



Event Horizon

ENCOURAGE. EXPLORE. DISCUSS

Premiere Issue



September 2025

Suncoast Stargazers

<https://suncoaststargazers.com/>

Who Are The Suncoast Stargazers

To coin a phrase from the late, great Admiral James Stockdale: “who are we and why are we here”? The answer is simple; there was a need that was not being fulfilled.

Back in 2018 and 2019 an active group of amateur astronomers began a “quasi club” largely affiliated with the local Science Center/Planetarium. There were interesting planetarium programs captained by a one-of-a-kind director who was everyone’s local favorite. Momentum was building. Then came the event that no one saw coming – Covid 19.

As someone deeply involved in the industry from a business perspective for over 25 years, it became obvious that suddenly everyone was looking for activities to keep them out in the fresh air BUT away from other people. One of those activities was an interest in stargazing and telescopes. Sales in a very mature company, happy with 3% to 5% annual increases, suddenly doubled their sales. Interest was everywhere but the means to nurture and grow that interest were either curtailed or indeed shut down completely. It was time to make a decision. From here the Suncoast Stargazers were born.

Relationships with stargazing venues such as Robinson Preserve (Bradenton) and The Bay Conservancy (Sarasota) had

[Continued on Page 12 Who Are Suncoast Stargazers](#)

Member Gregory T. Shanos Awarded Walter H. Haas Observers

The Association of Lunar and Planetary Observers (ALPO) is a scientific and educational organization founded in March 1947 by Walter H. Haas. Suncoast Stargazers member Gregory Shanos joined the ALPO in 2021 and has since submitted over 575 observations of the planets. The 2025 Walter H. Haas Observers Award is bestowed to Greg Shanos. Most amateur astronomers gravitate (pun intended) towards deep sky observing and astrophotography. The planets being a mere after thought. Nothing could be further from the truth. The light from deep sky objects took millions to billions of years to reach our telescopes whereas reflected light from the planets took only light minutes. In addition, the planets exhibit changes on a daily basis. For example, not only are the phases of Venus of interest but unbeknown to many, the upper and middle clouds of Venus are

visible in ultraviolet and infrared wavelengths respectively. Today’s CMOS chips are also sensitive in the UV and IR and by using the proper filters, these wavelengths are enhanced and the clouds become visible on Venus. The clouds appear dark due to an unknown ultraviolet absorber. At 1010nm (1 micron) the surface features on Venus become visible and are able to be imaged!

Mars exhibits dark albedo features at specific central meridians which rotate with the planet. Syrtis major, Hellas basin and Olympus mons are examples of such features. Mars exhibits seasons like the Earth. During Martian winter the seasonal ice caps composed of carbon dioxide form and grow then shrink again the spring and summer. Dust storms typically develop and may engulf the planet. During the 2018 apparition of Mars a global dust storm engulfed the entire planet, and no albedo features were visible from earth for several months until the dust began to clear. Clouds typically form near the limb and over the volca-

[Continued on Page 8 Member Gregory Award](#)

“Event Horizon” Is a quarterly publication of Suncoast Stargazers

Why is Suncoast Stargazers Important To Me?

The Members

When I started looking at the heavens in 1975, there was no one to ask about which telescope, which eyepieces, which clock drive, how to align with Polaris (I just thought you pointed the scope North), how (why) was the equatorial wedge angle set, and where were the interesting objects to look at? I had a Field Guide to the Stars and a subscription to Sky and Telescope. That led to a Celestron C8, four eyepieces (one of which I dropped and broke), and a clock drive. My first night at the Bishop Museum with Ed McDonough, Howard Hochhalter and Martha Wells in 2021 was a revelation about the importance of being with people who knew what they were talking about. Ed's advice led me back to Celestron. I wanted a larger scope (how unusual) and a computer guidance system. He suggested a C9 so of course I ordered a C11. He was right, the C11 is too heavy but I love the reaction when people look through it. He recommended a Celestron mount but I knew better and got the iOptron CEM, so it takes me three times as long to set it up, align it and put it away. Mostly, I appreciate the help offered by Ed, Jennifer, and Howard (when he is there), during set up and break down. They always offer their time and it means a lot to me.

The Public

At every session we have, be it at Robinson Preserve or The Bay Conservancy, people line up to look and express awe and surprise at what they see. Whether it is the Moon and its craters, or Saturn's rings, Jupiter and its moons or The Pleiades, the sense of wonder and appreciation makes all the work worthwhile. My favorite viewer was a six-year-old boy who made his mother drive from St Pete to Robinson Preserve for our solar eclipse event. He wanted to know about every piece of equipment and what it did. He then explained what caused the eclipse and what he wanted to see. I was blown away by the amount of knowledge he had and could verbalize. That interaction typifies why I do this.

