



Newsletter for July 2026

Join our annual star party at Plumas-Eureka State Park

Come out for our annual three-night star party at Plumas-Eureka State Park! We have two nights of club-only viewing and a third night where the public is welcome to share the views through our telescopes. In exchange, the park provides us several campsites for free. Plumas-Eureka is a beautiful place during the day, too, with hiking trails, lakes, historic buildings and artifacts, and many scenic views.



Please watch the [Groups.io email list](#) for more details, including how to sign up and reserve your campsite. If you would like to attend but don't want to camp, make your reservation now in the Graeagle vicinity. We hope you will join us!

Nights of Thursday-Saturday, August 13-15

Plumas Eureka State Park

[Google Maps location](#)

President's Rant: What's Up in July

We don't have monthly meetings during the summer, so for the months of July and August, the Rant will substitute for the What's Up This Month segment I would normally present at the meeting.

The Evening Sky

Jupiter, Venus, Mercury, and The Moon are done with their mid-June reunion. Both Jupiter and Mercury are now riding off into the sunset leaving **Venus** by her lonesome. Venus reached her highest sunset elevation back on June 5, but she will persevere as a hovering evening phenomenon for the next few months. On **July 16** the **Moon** returns on its monthly tour to commune with Venus again while also being 2 degrees from **Regulus**, the heart of Leo plunging headlong into the sunset. Venus continues to lose elevation even though she is at her greatest eastern elongation on August 15 – remember the western evening ecliptic flattens as autumn approaches. Venus will be at her brightest on September 22 near the horizon as a large crescent near us before she crosses in front of the sun at her inferior conjunction on October 24.

The Morning Sky

Mars is finally joining Saturn in the morning sky. He has been fighting for several months to become visible, having to contend with both the sun rising earlier and the springtime eastern morning ecliptic flattening. For those of us with early morning awakening, Mars will be a guide to find **Uranus**. On **July 4** at 4:30 am, blue-green Uranus will be only a quarter degree above Mars. Uranus may even be visible with binoculars if the conditions are good. The **Pleiades** will be five degrees above and **Aldebaran** five degrees below this conjunction, all in line vertically. A week later on **July 11**, the morning crescent **Moon** will join Mars, the **Pleiades**, and **Aldebaran** in a spread of only 15 degrees.

Looking ahead, August will be astronomically active. Two club members – Rod Brown and David Buchla – will be in Europe observing the **total solar eclipse** on **August 12** and may present at a future monthly meeting. Many of us will attend the club's annual **Plumas-Eureka Star Party** the evenings of **August 13-15** which will highlight the **Perseid meteor shower**. There will also be a **partial lunar eclipse** on **August 27**. It will peak at 9:30 pm, with just a small white sliver visible.

The warmth of summer makes stargazing more pleasant, but the downside is that it doesn't get really dark until around 10 pm. We can thank Daylight Savings Time for one hour of that. But with the Summer Solstice behind us, sunset will start creeping in sooner, but not until the end of August does the sun set a whole hour earlier than it does now.

Greg Ouligian

Upcoming events

Saturday, July 11, 9 pm: Monthly Star Party

Gravel lot at corner of Old Downieville Hwy and Hwy 49, Nevada City

[Google Maps location](#)

Bring your friends and family, a telescope if you have one, and warm clothes (it gets cool after the sun sets) and join fellow club members and the public in observing the night sky. Please park with your headlights pointing away from the telescopes. Weather will affect the schedule, so watch the [Groups.io email list](#) for details and updates.

Wednesday, July 15, 5 pm: Astronomy on Tap

1849 Brewing Company, 468 Sutton Way, Grass Valley

[Google Maps location](#)

Join us for beer and blather the third Wednesday of every month.

Thursday-Saturday, August 13-15: Plumas-Eureka Star Party

Plumas-Eureka State Park

[Google Maps location](#)

Mark your calendar for our annual three-night star party at Plumas-Eureka State Park. We will have campsites available for free, but if you want to reserve your own motel room or other lodging, do so now. Watch the [Groups.io email list](#) for details.

Wednesday, September 2, 7 pm: Monthly meeting and presentation

Gene Albaugh Community Room, Madelyn Helling Library

980 Helling Way, Nevada City

[Google Maps location](#)

We have no meetings during the summer, but mark your calendar for when we return in September. Attend in person or on Zoom.

Saturday, October 10: Star Party and Potluck

Home of Ania Brandysiewicz, 11975 Lodestar Drive, Grass Valley

[Google Maps location](#)

Mark your calendar for our next potluck, social, and star party at Ania's home. Stay tuned to the newsletter and [Groups.io email list](#) for details.

Feeling lost without a club meeting this month?

Watch a past presentation on YouTube!

Many of our past presentations are available to watch on the [Nevada County Astronomers YouTube channel](#). Here are a few suggestions:

[Red Star Over the Moon: Apollo's Soviet Competition](#)

[Quick Start Guide to Observing the Night Sky](#)

[Expanding Our View: The Nancy Grace Roman Telescope](#)

Telescopes available to borrow for free

The club has several telescopes and a star tracker available. Any one of them could be yours to borrow for a year for free! Please email club secretary Rod Brown at rodney.et.brown@gmail.com to learn more.

Sky-Watcher Star Adventurer tracking mount

Use this mount with your own camera, tripod, and remote shutter release to take tracked exposures of the night sky. This is a great way to try your hand at making your own night landscape shots.



Celestron C90 3.5-inch f/11 Maksutov-Cassegrain telescope

This telescope is small, compact, and easy to move around. It is a great way to look at the moon, planets, and brighter objects. Includes a mount, tripod, eyepieces, and storage case.



Meade ETX-125EC 5-inch f/15 Maksutov-Cassegrain telescope

We have two available. These telescopes are great for looking at a wide variety of objects. They include an electronic hand control and motorized mount allowing you to automatically go to any object in the telescope catalog. Tripod, storage case, and eyepieces are included.



Custom 10-inch f/5.68 Dobsonian telescope

This telescope is easy to use and capable of observing all of the Messier catalog objects. Donated by club member Tim Hogan and recently completed by Lonnie Robinson, this scope is quite sharp and fully equipped, including eyepieces, a 2x Barlow, a Rigel QuikFinder, and color and moon filters.



Get your Nevada County Astronomers merch



Show your love of the night sky and support for our club with a t-shirt, mug, apron, hat, or sticker with the club logo. A wide variety of items, styles, and colors are available. All items are printed to order and shipped directly to you. [Visit our store](#) to browse and get something just for you!

Links to monthly observing guides and more

[Sky & Telescope magazine's current observing information](#)

[Astronomical League's current observing guides](#)

[Sky Tour Astronomy podcast of celestial events this month](#)

[High Point Scientific YouTube playlist of What's in the Sky This Month](#)

[Actual Astronomy podcast, including monthly Observer's Calendar](#)

[Nevada County Astronomers website](#)

[Nevada County Astronomers YouTube channel](#)

[Nevada County Astronomers email list on Groups.io](#) (Members only)

Questions or comments? Send an email to club secretary Rod Brown at rodney.et.brown@gmail.com.