Mentorship Program Begins November 1

THE RECENT TAAS membership survey indicated a need for a mentorship program. This program will pair experienced TAAS members with persons new to astronomy. Together they will complete activities one-on-one promoting a better understanding of astronomy. Dee Friesen will lead the program beginning November 1. Details will be on the TAAS Web site (www.TAAS.org). All TAAS members are encouraged to participate. Interested persons may contact Dee at 856-1593 or president@taas.org.

The Sidereal Times
November 2009

General Meeting News

Explosions in the Sky:
Should we worry about Asteroids?

Mark Boslough
Sandia National Laboratories

THE 1908 TUNGUSKA EVENT was a multi-megaton explosion in Siberia of an asteroid too small to reach the surface. The thermal radiation ignited fires, and the blast wave threw down trees over hundreds of square miles. Now the forest has healed. Only a trained eye can see the remaining signs. If the Tunguska explosion hadn’t been observed the evidence might have never been recognized or believed. Is there geological evidence for older, perhaps more devastating airbursts? Should we worry about them? The answers may come as a surprise.

As a teenager vacationing with his family in Grand Teton National Park, Mark Boslough saw a blindingly bright object streak across the sky. It became known as the Great Daylight 1972 Fireball and was the first event ever recorded by U.S. DoD sensors, which tracked the object as it descended to 53 km above the surface and then rose back into space.

MARK RETAINED interest in impacts as he majored in physics at Colorado State University and did impact physics research as a graduate student at Caltech. He visited Arizona’s Meteor Crater with impact pioneer Gene Shoemaker at about the same time that the first paper was published showing dinosaurs had been wiped out by an asteroid impact.

He joined Sandia National Laboratories in 1983 after obtaining his Ph.D. in applied physics. He has worked in many aspects of impact physics. In 1994 he was a member of a team that gained international recognition for using a supercomputer to predict the effects of the Comet Shoemaker-Levy 9’s impact on Jupiter. His current research focuses on computational modeling of low-altitude airbursts. His work has been the subject of several recent television documentaries in which he joined expeditions to airburst sites in the Sahara Desert and Siberia.

Mark Boslough will speak at the TAAS general meeting November 7.

On the Event Horizon

Mentor Program Begins Sunday, November 1
ATM SIG Meeting Wed., November 4
TAAS Board of Directors Meeting Thurs., November 5
TAAS General Meeting Sat., November 7
Zia Elementary School Star Party Tues., November 10
GNTO New Moon Observing Sat., November 14
ATM SIG Meeting Wed., November 18
Sidereal Times Deadline Fri., November 20
GNTO Observing Sat., November 21

2.....President’s Message, Satellite Observation
3.....GNTO News & Views, LCROSS Results
4.....Placitas, The Perfect Day
5.....TAAS Reports & Notices
6-7..Calendars
8.....Meeting Minutes
9.....Event Reports
10.....Ads, TAAS Help Wanted
11.....TAAS Directors/Staff
Orion, Up and Down

IT IS 0230 MDT and I am over the Four Corners area. I look out the front windscreen of my MD-80 aircraft at an altitude of 37,000 feet. Exactly on the horizon at a bearing of about 120° is a flashing light constantly changing color. It is the rising of the second most familiar constellation in the Northern Hemisphere, Orion. We are observing light originating 773 years ago from the star Rigel.

In a few minutes, the flashing light evolves to a steady bright star. Soon the other prominent features of Orion greet us as we pass just north of Albuquerque. Orion is on its side as the three stars of the belt, and then the sword rises. Finally on the left side appears everyone’s favorite star, Betelgeuse.

Orion is easily recognizable from everywhere on the planet. Up north, it has the familiar appearance with Betelgeuse up high and the sword below the belt. Off to the bottom right is the variable triple star, Rigel. As with the Big Dipper, people unfamiliar with the night sky remember “the three stars in a row.” Often they have told me, “It is winter and the three stars are back in the night sky.” Orion seems to have this ability to capture people’s attention. It certainly has always captured mine.

