At the same TAAS General Meeting on Saturday, Dec. 2, John W. Briggs will present “Star Clusters of the Winter Milky Way” for Astronomy 101 at 6:00 pm.

John Briggs is a resident of Magdalena and a member of TAAS as well as the new Magdalena Astronomical Society. He will explain the rewarding fun of sweeping the Milky Way with binoculars to discover the beauty of star clusters. Telescopes of any size will show fainter stars, but the most beautiful views are often seen simply with binoculars – and among the most fun of all activities when starting an interest in astronomy.

SoS: Surveillance of Space
Dr. John McGraw, Featured Speaker

TAAS General Meeting
Saturday, December 2, 7:00 P.M.
Science and Math Learning Center;
UNM Campus
Free and open to the public

At the TAAS General Meeting on Saturday, December 2nd at 7:00 p.m., our featured speaker will be Dr. John McGraw. His topic will be “SoS: Surveillance of Space.”

Here is Dr. McGraw’s description of his presentation:
“We will discuss Earth Orbital Space (EOS) as a domain of Earth equivalent to land, sea and air. Human activity in this domain is rapidly becoming simultaneously more important to humans, and more hazardous to accomplish. Key to safe and sane use of EOS is surveillance of burgeon-

continued on page 2 . . .
ATTENTION ALL TAAS MEMBERS
Nominations for 2018 TAAS officers now open

In January every year, TAAS members elect fellow members to serve as the officers of TAAS, president, vice president, secretary and treasurer. Those who serve as officers oversee the business of TAAS.

Officers select the board of directors, and together with the board set the event calendar, organize the monthly meeting, collect the dues, authorize expenditures, pay the bills, respond to inquiries, keep members informed, etc. – all the things that need doing, and that provide a good foundation for our club to be recognized as one of The Best of Albuquerque and recognized by Astronomy magazine. It is work, but it is also a joy and an honor to serve such a diverse and talented volunteer organization.

If you want to expand your role as a TAAS member, or if you know a member you think would make a good club officer but is perhaps a little shy about taking on an “official” role with TAAS, send your name, or your fellow member’s name, to one of us on the nominating committee. We will do the rest.

Also, if you have questions about the role of an officer or director, contact us or one of the current officers or board members.

TAAS 2018 Nominating Committee
Mike Molitor, molitornsimon@gmail.com, 518-225-7077
Tom Graham, tkzeus@aol.com, 505-610-0467
Lynne Olson, desiree41@aol.com, 505-239-8838

...General Meeting continued from page 1

ing activity, including launch and orbital insertion of new satellites, safekeeping of operating satellites, and tracking of space debris.

“SoS was once thought to require sophisticated, large telescopes. We will describe the advantages of using commercial telescopes and detectors operated by amateur astronomers. By reviewing the fundamental operation of your telescopes and detectors, we evaluate SoS capabilities that you might explore. We'll also discuss satellites in weird orbits and how to observe them. We'll also discuss several scenarios for contributions to SoS by amateur observers.”

About the speaker:
John McGraw received a Ph.D. in astronomy from the University of Texas in Austin. He has held academic positions in the Universities of Texas, Cape Town, and Arizona. He is currently Professor of Physics and Astronomy in the University of New Mexico, and Principal Astronomer in J.T. McGraw and Associates, LLC. McGraw has a long history of developing instrumentation for astronomy, including unique telescopes and detector systems.

...Astronomy 101: StarClusters continued from page 1

Besides sharing examples of the most striking winter clusters and how to “star hop” with a sky map to find them, John will also explain some of what has been learned over the last century or so. Star clusters have been key elements establishing the so called “cosmic distance ladder” that has revealed the scale of the Universe and our place in it.

The crisp evening air of our winter season allows clear viewing of star clusters like Messier 46 and 47, shown here with other fainter clusters in a recent image recorded by FOAH Observatory near Magdalena, New Mexico.

About the speaker:
Currently president of the Antique Telescope Society, an international organization, John Briggs operates the Astronomical Lyceum in Magdalena, a workshop/museum/library/lecture hall that serves as headquarters for the Magdalena Astronomical Society, as well as FOAH Observatory, a growing facility on a 6,500-foot hilltop nearby.

