VILLAGES STAR

Newsletter of The Villages Astronomy Club

Volume 3, Number 2
February 2022

Club Website:
http://vlgastroclub.org/
Facebook:
https://www.facebook.com/groups/vlgastroclub/

Club Officers & Assistants

President	Mark Graybill
Vice President	Ken Katta
Secretary/Historian	Burt Salk
Treasurer	Linda Meng

Newsletter Contact
saundby@gmail.com
(please include TVAstro in subject line)

UPCOMING EVENTS

February 15th: General Meeting, Laurel Manor Recreation Center, 6:20pm

February 25th-26th: Outdoor Expo, Everglades Recreation Center, 10am-3pm

March 1st: Telescope Workshop. 5pm Location announced via email list.

March 4th: Directors' Meeting, 11am, Fishhawk Recreation Center.

March 11th: Starry Starry Day & Night, 2-5p and 6-9p, Homestead Rec Center, Mar 12th backup date.

March 15th: General Meeting, Laurel Manor Recreation Center, 6:20pm

Calendar: https://vlgastroclub.org/events

NEWS

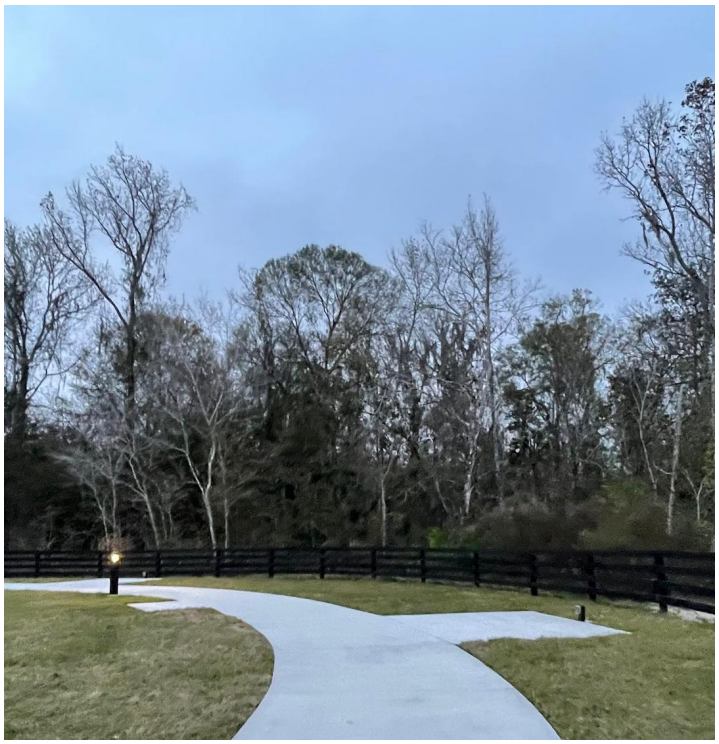
Homestead Recreation Center Grand Opening

We were part of the grand opening of Homestead Recreation Center on January 21st!

The new rec center includes telescope observing pads in an area away from the parking lot and street that provides darkness for observation and astrophotography. To use the site, contact the Homestead Rec Center to reserve the site by calling 352-674-1971. The new center is located at: 6227 Meggison Road.

Our public Starry Starry Day & Night events will be moved to this location, see below. We will also be holding a number of club-organized observing events for our astronomers and for our club members through the year.

Please feel free to reserve the site for yourself for your observing, though!



Observing Pad with Power Outlet-image by Kahler family

The Villages Outdoor Expo

The Villages Outdoor Expo will be held on Friday February 25th and Saturday February 26th from 10am to 3pm. This is an event where the clubs of The Villages that have outdoor activities can present themselves for those looking for new clubs and activities. We will have a booth at the expo, and hope to have solar observation and some of the Solar Walk on display.

We will have a sign-up sheet for staffing the booth at the meeting, with shifts from 9am to noon (includes setup), and noon to 30m plus cleanup. If you are interested in representing the Club at this event, please come to the meeting or contact Mark at 530-798-1899 to get added to the staff list. If you have a solar scope we would love to have you bring it to this event!

