

Celebrating 84 Years of Astronomy

Next Meeting

Time: 7:30 pm Where: Online (Zoom) See instructions for joining the

meeting on Page 8.

Speaker: Dr. Julie McEnery

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Image Credit - ESA/Hubble AND NASA, R. Cohen

ESO 520-21, also known as Palomar 6, is a globular cluster of stars that lies near the center of the Milky Way. More information can be found at www.eurekalert.org/newsreleases/929510.

Star Dust

Newsletter of National Capital Astronomers, Inc.

capitalastronomers.org

November 2021

Volume 80, Issue 3

Surveying the Universe with the **Nancy Grace Roman Space Telescope**

Julie McEnery NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center

When it launches in the mid-2020s, NASA's Nancy Grace Roman Space Telescope will create enormous space panoramas of unprecedented detail. The mission's wide field of view will enable sweeping cosmic surveys, yielding a wealth of information about celestial realms from our solar system to the edge of the observable universe. Roman will survey the sky in infrared light, and will have the same resolution in near-infrared wavelengths as NASA's Hubble Space Telescope, but will capture a field of view about 200 times larger. Roman's surveys will deliver new insights into the history and structure of the universe, including the mysterious "dark energy" that is making space itself expand faster and faster. This powerful new observatory will also discover thousands of exoplanets using its wide-field camera and study the atmospheres of giant gaseous planets orbiting other stars with a sophisticated technology demonstration

coronagraph.



Artist representation of the Nancy Grace Roman Telescope. Image Credit: NASA

Biography: Julie McEnery is the senior scientist for high energy astrophysics at the Goddard Space Flight Center. She currently serves as the senior Project Scientist for the Nancy Grace Roman Space Telescope, a NASA Astrophysics flagship mission that will study the

continued on page 2

Recent Astronomy Highlights

Juno Peers Through Jupiter's Clouds NASA's Juno probe, in orbit around our Solar System's largest planet, has found interesting results about Jupiter's belts and zones. Belts are the dark, reddish bands around the planet, while zones are the lighter, whiteish bands. Juno has a microwave radiometer which can peer down through Jupiter's upper atmosphere approximately 250 kilometers, where the pressure is around 100 bars or 100 times the average atmospheric pressure at the surface of the Earth. Readings show that both types of bands extend deep down into the atmosphere, at least in the mid latitudes of the planet. In addition, down to regions where the pressure is approximately 5 bars, the belts are bright in the microwave region of the spectrum while the zones are dark. But below, in regions where the pressure is 10 bars or greater, it is the zones that appear microwave bright and the belts that appear dark. This switch may be due to temperature or to the amount of ammonia present in the belts and bars, since ammonia absorbs microwave radiation. More info is at www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2021/1 0/211028153800.htm.

Mystery of Bennu's Boulder-Covered Surface Possibly Solved

Up until OSIRIS-REx neared its target, the asteroid Bennu. astronomers believed the asteroid was covered in fine regolith, created by meteoroid impacts over billions of years. However, the surface of Bennu actually turned out to be comprised almost exclusively of large rocks and boulders. Scientists now believe that the rocky covering of the asteroid is due to those rocks and boulders being extremely porous. Such porous rocks would compress, like sponges, when meteoroids hit them, instead of breaking and producing fine regolith. The porosity also slows heating and cooling as Bennu's surface by the Sun, leading to less heat-induced cracking as well. More information is at earthsky.org/space/asteroid-bennusboulder-mystery-solved-regolith-osirisrex/.

continued on page 4

Biography – continued from page 1



expansion history of the Universe, the evolution of cosmic structure and perform a statistical census of planets around other stars. She also leads a technology development program to modify detectors developed for particle accelerator experiments on Earth for use in space-based high energy astrophysics applications. Her scientific research focuses on the study of extreme high energy transients and the development of the ground and space-based observatories needed to pursue this. Prior to Roman, she was the project scientist for the Fermi Gamma-ray Space telescope which explored the violent and energetic universe in gammarays. She is the senior scientist for high energy astrophysics at Goddard Space Flight Center, and co-director of the Joint Space Sciences Center between Goddard and the University of Maryland. She holds professorships at the University of Maryland and the George Washington University. She is a fellow of the American Physical Society and a recipient of both the NASA Exceptional Scientific Achievement and the Outstanding Leadership Medals.

