



September 2018

Editor -Jack Fritz

The St. Petersburg Astronomy Club has been the center of family astronomy in the Tampa Bay Area for decades. Its 246 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.

### President's Message

KYLE BRINKMAN

★ I've been talking to some of the long-time members of the club. Sitting around the hospitality tent at the OBS on a cloudy night they tell their jokes, tales and occasional truths. Many of the stories centered around the old clubhouse at Hickory Hill. I'm told it was a firetrap and dump in the fondest of ways.



That old clubhouse was in the center of the observing field and had space for people to spend the night. They would bake cookies at midnight and have a place to go during the day or cloudy night. Friendships build at that location have been enduring to this day.

Our club is working on bringing back the magic of the old clubhouse in our new clubhouse at Withlacoochee. We have acquired a small building out at the campground. Last month our members dug a lengthy trench to lay the electricity for the building. We passed the electrical inspection. We will be refurbishing the interior and outfitting the building with an efficiency kitchen, sleeping spaces, storage and a common area. This will be great for astronomers who don't want to bring tents and have a safe place to sleep. We

will be bringing the library for some daytime activity.

There is a fund raiser to support the efforts. The board has stepped out in the belief that the club will prosper because of this addition. The donations have started coming in and the results are quite generous. The membership really does want this, and this is terrific!

We owe a special thanks to the team who have worked on this so far and to our VP/Chief Engineer Jack Fritz. There is more work to be done. Help if you can, donate if you are able. The good times are going to roll again!

### New Members

We would like to welcome Scott & Jo Yarley, Alan Ploansky, Dwayne Mericle, Van Le, David Feller, and Douglas Hall to our family of members.

### General Meeting

This month's general meeting and will take place on Friday, September 28<sup>th</sup> at 8:00 PM, at St. Petersburg College, Gibbs Campus. 6605 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue North.

We will begin the meeting with welcomes and a look at What's Up in the night sky. This will be followed by our main program, *Martian Geology* by Professor Antonio Paris.

**Club Meeting Hurricane Policy**

Hurricane season is upon us. We may cancel the meeting if a hurricane is threatening Pinellas County. If that happens, we will send a cancellation notification via email. Alternatively, you may call Allen Maroney at 727 867-4781 or Jack Fritz at 813 508-5680 to check on the status of the meeting.

**Editor's Notes**

JACK FRITZ

**Annual Elections** - We have our Annual Meeting, Election of Officers, and Pot-Luck dinner in October each year. The nominating committee has the following slate of candidates so far: President, Kyle Brinkman; Vice President, John O'Neill; Secretary, Shirley Vuille; Treasure, Jim Hunter; Director-At-Large, Paul Krahrmer. You have until September 30<sup>th</sup> to submit other nominations.

**Annual Meeting** - Please remember that our annual meeting begins a little earlier, at 7:00 PM and is a pot-luck dinner. It will be held in the Philip Benjamin Social Arts building, Room 114.

**Withlacoochee Clubhouse** - We will be renovating the clubhouse October 4<sup>th</sup> through the 10<sup>th</sup> and could use your help. Please let me know if you are available.

We are seeking donations to fund the project. Donations of \$100 or more will be recognized on our dedication plaque. You may donate online for our [website homepage](#) or mail a check to SPAC, 17316 Oak Ledge Dr, Lutz, FL 33549.

**Orange Blossom Special**

★ Our annual star party, Orange Blossom Special, will be January 30<sup>th</sup> through February 3<sup>rd</sup>. This is the only New Moon Weekend of the year that you must register to attend. Registration opens on October 1<sup>st</sup> and is avail-

able online only. Go to <https://www.stpeteastronomyclub.org/obs.php> for details and registration.

**National Weather Service**

SHIRLEY VUILLE

★ The NWS fall safety campaign has begun! They have focused their outreach on specific hazards during September, October, and November. Please check out [Fall Weather Safety](#) for more information and see more at [NOAA's Weather-Ready Nation](#).

**8th Annual St. Petersburg Science Festival**

Please save the dates, October 20, 2018, for the 8th Annual St. Petersburg Science Festival. Location: USFSP and Poynter Park. We could use a few more volunteers. Please contact [David Richmond](#).

**October Astronomical Events**

STEVE ROBINS

Friday, October 4<sup>th</sup>, find the Moon 1.3° south of the Beehive Cluster.

Saturday, October 5<sup>th</sup>, the Moon is 1.4° north of Regulus and at perigee, 366,400 km from Earth.

Wednesday, October 17<sup>th</sup>, the Moon is at apogee, 404,200 km from Earth.

Sunday, October 21<sup>st</sup> the Orionid Meteor Shower peaks just three days before the Full Moon.

Tuesday, October 23<sup>rd</sup>, Uranus is at opposition. Wait a week and see if you can spot it in binoculars.

Saturday, October 27<sup>th</sup>, the Moon will be 1.6 north of Aldebaran.

