IAAS Monthly Astronomy Newsletter February 2026

The International Association for Astronomical Studies provides this newsletter as a service for interested persons worldwide.

This newsletter is published on the World Wide Web at The Home of KIØAR - and is received nationally and internationally. Download the PDF formatted version of the newsletter.

An Open Invitation - For amateur radio operators and scanner enthusiasts around the world, please join the Colorado Astronomy Net on the Rocky Mountain Radio League's **K1DUN** repeater on **449.450 MHz** or other digital and analog repeaters, Allstar nodes, Echolinks, DMR and internet links connected to the SKYHUBLINK system. The net meets on Tuesday nights at 7 P.M. Mountain Time (US) (Wednesday at 0200 GMT). Connecting to the SkyHubLink system has expanded our coverage in the U.S., Canada and internationally. All Amateur radio operators worldwide are welcome. Anyone may listen to the net. The RMRL provides a "Live Audio Feed" using Broadcastify.

The Colorado Astronomy Net is now on YouTube!! All are welcome to join us Tuesday evenings!

Obtain your Amateur Radio (Ham) License or your General Radio Operator's License (GROL)! Visit the South Metro VE Team website for more information. The South Metro VE Team provides test sessions by appointment only. Check the website for current information. All others interested in Amateur Radio, check out the Amateur Radio Relay League website to find out more information about becoming an Amateur Radio operator.

The Colorado Astronomy Net and the IAAS are on Facebook page. Be sure to "Like" us.

Donate to the IAAS!
Your contributions are tax deductible.
Thank you for your support!

Excerpts from JPL mission updates are provided as a public service as part of the JPL Solar System Ambassador / NASA Outreach program.

"Jupiter (bottom center) rises beneath a colorful auroral curtain in February 2018, as seen from Churchill, Manitoba." Alan Dyer, Astronomy Magazine, February 2026, p.28.

In This Newsletter...

The Month At-A-Glance

The current month's calendar displaying the daily astronomical events.

The Moon

Phases:

- Full Moon occurs on the 1st.
- Last Quarter Moon occurs on the 9th.
- New Moon occurs on the 17th.
- First Quarter Moon occurs on the 24th.

- The Moon is at apogee (251,392 miles from Earth) on the 10th.
- The Moon is at perigee (229,991 miles from Earth) on the 24th.

Moon/Planet Pairs:

- The Moon passes 0.4° north of Regulus on the 2nd.
- The Moon passes 0.7° south of Antares on the 10th.
- The Moon passes 0.9° north of Pluto on the 15th.
- Saturn passes 0.9° south of Neptune, on the 15th.
- The Moon passes 1.7° north of Venus on the 18th.
- The Moon passes 0.1° south of Mercury, on the 18th.
- The Moon passes 4° north of Neptune on the 19th.
- The Moon passes 5° north of Saturn on the 19th.
- The Moon passes 6° north of Uranus on the 23rd.
- Mercury passes 5° north of Venus on the 26th.
- The Moon passes 4° north of Jupiter on the 27th.

For reference: The Full Moon subtends an angle of ~0.5°

Astronomy Calendar 2026: All Major Celestial Events of the Year

Weekly Rocket Report

Courtesy of "The Rocketman" Ed W6RDZ
Updated Weekly on Tuesday evenings
prior to the Colorado Astronomy Net

The Planets & Dwarf Planets

Planetary Reports are generated by "TheSkyX" software. These reports provide predicted data for the planets on the first of each month for the current year. The rise and set times for the Sun and the Moon for each day of the month as well as meteor shower radiants are also included in the reports. These reports have been optimized for the Denver, Colorado location, however, the times will be approximate for other locations on Earth.

