TAAS members Dale Murray and Bob Havlen explain the wonders of the solar system to a young visitor to the 2008 celebration of National Astronomy Day in Albuquerque’s Old Town Plaza. Over 3,000 people visited the one-day event to view the Sun and the exhibits of 17 organizations, all promoting science and astronomy. A big thank-you to all of the TAAS volunteers who made this a successful endeavor.

More pictures of the event are available on the TAAS Web site. See this month’s President’s Message for news about next year, the International Year of Astronomy.

Dee Friesen
Looking Ahead

As amateur astronomers we are very good at looking back. When we view M 81 this spring, we are observing light that left the popular northern hemisphere galaxy nearly 12 million years ago. However, it is time to look forward. It is only eight months before the beginning of the worldwide International Year of Astronomy. TAAS wants and needs to be a part of this event.

The International Year of Astronomy (IYA2009) will be a global celebration of astronomy and its contributions to society and culture, highlighted by the 400th anniversary of the first use of an astronomical telescope by Galileo Galilei. The aim of the Year is to stimulate worldwide interest, especially among young people, in astronomy and science under the central theme: “The Universe, Yours to Discover.” IYA2009 will promote a greater appreciation of the inspirational aspects of astronomy, an invaluable shared resource for all nations.

The main U.S. goal for IYA 2009 is “To offer an engaging astronomy experience to every person in the country, nurture existing partnerships, and build new connections to sustain public interest.” To achieve this goal, seven major U.S. themes have been established:

- Looking Through a Telescope (star parties and sidewalk astronomy)
- Dark Skies Are a Universal Resource (citizen-science campaigns such as GLOBE at Night and related educational activities)
- Astronomy in Arts, Entertainment, and Storytelling
- Research Experience for Students, Teachers, and Citizen-Scientists (observations of variable star Epsilon Aurigae and more)
- Telescope Kits and Optics (hands-on activities tied to new, inexpensive “Galileoscope” kits)
- Sharing the Universe through New Technology (blogs, podcasts, Webcasts, social networking sites…)
- The Universe for Classrooms and Families (a booklet of follow-on activities for children, teachers, and families, supported by a Galileo Club Card and related Web site).

Former TAAS president and current Very Large Array Public Relations Director Dave Finley is a member of the International Astronomical Union/American Astronomical Society program committee. Dave and I have been discussing the role of TAAS in this yearlong celebration.

I have begun a dialogue with several other astronomy clubs in New Mexico, with the local museums, and with the University of New Mexico. There is also a definite interest by other groups, such as the National Weather Bureau, the Balloon Museum, and the Indian Pueblo Cultural Center, to be involved with the year’s activities.

I would like to form a TAAS-member action team to consider what we can do to be a part of the International Year of Astronomy. If you are interested, send me an e-mail or give me a call. Together we will make a difference and have fun in the process.

General Meeting:

Dr. Ylva Pihlstrom Will Speak on “Lasers in the Sky”

At the TAAS General Meeting on Saturday, May 17, Dr. Ylva Pihlstrom will speak on “Lasers in the Sky.” Strongly beamed emission from interstellar molecules was discovered more than 40 years ago, and it was quickly realized that the emission could only be explained in terms of maser (laser) amplification. Because of the compactness and brightness of these masers, they have provided information about the molecular gas at the highest angular resolutions currently achievable.

Dr. Pihlstrom will discuss the environments in which we detect masers and what we have learned from the observations.

The meeting will begin at 7 p.m. in Regener Hall on the UNM campus. For information, call 505-254-TAAS. To obtain a map, visit the home page at http://www.taas.org or see the back page of this newsletter.
Our “New Moon” event on April 5 served as our Spring Messier Marathon. Melissa Kirk opened the facility and served as host for the Isengard telescope, while Steve Welch served as backup for opening. Later in the evening, Steve had our CCD imaging equipment running in the 10-foot dome. Our event was quite successful, with 18 telescopes and 20 observers. The last few folks packed up around 4 a.m. Sunday morning. Conditions were a bit breezy at times, but skies were generally good. Melissa submitted the following event summary:

> Conditions were a bit breezy at times, but skies were generally good. Melissa submitted the following event summary:

Telescopes provided dazzling edgewise views of galaxies. Eric Edwards and Barry Spletzer formed an ad hoc Messier observing tag team, viewing 13 objects through Eric’s image stabilized binoculars. John Lanning spotted 98 Messier objects with his 17.5-inch telescope. Pete Eschman displayed M51 and its companion galaxy, NGC5195, with the GNTO video imaging equipment. Ed Kist demonstrated the operation of the electric lift for his telescope, and bystanders were entertained with the whirring of the motor and the moaning of the winch.

