

VILLAGES STAR

Newsletter of The Villages Astronomy Club

Volume 4, Number 3

March 2023

Club Website:

<http://vlgastroclub.org/>

Facebook:

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

Club Officers & Directors

President Mark Graybill

Vice President Ken Katta

Secretary/Historian Burt Salk

Treasurer Linda Meng

Education Coord. Randy Gilbert

Newsletter Contact

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(please include TVAstro in subject line)

UPCOMING EVENTS

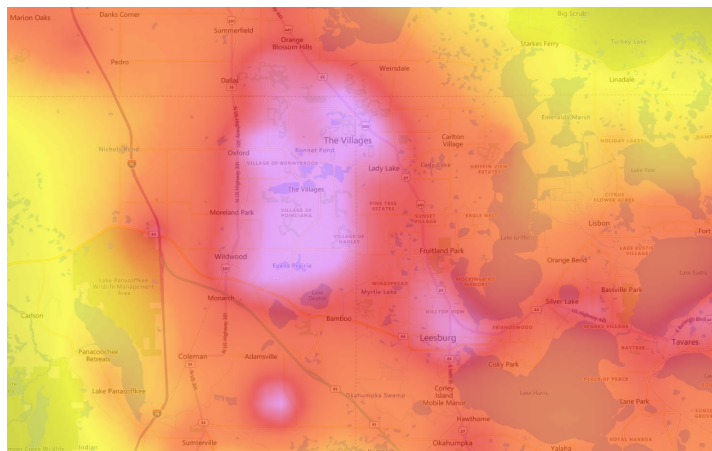
General Meeting, March 21st, 2023:

Light Pollution, by Frank Ancona

At this month's meeting, Frank Ancona will discuss a subject near and dear to all of us: light pollution. He will discuss what you can do, both personally and locally to help correct the situation. Light pollution affects more than astronomers. It affects everyone's health, wildlife, and excess lighting increases our tax and other monetary burdens. It represents a waste of energy as well as a waste of effort of workers in our community.

Come hear how you can help solve a problem that seems unsolvable. Also, the effects that controlling your local environment will have on your ability to see the stars.

Our humid skies and temperature differences between the Atlantic and the Gulf amplify the effects of light pollution in our area, and its effects on our ability to observe.



**Light Pollution Map of Our Area
via lightpollutionmap.info**

March 18th, 2022: Fruitland Park Astronomy

The Fruitland Park Astronomy Club meets for an evening of observing and talk on the third Saturday of the month every month, conditions allowing, at the Cales Soccer Field in Fruitland Park at 500 Shiloh Road (at the corner of Shiloh Road and Dixie Avenue, north of the Fruitland Park water tower.) Village Astronomy Club members and the public are welcome. Bring your telescopes, binoculars, or just your eyes and your interest. Gate opens at 5pm.

Scopes can be set up directly off of tailgates onto pavement, or taken further into the park along paved walks, away from the road to avoid nearby lights. The front of the park has Bortle 5 skies. Power is available.

March 3rd, 11am: Directors' Meeting

We will be holding our monthly Director's Meeting at Fishhawk Recreation Center, 2318 Buttonwood Run. The meeting lasts about 1 hour, and we discuss planning for upcoming events and meeting, club finances and other business. All members are welcome.

March 7th, 5:30pm: Telescope Workshop

Our monthly telescope workshop will be held at Truman Recreation Center, near the pavilions (behind the pool from the parking area.) Address is 2705 Canal St. in The Villages (just north of 466A.)

Bring your questions, your telescopes or binoculars, and share information with other observers on observing instruments and techniques, accessories, locations, and upcoming events.

Those who are just interested in getting a look through a telescope are welcome to attend.

Calendar: <https://vlgastroclub.org/calendar/>

March 31st: Embry Riddle Aeronautical University Astronomy Open House

Each spring, ERAU's Astronomy Department opens their doors to the public for a public lecture and observing through the department's telescopes. This month Dr Anna Chids of Northwestern University will give a lecture on Exoplanets at 7pm with observing to follow at 8pm.

Several of our members are planning to attend, and rides are available. Contact Mark Graybill at soundby@gmail.com to offer or to request a ride. Information at:

<https://observatory.db.erau.edu/index.php/astronomy-open-house>

NEWS

Telescope Workshops Now Official

Thanks to the helpful Villages Recreation Department team at Truman Recreation Center, our Telescope Workshops are now known to them as a regular event. This means that when prospective attendees contact the center for information, they'll know about who we are, what we do, and be able to make provisions for our presence there.

