

Celestial

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Observer

February 2019



Glen Smeltzer: iPhone attached to 6" Celestron SCT via the NeXYZ using a 32mm eyepiece at 48X

Next Meeting: Thursday, February 28th, 7 PM at United Methodist Church Wesley Building

Next Star Gazing: Saturday, February 2nd at sunset at the Santa Margarita KOA. See inside for directions and a map

Next CCAS Meeting

February 28th, 2019 (Thursday) 6:30 Doors Open, 7:00pm Start

CCAS Member David Gibbs is our guest speaker for February! Dave will feature a documentary Saving The Dark by Sriram Murali about light pollution (55 minutes). It is about the significance of Astronomy and the night skies, effects of Light Pollution on Astronomy, humans, wildlife and beyond, what we can do about it. Our meetings are at 1515 Fredericks in San Luis Obispo in the Wesley Room at 7pm. Doors open at 6:45pm.

Come early to get a good seat and meet our friendly astronomers!



For more details: <http://savingthedark.com/>

Hexagon at Night, Quartet in the Morning

By David Prosper

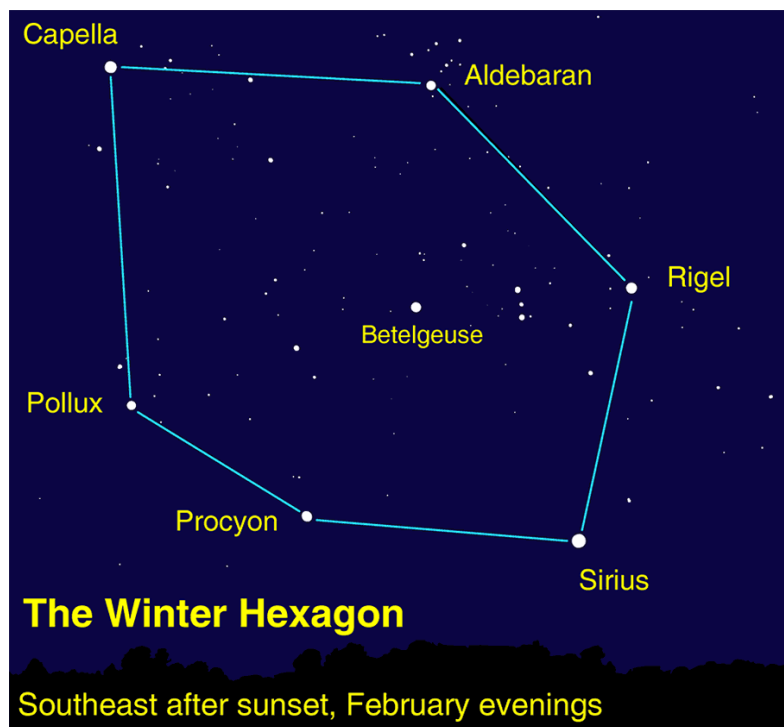
The stars that make up the **Winter Hexagon** asterism are some of the brightest in the night sky and February evenings are a great time to enjoy their sparkly splendor. The Winter Hexagon is so large in size that the six stars that make up its points are also the brightest members of six different constellations, making the Hexagon a great starting point for learning the winter sky. Find the Hexagon by looking southeast after sunset and finding the bright red star that forms the “left shoulder” of the

constellation Orion:

Betelgeuse. You can think of Betelgeuse as the center of a large irregular clock, with the Winter Hexagon stars as the clock’s hour numbers.

Move diagonally across Orion to spot its “right foot,” the bright star **Rigel**. Now move clockwise from Rigel to the brightest star in the

night sky: **Sirius** in Canis Major. Continue ticking along clockwise to **Procyon** in Canis Minor and then towards **Pollux**, the brighter of the Gemini twins. Keep moving around the circuit to find **Capella** in Auriga, and finish at orange **Aldebaran**, the “eye” of the V-shaped face of Taurus the Bull.



Two naked-eye planets are visible in the evening sky this month. As red **Mars** moves across Pisces, NASA's InSight Mission is readying its suite of geological instruments designed to study the Martian interior. InSight and the rest of humanity's robotic Martian emissaries will soon be joined by the Mars 2020 rover. The SUV-sized robot is slated to launch next year on a mission to study the possibility of past life on the red planet. A conjunction between Mars and **Uranus** on February 13 will be a treat for telescopic observers. Mars will pass a little over a degree away from Uranus and larger magnifications will allow comparisons between the small red disc of dusty Mars with the smaller and much more distant blue-green disc of ice giant Uranus.

Speedy **Mercury** has a good showing this month and makes its highest appearance in the evening on February 27; spot it above the western horizon at sunset. An unobstructed western view and binoculars will greatly help in catching Mercury against the glow of evening twilight.

The morning planets put on quite a show in February. Look for the bright planets **Venus, Jupiter, and Saturn** above the eastern horizon all month, at times forming a neat lineup. A crescent **Moon** makes a stunning addition on the mornings of February 1-2, and again on the 28th. Watch over the course of the month as Venus travels from its position above Jupiter to below dimmer Saturn. Venus and Saturn will be in close conjunction on the 18th; see if you can fit both planets into the same telescopic field of view. A telescope reveals the brilliant thin crescent phase of Venus waxing into a wide gibbous phase as the planet passes around the

other side of our Sun. The Night Sky Network has a simple activity that helps explain the nature of both Venus and Mercury's phases at bit.ly/venusphases

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

Next Star Gazing

February 2, 2019 at sunset (5:30 PM) at the Santa Margarita KOA

Our Sky Star Parties occur once a month, and are free and open to the public, and also weather-permitting. Check our website for all the details!