One week later, we met again at GNTO, this time with 8 telescopes in operation and 14 observers. Once again, Melissa Kirk opened the facility, with Bill Wallace serving as backup. Melissa also served as host for the Isengard telescope and provided this event summary:

> The skies were clear, the weather was calm, and the Moon was at first quarter phase. Steve Welch and Pete Eschman reset the inverter operating mode in the early evening in order to insure stable AC power. Later in the evening the RA drive assembly on the Isengard began to slip, so Steve and Melissa tightened set screws to snug up connections within the assembly.

Pete Eschman used the GNTO Video Outreach camera on his 5” f/5 refractor, with great results on a number of objects. Some of the video work was captured using Steve’s camcorder, so we hope to have some images available soon. We were very impressed with the added functionality of the Stellacam 3 wireless controller, which allowed us to easily acquire a series of long video exposures. Steve and Melissa finished the event by viewing M56 and M57 through the Isengard before locking the observatory at 2 a.m. Melissa took the Isengard motorized focuser home in order to repair some solder connections on the motor control cable.

On Sunday, April 27, we had a successful Spring Work Session at GNTO. Ten people volunteered, including Ray Collins, Pete Eschman, Dee Friesen, Mike Kernodle, Melissa Kirk, Charlie Mullen, Gordon Pegue, Mike Roth, Bill Wallace, and Steve Welch. Alan Scott also contributed on Saturday by scraping loose paint from the eves of the main dome. The event was well organized by Bill Wallace, who made sure we accomplished all major tasks including weeding the observing field and other site areas, as well as cleaning the guest trailer and Ortega Building. Other repairs to the Ortega Building included installing a new storm door, replacing damaged roof shingles, and hanging one of two window blinds. We also got most of the bench seats around the main dome ready for a new coat of stain. A big thanks go out to all those who helped to spruce up our observatory!

May 3 is our next “New Moon” observing opportunity at GNTO, serving as a local option to the event at Chaco Canyon. Our next GNTO Training session is on May 10. This event focuses on techniques for asteroid observation and occultation monitoring, so there will be something new for everyone.

Training starts at 7:45 p.m. (just before sunset) with our “Introduction to GNTO and the Isengard Telescope” which covers most of the GNTO equipment from the Isengard 16” reflector down to our 6” and 16” loaner Dobsonian scopes. After this, we will cover techniques for asteroid observation and occultation monitoring, including simulating an occultation and observing several asteroids.

June 7 marks the start of our Summer GNTO schedule, so we only meet at GNTO for “New Moon” events. Throughout the summer, secondary observing events are scheduled for the Oak Flat Picnic grounds in the Manzano Mountains south of Tijeras.

Steve Welch plans to have our CCD imaging equipment ready in our 10-foot dome whenever conditions permit. This is a great chance to learn about the imaging process and take some images of your own. We will have the comfortable Robert Ortega Building open and our Guest Trailer available for coffee, hot chocolate and any snacks you might want to share. We’ve got a bunch of great equipment waiting for you at GNTO, so plan your trip to GNTO soon. Why wait?

GNTO committee meetings are open to any interested TAAS members, and they provide a great way to get more involved with your observatory. Our next scheduled meeting is June 5. We meet every other month at 6:30 p.m. at JB’s Restaurant on Eubank just north of I-40. If you have questions about GNTO, please contact me (Peter Eschman, gnto@taas.org, phone 873-1517).

I hope to see you soon at your observatory.
**Astronomical League Corner**

Bev Firth, Astronomical League Correspondent

TAAS members now can join the Astronomical League as members of an affiliated club. Previously one would have to pay $35.00 per year to join as a member-at-large. Now we can join for only $7.50 per year!

