The Great Asteroid Hunt - An Update
by Andy Smith

About a thousand of us, around the world, are involved in efforts to find the more than 100,000 dangerous asteroids and comets, out there, and developing concepts to use to protect ourselves, if possible, or to be prepared to survive an impact, if we must. We get hit by one of these, every century. The last one was in Russia (Tunguska River, Siberia), in 1908.

The people involved in this largely volunteer activity come from many countries and specialties. The most effective asteroid hunting program in the world is the Air Force/NASA/MIT LINEAR Program, near Socorro (just inside the northern gate to the White Sands Missile Range)...you can find it on the Web.

The global data-base now includes about 1,300 of these objects and we are finding about one new near-earth object (NEO) a day. A decade ago we were finding one every month or so...so we are making real progress.

These objects range, in size, from about 50 meters to well over a kilometer (magnitudes from 25 to 18). It takes time-exposures to see most of them and the CCD camera has been a major tech improvement. The Arizona Crater was made by one about 50 meters wide (mag 25 range). The destructive energies range from about 20 megatons (of TNT) to over a billion megatons and the consequences of impact range from the destruction of any metropolitan area (small hit) to the destruction of most of the life on our planet. There is a near-miss of our orbit about every half-hour.

The NASA NEAR mission, to the asteroid EROS, last year, was a good step toward an interception capability. Work is going on (in many cases by volunteers) at many institutions and universities. Sandia, Los Alamos, UNM, NM Tech and NM State specialists have made major contributions. Also, there are major contributions coming from Russia, Japan, the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Australia, Italy and elsewhere.

Locally, some members of the private or amateur astronomy community are contributing. Also, the public is becoming more informed, thanks to such movies as Asteroid, Deep Impact, Meteor, etc. Finally, we are beginning to think, seriously, about civil emergency preparedness.

If you are interested in helping the local group to contribute to the international effort, please contact me: comfam@yahoo.com. I will try to keep you all informed of local, national and world progress, using the newsletter.
The May 3, 2001 Board of Directors (BoD) meeting of The Albuquerque Astronomical Society (TAAS) was called to order at 7:00 PM by President Eric Bucheit. Directors present included Dave Brown, Steve Snider, Ray Collins, Nancy Davis, Pete Eschman, Neil Goldberg, and Gordon Pegue. Barry Gordon was present as an observer.

Minutes

The minutes were accepted as printed in The Sidereal Times. The acceptance was motioned by Ray Collins and seconded by Gordon Pegue and was passed.

Treasurer’s Report

The treasurer’s report was dated April 30, 2001 was accepted as printed. General Funds on deposit are $1,313.25. GNTO funds on deposit were $1,176.19. Education funds on deposit were $1,234.30. And Dark Sky Funds on deposit were $89.36.

Dave continued by presenting the Board with the General Fund Budget and explaining the detail of each category. He demonstrated the projected revenue and how it would be generated. This was followed by the projected recurring expenses broken down in categories and posted both in actual dollars and the percentage of the totals. Dave did an excellent job of providing expense categories, average expenses, the percentage of the General Fund and broke it down to a cost per member. It is important to note the budget was based on recurring basic expense only - No special expenses or emergency expenses were budgeted.

The most outstanding category creating a deficit was the education members whose annual dues do not cover their percentage of the cost.

After much discussion Gordon Pegue made a motion to eliminate the education membership category. Neil Goldberg seconded the motion and further discussion ensued. After further discussion Neil withdrew his second and the motion was then seconded by Pete Eschman. Again after much discussion the question was called for with 1 vote for, 6 votes against and 1 abstention. The motion was denied.

Neil Goldberg motioned that ‘educator’ be removed from the category and ‘student’ remain so that students would still receive a reduced membership fee but educators would be moved to the regular membership category. This motion was seconded by Nancy Davis. Again much discussion occurred relating the benefits to both sides of this question. The motion was amended to qualify ‘student’ to high school or lower grade students. The question was called for with 4 yes votes, 0 no votes, and 3 abstentions. The motion passed.

