While playing around with my CCD one night, I was rather startled to see this image. It is a 2-minute exposure. I think the streaks are running lights on an aircraft, and the tail section got exposed when a strobe on the aircraft went off. Note faint galaxy lower right.

—Dan Richey

I SHOT THIS IMAGE December 5 using a Meade 12-inch LX200 at 3.3 operating as a remote-controlled telescope over GoToMyPC in my back yard. The software used was Sky Level 6 with Orchestrate and CCDSoft. The next evening was overcast, so a follow-up was not possible.

I sent my images to Dr. Eileen V. Ryan, Director of the 2.4-meter Telescope at New Mexico Tech’s Magdalena Ridge Observatory. Dr. Ryan responded as follows:

I had Bill [Dr. Ryan’s husband, Bill Ryan] take a look at your images-- he didn’t find a known asteroid in that location either, so he thinks you may have discovered a Near-Earth asteroid (you were looking in a location that may have been overlooked by the survey programs). Unfortunately, the asteroid was moving very fast, so without immediate follow up (i.e., more astrometry right away), it may have been lost (bummer!). Bill is still checking-- I’ll let you know if he finds out anything more. Good work, though!

I also reported the observation to the Minor Planet Center (MPC) and received an acknowledgement of the report.

TAAS Member Photographs Possible New Earth-Crossing Asteroid from Back Yard

John Sefick

I SHOT THIS IMAGE December 5 using a Meade 12-inch LX200 at 3.3 operating as a remote-controlled telescope over GoToMyPC in my back yard. The software used was Sky Level 6 with Orchestrate and CCDSoft. The next evening was overcast, so a follow-up was not possible.

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I also reported the observation to the Minor Planet Center (MPC) and received an acknowledgement of the report.
President’s Message

Winter, Bah Humbug

I DO NOT LIKE WINTER. I never have and most certainly never will. I do not like to be cold. The nights are long; they need to be to allow the multiple warmup periods we all need in the Ortega Building to stay comfortable. On the other hand, the winter night sky is wonderfully bright and interesting.

The good thing about our winter is that it is slightly shorter than our summer by about three days. This is because, as passengers on board our planet, we are at the perihelion (which I finally learned to spell) of our yearly trip around the sun. As Kepler informed us, our orbit is elliptical and we move faster around the sun in our winter than in our summer. Unfortunately, the slight difference does not seem to improve my ability to enjoy winter.

For those of us who like numbers, the facts are not real impressive. At aphelion, the tangential velocity of the earth around the sun is 105,448 kilometers/hour (65,522 miles/hour). At perihelion we speed up to 109,033 kilometers/hour (67,750 miles/hour). This is a grand difference of 1,228 kilometers/hour (763 miles/hour). Can you feel the difference?

I have discovered a better way to observe the winter sky is to look at it upside down. Rather than try and stand on my head, I went to the southern hemisphere. There it is summer in January and most importantly warm. The sky rearranges itself so that it is upside down without me standing on my head. It is always interesting to consider where we are on our planet and attempt to visualize the geometry of the situation. In my flying career, we called this “situational awareness.” So, when observing down south, my sandal clad feet are pointing toward your cold feet in your muck-a-lucks. Rigel rules over Betelgeuse, and the sword and M42 point up. No problem. In a telescope it looks the same. After all, who really thinks about images being upside down when we look through our telescopes?

Well, enough winter folly. Remember the real advantage of our current winter location in the orbit about the sun is that it brings us to January 10, 2008 and the TAAS Perihelion Banquet. Plan to attend. You may even win a door prize. See you at Perihelion, but hold on, we are accelerating!

Happy New Year.

OBSERVE – EDUCATE – HAVE FUN

January Musings

THERE ARE CERTAIN months during the observing year that always bring me a pleasant frame of mind. July is one of these, with the great lunar eclipse of 1982, the occultation of 28 Sagittari by Saturn in 1989, the great total eclipse of 1991, and the Jupiter comet crash of 1994. Then there are months that, well, I just associate with lost causes. Sadly, January is one of those, with many Quadrantid meteor showers snowed out, but mostly what dooms January is Comet Kohoutek in 1974.