My Back Yard

Setting up the C 11 with the CEM Mount and tripod is a fiddly opus of moving parts. When done right, the three-star alignment allows the computer to show me the night sky wonders that send me inside to interrupt Christine and whatever she is doing or watching so she can come "look at what I found". When it is not done right, the frustration of not finding what I am looking for drives me to distraction. I have done it enough times so that I can work through my check list and have the warm sense of satisfaction of having the object I want to see show up in the finder scope right where it is supposed to be. Without Ed, Howard, Jennifer and so many others from Suncoast Stargazers, it is unlikely that I would even have a scope, let alone know how to enjoy it.

By Jim Augustine

Just for the Funny of It!



1. WOW! I did not see that coming!
2. Those #\$\$%@ Starlink Satellites!
3. Good thing my scope is outside.
4. \$400 an oz. for meteorite's... it should pay for a new house.

Which Caption did you like best? Got one of your own? Email us @ publisherscsg@gmail.com

Let us know!

The Lunar X & V

One of my favorite “features” on the moon is the Lunar X & V. This phenomenon is predictable and occurs on a monthly basis. (See Table 1).

The Lunar X (also known as the Werner X) is a claire-obscure effect in which light and shadow creates the appearance of a letter 'X' on the rim of the craters Blanchinus, La Caille and Purbach. The X is visible beside the terminator about one-third of the way up from the southern pole of the moon. The Lunar V forms along the northern part of the terminator near the crater Ukert. (See images 1-2)

I advise all amateur astronomers to consult this table to see if the Lunar X & V will be visible from your location. Time and date are listed in Universal Time therefore each individual observer will need to convert to their local time in order to observe the event. The easiest way to do this is with a free program called WinJupos. (<https://jupos.org/gh/download.htm>) WinJupos states both Universal Time and Local Time for the Sun, Moon and Planets. Enter your latitude and longitude first, then enter Universal Time stated on the table and your local time will appear above (See Table 1). For many observers in the Western Hemisphere, local time will be the day before. For example, the Lunar X & V occurred according to the table on July 3, 2025 at 00 hours 15 minutes UT which for the New York Time Zone is the day before July 2, 2025 at 20:15 or 8:15PM local time. If you went out on July 3rd, the X & V would have occurred already and would not be visible. Therefore, it is imperative that Universal Time be converted to Local Time in order to witness the event.

Fortunately, the X & V will appear and last several hours later than the stated time on the table. This is a good thing, since it may be cloudy at the start of the event and an hour later the clouds may have dissipated. The Lunar X & V will still be visible! Another interesting phenomenon I previously witnessed was that the V was visible at the time stated on the table, but the X was not fully formed. It took several hours for the X to appear as a full X. This makes the observation even more interesting since you can watch the X appear in real time!

In conclusion, the Lunar X & V is a monthly phenomenon not to be missed. Check the table, convert Universal Time to Local Time and see if it will be visible from your location. If it is, then get out your telescopes and cameras and submit your observations to ALPO's the Lunar Observer care of David Teske. david.teske@alpo-astronomy.org



Image 1



Image 2

Month	4 Year Lunar "X" and "V" Schedule * **			
	2025	2026	2027	2028
Jan	6: 1645	25: 1630	15: 0015	4: 0830
Feb	5: 0800	24: 0730	13: 1530	3: 0015
Mar	6: 2300	25: 2145	15: 0600	3: 1500
Apr	5: 1300	24: 1100	13: 1930	2: 0430
				1: 1700
May	5: 0130	23: 2245	13: 0730	31: 0400
Jun	3: 1330	22: 0945	11: 1830	29: 1430
Jul	3: 0015	21: 2000	11: 0500	29: 0030
	1: 1100			
Aug	30: 2130	20: 0630	9: 1530	27: 1100
Sep	29: 0900	18: 1730	8: 0200	25: 2245
Oct	28: 2115	18: 0530	7: 1400	25: 1130
Nov	27: 1045	16: 1900	6: 0300	24: 0145
Dec	27: 0115	16: 0930	5: 1730	23: 1645

* All times are listed as the day of the month and then the hour in UT

** All times are approximations based on LTVT calculations. They are accurate to +/- 1 hour.

Table 1

By Gregory T. Shanos

Welcome to the Debut Issue of Event Horizon

Welcome to the Premiere Issue of the Event Horizon Newsletter published by Suncoast Stargazers!