Dave Brown motioned to increase Family Memberships to $5.00. The motion was seconded by Gordon Pegue. The stipulation was made that this category apply to immediate family members residing at the same address. After some discussion the question was called for and the vote was unanimous. The motion passed.

Barry Gordon suggested that letters to the affected members should be distributed with their renewal notices.

Neil Goldberg reviewed the plans for the upcoming General Meeting on May 5, 2001. Neil expects a large turnout and will have a membership table set up for the social hour. Neil then reviewed the list of potential speakers for future meetings and asked for suggestions.

Unfinished Business Cont’d

Dave Brown will evaluate the complementary membership and make recommendations regarding honorary status for the next meeting.

Committee Reports

Membership - Neil Goldberg reviewed the membership packet with suggestions for changes. Ray Collins will take the suggestions by Neil, discuss them with Kevin McKeown (who has been working on the packet also) and provide a ‘sample’ copy for review at the next meeting.

Neil Goldberg reviewed the plans for the upcoming General Meeting on May 5, 2001. Neil expects a large turnout and will have a membership table set up for the social hour. Neil then reviewed the list of potential speakers for future meetings and asked for suggestions.

Observatory

Pete Eschman reviewed the GNTO meeting which concentrated on the GNTO budget. Pete explained the budget, including projected revenue and expenses. The revenue portion was demonstrated by Dave Brown’s earlier presentation on revenue projections. Pete did an excellent job of presenting the expenses with detailed explanations of the costs. Again Pete only budgeted for known recurring

Correspondence

Eric read a letter regarding Dark Sky issues from Ann Cox. Pete Eschman will follow up with Ann regarding our role in supporting Dark Sky initiatives.

Unfinished Business

Pete Eschman presented the by-laws summary obtained from the state and will continue to provide update information not contained in the State’s records. Our goal is to accomplish all updates by August.

Gordon Pegue moved to extend the meeting to 10:00 PM. Dave Brown seconded the motion. The vote was 6 yes, 0 no, and 1 abstention.

At this time the Board lost it’s quorum of members as two members departed. Although discussion continued the Board could not act in an official capacity (vote on anything) after this point.

Unfinished Business Cont’d
expenses. No special or emergency funding was included. Under the current budget the GNTO will be operating at a deficit.

Pete went on to the GNTO key check out procedures. Pete discussed the various levels of authorization for different usage. Formal procedures and responsibilities for trainers and key holders including access to the approval database were discussed.

Pete went on to discuss possible Tech Transfer wall designs for the dome and approving the repair of the lower dome shutter. The disposition of Steve Snider’s dome was also resolved along with the approval of the modification of the CCD jog box.

Finally Pete noted that Carl Frisch finally has an e-mail address. Those interested see Pete.

Calendar

The only change to the calendar was the October 20th Chaco Star Party was changed to August 18th.

The meeting adjourned at 10:00 PM however discussion continued!!!!

Allan Green
Gentleman & Friend
by Julia Thomas-Green

On April 5, 2001 my husband Allan Green died. He was in good health and so this episode in his life was unexpected. Allan passed away at the Veterans Hospital as he was a veteran from the Korean War. My thoughts are that I have lost a man that I will miss so much, and that he was perhaps the only gentleman I had ever met. We often joked about the fact the he perhaps was a dying breed.

He was as you all know who knew him a very generous and loving man. He was also a very emotional and incredibly intelligent man about many things. His passions led him to exactly where he was in life and that was astronomy as his amateur hobby and professionally, architectural photography which proceeded logically from his 35 years as a motion picture director of photography in New York City. As husband and wife 8 years, our lives together were very happy. Finally, we each had met that someone who we could share all of life with. What bliss we had. Allan was my musical partner in my opera endeavors and his love and joy for music will be sorely missed.

The Northeast Astronomy Forum has now become legendary because of Allan and I am as you are proud of Allan’s so many accomplishments in astronomy. This is why you may send donations to the International Dark Skies Association at 3225 N. First Avenue, Tucson, Arizona 85719-2103, in Memory of Allan Green. This association protects the nighttime environment and our heritage of dark-skies by promoting quality outdoor lighting. They are a tax exempt, nonprofit organization, and are tax deductible for those of you whom itemize. You also may contact them at www.darksky.org.

