

Skylights

Newsletter of the Astronomical Society of Northern New England



APR 2024



Member of NASA's
Night Sky Network



Astronomical League

ASNNE MISSION

ASNNE is an incorporated, non-profit, scientific and educational organization with three primary goals:

- 1) To have fun sharing our knowledge and interest with others.
- 2) To provide basic education in astronomy and related sciences to all who are interested.
- 3) To promote the science of Astronomy.

What's Up In April

By Bernie Reim

The month of April is named after the Latin "aprilis" which means "to open". That is exactly what this part of the northern hemisphere will be doing later this month as the earth and the flowers and trees awaken along with most of the other flora and fauna in this area. Many seasonal birds will also return from the south all throughout this month.

April is always the first full month of spring. This April much more will happen than just the earth and its inhabitants reawakening and enjoying warmer and longer days again. Over 70 million of its 8 billion current inhabitants are expected to make the effort to place themselves directly in the narrow 110-mile-wide path of the lunar shadow on Monday afternoon, April 8 to experience their own awakening in a much larger sense. About 30 million people already live right in this narrow path that the moon's shadow will carve from northwestern Mexico, then from Texas to Maine including a direct path over Niagara Falls and on into Canada until the 240,000 mile-long lunar shadow cone lifts off the earth again over Newfoundland less than two hours later, racing over 3,000 miles of land in about 90 minutes at higher speeds than most of our military jets could attain.

All you will need to do is to get yourself right into this narrow shadow cone where it intersects with the surface of the earth. The alignment of any 3 heavenly bodies is called a syzygy. You would then become the fourth body in this perfect alignment so that you can experience all of the wonders that such an alignment offers by being in the right place at the right time. Then all you need is clear skies on that afternoon of Monday, April 8.

Mexico has the best weather prospects, then Texas, and then they go downhill from there as the shadow progresses towards the northeast. If the clouds are light you may find an opening for those critical three and a half minutes. If not, then try to catch a live feed of the event from another location even as you are watching it. Almost everyone along the eclipse path from Oregon to South Carolina on Monday, August 21 of 2017 was able to experience this great event. I saw that one from Driggs, Idaho, near Yellowstone and the Grand Tetons which created a perfect and dramatic backdrop for such a grand and memorable natural spectacle.

There is still some time to practice any photography that you may want to do to try to capture and share this majestic event with others. There are many great websites and practical videos on how to best accomplish this, so try to watch some of them to be properly prepared. Of course you will never be able to really capture the essence of such an out-of-this world experience, but it is always worth making the effort anyway.

Only 12 humans have ever walked on the moon, but in a very real sense you can actually let the moon come to you for a few precious minutes on that day without even doing all of the rigorous training that astronauts have to do! It will just be the shadow, but you will be surprised about how much information that shadow can convey about our only natural satellite and then you will never look at the moon the same way again.

Try to pick a spot with as much open space and altitude as possible to best experience this shadow which will plunge the entire landscape including you into deep twilight

darkness. It will race over you at about 2,000 miles per hour, so you get a great sense of this constant speed along with an idea of the width and distance to the moon since it will only last just over 3 minutes. It would last a little longer if the moon were closer to the earth at that time. Also make sure to take some time to look all around you to see the full 360-degree deep salmon-colored twilight. This way you instantly become aware of our entire life-giving atmosphere all at once instead of just the evening or morning slice that you can see twice every single day if it is clear at sunrise and sunset.

There are many other strange phenomena to look for as the sun gets smaller and smaller in our sky. All of the shadows around you will get super sharp, the temperature will drop 10 or more degrees, animals and birds will go to sleep, crickets would start to chirp if there are any, and many other strange and other-worldly effects will happen. Shadow bands will race across the earth like snakes just before and after totality, caused by a refraction effect in our atmosphere. Try to create hundreds of dancing crescent suns all around you simply by letting the sun shine through the holes in a colander or a straw hat or any pinholes you can create to spell anything out with the sun as the light source.

Look for the pink ring of the chromosphere of the sun and any prominences or solar flares that may be happening as the sun gets covered. That is the only time it will be safe to remove your solar filters from your eyes or cameras or binoculars, just for those 3 short minutes. Then make sure you put them right back on after that.

Look for Bailey's beads during the last minute before totality as the last few rays of the sun shine through the valleys on the moon between its mountains. Then the diamond ring effect is the last brilliant flash of light before the sun disappears as if it dropped into a black hole and was torn right out of the fabric

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What's Up "Continued from page 1"

of space-time and everything that you thought you knew about the familiar sun and earth and sky becomes instantly alien. You will be lifted right off the face of the earth to the edge of space 60 miles straight up where it is always black because there is no more atmosphere to scatter the sunlight and make our familiar sky blue. There is no need to pay 2 million dollars to ride a rocket to this edge and become weightless for a few minutes when you can just place yourself in the right place at the right time and experience something similar.

Another thing that amazed me beyond all of that was how all the bright planets and some stars became instantly visible as the sun went out. This time you will see Venus, Saturn, and Mars to the right of the sun since they are morning planets, and you will see Jupiter to the left of the sun since it is now an evening planet in Aries, where the sun will be during this eclipse. You should also be able to see all of the 8 bright stars that make up the Winter Hexagon along with the Pleiades just to the left of the sun and Jupiter. That would include Taurus, Gemini, Orion, and Sirius in Canis Major, the brightest star in our sky from either hemisphere.

A huge bonus to look for during this eclipse that did not exist during the 2017 eclipse is the fact that a certain comet named Pons Brooks could be visible just 3 degrees to the right of Jupiter during this eclipse. You will probably need binoculars to see it, so be prepared. This comet may even become visible to the naked eye later this month at night in Aries the Ram.

Another thing you will not be prepared for if you have never seen a total eclipse before is the fact that the pearly white and ethereal corona or atmosphere of the sun also becomes instantly visible as everything else goes dark. This atmosphere extends nearly 3 million miles into space all around the sun, or about 4 times the width of the normally visible part of the sun. Remember that this pearly corona is always there, but it only shines forth when the rest of its brilliant light is temporarily extinguished by the moon. Its temperature reaches over 2 million degrees while the solar surface is only 10,000 degrees F, which is still one of many unsolved mysteries that the sun still holds. Its constantly changing shape will also be very different from 2017 since the sun is now near its solar maximum in 2025 and hundreds of sunspots should be visible.

Beyond all of that you will glimpse a more real and permanent reality that far surpasses any ordinary awareness. It may only last around 3 minutes, but you will find that all sense of time and space disappear, leaving you in a timeless eternity that is always present regardless of any total solar eclipse.

I had the sense that I could instantly see and understand truths about our sun, earth, and moon and catch a glimpse of the inner workings and constant motions in our solar system that human eyes were never meant to see and human minds were never meant to understand.

All of this and much more (every eclipse is an individual experience just as every rainbow is unique for the viewer from that particular perspective) is only possible if you place yourself right into this lunar shadow and preferably as close to the center line as possible. As Annie Dillard stated so eloquently in her 1982 book *Teaching a Stone To Talk*: "Seeing a partial eclipse bears the same relation to seeing a total eclipse as...flying in an airplane does to falling out of one. Although one experience precedes the other, it in no way prepares you for it." Don't just stay in the Portland area or any other part of Maine that will not be right in this path. Even a 99% eclipse is nothing compared to a total solar eclipse because it will not go dark, you will not see the corona, the stars and planets will not come out and almost none of the other effects that I described will happen.

