



**Wellington Astronomical Society  
2018-04 eNewsletter**

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**Wellington Astronomical Society Inc.  
email Newsletter for April 2018**

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**1. APRIL 2018 SOCIETY MEETING**

The next WAS meeting will be held on Wednesday 4th of April at 7:30 pm at Space Place, Carter Observatory, 40 Salamanca Rd, Kelburn.

This month's meeting will contain the following:

1. Night sky in April
2. Astronomy News
3. Main talk at 8.00pm:

**Encouraging the Next Generation of Astronomers – Lee Mauger**

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Lee emigrated from Europe to New Zealand 11 years ago, and immediately felt lucky to have stunningly clear views of the night sky on his doorstep. Going from a light polluted location to a much darker location made him realise the march of light pollution was heading our way, and our luck may eventually run out. Having two small children, Lee was particularly concerned that by the time they grew up they may not be able to see the night sky as we do, and the impact that may have in inspiring their wonder of the world and sparking their interest in science.

Through his local schools Lee quickly found other parents, teachers, astronomers, engineers (and scientists) had the same concerns, and together they formed a not for profit charity called the 'Space & Science Festival' which runs events each year to inspire the next generation in all things STEM. May 2018 will be the 5th anniversary of the festival. The festival was designed to run near when the clocks change, allowing kids to sneak in an extra hour of darkness for astronomy, and officially be allowed to 'stay up late' and do science.

Recognising this is only part of the story, Lee has now also helped form the Martinborough Dark Sky Society. This is aiming to create a Gold Standard, International Dark Sky Reserve within a short drive of Wellington. This, we hope will ensure that future generations will always have a place to go to explore the night sky, be inspired to think about our place in the world, and contemplate how the universe works.

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## 2. GLOBAL ASTRONOMY MONTH 2018: FLY ME TO THE MOON

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Global Astronomy Month (GAM), organized each April by Astronomers Without Borders, is the world's largest global celebration of astronomy. [GAM 2018](#) brings new ideas and new opportunities, again bringing enthusiasts together worldwide to celebrate Astronomers Without Borders' motto One People, One Sky.

The main theme this year will centre on Earth's lone natural companion that has fascinated cultures around the world – the Moon.



That hauntingly beautiful silvery orb hanging in our skies is an integral part of life on Earth. Yet few people notice it or recognize its importance to us. Throughout Global Astronomy Month this year, the Moon will be celebrated with special series of programming that will be dedicated to helping people rediscover our closest companion in space. The world's largest celebration of astronomy runs throughout the month of April annually since 2010. Thousands of people and hundreds of organisations from around the world every year use the opportunity to celebrate GAM and share their passion for astronomy through a wide range of fun and educational events and activities.

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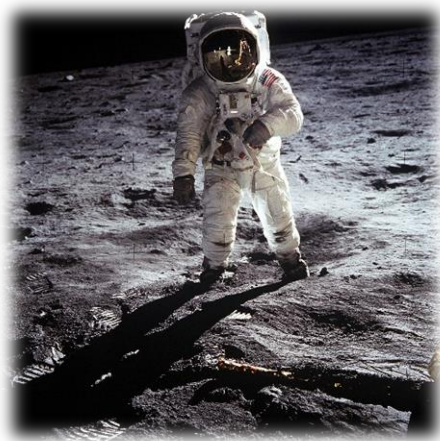
### 3. EVENTS

#### **WAS Astrophotography group / Dark Sky Observing - Saturday 14th April, 7:00 pm, Brooklyn Hill Turbine.**

We have access to this site for both astrophotography and dark sky observing. Please be at the gates by 7:00pm. The gates will be opened for cars to drive in and closed again at 7:15pm. There won't be anyone there to let you in if you are late. Any updates will be posted on the WAS Astrophotography Group Facebook page closer to the time. For further details or cancellations contact Chris 021 890 222, Paul 021 251 1559 or Antony 021 253 4979.

#### **Astronomy Night: Fly Me to the Moon - Friday 20th April, 7:00 pm, Lower Hutt War Memorial Library.**

Next year is the 50th anniversary of the Apollo Moon landing. Several governments and companies have announced plans to return to the Moon and ideas for lunar bases housing hundreds of people are being developed. These activities may start in only a few years!



Join Eric Dahlstrom for a look at what we've learned about the Moon since Apollo, and find out what you might experience on a visit to the Moon!

Eric is a space engineer, astronomer, and consultant who has worked on spacecraft design and space science for 35 years, both for NASA and the commercial space industry. He studied physics, astronomy, and space systems engineering and is currently the chair of Space Science at International

Space University, having taught in ten countries.

If the sky is clear, we'll go outside after the talk and look through telescopes provided by the Wellington Astronomical Society.

#### **Global Astronomy Month Starparty - Saturday 21th April, 7:00 pm, Wellington waterfront (by the bridge near the Lagoon).**

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Come to the Wellington Waterfront to see the planets, Moon and stars close up through our telescopes.

Wellington Astronomical Society is celebrating Global Astronomy Month, an event celebrated all over the world during April. If

you have a scope, it's B.Y.O.T. - Bring Your Own Telescope (or binoculars). Don't have a scope, don't worry, we have plenty available to look through. All are invited, all will be excited!

**Global Astronomy Month Sun Day - Sunday 21th April, 11:00 am, Wellington waterfront (by the bridge near the Lagoon).**



Free solar observing! Come and celebrate our nearest star, the Sun. See active sunspots and flares through special telescopes with filters capable of looking at the Sun. There will also be other fun activities for the younger participants.

