



# OBSERVER

## MARCH 2026

*Bringing Stars to the eyes of Tulsa  
since 1937*

*Editor - John Land*



### ANNUAL TELESCOPE WORKSHOP

On February 7th our Astronomy Club hosted its telescope workshop at the Tulsa Air & Space Museum Planetarium. The workshop was for people wanting to learn how to use their telescope. About 20 participants brought their telescope for an individualized session with one of our club members. 15 Club members helped them learn how to set up their telescope, explained how to align on a target, which eyepieces to use. Tips that will help them learn to enjoy observing the sky. Then we invited them to come to our observatory Guest Night that evening. Enjoy this the [YouTube of TASM workshop](#)

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## Stargazing Nights and Observatory Nights

Come enjoy an evening of star gazing at our observatory located in dark rural skies SW of Tulsa  
 Guests are requested to RSVP Large groups need to make separate arrangements.

Members Only Nights are Open to members and their family to come work on their observing goals, do some Astro imaging and share ideas

Details, Times and Direction Maps are posted on our Website  
<https://www.astrotulsa.com/events>

### Guest and member Observatory nights

**Saturday Mar 14 - 7:00 PM** Guest & Members Night

**Saturday April 11 - 7:15 PM** Guest & Members Night

### Astronomy Club Members Nights

Our members are invited to come work on their observing goals, do some Astro imaging and share ideas.

**Saturday Mar 21 - 6:00 PM to Dawn**

**Our annual Messier Object Marathon**

A combined members night and Messier Marathon. Come enjoy the stars & fellowship for a few hours or continue your deep dive into the treasures of the night until Dawn

**Friday Apr 17 - 7:30 PM** Members Observatory Night

If a Friday event must be cancelled due to weather, we will try on Saturday 30 minutes before sunset - Always check the website for event updates



### In Town Astronomy Club meetings at Jenks High School planetarium

Open to Guests and Members

**Friday Mar 6 - 7:00 PM** Jenks High School Planetarium

**Friday Apr 3 - 7:00 PM** Jenks High School Planetarium

Located at [205 East B St, Jenks, OK](https://www.google.com/maps/place/205+East+B+St,+Jenks,+OK)



## DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME BEGINS

**SUNDAY MARCH 8** We lose an hour of evening observing.

On Feb 23<sup>rd</sup> the Sun rose at 7:00 AM CST – for the first time since Nov 16

If we stayed on DST all year the sun would not rise until 8:00 AM and

Later than 8:30 AM from Dec 23 to Jan 21 & after 9:00AM in the Okla. panhandle

## [Astronomy Calendar 2026:](#) All Major Celestial Events of the Year

Explore a Month-by-Month listing of Celestial Events – Many have links to Details or Videos



Telescope Volunteers L – R Liam Yanulis, Tim Gilliland, John Moore, Bryan Kyle, Dana Swift, Bev Strader, Cathy Grounds, Scott Bratt, Jerry Cassity, Jonathan Fussell  
Seated Skip Whitehurst & Jack Reeder others include Kit Bratt, Aliosha Hand & Tamara Green



The Club's Women in Astronomy Group met for brunch on Sat. Feb. 21st at the Silver Skillet in Tulsa. Topics of discussion included upcoming events such as the Messier Marathon, the planetary alignment on Feb. 28th and Comet C/2024 E1. There was support for more events in town, and a women's overnight at the observatory and a dark sky weekend.

If you would like to join their next gathering contact Cathy Grounds at [astrotulsa.tres@gmail.com](mailto:astrotulsa.tres@gmail.com)



## 2026 ASTRONOMY CONFERENCES and STAR PARTIES

Are you looking for a way to combine a bit of vacation time and enjoy learning more about astronomy? A regional or national astronomy conference may be just the thing for you. You can make friends with like-minded astronomy enthusiasts and also get to hear some interesting presentations on a variety of topics. The door prize giveaways are also an extra little bonus.

**Texas Star Party May 10 – 17** <https://texasstarparty.org/> Registration is first come basis this year. Texas Star Party is located on the [Prude Guest Ranch](#) in far SW Texas near Fort Davis. Located at 31 degrees south its dark bortle 2 skies give observers a chance to see some southern target like Omega Centauri not visible from Tulsa. Its location in the dry semi-desert mountains give incredible views. Also, since it is held in May observers can enjoy tracking down the many spring sky galaxies. I've been there a couple of times and it's amazing to see stars shining clearly down to the horizon. You also have the option to schedule a trip to visit the nearby [McDonald Observatory](#) and the [Hobby-Eberly](#) 433-inch multimirror telescope. Registration numbers are limited so plan early. On site accommodations are available on a first come first served basis. It's about 750 miles drive one way.

**2026 MidStates Regional Astronomy Conference June 26 to 28** in St. Charles, Missouri. <https://www.asemonline.org/2026-msral> Hosted by the Astronomical Society of Eastern Missouri, this three-day event will include a Friday evening StarBQ and observing session, followed by convention programming on Saturday and Sunday. The speaker lineup is shaping up to be exceptional, with presentations covering the story of Gus Grissom, comets and the origins of life, the Vera Rubin Observatory, and the hidden geology of the Moon

**2026 National Astronomical League convention Aug 12 -15**

The ALCON 2026 will be located in Cincinnati, OH. Details are still in development but you can save the website <https://www.alcon2026.org/> and register for emailed updates

**Okie-Tex Star Party Oct 9 – 17** <https://www.okie-tex.com/index.php>

Several of our Tulsa area astronomers enjoy going to the Okie-Tex Star Party in the autumn. Each year about 500 astronomers arrive from all over the nation for a week-long feast of starlight. Okie-Tex is held on a spacious observing area just west of the Black Mesa State Park at the far western end of the Oklahoma Panhandle. Its bortle 1 dark skies are acclaimed as some of the darkest on the planet. Each time I go I am overwhelmed by the late summer Milky Way flowing overhead like a river of stars engulfing the sky. You need to register and reserve your meal choices BEFORE August 31, 2025

There are other extended Star Party events around the country. So, look for developing news in your Astronomical League quarterly newsletter *The Reflector*, Astronomy Periodicals or search online.



