

# TAAA Desert Skies Bulletin

Observing Our

Since



Desert Skies

1954

September 2026

[www.tucsonastronomy.org](http://www.tucsonastronomy.org)

## Membership Meeting

Friday, September 4,, 2026 6:30PM

TAAA's next general member meeting will be held on **Friday, September 4, 2026**. The Main Presentation will start at 6:30PM. This will be a hybrid meeting (both in person and on social media). TAAA members will receive a Zoom link should they wish to attend remotely. The public may attend in person at the **Steward Observatory Lecture Hall (Rm N210), 933 N Cherry Ave, Tucson**, or stream from the TAAA [YouTube](#) page.

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## Main Presentation at 6:30PM AZT

**Title: Unmasking Nysa – And Other Adaptive Optics Results from LBT** by Al Conrad, PhD.

*Presentation:* In this talk we will present recent observations of asteroid (44) Nysa using adaptive optics. Nysa has a one-of-a-kind shape and is orbited by a previously unknown moon. We discovered that Nysa, one of the brightest and largest known asteroids populating the main belt between Mars and Jupiter, possesses an extraordinary three-lobed structure and is accompanied by a small moon. The discovery, based on high-resolution adaptive optics imaging from the Large Binocular Telescope (LBT) on Mount Graham, provides a rare glimpse into the complex history of one of the solar system's most enigmatic asteroids. The observations were made possible by a high-contrast optical imaging instrument, dubbed SHARK-VIS, and a new adaptive optics system, which compensates for the blurring induced by atmospheric turbulence. We will also provide an update on other adaptive optics results from LBT, including recent observations of Jupiter's volcanic moon Io.

*Biography:* Dr. Al Conrad received his PhD in Computer Science from the University of California at Santa Cruz in 1994. Before joining LBT in 2014, he worked as software engineer and support astronomer at both Lick and Keck Observatories before moving to the Max Planck Institute for Astronomy to lead the development of the ground layer AO system for LINC-NIRVANA (LN). At LBT, Al has served as point of contact for LN, LBTI, and LUCI/AO commissioning. His current duties include the science archive, SHARK-NIR, SHARK-VIS, LN, and OSCO. His research interests include asteroid systems and developing novel techniques to study comets, planets, and the moons of planets, in particular Jupiter's moon Io. He enjoys cycling, sailing, and outrigger canoe paddling.



Asteroid (44) Nysa.  
Minker et al., A&A, 2026

### September 2026

Our organization has long been a leader in astronomy education in our community. Through our school star parties, events in our county, state and national parks, and our special events we introduce thousands of children to concepts of science. In fulfilling this part of our mission, there is a responsibility for us to ensure the safety of each minor engaged in our events. We do this by providing each volunteer the information and training they need to recognize, prevent, and respond to any potential safety risks during our programs.

TAAA events happen in unique places, as remote a location as we can find to be out of the way of ambient lights. The low light conditions add to the requirements that we address the risks. Whether we are at a park, a school, or other site, TAAA has adopted a standard overall approach to minor safety.

Our first step is awareness by each member that they need to be mindful of the responsibility we have. We inform our members that there are accepted approaches to ensure our events are safe for all. Further, we have developed a series of training programs for volunteers involved in events that are tailored to that specific type of event, and the issues certain events – such as overnight observing events – may entail. Beyond basic awareness, TAAA offers volunteers four other, tailored, levels of training. We teach

*by Ed Foley*

volunteers to remain visible, be aware of good sense, physical boundaries, understand protocols such as the “two-adult rule”, and how to respond if there is an incident during an event.

Parents, teachers and administrators must feel confident that TAAA, as an institution, provides appropriate safeguards when they partner with us for events. Our training programs are thus a key to our continuing ability to inspire Tucson youth as we share the wonders of the sky.

**Ed**

**President: Ed Foley**  
[president@tucsonastronomy.org](mailto:president@tucsonastronomy.org)

**Vice-President: David Rossetter**  
[vice-president@tucsonastronomy.org](mailto:vice-president@tucsonastronomy.org)

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**Stephen Ferris** [mal1@tucsonastronomy.org](mailto:mal1@tucsonastronomy.org)  
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**Gus Gomez** [mal3@tucsonastronomy.org](mailto:mal3@tucsonastronomy.org)

### From the Editor – David Rossetter

Sometimes, even among the beauty of a starry sky, life raises a less-pleasant reality. In my case, it came in the form of a (mild) stroke last week. While I am recovering nicely, I think it is time for me to step away from some of my responsibilities at the TAAA. **I would like to resign as editor of the TAAA Desert Skies Bulletin** as soon as I can find a replacement.

If you are looking for an incredibly satisfying and important way to contribute to our organization, I hope you will consider taking on this responsibility. You will have the support of a team of proofreaders and some incredible contributors.

The job need not be limited to one person. Nor do you have to have experience as an editor or with our software. I can train you on our systems. And you have the opportunity to make the Bulletin your own.

**Interested in becoming the TAAA Desert Skies Bulletin Editor?** Please contact me: [email](mailto:email) or 845-430-5191.

**The TAAA Board of Directors meets the second Wednesday of every month at 6:30pm.** Members are welcome to attend Board meetings. If you would like to attend, you may email [Ed Foley](mailto:Ed Foley) to receive a Zoom link for that meeting. Please send your email to Ed by the Monday prior to the meeting (by 5:00pm) and you will receive an email with the link on either Tuesday evening or Wednesday.

ALL MEMBERS ARE WELCOME.

#### Desert Skies Bulletin

Contributions to Editor: [David Rossetter](mailto:David Rossetter) by the 24th.  
Astro-Images to our Image Editor: [Gregg Ruppel](mailto:Gregg Ruppel)  
Proofreaders: Terri Lappin, Jeff Rothstein, Jim Knoll

# “Working With Minors” Training for Volunteers



TAAA Members and Outreach Volunteers, thank you for supporting our very important mission to spread the word about the amazing universe we live in. You likely inspire many young folks (and the general public) to explore the universe around them.

At the October 2, 2026 Friday General Meeting, the TAAA will be providing training on *Working with Minors* and awarding updated outreach awards. The training for Working with Minors is a triennial (every three years) requirement for TAAA members doing outreach with youth. Attendance will be recorded. It is also a good refresher for all TAAA members. Please try to attend in person (preferable) or by zoom. We will be presenting outreach awards as well for those in person, so hopefully you can attend. Please block your calendars for this event.



The NVRC is seeking candidates to fill some of our non-elected leadership positions including a **Chair for our Recognitions Committee**, and a volunteer to serve as **Club Publicist**, all subject to final selection by the TAAA President.

Be sure to also check out the *Help Wanted* section on the club's website main page for additional volunteer opportunities and links to relevant descriptions of those chances to get more involved with your club.

Please direct any questions or concerns regarding elected or volunteer positions to the NVRC at [nvrcchair@tucsonastronomy.org](mailto:nvrcchair@tucsonastronomy.org). Pete Hermes (Chair), Dave Pass, Connor Justice, and Terri Lappin.

## **TAAA Ladies' Night Out**

*by Susan O'Connor*

Ladies' Night Out is a social interest group for women members of the club. The group meets once a month at a local restaurant for fellowship and conversation.

Thursday, September 17  
6:30 pm

Biergarten  
2320 N Silverbell Rd  
(E Side of Silverbell, S of Grant)

Preview the menu [here](#).

RSVP [Susan](#) 520-780-0136

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### **Book Of The Month Review**

by Douglas Smith (TAAA Librarian)

**Book:** "The Solar Observer's Handbook"

**Author:** Mark Johnston

**Pages:** 363

The author is a well-known amateur astronomer and active solar observer. This book is comprehensive, covering all aspects of observing the Sun using amateur astronomy equipment. It also covers all aspects of imaging the Sun. The photographs are very good and show examples of the various solar phenomena.

The book is divided into 13 parts and 53 chapters. The parts are organized along major topics while the chapters subdivide the major topics into subtopics. I found the book easy to read and follow. There is an excellent glossary at the end.

I strongly recommend this book for anyone interested in observing the Sun. It is by far the most comprehensive guide to solar observing and imaging I have encountered to date.

This book is still very new (publication date January 2026) and I was able to locate it only on Amazon. Current price is \$50. I was unable to find any used copies on e-Bay. The book is also available from the author. **There is a copy in the TAAA library, available for check out by members.**

**by Doug Smith**

## **Astronomical League Workshop** **Open for Enrollment**

**Place:** Quincie Douglas Library Branch. 1585 E. 36th Street, NW corner of 36th and Campbell.

**Date:** Saturday, September 19, 2026

**Time:** 10 AM to 1 PM

**Synopsis:** This workshop is designed for anyone who may be interested in pursuing one of the Astronomical League observing programs for the first time or anyone interested in learning about these observing programs. The workshop will cover how the various observing programs work, program requirements, selection of an appropriate program, recommended equipment, resources, logging requirements, and much more. We will also cover other benefits and services provided by the Astronomical League.

If interested, you can contact the TAAA Astronomical League Correspondent (ALCOR) Douglas Smith at [alcor@tucsonastronomy.org](mailto:alcor@tucsonastronomy.org) 520-396-3233 or sign up using the signup page on the website. There will also be a signup sheet available at the July and August member meetings.

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## **Star Hopping Workshop** **Open for enrollment**

**Place:** TIMPA      **Date:** Thursday, September 10, 2026      **Time:** 6:00 PM until completed

**Synopsis:** This is another workshop in the *practical astronomy workshop* series. It will teach star hopping. The students will be taught proper star hopping technique and equipment usage. Each student will use the supplied equipment to locate at least two targets (maybe more if time permits). By the end of the workshop the student will know what equipment to use and how to use it in order to locate targets using star hopping.