We have submitted a reservation for the Picnic Pavilion as well, for the first Tuesday of the

month each month. In a few days we should hear if that has been approved. It does not directly affect our use of the area, however, as the Pavilion cannot be reserved past dusk, and the use of the grassy area near the Pavilion cannot be reserved.

That means that if someone else does get a reservation to the Pavilion, we do the same as we have done in the past: we give them enough room to be respectful of their event while continuing with our activities. However, at present we do not expect to run into such a conflict in the future.

"Space Academy" Coming Soon!

A new indoor activity for our club will be starting later this year. We have submitted a request for an indoor room at Truman Recreation Center on the first Tuesday of the month at 6pm..

This was initially intended to provide a "rain room" for the Telescope Workshop. But it also gives us the ability to provide another educational activity for our members!

We will show astronomy videos that we used to show before our general meetings. Videos from basic astronomy to astrophysics to space exploration, about 45 minutes long. Afterward, there will be discussion for those interested. And there will be a place for telescope workshop attendees to go when weather is poor.

"New Club" Survey

To obtain the room reservation, we needed to do the paperwork as if we are forming a new club. Have no fear, this is still your same Astronomy Club!

There will be a new club survey in the Recreation News for "Space Academy" in 2-3 weeks. Our president's email address will be the contact. If you are interested in a night of informative video and discussion with like-minded individuals, please respond to the survey and express your interest! This will assist The Villages in expediting our room reservation. We are hoping to have our first Space Academy meeting in May.

The Villages Outdoor Expo



Randy Gilbert and Frank Ancona with Solar Scopes at Outdoor Expo, Image by Bob Averitt

On February 24th and 25th, the Astronomy Club participated in The Villages Outdoor Expo. This is an annual opportunity for outdoor-oriented clubs in The Villages to represent themselves to the attendees.

Our location at the Everglades Recreation Center is a great one, positioned between the main building and the pool on a natural walking path between the indoor and outdoor exhibits.

We talked to about 500 people on Friday the 24th about our club and Saturday's Starry Starry Day & Night event. We ran out of fliers for it several times! We also had solar scopes at the event, which drew many interested onlookers.



**Our booth and display area at Outdoor Expo 2023
Image by Linda Meng**

On Saturday, we talked to about 400-450 people, and though we didn't have solar scopes out we were able to direct people to the Wildwood Community Center where we had our Starry Starry Day event going on.

Having both the Outdoor Expo and the Starry Starry Day & Night event on the same weekend was a strain on our volunteers, and we'll avoid doing that again in the future. But it was nice to be able to direct people to an event where they could look through telescopes that same day, and it likely helped the success of our event in Wildwood.

Thank you to all our members who volunteered to represent our club at the Expo, each of you made a critical difference! We managed to put together a very professional looking display, provide informative hand-outs, and get through the logistics of setting up our booth, banner, and Solar Walk teaser panels then clean up afterward because of you.

Special thanks go to member Jeffrey Kahler, who brought many of our presentation materials, extra tables, and weights for our pop-up pavilion.



**David Meng and Mark Graybill with new banner
Image by Linda Meng**

Starry Starry Day & Night



**An attendee checks in at the front table with Linda Meng, Burt Salk, Toni Graybill, and Mark Graybill
Image by Jeffrey Kahler**

We held our first SSDN event in conjunction with the City of Wildwood on February 25th this year. Wildwood has hosted us before, with our astronomers bringing telescopes to their fall celebration (near Halloween) and participating in the city's Summer Camp program as well as local Girl Scout programs.

Our SSDN event was a huge success, and Wildwood did a great job of supporting us. Their promotion of the event brought in lots of local families. Likewise, The Villages Daily Sun did a bang-up job of promoting our event on the front page of the Lifestyle section of the paper two days in a row, garnering a "Today's Pick" selection on the 25th!

During the day we had several astronomers out with solar scopes, showing both white light and Hydrogen Alpha views of the Sun (white light shows sunspots, H-alpha shows prominences, plages, and other features invisible in white light.) We also had the Solar Walk set up to give walking tours of the Solar System.

At 4pm, Dr Terry Oswalt of Embry Riddle Aeronautical University's Astronomy Department gave a talk on Finding Life in the Universe.

As the day faded toward evening, we were still giving tours of the Solar Walk while our astronomers were setting up their telescopes for

night time observation.

As the sky darkened, crowds gathered to look at the heavens. Before full dark, we had over 600 people there to look through our telescopes.



**Dr Terry Oswalt of ERAU's Astronomy Dept.
Image by Linda Meng**

The Moon, Venus, and Jupiter gave us bright early targets to display, with Jupiter's bands fading into view as the sky grew darker.