Salutations all,

As we continue moving through the year and steadily toward our 90th Anniversary, I'm excited to share a few important updates that reflect the momentum building within our club.

First, a huge thank you to everyone who helped make our Telescope Workshop and Guest Night on February 7th such a success. It was a fantastic joint effort and resulted in several new members joining our ranks. If you see a new face at a meeting or event, please take a moment to introduce yourself and welcome them into the fold! It's an exciting time to be part of this club.

The Board has also approved James Taggart — our observatory groundskeeper, resident fix-it expert, and unofficial IT department — to begin seeking a competitive bid to clear and trim the tree line surrounding the observatory. The goal is simple: reclaim our southwestern, western, and northern horizons. Improving these sightlines will significantly enhance our observing experience and preserve the sky access our observatory deserves.

In addition, we have officially scheduled a **Club Workday for March 28th from 10:00 a.m. until mid-afternoon**. This will be an opportunity for us to come together to clean, organize, and continue restoring the observatory grounds as we prepare for our 90th year of serving the Tulsa community. Lunch will be provided for all who are willing to lend a hand — many hands truly do make light work, and these days are always as rewarding as they are productive.

Before that, however, one of our most exciting observing nights of the year is almost here — the **Messier Marathon on Saturday, March 21st**, running from dusk until dawn. This will be a potluck-style, all-night event, so bring your favorite late-night snacks and treats to share. Pack camping chairs, blankets, and even a sleeping bag if you plan to stay the full night. It promises to be memorable, and the member who logs the most objects will receive a special prize. Whether you're chasing all 110 Messier objects or simply enjoying the challenge, this is one of those nights that reminds us why we love this hobby.

Looking ahead to summer, registration is now open for the **76th Mid-States Regional Astronomical League (MSRAL) Convention**, taking place **June 26–28, 2026**, in St. Charles, Missouri. Hosted by the Astronomical Society of Eastern Missouri, this three-day event will include a Friday evening StarBQ and observing session, followed by convention programming on Saturday and Sunday. The speaker lineup is shaping up to be exceptional, with presentations covering the story of Gus Grissom, comets and the origins of life, the Vera Rubin Observatory, and the hidden geology of the Moon. If you've never attended an MSRAL convention, I strongly encourage you to consider going. These gatherings are energizing, educational, and a wonderful way to connect with the broader astronomical community.

As always, be sure you're staying connected with the club between meetings and events. Follow us on Instagram, check in regularly on Facebook, and visit our website for the latest event schedules, updates, announcements, and engaging astronomy content. Our online platforms are the fastest way to stay informed and involved.

We are building something special as we approach 90 years of astronomy in Tulsa. Thank you all for your continued energy, service, and enthusiasm. The best nights are still ahead. Clear skies,

*Jonathan Fussell - President*

*Astronomy Club of Tulsa - "Bringing Stars to the Eyes of Tulsa since 1937"*



Click on these images to links on the Internet



\*\*\* The NEW **CLEAR OUTSIDE** icon above is a link to an extensive site showing cloud cover %,

Seeing, Transparency, Moon Phase, Temp in ° C and many other useful tools

**GOT A NEW TELESCOPE?** Here are some sites to help you get started with you telescope.

Getting Started with Your New Telescope

<https://skyandtelescope.org/astronomy-news/getting-started-with-your-new-telescope-2/>

Astronomy for Beginners | Night Sky Facts, FAQs & Resources

<https://skyandtelescope.org/astronomy-information/>

What to Know Before Buying a Telescope

<https://skyandtelescope.org/astronomy-news/what-to-know-before-buying-a-telescope/>

See [Website Observation Station](#) for a collection of [Interactive Sky Watching Tools](#)

Moon phases - Sun rise & Set - [Make your own custom interactive sky chart](#) and more

Great website for printable Finder Charts of Solar System objects <https://in-the-sky.org/>

## [Astronomy Calendar 2026: All Major Celestial Events of the Year](#)

Explore a Month-by-Month listing of Celestial Events – Many have links to Details or Videos

### [Daily Moon Guide](#) | Observe – Moon: NASA Science

March - Moon Phases - -

**Full** Tues Mar 3 - - **3<sup>rd</sup> Q** - - Sat Mar 22 - - **New** Weds Mar 18 - - **1<sup>st</sup> Q** Weds Mar 25

Mark your calendar for a predawn Total Lunar Eclipse March 3 - details later in newsletter

**Lunar conjunctions** – **Jupiter** Feb 26 & Mar 25, March 17 just before dawn the thin waning crescent moon will form a triangle 5 deg triangle with **Mercury & Mars**. Look near horizon Azimuth 100. March 20 evening near sunset the Moon will be above **Venus**.

**VENUS** can be located near the horizon in the west at dusk. Rising higher each week it will be our dominate evening “star” **JUPITER** in Gemini can be found high the south. SATURN will soon leave the evening sky. At dusk on March 7 use binoculars to locate it near VENUS. **MERCURY** is moving to the morning sky where it will join **MARS** and the **Moon** on March 17



The **Vernal Equinox** is March 20 at 9:46 AM CDT  
On that date the Sun crosses the celestial equator moving north.

