



January 2026

Meetings at Highland Road Park Observatory and online through YouTube and Jitsi

<https://meet.jit.si/brasmeet>

Calendar:

- 30 December, 6PM: Sidewalk Astronomy at Perkins Rowe
- 12 January, 7PM: Monthly Meeting at Highland Road Park Observatory
- 15 January, 5:30PM: WHAM STEAM night
- 25 January, 7:30PM: Star Party at Landolt Observatory
- 26 January, 6PM: Sidewalk Astronomy at Gonzalez Library (Main Branch)
- 27 January, 6PM: Sidewalk Astronomy at Perkins Rowe

Index:

President's Message—1
Vice President's Word—2
Outreach Report—3
Secretary's Summary—5
Observatory Notes—6
Skymap—8
Quick Picks—9
Contact Information—10

President's Message

Hi Everyone,

Welcome (almost) to 2026! I hope you all had a great holiday and are ready for what the new year has to offer.

At the risk of sounding a little self-serving, I'd like to again recognize our previous officers for stepping up and doing a great job for the past year. Don, Ben (yes, I know that's me), Scott and Trey kept things running smoothly and pushed the club in a good direction.

My plan, now as President, is to not let things slow down too much and keep moving forward. Of course, our outreach endeavors will remain the same and we'll continue to do our best to fulfil all requests that come our way. (The more club members we can get involved with volunteering, the easier that will be!) We'll also continue to look for opportunities to get our members out observing together. We can be solitary creatures, but there's also a lot of fun to be had with a group of eager astronomers.

As always, we welcome any input from our members. If you liked something we did or are doing, let us know. If you DON'T like something, let us know. Got a good idea for a meeting program or even a field trip of some sort? Let us know and we can see if we can get it going. I'm guessing most of us joined this club wanting a bit more than just to sit in on a lecture once a month. We want to learn more about telescopes, astrophotography and what we can see in our night sky. We'll do our best to come up with ideas, but if you have some, don't keep them to yourself!

I'm looking forward to this coming year with y'all. Here's to hoping for lots of clear nights with some fine observing equipment at our sides. I can't wait to see you all out there!

Clear Skies,
Ben Toman
President

Vice President's Word

A couple of years ago, probably as a way to make Ben's life more difficult, I started asking that the VP submit a brief note for the newsletter giving people an idea of what he had in mind for the coming meeting. It seems that decision has finally come back to bite me, as I now find myself trying to squeeze out a few words to entice people into showing up at the meeting myself.

Luckily, as is the tradition with the changing of the guard, the old VP has set the program for the January meeting. I have been told, that it will be the sharing of memories of Prof. Guzik. Beyond that, we have traditionally left January open to encourage people to bring in all of their shiny new astronomy toys they might have picked up over December to show them off for the club in order to invite envy or just plain get some advice on how to actually use them.

In classical times, Janus was known as the two-faced god, both looking back and looking forward. Since part of the meeting is set as a remembrance, the January meeting seems a fine time to talk about what we have planned for the coming year and to get some live feedback from members about the direction they'd like to see the club move over the coming year. Already, I've heard the call that members would like more of the free use nights at the observatory, and not just the few hours on the night of the monthly meeting (which are becoming increasingly popular and which we plan to continue). And so we will bring the MOON (Members Only Observing Night) back to HRPO, and we will try to find some free weekend evening that we can take over from BREC for our uses. We've also been trying to find a way to get us out as a group to do some observing from dark sites, and I'd like to hear some ideas on how people think we should expand that.

This should be a great meeting for us to gather in order to remember where we've been and to set a course for where we're going. The year is only just begun, and there is plenty for us to see and do. I'd say the sky's the limit, but we all know it's actually just a limiting factor.

Outreach Report

Hi Everyone,

Even though it's not possible in my mind that it is almost 2026, I guess we'll just go with it! By the time this reaches you, 2025 will be almost done. (As a quick reminder, you can still come hang out with us at Perkins Rowe for our final outreach of the year on Tuesday, December 30th.)

I'm very proud of all that we did this past year and none of it would be possible without our awesome volunteers. I say it all the time and I'll say it again, coming along as a volunteer to some of these outreach events is a great way to take your love/interest in astronomy to the next level. It also doubles as a way to make you feel good about volunteering in the community. So, if you are a New Year's resolution kind of person, resolving to get more active with the club is a perfect way to get things started!

