



The Sonora Astronomical Society's **SONORAN STARRY NIGHTS**

MARCH 2025

March Meeting Details

DATE: March 15th, 2025
MEETING TIME: 2:30 PM
PLACE: Sahuarita Library & Zoom
MEETING SCHEDULE:
(2:15 PM ZOOM Waiting Room Available)
2:30 Meeting Intro and Welcome
2:40 Featured Presentation Followed
by Club Activities/Business

Next Member Star Parties

DATE: Thursday, March 27th, 2025
TIME: 6:30 PM ***NEW LOCATION***
PLACE: Madera Canyon Parking Lot
(300 ft past 9 mile marker, Madera Canyon Rd)

- LOOKING AHEAD -

THE FOLLOWING STAR PARTY WILL BE:

DATE: Thursday, April 24th, 2025

TIME: 6:45 PM

PLACE: Madera Canyon Parking Lot

NOTE: If you have a telescope that you don't know how to use, or are looking to buy a telescope and want to compare different telescopes, join us at a star party and we can give you some help.

UPCOMING EVENTS

NEXT CLUB MEETING

DATE: April 12th, 2025

LOCATION: Sahuarita Library & Zoom

TIME: 2:30 PM (in person + Zoom)

Speaker: T B A

Subject: T B A

March Presentation

Speaker: Speaker and topic will be announced at the meeting

Subject: To be announced

Abstract: .

Biography:

Did you know?

NASA's Night Sky Network has a live Webinar each month (and a video that can be viewed following the live presentation) featuring an interesting array of subjects.

March's topic is:

Spritacular: Electrical Discharges Above Thunderstorms with Dr. Burcu Kosar March 11th.

April 16th topic is:

Psyche: Exploration of a Metal World with Dr. David Williams

Details and the YouTube link can be found on our website, News & Letters page, and on the Events page/Calendar @ <https://sonoraastronomicalsociety.org/>

You can also search the internet for YouTube, then Night Sky Network, for the videos.

SONORAN STARRY NIGHTS

PRESIDENTS NOTES

Greetings everyone,

Our March meeting will occur on March 15th at the Sahuarita library (670 Sahuarita Rd). There is parking behind the library. The meeting room is just to the left as you enter the front door. The meeting will officially start at 2:30pm this month with ZOOM login available by 2:15pm. Due to Easter occurring on the 20th, the April meeting will be held on the 12th.

There will be a public star party at Tumacacori National Historical Park on the evening of Friday the 21st.

We no longer have access to Canoa Preserve Park for our club star parties now. We are now using our new site on the way up to Madera Canyon. We finally had a few members show up for the February star party. The sky was wonderful and some nice images were taken by the participants. There is a map to the site available on our website. I will have a sign at the entrance to the road into the site. Our March club star party is scheduled for the 27th. If you have any questions about the site, let me know.

Stay safe,

John Dwyer
President

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MEMBER EQUIPMENT FOR SALE

Have a telescope or other astronomy equipment for sale? Contact John Dwyer with your item(s) to get them listed here.

The SAS website has a good one-page article from Sky & Telescope that can help get you started. Copy and paste this link:

<https://sonoraastronomicalsociety.org/newsletters/>

Basic monthly star charts are now available. Look on the website Home page yellow banner.

The website also has a list of suggestions of Planetarium Apps for your phone, several FREE!

SONORAN STARRY NIGHTS

THE MARCH SKY

SKY HIGHLIGHTS FOR MARCH

The evening night sky still has some great planets this month. **Mars** is still very prominent this month but its disk size (now about 10") as well as its magnitude (now down to about mag 0) continue to drop. **Jupiter**, still well placed for viewing, will start the evening about due south in the sky. **Saturn** is now too close to the Sun for viewing and will reach conjunction with the Sun on the 12th. **Neptune** will join Saturn as it reaches conjunction with the Sun on the 20th. **Venus** will begin to quickly drop towards the Sun this month and reach conjunction on the 22nd. By the end of the month, it will appear in the morning sky. **Uranus** is still in the evening sky about 20° in front of Jupiter. **Mercury** reaches greatest eastern elongation from the Sun (18°) in the evening sky on the 8th.

On the evening of the 13th, a Total Lunar Eclipse will occur. It will begin just before 9:00pm. The partial phase starts about an hour later. At 11:26pm totality starts with maximum eclipse occurring at 11:58pm. The total phase will end at 12:31am. Hopefully we will have good weather for it.

There will be no bright comets this month.

MARCH MOON/SUN TIMES

DATE	M-Rise	M-Set	M-Phase	Sun-set	Star Party
Sat 03/01	7:52	20:34		18:22	
Sun 03/02	8:23	21:45		18:23	
Mon 03/03	8:57	22:56		18:23	
Tue 03/04	9:35	-----		18:24	
Wed 03/05	10:19	0:08		18:25	
Thu 03/06	11:10	1:18	1st Qtr	18:26	
Fri 03/07	12:07	2:24		18:26	
Sat 03/08	13:10	3:22		18:27	
Sun 03/09	14:14	4:11		18:28	
Mon 03/10	15:18	4:52		18:29	
Tue 03/11	16:19	5:26		18:29	
Wed 03/12	17:18	5:55		18:30	
Thu 03/13	18:14	6:22	Full	18:31	
Fri 03/14	19:10	6:47		18:31	
Sat 03/15	20:04	7:11		18:32	SAS Meet- ing
Sun 03/16	21:00	7:36		18:33	
Mon 03/17	21:56	8:02		18:33	
Tue 03/18	22:54	8:32		18:34	
Wed 03/19	23:53	9:06		18:35	
Thu 03/20	-----	9:46		18:36	
Fri 03/21	0:52	10:32		18:36	Tu- macacori
Sat 03/22	1:48	11:27	3rd Qtr	18:37	
Sun 03/23	2:40	12:28		18:38	
Mon 03/24	3:26	13:33		18:38	
Tue 03/25	4:07	14:41		18:39	
Wed 03/26	4:43	15:50		18:40	
Thu 03/27	5:16	17:00		18:40	SAS S.P.
Fri 03/28	5:48	18:10		18:41	
Sat 03/29	6:19	19:21	New	18:42	
Sun 03/30	6:52	20:34		18:42	
Mon 03/31	7:30	21:49		18:43	

(S)=Solar

SONORAN STARRY NIGHTS

THE STARGAZER'S CORNER:

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

March's Night Sky Notes: Messier Madness

By Kat Troche

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.

