



Desert Skies

Tucson Amateur Astronomy Association

Volume LV, Number 5

May, 2009



Saginaw Hill Observatory

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Cover Photo: Named after a nearby silver mine, this is Claude and Teresa Plymate's personal observatory. The dome is an 8' Exploradome on a 10x10' building located about 40' north of their house. The telescope is a 12" lx-200 "classic".

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TAAA Board Of Directors	All Board Members		taaabod@tucsonastronomy.org

Membership in the TAAA

Annual Fees

Individual membership	\$25.00
Family (includes two adults plus minor children)	\$30.00
Youth under 18 years must join as a family upon parental or guardian acknowledgement of participation in TAAA events. Ask the Treasurer for the required form.	

Discounts (one discount allowed, subtract from above rates)

Seniors (over 60 years)	\$2.00
College Students, Teachers (K - 12)	\$8.00
Youth under 18 yrs (form required, contact the treasurer).....	\$13.00

Options (add to above membership rates)

Tucson society of the Astronomical League (TAL) fees.....	\$ 7.50
Sky & Telescope Magazine 1 year (12 issues)	\$32.95
Astronomy Magazine 1 year (12 issues)	\$34.00
2 years (24 issues)	\$60.00
Postage for New Member Pack	\$ 4.80

Donations are accepted for the following funds: SA-IDA/Light Pollution, TIMPA, Education, 30" Telescope & Land, and General/Undesignated.

Renewal Information

- Your membership expires as indicated on your mailing label.
- TAAA members may join the Tucson society of the Astronomical League (TAL) at the time they join or renew.
- Discounted Sky & Telescope or Astronomy magazine subscriptions are available to members and can be started or renewed at anytime. Rates are given above. Allow 3 months for processing. Subscriptions must be sent through the TAAA. *Do not send money directly to the*

magazines. To change an individual subscription to the group rate, pay the subscription amount to the TAAA treasurer. Include your magazine renewal notice.

- Please include a note explaining what you are paying for. Credit cards are not accepted. Write one check or money order for fees plus any options or donations. Make it payable to TAAA and send to:

Tucson Amateur Astronomy Association
PO BOX 41254 Tucson, AZ 85717

Mailing Address or Email Changes - Send to address above or email the treasurer.

TAAA Mission Statement - The mission of the Tucson Amateur Astronomy Association is to provide opportunities for members and the public to share the joy and excitement of astronomy through observing, education and fun.

Desert Skies Publishing Guidelines - All articles, announcements, news, etc. must be submitted by the newsletter deadline. Materials received after that date will appear in the next issue. The editor retains all submissions unless prior arrangements are made. Submissions should be submitted in Word compatible files via e-mail or on a recordable media.. All material copyright Tucson Amateur Astronomy Association or specific author. No reproduction without permission, all rights reserved. We will not publish slanderous or libelous material! Send submissions to:

George Barber
TAAA/Desert Skies Editor
15940 W Ridgemoor Ave
Tucson AZ 85736

Join our Email Lists on YahooGroups

Announcements: <http://tinyurl.com/e7o3y> (TAAA news, no posting allowed, 15/month)
TAAA Forum: <http://tinyurl.com/hwoau> (general astronomy discussion, posting allowed, 75/month)
TAAA Dark Site: <http://tinyurl.com/3d8ts9> (discussion of dark site issues, posting allowed)

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President's Message

May brings us to election time for our club Board of Directors. Please do not forget to come to the May meeting and participate in the Board elections. Remember that nominations for write in board candidates will be accepted on the night of the meeting but only if the nominee is present to accept. Also the May meeting brings us member's night presentations. It is always exciting to see what our club members have accomplished or are working on.

We are getting toward the end of the school year and I would like to thank everyone that helped out this season with the many Star Parties on our schedule. We do have a full list of Star Parties scheduled this month so please get involved if you are able. May also brings us our annual *Sharing the Sky* Star Party coming up on Saturday May 2nd. This event is a great way to help raise money for the future of astronomy education so please come out and help. As usual there will be sign up sheets for all of the star parties at the general meeting.

The Dark Site group has been very busy lately and is very near beginning the construction of Phase 1. We are also very happy to announce a very generous donation of several telescopes for the clubs dark site from Wally Rogers. We are very grateful to Wally for this donation. It is very exciting and will give the new site an impressive suit of visual and photographic instruments. It also puts us in a position to try and move forward as soon as possible with the facilities needed to house these instruments. This means we will need to find ways to raise the funds needed to build these facilities. If you have ideas in this area, please contact a board member or a member of the dark site planning committee. We are very excited about the future of the dark site as a first class observing facility.

As ever, Dark Skies.

Ken Shaver
TAAA President

Meeting Information and Calendar of Events

TAAA MEETING DATE: Friday, May 1, at the Steward Observatory Auditorium - Room N210

MEMBER'S NIGHT: 6:30 pm

Tonight is your night to share the spotlight! If you have an astronomy-related topic you would like to present, contact Ken Shaver to reserve a time slot during the main meeting.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING: Wednesday, May 13, 6:30 pm. The meeting is held at Steward Observatory Conference Room N305.

STAR PARTIES AND EVENTS:

04 May - Astro-Imaging SIG at China Rose
05 May - Magee Middle School Star Party

06 May - Redwood Academy Star Party
07 May - Laguna ES Star Party
08 May - Prince Elementary School Star Party
12 May - Sabino High School Star Party
14 May - Astronomy Fundamentals SIG
16 May - TAAA and AF-SIG Star Party at TIMPA
18 May - Emily Gray MS Star Party
21 May - Desert Willow Elementary Star Party
23 May - TAAA Star Party at Las Cienegas
29 May - Pima County Natural Resources Star Party
01 Jun - Saguaro Girl Scout Council Star Party

NEWSLETTER SCHEDULE: Deadline for articles: Sat, May 23. The newsletter is published at least one week prior to the following month's General Meeting.

Club News

Members Night

May Meeting is scheduled as our Annual Members Night and Board Elections. The presentations scheduled as of the Newsletter deadline are:

Steve Marten - Southern Arizona Science and Engineering Fair (SARSEF) TAAA award winner presentations.
George Barber - TIMPA Observatory construction video
Claude Plymate - Home observatory dome
Bill Lofquist - TAAA Dark Site planning
Eric Karkoschka - Planets this Month

List of Candidates

The TAAA Nominating Committee has compiled a list of candidates for the election of TAAA Board Members to be held during the May 1st general meeting. All listed candidates have agreed to have their names placed on the ballot. The candidates for the Board positions are:

Ken Shaver - President
Keith Schlottman - Vice President
Luke Scott - Secretary
Teresa Bippert-Plymate - Treasurer
John Croft - Member-at-Large

Club News (cont.)

