Asteroids

Asteroid Bennu is about to make land fall in Utah on Sunday. That is, 8.8 ounces of it. After a billion mile journey from the asteroid, which it left almost 3 years ago, the OSIRIS-Rex mission will parachute the sample onto the Utah desert. You can watch the landing on nasa.gov

Sept. 24 7:55 a.m.  Touchdown

Sept. 24 2:00 p.m.  NASA press conference

Space Stations

The International Space Station (ISS) has a great pass visible from Berkeley this week:

Sept. 30 8:26pm North West, Altitude 20°; 8:28pm North North East, Altitude 48°; Magnitude -3.3

The Chinese space station Tiangong also has some good passes to look up for:

Sept. 28 8:41pm West South West, Altitude 20°; 8:42pm South West, Alt. 40°; Magnitude -1.1

Sept. 29 7:39pm South West, Altitude 20°; 7:41pm South South East, Alt. 42°; Magnitude -1.6

Sept 30 8:14pm West South West, Altitude 20°; 8:16pm North North West, Alt. 72°; Mag. -2.1

Constellations

The Summer Triangle is high overhead in the evening. This asterism consists of Vega in the constellation of Lyra, the lyre, which was often marked on star maps as a vulture or eagle holding a lyre; Deneb in Cygnus the swan; and Altair in Aquila, the eagle. These avian representatives combine to make the triangle shaped asterism, which is an unofficial constellation. There are many other stories to be read in the stars above us. Hercules is striding right next to Lyra; Draco the dragon is hanging right above them while Ursa Major, the big bear, is at Draco’s tail. Meanwhile, Queen Cassiopeia, just to the east on her crooked throne, seems to be watching the spectacle playing out before her.

The Planets

Venus rises just after 4 a.m. as the Morning Star. Saturn is back in our evening sky and rises just as it gets dark with Jupiter clearing the Hills just after 10 p.m.
Telescopes @Berkeley Public Library!

We have 5 Orion StarBlast Astro Reflector Telescopes that you can borrow! Each BPL Branch has a telescope, which may be borrowed for 1 week. Place a hold on it and then pick it up from your branch when it is ready. It is fairly easy to carry at 13 lbs., and stands about 2 feet tall.

Here’s what you get:

"A great compact grab-and-go telescope designed for entry-level and intermediate astronomy enthusiasts. Substantial 4.5" aperture and fast f/4 focal ratio provides bright, detailed views of solar system targets like the Moon and planets, as well as wide-field celestial objects like nebulas and star clusters."

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Binoculars @Berkeley Public Library!

Thanks to a generous donation from the Cal Falcons program, we have 9 Vortex-Raptor binocular kits that you can put on hold and pick up at the location of your choice.

Here’s what you get:

Porro prism performance in a mid-size, wide-angle design, the Raptors deliver a bright, crisp image with excellent color fidelity - even in low light conditions. With a wide range of interpupillary distance, they can easily be adjusted to fit anyone in the family, making them ideal for serious, hard-core youth hunters. The kit comes with a copy of The Sibley Field Guide to Birds of Western America and a pocket guide to local birds of the SF Bay Area. But it is also great for looking at planets, the moon and the stars!

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This Sky Report is brought to you by Berkeley Public Library’s Cornerstones of Science, which is funded in part by the Silberstein Foundation. Cornerstones of Science is part of a multi-library initiative to bring STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) programming to patrons.