Invitation to East Mountain Observing

TAAS members Jeff and Vickie Averhoff have created a dark-sky observing site at their home on the east side of the Sandias. The Averhoffs are inviting all TAAS members to an observing session on Saturday August 3. The site is about a 30-minute drive from Albuquerque, all on paved roads. Directions are at https://maps.google.com/maps?q=saddr=I-40+E&daddr=NM-472+E&hl=en&ll=35.066535,-106.53923&sspn=0.108187,0.222301&geocode=FUQeFwldEPum-Q%3BFXA6AGAldZuys-Q&oe=Albuquerque&mra=dme&mrsp=0&sz=13&t=m&z=13

Jeff may be contacted at 505-401-5689 or javerhoff@gmail.com.

August Public Star Party
Set at East Mountain High School Site

by Lynne Olson

Our August public star party will be held Saturday August 10 on the grounds of the East Mountain High School, which was used for our June star party and proved to be an excellent site for TAAS telescopes and visitors alike. It is located just north of the turnoff to the Sandia Crest Road off Highway 14 (Cedar Crest) with very spacious parking, fine facilities, and great observing opportunities.

Gates open at 6:00 p.m. Plan to arrive before dark to set up telescopes (TAAS members) or to enjoy a picnic on the grounds and become familiar with the site (visitors). Keep lights low approaching the parking area and only use red headlamps/flashlights on the observing field to preserve night vision for all.

We plan to have a large array of telescopes of all sizes and types for viewing the summer skies, with special targeted objects as the night goes on, and there will be a green-laser constellation tour by a TAAS member. Telescope operators are always pleased to share their knowledge with all, so bring your curiosity!

Visit www.TAAS.org for a map and more details, and questions can be sent to TAAS@TAAS.org.

See also “Summer TAAS Fabulous 50” on page 2.
Peoples’ Stars

AS I CONTINUE on my seventieth trip around the Sun, one of the books that I’m reading is Astronomy Before the Telescope. With nineteen contributors and a wonderful foreword by Sir Patrick Moore, it’s a fascinating book. It describes how early civilizations used the night sky for the conduct of their lives. They identified the seasons of the year by the appearance of the night sky. The stars they used for these calculations are the same stars that we observe today.

Astronomy is the oldest science and is a part of all records written or unwritten of every civilization that ever existed on this third rock from the Sun. What interests me is that the stars that the ancients observed are the same stars we observe today. They are the stars of our species, even though many of the living members of our species are blind to their existence. Not so for us. The stars are just as much a part of us as we are a part of our species.

One of the stars seen through the ages is the brightest star in the sky, Sirius. Ancient astronomers observed Sirius at its heliacal rising, the time just prior to sunrise when it first appeared in the eastern sky. For the Egyptians, this occurred as the Nile began to flood and was the beginning of their calendar year of 365 days. The Greeks knew that the hot “dog days” of summer had arrived. Halfway around our planet and south of the equator, the Maori of New Zealand knew it meant the beginning of their new year. The Andean cultures called the Pleiades the storehouse (colca’ in Quechua), because it occurred during the harvest. Current New Age disciples believe that the Sun and the Earth will pass through a photon belt from the Pleiades, causing a spiritual transition referred to as a shift in consciousness or the “Shift of the Ages.” With any luck, we’ll be in the monsoon season, unable to see the Pleiades when the photon belt arrives, and we won’t get shifted.

I could cite many more examples, but the evidence is clear: the stars have always influenced and still continue to influence our perception of the universe and how we live within it. We can truly say that the stars belong to the people. We all observe the same stars even though we may perceive their influence differently.

OBSERVE EDUCATE HAVE FUN

Summer TAAS Fabulous 50 Viewing Session in August

Our summer night sky TAAS Fabulous 50 viewing session will be at the East Mountain High School public star party on Saturday August 10. The session will begin at 7:30 p.m. just prior to sunset. If you missed the earlier spring sessions, this is your opportunity to catch up with the program.

