



www.vbas.org

VIA STELLARIS

The Monthly Newsletter of the Von Braun Astronomical Society

VBAS Highlights

Public Programs for April

Our next society meeting will be held on Friday, Apr 16th at 7 PM. VBAS Meetings are held on the 3rd Friday of each month at 7 PM; they're open to the public and are free.

Regular planetarium programs are held on Saturdays at 7:30 PM. This month, we explore the Constellations of the Southern Hemisphere with shows on April 10th, and 24th. On April 3rd we'll have a special show to explain: "How Far Is That Star", and on April 17th we will explore "The Universe in Other Wavelengths". Admission to planetarium shows is free for VBAS Members, \$5.00 for Adults, \$3.00 for Students, and free for children under 6. Observation of the night sky through various telescopes will follow planetarium program, weather permitting.

Calendar of Events

On page 2, See what's cooking at VBAS including a Messier Marathon for April and May.

The Night Sky for March

On page 3, see what's up!

Spring Star Party

On page 4, Jeff Delmas reports this party is just starting.

Conjunction Party

On page 4, Doug invites folks over to view Venus & Mercury.

Stellar Events for April

On page 5, Doug Horacek reports on this month's astronomical events

Global Astronomy Month (April 2010)

On page 5, One People...One Sky!.

Richard Norman
Via Stellaris Editor
astrodude@mchsi.com



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Deadline for May Via Stellaris submissions is Apr 30, 2010.



Calendar of Events

Saturday, April 3rd 2010, 7:30 PM

Planetarium Show: "How far is that Star - measuring distances in space"

Location: VBAS

Join us for a family-friendly program as we explore measuring distances in space. Weather permitting, we will be viewing the night sky afterwards through powerful telescopes, too.

Tuesday, April 6th, 2010, 6 to 8:30 PM

Conjunction of Venus and Mercury

Location: Doug's Condo

Presented by Doug Horacek

Venus and Mercury that will be a little more than 3 degrees apart. See page 5 for more details.

Saturday, April 10th and 24th, 2010, 7:30PM

Planetarium Show: "Southern Skies - Fall and Winter"

Location: VBAS

Join us for a family-friendly program to explore space from the Southern Hemisphere as seen during the Fall and Winter Months. Weather permitting, we will be viewing the night sky afterwards through powerful telescopes, too.

Friday, April 9th, 2010, 7:30 PM - 10 PM

Youth and Adult Observing Night

Location: VBAS

Presented by David Lofts and Doug Horacek

Beginning at 7:30, there will be a planetarium tour of the current night sky by David Lofts and Doug Horacek, followed by observing time. Adults can arrive before 7:30 to set up their scopes if needed. David will assist both young and old beginners finding their way around the sky, and some of our adult observers will have their telescopes for the youth to look through to explore space. If cloudy or rainy we will have tours of the observatory instead. Call David Lofts at 726-0275 or Doug Horacek at

772-6788 for more information.

Saturday, April 17th, 2010, 7:30 PM

Planetarium Show: "The Universe at Other Wavelengths"

Location: VBAS

Join us for a family-friendly program as we explore the universe using wavelengths that our eyes can't see! This program will be interesting and fun for all ages. Weather permitting, we will be viewing the night sky afterwards through powerful telescopes, too.

Friday, April 16th, 2010, 7 PM

Regular Monthly Meeting

Location: VBAS

After a short pizza social we'll discuss pertinent society business before moving on to our program. Visitors are welcome!

April 16th, & May 14th, 2010, 7 PM

Messier Marathon Observing Nights

Location: VBAS

This year we will try the Messier Marathon 3 months in a row! March was a big success so be sure not miss the April event on the same evening as the Society Meeting, and May is the same as Youth and Adult Observing evening.

April 17th, 2010, 9 AM to 3PM

Earth Day

Location: Hayes Nature Preserve

This annual event is a fun way to spend a spring day seeing all kinds of outdoor exhibits including a VBAS booth. If you'd like to help, contact Richard Norman or Melissa Snider.

...And as always, for the most up-to-date information about VBAS events, be sure to check the web site at vbas.org.

The Night Sky for April, 2010

Here is the view at 9 PM in April 2, 2010, at 34° N Latitude, 86° W Longitude.

Map courtesy of John Walker and YourSky (<http://www.fourmilab.to/yoursky/>).

