Observing our Desert Skies since 1954



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April 2020

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I realize that much of this will duplicate information sent out in the March Notes from the President. However, I want to make sure that as many TAAA members as possible are apprised of TAAA activity changes related to COVID 19.

TAAA 6:30 and 7:30 General Member Meetings for May 1st has been cancelled.

As a result of the cancellation of the April and May General Member meetings, **the TAAA 2020 Elections** have been **postponed**. (Our regular Election procedures will be followed as soon as we can resume in-person General Member Meetings. Current Elected TAAA Officers and NVRC Committee Members will continue to serve in their present positions until the first day of the month after the new election. Persons elected to serve in this 2020 election will serve in that position through May 31, 2021.)

Other TAAA in-person Meetings in April and May are **cancelled**. (The TAAA Board and Strategic Planning Group will continue to meet by telephone/electronically, only.)

CAC and TIMPA are CLOSED for April and May.

Due to the Tucson Mayor's proclamation and information at the state and national levels, **TAAA Events and Star Parties (school, nonprofit and paid) for April and May** have been cancelled.

These decisions are subject to change should the COVID 19 situation change in a manner that removes the need for concern regarding in-person gatherings. As some of you may be aware, the National Park Service just closed the Grand Canyon. No one knows how long the closure will last. Thus, the **Grand Canyon Star Party** is still scheduled for **June 13 - 20, 2020**.

If you have questions, concerns or suggestions, please contact me at ssmith@email.arizona.edu.

We all regret the need for these changes. Please take care of yourselves, both physically and in your emotional survival of the challenges you face each day.

Mae Smith, TAAA President

March TAAA Board Meetings

To bring you up-to-date, the TAAA Board met March 11th and March 29th (via Telephone). Topics discussed that haven't already been noted by the President are.

- With some negotiating, the 30" mirror offer was increased and the mirror sold for \$5,000. The capabilities of the mirror were thoroughly evaluated and market prices thoroughly explored.
- A decision was made to ask Ben Bailey to enact the migration of the TAAA Forum from yahoo groups to groups IO.
- Approved the latest update of the Minor Policy document with Creative Commons licensing included.
- Approved a return/damage policy for library books.
- Passed basic COVID 19 procedures including having sanitary wipes and using sanitary practices at events as well as requesting volunteers to refrain from participating when sick.

Astronomical League Observing Programs What's Up List for April and Early May 2020

Fellow amateur astronomers. We can still be active astronomers. While TIMPA and CAC may be closed, we can still observe from our backyard. Many of the Astronomical League observing programs can be done from our backyards. The following is a list of objects visible thru mid May for the more common observing programs.

Constellation Hunter Program – Northern Sky

The following constellations are well placed for observing for April and early May:

Bootes

Canes Vanatici

Coma Berenices

Leo

Ursa Major

Messier Observing Program

The following Messier Objects are well placed for observation during April early May (listed in ascending RA): M44, M67, M48, M81, M82, M97, M108, M109, M101,

M40, M65, M66, M95, M96, M105, M3, M51, M63, M94, M106

Urban Observing Program

The following deep sky objects are well placed for observing during April and early May:

M81, M82, NGC 3242, Mel 111, M84, M86, M87, M104, M94, M64, M3

The following Double Stars are well placed for observation during April and early May:

Gamma Leo, Zeta Ursa Major

Lunar and Binocular Lunar Observing Program

The following is a list of the dates for the lunar phase when observations should be made for April and May:

New Moon: April 23, May 22 40 Hours waxing: April 25, May 24 72 hours waxing: April 26, May 25 4 days old: April 27, May 26 7 days old: April 30, May 29 10 days old: May 3, June 2 Full (14 days old): April 7, May 7 Gibbous April 12, May 12 72 hours waning: April 20, May 19 40 hours waning: April 21, May 20

Solar System Observing Program

The following list describes the various solar system objects and their visibility during April and early May:

Mercury becomes visible after Sunset in mid May.

Venus easy evening object after sunset for April and May. During April is best time to try daytime observation of **Venus**. Contact me if you need instructions on this observation.

Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Neptune all rise very late but are visible before sunrise.

Uranus is too close to Sun to observe.

April is a good month for a comet observation. **Comet ATLAS Y4** is binocular visible and may become naked eye, moving from Ursa Major towards Perseus, after sunset. Check on line for current positions.

by Douglas Smith

TAAA Trivia!

NOTE: Sometimes people have questions, comments, or additional information related to content in the TAAA Trivia. If you do, contact Mae at **ssmith@email.arizona.edu**.

Trivia : The four persons who served as TAAA Presidents from June 1988 to May 2001 have each continued their involvement in TAAA to the present, in different ways. It has been very valuable to TAAA to have the consistent, powerful contributions of these individuals to TAAA's development.