If interested contact the instructor, Douglas Smith: [alcor@tucsonastronomy.org](mailto:alcor@tucsonastronomy.org) 520-396-3233

PLEASE NOTE: due to equipment limitations there is a **strict limit of 20 students**.

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## **Constellation Locating and Identification Workshop** **Open for Enrollment**

**Place:** TIMPA      **Date:** Thursday, October 8, 2026      **Time:** 6:00 PM until completed

**Synopsis:** This is another workshop in the *practical astronomy workshop* series. The students will be taught how to locate and identify the constellations without having to memorize the night sky. Each student will use the supplied equipment to locate several constellations. They will learn how to use a planisphere and star atlas to locate constellations.

This program provides the methodology for the observing requirements of the Astronomical League's Constellation Observing Program (Northern and Southern).

If interested contact the instructor, Douglas Smith: [alcor@tucsonastronomy.org](mailto:alcor@tucsonastronomy.org) 520-396-3233

PLEASE NOTE: due to equipment limitations there is a **strict limit of 20 students**.

## Learn how to Record Observations and Sketch Objects Workshop Open For Enrollment

**Place:** TIMPA      **Date:** Thursday, November 12, 2026      **Time:** 6:00 PM until completed

**Synopsis:** This is another workshop in the *practical hands-on astronomy workshop* series. Students will learn how to record observations and how to sketch objects. The students will be taught proper recording techniques, what information to record, what sort of forms to use, etc. In addition students will be taught techniques for sketching objects. The students will view, using a telescope, several different types of objects and perform recording activities and sketch different objects.

If interested contact the instructor, Douglas Smith: [alcor@tucsonastronomy.org](mailto:alcor@tucsonastronomy.org) 520-396-3233

PLEASE NOTE: due to equipment limitations there is a strict limit of 20 students.

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## Using Setting Circles Workshop Open for Early Enrollment

**Place:** TIMPA      **Date:** TBD (early 2027)      **Time:** 7:00 PM until completed

**Synopsis:** This is another workshop in the *practical astronomy workshop* series. It will teach students how to use manual setting circles to locate objects in the night sky. Many older telescopes have manual setting circles. This workshop is highly recommended for students who have telescopes that are not goto or push-to and have manual setting circles.

If interested, contact the instructor, Douglas Smith: [alcor@tucsonastronomy.org](mailto:alcor@tucsonastronomy.org) 520-396-3233

PLEASE NOTE: due to extreme equipment limitations there is a strict limit of 10 students for this workshop. If additional properly equipped equipment becomes available the limit may be increased. Also, because we have a very small group signed up so far, if this date is not convenient for the current list of enrollees the date may be adjusted to better suit the people enrolled.

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## Fundamentals of Astronomy Class Open for Enrollment

**Place:** Patrick K. Hardesty Midtown Multi-Service Center, 1100 S. Alvernon Way, Tucson

**Date:** Three consecutive Saturdays: January 23, 2027, January 30, 2027, February 6, 2027

**Time:** 8:00 AM until 4:00 PM each day

**Synopsis:** This course is designed for anyone interested in learning the basic concepts in amateur astronomy. Topics covered (but not limited to) include the solar system, deep sky objects, stars, telescopes, eyepieces, mounts, star hopping, observation techniques, plus much more. This course is highly recommended for novice amateur astronomers and for anyone who may have just purchased a telescope for the first time. Taking this class will also aid the student in understanding the more advanced lectures often given during general membership meetings.

If interested contact the instructor, Douglas Smith: [alcor@tucsonastronomy.org](mailto:alcor@tucsonastronomy.org) 520-396-3233 or sign up using the signup sheet that will be available at all General Members meeting starting August 2026 through January 2027.

Enrollment is limited to 25 students and is on a first-come basis.

# So, I Bought a Seestar!

## Basic Skills for the ZWO Seestar S30 and S50

### Open for Enrollment

Stephen Ferris, Instructor

**Place:** TIMPA      **Date:** Thursday, October 29, 2026      **Time:** 6:00 PM until completed

**Synopsis:** ZWO Seestars are a hot item for amateur astronomers both new and experienced. They combine good optics, a lot of automation, and a user-friendly interface with entry level prices. This workshop will cover the basic use of both the Seestar S30 and the Seestar S50 (and maybe the S50 Pro). It is open to both current Seestar owners and those who are considering buying a Seestar. If you have a Seestar of either design, please bring it with you, fully charged. The instructor will walk you through basic procedures for using your equipment. Don't forget to bring your phone or tablet that you use to control it.

If you are interested in joining us, please contact the instructor, Stephen Ferris:  
[timpadirector@tucsonastronomy.org](mailto:timpadirector@tucsonastronomy.org) Text: 520-661-5355

This training is ZWO Seestar-specific. If you are interested in a workshop for another kind of smartscope, please contact Stephen at the contact info above.

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## Spooky Seestars and Smartscopes

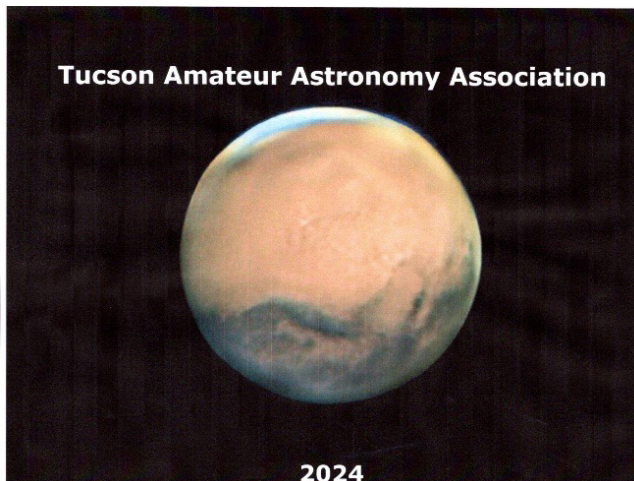
### Potluck and Meet and Greet for All Smartscope Users at TIMPA!

**Place:** TIMPA      **Date:** Saturday, October 31, 2026      **Time:** 5:00 PM until whenever

This TIMPA event is open to smartscope users of all levels of experience and interest, plus anyone who might be interested in getting a smartscope. We'll get started with a potluck dinner social around 5:00 PM. Bring some images and techniques to share with the group. We would love to hear about any use of any smartscopes that you might have. Then, if weather permits, we'll do some viewing after it gets dark until whenever.

October evenings can get cool in the desert, so bring some warm clothing!

If you are interested in joining us, please contact the TIMPA Director, Stephen Ferris:  
[timpadirector@tucsonastronomy.org](mailto:timpadirector@tucsonastronomy.org) Text: 520-661-5355



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## 2027 TAAA Wall Calendar

### We are looking for your images!

Have you taken some wonderful astro-images or photos of club events that would be great in the TAAA 2027 calendar? Please share them!

We are looking for high-quality file formats. And please include a description. You will be given credit.

Please send your calendar images to [Susan O'Connor](#).

by Jimmy Long

# September 2026 Volunteer Star Party Request List

Thank you for volunteering your time and talents for our extremely important outreach mission. Below is the Public/School Star Party list for **September 2026**.

If you haven't already, please consider doing some of the school events, in addition to the ever-popular park and national monuments. The kids and teachers do appreciate it, and it is our opportunity to influence the younger generations.

Please let me know by email at [astronomy-events@tucsonastronomy.org](mailto:astronomy-events@tucsonastronomy.org) if you are interested in volunteering with your scope for any of the events listed below. First come – first served. I will let you know in return if you are on it or that it was already filled. Some events go fast!.

If you are new to Star Party outreach, let me know and we'll be sure to help you get started. **It is important you sign up for star parties if you plan to attend** so I can manage who from TAAA will be on-site and for you to be included in any reminder or weather emails, directions to site, and setup location.

The PUBLIC Astronomy Events are also listed on the TAAA ([tucsonastronomy.org](http://tucsonastronomy.org)) and Night Sky Network (NSN) ([nightsky.jpl.nasa.gov](http://nightsky.jpl.nasa.gov)) calendars. Also, all PUBLIC star parties will be listed on the TAAA Facebook events page and will be updated based on weather, etc. in real-time. You can follow any of these events and get a notification when I update each event, but this is only for PUBLIC star parties listed on Facebook.

Jimmy Long, School/Non-Profit Volunteer Coordinator

**IMPORTANT TRAINING.** To participate in outreach events you must complete the TAAA **training on Working with Minors** every three years. It has been about three years since we did the training, so everyone will need to get re-certified. **The training will be conducted at the October 2nd, 2026 TAAA General Friday meeting** at 6:30 pm at the N210 Steward Lecture Hall. It is best in person but can be done via the Zoom stream of the meeting. There will be certain documents that will need to be completed. Please attend in person if possible. We will also announce updated outreach award levels after the training and hand out any swag.

## September Events Filled - No Volunteers Needed

Saturday - September 19 — ORACLE AZ

Oracle State Park

3820 E Wildlife Dr, Oracle AZ

Age/Grade Level: All Ages

# Participants: 125 – 150

5-6 scopes [0] Scopes needed

Setup Time: 6:30 pm. Start Time: 7:00 pm. End Time: 9:00 pm.

Nearest Moon Phase: New Moon

# September Events still in need of Volunteers

## Friday – September 11th – NORTHEAST TUCSON

Pima County Conservation Lands and Resources  
(CLR) @ Agua Caliente Park

Agua Caliente Park is located at 12325 E Roger Rd.

