April 2000

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Please note: TAAS offers a Safety Escort Service to those attending monthly meetings on the UNM campus. Please contact the President or any board member during social hour after the meeting if you wish assistance, and a Society member will happily accompany you to your car.

Calendars

Calendar Images

- May 2000 Calendar
  - GIF version (~65K)
  - PDF version (~20K)
- June 2000 Calendar
  - GIF version (~65K)
  - PDF version (~20K)
- TAAS Calendar page

Four Receive TAAS Honors
by David Nelson Blair

Robert Williams, Carl Frisch, Robert Kyrlach, and Peter Eschman received TAAS's highest honors March 18 at the Society's general meeting.

Robert Williams won the John Dobson Award, given each year for outstanding achievement in astronomy education. "He always gives the best planetarium shows!" exclaimed Kevin
McKeown, chair of the committee that decided the award on behalf of the Society. Indeed, in addition to being Society treasurer and chair of several committees, Williams is holder and chief operator of the Society's Starlab, giving dozens of shows each year at school star parties.

Carl Frisch became the first two-time winner of a major TAAS award, winning the Isengard Award for generosity to the Society in 1998 and again this year. McKeown cited his dedication as site manager of the General Nathan Twining Observatory. Frisch was cited for his initiative and energy in contributing to improvements at the observatory and in keeping it up.

The two remaining awards were TAAS Service Awards—awards first given in 1999 of which up to five can be made each year.

One of the current award recognized Robert Kyrlach, who in the 1950s was a founder of the Albuquerque Astronomers, the organization that eventually grew into TAAS. Declaring Kyrlach a founder of the Society, McKeown cited his work in star parties, in workshops, and as the first Society member to bring telescope-making to high schools.

The other service award went to Peter Eschman, for "all the little things at GNTO." McKeown cited in particular his work with computers and the observatory.

"It's a pleasure to work on," said Eschman, accepting his award. "I hope to see more and more use made of GNTO."

Williams and Frisch were also on hand to receive their awards in person.

The other members of the Awards Committee were Robert Ortega and Gordon Pegue.

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**Presidents Update**

*by Eric Bucheit*

"Desperately Seeking Susan ... or Jim ... or Carol ... or Matt ... or Joan" as Committee Members

The Albuquerque Astronomy Society is blessed with several dedicated, committed, hard working members which are the life blood of our organization. These members provide the drive and momentum making our society what it is today! Many prior Board members have set the stage, so to speak, by providing the tremendous impetus our society now enjoys.

George Pellegrino, Mike Pendley, Allen Green, Gordon Pegue, Barry Gordon, Lisa Wood, and Kevin McKeown have all helped establish this society and continue to provide leadership and support. Where would we be today without their participation.

Our current Board of Directors is composed of extraordinary individuals in their own right.
Bruce Levin was present to sign our original Articles of Incorporation and continues today as an officer of our Society in the position of Vice President. In addition to being on our Board of Directors Bruce is also Chairman of our Protocol Committee, and Chairman of the Program Committee.

Our superstar is Robert Williams. Not only is Robert the Treasurer of our society, he is the Database Manager, Planetarium Manager, Chairman of the Membership Committee, Director of the Astronomy 101 Seminars, and serves on the Asset Committee, the Scheduling Committee, the Education (School Star Party) Committee, and Public Relations Committee. I wonder how many members realize just how much Robert does for our society?!!

Carl Frisch is a long term member of the Board of Directors and is "in tune" with every aspect of our society. Carl is our Events Coordinator, maintains our Calendar, is our ad hoc member of the Lodestar organization, GNTO Site Manager, Chairman of the Lodestar Committee, and a member of the Scheduling Committee, the Observatory Committee, and Public Relations Committee. Carl is also very active in ATM (Amateur Telescope Making), the CCD Workshop, Astronomy 101 Seminars and the future Research Focus Group! Talk about Dedication!!!

Robert Ortega has been the driving force in establishing our GNTO Observatory. Robert is the Director of the GNTO, and Chairman of the GNTO Committee. Under Robert's leadership, the GNTO has grown from a dream, to the tremendous facility our society offers today! This is a full time job in itself!

As a long term member of the Board of Directors, Robert provides a foundation for continuity and stability.

Our 5th Board Member returning this year as Secretary of our society is Sammy Lockwood. Along with keeping us updated on all Board activities, Sammy is our Director of Public Relations, Chairman of the Asset Committee, Chairman of the Public Relations committee, and serves on the Membership Committee. Sammy is responsible for the marvelous press we have been receiving. Although a relatively new member Sammy is the epitome of heart, drive and determination which will carry our Society into the future.