(Editor's Note: A video about the Nancy Grace Roman Space Telescope, named in honor of the longtime member of the National Capital Astronomers, is available at the following link - www.youtube.com/watch?v=PNO_ofQijbY. Our thanks to Sue Bassett for informing us of the video.



Nancy Grace Roman

Exploring the Sky



"Exploring the Sky" is an informal program that, for over 70 years, has offered monthly opportunities for anyone in the Washington area to see the stars and planets through telescopes from a location within the District of Columbia. Presented by the National Park Service and National Capital Astronomers, sessions are held in Rock Creek Park once each month on a Saturday night from April through November, Beginners (including children) and experienced stargazers are all welcome—and it's free!

Hosted by: National Capital
Astronomers, Inc and Rock Creek Park

Due to the ongoing Coronavirus Pandemic, Exploring the Sky sessions are canceled. When the situation changes, sessions will once again be scheduled.

More information can be found at NCA's web site, www.capitalastronomers.org or the Rock Creek Park web site, www.nps.gov/rocr/planyourvisit/expsky.htm. You can also call the Nature Center at (202) 895-6070. For general information on local astronomical events visit www.astronomyindc.org

The article-submission deadline for December's issue of Star Dust, is November 21st.

Clear Skies!

Reflections on National Capital Astronomers' Past, Present and Future

Michael Chesnes

Guy Brandenburg's article in the October 2021 Star Dust, "Disturbing Racist Clauses Found in Early NCA Constitutions & Bylaws," was an important call for us to reflect as an organization on our contribution to society as a whole. The information Guy found through his research was disappointing, but only initially shocking. On further reflection it wasn't entirely surprising, considering the overall state of American society at that time.

I remain grateful to our predecessors who passed on to us our hobby of amateur astronomy as we know it today. Their talent, inventiveness, and determination are still awe-inspiring years or decades after their deaths. But clearly they let down their contemporaries, and we today can do better if we try.

Amateur astronomers are needed at star parties, science fairs, and planetarium shows, such as at the Owens Science Center in Lanham, MD, where much of my volunteering has taken place. As we emerge from the pandemic, there will be opportunities to participate on site in these events as well as virtually. Due to advances in communications and robotics, it is my suspicion that amateur astronomy will migrate away from the paradigm of owner/operators of small telescopes observing in person at local sites. The accessibility of equipment and techniques for amateur astronomy is related to the larger topic of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) and worthy of a much longer essay.

(957) Camelia, another odd-shaped asteroid

David and Joan Dunham

On 2021 September 15, around 8:54 UT, (957) Camelia occulted 7.2-mag. SAO 75054 from a path that extended from southern California to Minnesota. The occultation was recorded from nine stations deployed across the path in a plan coordinated with IOTA's asteroidal occultation tool Occult Watcher. The event timings are projected in the sky plane at the asteroid in the figure on page 6. The odd shape of Camelia is clearly shown. The best-fit ellipse, with dimensions 83 by 51 km, fits the data poorly. Sometimes when we see results like this, timing errors are suspected, but in this case, all of the observations were with GPS time-inserted video, and the bright star resulted in very small time errors. A complication for this event was that 4.8-mag. lambda Arietis was only 37" from the target, but even in the case with two of the smallest telescopes used where the two stars were not separated, the changes in the combined star's intensity when SAO 75054 disappeared and reappeared were clear and accurately timed.

Another interesting aspect is, although few observers tried this event, most ran two or more telescopes pre-pointed to the altitude and azimuth of the star: Joan and I ran 3 stations north and south of Wikieup, AZ; Ted Blank ran 3 more near Kingman (his two northernmost stations had no occultation and are not shown on the plot; they were both north of the closest miss line #10 by Vadim Nitikin in Colorado); Bob Jones ran 2 stations near 29 Palms, Calif.; and Steve Messner ran 2 telescopes in

continued on page 6

Sky Watchers

November/December

Mercury will appear lower in the morning sky as the days pass until it goes behind the Sun on Nov. 28, transiting to the evening sky in early December. Venus will remain in the evening sky throughout late November into December. Mars will be in the morning sky, but will still not be very visible due to being on the opposite side of the Sun from Earth. Jupiter and Saturn will be high in the eastern sky at sunset.