Wednesday, October 31<sup>st</sup>, the Moon passes 1° south of the Beehive Cluster and the Moon is at perigee 370,200 km from Earth.

October's full Moon is the Full Hunters Moon. It's time to hunt because when the snow

is on the ground, game is much harder to come by.

October Moon Phases

- 2<sup>nd</sup> - Third Quarter
- 8<sup>th</sup> - New Moon
- 16<sup>th</sup> - First Quarter
- 24<sup>th</sup> - Full Moon
- 31<sup>st</sup> - Third Quarter

Mirror Lab

RALPH CRAIG



★ Bill has finished polishing his 10" mirror and is in the final figuring stage with it. He should be done soon and rounding up parts to finish his telescope. Dave Pearson finished his 8" mirror and has moved onto his next mirror which is a 12.5" he has started rough grinding. Ron is still working on final figuring his 8" f/3. Dennis Farr is still grinding his 8" mirror but is taking a break from the summer heat and will get going again once it cools off a little.



Bill & Ron figuring their mirrors.

More pictures are on the mirror lab web page at; <http://www.telescopelab.com>, Mike Davis's web page at; <http://www.mdpub.com/> and Allen Maroney's web page at <http://www.knology.net/amaroney/>.

September New Moon Weekend

KELLY ANDERSON

★ The New Moon Weekend of September 7-9 was better than July and August, but not by much. We were visited by several rain showers over the weekend, one of which dumped the significant portion of an inch of rain along with some pretty gusty winds, but it tended to clear (kinda) late in the evening.

On Friday it was just Ron Wayman and your intrepid Field Reporter who braved the elements in the hope of a little clear sky. The clouds mostly went away about 11:00 o'clock, leaving enough for some observing. There weren't enough calibration stars for me to get a good polar alignment, but I did manage to get close enough to enjoy some celestial delights. Several Messier objects were pretty obvious in the eyepiece. M15 was an excellent glob, and the Andromeda Galaxy (M31) was brilliant.

It was still warm, and the dew was formidable, some of the heaviest I've experienced at Withlacoochee. So I gave up about Midnight and escaped to my air conditioned wheeled-hovel for the night. Ron got up around 4:00 Saturday morning and said that the skies were "great!" He captured some stills that show a significant tail of the comet 21P/Giacobini-Zinner. I invite you to watch his time-motion video (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/stpeteastronomyclub/permalink/1883499688382267/>) that he got Monday morning.

Saturday dawned bright and clear, and Ron and I discovered there were over 100 high school kids and their parents and coaches all

over the field. As it turned out the park was the site of a cross-country track meet. After several races, the pavilions were struck and packed away, and our Saturday morning crowd disappeared in a few minutes. The silence was, as the old saying goes, deafening.

That afternoon we were gifted with the hardest rain storm of the weekend. After the skies cleared I discovered that the tarp I had laid over my telescope had opened a seam near the top, but there was a second tarp underneath, so I figured it was OK. We were joined by Alan Polansky who tented with us that evening. Also, Shawn Bragg and his son came out for the evening. Unfortunately, the clouds were total overcast, and Shawn had to leave about midnight.

I arose (uncharacteristically) at about 2:30 and was greeted with very clear skies and only a few clouds around the periphery. I uncovered the equipment, fired up the computer, and began my polar alignment. Remember when I thought the scope was OK? Well, after I calibrated on my first star, the mount went crazy! It was as if it was trying to bash me with the counterweight. It seems that the handset (I hope) got some moisture where it doesn't like it, so I was down for the count. I got out my binoculars and enjoyed what I could, but it was too early for the comet. After an hour or so I covered everything up and once again retreated to my cool den that was mercifully devoid of flying insects. Of course, the morning was clear and brilliant, once again.

But we're on the far side of the Summer weather, heading for the cool, clear skies of Autumn. The next New Moon Weekend will be October 5-7. Be sure to mark your calendars, and dust off your Fall Sky Charts. Clear skies are guaranteed.

## NASA News

STEVE ROBBINS

It has not been a good month for Elon Musk. Having abandoned plans for Crew Dragon to return to a landing on dry ground, it will return to the ocean landings of the past. And now, the other shoe drops that Crew Dragon will not be a reusable capsule for human use. It will be reused only to transport cargo after its use as an ISS crew capsule. So first, SpaceX made the impossible routine with landing and reuse of Falcon 9. [Now it makes the routine seem impossible](#) with Crew Dragon's one time use restriction. But SpaceX simultaneously does cargo and crew launches. Is this a way to have cargo launches finance new Crew Dragon capsules?

Suddenly the continent of Antarctica has gone from the worst mapping resolution to the highest resolution 3D mapped continent. The entire continent is mapped to 8 meter resolution and [you can play with the results online](#).

