

New Braunfels Astronomy Club

Texas, USA

March 15th, 2018

226th Meeting

Larry's

Celestial Calendar & Newsletter

March 16th, 2018 to April 19th, 2018 249th Edition

Zodiacal Light

Lunar and Planetary Pairings

Jupiter

Spring Springs on March 20th

Another Blue Moon

Observer's Highlight Calendar for Clear Skies

Month Date

Time

Event

Month	Date	Time	Event
Mar	-	After Sunset	Look westward and see the pyramid shaped light pointing up. That's zodiacal light
Mar	17	8:12 am CDT	New Moon
Mar	18	Dusk	A young crescent Moon, Venus, and Mercury line up near the western horizon. Binoculars help.
Mar	20	11:15 am CDT	Spring equinox
Mar	22	8pm CDT	A waxing crescent Moon just about kisses bright Aldebaran (Taurus) in the west
Mar	24	10:35 am CDT	First Quarter Moon
Mar	31	7:37 am CDT	Full Moon – Blue Moon; second full Moon in March
Apr	2-8	Dawn	Saturn and Mars are in a dance above Sagittarius's Teapot. The waxing Moon joins in on the 6-7.
Apr	8	2:18 am CDT	Last quarter Moon
Apr	17-19	After Sunset	A waxing crescent Moon joins Venus, the Pleiades, and finally Aldebaran above the western horizon