11/17- 18	The Leonids Meteor Shower peaks on the evening of the 17 th into the morning of the 18 th with approximately 15 meteors/hour. Unfortunately, the nearly full Moon will cause less-ideal-viewing conditions.
11/19	Full Moon at 3:59 a.m. A partial lunar eclipse will also take place, although it is partial in that only a small sliver of the Moon will not pass into the complete shadow of the Earth, the Umbra. The eclipse will begin when the first part of the moon enters the Earth's Penumbra at 1:02 a.m. and it will end at 7:03 a.m., only minutes after sunrise. More details can be found at eclipse.gsfc.nasa.gov/LEplot/LEplot2001/LE2021Nov19P.pdf.
12/4	Total Solar Eclipse – only visible in the Southern Atlantic, Antarctica and South Africa.

All times are in EST (Eastern Standard Time)

Young Exoplanet Directly Imaged

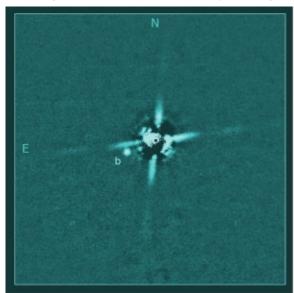


Image Credit - Subaru Telescope

Shown just left and below center in the above infrared image, the exoplanet designated 2M0437b lies approximately 400 light years away from Earth in a stellar nursery known as the Taurus Cloud. More information is available at keckobservatory.org/infant-planet. In addition, a prepublication copy of the paper detailing the research on the exoplanet, can be found at arxiv.org/pdf/2110.08655.pdf.

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Thank you!

Recent Astronomy Highlights – continued from page 2

Possible Ancient 'Protocluster' of Galaxies Discovered

Astronomers believe they have discovered a protocluster, or a type of 'shipyard' where galaxies were in the process of forming together when the Universe was only three billion years old. Designated PHz G237.01+42.50, the protocluster seems to be forming stars at about 1000 times the current rate of one stellar mass per year of the Milky Way. Such a high rate implies that the protocluster is receiving a large amount of hydrogen and helium. The protocluster will likely be a target for further study by the James Webb Space Telescope which is scheduled to launch in December. More information on this discovery can be found at www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2021/1

0/211027172624.htm.

continued on page 7

Occultation Notes

- D following the time denotes a disappearance, while R indicates that the event is a reappearance.
- When a power (x; actually, zoom factor) is given in the notes, the event can probably be recorded directly with a camcorder of that power with no telescope needed.
- The times are for Greenbelt, MD, and will be good to within +/-1 min. for other locations in the Washington-Baltimore metropolitan areas unless the cusp angle (CA) is less than 30 deg., in which case, it might be as much as 5 minutes different for other locations across the region.
- Some stars in Flamsteed's catalog are in the wrong constellation, according to the official IAU constellation boundaries that were established well after Flamsteed's catalog was published. In these cases, Flamsteed's constellation is in parentheses and the actual constellation is given in the notes following a /.
- Mag is the star's magnitude.
- % is the percent of the Moon's visible disk that is sunlit, followed by a + indicating that the Moon is waxing and - showing that it is waning. So 0 is new moon, 50+ is first quarter, 100+ or - is full moon, and 50- is last quarter. The Moon is crescent if % is less than 50 and is gibbous if it is more than 50.
- Cusp Angle is described more fully at the main IOTA Web site.
- Sp. is the star's spectral type (color),
 O,B,blue; A,F,white; G,yellow; K,orange;
 M,N,S,C red.
- Also in the notes, information about double stars is often given. "Close double" with no other information usually means nearly equal components with a separation less than 0.2". "mg2" or "m2" means the magnitude of the secondary component, followed by its separation in arc seconds ("), and sometimes its PA from the primary. If there is a 3rd component (for a triple star), it might be indicated with "mg3" or "m3". Double is sometime abbreviated "dbl".
- Sometimes the Axis angle (AA) is given. It is the angle measured around the Moon's disk, from the Moon's axis of rotation. It can be used with a lunar map to tell where a star will reappear relative to lunar features.

Mid-Atlantic Occultations

David Dunham

dur. Ap.

