

WEEKLY SKY REPORT

March 17 – March 23, 2024

COMETS

Here's a good reason to check out a telescope or binoculars from our library [see second page]: Comet 12P Pons-Brooks is making its way across the sky! This comet was discovered independently by the two greatest comet hunters. Jean-Louis Pons and William R. Brooks discovered 64 comets between them. Comet Pons-Brooks orbits the sun about once every 71 years—so now's a good time to catch it!

CONSTELLATIONS

This is a great time of year 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 to notice as he's 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!

Chabot Space & Science Center

Blast off to Chabot for a day filled with hands-on fun! The Center is hosting our first-ever Rocketfest. These feats of engineering allow us to send satellites into orbit, study Earth's upper atmosphere and eventually send humans to other planets. Discover more about rockets through hands-on activities, live science demonstrations, special guest speakers and more!

Saturday, March 23, 10-4pm

\$30 Adults, \$25 Kids/Students/Seniors, Members Free

All ages, family-friendly.

<https://chabotspace.org/>

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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 nebulae 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](http://www.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!



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