

STARLIGHT JOURNAL

MARCH 2026

SAVE THESE DATES NOW!

The Tadpole Galaxy – Image by DMAS member JR Paulson

I had never seen this galaxy in astronomy textbooks or magazines until the Hubble Space Telescope released its fantastic image in 2002. This is my attempt at this remarkable object. The Spitzer Space Telescope has taken a more recent image.

The Arp catalogue is a list of peculiar galaxies that do not fit into the normal Hubble classification. Arp 188 is a disrupted barred-spiral galaxy, 470 million light years distant, in the direction of Draco the Dragon. Its distinctive tail is over 280,000 light-years long and features several massive bright blue star clusters. That is nearly three times the diameter of our Milky Way Galaxy, making it one of the longest tails of any galaxy. One explanation is that a more compact intruder galaxy crossed in front of Arp 188 and was slung around behind the Tadpole by its powerful gravitational attraction. During this close encounter, about 100 million years ago, tidal forces drew out stars, dust, and gases forming the spectacular tail. The intruder galaxy can barely be seen through the foreground spirals of the galaxy in the upper left. It is estimated to lie 300 thousand light years behind the Tadpole. The Tadpole will likely lose its tail as the star-forming clusters coalesce into smaller satellites of the large spiral. This is a remarkable example of galaxy interaction.

This image was made with a 14-inch Celestron reflecting telescope and a very sensitive FLI Dream Machine CCD camera. It is a composite made from 58 3-minute exposures through a clear filter, 30 3-minute exposures through a red filter, 27 3-minute exposures through a green filter, and 29- 3minute exposures through a blue filter, totaling over 7 hours of photon collection. It required this very long expose to collect the very dim light that has been traveling across intergalactic space for over 470 million years.

SAVE THESE DATES

Saturday, March 7 – Annual Chili Supper at Ashton Observatory 6:00 p.m.
Saturday, March 7 – Monthly Member Meeting at Ashton Observatory 7:00 p.m.
Saturday March 14 – Annual Observatory Cleaning 10:00 - noon
May 15-17 North Central Region Astronomical League conference Cedar Rapids

March 2026 – President's Report

Thank you to our DMAS members for their many suggestions for our 2026 Priorities. There were many thoughtful ideas, and a few generated much interest in pursuing. Our highest rated priority was to have a member-only night for observing and/or teaching. We know our public viewing nights keep us very busy, as well as the private events that are scheduled during the season. But it is important as a club to also focus on members to enjoy the night sky as well.



Looking at the next couple items that ranked high are lighting for the new sidewalk and public outreach. Lighting options are being considered. Public outreach will take more thought as it was not defined as to exactly what this means. Do we advertise more? Do we consider going to other places such as libraries, to do programs and telescope viewing? To do off-site events, takes coordination and manpower. We will have more discussion on outreach in the days ahead.

This year's public viewing season is already off to a very good start as all the Saturday program dates have been filled. Thank You to our members who volunteered to give presentations this year. There are a wide array of topics and they all sound interesting.

Our Timberline property and the desired conservation process has been moving forward in the last year. Our appreciation goes to Norm Van Klompenburg for his continued efforts to stay in contact with the many parties involved. These include the District Forester from Iowa DNR, the adjacent property landowner, and the logger with whom our club contracted last year to harvest and remove the identified trees. The DNR District Forester generated the 'Forest Stewardship Plan' for our Timberline property.

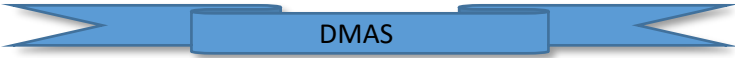
The next steps in our conservation plan are for removal of invasive plant species and the planting of new seedlings. For this process, Norm is investigating possible grant options to be used in conjunction with money from our tree sale harvest proceeds. In the conservation plan, 'Landowner Forest Management Goals' were identified. They are:

1. Keep land in relatively natural state for outdoor recreation and for the education of the public.
2. Improve and maintain long term forest health and wildlife habitat.
3. Improve and maintain the forest for sustainable forest product production.

Hope to see many of you at our spring-cleaning day at Ashton Observatory, which is scheduled for Saturday, March 14th at 10 AM. Many hands make the work go faster and is much appreciated.

Our annual Chili Supper is fast approaching on Saturday, March 7th at 6 PM. Our March membership meeting follows the supper at 7 PM. Bring whatever food you like and enjoy time with other members!!

JoAnn Cogil



DMAS

**The Des Moines Astronomical Society
Monthly Members' Meeting
March 7th, at 7:00 P.M.
at Ashton Observatory**

- Call to Order – Introductions
- Secretary's Report – February meeting minutes (printed in March Starlight Journal)
- Treasurer's Report
- Observatory Director's Report
 - Spring Cleaning
- Timberline Report
- Committee Report
- Member Comments
- Other Business
 - Priorities for 2026
- Dean Regas – Zoom presentations
 - March 11th – Comets & Meteors
 - April 7th – Top 10 Things to See in the Night Sky
- NCRA 2026 Conference
 - May 15-17
 - in Cedar Rapids, Iowa
 - *Ashton Observatory will be closed this weekend as approved by membership*
- First Saturday of our 2026 Public Viewing Season is April 4th!!
- Adjourn
- Next Membership Meeting Date: April 4th at Ashton Observatory
 - Membership meeting at 6:30 PM

Reminder: It is time to renew your 2026 membership! The membership renewal form is printed in this newsletter. Email your completed form to:

info@dmastronomy.com

You can pay your dues with Venmo at:

Des Moines Astronomical Soc DMAS

Thank you!!