The last total solar eclipse over Maine was on July 20 of 1963 and the next one will not be until Monday, May 1 of 2079. The next one in this country will not happen until August 23 of 2044, so make every effort to see this one. I guarantee that you will not be disappointed if it is clear.

All the rest of the highlights for this month or almost any month pale in comparison to such a phenomenal, rare, and unforgettable event as a total solar eclipse, the single greatest natural event that you could ever experience in astronomy, but I will cover a few of them anyway. The first good meteor shower since January will happen on Monday morning, April 22. Caused by Comet Thatcher, you would normally see about 20 Lyrids per hour emanating from Lyra in the summer triangle, but this time it happens just before the full moon, so you will see about half that many towards dawn if it is clear.

Look for a close conjunction of Mars and Saturn very low in the eastern morning sky on April 5. A thin waning crescent moon will join the pair the next morning. Then keep watching as they get even closer until they start drifting apart again after the 10th. Venus is the remaining morning planet now rising about half an hour before the sun. We will lose it by the end of next month.

April 1. On this day in 1997 Comet Hale-Bopp made its closest approach to the sun. Last quarter moon is at 11:15 p.m. EDT.

April 3. John Harrison was born on this day in 1693. He was an English clock maker that invented the marine chronometer to keep accurate time at sea to solve the longitude problem in 1730 and eventually collect a prize of 20,000 pounds which now would be around 3 million pounds.

April 7. The moon is near Venus in the morning sky. The moon is at perigee, or closest to the earth today at 222,979 miles. This makes for a longer total solar eclipse and a wider path for the moon on the earth. The Compton Gamma Ray observatory was launched on this day in 1991. It discovered about one gamma ray burst every day. It came down just 9 years later.

April 8. New moon is at 2:21 p.m. A total solar eclipse will happen from Mexico to Canada.

April 10. The moon passes near Jupiter this evening.

April 11. Halley's Comet made its closest approach to Earth on this day in 1986.

April 12. On this day in 1961 Yuri Gagarin became the first human to orbit the earth.

April 14. Christiaan Huygens was born on this day in 1629. He invented the pendulum clock in 1656 and the spacecraft that landed on Titan, the largest moon of Saturn on January 14 of 2005 was named in his honor.

April 15. First quarter moon is at 3:13 p.m. Leonardo da Vinci was born on this day in 1452.

April 22. The Lyrid meteor shower peaks this morning.

April 23. Full moon is at 7:49 p.m. This is also called the Grass, Egg, Pink, or Fish Moon.

April 25. On this day in 1990 the Hubble Space Telescope was launched. It is still working.

April 26. Arno Penzias was born on this day in 1933. He won the 1978 Nobel Prize in physics along with Robert Wilson for their discovery of the microwave background radiation in 1964 that is always present everywhere and was the first real proof that the Big Bang occurred. The moon passes near Antares in Scorpius once again this morning.

April 28. Jan Oort was born on this day in 1900. He was a Dutch astronomer. The Oort cloud, a distant spherical shell of billions of icy bodies which is the source of most of our comets, was named for him. It starts at 5,000 A.U., from the sun (100 times farther out than Pluto) and goes all the way out to 100,000 A.U., or over 1 light year away. Eugene Shoemaker was born on this day in 1928. He was an astronomer and geologist that discovered several comets including Shoemaker-Levy 9 that broke up and hit Jupiter in 21 pieces from July 16 to July 22 of 1994. I saw 5 of those impacts.



Moon Phases

Apr 1
Last Quarter

Apr 8
New

Apr 15
First Quarter

Apr 23
Full

Moon Data

Apr 5
Mars 2° north
of Moon

Apr 6
Saturn 1.2° north
of Moon

Apr 7
Venus 0.4° south
of Moon

Neptune 0.4° north
of Moon

Moon at perigee

Apr 10
Jupiter 4° south
of Moon

Uranus 4° south
of Moon

Apr 19
Moon at apogee

Observer's Challenge* – April 2024

by Glenn Chaple

Hickson 44 - Galaxy Group in Leo

NGC 3185 (Barred Spiral; Mag. 12.2; Dim. 2.3' X 1.6')
NGC 3187 Barred Spiral; Mag. 13.4; Dim. 2.3' X 0.7')
NGC 3190 Spiral; Mag. 11.1; Dim. 4.4' X 1.5')
NGC 3193 Elliptical; Mag. 10.9; Dim. 2.4' X 2.2')

In 1982, the Canadian professional astronomer Paul Hickson and his colleagues published a catalog of 100 compact galaxy groups uncovered during a systematic survey of the Palomar Observatory Sky Survey red prints. Besides the obvious quality of compactness, each group had to contain at least 4 galaxies in a specified magnitude range and be isolated from larger galaxy groups. This month's Observer's Challenge, Hickson 44 in Leo, satisfies these criteria. It consists of four isolated galaxies of generally similar magnitudes squeezed into an area 12 arc-minutes across. Most Hickson Compact Groups are too faint for the average backyard telescope, but Hickson 44, is an exception.

