

**Greg Smith – editor**

**Volume 25, No.11  
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**Program: Meeting Cancelled  
due to health concerns**

**Meeting: March 18, 2020  
Mark Morris LGIC**

## Spring Nights

As we enter the last days of winter and start the entering of Spring, we are given the chance to take an adventure into the night sky and observe many of the Messier objects that have been catalogued. The Messier Marathon may be an adventure that you are looking forward to, and rightly so, as it seems to be one of those things that amateur astronomers do just to get under their belt. Personally, I just can't do an all-nighter anymore. That is what Ted was going to talking about, he did not do a marathon, but broke it up into more doable pieces. His talk was to help us determine an easier path. If we break it up into smaller parts, we can accomplish the feat and still get that Messier pin from the Astronomical League. My goal was to get the solar observing pin, but solar minimum has gotten in the way of that for a couple of years, as there have been no sunspots to observe and record.

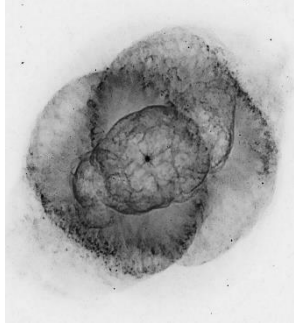
Did you hear about the contributions of citizen "astronomer: in tipping off astronomers of the University of Central Lancashire in the United Kingdom and astronomers at Penn State in the US? They alerted the astronomers about an oddly pulsating star. It seems that this kind of pulsating star has been theoretically imagined and has now been confirmed. It turns out that this pulsating star is being pulled only on one

side by a companion star. It is kind of egg shaped. Its brightness only fluctuates on one side of the star as the companion orbits. They must both be tidally locked to each other.

With the start of Daylight-Saving Time, our visible stars are later in appearing, but not so much as to make it hard to see a lot in the night sky. I still have the goal to see the galaxies at the base of the constellation Leo. I hope I'll be able to do this while Leo is still so prominent in the southern sky and we have a few clear nights these next few weeks.

**Betelgeuse sneezed.** It seems that a cloud of dusty debris was flung away from the star in our direction causing the highly noticed dimming. Betelgeuse is now brightening again and may not explode any time soon. Orion's arm is saved. No shoulder surgery will be performed, and a re-rendering of the constellation is now put on hold. Some astrophysicists maybe saying, "Oh shoot. It could have quite the event of the century. I could have written a lot of papers about it." 😊

**Every Day is a Star Filled Day,  
Every Night is a Starry Night**



## **A Capital debate: Should Earth's natural satellite be 'Moon' or 'moon'?**

By Leonard David 3/5/2020

### **How should we write the name of Earth's nearest celestial neighbor?**

There is an enduring debate over capitalizing the "m" in Earth's moon. Some organizations, like NASA, have the letter capitalized in their style guides. However, the Associated Press (AP) stylebook, considered the gold standard for setting style guidelines in journalism, downgrades our celestial next-door neighbor to a small "m."

Will this brouhaha over editorial rules ever be resolved? Key individuals make their cases, both upper and lower.

#### **Longtime style**

Webster's New World College Dictionary, which is AP's primary dictionary, uses lowercase "moon." So does the dictionary by Merriam-Webster, also revered for English word definitions, meanings and pronunciation.

"The AP Stylebook decision to lowercase 'sun' and 'moon' was made years ago, so I can't speak to the discussions that were held then," AP Stylebook editor Paula Froke told Space.com. (Space.com follows AP style, which is why you see "sun" and "moon" in our stories.)

"The current Stylebook and AP science teams know that many believe 'moon' should be capitalized," Froke said, "and many believe it should be lowercased. For now, we see no reason to change our longtime style. We would argue that the moon is a 'thing,' not a thing named 'Moon.'"

#### **Capital decision**

NASA has a different point of view, which the agency lays out in its Style Guide for NASA History Authors and Editors:

"Capitalize the names of planets (e.g., 'Earth,' 'Mars,' 'Jupiter'). Capitalize 'Moon' when referring to Earth's Moon; otherwise, lowercase 'moon' (e.g., 'The Moon orbits Earth,' 'Jupiter's moons'). Capitalize 'Sun' when referring to our Sun but not to other suns. Do not capitalize 'solar system' and 'universe.' Another note on usage: 'Earth,' when used as the name of the planet, is not preceded by 'the'; you would not say 'the Neptune' or 'the Venus.' When 'earth' is lowercased, it refers to soil or the ground, not the planet. Do use 'the' in front of 'Sun' and 'Moon' as applicable."

#### **Nitpicker**

To capitalize or not to capitalize?

That is the question, wrote lunar expert Paul Spudis in a 2009 article for Air & Space magazine. Spudis was a senior staff scientist at the Lunar and Planetary Institute in Houston. He passed away in 2018.

"Interestingly, the AP Stylebook says to capitalize the Earth but not the Sun and Moon," Spudis

wrote. "My guess is that some classically educated nitpicker who was forced to sit through endless hours on the joys of the ablative absolute in Latin class decided that the Roman-named objects of the universe were worthy of linguistic worship but the vulgar, barbarian Germanic names given to those other three bodies did not deserve to be capitalized."

NASA, which sent a dozen astronauts to the lunar surface from 1969 to 1972, capitalizes the name of Earth's moon. (Image credit: NASA)

Simply put, Spudis said, the AP Stylebook is wrong.

