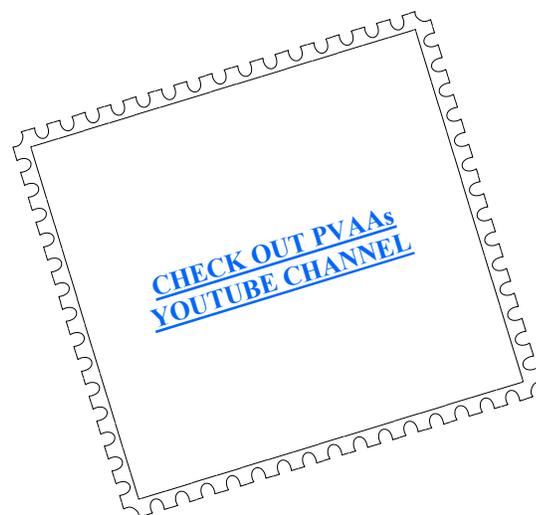




Newsletter of the Pomona Valley Amateur Astronomers

I am suspicious of all the things
that the average people believes.
H.L. Mencken



Volume 46 Number 01

nightwatch

January 2026

President's Message - January 2026

Happy New Year to all PVAA members! I am very hopeful that 2026 will indeed be a happy and productive year for both the club and all its members. There are lots of events planned for this year on the PVAA calendar as well as in astronomy and human and robotic space exploration.

Concerning the PVAA, I will continue trying to attract new PVAA by expanding our outreach to the public. In addition to having public telescope viewings of the Moon and planets during summer nights at Joat Park in Claremont on Saturdays, we are planning to have public telescope viewings of the Sun in conjunction with the San Dimas Farmers Market on Wednesdays starting in April. I will also be attending the monthly virtual meetings held by Claude and Teresa Plymate who are reinvigorating the Western Region of the Astronomical League (WRAL) which consists 28 astronomy clubs including the PVAA. It is my hope that this will open up communications and exchanges of information amongst the clubs which should be beneficial to the PVAA. In March we will have the nomination of board members. If you are interested in becoming more active in the PVAA this will be a great opportunity for you. Currently, there is a vacancy for one of the Board Member at Large positions, the terms of two current members will end this year and the Secretary position is also open. In addition, the position of Star Party Director is open as well. There is also a need for a member to assist Gary Thompson to help set up and run the computer for Zoom at the general meetings. If you interested in volunteering for any of these opportunities, please contact me either by e-mail at thespaceshuttle@aol.com or by phone at 626-541-8679.

The highlight in space exploration in 2026 is the Artemis II mission scheduled to take place between February and April. This will be the first manned launch of the Space Launch System and the Orion spacecraft. It will be the first manned lunar launch since Apollo 17 was launched on December 7, 1972. This is a test flight that will take a crew of four on a ten-day journey along a trajectory around the Moon that will reach the highest apogee ever attained on a manned space mission. In May, the Psyche spacecraft will fly by Mars and Haven-1, the first commercial space station, is scheduled for launch. In June, the Chinese spacecraft, Tianwen-2, will be inserted into orbit around the Earth's quasi-moon, Kamo'oailewa. In July, the Japanese spacecraft, Hayabusa 2, will fly by the asteroid Torifune. In August, the China plans to land their Chang'e 7 spacecraft at the lunar south pole. Then, in October, the Nancy Grace Roman Space Telescope will be launched to gather data on exoplanets, dark energy and dark matter. In November, two ESA spacecraft will partake in important mission events. First, BepiColombo will be inserted into orbit around Mercury and second, the spacecraft Hera will arrive at the binary asteroid system of Didymos and Dimorphos to gather pictures and data to determine the momentum transfer efficiency of the impact by the DART spacecraft in 2022. Then in December, ESA plans to launch the PLATO spacecraft to hunt for exoplanets and SpaceX plans to launch about five Starship upper stages to land on Mars.

