

WEEKLY SKY REPORT

January 28 – February 3, 2024

PLANETS

Venus rises just after 5 a.m. as the Morning Star and is visible high in the east until it gets lost in the glare of the sunrise; it is, in fact, still visible after 6 a.m. Mercury and Mars are not far behind Venus; you may be able to see them through the haze of the sunrise. Saturn is getting ready to sink behind San Francisco as it gets dark with Jupiter about halfway across the southern sky at 7:00pm.

SPACE STATIONS

The International Space Station (ISS) has a few great passes visible from Berkeley this week, including a pass straight overhead and is about as bright as it gets for us.

Jan. 30 7:12pm North West, Altitude 20°; 7:14pm North West, Alt. 39°; Magnitude -2.9

Jan. 31 6:24pm North West, Altitude 20°; 6:26pm North East, Alt. 32°; Magnitude -2.9

Feb. 1 7:12pm North West, Altitude 20°; 7:14pm South West, Alt. 46°; Magnitude -2.9

Feb 2 6:23pm North West, Altitude 20°; 6:25pm North East, Alt. 90°; Magnitude -3.8

READING RECOMMENDATION

Big Bangs and Black Holes: A Graphic Novel Guide to the Universe.

By Herji, Francfort with the participation of Nobel Prize Laureate Michel Mayor

What better way to understand the most complicated concepts in the universe than with a graphic novel?! This book covers it all, from gravitational waves to spaghettification. The text is clear and concise and the illustrations are fun and illuminate the concepts being described. There are sections on key scientists and their discoveries: Galileo, Newton, Einstein, Henrietta Swan Leavitt. Some of the mind boggling ideas include how fast our knowledge is evolving. For example, we now believe that there are 10 to 20 times more galaxies, stars, and planets than we thought less than ten years ago! So stay tuned for revised editions of this book!

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."



Much of the information for this report comes from the wonderful web site, Heavens Above. You can enter your home city location and bookmark it for easy access: <http://www.heavens-above.com>. Other stellar sources include: <http://www.space.com> and <http://www.nasa.gov>. And check spacex.com for launches.

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!

