



Monthly Notices of the Everglades Astronomical Society

Naples, FL
January 2012



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President's Message

Well we will make this month's message short and sweet - the Winter Star Party is this month! Perhaps more interesting for most of our members is the program being held March 3rd at St. Ann's school. We will need club members to bring their scopes or their enthusiasm to help show the kids the Moon and planets.

Clear Skies!
Mike Usher

Dates for the "FACK"

The best times to go out to the Fakahatchee strand would be during the nights we have a new moon or when the moon isn't so visible. Here are some dates when you might find us out here at the viewing site.

Date	Moonrise	Moonset
Feb. 18 th	4:23 AM	3:28 PM
Feb. 25 th	8:44 AM	9:53 PM

Sky Events

Feb. 7th - Full Moon
Feb. 14th - Last Quarter Moon
Feb. 21st - New Moon

Next Meeting

Date: Feb 14th
Time: 7:00-9:00 PM
At the Norris Center

Astronomical Trivia Question of the Month

How many light years away is the North Star?

- A. 48
- B. 434
- C. 572
- D. 84

Answer on next page.

What type of galaxy is this?





The Nerdiest Video Game Ever

By Dr. Tony Phillips

NASA has a job opening. Wanted: People of all ages to sort, stack, and catalogue terabytes of simulated data from a satellite that launches in 2015. Agile thumbs required.

Sorting terabytes of data? It's more fun than it sounds. In fact it's a game: Satellite Insight. The Space Place Team at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory created the entertaining app for iPhones to get the word out about GOES-R, an advanced Earth science satellite built by NOAA and NASA.

Described by the *Los Angeles Times* as possibly "the nerdiest game ever," Satellite Insight may be downloaded for free from Apple's app store. Be careful, though, once you start playing it's hard to stop. Some reviewers have likened it to Tetris, one of the most popular video games of all time.

GOES, short for "Geostationary Operational Environmental Satellite," is the workhorse spacecraft for weather forecasters. NOAA operates two (at a time) in geosynchronous orbit, one above the west coast of N. America and one above the east coast. They monitor clouds, wind, rain, hurricanes, tornadoes and even solar flares. The GOES program has been in action since 1975.

GOES-R is the next-generation satellite with advanced technologies far beyond those of the older GOES satellites. It has sensors for lightning detection, wildfire mapping, storm tracking, search and rescue, solar

imaging, and more. Many of the sensors are trailblazers. For example, the Advanced Baseline Imager has 60 times the capability of the current imager—16 channels instead of 5. It has twice the spatial resolution and five times the temporal refresh rate, including the 30-second imaging of weather systems over a region of 1000 km x 1000 km. Also, the Geostationary Lightning Mapper can count and pinpoint lightning bolts over the Americas 24/7. It's the first such detector to fly on a geosynchronous satellite, and it could lead to transformative advances in severe storm warning capability.

All in all, GOES-R represents a "huge technological leap from the current GOES." We know this because Satellite Insight tells us so. The app has an informative "Learn More" feature where players can find out about the satellite and the data they have been sorting. Which brings us back to sorting data. It's a bit like eating Cheerios; just don't tell the kids it's nutritious, and they love it. Helping GOES-R gather and stash data from all those advanced sensors is just as satisfying, too—a dose of Earth science wrapped in thumb-flying fun.

Answer to Trivia Question.

How many light years away is the North Star?
The north star, also known as Polaris, is 434 light years away!

And for those who may not have known, the picture of the galaxy on the top page is a Spiral Galaxy. It is one of three different types of galaxies.

2012 DUES

For the bargain price of only \$20.00, all this can be yours for the coming year:

- Meet with your fellow astronomy enthusiasts at least 10 times a year
- Many opportunities to freeze/sweat/get bitten by mosquitoes in the Fakahatchee Strand
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- Reduced price for *Sky & Telescope* and *Astronomy* subscriptions

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