What will joining Astronomical League do for me? For starters, you will receive the “Reflector” quarterly magazine delivered to your home. This magazine is written for amateur astronomers by amateur astronomers. It has articles, cartoons, poetry, book reviews, League business, and information about League services. You can also take advantage of a 10% discount through the League’s Book Service. You can even see your name in a national magazine! You can do this by completing any of the Observing Clubs such as the Messier Club, Binocular Messier Club, Deep Sky Binocular Club, Hershel 400, Sunspotter Club, Meteor Club, Arp Peculiar Galaxy Club, Double Star Club, or Lunar Club. Whatever your interest, there is probably an Observing Club. Complete the requirements and you will receive a pin and Certificate of Achievement as well as have your name listed in the “Reflector.”

Finally, there is the annual National Convention, “ALCON,” held in different regions of the country, as well as regional conventions. In both, you have access to the best and brightest names in amateur astronomy. This year the ALCON is in Des Moines, Iowa, on July 18-19. A sampling of the scheduled speakers includes: J. Kelly Beatty from *Sky and Telescope*, Jason D. Rhodes, NASA/JPL, Cal Tech, and Robert L. Gent, International Dark-Sky Association, just to name a few.

To join the Astronomical League, send a check made out to TAAS for $7.50 to P.O. Box 50581, Albuquerque NM, 87181-0581. Questions, please contact Bev Firth at bevfirthrn@msn.com.

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**Dark Sky SIG**

David Penasa

IDA 20th Anniversary Annual Meeting

Registration early-bird deadline is May 8, 2008.

Join the International Dark-Sky Association (IDA), June 8—10 at Loews Ventana Canyon Resort in Tucson, Arizona, as it celebrates 20 years of preserving and protecting our nighttime environment through quality outdoor lighting.

Keynotes include renowned science writer Timothy Ferris, Chief Technology Officer at Philips Lumileds, Dr. George Craford, and famed sleep and dream specialist Dr. Rubin Naiman, co-author with Dr. Andrew Weil.

Other talks and topics include:

**Safety and Security:**

- John Fitzpatrick, Department of Homeland Security, US Border Patrol, Tucson Sector
- Lisa Reed, Department of Homeland Security, US Border Patrol, Tucson Sector
  - “Improving Security using CPTED without light pollution”

**Lighting, Design and Energy:**

- Christopher Baddiley, Institution of Lighting Engineers (UK)
  - “Towards Understanding Sky Glow” complete ILE paper presented in proceedings
- Chris Elvidge, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration,
  - “Changes in the DMSP Satellite Readings at Night and What They Mean for Lighting Pollution and Energy Usage”
- Michael Siminovitch, California Lighting Technology Center, on Occupancy Sensors
- Bill Hein, Visionaire Lighting LLC, “HID Lamps and Dark Sky Friendly Technology”
- Panel "City of Ann Arbor, LED Retrofit": Mike Bergren, City of Ann Arbor; Bob Hahn, Luneco Technologies; Peter Hochstein, Relume Technologies

**Ordinances:**

- Mario Di Sora, IDA Italy, "The Italian Protocol: Interactions with Industry and Government"
- Panel: Jack Sales, IDA California; Debra Norvil, Resident, City of Homer Glen, IL; Keith Krueger, IDA Pinal County; Cindy Luong Cassidy, Green Earth Lighting
- Olga M. Ramos, GIS Analyst, USDA Forest Service San Juan, PR, “Puerto Rico: the Shining Star of the Caribbean and what this means to the Environment”

**Community Participation and Night Sky Inspirations:**

- Nathan Tyler, Founder, Lights Out San Francisco
- Connie Walker, National Optical Astronomy Observatory (NOAO), GLOBE at Night 2007 Results and International Year of Astronomy
- Dr. Paul Bogard, Northland College, “The Narrative of the Night: Using Story to Inspire, Educate, and Raise Awareness”
- Martin Morgan-Taylor, De Montfort University (UK), “Survey Results on Lighting Disturbances, UK Government Department for Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA)”