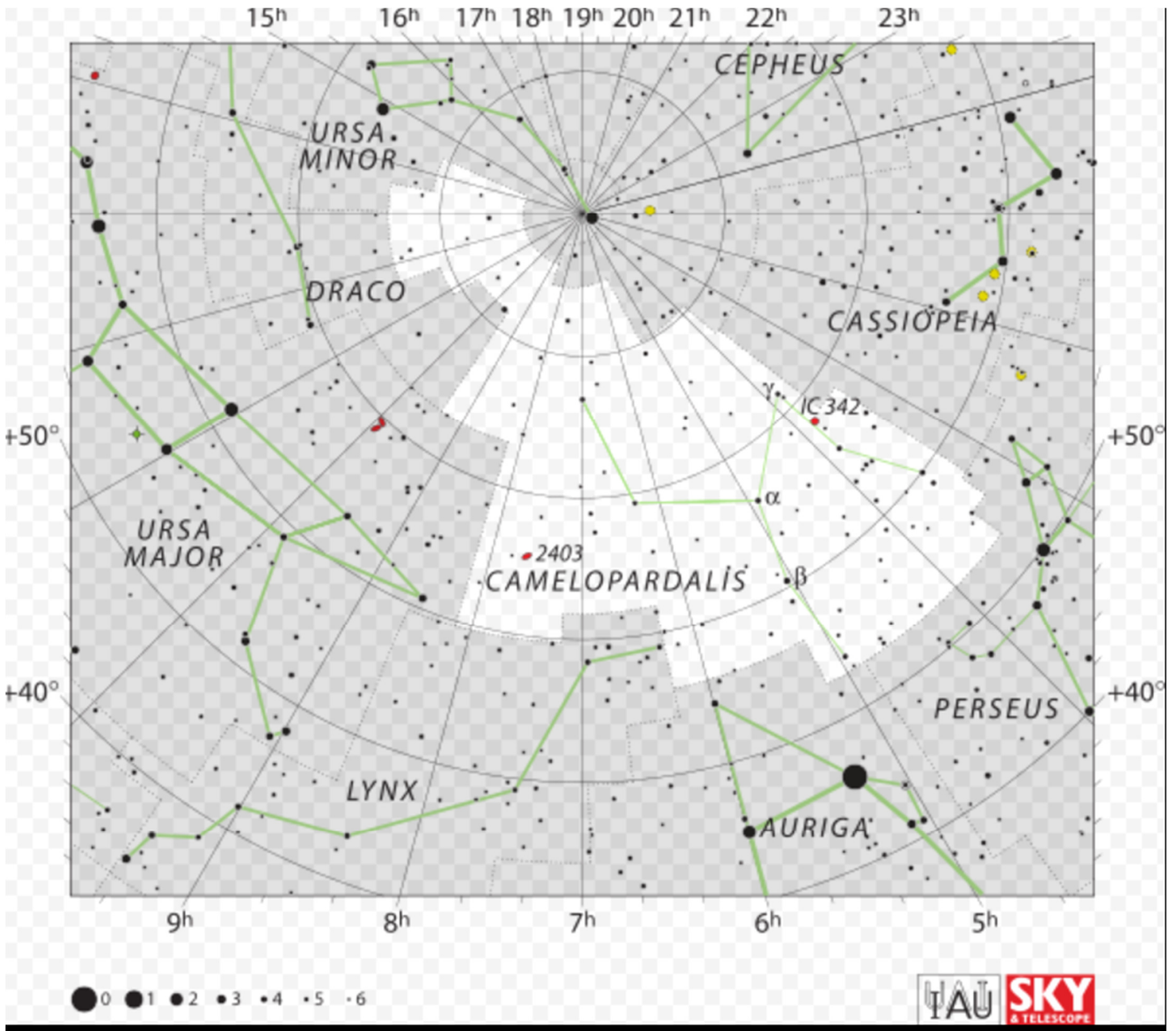
Solar System Roundup

- ✚ **Mercury** is dimming and close to the western horizon at dusk, but still pairs up with Venus and can make an interesting binocular sight.
- ✚ **Venus** is brilliant in the low western sky and can be seen with Mercury
- ✚ **Earth** still spins, and we are still here to marvel at the wonders of our universe.
- ✚ **The Moon** gets “Blue” again on March 31 for those interested in such things. It teams up with Mercury and Venus in the early evening sky on March 18 and Venus on April 17
- ✚ **Mars** is a morning “star” and rising higher in the southern sky, seen with Saturn just above the “Teapot” in Sagittarius. The Moon joins them on April 7.
- ✚ **Asteroid(s)** Ceres is the closest dwarf planet to Earth and cruising in northern Cancer, heading southeast.
- ✚ **Jupiter** will be rising before midnight now and around 10 pm by early April.
- ✚ **Saturn** is a morning “star” and teams up with the Moon and Mars in Sagittarius...see Mars
- ✚ **Uranus** will be in conjunction with Venus on March 28, low in the western sky. It will be 4’ above and to the right of Venus. Good luck. It will be lost in the Sun’s glare in April.
- ✚ **Neptune** is in conjunction with the Sun and not well placed for observing
- ✚ **Pluto** is in Sagittarius.
- ✚ **Comet(s)** PANSTARRS (C/2016 R2) is another dim (magnitude 10-11) comet. It’s from the Oort cloud and is now heading from Perseus to Auriga. On March 17-21 it will be about 2.5° southeast of NGC 1499 (California nebula)
- ✚ **ISS Viewing for New Braunfels (works for Canyon Lake too)**

Date	Start Time	Start Location	Travel Direction
03/16	06:59:38	NNW	ESE
03/23	20:41:11	SW	NE
03/25	20:33:26	WSW	NNE
04/14	20:51:52	NW	SSE

My Observing Pick: Camelopardalis

A “newer” world constellation, Camelopardalis is a giraffe and its size in the sky shows it. I say newer because it was named around 1613 by Petrus Plancius and is not one of Ptolemy’s original 48 constellations. It is a long, long constellation, spanning about 30° of sky above Auriga, Lynx, and Ursa Major. Camelopardalis is not in Greek mythology so no drama surrounding it. It’s just a giraffe!



Name	Object Type	Location	Description
β Cam	Multiple Star	2-3° southwest of α Cam	Triple star with yellow primary
NGC 2403	Spiral Galaxy	10° east northeast of β	Mag 8.9 face on spiral galaxy
IC 342	Spiral Galaxy	3° northwest of α	Mag 9.1 face on spiral galaxy
NGC 1502	Open Cluster	6° south of IC 342	Associated with Kemble’s Cascade asterism

What is it?

Parsec

Measure of distance based on the astronomical unit (AU) and light year distance references. Astronomical unit is the Earth's distance from the Sun. Of course, astronomers were not about to make it simple. Originally a parsec was defined as the distance where one AU subtends one arcsecond of angle in the sky. Now it is simpler... $648000/\pi$ astronomical units. Either way, that equals 3.26 lightyears in distance.

Next Month: Kelvin

Opportunities for NBAC Reach out

New Braunfels and Guadalupe Master Naturalists

The New Braunfels and Guadalupe Master naturalists do not have any lectures on the night sky. Astronomy is in their curriculum, but they have no one to present. They are looking for someone to present a 45-minute talk + 15 minute Q&A at one of their monthly meetings.

New Braunfels: lindheimermn@gmail.com

Guadalupe: txmn.org/guadalupe/

Coming up: OUR 227th ASTRONOMY CLUB MEETING

Thursday, **April 19th**, 2018, from 7 – 9:00 p.m., held in the conference room of TJ's restaurant on Loop Road (337). Have dinner and/or a beverage if you like.

The New Braunfels Astronomy Club can be reached at www.astronomyntx.org

Eric Erickson ewandnl@yahoo.com