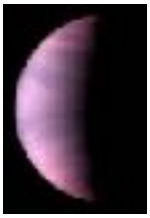
*(Times are Mountain Time (**MST**/MDT) unless otherwise noted. Times will vary slightly depending on your location.)*

Planetary Highlights for February

"Mercury, Venus, and Saturn put on an early-evening display in the west, while Jupiter dominates the rest of the night. Jupiter features many events involving its four major moons that are well worth chasing down. A remote annular eclipse of the Sun occurs on the 17th, visible only from Antarctica." Astronomy Magazine, February 2026, p.28.

Mercury

Is Mercury is at greatest eastern elongation (18°) on the 19th. Mercury is stationary on the 25th. Mercury sets at 5:56 p.m. on the 1st and about 6:46 p.m. by month's end. Mercury is visible about 30 minutes after sunset, low to the west. Mercury moves from the constellation of Capricornus into Pisces shining at magnitude -0.9 on the 15th.



Venus

Sets about 5:48 p.m. on the 1st and about 6:54 p.m. by month's end. Look for Venus low to the west about an 30 minutes after sunset. Venus moves from the constellation of Capricornus into Aquarius shining at magnitude -3.9.

Earth

N/A.

Mars

Mars rises at 6:57 a.m. on the 1st and about 6:09 a.m. by month's end. Look for Mars low to the east in the morning about 30 minutes before sunrise. Mars moves from the constellation of Capricornus into Aquarius shining at magnitude 1.1.

Jupiter

Rises at 3:03 p.m. on the 1st and about 1:03 p.m. by month's end. Look for Jupiter towards the east in the early evening, then follow it through the night sky as it sets in the early morning hours before dawn. Jupiter is in the constellation of Gemini shining at magnitude -2.5.

Saturn

Sets at 9:04 p.m. on the 1st and about 7:29 p.m. by month's end. Look for Saturn towards the west in the evening sky, soon after sunset. Saturn is in the constellation of Pisces shining at magnitude 1.0.

Uranus

Is stationary on the 3rd. Uranus sets about 2:05 a.m. on the 1st and about 12:17 a.m. by month's end. Look for Uranus to the southwest in the evening. Uranus is in the constellation Taurus shining at magnitude 5.7.

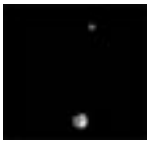
Neptune

Sets at 9:12 p.m. on the 1st and about 7:27 p.m. by the month's end. Look for Neptune towards the west in the evening near Saturn by a few minutes all month. Saturn is in retrograde, so watch Neptune appear to pass by Saturn as the month progresses. Neptune is in the constellation of Pisces shining at magnitude 7.8.

Dwarf Planets

Ceres

Sets at 10:20 p.m. on the 1st and about 9:18 p.m. by month's end. Ceres can be spotted low to the west following Saturn and Neptune. Ceres moves from the constellation of Cetus into Pisces shining at magnitude 9.1.



Pluto

Rises at 6:58 a.m. on the 1st and about 5:11 a.m. by month's end. Pluto is lost in the Sun's twilight glow for most of the month. Pluto is in the constellation of Capricornus shining at magnitude 15.2.

As always, good luck at spotting Neptune, Ceres and Pluto, a large telescope and dark skies will be needed.

Constellation information provided by Go Astronomy.

Astronomical Events

Meteor Showers

• "**MAJOR METEOR SHOWERS** skip February altogether. Random or sporadic meteors from ancient streams long since dispersed produce about a half-dozen meteors per hour. Meteors are always best seen after midnight under a dark, moonless sky. In the runup to dawn, you're sitting on Earth's leading hemisphere as it orbits the Sun, resulting in higher velocities as any cometary detritus enters the atmosphere.

Also visible on moonless evenings in February is the zodiacal light. This dim glow, aligned with the ecliptic, extends steeply above the western horizon well after the low arc of the twilight glow has diminished. From completely dark locations, the zodiacal light is almost as bright as the Milky Way. The cone extends upward through Aquarius, Pisces, and Aries. A line connecting Mercury and Saturn shows the way.