Several of our new Board Members are already active on multiple committees following in our predecessors footsteps, and I'm concerned we are over taxing our resources.

The title of this article "Desperately Seeking Committee Members" is not meant to be as DESPERATE as it sounds. We are not desperate but concerned. By involving more members in our committees we will be getting a more diverse perspective which will be more representative of the entire Society. By providing the opportunity for committees which do not chiefly consist of Board Members the Board will be able to better evaluate motions and suggestions with which they are not intimately involved. Finally we will be addressing the problem of overtaxing our human resources. Because of the difficulties of committee member outreach, and their tremendous dedication, our Board Members are taking the responsibility of serving on committees themselves! Board Members should be acting on committee recommendations only, not making the recommendations.
I would like to take this opportunity to invite all concerned society members to participate on our committees. Your energy and fresh ideas would be welcomed with pleasure! Place the committees in the hands of the membership and let the Board administer the committees recommendations.

CONTACT A COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN TODAY!

WE NEED YOU!!

New Members:

A warm welcome to our February new members to the Society:

Leo P. Apodaca
Katherine Gauntt
Randy Gauntt
Adam Gorelick
Richard E. Leonard
Gary Libman
Norma Libman
Latham Morris
Michael Robertso
Rob Salazar
Drew Seavey
Judy Stanley

Board Meeting
by Sam Lockwood

The March 16, 2000 Board of Directors (BoD) marathon meeting of The Albuquerque Astronomical Society (TAAS) was called to order at 7 pm by President Eric Bucheit. Other board members present at the meeting were Robert Williams, Sammy Lockwood, Carl Frisch, Robert Ortega, Ray Collins, Barry Spletzer, Dan Richey, and David Brown. Observers included Lisa Wood, Chris Wilson, Gordon Pegue, Kevin McKeown, Alejandra Valderrama, Pete Eschman, and Tom Pannuti.

Eric presented the meeting’s agenda for approval. Marsville, Starfire, and Gas Spectrum tubes were added. Sammy motioned that the time limit for the meeting be deleted. Robert O. seconded the motion which passed. Carl motioned that no formal agenda be used for the meeting. After discussion, Robert O. seconded the motion which failed. Finally, the agenda was accepted.

Sammy motioned to wave the reading of the last BoD minutes, the motion was seconded, and passed. The minutes were accepted as published.
Robert W. distributed and read March treasurers report. Education Funds on deposit are $1902.07. GNTO funds on deposit are $4519.75. General funds on deposit are $876.67.

**Correspondence**

- Eric read a letter from TAAS member Beth Fernandez, requesting to sell raffle tickets for a School project she was involved with at the next TAAS general meeting. After discussion, Robert W. motioned to approve Beth's request. Sammy seconded the motion which passed. Gordon commented that the BoD was setting a dangerous precedence by allowing this, and might open the door for future solicitors at our meeting. The BoD voted to revisit the issue. After discussion, Eric motioned to approve Beth's request, but specifically for the next general meeting. Barry S. seconded the motion, which passed.
- Eric then read a portion of a letter from the International Dark Skies Association, requesting a donation from TAAS. Eric will forward the letter to the TAAS Darkskies Committee.

**Old Business from Feb. BoD meeting**

- TAAS Positions and Responsibilities—Barry S. explained that he has been working to prepare a single document containing all of the TAAS bylaws, amendments, resolutions, committees, positions, and position responsibilities. Barry has e-mailed drafts of the document to BoD members, and is seeking review and input. Any member who would like to review the document should e-mail Barry Spletzer.
- Committees of the Board /vs/ Committees of the Membership.—Eric asked the board members to review our present TAAS committees, and help determine if any committee positions should be open to board members specifically, or general members specifically.
- Research Facility Proposal—Carl distributed several documents on a proposed TAAS Observatory at Oak Flat. Carl proposes a partnership with the Sandia Ranger District, similar to the operation at Chaco Canyon. Carl then motioned to form a special interest task force to study the Oak Flat proposal. Robert O. seconded the motion. After discussion, the motion passed. Carl will prepare a form to help poll the membership on the proposal.

**Committees**

**Public Relations**

- Sammy has been researching companies that can provide TAAS with embroidered shirts and hats, and explained that Black Duck Embroidery seemed to have the most reasonable prices and service, offering nice embroidered shirts for around $22, and hats for $10. He motioned for $100 on setup fees, which would allow for multiple orders of shirts, hats, jackets, etc., with embroidered TAAS logos. Robert W. seconded the motion, specifying the money to come from the education fund, which passed.
- Sammy then presented the BoD with two proposals for an multicolored TAAS logo to be used for the embroidery pattern. Barry S. motioned that the #1 pattern be accepted as presented. The motion was seconded and passed.
• Eric then commented that our TAAS PR person should be allowed more trust and freedom of action to represent TAAS, noting problems that had occurred with a recent PR opportunity with KOB. A lengthy discussion followed about TAAS communications surrounding the KOB broadcast from GNTO, as well as other successes and failures of Sammy's PR work. Eric noted that Sammy has now resigned from the PR position.