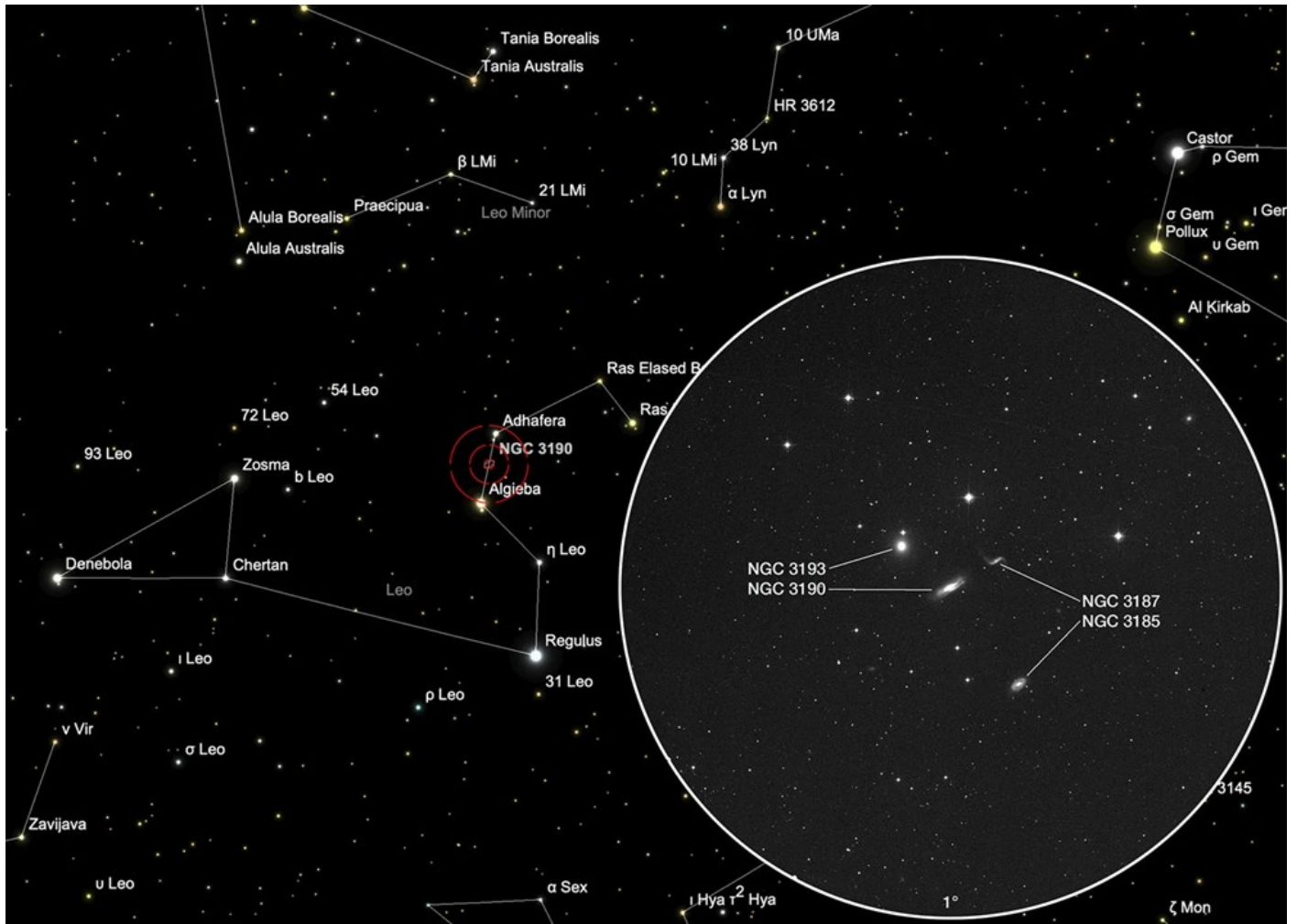
Hickson 44 lies in the "Sickle" of the constellation Leo, midway between 2nd magnitude gamma (γ) Leonis and 3rd magnitude zeta (ζ) Leonis. The largest Hickson 44 galaxy, NGC 3190 is located at the 2000.0 coordinates RA 10^h18^m05.6^s and DEC +21°49'58". I found the group by star-hopping 2 degrees south of zeta (refer to accompanying finder charts). Using a 10-inch f/5 reflecting telescope and magnifying power of 139X under magnitude 5 suburban skies, I was immediately able to pick out the two brightest members, roundish NGC 3193 and oval-shaped NGC 3190. I could *barely!* make out an extremely faint and elusive glow where NGC 3185 should be. The 13th magnitude barred spiral NGC 3187 was nowhere to be seen. From dark-sky areas, the three brightest Hickson 44 galaxies can be glimpsed with a 6-inch scope. NGC 3187 will require an 8 or 10-inch instrument.

William Herschel came across NGC 3190 and NGC 3193 in 1784, while NGC 3185 and NGC 3187 were discovered by William Parsons in 1850. According to a NASA website, the Hickson 44 Compact Group is 100 light years away, with NGC being the largest at a diameter of 70,000 light years.

*The purpose of the Observer's Challenge is to encourage the pursuit of visual observing. It is open to anyone who is interested. If you'd like to contribute notes, drawings, or photographs, we'd be happy to include them in our monthly summary. Submit your observing notes, sketches, and/or images to Roger Ivester (rogerivester@me.com). To find out more about the Observer's Challenge, log on to rogerivester.com/category/observers-challenge-reports-complete.

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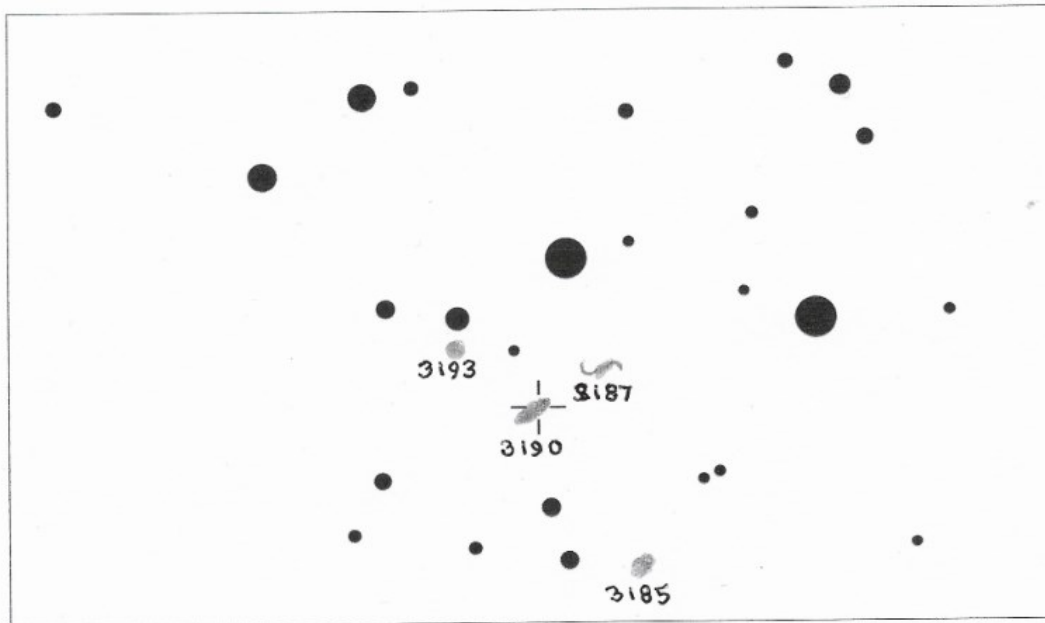
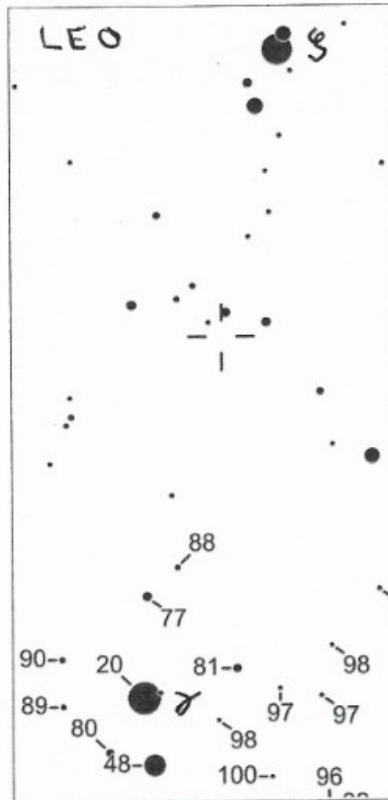
Hickson 44 Finder Chart A (www.deepskycorner.ch)



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Hickson 44 Finder Charts

Charts adapted from AAVSO Variable Star Plotter. Numbers are stellar magnitudes, decimals omitted. (Top) Wide field. Stars plotted to 10th magnitude in this 2 by 4½ degree field. (Bottom) close-up field. Stars plotted to 12th magnitude in this 60 by 30 arc-minute field. North is up in both charts.