Age Group: All Ages

Estimated # Participants: 75 - 100

5 scopes [2] Scopes still needed

Setup Time: 6:30-7:00 pm Start Time: 7:30 pm

End Time: 9:30 pm

Nearest Moon Phase: New Moon

## Saturday September 12th -- PICACHO AZ

Picacho Peak State Park

15520 Picacho Peak Rd, Picacho, AZ

Age Group: All Ages

Estimated # Participants: 100+

3-4 Scopes [3] Scopes still needed

Setup Time: 7:00 pm Start Time: 7:30 pm End

Time: 9:30 pm

Nearest Moon Phase: Crescent Moon, 2 days past  
New

## Monday, September 14th - TUCSON FOOTHILLS

Catalina Foothills High School

4300 E Sunrise Dr, Tucson

Age Group: Mostly 11th graders, aged 17

Estimated # Participants: 30

2 Scopes [1] Scope- still needed

Setup Time: 6:00-6:30 pm Start Time: 7:15pm

End Time: 9:00 pm

Nearest Moon Phase: Waxing Crescent Moon, 5 days  
past New

## Friday – September 18 -- TUMACACORI AZ

Tumacácori National Historical Park

1891 E Frontage Rd, Tumacácori, AZ

Age/Grade Level: All Ages.

Estimated Participants: 80 - 125

4 - 5 Scopes still Needed

Setup Time: 6:00-6:30pm. Start Time: 7:00 pm.

End Time: 9:30 pm.

Nearest Moon Phase: 1st Quarter

## Thursday - September 24 - Mount Lemmon

Ventana Vista Elementary

Whispering Pines Girl Scout Camp

E Organization Ridge Rd, Tucson, AZ 85749

Age/Grade Level: 5th Grade

# Participants: 100

2-3 Scopes [1] Scope still needed

Setup Time: 6:30 pm. Start Time: 7:00 pm. End

Time: 10:00 pm.

Nearest Moon Phase: 2 days before FULL Moon

## Friday - September 25— MARANA AZ

La Paloma Academy, Marana

13644 N Sandario Rd, Marana, AZ 85653

Age/Grade Level: K-8

# Participants: 200

3 Scopes [2] Scopes still needed

Setup Time: 6:30 pm. Start Time: 7:00 pm. End

Time: 9:00 pm.

Nearest Moon Phase: 1 day before FULL Moon

## Sunday – September 27 - EAST TUCSON - SOLAR

Saguaro National Park - EAST

Saguaro EAST is located at 3693 S Old Spanish Trail.

Age Group: All Ages

Estimated # Participants: 75

2-3 Scopes [1] Solar telescopes still needed (white  
light or H-alpha)

Setup Time: 12:30 pm Start Time: 1:00 pm End

Time: 3:00 pm

Nearest Moon Phase: NA

**REMINDER: Return Email to volunteer is:**

[astronomy-events@tucsonastronomy.org](mailto:astronomy-events@tucsonastronomy.org)

# Chiricahua Astronomy Complex (CAC) New Member Observatories



We are planning to build additional remote-capable observatories at CAC similar to those already there and pictured at left and below. We have a core of 12 members that are interested in pursuing this capability and want to determine if additional members are interested. These 12 members plan to join forces for three large 16' x 16' observatories with four piers to split the building cost. A similar concept could be arranged with other members. We can also build smaller observatories with fewer members joining together. The observatories would be paid for by the member lessees but owned by TAAA. In exchange the members would be given a 10-year lease with TAAA for use of the observatory. In 2023 the cost of the observatories ranged from \$25,000 for the 10x10 to \$45,000 for the 16x16 version. With inflation, it is expected the actual costs in 2026 will be higher.

This project may move quickly. If you are interested, send an email to CAC Director [Jim Knoll](#) and President [Ed Foley](#) as soon as possible. We can then set up a Zoom meeting to discuss the specifics.

Jim Knoll - CAC Director



# Happenings at TIMPA, September 2026

This month, the TIMPA team is excited to share that we have nearly completed the conversion of the Gila Monster Observatory to hold a Losmandy G11 mount capable of carrying multiple different OTAs. The default telescope for the new system will be a 127mm Explore Scientific triplet refractor. There is also an 85mm Stellarview refractor on site and we are looking to convert a 9.25-inch Celestron SCT to the proper configuration to be carried by the mount. We hope to have the whole system up and running by early fall.



The 14-inch Meade that was formerly on the pier has been retired.

The TIMPA team is very grateful to David Rossetter for the donation of the Losmandy G11 mount and to Kevin and Naomi Greene for the donation of the 127mm Explore Scientific refractor. We are also very grateful to the donors of the 85mm that is currently on site and the 9.25-inch Celestron that we hope to convert. Special thanks go to member Karl Rettenmaier for fabricating the adapter, base, and leveling plates that the mount now sits on, and for his help in installing them.

The TIMPA team is looking forward to having the system available for club use by October. We will have a short re-dedication for the Gila Monster at our October 31 Seestar celebration at the site. The Losmandy is driven by a PMC Eight control system and it is adaptable to an ASIAir system.

For any questions about the system, please email [Stephen Ferris](#). We will have more information about telescope availability later this fall.

Stephen Ferris - TIMPA Director

# Observing Sites

## TIMPA

by TIMPA Planning Group

TIMPA (Tucson International Modelplex Park Association) is TAAA's dark sky site west of the Tucson Mountains.

Location: The TIMPA observing site is located a few miles beyond the Desert Museum (3250 N. Reservation Road, Tucson, AZ 85743).

### TIMPA Star Party Dates this month

September 4-5  
September 11-12

The TIMPA Planning Group will be offering assistance with telescope usage and observing during the monthly TIMPA Star Parties. You are invited to bring your equipment and questions to TIMPA on Star Party dates for assistance. Be sure to register using the link below.

The TIMPA site is only partially improved. There are no inside buildings provided other than restrooms. TAAA provides very limited seating (members are welcome to bring folding chairs). Please note that members visiting the TIMPA site may encounter things commonly found in partially improved desert areas such as desert creatures and/or their remnants (such as rodent holes or ant hills), uneven terrain, weeds, and desert pollens. Members using the site are encouraged to bring red lights and to move cautiously taking appropriate safety measures. The site does not have potable water, so bring your own non-alcoholic drinks.

Reservations for the TIMPA Site are made on the TAAA website at [TIMPA DARK SITE RESERVATIONS](#). Please fill out the form completely and be sure to indicate the date you desire to visit TIMPA.



## Observing Sites' Upcoming Star Party Dates

### TIMPA

September 4-5; 11-12  
October 2-3; 9-10

Oct 31-Nov 1; Nov 6-7  
December 4-5; 11-12

### New Moon

September 10  
October 10

November 8  
December 8

### CAC

September 11-12  
October 9-10  
Oct 3 *Evening Under the Stars*  
November 6-7  
December 4-5

# Chiricahua Astronomy Complex

*by Jim Knoll*

## Upcoming CAC Weekend Dates (Friday - Saturday)

September 11-12 (New Moon September 10)

October 9-10 (New Moon October 10)



Now that our Monsoon is winding down, we will again have hosts at the site for the **Friday and Saturday CAC sessions**. If you have not been to CAC for a while, this is a good opportunity to come on out. We have a lot of fun. Typically, on Saturday evening, if we have the operators, we will have the RMO 40-inch and Folded Refractor 9-inch operating, so you don't even need to bring a telescope. Members do though still need to make an observing reservation.

**Special observing events at CAC.** Take advantage of our dark Bortle 2 Observing Complex by participating in some upcoming events to include:

**Meteor Showers** - Orionids: October 20-21;  
Leonids: November 17-18; and Geminids: December 13-14.

CAC will also host our semi-annual **Evening Under the Stars** public star party October 3, 2026 from 7-9 PM.

As a reminder, you can be trained to operate most of the CAC telescopes. To request training, please complete the request [form here](#). We also have ten sleeping rooms with heat and air conditioning, a Learning Center/Classroom, seven RV sites with electricity, and a large tent camping area. There are also nearby accommodations.

If you would like to observe, you must make a reservation on the CAC Web page at: [CAC Reservations](#).

Please email CAC Director [Jim Knoll](#) if you have any questions or suggestions for improvement or comments of what is working well.

# August Binocular Observers Activities - by Jimmy Long



We are proud to announce the first member of our group to achieve Astronomical League award status since we formed in April of 2026. Jeffery Johnston observed 50+ Messier objects in the Binocular Messier Observing

(Jeff Looks on as Bernie Stinger observes with his 125mm Vixen binoculars in Redington Pass)

Program, which involves the following requirements:

## The Astronomical League Binocular Messier Requirements

| Quick View of Requirements                                    |           |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| Binocular Messier Observing Program                           |           |
| Tools Used (Eyes (E), <b>Binoculars (B)</b> , Telescopes (T)) | B         |
| Manual (M) / Device Aided (DA)                                | M         |
| Remote Telescopes Allowed                                     | No        |
| Visual (V) / Imaging (I)                                      | V         |
| Number of Levels                                              | 1         |
| Number of Observations                                        | <b>50</b> |
| Must be an AL Member                                          | Yes       |
| Recommended Minimum Instrument Size                           | 20 mm     |
| Date Deadline for Submission                                  | No        |
| Special Equipment Required                                    | No        |
| Equipment Must Be Constructed                                 | No        |
| Observations Must Be Submitted to an On-Line Database         | No        |



Jeff has proven inspirational to several of our group members and is moving on to other Astronomical League challenges with his binoculars. He has also mentored several of us and created the observation sheets that we use to document our objects.

