

# VILLAGES STAR

Newsletter of The Villages Astronomy Club

**Volume 2, Number 1**  
**January 2021**

Club Website:

<http://vlgastroclub.org/>

Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/vlgastroclub/>

## **Club Officers & Assistants**

President Gerry Kosarko  
Vice President Warren Litavsky  
Secretary/Historian Burt Salk  
Treasurer Linda Meng  
Newsletter Editor Mark Graybill  
(officer contact info on club website)

## **Newsletter Contact**

[saundby@gmail.com](mailto:saundby@gmail.com)

(please include TVAstro in subject line)

## **FROM THE EYEPIECE**

Welcome to our first edition for the new year! We have many more astronomical events to enjoy coming up in the new year, and we may even get the opportunity to meet in person again at some point...we can hope!

Thank you all for your ongoing participation in our club. We hope you find this newsletter helpful to you in that regard.

Please join us at our Zoom meetings. Notices are posted to the email list and our Facebook group each month.

To join the email list, send an email request to join the TVAstro mailing list to Burt Salk at:

[bls73@aol.com](mailto:bls73@aol.com)

To join our Facebook group, you will need a Facebook account. Our group can be found at:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/vlgastroclub>

You will be asked a couple of questions that we use to filter out spammers from the group, then I or a member of my admin team will admit you to the group at their earliest opportunity.

## **Observation Reports**

We also ask that you send us observation reports for the newsletter. They do not need to be anything formal, simply your personal impressions on going out to have a look at the sky, whether with a telescope, binoculars, or just your eyes. Have a look at what member John Carter has submitted for this month.

## **Speakers**

We are also looking for speakers for our program this year. If you have a subject that you can give a 30-45 minute talk on, related to astronomy or space exploration, please contact me and let's see when we can schedule you to give your presentation to the group!

Thank you, and let's all have a great star-filled 2021!

Mark Graybill,  
TVAstro Board Member & Newsletter Editor



Set Up to Share the Conjunction with Neighbors.

## JANUARY NEWS

At this month's Board meeting, we discussed the telescopes that have been donated to the club. Normally, we would be raising money for the club and placing them in new homes at our meetings. The board has given Burt Salk approval to seek donations appropriate to the value of the better and more complete telescopes that the club has in storage, and otherwise use his judgement to place these scopes while getting a reasonable benefit for the club.

If you have an interest in obtaining a telescope through the club, we are working on a way to make them available to members. We have a few very nice instruments that have been donated to the club, but they are often ones that require specific skills or handling.

January's presentation is "Stars, Stars, No More Stars" by Jerry Kosarko. February's presentation will be "Destination Mars" by Burt Salk.

The Developer of The Villages has revealed that a recreation center in CDD13 will contain observing pads for telescopes. We don't have any details on how suitable they will be for astrophotography or observation relative to local sources of light pollution, but this is certainly a positive development!

## UP IN THE SKY

### Jupiter/Saturn/Mercury Conjunction

At dusk on the 10th, get out to see these three planets in a tight triangle in the western sky. Bring binoculars for the best view!

On the 11th, Jupiter and Mercury will be within 1.5 degrees of each other.

### The Moon

Last Quarter: 06 January, 4:37am

New Moon: 13 January, midnight

First Quarter: 20 January, 4pm

Full Moon: 28 January, 2:16pm

*Use the Moon to identify constellations and nearby bright stars:*

3rd: In Leo, near Regulus

6th: In Virgo, near Spica

9th: In Scorpius, near The Claws and head of the scorpion (3 stars in a row.)

10th: In Scorpius, near Antares

11th, Dawn: Moon-Venus conjunction

20th: 6 degrees below Mars

23rd: In Taurus, near Aldebaran

26th: In Gemini, near Pollux

29th: In Leo, near Regulus

### Planet Uranus

is visible 1.7 degrees below Mars on the 21st. A pair of binoculars or a small telescope will reveal it as a blue-green star that doesn't twinkle like the other stars nearby.

### The Pleiades

also known as The Seven Sisters, will be near the top of the sky above us early in the evening this month. Look for a small dipper-shaped group of six stars. The seventh "sister" is Algol, in the Big Dipper!

### Quadrantid Meteors

are active from Dec 28th through January 12th, peaking January 3rd. Best seen in early morning hours, they appear to radiate from a spot between The Herdsman (Bootes) and Draco the Dragon.

