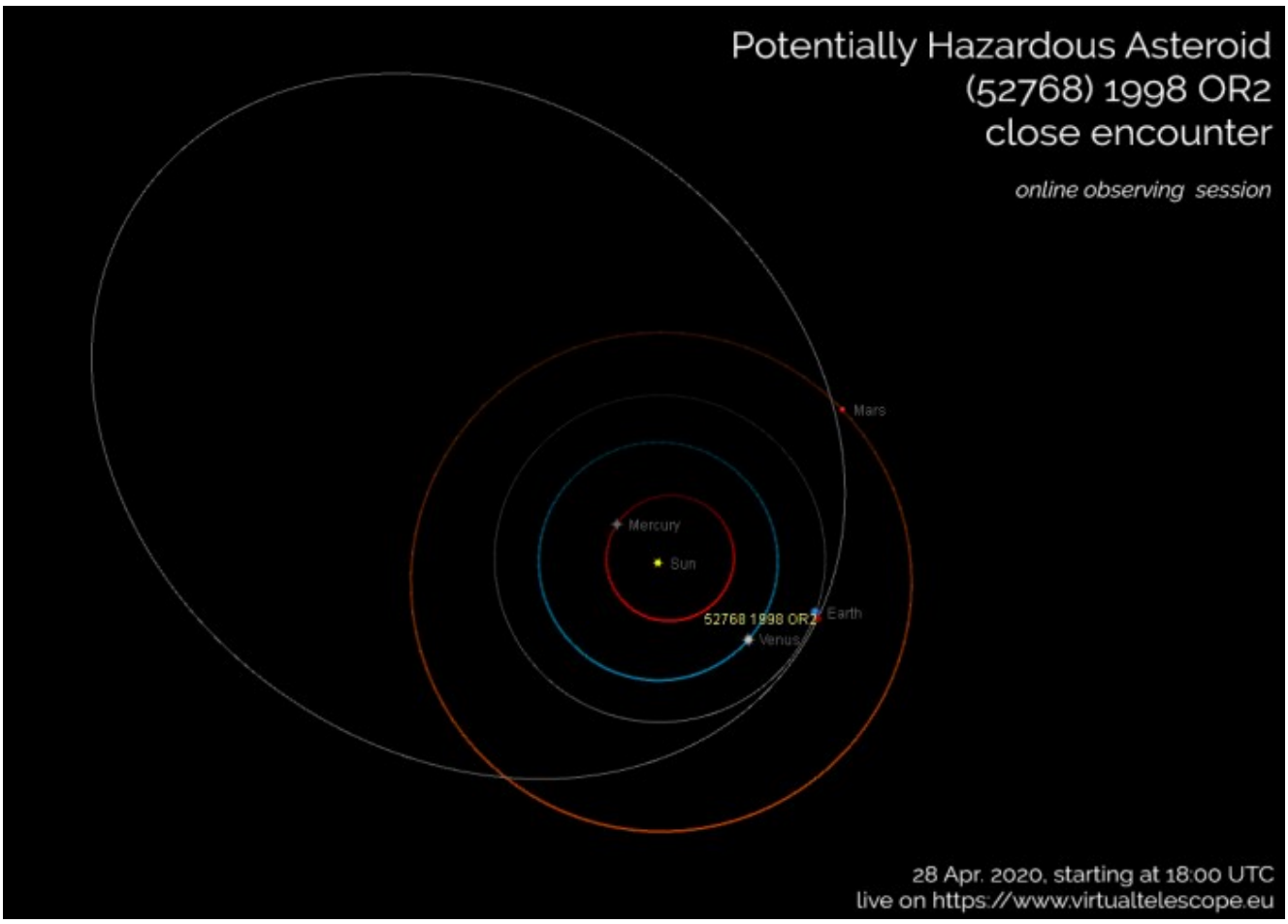
Massive, potentially hazardous asteroid to streak by earth in April as a slow moving star

No, not a fear-mongering article but a “stargazers delight” article. The mountain-sized Asteroid 1998 OR2 has been described by professional astronomers – those who know more about these objects than you or I – as “potentially hazardous,” so I’ll defer to their description.

The rare L-type asteroid is reddish but otherwise featureless and classified as a minor planet, which means it is neither a planet nor exclusively classified as a comet.

1998 OR2 is considered one of the brightest and largest potentially hazardous asteroids known to exist and astronomers keep a close eye on it each time it approaches.



Virtualtelescope.eu photo.

Having said that, the odds that the 2.5-mile wide asteroid will strike us are extremely low, but each time it approaches the dice are rolled again. While it will make a close pass by Earth on April 29 at about a distance of a very safe 4 million miles away, astronomers do work with probabilities so that means they can't do more than declare what is likely to happen.

What makes this particular asteroid newsworthy (and the purpose of this article) is that we amateur astronomers will be able to watch it streak by with our amateur telescopes. What characterizes this asteroid and makes it special, is that it is slow and extremely bright in nature with a visual magnitude of around 10 to 11, thus easy to spot. You can find some great tips on finding it, then tracking it here.

Don't have so much as a children's telescope? Don't fret. This show and any other future shows by an asteroid can always be enjoyed live and in high definition on the Virtual Telescope

Project.

Mark those calendars because if you miss the show, you will have to wait until its next fly-by in 2079!

If you are an amateur or professional astronomer that has a telescope with photographic capabilities you can send the photos to us so we can share with New Bedford by emailing info@newbedfordguide.com.