Scan your eyes left and right and your peripheral vision will pick up the cone-shaped glow. The middle of the month, starting after Feb. 6, is the best time to look, with the bright Moon out of the evening sky." Astronomy Magazine, February, 2026, p.29

For more information about Meteor Showers, visit the Meteor Showers Online web page.

Meteor Shower Radiant Report

Meteor Scatter (or Meteor burst communications) -- "is a radio propagation mode that exploits the ionized trails of meteors during atmospheric entry to establish brief communications paths between radio stations up to 2,250 kilometres (1,400 mi) apart." Tune your shortwave or your HF amateur radio to 54.310 MHz USB CW and see if you can hear any pings. Try other frequencies as well... 6m FT8 digital - 50.313 Mhz & 50.276 Mhz, JP-65 digital mode and the carrier frequencies of the lower VHF bands for TV channels 2, 3 & 4.

Meteor Rx How-To by Terry Bullett (WØASP).

Comets

• Comet C/2024 E1 (Wierzchoś) will be leaving the southern hemisphere, dimming to 6th magnitude for northern hemisphere observers. Comet Wierzchoś is passing from the constellation of Sculptor through Cetus and into Eridanus by the end of the month.

For information, orbital elements and ephemerides on observable comets visit Observable Comets.

For more information about Comets, check out Gary Kronk's 6-volume series of books on Cometography.

Eclipses

- An annular solar eclipse occurs on the 17th, visible only from Antarctica.
- No lunar eclipse activity this month.

Observational Opportunities

(from evening to morning)

- Look for Mercury, Venus, Saturn, Neptune, Ceres and Uranus to the southwest.
- Look for Jupiter in the evening and early morning to the south.
- Look for Pluto and Mars in the early morning to the east.

Asteroids

(From west to east)

- **Hebe** is in the constellation of Cetus.
- **Nysa** is in the constellation of Cancer.
- **Iris** is at opposition on the 27th in the constellation of Sextans.
- **Massalia** is in the constellation of Virgo.

Information about the Minor Planets can be found at the MinorPlanet.info web site.

Occultations

Information on various occultations can be found at the International Occultation Timing Association's (IOTA) web site.

Member Meteor Sightings

In this section I will post meteor, fireball, etc sightings that have been published on the American Meteor Society's web site. I want to make this an active section of the web pages and newsletter and would like to publish the links to member sightings. If you have any published sightings, please provide me with the links and I will post them here for all to enjoy.

Event ID	Date/Time	Location	Observer	Link
3871-2015	2015-11-13 01:55 MST	CO	Charles N	3871a
3587-2015	2015-11-22 17:38 MST	CO	Kevin S	3587aw
3829-2015	2015-12-05 18:06 MST	CO	Burness A	3829a
986-2020	2020-02-21 22:20 MST	CO	Lukas S	986
3716-2020	2020-07-24 23:22 MDT	CO	Lukas S	3716
4774-2021	2021-08-13 21:57 MDT	UT	Lukas S	4774
7044-2021	2021-10-28 20:37 MDT	CO	Burness A	249058
6763-2022	2022-10-06 05:56 CDT	OK	Mike C	6763
5300-2023	2023-09-11 22:04 MDT	CO	Lukas S	5300
578-2024	2024-01-28 23:05 MST	CO	Lukas S	578
2864-2025	2025-05-19 20:29 PDT	NV	Kenneth T	375753

Subscriber Gallery

I have created a web page containing images taken and submitted by subscribers (or special images) to the email newsletter, check-ins to the Colorado Astronomy Net and readers of the online newsletter and some of my own images. Anyone wishing to submit their images to the gallery, please send me an email. The images must be taken by the submitter and be astronomy related. Please include a description and your information so that I can give proper credit to your work. I will post the most recent submissions here.