**National “SunVisor” Alert Days** from about March 10 to 30

If you are driving on an East–West Road near sunrise or sunset. The sun will be shining almost directly into your face. On the date of the Equinox, it rises and sets directly down the road. Many ancient cultures set up stone pillars or erected structures to mark the Solar Equinox and Solstice positions.

On the evening of February 18th many people noticed the planet Mercury looking like a bright “star” next to the thin crescent moon. John Land took this series of photos with his SeeStar S50 from a hilltop near Bass Pro in Broken Arrow. The moon is moving upward past Mercury.



These are small sections of horizon view taken 40 minutes after sunset. On left is the moon & Mercury. Looking closely near the horizon you can see Venus peeking through the twilight.

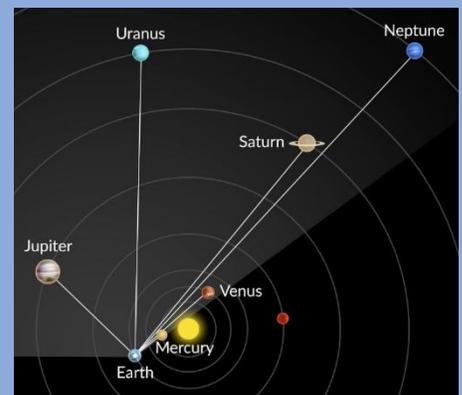


The Internet has been A-Buzz with talk of the **Feb. 28th planet alignment**. There are currently Six Planets in the evening sky any day this next week.

You’ll need a location with an unobstructed view toward the western horizon. Binoculars will help locate your them in the bright twilight. This image shows the planets on Thursday evening Feb 26 about 30 minutes after sunset. Look for **Venus** about 5 degrees above the horizon. Then **Mercury** to its right. **Saturn** is about 10 degrees higher but will be a challenge even with binoculars. **Neptune** is nearby but won’t be accessible even with a telescope. Next look up for bright **Jupiter** high in the south. On the 26th the moon will be nearby. You’ll have to wait for it to get dark and use a telescope to locate **Uranus** in the constellation of Taurus. Mars is in the morning sky.

This diagram below shows the arrangement of the planets in relationship to the Earth and Sun.

For more details Explore [Six Planets after Sunset](#). But keep in mind that they will be similarly place any evening through March 1st. Mercury and Saturn will leave the evening sky by early March but reappear before dawn by the end of the month.



# Touring the Winter Hexagon by John Land

As winter gives way to spring this is a good time to enjoy observing the region of the Winter Hexagon of stars surrounding the region of the constellation Orion.



Diagram from [Sky & Telescope article](#) in February 2020

See [Labeled Photo](#) of the Winter Hexagon

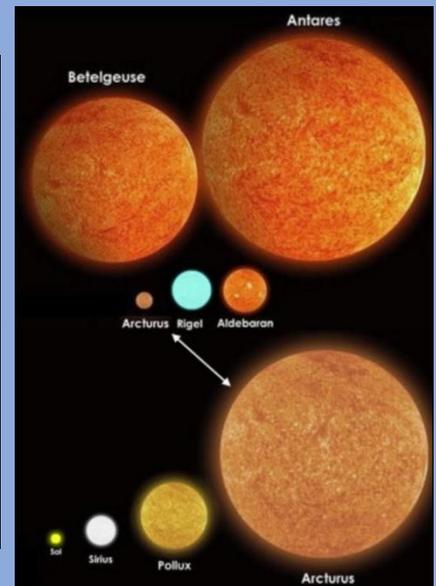
Actually, there are seven stars in the pattern with Betelgeuse in the middle to make up EIGHT of the top 20 brightest stars in the sky. ( No one knows what a Heptagon is ).

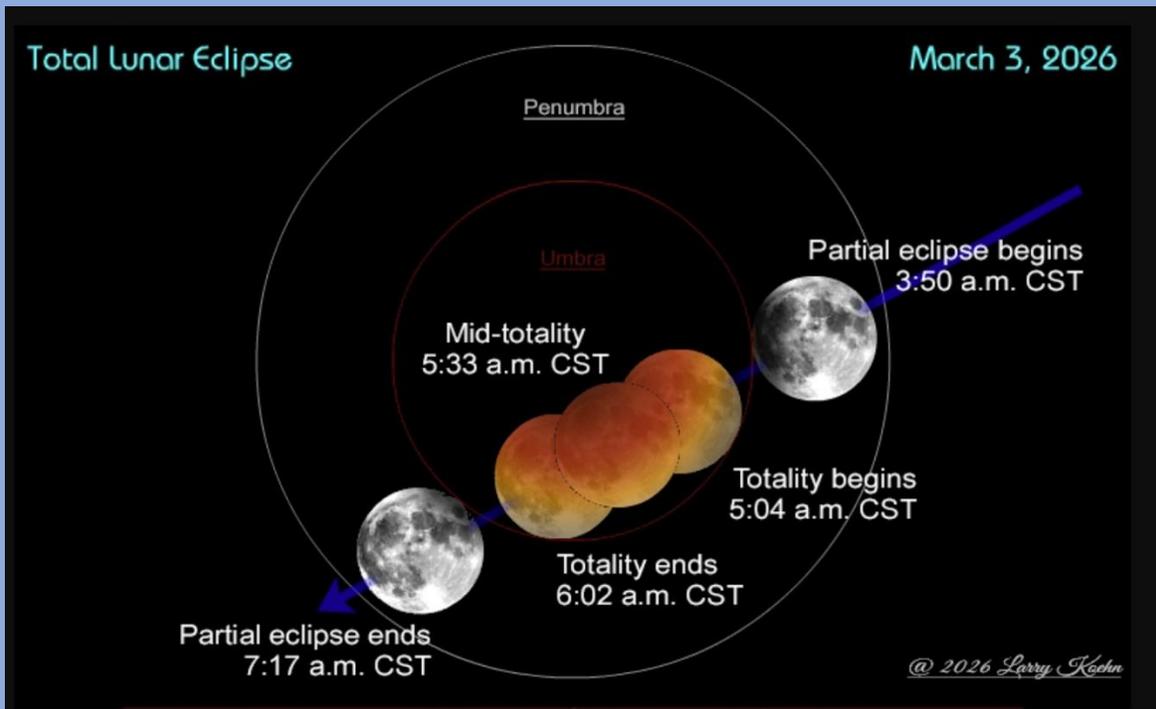
Starting with the brightest star, [Sirius](#) in the lower left. Sirius is the brightest nighttime star shining at -1.47 magnitude. It is also the fifth closest star to our sun at 8.58 Light yrs. Proceeding counter-clockwise we come to 0.4 mag [Procyon](#) in Canis Minor 11.4 L Yrs away. Moving upwards we come to the twin Gemini stars. [Pollux](#) and [Castor](#) Castor is a good double star test for your viewing. The components are separated by 5.2" Next we come to 0.07 mag [Capella](#) in Auriga. Capella rises in the NE shortly after dark in late October

