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Fourth Quarter

PSF NEWS

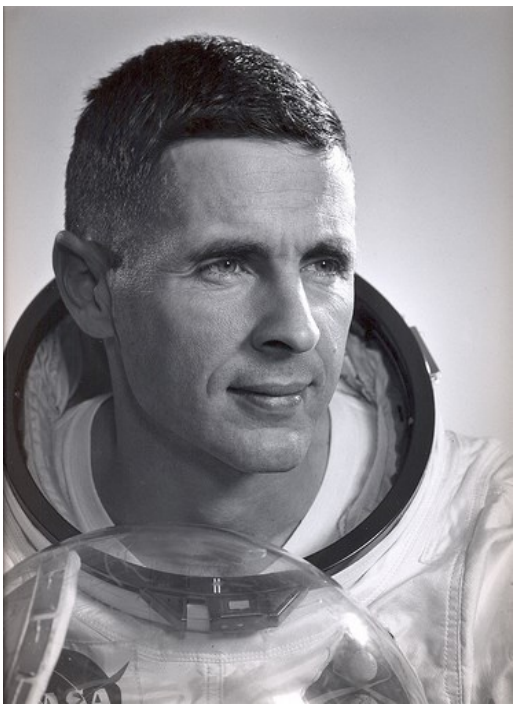
Planetary Studies Foundation

IN THIS ISSUE

Bill Anders 90th Birthday Celebration

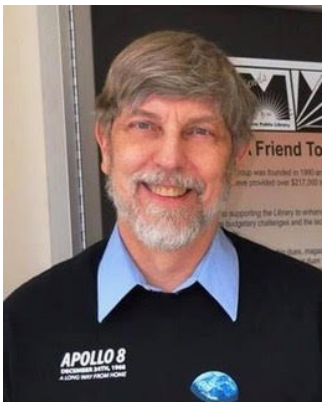
This past October 17th, astronaut Bill Anders celebrated his 90th birthday. Bill is well known for his flight, Apollo 8 with Frank Boreman and Jim Lovell, being the one of first three people to have traveled to the moon. We are also lucky enough to have Anders as a PSF member!

To celebrate his milestone birthday, a commemorative coin was minted in his honor The "older than dirt" (we love Bill's humor) commemorative coin contains drilling dust from a carbonaceous chondrite meteorite purchased by Bill at the Tucson Gem and Mineral Show. Such meteorites contain presolar grains and calcium-rich inclusions thus they are not only older than dirt, but they are also older than the 4.5-billion-year- old earth itself. PSF President, Paul Sipiera was given the privilege to be the expert geologist to sign off on the official coin certifications. What a wonderful way to celebrate an American hero and we feel honored to have PSF contribute to the celebration.



HAPPY 90TH BIRTHDAY BILL & CONGRATULATIONS!

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



As I look back on the previous eleven months of 2023, I am pleased to report that we had a very good year. The first six months were action-packed and thankfully the remaining six had no projects with pending deadlines. This gave us a well-earned breather and allowed us to look to the future for new opportunities to pursue. PSF is in a transitional phase where we need to evaluate our present resources to support existing programs and how to develop new ones. This will be accomplished in part through the inventory and cataloguing of our extremely valuable research, library and museum exhibit materials. 2024 will be a busy year!

