



December 2020

Â Notes from the President

A hallmark of 2020 has been our living in a state of unsureness and of adapting to changes over which we have limited control. Just as we all hoped that was changing, the month of December has been filled with even more developments as COVID case rates soared to new highs; an increasingly contagious strain of the virus began surfacing in some other countries; hospital space filled and hospital waiting rooms converted into patient rooms; and the welcome occurrence of not just one, but two vaccines, both of which seem to be quite effective. So, yet again, 2020 has proved to require resilience, adaptability and regular reviews of decision-making focusing on "what do we do now to adapt to the latest events?"

As always, TAAA is up to the challenges and is rallying through them. It appears that our new, TAAA Forum on Groups IO is working well;Â the TAAA virtual event for the December 21st conjunction was tremendous; and our various teams coordinating Zoom meetings, trainings, and communication supplied us with great support systems. Thanks to all of our TAAA Volunteers for the ongoing support and effort and to our TAAA members for the participation and adaptation that continues to help us all rally together through this prolonged crisis period.

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The TAAA Board met on December 9, 2020, and some of the items discussed include:

- 1.Â Â Â Â Â A decision to establish a Technology Storage Committee, chaired by Ed Foley. This Committee will focus on development of storage areas/strategies and content management for various types of TAAA information.
- 2.Â Â Â Â Â Covid 19 policies were reviewed. In light of current prevalence of COVID Cases; and recent changes in COVID rules by the City of Tucson and Pima County as well as nationally; and perceived continuing liability issues, a decision was made to discontinue use of TIMPA and CAC, at least, until some of the recent regulations are lifted. Other TAAA COVID 19 policies continue. TAAA COVID 19 policies are reviewed each month at the regular Board meeting and thus, the December decisions will be reviewed at the January Board meeting.
- 3.Â Â Â Â Â Current events includedÂ a virtual event for the December 21st conjunction of Saturn and Mars.
- 4.Â Â Â Â Â A discussion was held regarding storage at CAC and possible member fees for storage of telescope items if CAC storage capacity can be increased. Member interest will be determined.

TAAA Trivia!

1. What are some historic December holiday activities for TAAA?
2. What is the most recent December holiday event in which TAAA has participated?
(Trivia answers are at the end of this document.)

For those of you interested in theÂ **Grand Canyon Start Party (GCSP)**,Â TAAA and the National Park Service are beginning to gear-up for the GCSP 2021, which currently is

scheduled as an in-person event for June 5-13, 2021. TAAA has been coordinating with GCSP Ranger, Rader Lane, who has made sure that the free Mather campground space is allocated for a limited number of volunteers again this year (campground participants will be happy to know that NPS approved our request for extending our campground stay to include Friday June 4th, the evening prior to the event). GCSP past-participants should begin receiving emails from TAAA regarding GCSP some time in January. At this time we expect to follow our regular schedule for organizing the event, but will let you know of any changes, as they develop. We will make sure to notify you of any deadline dates.

The contact for GCSP questions is gcsp@tucsonastronomy.org.

TAAA Trivia Answers: 1. What are some historic December holiday activities for TAAA?

One, of course, is the Holiday Pot-luck Celebration that we generally hold at a member's home. Bill and Mary Lofquist provided their home for a number of years and in recent years Ed and Janet Foley have shared their home with us. We hope to resume this in-person activity in December 2021. A second tradition is to have a sale of astronomy items/equipment at significantly reduced prices for members. In recent years we have been conducting the sale at the Holiday Celebration. This year we have items for the sale but are delaying until after the COVID crisis has passed. A third tradition is the viewing of Kitt Peak from Mount Lemmon that Dean Ketelsen created and has coordinated in non-COVID times. Information from Dean Ketelsen follows:

"The solstice marks the occasion to observe the annual alignment of the setting sun behind the silhouette of Kitt Peak National Observatory, 60 miles distant from our observing spot on the Mount Lemmon highway. Several club members have made a sport out of watching/recording the spectacle. My best effort, prepared, but not used for the APOD folks, can be viewed at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o-1H5o0NRwk&feature=youtu.be>

2: What is the most recent holiday event in which TAAA has participated?

The most recent is the December 21, 2020 conjunction which Jim Knoll, Bernie Stinger and Rick Paul did an excellent recording of YouTube. The event at the time drew 550 Facebook participants and the recording will be reviewed by many others. See the recording at <https://youtu.be/x-ADBnQqsAs>

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A Happy, Safe, Healthy Holiday wish for all!

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