There's also star gazing in South County:



The poster features a starry night sky background with silhouettes of people stargazing. It includes the Los Flores Ranch logo, event details for three dates in Spring 2019, contact information for the Santa Maria Recreation and Parks Department, and a map showing the location at 6271 Dominion Road. Logos for the City of Santa Maria and the Santa Barbara Astronomical Unit are also present.

FREE SPRING 2019
Star Gazing Party

JOIN US FOR A TOUR THROUGH OUR NIGHT SKY!

Saturday, February 2nd, 5:30-7:30 p.m.
Saturday, March 9th, 5:30-7:30 p.m.
Friday, May 3rd, 7:30-9:30 p.m.

Los Flores Ranch
Recreation Open Space
6271 Dominion Road

Enjoy amazing views of star clusters, planets, and more through telescopes provided by Central Coast Astronomy Society, Vandenberg Amateur Astronomy Society, and Santa Barbara Astronomical Unit.

Follow signs for parking. No flashlights and no dogs please.

For more information, contact the Santa Maria Recreation and Parks Department at (805) 925-0951 ext. 2260.

Like us on Facebook: facebook.com/losfloresranch

City of Santa Maria Recreation & Parks Department

Map labels: East Bettonville Rd, Clark Rd, Dominion Rd, Santa Margarita Rd, Santa Margarita KOA

Sacramento Mountains Spectroscopy Workshop

The second Sacramento Mountains Spectroscopy Workshop (SMSW-2) will be held in Las Cruces, New Mexico on February 22, 23, and 24, 2019



This event is designed to be a boot camp to help friends and neighbors get started and move forward with amateur astronomical spectroscopy. You won't find a boot camp like this anywhere else in the world!

You can learn more and register here: <http://www.smswweb.com/>

CCAS Officers

Feel free to connect with us!



President: Joseph Carro

Vice President: Tom Frey

Vice President: Aurora Lipper

Outreach Coordinator: Dave Majors

Treasurer: Lee Coombs

Celestial Advisor: Kent Wallace

Webmaster: Joe Richards

CCAS Contact Information

Founded in 1979, the Central Coast Astronomical Society (CCAS) is an association of people who share a common interest in astronomy and related sciences.

Central Coast Astronomical Society

PO Box 1415

San Luis Obispo, CA 93405

Website: www.centralcoastastronomy.org

Facebook: www.facebook.com/CentralCoastAstronomicalSociety

Lectures & Star Parties

MONTHLY MEETING & LECTURE

On the fourth Thursday of the month (Jan-May, Aug-Oct), we often have world-renowned professionals and amateurs in astronomy speak about their projects during our monthly meetings. The talks are informal and questions are invited.

Meetings begin at 7:30 p.m. in San Luis Obispo. For location and directions, visit our website: www.sloastro.org

OUTREACH PROGRAM

We offer a limited number of outreach programs where we bring our star party to you. These custom events include a talk about current topics in space science. After the lectures, we make our telescopes available for your group to observe the wonders of the night sky.

STAR-GAZING EVENTS

Join us for a star-gazing evening by observing the dark skies through club members' telescopes. It begins just before sunset on one Saturday each month. The Star Party is hosted in Santa Margarita. (See www.sloastro.org for dates, times and locations).

Need help operating your telescope? Bring your telescope one hour early for help on how to work your telescope by our friendly astronomers.



Why Join CCAS?

BENEFITS OF MEMBERSHIP

- Subscription to *Celestial Newsletter*, our monthly bulletin of articles and events
- Interaction with world class speakers as they present cutting edge astronomical research
- Discounts on *Sky & Telescope* and *Astronomy* magazines
- Social events, such as our annual Star-B-Que
- Club telescopes – use one of the club's loaner scopes, complete with instructional lessons
- Access to 'Members Only' are of the website containing observing tips, scope tricks, and educational articles for all levels
- Field trips – to observatories and other locations of scientific interest, such as Mt. Wilson Observatory in Pasadena, Chabot, Space and Science Center, Fremont Peak, and the Stanford Linear Accelerator Center (registration fee may be requested)
- Extended observing hours on public nights and private observing sessions exclusively for CCAS members
- Assistance from club members, and other "how-tos" to help you best enjoy amateur astronomy and astrophotography

Questions about membership or other events? Call Lee Coombs at (805) 466-2788 or visit our website at:

www.sloastro.org

How to Join

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Membership is annual for each upcoming year, beginning when you first sign up. You can sign up online or mail in this form:

Membership Categories (Check one):

- \$15 Youth/Student
- \$15 Seniors
- \$20 Individual/Family

Magazine subscriptions Add specified amount to membership fee for a 1-year subscription.

- Sky & Telescope* (+ \$33) only in September
- Astronomy* (+ \$34) only available in September

Information: (PRINT CLEARLY!!)

Name(s) _____

Address _____

City _____

State, Zip _____

Home Phone _____

E-Mail _____

Newsletter Subscription:

You can choose E-Mail (recommended) or hard copy delivery for *Celestial Observer*: (check one)

- E-Mail (full color)
- Hard Copy (black & white)

Please make checks payable to Central Coast Astronomical Society and mail to P.O. Box 1415, San Luis Obispo, CA 93405.