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Club News:

1: If your 2006 dues remain outstanding, please bring them to the Feb 15th BAS meeting. Dues are \$25. Checks payable to the BAS.

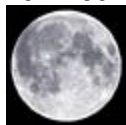
2: Megan Boyd has signed on to be the BAS Secretary for 2006. *Thanks, and welcome to Megan.*

Next BAS Star Party:

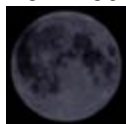
Shiloh North Site: Feb 24th

Moon Phases:

Full: Feb 13th



New: Feb 28th



What's in the Sky in February?

Orion remains high in the south sky during February. Orion has many features worth observing in addition to M42 & M43. The open cluster NGC 1977 can easily be found up and to the left of M42/43. Another interesting yet simple observation that can be made is the star *Mintaka*, the upper star in Orion's "belt". *Mintaka* is an easily resolved double star. There is also a fairly rich star field around the center belt star *Alnilam*. Only an extremely dark sky and a *large* aperture will reveal the Horsehead Nebula NGC 2024 (below). It is adjacent to *Alnitak* (lowest belt star). It is a diffuse nebula at a +10.00 magnitude. *Not for the faint of heart to try and find!*



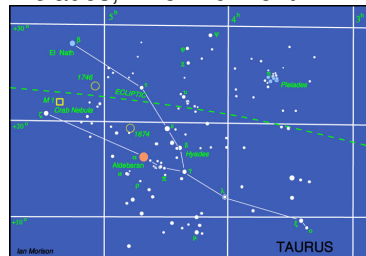
<http://www.jb.man.ac.uk/public/nightsky.html>

There are some objects that are much easier to find for the casual observer below Orion in the constellations Canis Major and Puppis. The *Little Beehive* cluster M41 is below the dog star Sirius. To the left and up are open clusters M93, M46, M47, and M50. Try to locate M93 off of the star *Aludra*, then up to M47, then left to M46 which is quite faint, but definitely worth the look!



PLANETS:

Mars remains in the sky this month. Mars is in the constellation Taurus the Bull in February, and very close to the *Pleiades*, M45 mid month.



<http://www.jb.man.ac.uk/public/nightsky.html>

Saturn remains exceptional for viewing. M44, the *Beehive Cluster* can easily be found just below Saturn throughout the month. Both are in the constellation Cancer rising from the east in the early evening.

Jupiter, the king of planets is now visible in the pre-dawn sky high in the east-south-east. By the end of February, it will rise before midnight. Even a relatively small telescope will reveal the planets' equatorial bands.

Venus passed between us and the sun in mid January and has moved from an "evening star" to a "morning star" shining bright [but low] in the south-east sky.

Next Month: Look for Leo to begin rising from the east along with the *Leo Triplets 1 & 2* (M65/M66).

Bode's Galaxy M81, and the *Cigar Galaxy* M82 can be seen off the north of Ursa Major *Upsilon Majoris* during the late evening in February.



Sky Watch

Issue #2
February 2006

The Newsletter of the Brevard Astronomical Society

Outreach News:

1. **Boy Scout Jamboree** - Eagle District Spring Cub Scout Family Campout "StarParty"; **25 Feb @** Wickham Park in Melbourne. – Scope volunteers needed. E-mail Oscar Sifuentes.

2. Astronomy Day - **Saturday, May 6, 2006. 11 am to 11 pm.** See e-mail from Chuck Greenwood for suggested activities and volunteers needed.

BCC Observatory

The BCC Observatory is in need of volunteers from BAS. Please check your schedule to see if you can help out any weekend. The coordinator is now **Suzanne Leslie**.

Upcoming BAS Meetings & Agenda:

Feb 15 - Presentation: **Astronomy and the STS-107 Mission** by Philip Chien.

BAS Meetings are held on the 3rd Wednesday of every month @ the BCC Cocoa Planetarium.

Summary of Past Meetings and Events:

- Jan 18 meeting – (see meeting minutes for more information)
- ❖ John Norczyk - presentation "Putting Labels on the Nighttime Sky".
- ❖ Dave Guibert- statistics & info on Saturn.
- ❖ Philip Chien announced he has written a book called "Columbia: Final Voyage".

Featured Science Article:

<http://www.universetoday.com>

The New 10th Planet Is Larger than Pluto

Astronomers have confirmed that the newly discovered 10th planet is larger than Pluto. Nicknamed 2003 UB313 for now, the new planet has a diameter of 3,000 km (1,850 miles) which is 700 km (435 miles) larger than Pluto. The size measurement of 2003 UB313 is published in the 2 February 2006 issue of *Nature*. By measuring its thermal emission, the scientists were able to determine a diameter of about 3000 km, which makes it 700 km larger than Pluto and thereby marks it as the largest solar system object found since the discovery of Neptune in 1846. UB313 was discovered in January 2005 by Prof. Mike Brown and his colleagues from the Californian Institute of Technology in a sky survey using a wide field digital camera that searches for distant minor planets at visible wavelengths. UB313 is one of the icy bodies in the *Kuiper* belt that exists beyond Neptune. It is the most distant object ever seen in the Solar System. Its very elongated orbit takes it up to 97 times farther from the Sun than is the Earth - almost twice as far as the most distant point of Pluto's orbit - it takes twice as long as Pluto to orbit the Sun.

Telescope News:

The BAS currently has two telescopes for use by club members. Contact Gary Scott for additional information.

For Sale or Trade:

no entries this month

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Please feel free to suggest topics you would like to see covered in the Brevard Sky Watch News.

