



Sky Watch

Issue #1
January 2006

The Newsletter of the Brevard Astronomical Society

BAS Contact Info:

P.O box 1084
Cocoa Village
Cocoa Fl. 32922
www.brevardastro.org

Officers:

President:
Gary Scott
Gary.Scott@IEEE.Org
Vice President:
Jan Ferguson
Astronomerjan@aol.com
Treasurer:
Mark Jones
mjones32@cfl.rr.com
Secretary:
TBD
Newsletter:
Bill Manley
bmanley@cfl.rr.com
Outreach Coordinator:
Oscar Sifuentes
osifuentes@cfl.rr.com

Club News:

1: 2006 dues are needed by no later than the March BAS meeting. Dues are \$25. Checks payable to the BAS.

2: Gary Scott is in process of coordinating with folks at Harmony observing site to allow BAS use.

Moon Phases:

Full: Jan 14th



New: Jan 29th

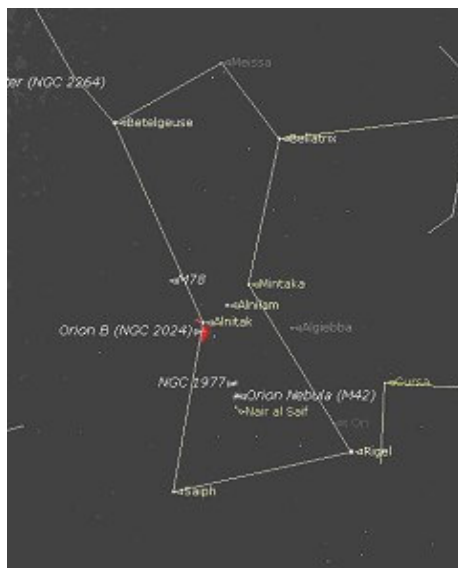


So What's in the Sky this month?

One word describes the major observing event in the sky in January – *Orion*. The constellation Orion provides a plethora of activity for stargazers. Certainly, the extraordinary M42 nebula takes center stage. The latest Hubble image is shown below.



Orion raises high in the southeast sky and transits the meridian at roughly 10pm by mid January. Orion has many other features worth observing once you get past M42. The open cluster NGC 1977 can easily be found up and to the left of M42. 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 are many other interesting open clusters in the sky this month, and through February. Some are: M35, M36, M37, M38; also M1 the Crab Nebula is high overhead near Zeta Tauri in Taurus. (Lg up & east)



There are many other open clusters below and to the south of Auriga & Orion.

PLANETS:

Mars and Saturn dominate the sky this month. Mars is in the constellation Aries and transits approx. 7:30pm. Mars is still clear and colorful, but is moving away from us. Saturn, and is in opposition to the earth Jan 27th. This date also coincides with a new moon. The planet will transit the meridian close to midnight during this period. All events point to great viewing at the end of Jan. M44, the Beehive cluster can easily be found just above Saturn throughout the month. Both are in the constellation Cancer rising from the east in the early evening.

Next Month: Look for Leo to begin rising from the east. Ursa Major will also becoming in full view during evening observation hours.



Sky Watch

The Newsletter of the Brevard Astronomical Society

Issue #1
January 2006

Outreach News:

1. 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** since Bart Lipofsky's retirement.

2. Boy Scout Jamboree

Wickham Park Youth Camp - February 25th

Upcoming BAS Meetings & Agenda:

Jan 18 - "Putting Labels on the Nighttime Sky" by John Norczyk.

Summary of Past Meetings and Events:

December 12th - Officer Elections for 2006.

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

Featured Science Article:

New Horizons Mission to Pluto

The New Horizons probe lifts off from Cape Canaveral Air Force Station this month on its 9 year mission to Pluto and beyond to the Kuiper Belt. It is scheduled to perform a 4hr flyby of Pluto and Charon in 2015. Dr. John Spencer from the Lowell observatory in Flagstaff Arizona provided a very informative lecture on the mission at the BCC Planetarium on Jan 14th. The lecture focused in large part on "why" we should go to Pluto, and the intent of the mission. Pluto is the only planet we have not sent a probe or spacecraft to. Recent observations have confirmed the presence of frozen carbon dioxide and methane. Pluto's is one of four known atmospheres in the solar system that is predominantly molecular nitrogen. The probe will perform a gravity assist maneuver past Jupiter next year. It will pass Pluto in 2015 at a distance of about 6,200 miles at a speed of 31,300 mph. The spacecraft will then travel on through the Kuiper belt and off into the galaxy. For additional info visit: <http://www.pluto.jhuapl.edu>.

Telescope News:

The BAS currently has two telescopes for use by club members. Please contact Gary Scott at the next BAS meeting for additional information.

For Sale or Trade:

no entries this month

To subscribe to this newsletter, send an E-mail with a Subject of "Subscribe" to

newsletter@brevardastro.org
To unsubscribe, send an E-mail with a Subject of "Unsubscribe".

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