October 3 will be the [Parker Solar Probe's](#) first Venus flyby. Putting Venus at the aphelion and using Venus seven times through 2021, scrubbing off speed, lowering the perihelion distance to 3.83 million miles, only 4% of 1 AU. And of course, as you scrub the speed off at aphelion to decrease the perihelion the speed at perihelion rises. This spacecraft will reach speeds of 430,000 miles per hour, 125 miles per second. Catch the error on the website where they say at that speed they would travel from Philadelphia to Washington DC in one second. No matter, it will certainly be by far the fastest human made object ever.

**SPAC Business Meeting** 

Our next business meeting is Wednesday, October 10<sup>th</sup>, at 8:00 PM at SPC Gibbs Campus, Natural Science Building, Room 139. 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	<a href="#">Kyle Brinkman</a>	727 455-6931
Vice Pres.	<a href="#">Jack Fritz</a>	813 508-5680
Secretary	<a href="#">Shirley Vuille</a>	727 864-2624
Treasurer	<a href="#">Jim Hunter</a>	813 507-8415
Dir.-at-Large	<a href="#">John O'Neill</a>	727 637-5945
Dir.-at-Large	<a href="#">David Pearson</a>	727-215-1526
Dir.-at-Large	<a href="#">David Richmond</a>	727 692-9831
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Public Relations	<a href="#">John O'Neill</a>	727 637-5945
Membership Chair	<a href="#">Shirley Vuille</a>	727 864-2624
Outreach Chair	<a href="#">Jim Hunter</a>	813 507-8415
Star Party Chair	<a href="#">Mike Partain</a>	859-339-0828
Librarian	<a href="#">Ralph Craig</a>	727 384-2086
Club Webmaster	<a href="#">Chris Curran</a>	813 653-2604

Click on the name to send email

**Recognition of Patrons & Benefactors:**

Clifford B. Benham	Benefactor
Jack & Roni Fritz	Benefactor
David & Tara Pearson	Benefactor
David & Mina Swan	Benefactor
Gus Waffan	Benefactor
Andy Demartini	Patron
Anthony Staiano	Patron
Brad & Lisa Perryman	Patron
Joe Bradley & Diane Ortiz	Patron
Kyle Brinkman	Patron
Matt Labadie	Patron
Peter & Jaclynn Dimmitt	Patron
Robert Myers	Patron
Wally & Ramona Vazquez	Patron

**Examiner Staff**

Editor	<a href="#">Jack Fritz</a>	813 508-5680
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In the News	<a href="#">Steve Robbins</a>	386 736-9123
Mirror Lab	<a href="#">Ralph Craig</a>	727 384-2086

**Withlacoochee New Moon Weekend**

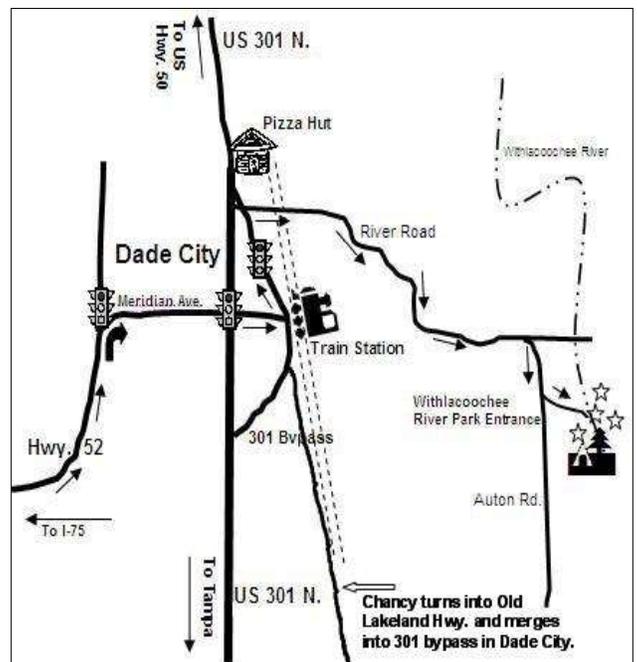
Our next New Moon Weekend falls on October 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup>.

There's no need for reservations. However, the park closes at sundown, so you will need to arrive before then. The park rangers will give you the gate-code once you're inside the park. Please do not call for the gate code as they are not allowed to give it out over the phone.

The year-round camping fee with electrical use is \$10/night for club members and \$15 for non-members. Tent camping without electric is \$5/night.

Reservations are not necessary. Please print and display our [Friends-Of-The-Park Pass](#) on your dashboard.

Please join us! All astronomy enthusiasts are welcome. You do not need to be a club member to attend. Please refer to our [Club Calendar](#) for details and scheduled dates.



**Withlacoochee River Park - Dade City, FL**  
 Detailed directions can be found at:  
[www.StPeteAstronomyClub.org](http://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: \_\_\_\_\_

Single: [ ] \$ 30.00/YR. Includes one adult, minor children, the "SPACE" newsletter, and all the rights and privileges of membership.

Family: [ ] \$ 35.00/YR. Includes two adults, minor children and the above rights and privileges.

Student: [ ] Free. Expected date of graduation: \_\_\_\_\_

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.