First Light with LRGB

M42 - The Orion Nebula

Courtesy of Roy Murray (KI7PKL)
Portland, Oregon
Astrophotography with the SkyWatcher HEQ-5 and Celestron C6
Images taken January 2026

"I've imaged this before, but it made a great test object with which to try out some new camera gear as well as some other upgrades. This was taken in three narrowband wavelengths: Hydrogen Alpha, Oxygen III, and Sulphur II. It was also imaged in the primary colors, (red, green and blue). Then I took the stars from the RGB image and combined them with the nebula in the narrowband image."

Planetary/Lunar Exploration Missions

(Excerpts from recent mission updates)

JPL Latest News

The Latest from Space

The Origin of JPL (a Youtube video-1 Hour 29 minutes).

James Webb Space Telescope

Information on the James Webb Space Telescope mission is available at The James Webb Space Telescope website.

The public can follow the mission on Facebook, Twitter and YouTube.

Juno

Information on the Juno mission is available at Juno and Mission Juno.
Images from NASA's JunoCam.
The public can follow the mission on Facebook and Twitter.

TESS

Information on the TESS mission can be found on the Latest Tess News page.

Past, Present, Future and Proposed JPL Missions

For special JPL programs and presentations in your area visit the JPL Solar System Ambassador web site.

Mars Missions

Be A Martian

Mars website mobile version is here!
Simply type
http://mars.jpl.nasa.gov
into your mobile browser.

Mars on the Go! NASA Be A Martian Mobile App

If you want the latest news as it happens, try out the "Be A Martian" app.
Download on Mobile Devices
Android | iPhone | Windows Phone

JMARS

JMARS is an acronym that stands for Java Mission-planning and Analysis for Remote Sensing. It is a geospatial information system (GIS) developed by ASU's Mars Space Flight Facility to provide mission planning and data-analysis tools to NASA's orbiters, instrument team members, students of all ages, and the general public.

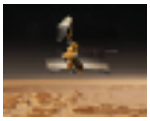
Laboratory for Atmospheric and Space Physics
"The Laboratory for Atmospheric and Space Physics (LASP) at the University of Colorado Boulder (CU) began in 1948, a decade before NASA. We are the world's only research institute to have sent instruments to all eight planets and Pluto.

LASP
Visit the LASP website for latest news and information.

MAVEN
Visit the MAVEN website for latest news and information.

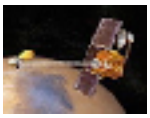
Mars 2020 - Perseverance
Visit the Mars 2020 (Perseverance) mission website for mission information and news updates.

Mars Science Laboratory - Curiosity
Visit the Mars Science Laboratory website for mission information and news updates.



Mars Reconnaissance Orbiter Mission

Mars Reconnaissance Orbiter HIRISE Images
View all of the archived HiRISE images.
More information about the MRO mission is available online.



Mars Odyssey Orbiter
Daily Mars Odyssey THEMIS Images
Thermal Emission Imaging System (THEMIS) web site.
Visit the Mars Odyssey Mission website for mission information and news updates.

Mars Missions Status
New Mars missions are being planned to include several new rover and sample collection missions. Check out the NASA Mars Exploration web page.

Astronomy Links and Other Space News

(If you have a link you would like to recommend to our readers, please feel free to submit it.)

Colorado Astronomy Links

Radio Astronomy Links

More Astronomy Links

Acknowledgments and References

Much of the information in this newsletter is from "Astronomy Magazine" (Kalmbach Publishing), JPL mission status reports, "Meteor Showers - A Descriptive Catalog" by Gary W. Kronk and other astronomical sources that I have stashed on my book shelves.

The author will accept any suggestions, constructive criticisms, and corrections. Please feel free to send me any new links or articles to share as well. I will try to accommodate any reasonable requests. Please feel free to send questions, comments, criticisms, or donations to the email address listed below. Enjoy!

Subscription Information

- Email Newsletter archives.
- Full documentation of the online administration system.
- The latest version of the newsletter.

Keep looking UP!

73 from KIØAR
Created by Burness F. Ansell, III
Email

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JPL Solar System Ambassador, Colorado
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