**Astronomy:**

- Mike Simmons, Astronomers Without Borders and The World At Night Photo Gallery
- John Jardin Goss, Astronomical League Secretary, “Confronting Light Pollution: A Problem Not to Be Ignored”
- Derek McNally, Honorary Research Fellow at the University of Hertfordshire (UK), “Current Threats to Astronomy Excluding Light Pollution”

For registration and more information see [http://www.darksky.org/mc/page.do?sitePageId=55062&orgId=idsa](http://www.darksky.org/mc/page.do?sitePageId=55062&orgId=idsa), or contact agm@darksky.org. Student rates and scholarships are available by contacting agm@darksky.org.
Donations to TAAS

General: United Way, Darrell Eidson, Gwinn Hall
Education: Bosque Farms School
GNTO: Darrell Eidson
Dark Sky: Dee Freisen
Science Fair: Accent Windows
Cosmic Carnival: Jewel Karpel, Dee Freisen, Smart Use LLC, Cash

Welcome to New and Returning TAAS Members

Teddy, Michael, and Jan Kring
Marilyn Javitt
Q. Brian and Andre Miller
Mark and Darlene Nagrodsky

Special Memberships
Did you know that special TAAS membership categories are only half the regular membership fee?

Members of the military, students (K—12), and teachers can become members of TAAS for just $15 a year. See the last page of this newsletter for more information.

Monthly Membership Report
April 2008

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<th>Membership</th>
<th>Current Month</th>
<th>Past Month</th>
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<td>Total Members</td>
<td>325</td>
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Location, Location, Location

• Chaco Canyon
6185’ elevation
Latitude: 36° 01’ 50”N
Longitude: 107° 54’ 36”W
36.03° -107.91°
36° 1.83’ -107° 54.60’

• Oak Flat
7680’ elevation
Latitude: 34° 59’ 48”N
Longitude: 106° 19’ 17”W
34.99° -106.32°
34° 59.80’ -106° 19.28’

• UNM Campus Observatory
5180’ elevation
Latitude: 35° 5’ 29”N
Longitude: 106° 37’ 17”W
35.09° -106.62°
35° 5.48’ -106° 37.29’

To convert from Degrees, Minutes, Seconds:
Divide seconds by 60, then add minutes, then divide by 60 again.
For security reasons, GNTO location is available by request only, so please contact Pete Eschman for GNTO information.

Clarification of New Member and Renewal Policy
Renewal notices will be mailed out one month before expiration date. Renewals and new members will be dated on the first of next month no matter when during the month they arrive. This will help with the database reports and queries.

There will also be no grace period for renewals. Please make sure that you send in renewal information and your check before the expiration date. Renewal of magazines and new subscriptions will be sent in twice a month. All checks are to be made out to “TAAS”. Thank you for your attention to this important issue. If you have any questions or special needs pertaining to membership and/or magazine subscriptions, contact the Treasurer, Dan Clark at treasurer@taas.org.

Editor’s Note
Please note that the deadline for the next issue of the Sidereal Times is Friday, May 30. Please e-mail text as an attachment, preferably in Microsoft Word. Please do not embed photos in text. Attach photos and illustrations separately. The e-mail address for the newsletter editor is editor@taas.org.
The game strayed (the distraction was working) as I listened intently. After more pool and refreshments, I told him it was a bad idea to drive 500 miles by himself and I had better go along so he didn’t get lost. It’s amazing how courage comes up when you’ve had a little too much to drink (self-inviting). After thinking for about 32 ½ seconds, he agreed. Later in the week, he e-mailed the organizer and asked if someone else could come with him. They said it would be fine, and that’s how I ended up going.

Shane, Becky, Gordon and I headed out of Edgewood on April 2 and arrived in a little town called Pecos, Texas. We found a Tex-Mex restaurant that actually had pretty good food (no green chile, darn) and stayed at a Motel 6 with short beds.

The next day we left Pecos at 9:00 a.m. and arrived at Ft. McKavett around 2:00 p.m. We then headed for the little town of Menard that had the biggest hamburgers (Texas style) I’ve seen. Driving up to the Fort was really neat. It was built in 1852 to protect settlers from local Indians and Mexican soldiers. The remains of the fort along with many of the restored buildings made you feel like it was alive. We stayed in the enlisted men’s barracks. It’s amazing how the people at the time lived. This fort was made up of mostly Buffalo soldiers and their officers. Shane took me on a private tour and pointed out many of the artifacts. They have signs all around the area describing what went on back when the fort was active. There is a visitor’s center with an interesting museum.

