Paul Floyd's
Astronomy & Space Website

Earth & Beyond
Teacher Newsletter
Term 1 2009

The new school year starts, and with it begins the International Year of Astronomy.

2009 coincides with the 400th anniversary of the first recorded astronomical observations with a telescope by Galileo Galilei and the publication of Johannes Kepler's Astronomia nova in the 17th Century.

Keep up to date with learning opportunities as they occur for your students by visiting my web site. While you are there, feel free to sign up to a new 'Earth & Beyond' E-mail list specifically for South East Queensland teachers.

Regards,

Paul Floyd.
www.nightskyonline.info

Online Resources

A variety of resources to assist you in your teaching of the Earth & Beyond strand of the Science Curriculum can be found on my site at www.nightskyonline.info. At the time of writing, these include a printer friendly 2009 Astronomy Calendar as well as an expanded version designed for online access. You will also find a set of Moon phase recording charts for each term designed to assist your students in understanding the Moons changing appearance. Finally, at various times throughout 2009, I will be webcasting 'live' the Apollo landing sites on the Moon. Check my site regularly for updates on when these webcasts will occur.

Best nights for a star party in Term 1 2009

Amateur astronomical societies are generally happy to assist schools by running a star party. This mean that they will bring telescopes and volunteers to your school so that your students can look through them at the night sky. Book ahead and avoid the time just between First Quarter Moon and two nights after Full Moon to avoid the light of the Moon washing out other sky objects. Using this criteria, the best nights therefore are:

* Friday January 30 to Monday 2 February
* Sunday 1 March to Tuesday 3 March
* Tuesday 31 March to Thursday 2 April

A list of S.E.Queensland Astronomical Societies can be found on the World Wide Web at http://tinyurl.com/7k7fb4

Planets visible to the eye

February: Your students can look for Venus during the first half of the month. Simply tell them to look low above the Western horizon during the evening twilight. Venus appears to the unaided eye as a bright star.

March: Get your students to look for Saturn at the end of evening twilight above the Eastern horizon. Saturn appears to the unaided eye as a pale yellow moderately bright star. A medium sized telescope will show the rings of Saturn. Saturn is at opposition on March 9th - meaning that it is ideally placed for viewing.

Easy Constellations

Orion 'The Hunter'

Look high above the North Western horizon at the end of evening twilight.

Crux 'The Southern Cross' **and** 'The Pointers'

Look above the South Eastern horizon at the end of evening twilight.

Moon Phases

	New	First Quarter	Full Moon	Last Quarter
February	25	3	10	17
March	27	4	11	19
April	25	3	10	17