Next PAS General Meeting
Friday, April 19, 2019 at 7:30pm
UNO Science Bldg. Room 1001

Photo of the Month
Big Bend National Park during the 2018 Geminids with Comet 46P/Wirtanen

By Joshua Moore
President’s Message

By: Bill Johnson

April has arrived, and with it the full on signs that spring is in full force. Skies are getting dark later, due to Daylight Savings time and the long days as we approach Summer. The lateness doesn’t really matter if we could get some clear skies in the evenings. I cannot remember a stretch this long with so few days to crank out the scope and gaze. It just means you have to be ready for the few that do come and take full advantage of any clear skies you get. As we move into April, and head toward those late evenings, we are missing the planets, all of which seem to be rising in the early morning right now. Fear not, the summer and fall will bring the familiar planets. But for now, we can spend more time on the less viewed objects that we tend to neglect, in favor of old favorites that are so familiar to most of us.

When was the last time you spent time on a specific type of viewing? Have you gone out to look with a plan, or do you simply set up and then consult the chart for best of the evening subjects. When was the last time you concentrated on strictly Double Stars? Or Open Clusters? Globulars? Spiral Galaxies? Comparing one to the next can be very rewarding. Is Globular M13 in Hercules that much better to view than M4 or M5 in Scorpius? Is the Beehive cluster M44 in Cancer a better view than M37 in Auriga? Or is it just DIFFERENT? As you will soon see, while they are all characterized as one type, each one has its own individual features that make it stand out against each of the others in the same type. It can be very rewarding to spend a night on just one set of objects. Plan for the next dear night to pick one category, and let us all know what you can come up with.

As this is written, the April Deep South Star Gaze at Whitehorse has just been Postponed until May. While it was unfortunate, the weather on Thursday dictated it be moved. So I look forward to attending in May and hope that we have paid our dues with cloudy nights, and May skies will bring some prime viewing. If you have not made plans to attend, you have a second chance. Take advantage, and spend some time looking up!

Our next meeting will be held on Friday, April 19th, at 7:30PM at UNO Science Building. I hope to see all of you at the next meeting. Don’t forget to bring a guest!

Bill Johnson       PAS President 2018, 2019

On May 12, 1930 the Adler Planetarium, the first planetarium in the western hemisphere, opened to the public. Chicago business leader Max Adler contributed funds for the museum’s construction, a Zeiss projector, and the Mensing Collection of astronomical instruments. South Park Commissioners agreed to assume operating costs. Adler dedicated the institution as a “classroom under the heavens” for popular astronomy education. PAS Times Editor and 2nd Vice President, Kent Birkle rode the City of New Orleans train to Chicago to visit Adler Planetarium.
Secretary's Report March 2019 General Meeting  

By: Nanette Johnson

7:30 Meeting called to order by President Bill Johnson.
Bill asked new members and guests to introduce themselves.

Officer's Reports:
First Vice President- Mike Danielson: We are in need of speakers for monthly presentations. If you are interested in giving a presentation, please contact Mike Danielson.
Second Vice President-Kent Birkle: Not present. Bill asked for all submissions for PAS Times to be sent to Kent.
Treasurer-John Scholl: John asked everyone to pay their dues.
Secretary-Nanette Johnson: Nanette awarded the Photo of the Month to Mike Danielson for February. Nanette then gave out NASA photos to two first time contributors to the photo contest. Nanette spoke of an upcoming outreach to be held at the Kenner Science Center in July.
SPMOS Site Manager-Ron Marcella: Everything is working and going well at SPMOS.
ALCOR Rep-Jerry Labauve: Not present.

Old Business:
Informal Star Party March 10th Lakeshore. There were eight members in attendance. The skies did clear for about an hour and a half of good viewing.

New Business:
Bill spoke of upcoming outreaches and of the club field trip to the Infinity Space Center. Possible dates were discussed for the field trip. Both June and July were mentioned in the discussion. Bill then talked about the possibility of having Observing Basics classes at SPMOS to benefit some of the newer members.

We then had a break.
Return from the break and Mike Danielson introduced Dr. C. Gregory Seab for the program Flat Earth.

9:30 Motion to adjourn. Second. Meeting adjourned at 9:30.
Adler Astronomy Museum and Planetarium in Chicago

Photos by Kent Birkle
1968 – 1970
Joseph M. Chamberlain, then director of the Hayden Planetarium (New York) was recruited as the Adler’s Director. The Adler also purchased a new Zeiss planetarium projector.

1999
Adler opened the Sky Pavilion, along with an extensive renovation of the original 1930 building. The Adler now offered several new exhibitions and the world’s first all-digital, interactive planetarium theater.