Observatory Committee Report

March, 2026, Greg Woolever, Observatory Director

Tis the season for uncertain weather. First we had unprecedented warm temperatures in February, and then heavy snows that closed schools. And most nights seem to have cloudy skies. I guess all that is one reason we have our off-season. But before long we will return to activities at Ashton. April, here we come.

And our annual chili supper meeting is coming soon – first Saturday of March (March 7 this year) we gather at Ashton. Bring your favorite chili or soup recipe to share with other members at Ashton. Some folks will bring desserts or salads, etc., to share as well. But please know that members are welcome to attend and partake in the food regardless of whether you bring food to share. Potlucks always have abundant quantities of food! We'll supply plates, bowls, napkins, spoons, forks, knives, and water and some soft drinks. If you have specific beverages you prefer, that's on you to bring.

Spring cleaning, an annual ritual, will be Saturday, March 14, weather permitting, starting at 10:00 a.m. at Ashton. We'll have cleaning supplies,

but bring your own if you have something you think will be helpful. Normally we will be able to finish by around noon.

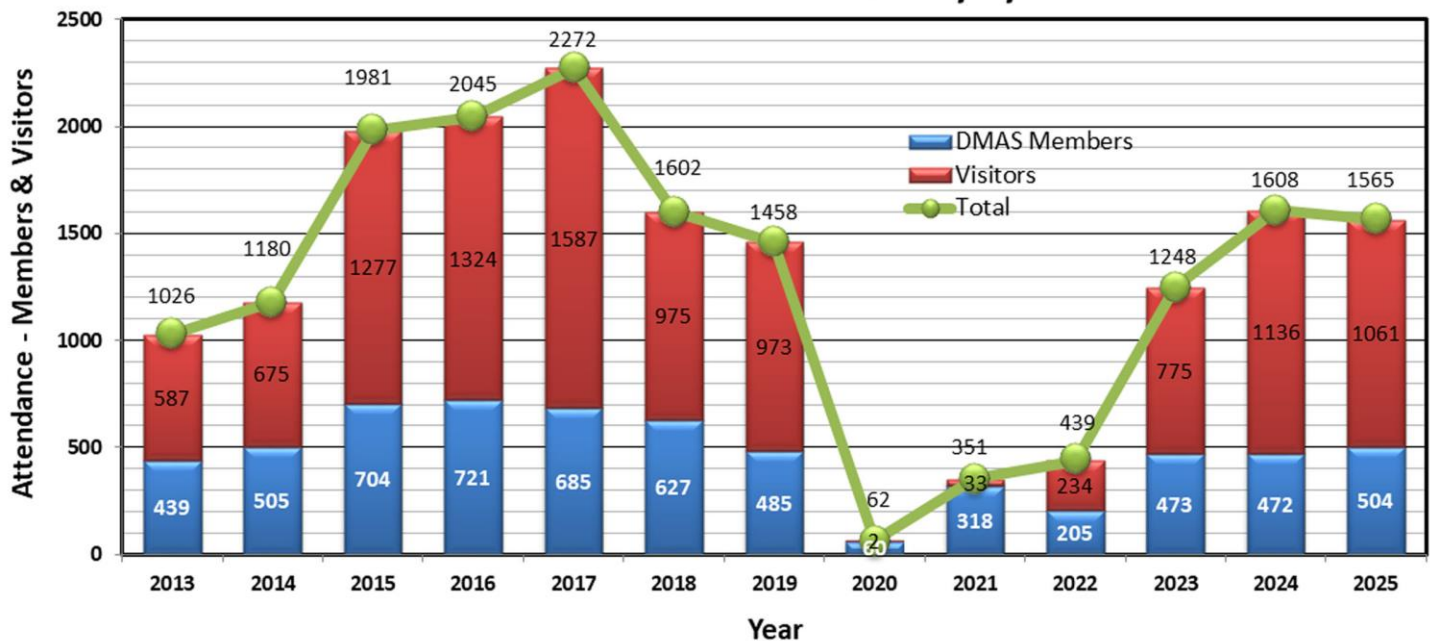
The team working on ordering a PlaneWave telescope (to replace the existing scope in the east dome) has found a supplier. We will share details at the March meeting and seek official DMAS authorization to place an order.

At the January meeting I shared data about attendance for our 2025 season. The chart below illustrates the numbers, compared with previous years, starting in 2013. 2017 had peak interest in the solar eclipse crossing North America. 2020 struggled with Covid pandemic. Weather can reduce attendance, and 2025 certainly had many Saturdays with poor skies.