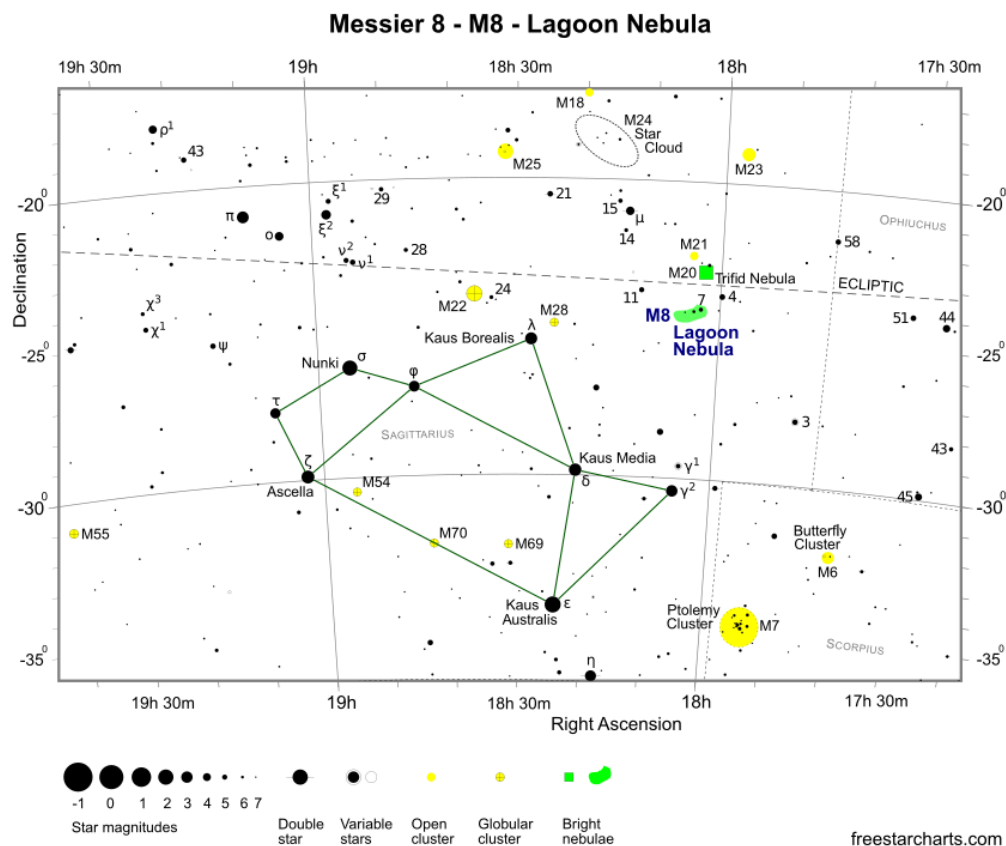
The League Program is an important part of the “Why” to join the Binocular Observers group. As such, periodically, we’ll show our progress on the table below. Every cell highlighted in green represents a completed program or an already received reward.

|           | Binocular Messier<br>50                                                                                                     | Deep Sky Binocular<br>60                                                                                                          | Southern Skies Binocular<br>50                                                                                    | Binocular Double Star<br>50                                                                                      | Advanced Binocular Double Star<br>50                                                                                                    | Binocular Variable Star<br>60                                                                                           | Asterism - Binocular<br>15                                                                       | Solar Neighborhood - Binocular<br>30                                                                                        | Earth Orbiting Satellite<br>30                                                                                                     | Solar System - Binocular<br>25                                                                                           | Lunar - Binocular Level<br>64                                                                  | Galileo - Binocular<br>13                                                                                                         | Binocular Master Observer Award<br>8                                                    | Sky Puppy<br>62                                                                        |
|-----------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|           | Pin & Certificate<br>Observe at least 50 of the 110 Messier objects with binoculars. This is a great program to start with! | Pin & Certificate<br>Observe at least 60 listed deep sky objects with binoculars. Completion of Binocular Messier is recommended. | Pin & Certificate<br>Observe 50 from a list of 73 southern sky objects. Approximately 19 are visible from Tucson. | Pin & Certificate<br>Observe 50 double stars from the list using binoculars and their location in the night sky. | Pin & Certificate<br>Observe and plot 50 challenging double stars from the list. Must complete the Binocular Double Star program first. | Pin & Certificate<br>Observe 60 variable stars with binoculars, estimate their brightness and submit the data to AAVSO. | Certificate Only<br>Locate, identify and sketch any 15 of the listed asterisms using binoculars. | Certificate Only<br>Observe and sketch 30 of the closest stars using binoculars (up to 10 objects may be observed unaided). | Pin & Certificate<br>Manually spot, track and sketch 30 satellites using the unaided eye and binoculars, completing 25 activities. | Certificate Only<br>Observe and sketch various solar system objects aided and with binoculars, completing 25 activities. | Certificate Only<br>Perform 64 various (16 unaided and 48 binocular) observations of the moon. | Pin & Certificate<br>Follow in Galileo's footsteps making 13 observations and sketches to demonstrate the nature of the universe. | Pin & Certificate<br>Complete at least 8 of the 12 listed binocular observing programs. | Pin & Certificate<br>Perform 62 astronomy-related activities. Must be age 18 or under. |
| Name      | Kevin                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                         |                                                                                        |
| Jeff      |                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                          | 8                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                         |                                                                                        |
| Barbara   |                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                         |                                                                                        |
| David     |                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                         |                                                                                        |
| Jeffery   | 57                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                         |                                                                                        |
| Jimmy     | 25                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                         |                                                                                        |
| Jim       |                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                         |                                                                                        |
| Pat       |                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                         |                                                                                        |
| David     |                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                         |                                                                                        |
| Doug      | 56                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                   | 50                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                         | 36                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                         |                                                                                        |
| Bernie    |                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                         |                                                                                        |
| Nelsey    | 62                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                         |                                                                                        |
| Mike      |                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                         |                                                                                        |
| Thomas    | 24                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                   | 54                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                         |                                                                                        |
| Completed | 248                                                                                                                         | 0                                                                                                                                 | 0                                                                                                                 | 114                                                                                                              | 0                                                                                                                                       | 60                                                                                                                      | 0                                                                                                | 0                                                                                                                           | 0                                                                                                                                  | 0                                                                                                                        | 8                                                                                              | 0                                                                                                                                 | 0                                                                                       | 0                                                                                      |

Astronomical League Program Status as of August 2026

Since the category descriptions are a little hard to read, here's a zoomed in version of the popular program descriptions:

| <a href="#">Binocular Messier</a>                                                                      | <a href="#">Deep Sky Binocular</a>                                                                      | <a href="#">Southern Skies Binocular</a>                                                     | <a href="#">Binocular Double Star</a>                                                       | <a href="#">Advanced Binocular Double Star</a>                                                                     | <a href="#">Binocular Variable Star</a>                                                            |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>50</b>                                                                                              | <b>60</b>                                                                                               | <b>50</b>                                                                                    | <b>50</b>                                                                                   | <b>50</b>                                                                                                          | <b>60</b>                                                                                          |
| Pin & Certificate                                                                                      | Pin & Certificate                                                                                       | Pin & Certificate                                                                            | Pin & Certificate                                                                           | Pin & Certificate                                                                                                  | Pin & Certificate                                                                                  |
| Observe at least 50 of the 110 Messier objects with binoculars. This is a great program to start with! | Observe all 60 listed deep sky objects with binoculars. Completion of Binocular Messier is recommended. | Observe 50 from a list of 73 southern sky objects. Approximately 19 are visible from Tucson. | Observe 50 double stars from the list using binoculars and their location in the night sky. | Observe and plot 50 challenging double stars from the list. Must complete the Binocular Double Star program first. | Observe 60 variable stars with binoculars, estimate their brightness and submit the data to AAVSO. |



Star chart of the Lagoon (M8) and Trifid (M20) Nebulae between Sagittarius and Scorpius, a region rich with Messier objects, courtesy of [Free Star Charts.com](http://FreeStarCharts.com)

# Special Interest Groups



## **Starry Messengers Special Interest Group**

*Opening Minds to the Universe*

The SMSIG took the summer off. We next meet on Monday, September 14th by Zoom. Contact Terri (info below) for the Zoom link.

If you'd like to become involved in astronomy outreach that doesn't require a telescope, check out the Starry Messenger page on the TAAA Members Only website to learn about what we do. After logging into MemberPlanet, click on the "Starry Messenger" link at the bottom of the right-hand menu.

Questions about the Starry Messengers SIG and our hands-on outreach toolkits can be directed to Terri Lappin ([email](#) or 520-977-1290).

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## **Radio Astronomy SIG (RASIG)**

*by Sandy Nichols*

The next RASIG meeting will be **Wednesday, September 16th** at 7:00 PM AZT via Zoom. All TAAA members are welcome to attend. The Zoom link will be posted to the TAAA Forum, or you can obtain it directly by [emailing](#) Sandy Nichols.

*Topic:* Member projects: Observing radio solar flares.

[Email](#) Sandy Nichols for the Zoom if you do not already have it.

[RASIG on the Web](#)

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## **Astronomy Fundamentals SIG**

*by Connor Justice*

Come join us for a presentation on the fundamentals of amateur astronomy. Learn your way around the night sky to add to your observing enjoyment. Meetings are on the second Thursday of each month.

The next AFSIG meeting is **Thursday, September 10, 6:30pm to 8:30pm.**

*Topic:* To be announced.

Contact [Connor Justice](#) for more information.

Access videos of previous meetings in the TAAA [YouTube Channel](#)

[AFSIG on the Web](#)

The next AISIG meeting will be **Monday, September 21st at 7:00 PM** via ZOOM.