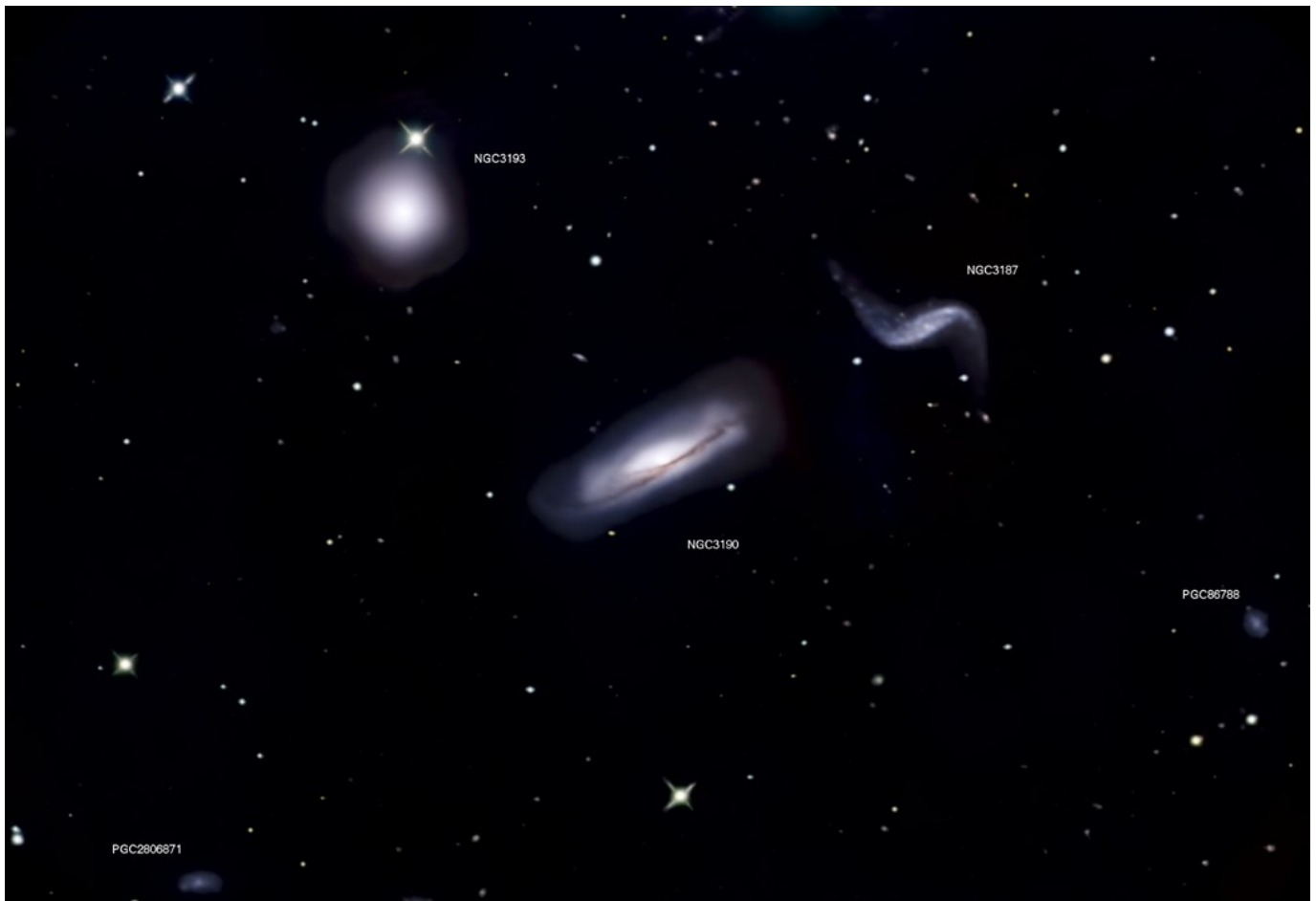


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NGC 2440 Image

Mario Motta, MD (ATMoB)

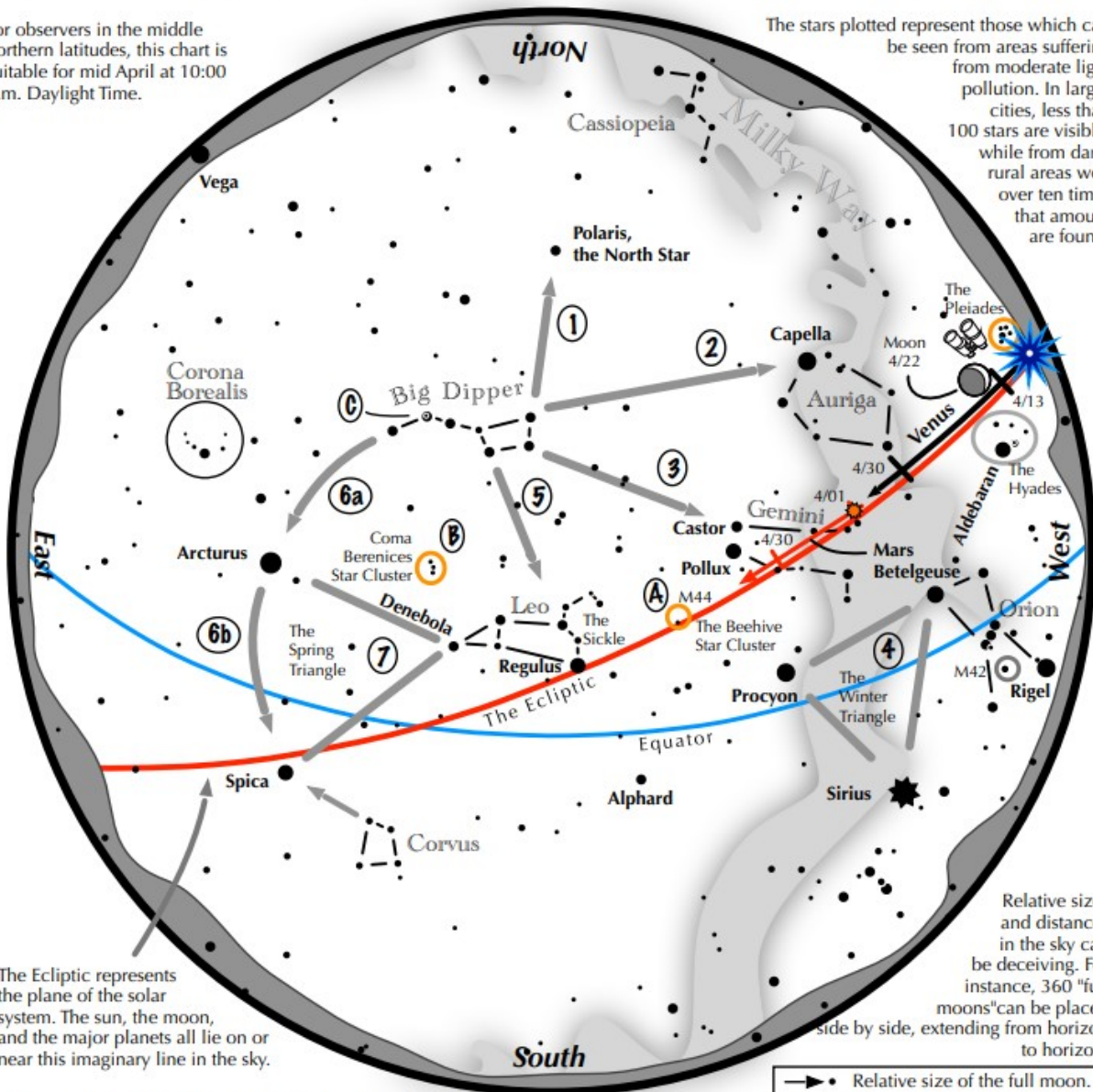
“This was taken through my 32 inch F6.5 relay telescope from Gloucester MA, with a ZWO 6200 camera, and RGB filters about 2 hours total imaging, stacked and processed in PixInsight.”



