



# May, 2020

## TAAA Notes from the President May 2020

Substantial progress has been made in the last month. That progress has been due to dedicated work of our TAAA leaders, members and Board. A rewarding highlight in May was resuming our first Friday Member Meeting on Zoom. At least 69 members attended the meeting. It featured an interesting astronomy presentation, and we also had some enjoyable and pleasant interaction with some informational and discussion questions where attendees provided input. Thank you for your participation and for all the supportive comments. We plan to continue Zoom (but not in-person) Member Meetings through the summer (the University is not scheduled to open up until fall), and we hope you will be able to join us either by computer or by phone. The information to join the Zoom Member Meetings will be sent to you through the regular Member Planet email system.

~~~~~ You may wish to note that the Virtual Grand Canyon Star Party is definitely in process. The hope is to be able to offer online 8 nights of activities that occur on the same dates as the 2020 GCSP was scheduled to occur: Sunday, June 13<sup>th</sup> through Saturday, June 20<sup>th</sup>. Some of the plans are in developmental stages at this point, but a number of people are working hard trying to get things done and organized. As you know, Jim Knoll and Bernie Stinger have already engineered some TAAA virtual star parties. Jim O' Connor has added his participation and, hopefully, they will be able to provide some TAAA virtual star-parties for the virtual GCSP event. We will send you emails and update you about the progress of the 2020 Virtual Grand Canyon Star Party.

~~~~~ Some of the activities at the May 8<sup>th</sup> TAAA Board Meeting (via Zoom) included:

- A preliminary budget was passed. (Note: No one yet really knows what expenditures and income will exist from July 2020 to June 2021. However, we do need some kind of approved budget to allow us to pay continuing bills -- like electricity, etc. When needed we can make revisions to the preliminary budget.
- A Covid 19 individual use-policy for CAC was approved supporting limited/individual use. Note that at present we cannot offer training, supervision and immediate post-use inspection in the rules and procedures for opening, closing and operating individual aspects of the site; thus, potential individual users must have thoroughly demonstrated such skills previously. Also, cleaning and sanitization of the site has always been done by TAAA members, leaders, hosts, etc. TAAA has no budget for any cleaning services. Any persons using CAC during COVID 19 do so with the understanding that they must provide their own cleaning and sanitization of anything at the CAC site. (TAAA will provide cleaning solution WHEN WE CAN GET IT.) So, approved users use the site at their own risk. Persons interested in learning more about the rules and making reservations and can contact the CAC Director for more information at [CAC-Director@tucsonastronomy.org](mailto:CAC-Director@tucsonastronomy.org)
- The TAAA Board was unable to pass policies at this time for the use of TIMPA because the City TIMPA Board that rents the site to us has not finished deciding what policies we must follow. This item will be reviewed again at the TAAA June Board meeting. (We are sorry!)
- Some options were discussed for holding the TAAA election online. A decision was made not to follow that avenue at the present time.
- TAAA will pursue having a free YouTube Account to post some virtual activities
- TAAA plans to set up a virtual meeting for TAAA leaders on Zoom.
- TAAA established a Committee to work on TAAA virtual activities and on storing copies of them.

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### 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](mailto:ssmith@email.arizona.edu).

**Trivia Question 1:** Some time ago a lot of work was put into the development of TIMPA.

**Question 1a:** What did the original restrooms at TIMPA look like?

**Question 1b:** What do the current restrooms at TIMPA look like?

**Question 1c:** How was the change made and who was involved?

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Â (Trivia answers are at the end of this document.)

The **next TAAA Board meeting** is scheduled for **June 10th (Wed) at 6:30pm on Zoom**. A reminder notice will be sent, in case you wish to attend.

## Some Major Activities of TAAA Leaders in Adapting to COVID-19

Many of our TAAA Leaders have been finding ways to cope with COVID-19 to carry on TAAA activities and serve TAAA Members even though some of it is behind-the-scenes work. (Please note that this is an incomplete list.)

**Tom Rolfsmeyer and Gregg Ruppel, Astroimaging SIG** send regular emails to their regular attendees with items of interest, individual images, etc. AISIG is currently having monthly virtual meetings on Zoom.

**John Christensen, Bulletin Editor,** Increased size of April issue from 6 to 9 pages.

**Doug Smith, Astronomical League Coordinator,** Compiling and sending to the Bulletin, "Astronomical League Observing Programs What's Up for April and Early May 2020" for five popular AL observing programs.

