The Sonora Astronomical Society's
SONORAN STARRY NIGHTS

MARCH 2026

March Meeting Details

DATE: Saturday, March 21st, 2026
MEETING TIME: 2:30 PM (2:00 access)
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 19th, 2026
TIME: 6:15 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 16th, 2026
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: Saturday April 18th, 2026
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: The presentation will be an interesting astronomy-based video followed by a round table discussion.
Abstract: .
Biography:

WHAT'S NEXT?

NASA has several outreach activities. The YouTube channel holds many interesting current and past videos to watch.

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

The **March 25th,** 6PM PST/MST presentation will be:
Europa and the Jovian System **,**
with **Dave Doody.**

Viewing of and details on this presentation are on YouTube by clicking:

https://www.youtube.com/@NASANightSkyNetwork

Then look for the presentation (should be first shown).

SONORAN STARRY NIGHTS

PRESIDENTS NOTES

Greetings everyone,

Our March meeting will take place on March 21st 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. If anyone has any suggestions for meeting presentations or knows someone we can bring in for a presentation, please let me know.

There are no public star parties this month.

We no longer have access to Canoa Preserve Park for our club star parties. We are now using our new site which is on the way up to Madera Canyon. There is a map to our new site available on our website. Our March club star party is scheduled for the 19th. Again, check our website for details. If you have any questions about the site, let me know.

Stay safe,

John Dwyer
President

IN THIS ISSUE

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.

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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!

THE MARCH SKY

SKY HIGHLIGHTS FOR MARCH

The evening night sky is losing some planets and gaining others this month. **Jupiter** is still in a good position for viewing and will be visible through midnight. **Saturn** will be virtually impossible to see this month and will reach conjunction with the Sun on the 25th. **Neptune** is not viewable as well as it will reach conjunction with the Sun on the 22nd. **Uranus** is still fairly high in the southwestern sky at sunset and will be viewable before midnight. **Venus is** now in the evening sky, but is very low in the western sky at sunset. **Mars**, now in the morning sky**,** is still too close to the Sun for viewing. **Mercury**, after reaching conjunction with the Sun, now moves into the morning sky.

The visibility of comets is very slim this month. A few are in the 10th magnitude threshold. Comet C/2025 R3 (PanSTARRS) might become bright next month, possibly reaching 5th magnitude. However, it will be very low in the morning sky.

If you have any solar viewing equipment, the Sun is extremely active now as it has officially reached maximum. As it is getting a little cooler now, break out the solar equipment and take a peek.

MARCH MOON/SUN TIMES

DATE	M-Rise	M-Set	M-Phase	Sun-set	Star Party
Sun 03/01	16:48	5:51		18:22	
Mon 03/02	17:53	6:24		18:22	
Tue 03/03	18:54	6:53	Full	18:23	
Wed 03/04	19:54	7:20		18:24	
Thu 03/05	20:53	7:47		18:25	
Fri 03/06	21:52	8:15		18:25	
Sat 03/07	22:51	8:44		18:26	
Sun 03/08	23:50	9:16		18:27	
Mon 03/09	-----	9:53		18:28	
Tue 03/10	0:48	10:35		18:28	
Wed 03/11	1:44	11:24	3rd Qtr	18:29	
Thu 03/12	2:35	12:18		18:30	
Fri 03/13	3:22	13:16		18:30	
Sat 03/14	4:04	14:18		18:31	
Sun 03/15	4:40	15:20		18:32	
Mon 03/16	5:13	16:23		18:33	
Tue 03/17	5:43	17:27		18:33	
Wed 03/18	6:12	18:31	New	18:34	
Thu 03/19	6:42	19:37		18:35	SAS S.P.
Fri 03/20	7:13	20:45		18:35	
Sat 03/21	7:47	21:56		18:36	SAS Meeting
Sun 03/22	8:27	23:09		18:37	
Mon 03/23	9:15	-----		18:37	
Tue 03/24	10:10	0:20		18:38	
Wed 03/25	11:14	1:25	1st Qtr	18:39	
Thu 03/26	12:21	2:23		18:39	
Fri 03/27	13:30	3:11		18:40	
Sat 03/28	14:37	3:51		18:41	
Sun 03/29	15:41	4:25		18:41	
Mon 03/30	16:43	4:55		18:42	
Tue 03/31	17:43	5:22		18:43	

(S)=Solar

This article made available by NASA

NASA Webb Pushes Boundaries of Observable Universe Closer to Big Bang

NASA's James Webb Space Telescope shows galaxy MoM-z14 as it appeared in the distant past, only 280 million years after the universe began in the big bang.
Credits: Image: NASA, ESA, CSA, STScI, Rohan Naidu (MIT); Image Processing: Joseph DePasquale (STScI)