This is for you, by you and about you. Here is where you can “Encourage, Explore, Discuss” all thing relating to stargazing and astrophotography. Do you have a story about a night out stargazing? Share it here. Do you have some knowledge that you would like to pass on, put it in writing here to encourage others. Not only are we sharing out adventures in stargazing but we can share our beautiful images as well.

We welcome submissions of articles or images. If you want more information about article length and or submitting an article or images, contact our publisher @ publisherscsg@gmail.com and we will respond to your email as soon as possible.

Thanks, to you and for you.

Publisher— Event Horizon by Suncoast Stargazers

Five Questions With... Kayla Taylor

Kayla Taylor is working toward her PhD in Electrical Engineering and Computer Science at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University. She also holds a BS in Astronomy and Astrophysics and an MS in Aviation with a specialization in Space Studies from Embry-Riddle. Her research interests focus on balancing the opportunity and impact of human innovation, scientific inquiry, artificial intelligence, machine learning, transportation, and space exploration. She is an avid technical writer and STEM communicator, and she enjoys working with her colleagues to conduct interdisciplinary research. She has conducted research and published on various STEM-related issues, from [expanding opportunities for women in STEM](#) to [evaluating the effect of light pollution on ground-based astronomy](#). Her work serves to reimagine and support the aerospace and aviation industries.

Q1. *What first inspired your interest in astronomy and the cosmos?*

Kayla: I've had many mentors and experiences throughout my life that inspired my interest in astronomy, but the FIRST time I realized I had an interest in astronomy and astrophysics was in first grade (I was probably around 6 or 7 years old), and I read Mary Pope Osborne's "Midnight on the Moon" from

[Continued on Page 7 Five questions with...](#)

Summer Telescope Hibernation?

As an amateur astronomer living in Florida, observing the night sky is a bittersweet experience. From late October to May, the sweet skies above the sunshine state can be second to none. Assuming you can get to a relatively dark sky, winter weather in Florida can make for a wonderful and memorable visual experience. The experience from June to early October is quite the opposite. During the bitter summer months in Florida is when most telescopes go off to hibernate.

As we endure the wet weather that makes the skies inhospitable to visual astronomy, it seems that we can only dream about the cool and drier skies of winter, but all is not lost. We can do two things to help feed our astronomy needs. The first is to adjust your stargazing plans. While the summer months make breaking out the telescope less than ideal, binoculars can take advantage of the opportunities that the sky reveals in short lived moments between the clouds. The second thing is to spend some time planning the upcoming observing season and setting observational goals that will help enrich the experience.

While I am blessed to own several telescopes of varying apertures (as well as a permanent observatory with a 14" Schmidt-Cassegrain), it is my binoculars that get regular use during the summer months. Oblivious to the weather and our desires, one of the most interesting places to see in the heavens makes its grand appearance in our southern skies. That is the central bulge of our Milky Way galaxy. Overflowing with stars, clusters and nebulae, it practically demands the lower power offered by binoculars. Hidden behind clouds during most of the summer time's night skies, binoculars offer a way to indulge in this celestial beauty when the clouds are kind enough to part and offer a view of this glorious aspect of our place in space. A tripod, or parallelogram mount will make the viewing much easier, but I find the low-tech solution of a blanket in the grass a much more fun and comfortable way to see the skies through binoculars.

Visual astronomy can reward spontaneity, planning can make an evening of observing a much more efficient and enjoyable experience. I have spent countless hours staring into a handset or looking at charts under a red light, trying to determine what to look at next, when some prior planning could have led to more efficient use of the time.

Logbooks and star charts were the way to do this in

[Continued on Page 12 Summer Telescope Hibernation?](#)

When the Universe gives you Lemons- make LUP-enade

Editor's Note: I know this information may be slightly outdated, but this article was written so professionally that I could not, in good conscience, remove it from our Premiere Newsletter. Please enjoy reading it and take a moment to appreciate all the hard work Greg has put into crafting this beautifully written, entertaining piece.

T-Coronae Borealis abbreviated TCrB also known as the “Blaze Star” is a recurrent nova which last brightened in 1946. Professional astronomers predicted it would brighten again by September 2024. As of mid-2025, TCrB has not yet gone nova but when it does happen, its apparent brightness is predicted to be naked eye at magnitude +2.

T-Coronae Borealis is a classical nova involving a white dwarf accreting hydrogen rich material from a companion star usually a red giant. The accreted hydrogen builds up and leads to a thermonuclear explosion that results in the sudden brightness of the star. The white dwarf is not destroyed in the process.

While waiting for the Blaze Star to brighten, another nova occurred that took astronomers by surprise. The new nova was detected in the constellation LUPUS the wolf. Therefore, when the universe gives you lemons-make LUP-enade.