Meteor showers for April start with a Minor Shower, the kappa Serpentids near Corona Borealis on the Morning 5 April, has an unknown parent comet, only 4 per hour. On the Morning of 22 April the Major Shower Lyrid Meteor Shower, has 18 Meteors per hour, the associated comet is C / 1861 G1 Thatcher. The Last Meteor Shower in April peaks the next evening, the evening of 23 April from just after Sunset until 10 P.M. CDT the pi Puppids will peak at about 20 per hour in the Southwest below Canis Major in Puppis. The parent comet is 26P Grigg-Skjellerup.



Spring Star Party

by Jeff Delmas

We're planning one star party each month this spring. Our March star party was a big success, with observers in the field until 3:00am. We had about a half dozen member telescopes in the field and also operated both the Swanson 21" and the C16.

The second in our series of three spring star parties is set for **Friday, April 16**. Bring your telescope to the society observing field on Monte Sano that evening to join with fellow observers in this evening-long celebration.

The April Star Party coincides with our monthly members' meeting. Non-members are welcome to both the Star Party and the meeting. We'll start setting up around 6:30pm. The meeting is at 7:30pm and observing will continue as long as there are willing participants! The Sun sets at 7:19pm. The Moon is a waxing crescent only 5% illuminated and sets at 9:55pm. We provide concrete telescope pads, electric power (115V AC), drinks, and snacks for all observers. We also plan to operate the Swanson 21" as a video platform.

The May star party will be:

Friday, May 14

Mark your calendars, and join us before the summer heat gets here.

Conjunction Party

by Doug Horacek

Tuesday evening 6 April 2010 from 6:00 until 8:30 P.M. come to my Condo to observe Venus and Mercury that will be a little more than 3 degrees apart. I will have my 3.5 inch Orion refractor, feel free to bring your own small scope to set up on the lawn and front porch. The condo is in Madison Town Center at the Corner of Hughes and Old Madison Pike, coming from Hughes the first left past the Dollar General Store turns into Madison Town Center, take the first left which is Water's Edge Lane, go around the circle head south and make a right at mail boxes, head west, my condo is 289 Water's Edge Lane the top condo closest to the parking lot at south west corner of the complex next to the Dollar Store and field extending to Subway. Call Doug Horacek at 772-6788 if you have further questions.



Copeland's Septet using the CS21" & stellacam partially processed, still has hot pixels. Shows coma problem, and light leak at top that can be corrected with a better quality focuser and baffles.

Stellar Events for April 2010

by Doug Horacek

Four of the five visible planets are in view during the evening and the fifth one near dawn. see below for details.

1st-15th: Mercury climbs toward Venus in the evening sky just after sunset. Closest approach is on the 3rd and 4th.

3rd: Antares will be 1 deg below the moon in the morning.

6th: Come see Venus and Mercury from Doug's place. Last Quarter Moon occurs at 4:37 A.M.

11-12th: The crescent moon is 5 deg above Jupiter on 11th and 11 deg to the left of Jupiter on the 12th.

13-20th: Mars and the Beehive Cluster, M44 are within a 2 deg field of view making a fine sight in binoculars or small telescope.

14th: new moon occurs 7:29 AM CDT

15th: Thin crescent Moon will be 7 deg to the lower right of Venus, and Mercury will be just below the moon at dusk.

16th: the crescent moon will be between Venus and the Pleiades.

21st: First Quarter Moon at 1:20 PM CDT. Also, the moon will pass within 5 deg above Mars that night.

23-25: Venus and the Pleiades will be within 5 deg for a nice unaided eye or binocular view.

24-25th: Saturn and the Moon make a nice pair as the moon moves from the right to left side of Saturn.



Global Astronomy Month

by Richard Norman

If the VBAS Calander of Events wasn't packed enough for you, check out the list of global astronomy events at the <http://www.astronomerswithoutborders.org> web site.

GAM provides a way to continue to build upon the success of the International Year of Astronomy. GAM includes some well known yearly events like the International Dark Sky Week (April 4 to 10), and Earth Day (April 17th for us), but will also include some new events such as the Moon Bounce (Apr 17th) <http://echoesofapollo.com/moon-bounce>

April is going to be a busy month!

Via Stellaris



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P. O. Box 1142
Huntsville, AL 35807-1142

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