

SONOMA SKIES

November 2015 E-Newsletter of the
[Sonoma County Astronomical Society](#)



501(c)(3) Scientific and Charitable Organization



Hello members and friend,

We had a wonderful meeting last month thanks to Kurt Kruger and the SPARQ program. Piner High School is very fortunate to have such a facility and instructor such as Kurt. If you are interested in supporting this program, please visit the following link for more information <http://sparqatphs.com/>



Next SCAS General Meeting

Wednesday November 11, 2015
7:30pm – 9:30pm

Location:

Proctor Terrace Elementary School
1711 Bryden Lane, Santa Rosa

ANNUAL POPCORN & MOVIE NIGHT!

This evening we will be presenting a brand new DVD from PBS-NOVA titled

CHASING PLUTO



Program Description

On July 14, 2015, the New Horizons spacecraft, one of the most advanced ever built, is scheduled to fly by Pluto to take the very first detailed images of the dwarf planet. After nine years and 3 billion miles, we will finally get a close look at this strange, icy world, but only if the craft can survive the final, treacherous leg of its journey, which could take it through a dangerous field of debris.

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/space/chasing-pluto.html>

SONOMA COUNTY ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY

2015/16 MEETING CALENDAR



November 2015 – Popcorn & Movie Night - Annual Event (CHASING PLUTO)

December 2015 – John Whitehouse, Speaking on the Lick Observatory

January 2015 – Hunter Ward, (Young Astronomer & Striking Sparks Winner) will be sharing his presentation on the Dwarf Planet Pluto and the latest information on the New Horizons flyby this past July.

February 2015 – Open

March 2015 – The SCAS 2015 'STRIKING SPARKS' ANNUAL AWARDS PROGRAM, with Larry McCune and Len Nelson hosting.

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### Contact us

President – Mike Dranginis  
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Vice President & Program Director – Jim DeManche  
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Membership Director – Laura Sparks  
[Membership@sonomaskies.org](mailto:Membership@sonomaskies.org)

Director of Community Activities – Lynn Anderson  
[Activities@sonomaskies.org](mailto:Activities@sonomaskies.org)

[SCAS Young Astronomers Advisor – Len Nelson lennelsn@comcast.net](mailto:SCAS%20Young%20Astronomers%20Advisor%20-%20Len%20Nelson%20lennelsn@comcast.net)

# Annual Elections for SCAS Board Members Coming this December 2015!!

Hello members,

It's only **1-month** until the December 2015 'General Meeting' when you (the dues paying SCAS members) will be electing a new SCAS Board of Directors for 2016. ***It's time to seriously consider nominees!***

**Mike Dranginis** – SCAS President, has fulfilled his two years and will be stepping down from the SCAS Board completely.

**Jim DeManche** – SCAS Vice President & Program Director, has fulfilled his two years as well, and will also be stepping down from the SCAS Board completely.

Here are the SCAS Board positions that will be open for nominations:

- ✚ President
- ✚ Vice President & Program Director
- ✚ Treasurer
- ✚ Secretary
- ✚ Membership Director
- ✚ Member at Large (Tech. Director)
- ✚ Director of Community Activities

Also; the various other hospitality duties that Jim DeManche has done over the years such as opening and closing the building, Greeter, Snack Table & Coffee, ID Badges, Facebook Adm., SCAS E-Newsletter, Set up & take down, will be open and available as well for you to choose from. There are plenty of opportunities to help out.

Now is the time to start giving **serious thought** to what your part in SCAS will be next year. Going into 2016 with a new SCAS Board of Directors is only the first step. Please feel free to discuss your interests with anyone on the SCAS Board of Directors.

It's your SCAS.

# A letter to the membership from the Vice President

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October 2015

Dear SCAS members and friends,

I want to write this message to let all of you know that to date no one has come forward to show interest in being nominated to the SCAS Board positions of either President or Vice President/Program Director for 2016. This is disappointing.

As I have shared in the past, SCAS is your astronomy club. We have had a wonderful two years of exciting programs and guest speakers. The current SCAS Board has worked responsibly to keep the quality and outreach of our society at a high level.

Personally I am stepping down from the board and my ancillary duties, to pursue further education, sidewalk astronomy and outreach to the local community and seniors. This decision was not easy but I must move forward with my own goals and desires in astronomy.

