

WEEKLY SKY REPORT

February 4 – February 10, 2024

PLANETS

Venus rises just after 5:30 a.m. as the Morning Star and is visible low in the south east until it gets lost in the glare of the sunrise. Soon Venus will disappear until the summer when it will transition into the Evening Star; Saturn is getting ready to sink behind San Francisco as it gets dark with Jupiter just past halfway across the southern sky.

CONSTELLATIONS

This is a great time of year—when it's not raining!—to see some of the most striking constellations. That big man of the night, Orion with his 3-starred belt and the glowing red chip on his shoulder, Betelgeuse, is in the southern sky. His good dog Canis with his shiny nose Sirius, is chasing Lepus the jackrabbit right past Orion's feet. Orion is too busy dealing with Taurus the bull with his long horns ready to charge him. The Gemini twins are arm in arm above Orion watching the action. Meanwhile, Leo the lion is bounding from the Berkeley Hills and the twins better watch out!

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!