That previous November, I faithfully awoke before dawn each day to make magnitude estimates of what was supposed to be the Comet of the Century, due in January. I kept a little notebook just for this. Kohoutek drifted though the stars of Virgo, mimicking Messier 13. When I got home just before Christmas, Kohoutek was too close to the Sun to observe—from Earth, that is. Around December 29, astronauts aboard some forgotten space ship other than Apollo reported Kohoutek, now a few degrees from the Sun, to be “huge, brilliant, with a big tail.” “Brighter than Venus. Golden yellow! Wow!”

By January 6, I was home in Huntington, New York, on winter break from college. Day after day, New York was hit by bad weather from late December to early January. Finally, it cleared! As twilight faded, I watched Channel 7, Eyewitness TV News. Weatherman Tex Antoine came on. He started his broadcast as follows: “Boy have we got a com-
WE HAD A GOOD Training and Observing event on November 22. Will Ferrell opened the facility, with Melissa Kirk serving as backup for opening duties. Dale Murray conducted the training session and served as host for the Isengard telescope. Robert Williams also helped with the Isengard later in the evening. Will said they had thin cirrus clouds for much of the night. Folks were treated to a breathtaking sunset with sunlit clouds against the profile of the Ladrone Mountains. There were 10 people attending and 5 scopes in operation for this event.

Despite the thin clouds, constellations around the zenith were mostly clear, and good views were noted for the Perseus Lenticular (NGC 1023), the Owl cluster in Cassiopeia (NGC 457), M31, and M33. A sucker hole opened that allowed the viewing of the Silver Dollar galaxy in Sculptor (NGC 253) along with the nearby globular cluster NGC 288. When Orion finally rose above the muck after 11 p.m. they ratcheted up the magnification to over 200 for an awesome show of M42. Most folks left by midnight, although Will opted to spend the night in the Ortega Building, enjoying the comfort of his mattress and heavy sleeping bag.

By the way, I just checked on the spelling of the Ladrones and ran across this tidbit of information from The Place Names of New Mexico by Robert Julyan: “Sierra Ladrones, Spanish ‘thieves mountains’ named because Navajo and Apache raiders of the settlement along the Rio Abajo would take stolen stock here, safe from pursuit in the mountains’ steep and treacherous canyons. Later, non-Indian rustlers and highwaymen used these rugged mountains as a hideout, and legends abound of treasure still hidden here. Often called simply Los Ladrones. Highest elevation, 9,210; Ladron Peak is 9,143 ft.” So, now you know where to hunt for your missing stuff.

ON NOVEMBER 29, we had a good “New Moon” observing event. Again, Will Ferrell opened the facility. This time Dale Murray was on call as a backup for opener duties, but his help was not needed, so he dodged the long drive to GNTO. Ray Collins served as host for the Isengard telescope, and Melissa Kirk helped with the Isengard later in the evening. Will reported that the evening started off looking bad, but ended with very good conditions. Thanks to Carl Frisch, the observatory access road was freshly graded, as were portions of the nearby Twinning Lane Right-of-Way. Steve Welch made a trip down to GNTO to open the valve on the propane tank, located under the locking tank cover. Thanks to the propane supply, a cozy Ortega building was enjoyed by all throughout the evening. There were a total of 13 people attending and 7 telescopes in operation.

Although the sky was clear early in the evening, lots of humidity made for poor viewing. As the night progressed, humidity dropped and the viewing improved, resulting in excellent transparency. Most targets looked better than they did the previous weekend. Observing targets included M31 and M33, with M33 showing a faint but distinguishable spiral arm. The Silver Dollar galaxy (NGC 253) was much brighter. Good views included a galaxy cluster in Fornax, with 7 galaxies in a single field of view. Toward the end of the observing session, targets included Radio Galaxy Fornax A (NGC 1316) and the Fornax Barred Spiral (NGC 1365). Will and Melissa closed the facility around 12:30 a.m.

OUR MOST RECENT GNTO Committee meeting took place on December 18, with Ray Collins, Pete Eschman, Will Ferrell, Dee Friesen, Dale Murray, and Steve Welch attending. We changed two task area assignments, with Bill Wallace turning over Buildings and Grounds to Will, while Bill takes over the Events task area from Dale. Pete and Steve continue to share the Operations task area responsibilities. After we established duty assignments for the next few events, we turned to discussion of some GNTO improvements. Steve will purchase an inexpensive nebula filter from Owl Products. The filter will reside in the case along with the eyepieces used on the GNTO loaner telescopes. In the months to come, we plan to relocate the GNTO storage batteries and arrange to install a permanent monitoring/control computer along with our weather station.

