

# New Braunfels Astronomy Club

Texas, USA

February 15<sup>th</sup>, 2018

225<sup>th</sup> Meeting

Larry's

## Celestial Calendar & Newsletter

February 16<sup>th</sup>, 2018 to March 15<sup>th</sup>, 2018 248<sup>th</sup> Edition

### Zodiacal Light

### Lunar and Planetary Pairings

### ISS VIEWING SCHEDULE

**\*\*Daylight Savings begins on March 11, 2 am\*\***

## Observer's Highlight Calendar for Clear Skies

Month Date Time Event

Month	Date	Time	Event
Feb	16	Dusk	A very thin waxing crescent Moon is close to Venus on the west-southwest horizon
Feb	28	Dusk	Venus and Mercury are close on the western horizon
Mar	1	6:51 pm CST	Full Moon
Mar	1-4	Dusk	Venus starts above Mercury on Feb 28 <sup>th</sup> and ends up below on March 4 <sup>th</sup>
Mar	9	5:20 am CST	Last quarter Moon
Mar	10-11	Pre-Dawn	A waning crescent Moon slides by Mars and Saturn in Sagittarius
Mar	15	Dusk	Mercury is at its greatest eastern elongation and sits above Venus near the western horizon.

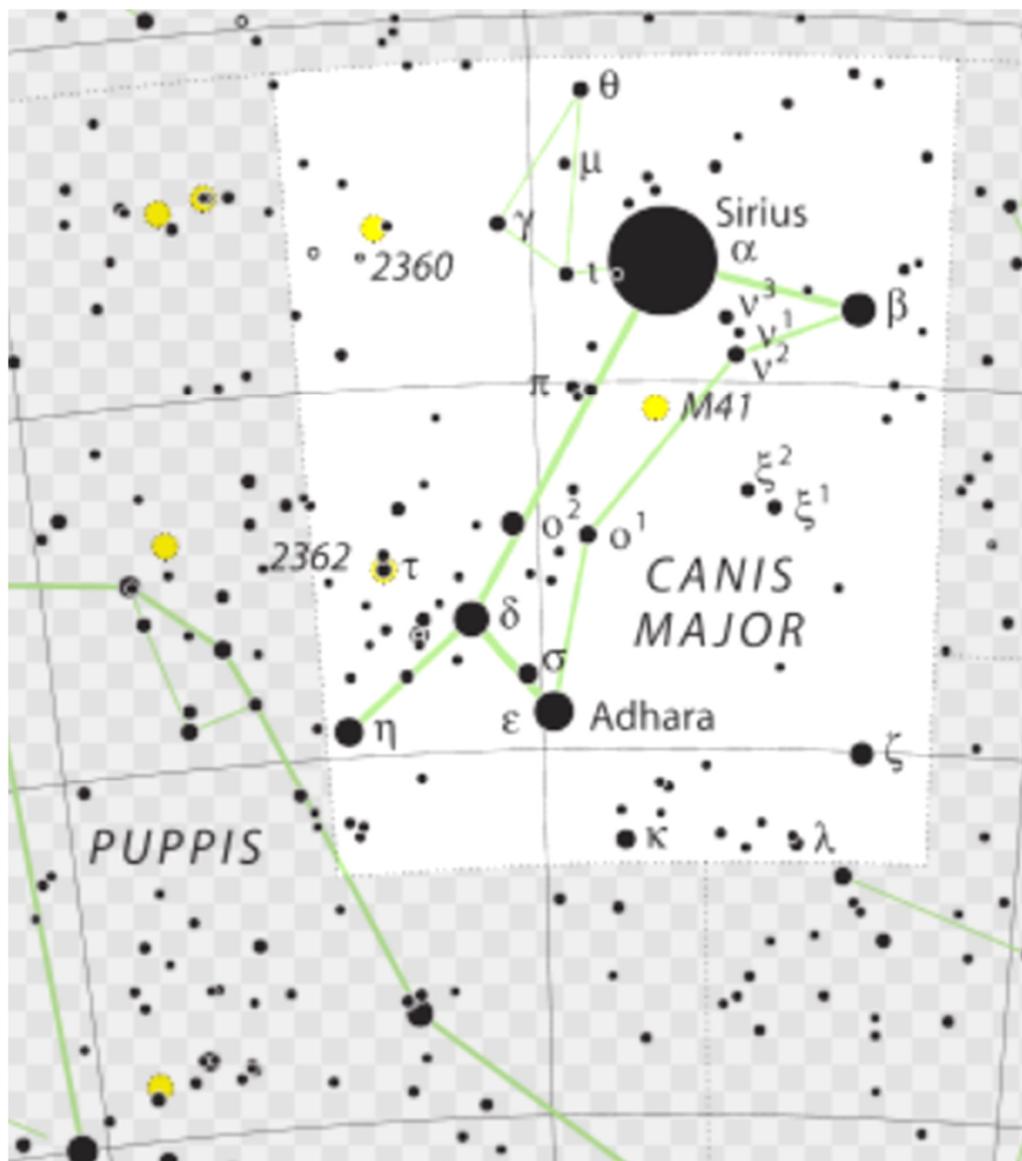
# Solar System Roundup

- ✚ **Mercury** becomes an evening “star” after February 17th, rising slowly toward its greatest eastern elongation on March 15<sup>th</sup>. Best views will be in March as it pairs up with Venus on the western horizon at dusk.
- ✚ **Venus** becomes an evening star in mid-February, slowly rising out of the Sun’s glare. By the end of February and into March it makes a nice pair with Mercury in the western horizon after Sunset.
- ✚ **Earth** still spins, and we are still here to marvel at the wonders of our universe.
- ✚ **The Moon** teams up with Venus in the early evening hours on February 16<sup>th</sup> and with Saturn before Sunrise on March 10-11.
- ✚ **Mars** is a morning “star” but not so good for observing. It gets brighter slowly and teams up with Jupiter and the Moon in the pre-dawn sky. Look for it to separate from Jupiter as time progresses.
- ✚ **Asteroid(s)** Ceres is the closest dwarf planet to Earth and it is cruising in Cancer. It is moving westerly just southwest of Sigma ( $\sigma^3$ ,  $\sigma^2$  and  $\sigma^1$ ) between February 17-28, and into early March. Then on March 15 it starts to loop southward and then southeasterly.
- ✚ **Jupiter** will be rising before midnight by February’s end and is getting closer to becoming a night time planet
- ✚ **Saturn** is a morning “star” and teams up with the Moon and Mars in Sagittarius on March 10-11.
