The Los Angeles Astronomical Society

FEBRUARY, 2025
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THE BULLETIN

Meet our club officers for 2025.

From left to right Spencer SooHoo (Secretary), Victoria Fegen (VP), Keith Armstrong (President), Darrell Dooley (Past President), and John O'Bryan (Treasurer)

Upcoming Club Events

Dark Sky Night: Feb. 1

Board Meeting: Feb. 5

Public Star Party: Feb. 8

General Meeting: Feb. 10

In This Issue

The Garvey Ranch Park Observatory is open for free to the public and to all LAAS members and friends on Wednesday nights from 7:30 PM to 10 PM. Go to our website at LAAS.org and click on "Locations" to learn more about this special weekly event.

Award Recipients

LAAS Annual Banquet

2025 Awards Banquet

Honorees list

Lifetime Achievement Award: Trophy

David Nakamoto
Andee Sherwood

Outgoing President Gavel

Darrell Dooley

Outstanding Service Award - Special recognition: Trophy

Keith Armstrong
Heven Renteria

Outstanding Service Award - Outreach

David Yakerson
Van Webster
Andrew Inohara
Justin Hawkins
Shane Winter

Outstanding Service Award - Contribution(s) at Garvey Ranch

Darrell Dooley
Joseph Phipps
Zoly Dobrovics

Outstanding Service Award - Contribution(s) at S. K. A. S.

Ted Moss
AL Alicea
Roman Tolesnikov
Spencer Soohoo
Ray Brumhorst

Outstanding Service Certificate – Outreach

Heven Renteria: Outstanding Service Award

Keith Armstrong Outstanding Service Award

Dave Nakamoto—Lifetime Achievement Award

Andee Sherwood: Lifetime Achievement Award

From the left: Tim Thompson, Spencer SooHoo, and Andee

Outstanding Service Certificate – Outreach

Andrew Jones
Veronica Jones
Annie Gross
Dave Hasenauer
Eric Liljestrand
Iraneide De Oliveira
Jamir Soberians
Jimmy Castro
Laura-May Abron
Nasir Jeevanjee
Neide DeOlivera
Nick Sitchon
P.J. Goldfinger
Penny Kunitani
Philip Taylor
Rafael Gonzalez
Rob Kamoto
Spencer Soohoo
Steve Smith
Tim Russ
Vance Tyree,
Victoria Fegen
Zoly Dobrovics

Neide DeOlivera
Nick Sitchon
P.J. Goldfinger
Penny Kunitani
Philip Taylor
Rafael Gonzalez
Rob Kamoto
Spencer Soohoo
Steve Smith
Tim Russ
Vance Tyree,
Victoria Fegen
Zoly Dobrovics

Garvey Ranch Observatory Report

Wed Jan 22nd

By Dave Nakamoto

More astro-fun at Garvey Ranch observatory last night . . . or we tried to. Although the winds were calm, the Santa Ana condition in SoCal produced a lot of turbulent air, and it was not confined to the low southwest sky with Saturn and Venus. Nothing usable came out of any of the videos. And the clouds and haze made me decide that deep sky stuff was out.

So lousy views of the planets it was.

I heard from several people asking about the planet alignment. Let me say a few words about that. It lasts for several weeks, and a few more weeks for Garvey Ranch. The planets are spread from low in the southwest to halfway up the east. You can't see them as disks at the same time through any scope. It happens perhaps once or twice a decade, given the positions of the planets.

Mercury and Pluto are in the morning sky.

Saturn was first, as it sets firsts, and was quickly behind the trees.

Venus was next, a half phase.

Neptune came after that, but nothing to write home about.

Uranus was next, a pale green and small disk.

We skipped Jupiter because it was near Zenith and the mount couldn't point to it.

Mars was a boil. The photo below shows the best of four attempts to process the heck out of the planet. It is digitally zoomed in and cropped to reduce the dark sky around it. The north polar cap is visible at the top of Mars, surrounded by Mare Borealis or the northern "ocean". Syrtis Major is the dark feature near the left edge.

The lastly, Jupiter. We saw the four Galilean moons; Ganymede way off to one side, and on that side Io and Callisto, the latter noticeably off-line from the other three. Europa was alone on the other side of Jupiter.

Clear and STEADY nights observers !