Navigating the April Night Sky, Northern Hemisphere

For observers in the middle northern latitudes, this chart is suitable for mid April at 10:00 p.m. Daylight Time.

The stars plotted represent those which can be seen from areas suffering from moderate light pollution. In larger cities, less than 100 stars are visible, while from dark, rural areas well over ten times that amount are found.



The Ecliptic represents the plane of the solar system. The sun, the moon, and the major planets all lie on or near this imaginary line in the sky.

Relative sizes and distances in the sky can be deceiving. For instance, 360 "full moons" can be placed side by side, extending from horizon to horizon.

→ • Relative size of the full moon.

Navigating the April night sky: Simply start with what you know or with what you can easily find.

- 1 Extend an imaginary line north from the two stars at the tip of the Big Dipper's bowl. It passes Polaris, the North Star.
- 2 Draw another imaginary line west across the top two stars of the Dipper's bowl. It strikes Capella low in the northwest.
- 3 Through the two diagonal stars of the Dipper's bowl, draw a line pointing to the twin stars of Castor and Pollux in Gemini.
- 4 Look in the west-southwest for the bright Winter Triangle stars of Sirius, Procyon, and Betelgeuse.
- 5 Directly below the Dipper's bowl reclines the constellation Leo with its primary star, Regulus.
- 6 Follow the arc of the Dipper's handle. It first intersects Arcturus, then continues to Spica.
- 7 Arcturus, Spica, and Denebola form the Spring Triangle, a large equilateral triangle.

Binocular Highlights

- A: M44, a star cluster barely visible to the naked eye, lies to the southeast of Pollux.
- B: Look nearly overhead for the loose star cluster of Coma Berenices.
- C: In the Big Dipper's handle shines Mizar next to a dimmer star, Alcor.

Duplication allowed and encouraged for all free distribution.



Principal Meteor Showers in 2024

January 4
Quadrantids

April 22
Lyrids

May 6
Eta Aquarids

July 30
Delta Aquarids

August 12
Perseids

October 9
Draconid

October 21
Orionids

November 9
Taurids

November 18
Leonids

November 26
Andromedids

December 14
Geminids

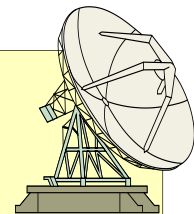
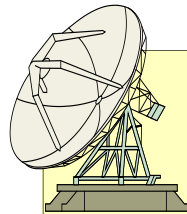
December 22
Ursids

Note: Dates are for maximum

MEMBERSHIP DUES

Membership fees are for the calendar year beginning in January and ending in December. Dues (see page 22 for prices) are payable to the treasurer during November for the upcoming year. New members who join during or after the month of July shall pay half the annual fee, for the balance of the year. Checks should be made payable to the Astronomical Society of Northern New England (A.S.N.N.E). If you would like to mail in your dues, use the form on page 22. Or you can use PayPal via asnne.astronomy@gmail.com

A Member who has not paid current dues by the January meeting will be dropped from membership, (essentially a two-month grace period.) Notice of this action shall be given to the Member by the Treasurer. Reinstatement shall be by payment of currently due dues.



Got any News?

Skylights Welcomes Your Input.

Here are some suggestions:

*Book reviews -- Items for sale -- New equipment --
Ramblings -- Star parties -- Observing -- Photos.*

Our Club has Merchandise for Sale at: www.cafepress.com/asnne



*All money raised goes to our operating fund.
Any design can be put on any item.*

Contact David Bianchi dadsnorlax@yahoo.com for further details.



This article is distributed by NASA Night Sky Network

The Night Sky Network program supports astronomy clubs across the USA dedicated to astronomy outreach. Visit nightsky.jpl.nasa.org to find local clubs, events, and more!

Participate in Eclipse Science

By Kat Troche

April is NASA's Citizen Science Month, and there is no shortage of projects available. Here are some [citizen science projects](#) that you can participate in on April 8th, on and off the path of totality right from your smartphone!



Eclipse Soundscapes, ARISA Lab / NASA

Eclipse Soundscapes

Eclipse Soundscapes will compare data from a 1932 study on how eclipses affect wildlife – in this case, crickets. There are a number of ways you can participate, both on and off the path. NOTE: you must be 13 and older to submit data. Participants 18+ can apply to receive the free Data Collector kit. Learn more at: eclipsesoundscapes.org/

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GLOBE Eclipse

Folks that participated in the **GLOBE Eclipse 2017** will be glad to see that their eclipse data portal is now open! With the GLOBE Observer smartphone app, you can measure air temperature and clouds during the eclipse, contributing data to the GLOBE program from anywhere you are. Learn more at: observer.globe.gov/



HamSCI, The University of Scranton / NASA

HamSCI

HamSCI stands for **Ham Radio Science Citizen Investigation**. HamSCI has been actively engaged in scientific data collection for both the October 14, 2023, annular solar eclipse and the upcoming April 8, 2024, total eclipse. Two major activities that HamSCI will be involved in around the solar events will be the **Solar Eclipse QSO Party (SEQP)** and the **Gladstone Signal Spotting Challenge (GSSC)**

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SunSketcher™

SunSketcher, Western Kentucky University / NASA

SunSketcher

If you're traveling to totality, help the **SunSketcher** team measure the oblateness, or shape, of the Sun during the eclipse by timing the flashes of Baily's Beads. You will need a smartphone with a working camera for this, along with something to hold the phone in place - don't forget a spare battery! NOTE: The app will need to run from five minutes *before* the eclipse starts until the end of the eclipse. Any additional phone use will result in Sun Sketcher data loss. Learn more at: sunskecher.org/

Don't stop at the eclipse - NASA has citizen science projects you can do all year long - from [cloud spotting on Mars](#) to [hunting for distant planets](#)! By contributing to these research efforts, you can help NASA make new discoveries and scientific breakthroughs, resulting in a better understanding of the world around us, from the critters on the ground, to the stars in our sky.

We'll be highlighting other citizen science projects with our mid-month article on the [Night Sky Network](#) page, but we want to wish all you eclipse chasers out there a very happy, and safe solar eclipse! For last minute activities, check out Night Sky Network's [Solar Eclipse Resources section](#)!