OVER THE SKIES of Vietnam, at 12° north, it would shine high overhead. On my first visit to Chile at 33° south, I did not initially recognize the constellation. I was alone in a dark field with an unfamiliar sky chart. I saw the Southern Cross to the south and then looked north. On the horizon was this familiar but yet unrecognizable star pattern. I saw the belt, but where was the sword? Soon I saw it pointing up, well above a bright red star. Yes, it was Orion, but this time, I was upside down.

Now that I have had the opportunity to cross the equator many times, Orion has become a familiar beacon in the night sky that can be up in winter and down in summer. Seen from anywhere on the planet, Orion is always three stars in a row with a sword and a bright red and blue star. It can be up or it can be down, but it is always Orion.

Earth Satellite Observing Added at GNTO

Bill Wallace

ON ANY EVENING, there are about 15 relatively bright (mag 4.5 or brighter) satellites passing overhead. To observe them, you don’t need any more equipment than a good timepiece and your eyes.

At a recent meeting of the GNTO Committee, I suggested that we include the observing of earth satellites as an optional activity. I enjoy it as an occasional pursuit and see them float through the field of view of my telescope regularly. One evening at GNTO, Steve Welch and I worked from a list he brought.

For the future, Steve and I will attempt to bring that evening’s list of visible satellites for anyone else to join in. You can get your list from a couple of Web sites: Heavens Above http://www.heavens-above.com/ where satellites of magnitude 4.5 or brighter are listed, or CalSky http://www.calsky.com/ where satellites of any magnitude are listed. Each offers a diagram of how and when the satellite will pass through the sky.

How Likely Are Collisions?

On another, but similar, topic, there was a collision of two satellites a few months ago, and a small flurry of TAAS-L e-mail list discussion about the probability or improbability of such an event ensued. Some maintained that the volume of space in which satellites operate and other factors made it a highly improbable event. I, on the other hand, thought that over a relatively short span of time it had a better than 50% chance of happening. There is a Web site that keeps track of possible collisions. It lists the probability of collision, the minimum distance, which satellites, and when. Whenever I look, there are about three near-collisions per week where the minimum distance is 50 meters or less. One on the list has a 1.3% chance of occurring. The site is http://celestrak.com/SOCRATES/.

IC 1727 and NGC 642 (brighter) with at least 3 other galaxies in the field.
Exposure 10x2 minutes.
Celestron C14 with Hyperstar (f/1.9)

Photo:
Bill Wallace
SEPTEMBER was a busy month for GNTO, with events on the 19th and 26th. The 19th was a New Moon observing opportunity while some of the GNTO regulars were at the Okie-Tex star party. Lance Hurt opened the facility, with Steve Welch as back up, and Bill Wallace as Isengard host. Early clouds cleared by 10 p.m., providing good observing for the twelve in attendance. Observing highlights included watching the Hubble Space Telescope pass overhead, views of a weather balloon, asteroid 3 Juno, and several bright meteors. We closed by midnight.

Our September 26 Fall Equinox event started with the open house, and then settled in for a great potluck dinner in the late afternoon. I opened the facility, with Gordon Pegue as back up. Later, I conducted a training session to introduce folks to GNTO and the Isengard Telescope. I also hosted the Isengard late that evening. Carl Frisch did a nice job of smoothing the road with the road dragger. Becky Ramotowski coordinated the potluck and Mike Roth pitched in to cook the hamburgers on the grill. There were plenty of delicious side dishes to supplement the hamburgers.

After observing got underway, Robert Williams used his green laser and extensive knowledge of sky lore to conduct an “Eye Candy” Sky Tour. Steve Welch ran the imaging gear in our 10-foot dome for a CCD imaging demonstration. Later, Becky helped out with words of encouragement and technical tips on using digital cameras. This was her long awaited “Rain Check” session of Astrophotography Boot Camp.

There were over 40 people at the potluck and around 25 observers later that evening with over 14 telescopes and a few binoculars in use, making this one of our better attended events this year. We had good skies with a number of observers staying well after moonset. I closed up around 4 a.m.

