



December 2015

Editor -Jack Fritz

The St. Petersburg Astronomy Club, has been the center of family astronomy in the Tampa Bay Area for decades. Its 286 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

★ There have been a lot of questions about our host at the Science Center. I met with Michael Dailey who is in charge of the facility and we discussed what is going on. Mr. Dailey is a retired police officer who is now working for Career Source Pinellas. Career Source Pinellas is not a science company. Their mission is to provide skill training to return workers to the workforce.



The Science Center is still trying to support its old mission. School children still go there for field trips. They are maintaining the planetarium and the observatory. I've suggested that some of our members would like to learn to use the planetarium and observatory. This would allow us to open those during our Bring Your Scope nights and also provide a list of people he could call on for Science Center events.

One big thing has changed. Mr. Dailey is upgrading the security at the Science Center. They have made significant investments in changing locks and installing alarms. As good guests we need to make sure that we are staying in the right areas and using the facility as

agreed. The club is responsible for the facility while we are in it. Please be sure to report anything that breaks or messes made. Please do not remove anything from the facility.

I'm assured that SPAC remains an important part of their science outreach. Maintaining a good relationship with our host supports our common goals.

I hope everyone enjoys the festivities of the season. These long nights should lead to some extended observing time.

Keep looking up.

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, December 18, 2015 at 7:00 PM, at the Science Center of Pinellas County, 7701 22nd Ave. N, St. Petersburg, FL.

This month's meeting will be our annual Christmas Party. Bring a covered dish and your telescope.

Upcoming Programs

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 23rd - Planetarium show at MOSI with Dr. Paris.

February - Dr. Nebil Misconi, retired professor from UCF. He will be telling us about his new book, *An Immigrant's Journey into the Cosmos*. Autographed copies will be available. Dr. Misconi's research has been in Interplanetary Dust, Comets and Asteroids. His career includes some high profile NASA missions such as Pioneer 10 and 11, Skylab and Space Shuttle Columbia. His book can be found at <http://immigrantsjourneybook.com/>

Member Appreciation

KYLE BRINKMAN

★ Dimitri Leventis is the obvious choice for anyone who was at the auction last month. This was the second time he served as our auctioneer since I've been in the club. His wit and personality made the auctions a great success for the club. Who doesn't enjoy hearing the gong marking the end of bidding? It was a good time, even for those who just watched the action.

People donate used astronomy equipment to the club throughout the year. These things build up in our mirror lab and have to leave. The club uses the auctions to fairly distribute the gifts to people who will use them. The auction also serves to raise money for our club. The club has modest expenditures and wants to keep it that way so that your dues are kept low.

Orange Blossom Special Star Party

JACK FRITZ

★ Registration is now open. Mark your calendars for our 22nd Orange Blossom Special Star Party, March 2nd through the 6th. 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.

Handbooks & Calendars

JIM HUNTER

I just received 10 RASC Handbooks and 10 calendars. I will have them with me at the New Moon Weekend and the Christmas party. Prices are the same as last year:

- Handbook \$24
- Calendar \$14

Please include \$3 for postage if you would like to receive them by mail.

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

★ We seem to have reentered either the twilight zone or maybe it is using the "cloud" for processing. If you do banking on the cloud, is it a cloud bank? That is what we had the 18th & 19th. First at Forrest Lake in Oldsmar and then at Jimmie Keel Library. We do have two new events, Jimmie Keel re-scheduled for Wed 2/17.

A new school - Campbell Park on 7th Ave S in St Pete wants SPAC on December 10th. Hopefully, SPACers from St Pete can help out.

Jan 9 - Brooker Creek - 3940 Keystone Rd Tarpon Springs - 2nd year.

Jan 19 - Canterbury School - 990 62nd Ave NE St Pete - New.

Feb 20 - Moccasin Lake Nature Park in Clearwater.

Feb 18 - Stewart Middle - 1125 Spruce - Tampa - 4th year.

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

Learn to Use Your Telescope Observing Night

SHIRLEY VUILLE

★ November's Learn to Use Your Telescope Night was clouded out. We will not host this event in December.

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

January Astronomical Events

★ January 1st Venus is at greatest elongation, 37.9° W of the Sun. So it rises in the morning before the Sun.

Saturday, January 2nd the Earth is at perihelion, .9833 AU from the Sun.

Sunday, January 3rd Mars will be 1° N of the Moon.

Monday, January 7th Venus will be 1.6° S of the Moon.

Monday, January 4th the Quadrantid Meteor Shower (ZHR~120) is 5 days before the new Moon—pretty ideal and you better be there. Saturday, January 9th Saturn only .1° N of Venus.

January 19th Regulus will be 2.9° N of the Moon.

January 27th Jupiter will be 1.6° N of the Moon.

January's full moon is the Full Wolf Moon. Packs of hungry wolves howled though the night leading early Americans to be cautious outside.