Point and Shoot Camera Astro-Imaging (no telescope)

Canon PowerShot SX50 HS

Image & write-up submitted by Paul Kursewicz

Medusa Nebula & NGC 2395

RAW Mode, FL 1200mm, ISO 800, f/3.5, 20 x 5 min, Baader Filter, 2-8-24



Finding these extremely faint objects with my camera was a real challenge. It took me over an hour to locate them. Turns out that a 1 minute long exposure at ISO 1600 was not long enough to reveal **NGC 2395**, the *open cluster* in the upper center in my picture. **NGC 2395** is small (4.62 arc min in size), and only showed up when I did a 2 minute long exposure. Once I had the open cluster I knew exactly where to look for the **Medusa Nebula**, a large *planetary nebula* 1500ly away in the constellation Gemini. It has a physical diameter of about 4 light-years, with an apparent magnitude of +15.99 (very faint). Planetary nebulae are formed by stars that are not massive enough to go out as supernovae at the end of their life cycle. It's the final stage in the transformation of stars as they end their active lives and become white dwarfs. Our Sun itself will form one in the last phase of its evolution, in about 5-6 billion years.

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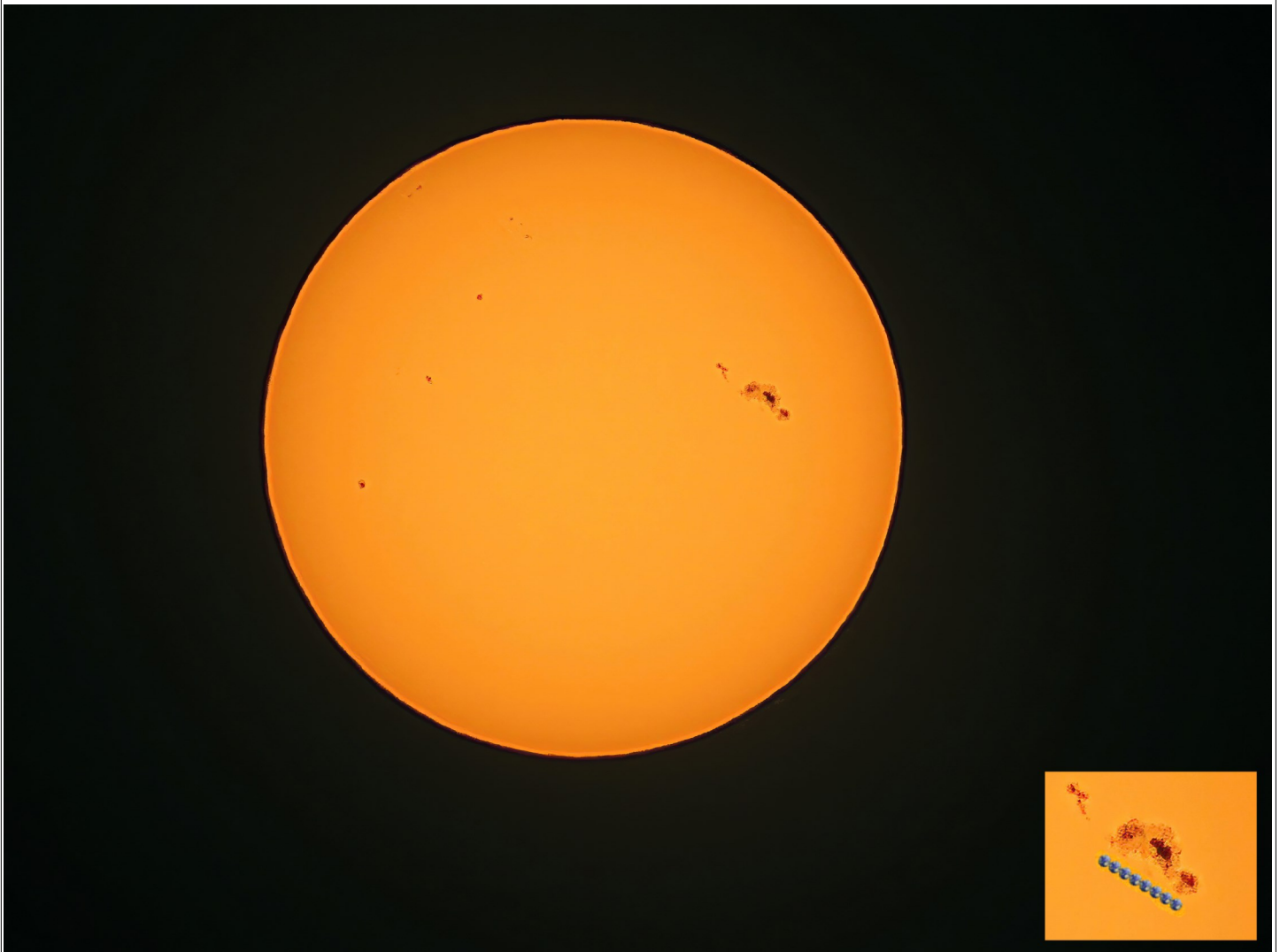
Point and Shoot Camera Astro-Imaging (no telescope)

Canon PowerShot SX50 HS

Image & write-up submitted by Paul Kursewicz

Naked-Eye Sunspot

**JPEG, (Hand-held), Single Image, FL 1800mm (digital zoom), ISO 125, f/6.5, 1/320sec,
Thousand Oaks Solar Filter, 2-26-24**



Giant sunspot AR3590 has exploded often producing X-flares and M-class flares. Strangely, not one of those eruptions produced a coronal mass ejection (CME). Sunspots usually travel along lines of latitude, creating horizontal bands parallel to the sun's equator. Today's line-up is almost perpendicular to that arrangement. Does it mean anything? Probably not. However, the almost vertical line might signal something offbeat in the Sun's inner magnetic dynamo--the ultimate source of all space weather. It merits watching. Giant sunspot group AR3590 is more than eight times wider than Earth (see inset) and was viewed through ordinary eclipse glasses. There may be a good possibility of having a giant sunspot visible during the upcoming eclipse.

The NASA Night Sky Network Awardees

(Bringing the wonders of the universe to the public)



During the March meeting club president David Bianchi presented two Outreach Certificates and one Outreach Pin to Marty and Bern. Both seen here in the picture standing with past awardees. From left to right: Gary Asperschlager, Bernie Reim, Marty Burgess, David Bianchi, Bernard Valliere, Carl Gurtman.

**Astronomical Society of Northern New England (ASNNE) Membership
Meeting Minutes of 1 March 2024**

Business Meeting: The Business Meeting was called to order at 7:04 pm by
President David Bianchi.

NOTE: The Business Meeting was held in the same room as the subsequent
Regular Meeting. People started arriving for the Regular Meeting, so there was
no need to brief the Regular Meeting on what had transpired during the Business
Meeting. Directors/People Present are totals from late in the Meeting.

Directors Present: David Bianchi, President
Bernie Reim, Vice President
Carl Gurtman, Secretary
Gary Asperschlager, Director
April Nicholls, Director
Bern Valliere, Director

Plus: Paul Kursewicz, *Skylights* Editor

Secretary's Report: & **Treasurer's Report:** These Reports were omitted.

Old Business:

Huttopia: Gary has been trying to contact Charlotte Cottin, the Manager of Huttopia, to work out details for this summer's AASNN Presentations. She had previously contacted David about us doing our Presentations at Huttopia this summer. So far, however, Gary's been unsuccessful in reaching her about the details. Carl suggested, that with inflation; and considering Point Sebago's charge of \$300/night, we raise our charge to Huttopia from \$200 to \$250/night.