I hope that all of you are joyous in your sacred relationships with each other and hold them endearingly.

Love to you all,

Julia Green
Leah Green, step-daughter
Mark Green, son and cellist
Lisa Green, daughter, mother of two
Mike Green, son, father of two

Chaco
by Carl Frisch

Saturday, June 16th is this springs star party at Chaco Canyon. This is the 10th year (I think) TAAS has been co-hosting star parties here. An old moon promises a very dark sky. If you’ve been to GNTO on a good moonless night, imagine that night without the annoying city light domes. But to be honest, the seeing at GNTO is generally steadier but lacks the good transparency and fainter limiting magnitudes that are found at Chaco. Great camp sites, new cooking facilities and showers add to parks perks.

The public nighttime program includes a talk by GB Cornucopia and a slide show on archeoastronomy. The program is followed by a star party using the parks 25” Dob, a C-14, and a 13” and 17.5” coulter. TAAS members are encouraged to participate. When the more public part is over, the observatory will pretty much belong to TAAS. Other perks include color CCD imaging with adaptive optics, nice computers, (one with a 21” monitor), and control of the parks “night lights”.

New rest rooms nearby should be completed by the event. The regular public star parties are held on Tuesdays, Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays. Come up for several days if you wish, and maybe stay for the summer solstice (a big deal here at Chaco). Park fees will be waived for participating TAAS members.

The Park has daytime programs and other offerings for those non-night owls. Trails abound for hiking, birding, archeological tours, or just plain exercise. The park’s paved tour loop is perfect for bicycling or car tours. Part of the public daytime program includes viewing the sun with an H-alpha filtered telescope (excellent).

To get to Chaco I think the north way is the better. From Albuquerque go north on I-25 to Bernalillo then west on old highway 44 (now 550). About 50 miles past Cuba look for the Chaco turn off on the left, just past the Thriftway convience store. Five miles of pavement followed by 16 miles of dirt road get you to the park. The drive from the big I is around 150 miles and, due to some construction on 44, will take about 3 hours. It’s a good idea to get to the visitor’s center during business hours (before 6 PM) to get oriented and settled in. Housing is always in short supply so availability won’t be known until we get closer to the event. Call GB (505-786-7145) if you plan on coming up to get the latest information, and to let him know what kind of numbers to plan for. See you there.
June 2001

Oak Flat is June 23

by Sammy Lockwood

The dark skies of the Oak Flat Picnic Area are the setting for a special evening of Deep Sky stargazing, as The Albuquerque Astronomical Society teams with the Sandia Ranger District for Astronomy Night at Oak Flat, Saturday, June 23. Deep Space viewing can include faint but spectacular objects, not usually visible from the glare of cities. Objects viewable this month include: The Whirlpool Galaxy, The Great Hercules Cluster, The Ring Nebula, the Red Planet, and the Sombrero Galaxy, to name a few. Please join us for this special night of public Star Gazing. Take NM Highway 337, 9 miles south of Tijeras, and follow the signs. The viewing begins at dusk, but the memories will last an eternity. For information, contact Sammy Lockwood at 275-0258, or the Sandia Ranger Station at 281-3304.

Mars Day is June 22.

by Sammy Lockwood

The Red Planet is coming! This summer, Mars and the Earth will orbit closer together than they have for over a decade, promising some great warm weather planet gazing. TAAS will rise to the occasion with a public Planet Party on Friday, June 22, at the UNM Campus Observatory.