Awards Committee

• Kevin McKeown will present the annual TAAS awards at the March general meeting.

Membership Committee

• Robert W. explained that the new TAAS Membership Packet is almost ready, and that the committee is about ready to begin a telephone membership canvas, who's goal is to contact all full TAAS members, and get their input on what we can do to improve the society.

Lodestar Committee

• Carl presented the BoD with minutes from the previous Lodestar committee meeting. Basically, the committee voted to continue a careful relationship with lodestar. Carl then announced his resignation from his post on the Lodestar board. Several possible replacements were discussed. Carl then motioned that TAAS members be polled on what our relationship with Lodestar should be. After discussion on how useful such a poll would be, Sammy seconded the motion, which failed to pass.
• Sammy then announced that Lodestar would have a grand opening on the weekend of 3/25, and that TAAS was invited to have a booth at the opening. Sammy motioned that TAAS accept the invitation, Robert W. seconded the motion, which passed after discussion.

GNTO Committee

• Robert O. read the minutes from the GNTO committee meeting. The GNTO manual is almost complete, New GNTO pictures are ready for the web site, Belen City officials will be on site 9/16, Astronomy 101 went well, the Isenguard is now linked to a PC (to use "The Sky" astronomy program), the PC has been upgraded to Win 98, and Carl has moved lots of gravel at the site.

Program Committee

• Dan explained that several proposals for Program policy changes are being readied for BoD approval.

Grant's Committee
No Report.

**Calendar**

- No Report

**Events**

**School Star Parties**

- Robert W. and Dave announced that recent School parties were successful.

**Starfire Tour**

- Eric explained that Allan Green is prepared to coordinate a TAAS tour to Starfire once he knows of a date. After reviewing the TAAS calendar, June 2nd was agreed as our first choice.

**Science Fair (3/16-18)**

- Barry S. explained that Jim Parker will fill Bruce's post as a judge.

**Astronomy Day 2K (4/29)**

- Sammy distributed an written report on preparations. He has:
  1. 13 groups confirmed for Astronomy day exhibits, plus 7 more possible.
  2. Brock Parker heads the Booth team with a growing list of volunteers.
  3. Jeff Goldmeer heading the outdoor team.
  4. Eric heads the exhibitor team
  5. Lisa Wood heading the relief team.
  6. Robert Williams heads the clean-up team.
  7. David Blair finishing work on the poster.

- Sammy asked for funds for the posters. Robert Williams motioned that $150 be authorized from the general fund for the posters. Ray seconded the motion, which passed.

- UNM night on 4/28 will be replaced by a UNM night on 4/29.

**Messier Marathon (4/1)**

- Everything is set.

**Elephant Butte (4/8)**

- Steve Carry owns the event. All members are invited for a free stay at the State Park that weekend, in exchange for a star party.

**Chaco Canyon (4/27, 9/30)**
John Sefick owns these events.

Marsville (3/25)

- Robert W. explained that he will setup the TAAS Starlab at this Air Force sponsored event, and has passes/invitations for anyone who wanted to attend.

Newsletter Assignments

- Deadlines were discussed, as were omissions in the March newsletter.

New Business

Deadlines for Ownership of Standing Events

- Tabled.

Various Lost and Questionable TAAS Documents

- Anything related to this topic should be presented to Barry Spletzer.

GNTO Director and Operations Amendment

- Dave distributed a proposal to amend the TAAS bylaws, which would define the roles and rules of GNTO, the GNTO Committee, the GNTO Committee Chair, and establish the GNTO Committee Chairman as an Elected TAAS Officer. There was lengthy discussion on why the chair should be an officer, and why the GNTO rules and definitions should be incorporated into the bylaws. Eventually, the proposal was tabled without action.

Gas Spectrum Tubes

- Barry S. displayed a protective case that he had made for the gas spectrum tubes used by the TAAS Educational Outreach Program. He motioned that $160 be spent from the education fund to cover replacement of broken tubes. The motion was seconded, and passed.

The meeting adjourned at 10:55.

These minutes will not be official until accepted by the Board of Directors—ed.