Since SpaceX has obtained approval to double its launch rate at Vandenberg Space Force Base starting in 2026, we should soon be able to enjoy observing more launches from our homes in California.

Finally, please mark your calendars to attend the Fontana Astronomy Night on Saturday, January 24. It will be held from 4:00 pm to 7:00 pm PDT at the Mary Vagle Nature Center located at 11501 Cypress Avenue in Fontana.

Ken Elchert

Club Events Calendar

Jan 3	Full Moon	April 1	Full Moon
Jan 17	Star Party – GMARS	April 3	General Meeting 7:30 PM
Jan 21	Board Meeting IHOP 6:00 PM	April 17	New Moon
Jan 18	New Moon	April 18	Star Party – GMARS
Jan 24	Fontana Astronomy Night – Mary Vagle Nature Center, Fontana 4pm	April 22	Board Meeting IHOP 6:00 PM
Jan 30	General Meeting Claire Stover & David Thomas - “Aurora Viewing in CA & AK” 7:30 PM	May 1	General Meeting 7:30 PM
		May 16	Star Party – GMARS
		May 16	New Moon
		May 20	Board Meeting IHOP 6:00 PM
Feb 1	Full Moon	May 29	General Meeting 7:30 PM
Feb 17	New Moon	May 31	Full Moon
Feb 18	Board Meeting IHOP 6:00 PM		
Feb 21	Star Party – GMARS	June 13	Star Party – GMARS
Feb 27	General Meeting 7:30 PM	June 14	New Moon
		June 17	Board Meeting IHOP 6:00 PM
Mar 3	Full Moon	June 26	General Meeting 7:30 PM
Mar 18	New Moon	June 29	Full Moon
Mar 21	Star Party – GMARS		
Mar 25	Board Meeting IHOP 6:00 PM		

Upcoming Celestial Events January 2026

events visible in southern California
highlighted in yellow

PST = UTC – 8 hrs
PST = PDT – 1 hr
PDT = UTC – 7 hrs
PDT = PST + 1 hr

Date	Day	LA Time	Event	Direction	Altitude (deg)	Moon Phase/Illumination
Jan 3	Sat	2:02 am Visible all night	Full Moon	E-S-W	5-83-5	Full Moon 100%
Jan 3	Sat	3:13 pm Visible after 6:08 pm	Moon near Jupiter $\delta = 3.2^\circ$	ENE	~15	Waning Gibbous 98%
Jan 6	Tue	7:19 am – 11:22 am Not visible	Lunar occultation of Regulus	----	----	Waning Gibbous 87%
Jan 10	Sat	12:34 am Visible all night	Jupiter at Opposition	E-S-W	5-78-5	Waning Crescent 49%
Jan 14	Wed	10:00 am – 2:04 pm Not visible	Lunar occultation of Antares	----	----	----
Jan 18	Sun	11:53 am Not visible	New Moon	----	----	New Moon 0%
Jan 23	Fri	12:57 am Visible after 5:50 pm 1/22	Moon near Saturn $\delta = 3.8^\circ$	SW	41	Waxing Crescent 20%
Jan 27	Tue	1:29 pm Visible 5:57 pm – 1:45 am	Moon – Pleiades close approach $\delta = 1.1^\circ$	E-S-W	71-80-12	Waxing Gibbous 74%
Jan 29	Thu	12:52 am – 4:54 am Not visible	Lunar occultation of Beta Tauri	----	----	----
Jan 30	Fri	7:38 pm Visible 5:36 pm 1/30 – 4:48 am 1/31	Moon near Jupiter $\delta = 3.8^\circ$	E-S-W	26-78-7	Waxing Gibbous 96%

Lunation No. 1274

Lunation No. 1275



XMas Party Photo - Gary Thompson.



PVAA Holiday Party - 12.6.25 Laura Jaoui



Holiday Photos - Ken Elchert



Holiday Photos - Marissa Elchert





Holiday Photos - Marissa Elchert