

# Penobscot Valley Star Gazers

An Astronomical Society of Central Maine

<http://www.gazers.org>

March 2009

## Sweets for the Sweet?

The March 2009 meeting of the PVSG will be on Monday the 9th, 28 days after February's meeting, at 6:30 p.m. in room 310 at John Bapst Memorial High School. The word on the street is that this meeting will feature a dessert potluck, awarding of Night Sky Network pins, and more planning for Stella-baloo. And if that isn't enough reason to come, you will surely want to meet the new mystery member!

### E-mail Excerpts

Club notes sent by e-mail since the last meeting  
Simply for the record and for those for whom we have no e-mail addresses

*Secretary's Report*  
Sorry, the minutes were unavailable.  
*February 2009*

### NSN News

Google Map: If you haven't already entered your club information, Night Sky Network (NSN) has a brand new interactive map for visitors to find your club. Jump on the bandwagon and show off your club by using the Google map feature on our website and add your club logo while you are at it:

<http://nightsky.jpl.nasa.gov/club-map.cfm>

LCROSS has a planned launch date of April 24, 2009. That's right around the corner and we bet you will be getting questions about it as the media starts to take note. If you want to be well prepared, our LCROSS partners have set up a resource page just for amateur astronomers to give you PowerPoint, movies, Fact Sheets, images and more: <http://lcross.arc.nasa.gov/resources/>

Mark your calendar for the exciting upcoming telecon in our Monthly IYA 2009 Series: Thursday, March 26th at 6:00 pm PT (9:00 pm Eastern) for Kris Koenig introducing: 400 Years of the Telescope and Mike Simmons on: 100 hours of Astronomy. Concurrent with the debut of the PBS Special "400 Years of the Telescope" the Night Sky Network is proud to soon release the latest ToolKit, Glass and Mirrors: An Inside Look at Telescopes. Stay tuned for the release date. Make sure and log your events before the end of March so your club can receive one. Should you have any questions or need assistance, please email us at: [nightskyinfo@astrosociety.org](mailto:nightskyinfo@astrosociety.org)

Galileo Scopes Now Available: The Galileo scopes website has been updated and now you can order too: <https://www.galileoscope.org/gs/>

GaN Files and Links A new black and white only

(with the exception of pictures) file is available for download with other links: [http://nightsky.jpl.nasa.gov/download-view.cfm?Doc\\_ID=361](http://nightsky.jpl.nasa.gov/download-view.cfm?Doc_ID=361)

### Solar Week:

March 9-13, 2009 is Solar Week and provides a week of series of web-based educational classroom activities and games. Celebrate the

Sun-Earth connection. Initiated as a means of encouraging girls in the sciences, one of Solar Week's special strengths is a role model approach, expressed through on-line interaction between all students and leading women solar scientists (via interactive message board). For more info check out: [www.solarweek.org](http://www.solarweek.org)

Kepler Launch: NASA's Kepler mission is launching on March 5th at 10:48 p.m. EST! Pull out your Shadows & Silhouettes Toolkit activities about the Kepler mission: <http://nightsky.jpl.nasa.gov/download-list.cfm?SearchString=silhouette> More on the Kepler mission: <http://www.nasa.gov/missionpages/kepler/main/index.html>

Marni Berendsen, Kenneth Frank and Vivian White Night Sky Network Administrators Astronomical Society of the Pacific (415) 337-1100

Night Sky Network: <http://nightsky.jpl.nasa.gov/>

### On the Schedule

(Items Subject to Change)

#### PROGRAMS

May: Bill, Hubble Upgrade

#### STAR PARTIES

April 4(rs): Club IYA big event / telescope clinic, UM

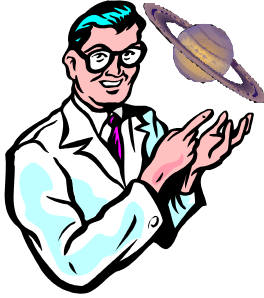
First date is primary, second is rain date; ? Tentative; (rs) rain or shine; (co) clear only

### Doug Captures Lulin

Hello all, Stitched together some images of Comet Lulin taken last night. Images are short (15 sec) exposures and north is up, east to left. Telescope 16". Spiral galaxies NGC3020 and NGC3024 are visible through comet's tail. Doug

## Cassini Does It Again

Mr. Astronomy



Once again the amazing versatile Cassini spacecraft has found the reason for ongoing mysteries within the rings of Saturn. Before Cassini one of the dimmest rings, the G ring, had no known moon associated with it. This diffuse ring was the last ring to be discovered and it also contains a brighter ring arc which extends for

about one-sixth of the way around the G ring. Now a small moon has been found within this ring arc which appears to be the source of both the ring arc and the G ring.

This newly discovered G ring moonlet is too small to be measured directly by Cassini but by comparing the moonlet's brightness to another small moon, Pal-

lene, it was possible to estimate its size as about half a kilometer across. The moonlet was most recently imaged on February 20, 2009 and has been imaged numerous times since August 15, 2008. This moonlet is the latest of three other ring arc imbedded moonlets found by Cassini and along with measurements of other Cassini instruments a population of much smaller particles ranging in size from 1 to 100 meters is implied. Collisions among these particles and the moonlet may be the source of the ring arcs and rings.

These results were reported by members of the Cassini imaging team including Matthew Hedman at Cornell University and Carl Murray at Queen Mary University of London, England. Cassini is expected to take a closer look at the moonlet and ring arcs during the Cassini Equinox mission now underway as an extension of the completed original four-year mission of the spacecraft. For more information on the Cassini-Huygens mission go to [www.nasa.gov/cassini](http://www.nasa.gov/cassini)

Mr. Astronomy

