



**In this issue:**

- Club Notes
- Observatory Spring Cleaning
- Calendar and Events
- Mar Night Sky: NASA
- What in the April Sky
- Kid's Corner
- Kid's Corner Extra
- Which Star am I?
- Club History Moment
- Upcoming Club Events
- Featured Club Photos
- Equipment for Sale
- Astronomy Equipment Swap
- NASA Photo of the Day
- Publication information

## CLUB NOTES

Dear Members,

Finally, we officially made it to spring, at least according to the calendar. The Spring equinox in 2025 occurred on March 20 at 5:01 a.m. EDT, marking the official start of Spring in the Northern Hemisphere.

On this day, night and day are approximately equal in length as the sun crosses the celestial equator.

It also gave us some clear sky days and nights with the sun out and some observing opportunities.

Several members took advantage of this and examples you will find in this newsletter.

Those who could spend some nighttime out were able to see a total lunar eclipse on March 14 with totality at 3 am.

In April, we have several activities going on, starting on April 5 with a presentation at the Hemlock Nature center on the spring and summer sky.

Please be aware that in April our membership meeting has shifted due to spring break and will be on APRIL 17!

We will have a great video on the ISS and Peter Burkey talking about solar and lunar eclipses.

A small team is working on setting up a weather station and all sky camera system for the observatory.

Proposals for this will be presented at the membership meeting for approval. I wanted to thank Barry Schoenfelner for taking the helm of SAAA during my latest trip.

Wishing you clear skies.

Karl Rijkse  
President SAAA



### Observatory Spring Cleaning

Spring has sprung and it is time to get your pails, sponges/rags and rubber gloves to help with the "First Annual Observatory Spring Cleaning". Weather permitting, it will take place on Saturday, **April 19, starting at 10 AM**. We will clean the inside of the dome as well as the outside. We will try to keep the outside as dry as possible to prevent creating mud/sand patches.

Thanks in advance for your help,  
Frank Roldan  
SAAA Observatory Director

# Calendar and Upcoming Events



## Public Observing

**When** Every FRI evening starting 8PM (weather permitting).

**Where** Hemlock Crossing Public Observatory, 8115 W Olive Rd, West Olive, MI 49460, USA

**Description** The observatory is open from our start time until 11 PM (weather and clear sky permitting, see note after October 14<sup>th</sup>). There are no entry fees. Please be aware that the park gate closes automatically at 8 PM sharp, therefore visitors must arrive before 8 PM to enter the park. You will be able to leave as you wish.

**Visible night sky objects:** planets, the Moon, deep sky objects like galaxies, star clusters and planetary nebulae.

## April Club Lecture

Spring & Summer Sky—April 5th at 7PM Hemlock Crossing Nature Education Center: Join Karl Rijkse for a presentation on the major constellations available for viewing in the nighttime sky during the Spring and Summer months, along with additional objects such as the visible planets, the Moon and other deep space objects.

## Looking Ahead: May Club Lecture

Peter Burkey will summarize all types of solar eclipses, what causes them, how they vary and why they are only visible at certain times and places.

## April 2025

SUN 30	MON 31	TUE Apr 1	WED 2	THU 3	FRI 4	SAT 5
					● 8pm Public C	● 7pm Spring i
6	7	8	9	10	11 ● 8pm Public C	12
13	14	15	16	17 ● 7pm Club Me Date Changed	18 ● 8pm Public C	19 10 AM See Page 1
20	21	22	23	24	25 ● 8pm Public C	26
27	28	29	30	May 1	2 ● 8pm Public C	3 ● 1pm Astrono ● 7pm Lunar a

For More Information on Any Event  
Please go to [www.holland-saaa.org](http://www.holland-saaa.org)

