



April 2015

Editor -Jack Fritz

The St. Petersburg Astronomy Club, has been the center of family astronomy in the Tampa Bay Area for decades. Its 263 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

★ A friend of mine once told me about the fairness inversion principle. It is the reason that 80% of the clothes are made to fit 20% of the people. Another name for the phenomenon is the Pareto Principle. The Pareto Principle is common in volunteer organizations where 80% of the work is done by 20% of the people. It is those in the high contributors that are due some gratitude.



Volunteers are the heart of SPAC. We are a non-profit organization that relies upon astronomers who want to promote the science and enjoy it together. That takes a lot of work. Each event on our calendar has hours of planning and preparation in advance. Dedicated volunteers do all the work to bring good programs to our monthly meetings, send welcome emails to new members, arrange public showings, bring refreshments to meetings. Then there is an award winning mirror lab open every Saturday. That takes commitment.

This column is not long enough to list all the activities our volunteers do that make our club the oldest and best in the state. Each contribution is necessary and welcome. We

need all those contributions and there is a place for different talents.

Sometimes volunteers do not get the recognition they deserve. If you were following our Facebook page last month you may have noticed that I accidentally thanked the wrong astronomer for their work at Bauder Elementary School. My friends soon corrected me.

I am starting a new entry for our newsletters to highlight a volunteer who has done something good for the benefit of the club. Please join me in thanking these volunteers when you see them. This month's volunteer is Jack Fritz our VP, newsletter editor, and New Moon Weekend coordinator (among other things).

The Board of Directors needs your input. We are planning the direction of the club for the immediate and long term and need to include you. There will be a meeting on May 30th to discuss the ideas that will make us the inviting club we all want to be a part of. Members make a club. Please come and bring your best ideas. A good idea with a vigilant effort is sure to succeed. Let's see what this club wants to be.

New Members

We would like to welcome Colin Davis & Margaret Cashill, Cynthia Tiffany, Ed

Peachey, and Tom Boyko to our family of members.

General Meeting

This month's meeting will take place on Friday, April 24, 2015 at 8:00 PM, at the Science Center of Pinellas County, 7701 22nd Ave. N, St. Petersburg, FL.

Beginning Program - Kyle Brinkman will welcome guests and make pertinent announcements.

Break & Sidewalk Astronomy - Snack Time & Sidewalk Astronomy. Paul McNabb, our provider of all good eats, will lead a walk outside to observe and discuss the night sky.

Main Program - Dr. Chris Kelso from the University of North Florida will enlighten us with our current understanding of dark matter surrounding black holes.

Coming Programs

May - Spring Picnic at the Science Center. We will begin one hour early, at 7:00 PM. Bring your telescopes.

June - Jim Hunter will give pointers on conducting a star party for schools and such. Ed Peachey the CEO of Career Source Pinellas will update us on the future of the Science Center. Dr. Eduardo Fernandez, Eckerd College, will discuss Ion Engines.

Long Term Planning Meeting

KYLE BRINKMAN

★ The club is going to take a little time to reflect on where we are as an organization and what we want our club to be. We will be meeting at Panera Bread, 1908 4th Street N. in St Petersburg one Saturday May 30th 1:00 - 3:00PM. Please mark your calendars and bring your thoughts and suggestions.

Editor's Note

JACK FRITZ

★ We have created a Google Calendar to manage all of our club events. The calendar includes our Business Meetings, General Meetings; Star Parties, and Outreach Program. Please go to www.stpeteastronomy-club.org/calendar.php and take a look.

Now is the time to begin organizing our outreach program for next season. Jim Hunter, our Treasurer, is our Outreach Chair and he needs your help. It would be great if we had outreach coordinators for both Hillsborough and Pinellas Counties. They could assist Jim by accepting requests for events, assigning event coordinators, posting the event on our Outreach Calendar and Facebook, and making sure that the event details are sent to our newsletter editor. Please let me know if you are willing to take on the task.