Nova Lupi 2025 officially designated V462 Lupi was first discovered on June 12, 2025, by the All-Sky Automated Survey for Supernovae, a network of 20 worldwide robotic telescopes. When Nova Lupi 2025 was first detected to outburst, it was +8.7 magnitude and has since rapidly brightened to +5.7 magnitude, which is on the verge of naked eye visibility. This star is normally at magnitude +22.3 and therefore brightened by 3.3 million times! Since this is its first recorded eruption, it is unknown how long V462 Lupi will be visible to the naked eye. It could take from a few days to a few months to dim from its previous level. V462 Lupi was determined to be a classical nova just like TCrB.

Observers from a latitude around 40 degrees North will find Nova Lupi 2025 low in the sky at approximately 10 degrees above the southern horizon at around 10:30 p.m. local time. The further south you are the nova will appear higher in the sky. From the Florida Keys V462 Lupi will be 25 degrees above the southern horizon. Therefore, the best way to view the nova is on a clear night with an unobstructed view down to the horizon. The coordinates for V462 Lupi are RA 15h 08m 03.27” and DEC -40° 08' 35.1”. Simply input these coordinates into your GO TO telescope and the nova will be centered in the field of view.

This was my first observation of a nova. I was sur-



prised how bright the star appeared in my Seestar S50 smart telescope. I will be monitoring and imaging this star throughout the coming months as it begins to fade. I encourage all amateur astronomers to attempt an observation/image of this once in a lifetime event. Consider submitting your observations to the Association of Lunar and Planetary Observers (AAVSO).

Image of T-Coronae Borealis on June 24, 2025 at 11:33pm local time or June 25, 2025 3h 33m Universal Time near the zenith. The skies were moonless, clear, and hazy at Bortle 6. The easiest way to find TCrB in the Seestar is to input the elliptical galaxy IC4587 at mag +14.3. The Blaze Star will be the nearest bright star to the galaxy at approximately +10 magnitude. Image is the result of 10 second exposures totaling 5 minutes in equatorial mode. Straight out of the Seestar with no post processing. Image was taken by the author from Longboat Key (Sarasota), Florida TCrB has yet to

[Continued on Page 6 When the Universe give you...](#)

Welcome to the Debut Issue of Event Horizon

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Image of V462 Lupi taken on June 24, 2025 at 11:08pm local time or June 25, 2025 at 3h 08m Universal Time. The skies were moonless, clear and hazy right down to the horizon at Bortle 6. The nova was 22 degrees above the horizon at this time. The bright star at the bottom center of the image is HR Lupi which is at magnitude +5.8. Note that the Nova Lupus is approximately the same magnitude. Image is the result of 10 second exposures totaling 5 minutes in equatorial mode. Straight out of the Seestar with no post processing. The image was taken by the author from Longboat Key (Sarasota), Florida. Note that V0462 Lup in the watermark is officially V462 Lupi.

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- 9) Special thanks to Russell Pinizzotto PhD President of the Southern Maine Astronomers for his valuable assistance in identifying the nova against the background stars in my Seestar image. <https://www.southernmaineastronomers.org/>

By Gregory T. Shanos

A friendly reminder

Suncoast Stargazers has NO ANNUAL DUES! So please do your part to help this 501(c)(3) Private Foundation with a tax deductible contribution. Your help no matter how big or small, goes a LONG ways. Might I even say that it goes Lightyears?

You can make your contribution by following this link:

<https://my.cheddarup.com/c/tax-deductible-contribution/items>

the *Magic Tree House* series. The book details the adventures of a brother and sister who have a magical treehouse that can take them on adventures throughout space and time. "Midnight on the Moon" had several spin-off nonfiction books that described each planet in the solar system, and I couldn't put them down until I finished ALL of them! I ended up winning a reading competition at my school that year (as a first grader!), and I often attribute that award to those *Magic Tree House* books. I kept a little composition notebook with all of the interesting facts I learned as I read, and I often had to write in tiny handwriting in the margins because I didn't have enough space in my notebook.

Q2: *Who inspired you to follow your dreams?*

Kayla: It's hard for me to attribute my inspiration to a single person, and I wouldn't be able to list them all here, but I will certainly describe a few of my mentors who helped mold me into the scientist I am today! If you asked any of my teachers from primary/secondary school, I'm sure they would all tell you that I LOVED to learn, and I especially loved math and science. My fifth-grade teacher, Julie Murray, was one of the first people who really made me feel like I could be successful as a mathematician or a scientist. I also had a fabulous science teacher in middle school, Nicole Machenheimer; at first, her class felt incredibly difficult, but I became so much more confident in my ability to learn and communicate science after a few years with her. In high school, Jason Mocherman at the Riverview High School Planetarium was a key figure in my pursuit of astronomy. I was his intern during my senior year, and he helped me build the technical foundation that helped me be so successful in college. Last (but certainly not least), I was a planetarium intern at the Bishop Museum under Howard Hochhalter, and he helped me realize my passion for science communication. Howard is one of the best public speakers I have ever encountered, and he helped me gain confidence in my own ability to communicate science with others, especially those who may not have a technical background.