Observatory Committe (GNTO Committee)

by Robert Ortega
The Galileo spacecraft, in orbit around Jupiter, saved some of its most fruitful exploration for last—because it was also the some of the most dangerous. Dr. Len Duda, a volunteer solar system ambassador for the Jet Propulsion Laboratory, brought TAAS up to date on the Galileo mission at the Society's General Meeting on March 18. The meeting, which survived the statewide power failure a few hours earlier, also saw four TAAS members honored with the Society's most prestigious awards. (See awards story, on page 1.)

Close passes of Jupiter's inner Galilean moons, Io and Europa, involve increased radiation danger, Duda, explained, so these encounters were left until late in the mission, after most other objectives had been achieved. Yet the two moons are among the most interesting objects in the solar system, Io because it the system's most volcanic world, Europa because evidence is strong that there is a liquid, salty ocean beneath its surface ice.

Three close encounters of Io have taken place in the last six months. In one of them, the spacecraft approached to within 200 kilometers of the surface of Io, a volatile world with more than 100 active volcanoes. The surface ranges from sulfur dioxide frost at -180 C. to flows of lava that are 200 to 300 C. hotter than the lava flows of Earth.

The spacecraft has also provided the closest views to date of the cracks and ridges of Europa, which has a constantly renewing surface, and thus few impact craters. Salty, liquid water is believed to be under about 10 kilometers of ice.

Other exploration in the Jovian system has included the big moons Callisto, the most heavily cratered object in the solar system, and Ganymede, around which Galileo discovered a magnetic field.

Duda reviewed the earlier accomplishments of Galileo—including its close passes of Gaspara in 1991 and Ida in 1993. The former yielded the first close-up views of any asteroid; the latter produced Dactyl, the first moon discovered around an asteroid.

Dr. Duda received his Ph.D. in physical chemistry from the University of Illinois and has worked at Sandia National Laboratories for twenty years.
April Meeting Preview
by Bruce Levin

No report this month

Observer's Page
by Kevin McKeown

No report this month

What's Up
by Kevin McKeown

No report this month

Ask the Experts
by Bruce Levin

Special guest editor this month -- Barry Gordon

What is this mysterious "f-number" I keep running into when reading about lenses?

The "f-number" is one of our worst examples of terrible terminology—introducing mystery and confusion into what is really a fairly simple and straightforward business.

A lens has two primary attributes: aperture and focal length. Its aperture is the opening or "window" through which light is admitted, generally its front surface. Focal length is the distance from the lens to the point where light passing through it comes to a focus.
Now let's see what these things do. First and simplest, the lens aperture lets in the light. How much light does it let in? How much water goes through a pipe? Other things equal, the bigger the pipe diameter, the more water. And so it is with a lens: other things equal, the bigger the aperture, the more light. In fact, the amount of light available increases with the square of the aperture—double the aperture and you quadruple the available light, triple the aperture and you get nine times the light.

What about focal length? Well, it just happens that image size (for everything but "point sources") is proportional to focal length. And that is just great: if we want an image twice as big, we simply use a lens with twice the focal length—which, of course, is precisely what long lenses are all about.

But before we start thinking we're getting something for nothing, let's look into the cost of these lovely large images. How much light does such an image require? How much paint does a wall require? Other things equal, the bigger the wall, the more paint. So it is with an image: other things equal, the bigger the image the more light is required. In fact, the amount of light required increases with the square of the image size—double the image size and you quadruple the required light, triple the image size ... but by now, this wording should be looking very familiar.

Bottom line: a brighter image results from increasing aperture, or (again excluding "point sources") from decreasing focal length (and, therefore, image size). Further, brightness of image varies according to the square of each, but in the opposite direction. Hence, if we double, or halve, or do anything the same to both aperture and focal length, the image brightness remains the same. In short, the one thing that determines lens speed is the relationship of its aperture to its focal length. Thus (ignoring trivial effects of different construction), all lenses with apertures of, say, 1/8 of their focal length will give equally bright images; and lenses with apertures that are 1/11 of their focal length will give images about half as bright (since the square of 1/11 is about half the square of 1/8).

Consequently, instead of giving the actual aperture of a lens in units like millimeters, it is generally (again, for everything but "point sources") much more useful to specify aperture as a fraction of focal length.

The lower case letter "f" being the traditional symbol for focal length, we would say that lenses such as the aforementioned had apertures of f/8 or f/11—but, going with common practice, we would simply call them f/8 or f/11 lenses, meaning lenses with an apertures equal to focal length divided by eight or eleven. Yes, that "slash" really is the symbol for division—and that is all it is; and the number following that slash is properly called a focal ratio—i.e., the ratio of focal length to aperture.

In conclusion (arguably the most beautiful words in the language), a telescope with 2,000mm focal length and 200mm aperture has a focal ratio of 10 and an aperture of f/10. It has no "f-number".