George Barber - Member-at-Large
John Kalas - Member at Large

Nominations for write-in candidates shall be accepted from the floor at the May 1st general meeting. Write-in candidates must accept their nomination in person or in writing before the vote is taken. Any member who has been a member for one year, and is a member in good standing, may be nominated for office. All members of the Board of Directors must be at least 18 years of age.

Member News

We welcome these members who have recently joined the TAAA: Robin Blais, Richard & Donna Kidwell, Jim & Constance Kraska, Beck Ney, Graciela Schneier, and Mike Taylor & Donna Tippins. Glad to have all of you join! New members can pick up a members pack at a meeting if they didn't request it by mail. Hope you'll make it to our star parties or meetings so we can all get to know you. (Updated membership lists are available at our website after logging in as a member. You can also pick one up at most meetings.)

Astro-Imaging SIG Meeting

Monday, May 4, 7pm
China Rose, NE corner Speedway/Rosemont

Our presentations feature CCD images, planetary webcams, and film. Come see some of the state of the imaging art over some Chinese food. Just show up and enjoy the show! For more information, contact Steve Peterson.

Astronomy Fundamentals Special Interest Group AFSIG for May

The Astronomy Fundamentals Special Interest Group (AFSIG) will meet on Thursday, May 14, at 6:30 pm in room 253 of the Environmental and Natural Resources Building (USGS and Weather Service) on the northeast corner of Sixth Street and Park Avenue on the campus of the University of Arizona.

Have you ever wondered where those amazing images come from that are shown by the TAAA Astrophotography SIG (Imaging SIG) each year? Wonder no more. Michael Turner will present "Introduction to Astrophotography", a quick overview of what is involved in astrophotography and some of the equipment and software that is required to properly enjoy this segment of the Astronomy hobby. Fear not, we will not go too deep into the "quadzillion" ways using a particular method will achieve the same end: pretty pictures.

SHARING THE SKY PUBLIC STAR PARTY

National Astronomy Day
May 2, 2009

What better way to celebrate National Astronomy Day during the International Year of Astronomy than to participate in the Sharing the Sky Public Star Party fundraiser hosted by David and Wendee Levy. You will have the opportunity to do so on Saturday, May 2nd from 3:00 to 10:00 PM on the University of Arizona Mall across from Flandrau Science Center. The Sharing the Sky Foundation is a 501c (3) organization that is dedicated to motivating and teaching the public about the night sky.

As in years past, we will have telescopes set up for solar viewing in the afternoon and night sky viewing in the evening. Because it is National Astronomy Day, there will also be some special hands-on activities for children and adults. We will need members to help with these activities, so if you don't have a telescope and want to help, we would appreciate your assistance with the special activities and collecting donations. We would like to request that members supporting the event, who have canopies, bring them and set them up to enhance the early-afternoon sun protection of the donation tables and hands-on activities.

David and Wendee would like to thank all of you for helping with this worthwhile event. Support from the TAAA is essential for the success of this activity. There will be signup sheets at the May club meeting or you can call or e-mail Liz Kalas at 620-6502, lizkalas@cox.net.

TAAA Spring Star-B-Cue at Kitt Peak May 16 (Saturday)

The TAAA has scheduled a star party and pot-luck barbecue at the picnic grounds up on Kitt Peak on Saturday, 5/16, starting at 4:00 pm. A maximum of 70 TAAA Members and families will be allowed to participate. A gas-fired barbecue grill at the ramada will be fired up starting at 4:30 pm and members are invited to cook their dinners between 4:30 and 6:30 pm. Bring a dish to share with other members. The grill will be turned off at 6:30 pm. Telescope observing will commence after sundown and will be concluded by 11:30 pm. All members must be heading down the mountain by midnight. Be prepared for cool temperatures and mosquitoes.

TAAA Member, Claude Plymate, in association with the National Solar Observatory (NSO) is adding an extra feature to this TAAA Star-B-Cue. The NSO is inviting members of the TAAA to a special viewing of sunset through the McMath-Pierce Solar Telescope (McM-P). Weather permitting; the telescope's roughly 0.8m diameter solar image will be projected onto a table top for all to see. Don't expect to necessarily see sunspots. The very deep solar minimum we're currently experiencing has resulted in an extremely quiet sun over the past couple of years. You can, however, count on seeing solar

Club News (cont.)

granulation, interesting atmospheric effects and the infamous "green flash".

The size of the McM-P observing room requires attendance to be limited to 30 members. The star-b-cue sign-up sheet will include a check box for those interested in attending the McM-P sunset on a first-come, first-serve basis. Kitt Peak requests that TAAA members minimize traffic on top of the mountain by carpooling up from the picnic grounds as much as possible. Members who sign up for the solar viewing must be at the picnic area by 6:15 pm for check-in. Carpooling will leave the picnic area shortly thereafter to arrive at the McM-P telescope by 6:30 pm. Immediately following sunset, members will be expected to depart from the top of the mountain and return the picnic grounds.

There will be a sign-up sheet on the table at the back of the lecture hall at the start of the May 1st meeting. Because of the popularity of this event, attendance will be initially limited to TAAA Members and their immediate family members only. If, after all TAAA Members have had an opportunity to sign up, there are any openings or cancellations, the attendance of guests will be considered. If you are unable to attend the May meeting, phone and e-mail reservation requests will be taken on a first-come, first-serve basis *after* 9:00 am Saturday, 5/2. Contact John Kalas at 620-6502 or via e-mail at <jckalas@cox.net>.

It is very important for all attendees to abide by the rules established by Kitt Peak and respect the facility. Adherence to the rules will help to continue TAAA activities on Kitt Peak in the future.

1. No vehicles are allowed above the picnic grounds after 4:00 pm (except for the McM-P solar viewing).
2. Only the ramada gas-fired barbecue grill is permitted for cooking food at the picnic grounds. No open fires or use of the personal barbecue grills is permitted.
3. All trash must be placed in the garbage receptacles.
4. Use of cellular phones and radio walkie-talkies is prohibited. All cell phones must be turned off.
5. No alcoholic beverages are permitted.

When leaving the picnic grounds after dark, if possible, use your parking lights until you have reached the main road and are headed downhill after exiting the picnic area.

C-Row Star-B-Q Event

Friday & Saturday, June 19th & 20th

The Huachuca Astronomy Club in cooperation with Celestron and Starizona will be hosting a two-day star party in Palominas, AZ about 20 miles south of Sierra Vista on Friday, June 19th and Saturday, June 20th. Although this event is sponsored by Celestron, people are invited to bring any make of telescope. RV, camping and lodging are available. There will be many really nice door prizes available with a raffle for a new, Celestron CPC 800 telescope, as well. Featured speakers include; Bob Gent, Steve Coe, Kim Rogalski and special guest David Levy. Celestron will have technicians on-site for support. The event will be limited to 150 participants and pre-registration is required. The registration fee \$20 per person which includes 20 raffle tickets. There will be an optional catered rib dinner on Saturday evening for \$23 per person. This sounds like a fun event and is a great way for the TAAA to support our friends in the Huachuca Astronomy Club. For more information and the registration form, visit www.hacastronomy.com or call (520) 366-0049.