Night Sky Network Outreach Pins: David has been corresponding with the Night Sky Network. They wish to be informed of our Outreach Efforts. They'd like information about what was presented, our Members present, time and date, and attendance. David has a backlog of 192 Outreach Events that he is patiently uploading to them. It may be that with enough documented efforts, ASNNE will gain a higher level of acknowledgement for its Outreach Efforts.

David awarded another Outreach Pin, and two Outreach Certificates - to Bern & Marty. Several recent awardees joined the new awardees for a picture Paul took for *Skylights*.

“Continued on page 16”

A Previous Request: Yekta Zahel, requested a Star Party in April; from 8:00 - 11:00 pm. There don't seem to be any specifics about this.

New Business:

Presentation/Star Party Requests:

Cub Scouts: ASNNE has been requested to host a Star Party at the Talmage Observatory at Starfield for a group of about 20 Cub Scouts. Gary is taking the lead for this; he will clear up any ambiguity about planned and back-up dates, and ensure the group is properly chaperoned.

Springvale Public Library (Sanford): ASNEE has been requested to provide a Presentation at the Springvale Public Library in March about astronomy and the upcoming total Solar Eclipse. Carl volunteered to take the lead on this. Similar to his planned Presentation at the Kennebunk Free Library, it's basic astronomy, with an added & strengthened section on the total Solar Eclipse. Springvale needs to contact Carl about details. Carl requests the assistance of the Outreach Team of Gary, Bernie, and Bern and cordially invites other Members to attend.

The Talmage Observatory at Starfield: When we dedicated our Starfield Observatory to Peter Talmage, who was the guiding force behind its establishment, and unveiled the plaque in his honor, his family was unable to attend. We have a chance to rectify that. David will reach out to Tim Brown, who may have family contact information, so we can see about inviting them to a small ceremony in Peter's honor.

Upcoming Total Solar Eclipse: David asked if ASNNE should do something regarding the Eclipse. Many members have their own plans to travel. Marty is planning a day trip to the path of totality, and he can take some people. Others could carpool. There should be something planned at the Talmage Observatory at Starfield, but time is short, and no one stepped forward to take the lead on that.

The Business Meeting was adjourned at 7:40 pm.

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Regular Meeting:

Regular Meeting: The Regular Meeting was called to order at 7:45 pm by President David Bianchi.

Directors Present: David Bianchi, President
Bernie Reim, Vice President
Carl Gurtman, Secretary
Gary Asperschlager, Director
April Nicholls, Director
Bern Valliere, Director

Plus: Paul Kursewicz, *Skylights* Editor

Others Present: There were sixteen people physically present at the Regular Meeting, as well as one on Zoom.

Introductions: David had everyone present, whether in person, or on Zoom, introduce themselves. The introductions were brief. There were two new people.

Observing Session: David suggested that Friday, 8 March, would be a good day to hold a Public Star Party; the Moon will be a thin waning crescent and will set very early.

"What's Up?":

Before his talk tonight, Bernie told us of his visit to the Bigelow Laboratory for Ocean Sciences, in East Boothbay, ME, and passed around some science material.

He told us also, of his listening, at his church, to a piano composition, called *Echoes of Light*, based upon the idea of the ever-expanding sphere of electromagnetic radiation, from the first broadcasts of radio and television.

Bernie then gave his usual thorough, comprehensive, and complete discussion of what's in store for us in the skies of March. The month of March is named after the Roman god Mars, who is the god of war. March was originally the first month of the year, and marks the return of spring.

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Of note in March, is that the comet 12P/Pons-Brooks continues to brighten. It will almost certainly reach naked-eye visibility. The official coming of spring, the Vernal Equinox, will occur on 19 March. And there will be a deep penumbral lunar eclipse, on 25 March.

Bernie's excellent presentation, in its entirety, can be found, this month, and every month, in *Skylights*, ASNNE's professional-quality newsletter; editor, Paul Kursewicz. *Skylights* may be found at: <http://www.asnne.org/newsletter.php>

Astroshorts: There were a few Astroshorts.

Next Meeting:

ASNNE's next Meeting on Friday, 5 April, 2024, at the New School, in Kennebunk, at 7:30 pm. The Business Meeting; same location, starts at 7:00 pm. All are welcome to attend the Business Meeting

There is no Presentation currently scheduled for April.

Respectfully submitted,

Carl Gurtman

ASNNE 2024 Public Star Parties

Submitted by Carl Gurtman

CONTACT:

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Astronomical Society of Northern New England

asnne.astronomy@gmail.com

PO Box 1338, Kennebunk, ME 04043

www.asnne.org

David Bianchi, Club President

FOR: THE COMMUNITY CALENDAR

PUBLIC STAR PARTIES - AN OPEN INVITATION!

The Astronomical Society of Northern New England (ASNNE) has set its schedule for Public Star Parties through August, 2024. ASNNE extends an invitation to the General Public to attend. ASNNE operates its own observatory, the Talmage Observatory at Starfield, on State Route 35, in West Kennebunk, Maine.

At Public Star Parties, held in as much as possible in the dark of the Moon, the General Public, as well as ASNNE Members, are most cordially invited to observe the heavens through our large Club telescopes, as well as Member telescopes. Stars, visible planets, and deep sky objects can all be viewed. Experienced ASNNE Members are on hand to guide the observing, explain what is being seen, and answer questions..

There is no fee.

The Talmage Observatory at Starfield opens at 7:30 pm for these events. Detailed driving instructions may be found at: <http://asnne.org/where-to-find-us.php>

The dates for the Public Star Parties are as follows:

April 12 Rain date: April 13

May 10 Rain date: May 11

June 8th No rain date

July 5 Rain date July 6

August 9 Rain date August 10

ASNNE is a local association of amateur astronomers that meets monthly

at the New School, on Rte. 1, (York Street) in Kennebunk, Maine. Meeting are on the first Friday of each month; all those interested in astronomy are welcome; from stargazers and hobbyists, to serious observers, astrophotographers, and those interested in astronomical theory. The general public is also most cordially invited and welcome.

For more information about ASNNE, including directions and events, or to contact the Club, you may also visit us at www.ASNNE.org.

Club Meeting & Star Party Dates

Date	Subject	Location
<u>April 5</u>	<p><u>ASNNE Club Meeting:</u></p> <p>Business Meeting starts prior to Club meeting.</p> <p>Club Meeting (in house & on Zoom): 7:30-9:30PM</p> <p>Guest Speaker: TBD.</p> <p>Bernie Reim - "What's UP"</p> <p>Astro Shorts: (news, stories, jokes, reports, questions, photos, observations etc.)</p>	The New School, Kennebunk, Me.
Last Month	Last month we met at The New School and had our Meeting on Zoom. There was no guest speaker. Bern & Marty were awarded an Outreach Pin and two Outreach Certificates. Bernie gave his What's Up presentation. There were several astro shorts.	
April 12/13	Club/Public Star Party: Dependent on the weather.	Talmage Observatory at Starfield West Kennebunk, Me.

