

New Braunfels Astronomy Club

Texas, USA

March 21, 2019

237 Meeting

Larry's

Celestial Calendar & Newsletter

March 21st to April 21st, 2019 260th Edition

Headlines

Eric Erickson is missing!
Last seen in New Zealand

Observer's Highlight Calendar for Clear Skies

Month Date Time/Direction Event

Month	Date	Time/Direction	Event
March	20		The March equinox marks the first day of spring for anybody living in the northern hemisphere, and the first day of autumn for anybody living in the southern hemisphere.
March	15 to 24		The Big Dipper returns to prominence in the March evening sky, while three bright planets continue to rule the predawn hours. The Dipper is the most conspicuous part of the constellation Ursa Major the Great Bear.

March	28		The Straight Wall on the Moon. The Straight Wall, or Rupes Recta, is best observed either 1 or 2 days after First Quarter or a day or so before Third Quarter. To honest, it is not really a wall but a gentle scarp - as Sir Patrick has said "Neither is it a wall nor is it straight!"
-------	----	--	--

Solar System Roundup

-  **Mercury** from March 15, Mercury will enter the eastern pre-dawn sky — exhibiting a waxing crescent and becoming readily visible only towards month-end due to the very shallow morning ecliptic.
-  **Venus** will spend March low in the eastern pre-dawn sky, slowly swinging eastward towards the sun. Over the course of the month, Venus' disk will shrink slightly in apparent diameter while its illuminated phase will grow from 72 percent to 81 percent.
-  **Earth** still spins, and we are still here to marvel at the wonders of our universe.
-  **The Moon**
-  **Mars** will spend March in the western evening sky. It will be among the stars of Aries until March 23, when it will cross into Taurus. Mars' steady eastward motion has been counteracting the westward migration of the background stars. But by the end of the month, the arrival of later sunsets will require skywatchers to observe Mars while it is lower in the sky.
-  **Jupiter** During March, very bright **Jupiter** (average magnitude -2.15) will rise in the hours after midnight and then move into the southern sky by dawn. Throughout the month, the planet will grow slightly brighter and larger in telescopes as Earth slowly draws closer to it in preparation for opposition in June. Jupiter will remain in southeastern Ophiuchus all month while slowly moving eastward. Several double shadow transit events will occur on Jupiter in March, including a very good one on March 25.

Table 1

Comet	Evening		Midnight		Morning	
	Mag	Highest alt.	Mag	Highest alt.	Mag	Highest alt.
<u>C/2018 Y1 (Iwamoto)</u>	8	84	8	29		
<u>46P/Wirtanen</u>	10	89	10	86	10	24
<u>64P/Swift- Gehrels</u>	12	77	12	22		
<u>C/2018 L2 (ATLAS)</u>	12	4			12	15
<u>38P/Stephan- Oterma</u>	13	81	13	65	13	14
<u>123P/West- Hartley</u>	13	55	13	87		
<u>C/2016 N6 (PanSTARRS)</u>	13	33	13	1		

✚ **Saturn** will be observable in the southeastern pre-dawn sky during March, appearing as a yellowish, visual magnitude 0.6 object located to the left of the Teapot asterism of Sagittarius. Over the course of the month Saturn will rise earlier while it climbs away from the Sun.

✚ **Uranus** During March, blue-green **Uranus** will be carried lower by the western evening sky while moving slowly eastward among the stars of western Aries. At visual magnitude 7.2, Uranus is bright enough to observe in binoculars under dark sky conditions. Look for the planet sitting about 3 degrees above the medium-bright star Omicron Piscium.

✚ **Neptune** During March, dim, blue-tinted **Neptune** will be too close to the sun to be observed

✚ **Comets**

✚ **ISS Viewing for New Braunfels (works for Canyon Lake too).**

Date	Visible	Max Height	Appears	Disappears
------	---------	------------	---------	------------

Mon Mar 18, 9:29 PM	1 min	20°	11° above SW	20° above SW
Tue Mar 19, 5:44 AM	< 1 min	15°	15° above SE	12° above SE
Tue Mar 19, 8:38 PM	4 min	39°	10° above SSW	30° above E
Wed Mar 20, 9:26 PM	2 min	25°	22° above WNW	23° above NNW
Thu Mar 21, 8:32 PM	6 min	53°	10° above WSW	10° above NE
Fri Mar 22, 9:21 PM	1 min	10°	10° above NW	10° above NNW
Sat Mar 23, 8:30 PM	2 min	19°	19° above NW	10° above N

Zodiac Lights

At our last meeting, Zodiac lights was mentioned, This is the link to an article

<https://earthsky.org/tonight/look-for-the-zodiacal-light-in-the-west-after-sunset>

“The weeks around the spring equinox are best for viewing the zodiacal light in the evening. Now that the moon has left the early evening sky, the next several weeks present an excellent time for those in the Northern Hemisphere to view this mysterious light, which looks like a hazy pyramid extending up from the western horizon, when all traces of twilight have let the evening sky. You’ll want a rural location, as full darkness falls. About 80 to 120 minutes after [sunset](#) should be about right.”

This month, years gone by ..

1965 - Soviet cosmonaut Alexei Leonov makes the first spacewalk outside the Voskhod 2 spacecraft. Although a television camera captures the event, good quality photographs could not be retrieved because the camera became stuck in the airlock, which was jettisoned before re-entry. Leonov later flew on the Apollo-Soyuz mission.

Skywatching Terms

Gibbous: Used to describe a planet or moon that is more than 50 percent illuminated.

Asterism: A noteworthy or striking pattern of stars within a larger constellation.

Degrees (measuring the sky): The sky is 360 degrees all the way around, which means roughly 180 degrees from horizon to horizon. It's easy to measure distances between objects: Your fist on an outstretched arm covers about 10 degrees of sky, while a finger covers about one degree.

Visual Magnitude: This is the astronomer's scale for measuring the brightness of objects in the sky. The dimmest object visible in the night sky under perfectly dark conditions is about magnitude 6.5. Brighter stars

are magnitude 2 or 1. The brightest objects get negative numbers. Venus can be as bright as magnitude minus 4.9. The full moon is minus 12.7 and the sun is minus 26.8.

Terminator: The boundary on the moon between sunlight and shadow.

Zenith: The point in the sky directly overhead.

COMING UP: OUR 238th ASTRONOMY CLUB MEETING

Thursday, **April 18th**, 2019

7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m., in the conference room of TJ's restaurant on the Loop Road (337). Have dinner and/or a beverage if you like. The New Braunfels Astronomy Club can be reached at www.astronomynbtx.org

Eric Erickson ewandnl@yahoo.com