Greg Woolever & the Observatory Committee:
Dave Heck, Norm Van Klompenburg,
Jim VandeBerg, JoAnn Cogill, Greg Woolever.

Attendance at Ashton Observatory by Year



The Night Sky for March 2026

By JoAnn Cogil

The Moon seems to be the Belle of the Ball this month...as it frequently pairs up with planets and stars for us to enjoy.



Mercury - has a solar conjunction on the 7th, then returns to our morning skies as it rises about 1 hour before the Sun later in the month. Better viewing will be into April -

Venus - our bright evening star is shining once again & climbs higher each night. On the night of the 7th, it will be close to Saturn but may be tough to see as they both set in the west less than one hour after the Sun, which sets about 6:12 PM CST. On the 20th, enjoy the Moon & Venus as they both trail after the Sun at dusk. The Moon will be a very thin crescent though, so look closely.

Earth - **DST** (daylight savings time) returns the morning of the 8th. Set your clocks forward 1 hour! The Spring or Vernal Equinox is on the 20th at 9:46 AM CDT. This day our night and day hours will be equal.

Mars - the little red planet is still a 'No-Show' this month.

Jupiter - remains a prime evening viewing target this month and will stay close to the stars of the constellation Gemini the Twins. On the 25th, the belted planet joins the Moon in the evening western

sky, with Orion below and Gemini above. Ganymede, Jupiter's largest moon, transits the planet late on the 4th and is estimated to take 3 hours to cross the planet. (Image credit: Stellarium)

Saturn – has a solar conjunction on the 25th, which keeps the ringed planet low in the western sky as it trails closely behind the Sun. Again, on the 7th it pairs nicely with Venus.

Uranus – can be found south of the Pleiades this month.

Neptune – on the 22nd, it has its solar conjunction and is still Saturn's neighbor as they both set quickly after the Sun.

Moon

3 – FULL moon @ 5:37 AM CST

11 – 3rd quarter

19 – NEW moon @ 8:23 PM CDT

25 – first quarter

This month we have the 'Worm Moon' for when earthworms begin to emerge as the soil warms in spring, the 'Sap Moon' when maple sap runs as the trees are tapped, and a 'Crow Moon' as the crows begin to call, which signals the end of winter.

Total Lunar Eclipse

On the morning of March 3rd, we will be able to see the total eclipse of the Moon. This occurs when the Moon passes completely into Earth's shadow during its orbit around Earth. Lunar eclipses are notable for causing the Moon to appear orange or red as the Moon passes through the Earth's umbra, the darkest region of the eclipse.

The eclipse begins about 2:45 AM CST locally and is expected to reach totality about 5:33 AM CST. Totality lasts about 1 hour, and the entire eclipse will last about 5 hours.

The striking reddish color creates a phenomenon nicknamed a 'blood moon'. The moon turns red during a total lunar eclipse due to the way Earth's atmosphere bends and filters sunlight, scattering blue light while allowing red and orange light wavelengths to reach the moon.



If you look really hard right at the beginning and just before the end of totality, you may detect a light blue band along the edges of the Moon's surface. This happens because the Earth's ozone layer scatters red light and lets through some of the blue light that is otherwise filtered out by other layers of Earth's atmosphere.

Total lunar eclipses are not as dramatic as total solar eclipses, but they are still beautiful to observe.

(Image credit: Wikipedia)



Educational Opportunities

Dean Regas is **an astronomer, public speaker, author, and podcaster** who brings the complicated universe down to Earth for audiences of all ages.

Dean is an honorary member of the Des Moines Astronomical Society.

He is also the host of the "Looking UP" podcast

Visit Dean at his astronomy website: <https://astrodean.com/>



Free Online Zoom Classes in 2026 with Astronomer Dean Regas

Feb 11: Life and Times of Galileo

Mar 11: Comets and Meteors

Apr 7: Top 10 Things to See in the Night Sky

May 5: It's About Time - How We Use the Sky

June 2: Webb and Rubin Telescope Updates

July 7: Along the Milky Way

Aug: TBD (depending on the itinerary of my eclipse trip)

Sep 1: Ancient Greek Astronomy

Oct 6: Monsters in the Sky - Constellations of Fall

Nov 3: Life and Death of Stars

Dec 1: Exoplanets News

Astronomical League

Explore these Rewarding and Educational Observing Programs

The **Astronomical League** is an umbrella organization of amateur astronomy societies. Currently their membership consists of over 330 organizations across the United States, including the **Des Moines Astronomical Society**. You can find many useful astronomy resources on their website.