near Halloween. It often twinkles rapidly in various colors leading to some reports of a "UFO" hovering in the sky. [Aldebaran](#) marks the eye of Taurus the bull. It is a giant star 45 times larger than the sun with a distinctive orange color revealing it as a K5 star cooler than the sun.

[Rigel](#) in Orion's foot is a Blue Supergiant star. At 11,100 Kelvins ( 19,550 F ) it is over twice as hot as the sun. In addition to being hot, it is 76 times the size of the Sun making it the intrinsically brightest of the group. The super red giant star [Betelgeuse](#) is 560 times larger than the sun! Its diameter of 5.2 astronomical units is the distance from the Sun to Jupiter. Placed in our solar system its outer surface would reach to the orbit of Jupiter !! See [Comparing the Size of Stars](#) The table shows stats on each star. Its Visual magnitude, Distance, Luminosity and Size compared to the Sun. Absolute Magnitude indicates how bright the stars would appear if they were all at the same distance of 3.26 Light years away. At +4.83 absolute magnitude our Sun would just barely be visible in a dark sky.

STARS of Winter Hexagon					
Name	Visual Mag	Distance Lyrs	Luminosity	Size	Abs. Mag
Sun	-26.7	500 Light sec	1	1	4.83
Sirius	-1.47	8.58	26	1.93x	1.46
Procyon	0.4	11.4	7.7	2.09x	2.67
Pollux	1.22	33	29.6	10.2x	1.41
Castor	1.58	15.6	48.1	2.84x	0.61
Capella	0.07	42.8	137	19.9x	-0.52
Aldebaran	0.99	66.6	142	45.1x	-0.56
Rigel	0.28	860	45,800	75.9x	-6.63
Betelgeuse	0.56	500	11,800	560x	-5.36





See animation version of eclipse at <https://www.shadowandsubstance.com/>

In the early morning of Tuesday March 3rd, you can observe a **Total Lunar Eclipse**. A lunar eclipse occurs when the full moon passes through the Earth's shadow. You won't need special equipment, filters or dark skies to enjoy the eclipse. However, binoculars or a small telescope will enhance your view. If the sky is clear, you can enjoy the view.

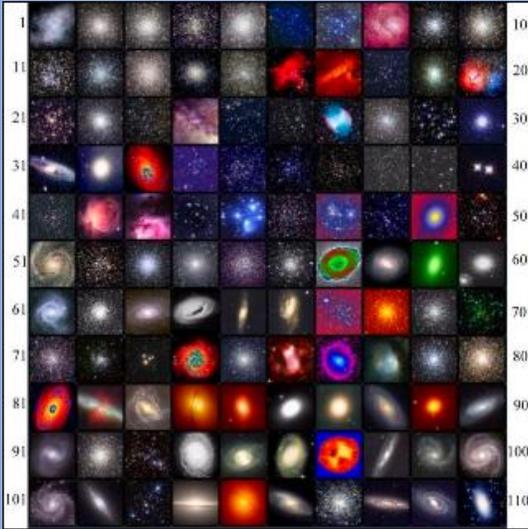
The whole eclipse lasts from 3:50 AM until the moon sets at 6:53 AM midway through the ending partial phase. For the less ambitious observers wanting to see the Total Eclipse Phase be out by 5:15 AM and watch until it begins leaving the Earth's shadow at 6:02 AM. The moon is much dimmer during totality so you may have to look carefully to find it. Early morning rush hour drivers will likely see the partially eclipsed moon setting toward the west.

As the partial phase begins look for the Moon a bit south of west and about 1/3 of the way up. Watch as the moon slips into the Earth's inner shadow – the umbra – as a “nibble” on the left side. The left side of the moon will continue to darken. As it nears totality it will take on a reddish-brown color. As totality begins at 5:04 AM take note of how its color changes as it slips deeper into the shadow. The color of the eclipse is caused by the Earth's atmosphere bending the light of all its sunrises and sunsets around the planet. Depending on how much dust is in the air it may appear bright copper orange, dusky brick red or even dim gray. Since the whole event lasts about 3 hours you don't need to stand out all night. You can duck in or out to see what is happening. Learn more at [NASA – March 2026 Total Lunar Eclipse](#)

If you are planning to take some images of the eclipse, practice a few nights earlier. Modern smart phones will work nicely but you may want to mount the phone to keep it steady. Telescope imagers may want to have their scope set up and sharply focused the evening before. Maybe bracket your exposures for best results. If your phone or camera has a remote that will help.