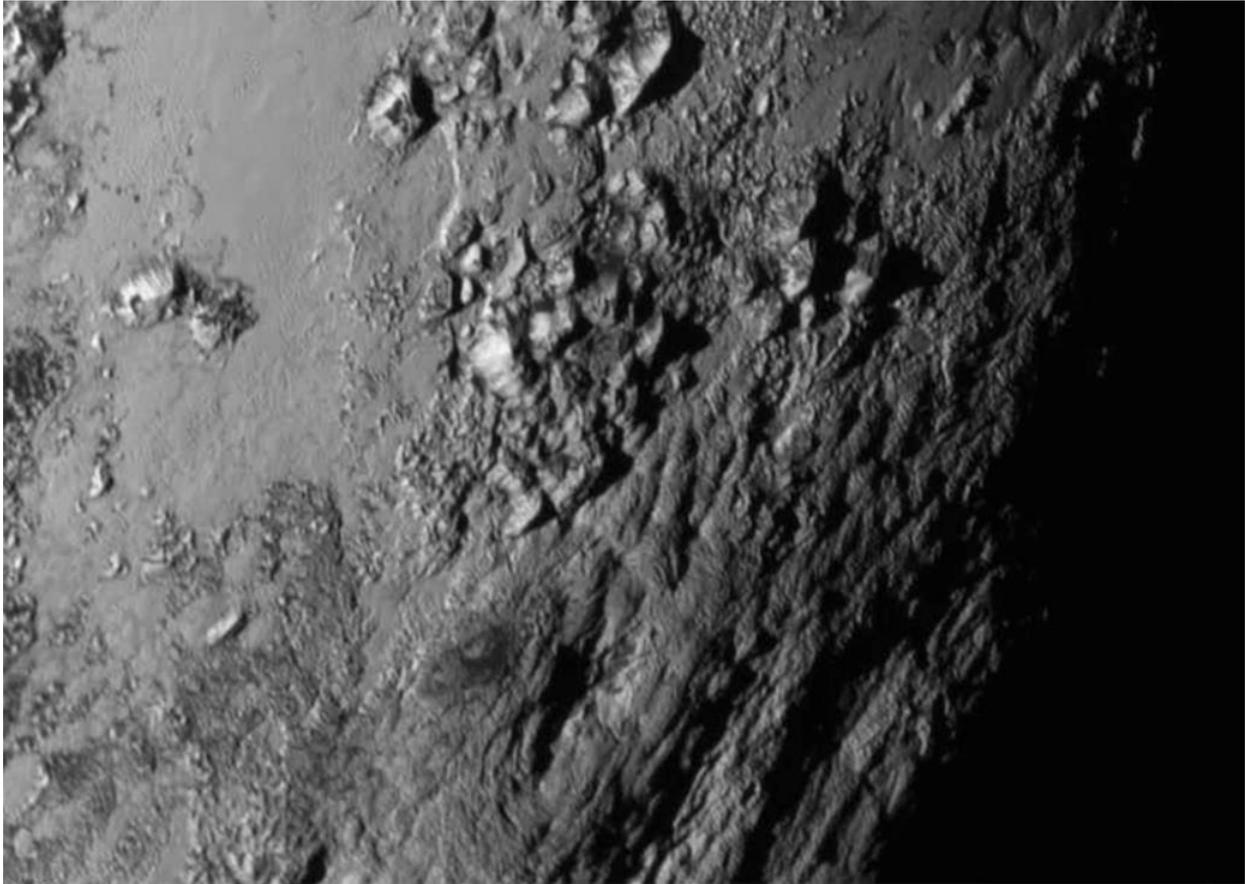
Let me thank all of you for the opportunity to serve SCAS and our community over the past 5-years since joining. I am not quitting as a member, just quietly taking a seat in the back so to speak.

As you all know the elections for new Board Officers will take place a month from now at the December SCAS General Meeting. I cannot express how important it is not to let any of the SCAS Board positions fall vacant. You will receive help and guidance in any position that may interest you, so please don't feel that the responsibility will simply be dropped on you. Please think about it.

Sincerely,

Jim DeManche  
SCAS VP/Program Director

## THE SURFACE OF PLUTO



New close-up images of a region near Pluto's equator reveal a giant surprise: a range of youthful mountains rising as high as 11,000 feet (3,500 meters) above the surface of the icy body.

The mountains likely formed no more than 100 million years ago -- mere youngsters relative to the 4.56-billion-year age of the solar system -- and may still be in the process of building, says Geology, Geophysics and Imaging (GGI) team leader Jeff Moore of NASA's Ames Research Center in Moffett Field, California.. That suggests the close-up region, which covers less than one percent of Pluto's surface, may still be geologically active today.

Moore and his colleagues base the youthful age estimate on the lack of craters in this scene. Like the rest of Pluto, this region would presumably have been pummeled by space debris for billions of years and would have once been heavily cratered -- unless recent activity had given the region a facelift, erasing those pockmarks.

"This is one of the youngest surfaces we've ever seen in the solar system," says Moore.