The club had several activities. We enjoyed a potluck dinner, went to a working ranch

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**STAR PARTIES?…A MUST!!**

Larry Cash

Fort McKavett, April 2, 2008

It all started several months ago with Shane and Becky Ramotowski asking Gordon Pegue to join them at the Johnson Space Center Astronomical Society Get Together. It’s not a private star party, but it’s not well published either because of limited facilities.

Gordon was by for some needed refreshments, to play pool and to get away from the week’s stress. As I was beating the heck out of him at 8-ball, he started to distract me by telling of a star party called Fort McGavern, or Fort McKavern, or maybe it was Fort McKavett (I never got it right and he liked correcting me). As he talked, my

The club had several activities. We enjoyed a potluck dinner, went to a working ranch

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continued on page 9
### June 2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sunday</th>
<th>Monday</th>
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<td>ATM SIG Meeting</td>
<td>GNTO Committee Meeting</td>
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<td>Sidereal Times Deadline</td>
<td>General Meeting/Picnic, Oak Flat Star Party/Messier SIG</td>
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### Notes


GNTO = General Nathan Twining Obs.

GNTO Training = GNTO Observing and Training

GNTO NM = New Moon Premium Observing Night

UNM = University of New Mexico Observatory. Call the TAAS hotline @254-8227, or the UNM hotline @277-1446 to confirm, or unm_coordinator@taas.org.

ATM = Amateur Telescope Making. Call Michael Pendley for information @ 296-0549, or atm@taas.org.

P & A = UNM Physics and Astronomy Building, Corner of Lomas and Yale

Blue = Non-TAAS events

Saturday, May 17, 2008
7:00 P.M.
Regener Hall
University of New Mexico
(See map, back page)

**Lasers in the Sky**

**Dr. Ylva Pihlstrom**

Department of Physics and Astronomy
University of New Mexico
TAAS BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING  
April 17, 2008
University of New Mexico Physics and Astronomy Building

MEETING MINUTES

Directors present: Bob Hufnagel, Ryan Demares, Charlie Mullen, Bob Havlen, Pete Eschman, Gordon Pegue, Tom Davies, Larry Cash, Dee Friesen (President), Dan Clark (Treasurer), Melissa Kirk (Secretary)

Directors absent: Bill Firth (excused), Steve Welch (excused), Dick Fate (Vice President, excused)

Additional TAAS member present: Ray Collins

The meeting was called to order at 7:03 p.m.

There are no corrections to the March Board meeting minutes.

Executive Report

TAAS members can obtain training to operate the telescopes at the Museum of Natural History for the Starry Night events. The Starry Night events are not official TAAS events.

Program Report

Dick Fate has scheduled guest speakers for the May, July, August, September, October, and November 2008 general meetings. The June general meeting will be held during the Oak Flat event on June 28. Dick has scheduled Sid Gutierrez for a meeting in the fall.

Treasurer’s Report

Account balances as of the end of March

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<td>Total Expenses for March 2008</td>
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<td>Total Income for March 2008</td>
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E-mail to taas.org

There are problems with several domains sending e-mail to taas.org. We are seeing problems with Comcast, MSN/Hotmail, Yahoo, SWCP, and some Gmail accounts. Affected board members are urged to obtain secondary e-mail accounts, or send e-mail directly to the recipient instead of using taas.org addresses. We hope to have these e-mail problems resolved soon.

Committee Reports

Education

Bob Hufnagel would like to have more than one school star party (SSP) per month and wants to have more than the same six or eight volunteers who normally volunteer for SSPs. Bob thinks we should be using the Astro Lab inflatable planetarium more often. We have one SSP for next year which will use the Astro Lab.

The Supernovae Toolkit will ship on May 27. A model of the solar system from the Night Sky Network will be on display at the Cosmic Carnival.