--- Dave

How Can You Help Curb Light Pollution?
By Dave Prosper
Updated by Kat Troche

Before and after pictures of replacement lighting at the 6th Street Bridge over the Los Angeles River. The second picture shows improvements in some aspects of light pollution, as light is not directed to the sides and upwards from the upgraded fixtures, reducing skyglow. However, it also shows the use of brighter, whiter LEDs, which is not generally ideal, along with increased light bounce back from the road. Image Credit: The City of Los Angeles

Light pollution has long troubled astronomers, who generally shy away from deep sky observing under full Moon skies. The natural light from a bright Moon floods the sky and hides views of the Milky Way, dim galaxies and nebula, and shooting stars. In recent years, human-made light pollution has dramatically surpassed the interference of even a bright full Moon, and its effects are now noticeable to a great many people outside of the astronomical community. Harsh, bright white LED streetlights, while often more efficient and long-lasting, often create unexpected problems for communities replacing their older streetlamps. Some notable concerns are increased glare and light trespass, less restful sleep, and disturbed nocturnal wildlife patterns. There is increasing awareness of just how much light is too much light at night. You don't need to give in to despair over encroaching light pollution; you can join efforts to measure it, educate others, and even help stop or reduce the effects of light pollution in your community.

Amateur astronomers and potential citizen scientists around the globe are invited to participate in the Globe at Night (GaN) program to measure light pollution. Measurements are taken by volunteers on a few scheduled days every month and submitted to their database to help create a comprehensive map of light pollution and its change over time. GaN volunteers can take and submit measurements using multiple methods ranging from low-tech naked-eye observations to high-tech sensors and smartphone apps.

Globe at Night citizen scientists can use the following methods to measure light pollution and submit their results:

- Their own smartphone camera and dedicated app
- Manually measure light pollution using their own eyes and detailed charts of the constellations
- A dedicated light pollution measurement device called a Sky Quality Meter (SQM).

The free GaN web app from any internet-connected device (which can also be used to submit their measurements from an SQM or printed-out star charts)

Night Sky Network members joined a telecon with Connie Walker of Globe at Night in 2014 and had a lively discussion about the program's history and how they can participate. The audio of the telecon, transcript, and links to additional resources can be found on their dedicated resource page.

Light pollution has been visible from space for a long time, but new LED lights are bright enough that they stand out from older streetlights, even from orbit. Astronaut Samantha Cristoforetti took the above photo from the ISS cupola in 2015. The newly installed white LED lights in the center of the city of Milan are noticeably brighter than the lights in the surrounding neighborhoods. Image Credit: NASA/ESA

The International Dark-Sky Association (IDA) has long been a champion in the fight against light pollution and a proponent of smart lighting design and policy. Their website provides many resources for amateur astronomers and other like-minded people to help communities understand the negative impacts of light pollution and how smart lighting policies can not only help bring the stars back to their night skies but also make their streets safer by using smarter lighting with less glare. Communities and individuals find that their nighttime lighting choices can help save considerable sums of money when they decide to light their streets and homes "smarter, not brighter" with shielded, directional lighting, motion detectors, timers, and even choosing the proper "temperature" of new LED light replacements to avoid the harsh "pure white" glare that many new streetlamps possess. Their pages on community advocacy and on how to choose dark-sky-friendly lighting are extremely helpful and full of great information. There are even local chapters of the IDA in many communities made up of passionate advocates of dark skies.

The IDA has notably helped usher in "Dark Sky Places", areas around the world that are protected from light pollution. "Dark Sky Parks", in particular, provide visitors with incredible views of the Milky Way and are perfect places to spot the wonders of a meteor shower. These parks also perform a very important function, showing the public the wonders of a truly dark sky to many people who may have never before even seen a handful of stars in the sky, let alone the full glorious spread of the Milky Way.

More research into the negative effects of light pollution on the health of humans and the environment is being conducted than ever before. Watching the nighttime light slowly increase in your neighborhood, combined with reading so much bad news, can indeed be disheartening! However, as awareness of light pollution and its negative effects increases, more people are becoming aware of the problem and want to be part of the solution. There is even an episode of PBS Kid's SciGirls where the main characters help mitigate light pollution in their neighborhood!

Astronomy clubs are uniquely situated to help spread awareness of good lighting practices in their local communities to help mitigate light pollution. Take inspiration from Tucson, Arizona, and other dark sky-friendly communities that have adopted good lighting practices. Tucson even reduced its skyglow by 7% (as of 2018) after its own citywide lighting conversion, proof that communities can bring the stars back with smart lighting choices.

Originally posted by Dave Prosper: November 2018

Last Updated by Kat Troche: January 2025

This article is distributed by NASA's Night Sky Network (NSN).

The NSN program supports astronomy clubs across the USA dedicated to astronomy outreach.

