



# The Night Sky

By David Leake

*Retired Planetarium Director of  
Staerkel Planetarium at Parkland College,  
Co-Founder of the  
Champaign-Urbana Astronomical Society, Inc*

January 28 – February 3

The innermost planet in our solar system, Mercury, is one of the more difficult planets to see. Of course, one should never look at the Sun, so you have to catch Mercury on one side of the Sun or the other. Usually there are three time frames to see Mercury in the evening sky and three in the morning sky, but not all are equal. Some will go through

life having never seen Mercury – don't be that person! One of the best evening views of the year is coming up and it extends into February. Start looking just after sunset, low west-southwest early next week. Don't confuse Mercury with Venus, which is below Mercury and brighter. Stay with it as Mercury will gain altitude each night and be highest in the sky on February

19th. Then it will head back sunward, passing Venus on February 24th. You'll want to place yourself in a spot with no trees on the horizon.

The Full Moon will brighten our sky this weekend. The Dakota tribe called February's full Moon the "Snow Moon." Other tribes called it the "Bald Eagle Moon," "Raccoon" or the "Black Bear Moon."

## Philo Library Weekly Newsletter

It's 3:45 on Sunday and the sun is shining on the newly fallen snow - just like a picture postcard or Christmas card setting. It's hard to believe that for the past day or so we've been watching the weather closely and stocking up on groceries in preparation for being snowed in.

Yesterday and today had enough sports on television to keep most people busy. But, for those of you who are not heavily into the sports, I hope you stocked up on books and other materials from Philo Library to see you through the weekend.

Don't forget the ebooks which are increasingly popu-

lar and you don't have to wait for the Library to open, just go online and download.

I'm going to tell you about books that should be arriving in the next few weeks so you can prepare yourselves for the new reads that are coming, drum roll please!

Books that should be received during what's left of the month of January include:

Dean Koontz's "Friend of the Family",

Jim Butcher's "Twelve Months",

"All the Little Houses" by Mary Cobb,

"The Storm" by Rachel Hawkins,

"The Shop on Hidden Lane" by Jayne Ann Krentz, and "Woman Down" by Colleen Hoover.

And a couple due the first part of February: "It's Not Her" by Mary Kubica (LP), also in large print "Cross and Sampson: An Alex Cross and John Sampson Thriller", and J.D. Robb's "Stolen in Death". All should be coming in the next month or so. I don't know about you but I'm excited!

Having given you the list and food for thought, I'll call it a day.

Stay warm and thanks for reading!

## This Week at Tolono Library

For those of you who have been following along, there have been a lot of exciting developments happening at the Tolono Public Library.

We have been significantly increasing our program offerings to our patrons over the last several months. If you haven't yet had a chance to see what new events and resources the library has for you, now is the time to stop by.

Every Wednesday from 3:30-5:00, a representative from the CU Fab Lab comes to provide tools for teens to make and create whatever they can imagine in our Teen FabLab. This program is a designated space for teens to express themselves through art and creation.

However, in an exciting development, our makerspace resources are no longer reserved just for the teens! On Saturday, January 31st we have specific times set aside for adults (11:00-1:00) and

Kids, ages 6-12, (1:30-3:00) to come to the library and try your own hand at our makerspace tools.

If you have infants or toddlers at home, be sure to come to our Kids' Storytime this Friday, January 30th from 10:00-10:30. Short and sweet, this half hour will be packed full of animated storytelling, and at the end, your little ones are welcome to explore.

Popping into February, we will host a Groundhog Day Craft for kids on Groundhog Day! Tuesday, February 2nd, whether Punxsutawney Phil saw his shadow or not, we will be making our own pop-up groundhog.

Also on February 2nd, will be the second meeting of the LKBC (Low Key Book Club). We meet on the first Monday of every month from 5:30-6:30 to discuss what we have been reading. Anyone can join at any time; you do not need to have been reading a certain

book to participate; it's very low key.

Finally, seniors, don't miss out on Coffee Talk this month. On February 4th from 9:00-10:00AM, Dimitri Glaros will be joining us at Coffee Talk. He plans to bring a few different instruments to play and talk about South Slavic music (Bulgaria, Greece, and North Macedonia).