Question 1a: Who are the four and what years did they serve as President?

Question 1b: What were some focal activities of their Presidency?

Question 1c: How has each contributed to TAAA in recent years?

Answers are on page 6.

Member Star Parties

The TIMPA observing site is located a few miles beyond the Desert Museum. The CAC observing site is located in southeast Arizona near Sunsites, AZ, about 1.5 hours drive from Tucson. Maps to both sites can be found on the TAAA website. Locked gates protect both sites. Call or email the contact person to learn when the gate will be unlocked.

TIMPA

Contact Person: Ralph Means Email: fundamentals[at]tucsonastronomy.org Email: bookbuyer1769@gmail.com Phone: 520-460-8770

The AFSIG hosts the TIMPA star parties. An AFSIG representative will open the gate for an evening of viewing. The Gila Monster Observatory with its Meade 14" Schmidt-Cassegrain telescope will be open for your viewing pleasure. The TIMPA site features a large parking area and full restroom facilities. Be prepared for cool temperatures after sunset. Guests are welcome, accompanied by a TAAA member. We hope to see you there!

Chiricahua Astronomy Complex

Contact Person/RSVP to: Mike McDowell Email: cac-director[at]tucsonastronomy.org Phone: 206-356-6624

Chiricahua Astronomy Complex (CAC) is the club's dark observing site, located in Cochise County approximately 100 miles southeast of the center of Tucson. The site includes concrete telescope pads with electricity, a roll-off roof observatory with a Celestron 14" telescope, a picnic Ramada, and a full bathroom facility with shower room. The new Reynolds-Mitchell Observatory includes a 40" telescope and a large warm room. At an elevation of 4800 feet, be prepared for cooler temperatures. Try to arrive before sunset. Our use permit limits the number of attendees at any one time, so reservations and cancellations are required. If you would like to attend, you must contact CAC Director Mike McDowell. Reservations are on a first come – first serve basis. You need to reserve for both nights if observing both nights.

Astronomical League Observing Programs

The Astronomical League Observing Programs are designed to provide direction for your observing, teaching you skills useful for the full enjoyment of our hobby. Each program has a set of requirements. Upon completion of the requirements, you qualify for a certificate and are awarded a pin. This program is only for those who are members of the Astronomical League.

Upon completing the requirements for a program, submit your observations to the TAAA ALCOR. Our ALCOR will review them and then forward them onto the appropriate program coordinator for further review. If they are complete you will be awarded your certificate and pin at one of our meetings.

For more information, ask our ALCOR or visit http://www.astroleague.org/observing.html

Beginner Programs

- ♦ Binocular Double Star Program
- Binocular Messier Program
- Constellation Hunter Program
- Dark Sky Advocate Award
- Deep Sky Binocular Observing Program
- ♦ Galileo Observing Program
- Lunar Observing Program
- Messier Observing Program
- Meteor Observing Program
- Outreach Observing Award
- Sketching Observing Award
- Sky Puppy Program
- Solar System Observing Program
- ♦ Southern Skies Binocular Program
- Universe Sampler Program

Our ALCOR is Doug Smith

Intermediate Programs

- Advanced Binocular Double Star Observing Progam
- Asteroid Observing Program
- Caldwell Observing Program
- ♦ Carbon Star Observing Program
- Comet Observing Program
- ♦ Double Star Observing Program
- Earth Orbiting Satellite Observing Program (EOSOC)
- Globular Cluster Observing Program
- Lunar II Observing Program
- ♦ Open Cluster Observing Program
- Planetary Transit Special Observing Award
- Southern Skies Telescope Observing Program
- Sunspotters Observing Program
- Stellar Evolution Observing Program
- Two in the View Observing Program

Advanced

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- Advanced Binocular Program
- ♦ Analemma Observing Program
- ♦ Arp Peculiar Galaxies Northern Observing Program
- Asterism Observing Program
- ♦ Bright Nebula Observing Program
- Dark Nebula Observing Program
- Galaxy Groups and Clusters Observing Program
- Herschel 400 Observing Program
- ♦ Herschel II Observing Program
- ♦ Hydrogen Alpha Solar Observing Program
- NEO Observing Program
- Occultation Observing Program
- Planetary Nebula Program Observing Program
- Radio Astronomy Observing Program
- Variable Star Observing Program
 ...and more including the Master

Special Interest Group (SIG) Activities

Astronomy Fundamentals SIG (AFSIG)

Meeting: June 11 (Thu)

6:30 PM

Ward 6 Office—East Room 3202 E 1st Street (off of Country Club and Speedway) Contact: Connor Justice Group Email: fundamentals[at]tucsonastronomy.org Leader Email: Elliot.c.justice[at]gmail.com

Come join us for a presentation from the fundamentals of amateur astronomy.

