



What's Up With the Astronomical League October 9, 2026

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Compiled and edited by
Carroll Iorg,

Immed. Past President

A periodic publication available to all Astronomical League Members

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- Bringing People and Space Closer Together

Call for

What's Up With the Astronomical League Submissions!

Does your society or you as a member-at-large have a time sensitive event you would like to share with the national membership? Or do you just want to share some special projects or events that you or your club have participated in?

This is your opportunity! The possibilities are endless.

Over the several years this periodic publication has been in existence, we have shared such varied subjects as positive dark sky ordinances in cities, online library signup for a member club, a celebration of an AL region's 50th anniversary celebration, star parties notices and follow-up stories, and articles from other astronomy groups.

A full one page submission is requested in either JPG, Word or PDF format. Pictures are also encouraged as part of your submissions.

Please send an email to carroll.iorg@gmail.com with the words "What's Up With the Astronomical League" in the subject line to attach a submission or for more information.

The deadline for submissions is generally about the 5th day of the month.



ASTRONOMICAL LEAGUE LIVE!



Friday October 30, 2026; 7:00 pm EDT



graphic: Dr. Shane Larson



Dr. Shane Larson

"Zombie and Vampire Stars: Tales from the Stellar Graveyard"

*your
host*

Terry Mann

*also
with*

**Chuck Allen,
John Goss
Laurie Ansorge,
and Scott Roberts,**

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EDITOR: JAMES S. EDGAR
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2027
OBSERVER'S
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Order early. Quantities are limited!

Stock typically arrives in November and typically ships in December in time for Christmas. We order a limited number of items, and once they are sold, we won't receive any more.

ALCon 2027 Brief Announcement

Mark your calendars now for ALCon 2027!

This convention is being hosted by the Yellowstone Valley Astronomy Association and will be held on July 28-31, 2027. The main venue is the 41,000 square-foot Billings Hotel and Convention Center with casino, water slide pool, and ample banquet and presentation space. There will be a dinner at historic Red Lodge and a stargazing session with Native American stories at Pictograph Cave State Park.

The Star-B-Que will be held at the Zoo Montana with access to the zoo and its eagles, grizzly bears, and bison.

BRINGING PEOPLE AND SPACE CLOSER TOGETHER

The Houston Astronomical Society (HAS) hosted a major outreach on Friday, July 24 at Space Center Houston, Bringing People & Space Together, in cooperation with the Foundation for International Space Education (FISE), which brought 50 students (16-19) from 25 countries to the area (July 18-August 3, 2026) with a simple assignment: Design a mission to Mars in teams of teams!

The event also brought the 150 members of SCH, a dozen Amateur astronomers and their instruments, and several teachers, who led children in activities and introduced all to microscopy (with an exobiology slant). Talks were offered in the Destiny auditorium about the Sun and meteorites. Clips from the major space agencies were playing in a loop on a dozen laptops featuring the planets and the major current missions to Venus, Mars and Jupiter along with informative flyers to remember the event by.

Over 400 attendees were present, and this resulted in the creation of an astronomy club in Bolivia after HAS donated a Sky Watcher 150P to the Bolivian USS representative. Local host families are scheduled for the teenage visitors who attend from around the world.

This submission is compliments of Daniel M. Roy, the education and outreach coordinator for the Houston Astronomical Society (HAS) which currently organizes four star parties and a few talks in schools or libraries every month. He is excited by the society's latest venture with Space Center Houston (the JSC visitor center) which welcomes 1.3 Million visitors from all over the world annually.



Students attending the August 2026 event, photo compliments of Daniel M. Roy.

Contact for more information about the program: <https://thehangarmuseum.ca/united-space-school>. [This is United Space School!](#)

On the following four pages are the praises of some representative former program participants.

Dr. Cathy Lenaghan Steely USS 1999



My name is Dr. Cathy Lenaghan, and I'm a UK GP (family medicine physician). I attended what was then known as, international space school 1999 and it remains one of the most memorable and enjoyable experiences of my life to date. Those weeks were special , with unique experiences into astronaut life , and exposure to magical places such as Johnston Space Centre . We were incredibly lucky to be present in Mission Control when the first female shuttle commander, Eileen Collins, steered the shuttle home. We met many esteemed astronauts and staff of JSC .

I had wanted to be a doctor from a very young age and always had an interest in science . My experience in this project really helped prepare me for university life. It was the first time I had been away from my family, on my own, thousands of miles away, to stay with people I had never met . The internet was developing , times were changing . I became more confident and independent over these few weeks, meeting new people and learning new skills. With thanks to my amazing host family , they cared for me like I was their own family, and

ultimately I had the best time of my life.

I studied medicine at the university of Glasgow and graduated in 2005 , and I'm now a GP partner in a large practice in south of Scotland. I will be forever grateful to all of the volunteers, host families and organisers for this once in a lifetime experience.