Location	Penumbral phase begins	Partial phase begins	Total phase begins	Maximum eclipse	Total phase ends	Partial phase ends	Penumbral phase ends	Duration of penumbral phase	Duration of partial phase	Duration of total phase
Tulsa (USA) 96° 00' W, 36° 09' N	02:44:18 47.2°	03:50:00 35.5°	05:04:27 21.1°	05:33:36 15.3°	06:02:45 9.5°	07:17:12 -5.2°	08:22:54 -17.7°	(5:38:36)	(3:27:12)	0:58:18

Brad Young's article below explains the **Danjon Scale of Lunar Eclipse Darkness**



## Are you up for the challenge of the annual **Messier Marathon Saturday Mar 21**

Each spring near the Spring Equinox it is possible to find all 110 objects in Charles Messier's Catalogue of Deep Sky Treasures during a single night. Hundreds of amateur astronomers turn their telescopes eagerly toward the sky searching for star clusters, nebula and galaxies hidden in the canopy of the night sky. The quest begins at dusk to catch the ones soon to set it the west. Then proceeds checking off the many objects of the winter and circumpolar sky. You'll need a power snack before tackling the vast denizens of Virgo cluster galaxies. Stave off drowsiness with numerous cups of coffee as the Summer Milky Way rises in the east after midnight. Only the most hardy observers preserve to catch the objects of the autumn sky before they are swallowed up by the brightening dawn.

The Messier Marathon is a night that club members get together to encourage each other to find as many of the Messier Objects as they can in a single night. Whether you find a few dozen or nearly 100 it's an experience all will enjoy.

The week or so prior to the March New Moon is great time to get started honing your observing skills. Choose a couple of the charts in the links below and try to locate all the objects on that chart. Many of them can be found from suburban skies. Try turning off your GoTo features and find them yourself using the star charts. Our [April 2021 Newsletter](#) has a good article explaining how to find the Field of View in your telescope eyepieces. Then "Star Hop" from a known star to locate your desired object. Just manually use your controls to move the scope until you find the Deep Sky object. Take a bit of time to look observe its details. Maybe even make a sketch of it. If you've never done the [Messier Certificate program](#) this is good time to start but you'll want to spend more time recording your observations for the certificate. Print Off Charts 3,4 & 5 in the link below and see how many you can find.

THE MESSIER MARATHON – extensive page of the history and objects of the marathon  
<http://www.messier.seds.org/xtra/marathon/marathon.html> Bottom of the page has links to years.

### **Excellent Explanation and strategy for planning your observation Sequence**

- Note- The resources at the end can now be found online.

<http://www.richardbell.net/marathon.html>

### **Single Page printout of the Sequence search list**

[http://www.richardbell.net/files/messier\\_list.pdf](http://www.richardbell.net/files/messier_list.pdf)

**Messier Marathon Packet** - Made in 2016 – Object list works for any year in March

<https://okmcd.com/pub/MessierMarathonCharts.pdf>

Only the first or last M Objects may vary a bit.

Printable PDF charts or ones that can be stored on a computer.

7 pages of Log sheets to check off your progress arranged by sequence and Suggested times for conducting your search.

17 pages of detailed charts showing the location of each object. Identified by sequence number.

Three Page Log sheets -

<http://www.astunit.com/tonkinsastro/messier/messmara.pdf>

For observers using different instruments during the night

- this one has columns to identify which instrument

## Observing Chairman Brad Young



# Sophomore Slump

This month's article has several items. Don't forget about the total lunar eclipse, as discussed in John Land's article. This is a naked eye event, but if you do have binoculars or telescope it's interesting to watch the craters disappear into the shadow. You can even help astronomy by timing these events, which are used to define the size of the umbra (Earth's shadow). Another useful report is on the color of the moon during total eclipse, which provides data on the Earth's atmosphere. For more on these observations, see <https://skyandtelescope.org/observing/useful-projects-for-a-lunar-eclipse/>.



Danjon Scale of Lunar Eclipse Darkness

We are nearing the equinox, so the geostationary satellites will be flaring during the first week of March as described in my article <https://warrenastro.org/newsletter/WASP-2021-03.pdf>. And the zodiacal light is prominent in the dusk now too, a cone of dim light visible outside bright city skies (look it up on Wikipedia). There are other observing opportunities this month which I'll discuss at our monthly meeting, as usual.

I had the pleasure of presenting a talk on my completion of sketching all the NGC objects to the Bartlesville Astronomy Club on February 2nd. I'd like to propose that we work more closely with that club since we are relatively close and might be able to work together to find a dark sky site. They were quite welcoming and gave me a mug decorated with images club members took.



## Afternoon Workshops

With warmer weather coming, I have proposed to the Board that we invite the public on open observing nights to come an hour or so early to get help with their telescope, advice on what equipment to get if they're just starting out, or how the sky works and other basic help, in a casual, open discussion. More details on that to follow. Note that we could have the workshops even if the weather is cloudy. If you have any specific ideas or would like to attend a workshop like this, please contact me at [allenb\\_young@yahoo.com](mailto:allenb_young@yahoo.com)

And of course, if you would like to help with the sessions, feel free. We need someone to help imagers, as I have just started doing imaging and don't know much.



Future night skies with 1 million Starlinks and others

As some of you may have heard, SpaceX has now requested a license to launch up to one million satellites to support its plan to run data centers in space instead of using resources and causing public concerns with ground stations. The IAU committee I'm on is trying to protect astronomical communities, both professional and amateur, from being deluged by satellite trails but is finding mitigation difficult based on scaling up from the problems that are occurring now. If you would like to comment on the SpaceX application with the FCC, contact me.