Q3: *What do you think about when you look at the clear starry night sky?*

Kayla: When I look at a clear, starry sky, I often think to myself how *unusual* it is for me to see a clear and starry sky. For so much of my life, I have lived in areas where light pollution has (and continues to be) a significant problem for astronomers. In fact, my senior project as an undergraduate focused on the [light pollution at Embry-Riddle](#) that made it very difficult to conduct research on our 1-meter telescope. As a middle/high-schooler, I attended "sleep-away" summer camp in the mountains of North Carolina, and during that time, I truly felt like I was seeing an unimpeded, clear, starry night sky. Now, as an academic, I often think, "How much longer will the sky look like this before satellite mega-constellations take away this view?"

Q4: *If you could be sent to anyplace in space, where would it be?*

Kayla: If I could be sent anywhere in space (and survive the journey, ha!), I would want to be sent to LGM-1, which is the pulsar that Dr. Jocelyn Bell Burnell discovered in 1967 ("LGM" stands for "Little Green Men," because Dr. Burnell joked that the signal must be an alien). I have met Dr. Burnell twice, and she is one of the most remarkable people I have ever met. I think her discovery is so fundamental to understanding the life cycle of stars, which, of course, is why the discovery was awarded a Nobel Prize in Physics (that left Jocelyn's name off because she was a female graduate student at the time). Dr. Burnell told me that she thinks the Nobel snub made her *more* famous, and she continues to be very good-natured about the lack of recognition, which I applaud her for. I would want to be sent to LGM-1 to see, in person, one of the greatest discoveries that has been made in all of astronomical history AND discovered by someone whom I have met!



Sarasota's Own Kayla Tylor

Photo by [Alyssa Shrock Photography](#)

Q5: *What is something you learned during your astronomy pursuits that might be surprising to someone else?*

Kayla: I have learned how INCREDIBLY important humanities and communication classes are; these are often referred to as "general education" courses, and I think that many people write them off as being "unrelated" or "unimportant." Humanities and communication classes are where students learn how to write, speak to an audience, think critically, evaluate sources, and integrate ethics into the choices they make. We would not want aerospace engineers building rockets if they don't understand the fundamental ethics of sending human lives into space! I think it is incredibly important in science to be clear, effective communicators; not only does science communication help involve and inspire individuals outside of STEM, but it is also critical within disciplines so that individuals can act upon information that is accurately portrayed in writing.

By Timothy Milligan *Editor*

noes. These clouds are easily visible from earth especially with the use of a blue/violet filter. During the 2022 apparition Greg was involved in a blue clearing study with ALPO Mars Section Coordinator Roger Venable MD. Blue clearing is a phenomenon whereas albedo features not typically visible with a blue/violet filter become visible. Greg submitted 61 images of Mars taken under strict protocols that were analyzed by Dr. Venable and published in the Winter 2025 issue of the Strolling Astronomer- the Journal of the Association of Lunar and Planetary Observers.

Jupiter, being a gas giant, exhibits atmospheric clouds with storms such as cyclones, anticyclones, festoons and the of course, the Great Red Spot. The colors of the atmospheric bands, including the Great Red Spot, also vary at unpredictable intervals. The four Galilean moons, Io, Europa, Ganymede and Callisto regularly transit the planet and cast their shadow. These shadow transits are predictable and the free program WinJupos will alert you to which moon and at what time and date the shadow transit will occur.

Saturn is by far the “Lord of the Rings”. The most obvious feature is the tilt of the rings. Typically, the A, B, C & D rings are visible as well as the Enke and Cassini divisions. The rings also cast a shadow on the planet. In reciprocation, Saturn itself also casts a shadow on the rings. Around opposition, the rings appear brighter due to the Seeliger effect, whereas shadows of the individual ring particles temporarily disappear from our view. Every 13.7 to 15.7 years, as Earth’s orbit passes through Saturn’s ring plane, the rings appear thin and edge-on. During this time, shadow transits of the moons Titan, Dione, Mimas, Enceladus are able to be observed. Saturn’s disk appears to be yellow-brown in color due to cloud bands with subtle color variations. These cloud bands do not change appearance as rapidly as those on Jupiter. Transient features such as storms, eddies and bright spots are of particular interest. Saturn’s rings and disk are always a delight.