Will is bringing the Observing contingent of the Messier SIG down to GNTO for four Messier object observing sessions. They plan to observe roughly one quarter of the complete Messier catalog at each of the four yearly meetings at GNTO. Word is that Barry Spletzer will be asked to produce the quarterly observing object lists.

OUR NEXT THREE EVENTS are “New Moon” observing opportunities scheduled for December 27 and January 24, while a Training and Observing event is slated for January 31.

Steve Welch heads up our CCD imaging program. If you are interested in taking part in this program, Steve asks that you contact him at 505-866-7668 to make arrangements. Steve can have our CCD imaging equipment ready in the 10-foot dome, so you can learn about the imaging process and take some images of your own.

We will have the heated 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. We meet every other month at 6:30 p.m. at JB’s Restaurant on Eubank just north of I-40. Our next committee meeting is February 19. 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.
TAAS 2009
PERIHELION BANQUET

Saturday 10 January 2009
1800 (6:00 pm) MST
MCM Eleganté Hotel, 2020 Menaul Blvd NE
Albuquerque

TAAS is providing ++ Room Setup ++ Door Prizes ++
++ Election of Officers++
Attendees provide ++ Cash Bar ++ Dinner Buffet
($30 per person)

Dinner Buffet Menu
Fresh Green Salad
Fresh Fruit Ambrosia Salad
Tortellini Salad
Roasted Garlic Mashed Potatoes
Sliced Herb Roasted Prime Rib of Beef
Chicken Marsala
Holiday Desserts
Gourmet Coffee and Iced Tea

Keynote Speaker
Dr. Dave Westpfahl
NM TECH, VLA, MRO

“The Value of Astronomy to Society”

RSVP \text{sylsantos@aol.com}  
NLT 6 Jan 09  
269-3461

More details at www.TAAS.org

Perihelion Banquet
Keynote Speaker: Dave Westpfahl

THE KEYNOTE SPEAKER at the TAAS Perihelion Banquet is
an experienced astronomer who believes deeply in the need for the
public to understand how and why scientists are spending taxpay-
ers’ money.

Dr. Dave Westpfahl is a friend of TAAS and in the past has given
many interesting presentations to the organization. He is the chair of
the Physics Department at New Mexico Tech.

Dave conducts research at the Very Large Array Telescope (VLA)
and is involved with the development of the Interferometer Tele-
scope at the Magdalena Ridge Observatory. He is currently investi-
gating the dynamics and kinematics of nearby galaxies

Dave is well known for his ability to communicate science to the
public. At the Perihelion Banquet he will present a nontechnical talk
entitled “The Value of Astronomy to Society.”

Win a Free Book on Astronomy

THE TAAS BOARD of Directors has mailed a membership
survey to all regular TAAS members. The participation of all
TAAS members in this effort is encouraged and appreciated.
To motivate you to participate, TAAS is giving away to some
lucky participant a copy of the astronomy book \text{ASTRONOM-
ICA}. It has a wonderful introduction by Sir Patrick Moore and
is 20 pounds of interesting and valuable information. Particu-
larly interesting are the constellation pages in the second half
of the book. Details of the book are on the TAAS Web site.

In the packet that was mailed to TAAS members are two tick-
ets. Keep one ticket and enclose the second with your return
mailing. A winner will be drawn at the banquet. If you did not
get a mailing, go to the TAAS Web site (www.TAAS.org) and
click on the monthly meeting page. You will be directed to the
survey page, where you can download a copy of the survey.
Follow the instructions given to return your survey and to en-
ter the contest. The winner’s name will be drawn at the Perihe-
lion Banquet. You do not need to be present to win.
Donations to TAAS

General
Jose Rodriguez
United Way

Education
Elaine Kroska
Route 66 Elementary School

GNTO
Elaine Kroska

DARK SKY
Jose Rodriguez
Charles and Nancy Wohlenberg

Welcome to New and Returning TAAS Members

KATHLEEN KEAMY
JOSE RODRIGUEZ
CHARLES AND NANCY WOHNLEBERG

Note from Treasurer

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.