Please give a warm welcome to these new DMAS members:

Ben Sinclair
James Rankin
Julie Walker

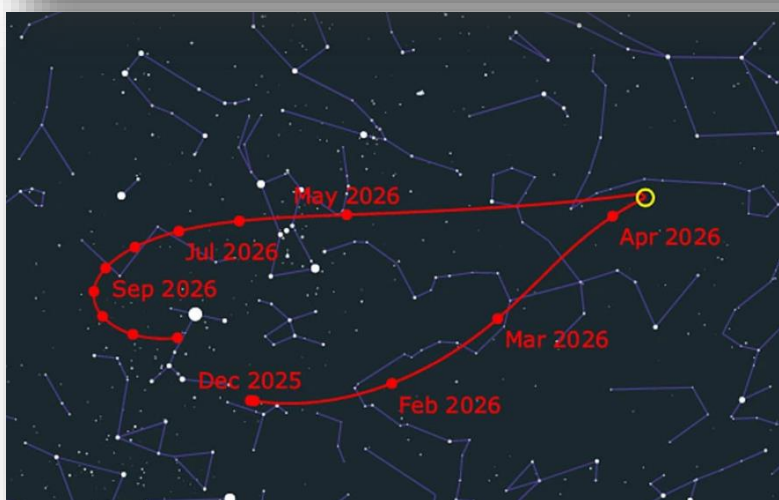
Comet Watch by JoAnn Cogil

Comet C/2026 A1 (MAPS)

This is a new 'Kreutz sun grazing' comet that was recently discovered. The 'Kreutz' comet is a family of comets that pass extremely close to the Sun, sometimes within a few thousand miles. This comet is possibly a fragment of an extremely large comet that broke apart centuries ago and has been sending bright comets and debris into our skies for the last 2,000 years. They have orbital periods of about 500-1,000 years. These comets are some of the brightest and most spectacular comets ever seen. Comet Lovejoy (C/2011 W3) and Comet Ikeya-Seki (C/1965 S1) were stunning Kreutz comets with spectacular tails. Comet Ikeya-Seki was the brightest comet in the 20th century.



Image credit: Astronomy.com (Comet Ikeya-Seki, captured on October 29, 1965. Credit: [Roger Lynds/NOIRLab/NSF/AURA, CC BY 4.0](#))



Over 4,500 Kreutz comets have been discovered by NASA & ESA. Many are tiny, some only a few feet across and disintegrate quickly near the Sun. Scientists think the MAPS comet is much bigger, possibly as large as 1.5 miles across, and when discovered, it was farther from the Sun than any previous sungrazer comet.

MAPS was discovered photographically on January 13th and currently has a magnitude of about 17. It won't become visible in

even 8 to 10-inch telescopes until mid-March, when it brightens to around 13th magnitude. It can be found in the constellation Cetus and will be low in the southwestern sky during late evening twilight. It is very likely the comet will grow a long, striking tail that may be seen for several days on and after April 4th, the date of its perihelion, as the comet will pass within about 99,000 miles from the Sun's surface, well within the solar corona. Being so close to the Sun often leads comets to fragment due to extreme heat and strong

gravitational tides. But if the MAPS comet survives its journey near the Sun, it may become a bright, naked-eye object.

Comet C/2026 A1 (PAPS) path. *Image credit: Sky&Telescope.com*

Comet C/2025 R3 (PanSTARRS)

Next month in April, this long-period comet will make its way through our solar system. It is expected to reach perihelion, its closest distance to the Sun, on April 20th as it will come within 47.4 million miles of the Sun. Then on April 27th, it is expected to be at its closest point to Earth, about 44 million miles. This closeness should allow the comet to be at its brightest.

The comet was discovered last year on September 8th by the Pan-STARRS Observatory, which have a pair of 5.9 foot reflector telescopes that sit atop the Haleakalā volcano in Hawaii. These scopes take constant wide images of the sky which are compared via computer with older images, flagging anything that moves. The Canada-France-Hawaii 11.8-foot Telescope at Mauna Kea, Hawaii, performed follow-up observation to help calculate the comet's path.

(Image credit: The Pan-STARRS observatory in Hawaii — a telescope system credited with discovering many new comets and near-Earth objects. [@Rob Ratkowski](#))

What does the designation C/2025 R3 mean? C/ is for non-periodic comet, which means it only travels through our solar system one time; 2025 the year of discovery; R indicates discovery in the first half of September; and 3 as it was the third comet discovered in the first half of September. The name 'Pan-STARRS' credits the survey project that made the discovery.

Long-period comets spend most of their time far beyond the planets, in the far distant reaches of our Solar System. These objects can take tens of thousands to possibly millions of years to return to our area of the solar system and some never return. Initial estimates by scientists show this comet may have an elongated path that may not form a closed loop around the Sun, meaning it will go past the Sun once and head back out into interstellar space. So be ready as next month may be the only time in history we may see this comet. Or its path is so long that no one alive today would ever get to see it again.

For now, the best chance to see it will be late April to early May. Observers in the Northern Hemisphere will want to catch it in the morning skies as it passes through the constellations Pegasus, Pisces, Cetus and Taurus. Around mid-April, it should be within the Great Square of Pegasus, an hour before sunrise. As the comet moves between the Earth and the Sun, its tail reflects and scatters a lot of sunlight in the direction of Earth. This is a phenomenon that enhances the comet's brightness and is known as 'forward scattering'. This makes the comet easier to see. Here is the expected location of the comet on April 13th at 5:00 AM CDT.