Help Wanted: Insurance Expert

As the TAAA develops its new astronomy complex, our insurance requirements are changing. The board of directors needs help in determining exactly what type of insurance the club should purchase. If anyone in the club is in the insurance business, we would appreciate some guidance. If you would like to offer that guidance, please contact John Kalas via phone at 620-6502 or by e-mail at jckalas@cox.net.

Help Wanted: Experienced Gas Welding Person

The club has the need of a person who owns or has access to gas welding equipment capable of burning some holes in steel out at the club's TIMPA Observatory. If you could offer this capability, please contact John Kalas via phone at 620-6502 or by e-mail at jckalas@cox.net.



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Club News (cont.)

TAAA Apparel

Looking for a special gift or a way to make that fashion statement? Try on something from our fine line of club apparel. We have got hats, T-shirts, denim shirts, and patches. We take cash and checks.

Coordinator Wanted

We are looking for a member to take on the club apparel sales program. After 8 years selling apparel and calendars, Ann Scott would like to take a break. The club usually orders apparel twice a year and takes special orders for jackets in the fall. Anyone who can attend meetings regularly and is interested in helping the club with this activity should contact a Board member.

IYA 2009 – TAAA Style

The year 2009 is special. First, it marks 55 years that the TAAA has brought astronomy into the Tucson community. Secondly, it has been declared the International Year of Astronomy by both the International Astronomical Union (IAU) and the United Nations.

If astronomy were like other high tech sciences, the International Year of Astronomy (IYA 2009) would mean increased international collaboration among researchers, but it would mean little to the average person on the street. Now, we all know astronomy is a high-tech science (we certainly have high-tech gadgets), but astronomy is one of the few sciences where amateurs can still play a big part in a very simple way. The IAU, in writing their vision statement for IYA 2009, has given amateur astronomers a responsible role. Here's that vision statement:

Everyone should realize the impact of astronomy and other fundamental sciences on our daily lives, and understand how scientific knowledge can contribute to a more equitable and peaceful society. IYA2009 activities are taking place locally, nationally, regionally and internationally. National Nodes in each country are running activities throughout 2009 which will establish collaborations between professional and *amateur astronomers*, science centers and science communicators. 137 countries are already involved and over 140 are expected to participate eventually. (*Emphasis in italics added*)

Although the IAU is mainly an organization of professional astronomers, they value our ability to connect to the public and to bring the excitement of astronomy into the public's eye.

Over the last 55 years, TAAA has been an important component in the Tucson astronomical community. We work beside some mighty partners, too. Steward Observatory, Flandrau Science Center, Kitt Peak National Observatory/National Optical Astronomy Observatory, and Whipple Observatory are just a few. Over our 55 years, hundreds if not thousands of TAAA members have taken some part in bringing astronomy to the public.

Unfortunately, the TAAA hasn't yet jumped on the IYA 2009 band wagon. We held no public event during the 100 Hours of Astronomy which took place from April 2nd to April 5th. This was a hugely successful IYA global event with over 1500 events in 130 countries. We missed out, but it's not too late for TAAA to participate in IYA 2009.

The TAAA can hold some public star parties, but there are other ideas such as workshops (public or for our membership) which we could consider. We need people with ideas; people who can work with others to carry an idea through to the end event. If you should take an interest in any of these, please contact Terri (see page 2). Anyone is welcome to work together with a group on a specific event, so let Terri know how you want to become involved.

To learn more about the IYA 2009, take a look at these websites: <http://iya2009.org/> and <http://astronomy2009.us/> (the US IYA 2009 node).

Upcoming Lectures

If you have a suggestion for either an Astronomy Essentials or Invited Lecture, or if you want to give one yourself, let Terri Lappin know. See page 2 for contact information.

This Month	Members Night Presentations by TAAA Members Meeting begins at 6:30pm NO Astronomy Essentials Lecture	
Jun 5	<i>Astronomy Essentials</i>	Binoculars Steve Marten
	<i>Invited Lecture</i>	NASA Reduced Gravity Mission David Levy
Jul 3	<i>Astronomy Essentials</i>	Seasonal Objects Mary Turner
	<i>Invited Lecture</i>	OPEN
Aug 7	<i>Astronomy Essentials</i>	George Barber Comets
	<i>Invited Lecture</i>	SOFIA Eric Young

Club News (cont.)



Night Sky Network Toolkits

Below is a list of the Night Sky Network Outreach Toolkits developed by the Astronomical Society of the Pacific under contract with NASA. These toolkits are specifically developed for amateur astronomers and are perfect for those early hours at a star party before its dark enough to observe. Some projects are well suited for use after its dark. They are best when used in small groups as you might have around your telescope at a school star party. You could pair up with someone with a telescope and talk to people standing in line waiting to look through the telescope. Please make arrangements with Terri Lappin (see page 2) to borrow any toolkit.

- PlanetQuest:** explains planet detection techniques
- Our Galaxy, Our Universe:** scale model of the Milky Way galaxy and the Universe
- Black Hole Survival Kit:** what is a black hole and how does it affect objects nearby
- Telescopes - Eyes on the Universe:** explains basic principles of optics, the human eye, and observing
- Shadows and Silhouettes:** covers lunar phases, eclipses, and transits
- Exploring the Solar System:** scale model of solar system and NASA exploration of planets
- GLOBE at Night:** light pollution principles
- Supernova!:** life cycle of massive stars, touches on life cycle of sun-like stars
- SolarScope:** provides a white light image of the sun suitable for small group viewing.
- Mirrors and Glass - An inside look at telescopes:** how telescopes work

Each toolkit contains several projects. You pick and choose which part you want to demonstrate. They contain essentially all the materials needed. All NSN toolkits include a Resources CD and a training DVD. You can request a copy of the CD and DVD set from Terri Lappin. The CDs contain PowerPoint presentations, along with scripts and background information should you be presenting to a larger audience.

TAAA Website - Login/Password Required

The TAAA website now has more resources for members viewing. Members must login using the user name and password that has been distributed by email. If you haven't received the email message, it may mean we do not have your latest email address in our records. Please contact the treasurer to update your information. This is also how to ensure that you receive the newsletter. We currently have a common user and single password that everyone uses. You do not enter your email address or any other personal information to gain access to the member's pages. Should you not have email and want the user name\password, contact any board member.

Name Tag Order to be Placed

We will take names for name tags at the May and June meetings. The list will be at the membership signup/renewal table at both meetings. Name tags are free, one for individual memberships, two for family memberships. Additional name tags can be purchased for \$5 each. You have your choice of pin or magnetic backs. You can also request name tags by emailing or phoning the treasurer, see page 2.