Location, Location, Location

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

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

• UNM Campus Observatory•
5180’ elevation
Latitude Longitude
35˚ 5’ 29”N 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.

Membership Services

for:
• Membership Inquiries
• Events Information
• Volunteer Opportunities

Contact Membership at membership@taas.org

Editor’s Note

Please note that the deadline for the next issue of the Sidereal Times is Friday, January 23. Please e-mail text as an attachment, preferably in Microsoft Word or OpenOffice.org Writer. Please do not embed photos in text. Attach photos and illustrations separately. The e-mail address for the newsletter editor is editor@taas.org.

Monthly Membership Report

December 2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Membership</th>
<th>Current Month</th>
<th>Past Month</th>
<th>Change</th>
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<td>Regular</td>
<td>187</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>-3</td>
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<td>Educational</td>
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<td>7</td>
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<tr>
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<td>34</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Members</td>
<td>285</td>
<td>289</td>
<td>-4</td>
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## January 2009

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sunday</th>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>Tuesday</th>
<th>Wednesday</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>ATM SIG Meeting</td>
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<td>ATM SIG Meeting</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Pajarito Elementary School Star Party</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Board of Directors Meeting</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Board of Directors Meeting</td>
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<td>27</td>
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<td>28</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### No-Rules Astrophoto Show

**continued from page 1**

You must be a TAAS member.

Maximum entries: 3. Each entry must be matted, framed, and ready to hang.

Maximum frame size: 11 x 14 inches.

If you want to participate in a photo exchange with another entrant, mark one of your entries on the back for exchanging.

As each month nears, I’ll post a few interesting targets and some tips for making photos.

**A few dates to remember as possible photo ops.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>January 2009</th>
<th>February 2009</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 The first sunrise of the IYA 2009 (International Year of Astronomy)</td>
<td>10 The largest Full Moon of 2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Venus near the Moon</td>
<td>30 Venus near the Moon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Moon near Pleiades</td>
<td>4 Moon near Pleiades</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Full Moon</td>
<td>9 Full Moon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 Zodiacal Light (it’s tougher than you think)</td>
<td>12 Zodiacal Light (it’s tougher than you think)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23-24 Mercury, Moon, Mars, Jupiter conjunction (morning)</td>
<td>27 Venus near Moon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27 Venus near Moon</td>
<td>Ongoing 2009</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Star trails

Show will be held in November at a venue to be announced later.

We will award a People’s Choice Award, two runners-up, and one Judges’ Choice Award.

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continued on page 9
ELECTION OF OFFICERS

**Election of TAAS Officers for 2009**

The TAAS Nominations Committee has prepared a slate of recommended officers for the 2009 calendar year. The nominations are:

- President – Dee Friesen
- Vice President – Dick Fate
- Secretary – Melissa Kirk
- Treasurer – Dan Clark

TAAS members can participate in the election in two different ways. First, attend the Perihelion Banquet on Saturday 10 January 2009 at 6:00 p.m. and vote in person. Second, you can go to the TAAS Web site (www.TAAS.org), print the proxy ballot, and return it to the address on the ballot.

Your participation is requested in this important matter.

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GNTO = General Nathan Twining Observatory

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

SIG = Special Interest Group

TBA = to be announced

Blue Italics = Non-TAAS events
TAAS BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
December 4, 2008
Home of Dick and Susie Fate

MEETING MINUTES

Directors present: Melissa Kirk (Secretary), Dee Friesen (President), Gordon Pegue, Steve Welch, Pete Eschman, Dan Clark (Treasurer), Dick Fate (Vice President), Larry Cash, Bob Hufnagel, Bob Havlen, Tom Davies

Directors absent: Charlie Mullen (excused)

The meeting was called to order at 8:00 p.m.

There are no corrections to the November Board meeting minutes.

Executive Report
1. There will be an astronomy planning meeting next Saturday at Explora Science Center. The Center is also preparing to have telescopes set up in the lobby early in 2009. The purpose of the event will be to teach the public about telescopes.
2. A packet will be sent to the membership approximately one week from now. The packet will contain a membership survey along with the ballots for the election of the Officers for 2009.
3. Astronomy 101 is being reinvented. TAAS should have a list of Fabulous 50 objects and a mentor program. The Board discussed a potential meeting site for Astronomy 101.

