

# Celestial

Volume 39 Issue 4



# Observer

April 2019



*Robin White: M20 Exposures 6 x 5 minutes, Meade Lx200 10" F6.5, Canon EOS T2i, Stacked & combined in Photoshop 7.0*

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**Next Meeting:** Thursday, April 25th at 7 PM, United Methodist Church Wesley Building. Guest speakers and snacks provided!

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**Next Star Gazing:** Saturday, April 6th at sunset at the Santa Margarita KOA. See inside for directions and a map

# Upcoming Meeting

**Wesley Room, 1515 Fredericks Street, San Luis Obispo**

**6:30pm Doors Open | 6:45 Refreshments & Solar Telescope Viewing | 7:00 Meeting Starts**

The April 25th meeting will be a blast from the past! Joseph will be president in charge of the meeting. Lee Coombs will give a history of the 40 years that CCAS has been in operation, we will show slides from past activities (RTMC, road trips, eclipses, etc.), Tom Frey have the T-shirts to distribute to those who ordered [cash or check only].

We'll have cake and punch, Members are urged to bring their own stories, slides, T-shirts, hats, souvenirs, to share with all. It will be a pretty easy going evening celebrating the many years of observing we've done together.

Can't wait to see you there!



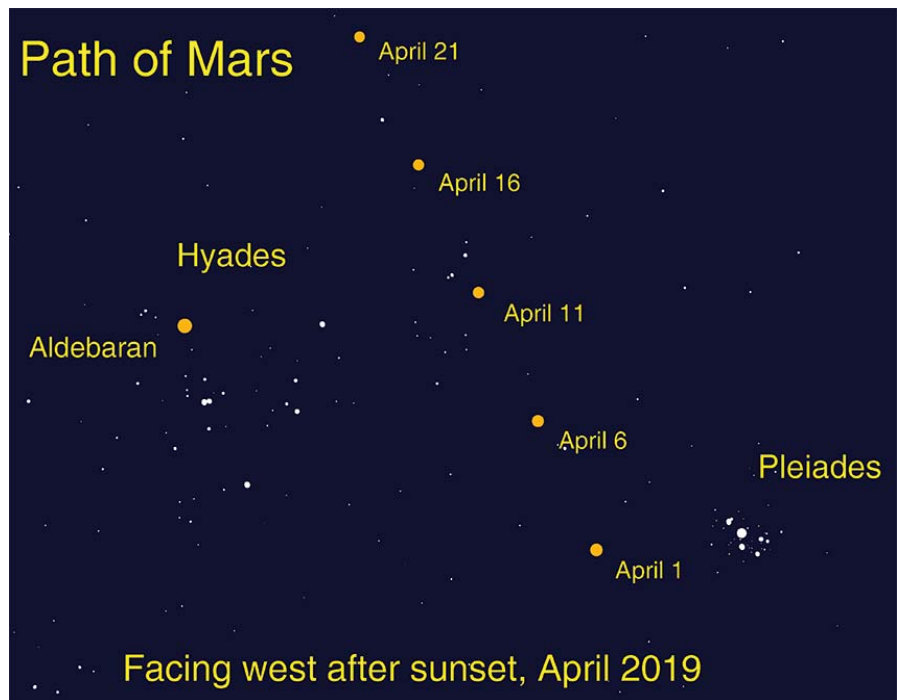
# Mars the Wanderer

By David Prosper

April 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 travelled 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](https://www.nasa.gov)

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## **Next Star Gazing**

**April 6, 2019 at sunset (7:30 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!

CCAS Members also had an initial star party at the Santa Margarita Lake March 30th. In attendance at the possible new star party site at Santa Margarita Lake were Joseph Carro, Glen Smeltzer, Ron Setina, Scott McMillian, John Walker, Pete

Roebber, and Tom Frey. We came equipped with large and medium reflectors, a refractor and a set of large binoculars. We setup in the parking lot near the marina.

We had excellent seeing conditions except for a very bright light that also cast reflections on the lake. We have recently found out from Santa Margarita Lake staff that the light can be extinguished during star parties. The most positive feature of the location is the asphalt surface. Fairly level and no summer dust or winter mud or steep hill to deal with. There is also a restroom close by. Other logistic features need to be ironed out with lake staff but the site is very promising and will handle a large number of visitors.

Stay tuned for more announcements. Until otherwise informed, we will continue to be at the KOA campground for star gazing!

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## 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](http://www.centralcoastastronomy.org)

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/CentralCoastAstronomicalSociety](https://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](http://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](http://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](http://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.