Photos by Kent Birkle
Mars the Wanderer
By David Prosper

April's skies find Mars traveling between star clusters after sunset, and a great gathering of planets just before sunrise.

Mars shows stargazers exactly what the term "planet" originally meant with its rapid movement across the evening sky this month. The ancient Greeks used the term planete, meaning wanderer, to label the bright star-like objects that traveled between the constellations of the zodiac year after year.

You can watch Mars as it wanders through the sky throughout April, visible in the west for several hours after sunset. Mars travels past two of the most famous star clusters in our night sky: the Pleiades and Hyades. Look for the red planet next to the tiny but bright Pleiades on April 1st. By the second week in April, it has moved eastward in Taurus towards the larger V-shaped Hyades. Red Mars appears to the right of the slightly brighter red-orange star Aldebaran on April 11th. We see only the brightest stars in these clusters with our unaided eyes; how many additional stars can you observe through binoculars?

Open clusters are made up of young stars born from the same "star nursery" of gas and dust. These two open clusters are roughly similar in size. The Pleiades appears much smaller as they are 444 light years away, roughly 3 times the distance of the Hyades, at 151 light years distant. Aldebaran is in the same line of sight as the Hyades, but is actually not a member of the cluster; it actually shines just 65 light years away! By comparison, Mars is practically next door to us, this month just a mere 18 light minutes from Earth - that's about almost 200 million miles. Think of the difference between how long it takes the light to travel from these bodies: 18 minutes vs. 65 years!

The rest of the bright planets rise before dawn, in a loose lineup starting from just above the eastern horizon to high above the south: Mercury, Venus, Saturn, and Jupiter. Watch this month as the apparent gap widens considerably between the gas giants and terrestrial planets. Mercury hugs the horizon all month, with Venus racing down morning after morning to join its dimmer inner solar system companion right before sunrise. In contrast, the giants Jupiter and Saturn move away from the horizon and rise earlier all month long, with Jupiter rising before midnight by the end of April.

The Lyrids meteor shower peaks on April 22nd, but sadly all but the brightest meteors will be washed out by the light of a bright gibbous Moon.

You can catch up on all of NASA's current and future missions at nasa.gov

Discover all of NASA’s current and future missions at nasa.gov

Image on the right......
The path of Mars between the Pleiades and Hyades in April.
Image created with assistance from Stellarium

NASA Night Sky Notes!
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!
**Upcoming Events**

**PAS General Meeting** - Friday, April 10 - 7:30 P.M. UNO

**Deep South Spring Scrimmage** - Thursday May 2nd to Sunday May 5th
White Horse Christian Retreat Center

**Bogue Chitto Outreach** - Saturday June 8th Bogue Chitto State Park

**Kenner Planetarium 20th Anniversary** - Saturday, July 20th

**Deep South Star Gaze** - Tuesday October 22nd to Sunday October 27th

**Bogue Chitto Outreach** Saturday November 2nd, Bogue Chitto State Park

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**On the Cover**
Geminids with Comet 46P/Wirtanen by Joshua Moore

**On the Back Cover**
A star chart of Orion from Urania’s Mirror - A View of the Heaven

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**2019 PAS Meeting Dates**
April 19
May 17
June 21
July 19
August 16
September 13
October 11
November 15
December 13

**2019 PAS-Times Deadline**
Sunday, May 5th
Please submit all things astronomical to be included in the next edition of PAS-Times to the editor at the following address:
pas2vp@astronola.or

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**2019 Membership Renewal Form**

Date__________________________

Name__________________________
Address________________________
City__________________________St.________________ZIP

Home Phone*__________________________Work Phone*__________________________

Occupation__________________________E-mail Address__________________________

*Check here ____ if you DO NOT want your phone numbers published.

Membership Dues:
(Calendar year per household) $40.00 _______
Optional Subscriptions:
Sky & Telescope $32.95/ yr $65.95 5 two years

____ New Renewal

Astronomy $34.00/ yr or $60.00/2 years

____ New Renewal

Mailed Newsletter $20.00/ yr _______

SPMOS Key Deposit $25 _______

Only pay this if you do not have a dorm key and want to obtain one.

Optional Donation: _______ (Tax Deductible)

Total Amount: _______

(Make check payable to PAS)

Mail to:
Pontchartrain Astronomy Society, Inc.
16082 Lake Ramsey Rd.
Covington, LA 70435

Members can also renew their membership and pay dues on the website. Here is the link: http://astronola.org/join.php
The constellation Orion has three bright stars
In Orion’s belt the center star, called Alnilam
means the string of pearls in Arabic.