To see our full calendar of events and register to attend, you can always visit our website, and don't miss the fun following along with us on our Instagram, Facebook, and LinkedIn.

Are you looking for a way to be involved and support the library? Our brand-new Friends of the Tolono Library Group is meeting on Thursday, February 5th from 4:30-5:30 at the library. Come see what they're all about and what you can do to be a part of this supportive community.

## Parkland College CTE to Host Free Career Exploration in February

CHAMPAIGN, Ill. —

Parkland's Career and Technical Education division will host a free career exploration event for 6-8th grade students and their parents on Saturday, February 7, 2026.

From 9:30 a.m. until noon, students will engage in hands-on activities utilizing CTE career labs, welding classrooms, and program equipment.

Areas of exploration will include Automotive Technology, Construction Trades, Collision Repair, Welding, and more.

This workshop requires active student participation.

A Safety and Photo Release Workshop Waiver is required for each student and must be turned in no later than the morning of the event.

Refreshments will be avail-

able.

Attendees will also be entered into a drawing for a free Community Education summer youth camp voucher.

Registration is now open and due Monday, February 2. Learn more at parkland.edu/CareerExploration.

For questions about the event, contact pce@parkland.edu.

# THE SIDNEY SCOOP

by Ann Rhoton, 688-2812



Look for your correspondent's January 19 Sidney American Legion Post 433 Meeting Coverage in this week's Southern Champaign County Today Paper.

The next regular monthly meeting of the Village of Sidney Board of Trustees will take place on Monday, February 2 at 7:00 p.m. in the Sidney Community Building located at 211 East Main Street in Sidney. All monthly meetings, unless otherwise posted, are

held in the Sidney Community Building meeting room.

The Sidney American Legion Post 433 will hold their next monthly meeting at the Post Home located at 221 South David Street in downtown Sidney on Monday, February 16 at 6:00 p.m. Prospective new members are always welcome and encouraged to attend and all monthly meetings, unless otherwise posted, are held at the Post Home.

Have a great week!

If you or your organization have news items you want published drop a line to Ann Rhoton at P. O. Box 491, Sidney, IL 61877 or call (217) 688-2812 between 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Don't hesitate to leave a message if there's no answer.

News items must be turned in by 10:00 a.m. each Friday to be published in the following week's paper. Items submitted after the deadline will be published in the following week's column.

## PEACE MEAL WEEKLY MENU

Sidney, Homer, Philo, Tolono, Sadorus, and Pesotum Peace Meal menu for Thursday, January 29 through Wednesday, February 4.

Thursday, 1/29/26 – Ham chef salad with ranch dressing, coleslaw, Jello, peaches and crème cup, dinner roll served with butter or margarine, and a half pint of milk.

Friday, 1/30/26 – Chicken Parmesan, succotash, parsley potatoes, pear cup, breadstick, and a half pint of milk.

Saturday, 1/31/26 – Ham salad, celery sticks, cottage cheese with pineapple, apple-sauce, sliced bread served with butter or margarine, and a half pint of milk.

Sunday, 2/1/26 – OSF

Peace Meal is closed.

Monday, 2/2/26 – No menu available at this time.

Tuesday, 2/3/26 – No menu available at this time.

Wednesday, 2/4/26 – OSF Peace Meal is closed.

OSF Peace Meal provides seniors, age 60 and older, with a nutritious lunch Monday through Saturday and are closed on Sunday and Wednesday. There is a suggested donation of \$4.00 for each meal, however, no senior will be denied a meal because of an inability to financially contribute. The Illinois Link Card is an accepted form of payment. For more information, please go to <https://www.osfhealthcare.org/osf-peace-meal/> or call 1-309-665-5900.

peace-meal/ or call 1-309-665-5900.

The Homer Peace Meal congregate site is at the Homer Village Hall located at 500 East Second Street. It is currently carry-out only. For reservations, please call 1-309-665-5900. Home delivery in southern Champaign County is currently available in Sidney, Homer, Philo, Tolono, Sadorus, and Pesotum.

