



Newsletter of the Pomona Valley Amateur Astronomers

We are all born ignorant  
But one must work hard to remain stupid.

*Benjamin Franklin*



Volume 46 Number 04

*nightwatch*

April 2026

### President's Message - April 2026

Thanks to all of you who took the time to fill out and return the PVAA member survey. The responses were reviewed at the March 25 PVAA board meeting. The results will help the PVAA board to adjust our plans for this year, give us ideas on how to improve the PVAA, and help us grow the PVAA membership.

At the March 25 board meeting we also had the nomination of candidates. Currently we need candidates for President, Secretary and Board Member at Large. If you'd like to run for any of these positions, please contact the PVAA Vice President, Ron Hoekwater, at [astro4ron@gmail.com](mailto:astro4ron@gmail.com) or 909-445-9282 no later than April 13.

In addition, we still need (1) a volunteer to be an assistant and back-up for Gary Thompson to help set up the computer for our Zoom meetings, (2) an Outreach Coordinator, and (3) a Star Party Director. So, there are plenty of opportunities for those of you who would like to get more involved with the PVAA. If you are interested in any of these positions, please either contact me at 626-541-8679 or [thespaceshuttle@aol.com](mailto:thespaceshuttle@aol.com), Ron Hoekwater at 909-445-9282, or Gary Thompson at 909-935-5509.

If everything continues on schedule with the prelaunch countdown for Artemis II, the crew should be somewhere in cislunar space by the time this newsletter is published. As all of you know, this is a milestone mission: the beginning of the next era in manned spaceflight. It's the first manned mission to the vicinity of the moon since the launch of Apollo 17 in December 1972. For all of you who would like to follow the mission in real time, you can get the location of the spacecraft including its distance and speed relative to the Earth and Moon on the Artemis Real-time Orbit Website (AROW) at <https://go.nasa.gov/4ct5KOL>

The main astronomical attraction for this month is the Lyrid meteor shower that peaks on April 21 and 22. Viewing the shower is best after midnight and towards the east. No telescopes or binoculars are needed just your unaided eyes and a comfortable chair! May all of you have clear skies!

I wish all of you a very nice Easter with family and friends!

*Ken Elchert*

### PVAA Officers and Board

#### Officers

President .....	Ken Elchert	.....	<a href="mailto:thespaceshuttle@aol.com">thespaceshuttle@aol.com</a>
Vice President ..	Open position		
Secretary(acting) .....	Ken Elchert	.....	626-541-8679
Treasurer .....	Gary Thompson	.....	909-935-5509

#### Board

Jim Bridgewater (2026).....	909-599-7123
Claire Stover(2026) .....	<a href="mailto:pvaanightwatch@gmail.com">pvaanightwatch@gmail.com</a>
Ron Hoekwater (2027).....	909-445-9282
Howard Maculsay (2027).....	909-913-1195

#### Directors

Membership / Publicity....	Gary Thompson	. 909-935-5509
Outreach .....	Jeff Schroeder	..... 909-758-1840
Programs .....	Ron Hoekwater	..... 909-445-9282

### Club Events Calendar

Date	Time	Event	Location
April 3	7:30 pm	PVAA General Meeting – nominations announced	Harvey Mudd College, Shanahan B-460
April 5	-----	Easter	-----
April 12	-----	65 <sup>th</sup> anniv. of Gagarin flight; 45 <sup>th</sup> anniv of STS-1	-----
April 13	7:00 pm	Carnegie Astronomy Lecture	Huntington Library Rothenberg Hall
April 15	All Day	WRAL meeting	Lowell Observatory @ Flagstaff, Arizona
April 15	-----	Deadline to mail ballots	-----
April 18	-----	Star Party	GMARS @ Landers
April 22	6:00 pm	PVAA Board Meeting	IHOP @ 80 N. Euclid Ave. Upland
May 1	7:30 pm	PVAA General Meeting - election of officers	Harvey Mudd College, Shanahan B-460
May 12	6:00 pm	Teen Astronomy Club presentation	Glendora Public Library
May 16	-----	Star Party	GMARS @ Landers
May 20	6:00 pm	PVAA Board Meeting	IHOP @ 80 N. Euclid Ave. Upland
May 21	11:59 pm	Deadline for Celestial Escape Sweepstakes	-----
May 29	7:30 pm	PVAA General Meeting	Harvey Mudd College, Shanahan B-460
June 9	6:00 pm	Teen Astronomy Club presentation	Glendora Public Library
June 13	-----	Star Party	GMARS @ Landers
June 17	6:00 pm	PVAA Board Meeting	IHOP @ 80 N. Euclid Ave. Upland
June 30	6:00 pm	World Asteroid Day presentation	Glendora Public Library