This event is part of a larger, statewide effort recognizing Mars Week from June 17-22. Astronomy Clubs, Planetariums, and observatories across the state are gearing up for Mars oriented activities, and a request to Gov. Johnson has been made for a proclamation. The events are being coordinated through “NM Astronomy”, a statewide astronomy e-mail server. For details, contact Sammy at sam@samlockwood.com
## July 2001

<table>
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|      |      |      | ATM Workshop 7pm, Valley HS  
Earth at aphelion (farthest from Sun) at 07:00.  
• UNM  
• Full Moon at 09:04  
• Partial eclipse of the Moon  
• TAAS picnic  
• GNTO  |
| 8    | 9    | 10   | 11   | 12   | 13   | 14   |
|      | • Moon at apogee. 63.6 earth-radii @ 06:00  
Venus 0.72° S. of Saturn and Venus becomes more than 1 a.u. from Earth  
• Moon at 0.6° from Saturn, and 0.36° from Venus (morning sky)  
• ATM Workshop 7pm, Valley HS  
Moon 0.2° from Jupiter (morning sky)  
• Mars stationary in RA. End retrograde motion  
• UNM  
• Last quarter at 12:47  
• UNM  
• GNTO  |
| 15   | 16   | 17   | 18   | 19   | 20   | 21   |
| • Sun enters Leo  
• Moon at apogee. 63.6 earth-radii @ 06:00  
Venus 0.72° S. of Saturn and Venus becomes more than 1 a.u. from Earth  
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• UNM  
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• UNM  
• Full Moon at 09:04  
• Partial eclipse of the Moon  
• UNM  
• GNTO  |
| 22   | 23   | 24   | 25   | 26   | 27   | 28   |
|      | • Sun enters Leo  
• Moon at apogee. 63.6 earth-radii @ 06:00  
Venus 0.72° S. of Saturn and Venus becomes more than 1 a.u. from Earth  
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• UNM  
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• UNM  
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• Partial eclipse of the Moon  
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• GNTO  |
| 29   | 30   | 31   |      |      |      |      |
|      | • Neptune at opposition  
Sunrise/Sunset  
07/01 05:55/20:26  
07/15 06:03/20:23  
07/31 06:14/20:12  
(MDT)  
Planet Rise / Set (07/15/2001)  
(Rounded to 15 minutes, MDT)  
Mercury 04:30/18:45  
Venus 03:15/17:00  
Mars 17:45/03:15  
Jupiter 04:15/18:45  
Pluto 16:30/03:45  
Saturn 03:00/17:15  
Uranus 22:00/08:45  
Neptune 21:00/07:15  |

### NOTES:

**TAAS** = The Albuquerque Astronomical Society

**GNTO** = General Nathan Twining Observatory. Call Peter Eschman @ 873-1517 to confirm.

**UNM** = University of New Mexico Observatory. Call the TAAS hotline @ 296-0549, or the UNM hotline @ 277-1446 to confirm.

**ACSA** = Albuquerque Coffee Shop Astronomers. Contact Sammy for information or visit www.taas.org and select sidewalk astronomy.

**ATM** = Amateur Telescope Making. Call Michael Pendley for information @ 296-0549.

**PandA** = UNM Physics and Astronomy. Corner of Lomas and Yale.

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**Chaco Observatory**

TAAS once again sponsored Astronomy Day at Coronado Mall (April 21). Above left — the Lodestar Planetarium. Above right and middle left — Bruce Levin operates his refractor / H-alpha solar telescope. Above — misc. solar telescopes on the south side of the mall. Right — Barry Gordon ponders the universe while staffing the TAAS booth. Photos by Eric Bucheit
Above left — the irrepressible Brock. Above right — the ¡Explora! gravity well. Middle left ??? display. Above right — Judy Stanley, Barry Gordon, and Steve Snider staff the TAAS booth. Photos by Eric Bucheit.

These fantastic moon shots were taken by Carl Frisch at Chaco Canyon using a 25” Dob and a hand held Kodak digital camera!
Light the Night?
Let’s Hope Not!
by Pete Eschman

Well, we may need to do more than just hope. Several zoning ordinances govern areas of Bernalillo County, and they are undergoing revisions at the present time. This means we have an opportunity to try to get lighting issues addressed in several local ordinances that encompass a huge area.

The current documents have no appropriate restrictions on lighting concerning such things as light trespass or skyward illumination. The area encompassed by these ordinances is larger than the area within the Albuquerque City limits, and poor outdoor lighting in this area will have a devastating effect on all of us. You may wish to take advantage of any scheduled public meetings to make your feelings known.