The AFSIG is looking for people to present future "Constellation of the Month", whether it is an old favorite or a constellation you would like to learn more about. Also, do you have a topic the would help us become better or more knowledgeable observers? Present it at the AFSIG. Let Connor know, so we can schedule you in. Is there a topic you would like to hear about or do you to present but need help finding a topic? Shoot us an email at fundamentals[at]tucsonastronomy.org

The Astronomy Fundamentals Special Interest Group, is for all TAAA members who want to learn about and share the multiple aspects of the hobby. It is not just for beginners or new members, though, of course, it is one of the best way for them to learn about the club and hobby. Please come and share in the fun, whether to learn something new or share some hard won knowledge.

Room: The AFSIG meeting will be held in the east room of the Ward 6 Building which is located across the road from the Walgreens. Please enter through the door on the back side of the building. The front door is required to be locked during off hours.

Parking: Parking is available along the curb of the building and on the backside of the building. Parking is also available at the Walgreens store across the street from the office.



Next Meeting: TBD

Location: Total Wine and More (4370 N Oracle) Contact: Tom Rolfsmeyer Group email: astro-photo[at]tucsonastronomy.org Leader email: mrolf@earthlink.net

TAAA Astro-Imaging SIG (AISIG) Meetings usually occur on the 3rd or 4th Tuesday of the month, but the date and time may vary (please check the Events Calendar). We meet at Total Wine and More, 4370 N. Oracle Rd. If you are just getting into imaging the night sky or a veteran astroimager, AISIG is the group to ask questions, share your expertise and present your latest efforts. Best of all, the group decides what topics to address at upcoming meetings.



Starry Messengers SIG-Opening Minds to the Universe

Next Meeting: TBD

Contact: Terri Lappin Phone: 520-977-1290 Email: smsig@tucsonastronomy.org

The Starry Messengers was working very hard to get our exhibit ready for the Tucson Festival of Books/UA Science City before it was cancelled. The theme was the Search for Life with an emphasis on the summer launch of the Mars 2020 rover.







Trivia Answers!

Trivia Question 1a:

The TAAA President from June 1988 through May 1991 was Tim Hunter. The TAAA President from June 1991 through May 1995 was Dean Ketelsen. The TAAA President from May 1995 through May 1998 was Terri Lappin. The TAAA President from June 1998 through May 2001 was John Kalas.

Note to Tim, Dean, Terri and John: I apologize for wherever I miss important items or wherever I misunderstand anything. Please let me know of my errors. There is no way that I can give proper credit and show all the appreciation that is due for your contributions.

Trivia Question 1b: Tim Hunter during his Presidency pursued some activities of lasting significance to TAAA in that he obtained incorporation status and non-profit status for TAAA. Tim also pursued the interests of the club in having its own observing site by starting the first fund for an observing site and obtaining \$10,000 in donations into that fund. He then worked with the Board to place a bid on the Titan Missile Site which was available at the time. TAAA lost the bit for the Titan Missile Site but used the \$10,000 as the beginning dollars for the fund that eventually started CAC.(Also, in 1987/1988, David Crawford (another TAAA member) and Tim Hunter Co-Founded the organization which is now the International Dark-Sky Association and still has its home office in Tucson.

Dean Ketelsen accomplished a couple of developments that increased the size of TAAA. He was able to change the TAAA monthly meeting location from a much smaller venue in Flandreau Planetarium to the larger auditorium at Steward. Also, during Dean's Presidency, the Desert Skies newsletter was increased in size and sophistication (a newsletter focusing on astronomy information which TAAA no longer publishes) and various other observing activities, such as school star parties and meetings of smaller interest groups. During Dean's Presidency, there was diligent searching for a TAAA Dark-sky site but agreement on a specific site was not obtained. Dean, his wife, Vicki, and a handful of other TAAA volunteers also conducted the first Grand Canyon Star Party in 1990 and Dean and Vicki continued to coordinate it during his Presidency.

Terri Lappin reports that she became TAAA Treasurer in 1981 and continued in that position for many years. During her Presidency beginning in 1995, TAAA membership increased from 250 to just over 300. Terri started the 6:30 Member Meeting concept focusing on meeting the needs of beginning astronomers who may be overwhelmed by the sophisticated 7:30 speakers. The astro-imaging SIG was started during Terri's presidency. During Terri's administration there were some important organizational efforts that happened: a significant bylaws rewrite, computerization of financial records as well as John Kalas began doing paid star parties to raise money for a dark-sky site, and the dark-sky funds were placed in investment accounts which had much better yields than savings.