## VILLAGE OBSERVER'S LOG

Send your observations to:

[saundby@gmail.com](mailto:saundby@gmail.com)

(please include TVAstro in subject line)

Member John Carter sent us several reports of his observations with a new telescope as he gains experience in using it:

The first setup was successful in many regards, (believe it or not) we still have things to learn. Using daylight to advantage, took care of levelling the tripod, attaching Mount and power tank, and the OTA.

The unit uses a red dot finder for alignment, which went smoothly using the moon. Successfully used the Keypad to change scope's view, it never was able to see anything but a bright circle through the eyepiece.

From the tubes my optics were: eyepiece holder, Televue "Everbrite" diagonal, (and was it ever!), and a 12mm Pentax eyepiece.

This was all just before dark. We live quite close to the Caroline Post Office, and have a variety of views out over the swamp across Stillwater. Clouds were heavy, but moving fast, alternately obscuring and revealing the moon.

Happy we had assembled, powered up, and made a stab at alignment, I noticed it was getting darker and the cloud cover was thicker.

Knowing that the crescent moon would be in close proximity to Saturn/Jupiter, I took advantage of a much clearer sky starting an hour or so later.

I set up my Sony Camera with a 100-400 lens on tripod, and took several exposures using various settings. The detail on the crescent moon was very nice. Saturn was faint, but a few shots showed ring indications. I think I got two of Jupiter's moons in several exposures, as well as a variety of color shades.

Up a lot higher and the the right was a very blue object, which I did not think to ID, as I only saw it later inside at about 400x, the magnification I needed to see the moons and ring indication.

Plan is tonight to repeat, stay later if clear when the sky is darker, and use a 26mm Plossl with the kit diagonal that came with the scope.

I was pretty wound up after the overall experience, due to success handling the new scope, and just seeing that event. I really like the idea of the crescent moon visible in the same frame as Saturn and Jupiter.

My wife was bummed as she expected to be able to see more with the telescope. I am figuring the sky was just too bright, but really have no idea if we missed something major in the instructions or whatever.

Not deterred, determined.

John Carter

## VIDEO HIGHLIGHTS

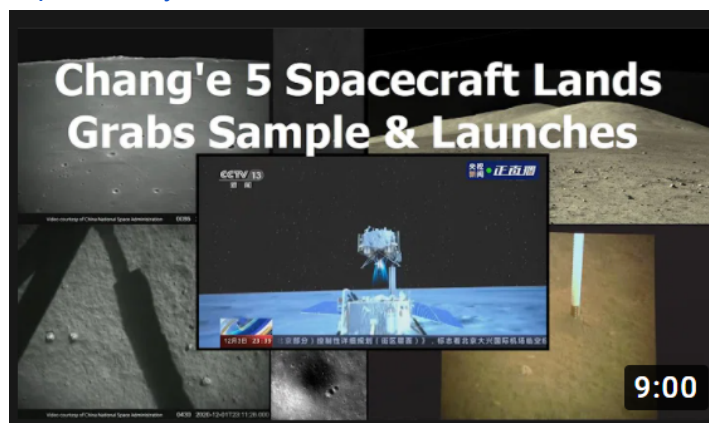
**NASASpaceFlight SpaceX Starship Live Feed**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OLpN8Cco3mU>



**Scott Manley: China Gets Moon Samples**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lwLPzU8H3HI>



## ONLINE RESOURCES:

### Online Calendar Creator

<https://www.timeanddate.com/calendar/create.html>

Create your own PDF calendar to your specifications, showing astro dates, holidays, etc.

### What's In The Sky Tonight?

<https://www.timeanddate.com/astronomy/night/>

What's up, where it is, for your location and time zone.

### Space Missions to Watch in 2021

<https://skyandtelescope.org/astronomy-news/space-missions-to-watch-in-2021/>

The Space Launch System, James Webb Space Telescope, a new drone-based launch system, and more!

### Meteor Showers for 2021

<https://skyandtelescope.org/observing/best-meteor-showers-in-2021/>

Perseids and Eta Aquariids promise good shows.

### The Sky this Month: January 2021

<https://astronomy.com/magazine/sky-this-month/2021/01/sky-this-month-january>

Conjunctions, planets, and constellations.

### SpaceX Starship Information Site

<https://www.spacex.com/vehicles/starship/>

Drawings, images, video, and presentations on the new Saturn V class launch vehicle undergoing flight testing by SpaceX in Boca Chica, TX right now!



Starship SN8 Launch  
image by Forest Katsch