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Book Review: Clocks in the Sky: The Story of Pulsars

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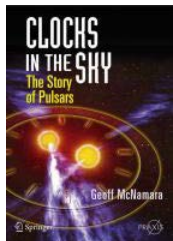
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Clocks in the sky : the story of pulsars



McNamara, Geoff. Springer/Praxis, 2008

190p, 9780387765600 \$29.95

LC Call Number: [QB843](#)

McNamara, an Australian science teacher, has produced a masterpiece of science writing. Beginning with just enough astronomical background to bring casual readers up to speed, he proceeds to provide vignettes of the key theoretical developments and observational discoveries over the last 75 years that establish pulsars as one of the most important fields in astronomy. Since their original observational confirmation in 1967, pulsars have been the basis for two Nobel Prizes, providing a unique laboratory for studying exotic matter and extreme magnetic fields, as well as rigorous tests of general relativity. Pulsars even provided the first confirmation of planets outside the solar system. Readers are brought right into the scientific story via firsthand accounts of key events, and even some of the original data and lab notes are provided. McNamara tells the story--warts and all--and recounts intriguing scientific ethical issues. Surprisingly, the descriptions of difficult topics such as relativistic effects are so well explained that casual readers will understand the basic principles. This book has it all: excellent writing, thorough attention to historical accuracy, and good science. This book is hard to put down!

Summing Up: Essential. All levels/libraries.

Reviewer: [T. D. Oswalt](#), Florida Institute of Technology

Recommendation: Essential

Readership Level: All Readership Levels, General Readers, Lower-division Undergraduates, Upper-division Undergraduates, Graduate Students, Researchers/Faculty, Two-Year Technical Program Students, Professionals/Practitioners

Interdisciplinary Subjects:

Subject: [Science & Technology - Astronautics & Astronomy](#)

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