At this time of year looking into the future is always fun. First up on the 2024 calendar will be February 8th a day set aside to celebrate the 1989 founding of your Planetary Studies Foundation. By anyone's count that makes it our 35th Anniversary. Congratulations to all our members past and present for making this possible. It's hard to believe that much time has passed since our founding days, but the calendar doesn't lie. Looking back on our history the Planetary Studies Foundation was originally created for a two-fold purpose: First, to support science education through the creation of a multi-purpose planetarium and secondly, to actively participate in meteorite research. Unfortunately, for several complicated reasons the first goal of building a planetarium on a college campus was never realized. The PSF did come close a couple of times over the years but in the end, we just couldn't raise the necessary funds to build the facility. As an alternative we obtained a Starlab portable planetarium which allowed us to introduce the wonders and joys of astronomy to over 50,000 people. Concerning participation in meteorite research, PSF has certainly surpassed its initial goal by becoming an internationally recognized institution in both active research and meteorite collections. This achievement certainly did not happen overnight. It all began in 1995 with the generous donation from Violetta J. DuPont of her husband's world-famous meteorite collection. At that time the James M. DuPont Meteorite Collection with over 1,000 officially recognized specimens was the world's largest private collection. This incredible donation instantly placed PSF among the world's most important collections. Building upon this DuPont Collection base, PSF eventually amassed a second collection that would eventually exceed 1,800 officially recognized meteorites. This was accomplished through active research on unclassified meteorites, purchases, and from three Meteorite Research Expeditions to Antarctica. Being the curator of such an important collection is a great responsibility. It was therefore decided that PSF would seek an association with a major museum to best preserve these specimens for future studies. After much deliberation it was decided that the Yale Peabody Museum in New Haven, CT would be the best choice to receive the over 2,800 official specimens. PSF is also proud to be an active research partner with the Yale Peabody Museum's scientists. PSF looks forward to a long and productive research relationship.

The astronomical BIG news for 2024 will be the spectacular April 8th Total Solar Eclipse that will cut across the United States. For those of us who remember the 2017 Total Solar Eclipse this one could have, depending upon your location, over four minutes of totality. The majority of PSF's astronomical activities next year will center around our Doug Firebaugh Astronomical Observatory in Freeport, IL. Observing sessions will be held on alternate Saturday nights beginning in April and running through October.

To all our members, friends, supporters and research partners.

Seasons Greetings and a Happy New Year!

Paul P. Sipiera

Doug Firebaugh Observatory

Open rain or shine on the 1st and 3rd Saturdays, May through October at 8:00p.

2892 W Stephenson St
Freeport, IL
815-291-3072

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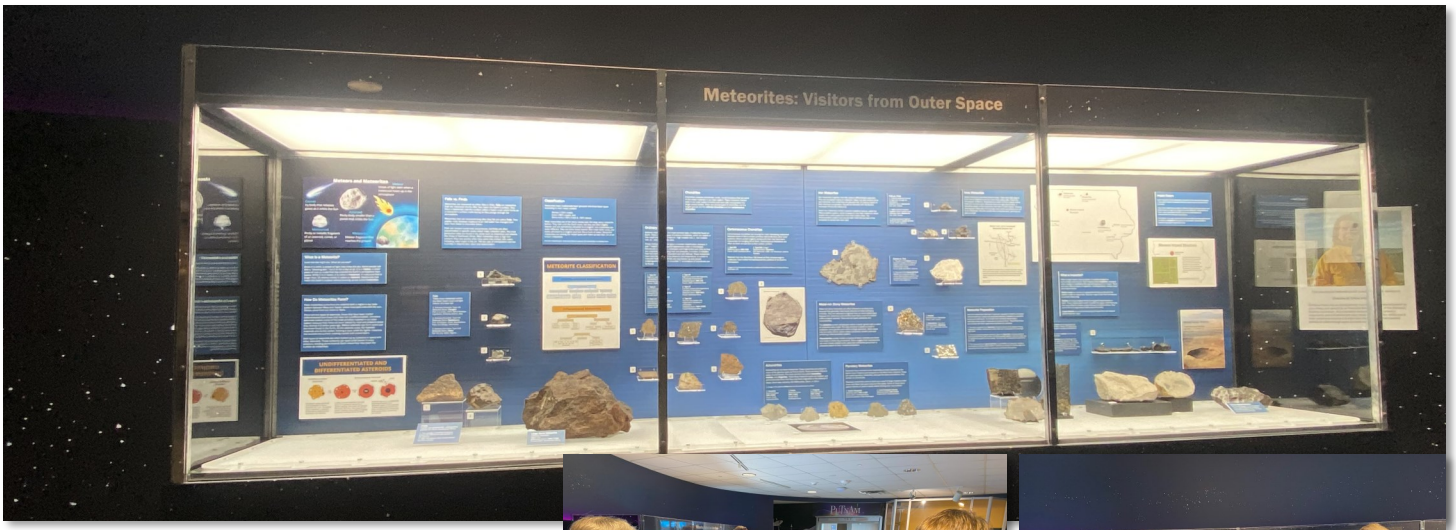
Our mission is to promote the study of planetary science and astronomy with emphasis on meteorites; and to sponsor, encourage, and assist in the physical, astronomical, environmental, and cultural sciences so as to broaden man's knowledge of all phases of the universe.