We also need additional volunteers to participate in our Outreach Program. It is a major contributor to the growth of our organization. Please consider joining in. We all find enjoyment in sharing the night sky with folks who have never looked through a telescope. Drop me an email if I have left you off the list or you would like to join. Don't worry about not knowing how; you'll get the hang of it by participating in just one event.

Science Center of Pinellas

JACK FRITZ

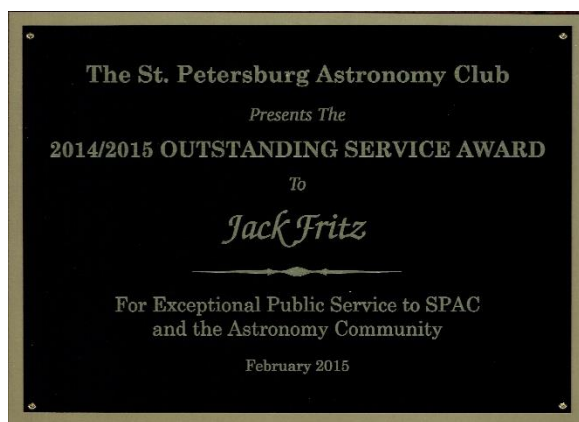
★ The Science Center is now owned by Career Source Pinellas and they need our help. Mr. Ed Peachey, CEO, has stated that he is glad to have us there and we have a home as long as they can maintain the facility.

They are looking for additional corporate sponsorship for their efforts. If you are a part of a company that may be able to help, please make sure you attend our June meeting to learn more about their goals and objectives. Be sure to let us know if you have any ideas on fund raising.

Member Appreciation of the Month

KYLE BRINKMAN

★ It's only fitting to give the very first posting of the Member Appreciation of the Month to Jack Fritz. The board met, and rightly decided to give him the Outstanding Service Award. The award is special because it is very rare. There have only been 4 awarded in the 90 year history of SPAC. We have some great volunteers who come to viewings, speak to our club and some serve as club officers.



Jack has done all of these things, and more, for a long time. Jack is the coordinator of our New Moon Weekends at Withlacoochee. He's done upgrades to the electricity at the park making it more hospitable for campers and their scopes. The OBS was a huge success because of his 7 years of experience making it happen. Some of our most important technological changes like Paypal, online membership registration and newsletters by email were all made possible through his efforts. These contributions, big and small, make the SPAC club the successful club it is.

May Astronomical Events

STEVE ROBBINS

★ On May 1st, Venus is at greatest elongation at 42.1° east of the Sun.

The Eta Aquarid Shower is the evening of May 4/5, with a nearly full Moon dominating the sky. With about a ZHR of 60 it still may yield some treasure.

Saturn can be found 2.1° south of the Moon on May 5th. Mercury reaches greatest elongation on May 7th at 21.2° east of the Sun.

Saturn is at opposition on May 22nd. Venus will be found 4° south of Pollux on the 29th.

May's full moon is the Full Flower Moon, for the fields of flowers in that month.

Lunar Phases

- Full Moon - May 3, 23:43 EDT
- Third Quarter - May 11, 06:37 EDT
- New Moon - May 18, 00:15 EDT
- First Quarter - May 25, 01:20 EDT

NASA News

It seems to me that something very strange is happening to the Dawn mission to Ceres. Until yesterday, I had not read any other commentator having similar concerns. On March 6th, Dawn entered orbit around Ceres with regular updates happening almost on a daily basis. Then silence. On March 10th I e-mailed the publicity director of the mission, asking why no updates? I received an automated reply that he would be on vacation for the next couple of weeks.

Suppose Apollo 11 had arrived at the moon, the LM separated and a landing were imminent, and the next thing we heard was two weeks later that the astronauts had safely returned to Earth. No video. No "One step for man." We'd have questions.

But it is now April 5th and the last posted news for the Dawn mission [on the official web-site](#) is dated March 6th. Finally one of the [NASA UFO conspiracy nuts](#) has mentioned it when the news media seems tone deaf. "NASA Hiding Evidence of Alien Life on Dwarf Planet Ceres?" they say. Can you blame them?