ON OCTOBER 8 and 9, Peter Eschman, Patricia Rose, Steve Welch, Robert Williams, and Shane and Becky Ramotowski gathered at GNTO for the NASA LCROSS lunar impact. We had video equipment recording on three telescopes: the Isengard 16”, Astrophysics 6” refractor, and Ramotowski’s Takahashi reflector. Robert had the GNTO 16” loaner telescope running atop our Video Outreach equatorial platform, using his camera to record the event. We saw no evidence of the impact, but it was wonderful to see all the equipment working, and we all had a good time. Shane and Becky provided breakfast burritos, and Robert offered juice and other snacks to help us get going after sun-up on Friday.

Great sky conditions and a big turnout marked our New Moon observing opportunity on October 17. Will Ferrell was designated to open the facility; however, Steve Welch, arriving early to do some maintenance, opened things up. Bill Wallace served as Isengard telescope host and Steve ran the equipment in the 10-foot dome for a good imaging instruction and demonstration session.

All told, there were over 35 observers and at least 21 telescopes in operation. Kevin McKeown provided an excellent e-mail summary of that night’s observing highlights which included Jupiter, Neptune/Triton, Uranus/Oberon/Titania, bright Gegenschein, 5 nice galaxies in Grus, a variety of fall globular clusters, NGC 253 (Silver Dollar Galaxy), some nice planetary nebulas, UV Ceti, Hind’s Crimson Star, the Rosette Nebula, and Barnard’s Loop. Robert Williams offered a constellation tour. Kevin also reported that Orionid meteors began to show once Orion rose. It was a long, enjoyable night. Will closed up around 9:30 a.m. after catching some rest.

The October 22 GNTO committee meeting was at the Frontier Restaurant on Central. After eating, we moved to a quieter section for our meeting. We had eight attendees, including Larry Cash, Ray Collins, Pete Eschman, Will Ferrell, Dee Friesen, Lance Hurt, Bill Wallace, and Steve Welch.

THE EARLY MORNING of October 9 saw 14 TAAS members and three visitors from California eagerly viewing the nearly overhead Moon for a glimpse of the LCROSS impact. Twelve telescopes pointed up as the time for the event came and went. However, the only impact observed was the pancake that Will Ferrell managed to flip on to the floor of Dee Friesen’s kitchen.

Meanwhile, at GNTO six TAAS members successfully operated three separate video recording efforts during the time period of the event. At GNTO there were no pancakes, only Beck’s burritos. However, no burrito impact reports were received from GNTO.
The Perfect Day

Robert Williams

MY PERFECT DAY—Saturday, October 17—began with a weekend class at CNM, where each Saturday I spend 3½ hours that can sometimes be not so exciting. But this day, it was a good class. After lunch, I went to work for a couple of hours (I know that may not sound like the recipe for a good day, but I really do like what I do). Accomplishing much in the short time I was there, I left work to prepare for a night at GNTO.

As I headed to GNTO, I decided to take the longer, scenic drive through Isleta Reservation, Los Lunas, and Belen. Between Isleta and Los Lunas, I noticed the trees changing colors, a typical fall in New Mexico, but there was something spectacular in it this time. Stopping along the road to take some pictures, I was reminded of how beautiful the state is, how marvellous it is to have this capital of color in our own back yards.

I arrived at GNTO, set up my telescope, and began developing a plan for my observing session. As the sky darkened, more people began to arrive and soon filled the observing field to capacity. The night would prove to be a classic, with mostly very good sky conditions. I began with the brightest object in the sky, Jupiter, and it was putting on quite a show for us this evening. I then moved on to some of my all-time favorites—M13, M57 and M31—and was not disappointed. They looked great in my scope and in other scopes I looked through.

I saw things I had not seen before, such as NGC 7009, the “Saturn Nebula,” and was amazed at how much it looks like Saturn and at the stunning blue color. I will definitely be looking at this again. I also looked at M15, Epsilon Lyre (the Double Double), and the “Dumbbell.” Everything was astounding. It was one of the best nights I have had in some time. Now I would like to share some of the entries in my observing log for that evening.