Treasurer’s Report

Account balances as of the end of November:
- General Fund: $18,180.11
- GNTO Fund: 6,405.86
- Education Fund: 5,843.96
- Dark Sky S.I.G. Fund: 5,457.23
- Special Projects Fund: 400.00
- Science Fair Fund: 34.35
- Cosmic Carnival Fund: 134.06
- Astronomical League Reserve: 37,513.42
- Total Expenses for November 2008: 285.43
- Total Income for November 2008: 656.26

Committee Reports

Education
Bob Havlen reported that the Night Sky Network is working on a new toolkit about asteroids.

Budget
The Board investigated options for budgeting, because TAAS has sufficient funds that have not been spent. Dee suggested purchasing a speaker system and signs for general meetings, and keeping a storage box in Regener Hall.

The Board conversed about options for budgeting for the newsletter, the telescope loaner program, and the hotline number. For printing of the newsletter, electronic files are sent to a company in Florida. The 254-TAAS information hotline gets 5 calls per month and 8 to 9 hangups. Bob Havlen motioned to have $250 reappropriated from the prizes budget to the hotline budget. The motion was approved by a vote of 6 for to 5 against.

The budget for 2009 was approved by a vote of 10 for to 1 against. Breakdown of each category is excluded in this summary, but the breakdown is included in a spreadsheet given to each Director.

Summary of Approved TAAS 2009 Budget:

Activities Funded Completely from the TAAS General Fund
- General Operations: $1,982
- Membership: 300
- General Meetings: 680
- Perihelion Banquet: 1,050
- Web Site: 115
- Newsletter: 800
- Advertising: 300
- Public Relations: 100
- Astronomy 101: 70
- Amateur Telescope Making Special Interest Group: 70
- Messier Special Interest Group: 70
- TAAS Reserve: 500
- Total for Activities Funded Completely from the TAAS General Fund: 6,037

Activities Funded Partially from the TAAS General Fund
- Education: $320

Total General Fund Budgeted Expenses
- 6,357

Self-Funded Activities
- GNTO: $5,210
- Cosmic Carnival: 1,150
- TAAS Glass Project: 150
- Dark Sky Special Interest Group: 130
- Loaner Telescopes: 200
- Total for Self Funded Activities: 6,840
- Total Budget for All Activities: 13,197

Current TAAS Income into General Fund
- From Memberships: $4,915
- From Donations: 1,283
- Total Income into General Fund: 6,198
- Total General Fund Income – Total General Fund Budgeted Expenses for 2009: $ -159

There is plenty of money in the General Fund, so a shortfall is not an issue.

New Business

Dr. Penelope Boston presented the Board with options for funding opportunities from the New Mexico Space Grant Consortium, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration Experimental Program to Stimulate Competitive Research (EPSCor), and the National Science Foundation.

The New Mexico Space Grant Consortium grants research enhancement awards through several programs. The Consortium issued a call for proposals for the Public Service Program. The funding amounts

continued on page 9
Tips, tricks and other stunts to make astrophotos that rock!

1. Shoot like Paparazzi. This may seem like a no-brainer or a cop-out, and you may think that surely everyone is going to shoot the largest full Moon of the year, the comet of the century, or stalk the conjunction of the decade. But not everyone will have the same idea for composition, foreground subjects, or sky conditions and artistic eye that you do. So just shoot it! Besides, you might be the only one in your area that has a clear sky the night of the big event, and if you don’t go outside and try, that’s a sure way to not get the shot. I practice what I preach. Just look at the archives of my blog at http://infinity.my-expressions.com/.

2. Make photos of atmospheric optics. This may seem like fudging, but some of the most amazing images I’ve seen have been of sky phenomena like sundogs, moonbows, and halos. Don’t count them out because they aren’t exactly considered astrophotography. Because of their dynamic range they are often impossible to capture as you see them. On top of that, anytime you are outside shooting, it gets the creative juices flowing, and that’s always a good thing!

3. Shoot outside your comfort level. Try to photograph something you’ve never tried before. If you keep shooting the same thing over and over, you will of course master it. Just don’t fall into a comfortable rut and not try anything new.