**Topics:** **Beginners' Corner** - Ask a Question  
**Monsoon Challenge** - Group Presentation  
**Members will share images** taken during the 2026 monsoon season

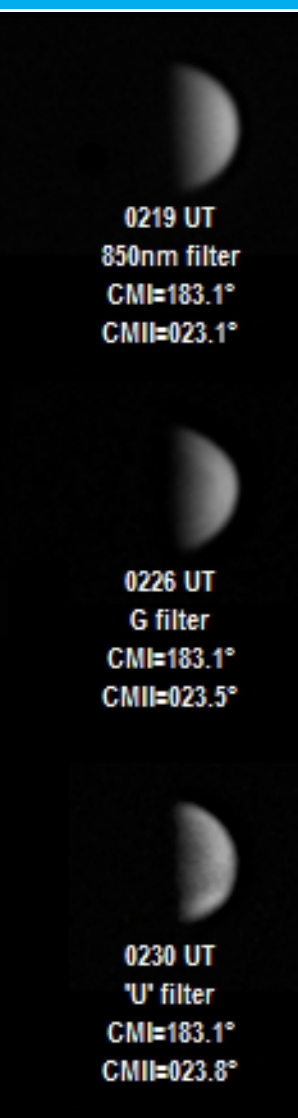
We will post Zoom details on [the Forum](#) before the meeting.

Email [Gregg Ruppel](#) for the ZOOM link or any other information. Gregg and the AISIG folks are very active on the [TAAA groups.io](#) forum. Check out all the helpful advice and amazing images there. For more information or instructions on how to join the Forum, [click here](#).

View previous AISIG meetings on the TAAA [YouTube Channel](#).

We offer a mentoring program for beginning astro-imagers. For details, see the AISIG [Web Pages](#).

## Member Astro-Images



**VENUS**  
**2026 08 05UT**  
**Seeing: 6-7/10**  
**C5 f/10 Mak-Cass.**  
**Cam: SKYRIS 236M**  
**Dia 21.7"**  
**Mag. = -4.3**  
**Illum: 0.539**

Richard "Rik" Hill ©2026  
Loudon Obs. Tucson, AZ  
RHILL24@COX.NET

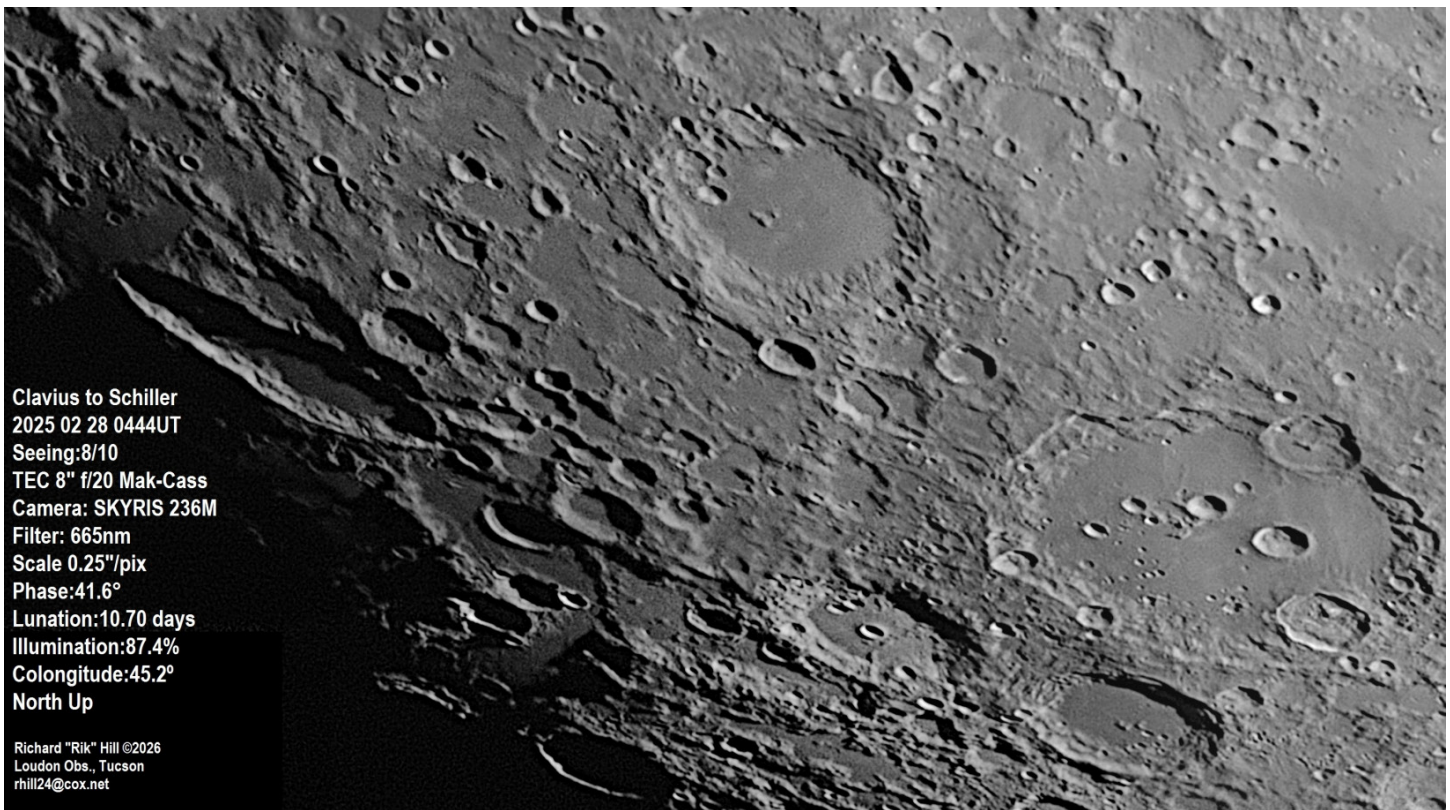
0219 UT  
850nm filter  
CMI=183.1°  
CMII=023.1°

0226 UT  
G filter  
CMI=183.1°  
CMII=023.5°

0230 UT  
"U" filter  
CMI=183.1°  
CMII=023.8°

**Rik Hill**

Venus



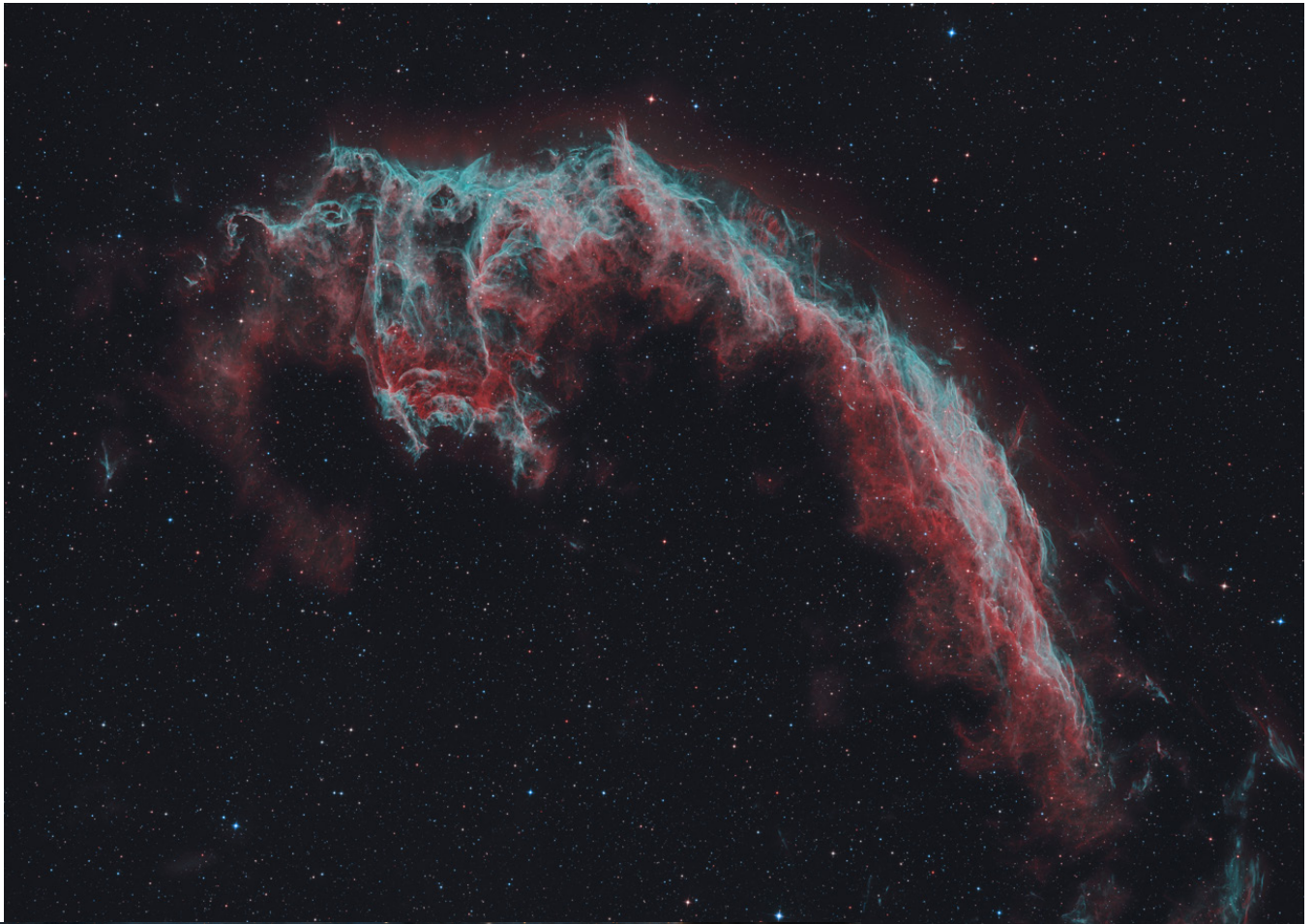
## Rik Hill

Dominating this region is the monster crater Clavius (231km dia.) visible in a good sized (10x) pair of binoculars. As we saw in a previous TLO article, study of this grand 'walled plain', and associated satellite craters, can occupy pages of description and many of the amateur selenographer's evenings. Here it is seen in the lower right of the image with Rutherford (56km) on the lower right wall. Then, leading north and west (left) there is an arc of four more craters curving west through the center of this great 'walled plain'. On the upper crater wall directly above Rutherford is a similarly sized crater, Porter (54km). Notice the difference between Rutherford and Porter. The former is less than 1 billion years old and the latter may be as old as 4.5 billion years hence interior features on Rutherford are crisp compared to the features in Porter which have been modified by other impacts and infilled with ejecta from other impacts.

