

WEEKLY SKY REPORT

April 13 – April 19, 2025

CONSTELLATIONS & The BLAZE STAR

The winter constellations are rotating out of our night sky, which means there is a new batch of stellar sights to see. Boötes, that herder of stars, is rising from the south Berkeley Hills around 9 p.m. with the crown of stars, Corona Borealis, following close behind. This gives us the chance to see the overdue explosion of the Blaze Star. This is a recurrent nova binary star just to the lower left side of Corona Borealis, which spends about 80 years with one star stealing gas off the other. This leads to a certain irritation on the part of the victim and results in an outburst seen here, 80 years later.

PLANETS

The brilliant Jupiter is embedded on the right horn of Taurus the bull and is beginning its slide down towards San Francisco; it sets there around midnight. Mars is a smoldering red dot directly overhead at 9 p.m.

SPACE STATIONS

The Chinese space station Tiangong has some great passes visible from Berkeley this week. There are three taikonauts on board. The station is just over a third of the size of the International Space Station but still is fairly shiny and easy to spot with the naked eye. Tiangong, or Heavenly Palace, is comprised of modules. The core is Tianhe, or Harmony of the Heavens; the two laboratory modules are Wentian, or Quest for the Heavens, and Mengtian, Dreaming of the Heavens. Obviously the Chinese have high hopes for their station!

April 14 9:06pm North West, Altitude 20°; 9:08pm North, Altitude 43°; Mag. -1.3

April 15 9:40pm North West, Altitude 20°; 9:42pm, North West, Altitude 48°; Mag. -1.2

April 16 8:38pm North West, Altitude 20°; 8:41pm North East, Altitude 52°; Mag. -1.6

April 17 9:13pm North West, Altitude 20°; 9:15pm South West, Alt. 73"; Magnitude -2.2

April 19 8:46pm West, Altitude 20°; 8:48pm South West, Altitude 45°; Magnitude -1.5

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](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!