An observer and instrumentation engineer, he has worked at many observatories across the country and the world, most recently on a consulting project for Jordan Observatory at the Univ. of Maine. He is also serving the Jet Propulsion Laboratory’s Table Mountain Facility in California in a project to measure daytime astronomical seeing.
October 21—New Moon Observing:
Alan Scott was the Opener. He arrived on site at 5:00 p.m. and reported that the road has had some significant work in the last two weeks and was quite good.

The weather started out with a 10-mph wind at about 70 degrees. The wind was a nuisance throughout the night but it did get better the later it got. Temps decreased to about 45 degrees by the time he departed. Skies were gloriously cloud free and transparent. Numerous guests and new folks mentioned that there were more stars they had ever seen. The Milky Way was spectacular. Seeing was poor to fair.

No one else showed up until about 6:30 p.m. when a large caravan arrived. In attendance were Marshall Gatten, Marshall’s guests Kathleen and her husband, George Friedman, George’s guests Mel and Melanie Friedman, Geno Griego, Jake Skinner, Viola Sanchez, Jon Wheeler, and Keon Ahghar.

Marshall worked with the Isengard with his guests (relatives) from California and George worked with the GNTO portable 16” Dobsonian with his guests from Ro- swell. Geno and his friend Jake worked with the Zhumell ZB Dobsonian from the Telescope Loan Program. Alan gave them a few ideas of things to look at M17, M8, and M11.

Most of the observers left early as it was getting cold. By 11:30 p.m. Alan had the field to himself. He observed for another hour, and after putting my telescope away and closing, he departed by 1:15 a.m.

November 11—3rd Quarter Moon Observing:
Dee Friesen was the opener. He reported that it was a beautiful evening. Present for the evening were 15 TAAS members and five guests. The weather was unseasonably mild. They enjoyed totally clear skies and no wind with the temperature at 11:30 p.m. of 55° F.

TAAS members in attendance were Jeff Boggs, Dan Rossbach, Chris Montean, Jim Fordice, Ron Hospelhorn, George Friedman, Phil Fleming, Carl Larson, Dale Murray, Patrick Vander Wyden, Martin Hilario, Kevin McKeown, Melissa Kirk and Viola Sanchez. Guests visiting from Rochester, NY, were Glenn and Margret Cummings who were visiting their children Chris and Tura Montean. Chris brought an Edmund Scientific 4-inch reflector and compared its performance to the GNTO 6-inch loaner scope. Other guests in attendance were Mike and Catie Tigert.

Both the 6- and 16-inch loaner telescopes were used by the attendees. The highlight of the evening was the first GNTO light for President Dale Murray’s 13-inch reflector with a Coulter mirror from a previous life-time. Later in the evening, Martin Hilario installed his image-enhancing eyepiece apparatus into Carl Larson’s 18-inch obs- session. A wonderful view of the Horsehead Nebula was observed in all of its "green" brilliancy.

We all enjoyed wonderful views of NGC 253 the “Silver Dollar Galaxy,” NGC 6960 the “Veil Nebula,” and the beautiful double star Almach in Andromeda among many other objects. Later the gems of the winter sky appeared in the eastern sky. Of course, everyone observed M42, the “Orion Nebula,” and enjoyed a successful splitting of the double star Rigel.

continued on page 4 . . .
The Sidereal Times December 2017

Telescope Loan Program Update
by Jim Fordice, Telescope Loan Coordinator

The Meade LX200 12” SCT was sold via Cloudy Nights to a buyer in Omaha. I have ordered a Celestron Advanced VX equatorial mount on which I will mount the old NexStar 8i OTA. This new package should be added to the inventory by the end of November.

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<th>Loan Program Statistics</th>
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<td># of Scopes</td>
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Type:  Reflectors  Refractors  Catadioptrics
23 6 11

Size: Large (>8") Medium (5"-8") Small (<5")
12 16 12

Tracking: Manual  Push-To  Go-To  Tracking
26 5 5 9

As of: 11/13/17

Dee was trying out the Celestron NexStar 8SE telescope from the TAAS loaner program. After one two-star alignment, the scope performed very well and was easy to operate. After bumping the tripod legs and moving the whole telescope, Dee discovered a simple method to regain the original alignment. It made for an enjoyable viewing session. Dee highly recommends the scope to other TAAS members. He is willing to assist others in learning how to best use the scope.