Directions to ASNNE event locations

Directions to The New School in Kennebunk [38 York Street (Rt1) Kennebunk, ME]

For directions to The New School you can use this link to the ASNNE NSN page and then click on "get directions" from the meeting location. Enter your starting location to generate a road map with complete directions. It works great. http://nightsky.jpl.nasa.gov/club-view.cfm?Club_ID=137

Directions to Talmage Observatory at Starfield [Alewife Road, Kennebunk, ME]

From North:

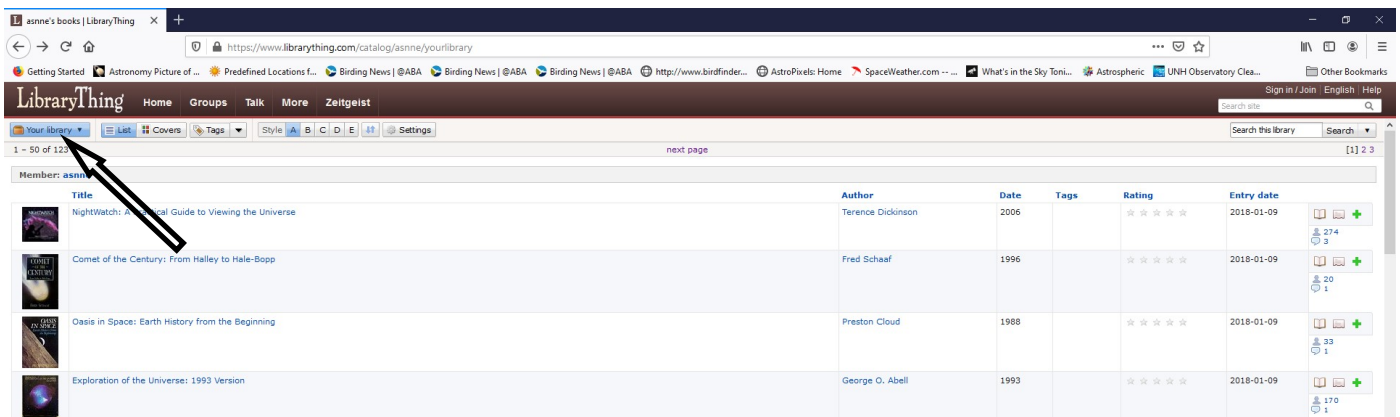
Get off turnpike at exit 32, (Biddeford) turn right on Rt 111. Go 5 miles and turn left on Rt 35. Go 2 miles on Rt 35 over Kennebunk River to very sharp 90 degree left turn. The entrance to the Starfield Observatory site is at the telephone pole at the beginning of the large field on the left. Look for the ASNNE sign on the pole.

From South:

Get off the turnpike at exit 25 in Kennebunk. After toll both turn right on Rt 35. Go up over the turnpike and immediately turn right on Rt 35. About 4 miles along you will crest a hill and see a large field on your right. Continue until you reach the end of the field. Turn right into the Starfield Observatory site at the last telephone pole along the field. Look for the ASNNE sign on the pole. If you come to a very sharp 90 degree right turn you have just passed the field.

Astronomy Club & Library Resources

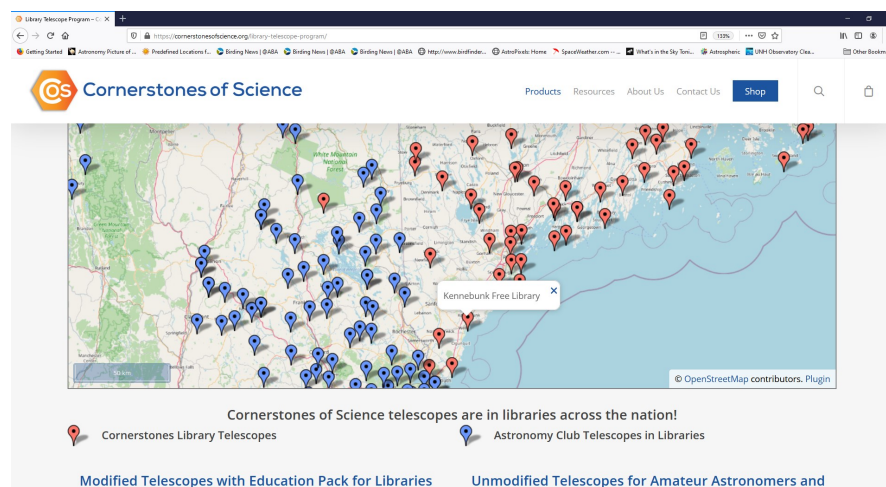
Our club has a library of astronomy books which are stored at The New School in Kennebunk, Maine (our monthly club meeting location). To request a book(s), contact one of the club officers. A listing of books is provided here: <https://www.librarything.com/profile/asmne> . After clicking on the link, a window will open. Click on “Your library” near the upper left corner (as shown by the arrow below). Then scroll down to the end of the page to go to the next page.



Title	Author	Date	Tags	Rating	Entry date
NightWatch: A Practical Guide to Viewing the Universe	Terence Dickinson	2006		☆☆☆☆☆	2018-01-09
Comet of the Century: From Halley to Hale-Bopp	Fred Schaaf	1996		☆☆☆☆☆	2018-01-09
Oasis in Space: Earth History from the Beginning	Preston Cloud	1988		☆☆☆☆☆	2018-01-09
Exploration of the Universe: 1993 Version	George O. Abell	1993		☆☆☆☆☆	2018-01-09

Would you like to borrow a telescope? While many astronomy clubs may have a scope to lend out, there are also many libraries which have telescopes for their guests to use. Here are a couple of links.

The following link will bring up an active map (see screen shot below) of the USA showing the libraries which have telescopes to lend out: <https://cornerstonesofscience.org/library-telescope-program/>



Cornerstones of Science telescopes are in libraries across the nation!

- Cornerstones Library Telescopes
- Astronomy Club Telescopes in Libraries

Modified Telescopes with Education Pack for Libraries Unmodified Telescopes for Amateur Astronomers and

The below link will show a list of known participating library locations for the state of Maine.
<https://www.librarytelescope.org/locations/usa/maine>

To join **ASNNE**, please fill out the below membership form. *Checks should be made payable to: Astronomical Society of Northern New England (A.S.N.N.E).* For more details, please visit our website: <http://www.asnne.org>



Astronomical Society of Northern New England
 P.O. Box 1338
 Kennebunk, ME 04043-1338

2024 Membership Registration Form

(Print, fill out and mail to address above) or Use PayPal via asnne.astronomy@gmail.com

Name(s for family): _____

Address: _____

City/State: _____ Zip code: _____

Telephone # _____

E-mail: _____

Membership (check one):

Individual \$50 _____ Family \$ 60 _____ Student under 21 years of age \$10 _____ Donation _____

Total Enclosed _____

Tell us about yourself:

1. Experience level: Beginner _____ Some Experience _____ Advanced _____

2. Do you own any equipment? (Y/N) And if so, what types?

3. Do you have any special interests in Astronomy?

4. What do you hope to gain by joining ASNNE?

5. How could ASNNE best help you pursue your interest in Astronomy?

6. ASNNE's principal mission is public education. We hold many star parties for schools and the general public for which we need volunteers for a variety of tasks, from operating telescopes to registering guests to parking cars. Would you be interested in helping?

Yes _____ No _____

7. ASNNE maintains a members-only section of its web site for names, addresses and interests of members as a way for members to contact each other. Your information will not be used for any other purpose. Can we add your information to that portion of our web site?

Yes _____ No _____

