



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: January 20, 2022

Contact: Alex Vrenios, PAS Secretary

Email: Secretary@PASAZ.org

Astronomy Fans: YOU Are Invited to a Free Lecture!

Phoenix, AZ – The Phoenix Astronomical Society PASAZ.ORG is proud to announce that Washington University’s **Dr. Emily Levesque** will be our guest lecturer **January 20, 2022**, during our 7:00 p.m. ZOOM meeting. Please join us via

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86482384302?pwd=ek5IK3BseDdyZnNMZmN4WjhSVXVFUT09>

Dr. Levesque’s lecture is titled “*Betelgeuse Is Pretty Cool: Cosmic Questions for our Naked-Eye Neighbor*” Betelgeuse's "Great Dimming" in the winter of 2020 quickly became a source of fascination for both professional and amateur astronomers. Drastic enough to be easily detected with the naked eye, the star's drop in brightness was unprecedented in observational memory and revealed the extent to which the workings of red supergiants (RSGs) are still a mystery. RSGs are the coldest and physically-largest members of the massive star population, making them ideal sources for studying the extremes of stellar physics and a key turning point in the evolution of post-main-sequence massive stars. They are also the precursors of supernovae and a crucial step in the formation of the same binary systems that violently collide and produce gravitational waves. However, our recent studies of Betelgeuse have forced us to confront the many unanswered questions that still surround these strange stars.



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Using Betelgeuse and its recent behavior as an archetype, this talk will provide an overview of our current knowledge of RSGs, identify some of the most pressing open questions about these stars, and consider the importance of studying RSGs in the coming decade as the next generation of observatories comes online.

Dr. Levesque is an astronomy professor at the University of Washington. Her work explores how the most massive stars in the universe evolve and die. She has observed for upwards of fifty nights on many of the planet's largest telescopes and flown over the Antarctic stratosphere in an experimental aircraft for her research. Her academic accolades include the 2014 Annie Jump Cannon Award, a 2017 Alfred P. Sloan fellowship, a 2019 Cottrell Scholar award, and the 2020 Newton Lacy Pierce Prize. She earned a bachelor's degree in physics from MIT and a PhD in astronomy from the University of Hawaii. She recently published her first popular science book, *The Last Stargazers*, which takes readers on a behind-the-scenes tour through the world of professional astronomy.

This lecture is open to the public, so please tell a friend!

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