GNTO

There was a committee meeting on April 3. We are hoping for a successful spring work party on April 27 and will discuss occultation imaging on May 10 at GNTO. We received the wireless controller for the video camera. The new focuser for the Isengard Telescope was ordered but has not yet arrived. See the GNTO section of the newsletter for more detailed information.

Membership

a. Bill Firth is working on name tags. There is a software program for name tags on Dan’s computer.
b. Astronomical League (AL) membership dues are prorated according to the time of the year when the payments are mailed to the League. The maximum dues are $7.50. For the sake of simplicity, TAAS charges its members $7.50 for AL membership regardless of the membership renewal date. The result is that there is a small positive balance of AL membership dues in the TAAS treasury. Dan asked the Board what to do about the small positive balance. The Board decided not to make any changes to the current procedure of collecting funds.

Web Site

The Web site action team met last April 14. They discussed options for hosting the Web site. Dee has set a goal of completing the new Web site by June 1.

TAAS Store

Dave Downs was not available to present the TAAS store status. He will present the status at the May Board meeting.

Old Business

a. Former TAAS president Ray Collins reported on the mirror blanks that were donated to TAAS several years ago. He agreed to continue storing the blanks for TAAS. Dee is appointing an action team to evaluate the options for the appropriate use of the blanks. The team will report back to the board this fall.
b. TAAS-owned equipment is not now insured. There may be ways to afford a high deductible policy to insure GNTO

continued on page 9
equipment. TAAS member John Chase is an insurance agent and has a copy of our insurance policy. John will investigate the issue further.

**New Business**
The Board adopted a resolution to vote via e-mail. The procedure is as follows:

1) Post the question by e-mail to the BOD for consideration. The e-mail contains information in the subject heading alerting BOD members that it pertains to a voting issue.
2) Each Director can “weigh in” with their thoughts and state a position on the issue.
3) The TAAS President will set a deadline for the conclusion of this process.
4) The President will tally the results and announce the final count.
5) The Pass or Fail will be tallied just as if the BOD were in session using established procedures for tallying a vote on any issue.
6) The seriousness of the issue must determine the deliberateness we use with this process.
   a. A routine matter can be voted on immediately.
   b. In instances where the issue is non-routine, Directors may wish to hear the comments of other Directors before casting a vote.
   c. If any BOD member views it as a serious issue, the president will call for e-mail discussion first and an e-mail vote second. The President will announce the beginning and the end of the voting session.
7) This matter should be treated as a resolution. The BOD for following years may wish to do something different.

**Events Retrospect**
Several TAAS members attended the Fort McKavett star party, hosted by the Johnson Space Center Astronomical Society.

**Events Prospect**

a. Dee will own the Chaco Canyon event. We can use the VIP campground. Saturday night a Navajo family will prepare a Navajo dinner. John Sefick will be there. G.B. Cornucopia, a park ranger at Chaco Canyon, would like to honor John, because this will be the 10th anniversary of the observatory facilities at Chaco, which John helped to create through his donations and generosity.

b. The American Cancer Society event will be in the Manzano Mountain Retreat on June 3. The April 27 event at GNTO should be added to the calendar.

c. Dee collected $900 for Cosmic Carnival this year. He said the estimated expenses for Cosmic Carnival were approximately $900.

The meeting adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

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*Star Parties?...A Must!! continued from page 6*

for a barbecue dinner for us, and the Friends of Ft. McKavett made a barbecue lunch for us. I think I gained five pounds in three days.

The first night we were treated to one heck of a light show at 2:00 a.m. The lightning was tremendous. It was mostly cloud-to-cloud, but so bright it woke everyone up, and I believe Becky took pictures of it. The second night was absolutely gorgeous; we had unbelievably good clear skies. I used my new 20” scope for the first time under really dark skies, WOW! I saw some familiar objects such as M104, M51, M35, M36, M37, M13 and many others. It is just great without light pollution; they really stand out. I also got to work on my second Herschel 400 list. These are little fuzzy objects, mostly galaxies that are 11-14 magnitude. Oh what sick minds some of us have who find these exciting to see! We eventually went to bed around 4:30 a.m.

