

SONOMA SKIES

May 2016 E-Newsletter of the
[Sonoma County Astronomical Society](#)



*501(c)(3) Scientific and Charitable Organization
Established in 1974*



Hello members and friends,

Our many thanks again to George Loyer, Larry McCune, Steve Smith, and the entire Board of the Robert Ferguson Observatory, for last month's personal introduction of the new 40" reflector telescope. The classroom was filled with both adults and current Striking Sparks winners. Please take the time to meet this wonderful new window into the universe.



SCAS GENERAL MEETING

May 11th, Wednesday 7:30PM – 9:00PM

MEETING AT PROCTOR TERRACE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
1711 Bryden Lane

Santa Rosa, CA 95404

Program Schedule

7:30PM – Meeting Begins, General Business

7:45PM – Coffee Break

8:00PM – Program Topic Begins

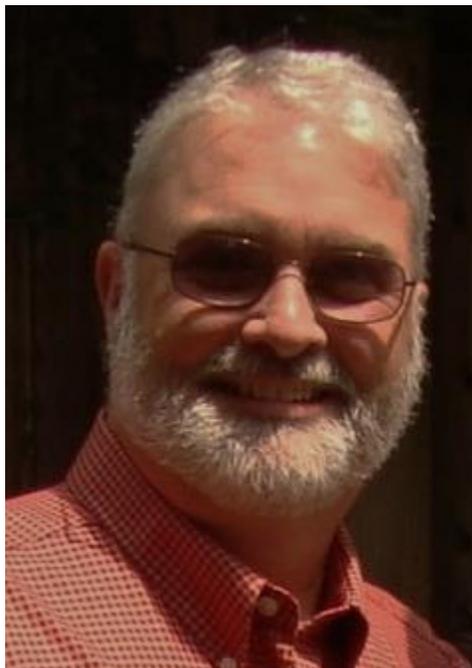
9:00PM – Meeting Officially Ends

PLANET MARS

‘Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow’

Speaker

Jim DeManche, President SCAS





We have our date for the Yosemite trip !!!



July 22 & July 23 at Glacier Point viewing.

Camping @ Bridal Veil passes and park entry is limited number
and only granted to SCAS members with telescopes :-)

Please email me @ france_christine@yahoo.com to get on list
and or further information.

7/22/2016 88% waning gibbous Moon rising 10:21pm

looking forward to an amazing trip

SCAS members with telescopes are invited to camp
At Bridal Veil and bring telescopes to Glacier Point for viewing.
There are a limited number of passes so please email to

Reserve your spot or if you just need more information :-)

7/22/2016 88% waning gibbous Moon rising 20:21PM



Image Credit: Len Nelson

SONOMA COUNTY ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY – 2016
GENERAL MEETING CALENDAR

(schedule topics subject to change)

May 9th

Mercury Transit

Time: 7 AM - 12 Noon

RFO will be open this morning with solar telescopes operating to observe the planet Mercury passing across the face of the sun. Already in progress at sunrise, the transit will end at about 11:40am. Come and join us to observe this fairly rare event.

May 11th

The Planet Mars - Jim DeManche – **Confirmed**

May 14th

International Astronomy Day – Various outreach events worldwide.

June 8th

The Moon – Rob Davis (Robert Ferguson Observatory) - **Confirmed**

July 13th

The Space Act of 2015 – Lynda Williams (SRJC Physics Dept.) - **Confirmed**

August 6th

SCAS STAR B QUE - **Confirmed**

September 14th

Gravitational Waves – Dr. Lynn Cominsky (SSU) - **Confirmed**

October 12th

Supernova explosions, their host galaxies, and gravitational lensing by galaxies and galaxy clusters. Patrick Kelly UC Berkeley - **Confirmed**

November 9th

Popcorn & Movie Night - **Confirmed**

December 14th

Jim Goodenough & Linda Sinkay – Astrophotography – **Confirmed**

**SONOMA COUNTY ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY – 2017
GENERAL MEETING CALENDAR**

January 11th - Open

February 8th – SETI Institute - Over the past 15 years, he has dedicated his research to the study of our solar system using mainly ground-based telescopes equipped with adaptive optics. Dr. Franck Marchis - **Confirmed**

March 8th – STRIKING SPARKS ANNUAL AWARDS PROGRAM - **Confirmed**

April - Open

May - Open

June - Open

July 12th – Popcorn and Movie Night

August 9th – SCAS Star – B- Que at the Robert Ferguson Observatory

September - Open

October - Open

November - Open

December - Open

MAY ASTRONOMICAL EVENTS

May 6 - New Moon. The Moon will be located on the same side of the Earth as the Sun and will not be visible in the night sky. This phase occurs at 19:29 UTC. This is the best time of the month to observe faint objects such as galaxies and star clusters because there is no moonlight to interfere.

May 5, 6 - Eta Aquarids Meteor Shower. The Eta Aquarids is an above average shower, capable of producing up to 60 meteors per hour at its peak. Most of the activity is seen in the Southern Hemisphere. In the Northern Hemisphere, the rate can reach about 30 meteors per hour. It is produced by dust particles left behind by comet Halley, which has been known and observed since ancient times. The shower runs annually from April 19 to May 28. It peaks this year on the night of May 5 and the morning of the May 6. The new moon will ensure dark skies this year for what could be an excellent show. Best viewing will be from a dark location after midnight. Meteors will radiate from the constellation Aquarius, but can appear anywhere in the sky.

May 9 - Rare Transit of Mercury Across the Sun. The planet Mercury will move directly between the Earth and the Sun. Viewers with telescopes and approved solar filters will be able to observe the dark disk of the planet Mercury moving across the face of the Sun. This is an extremely rare event that occurs only once every few years. There will be one other transit of Mercury in 2019 and then the next one will not take place until 2039. This transit will be visible throughout North America, Mexico, Central America, South America, and parts of Europe, Asia, and Africa. The best place to view this event in its entirety will be the eastern United States and eastern South America. (Transit Visibility Map and Information)

May 14 - International Astronomy Day. Astronomy Day is an annual event intended to provide a means of interaction between the general public and various astronomy enthusiasts, groups and professionals. The theme of Astronomy Day is "Bringing Astronomy to the People," and on this day astronomy and stargazing clubs and other organizations around the world will plan special events. You can find out about special local events by contacting your local astronomy club or planetarium. You can also find more about Astronomy Day by checking the Web site for the Astronomical League.

May 21 - Full Moon, Blue Moon. The Moon will be located on the opposite side of the Earth as the Sun and its face will be fully illuminated. This phase occurs at 21:15 UTC. This full moon was known by early Native American tribes as the Full Flower Moon because this was the time of year when spring flowers appeared in abundance. This moon has also been known as the Full Corn Planting Moon and the Milk Moon. Since this is the third of four full moons in this season, it is known as a blue moon. This rare calendar event only happens once every few years, giving rise to the term, "once in a blue moon." There are normally only three full moons in each season of the year. But since full moons occur every 29.53

days, occasionally a season will contain 4 full moons. The extra full moon of the season is known as a blue moon. Blue moons occur on average once every 2.7 years.

May 22 - Mars at Opposition. The red planet will be at its closest approach to Earth and its face will be fully illuminated by the Sun. It will be brighter than any other time of the year and will be visible all night long. This is the best time to view and photograph Mars. A medium-sized telescope will allow you to see some of the dark details on the planet's orange surface.

