample quantities of delectable comestibles might have been an added attraction). We got back to Withlacoochee about 10:00 just in time for some astronomy. Skies were not bad, with clear spots interrupted here and there with a few high, thin clouds that got scarcer as the evening progressed. Joe captured both the Western and Eastern Veil Nebulae and posted them on our club Facebook page, so don't miss them. I finally managed to get my 8" f/3.9 astrograph to cooperate simultaneously with my auto-tracker (they don't play well together), so life was good. I picked some easy targets to start (The Pleiades, Flame, and Orion Nebulae) with pretty good results. I packed it in at about 3:00 am, and woke to bright, clear skies promising another great night. As you'll see, Mother Nature reneges on her promises sometimes.

Our astronomy neighborhood grew on Saturday, welcoming Tom Boyko and his 16" Dob (super bright views) Wally Vazquez, Mike & Carly Pertain, and Shirley & Sam Vuille. Roy Ward joined Elizabeth and the party after a day of kayaking the Withlacoochee through the Green Swamp. Roy and Elizabeth hosted an informal soiree where hors d'oeuvres, cordials, and fun conversation made a lovely start to the evening's activities.

As a side note, for those of you who enjoy paddling through the natural world, the kayaking/canoeing at the Withlacoochee River Park is great! Just one more wonderful activity to enjoy at our incredible dark site!

We had a bunch of boy scouts visit us early Saturday evening when the seeing was still OK. They even allowed their adult leadership to join them. They were impressed with all we were able to show them, even though the cloud gods kept getting in the way. As the evening progressed the clouds got worse, so we shut down our observatories and watched a DVD of Wally and Ramona's recent trip to Africa. Wow!

The next two DOTMs coincide with Thanksgiving and New Year, so what better place to celebrate the holidays? I'd guarantee clear skies, but the last time I did that it didn't turn out so well.

NASA News

STEVE ROBBINS

Those sticky thruster valves which are keeping Juno from decreasing its orbital period as planned may not be a singular anomaly. NASA is investigating whether Juno's helium valve malfunction may be related to a series

of malfunctions on the Intelsat geostationary satellites. "It was made known to us that the rocket we currently have on Juno, the retrorocket that gets us into orbit, is in the same family as one that has been malfunctioning on the Intelsat," says James Green of NASA's planetary science division.

New Horizons reached a milestone on October 25th, when it transmitted the last bit of data collected from its July 2015 encounter with Pluto and all data is now safely back on planet Earth. They have their pot of gold!

The Hubble Space Telescope crew has been monitoring the Joe Canzoneri Facebook page lately and frankly, they're a bit worried about losing funding. They pulled out all stops to produce <u>this photo</u>, which they hope will restore their prominence.

Finding a very curiously shaped rock on Mars' surface, <u>Curiosity zapped it seven times</u> with its ChemCam laser. It had found an iron-nickel meteorite! It was its glossy black appearance, in contrast to the normal reddish flat sedimentary character of most Martian rocks that attracted the Curiosity team's attention.

A few more photographs



Pause to Pose



Mary Garner (Left) My bride Roni (Right)



The annual meeting is called to order.



Jim holds court.

SPAC Business Meeting



Our next meeting is Wednesday, December 7^{th} , 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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| Vice Pres.: | Jack Fritz | 813 508-5680 |
| Secretary: | Paul McNabb | 727 345-5713 |
| Treasurer: | <u>Jim Hunter</u> | 813 909-7013 |
| Dirat-Large: | John O'Neill | 727 637-5945 |
| Dirat-Large: | David Pearson | 727-215-1526 |
| Dirat-Large: | <u>Allen Maroney</u> | 727 867-4781 |
| SPACE Editor | Jack Fritz | 813 508-5680 |
| 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

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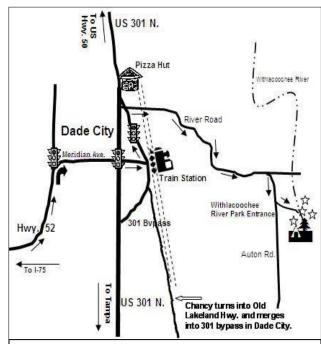
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| Mirror Lab | Ralph Craig | 727 384-2086 |

Withlacoochee New Moon Weekend

Our next New Moon Weekend falls on November 25^{th} and 26^{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. 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 | lress: | : | Newsletter Preference: | Email [|] US Mail [] | |
| Single: | [] | \$ 20.00/YR. | Includes one adult, minor children, the "SPACE" newsletter, and leges of membership. | d all the ri | ghts and privi- | |
| Family: | [] | \$ 25.00/YR. | Includes two adults, minor children and the above rights and private and priva | vileges. | | |
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