The last night we had a star party for 75—100 local residents and ranchers who acted just like little kids (really excited). Some had never seen Saturn, and it seemed everyone’s favorite. The Orion Nebula and Sombrero Galaxy were also favorites. Omega Centauri was a favorite of the astronomers, but that didn’t show up until later in the night.

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**Photos:** Larry Cash

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**Star Parties?...A Must!! continued from page 6**
The telescopes ranged from 3 ½-inch to 25-inch with refractors, SCT’s, reflectors (Dobsonians), homebuilt and store-bought. At least a half dozen scopes were doing CCD imaging (shooting pictures), and two people brought only cameras. Another flavor was the binocular chairs of a few members. Everyone was very proud of their scopes and were more than willing to share their knowledge of their hobby.

This was one of my favorite star parties ever. If you haven’t gone to a star party, it’s a must-do. There are two very large star parties I highly recommend. First is the Texas Star Party (TSP) in late spring at the Prude Ranch in Ft. Davis, Texas, and the second is the Oklahoma Star Party, known as the Okie-Tex, in the fall in Kenton, Oklahoma. We are fortunate these are very close to us. Also in the fall, there is the White Sands Star Party in Alamogordo, the Enchanted Skies Star Party in Socorro, and the Rocky Mountain Stare Star Party on the backside of Pike’s Peak in Colorado Springs, Colorado. There are many more listed in the various astronomy magazines (Astronomy magazine, Sky and Telescope, and Amateur Astronomy, etc.)

You meet new folks at these events, and if you go long enough, some actually become friends. You also meet many of the vendors you hear about and, believe it or not, you might get lost looking up at really dark skies. The constellations are difficult to make out when numerous stars (usually obscured by light pollution) become visible.

I’ll be at Okie-Tex this fall, and I hope I’ll see you there!

TAAS Help Wanted May 2008

TAAS needs people to assist with the following areas. If you are interested contact Dee Friesen or any other TAAS Board member. Contact info for all BOD members is on page 11.

General Meeting Planning — Identify speakers, activities and events for the monthly TAAS meetings.

Contact Dick Fate

Education — Participate in the TAAS Educational Outreach Program by attending school star parties.

Contact Bob Hufnagel

GNTO Committee — Join the committee and receive training to become a GNTO Key Holder

Contact Pete Eschman

Membership — Assist with the conduct of the TAAS membership program. This includes procedures to track membership, identification of reasons for nonrenewal of membership and promotion of TAAS membership.

Contact Bill Firth

Observing — Identify significant observing events for TAAS members and events to present to the public. Creation of observing contests and observing lists for members to complete to receive TAAS awards.

Contact Steve Welch

Membership Survey — Create a survey of the entire membership to identify the interests, desires, critiques and thoughts of the membership concerning the activities and events of the organization.

Contact Dee Friesen

Social Events — Assist with the planning and conduct of TAAS social events.

Contact Diane Murray

Web Site — Assist with the planning and design for a new TAAS Web site to include email procedures and other electronic communications.

Contact Dee Friesen

International Year of Astronomy planning — Assist with the planning of TAAS events for the IYA.

Contact Dee Friesen
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The Sidereal Times
May 2008

The Official Newsletter of The Albuquerque Astronomical Society
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**MEMBERSHIP:** You may request a membership application by sending e-mail to membership@taas.org or calling (505) 254-TAAS(8227). 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 a teacher, student (grades K-12), or military membership. Additional family members may join for $5/each (teacher, student and family memberships are not eligible to vote on society matters). New member information packets can be downloaded from the Web site or requested from the TAAS Membership Services Director at membership@taas.org. 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 at the next meeting.

**MAGAZINES:** Discount magazine subscriptions to *Sky and Telescope* and *Astronomy* 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.

**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, $7 for business card size. The newsletter editor reserves the right to include and/or edit any article or advertisement. E-mail attachments in Microsoft Word, 11 point Palatino, justified, no indent at paragraph beginning, one space between paragraphs is preferred. ASCII and RTF are acceptable. One column is approximately 350 words. Contact the Newsletter Editor at editor@taas.org for more information.

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**TAAS LIBRARY:** Please contact the Librarian at librarian@taas.org or 890-8122 to check out a book or make a contribution.

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