Asteroidal Occultations

2021	-	Day	EST	Star	Mag.	Asteroid d	mag	S "	Location
NOV NOV NOV NOV NOV DEC DEC DEC DEC	10 15 19 21 27 28 30 2 3 4 5 6 8	Wed Mon Fri Sun Sat Sun Tue Thu Fri Sat Sun	21:55 0:36 6:25 19:53 6:13 2:35 5:07 20:45 5:12 20:41 2:54 23:25 1:26	4UC51507599 4UC67234256 4UC56823448	11.7 12.5 11.7 14.4 11.7 14.3 9.4 6.7 8.5 12.6 12.7 10.3 11.6	2002 TC302 Aegle Spiraea Automedon 2000 Jw55 Jimmiller Romanskaya Recha Dynamene Zeuxo Franklina Hamatonbetsu Caltech	8.7 0.8 4.2 1.7 7.2 2.9 8.2 7.3 5.1 1.8 2.8 7 3.5	21 5 17 6 4 5 6 12 1.1 7 3 11 2.4 3 4 2 8 2 6 7 2.1 7 2.6 4 4 5	LOCATION NY, PA, OH; DC, VA? SMD, SDC, CVA, SeAZ neMD, SE-WPA, neOH NJ, eMD, DC, e&scVA se-wMD; DC, nVA? CMD, DC, nVA, SOH SVA, nWNC, SETN seVA, CNC, WSC, nGA n&ETN, w&SNC, nSC CNJ, nMD, nVA; DC? SNJ, nDE, nMD, COH SNJ, nMD, nWV, SOH S&WMD, DC, nVA, WPA CVA, SMD, CDE, SNJ
Dec Dec				4UC61645959 TYC08081422			2.2 5.8		eVA,s&cMD,DC,wPA sNJ,cMD,DC,n&cVA

Lunar Grazing Occultations

2021	Day	EST	Star	Mag	% a	llt	CA	Location, Notes
Nov 12	Fri	19:39	SAO 165327	7.8	65+	37	11s	Falmouth,VA; Largo,Crofton,MD Ldysmt,Ambr,VA;LaPlt,Brstl,MD Wilsn,NC;sChesapek,nVA Bch,VA