Starry Starry Day and Night

Our next Starry Starry Day & Night will be on March 11th. We will be at the new Homestead Rec Center observation area. March 12th will be the fallback date in the event of weather cancellation on the 11th.

The daytime event runs from 2-5pm, with the Solar Walk and solar observation. The evening event runs from 6-9pm with astronomers sharing telescopic views of the sky!

If you would like to show the night sky to the public at this event, please contact Mark at 530-798-1899 to be added to the Observers' Mailing List so that you can be up to date on the preparations for this event's star party.

February Meeting

Come learn the story of the Dobsonian telescope at our meeting! This month's meeting features a talk by club president Mark Graybill, who learned telescope making from John Dobson, and was a friend of John's. Mark will describe the events in John's life that shaped his telescope making and the design of his revolutionary telescope.

Future Meeting Presentations

March: Astrophotography by Mick Groszko
April: Future Giant Telescopes by Ernie Rossi of The Plantations Astronomy Club
May: Women of Science pt. 2 by Linda Meng

Directors' Meetings

The next Directors' Meeting will be held on March 4th at 11am at the Fishhawk Recreation Center on Buttonwood Way (Village of Buttonwood.) All members are welcome to join us, to assist us with the planning and organization of the club, and in developing our plans for activities to help the club better serve its membership.

IN THE SKY THIS MONTH

The Moon:

1st Quarter, Feb 8th,
Full,Feb 16thth,
Last Quarter ,Feb 23rd,
New, March 2nd .

Mercury, **Venus**, and **Mars** put on a month-long show in the predawn sky this month, with **Saturn** joining them near month's end as it moves out of the Sun's glare. Mercury reaches greatest elongation (greatest distance from the Sun) on the 16th, and is at its brightest midmonth as well.

At the end of the month, rising early will pay off with a view of four planets in close proximity to each other.

Jupiter will move into the Sun's glare this month. Look for it early in the month during dusk. By midmonth it sets before full dark, and before the end of the month it will set in daylight. It has its conjuntion with the Sun in March (it will be behind the Sun), then will begin to rise far enough before the Sun to be seen in late March.

Orion the Hunter

The constellation Orion is the most recognized constellation in the sky, visible to both northern and southern hemisphere observers. It has seven bright stars, the three stars of the belt make it easy for most people to find.

Below and to the right of the belt, from our perspective, lie three dimmer stars that mark the Sword of Orion. The center one of these stars, it turns out, is not an actual star. It is the bright nebula **Messier 42 (M42), the Great Orion Nebula**, seen as a fuzzy glowing patch rather than a star even in binoculars. This is a star forming region, where gas and dust is condensing into new stars and solar systems.

A look at medium powers (100-200x) will show a small group of 4 stars in the heart of the nebula known as the **Trapezium**. These are young stars that have recently (from a star's multimillion year perspective) begun nuclear fusion, and have blown away the gas and dust from around them, revealing them to our sight. Within the other parts of the nebula, other new stars are forming, and will likewise blow away the dust around them once fusion starts.

Betelgeuse (pron. BAY-tel-juice) is the "right shoulder" of the the figure described by the four bright stars outside the belt. It is the 11th brightest star in our sky. It is a bright red giant star, about 14,000 times brighter than our Sun, about 500 light years away.

Rigel (pron. RYE-jell) is the left foot of the Hunter, the 7th brightest star in the sky. It is one of the brightest stars in the Milky Way, a blue-white star about 900 light years from Earth. It is about 60,000 times the Sun's brightness. It has a companion star visible in telescopes at medium power, at magnitude 6.7, about 9 arcseconds from Rigel.

Homestead Grand Opening Images

images courtesy of member Jeffrey Kahler, his wife Kathy, and son Jeffrey, jr.

Ribbon-Cutting Ceremony

Looking toward the astronomy pads from pavilion