Visit nightsky.jpl.nasa.gov to find local clubs, events, and more!

Monthly Sky Report

By Dave Nakamoto

All times are Pacific Standard Time (PST).

The moon is at first quarter on the 5th, full on the 12th, last quarter on the 20th, and new on the 27th.

On the 1st:

The sun rises at 6:50 a.m., and sets at 5:24 p.m.

Mercury starts February close to the sun and cannot be observed.

Venus sets in the west at 9:00 p.m., with a disk that is 38-percent illuminated and 32 arcseconds wide.

Mars is in Gemini the Twins. The planet sets in the west-northwest at 5:57 a.m. and is 99-percent illuminated and 14 arcseconds wide. A telescope with a magnification of 100x or more is needed to see anything on its disk.

Jupiter is in Taurus the Bull. The planet sets in the west-northwest at 2:51 a.m. and is 99-percent illuminated and 43 arcseconds wide. A telescope capable of magnification 50x will show the Red Spot and the four bright Galilean moons moving back and forth, across and behind Jupiter.

Saturn is in Aquarius the Water Bearer. The planet sets in the west at 8:05 p.m. and is 100-percent illuminated and 16 arcseconds wide. The rings and Saturn's largest moon Titan may be seen with a telescope capable of magnification 50x.

Uranus is in the constellation Aries the Ram. The planet sets in the west-northwest at 1:25 a.m. and is 100-percent illuminated and 3.6 arcseconds wide. On the 15th, Uranus is at Right Ascension $3^h\ 24^m\ 9^s$ with a declination of +18° 23' 4". A telescope with a magnification of 150x is needed to show its pale greenish disk.

Neptune is in the constellation Pisces the Fishes. The planet sets in the west at 8:55 p.m. and is 100-percent illuminated and 2.2 arcseconds wide. On the 15th, Neptune is at Right Ascension $23^h\ 56^m\ 9^s$ with a declination of -1° 47' 45". A telescope with a magnification of 150x is needed to show its pale bluish disk.

On the 28th:

The sun rises at 6:23 a.m., and sets at 5:49 p.m.

Mercury, on the 23rd, sets in the west at 6:40 p.m. 55 minutes after sunset. The planet is 91-percent illuminated and 5.4 arcseconds wide. On the 28th, Mercury sets in the west at 7:03 p.m., one hour 14 minutes after sunset. The planet is 79-percent illuminated and 5.9 arcseconds wide. Do not observe any planet when it comes close to the sun, for the danger to the eyes is great.

Venus sets in the west-northwest at 8:17 p.m. and is 16-percent illuminated and 48 arcseconds wide. Venus slowly continues to brighten and its disk becomes wider and less illuminated as it slowly comes between the sun and earth.

Mars sets at 3:55 a.m. and is 94-percent illuminated and 11 arcseconds wide. The planet becomes smaller and dimmer as it recedes from earth.

Jupiter sets in the west-northwest at 1:09 a.m. and is 99-percent illuminated and 40 arcseconds wide.

Saturn sets at 6:34 p.m., PST, 45 minutes after sunset.

Uranus sets in the west-northwest at 11:36 p.m.

Neptune sets at 7:13 p.m.