## Retaining Members

"You can listen as well as you hear" – *The Living Years*, Michael Rutherford and Brian David Robertson

The main point of this article is one that has come up several times and will probably be the focus of my next book. I call it the sophomore slump, the period between the exciting beginning of astronomy as a hobby and the confident enjoyment after a few years when you know more. You see it in astronomy clubs, where there is a tendency for members to join with high hopes, then finding it is harder than they thought, they give up on the hobby. This is one of the issues driving the decline in astronomy club membership - especially among young people.

One recommendation I would make is to have workshops like we did in February at Telescopes 101 and the ones we hope to have before our observing nights as noted above. But it's essential that when we have any initial meetings with future members, we listen to what they want to achieve by becoming active in this hobby. Too often, I think we expect people who are new to astronomy to fit a certain model that we consider to be normal. For instance, with advances in technology and changes in society, most younger people today are quite comfortable using computerized telescopes run by apps on their phone and are more interested in imaging than visual observing. I base this not only on experience at star parties and outreach events, but on anecdotal evidence and comments from clubs and amateurs all over the country.



This is the way things are moving. New devices such as a Seestar may not seem like “real” observing to some who have been doing this hobby for a while, but it doesn't matter. The way to attract and retain members and, more importantly, to foster their interest in astronomy, is to allow them to find what they are excited by. We do have a responsibility to explain that telescopes can be very expensive, and you don't want to give them buyer's remorse. Still, we can explain the different types of equipment that are available and the different types of observations and other activities that can be done and let the budding amateur astronomer pick their own path.

We experienced amateurs often tell new folks to go around and check out the different types of telescopes. Make an impression by reciprocating - ask to see what apps the new person uses, or what electronic devices are in his setup. Perhaps we can learn something too – e.g., I really enjoy using my Seestar even though it is a new way of observing for me. Even if we don't, the new person may feel more welcome if they can show us tips and tools too, so there is a balance to the relationship instead of a teacher-student dynamic.

New observers may also be intimidated by the equipment or social situations. Approach them with a smile and try to see things from their view. Others may be gregarious and want to talk a lot about different aspects of the hobby or may just want to talk. And remember, you must cast a wide net and very few people will stick with the hobby and / or the club. That's OK if we are not ripping the net open by ignoring potential members, demeaning them by pointing out their lack of skills or scaring them with proselytizing.

Your old road is rapidly agin" ( age-n )  
Please get out of the new one if you can't lend your hand  
For the times they are a-changin'  
*The Times They Are A-Changin'*, Bob Dylan

Some amateur astronomers seem to have been around since they ground their own telescope mirrors and borrowed Galileo's eyepiece and can be set in their ways. I've seen this movie before with people complaining about new methods from the switch of visual to film, heard film users decry digital imaging and listened to complaints about electronic go-to and push to systems. You may have enjoyed the old ways or think they are better, but that ship has sailed.

Astronomy for amateurs is intended to be what the person wants it to be. Helping a new amateur find what excites them can be a rewarding experience for both parties. This may include new technology or delaying learning some fundamentals. However, telling them they must learn all the constellations and be able to star hop is not going to promote a hobby that is already expensive and complicated to begin with. If you would like to discuss ideas about retaining members (and specifically drawing a younger crowd), contact me.

## Epilogue

Searching for an image of an old man shaking his cane led me to this oldie but goodie meme; a perfect one for amateur astronomers.



## More Planned March events.

**Friday March 27** Public Telescope viewing night at **Hunter Park** - TIME TBA

**Saturday March 28** **Observatory Workday.**

Volunteers are needed. It's time to do several Spring Cleaning projects both inside the observatory and outside on the grounds. Pictured below is a previous year's workers.



# Treasurer Report

## Cathy Grounds



As of February 18, 2026, we have **145** members with **2** new members this year. Please welcome our newest members Gail Algeo and Lidia Gonzales!

FAQ: How do I know when to pay my dues? You will receive a notice by email when it is time to renew your membership. Look for it on or around the 1st of the month in which your membership expires. If you are not sure just check with the treasurer.

Don't forget these easy methods to Join or Renew your membership:

<https://www.astrotulsa.com/join> – see the “join” tab at the upper right

1. PayPal (click “join/renew” on the website) and follow the prompts, there is small fee.
2. Mail in a check or money order to  
Astronomy Club of Tulsa, PO Box 470611, Tulsa, OK 74147.
3. Direct your bank's bill pay service to send payment to our PO Box address above.
4. Pay cash at any club event or swipe a credit card (there is roughly a 3% service charge).

As always if you have any questions or concerns or if your email, phone, or mailing address has changed please email me at: [AstroTulsa.Tres@gmail.com](mailto:AstroTulsa.Tres@gmail.com)

Membership rates for 2025-2026 are as follows: All include an Astronomical League Membership and you will receive their magazine *The Reflector* each quarter.

Adults: **\$50 per year**

Sr Adult: **\$40 per year** (65 or older).

Students: **\$40 per year**

Additional Family membership: **\$30 including voting rights.**

The regular membership allows all members in the family to participate in club events but only ONE Voting Membership and one Astronomical League membership.

**Magazine Subscriptions-** You can see subscription info on the “Join” tab at [www.astrotulsa.com](http://www.astrotulsa.com).

You can get a discount rate as an Astronomy Club member.

**However, you will need to do so directly using their discount rate web links.**

Both have options for DIGITAL as well as PRINT subscriptions.