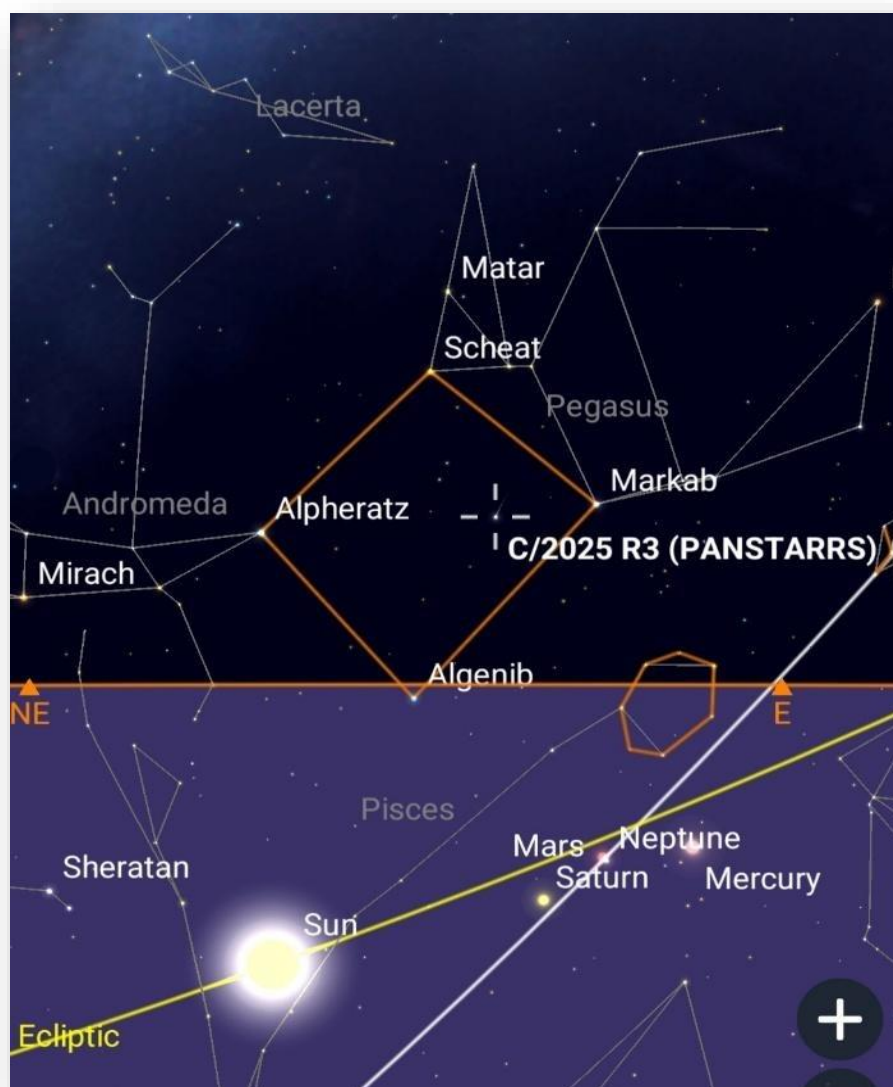


Image credit: SkySafari



The Tadpole Nebula – Image by DMAS member JR Paulson

What's causing the commotion in the Tadpole Nebula? Star formation. Dusty emission in the Tadpole Nebula, IC 410, lies about 12,000 light-years away in the northern constellation of the Charioteer (Auriga). The cloud of glowing gas is over 100 light-years across, sculpted by stellar winds and radiation from embedded open star cluster NGC 1893. Formed in the interstellar cloud a mere 4 million years ago, bright newly formed cluster stars are seen all around the star-forming nebula. Notable on the right of the image are two relatively dense streamers of material trailing away from the nebula's central regions. Potentially sites of ongoing star formation in IC 410, these cosmic tadpole shapes are about 10 light-years long. The image was processed highlighting the emission from sulfur (red), hydrogen (green), and oxygen (blue) gas.

Coming from a medical background, I see this nebula in a different paradigm. I see two giant sperm heading for a cervix. What do you see?

Ashton Observatory Public Night Programs filled for 2026!



Ashton Observatory Public Nights 2026

Presented by The Des Moines Astronomical Society. Inc.

Ashton Observatory is open to the public for weekend programs,
followed by stargazing – Saturday evenings, April through October.