Lunar Total Occultations

```
2021
        Day
              EST
                    Ph Star
                                     Mag % alt CA Sp. Notes
Nov 11 Thu 22:03 D ZC 3227
                                     6.3\ 56+\ 17
                                                    26N K0
            17:34 D 69 Aqr* 5.7 65+
19:33 D SAO 165327 7.8 65+
                                                    59N
                                                        B9 Sn-8,ZC3343,m2 9,dT+43s
Nov
        Fri
Nov 12 Fri
                                              37
                                                    20S F0
                                                            ZC3349,mag2 10,dT +545s
Term. Dist. 6"; Graze
Nov
        Fri
             19:39
                    D
                       tau Aqurii
                                     4.1
                                         65+
                                                    13N K5
                                    7.8
        Fri 19:45
                       SAO 165327
                                                     2s
    13
        Sat 17:36 D ZC 3480
                                         74+
                                                    66N F5
                                                            Sun altitude -8 degrees
Nov
        Sat 19:02 D ZC 3484
                                     6.9
                                                    70s G5
Nov
    13
Nov
        Sat 21:30
                    D
                       zc 3490
                                                    71N F8
                                     7.1 84+
        Mon
              1:20 D
                                                    26S A0
Nov
             17:48
                       31 Arietis
                                     5.6
Nov
        wed
                    D
                                         98+
                                                    61s F7
                                                            Sun-11,ZC 384,close dbl
                             93521 8.7 1E
93521 8.7 43E
                                                    88U F8
                                                            lunar éclipse
Nov
        Fri
                    D
                       SAO
     19
        Fri
              5:01 R SAO
                                                    84U F8
                                                            lunar eclipse
Nov
    19
        Fri 23:36
                    R
                       51 Tauri
                                     5.6
                                         99-
                                              69
                                                    88N F0
                                                            AA269,ZC631,db1,TmD 11"
Nov
                                     5.3
                                                            AA283,ZC634,TermDst 11"
AA326,ZC656,db1?,TrmD4"
                       56 Tauri*
                                          99-
Nov
              0:34 R
                                                    73N A0
        Sat
                       kappa Tau
                                                    30N A7
    20
        Sat
              4:23
                    R
                                         99-
Nov
                                                            AA296,ZC657,TermDst 11"
AA 313,ZC 767,close dbl
                                     5.3
    20
              4:36 R 67
                                         99- 37
                                                    60N A7
                          Tauri*
Nov
        Sat
                                     5.5 97-
7.0 88-
                       103 Tauri
             22:38
    20
        Sat
                    R
                                                    42N B2
Nov
             21:21 R ZC 1046
        Mon
                                                    57S F8
                                                            close double?
Nov
                          1049
    22
                                                    15S A2
Nov
        Mon 21:31 R
                       ZC
                                     6.8 88-
              2:00
                                                            ZC1061,close double?
ZC1062,close double??
    23
23
                       39
                                         87-
                                                    85S
                    R
                          Gem
                                     6.2
Nov
        Tue
        Tue
                    R 40 Gem
                                     6.4 87- 74
                                                    42S B8
Nov
                            99091 7.3
647 6.7
119272 7.6
139080 7.8
                                                    49S G5 Az77,mg2 10 dT -5sec
76S A2 Sun altitude -10 deg.
44N F5 Sun altitude -5 degrees
             23:59
                    R SAO
                                         52-
    26
Nov
        Fri
                                         40-
              6:14
                       zc 1647
    28
        Sun
Nov
                    R
              6:39 R SAO 119272
    29
        Mon
Nov
              3:53 R SAO 139080
6:23 R SAO 158842
6:24 R SAO 158831
                                         20- 15
Nov
    30 Tue
                                                    18N KO Azimuth 105 degrees
                                                    35N K1 Sun -9, Azimuth 123 deg
62S F0 Sun alt. -8, Az. 124 dg
                                    7.2
7.9
Dec
        Thu
Thu
Dec
                                                            Sun alt. -2 deg.
Sun alt. -4 deg.
              6:58 R
                       SAO 158861 7.8
Dec
        Thu
                                              19
                                                    54N K2
             17:03 D
                       zc 3012
                                     6.9
                                         18+
                                                    90N
                                                        Α7
Dec
        Tue
                       SAO 189555 7.2
                                         18+ 17
Dec
        Tue 18:20 D
                                                    66S G1
                                     6.4
                                                    38N G8 Azimuth 221 degrees
Dec
        Tue
             18:34 D
                       zc 3018
                                         18+
                                              15
                        190556
                                                    74N K1
Dec
      8
        wed
             19:50 D
                                     7.0\ 28+\ 16
             20:38 D
                                         28+
                                                        AO Az. 236, close double?
Dec
        wed
                       ZC
                          3178
                                     6.2
                                                    74N
Dec 10 Fri 22:16 D ZC 3458
                                     6.2\ 50+\ 17
                                                    68s K0
        Sat
             21:10 D
                       ZC
                                     7.4
                                         60+
                                                    83S
                                                        G6
Dec
    11
Dec 12 Sun 20:55 D ZC
                            128
                                     7.069 + 49
                                                    13N G5
                                     7.6 70+ 18
7.0 79+ 21
    13
              0:15
                    D SA0109613*
                                              18
                                                        F6 close double??
        Mon
                                                     8N
              0:59 D ZC
                           269
                                                    46S KO mag2 12, 12", dTime -57s
```

*in Kepler2 program so occultation light curves are sought.

More information is at iota.jhuapl.edu/exped.htm
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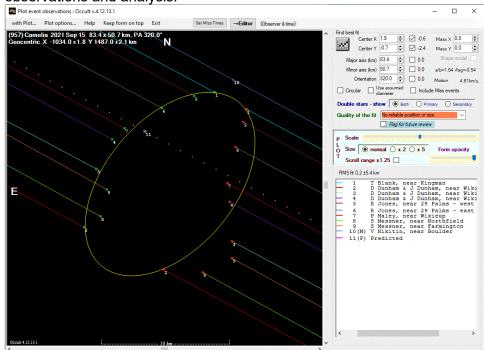
Social Media

Twitter: @NatCapAstro

(957) Camelia, another odd-shaped asteroid - continued from page 3

Minnesota. Paul Maley ran a station of his own north of Wikieup. We thank everyone who participated in this very successful occultation.

Camelia has no shape model determined from rotational light curve observations. Our observations of this occultation might motivate such observations and analysis.



Sky plane Plot of timings of the occultation of SAO 75054 by (957) Camelia on 2021 Sept. 15. Credit: John Moore, IOTA.



This map from Occult Watcher shows the 3 stations set up by Ted Blank in the upper left while our 3 stations are in the lower right. The green line is the predicted central line while the blue lines are the predicted limits, and the dark red lines are the limits in case of a 1-sigma shift to the north or south. The actual path was wider than predicted and shifted more than 1-sigma to the south. Credit: Google Maps, Occult Watcher, and David Dunham, IOTA.