We've got some outreach requests coming in for 2026 and, of course, we'll have our Sidewalk Astronomy. Take a look at the list below and let me know if you'd like to come help out. It helps a lot with the planning and scheduling if you let me know you will be volunteering for an event, but I know sometimes it has to be a last minute decision so don't be afraid to just show up if you find you have the time. We can always find something for you to do or you can just assist someone else!

Keep your eye out for more events as they start coming. It'll be hard to top 2025 for activity, but we're ready to take it on if it comes our way!

Clear Skies,

Ben Toman

Outreach Chairperson

Upcoming Events

Tuesday, December 30th (2025)

6pm-9pm

Sidewalk Astronomy at Perkins Rowe

Thursday, January 15th

5:30pm-7:30pm (possibly 8pm if needed)

Westdale Heights Academic Magnet

3-4 people needed for demos/exhibits

Monday, January 26th

6pm-7:30pm

Sidewalk Astronomy at Gonzales Library (Ascension Parish)

Tuesday, January 27th

6pm-9pm

Sidewalk Astronomy at Perkins Rowe



At the Gonzales Library: Roz lets her scope speak for itself, Don sets up his angle, Chad wows the children, and Steve checks out the view for himself.



From Iberville Elementary: Ben mans the gravity well, Roz guides students through the solar system, and Scott readies the scope.

Secretary's Summary

- 32 People in attendance
- Annual feasting of the potluck was had
- Officers for 2026 were elected by acclimation of members in attendance:
 - President: Ben Toman
 - Vice-President: Scott Cadwallader
 - Secretary: Chad Jasper
 - Treasurer: Trey Anding
- Members were recognized for their outreach service to the club throughout the previous year
- Games were had for a chance to walk away with various small prizes
- The raffle of the classic C8 with footlocker was held with a surprise second classic C8 with footlocker as a runner up prize. Congratulations to the winners.



The Feast: members gather to celebrate the passing of another year with the sharing of food and company.

Observatory Notes

HIGHLAND ROAD PARK OBSERVATORY

January 2026 Public Schedule

{HRPO is closed to the public on New Year's Day.}

{A binocular is recommended for all twilight and night viewing.}

FRIDAY NIGHT LECTURE SERIES

7:30pm / for ages twelve and older / no admission fee

2 January = "2025—The Space Year in Review" Tradition continues, with HRPO's cornerstone program returning for another calendar year with a look back at the discoveries, advances and celestial events of the previous year.

23 January = "Planet X" Ten years ago Caltech astronomers released evidence for an object larger than Earth—past Neptune in the outer solar system. If it exists, this planet could take thousands of years to orbit the Sun. What data have more recent observations uncovered?

30 January = "Apollo Fourteen 55th Anniversary" It was the launch that had something to prove. Nearly a year after the near-disaster of Apollo Thirteen our country's first spaceman—Alan Shepard—returned to space, joined by Stuart Roosa and Edgar Mitchell. During this time when Americans are asking when we will go back to the Moon, former HRPO Center Supervisor Tom Northrop continues his Apollo anniversary lectures.

SCIENCE ACADEMY

Saturdays from 10am to 12pm.

for Cadets aged eight to twelve / \$5 per Cadet per week (\$6 if out-of-parish)

advanced registration via WebTrac strongly recommended

[activity #331320] / parents may stay with or leave Cadet

Four Cadet minimum and sixteen Cadets maximum per session.

3 January = "Jupiter"

10 January = "Distances in Space"

17 January = "Planet, Star, Galaxy, Universe III"

24 January = "Calendars and Timekeepers"

EVENING SKY VIEWING

for ages six and older / no admission fee

Fridays (2, 16, 23 and 30 January) from 8:30pm to 10pm

Saturdays (3, 10, 24 and 31 January) from 8:30pm to 10pm

HRPO houses a 50-cm reflector, a 40-cm reflector and several smaller telescopes to bring the majesty of the night sky to the public. Trained operators, sharing duties via a rotating roster, work throughout the year in shifts. Each operator has a pre-planned list of objects to highlight. However, requests will be taken if there is time and if all present have viewed the previous target.

JOVIAN OPPOSITION

Friday 9 January from 7:45pm to 9:45pm

for ages six and older / no admission fee / binocular recommended

Jupiter is about 180 degrees from the Sun, rising in Gemini as the Sun sets in Sagittarius. On this night we are then the closest we'll be to Jupiter this year! Weather permitting, viewing of Jupiter will take place.