John Kalas had started the paid star-party program prior to his Presidency and he continued that Program and also to write the newsletter while he was President. During John's Presidency, the first agreement for use of the TIMPA site was signed, electricity was brought to the TAAA area of TIMPA, the TIMPA bathrooms were built, an observatory building was donated by Kitt Peak and disassembled with ground properly prepared at TIMPA. Some changes were made to the barn, TAAA items were collected from paid storage areas and moved to the TIMPA barn, including the 30" mirror that some TAAA members had worked on. Star Party guidelines were developed, club membership categories were revised, our current arrangement with Astronomy League was created, TAAA created a telephone service, a website domain was secured, the apparel program was developed, TAAA library was cataloged, an annual schedule of TAAA activities was created.

Trivia Question 1c: I will highlight a few of our Past Presidents' recent contributions.

Tim Hunter: 2017 through 2019, Tim served on the TAAA Fund-Raising Committee (That Committee secured grants of \$15,000, \$3,000 and \$100,000 as well as thousands of dollars of donations for CAC.); Tim conducted our 65th anniversary celebration in 2019; He recently gave a TAAA 7:30 meeting presentation on his experiences in developing and operating remote observatories; and he is always available when we need his expertise and knowledge.

Dean Ketelsen: Ran the GCSP for 19 years and still participates, serves on the GCSP t-shirt Committee; Serves on the Bok Award Committee; Chaired our TAAA presentations of the Solar Eclipse Experiences; Did a blog for the new website when we first set up the website about 3 or 4 years ago; seems always available to assist with Imaging or photography when needed, conducts the special photography event on Mt Lemmon each Christmas, for years after his Presidency ran TAAA's Kitt Peak Star B Que.

Terri Lappin: Edited the Desert Skies newsletter for years until about 3 years ago; Edited the TAAA Bulletin until about 3 years ago; coordinates the 7:30 speakers for the TAAA Member Meetings; Coordinates technology for the 6:30 and 7:30 Member Meetings; Coordinates rooms with Steward Observatory and rescheduling of other auditoriums when Steward is not available, Runs SMSIG, assists the Refreshment Coordinator, serves as TAAA's Night Sky Network Coordinator and manages all tool kits. Terri also serves on the TAAA Bok Committee.

John Kalas: As some of you know John continued to coordinate TIMPA for several years, He continued to run the Paid Star Party Program for 16 years, making thousands of dollars for CAC. John provided very active service on the TAAA Board from before his Presidency until about 2 years ago. John served as CAC Coordinator for 10 years and provided leadership for all aspects of CAC Development. John has served on the Strategic Planning Committee which was designed to create and develop CAC from the time of its formation until the present. After John discontinued as CAC Coordinator he has continued to perform project development for many CAC projects, to coordinate registration for the Evening Under the Stars Program (star-parties for the public at CAC), and to provide enormous support and assistance with CAC as well as to be available, when needed, for assistance to TAAA. John serves on the TAAA Bok Committee. **by Mae Smith**

Some Online Resources from Nightsky Network

Since TAAA meetings are cancelled, I thought we might be able to provide you with some interesting astronomy information through email.

A few resources sent to us by Nightsky Network that you may be interested in are below. These are online astronomy resources that relate to April:

Video: What's Up for April 2020?

What are some astronomy highlights in the sky in April 2020? This month, Venus visits the Pleiades; Mars, Jupiter and Saturn begin their breakup; and we ask, "What is the Moon illusion?" Find out in JPL's latest video for stargazers at: https://youtu.be/qDZtsjHg8iY/

Global Astronomy Month: Online Edition

You can still participate in Global Astronomy Month! Find observing challenges and online astronomy events you can attend from home in Astronomers Without Border's calendar at: https://astronomerswithoutborders.org/gam2020programs/program-schedule-2020.html

Night Sky Notes: Hubble at 30: Three Decades of Cosmic Discovery

The Hubble Space Telescope celebrates its 30th birthday in orbit around Earth this April. Celebrate three decades of this amazing space telescope, and discover how you can spot it in the night sky, at: nightsky.jpl.nasa.gov/newsdisplay.cfm?News_ID=910

Online Hubble Content: Observe Ten Hubble Objects in April

Hubble's team at NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center created a list of 10 objects that you can observe with a backyard telescope. Your view won't be nearly as spectacular as Hubble's, but it makes for a fun faint fuzzy Easter egg hunt: www.nasa.gov/content/news-hubbles-30thanniversary-hubble-stargazing

Hope some of these provide some fun for you.

NASA/JPL

Scientists

by Mae Smith



IN THE SKY

Halloween ghost of the summer sur

Astronomy.



It's free with your TAAA Membership!



Developed and Managed by the Astronomical Society of the Pacific

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Tectory, AZ 7.00 PM - 6:00 PM Explore the Hight Main IP/ID/14 IIII Regional Libri

Upcoming Events

III Report Library 175 N Orionfield Re Others J.C