# What's in the Sky this Month: April

Provided by Peter Burkey

## The April Sky Has Much to Offer

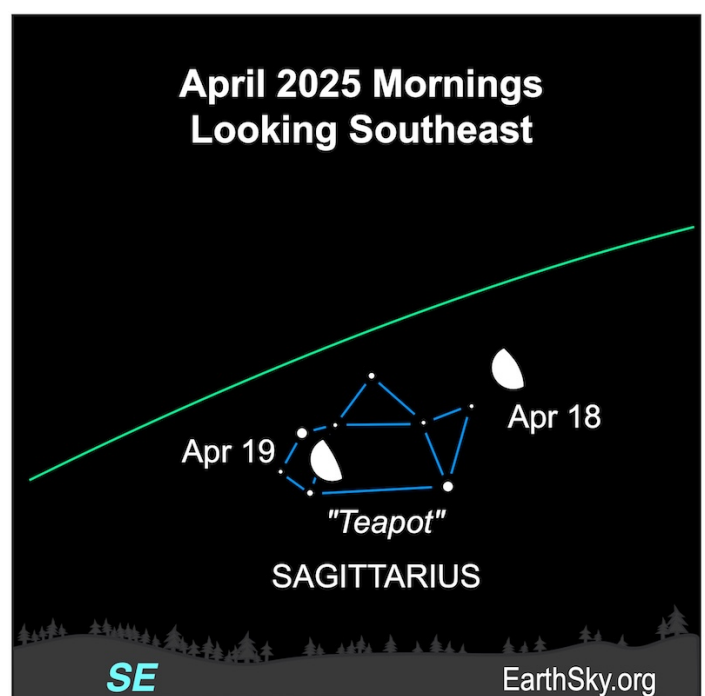
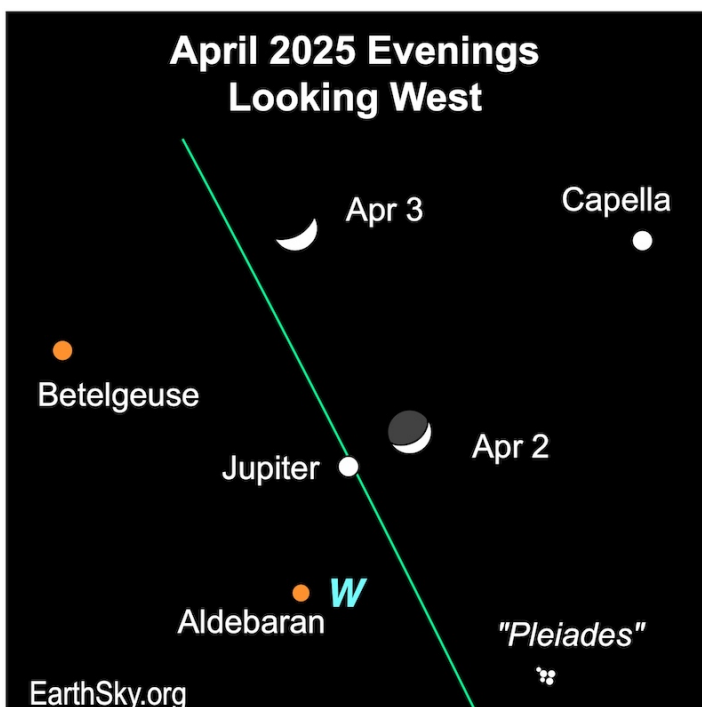
April is often welcomed for its warmer weather and clearer skies. Many people are out raking, cleaning, and generally getting prepared for spring. If you're one of them, you may also be an admirer of the night sky. This month has lots to offer.

Bright planets were the norm the past few months, but that is starting to change. By mid-month, Mercury, Venus, Saturn and Neptune will be just above the eastern horizon about an hour before sunrise and very difficult to observe. However, the evening sky, on the other hand, will display two bright planets, Jupiter and Mars, high in the western sky. These should be easily visible.

Although the spectacular constellations of winter such as Orion, Gemini, and Taurus are still visible in the west, they are slowly fading and dropping out of view. They are replaced by Leo, the lion, high in the southern sky as April progresses. If you turn around, face north and look almost straight up, you will see Ursa Major, aka the Big Dipper, almost directly opposite from Leo with respect to the zenith. Many people don't think of the Bear and the Lion as being so closely related to each other in the sky, but it is an interesting combination at this time of year.

Like Orion the Hunter, Leo is recognizable because it clearly resembles its namesake, a lion. It's backward question mark head faces west, followed by a triangle of stars forming its hindquarters and tail. The bottom of the question mark is the bright star Regulus. The sixteenth century astronomer Copernicus gave the star its name which means "little king" and reflects the ancient belief that this was one of the royal stars which ruled the heavens. Many scholars believe that the sphinx of Egypt, a figure with a human face and the body of a lion, associated the royal power of the Egyptian kings with the impressive celestial symbolism of Leo the Lion.

Luckily, in April you don't have to be royalty to appreciate what's up in the sky.