Dee left around midnight and turned over the closing duties to Martin Hilario, who spent the night.

The Dome is Now Motorized!
Yes, you heard it right. Mike Molitor completed installation of a motor system for the Main Dome. After you open the shutter you can now rotate the dome using a switch that is attached to a long cable. Everyone who has used the motor reports that it works easily. Nice job, Mike!

Upcoming GNTO Events:
- Dec. 9: 3rd Quarter Moon Observing
- Dec 16: New Moon Observing
- Jan. 12 (Friday!): 3rd Quarter Moon Observing
- Jan. 20: New Moon Observing

Don't forget that the GNTO Observing Field is available for use by TAAS members any time. Check the TAAS website for the procedure to follow. Contact me if you have any questions.

As always, check TAAS_Talk and the TAAS website for last-minute changes and updates. GNTO events are open to all TAAS members and their guests.

Jim Fordice, GNTO Director: GNTO@TAAS.org or 505-803-3640.

The Dome is Now Motorized! continued from page 3

...Perihelion Banquet continued from page 1

The Awards presentation and the Election of Officers conclude the evening’s schedule... with more time to meet and talk with your fellow astronomers in a whole new light and in clothes other than hiking boots and jeans!

You can sign up for the event and pay ($30/person) online at http://taas.org/Banquet.html. So before the holiday madness really begins, make your plans to attend – then you’ll have nothing to do when the evening arrives but show up, and enjoy!

—Lynne Olson
IC 5068 is a very large emission nebula located about two degrees south of the more famous IC 5070 Pelican nebula in Cygnus. It is about 100’ in size, and distance is estimated between 1500 and 2500 light-years. I found it by accident when trying to re-align my mount using Deneb. I was trying to image Sharless Sh2-126 in Lacerta but could not locate it.

Equipment: ES ED80CF f/6, iOptron CEM60 mount, SBIG ST8300M with CFW5, guided with SBIG SG-4 on a AT102ED f/7. Software: CCDSoft V5.210, CCStack V2, ImagesPlus V5.25a, PhotoShop Elements V9, Astronomy Tools (false color). Exposure: 24x5 minutes for total two hours through a Hydrogen Alpha 656nm with a 7nm bandwidth.

Location: 3 miles north of Oak Flat on my backyard patio. Nov. 11, 9-11:30 PM MST. Note: I fell asleep for the last hour but my equipment kept working without my help.

—John Laning
STAR PARTIES: Cleveland Middle School and International School  
by Tom Grzybowski, Education Coordinator

On Tuesday, Oct. 24, we had another successful TAAS star party at Cleveland Middle School in Albuquerque. About 200 students and adults attended and were treated to our TAAS astronomical STEM demonstrations and activities. These included Jim Greenhouse’s planetarium shows, Bob Havlen’s “The Milky Way,” Bob Shipley’s “Rainbow in the Skies” classroom presentations, Boris Venet’s telescope optics demonstrations and of course our field of telescopes.

It was a gorgeous day and evening with clear skies and temperatures in the 50s. We had great viewing of the 1st quarter moon, nearby Saturn, the Andromeda Galaxy and the colorful double star Albireo. The TAAS telescope support included John Laning, Fernando Torres, Steve Snider, Trish Logan, Mike Salazar, Jim Kaminski and Ed Juddo.

All in all it was a great evening, and the school invited us back as soon as possible.

I thank Steve Lange, Kim Stuhler and George Navarro from the Cleveland Middle school’s Science department for coordinating this event and providing much needed adult and student volunteers to help us through the night. We would also like to thank all of the TAAS members who supported our class room, planetarium and telescope viewing activities.

On Thursday, Nov. 9, our star party was at the International School in Albuquerque. About 200 students and adults attended and were treated to our TAAS astronomical telescopes and a STEM activity alongside the school’s other International Fair activities. These included Bob Havlen’s “The Milky Way” and a telescope optics use introduction activity by Tom Grzybowski, Jim Greenhouse and Boris Venet. As always, our field of telescopes was a hit.