**Terri Lappin, Starry Messenger SIG Coordinator:** coordinating with SARSEF to arrange changes in judging; coordinating cancelling TFOB as well as cancelling the venue for Astronomy Day Event. Conducting SMSIG virtual meetings; working on TAAA virtual options for astronomy education.

**John Mead, Strategic Planning Group Coordinator** was our first leader to set up regular meetings on Zoom.

**Terri Lappin, Steward Observatory Room Coordinator and Technology Operator:** arranging, managing and hosting Zoom for TAAA General Member Meetings, assisting with Virtual club events and recordings, and providing expertise and assistance for other TAAA Zoom Activities.

**Doug Smith, Astronomy Fundamentals SIG Team,** supplying information to the Bulletin relevant to AFSIG Member observing activities.

**Jim Knoll, School/Nonprofit Star Party Manager, Tucson Stargazing Adventure Coordinator, and Facebook Coordinator:** Managing the development and implementation of a virtual star party event structure Interfacing with Facebook. Working on that system and Implementing it with **Bernie Stinger** and

**Jim O'Connor** with **Susan Knoll** assisting. Working with that team to provide Virtual Grand Canyon Star Party videos. Working with Starry Messengers on Virtual activities.

**Ed Foley, Chuck Hendricks, Mike McDowell, Mae Smith, TAAA Grand Canyon Star Party Committee; Don Cain, Jim Knoll, Susan Knoll, Bernie Stinger, Telescope Field Subcommittee.** (Meetings via telephone). Working on considerations in holding the GCSP.

**Ralph Means, TIMPA On-Site Coordinator** and **John Mead (TAAA Representative to TIMPA Board),** coordinating with all parties and supervising TIMPA changes and site welfare.

**Mike McDowell, CAC Director and Construction Supervisor,** supervising both CAC site welfare and current CAC Construction Project adapting to COVID-19 Implications. Administering new CAC Covid-19 policies.

**David Rossetter, Ken Bertschy, Dale "Sandy" Nicholas, Ben Bailey, NVRC (Nominating and Volunteer Resource Committee:** (Meeting via Skype) worked extremely hard in thoroughly reviewing the TAAA election process and exploring implications of various decisions in managing the TAAA elections in light of Covid-19: a very hard task and an excellent job!!

**Ed Foley, Chuck Hendricks, Mike McDowell, John Mead, Ralph Means, Doug Smith, Mae Smith, TAAA Board:** (Using telephone meeting and emails and currently, ZOOM) making responsible decisions in response to Information from government officials regarding TAAA activities and responsibilities during this time; Coordinating with NVRC in making decisions regarding handling the TAAA Election; sending emails to members with any updates related to Covid-19 impacts on TAAA.

**Thanks to all of our leaders and members for their contributions to getting us through this unusual and challenging period of time! 🙏 🙏**

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**Answers to Trivia Questions:**

**Question 1a:** Below is a picture of the original restroom facilities at TIMPA:

(Picture provided by John Kalas.)

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**Question 1b:** Below is a picture of the current three-room restroom facilities at TIMPA.

(Photo after completion of building in March 2001 taken by and provided by John Kalas.)

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**Question 1c:** John Kalas was TAAA President from June 1998 through May 2001. During those years a lot of effort was put into the TIMPA observing site. John Polacheck (a TAAA member, model plane operator, and very involved dark-skies person) was an active TIMPA advocate and successfully lobbied the TAAA Board to establish a joint arrangement with the TIMPA Board to share use of the facility. There was agreement that the restroom facilities needed upgrading from the rental, plastic stalls then in use, and that the two groups would share in the expense of that effort. The model plane group supplied free work from some of their qualified members including a mason, an electrician and a plumber, plus half of the expense. TAAA contributed some labor, \$8,000 in cash, and John Polacheck on behalf of TAAA donated all of the outside decorative chocolate-brown cement blocks that frame the entire building. The only blocks that were purchased were the ones for the interior walls separating the 3 sections. John Polacheck (and his wife, Faye) were dedicated TAAA Members and were known for their annual Spring Solstice parties. We miss them both. John died November 25, 2019 (Faye had died earlier.). For years to come we certainly will appreciate TIMPA and those restrooms!!!