NGC 7009 “Saturn Nebula”—9:35 p.m., 13.1” Dob with 12.5mm
*This is the first time I have seen this object. It was easily noticed at lower power. I was clearly able to see the bluish color and a little hint of the ring-like appendages that give it its name. With the 12.5mm eyepiece, I was amazed at how much it looked like Saturn, except for the color. It was a spectacular bluish color.*

continued on page 6...
Donations to TAAS

General
BRIGGS ATHERTON
UNITED WAY

Education
NORTH STAR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

GNTO
KURT SANDQUIST
BETH WARD

Dark Sky
TERRY CHAN

Welcome to New and Returning TAAS Members

BRIGGS ATHERTON
STEVEN AND NANCY BALL
TERRY CHAN
KERRY HORTON
JON MILLER
JUSTIN NORRIS
WILLIAM STOKER
BETH WARD

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.

Note from Treasurer

Clarification of 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.

Membership Services

for:
• Membership Inquiries
• Events Information
• Volunteer Opportunities

Contact Bill Firth at membership@taas.org

Editor’s Note

The deadline for the next issue of The Sidereal Times is Friday, November 20.

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

October 2009

Membership Current Past Change
Month Month
Regular 197 189 8
Family 50 50 0
Educational 10 9 1
Total Paid 257 248 9
Honorary 7 7 0
Complimentary 38 38 0
Total Members 302 293 9

Thank You

P.O. Box 50581 Albuquerque, NM 87181

Page 5
**November 2009**

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**...The Perfect Day**, continued from page 4

Jupiter and the Great Red Spot—10:20 p.m., 13.1” Dob with 6mm
WOW! I had looked at Jupiter a few times this evening, but this was the first time I looked at it with this much magnification. I could only see the two closer moons, Io and Europa, but the detail in the planet itself was astonishing, as was the Great Red Spot. I could also make out some detail at the edges of the cloud bands. By far, this was among the best views of Jupiter I have ever had.

Epsilon Lyre “Double Double”—10:30 p.m., 13.1” Dob with 25mm
I was easily able to split the initial double, but even with higher magnification, I was not able to split the second double. I know that Dee will give me a hard time because I am not a big double star person, but I was impressed with this one. The stars were a very bright blue, and much brighter than any other stars in the field of view.

M27 “Dumbbell Nebula”—11:15 p.m., 13.1” Dob with 12.5mm
This is a nice object for darker skies, and it was not disappointing this evening. The nebula was very large and bright. The lobes that give it its name were very evident, and it stood out in the fairly rich field of stars. Again, this was one of the best observations of this object I have had.

M15—11:35 p.m., 13.1” Dob with 12.5mm
This may not be the best globular cluster in the sky, but this evening it was showing all its wonder, and it was definitely holding its own. It was easy to distinguish individual stars toward the edge of the cluster, but the core was a dense ball with no distinguishable individual stars.

THOSE ARE just a few of the entries in my log for this evening. Trust me, everything I looked at was magnificent, and my perfect day ended with a perfect night of observing. I will keep my eyes and my mind open for more of those splendid little events that can add up to another perfect day.
# TAAS General Meeting

**Saturday, November 7**

**7:00 P.M.**

**General Meeting**

**Explosions in the Sky:**
Should We Worry About Asteroids?

**Mark Boslough**, Sandia National Laboratories

Regener Hall, University of New Mexico

(See map, back page)

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**Notes**


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

School Star Party

SIG = Special Interest Group

TBA = to be announced

Blue Italics = Non-TAAS events
### Meeting Minutes

**TAAS Board of Directors Meeting**  
**October 1, 2009**

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

Directors Absent: Robert Williams

The meeting started at 7:05 p.m. There are no corrections to the September 3 Board meeting minutes.

**Program Report:**

Dick Fate reported that the effort to purchase new computers and software for TAAS is proceeding on schedule.

Sy Santos is coordinating the Winter Banquet. Trish Henning will be the keynote speaker. A 10-inch Dobsonian telescope will be raffled to help fund the event.

**Education:**

Pete Eschman purchased a 15mm focal length eyepiece for the solar telescope. Pete suggests having a kit for the Solar Fiesta.