At the session, you will be instructed on how to use both a printed sky chart and your mobile media device. The prominent naked-eye objects of the summer sky will be observed. Other TAAS members will be present with binoculars and telescopes to enhance the viewing session.

All the information along with a map to the school is on the TAAS website www.TAAS.org.

Sheliak Vega Ring Nebula Sulafat Alberio Deneb Sadr

...General Meeting News continued from page 1

and electronics for high energy physics experiments done at SLAC, Fermi National Accelerator Laboratory (Chicago), and Brookhaven National Laboratory (Long Island). He later joined the Physics Division at the Jefferson National Lab (Continuous Electron Beam Accelerator Facility) in Virginia where he created and managed an electronics design group to support the lab’s physics experiments. After four years, he joined the LIGO design team at Caltech, where he designed and commissioned two of the major control systems. Upon completion, he joined Raytheon Infrared Operations in Santa Barbara designing infrared cameras, retiring in 2010. He and his wife currently live in Placitas and are members of TAAS.
JUNE was a busy month for the Buildings and Grounds team at GNTO. The antique trailer which has served as our kitchenette is no longer on site. Carl Frisch, who has worked tirelessly to improve GNTO’s infrastructure, recommended that the aging trailer be replaced. The trailer was actually owned by Carl and on loan to GNTO all these years. Carl hauled the trailer to his nearby property. In its place we have a new 12 by 20 foot building shell from Sturdy Built Sheds of Belen. Over the next months it will be converted into our new Astro-Eatery. Carl has decided not to continue as site B&G lead and Ray Collins is heading up the building’s finish work. If you are willing to lend a hand, give Ray a call.

We had decent skies for the June 8 New Moon event. The Isengard was trained on Saturn and several globular clusters for the enjoyment of those who made the trip upstairs. Twenty members and guests were in attendance for Bill Wallace’s final New Moon Event as Director.

A family issue prevented me from performing the GNTO opening duties on July 6, but thanks to Ray Collins, the site was open until 10 p.m. In Ray’s eloquent phrasing, “... there were eight visitors, no telescopes and no stars. I was most pleased for such agreeable and optimistic companions. I think I speak for all in reporting that the banter and collegiality, and of course the splendor of our setting on Belen’s West Mesa, were sufficient compensation for the drive. Was I surprised? Hardly: TAAS people shine by their own light, no less when the stars are on furlough.”

August 3 is the next New Moon Event at GNTO. The theme for the night is Globular Clusters. This is the best time of year to view these galactic star balls.

Statewide New Mexico Star Party Planned for November

TAAS along with the Silver City Astronomical Society and the Astronomical Society of Las Cruces is planning a New Mexico statewide star party for November 1–3, 2013, at the Sevilleta National Wildlife Refuge, located 20 miles north of Socorro.

Sevilleta has some housing facilities available as well as parking spots for RVs. Details will be announced as they become available and a website will be created for the event. In December of 2012, TAAS held a public star party at the site. TAAS members judged it to be a dark-sky location equivalent to GNTO. Questions may be directed to TAAS@TAAS.org.
### July 2013

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<td>18 Board of Directors Meeting</td>
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<td>25</td>
<td>26 Military Family Night (TAAS Supported) at NMMNH&amp;S</td>
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**Families of Deployed Military Personnel Night at New Mexico Museum of Natural History & Science**

IF YOU ARE ACTIVE MILITARY or a scope-toting TAAS member, you get a free pass to the Natural History Museum on Friday July 26 from 1830–2130 hours (that's military time, it seems so appropriate for this event). It’s from 6:30–9:30 p.m. in civilian speak.

Since the event starts before sunset, you can expect some good solar viewing, in both white light and H-alpha, especially if you bring a scope yourself, like the new Lunt loaner which is available for a one night stand that night...err, day. When the stars finally come out the viewing will switch to more distant stars and planets.