- ✚ **Uranus** is still in Pisces and setting about an hour after Sunset.
- ✚ **Neptune** is heading for 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 about 3° northeast of the Pleiades heading north-northeast toward Perseus. It will be in Perseus by March, about 2.5° east of ζ (Atik) on March 5<sup>th</sup>, moving northeast.
- ✚ **ISS Viewing for New Braunfels (works for Canyon Lake too)**

Date	Start Time	Start Location	Travel Direction
02/16	7:07:30 pm	WNW	SE about 10° above the horizon
02/23	6:28:44 am	SSW	NE
02/25	6:20:05 am	SW	NE

# My Observing Pick: Canis Major

The *greater dog* in Latin, Canis Major follows Orion (the hunter) around the celestial dome and chases Lepus the hare in a never-ending run. This is one of many myths surrounding this month's pick. It is not always a dog; the Babylonians saw it as a bow and arrow (combined with Puppis). No matter what it is called, it surely looks like something, easily a dog or other similarly shaped animal.



Name	Object Type	Location	Description
M41	Open Cluster	4° south of Sirius	100+ Yellowish and blueish stars. Binoculars show M41, NGC 2360, and Nu <sup>2</sup> (ν <sup>2</sup> ). A pretty sight.
NGC 2360	Open Cluster	7° east of Sirius	Caroline's Cluster (Caroline Herschel); Compact
NGC 2362	Open Cluster	See Tau (τ) C. majoris	Compact; Tau C. majoris is brightest star - pretty
NGC 2367	Open Cluster	3° north of NGC 2362	Compact and colorful
h3945	Double Star	2.5° east of Omicron <sup>2</sup> (ο <sup>2</sup> )	Blue and gold double; 2.8" apart.

## What is it?

### Zodiacal Light

Dust from asteroid collisions and comets causes meteor showers. It also follows our planet along the ecliptic. This dust, when our Earth is at a steep western angle with respect to the ecliptic, is illuminated by the Sun after it sets. A broad pyramid shaped glow can be seen above the horizon after Sunset. This is Zodiacal light. It's called Zodiacal because Zodiacal constellations ride the ecliptic.

Next Month: Parsec

## 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. Guadalupe is look for someone in February 2018.

## Coming up: OUR 226<sup>th</sup> ASTRONOMY CLUB MEETING

Thursday, **March 15<sup>th</sup>**, 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.astronomynbtx.org](http://www.astronomynbtx.org)

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