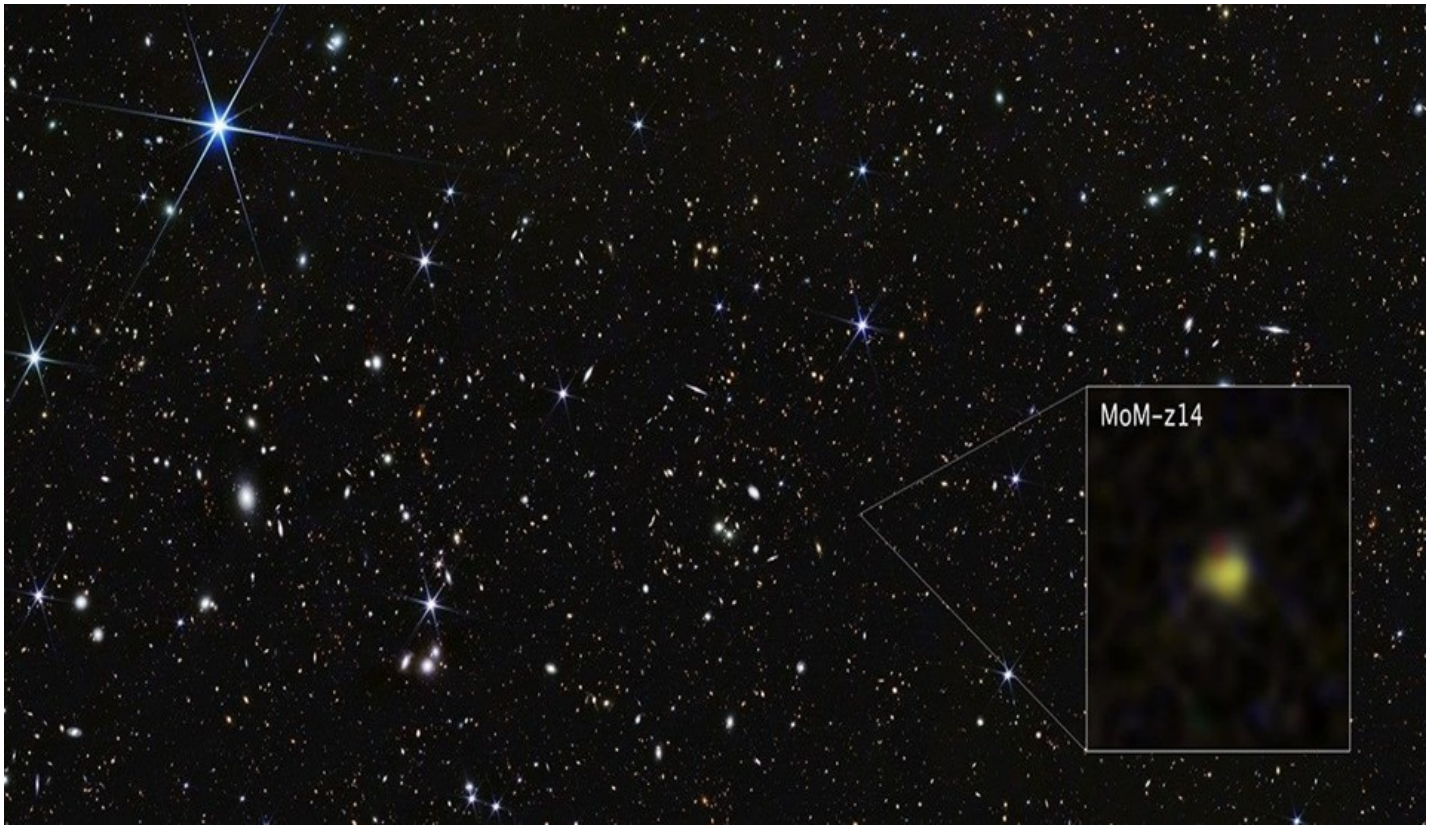
NASA's James Webb Space Telescope has topped itself once again, delivering on its promise to push the boundaries of the observable universe closer to cosmic dawn with the confirmation of a bright galaxy that existed 280 million years after the big bang. By now Webb has established that it will eventually surpass virtually every benchmark it sets in these early years, but the newly confirmed galaxy, MoM-z14, holds intriguing clues to the universe's historical timeline and just how different a place the early universe was than astronomers expected.