**Finance:**

Account balances at the end of September 2009:

- General Fund: $17,606.24
- GNTO Fund: $7,716.59
- Education Fund: $6,165.33
- Dark Sky S.I.G. Fund: $1,318.96
- Special Projects Fund: $5,457.23
- Science Fair Fund: $600.00
- Cosmic Carnival Fund: $323.85
- Astronomical League Reserve: $50.86
- Total Funds on Deposit: $39,372.01
- Total Expenses for September 2009: $707.97
- Total Income for September 2009: $692.69

**Membership:**

The Membership Committee investigated prices for lanyards and holders for TAAS membership cards.

**GNTO:**

There was a successful event at GNTO on September 19. Lance Hurt opened the observatory. On September 26, there were 14 telescopes and 25 observers. Becky Ramotowski held an astrophotography boot camp. Asteroid Sagan was observed from GNTO. As seen from GNTO, the asteroid did not occult any star. During the Board meeting, Steve Welch showed a movie of Asteroid Ekard occulting a star. Steve also reported during the meeting plans to observe the Lunar Crater Observation and Sensing Satellite (LCROSS) mission impacts on the lunar surface.

**Events Retrospect:**

The sky was overcast over Oak Flat during the last star party there. Seven telescopes were at the star party.

**Events Prospect:**

1. Telescopes for Teachers: There were two training sessions at the University of New Mexico Albuquerque Campus Observatory during the Friday night star parties.

2. TAAS members will co-host a star party along with the Albuquerque Open Space Division on October 10. The theme will be An Autumn View of Jupiter.

3. The West Mesa School star party will be held on October 23.

4. TAAS will provide several telescopes for the Corn Maze on Friday, October 23.

5. The Placitas star party will be held on October 24.

The meeting ended at 8:30 p.m.

**...GNTO News & Views continued from page 3**

As Buildings and Grounds task area representative, Will offered some thoughts on the need for more gravel on the observing field and around some structures. We will develop a long-range plan to deal with this. As Events task area representative, Bill suggested that we feature satellite tracking and logging at some of our events. Bill's newsletter article on this is elsewhere in this newsletter. Steve and I outlined plans to improve our documentation, as part of our role as representatives of the Operations task area. We have upgraded two of Isengard's 1.25" eyepieces. This collection includes 12.5mm, 17mm, 26mm, and 40mm, along with a 2x Barlow.

We reviewed maintenance and improvement needs at GNTO and made plans to address them. After considerable discussion, the committee approved plans to spend up to $3,000 to improve our GNTO computers. We also agreed on some software upgrades that will be done in the next month or so.

**WE HAVE TWO EVENTS scheduled for November, starting with a New Moon observing event on November 14.** We also have a regular observing session scheduled one week later on November 21.

The Leonid meteor shower is on November 17, so watch for e-mail about an impromptu meteor shower event at GNTO. December's single event is a New Moon observing chance on December 12.

Steve Welch heads up our CCD imaging program. If you are interested, contact him at 505-866-7668 to make arrangements. He can have imaging equipment ready in the 10-foot dome so you can learn about imaging 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 next trip to GNTO soon.

GNTO committee meetings are open to any TAAS members, providing a great way to get involved with your observatory. We meet every other month at 6:30 p.m. Our next meetings are December 17 and February 18. We are considering new locations, so I will provide more details later. 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.
Telescopes for Teachers Having a Positive Effect

Tom Davies

Here is an e-mail from Anne Stevens of Cleveland Middle School:

HI TOM: . . . We had our first stargazing activity at Cleveland last night in conjunction with a chorus concert. It was a big hit. After the “Dancing with the Stars” concert, a number of the students and their parents came out to look at Jupiter and the moons. Another teacher brought his telescope, so we had two set up. It was pretty neat to hear all the oohs and aahs, especially from the parents. They were even lifting their little kids up to look through the scope. Our only problem is we have way too much light from parking lot lights and school security lights.

OUR NEXT EVENT is scheduled for Thursday, November 5, our school Astronomy Night. We will have the telescopes set up again and also some activities inside the school. If any of your crew would like to help out, I would be more than happy to have you guys. You all know so much more about the night sky than I do. Our science fair is scheduled for December 1, and we will also be setting up the telescopes on that night. I’m trying to hook up with as many chorus and band concerts as I can, since that gives us a captive audience . . . This has been such a positive experience for our school. Thank you again for the opportunity to share astronomy with our students.