Below Clavius are another pair of similarly sized craters, Blaucanus (109km) directly below, and to the west of that is Scheiner (114km) with an interesting east-west ridge on the southern portion of the crater floor. This latter crater is from the early bombardment on the moon possibly as old as 4.5 billion years ago. Farther west at the bottom of this image is a shadow-filled crater, Bettinus (73km). Even small telescopes (60-80mm) will show these craters nicely.

Near the top of the image is another large flat bottomed 'walled plain' with a small offset central peak, this is Longomontanus (150km). Notice the 16km crater in the northwest (upper left) quadrant, Longomontanus L. The interior is quite mottled with several different geologic materials exposed. It would be interesting to observe this at high resolution under high sun, with different narrowband filters.

Lastly is the elongated feature on the terminator, Schiller (179x71km) a very distinctive feature created by the merger of at least two craters. There is a central range of mountains in the northern portion of this crater, in shadow here, but the southern 2/3 of the crater is flat.



**Randy Smith**

**NGC 6992**

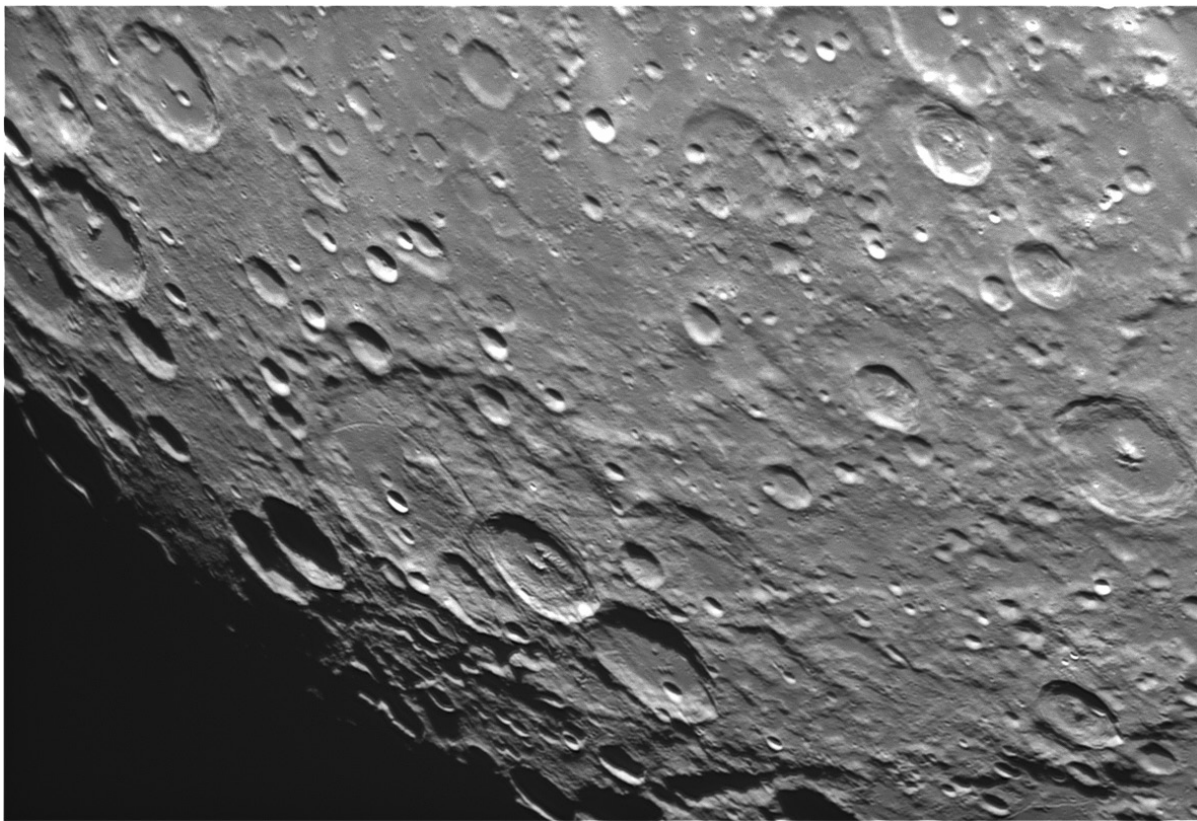
Skywatcher 250P 10"  
Newtonian  
ZWO 2600MM Ha/  
OIII Antlia 3nm filters,  
147x120s.



**David Stearn**

**NGC 7882**

RGBSHO  
data from Telescope Live



9.25 inch SCT, ZWO ASI290mm camera with a IR Pass 685nm filter. The ruined crater Jannsen is a 199 km diameter crater (bottom center) was imaged at 1:32 a.m. on August 1. The crater is filled with debris and a rille running through the center. Overlapping the crater to the right is the crater Fabricius, which has an unusual semi-rectangular landslide formation inside and to the right of that crater is the crater Metius.

**Jannsen**

**Steve Thornton**

## Lacus Mortis

9.25 inch SCT, ZWO ASI290MM camera with a IR Pass 685nm filter.

Lacus Mortis (Lake of Death), left center, is a basaltic depression with a diameter of 151 km on the moon's northeast near side. The prominent