Please do not under any other circumstances look at the Sun without specialised

equipment.

**2018 RASNZ Conference - Friday 4 – 7th May, 7:00 pm, The Arts Centre, Christchurch.**

The Royal Astronomical Society of New Zealand (RASNZ) annual conference will be held this year in Christchurch over the weekend of 4th - 6th May 2018. This conference is hosted by Canterbury Astronomical society and will be held in the magnificent Great Hall at the Arts Centre.

The VSS Symposium will follow the conference, starting Sunday evening 6th May.



The 2018 Conference guest speaker will be Dr Katie Mack from the North Carolina State University, and the Fellows' Lecture will be delivered by, Steve Butler.

**Dark Skies & the Science of Light** - Saturday 5th May, 6:00 pm, Carterton Information Centre.

We're proud to announce the Space & Science Festival and the Martinborough Dark Sky Society have teamed up for the first time to organise an evening of four short talks on "Dark Skies and the Science of Light" in the Wairarapa.



This year our four guest speakers are:

- Dr Brendan Darby (Victoria University of Wellington)
- Dr Guy Warman (Auckland University)
- Ellery McNaughton (Auckland University)
- Dr John Barentine (International Dark Sky Association)

The event will be held on May 5th at Carteron Events Centre, tickets are only available [online](#). Our other events frequently sell out early, please grab tickets early to avoid disappointment. Only \$10 a ticket, all proceeds support the Space & Science Festival.

We would like to acknowledge the generous support of the US Embassy in New Zealand for helping fund travel for our international guest speaker (Dr John Barentine from the International Dark Sky Association) from Tuscon, Arizona.

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#### 4. CHANGES TO THE NEWSLETTER

At last year's November AGM, the members of the Society passed a resolution that the society:

- i) Cease to produce the monthly newsletter in the current format, and
  - ii) Make use of online means to communicate to and between its members.
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The reason behind this change is that it takes a considerable amount of time to produce the newsletter, most of it spent for-mattng the text into its present form. Further, the information can sometimes be outdated by the time the newsletter is emailed out to the members.

We will email sections of newsletter as soon as the information becomes available. So rather than receiving one newsletter a month, you will receive several regular emails instead, with articles of related to astronomy and notices of upcoming events. It means less need for formatting making the turnaround quicker with several people taking responsibility for the different sections.

If you have any feedback to offer, we would love to hear it. This is a work in progress so we will continue to make changes till we find the most suitable format for the newsletter.

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## 5. ASTRONOMY NEWS

[Thousands Flock to Stephen Hawking's Funeral Including Theory of Everything Star Eddie Redmayne](#)



Thousands of mourners lined the streets of Cambridge, England, on Saturday for the funeral of Stephen Hawking.

The world-renowned physicist, who had motor neurone disease, died on March 14 at the age of 76. His funeral was held at Great St. Mary's Church steps from Gonville and Caius College in the University of Cambridge, where he spent 52 years as a research fellow and lecturer.

[Astronomers Have Discovered A Galaxy With No Dark Matter And It's A Huge Deal](#)

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For the first time ever, an international team of astronomers has discovered a galaxy lacking dark matter, the hypothetical and mysterious substance that's expected to outweigh regular matter – which makes us and everything we can see in the universe – five to one.

The discovery, published in Nature, is monumental. Dark matter is currently the best explanation for how galaxies are distributed in the universe and how they behave. Finding a galaxy with no dark matter challenges this assumption. We thought that all galaxies formed inside dark matter blobs, or halos, but it seems there is at least one exception to the rule.

#### [In 1.3 Million Years, Our Solar System will contain Two Stars](#)



The Sun is used to having plenty of personal space, given that its nearest stellar neighbor, the Alpha Centauri system, is located about four light years away. While that's not very distant in cosmic terms, it's wide enough for our solar system to not be influenced by these alien stars.

But in about 1.3 million years, a star named Gliese 710, which is about 60 percent as massive as the Sun, is projected to interrupt the Sun's hermitude by crashing right on through the far-flung reaches of the solar system.

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## 6. NIGHT SKY FOR APRIL 2018

The [Night Sky for April 2018](#) courtesy of the University of Canterbury

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## 7. CONTACTS

The following members were elected to Council at the Nov 2017 AGM

President: Antony Gomez ([president@was.org.nz](mailto:president@was.org.nz)) - 021 253 4979

Vice President: Duncan Hall ([vice-president@was.org.nz](mailto:vice-president@was.org.nz))

Secretary: Becky Bateman ([secretary@was.org.nz](mailto:secretary@was.org.nz))

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Treasurer: John Homes  
Membership Secretary: Janine Bidmead ([membership@was.org.nz](mailto:membership@was.org.nz))  
Website: Peter Woods ([webmaster@was.org.nz](mailto:webmaster@was.org.nz))  
Telescope custodian: Chris Monigatti

Council: Andrew Fuller, Chris Monigatti, Frank Andrews, Janine Bidmead, Murray Forbes, Peter Woods, Roland Idaczyk

Postal Address:  
Wellington Astronomical Society,  
PO Box 3181,  
Wellington 6140, New Zealand

Website: [www.was.org.nz](http://www.was.org.nz)  
Facebook page: [Wellington Astronomical Society](#).  
Facebook group: [WAS – Wellington Astronomical Society](#) (for members)  
Facebook Astrophotography group: [WAS Astrophotography Group](#) (for members)

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