The observatory deck will be open, and there will be free planetarium shows on the hour. TAAS members who like to engage the public are invited to “interpret” the new volunteer Hall of the Stars and/or the new Hubble Heritage Exhibit.

Please contact Roger Kennedy (rwkennedy45@centurylink.net) to let him know if you will be bringing a scope or ask any questions you may have. Stay tuned to TAAS_Talk for further details as the event approaches.
### TAAS General Meeting

**Saturday, July 20, 2013, 7:00 P.M.**

Regener Hall  
University of New Mexico  
(See map, back page)

**Gravitational Wave Astronomy**

Dale Ouimette  
Former LIGO Gravitational Wave Observatory Engineer, Caltech

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**Notes**

Hotline 505-254-TAAS (8227).  
= School Star Party  
ATM = Amateur Telescope Making.  Call Michael Pendley for information at 296-0549, or e-mail atm@TAAS.org.  
GNTO = General Nathan Twining Observatory  
GNTO Training = GNTO Observing and Training  
GNTO NM = New Moon Premium Observing Night  
NMMNH&S = New Mexico Museum of Natural History and Science  
UNM = University of New Mexico Observatory.  Call the TAAS hotline at 254-8227, or the UNM hotline at 277-1446 to confirm, or e-mail unm_coordinator@TAAS.org.  
P & A = UNM Physics and Astronomy Building, Corner of Lomas and Yale  
SIG = Special Interest Group  
TBA = To Be Announced
Library Summer Reading Outreach Report

by Roger Kennedy

A total of 978 visitors have participated in ABC Libraries’ summer reading program featuring Our Magnetic Sun kit, solar observing, and other solar activities at nine library events, as follows:

1 June, Tony Hillerman Library Kickoff Event. Thanks to Assis Carlos, Linda Kennedy. 124 visitors.

8 June, South Valley Library. Thanks to Linda Kennedy. 95 visitors.

13 June, Erna Ferguson Library. Thanks to Linda Kennedy. 102 visitors.

15 June, Los Griegos Library. Thanks to Linda Kennedy. 38 visitors.

18 June, Ernie Pyle Library. Thanks to Linda Kennedy. 93 visitors.

19 June, East Mountain Library. Thanks to Linda Kennedy, Dave Ray. 48 visitors.

20 June, Lomas-Tramway Library. Thanks to Linda Kennedy. 181 visitors.


8 July, Alamosa Library. Thanks to Linda Kennedy, Bill Burns, Deb Novak. 112 visitors.

East Mountain Library Outreach

Forty-eight visitors came to East Mountain Library for our solar outreach event. TAAS members Dave Ray, Linda & Roger Kennedy had clear skies and warm temperatures as well as a very active sun.

Alamosa Library Outreach

Ninety-seven visitors braved the heat and humidity to learn about the Sun and about critters that live beneath the Earth’s surface. TAAS members Linda and Roger Kennedy were assisted by Bill Burns and Deb Novak from NMMNH&S. (And of course mascot Timmy Telescope.)

Ernie Pyle Library Outreach

Ninety-three visitors came to Ernie Pyle Library SRP event on 18 June. If you have not visited this quaint, small library dedicated to the late war reporter Ernie Pyle I recommend that you go some time. This was a house that he actually lived in and has memorabilia of his life TAAS members at the event: Roger and Linda Kennedy.
Chaco Canyon Star Parties Return

by David Frizzell

On June 7 and 8, the Albuquerque Astronomical Society (TAAS) and Chaco Culture Historical National Park renewed their star party and night sky programs after a year’s hiatus for the reconstruction of the Chaco Visitors’ Center. Some TAAS members brought telescopes Friday night, the 7th, and by Saturday night, the 8th, there were about 20 telescopes of various sizes and configurations in the viewing area next to the Visitors’ Center. Friday night, Ranger G.B. Cornucopia gave a presentation in the amphitheatre and then operated the Chaco observatory and telescope while visitors looked through the observatory telescope and the TAAS telescopes.