For more information about our mission, history, science articles and upcoming events, visit:

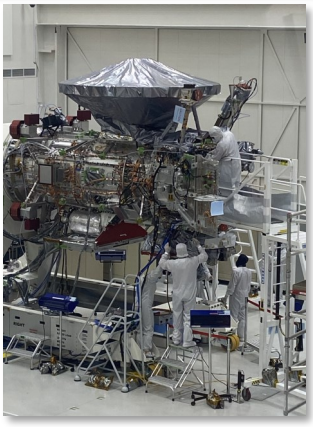
www.planets.org

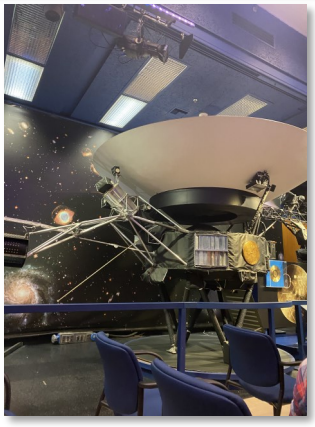
A Look Back at 2023

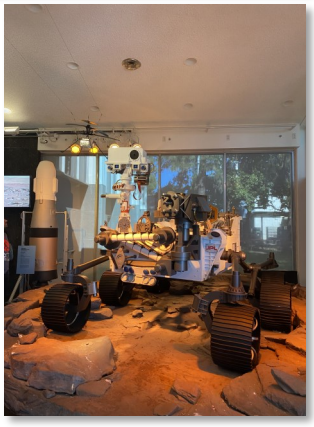


April Dedication Ceremony of the Tina Hollis Meteorite Exhibit at the Putnam Museum in Davenport, IA

PSF Recent Yale Graduate and PSF Member, Evelyn Larson, to Attend the 86th Annual Meeting of the Meteoritical Society at UCLA







Solar Eclipse Open Viewing Event at the Firebaugh Observatory

WINTER CELESTIAL CALENDAR

December 27 — Full Moon

The Moon will be located on the opposite side of the Earth and its face fully illuminated. This is a great time to grab a pair of binoculars and head outside!

January 3, 4 — Quadrantids Meteor Shower

The Quadrantids is an above average shower with up to 40 meteors per hour at its peak. The shower runs annually from Jan. 1-5 and best viewing will be from a dark location after midnight.

January 11 — New Moon

The Moon will not be visible in the night sky making it a great time to observe fainter objects such as galaxies and star clusters because there is less light to interfere.

January 12 — Mercury at Elongation

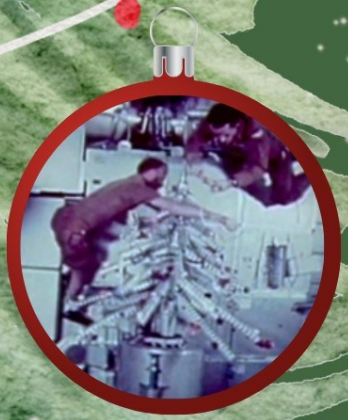
The planet Mercury reaches greatest western elongation of 23.5 degrees from the Sun. This is the best time to view Mercury since it will be at its highest point above the horizon in the morning sky. Look for the planet low in the eastern sky just before sunrise.