"When referring to 'the Moon' — that is, our Moon, Luna, site of Neil Armstrong's landing in 1969 — the word should be capitalized," he wrote. "When referring to any moon, such as in 'the moons of Jupiter,' it becomes a generic descriptor and hence, should not be capitalized. Our Moon is a world with its own history, one intimately entwined with our own. It has the material and energy resources needed to help us bootstrap a true spacefaring capability. It will one day become a second home for humanity."

### **Firestorm of letters**

Retired NASA lunar expert Wendell Mendell, a planetary scientist with a doctorate in the field and 50 years of experience with the space agency, weighed in on the debate as well.

Mendell, among others, has been cognizant of a firestorm of letters from planetary scientists that appeared in email threads on this issue.

For nonscientific individuals, Mendell said, "moon" is a noun referring to a unique object venerated for its romantic connotations.

But "for a planetary scientist, it can be any one of hundreds of moons in the solar system, each one of which has a name," Mendell said. "The name in English for the principal satellite of Earth is 'the Moon.' This is the term used in professional papers and is so designated by the manual of the United States Government Printing Office, Section 3.31. It is listed in the style sheet of the American Geophysical Union for submitted manuscripts. The rule is similar for 'the Sun' when referring to the prominent star in our sky to distinguish it from billions of suns in the universe."

### **"End of story"**

"This is simple English," said Clive Neal, a lunar authority at the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering and Earth Sciences at the University of Notre Dame in Indiana.

"The name of Earth's only natural satellite is 'the Moon' — it is a proper noun, so it is spelled with a capital 'M.' End of story," Neal told Space.com.

If organizations profess to follow the English language, the Moon always has a capital 'M,' he added.

"Otherwise, they follow a language I am not familiar with," Neal said. "The Associated Press (AP) does not follow the English language (note: no capital letters!)," he said. "Phobos is a natural satellite of Mars — a moon. The Moon is the only natural satellite of Earth — it is a moon of Earth called the Moon."

### **Cringe factor**

Even Apollo-era engineers are piping up on the issue.

"Several of us Apollo veterans would like to point out that everyone should always capitalize the name of our nearest extraterrestrial neighbor, the 'Moon.' NASA does this in all their web references. I hope that others will soon also accept this important and accurate way of portraying the Moon," said Ron Creel, an Apollo Lunar Roving Vehicle team member.

"It just makes us cringe whenever we see the name of our nearest celestial neighbor not capitalized," Creel said. "Someone at NASA must have felt the same way. To heck with the AP. What do they know?" 😊

## Minutes of the February Meeting

President, Ted Gruber, called the meeting to order.

Earth Day is April 18th. The cost is \$50 and will be held at the Fairgrounds. We will need volunteers, be ready to sign up at the March meeting. Greg has the application and will get it sent in with the check that Steve Powell will write tonight.

The insurance policy was paid. There was no cost increase at \$315.

Treasurer, Steve Powell, gave the treasurer report. We are in the black.

Mike Fiest has volunteered to host Star Parties again at his home this spring and summer. Ted and Mark will come up with a schedule and confirm with Mike. Sidewalk Astronomy might need a new location. Starbucks closes early at 9:00 Pm before it gets dark in the summertime. If you have any ideas, let one of the officers know.

Last year we did a Star Party at Cascade Middle School. We were asked if we would do it again. Ted said we would. The date is still to be determined.

Ted mentioned that Mark Thorsen thinks we should participate in the Oregon star Party taht will be held July 22 - 25th.

August 21-22nd is the Mt. St. Helen's Institute Star party. We will participate in it again this year.

Greg Smith has the snack sign-up sheet.

We need a program for March.

Row Gawlick gave a suggestion to participate in the 4th of July parade. We will discuss it more.

Ted gave the Sky Report. Venus continues to dominate the evening sky. the evenings of March 7th & 8th offer good chances to see Uranus, when they are only a couple of degrees apart. The morning sky hosts Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn. the Messier of the month is M41, an open cluster in Canis Major. The cluster contain about 100 stars, including several red giants and white dwarfs. It is about 25 light years in diameter and about 2,300 away. Through bins, it appears as a large faint patch of light. Even small telescopes will resolve about 50 stars. It is best viewed at low magnification.

Due to computer issues, we headed to Steve Powell's room for the video program of the 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Lowell Observatory and 90<sup>th</sup> of the Discovery of Pluto.

Meeting adjourned.

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|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <b>☞ March 2020 Meeting ☞</b> |                                      |
| DATE:                         | <b>Wednesday March 18</b>            |
| TIME                          | <b>Cancelled</b>                     |
| PLACE:                        | Mark Morris High School<br>LGIC      |
| PROGRAM: -                    |                                      |
|                               | Drinks<br>Snacks                     |
| Remember:                     | Earth Day<br>Saturday April 18, 2020 |

## Friends of Galileo Club Officers

|                                  |              |
|----------------------------------|--------------|
| PRESIDENT                        | Ted Gruber   |
| VICE-PRESIDENT/<br>PROGRAM CHAIR | Mark Thorson |
| SECRETARY                        | Becky Kent   |
| TREASURER                        | Steve Powell |
| WEBSITE                          | Ted Gruber   |
| NEWSLETTER ED.                   | Greg Smith   |
| ALCOR                            | Tom Meek     |

## Next Month's Newsletter Deadline

The deadline for items in next month's newsletter is:

**Wednesday: seven days  
before next meeting.**

**Please feel free to send in your  
thoughts and experiences about  
your astronomical adventure.**

Submit your material by E-mail to:

[gryth@msn.com](mailto:gryth@msn.com)

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