The more difficult planets to image are Mercury, Uranus and Neptune. Mercury being low on the horizon is always a challenge, however, I have been able to image the larger impact craters on its surface. Mercury is best observed during morning

apparitions since it rises higher in the sky instead of setting during the evening. Uranus and Neptune show a disc which is blue green in color with the poles appearing white.

As you can see, planetary astrophotography has much to offer. Since the planets are bright objects, the method utilized is different from that of deep sky astrophotography. The basic technique is to take a short 60 to 90 second uncompressed AVI/SER video of the planet using a dedicated [uncooled planetary camera](#), align and stack the individual frames, sharpen and you are essentially finished. The software utilized is [Firecapture](#), or [Sharpcap](#) to acquire the video, [Autostakkert](#) or [Astrosurface](#) to align and stack the individual frames and [Registax](#) or WaveSharp to sharpen the final image and [GIMP](#) for further post-processing. Best of all these programs are FREE! Derotation of images in [WinJupos](#) further reduces noise and increases resolution. For planetary, larger is better since a long focal length is required. Most planetary imagers use at least an 8-to-14-inch Schmidt-Cassegrain telescope with a Barlow lens. You can even be altazimuth mounted since [Autostakkert](#)/[Astrosurface](#) will eliminate any field rotation during the aligning and stacking process.

The high quality of planetary images by today’s amateur astronomers has caught the attention and interest of professional planetary scientists. [ALPO](#) serves as a database where amateur astronomers to submit their images with pertinent scientific information such as Date, Universal Time, Central Meridian, Telescope, Camera, Optics utilized etc. International databases include [hstjupitergroups.io](#), [Planetary Virtual Online Library](#), British Astronomical Association, and ALPO-Japan. I submit my images to all these organizations. I have received alerts on the [hstjupitergroups.io](#) that the Juno spacecraft will be at a certain position taking photographs of Jupiter during a certain time frame. All images of Jupiter from amateur astronomers are needed to compare with those of the spacecraft.

In conclusion, planetary astrophotography is a rewarding endeavor worth pursuing by amateur astronomers who have an interest in astrophotography. While you’re imaging a deep sky object with a refractor, turn your Schmidt-Cassegrain to

Colorado Milky Way!

Recently I took a road trip out to Colorado to find the Milky Way. Let me tell you how it went.

It started more than a year ago. Linda McKenna and I were both on the Suncoast Stargazer eclipse trip to Dallas in April 2024. We had pleasant interactions during the Dallas trip but did not know each other well. After our return, Linda posted that a new resort was being built in Colorado near the Great Sand Dunes National Park and was there anybody from our group who had an interest to share a room to experience those dark skies?

I looked at the resort's web site and took her up on her suggestion. I have always had an interest in astronomy since Apollo 11 landed on the moon on July 20, 1969 at 4:17PM EDT when I was about to turn the big 13. All the recent images from the Hubble, Webb and now the new Rubin telescope in Chile have rekindled my interest in science. When Linda made her suggestion, I thought it an excellent opportunity to see the Milky Way. Our local public events while thrilling, are subject to too much light pollution to allow for a dark enough sky to view it around here.

A couple of Zoom meetings later, the time arrived for Linda and I to trek out to Colorado to be thrilled. We had decided to drive out to Mosca, Colorado arriving on day 4 of our little jaunt. Off the bat two problems reared their heads. 1) Although periodically keeping an eye on the Kosmos Resort web site, there was little information on the actual buildings' progress. Responses to many emails to the resort for confirmation were not forthcoming. All was arranged from our perspective. She and I had agreed on the amount of driving, we discussed and selected interesting places to visit along the way and so the decision was made to - - "go west young man" and let the chips fall, so to speak. Well, no sooner were we north of Tampa when we got the call from the Kosmos Resort that indeed OUR particular building had not earned its certificate of occupancy. Oh, the "other" buildings were up and running and being occupied but the building our reservation was for was still under constructions for the next several weeks at least, (meaning several months at least). So, a decision was made by us as we flew up Interstate 75 to pivot to new accommodations near Mosca. Linda did the research and made the new reservation while I kept our Saturn V rocket on the road. Problem One = solved.

2) Linda realized that per the carefully cultivated and color-coded spreadsheet I had created for our itinerary, our reservation dates were made for the wrong days. On this bright sunny Saturday morning, our Des-

tin, Florida hotel was not reserved till Sunday. We had no bed for the night. Once again, Linda got on her trust-ed phone and researched lodgings for us and we got a bed for the night in Fort Walton-close enough. We determined that once ensconced in our motel we would have to call all the other reserved spots and try to rearrange a schedule we both thought was written in stone. Problem Two = solved.

