



February 2016

Editor -Jack Fritz

The St. Petersburg Astronomy Club, has been the center of family astronomy in the Tampa Bay Area for decades. Its 291 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



Come One, Come All!

The Orange Blossom Star Party is coming up quick. The park is ready. The plans are made. This is going to be a wonderful time. Last year's party had the clearest skies for the whole week. We are hopeful for more terrific conditions this year. There are things to do during the day with vendors and a great lineup of speakers. There will be door prizes. Make your reservations quick.

Maybe you have to work and can't come out for the week. Come out for a day if you can. We are a family oriented social club who love to talk about all things astronomy related. The astronomers love to tell people about their scopes. This is the best way to get reviews on new gadgets. Having trouble with Registax or something else? There is an expert user who can show you how it works. There will be close to 100 astronomers and every telescope design you can think of. There is no better way to refine your skills than to talk with the people who have tried out the tricks of the trade.



Sometimes people feel intimidated by astronomers with superior experience. Long time club members know the joy of sharing their knowledge with new people. I can name a dozen astronomers in the club who I look to for advice. Maybe that is why they let me be president, so I can point you in the right direction. With certainty there are people in the club who know far more than I do about any given topic. The club is about the joy of learning about astronomy. Come on out. Get involved.

Keep looking up

New Members

We would like to welcome Ryan & Julie Fogarty, Buster Lentine, Zane & Cristian DiVita Shawn & Michelle Blagg, and Dario Diaz to our family of members.

General Meeting

This month's meeting will take place on Friday, February 26th at 8:00 PM, at the Science Center of Pinellas County, 7701 22nd Ave. N, St. Petersburg, FL.

Dr. Nebil Misconi, retired professor from UCF, will be telling us about his new book, *An Immigrant's Journey into the Cosmos*. Auto-graphed 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/>

Upcoming Programs

March - There will be two presentations in March. There will be a recap of the Orange Blossom Star Party followed by a presentation by Dr. Tony Paris of MOSI and St Petersburg College. Dr. Paris will present his research on "The Wow Signal". This paper was recently published in scientific journals and is an important contribution to the SETI efforts.

Member Appreciation

KYLE BRINKMAN

★ It takes a lot of effort to host a star party. SPAC has hosted the Orange Blossom Star Party for years while other clubs see their parties come and go. People have to feel welcome when they show up and that first impression makes a big difference. It sets the tone for the rest of the week. We are fortunate to have dedicated volunteers who make the welcoming process pleasant for all our guests.

Nancy Huff and Roni Fritz have been welcoming our guests at the OBS for a long time. Their efforts not only put a smile on our faces while giving out T-shirts, but they are that first impression of the friendly club that we are. Don't think that is all that they do. They show up early and stay late to make sure that the guests are accommodated. They put in the time that makes our annual party the best around.

Thank you Nancy.

Thank you Roni.

The club appreciates your efforts dedication and the warm welcome you give as the first ambassadors of our club.

Membership Chair Request

SHIRLEY VUILLE

★ Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or concerns about your membership. svuille@aol.com

Please refer to the SPAC Calendar on our website for upcoming events or rain date changes.

Orange Blossom Special Star Party

JACK FRITZ

★ Registration is now closed. I hope to see you at Withlacoochee River Park for another great event. This will be my last year as Star Party Chairman. It's time to let some new blood run the show. I'll remain on the committee, and help in any way I can.

Outreach

JIM HUNTER

★ Scott and Diane Walsh hosted the Gulfport outreach event on January 16th. Patrons managed to view the First Quarter Moon during daylight and after sunset.

The weather clouded up and got bad at 8pm. Many club informational flyers were



taken. All in all it was a good, but short outreach viewing.



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

March Astronomical Events

★ March 2nd the Moon and Saturn will make a close approach, passing within 3°33' of each other.

March 6th The Moon's monthly orbit around the Earth will carry it to its closest point to the Sun, its perihelion, at a distance of 0.9902 AU from the Sun.

March 8th Jupiter will be well placed for observation, in the constellation Leo. It will be visible for much of the night, reaching its highest point in the sky at around midnight local time.

March 10th The Moon will reach the closest point along its orbit to the Earth, and as a result will appear slightly larger than at other times.

March 20th is the Vernal equinox, a day when the Sun is above the horizon for exactly half the time everywhere on Earth. According to the astronomical definitions of the seasons, this day marks the beginning of spring in the northern hemisphere and of autumn in the southern hemisphere.

The Moon will be at apogee, furthest from Earth, on the 25th and one day later, it will be at aphelion, its furthest point from the sun.

The Moon and Mars will make a close approach, passing within 4°08' of each other on March 28th.

The Moon

- Third Quarter - March 1, 18:12 EST
- New Moon - March 8, 20:56 EST
- First Quarter - March 15, 13:04 EST
- Full Moon - March 23, 08:02 EST

Mirror Lab

RALPH CRAIG

★ Mike Davis finished his 12.5" 2nd generation hex backed mirror this month. Richard, is in final figuring with his 10" mirror and should be done soon.



Tom Spano also stopped by the lab to show us a focuser base that was copied by a 3-D printer, very impressive.



3-D Printer are amazing

We had a new grinder, Devin D., start a 10" mirror this month. His dad has made mirrors in the past and his son is carrying on the family tradition.



Devin following in dad's shoes.

We had 3 mirror blanks donated to the lab by Ren Monllor of Lakeland which will be put to good use. Thanks Allen for picking these up for us.



Mike's completed mirror

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.

SPAC Business Meeting 

The Business Meetings are normally held on the second Wednesday of each month. Our next meeting is Wednesday, March 9th, 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
Dir.-at-Large:	Mike Davis	727 474-6785
Dir.-at-Large:	David Pearson	727 791-4241
Dir.-at-Large:	Allen Maroney	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

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

Examiner Staff

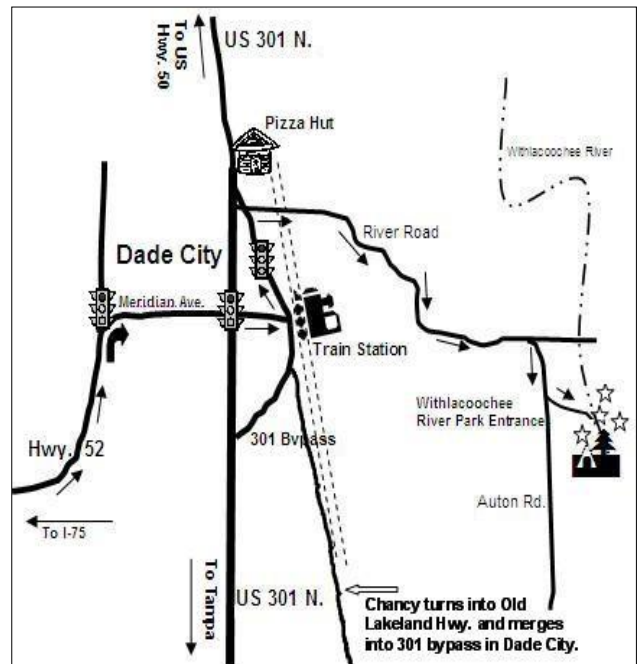
Editor	Jack Fritz	813 508-5680
In the News	Steve Robbins	386 736-9123
Assistant Editor	Nancy Huff	813 621-3606
Mirror Lab	Ralph Craig	727 384-2086

Withlacoochee New Moon Weekend (Cont.)

Our next New Moon Weekend falls on April 8th & 9th as the March New Moon is by registration only.

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.