Menu substitutions may occur due to global supply chain shortages, but a nutritious meal is still guaranteed.

The OSF Peace Meal menu is submitted for the OSF Peace Meal Senior Nutrition Program by Ann Rhoton.

## The Giving Place Weekly Newsletter & Upcoming Events

"And now brothers, I will ask you a terrible question, and God knows I ask it also of myself. Is the truth beyond all truths, beyond the stars, just this: that to live without him is the real death, that to die with him the only life?"

— Frederick Buechner

The TGP News Section Wednesday was very busy at The Giving Place. We served 12 families (0 new), 50 people and 23 children. Food totaled \$850.00 (17 boxes at ~\$50.00 per box).

Yearly totals for 2025, The Giving Place served 422 families (30 new), 1,421 people and 643 children. Food totaled \$28,550.000 (573 boxes at ~\$50.00 per box)

Volunteers worked over 1,100 hours. At 34.79 an hour,



this totals over 37,780 worth of volunteer labor

All food is donated or purchased through cash donations from our very generous community!

Thanks to Jo Ellen, Cindy, Miranda, Karen, Sharon J, Ernie, Pastor Gail, Dale, and Mike for serving our clients Wednesday night.

We had approximately 40 different people volunteer in 2025. Thanks to all who volunteered.

Feel free to visit some Wednesday and see all the blessings that are happening and maybe become a part of it.

The Giving Place continues as a way for our church and other community churches to minister to the Unit 7 School District and help those in need.

Mike Williams  
The Verses  
Ephesians 2:8-9 ESV

For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

## Active Senior Republicans January Meeting Information

The monthly meeting of Active Senior Republicans in Champaign County is for seniors seeking information, fellowship and fun.

The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, January 2, 2026 at 9:30 a.m. (Social time from 9:00-9:30) at the Champaign Public Library; located at 200 W. Green St., in Champaign in the Robeson Pavilion Room A & B

Coffee and snacks will be provided. All are welcome.

This month's speaker is John Farney, Champaign County Board District 3, St. Joseph. He will be discussing Financial Challenges Facing Champaign County.

BUSINESS MEETING: Elections for President, Secretary and Treasurer will follow the speaker. Please submit nominations to Sandy McCabe or Joyce McCabe prior to the start of the meeting.

The Active Senior Republican meetings are free and

open to the public.

UPCOMING EVENTS:  
March Meeting: March 2, 2026

April Meeting: April 6, 2026

For information or questions: Joyce McCabe, Co-President: PHONE: 217-819-0939

EMAIL: david\_mccabe\_347@myyahoo.com

Sandy McCabe, Co-President: PHONE: 217-207-7001

EMAIL: sandymccabe55@yahoo.com

Hope to see you there!

## Sidney American Legion Post 433 Holds First 2026 Meeting of New Year cont'd from pg. 1

ment at 6:45 p.m. following a motion from Post 433 Sergeant at Arms David Dillman, a second to the motion by Post 433 legionnaire Mike Shepard, and closing ceremonies and a prayer from Post 433 Chaplain

Fred Olds.

The Sidney American Legion Post 433 will hold their next monthly meeting at the Post Home located at 221 South David Street in downtown Sidney on Monday, Feb-

ruary 16 at 6:00 p.m. Prospective new members are always welcome and encouraged to attend and all monthly meetings, unless otherwise posted, are held at the Post Home.

**Great FUTURES Start Here.**

**PARKLAND COLLEGE**  
parkland.edu

**register now | CLASSES BEGIN 2/2 | parkland.edu/spring26**



Winter Poem  
BY NIKKI GIOVANNI

Once a snowflake fell on my brow and I loved it so much and I kissed it and it was happy and called its cousins and brothers and

a web of snow engulfed me then I reached to love them all and I squeezed them and they became a spring rain and I stood perfectly still and was a flower

## Poets Corner:

Would you like to see

your original or a family members work published?

Submit your poems or short stories!

e-mail poems and/or short stories to:

jamie@thecounty-chronicle.com