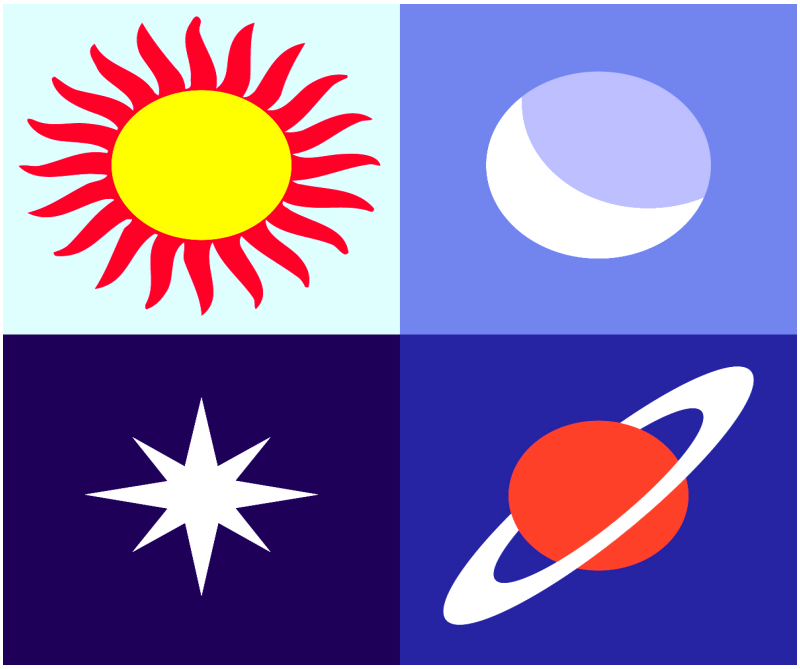
SPECIAL EVENTS

The major lunar standstill will occur from 2024 through 2025. The moon rises and sets as far north and as far south as it can in an 18.61-year cycle of lunar excursion. This “season” is known as the major lunar standstill. Unlike an eclipse, a standstill can be observed at any location on Earth. We observe the major lunar standstill by watching where the Moon rises on the eastern horizon and where it sets on the western horizon.
On Saturday the 8th, the moon is at the northern major standstill point. The moon rises at 1:38 p.m., PST, and sets at 4:07 a.m., PST.

Garvey Ranch observatory is located on the east end of Garvey Ranch park. Parking is available on the west side of S. Orange Ave. south of Graves Ave. The observatory is open every Wednesday night from 7:30 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. The telescope is open for public viewing if the sky is clear. It is manned by volunteers from the Los Angeles Astronomical Society. Admission and viewing through the telescope are free.

To contact Dave Nakamoto
about his sky report, please send
an email to

dinakamoto@hotmail.com



Almanac

Source:
http://www.seasky.org/astronomy/astronomy-calendar-2024.html

January 29 - ***New Moon.*** *The Moon will located on the same side of the Earth as the Sun and will not be visible in the night sky. This phase occurs at 12:37 UTC. This is the best time of the month to observe faint objects such as galaxies and star clusters because there is no moonlight to interfere.*

February 12 - **Full Moon.** The Moon will be located on the opposite side of the Earth as the Sun and its face will be will be fully illuminated. This phase occurs at 13:55 UTC. This full moon was known by early Native American tribes as the Snow Moon because the heaviest snows usually fell during this time of the year. Since hunting is difficult, this moon has also been known by some tribes as the Hunger Moon, since the harsh weather made hunting difficult.

February 28 - **New Moon.** The Moon will located on the same side of the Earth as the Sun and will not be visible in the night sky. This phase occurs at 00:46 UTC. This is the best time of the month to observe faint objects such as galaxies and star clusters because there is no moonlight to interfere.

February 2025

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1 Dark Sky Night
2	3	4	5 Garvey Night Board Mtng	6	7	8 Public Star Party
9	10 General Mtng	11	12 Garvey Night	13	14	15
16	17	18	19 Garvey Night	20	21	22
23	24	25	26 Garvey Night	27	28	

Meet The New Members

Andre Matthieu	Devon Gutekunst	Joshua Moser	Stou Sandalski	Lingyu Zhan
Kevin Barltrop	Ricardo Hernandez	Steven Posner	David Seidel	
Cannon Coccellato	Vibol Hou	Evald Ridore	Oksana Tsvigun	
Sean Davis	Grace Martinez	Houston Roderick	Keena Weigel	
Wren Filley	Esteban Morales	Allen Rodriguez	Christian Wendland	
Ana Gurgenidze	Kristopher Morris	Elias Rojas	Philip Wingard	

LAAS Board Meetings

All Board Meetings are held online, live on Zoom. Please check the information posted in the IO Group Forum for any current news related to these meetings. If you wish to attend a board meeting, please send a request to secretary@laas.org for a link to Zoom.

Volunteer Opportunities

Every LAAS member is a volunteer at some point. Some members volunteer to share telescopes with the public, while others tackle administrative duties, help out at our community and public events, or join a club committee. Taking photos at our events and writing articles about events for our club newsletter are great ways to volunteer and become more involved in the LAAS as a member.

Volunteers are always welcome to write articles for our monthly newsletter or share images captured of the night sky. Members are also welcome to come up with new ideas and future activities for the membership which can be shared in Board meetings. If you are artistic and enjoy creating posters or flyers, or printable astro-educational handouts for further star parties, please let us know.

Please send any articles, images, or artwork to the newsletter editor here: communications@laas.org

Time To Renew Your Membership?

Please remember to renew your membership after you receive a notice from the Club Secretary.

Please send any new contact information to the club secretary at secretary@LAAS.org OR login to your account here: https://common.wildapricot.com/login

Outreach Team Member Volunteers

"We are dedicated to advancing the knowledge of astronomy, optics, telescope making, and the wonders of our universe."