At this point, I needed to be spelled, so Linda took over the driving. Was it four or seven miles into Linda's shift when a State Trooper pulls her over. [Thank God it wasn't when I was driving at 83 on a 70]. The Trooper surprised me by appearing at MY window instead of the driver's but we explained that it was my car and Linda was driving, produced the appropriate paperwork and informed him we were on our way to Colorado. Whether he took pity on two ole broads driving to Colorado or was charmed by these two intrepid voyagers, we'll never know but he released us without a ticket. Problem Three = solved. We weren't even out of Florida yet!!

Our little respite in Destin was wonderful. We toured the caverns at the FL Caverns State Park, lunched on the water, took a strolled down the boardwalk of the quaint Destin Harbor, a dolphin boat ride at sunset and best of all: discovered that we had left St. Pete a day early! The reason our schedule was out of alignment was it started on Sunday but we had left on Saturday.

Problem Four = solved.

Our drives through Shreveport and Clovis New Mexico, (not Texas) were interesting and thought provoking. We did have a snafu trying to find the artist's alleyway in Hattiesville, Mississippi but I wouldn't say it rose to Problem Five status.

Day 4: Great Sand Dunes Nat. Pk - we determined that we would take a peek outside at 10:30PM (still too many lights on in the campground), 1:30AM - darker and 3:30AM - darker still. I think Linda caught the Milky Way in her lens. THAT's my story and I'm sticking with it. I did see 3 meteors with my eyes on each of two nights while Linda was stuck behind her lens but she DID get one on "film". [What is the expression we will use to replace this phrase now? Mmmm?] Although I have a new 2025 Prius, I neglected to factor in the miles I'd put on the car during this trip and its effect on the oil change requirement. The drive home was punctuated by the fact I went way over the recommended 5,000 miles mark for my first oil change. We stopped in Sante Fe and toured Georgia O'Keefe's Museum and drove a punishing nine and a half hours to Dallas just to get up the next morning and drive another 7 hours to

[Continued on Page 11 Colorado Milky Way!](#)

whatever planet is visible during the observing session. You will be pleased with the results.



The author with the *Walter H. Haas Observers Award*.

We at Suncoast Stargazers are proud of Greg Shanos.
Congratulations Gregory



Eclipse Escapade 2027

Join us August 2nd, 2027 for the Total Eclipse

In April 2024, Suncoast Stargazer arranged a trip out to Dallas, TX to enjoy the city and experience this phenomenon. It was a success and we want to be even more adventurous now and venture further afield to Spain in 2027. There will be a 100% total eclipse of the sun that rotates through Gibraltar on August 2, 2027. We have taken one week to explore the southern coast towns of Spain including a couple of days on the Rock, (a UK protectorate), as well as a jaunt to Tangiers for a taste of that culture as well.

These plans are developing and will change as we get closer to the event. I did want to give you a sample however of the plan as it now stands. As with the Dallas trip, you are encouraged to participate but are welcome to go your own way, if you prefer.

Arrival in **Malaga, Spain** and have 2 days to explore the ancient charm of this citadel and lounge by the beach.

Day 4 has us moving on to **Gibraltar** by train. Under British rule since 1704, Gibraltar is a British enclave in the heart of Spain's Mediterranean coast. The top of

the mountain is accessible via cable car. It is unclear at this time if we will be able to view the phenomena from "The Top of the Rock". There are interesting things to see and do while here, although our time here is limited. I'm told to keep your personal belongings close to hand because the monkeys residing on the Rock will steal glasses off your face and food out of your hand as well as anything else they can get to!

Tangier The eclipse is set for 9:40 AM on Monday, August 2, 2027. We are suggesting a hydrofoil over to Tangier, Morocco after that for the afternoon and evening. Our plan is to hire a guide for the day and safely explore the city, its bazar and local food. Returning to Gibraltar for Day 6 and back to Malaga for Day 7 and prepping for flights back to the States on Day 8.

Budget: Based on current 2025 prices and for discussion purposes only we estimate the following per person charges \$3810.00

Contact Donna @ donnareidwright@gmail.com to be placed on a Newsletter list for updates and to get further details as they come to fruition.

By Donna Wright

[Continued from Page 9 Colorado Milky Way!](#)

New Orleans. Before I had the oil changed in New Orleans, the odometer read 6,669 miles. Problem Five = solved.