Name tags will be available at the July and subsequent meetings for pick up. You must pick them as we do not mail them out.

Items of Interest

Earth Hour Events

By Connie Walker

Many thanks to the 5 TAAA members who gave their immense support operating telescopes and interacting with the public during the star party on the east end of the UA Mall on March 28 for Earth Hour. Staff from NOAO and Steward Observatory was also present. We had about 100 participants from the public. Near Flandrau, 200 Girl Scouts and 30 people from the public participate in the star gazing hosted by Flandrau, Steward Observatory and the TAAA. David Acklam was among the TAAA members. At the west end of the UA Mall, Residence Life hosted 150 to 200 people in doing crafts in celebration of Earth Hour. At Sabino Canyon, the Friends of Sabino Canyon and the TAAA hosted a star party for 1500 people. Paul Moss and

Doug Isbell were among the TAAA members who supported that event. Lights at Presidio Park were turned off to commemorate the event. All over the world, hundreds of millions of people from over 4,000 cities in 88 countries participated in Earth Hour in order to make a highly visible global statement in support for action on climate change, energy conservation and light pollution.

Also many thanks to those who supported and participated in the global light pollution monitoring campaign, GLOBE at Night. Over 15,300 Orion measurements were made worldwide!

Member's Events

TAAA and AF-SIG Star Party at TIMPA

Saturday, May 16

Come on out and enjoy the spring skies! TIMPA star parties are great for both beginners and experienced observers. Our novice members can get help with observing issues or equipment problems, as there are many experienced members there who would be happy to help. If you don't own a telescope, come anyway, because there are lots of telescopes set up and everyone is invited to look through them. This is a great way to check out different telescope designs before you make that all important decision to buy. We'll do our best to get you the answers you need. If you have friends or relatives who are curious about amateur astronomy, feel free to bring them along. The TIMPA site features a large parking area, and full restroom facilities. Directions to the TIMPA site are located on the outside flap of this newsletter.

The AFSIG will have the 14" telescope available for supervised observing. The telescope is located about 100 yards south of the restrooms. Just look for the white "outhouse"!

TAAA Spring Star-B-Cue at Kitt Peak

May 16 (Saturday)

See article in the *Club News* section.

TAAA Star Party at Las Cienegas (Empire Ranch)

Saturday, May 23

Las Cienegas (formerly Empire Ranch) has been our normal dark-sky observing site for quite a number of years. Please try to arrive before sunset. Plan to stay as long as you like, but let everyone know when you are ready to leave; someone may be taking astro-images. Bring a telescope if you have one, but you don't need one to attend. Any member would be glad to let you look through their telescope. And, there are now restroom facilities at the site. Las Cienegas is at 4000 feet so be prepared for cold temperatures after sunset. Attendees should park their vehicles either perpendicular to the airstrip facing toward the center of the strip, or parallel to the airstrip along either side facing west. That way, when you are ready to

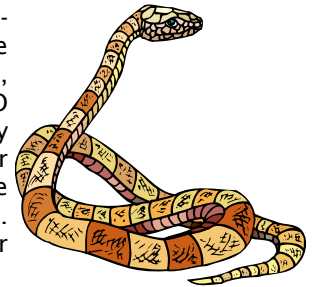
leave, you will not have to back up and turn on your bright white backup lights. See the directions to Las Cienegas on the outside flap of this newsletter.

Rattlesnake Alert!

Be alert for rattlesnakes! Rattlesnakes are generally aggressive only if disturbed. If you see one, keep a safe distance and DO NOT try to interact with it in any way. Snakes are much faster than our reflexes, and should be handled only by professionals. Wear boots and long jeans. For more information, go to

<http://>

www.friendsofsaguaro.org/rattlesnakes.html.



Along with rattlesnakes, other desert critters, such as gophers and ground squirrels, make their home wherever they want. These residents can leave holes and other potential tripping hazards, so be careful when walking.

PLAN TO ATTEND!
Sharing The Sky
Public Star Party
Saturday, May 10
University of Arizona
Mall

Want better observing?

Join the group that's keeping the sky dark
International Dark Sky Association

Southern Arizona section

We get people to use better lighting, so we'll have a dark sky

Some of the things we do:

- Talks to schools and organizations
- Demonstrations at Desert Museum
- PowerPoint presentations on CD

- Work with government agencies
- Identify non-compliant lighting in So AZ

Monthly meetings

2nd Wednesday, 5:30 - 7 pm.
 3225 N. First Ave

Contact: Joe Frannea
sky@sa-ida.org
www.sa-ida.org

To preserve and protect the nighttime environment and our heritage of dark skies through quality outdoor lighting

Public Star Parties and Community Events

All members are asked to support the TAAA School Star Party program and other community events listed below. TAAA either sponsors or co-sponsors these events. These are great opportunities for beginners as you may only need to know a few objects in the sky. Even without a telescope, you can be valuable in other capacities. Sign up sheets for many events can be found at the meeting or contact a TAAA officer.

Magee Middle School Star Party **East** Tuesday, 5/5/2009 No. of Scopes: 4

Magee Middle School will be preparing Night Sky Adventure for an estimated attendance of 100 students and parents at 8300 East Speedway Blvd. East on Speedway about ½ miles beyond Pantano Road on the right-hand side of Speedway. Viewing will be on the school grounds behind the school. Contact person Joan Flannery can be reached at 731-5000 or email joan.flannery@tuds1.org. Set-Up Time: 7:00pm. Observing will be from 7:30 pm to 9:30 pm. Sunset: 7:12pm Dark Sky: 8:10pm Moon Phase: near Full Moon.

Redwood Academy Star Party **North** Wednesday, 5/6/2009 No. of Scopes: 2

Redwood Academy will be planning Trip to the Moon for an estimated attendance of 35 students and parents at Catalina State Park. From mid-town go west to Oracle Rd. Continue north on AZ-77/N Oracle Rd to 11570 N Oracle Rd. The park will be on the right. Viewing will be at the Small Group Area. Contact person Paula Guthrie can be reached at (623) 878-0986 or email paulag@edkey.org. Set-Up Time: 7:45pm. Observing will be from 8:15pm to 9:15 pm. Sunset: 7:12pm Dark Sky: 8:11pm Moon Phase: near Full Moon.

Laguna ES Star Party **West** Thursday, 5/7/2009 No. of Scopes: 2

Laguna ES will be holding 4th Grade Camp Out for an estimated attendance of 60 students and parents at Double V Scout Camp, 3801 S. Kinney Road. Speedway to I-10, I-10 to I-19. Take the Ajo exit and go west to Kinney Road. By the McDonald's .Go right on Kinney and go about ¼ of a mile. Follow road to Ramada Grande and you will see several vehicles and a school van. Viewing will be parking lot in front of Ramada Grande. Contact person Pat Kline can be reached at 696-8479 or email ClineP@flowingwells.k12.az.us. Set-Up Time: 7:45pm. Observing will be from 8:15pm to 10:15pm. Sunset: 7:13pm Dark Sky: 8:11pm Moon Phase: near Full Moon.