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THE STARGAZER'S CORNER (CONTINUED):

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:



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 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.

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.

(See image next page)

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THE STARGAZER'S CORNER (CONTINUED):



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



*Locate M76 and M31 setting in the west, 60 minutes after sunset. Credit: Stellarium Web
(Continued Next Page)*

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.

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.

Good luck and Clear Skies!

SONORAN STARRY NIGHTS

S.A.S. CLUB OFFICERS

OFFICE/POSITION	NAME	PHONE NO.
Chairman of the Board	Open	
President	John Dwyer	(520) 393-3680
Secretary	Michael Moraghan	(520) 399-3352
Treasurer	John McGee	(520) 207-6188
Star party Coordinator	Open	(520) 303-6920
Newsletter Editor	Joe Castor	(620) 584-4454
Webmaster	Joe Castor	(620) 584-4454
ALCOR* (Currently Inactive)	Inactive	(520) 396-3576
NSN** Representative	Open	(520) 303-6920
Past President Emeritus	Open	
*Astronomical League		
**Night Sky Network		

WHY JOIN SAS

1. SAS Family Membership Fee is only \$25.00 per year.
2. SAS monthly newsletter "The Sonoran Starry Nights."
3. Top-quality astronomy lectures by local astronomers!
4. SAS Discount for Astronomy Magazine \$34.00 for 1yr or \$60.00 for 2 yr renewed through our treasurer.
5. SAS Discount subscription rate for Sky & Telescope Magazine — self-renewed.
6. RASC Observer's Handbook at a discount, \$30.00.
7. SAS T-Shirts for sale for \$10.00—M, L, XL.
8. Member of International Dark-sky Association (IDA).
9. SAS Discount for Astronomy 2020 Calendar \$10.00
10. SAS monthly Member Star Parties.
11. SAS Telescope and astronomy book loan programs.
12. SAS outreach to astronomy education in schools.
13. SAS fellowship with other amateur astronomers!

CLUB DUES

Dues (family or individual) are \$25 annually, payable each year in the month you initially joined the club. You will receive a reminder in the monthly newsletter e-mail of your due date. You can either pay at the club meeting or mail it to the club's address (S.A.S., P.O. Box 1081, Green Valley, AZ, 85622).

SAS WEBSITE

If you want to keep up-to-date with club activities, such as star parties, etc., check out our website (and Calendar) at:

[HTTPS://sonoraastronomicalsociety.org](https://sonoraastronomicalsociety.org)

SAS STATISTICS & FINANCES

Lifetime Members: 1
Individual & Family Members: 105
Total Membership: 106

Bank Balance as of Jan. 31: \$ 1,285.61
Deposits / (D/Ws): \$.N/A (\$.N/A)
Bank Balance as of Feb 28: \$ N/A

SONORAN STARRY NIGHTS

LOCAL ASTRO-IMAGING GROUP: Sonoran Desert Astro Imagers (SDAI), Larry Phillips, Coordinator

Are you interested in Astrophotography or are you currently involved in imaging the skies? If so, you are invited to join the Sonoran Desert Astro Imagers group. Our meetings focus on improving our skills, helping each other, workshops, and field trips. We meet on Thursdays at 9 AM. The meetings are on Zoom, except once-a-month we get together in-person at the Quail Creek Conference Center. Email notifications are sent to members before each meeting.

Please send your Name and E-mail address to my address below and we'll include you in the emailing notices of monthly meetings; "the when and where meeting notice." Do you have any questions? If so, call me (Larry Phillips) at (520) 777-8027 or email to lp41astro@cox.net. Clear Skies! Larry Phillips

ABOUT THE ASTRONOMICAL LEAGUE



While SAS is no longer an active member of the Astronomical League, a SAS member may join the Astronomical League as an at-large member. What are the advantages to joining the AL?

1. You can receive various observing awards by joining an "observing club" and observing the required number of objects. There are all levels of clubs from beginner to advanced, viewing constellations to deep-sky objects and using either your naked eyes, binoculars, or a telescope. Contact our ALCOR rep Burley Packwood for details.

2. You can get a 10% discount on books purchased through the AL Book Service.

3. You will receive the AL's quarterly "Reflector" magazine which keeps you up to date on all the AL activities.

More info at www.astroleague.org

SAS IS A MEMBER OF IDA



SAS is proud to be a member of the International Dark-Sky Association, supporting the reduction in light pollution around the U.S. and the world.

More info at www.darksky.org

SAS NON-PROFIT STATUS

The Sonora Astronomical Society is a 501 (c) (3) nonprofit charitable organization! SAS has a CERTIFICATE OF GOOD STANDING from the State of Arizona Corporation Commission!

MAGAZINE SUBSCRIPTIONS

To renew your Sky and Telescope Magazine at the Club Rate, you can go directly to their website, or to order it new, or to order or renew Astronomy Magazine, contact the Club Treasurer.

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