TRISH LOGAN of John Adams Middle School sent a video of her students learning about the telescope. And future plans. Quote from Trish: “They are looking forward to a possible evening at the community center across the street from the school. Thanks again... TAAS (and you) did a GOOD thing!”

Oak Flat Season Finale a Win Over Clouds

Tom Davies

THE SEPTEMBER 12 Oak Flat star party was attended by Shane and Becky Ramitowsky, Steve Welch, Robert Williams, John Lanning, Bob Norton, Kevin McKewon, and myself, Tom Davies.

We had a mix of guests—some families and my neighbor, who brought out 15 members of her Del Norte Rotary Club. They enjoyed a picnic before dark. With 98% cloud cover, we still managed to make a memorable star party for our guests. Robert and I introduced the club to our guests and made them aware of other upcoming club activities. We all had Jupiter in our scopes, dragging it through the clouds. Steve had the telescope video cam set up and was observing Jupiter. John Lanning had M13 for about 30 seconds. Kevin located M4 and a couple of other interesting items in my telescope for our guests.

THANKS to all who helped make this effort a success. This may not have been the kind of night that we would prefer as amateur astronomers, but I am certain that our guests were thrilled with what we could show them.

The club presented potted orchid plants to our Forest Service hosts, Jackie and Libby, to thank them for their support throughout the year. Jackie has a tradition of bringing homemade enchiladas for the astronomers every month.

New Feature on the Web Site: The TAAS Library List

FROM 365 Starry Nights to Zen and the Art of Photoelectric Photometry, titles of the books, magazines, tapes, and pamphlets in the TAAS Library are now on the TAAS Web site. Look under Education Outreach for Library to see the many interesting and useful astronomy-related publications available. Any TAAS member can borrow the materials by arrangement with Bob Hufnagel, TAAS librarian, at librarian@taas.org.

UNM Campus Observatory Report

Robert Williams

TAAS and the University of New Mexico Physics and Astronomy Department host observing sessions on Friday evenings during the 2009 Fall Semester at the Campus Observatory. The hours of operation are 7-9 p.m. MST and 8-10 p.m. MDT. The observing sessions are free and open to the public. For information and a map, visit http://www.unm.edu and search for “observatory.” Check the Web site prior to visiting the observatory, as the site will announce any closings due to inclement weather. The status will be posted at 3 p.m. on Fridays. The observatory will be closed on November 27 for the Thanksgiving holiday. The final evening of observing for this semester will be Friday, December 11.

A Pair of October School Star Parties

Bob Hufnagel, Education Coordinator

Corrales Elementary School. Our first school star party for October was held at Corrales Elementary School October 6. Over 50 children plus their parents were treated to excellent views of Jupiter, now ruling the night skies, as well as other less obvious but more surprising views of nebulae and star clusters. Like other schools, Corrales Elementary is located in an area of streetlights and advertising signs, but TAAS volunteers with 6 telescopes were able to coax out views that ranged from “neat” to “awesome.” Inside, everyone was treated to a take-home pocket solar system, and they were able to watch a comet materialize right before their eyes, complete with hissing and vapors.

Many students and teachers remembered the last TAAS star party at their school, so the memories of these events carry on for a long time. A big thank-you to all the volunteers who helped to make this another memorable event.

West Mesa High School. For our second school star party in October, we had a scopes-only event with the West Mesa High School chapter of SACNAS—Society for Advancement of Chicanos and Native Americans in Science (www.sacnas.org)—on Friday, October 23. There were no indoor demonstrations at this event, so we only needed a few volunteers with telescopes. This is a fairly dark-sky area for the city, and previous events have been well attended. With two other TAAS events that night, our volunteer bank was stretched a little thin, so John Lanning and I were the only TAAS members there. With only about 50-60 students attending the star party, everything worked out well, except the weather.