AMATEUR ASTRONOMY COURSES

Saturdays from 3:30pm to 7:30pm / registration in progress [activity #431322 and #131322]

Registrants must be eighteen or older. / \$15 per registrant (\$18 if non-EBR Parish)

These exciting one-day classes are tailor-made to instruct the patron in the use of a personal telescope or binocular for skygazing, or the basics of the unaided-eye Baton Rouge sky. Sign up for one or more!

“Learn Your Binocular” = 10 January

“Learn Your Telescope” = 24 January

BATON ROUGE ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY MEETING

Monday 12 January from 7pm to 9pm

for ages fourteen and older / no admission fee

DISCUSSION: ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Friday 16 January from 7:30pm to 8:30pm

Postponed from 12 December / for ages twelve and older / no admission fee

Many game-changing moments have occurred since HRPO’s last focus on AI—some astonishing, some alarming. This brief update is for any who want the latest information.

PLUS NIGHT: “Winter Sky Survey”

Saturday 17 January from 7pm to 10pm

for ages six and older / no admission fee / binocular recommended

During Plus Nights and extra features are available to the public...

*The well-known marshmallow roast takes place at the campfire ring (weather-dependng).

*Seven to ten of HRPO’s collection of over fifty physical science demonstrations will be on hand to perplex and amaze. Which demos will it be?

*An unaided eye sky tour takes place, showing the public major features of the sky for that month.

*Filters are inserted into the viewing mechanisms, to show patrons “hidden” details of the Moon, Mars and Jupiter (when they are available).

*Reveal your age, and be shown any “birth stars” in the sky at that time.

SOLAR VIEWING

Saturday 31 January from 12pm to 2pm

for ages six and older / no admission fee

Weather permitting, viewing of the Sun’s image in four different manners—transferred onto a white surface, directly with optical light, directly in hydrogen-alpha wavelength and directly via Calcium K wavelength—will take place. Protective clothing and sunscreen are recommended.

STEM EXPANSION: “Geophysics”

Saturday 31 December from 2:30pm to 6:30pm

for ages twelve to sixteen. / \$15 each per in-parish registrant; \$18 each per out-of-parish registrant.

Advanced registration via WebTrac required [activity #431321].

This program offers advanced topics, topic extensions and all-new games and activities to an older crowd. Certificates will be earned, and a section of archived experiments, some *never* performed on site, take place. There are also giveaways and door prizes.

Sky Map



<https://in-the-sky.org>

Sky Map centered on 15 January at 10PM.

Quick Picks—Events for January

- Thu 1 [Moon](#) Perigee at 360,348 km.
- Sat 3 [Full Moon](#)
- Sat 3 Earth at Perihelion - Dist: 0.9833 AU
- Sat 3 Quadrantid Meteor Shower
- Sat 3 [Jupiter](#) 3.7°S of [Moon](#)
- Sat 3 Pollux 3.0°N of [Moon](#)
- Sun 4 Beehive 1.3°S of [Moon](#)
- Tue 6 [Mercury](#) at Aphelion
- Tue 6 [Venus](#) in Superior Conjunction
- Tue 6 Regulus 0.5°S of [Moon](#)
- Fri 9 [Mars](#) in Conjunction with the Sun
- Sat 10 [Jupiter](#) at Opposition
- Sat 10 [Last Quarter Moon](#)
- Sat 10 Spica 1.6°N of [Moon](#)
- Tue 13 [Moon](#) Apogee at 405,437 km.
- Wed 14 Antares 0.6°N of [Moon](#)
- Sun 18 [New Moon](#)
- Wed 21 [Mercury](#) in Superior Conjunction
- Thu 22 [Venus](#) at Aphelion
- Fri 23 [Saturn](#) 4.3°S of [Moon](#)
- Sun 25 [First Quarter Moon](#)
- Tue 27 Pleiades 1.1°S of [Moon](#)
- Thu 29 [Moon](#) Perigee at 365,878 km.
- Fri 30 [Jupiter](#) 3.8°S of [Moon](#)
- Sat 31 Pollux 3.0°N of [Moon](#)

(Times are non-local: see Stellarium.com for exact times.)

Contact Information

President----- Ben Toman outreach@brastro.org

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Secretary----- Chad Jasper secretary@brastro.org

Treasurer-----Trey Anding treasurer@btrastro.org

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YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCS3Xkk1t7C9lRnB8GKrt9MQ>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Baton-Rouge-Astronomical-Society-122591151112271/>

Reddit: <https://www.reddit.com/r/BRAstro/>

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