Prince Elementary School Star Party North-Central Friday, 5/8/2009 No. of Scopes: 2

Prince Elementary School will be hosting YSEF Star Party for an estimated attendance of 40 students and parents at 125 East Prince Road. Take Prince west from

1st Ave. Prince Elementary is on the north side of Prince just west of Amphitheater Middle School (marked with a giant pirate face on the side of its gym). The front office for check in is at the flagpole. Viewing will be in the loop parking lot west of the office. Contact person Doug Hall can be reached at 696-6350 or email youthscienceeducation@yahoo.com. Set-Up Time: 8:00pm. Observing will be from 8:15pm to 10:15pm. Sunset: 7:14pm Dark Sky: 8:12pm Moon Phase: near Full Moon.

Sabino High School Star Party **East** Tuesday, 5/12/2009 No. of Scopes: 2

Sabino High School will be planning Night Sky Adventure for an estimated attendance of 30 students and parents at 5000 North Bowes Rd. Speedway east to Wilmot-north to Tanque Verde-east on Tanque Verde to Bear Canyon-north on Bear Canyon to Snyder-east on Snyder to Bowes Rd.-north on Bowes to High School. Viewing will be Baseball fields. Contact person Maryanne Carpenter can be reached at 584-7753 or email MaryAnn.Carpenter@tusd1.org. Set-Up Time: 7:45pm. Observing will be from 8:15pm to 10:15pm. Sunset: 7:17pm Dark Sky: 8:16pm Moon Phase: (no moon during viewing).

Emily Gray MS Star Party **East** Monday, 5/18/2009 No. of Scopes: 2

Emily Gray MS will be holding Exploring the Night Sky for an estimated attendance of 50 students and parents at 4201 N. Melpomene Way. Traveling East on Speedway, turn (left) on to Wilmot, which becomes Tanque Verde. Then turn left on to Catalina Hwy. Then turn right on to Prince. Then turn left on to Melpomene. Driving time is about 20 minutes after you leave Speedway. Viewing will be on the campus athletic fields. Contact person Michael Stock can be reached at 520- 749-4948 or email michaeljstock@msn.com. Set-Up Time: 7:45pm. Observing will be from 8:15pm to 10:15pm. Sunset: 7:21pm Dark Sky: 8:21pm Moon Phase: (no moon during viewing).

Desert Willow Elementary Star Party **East** Thursday, 5/21/2009 No. of Scopes: 6

Desert Willow Elementary will be hosting Star Gazing in 2nd Grade for an estimated attendance of 200 students and parents at 9400 E. Esmond Loop. Take Speedway to Kolb. South on Kolb to Valencia. Turn left at Valencia. Take Valencia to Esmond Loop and turn right. Take the

Public Star Parties and Community Events (cont.)

loop around to the school. It is about half way around the loop. Viewing will be on the School Playground. Contact person Sarah Twilling can be reached at 879-2353 or email twillings@vail.k12.az.us. Set-Up Time: 8:00pm. Observing will be from 8:30am to 10:30 pm. Sunset: 7:23pm Dark Sky: 8:23pm Moon Phase: (no moon during viewing).

Pima County Natural Resources Star Party West
Friday, 5/29/2009 No. of Scopes: 2

Pima County Natural Resources will be hosting Star Gazing for an estimated attendance of 35 people at 3500 West River Road. Take Speedway, which turns into Gates Pass Road. Continue on Gates Pass Road, until it dead ends at Kinney Rd. Go left on Kinney Rd, past Old Tucson, then take a right on Hal Gras Rd (keep an eye out for this turn - it's not well marked, but we'll have a sign up for the Star Party event). Follow the road about ¼ mile. We'll set up near the restrooms. Viewing will be Near Ironwood Picnic Area, TMP. Contact person Sandy Reith can be

reached at 520-615-7855 or email Sandy.Reith@pima.gov. Set-Up Time: 8:00pm. Observing will be from 8:30 pm to 10:30 pm. Sunset: 7:27pm Dark Sky: 8:30pm Moon Phase: Last Quarter.

Saguaro Girl Scout Council Star Party Foothills
Tuesday, 6/2/2009 No. of Scopes: 4

Saguaro Girl Scout Council will be hosting Fun and Learning the Night Sky for an estimated attendance of 100 Girl Scouts at The Hacienda, 3901 N. Sabino Canyon Road. EAST on SPEEDWAY Blvd. Turn LEFT onto WILMOT Rd. Continue NORTH on WILMOT Rd as it becomes TANQUE VERDE Rd. Turn LEFT onto SABINO CANYON RD. North on SABINO CANYON RD. The Hacienda will be on the west side of the road. Viewing will be at the end of north parking lot. Contact person Judy Showers can be reached at 444-3587 or email judithshowers@mac.com. Set-Up Time: 7:30pm. Observing will be from 7:00 pm to 9:30 pm. Sunset: 7:30pm Dark Sky: 8:32pm Moon Phase: Last Quarter.



Apparel Sales Person Needed.
See any board member for details.

Cast your vote!
TAAA Board of Directors Election
May 1 Meeting



Dark Skies for May 2009

DARK SKIES (no twilight, no moonlight) for Tucson in 24-hour MST: 18=6pm, 20=8pm, 22=10pm, 0=12am
RISE, SET, VISIBILITY for sun and bright planets: rise for morning object, set for evening object

Th/Fr 30/ 1 1:02 - 4:08	Su/Mo 10/11 20:44 - 21:06	Th/Fr 21/22 20:55 - 3:36
Fr/Sa 1/ 2 1:40 - 4:07	Mo/Tu 11/12 20:45 - 21:59	Fr/Sa 22/23 20:56 - 3:45
Sa/Su 2/ 3 2:14 - 4:06	Tu/We 12/13 20:46 - 22:46	Sa/Su 23/24 20:57 - 3:45
	We/Th 13/14 20:47 - 23:27	
Su/Mo 3/ 4 2:44 - 4:04	Th/Fr 14/15 20:48 - 0:03	Su/Mo 24/25 20:58 - 3:44
Mo/Tu 4/ 5 3:14 - 4:03	Fr/Sa 15/16 20:49 - 0:35	Mo/Tu 25/26 21:12 - 3:43
Tu/We 5/ 6 3:44 - 4:02	Sa/Su 16/17 20:50 - 1:04	Tu/We 26/27 22:10 - 3:43
We/Th 6/ 7 - - -	We/Th 27/28 22:59 - 3:42	
Th/Fr 7/ 8 - - -	Su/Mo 17/18 20:51 - 1:32	Th/Fr 28/29 23:40 - 3:41
Fr/Sa 8/ 9 Full Moon	Mo/Tu 18/19 20:52 - 2:00	Fr/Sa 29/30 0:15 - 3:41
Sa/Su 9/10 - - -	Tu/We 19/20 20:53 - 2:29	Sa/Su 30/31 0:47 - 3:40
	We/Th 20/21 20:54 - 3:00	