TAAS members set up solar telescopes on Saturday at the Visitors’ Center, and there were two brief presentations in the auditorium concerning amateur astronomy and the star parties. Saturday afternoon, TAAS members and guests had a picnic and enjoyed the company of a diverse group of amateur observers and Chaco Park aficionados.

On Saturday evening, Ranger Cornucopia presented a slide show on archeoastronomy and the dark skies of Chaco, followed by a general star party. Visitors enjoyed the summer gems of Saturn, the Hercules globular cluster, the Whirlpool Galaxy, and the Ring Nebula, along with many other targets for the large array of telescopes.

TAAS and Chaco renewed their commitments to support public education about the Canyon, the night sky, and amateur astronomy, and we look forward to more participation and more events in the months and years to come!

Need help with your Telescope?

Attend the ATM meeting and receive assistance.

First and third Wednesday of the month.

Manzano Mesa Multi-Gen Center
501 Elizabeth St SE, Albuquerque, NM

map is available at www.TAAS.org

TAAS Members Planning to Attend New Zealand’s Stardate 2014

Several TAAS members are planning to attend the New Zealand annual star party called Stardate 2014. It is presented by the Phoenix Astronomical Society of Wellington. The dates are January 3–5, 2014. If you are interested, contact Dee at TAAS@TAAS.org. More information on the star party is at http://groupspaces.com/PhoenixAstronomicalSociety/item/389650.
M8 (the Lagoon Nebula) and M20 (the Trifid Nebula) captured in the early morning of June 8, 2013, at GNTO. An SBIG ST4000XCM attached to an AT65 APO refractor, mounted on a Losmandy G11 was used. A total of twenty-four 5-minute integrations were made. Images were combined in CCDSOFT, debayered in CCDOPS, and final processing was done in Photoshop CS2. The focal length of the AT65 is 420 mm. The focal ratio is f/6.5 and the camera detector is 15.2 x 15.2 mm², yielding a crop factor of 2.

—Vance Ley
You Win Some, You Lose Some
by The Loan Ranger

IN THE HECTIC high-stakes world of loaner telescopes, sometimes you win and sometimes you lose. Recently we won by adding a new, and very nice, scope to the program and we lost half a telescope, but that’s not bad news. First, the win. We’ve had a pair of Criterion 6-inch equatorial reflectors in the program for a long time. They tend to be very heavy and thus underused. Yet another Criterion was recently donated to the program but this one is a real gem.

Rather than the heavy long tube reflectors, this is a 6-inch Schmidt Cassegrain so it’s lightweight and portable but the long 60-inch focal length gives good magnification. The scope and mount weigh in at under 20 pounds each making it manageable by almost anyone, unlike our larger SCTs. It has the typical SCT equatorial fork mount with clock drive (only 110 AC, though) and has simply the best analog setting circles I’ve ever seen. The finish is the standard Criterion crinkled gray, reminiscent of its 1970s vintage. It even has a celebrity history, being donated by local meteorologist and former TV personality, Robin Marshment. I’m sure it will see plenty of use in the program, filling a niche for a portable scope with serious capabilities. Thanks for your generous donation, Robin.

As for the one-half telescope we lost, fortunately it was a half that we really didn’t need. The scope is the 13-inch Coulter. With this large aperture it could be a very popular scope. But with a combined weight (tube plus base) of 104 pounds it has seen very little use simply because it is so heavy as to discourage all but the most robust telescope loan customers. Further, both the base and tube were in serious need of repair. After Ray Collins generously donated a thin-walled Sonotube, the job of getting rid of half of the scope, by weight anyway, was on. So where did all the weight go?

The old tube weighed in at 24.1 pounds. Ray’s thinner tube was 13.6. The Coulter three point mirror cell was 11.2 pounds. This dropped to 1.4 pounds using an edge support cell. The baseboard, 1 1/2 inch thick chipboard weighing 11 pounds was replaced with an equally stiff but spindly support weighing 1.4 pounds. The remainder of the base was built from 1 inch Baltic Birch hollow plywood (using a 3/4-inch core webbed out laminated between two 1/8-inch outer skins) replacing the generous chipboard box and saving 20 pounds while maintaining the original stiffness. Small weight savings were also realized in the trunnions and secondary.