Date	Time	Presentation Subject	Presenter	days Moon
Apr. 04	8:00 p.m.	Stargazing		17.1 ☾
11	8:00 p.m.	Preview of the coming 2026 season.....	Derryl Barr	24.0 ☾
18	8:00 p.m.	Stargazing		1.6 ●
25	8:00 p.m.	Astrophotography with a DSLR/Mirrorless Camera	Heather Johnson	8.6 ☾
May 02	8:00 p.m.	Stargazing		15.6 ☾
09	8:00 p.m.	Types of Objects in the Universe.....	Paul Caligiuri	22.6 ☾
16	8:00 p.m.	Ashton Observatory closed: NCRAL conference in Cedar Rapids....		0.3 ●
23	8:00 p.m.	Stars & S'mores: The Perfect Camping Combination.	Jim McGraw	7.3 ☾
30	8:00 p.m.	Stargazing		14.3 ☾
Jun. 06	8:00 p.m.	Stargazing		21.3 ☾
13	8:00 p.m.	Starry, Starry Night.....	JoAnn Cogil	28.3 ●
20	8:00 p.m.	Stargazing		6.0 ☾
27	8:00 p.m.	Inspiring Astronomer: Hebert Howe	Jim VandeBerg	13.0 ☾
Jul. 04	8:00 p.m.	Stargazing		20.0 ☾
11	8:00 p.m.	Finding Distances to Stars and Objects.....	Paul Caligiuri	27.0 ☾
18	8:00 p.m.	Stargazing		4.7 ☾
25	8:00 p.m.	Protecting our Dark Skies	JR Paulson	11.7 ☾
Aug. 01	8:00 p.m.	Stargazing		18.7 ☾
08	8:00 p.m.	Our Address in the Universe	JR Paulson	25.7 ●
15	8:00 p.m.	Stargazing		3.4 ●
22	8:00 p.m.	Astronomy Fun Facts.....	Jim VandeBerg	10.4 ●
29	8:00 p.m.	Stargazing		17.4 ☾
Sep. 05	8:00 p.m.	Stargazing		24.4 ●
12	8:00 p.m.	History of Apollo, Part 2	Wade Johnson	1.9 ●
19	8:00 p.m.	Stargazing		8.9 ☾
26	8:00 p.m.	Journey to the Edge of the Universe	Jim VandeBerg	15.9 ☾
Oct. 03	8:00 p.m.	Stargazing		22.9 ☾
10	8:00 p.m.	Hidden in Plane Sight: Looking at Saturn Edge-On.....	Derrick Bennett	0.4 ●
17	8:00 p.m.	Stargazing		7.4 ☾
24	8:00 p.m.	Once Upon an Eclipse.....	Derryl Barr	14.4 ☾
31	8:00 p.m.	Stargazing		21.4 ☾



This Month in DMAS History

From the StarLight Journal 25 Years Ago, March 2001

There are no StarLight Journals in the online archives for January through June of 2001.

From the StarLight Journal 10 Years Ago, February 2016

A Home Observatory by Keith Jamison, Knoxville, IA.

My interest in astronomy began in the 1950's. I remember making the rounds of the businesses in my hometown of Sheffield, Iowa asking for any cardboard tubes to be used for making a telescope. The optics were obtained from Edmund Scientific (still in existence). Most lenses were around 50-60mm in diameter with a focal length of 400mm. I would look out my upstairs window at Mars, Jupiter or the moon. Then in 1957 I caught sight of Comet Arend-Roland and I was hooked for good.

In 1965 I moved to Knoxville, Iowa and purchased a house a little later. I had a ten foot square concrete pad poured and began planning for some type of observatory. My first attempt was a crude dome using fiberglass

curtains but it was too flimsy. I moved on to a dome made from tempered Masonite and ribs cut with a router. A friend of mine and I made up plans for the dome and sold them through Sky & Telescope back in 1975. We sold about 100 sets of plans and were very pleased. The Masonite rotted after about 5 years so I went with a roll-off roof observatory. The round Masonite dome offered wind protection and blocked some local lights. The new building gives you a better look at the night sky. Each design has some advantages.

I've had several different scopes over the years beginning with a 4.5 inch reflector from Edmund Scientific. I next purchased a Cave Optical 6 inch reflector plus a used 10 inch Cave reflector. Thus came the name of my observatory - **TCO – Twin Caves Observatory**. Later on I had a couple Celestron Schmidt-Cassegrain Telescopes (5 to 8 inch). Several of my scopes were given to DMAS over the years.

Cameras have changed over the years as well. I had a Schmidt camera that used individual frames of film plus several SLR cameras that used rolls of film. I messed around with cold cameras and later with hypersensitized films. Today it's mostly digital SLR cameras. Currently the TCO houses a Celestron 6 inch SCT on an iOptron EQ 45 mount. The scope can be guided by a small CCD sold by SBIG. I enjoy the globular clusters as well as any visible comets. I have finished the Astronomical League Herschel 400 list as well as the Messier objects.

The original article also contained several pictures, one of which is shown below:



Current roll-off roof observatory. 4 ft. high walls and building is 10 x 10 ft. The roof rolls off to the north.



Other Astronomy Events that Happened in March

- 697 BC** March 23 – Chinese astronomers observe the Lyrids and record that they dropped down like rain
- 5 BC** March 10 – A comet is discovered near Alpha Capricorni and is visible for 70 days
- 1610** March 13 – Galileo discovers Jupiter's largest 4 moons
- 1656** March 5 – Christian Huygens discovers Saturn's largest moon Titan
- 1998** March 2 – Space probe Galileo data indicates a liquid water ocean under a thick layer of ice on Europa
- 2011** March 18 – Messenger space probe becomes the first spacecraft to orbit Mercury
- 2018** March 14 – NASA announces that 7% of Scott Kelly's genes have changed after a year in space
- 2022** March 29 – New Horizons space probe reveals cryovolcanism and ice flows on Pluto
- 2026** March 3 – Total lunar eclipse (see below)

TOTAL LUNAR ECLIPSE MARCH 3, 2026

In the very wee hours of the morning central Iowa will have the opportunity to see and photograph a Total Lunar Eclipse. It has been described in early publications as a Blood Moon. However, due to the hours and position of the setting moon a clear and unobstructed view of the south and west will be essential. The moon sets just minutes after maximum totality.