I attended a recent meeting regarding proposed changes to the Extraterritorial Zoning Ordinance. This ordinance covers the portions of Bernalillo County that lie outside the Albuquerque City limits, but within a 5-mile distance of these city limits. I also learned that similar changes are proposed for the Bernalillo County Zoning Ordinance, which covers the remaining county area that lies outside of the Extraterritorial zone. The Extraterritorial area falls under a joint City/County jurisdictional body, so citizens of both city and county have an indirect voice in what happens in this area.

Prior to the meeting, I had obtained a copy of the document, and had located the few sections that contained any language related to lighting. At the meeting I summarized these few sections and requested that a more comprehensive lighting section be added to the document. County staff expressed interest in doing this, as long as the wording could be kept simple and thus enforceable.

The proposed zoning revisions were introduced to the Bernalillo County Planning Commission (CPC), and Extraterritorial Land Use Commission (ELUC) on May 2 and May 3. The next step in the process will be formal public hearings before the CPC on July 12 and ELUC on July 11. Before the hearings, they will prepare a staff report on the changes, including all comments received from the community. They are requesting all comments regarding the changes to the Zoning Ordinance by June 8, 2001. The main phone number for the Bernalillo County Zoning, Building & Planning Department is 924-3700.

A copy of the proposed revised ordinance can be found on-line at http://www.bernco.gov/departments/zoning_building&planning/etz_zone_ordinance.pdf

In addition, I have learned that the Light Pollution Ordinance for the East Mountain area is currently under review. Questionnaires are being circulated to neighborhood associations and are to be returned to Catherine VerEecke, Program Planner, Zoning, Building, and Planning Department, Bernalillo County. VerEecke can be reached at 924-3725 or by email at cvereecke@bernco.gov.

The only other area of Bernalillo County that has its own lighting ordinance is covered in an ordinance titled “Outdoor Light Fixtures in the North Albuquerque Acres and Sandia Heights Areas.”

It would seem that a countywide ordinance with appropriate sections on outdoor lighting would benefit all of us, because no form of pollution seems to honor political or jurisdictional boundaries. Please contact Pete Eschman at 873-1517 if you need more information or are not sure how you can help. So, are you going to just sit there and hope, or get involved and let your feelings be known?

GNTO News and Views
by Pete Eschman

We had a good GNTO turnout on May 12th. One of the first things we worked on was repair of the lower shutter mechanism on the dome. The original gearbox had failed, so we installed a simple drum winch to spool the cable from the shutter. The end result is a system with nearly the same gear ratio, but fewer moving parts. When the sun had set, I was pleasantly surprised to find clear skies overhead, so Gordon Pegue and I set about preparing the Isengard for viewing. Because the Albuquerque forecast had looked poor, both Gordon and I had left our usual telescopes at home. We regretted that decision until the wind began to pick up, at which time the relative shelter of the dome was welcome. Other GNTO stalwarts included Kevin McKeown, Karen Keese, Mark Nagrodsy, Carl Frisch, and two newcomers: Fred Brandenbury and Michael Barron. Karen took advantage of the 6” dobsonian that is available to GNTO visitors, and had a good time finding objects on her observing list.

Our most recent GNTO committee meeting was April 26th, with the following folks attending: Dave Brown, Ray Collins, Nancy Davis, Carl Frisch, Kevin McKeown, Gordon Pegue, George Pellegrino and Barry Gordon looked on as an observer. We spent a large amount of time going over the GNTO budget and will present our findings to the TAAS Board of Directors. The next major meeting topic was training procedures, and we identified five trainers: George, Carl, Pete, Gordon and Kevin. We plan to have at least one training session at GNTO each month, and I will post notices on the TAAS-L newsgroup and the TAAS update prior to the training sessions. The last major meeting topic was the plans for a support wall that will be needed under the 10-foot dome that we plan to place over the Astrophysics pier.
June 2001

THE SIDEREAL TIMES

CLASSIFIED ADS


For Sale: 105mm (4.1”) f/5.6 Astro--physics refractor with a 2.7” focuser. The sale package includes a 2.5” extension barrel, 2” and 1.25” eyepiece adapters, and a custom padded carrying case. The package also includes an Astrophysics 400E (German Equatorial) head with factory-installed optical encoders with a hand controller. The head couples to an adjustable hardwood tripod. Rechargeable battery-back also included.

