



The Monthly Newsletter of the Von Braun Astronomical Society

## VBAS Highlights for January

### Public Programs for January

Our next member's meeting will be held on Friday, January 18th at 7 p.m. Dr. Wesley Colley will give a talk on "Gravitational Lensing for Cosmology and Quasar Structure", which has become an important tool for understanding dark matter and the structure of Quasi-Stellar Objects. VBAS Member Meetings are held on the 3rd Friday of each month at 7 p.m.; they're open to the public and are free.

Regular planetarium programs start at 7:30 PM. This January, we will be kicking off a year-long series on the planets and other bodies of our Solar System, with two shows on Mercury on the 5th and 12th. On the 19th, Jeff Delmas will tell people what to do with the telescopes they got for Christmas. On the 26th, during the 50th anniversary weekend of the launch of America's first satellite, Explorer 1, Roy Young will be giving a presentation about that historic event. Admission to planetarium shows is free for VBAS Members, \$5.00 for Adults, \$3.00 for Students, and free for children under 6. Observation of the night sky through various telescopes normally follows each planetarium program, weather permitting.

### Upcoming Dark Sky Events

There are three upcoming Dark Sky events in the Calendar of Events on page 2: a Night Sky Network telecon at the planetarium on February 5th, the GLOBE worldwide star count February 25th through March 8th, and Lights Out America on March 29th.

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*Saturday, January 5th and 12th, 2007, 7:30 PM*

**Planetarium Show: Mercury**

*Presented by Melissa Snider*

This family-friendly program on Mercury, the closest planet to the sun, will be the first in a monthly series on the planets and bodies in our Solar System.

*Reprocessed Mariner 10 data was used to produce this image of Mercury. The smooth band is an area of which no images were taken. Source:*

<http://antwrp.gsfc.nasa.gov/apod/apo11124.html>

*Friday, January 18, 2007, 7:00 PM*

**Regular Monthly Meeting**

After a short pizza social and marketplace swap meet, we'll discuss pertinent society business. The program has not been announced as of yet. Visitors are welcome.

Our program for Friday, January 18th will feature Dr. Wesley Colley, who will present "Gravitational Lensing for Cosmology and Quasar Structure", which has become an

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## The Night Sky for January, 2008

Here is the view at 9 PM in mid January, 2008, at 34° N Latitude, 86° W Longitude. Mars, the spear-and-shield symbol, will be almost straight overhead, between Gemini and Auriga. Jupiter, the "h"-like symbol, is rising in the east with Leo. The Moon will be in Pisces in the west.

Map courtesy of John Walker and YourSky (<http://www.fourmilab.to/yoursky/>).



### Contributions to Via Stellaris

We welcome contributions to our newsletter that may be of interest to the astronomical community. Contributions are best sent by email to Steve Sloan at [editor1@vbas.org](mailto:editor1@vbas.org). If you don't have access to email, you can send articles in either Word or ASCII format to Steve at 2110 Vilaret Dr, Huntsville, AL 35803.

### Membership and Renewal

The VBAS currently has four categories of membership. All four include free admission to the planetarium shows; subscription to this newsletter; membership in the Astronomical League; and use of VBAS library and equipment. The four categories of membership, and the dues for each, are: REGULAR at \$24.00 per year, FAMILY at \$36.00 per year, STUDENT (must be full-time student) at \$12.00 per year, and LIFE at \$500.00. Newsletter Only is also available for \$12.00 per year. Membership renewal occurs for all members annually on March 1st.

All VBAS memberships have been renewed until March 2008. If you have questions regarding membership, please contact Jared Cassidy.

Please send your renewal to the Membership Secretary at VBAS, P.O. Box 1142, Huntsville, AL 35807. Make checks payable to the Von Braun Astronomical Society. If your mailing or email address changes, please report the new address promptly to the Membership Secretary, Jared Cassidy, at 539-4392, or [jared@harc.net](mailto:jared@harc.net), to avoid missing issues of *Via Stellaris*.

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*Steve Sloan, Via Stellaris editor*