4. Shoot for the memory. Sometimes it’s best to shoot the scene just as it is right in front of your eyes as a documentation of what you saw even though it might not be perfect. Often a snapshot records enough data to stimulate your memory of the event later. While this may or may not make for an award-winning photo, it’s one of the best ways I know to have a keepsake of what you saw.

5. Make your mistakes when they don’t matter. There are going to be times you want to photograph an event that you have had no practice for and you’re only going to get one chance to make a photo of it. An example of this is a dim object (say the ISS) moving through the field of a bright one (like the Moon) and you want to capture the dynamics of the speedy motion of the ISS against a not-so-speedy stellar background. A few nights before showtime, go outside and set up your camera to record the scene at the same time the actual event will occur. Aim your camera at the field the ISS will fly through and frame it in a pleasing way. Now try different f-stops for the designated time of the pass to determine which one is best for the result you want. You can use charts to figure out how long the exposure will be using tick marks on the detailed star charts at Heavens-above.com. The stars will trail a bit if the exposure is over 30 seconds long, so keep this in mind when setting up the shot.

6. Fill the memory card. It’s simply the right thing to do. Don’t scrimp and just take a few photos because you think it’s enough. Delete the ones that don’t turn out, and no one will be the wiser. Save the keepers to print and share. If you’re stacking images, you will need to save every ounce of data possible to make the best compilation. Remember less is not more here. More is more. It’s okay to be greedy; it’s highly recommended.

7. Be inspired by bigger pictures. Look at other photos and make notes of why you like them and how you might make a similar image. Even though you may not have a zillion-megapixel camera or direct access to the Hubble Space Telescope, you can still make killer images with simple point-and-shoot cameras or digital SLR cameras by using ideas from the pros you admire.

8. Turn off the flash. Enough said. Unless you purposely want bloopers and odd reflections, turn it off. The flash unit is only good for about 6 feet maximum, and the Moon is much farther away than that. So turn the darn thing off and save your battery power as a bonus.

9. Hocus focus. Focus is the most difficult aspect of digital astrophotography. Focus manually on a distant object and then lock the focus if possible. Some cameras hunt unsuccessfully for focus because they can’t figure out what you are aimed at in the dark if it is small and dim.

10. Keep it fun! Don’t kill yourself or your camera trying to impress your peers. Do it because you are widening your horizons and growing creatively with your technique and camera. In the end, how much fun you had is truly what matters.

Happy New Year!
TAAS Help Wanted, January

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

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, identify reasons for nonrenewal of membership, and promote TAAS membership.

Contact Dee Friesen.

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.

TAAS 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.

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

Contact Diane Murray.

TAAS Web Site — Assist with the the new TAAS Web site including e-mail 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.

Online Sidereal Times Delivers Big Benefits
Barry Spletzer

In a sweeping move to provide top quality communiques to our members while conserving our precious resources, TAAS is pleased to re-announce the availability of this newsletter the Sidereal Times in full color—online. That’s right, catch the blush of the monthly speaker, the blue eyes and red hair of that cute 6-year-old at the School Star Party, the depth and vibrance of all the full-color illustrations. Online reading also allows you to enlarge for eye comfort and click to most Web addresses instantly.

The catch is that the full-color version is only available at our Web site: www.taas.org. If you prefer to download and read your newsletter on your computer—or print it yourself—rather than receive a paper copy by mail, please notify the TAAS treasurer, Dan Clark, at treasurer@taas.org to have your name removed from the Sidereal Times mailing list. This will provide you with the newsletter of your choice and save TAAS money.

Now that many of our members are taking advantage of this offer, our mailing list is less than required to get a bulk-rate postage discount. The newsletter is now mailed at first-class rates. So, it is more important than ever for you to get your newsletter online. Thanks for your consideration.
# 2008 TAAS Board of Directors/Staff

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<tr>
<th>Position</th>
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<th>Phone</th>
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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.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS: Note that the Sidereal Times is mailed at a first class mail rate. As a result, the newsletter may be forwarded to your new address should you move, or it may not!! Please provide the Treasurer (treasurer@taas.org) with your new mailing address or e-mail address to ensure that you receive your newsletter.

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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