The Moon

- Third Quarter - January 2, 00:30 EST
- New Moon - January 9, 20:30 EST
- First Quarter - January 16, 18:26 EST
- Full Moon - January 23, 20:45 EST
- Third Quarter - January 31, 22:27 EST

NASA News

STEVE ROBINS

Interestingly [the latest piece of news on the Dawn news site](#) is from October 26, just after the beginning of the seven week ion motor burn to take her down to her final orbit, closest to Ceres. Timing of this bulletin is just off because news will start crashing in a couple of days from now!

New Horizons on December 4, [radioed back the first of its best photos of Pluto](#). Taken with short exposures to avoid motion

blur, these one pixel = 265' resolution photos resolve objects as small as half a city block.

It's been a year since Rosetta's lander Philae touched down on Comet 67P/Churyumov-Gerasimenko. There is [a very nice retrospective](#) on the Rosetta website, including some new facts. The night before the landing, the reverse thruster, meant to overcome the impact of Philae's harpoons was found to be non-operational. Then on landing, the harpoons themselves didn't fire. Ice screws, backups to the harpoons, also didn't work because the landing area turned out to be much harder than the soft material the screws were meant to hold to. They feature [an animation](#) showing a reconstruction of the bizarre "landing" of Philae.

And we can't pass on mentioning that Japan's rescued spacecraft, Akatsuki, [successfully attained orbit](#) around Venus after five years of wandering the inner solar system resulting from a failure of a thruster valve back in 2010. Mirror Lab

RALPH CRAIG



We have room in the mirror lab now that the auction has taken place at the November club meeting. Many thanks to Dimitri for holding the auction for the club and also to members of the mirror lab for helping to move all the equipment and set it up. Our new grinder, Richard, is now fine grinding his 10" mirror. He should be polishing in a week or two. He is using one of Mike's blanks he generates in his kiln. We took 6 mirrors in to Spectrum Coatings for aluminizing which are ready for pickup. Some of these mirrors should be in new telescopes at the OBS star party. Paul is busy cutting the wood for the tube of his new 10" telescope he is making with the BVC mirror he finished.

More pictures are available on the mirror lab web page at: www.telescopelab.com, on



Mike Davis's web page at: www.mdpub.com, 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 Deep Space Explorer Dobsonian telescope, Sirlus plossi 26 mm 1.25" w/eye-guard. Contact Jim Elwood at (352) 445-3950.

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 sawmann55@yahoo.com.

Steve Robins has a Coulter 17.5" mirror set, never used for \$700. You may contact him at Steve.Robbins@cfl.rr.com 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>

SPAC Business Meeting

The Business Meetings are normally held on the second Wednesday of each month. Our next meeting is Wednesday, January 13, 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
Vice Pres.:	Jack Fritz	813 508-5680
Secretary:	Paul McNabb	727 345-5713
Treasurer:	Jim Hunter	813 909-7013
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Dir.-at-Large:	Allen Maroney	727 867-4781
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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
Tommy & Amy Ming	Benefactor
Alexie & Yanira Velez	Patron
Gustav J. Waffan	Patron
Joe Ortiz-Bradley	Patron
Lindsey & Yanira McKeown	Patron
Matt Labadie	Patron
Robert Myers	Patron
Robert & Debora Csere	Patron
Ruggero & Carla Santilli	Patron
Thomas Tobin	Patron

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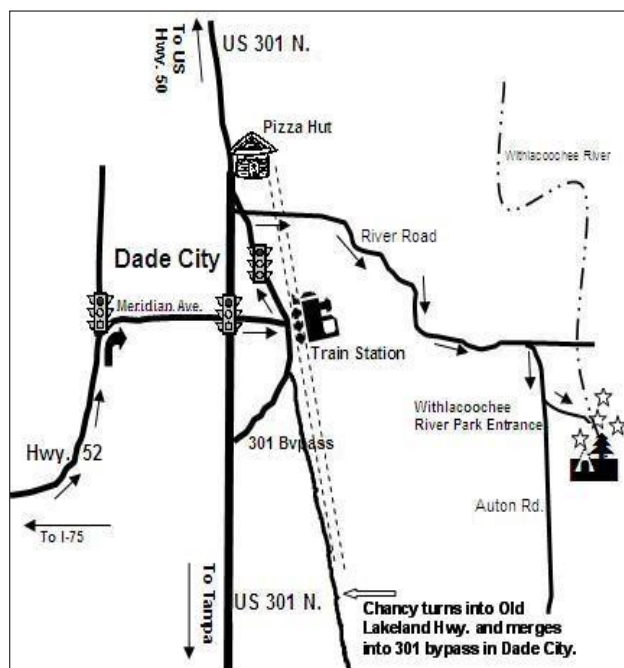
Withlacoochee New Moon Weekend (Cont.)

Our next New Moon Weekend falls on January 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.