

March
2008



OBSERVER

Messier Marathon Preview

March 14, 2008 7:00PM

TCC Metro Campus - Philips Auditorium
Building 2 9th and Cincinnati

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By Tamara Green

Our guest speakers for our March Meeting will be Ron and Maura Wood from the TUVA Club near Checotah. Ron and Maura will be giving a presentation on the Messier Marathon that will be entertaining as well as informative. Our annual Messier Marathon with TUVA will be on Saturday, April 5, so this will be a good topic for all of you to enjoy, and hopefully it will get you excited about the upcoming marathon! The meeting will take place at TCC Metro Campus, 9th and Boston, in the Phillips Building Auditorium at 7:00 PM on Friday, Mar 14. I know this is not going to be the Fri closest to full moon, but the Fri that IS closest to full moon happens to fall on Good Friday, and I realize that most of you will want to spend the Easter Weekend with your families.

For those of you who volunteered for and those of you who actually came out to TASM on the evening of February 20, only to be greeted by nasty cloud cover instead of a beautiful lunar eclipse, I thank you. However, the event was not a total loss, thankfully. A special thank you goes out to Dennis Karcher for providing a webcast of the eclipse and another special thank-you goes out to Chris Pagan for keeping the planetarium open and running the shows, which were all very good! And of course, a special thanks to all who came out to support the event.

Our first last-quarter-moon-members-only star party on Feb 29 was a success. A lot of our members came out and had a very good time under some pretty nice sky. These will be a wonderful opportunity for those of you who just want to come out and do some observing, work on observing projects, or just look at your night-sky favorites. I hope to see more and more of you at these special star parties.

Upcoming dates to look forward to:

The "regular" star party for March will be on Fri Mar 7.

The TCC Meeting with Ron and Maura Wood will be on Fri Mar 14.

The members-only star party will be on Fri Mar 28.

As with regular star parties, the members-only parties will also have the Saturdays as back-up nights in case of bad weather.

DON'T FORGET OUR MESSIER MARATHON WITH TUVA ON SATURDAY, APRIL 5! There will be a pot-luck dinner before the marathon begins, so if you wish to bring some yummys to share, you are more than welcome to! I have no word yet on whether or not there will be a caravan to the site, but I will be checking with David Stine very soon, and I hope to be able to announce that at the meeting on Mar 14.

Hope to see y' all there, and Clear Skies!

Tamara

Lands Tidbits – by *John Land* Mar 4, 2008

Welcome Recent New Members: Russell Dysart, Mike Ransom, Nate Isaacs, Grant Cole, Bobby Cox, Christopher Proctor, Len Turner, Steve Elliott, Callen Johnson

Our membership rates for 2007 – 2008

Adults - \$ 35 per year includes Astronomical League Membership

Sr. Adult discount \$25 per year for those 65 or older includes Astronomical League Membership

Students \$ 15 without League membership.

Students \$ 20 **with League membership.**

The regular membership allows all members in the family to participate in club events but only ONE voting membership and one Astronomical League membership.

If an **additional member of the family** would like to join with voting rights the additional cost is \$15.

Additional League memberships within a family are \$ 5 each.

Magazine Subscriptions: If your magazines are coming up for renewal, try to **save the mailing label** or renewal form you get in the mail. Do NOT mail renewals back to the magazine!

To get the club discount you must go through the club group rate.

Astronomy is \$ 34 for 1 year or \$ 60 for 2 years. www.astronomy.com

Sky & Telescope is \$33 / yr www.skyandtelescope.com

Sky and Telescope also offers a 10% discount on their products.

Note: You may **renew** your **Sky & Telescope subscription** directly with out having to mail in the subscriptions to the club. **NEW SUBSCRIPTIONS** must still be sent to the club treasurer. **Forms are available on the website.**

We now have an automated on line registration form on the website for new AND renewal memberships plus magazine subscriptions. You simply type in your information and hit send to submit the information.

<http://www.astrotulsa.com/Club/join.asp>

You can then **print a copy of the form and mail in your check.**

Astronomy Club of Tulsa - 25209 E 62nd St – Broken Arrow, OK 74014

Address Corrections- Email changes – Questions:

You may forward questions to the club by going to our club website and Fill out an online form or just click on John Land and send an email. Please leave a clear subject line and message with your name, phone number, your question – along with email

Summer Astronomy Events

June 6 and 7, 2008 The Mulberry Mountain Star Party near Ozark, AR

<http://www.aoas.org/calendar/event.php?eid=20080116224315459> more info at www.aoas.org

June 21, 2008 convention of the Mid-States Region of the Astronomical League (MSRAL) will be at the St. Charles Community College campus in Cottleville, Missouri.

<http://asemonline.org/archives/category/upcoming-events/>

June 26 to July 5, 2008 Heart of America Star Party in SW Missouri hosted by the Kansas City Astronomy club.