The evening crowds by the telescopes. Jupiter and Venus above. Image by Jeffrey Kahler

Later, we were able to show views of Uranus, the Great Orion Nebula, the Hyades cluster, the Pleiades, and many other objects. We had 9 astronomers with telescopes, and could easily have used more!

Thanks to our evening astronomers:

Wilfred Collier
Jerry Hubbuch
Frank MacMullan
Frank Ancona
Monica Scruggs (Fruitland Park AC)
Dave Scruggs (Fruitland Park AC)
Randy Gilbert
Jeff Kahler
Mark Graybill

And thanks to our daytime observers:

Randy Gilbert
John Keller
Harry Orlind

Thanks to our Solar Walk guides:

Linda Meng
Burt Salk
Toni Graybill

Thanks to Ken Katta for working with Dr Oswalt and the team from ERAU to bring their expertise to our event.

Thanks to Randy Gilbert for organizing SSDN and working with the City of Wildwood to make it a success.

A special thanks to Linda and David Meng, who split themselves between the Outdoor Expo and SSDN this weekend, working hard to make sure both events were successful.

And thank you to everyone else who attended and assisted, each of you made a difference whether you were directing attendees, conversing with them while they waited on a view through a telescope, or any other contribution you made!

We had 359 guests at our daytime event, and over 600 at night, with some overlap. We estimate about 800 public attendees at SSDN.

IN THE SKY THIS MONTH

The Moon:

Full Moon, March 7th
Last Quarter, March 14th
New Moon, March 21st
1st Quarter, March 28th
Full Moon, April 6th

Conjunction of Jupiter and Venus

On March 1st we have a conjunction of **Jupiter** and **Venus** with the pair only 1/2 a degree apart! The next such conjunction won't be visible until August 2025, and they'll be twice as far apart. Another conjunction as good as this will not occur until 2027.

Jupiter will continue to sink toward the Sun. On March 22nd, Jupiter will be near a thin crescent Moon. On the 27th, another conjunction with planet **Mercury**.

Venus will continue to rise higher in our evening sky, ending the month as a signpost for finding dim planet **Uranus**, in conjunction with Venus only 1.2 degrees to the south of Venus.

Mars remains high in our evening sky, crossing Taurus then going into Gemini on the 26th. On March 29th, Mars is only 1.1 degrees north of star cluster M35 in Gemini, which is visible in binoculars or small telescopes at low power. Use Mars this night as a guide to locate the cluster.

Saturn reappears from behind the Sun in the morning sky this month. On March 2nd there will be a conjunction between Mercury and Saturn that will be difficult to see near the Sun's glare. As the month goes on, however, Saturn will rise further and further away from the Sun in the early morning sky.

Minor Planet **Ceres** reaches opposition this month on the 21st. Even at its brightest, it will only appear as a star-like point even in a telescope.

However, it will be at its brightest and closest in Coma Berenices at that time. For a finder chart and more information, see:

<https://in-the-sky.org/data/object.php?id=A1>

Calendar

March

- 3** Exec Meeting 11a Fishhawk Rec Center
- 7** Telescope Wkshp, 6pm Truman Rec Ctr.
- 12** DST Time Change
- 18** Fruitland Park Astronomy 5pm 300 Shiloh Rd
Fruitland Park
- 21** TVAC General Meeting: Frank Ancona, Light
Pollution, 6:30pm Laurel Manor Rec Ctr.
- 31** ERAU Astro Open House, Daytona Beach

April

- 4** Telescope Wrkshp 7:30pm Truman Rec Ctr
- 7** Exec Meeting 11am Fishhawk Rec Ctr
- 15** Fruitland Park Astronomy 5pm 300 Shiloh Rd
Fruitland Park
- 18** TVAC General Meeting: Linda Meng, Henrietta
Leavitt 6:30pm Laurel Manor Rec Ctr

May

- 2** Telescope Workshop 7:30pm Truman Rec Ctr
- 5** Exec Meeting 11am Fishhawk Rec Ctr
- 15** TVAC General Meeting 6:30pm Laurel Manor
Rec Ctr
- 20** Fruitland Park Astronomy 5pm 300 Shiloh Rd
Fruitland Park



**Randy Gilbert shows the Sun through his solar scope at Starry Starry Day & Night at the Wildwood Community Center, Feb 25, 2023
Image by Linda Meng**



**Activity at our booth at Outdoor Expo. David Meng, Bob Averitt, Randy Gilbert, Linda Meng, Harry Orlind, Jeffrey Kahler and many others are working hard to keep up with the crowds!
Image by Linda Meng**