January 25 — Full Moon

The Moon will be located on the opposite side of the Earth and its face fully illuminated. This is a great time to grab a pair of binoculars and head outside! ***Did you know?*** *Early Native American tribes called this moon the "Wolf Moon" because this was the time of year when hungry wolf packs howled outside their camps.*

Christmas in Space

The first crew to spend Christmas in space, Apollo 8 astronauts Frank Borman, James A. Lovell, and William A. Anders, celebrated the holiday while circling the Moon in December 1968, the first humans to have left Earth orbit. They immortalized the event on Christmas Eve by taking turns reading the opening verses from the Bible's Book of Genesis as they broadcast scenes of the Moon. An estimated one billion people in 64 countries tuned in to their Christmas Eve broadcast. As they left lunar orbit, Lovell radioed back to Earth, where it was already Christmas Day, "Please be informed there is a Santa Claus!"



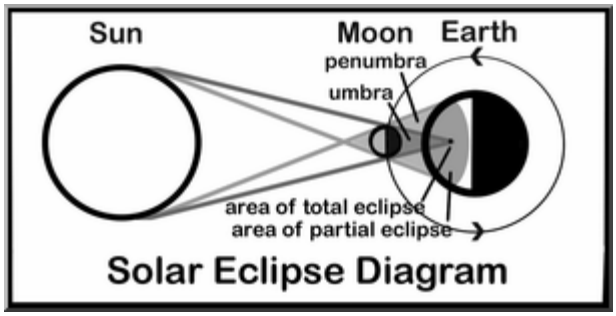
During their 84-day, record-setting mission aboard the Skylab space station in 1973 and 1974, Skylab 4 astronauts Gerald P. Carr, William R. Pogue, and Edward G. Gibson celebrated Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's in space. They were the first crew to spend Thanksgiving and New Year's in orbit. They built a homemade Christmas tree from leftover food containers, used colored decals as decorations, and topped it with a cardboard cutout in the shape of a comet.

Jingle Bells is one of the most easily recognized Christmas songs on the planet, and apparently, the same goes for space as well. In truth, Jingle Bells was the first piece of music broadcast in space, and the whole thing was one big prank. During the Gemini 6A mission to send people into space, two astronauts thought they'd have a little fun at mission control's expense.

On Dec. 16, 1965, Walter Schirra Jr. and Thomas Stafford radioed in a UFO sighting. They claimed to be picking up an object orbiting the planet before patching through a signal they were allegedly receiving from the craft. At this point, the two crewmen pulled out a harmonica and sleigh bells and recited the famous song.

April 8, 2024 Total Solar Eclipse

On April 8, 2024, a total solar eclipse will be visible in the continental United States. Glimpse the full glory of the Sun's outer atmosphere, or corona, visible only when the Sun's disc is completely covered by the moon.



To witness this incredible total solar eclipse, you will need to be within the 115-mile-wide path of totality. The path arches from Mexico to Texas to Maine. Unless you're on that line—the path of totality—you'll only see a partial eclipse. The difference between a total solar eclipse and a partial one is literally the difference between night and day, so get yourself into the path of totality if you can! The closer you are to the center of that path, the longer totality, the maximum point of the eclipse, will last.

The whole event will take about two and a half hours, but totality will only last about four minutes. Most towns in the US aren't on the path. If you stay home, you'll likely only see a partial eclipse. Make your travel plans early as hotels and campsites usually book up months in advance!

According to predictions, your best bets for clear skies are in central Mexico and south-central Texas. You will need eclipse glasses to safely view the Sun. You can watch the eclipse with your eclipse glasses, but a telescope—with the proper, safe filter!—will make viewing the eclipse even more amazing. If you don't have a buddy with a telescope, check at your local library or museum for special events!

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Where would you like your donation to go?
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____ Doug Firebaugh Observatory
____ Meteorite Research
____ Operating Expenses
____ Student Internships

We realize there are more choices than ever during this season of giving. Every dollar given to the PSF goes straight to activities that support the mission. Plus, we give you the option to choose exactly where you want your money to go.

Thank you for your support.