# What Was in the Sky (in pictures) – March, 2025

From Karl Rijkse (numbered from left to right, below)

1. March 14 Lunar eclipse taken with his Seestar S 50
2. March 17 Jupiter taken with the 16" Meade Observatory telescope and a digital ZWO camera. Barry, Travis and Karl took the picture.
3. March 18 M 51 Whirlpool galaxy taken with his Seestar S 50



# This Month in Club History

## April 1992

### The 22nd Annual Apollo Rendezvous and Telescope Fair

Apollo Rendezvous and Telescope Fair, on June 12th and 13th, hosted by the Miami Valley Astronomical Society and the Dayton Museum of Natural History, initiates the summer season of gatherings for amateur and professional astronomers of the midwest. This year's convention will be held entirely within the newly remodeled Dayton Museum of Natural History, featuring the DIGISTAR planetarium, the only one in Ohio.

On Friday is registration, an informal slide presentation, as well as a planetarium show. Star gazing will follow on the museum grounds. On Saturday, displays will be set up featuring commercial and amateur astronomical software, a telescope fair and flea market (good place to get a scope!), as well as numerous talks. Featured speakers include Australian astronomer Rev. Robert O. Evans of supernova fame, and Deborah Byrd, formerly of *Star Date* and now producer of *Earth and Sky*. Saturday evening will host a star party at the John Bryan State Park Observatory.

For more information, contact Bob Wade.

## What Star am I?

*I reside in the Zodiac  
My constellation's history is quite thrilling  
From India to Arabia to Europe  
All agreed on what they were seeing  
I'm slightly brighter than my "twin"  
Even though he gets first billing*

If you think you know the answer, send it to Peter Burkey (consult your membership directory) to either his email or cell phone. The answer will appear here next month.  
Last month's answer: Adhara (Epsilon Canis Majoris)



## This Month in Astronomy History

- April 1: Comet Hale-Bopp nearest Sun - 1997
- April 2: First photograph of Sun taken - 1845
- April 9: NASA selects original seven Mercury astronauts - 1959
- April 12: Yuri Gagarin becomes first human in space - 1961
- April 12: Columbia is first space shuttle to be launched - 1981
- April 17: Apollo 13 returns to Earth - 1970
- April 20: Shapley-Curtis debate on the distance and nature of spiral nebulae - 1920
- April 25: Deployment of Hubble Space Telescope - 1990
- April 28: Eugene Shoemaker is born - 1928



# Kids Corner

<https://spaceplace.nasa.gov/> A place where kids and grown-ups have fun with technology.

NASA Climate Kids: It's all about climate.