One of the ways the LAAS advances the knowledge of astronomy and the wonders of our universe is to visit local schools in our area with telescopes. The telescope operators are current members of the club. Many schools invite us to their campus to provide views of the objects in the night sky for not only the children but for the staff and parents, too. Some schools invite us on scheduled "Science Nights" while other schools plan a special evening of astronomy education on their campus.

Our Outreach Coordinator, Heven Renteria will be retiring from his position after 10 years of dedicated service to the club. Heven and the others on his team have been attending outreach events on campuses throughout Los Angeles county and beyond.. Many of them travel great distances (and after a full day of work) to share astronomy with children and the public. Recently, the club could not accept additional requests for outreach events because the team's schedule was full.

Our club needs more members like YOU to join the outreach team. Some of these events may be local to you. If you login to your account on the Night Sky Network and view the calendar, you may find an outreach event in your own neighborhood.

You don't need to be an expert using a telescope as the members of the team will help you set up and find objects in the sky to share with the students. You can attend an outreach event without a telescope and help the team with their telescopes or help with the long lines of children who are excited to look through a telescope for the first time.

These events are fun and rewarding in many ways. The enthusiasm shared by the children is infectious, in the best way possible. If you enjoy attending Public Star parties at the Griffith Observatory, you will enjoy a school outreach event.

The Outreach Team needs your support and participation.

Please send an email to outreach@laas.org to learn more or volunteer on our discussion forum.

Thank you for volunteering!

Andee Sherwood
Communications

John O'Bryan shows a student the Sun at Overland Elementary, 2021.

Photo credit: Van Webster

LAAS Outreach Program

The mission of LAAS is to promote interest in and advance the knowledge of astronomy, optics, telescope making and related subjects. In furtherance of its mission, LAAS conducts public star parties and other outreach events that are intended to enhance the public's understanding of astronomy and its enjoyment and appreciation of the beauty and wonders of our universe.

We provide outreach events at local schools, Griffith Observatory, Mt. Wilson Observatory, various state and county parks, and community events.
Join our Outreach team of volunteers today.
Contact our Outreach Coordinator at Outreach@LAAS.org for more information.

All LAAS members can check the club calendar by logging in to their NSN account to view future outreach events. Events are posted once scheduled so check the calendar as often to find an event near you.

LAAS Club Merchandise

LAAS T-Shirts, Hoodies, mugs, and more!

To find new merchandise from our store, please use the following link: **Shop Here**

Please note all prices listed are subject to change and include all shipping and handling costs. All items will be shipped directly to the address you provide on your order form.

LAAS Hoodie

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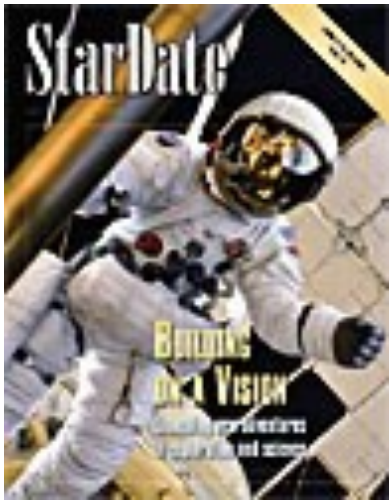
John O'Bryan, Jr.

Treasurer

Astronomy Magazines

Discounts for astronomy magazines can be found on the internet. Look for the best deals possible. Send a copy of your LAAS membership card with your check or payment to receive a club member discount.

Click here to subscribe to Sky and Telescope Magazine.



Subscribe or renew to the McDonald Observatory's StarDate Magazine and receive a special discount. Follow this link to subsribe and press "Add to Cart" under the type of subscription option: http://stardate.org/store/subscribe

On the Checkout form, enter "network" in the Coupon Code box.

Astronomy magazine

As a member of the Night Sky Network, you may use renew your Astronomy Magazine subscription (or enter a new subscription) at the club discount rate. If this is a renewal, Astronomy Magazine will match your entered name and address and extend your subscription. For inquiries, please contact Astronomy Magazine customer service & sales at 1-800-533-6644.

Click here to begin the subscription process.

ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY OF THE PACIFIC

Join the Astronomical Society of the Pacific and help support the cause of advancing science literacy through engagement in astronomy.

Member benefits include a subscription to

***Mercury* Magazine**. .

You can look at inserts in your current magazines for deals for subscribers offering good discounted prices.

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Sky Report:

213-473-0880

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Find astronomy outreach activities by visiting NASA's Night Sky Network