

The February Sky

The 7th major planet from the Sun is Uranus, whose pronunciation is the butt of [many jokes](#). Most people have never seen it. February is your opportunity to see the pale blue gas giant. For most of February, Mars will be within the same field of view using a pair of binoculars ($\sim 5^\circ$). [This map](#), shows the relative positions of the two planets between February 5th and 20th. Mars is easily found as the brightest object in the southwest after evening twilight. Uranus appears about as bright as the star directly above it in the map. This chart is oriented with the zenith at top, which best represents what an observer will see in binoculars while facing the southwest.

While looking at Mars, think of the two landers currently operating on its surface: Mars Science Laboratory “*Curiosity*,” and *Mars InSight*. They have very different missions and are therefore of very different designs.

[Curiosity](#) is a rover, designed to move considerable distances over the dusty Martian surface without getting stuck. *Curiosity* is sampling the composition of rock along the way.

[InSight](#) is the opposite of a rover. Its mission of sensing the interior of Mars makes it essential that it *doesn't* move. You can inspect this [virtual InSight](#) by clicking and dragging the image with your computer's mouse.

Come and see the night sky through many different telescopes at the [Blue Grass Amateur Astronomy Club](#)'s outings at Raven Run. The (Saturday) dates in 2019 are:

Mar 9, Apr 6, May 4, Jun 29, Jul 27, Aug 31, Sep 28, Oct 26

Call [Raven Run](#) an hour before sunset to verify that the weather will be sufficiently clear.

You will find an [all-sky finder chart](#) for January at [our web site](#).

UK MacAdam STUDENT OBSERVATORY

UK's MacAdam Student Observatory, designed and built in 2007, was officially opened in 2008. The Observatory is located atop Parking Structure #2 between the W.T. Young Library and the Chemistry-Physics Building, and its dome houses a high-quality 20-inch reflecting telescope plus a variety of state-of-the-art optical instruments. The Observatory is dedicated to serving UK students as well as astronomy enthusiasts of every age and experience level throughout Kentucky.

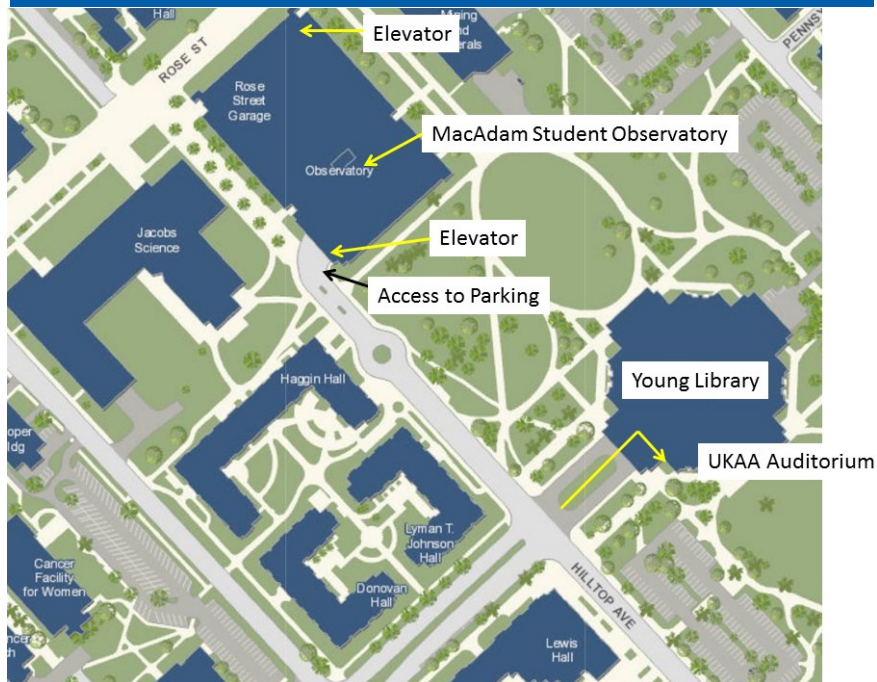
Are you interested in informal talks on astronomy and astrophysics? Are you curious about telescope design and operation? Would you care to take a look through the eyepiece?

The Department of Physics & Astronomy in UK's College of Arts & Sciences welcomes you! Join us to experience the excitement of stargazing through a powerful telescope. An up-to-date calendar of events can be found on our website:

<https://pa.as.uky.edu/observatory>



How to find the MacAdam Student Observatory



Monthly Meetings

The MSO hosts monthly public-observing sessions, each with a kick-off 40 minute presentation in the Chemistry-Physics Building. The presentations will take place even on cloudy nights. If the sky is clear, the observatory will open after the talk! Can't make the SkyTalk? Then come after!

Next month:

March 14, 2019 - **7:00 PM**
UKAA Auditorium, Young Library

Kentucky SkyTalk



Charon, largest moon of Pluto. Charon, the mythological character that ferried people into the after-life, was only discovered in 1978.

Image Credit:
New Horizons

<http://pluto.jhuapl.edu/>

Dr. Tom Troland — University of Kentucky

Thursday - February 14, 2019 7:00 PM

New location:

UKAA Auditorium—W T Young Library

Pluto and Beyond

The Twilight Zone of the Solar System

Where does the Solar System end? Is it with the last major planet, Neptune? Not really. The outer Solar System beyond Neptune is populated by dwarf planets, of which Pluto is the most famous, and smaller "Kuiper Belt" objects, including cometary nuclei. Then there is the solar magnetic field and, far beyond, a huge "Oort Cloud" of material. Earthbound telescopes and spacecraft have provided fascinating glimpses of this twilight zone of the Solar System.

Tonight's *Kentucky SkyTalk* is part of an ongoing series. These are presented by the UK Department of Physics and Astronomy, and the MacAdam Student Observatory. Held every 2nd Thursday of the month, they are always free and open to the public.