As we arrived, we were greeted with some high thin clouds, which got lower and thicker over the evening. There were enough sucker holes at any one time to keep several objects available. Jupiter and the Moon were fairly easy, but star clusters, Andromeda, and Uranus were a bit more difficult. Students and teachers were very appreciative, though, and the night was still a success.
Visit the TAAS Store online at www.taas.org
Look for the link on TAAS homepage.
TAAS Logo Wear
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TAAS 2010 PERIHELION BANQUET
Saturday, January 9, 2010
Keynote Speaker
Dr. Trish Henning
Director, Institute for Astrophysics UNM
Food, drink, prizes, games and more fun
MCM Eleganté Hotel,
Albuquerque

TAAS Help Wanted, November

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.

TAAS Mentor Program — Provide learning assistance to a newer member by sharing your astronomy knowledge and experience.

Contact Dee Friesen.

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. Help 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. Create observing contests and observing lists for members to complete to receive TAAS awards.

Contact Steve Welch.

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

Contact Dick Fate.

TAAS Web Site — Assist with the TAAS Web site including e-mail procedures and other electronic communications.

Contact Mike Fleenor.

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

Contact Dee Friesen.
## 2009 TAAS Board of Directors/Staff

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<td>President</td>
<td>Dee Friesen</td>
<td><a href="mailto:president@taas.org">president@taas.org</a></td>
<td>856-1593</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vice President / General Meeting Coordinator</td>
<td>Dick Fate</td>
<td><a href="mailto:vp@taas.org">vp@taas.org</a></td>
<td>293-2131 (H)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secretary / Public Relations Coordinator</td>
<td>Melissa Kirk</td>
<td><a href="mailto:secretary@taas.org">secretary@taas.org</a></td>
<td>295-0111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ATM Coordinator</td>
<td>Ray Collins</td>
<td><a href="mailto:atm@taas.org">atm@taas.org</a></td>
<td>344-9686 (H)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ATM Coordinator</td>
<td>Michael Pendley</td>
<td><a href="mailto:atm@taas.org">atm@taas.org</a></td>
<td>296-0549 (H)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dark Sky Coordinator</td>
<td>David Penasa</td>
<td><a href="mailto:darksky@taas.org">darksky@taas.org</a></td>
<td>277-1141 (W)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education Coordinator / Librarian</td>
<td>Bob Hufnagel</td>
<td><a href="mailto:education_coord@taas.org">education_coord@taas.org</a></td>
<td>890-8122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grants Coordinator</td>
<td>Barry Spletzer</td>
<td><a href="mailto:grants@taas.org">grants@taas.org</a></td>
<td>228-4384 (C)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Librarian</td>
<td>Bob Hufnagel</td>
<td><a href="mailto:librarian@taas.org">librarian@taas.org</a></td>
<td>890-8122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loaner Scope Coordinator</td>
<td>Barry Spletzer</td>
<td><a href="mailto:telescope_loans@taas.org">telescope_loans@taas.org</a></td>
<td>228-4384 (C)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Membership Coordinator</td>
<td>Bill Firth</td>
<td><a href="mailto:membership@taas.org">membership@taas.org</a></td>
<td>899-0950</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newsletter Editor</td>
<td>Gary Cooper</td>
<td><a href="mailto:editor@taas.org">editor@taas.org</a></td>
<td>321-5404 (C)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Relations Coordinator</td>
<td>Melissa Kirk</td>
<td><a href="mailto:pr@taas.org">pr@taas.org</a></td>
<td>385-0113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNM Observatory Coordinator</td>
<td>Robert Williams</td>
<td><a href="mailto:unm_coord@taas.org">unm_coord@taas.org</a></td>
<td>270-5857</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Web Master</td>
<td>Bill Wallace</td>
<td><a href="mailto:webmaster@taas.org">webmaster@taas.org</a></td>
<td>864-8212</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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 if 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.

TAAS ON THE WORLD WIDE WEB:

- The TAAS Web site: http://www.taas.org
- Online Sidereal Times
- Educational Outreach
- Programs: TAAS 200, Equipment Trader, Telescope Loaner Program, and more
- SIGs
- Members Guide
- Links to Astronomy Resources and Members’ Blogs

E-mail: taas@taas.org