And neither does anything else.
The Kids' Corner

by Barry

Barry has decided to retire as The Kid's Corner editor / author. Kids—we need a replacement. If you are interested please contact me (call the Hotline) or e-mail me at mycall@rt66.com—ed.

ATM Corner

by Michael Pendley

The Amateur Telescope Making Workshop

The Amateur Telescope Making workshop is now in operation. The workshop meets the first and third Wednesdays of each month at Valley High School. Valley High School is located at 1505 Candelaria—the north side of Candelaria, just west of 12th street. The meetings begin at 7 PM in building A, room 7.

The workshop is intended to be a place where experienced telescope makers, beginning telescope makers, and everyone in-between can come together to get help, share ideas, and provide each other support and good conversation. We have only met a few times and are still evolving the workshop format. The intent is to not have a beginning or end . . . just an ongoing resource—a place—for individuals to ask "What do I do next"; bounce an idea off someone else, or use a piece of test equipment.

How can you help you say? We need stuff. We would like to assemble a first class ATM library, build a cache of high quality test equipment, and maintain a supply of consumables. Do you have any ATM related books, magazines, software, or videos you would like to donate or simply loan? Do you have any supplies (glass, abrasives, pitch, etc.) just lying around the house? Maybe you have a grinding bench, a piece of tube, or an old focuser. We can provide a good home for all this stuff.

If you would like to make a donation or simply get more information about the workshop call the TAAS hotline at (505) 296-0549. Better yet, come to a meeting and join in the fun.
Star Myths, TAAS 200, and More

by Robert Williams

Gemini "The Hunter"

Again this month we will stay in the same area of the sky we have been looking at the last couple months. We are going to look at Auriga "The Charioteer", it is fairly easy to find, look for Orion and Taurus, above the two of them sits Auriga. The brightest star is Capella, which means "small goat", is 43.5 light years away and about ten times the size of our Sun. Capella's visual magnitude is really the combined brightness of the primary star and a close companion, which revolves around Capella once every 104 days.

The starlore for Auriga again comes from The Starlore Handbook—An Essential Guide to the Night Sky by Geoffrey Cornelius. This myth is quite interesting and violent.

Auriga represents the ill-fated charioteer Myrtilus. King Oenomaus, noted for his love of horses, could not bear the thought of his daughter Hippodameia ("horse-tamer") marrying. He devised a chariot race, in which he would race each suitor for her hand, the suitor forfeiting his life if the king won. Oenomaus' horses, swifter even than the North Wind, came from the god Ares and were unbeatable, so that Oenomaus was able to slay each of his daughter's suitors.

When it came to the turn of Pelops, son of Hermes, the gods decided to intervene. Poseidon, an ancient god of horses as well as ruler of the seas, gave Pelops a gold chariot drawn by winged golden steeds. To further ensure his victory, and with the collusion of Hippodameia, Pelops plotted with Myrtilus, Oenomaus' charioteer, to replace the lynchpins from the axles of the king's chariot with copies made of wax. Pelops promised that if the king lost the race, then the crafty charioteer would be given half the kingdom and the privilege of the bridal night with Hippodameia. At the climax of the race the wheels flew off Oenomaus' chariot and he was dragged to his death, uttering a curse on Myrtilus as he died.

Celebrating their victory, Pelops, Hippodameia and Myrtilus went for a chariot drive. When they stopped the chariot to have a picnic, Myrtilus demanded part of his reward there and then, but Hippodameia resisted. Pelops struck the lustful charioteer, took the reins and began the journey home. As they sped back Pelops gave Myrtilus a sudden kick, hurling him to his death. Hermes, who appreciated a cunning trick, honored the charioteer by placing him in the stars.

For this version of the TAAS 200 again I used the 16" Isengard at GNTO. For the first object I used the NGC Max to help find the object. It made finding the object as easy as pushing a few buttons and moving the scope. For those of you who are not familiar with an NGC Max, it is a computer that has a data bank of objects programmed into it and you just punch up the number for the object you are looking for and then use the arrows to point the scope. Just recently some work was done on the NGC Max on the Isengard to update the software and to make it easier to use. Now all you have to do is turn on the power point to a star in the eastern sky and you are ready to go. If you would like to come out to GNTO and learn to use this equipment it can be a great help in doing the TAAS 200.
The first TAAS 200 I looked at was TAAS #43 or NGC 1893. This is an open cluster with galactic nebula, I had to use a nebulosity filter in order to see the nebula, but it was very pretty. NGC 1893 lies opposite the constellation from Capella and was the object I used the NGC Max on. I will be looking for this one without the NGC Max and will report later how difficult it is to find. With the filter on the eyepiece the stars were much dimmer but the nebulosity was very evident.