Dr. Amy Rankine (2011)



I come from a small town in Scotland that doesn't typically send many of its young people to university. At school, I loved physics and maths and really just anything science! But I was quiet and under-confident.

Space School gave me the push and self-confidence I needed to study Astrophysics at university. USS was my first chance to present in front of an international audience of strangers and other fast friends and family I'd known only for two weeks. Now it is part of my job.

I graduated from the University of St Andrews in 2017 and got my PhD from the University of Cambridge in 2021. I am now a Leverhulme Early Career Fellow at the University of Edinburgh where I research how the supermassive black holes that sit at the centres of galaxies may influence galaxy evolution and ultimately craft the Universe that we see today.

While I spend my time only *using* data from telescopes on the ground and in space, USS gave me an appreciation for the countless roles, complex structures, and tightly interwoven tasks that make space missions possible. It also showed me the variety of careers that all share the same fundamental goal of being curious about the Universe and everything in it.

My experience of the world was very small and so USS seemed very daunting from the outset, but through the generosity of my host family (three cheers to the Goodmans!) my worries melted away. The safe, welcoming home to come to at the end of each day truly allows USS to be the wonderful experience that it is and should be.



Ian Gottlieb Godoy Garraza (2023)

"When we transform education, we transform people's lives"

I am Ian Gobblielb Godoy Garraza. I represented my country, Argentina, in the United Space School in 2023, where I was distinguished with the "High Achievement Award".

I am currently studying International Relations and Political Science at Universidad de Palermo.

I have also completed the first year of the Chemical Engineering degree at the Universidad Nacional de La Plata.

In 2024 I was recognized as one of the top 50 best students in the world for the Global Student Prize of the Varkey Foundation and Chegg organization. In addition, I have been recognized as a "distinguished citizen of La Plata" for my contributions in the education field.

I am the founder of "Inspirar Futuro" ("Inspiring Future") organization, which started as a radio show in the very first university radio station in the world (the Universidad Nacional de la Plata radio station) and evolved into what it is today. My work starts with the belief that, when we transform education, we transform people's lives. That's why I developed initiatives across Latin America that combine science, art, policy making, and leadership to expand students' opportunities.

I have to say two learnings that United Space School gave me and I remember in my daily basis, I would say that: there is always room for more (knowledge, curiosity, improvement, aspirations, kindness, etc.), and that when we make our projects bigger, is when we take advantage of diversity and make from our differences an opportunity. That's why I work every day to connect knowledge with impact, to empower the next generation and to show that, if we work together, we will be able to lead the changes needed to foster social development.

This year I had the opportunity to coordinate a University program on the SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals), where we had the responsibility of designing ways for students to participate in the policy making process. Apart from that, very recently I started an internship at the Legislative (the Provincial Congress).





I am a dedicated and passionate Mathematics educator with over 15 years of experience in teaching Mathematics. At 37 years of age, I have established myself as a significant figure in the educational community, particularly in the ZF Mgcawu District.

My journey in education began with a deep interest in the fields of Mathematics and Physical Sciences, which culminated in my active involvement in various educational initiatives. Notably, I was part of the ISSF in 2004, where I met with other students from around the world where I enhanced my learning experiences and build up a great deal of confidence within myself to tackle the challenges that life threw my way. When I came back from the ISSF 2004 I was a new person with a new outlook on life. It was really a life changing experience for me which I would not exchange for any-

thing but the grace and love of God.

In 2017, I had the opportunity to serve as a mentor for the USS (FISE) program, demonstrating my commitment fostering growth, improvement demonstrating my commitment fostering growth, improvement among students and developing their ability to learn, discover and become greater citizens in the world we live in.

My efforts in the classroom have not gone unnoticed; in 2023, I received prestigious awards for achieving the best improvement in Grade 12 results for both Mathematics and Physical Sciences. These awards celebrated my dedication, commitment and effectiveness in elevating student performance, a testament to my innovative teaching methods and unwavering support for my students.

I am currently working at Pretoria High School for Girls, where I continue to inspire young minds with my enthusiasm for Mathematics. My passion for education is evident in my approach to teaching, as I seek to cultivate a love for learning and critical thinking among my students.

As a respected educator in the community, I remain committed to making a positive impact in the lives of my students, encouraging them to explore the wonders of Mathematics. I believe that a strong foundation in this subject is crucial not only for academic success but also for developing problem-solving skills that are vital in everyday life.

My teaching philosophy centers around an engaging and inclusive classroom environment.

In addition to my teaching responsibilities, I am actively involved in professional development within my field. I regularly attend workshops and seminars to stay updated on the latest educational trends and methodologies.

I am not just a teacher: I am a mentor, a supporter, and an advocate for quality education. My dedication and achievements reflect my unwavering belief in the power to transform young minds into young adults that will have a positive contribution and impact on our community at large.