<https://climatekids.nasa.gov/>

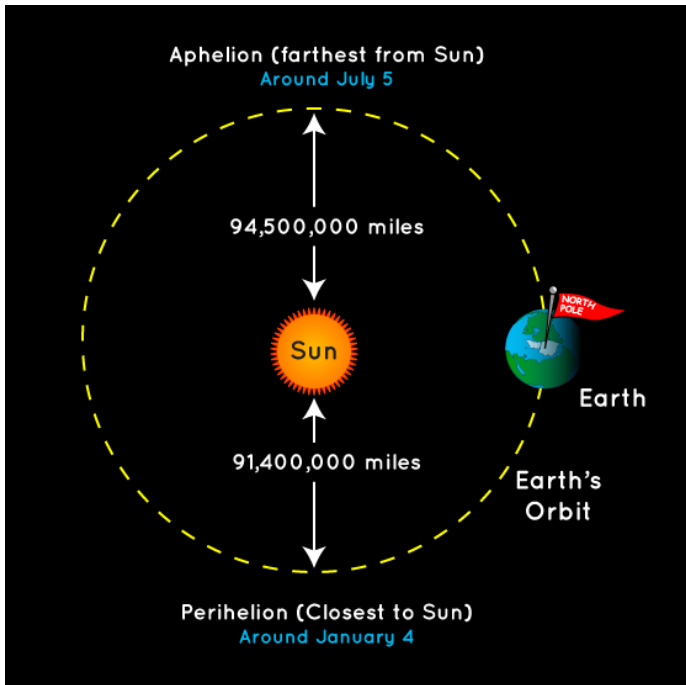


SciJinks: It's all about weather! <https://scijinks.gov/>

<https://plus.nasa.gov/scheduled-events/>

## Kid's Corner Extra: What Causes Our Seasons?

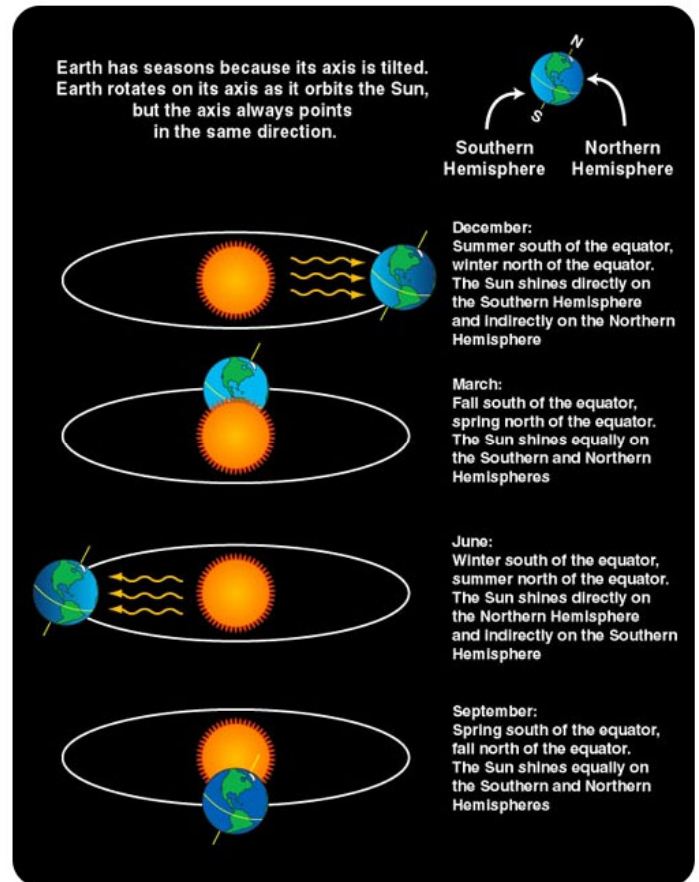
From <https://spaceplace.nasa.gov>



Earth's perihelion (point closest to Sun) = 91,400,000 miles from Sun

Earth's aphelion (point farthest from Sun) = 94,500,000 miles from Sun

While that is a difference of over 3 million miles, relative to the entire distance, it isn't much. Believe it or not, aphelion (when Earth is farthest from the Sun) occurs in July, and perihelion (when we are closest) occurs in January. For those of us who live in the Northern Hemisphere where it's summer in July and winter in January, that seems backwards, doesn't it? That just goes to prove that Earth's distance from the Sun is not the cause of the seasons.



# Club Photo: M81 (Bode's Galaxy) and M82 (the Cigar Galaxy)

Photo by Travis McGeehan



M81 is on Left,  
and M82 is on  
Right.

Taken with his  
new SQA55  
telescope .

It took 19 hours  
of data collec-  
tion.

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## West Michigan Astronomy Swap Meet

The meet will be held on Saturday, May 17 from 10 am until 2 pm. at the Muskegon Astronomical Society observatory. Their website has a google maps location for directions. It's a free event to all. Bring anything astronomy related you want to sell or just browse around and see what others are selling, meet and chat with other West Michigan Astronomers. In case of bad weather, a rain date of Saturday May 31 will be used.

<http://www.stargazing.net/mas/index.htm>

702 N Maple Island Rd, (then 2, 1 miles East, Muskegon, MI 49442





## Selling Equipment?

If you want to sell your telescope or other astronomy equipment, we will provide space here, on this page of our newsletter.

Any member interested in selling their astronomy equipment to other members they can do this via the Newsletter. SAAA will not be otherwise involved or responsible for any bidding/selling transactions. The member should list the asking price, a picture and phone number to be reached at in order to be contacted directly. Please send to Barb/Editor ([barbwbrown@hotmail.com](mailto:barbwbrown@hotmail.com)) seven (7) days before the end of any month in order to be included in the next month's issue.

## Keyholder Schedule

Members, please see our membership roster for contact information in order to schedule for the Keyholder in order to

MAR 30-APR 5	Karl Rijkse
APR 6-12	Frank Roldan
APR 13-19	Barry Schoenfelner
APR 20-26	Michael Long
APR 27-MAY 3	James Reier

schedule an Ob-  
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## NASA's Photo of the Day!

<https://apod.nasa.gov/apod/astropix.html> features the NASA photo of the day.

Have you missed a copy, or lost one, or just want to browse old issues of Astronomical League's *Reflector*?  
**Astronomical League's quarterly *Reflector* magazine:**

<https://www.astroleague.org/reflector/>

### *Publication Information*

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*Editor is appointed by the SAAA board. Email: [barbwbrown@hotmail.com](mailto:barbwbrown@hotmail.com)  
Previous Issues of our newsletters are found on our website at: [Holland-saaa.org](http://Holland-saaa.org)*

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<https://www.astroleague.org/reflector/>