Next I found TAAS #44 or NGC 1907. This is an open cluster that is very bright but very tiny, it is rich with stars in the field but the cluster is obvious. If you are using an eyepiece with a wide field of view you will see part of M38 towards the bottom of the field. M38 is a very large cluster of stars and I determined that it would be much easier to find M38 first then push the telescope just a little away and you will see NGC 1907 come into the field of view. M38 is a very pretty bright open cluster with about 100 stars at a distance of 4,200 light years.

The last object I looked for was TAAS #41 or NGC 1664. This is another open cluster in a very rich field of stars; there is a dimmer group of stars towards the center of the field that appears to be denser. The main cluster looks like a box kite with the tail coming down at about 6 o’clock.

There is another TAAS 200 and some more Messier objects to be found in Auriga but I did not look for these ones yet so you have something more to look for. I hope you enjoy Auriga, and we will see you next month.

UNM Campus Observatory Report

by Jay Harden, Campus Observatory Coordinator

No report this month

Docent News

by Lisa

Blast-Off turns Bust-Ola

I am disappointed to relay that I was unable to secure the Apollo Space Suit I was pursuing for school star parties—the scheduling with Johnson Space Center just didn't work out. We'll just have to be Undercover Space Cadets, something we all are pretty good at anyway!

Gusty Gabaldon

The weather at Gabaldon at our last event was gusty and clear. We had a very low patron turnout due to these conditions, but served about 60-75 students, and had some fun along the way. Thanks to the docents who attended or offered to attend.
Upcoming Events

- **4/25/2000—Collett Park.** From Indian School and Eubank, go west on Indian School. Turn south (left) on Morris. School on right. (Note from Editor -- this event was changed to Petroglyph elementary school. From I-25 and Paseo del Norte Go west on Paseo cross the river. Right at first light (Eagle Ranch Road). Left on Paradise Rd. Go up hill. Before big post office, turn left on Davenport. Road dead ends--school on left.

Star Party at Your School?

Now's the time to apply—we fill our dates quickly. Please download the form from our website—www.taas.org

Click on the Educational Outreach link and there you will see our requirements and the request form. You can also contact me for a form.

Meet Our Docents

Lisa Wood interviews Barry Gordon

This month we're highlighting one of our most well-know members!

Tell us a little about yourself

Barry Gordon, a native of New York City, lived there until taking up residence in Placitas in May 1992. After receiving a BS degree in Mathematics, he embarked upon his career of programming IBM computers—in 1950! He has been a Programmer, a Manager of Programmers, a Systems Engineer, and an Independent Programmer/Consultant (his last calling prior to a thoroughly delightful retirement).

In the course of his career, he has:

- Lectured extensively for IBM, the Association for Computing Machinery, the Canadian Information Processing Society, and the American Management Association;
- Served as Chairman of the New York City Chapter of the Association for Computing Machinery
- Served on the National Council of the Association for Computing Machinery
- Had papers published in several of professional journals.

In his spare time, he developed some skill in photography, with several publicity shots and a record album cover to his credit.

When and how did you get interested in astronomy? Any special areas of interest?
His interest in astronomy goes back to the 1930's, the specific "how" now completely lost in the mists of time, but likely as not simply the result of looking up at the night sky—which, way back then, one could see even from places like suburban New York City.

What do you enjoy most about docenting at star parties? Any interesting comments or events while docenting?

The most enjoyable part of star party docenting, as well as the most interesting comment, is (still!) the many and varied versions of "Oh, wow!" from people viewing some celestial showpiece through a telescope for the first time.

**Of what accomplishments are you most proud in your "astronomy career"?**

As an amateur astronomer, he has:

- Served as an Officer and Director of the Amateur Astronomers Association in New York City;
- Served as a Director of The Albuquerque Astronomical Society
- Been a Guest Lecturer for The Albuquerque Astronomical Society
- Been the Director of the Lecture Staffs of several Solar Eclipse groups, as well as giving the Photography Seminars
- Had articles published in both Sky & Telescope and ASTRONOMY

Combining his two avocations - astronomy and photography - he took up astrophotography and has had his astrophotographs published in Sky & Telescope, New Mexico, and elsewhere. He also developed a course in astrophotography, which he taught for several years at NYC's Hayden Planetarium. Much of this course saw its way into his book, "Astrophotography", published by Willmann-Bell in 1985; it has sold over 10,000 copies (and is still selling, albeit rather more slowly than initially).

**Any favorite astronomy quotes? Favorite astronomers?**

Favorite astronomy quote: With Solar Eclipses, the difference between 99% and 100% is 100%.