Most likely THAT's not what's happening, but what is?

Not satisfied with taking the most awesome astrophotographs in history, Hubble is now in the business of making movies. But of course, being Hubble, they aren't just ANY movies. In 2002, [Hubble caught V838 Monocerotis](#) having some sort of atypical outburst, suddenly becoming one of the largest and brightest stars ever observed, with a light output 600,000 times that of the Sun. For years, Hubble took photo after photo of this star. Now those photos have been assembled into a movie actually [showing the expansion of the light echo](#) from this event through the surrounding dust clouds.

Outreach

JIM HUNTER

★ Chris Curran, Chris Halls, Wally Vazquez, Jack Fritz, and I set up at Northwest Elementary on April 2nd for a crowd of more than 300 students, parents, and teachers.



Long lines at Jim's Dob.



Chris had long lines also.

The sky was mostly cloudy but we could keep the Moon, Venus, and Jupiter in the scopes throughout the evening.

Scott and Diane Walsh set up at Gulfport on April 3rd. Scott writes: "The weather was perfect, with Jupiter almost directly overhead. I estimate 150 people were treated to super views of Jupiter with its moons and our almost full Moon. Lines to access my Meade 8" SCT, were at times, 20 people long and double wide. Jupiter's moons, Io and Ganymede, performed their disappearing act behind the planet.



Happy Crowd at Gulfport



Scott & Diane could use another telescope.

Our astronomy table was utilized and had free Astronomy and Sky & Telescope magazines, all were scooped up quickly. A giant Cosmos book shows patrons splendid pictures and info before viewing the object with the scope.

It just does not get any better. I'm looking forward to the next Gulfport event."

Scott and Diane Walsh, along with several members of the MARS Club, set up telescopes for MOSI's Sky Watch on April 11th. There were about a dozen scopes of all styles and sizes. The viewing was moved from the Butterfly exhibit area, to the access road behind employee parking so as not to interfere with another event. Around thirty-five interested viewers were treated to views of the night sky.



Clouds tried to ruin the Sky Watch event, but at around 8 PM the clouds parted, and gave way to clear skies. MOSI's lead Astronomer, Dr. Antonio Paris, started out with a talk about what we were going to see. Our targets were; Jupiter, Venus, M42 and a few other bright stars. It was a great event.

Coming Outreach Events

Please contact the event coordinator if you can help with these events:

- 5/1 - Gulfport Sidewalk Astronomy - Greg Simpson
- 5/16 - Gulfport Sidewalk Astronomy - Greg Simpson
- 9/19 International Observe the Moon Night - TBD

Event Coordinators

- *GS Greg Simpson 727 896-9410
- *JH Jim Hunter 813 507-8415

- *JO John O'Neill 727 637-5945

Please send a brief description of any events you are planning to Jim Hunter for inclusion in the newsletter.

Mirror Lab

RALPH CRAIG

★ Our Canadian, Peter, has started polishing his 8" mirror. Brent & Joey, and Mike Davis are in final figuring of their 10" and 12.5" mirrors. We will see who finishes first.



Paul's Black Vitrified Ceramic Blank

Paul McNabb, yes Paul McNabb, has pulled out a long lost 10" Black Vitrified Ceramic mirror blank he had. He has finished fine grinding it and will start polishing this week. We have a few others working on mirrors in various stages of completion. More pictures on the mirror lab web page at: <http://www.telescopelab.com/> and also on Mike Davis's web page at: <http://www.mdpub.com/>

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.

Withlacoochee New Moon Weekend

JACK FRITZ

★ We had a good turn-out for the March New Moon Weekend, and a great time was had by all. Kelly Anderson writes: "The March DOTM event was fairly well attended, with Jack & Roni Fritz, Chris Curran, Dave and Mina Swan, Joe and Penny Canzoneri, Laura Flores, and a few others whose names I cannot recall.

