

On the cover: The Solar and Heliospheric Observatory catches a giant prominence shooting out from the Sun.

SOHO / ESA / NASA

FEATURES

22 Exoplanets **Imaged at Last**

Two teams of astronomers have finally achieved one of astronomy's holy grails. By Robert Naeye

26 Mercury Gets a Second Look

The Messenger spacecraft's return visit to the "iron planet" both satisfies and tantalizes. By J. Kelly Beatty

30 Solar Impact



Variations in the Sun's output influence Earth's climate in ways scientists are still trying to discern. By Kristina Grifantini

68 Abraham Lincoln's **Celestial Connections**

The life of the United States's 16th president was punctuated with instances of astronomical awareness. By Donald W. Olson & Laurie E. Jasinski

Lucky Deep-Sky Imaging

By combining techniques for deep-sky and planetary imaging, amateurs are pushing the resolution envelope. By Ricardo Serpell & Daniel Verschatse

March 2009

VOL. 117, NO. 3

THIS MONTH'S SKY

- March 2009 Sky at a Glance
- **Northern Hemisphere's Sky** By Fred Schaaf
- Binocular Highlight By Gary Seronik
- Suburban Star-Hop By Ken Hewitt-White
- Sun, Moon, and Planets By Fred Schaaf
- **Exploring the Moon** By Charles A. Wood
- 58 **Celestial Calendar** By Tony Flanders
- **Deep-Sky Wonders** By Sue French

S&T TEST REPORT

Short and Sweet 36

Does TMB's new 92-mm refractor live up to the claim that it's a replacement for the legendary Astro-Physics Stowaway? By Alan Dyer

38 Quick Look: Meade's **LightSwitch Technology**

By Dennis di Cicco

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

- **Spectrum** By Robert Naeye
- TO Letters
- 50 & 25 Years Ago 10 By Leif I. Robinson
- **News Notes** т6
- т8 **Mission Update** By Jonathan McDowell
- **Cosmic Relief** 20 By David Grinspoon
- **New Product Showcase** 40
- 66 **Books & Beyond**
- **Telescope Workshop** 72 By Gary Seronik
- **Gallery** 78
- 88 **Focal Point** By Gordon Reade

SKY & TELESCOPE (ISSN 0037-6604) is published monthly by Sky & Telescope Media, LLC, 90 Sherman St., Cambridge, MA 02140-3264, USA. Phone: 800-253-0245 (customer service/subscriptions), 888-253-0230 (product orders), 617-864-7360 (all other calls). Fax: 617-864-6117. Our website: SkyandTelescope.com. © 2009 Sky & Telescope Media, LLC. All rights reserved. Periodicals postage paid at Boston, Massachusetts, and at additional mailing offices. Canada Post Publications Mail sales agreement #40029823. Canadian return address: 2744 Edna St., Windsor, ON, Canada N8Y IV2. Canadian GST Reg. #R128921855. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Sky & Telescope, PO Box 420235, Palm Coast, FL 32142. Printed in the USA.



NASA / ESA / ESO / WOLFRAM FREUDLING & OTHERS