Weekend	Sun Set	Sun Rise	Mercury Set Vi	Venus Rise Vi	Mars Rise Vi	Jupiter Rise Vi	Saturn Set Vi Vi=Visibility
02/03	19:04	5:34	20:35 5	3:38 -3	4:00 4	1:57 -2	3:08 1 -3 brilliant
09/10	19:09	5:28	20:07 -	3:26 -3	3:47 4	1:32 -2	2:40 1 0 conspicuous
16/17	19:14	5:23	19:21 -	3:15 -3	3:34 3	1:07 -2	2:12 1 3 moderate
23/24	19:18	5:19	Rise: -	3:06 -3	3:21 3	0:41 -2	1:44 1 6 naked eye limit
30/31	19:23	5:16	4:30 -	2:57 -3	3:08 3	0:15 -2	1:17 1 9 binoculars limit

By Erich Karkoschka

TAAA ASTRONOMY COMPLEX

Phase 1 Construction Update

John Kalas - Construction Coordinator

We apologize for not fully updating you about the progress of the club's dark site in the past. The activity level is increasing significantly. From the early brainstorming meetings held in Bill Lofquist's home, many great ideas were presented by interested members. These ideas were integrated into the final Master Site Plan by the Strategic Planning Group (SPG). After much deliberation and a review of the available club funds, the facilities and features for Phase 1 were selected. Phase 1 will include the following features:

- Bringing electric service onto the site.
- Developing a well system (costs split between TAAA and the four Perseus Group members).
- Building a 30-space graveled parking lot including two concrete handicapped parking spaces.
- Connecting the two handicapped parking spaces with the bathroom facility via a concrete walkway.
- Constructing a bathroom facility containing two unisex bathrooms, one shower room and one utility/storage room.
- Constructing the septic system required for the bathroom facility.
- Constructing a security gate system for the entry road.

The club has been supported by three key outside individuals to this point. Peter Ammon, an excavating/septic contractor from Dragoon, AZ, has been incredibly helpful in guiding us through the intricacies of the construction process. John Riggs, an architect from Tucson, has been gracious enough to donate his architectural services to the club and design all of the necessary drawings; Master Site Plan, Site Plan and Bathroom Facility design. Peter Lofquist, structural design engineer from Phoenix and son of Bill Lofquist, has donated his firm's services to provide the structural engineering certifications required for the bathroom facility design. Without the help of these individuals, this project would probably not have happened.

Several milestones have been completed and the pace of activity regarding construction will be accelerating rapidly in the coming weeks. In October of 2008, the septic evaluation was performed at the site. The most important milestone was achieved on February 11, when the Perseus Group (Robert Crawford, Erich Karkoschka, Sam Rua and John Kalas) officially donated 16 acres of land to the TAAA. On February 19, final bathroom facility design drawings were presented to three contractors for bid. The TAAA completed its requirements for the Special Use Permit from Cochise County on March 4. The final contractor bid for the construction of the bathroom facility was received on March 19. An application for electric service was presented to Sulphur Springs Valley Electric Cooperative on April 7 and the wooden stakes indicating the locations of the two power meters were placed on the dark site on April 17. The TAAA Board of Directors approved the SPG's recommendation for the bathroom facility contractor on April 8 and Randy Maddox has been brought on board as our contractor. On April 29, the club will submit an application for the building permit for the Phase 1 construction. Currently, I am working on a document to indicate the sequence of the tasks required for Phase 1 construction. Once construction has started, it is hoped that Phase 1 construction can be completed in about three months. Construction cannot be started until we receive an approved building permit, which will take at least three weeks after application submission on 4/29. These dates are only the highlights of the efforts so far. Numerous trips have been made to the dark site and to the Cochise County offices in Bisbee by Bill Lofquist, Robert Crawford and I to pave the way for this project. Many meetings have also been held with our architect, John Riggs.

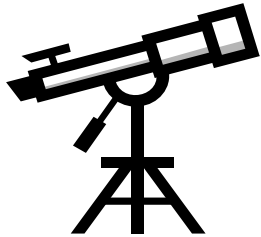
At the May TAAA monthly meeting on 5/1, a more in-depth update presentation will be reviewed with members. With Phase 1 construction about to begin, the SPG is already preparing for Phase 2. Come to the meeting on 5/1 and hear all about it.

Desert Skies Classified

FOR RENT	The residence at the TIMPA site will be available for rent in April. The house is a 3 bedroom, 1 bath. The rent is \$450/mo. but will be discounted \$100 if the renter is willing to empty the trash cans for TIMPA. They may have additional credits for other duties at the site. Please contact TIMPA President Mike Cummins at 299-0593. e-mail michael@mcummins.com
FOR SALE	Celestron Ultima 11 with accessories. See http://sites.google.com/site/saleofatelescopenow/ for more information. [06/09]
SERVICE	Green laser pointer need repair or tune up? Contact Donald Arndt at (415) 215-2409 or donaldja@pacbell.net. Typical repairs cost \$25-50, including return shipping.

Your ad will run for 4 months unless specified. Month and year of last appearance is last item of ad. For additions or changes to this list, call or e-mail the newsletter editor.

Telescopes for Borrowing



Free service



Only for Members

Don't own a telescope?
Our Loaner Program is your answer!

These telescopes are in the program

Sears 60mmf/15 on equatorial mount
Unitron 62mmf/14.5 on equatorial mount
Meade 90mm ETX

Coulter Odyssey 8 8-inch f/4.5 Dobson
Meade 10-inch f/4.5 on equatorial mount
Meade 10" LX200 GPS (requires training session)

Beginners, here's your chance to learn and observe the sky before buying any equipment. The Loaner Program is available to any current member after meeting requirements detailed in the TAAA Loan Policy. Contact the Equipment Loan Coordinator (see page 2) or any club officer for details about these telescopes.

TAAA Board of Directors Meeting - - 08 APRIL 2009

Attending: Board members present (7): Ken Shaver (presiding), Terri Lappin, Luke Scott, George Barber, Bill Lofquist, Teresa Plymate, and John Kalas. Members Present (5): Claude Plymate, J. D. Metzger, Ann Scott, Liz Kalas, Wally Rogers.

The president called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm.

Minutes from the March Board meeting were approved.