<http://www.hoasp.org/>

Astronomy News

From Sky and Telescopes weekly email news bulletins

If you haven't signed up yet go to <http://www.skyandtelescope.com/s?action=login&f=y>

Martian Landslides Caught in the Act <http://www.skyandtelescope.com/news/home/16223907.html>

How are we supposed to remember the planets in order? The tried-and-true mnemonic "My Very Educated Mother Just Served Us Nine Pizzas" doesn't, in the IAU's eyes, cut it anymore.

Thankfully, National Geographic has come to the rescue. Last year its books-for-kids division sponsored a [contest](#) for a **nifty way to recall Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars, Ceres, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, Neptune, Pluto, and Eris in order.**

The winner, [announced this week](#), is 10-year-old Maryn Smith of Great Falls, Montana. Her fourth-grade class at Riverview Elementary School cooked up a bunch of clever phrases, but in the end the class voted to submit Maryn's entry — which was "**My Very Exciting Magic Carpet Just Sailed Under Nine Palace Elephants.**" Hers was selected from about 800 other submissions. Full story at <http://www.skyandtelescope.com/news/16078757.html>

Why Is Easter Early This Year?

Easter this year is Sunday March 23, 2008 the earliest Easter since 1913!

The official rule is Easter falls on the first Sunday following the first ecclesiastical full moon that occurs on or after March 21st. The ecclesiastical dates are calculated from a set of tables instead to the true astronomical definitions.

The Spring Equinox called the Vernal Equinox is the date the Sun crosses the equator moving north. In the western hemisphere that occurs most often on March 20th. That date can shift a bit in the calendar due to leap year and other long-term variations in the calendar. Since Rome and the Vatican are in the eastern hemisphere the official rule uses a fixed ecclesiastical date of March 21st which is the traditional date of the equinox. It doesn't always match the astronomical date of the spring equinox. Easter can occur as early as March 22 and as late as April 25th.

The Eastern Orthodox Catholic church split from Rome in 1054 AD. As a result they did not adopt the Gregorian calendar proposed by the Pope XIII in 1582. The Gregorian calendar differs from the Orthodox calendar now by 13 days. As a result the Orthodox Easter will not occur until April 27th.

Use this link to calculate the date of Easter and Ash Wednesday for any year
<http://aa.usno.navy.mil/data/docs/easter.php>

Ash Wednesday is the beginning of the religious season of Lent preceding Easter by 46 days. There is more official information about how the date is calculate on this site also. Below are some facts from an email I received with a couple of errors corrected:

This dating of Easter is based on the lunar calendar that Hebrew people used to identify Passover, which is why it moves around on our Roman calendar. Based on the above, Easter can actually be one day earlier (March 22) but that is pretty rare.

This year is the earliest Easter any of us will ever see the rest of our lives! And only the most elderly of our population (95 years old or above) have ever seen it this early!

None of us have ever, or will ever, see it a day earlier! Here are the facts:

- The next time Easter will be this early (March 23) will be the year 2160 (152 years from now).
- The last time it was this early was 1913. So if you're 95 or older, you are the only ones who were around for that!
- The next time it will be a day earlier, March 22, will be in the year 2285 (277 years from now).
- The last time it was on March 22 was 1818. No one alive today has or will ever see it any earlier than this year!

Double Iridium Flare

Iridium 55 & 96 03-01-2008 7:10PM CST



Photo by Frank Boston

CLUB OFFICERS

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Treasurer	John Land	918-357-1759
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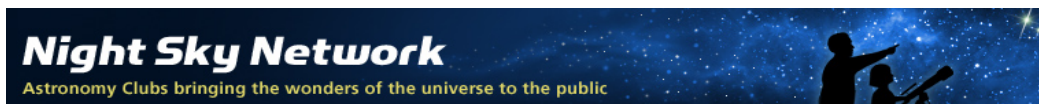
APPOINTED STAFF

POSITION	NAME	PHONE
RMCC Facility Manager	Craig Davis	918-252-1781
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Observing Chairman	David Stine	918-834-1310
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Observatory Director	Teresa Kincannon	918-637-1477
Webmaster	Richard Alford	918-855-9986
Newsletter Editor	Tom McDonough	918-665-1853
Night Sky Network	Teresa Kincannon	918-637-1477

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

Astronomy Club of Tulsa membership (\$35/year) includes membership in the Astronomical League and subscription to ACT's "Observer" and AL's "Reflector". "Astronomy" (\$34/year) and "Sky and Telescope" (\$33/year) are also available through the club. For more information contact John Land at 918-357-1759. Permission is hereby granted to reprint from this publication provided credit is given to the original author and the Astronomy Club of Tulsa Observer is identified as the source.

The Astronomy Club of Tulsa is a member of the Astronomical League and the Night Sky Network



<http://www.astroleague.org>

<http://nightsky.jpl.nasa.gov>

ACT welcomes your questions, suggestions, comments, and submissions for publication.

Please send all inquiries to Newsletter@astrotulsa.com