To learn about [Sky and Telescope magazine](#) see their home page

Digital \$ 37.05 Print & Digital \$ 45.75 includes a \$ 10 club discount

Use this [Sky & Telescope Subscription Link](#)

To learn about [Astronomy magazine](#) see their home page

Use this [Astronomy Subscription Link](#) Digital \$ 39.95 Print & Digital \$ 49.95 no club discount



**This article is distributed by NASA's Night Sky Network (NSN).**

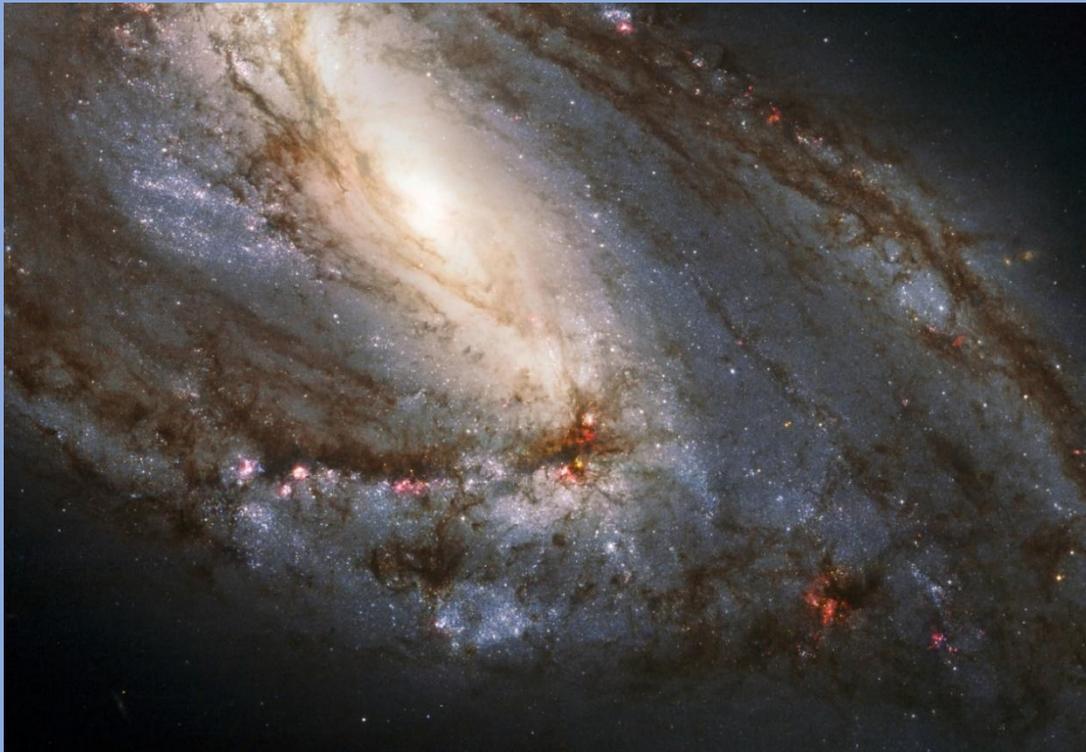
The NSN program supports astronomy clubs across the USA dedicated to astronomy outreach. Visit [nightsky.jpl.nasa.gov](https://nightsky.jpl.nasa.gov) to find local clubs, events, and more!

## March's Night Sky Notes: Messier Madness

By Kat Troche

This article originally ran in 2025. Due to deep federal cuts in funding for 2026 new monthly articles are no longer being created

March is the start of spring in the Northern Hemisphere; with that, the hunt for Messier objects can begin!



*Showing a large portion of M66, this Hubble photo is a composite of images obtained at visible and infrared wavelengths. The images have been combined to represent the real colors of the galaxy. Credit: NASA, ESA and the Hubble Heritage (STScI/AURA)-ESA/Hubble Collaboration; Acknowledgment: Davide De Martin and Robert Gendler*

### What Are Messier Objects?

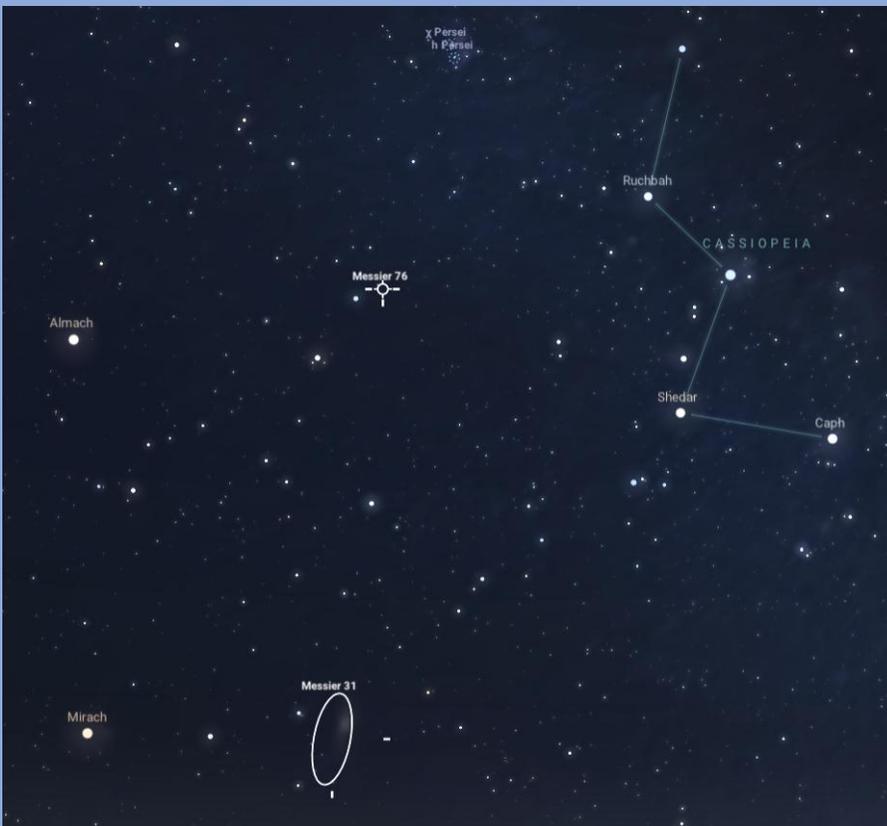
During the 18th century, astronomer and comet hunter [Charles Messier](#) wanted to distinguish the 'faint fuzzies' he observed from any potential new comets. As a result, Messier cataloged 110 objects in the night sky, ranging from star clusters to galaxies to nebulae. These items are designated by the letter 'M' and a number. For example, the Orion Nebula is [Messier 42](#) or **M42**, and the Pleiades are [Messier 45](#) or **M45**. These are among the brightest 'faint fuzzies' we can see with modest backyard telescopes and some even with our eyes.