I will also include a full-aperture solar filter from Thousand Oaks.

This scope has been used only a dozen times or so, and is in pristine condition. Purchased new in 1997, the total package was in excess of $5000. Will sell for $4000.


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For Sale: Meade telescope. 10” f/4.5 Starfinder equatorial. Homemade base allows use as Dobsonian. 8 X 50 finder and 12 VDC variable drive corrector. $500. Call Carl Frisch at 239-6002.

For Sale: Meade 16” F4.5 dob telescope, Telrad, Magellan 1 computer with Meade 4000 9.7 and 26mm eye pieces. Excellent deep sky performer! Only 1 year old. This is a big, heavy scope. Paid $1195 for scope and $295 for computer. Will sell all for $1100. Call Harry @ 286-5491.

For Sale: Celestron 6” achro refractor with CG5 mount. Superb optics. Stunning planetary and deep sky performance. Comes with an 8X50 finder, 20mm eyepiece, 1.25” diagonal and 2x barlow. Only 5 months old. Selling to finance an Astro-Physics. Harry441@juno.com

Please contact John Wise at (505) 890-1960 between 7:00-9:00 PM.

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Explorer Post 110 President Ted Schuler-Sandy 856-7450 (H) Cougar447@aol.com

TAAS Hot Line Phone Number is 296-0549

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MEMBERSHIP: You may request a membership application by calling the Hotline or by sending e-mail to the Database Manager (see previous page). Applications may also be downloaded from the Web site. Annual dues to The Albuquerque Astronomical Society are $30/year for a full membership and $15/year for an educator or full time student membership. Additional family members may join for $3/each (educator, student, and family memberships are not eligible to vote on society matters). New member information packets are available for $5.50 (free copies are available from the Web site). You may send your dues by mail to our newsletter return address with your check written out to The Albuquerque Astronomical Society or give your check to the Treasurer (see previous page) at the next meeting.

MAGAZINES: Discount magazine subscriptions to Sky and Telescope ($29.95/12 issues) and Astronomy ($29/12 issues) as well as discounts on books from Sky Publishing Corporation are available when purchased by TAAS members through our society. Include any of the above magazine renewal mailers and subscription payments as part of your renewal check. Make checks out to TAAS (we will combine and send one check to the publisher). Warning: publishers take several months to process magazine subscriptions.

NEWSLETTER ARTICLES/ADVERTISEMENTS: Articles, personal astronomical classified advertisements and business card size advertisements for businesses related to astronomy must be submitted by the deadline shown on the Society calendar (generally the Saturday near the new Moon). Rates for commercial ads (per issue) are $120 per page, $60 per half page, $30 per quarter page. The newsletter editor reserves the right to include and/or edit any article or advertisement. E-mail attachments in Microsoft Word, 10 point Palatino, justified, 25 inch indent at paragraph beginning, no spaces between paragraphs is preferred. ASCII and RTF are acceptable. One column is approximately 350 words. Contact the Newsletter Editor (see previous page) for more information.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS: Note that The Sidereal Times is mailed at a nonprofit organization bulk mail rate. As a result, the newsletter will NOT be forwarded to your new address should you move!! Please provide the Database Manager with your new mailing address to ensure that you receive your newsletter.

TAAS LIBRARY: Please contact the Librarian (Lisa Wood) to check out a book or make a contribution.

TAAS on the World Wide Web:
http://www.taas.org
http://www.taas.org/download
Digest@www.taas.org

TAAS Hotline: (505) 296-0549

Map to UNM Campus Observatory
(not to scale)

The Albuquerque Astronomical Society

P. O. Box 50581
Albuquerque, NM 87181-0581

Address Service Requested