New Orleans was a whirlwind and fun. Linda had her picture taken in Jackson Square, a Hurricane at Pat O'Brian's and beignets at Café' du Monde. We arrived safely home and plan to return next year.

By Donna Wright



I say, this is the *Milky Way*!



Jackson Square



Jackson Square



Linda caught a meteoroid!

already been previously established but now became more structured and planned. The Suncoast Stargazers were incorporated on 2/25/22 and became a 501 (c) (3) Private Foundation on 4/22/22. We became members of the prestigious NASA Night Sky Network of National Astronomy Clubs on 2/27/23. Monthly public stargazing events were scheduled, and monthly educational zoom speakers were booked. Many of the speakers are club members with a high degree of expertise in various areas of interest. Others are outside contacts that we have developed and nurtured.

And so, we continue on with over 300 members and over 800 Facebook Followers. We have a core group of members eager and anxious to staff public events with their telescopes and help in any way that they can. The founding members decided that every effort would be made to accommodate newcomers to the hobby and to help them grow in the hobby at their own pace. We now have access to a dark sky site, a quarterly newsletter, and soon an annual picnic. The growth of the club and the support of local well-respected organizations has been much appreciated and most gratifying. The Suncoast Stargazers look forward to continuing to spread the joy of astronomy in the upcoming 2025/2026 observing season.

By Ed McDonough

2025/2026 Observing Season

7/19/25 – Robinson Preserve, Summer Doldrums

9/27/25 – Robinson Preserve

10/25/25 – The Bay Sarasota

11/1/25 – Robinson Preserve

11/15/25 – Myakka State Park, Dark Sky Special

11/29/25 – Robinson Preserve

12/27/25 – Robinson Preserve

1/10/26 – Lakewood Ranch Greenbrook Adv. Park

1/24/26 – The Bay Sarasota

1/31/26 – Robinson Preserve, Full Moon Special

2/14/26 – Myakka State Park, Dark Sky Special

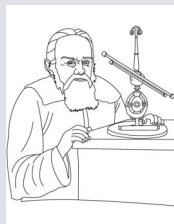
2/21/26 – Robinson Preserve

3/21/26 – Robinson Preserve

3/28/26 – The Bay Sarasota

4/25/26 – Robinson Preserve

5/23/26 – Robinson Preserve



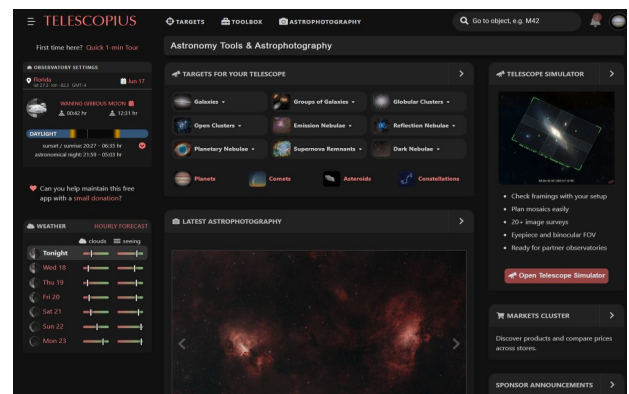
Special Events Can be added with short notice, follow us on [Facebook](#) and our [website](#) for more information. Also watch for email updates!

the past, but software and the omnipresent internet make this a much easier, intuitive and fun task. I am a big fan of <https://telescopus.com>. It is a one stop shop for planning your astronomical needs, whether they are purely visual or photographic. It offers a host of other features that can ease the complexity of target selection and image framing. I highly recommend spending some time perusing the site and checking out what it offers.

With planning aids and other observational tools, we can continue to pursue our shared love of the sky and the treasures it holds.

Clear skies!

By Howard H.



Who is Suncoast Stargazers?

We are the Suncoast Stargazers, a very large, active and knowledgeable astronomy group in the Bradenton, Sarasota and Venice area of the Suncoast. We strive to showcase our members community involvement with “open to the public” star parties monthly. Our members also have access to a dark site observing complex, monthly zoom meetings, help with using your equipment, and Astro Imaging guidance. Whether you are new to the hobby, mid-tier, or advanced, you are welcome here. Join us and register as a full benefit member and/or also feel free to follow us on our FB page. Post your questions. Ask for help. Show off your images. It’s all free, no membership fees.

We are also proud affiliate members of the Science and Environment Council of Southwest Florida

<https://www.scienceandenvironment.org/>

The views expressed in each article are those of the individual authors and are shared to encourage exploration and discussion within the Suncoast Stargazers community. While the organization does not officially endorse specific products mentioned, we support our members in sharing their knowledge and experiences. Authors are responsible for the accuracy and content of their contributions.