Member Feedback

To ensure that the TIMPA gate is open on star party nights, John Kalas will coordinate access to the TIMPA site. The AFSIG will open the gate on planned AFSIG star party nights, and will notify John if an AFSIG committee member is unable to open the gate.

Upcoming Meetings

May is Members' Night. 30 minutes were reserved for an update on the Dark Site development. The July astronomy essentials and main lectures are open. George Barber tentatively committed to giving the August astronomy essentials lecture.

Announcements for Record

SARSEF awards will be presented at the May meeting. The board approved the addition of "AFSIG" to name tags for the AFSIG committee.

Treasurer's Report

The general liability insurance premium was paid; there were no other non-routine expenses. Terri Lappin presented a quote from the club's insurer for general and land liability insurance. The quote requires further clarification before acceptance.

Loaner Telescope Loss

A motion was entered to direct Richard Dougall to inform the family of a deceased TAAA member that the loaner telescope mistakenly donated to Good Will does not have to be paid for. The motion was approved unanimously. A motion was entered to approve the purchase of property tags for attachment to loaner telescopes. The motion was approved unanimously.

Master Calendar

The TIMPA star party for October has been moved to the 17th to avoid a conflict with the TIMPA Aerobatic Shootout. The Schedule of Events published on the web site needs to include the date and revision of the master calendar document from which it was generated.

Dark Site Development

At Robert Crawford's request, the TAAA appointed an assistant well share administrator to assume his duties after the

TAAA Board of Directors Meeting - - 08 APRIL 2009 (cont.)

well is built and set up. The board designated the Treasurer for this position.

John Kalas reported that a service request has been submitted to SSVEC to bring electricity to the site.

John Kalas presented bids received from three contractors for construction of restrooms. Following discussion of the bids, a motion was entered to approve the Strategic Planning Group's recommendation to pursue negotiations with Randy Maddox as the restroom contractor. The motion was approved unanimously.

Clarification is needed from Cochise County on the requirements for improving Price Ranch Road.

Bill Lofquist will schedule a second fund raising seminar.

Telescope Equipment Donation

Bill Lofquist introduced Wally Rogers who provided an informational presentation on his plans to donate funds for 4 telescopes for the Dark Site. The very generous contribution consists of a Celestron CPC 800, CPC 925, CPC 1100, and a C-14 OTA on an Astro-Physics 1200 mount.

A motion was entered to accept Wally Rogers' donation of \$12000 to purchase an Astro-Physics 1200 mount. The motion was approved unanimously.

Other

George Barber will review software for automating electronic newsletter announcements and report to the board.

Terri Lappin will write a newsletter article soliciting ideas for IYA activities.

Bill Lofquist will arrange the rental of a 2x10 safe deposit box at Chase Bank.

J. D. Metzger requested that the board review a list of accessories for the TIMPA observatory telescope.

Bill Lofquist will manage shirt purchases for the Grand Canyon Star Party. He will contact the shirt supplier and report to the board.

Meeting adjourned at 9:45 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Luke Scott
Secretary

Constellation Report by Chris Lancaster

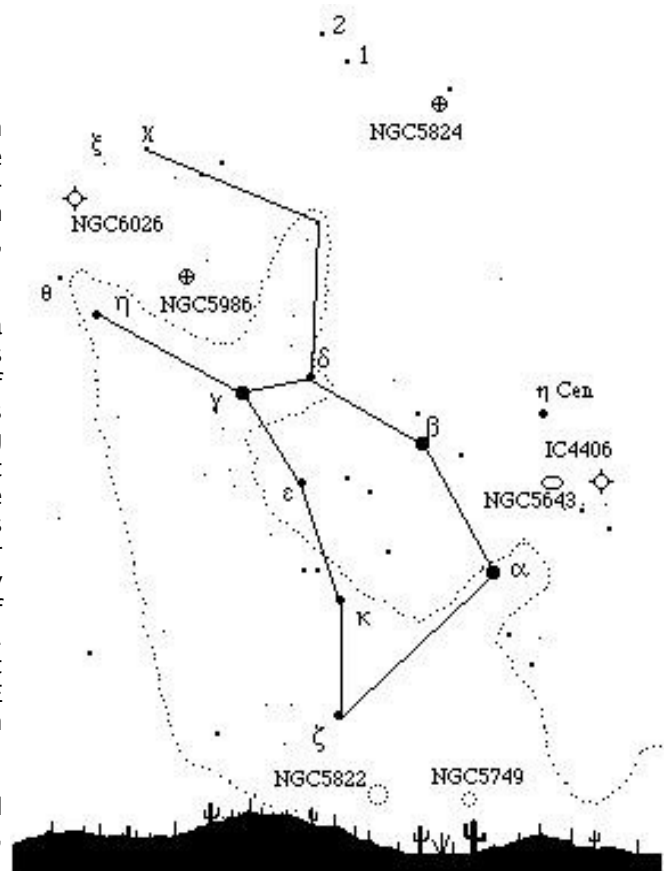
Lupus

The Wolf

The entirety of this southern constellation just clears the horizon from Tucson's latitude. It straddles the meridian at 11pm at the middle of the month, and appears as a sprinkling of medium-bright stars southwest of the curving tail of Scorpius. Its modern image is that of a wolf, but in ancient times it was called Therion, an unspecified wild animal.

The first object in Lupus that comes into view is NGC5824, a globular cluster in the northwest corner of the constellation. This globular is both easy and difficult to find. Or a better way of putting it is to say it is easy to see, but difficult to recognize. It is fairly bright at magnitude 9.0 with a size of 6.2'. I was scanning its area with an 11-inch telescope and wondering why I couldn't see it until I realized that it was masquerading as a star! The center of this globular cluster is so densely cluttered with stars that at low power it looks stellar. At high power, the center becomes extended with a faint haze surrounding it. Unfortunately no stars are resolvable except perhaps through the largest of backyard telescopes, but its bright nucleus is quite impressive. About 10.5 degrees north of Beta Lupi (or the width of your fist held at arm's length) is a 5.5 magnitude star, and 1/2 degree SSE of this is NGC5824. More precisely, this globular is at RA 15h 04m Dec -33d 04'.

Moving 10 degrees to the southeast in the wolf's neck we find another globular that couldn't be more different than NGC5824,



Constellation Report by Chris Lancaster (cont.)

as there is no mistaking what this object is. This one is NGC5986, 2.8 degrees WNW of Eta Lupi, or RA 15h 46.1m Dec -37d 47'. Measuring a large 9.8' and a bright magnitude 7.1, this globular just at the limit of resolvability presents us with a mottled circle of stars. There is no distinct nucleus here, just a gradual increase of stars toward the center.