Stargazers can catalog these items on evenings closest to the new moon. Some even go as far as having "Messier Marathons," setting up their telescopes and binoculars in the darkest skies available to them, from sundown to sunrise, to catch as many as possible. Here are some items to look for this season:



**Messier 44 in Cancer:** The Beehive Cluster, also known as Praesepe, is an open star cluster in the heart of the Cancer constellation. Use Pollux in Gemini and Regulus in Leo as guide stars. A pair of binoculars is enough to view this and other open star clusters. If you have a telescope handy, pay a visit two of the three galaxies that form the Leo Triplet - **M65** and **M66**. These items can be seen one hour after sunset in dark skies.

*M44 in Cancer and M65 and 66 in Leo can be seen high in the evening sky 60 minutes after sunset. Credit: Stellarium Web*



**Messier 76 in Perseus:** For a challenge, spot the Little Dumbbell Nebula, a planetary nebula between the Perseus and Cassiopeia constellations. With an apparent magnitude of 12.0, you will need a large telescope and dark skies. You can find both M76 and the famous [Andromeda Galaxy \(M31\)](#) one hour after sunset, but only for a limited time, as these objects disappear after April. They will reappear in the late-night sky by September.

*Locate M76 and M31 setting in the west, 60 minutes after sunset. Credit: Stellarium Web*



Locate M3 and M87 rising in the east after midnight. Credit: Stellarium Web

**Messier 3 Canes Venatici:** M3 is a globular cluster of 500,000 stars. Through a telescope, this object looks like a fuzzy sparkly ball. You can resolve this cluster in an 8-inch telescope in moderate dark skies. You can find this star cluster by using the star Arcturus in the Boötes constellation as a guide.

**Messier 87 in Virgo:** Located just outside of Markarian's Chain, M87 is an elliptical galaxy that can be spotted during the late evening hours. While it is not possible to view the [supermassive black hole](#) at the core of this galaxy, you can see M87 and several other Messier-labeled galaxies in the Virgo Cluster using a medium-sized telescope.

**Plan Ahead** - When gearing up for a long stargazing session, there are several things to remember, such as equipment, location, and provisions:

- **Do you have enough layers to be outdoors for several hours?** You would be surprised how cold it can get when sitting or standing still behind a telescope!
- **Are your batteries fully charged?** If your telescope runs on power, be sure to charge everything before you leave home and pack any additional batteries for your cell phone. Most people use their mobile devices for astronomy apps, so their batteries may deplete faster. Cold weather can also impact battery life.
- Determine the **apparent magnitude** of what you are trying to see and the **limiting magnitude** of your night sky. You can learn more about apparent and limiting magnitudes with our [Check Your Sky Quality with Orion](#) article.
- When choosing a location to observe from, select an area you are familiar with and bring some friends! You can also [connect with your local astronomy club](#) to see if they are hosting any Messier Marathons. It's always great to share the stars!

You can see all 110 items and their locations with NASA's [Explore the Night Sky interactive map](#) and the [Hubble Messier Catalog](#), objects that have been imaged by the Hubble Space Telescope.

**You are invited to join us to learn more about  
Astronomy and view the wonderful sights in the night sky.**

Check the EVENTS section at <https://www.astrotulsa.com/>



During the school year our club holds a  
**Monthly General Club meetings at  
Jenks Public Schools Planetarium**

**[205 East B St, Jenks, OK](#)**

**Meetings begin at 7:00 PM**

**Guests are Welcome**

**When you enter the building lobby,  
take the elevator to the 3rd floor.**



**ASTRONOMY CLUB OBSERVATORY**

Located on a hilltop about 25 miles SW of Tulsa  
Features: classroom, restroom, dome with 14-inch telescope  
and an acre to set up your telescopes.

Weather permitting, we host two types of observing nights.

**GUEST OBSERVING NIGHT – RSVP requested**

This event is open to our Guests – both individuals and  
families as well as our regular members. Several of our club  
members set up telescopes for public viewing.

\* Groups need to make separate arrangements.

**MEMBERS OBSERVING NIGHT** usually on a Friday near new moon

Reserved for club members and their families to allow them to pursue observing projects.  
The Observatory is **ONLY OPEN** for SCHEDULED EVENTS.

Check the **EVENTS** section at <https://www.astrotulsa.com/>

Follow our map directions **DO NOT USE GPS**

**Two Options for travel to the observatory**

**[MOSTLY PAVED ROADS](#)** – Hwy 75 to 201st St S – through Mounds OK

Most **[DIRECT ROUTE](#)** – Hwy 75 to 241st St S – some coarse gravel & dirt roads

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To Send a Message to any of the  
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or click the CONTACT tab  
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## Enjoy at Planetarium Show at Jenks High School

Jenks High School Campus  
205 East B Street, Jenks

TICKETS are \$7

See our Current Shows Schedule  
and ticket purchase links at  
[Shows and Ticket Link](#)

Shows take place on Tuesday evenings  
or Saturday mornings  
Must purchase tickets online in advance  
[Shows and Ticket Link](#)

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