– **DMAS member David Lynch**

Moon Rise-----6:39 AM March 2nd
1st Contact Penumbra-----2:44 AM
1st Contact Umbra-----3:51 AM
Start of Totality-----5:04 AM
Maximum Totality-----5:34 AM
Moon Sets-----5:39 AM

Dear Observatory Family,

The Drake Municipal Observatory will be open Friday, February 20th starting at 7:30 p.m. If you are in town and not too busy, you are cordially invited to a warm astronomical evening (indoors if not out). Tell your friends and family, and as usual it is free and open to all. Of course, we will warn you if the road is impassable.

All the best,
Herb Folsom



DRAKE MUNICIPAL OBSERVATORY PUBLIC NIGHTS 2026

March 13th Vera Rubin Observatory
 March 20th Exo-Planets: Ethan Beacom (Science Center of Iowa)
 March 27th AI in Astronomy: Dr. Laura Yost (University of Iowa)
 April 6th Women in Astronomy: JoAnn Cogil (DMAS)
 April 13th Comets: Mystery and Madness
 April 20th Cosmology: Everything There Is
 April 27th Open Topic
 May 4th Cosmology Part 2: More Everything
 May 11th Mars Exploration: Landers, Rovers & Helicopters
 May 18th Telescopes: Infinite Knowledge Through Infinite Diversity



The Des Moines Astronomical Society, Inc. Member Application/Renewal Form

PLEASE PRINT LEGIBLY

Renewal memberships are due by January 31.

Prorated dues are only eligible to new members.

Check one: ☐ New member ☐ Renewal

NAME(S): _____

STREET ADDRESS: _____

CITY, STATE, ZIP: _____

PHONE NUMBER: _____

EMAIL ADDRESS: _____

Privacy

None of your contact information is ever shared with the public. You may also restrict it from being shared with fellow members on the member roster if you wish. Check which items you want to keep private:

☐ Address ☐ Phone ☐ Email ☐ Other (explain): _____

Monthly Newsletter Delivery

There are two ways to receive the newsletter – please check one.

☐ Email – recommended (link to PDF file sent by email; copy also available on DMAS website).

☐ Postal delivery (requires printing & postage expenses, plus time by editor).

DMAS Annual Dues Rates - check one.

Type	Votes	Dues
Individual (18 & up):	1.....	\$40.00[]
Family:	2.....	\$60.00[]
Associate:	0.....	\$21.00[]
Lifetime individual	1.....	\$500.00[]
Lifetime family:	2.....	\$600.00[]

New Member Prorated Dues Amounts - check one.

Date	Individual	Family	Associate
Jan-Jun	\$40.00[]	\$60.00[]	\$21.00[]
Jul-Dec.....	\$20.00[]	\$30.00[]	\$10.00[]

My Payment This Year.

Dues: \$ _____

Optional donation: \$ _____

Total: \$ _____

Your payments to DMAS are tax deductible. Thank you!

Fill out this form and return it with your payment to start your member privileges. Make check payable to: DMAS

Mailing address:

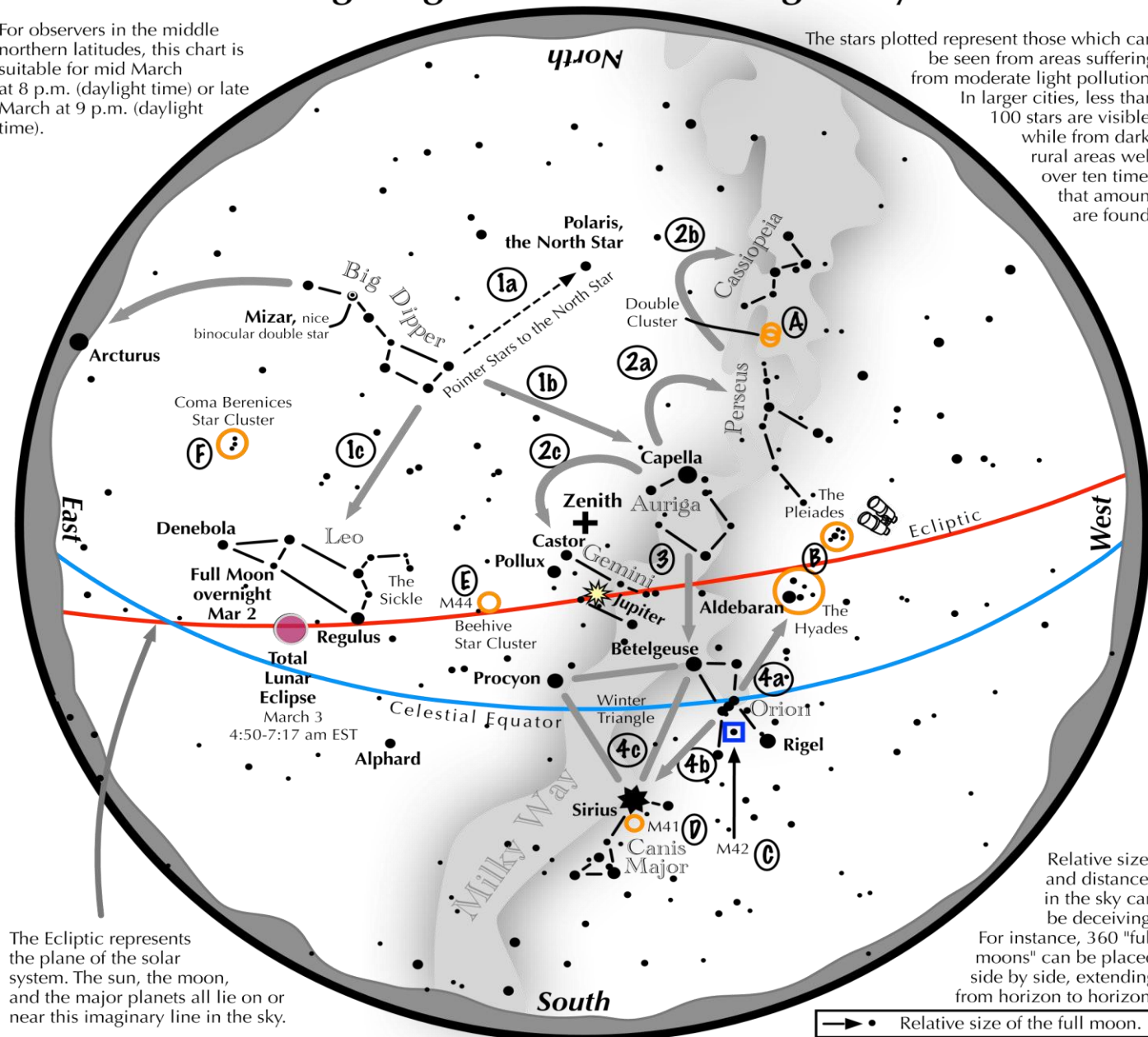
Des Moines Astronomical Society PO Box 111
Des Moines IA, 50301 (or pay with Venmo at "Des Moines
Astronomical Soc DMAS")

Alternate delivery of membership form:
email to info@dmastronomy.com

Navigating the mid March Night Sky

For observers in the middle northern latitudes, this chart is suitable for mid March at 8 p.m. (daylight time) or late March at 9 p.m. (daylight time).

The stars plotted represent those which can be seen from areas suffering from moderate light pollution. In larger cities, less than 100 stars are visible, while from dark, rural areas well over ten times that amount are found.



The Ecliptic represents the plane of the solar system. The sun, the moon, and the major planets all lie on or near this imaginary line in the sky.

Relative sizes and distances in the sky can be deceiving. For instance, 360 "full moons" can be placed side by side, extending from horizon to horizon.

→ • Relative size of the full moon.

Navigating the March night sky: Simply start with what you know or with what you can easily find.

- 1 Above the northeast horizon rises the Big Dipper. Draw a line from its two end bowl stars upwards to the North Star. Its top bowl stars point west to Capella in Auriga, nearly overhead. Leo reclines below the Dipper's bowl.
- 2 From Capella jump northwestward along the Milky Way to Perseus, then to the "W" of Cassiopeia. Next jump southeastward from Capella to the twin stars of Castor and Pollux in Gemini.
- 3 Directly south of Capella stands the constellation of Orion with its three Belt Stars, its bright red star Betelgeuse, and its bright blue-white star Rigel.
- 4 Use Orion's three Belt stars to point northwest to the red star Aldebaran and the Hyades star cluster, then to the Pleiades star cluster. Travel southeast from the Belt stars to the brightest star in the night sky, Sirius. It is a member of the Winter Triangle.

Binocular Highlights

A: Between the "W" of Cassiopeia and Perseus lies the Double Cluster. **B:** Examine the stars of the Pleiades and Hyades, two naked eye star clusters. **C:** M42 in Orion is a star forming nebula. **D:** Look south of Sirius for the star cluster M41. **E:** M44, a star cluster barely visible to the naked eye, lies to the southeast of Pollux. **F:** Look high in the east for the loose star cluster of Coma Berenices.



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At Large Director: Dave Bailey

Observatory Committee: Greg Woolever, Norm Van Klompenburg, Dave Heck, and Jim VandeBerg

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Article Deadline: Before the 21st of the month, please send your articles, photos, sketches, poems, cartoons, and news to Jim VandeBerg (FinePineCabin@gmail.com) Articles may be edited to fit the allotted newsletter space. Copyrighted material must have permission from the copyright holder. Views and opinions expressed within submissions are those of the author and not necessarily those of the Des Moines Astronomical Society, Inc.

The Purpose of our Society

- Secure the pleasure and benefits of an association of persons interested in amateur astronomy
- Promote the science of astronomy
- Encourage and promote activities of an astronomical nature
- Foster observational, computational, technical, and creative skills in various fields of astronomy
- Pursue activities with other amateurs and professionals
- Educate the public

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