From a pair of globular clusters we go to a pair of widely separated planetary nebulae. In the northwest corner of Lupus is NGC6026, just less than 4 degrees north of Eta Lupi. At between 150x and 200x magnification, this faint (magnitude 12.5) nebula shows a fairly large disk (50") and a central star. (RA 16h 1.4 s Dec -34d 32'.) As a side trip before visiting the other planetary nebula, we can look to a double star which is close by (just over 1 degree to the northwest. Xi Lupi is an easy double for both large and small scopes. Here is a pair of white stars of spectral type A, separated by 10.5", and each one is magnitude 5.5.

Now at the far western edge of Lupus is IC4406, our other planetary nebula which lurks among some scattered galaxies. High power should be used on this small, elongated nebula of magnitude 11 since its brightest, observable portion is almost stellar in appearance. The combination of smaller size and brighter magnitude means that this nebula is easier to spot than the other one, but high magnification is required to see it as a disk. You can find IC4406 4.7 degrees northwest of Alpha Lupi, or RA 14h 22.4m Dec -44d 09'.

There is a small collection of galaxies in this same area of Lupus. The brightest is NGC5643, a round spiral galaxy measuring 4.5'x 4.0'. If you have found our preceding planetary nebula, IC4406, an easy way to find NGC5643 is to move 1.8 degrees due east (RA 14h 32.7m Dec -44d 10.4'). Otherwise move 2 degrees SSW of Eta Centauri, a 2nd magnitude star forming the northwest point of a triangle with Alpha and Beta Lupi.

A couple of open clusters deserve mention, but are almost impossible to view here due to their far southern location. From Tucson, our horizon prevents us from viewing objects which are south of -57 degrees declination. These two clusters are situated near -55 degrees, so you might want to keep these in mind if you ever find yourself observing near the southern hemisphere. NGC5822 is a very large cluster covering 40', or almost half again larger than the width of the moon. It sits well within the southern summer Milky Way which is a rich star field to begin with. This cluster is a collection of 120 stars of magnitudes 9 to 12, making a combined brightness of magnitude 7.0. This cluster is 2.5 degrees SSW of Zeta Lupi, or RA 15h 5.2m Dec -54d 21'.

NGC5749 is a diminutive cluster by comparison measuring 8' across, of magnitude 9, and containing stars between 10th and 11th magnitude. Move 2.3 degrees west of NGC5822 to find this one (or center your scope at RA 14h 38.9m Dec -54d 31').

Lupus can be a challenge to observe due to its southern declination, and it takes patience waiting for some of its objects to get high enough to easily view. But it contains some interesting objects which are well worth your time.

MEMBER FORUM

Project ASTRO greets Project Inspire

By Paul and Cathy Anderson

The children from the Sahuarita Project Inspire K-2 program joined with the Project ASTRO program in dedicating a telescope to be used in the local schools. The children in this program inspire all of us as they seek to reach for the stars and make possibilities happen although each of the children in this program has multiple disabilities.

The dream of these small children and their families, to be able to view the night sky through a telescope, is one that is echoed throughout the school yards. The Project ASTRO program and the School Star Parties hosted by SAS and TAA Astronomy clubs have made this a reality for many families. However, for the children who struggle with disabilities it is often too difficult for them to see through a telescope.

Now available is a sturdy telescope thanks to the efforts of many amateur astronomers. Bill Kerwin donated the



MEMBER FORUM

telescope to the TAAA club and then Claude and Teresa Plymate evaluated and refurbished it. After winning the scope in a TAAA drawing, Wally Rogers looked for a school program that would use the scope and not just let it sit in a closet somewhere. The former president of TAAA, Bill Lofquist introduced Wally to the Anderson's. Paul and Cathy



participate in Astronomical Outreach programs in area schools as well as SAS and TAAA events. After equipping the telescope with a Telrad Finder donated by Starizona, the telescope was ready for dedication.



On March 30, accompanied with Project ASTRO programs, the telescope was dedicated to the use of children and families in our local school districts.



This Project ASTRO team consists of Project ASTRO and Project Inspire Special Education teacher, Cathy Anderson and Project ASTRO astronomers Larry Woods, John Dwyer, and Paul Anderson. Cathy also is an avid amateur astronomer, and all of the Project ASTRO team are members of both the local SAS and TAAA astronomy clubs.



Tucson Amateur Astronomy Association
P.O. Box 41254
Tucson, AZ 85717

Address Service Requested

Please consider renewing your membership on time. Renewal month and dollar amount appears on your address label. Magazine subscriptions are not included. TAL fee is included if participating in TAL. See details on page 2.

Directions to TIMPA and Las Cienegas

Directions to TIMPA Site

GPS coordinates: 32 deg 15.868' N, 111 deg 16.390' W

From the North:

1. Take Ina Rd. west about three miles past I-10.
2. Turn left (south) on Wade Rd.. Wade Rd. becomes Picture Rocks Rd. when the Rd. bends to the right (west).
3. Take Picture Rocks Rd. west to Sandario Rd..
4. Turn left (south) on Sandario Rd. to Manville Rd..
5. Turn right (west) on Manville Rd. to Reservation Rd..
6. Turn left (south) on Reservation Rd. (dirt Rd.) and go about two miles. The TIMPA entrance is on the left.

From the East:

1. Take Speedway Blvd. west and it turns into Gates Pass Rd..
2. Go over Gates Pass and continue west to Kinney Rd..
3. Turn right (north) on Kinney Rd. and continue past the Desert Museum.
4. Kinney Rd. bends left at the entrance to Saguaro National Park West and becomes Mile Wide Rd..
5. Take Mile Wide Rd. west about five miles to Reservation Rd.. Mile Wide Rd. ends at Reservation Rd. and you must turn right (north) onto Reservation Rd..
6. Take Reservation Rd. north about one mile. The entrance to TIMPA will be on the right.

NOTE

A gate card is required for TIMPA access. Please **DO NOT** ask the caretakers for entry to the TIMPA SITE. A list of TIMPA key keepers is available on the TAAA website, or by contacting a board member. For scheduled TIMPA star parties, a designated TAAA representative will provide access to the site.

Directions to Las Cienegas (Empire Ranch)

GPS coordinates: 31 deg 47.356' N, 110 deg 37.913' W

Take I-10 East from Tucson. Take Exit 281 (Route 83 Sonoita-Patagonia Highway South). Travel south on Route 83 for about 19 miles, watch for green and white milepost 40 sign on the right side of the road. Approximately ¼ mile past milepost 40, turn left into Las Cienegas. The road is dirt and is "washboarded" so go carefully. At about 2.9 miles, there is a fork in the road. Stay to the right. When the road ends in a "T", take a left. Cross over a concrete section of the road down in a wash. Just up the hill from the wash (about .2 mile), turn left. 0.1 mile ahead will be the end of an abandoned airstrip with a covered ramada. The club members have been setting up several tenths of a mile down the runway. If you arrive after dark, as a courtesy to other members, use only your parking lights to approach the set-up location.