**Horsehead Nebula** - RASA 11 f/2 + ZWO 2600 MC Pro Gain 0 Offset 50 -3C. 1.5 hrs.

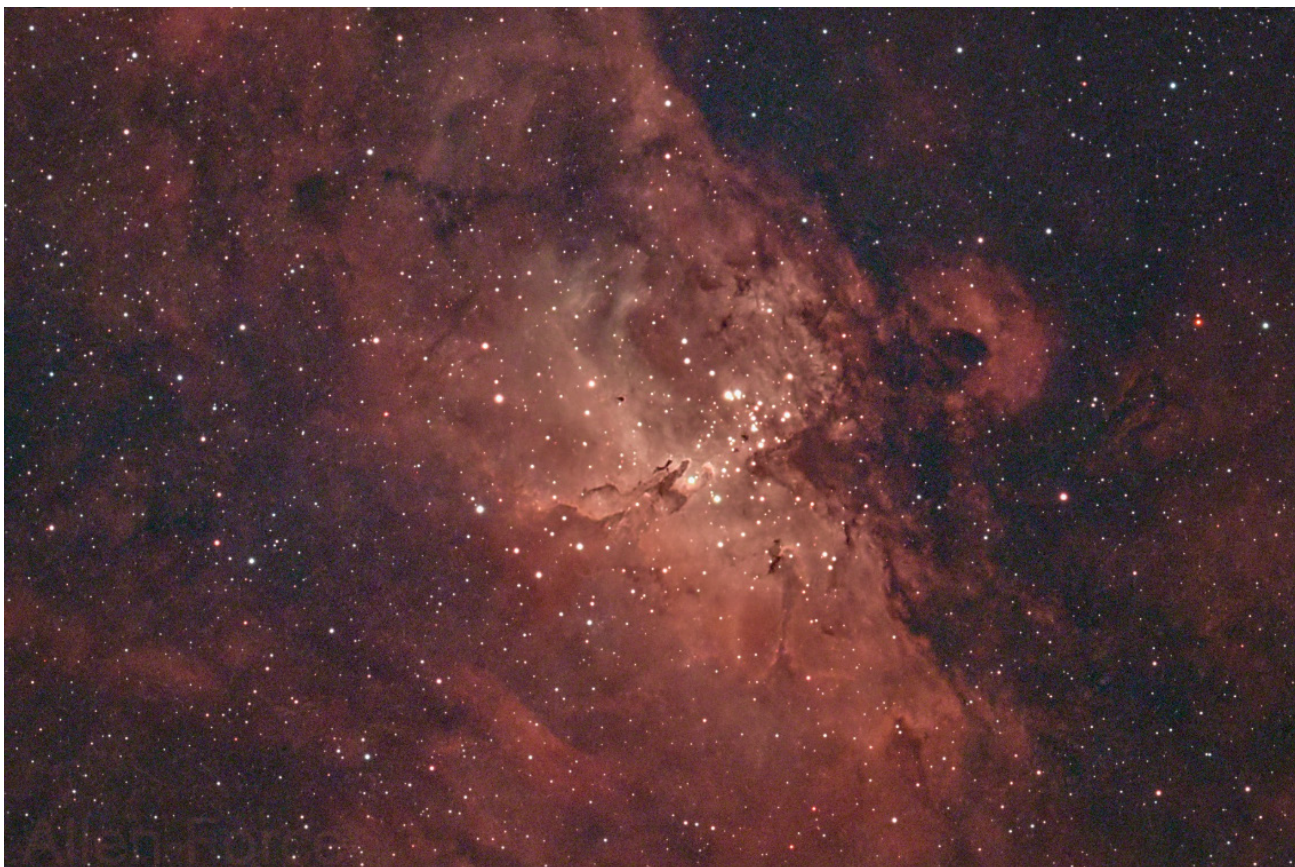
**Tom Eby**

**Sh2-64** - RASA 8" f/2.0, ZWO 2600MC Pro, CEM60ec mount, unguided, no filters.



M16

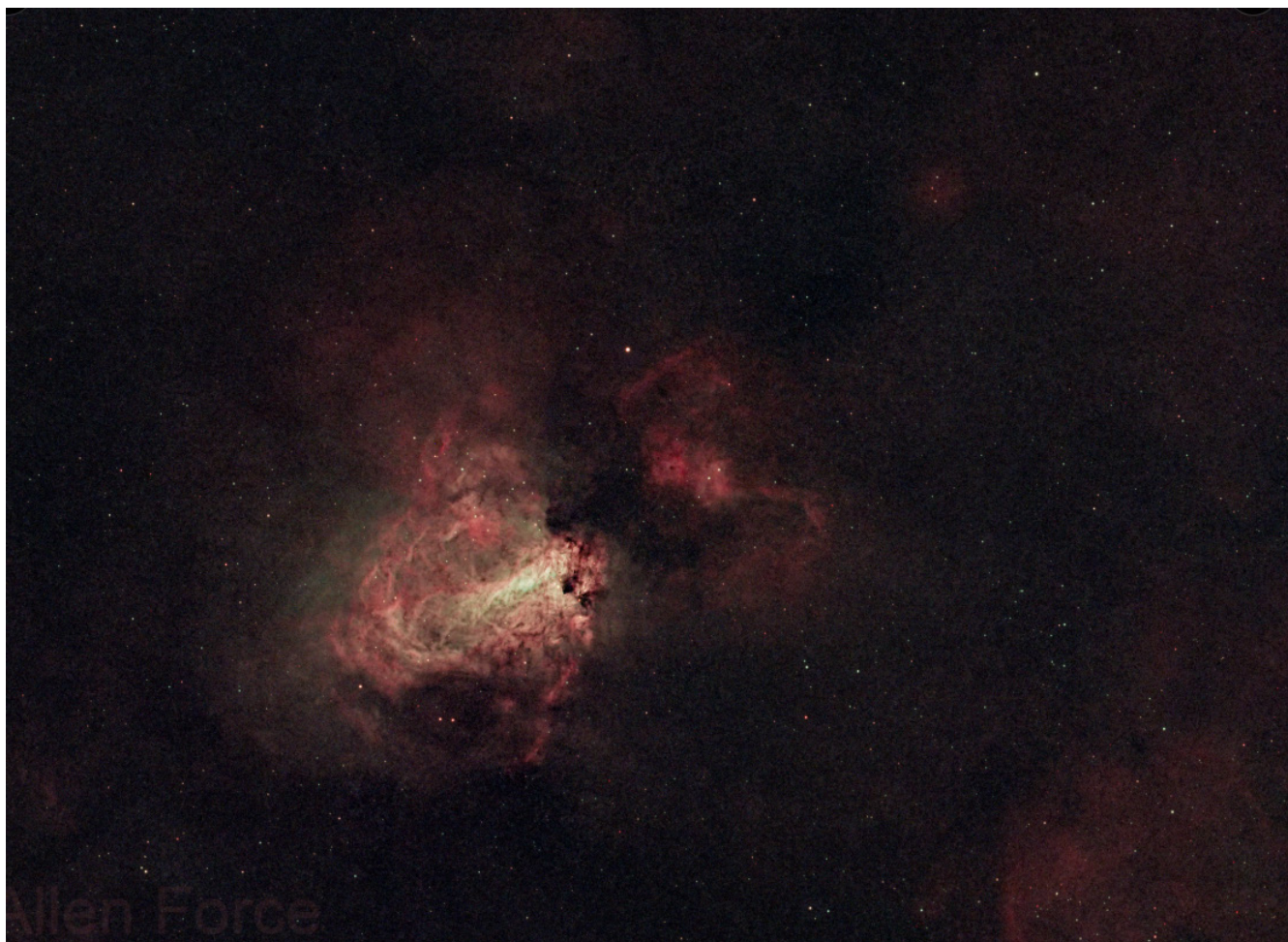
[Astrobin](#)

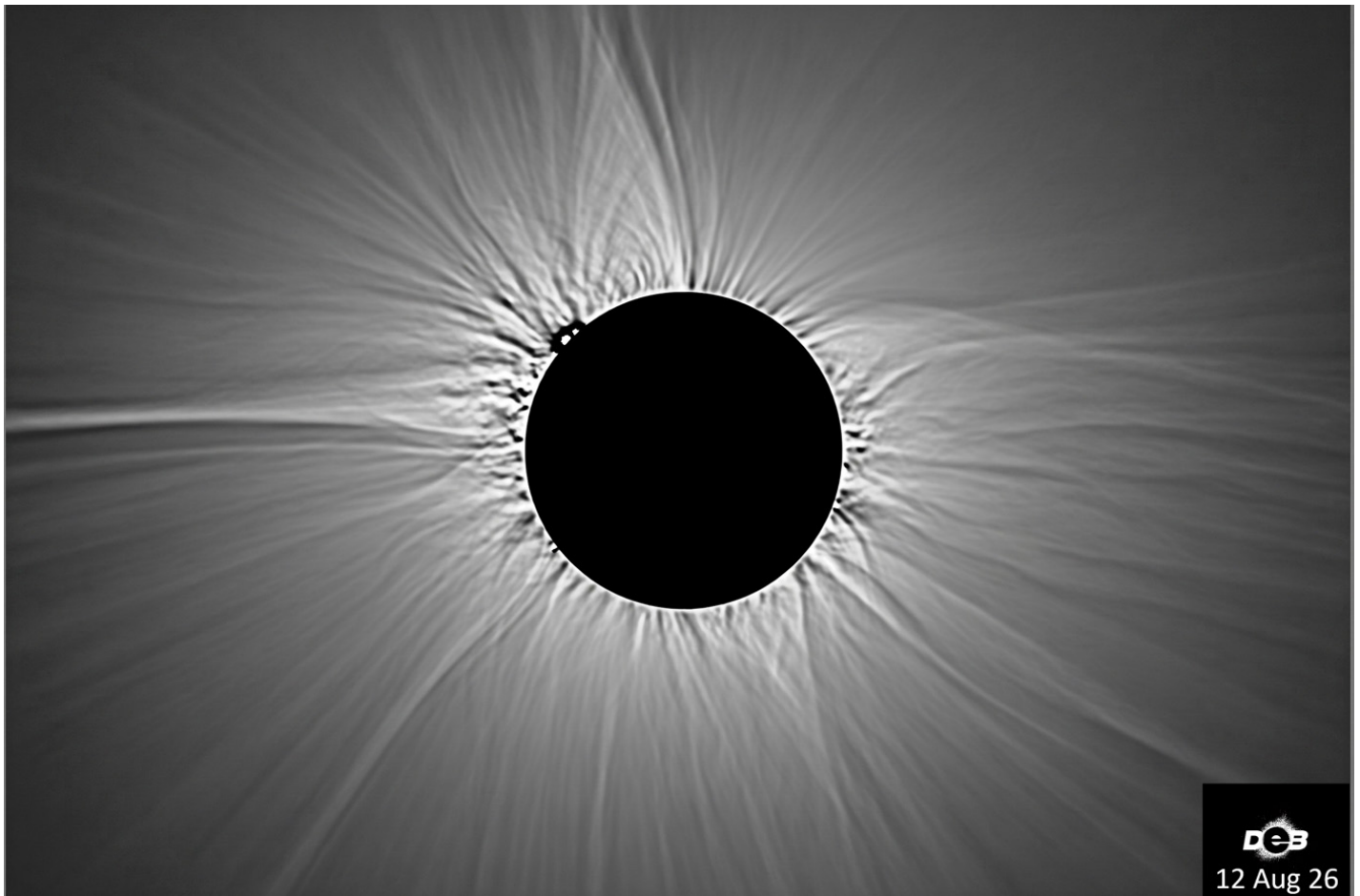


**Allen Force**

ASI2600MC Duo on the RASA8

M17 - [Astrobin](#)





**Matt Penn** Total Eclipse 8/12/26 - HDR composite from only 20 seconds of data captured by our DEB Initiative team in Leon, Spain.

**Jeff Rothstein** - M8 and M20 [Astrobin](#)



*by Doug Smith*

## **Observing Programs - What's Up in September 2026 – October 2026**

Many of the Astronomical League observing programs can be done from our backyards. The following objects are visible in September and October for the common observing programs.

**Constellation Hunter Program Northern Sky** - The following constellations are well-placed for observing for September and October:

Aquarius, Aquila, Cepheus, Cygnus, Delphinus, Equuleus, Lacerta, Lyra, Pegasus, Sagitta, Vulpecula

**Messier Observing Program** - The following Messier Objects are well-placed for observation during September and October (listed in ascending RA):

M56, M55, M71, M27, M75, M29, M72, M73, M15, M2, M39, M30

### **Lunar and Binocular Observing Program**

Here is a list of dates for lunar phases in September and October:

|                                           |                                              |
|-------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|
| New Moon: September 11, October 10        | 10 days old: September 21, October 21        |
| 40 Hours waxing: September 13, October 12 | Full (14 days old): September 26, October 26 |
| 72 hours waxing: September 14, October 13 | Gibbous: September 4, October 3              |
| 4 days old: September 15, October 14      | 72 hours waning: September 8, October 7      |
| 7 days old: September 18, October 18      | 40 hours waning: September 9, October 8      |

### **Solar System Observing Program**

The following describes the planets and their visibility during September and October:

**Mercury** is an early evening object during September and October. However, this is not a very good appearance as even at its maximum elongation (October 11) it sets just 45 minutes after the Sun.