Altogether, the weight dropped from 104 pounds (tube 54, base 50) to 40 pounds (tube 24, base 16) making this large scope very manageable. Of course, being a solid tube scope, the size is still formidable so check the website for dimensions to see if you can haul this light bucket home.

With 25 scopes in the program, ranging in aperture from this 13-inch Coulter to the 4-inch Astroscan, and scope types including Newtonians, refractors, Schmidt Cassegrains, Maksutov Cassegrain, binoculars, solar projection, and our amazingly popular Lunt H-alpha, there is something for everyone. So check out the loaner web page, e-mail me, The Loan Ranger (telescope_loans@TAAS.org) to get a scope, and join the fun.
I imaged M27 with my 8" RC in July 2010, but my processing was too bland, so here is a newer version.

M-27, known as the Dumbbell Nebula, is a Planetary Nebula about 1000 light-years distant and visible in a 50 mm finder in the dim constellation Vulpecula, the Fox, below Cygnus.

RGB 15:15:15 x 1 minute.


—John Laning
The Albuquerque Astronomical Society is a 501(c)(3) organization. Donations are deductible as charitable contributions on the donor’s federal income tax return.

**Monthly Membership Report**

**May 2013**

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<td>Total Members</td>
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**Editor’s Note**

The deadline for the next issue of The Sidereal Times is **Friday August 9**. The newsletter editor’s e-mail address is editor@TAAS.org.

Text: E-mail text as an attachment, preferably in Microsoft Word or compatible format.

Photos: Caption and credit needed. Attach photos or graphics in separate graphics files. Photos or graphics in Word files are no longer acceptable.

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**Location, Location, Location**

- **Chaco Canyon**
  - 6185’ elevation
  - Latitude 36° 01’ 50"N 107° 54’ 36"W
  - 36.03’ -107.91’
  - 36° 1.83’ -107° 54.60’

- **Oak Flat**
  - 7680’ elevation
  - Latitude 34° 59’ 48"N 106° 19’ 17"W
  - 34.99’ -106.32’
  - 34° 59.80’ -106° 19.28’

- **UNM Campus Observatory**
  - 5180’ elevation
  - Latitude 35° 5’ 29"N 106° 37’ 17"W
  - 35.09’ -106.62’
  - 35° 5.48’ -106° 37.29’

For security reasons, GNTO location is available by request only, so please contact Mike Molitor for GNTO information.

**Explanation of Dues and Membership Renewal Date**

New memberships will be posted as beginning the first day of the month regardless of what day during that month the check is received. Notice of renewal will be sent out the month before the due date. You will have until the end of the month after your renewal date to send your membership check. If you fail to pay and renew at that time, your membership will lapse. When you pay on a lapsed membership you will be reinstated in the month that the membership was originally due. (If dues were due in March and you did not renew until May or June or July, etc., the date of your renewal will be in March. If your dues are due in April and you pay in March, your membership will still be renewed in April.)

In a nutshell, if you pay late or early your membership date stays the same and your next year’s dues will be due on that date next year.

—Dan Clark

**Membership Services**

**For:**
- Membership Inquiries
- Events Information
- Volunteer Opportunities

**Contact Bob Anderson at** membership@TAAS.org

**For:**
- Membership Dues
- Magazine Subscriptions
- Address/e-mail changes

**Contact Dan Clark at** treasurer@TAAS.org

P.O. Box 50581
Albuquerque, NM 87181
## 2013 TAAS Board of Directors/Staff

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<th>Position</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Email/Phone</th>
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<td>Dee Friesen</td>
<td><a href="mailto:president@TAAS.org">president@TAAS.org</a>, 505-856-1593</td>
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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.

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