"With Webb, we are able to see farther than humans ever have before, and it looks nothing like what we predicted, which is both challenging and exciting," said Rohan Naidu of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's (MIT) Kavli Institute for Astrophysics and Space Research, lead author of a paper on galaxy MoM-z14 published in the Open Journal of Astrophysics.
Due to the expansion of the universe that is driven by dark energy, discussion of physical distances and "years ago" becomes tricky when looking this far. Using Webb's NIRSpec (Near-Infrared Spectrograph) instrument, astronomers confirmed that MoM-z14 has a cosmological redshift of 14.44, meaning that its light has been travelling through (expanding) space, being stretched and "shifted" to longer, redder wavelengths, for about 13.5 of the universe's estimated 13.8 billion years of existence.

"We can estimate the distance of galaxies from images, but it's really important to follow up and confirm with more detailed spectroscopy so that we know exactly what we are seeing, and when," said Pascal Oesch of the University of Geneva, co-principal investigator of the survey.

(Continued next page)

COSMOS Field MoM-z14 Galaxy (NIRCam Image)



NASA's James Webb Space Telescope shows galaxy MoM-z14 as it appeared in the distant past, only 280 million years after the universe began in the big bang.
Image: NASA, ESA, CSA, STScI, Rohan Naidu (MIT); Image Processing: Joseph DePasquale (STScI)

Intriguing Features

MoM-z14 is one of a growing group of surprisingly bright galaxies in the early universe – 100 times more than theoretical studies predicted before the launch of Webb, according to the research team.

"There is a growing chasm between theory and observation related to the early universe, which presents compelling questions to be explored going forward," said Jacob Shen, a postdoctoral researcher at MIT and a member of the research team.

One place researchers and theorists can look for answers is the oldest population of stars in the Milky Way galaxy. A small percentage of these stars have shown high amounts of nitrogen, which is also showing up in some of Webb's observations of early galaxies, including MoM-z14.

"We can take a page from archeology and look at these ancient stars in our own galaxy like fossils from the early universe, except in astronomy we are lucky enough to have Webb seeing so far that we also have direct information about galaxies during that time. It turns out we are seeing some of the same features, like this unusual nitrogen enrichment," said Naidu.

With galaxy MoM-z14 existing only 280 million years after the big bang, there was not enough time for generations of stars to produce such high amounts of nitrogen in the way that astronomers would expect. One theory the researchers note is that the dense environment of the early universe resulted in supermassive stars capable of producing more nitrogen than any stars observed in the local universe.

(Continued next page)

The galaxy MoM-z14 also shows signs of clearing out the thick, primordial hydrogen fog of the early universe in the space around itself. One of the reasons Webb was originally built was to define the timeline for this "clearing" period of cosmic history, which astronomers call reionization.

This is when early stars produced light of high enough energy to break through the dense hydrogen gas of the early universe and begin travelling through space, eventually making its way to Webb, and us. Galaxy MoM-z14 provides another clue for mapping out the timeline of reionization, work that was not possible until Webb lifted the veil on this era of the universe.

Legacy of Discovery Continues

Even before Webb's launch, there were hints that something very unanticipated happened in the early universe, when NASA's Hubble Space Telescope discovered the bright galaxy GN-z11 400 million years after the big bang. Webb confirmed the galaxy's distance — at the time the most distant ever. From there Webb has continued to push back farther and farther in space and time, finding more surprisingly bright galaxies like GN-z11.

As Webb continues to uncover more of these unexpectedly luminous galaxies, it's clear that the first few were not a fluke. Astronomers are eagerly anticipating that NASA's upcoming Nancy Grace Roman Space Telescope, with its combination of high-resolution infrared imaging and extremely wide field of view, will boost the sample of these bright, compact, chemically enriched early galaxies into the thousands.

"To figure out what is going on in the early universe, we really need more information —more detailed observations with Webb, and more galaxies to see where the common features are, which Roman will be able to provide," said Yijia Li, a graduate student at the Pennsylvania State University and a member of the research team. "It's an incredibly exciting time, with Webb revealing the early universe like never before and showing us how much there still is to discover."

The James Webb Space Telescope is the world's premier space science observatory. Webb is solving mysteries in our solar system, looking beyond to distant worlds around other stars, and probing the mysterious structures and origins of our universe and our place in it. Webb is an international program led by NASA with its partners, ESA (European Space Agency) and CSA (Canadian Space Agency).

To learn more about Webb, visit: **https://science.nasa.gov/webb**

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	(**6**20) 584-4454
Webmaster	Joe Castor	(**6**20) 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

SAS STATISTICS & FINANCES

Lifetime Members:	1
Individual & Family Members:	99
Total Membership:	**100**

Bank Balance as of Jan 31:	$ 1,533.96
Deposits / (D/Ws):	$ 100.00 / ($ 35.87)
Bank Balance as of Feb 28:	**$1,598.09**

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 llp41astro@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.

OUR SPONSORS