### Upcoming Celestial Events

April 2026

events visible in southern CA highlighted in yellow

In the U.S., Daylight Savings Time is in effect from the first Sunday in April to the last Sunday in October  
 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
April 6	Mon	12:21 pm Not visible	Lunar occultation of Antares	----	----	----
April 13	Mon	5:30 pm Not visible	Mars – Neptune conjunction	----	----	----
April 15	Wed	5:45 pm Not visible	Moon – Mars conjunction	----	----	----
April 15	Wed	5:45 am	Moon, Mercury, Mars, Saturn grouping	E	3 – 7	Waning Crescent 5%
April 16-20	Thu-Mon	5:45 am	Mercury, Mars, Saturn grouping	E	3 – 7	Waning to Waxing Crescent
April 17	Fri	4:52 am	New Moon	----	----	New Moon 0%
April 18	Sat	8:00 pm	Moon – Venus conjunction	W	16	Waxing Crescent 3.7%
April 21-22	Tue-Wed	After midnight	Lyrid Meteor Shower Peaks	E	----	Waxing Crescent 29% - 39%
April 22	Wed	3:06 pm	Moon – Jupiter conjunction	WSW	65	Waxing Crescent 39%
April 25	Sat	5:37 pm Not visible	Lunar occultation of Regulus	----	----	----
April 30	Thu	1:17 am	Moon – Spica conjunction	S	45	Waxing Gibbous 98%

Lunation No. 1277

Lunation No. 1278

## PVAA General Meeting 2/27/26

Ken Elchert started the meeting with his Celestial Events Calendar. First, he recognized the Apollo 1 fire, the crew, and the changes made. March 16-17 will be the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Gemini VIII flight. This was the first flight that docked in space. They docked with the Agena upper stage. They had a stuck thruster and performed an emergency re-entry over China into the Pacific Ocean. March 16<sup>th</sup> is the 100th anniversary of the first flight of a liquid propellant rocket. It went up 41 feet and landed 184 feet away. In 1920 the NY Times came out with an editorial claiming Goddard's research paper on rocket propulsion "lacked the knowledge ladled out daily in high schools." During the Apollo 11 flight, the NY Times wrote an apology.

Ken also brought up the Carnegie Science Lecture Series. Tickets are free, but reservations are required. Reserve yours at <https://carnegiescience.edu/events>. The dates are 3/16, 3/30 & 4/13. You can watch online at <https://www.youtube.com/c/CarnegieInstitution/streams>. You can also send your name around the moon on Artemis II: <https://www3.nasa.gov/send-your-name-with-artemis/> To enter the Planetary Society's "Celestial Escape to Mauna Kea + a Private Q&A with Bill Nye" go here: <https://win.planetary.org/>

Our yearly election of board members is coming up. Please consider becoming a member of the board to help shape the future of the PVAA.

For celestial events: The best time to see Mercury will be between March 29<sup>th</sup> and April 3<sup>rd</sup> between 5:40am and 6:30 am in the east.

Ken was also our main speaker. His presentation was on Grote Reber – the inventor of the Radio Telescope. Actually Karl Jansky, working for Bell Labs, created the first radio telescope. He investigated where static was coming from and determined it was strongest from our galaxy. Grote read about Jansky's work and built his own radio telescope. Grote uncovered the mystery of what was producing low frequency radio emissions. (Black holes and stars.) Grote demonstrated that there was more low frequency energy than high frequency energy. He put a radio telescope atop Haleakalā mountain in Hawaii. In 1954 he moved to Tasmania and there he designed and built arrays to study galactic radio emissions at wavelengths of a few meters. He built a large antenna to detect cosmic radio waves and created the first radio map of the southern sky at 2.085 MHz. All his life he considered himself an amateur astronomer.

*Gary Thompson*



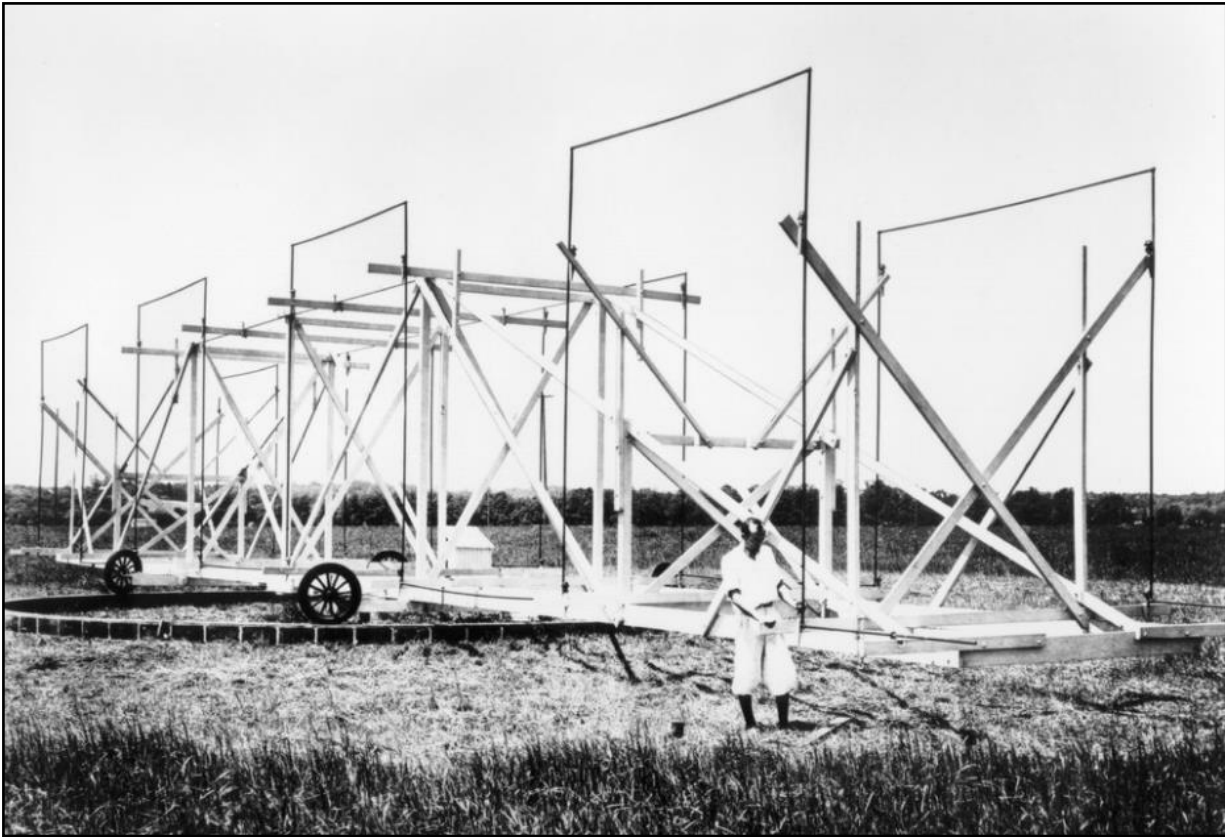
Image of contrail of 600<sup>th</sup> Falcon9 launch carrying Starlin 7-13 satellites taken by Marissa Elchert Feb 14<sup>th</sup>.