Recent Astronomy Highlights – continued from page 4

Astronomers Present Possible Discovery of Planet in Another Galaxv

Until recently, all of the exoplanets discovered have been within the Milky Way and most within 3000 light years of Earth. However, astronomers have found evidence for a possible planetary candidate in M51, the Whirlpool Galaxy, which lies approximately 28 million light years away. If the planet does indeed exist, it is in a binary system with one of the stars having become either a neutron star or a black hole. The stellar remnant is feeding off of gas from its companion star, creating X-rays in the feeding process. Since the stellar remnant is small, only miles across, a planet transiting in front of it could completely block out the X-rays. Astronomers estimate that the planet is about the size of Saturn and orbits the binary at about twice Saturn's distance from our Sun. More information is at www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2021/1 0/211027094914.htm.

Calendar of Events

NCA Mirror- or Telescope-making Classes: The Chevy Chase Community Center is reopening and classes are resuming. Classes will be Tuesdays and Fridays, from 5:00 to 8:30 pm at the Chevy Chase Community Center (intersection of McKinley Street and Connecticut Avenue, N.W.) Please contact instructor Guy Brandenburg at 202-262-4274 (leave message) or at gfbrandenburg@yahoo.com if you plan to attend. DC's Department of Parks and Recreation wants folks to formally register. Also note that masks are mandatory, as in all DC government buildings. More info is at guysmathastro.com.

Open house talks and observing at the University of Maryland Observatory in College Park are temporarily suspended. When they resume, they will be on the 5th and 20th of every month at 8:00 pm (Nov.-Apr.) or 9:00 pm (May-Oct.). Updates are posted at www.astro.umd.edu/openhouse.

Next NCA Meeting: 11 December 7:30 p.m. Brian Williams (GSFC) Remnants of Supernovae

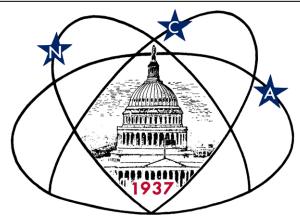
The APS Mid-Atlantic Senior Physicists Group: (Zoom Meeting) November 17th at 1:00 p.m., Stephen Obenschain, U.S. Naval Research Laboratory, will give a talk entitled "Progress Toward High-gain Inertial Confinement Fusion with Lasers". More information on the meeting is available at www.aps.org/units/maspg/meetings/meeting.cfm?name=SENIOR1121. If you're interested in attending the meeting, please email units@aps.org.

National Capital Astronomers Membership Form								
Name:		Date://						
Address:		ZIP Code:						
Home Phone:	E-mail:	Print / E-mail Star Dust (circle one)						
Membership (circle one): Student \$ 5; Individual / Family\$10; Optional Contribution\$ Please indicate which activities interest you:								
 Attending monthly scientific lectures on some aspect of astronomy Making scientific astronomical observations Observing astronomical objects for personal pleasure at relatively dark sites Attending large regional star parties Doing outreach events to educate the public, such as Exploring the Sky Building or modifying telescopes Participating in travel/expeditions to view eclipses or occultations Combating light pollution Do you have any special skills, such as videography, graphic arts, science education, electronics, machining, etc.? 								
Are you interested in v	volunteering for: Telescope making, Explor	ing the Sky, Star Dust, NCA Officer, etc.?						
	with check payable to National Capital As ofinger, NCA Treasurer; 727 Massachusett							

National Capital Astronomers, Inc.

If undeliverable, return to NCA c/o Elizabeth Warner 400 Madison St #2208 Alexandria, VA 22314

First Class
Dated Material



Celebrating 84 Years of Astronomy

Next NCA Meeting: 2021 November 13th 7:30 pm (On Zoom)

Dr. Julie McEnery

To join the Zoom meeting, use the following link: umd.zoom.us/j/96856095178?pwd=cWhyNE92bGFYUkYxZ nl6eWVIK0IKdz09

Please download and import the following iCalendar (.ics) files to your calendar system: umpj4sGt2QsR6PRowAGo_4M_TxmCVcgqdFmhjHAXh_albhBO5FF4ZZIYDc

Please note that NCA Zoom meetings are often recorded.

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