**Venus** is an early evening object during September. It is at maximum brightness on September 18. By mid-October it has swung around the Sun and becomes an early morning object. By the end of October it is rising about an hour before the Sun.

**Mars** is still a late night object. On September 1 it does not rise until around 1 AM. By the end of October it is rising around 11:30 PM. On October 11 Mars is right on the edge of M44 in Cancer.

**Jupiter** is a late evening object. On September 1 it rises around 3 AM and on October 31 it rises just after midnight.

**Saturn** is well placed for evening observation. On September 1 it transits around 2 AM and on October 31 it transits around 10 PM.

**Uranus** is a late evening object during September and October. On September 1 it rises around 10 PM. On October 31 it rises around 6 PM

**Neptune** is well placed for observation during September and October. It transits around 2 AM on September 1 and around 9 PM on October 31.

### **Urban Observing Program**

The following **deep sky objects** are well placed for observing during September and October: Cr 399, NGC 6818, NGC 6826, M27, NGC 6910, NGC 6934, NGC 6940, NGC 7009, M15, M2, M39, NGC 7160

The following **Double Stars** are well placed for observation during September and October: Beta Cygni, Gamma Delphini

# TAAA Astronomy Equipment For Sale

TAAA has an assortment of astronomy-related equipment for sale. This equipment is available for members only at this time. We have suggested prices for all equipment and telescopes but prices are negotiable!

All the listed telescopes come with eyepieces, finders and other accessories.



**Dobsonians – We have 2 large dobs  
Homemade 13” and 12” Skywatcher**



**Celestron 6 w/ NexStar  
This is a great starter scope!**



**Meade 5” ETX Maksutov  
with AutoStar**



**Celestron 11 with NexStar**



**Meade 10” LX200 w/ AutoStar**



**Celestron 8s with NexStar  
We have two C8's.**



**Maksutov Optical Tubes**



**25x100 Binoculars in case**

## TAAA Astronomy Equipment For Sale (continued)



Celestron 5"  
Omni XLT



We have numerous **tripods**.



Several full aperture  
**white light solar  
filters**. Most are  
'film type'. We have  
one 'glass type'.  
Various sizes. All  
checked out okay.  
If interested please  
inquire for available  
sizes and prices.



### EYEPIECE CLEARANCE SALE!!!

50+ eyepieces and filters for sale at rock bottom prices! Mostly 1.25". Inquire for availability and pricing

Adjustable  
Observing  
Chair



We also have an assortment of other items available at this time including: finders (various sizes), finder rings, 7x50 binoculars, focusers, some eyepieces, some eyepiece filters, telescope rings of various sizes, mirror blanks of many sizes, a 6 inch Newtonian mirror set mounted in mirror cells, several large mirrors and much more.

If interested in purchasing any of the listed telescopes, contact Douglas Smith at [dsmith217@cox.net](mailto:dsmith217@cox.net) to discuss included accessories and pricing.

# Member Equipment for Sale

**Don't forget, you can advertise the sale of your excess equipment in the TAAA Desert Skies Bulletin for free!**

- All advertisements are for member-owned equipment. Members may not place ads for non-members.
- Advertisements are for one month. If you would like to run the ad for a longer period you must resubmit the ad each month.
- If you would like to show the item as sold in a following issue, you must send the sold notice to the editor.
- Each member may submit up to two ads per month.
- There are no formal ad restrictions. Please keep them brief. A small photo or two may be submitted. The editor has total discretion as to the formatting of the ads.

*Buyers:* The TAAA does not assume responsibility for the products sold or offered. It is the responsibility of individuals who posted the ad to reply to your message and confirm the legitimacy. There are risks which you assume when dealing with people who might be acting under false pretenses; all these risks are borne by you. The TAAA does not control the products offered by and to members. But please, let's all be honest with each other!

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## Wheeley Bars for Sale

**Lightly used Medium JMI Universal Wheeley Bars with upgraded 5" polyurethane wheels, excellent condition.** I bought this for a large Meade SCT rig when I moved here, fell down the imaging rabbit hole, and the entire setup sat in the garage for years.

New today \$582, asking \$200.

Contact Jeff Rothstein 847-207-9348 or [email](#).



# August Crossword Puzzle - The Solar System Solution

NEPTUNE  
J L  
URANUS  
P T  
I COMET  
T  
M E  
ASTEROIDS  
R A  
VENUS T  
U  
MERCURY  
N I  
N  
G  
S

## Public Astronomy Events



COLLEGE OF SCIENCE

**LUNAR & PLANETARY  
LABORATORY**

## 2026 LPL Evening Lecture Series

Lectures at the Kuiper Space Sciences, Room 308 and Zoom; 7-8PM

- [Sept. 16, 2026](#) **Dr. Marc Neveu** Research Scientist  
Center for Research and Exploration in Space Science &  
Technology  
University of Maryland College Park  
*Exploring the icy worlds of the outer solar system: From identifying oceans to the search for life*
- [Oct. 7, 2026](#) **Dr. Joellen Russell** Professor, Distinguished Professor  
Department of Geosciences  
University of Arizona  
*Our Ocean World: Habitable Climates*
- [Nov. 4, 2026](#) **Dr. Dante Lauretta** Regents Professor, Department of Planetary Sciences  
Director, Arizona Astrobiology Center  
University of Arizona  
*Bennu's Ancient Waters: Asteroid Samples and the Chemical Origins of Life*

Click the graphic for the web site.



OCTOBER 1-3, 2026 | GREEN VALLEY, ARIZONA



There's nowhere in the world quite like the Southwestern United States. It's a place where dozens of cultures come together under one pristine sky to spread and build community, family, and the kind of research that generates awe in wonder about our place in the Universe. It's also home to the Northern Hemisphere's largest concentration of ground-based research observatories. Southwest Skies is bringing them to one place— Green Valley, Arizona— where you can enjoy lectures, activities, booths, star parties, and special access to our host: Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory's Fred Lawrence Whipple Observatory, part of the Center for Astrophysics | Harvard & Smithsonian.

LOOK WHO'S COMING TO  
**SOUTHWEST SKIES**  
ASTRONOMY FESTIVAL  
GREEN VALLEY, AZ | OCTOBER 1-3, 2026

SOUTHWEST SKIES IS BROUGHT TO YOU BY



FRED LAWRENCE WHIPPLE  
OBSERVATORY



GREEN VALLEY REC



TUCSON AMATEUR  
ASTRONOMY ASSOCIATION

# Skyward

By Dr. David H. Levy  
August 2026

## A rhyme for the children

By Doveed

Strong sky no cloud, in dusk so calm;  
A star, a world, it brings me home,  
In brilliance, not unlike a dome  
In darkness just before the dawn.

Mars calls and often asks me why  
In voice so soft and yet so clear  
So far away and yet so near  
It beckons me from eastern sky.

It summons the folks, both young and old;  
To gaze, to peer, to look, to learn  
With open hearts and minds that earn  
A lifelong wonder, tough and bold.

A child looks up, eyes agape  
With wonder, query, answers naught  
But problems, questions, nothing bought;  
But ever. wonder, as dawn does break.

Grow up, dear child, and find your time,  
Business, doctor, lawyer, mold  
But let your avocation hold  
To love the sky, its mood sublime.

Each star is there, it is your friend.  
It shines upon you every night,  
Its light does twinkle from the height  
And down to you, nor e'er to bend.

On summer nights, Vega does rule.  
Its soft blue light, its youth beguiles  
A nascent system of worlds and styles,  
This star all night will never fool.

With Deneb and Altair, those stars three  
A Summer triangle all the night  
Makes this season's sky so bright,  
And friendly they will always be.

Triangle, encasing the Milky Way  
A road that straddles the inky sky  
With stars and clouds each evening nigh  
And wander through it every day.

Sixteen hundred light years hung  
Deneb still delights us all.  
But Altair, sixteen light years call  
Towards Vega, twenty-six years flung.

These three light up the nightly sky  
Like lamps to cheer our wounded nest  
And show us what they see as best  
A trio of joy, as night falls by.

The stars for children are defined  
To study, love, and never fear;  
But ever to look, or hold so dear  
On every night, we are not blind.

The sky is meant for every child.  
Explore, befriend, and even speak  
The gracious stars and worlds not weak  
To furnish lovely dreams, so mild.

A child's eyes look up high  
Some will remember, most will not,  
But for all in life's unfairness caught  
Please gaze to the stars, a heavenly sky.

Immortal sky, forever stars  
But even they are gone one day  
Even the triangle will not stay  
Just as they die, and so will Mars.

But somehow children will always be  
To gaze, and look, their eyes to dream  
Of happy times, of stars that seem  
Forever young, forever free.



A wonderful shooting star, a meteor, scratches the sky. It comes from the Geminid meteor shower, which reaches its maximum in December. At upper left is the Pleiades star cluster.

Dr. David H. Levy is a long-time member and former President of the TAAA. He is a well-known astronomy writer and discoverer of comets. He writes this monthly “Skyward” column for the Vail Voice and generously allows us to publish it here.