Friday night was good seeing. The highlight of the evening was Joe helping Laura in using her new refractor. For the first time, she was able to take some pretty good images of deep sky objects, and was totally delighted with both her new scope and new-found ability to image. The next morning, Joe showed her how to process the data she had captured, and she was ecstatic with the results. I'm pretty sure she's hooked ... welcome to our newest astronomy junkie! I had a good time imaging the Double Cluster (NGC 869 and NGC 884), Whirlpool Galaxy (M51a/NGC 519), Orion Nebula (M42), and the Pleiades (M45) with good results. I still have a ways to go in precise polar alignment (I'm close, but no cigar) and learning how to process the data into eye-popping images.

Saturday night was not so much. Although the atmosphere had pretty good clarity, mid-level scattered to broken cloud layers moved in. We were able to view some celestial wonders through "sucker holes", but imagery was pretty much a lost cause. The highlight of the evening was Chris Curran's fabulous refractor. Even though Jupiter was intermittently covered with a thin layer of clouds, his system was able to grab enough photons to keep us all in awe. Not only was he able to bring in extremely good detail of the planet, we were able to watch the transit of Io across

the face of mighty Jove. This was a first for me, and for most of the others who looked through Chris' eyepiece that night."

I would like to second Kelly's description on viewing Jupiter through Chris's AP refractor. I have never seen the degree of detail on the Great Red Spot that we had on Saturday night. It looked much like a cinnamon roll.

Astrophotography

Here are some shots taken by our members.



Joe Canzoneri's Eskimo Nebula



John O'Neill's Helix Nebula

SPAC Business Meeting

The Business Meetings are normally held on the second Wednesday of each month. Our next meeting is Wednesday, May 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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Secretary:	Paul McNabb	727 345-5713
Treasurer:	Jim Hunter	813 909-7013
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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
Alexie & Yanira Velez	Patron
Gustav J. Waffan	Patron
Joe Ortiz-Bradley	Patron
John O'Neill	Patron
Matt Labadie	Patron
Patrick Herron	Patron
Robert Myers	Patron
Robert & Debora Csere	Patron
Thomas Tobin	Patron

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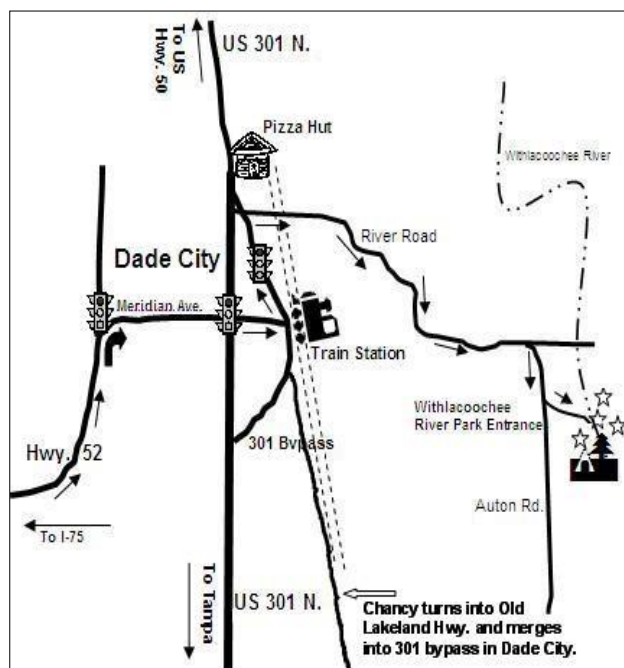
Withlacoochee New Moon Weekend (Cont.)

Our next New Moon Weekend falls on May 15th and 16th. I hope to see you all there.

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.

OPTIONAL DISCOUNTED MAGAZINE SUBSCRIPTIONS AS A BENEFIT OF MEMBERSHIP:

Sky & Telescope Magazine: ☐ \$32.95/Yr.

Astronomy Magazine: ☐ \$34.00/Yr.