Favorite astronomers: David Healy (amateur) and Ellie Gates (professional)

Thanks Barry—As current (soon to retire) librarian, I can say that Barry's book has been around the block more times with TAAS members than any other book in our collection. We're lucky to have you in TAAS.

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**Astronomy 101**

*by Robert Williams*
No report this month

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\[ \sum_{i=1}^{8} \]

**Astronomical Computing**  
*by Michael Pendley*

No report this month

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**Internet Info**  
*by Michael Pendley*

No report this month

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**GNTO News**  
*by Carl Frisch*

No report this month

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**Trivia Question**

No trivia this month

**Answer**

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**Astronomy Day 2K is April 29 at Coronado Center**  
*by Sammy Lockwood  
Astronomy Day Coordinator*

TAAS is finishing its preparations for the largest public astronomy event of the year, as Astronomy Day 2K draws near on April 29th at Coronado Center. Astronomy groups from across the state will converge in Albuquerque on that date to show the world what astronomy is all about, and all TAAS members are encouraged to help and attend. The show starts at 10am,
and lasts till 9pm, with public stargazing at UNM afterwards. We really need lots of help to cover the whole day.

We need TAAS members for:

1. The TAAS Booth—Brock Parker is spearheading our display efforts. Although several members have volunteered early to help, we really need more. Contact Brock at 298-2792 or Sammy if you can join us.
2. Outdoor Exhibits—Our Solar scopes on Astronomy Day are a successful tradition, and Jeff Goldmeer heads this effort. Contact Jeff at 332-8811 to join this tradition.
3. Setup and Cleanup Teams—We start building tables and booths after the Mall closes on Friday night and tear everything down on Saturday night, Eric Bucheit and Robert Williams will lead this effort. Camaraderie is always high for this. Please call Robert, Eric, or Sammy if you can help.
4. Relief Team—We always need some extra help to give both our members, and some of our exhibitors a few breaks during the day. Lisa Wood has once again agreed to lead this team. Contact Lisa for details.
5. Event Documentors—Basically, people to take names and pictures of Astronomy Day 2K for the newsletter and archives. Contact Sammy to help.
6. Public viewing at UNM after dark. Saturday night stargazing at UNM after Astronomy Day is another successful TAAS tradition. Contact Sammy if you can help.

Frequent updates on Astronomy Day 2K can be found on our web site at [http://www.taas.org](http://www.taas.org)

Confirmed exhibitors joining us for Astronomy Day 2K will be:

- Air Force Research Lab
- Alamogordo Space Center
- Apache Point Observatory
- Chaco Culture National Historic Park
- Da Vinci Society / ¡Exploraj
- Explorer Post 110
- Inez Elementary Science & Tech. Magnet School
- Institute of Meteoritics
- KOB TV-4 WeatherNet
- Lodestar
- National Radio Observatory
- The New Mexico Space Society
- Project Starshine
- Young Astronauts Club

I'm hoping to confirm:

- New Mexico Museum of Natural History
- NM Tech. Astronomy Club
Santa Fe Community College Planetarium

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**Messier Marathon—a first report**

*by the Editor*

Sam Lockwood posted this message to the TAAS e-mail list the morning after—ed.

What a night...

I was impressed by the Grand Canyon, until I saw the ruts in Twining Lane yesterday. I knew I shouldn't have tried it, and paid the price. RO eventually pulled me out, after he pulled out Pete. We eventually made it to GNTO, where it rained until long after sunset, then solid clouds and wind. Robert W. made it in the day before with the RV, but no propane, so no stove.

Still we had a good time playing cards, and trying to dry out. I think I saw a star around midnight!!!

—Sammy

April Fools.

The road was great, the skies were clear, and no wind. Robert's Pasole was great. I bagged 62 (charts & Telrad only) before my eyepieces frosted over. You all missed a good Messier Marathon.

—Sammy

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**Marsville 2000**

*by Sammy Lockwood*

The Albuquerque Astronomical Society was invited this year to attend Marsville at Kirtland Air Force Base on Saturday March 25th. For those of you who are not familiar with what Marsville it is a program done each year with the Air Force Research Laboratory and 5th graders statewide. The students spend the several months designing Martian habitats from specific specs given to them by the organizers. They only communicate via e-mail, phone or faxes and on one specific day they meet at one location (KAFB for this year) and build the habitats. The students must work together to build the habitats to pass inspection by the organizers.
The organizers of this event asked us to come and set up the Starlab and solar scopes to give the students something to do as they moved through each phase of the program. We took the Starlab and Mike Pendley's "Sun Gun" and set them up for shows of the stars, planets and the Sun. We did more than 12 shows and spent several hours outside with the sun gun showing anyone who was interested stars and Sun.