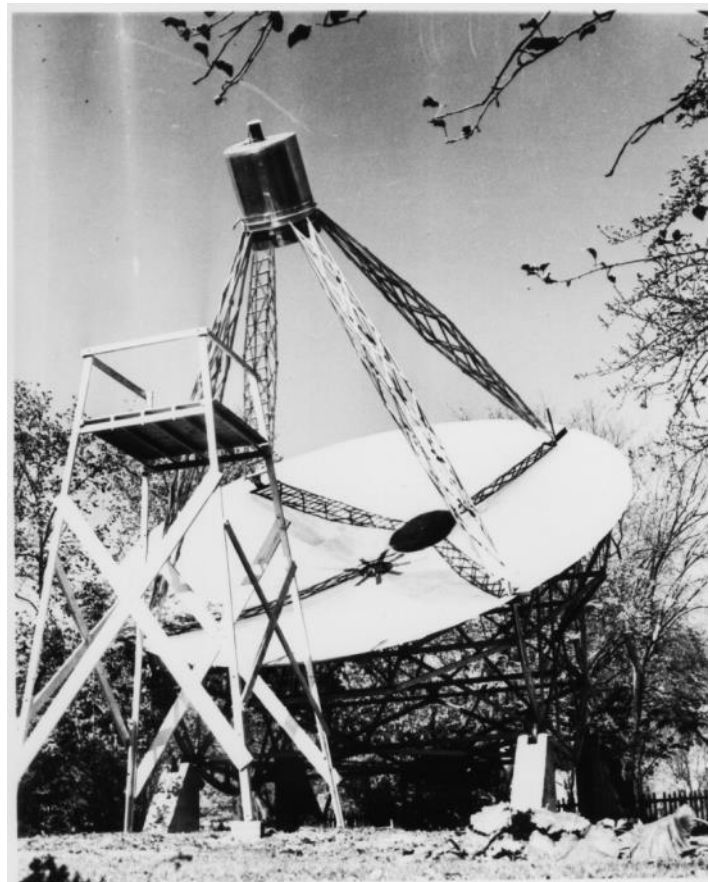
Orion Nebula: 4-minute picture taken by Gary Thompson using Dwarf II camera/telescope with only a 24mm (just under 1-inch) lens.

### **Candidate Locations for Field Trips** **Jeff Schroeder, Outreach Coordinator**

- 1. Jet Propulsion Laboratory**
  - 2. Griffith Observatory & Planetarium**
  - 3. Carnegie Observatories in Pasadena**
  - 4. Mount Wilson Observatory**
  - 5. Mount Palomar Observatory**
  - 6. Pomona College Observatory**
  - 7. Gordon D. Crowell Astrophysical Observatory @ Rio Hondo College**
  - 8. Mount San Antonio College Planetarium**
  - 9. SpaceX Headquarters in Hawthorne**
  - 10. California Science Center**
  - 11. Columbia Memorial Space Center**
  - 12. Planes of Fame Museum**
  - 13. Western Museum of Flight**
  - 14. Proud Bird Museum**
  - 15. Burbank Aviation Museum**
  - 16. Big Bear Solar Observatory**
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Jansky and his rotating directional radio antenna (early 1930s),  
the world's first radio telescope.



Reber's parabolic dish and receiver



Grote Reber's equipment in his mother's home

Eclipse Photos - 3.3.2026 - Lucy Stover