This was a great event and with more than 800 5th graders and dozens of visitors, aids and organizers this had to be one of the largest events TAAS has been a part of so far this year. If you are interested in seeing what Marsville is like or would like to help with future events of this nature keep looking to the newsletter for more information. I am sure we will be doing this event again next year. I am including photos taken by Eric Bucheit so you can have some idea of the scale of this event.

I would like to thank Kevin McKeown, Carl Frisch, Judy Stanley, Eric Bucheit, and Sammy Lockwood for coming out and helping with the setup, take-down and running of the Starlab, slide show and sun gun.

Here are a series of thumb-nail images from the event. Click on an image to get a better look.

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Red Faced Editor

*by the editor*

The editor is a little red faced this month. While sorting through my electronic pile of newsletter submissions last month I simply failed to see Eric's President Update. Eric—sorry about that.

I also published 3 different dates for Easter last month—yikes!!!! I hope the calendars this month are a little more accurate.
TAAS at Lodestar's Grand Opening

by Sammy Lockwood

While Lodestar held the grand opening of their new planetarium on 3/25 in a full fledged, weekend long, media blitz that drew thousands in attendance, The Albuquerque Astronomical Society was there answering questions and drawing new prospective members.

Lodestar's ribbon cutting ceremony was held at 10am Saturday morning, but TAAS members Brock Parker, Tom Saunders, Dave Brown, Sammy Lockwood, and Barry Spletzer were there the night before, setting up a 15’ TAAS display featuring the best of TAAS. Over the weekend, Brock, Dave, and Sammy were joined by Eric Bucheit, James Brockway, Larry Cash, Nancy Davis, Chris Wilson, Jane Stanley, Dan Lovett, Jim Lawrence, and Marvin the Martian, as they fielded questions ranging from telescope recommendations to "How Can I Get Started?" Over 400 specially printed TAAS membership applications were taken at the event.

Special thanks to Lodestar's Ann Hunter, who invited TAAS to the opening, and Brock Parker who spearheaded the TAAS booth construction, and manned the booth all weekend.

Library News

by Lisa

I'm currently looking for my replacement. I have really enjoyed having access to the TAAS library—barring queries such as "What happened BEFORE the Big Bang?", virtually no astronomy question has gone unaddressed around here for a good seven years.

Our collection includes

1) About 300 books
2) A small collection of videos, including the series, Understanding Our Universe
3) A large collection of Sky and Telescope magazines
4) A bookcase to hold the magazines

If you are interested in serving as the TAAS librarian please contact me. I leave this job with the happiest of memories, and am hoping to serve TAAS in some new capacity.
Colorful TAAS Shirts and Caps

by Sammy Lockwood

Sure, T-shirts are OK, but wouldn't you really like a sharp, professional looking shirt, with a colorful embroidered TAAS logo? Well TAAS now offers its members a great looking shirt, in a variety of colors & styles, and a price that's low enough to buy 2!

Sharp, professional looking polo shirts with a 4-color embroidered TAAS logo start at around $23, in a variety of colors and styles. Embroidered TAAS ball caps are only $10. All shirts must be ordered (2 weeks), but I'll try order the caps ahead and have some at the April general meeting. Contact Sammy for details or visit our web site at http://www.taas.org.

Larry Rice at GNTO

Sammy Lockwood forwarded these pictures of Larry Rice the night he and Channel 4 broadcast their weather report from GNTO (Monday Feb 29). Click an image to get a better view—ed

Above left: Carl Frisch showing Larry Rice the Isengard telescope. Eric Bucheit in background

Above right: Sammy Lockwood, Larry Rice, Eric Bucheit, and Carl Frisch

Trivia Answer

Back to trivia
Letters to the Editor

No letters this month

Lost and Found

No Items this month

Classified Ads

For Sale: 25 inch f/5 Star Splitter truss tube Dob. Includes shroud and JMI 2" focuser. Superb optics. $6,300. Call Mark Nagrodky at (505) 864-2953 or e-mail at nmastronomical@aol.com

For Sale: Intes Mk-67 Maksutov Cassegrain, 6" f/10 OTA. Crayford focuser, 8x40 finder, padded storage case. Superior high-contrast images. Very portable. Asking $650. Also, 21mm Televue Plossl eyepiece in very good condition. Asking $50. Call Art Jacobs at 281-9223 (eves./weekends) or e-mail at ajacobs@lobo.net.

For Sale: 10" Meade LX-200 on WheelieBars. E-mail Dan Judd at danjudd@swcp.com or call (505) 268-6020, for demo.

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