It was a gorgeous evening with clear skies, no wind, and temperatures quickly dropping into the 50’s after sunset. During the observing sessions, although we had no moon, we did have early viewing of Saturn before it set, as well as the colorful double star Albireo, Polaris and various seasonal star clusters. Excellent TAAS telescope support was provided by Trish Logan, John Laning, Mike Salazar, Bruce Meyer, and Jim Roucis, who volunteered their time and expertise answering the many questions from inquisitive minds. We also had a table in the observing area with one of the school’s Dobson scopes that allowed students who had learned about the schools telescope usage in our training to test their ability to find, point and observed astronomical objects.

All of these activities allowed the students to learn about the various astronomical objects and the tools that we use to observe them. I would like to thank May Fox and Amalia Giebitz and the other International School staff for successfully coordinating our and their activities during the evening, providing much needed adult volunteers to help us through the night and some wonderful international food and music. We would also like to thank all of the TAAS members who supported our class room and telescope viewing activities.

Our next TAAS school star party is scheduled for Tuesday Dec. 5 at the nearby To’Hajiilee Community School. This will be a relatively dark sky site which is all the more reason to bring your telescopes. We look forward to another great TAAS turnout. I will be sending out a note in the next couple of weeks with further details.
Stephan’s Quintet, captured at GNTO on October 22, 2017. This, the first compact galaxy group to be observed, was discovered by Édouard Stephan in 1877. Four of the five are in a physical association and will likely merge. NGC 7320, the elliptical galaxy with two stars in its foreground, is not physically associated with the group and is “only” ~ 39 million light-years distant, while the rest of the group is about 210 to 340 million light-years away in the direction of the constellation Pegasus.

I used a C11 HD with f/7 focal reducer on a Losmandy G11 mount. The camera was an SBIG ST4000XCM. Twenty-four 10’ subframes were captured. Twenty-one of these were combined and processed using PixInsight. The image was cropped for aesthetics. Final processing was done using Photoshop CS2.

—Vance Ley
Donations to TAAS

Paul Lin
Isaiah Nixon
Fernando Torres
Eric Dose
Jim Sargeant
Derek Wallentinsen
Charles L. Parker
Christopher Montean

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

Welcome to New or Returning TAAS Members

Jeff Bender
Robert Bittner
Chris Bittner
Vicky Doan-Nguyen
Cameron Kimber
Dan Klinglesmith
Bridget Luter
Rachel Luter
Robert Luter
Sarah Luter
Christopher Montean
Emma Nixon
Isaiah Nixon
Tom O’Harra
Charles Parker
Leiph Preston
Sonya Preston
Aaron Tigert
Catherine Tigert
Michael Tigert
Susan Tigert
Edward (Ted) Trigg
Patrick Vander Wyden

Location, Location, Location

- Chaco Canyon
  6185' elevation
  Latitude 36° 01' 50"N
  Longitude 107° 54' 36"W

- Oak Flat
  7680' elevation
  Latitude 34° 59' 48"N
  Longitude 106° 19' 17"W

- UNM Campus Observatory
  5180' elevation
  Latitude 35° 5' 29"N
  Longitude 106° 37' 17"W

For security reasons, GNTO location is available by request only, so please contact Jim Fordice, GNTO Director, for GNTO information, e-mail GNTO@TAAS.org.

Explanation of Dues and Membership Renewal Date

New memberships are registered immediately if you pay online. If you pay by check, your membership is registered when your check is received by the treasurer.

Renewal notices will be sent out via e-mail beginning 60 days before your membership expires. If your membership is renewed before it expires or with in 90 days after it expires, your new expiration date will be advanced one year from the previous expiration date and your membership will be continuous.

If dues payment is received more than 90 days after the expiration date, you will be reinstated as a member with an expiration date set as one year from the receipt of payment.

Monthly Membership Report

November 2017

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<th>Membership</th>
<th>Current Month</th>
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Editor’s Note

The deadline for the next issue of The Sidereal Times is Friday, December 15. The newsletter editor’s e-mail address is editor@TAAS.org.

Membership Services

for:
- Membership Inquiries
- Events Information
- Volunteer Opportunities

Contact Bob Anderson at membership@TAAS.org

for:
- Membership Dues
- Address/e-mail changes

Contact Doug LeGrand at treasurer@TAAS.org

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<thead>
<tr>
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TAAS is honored to receive an "OUT-OF-THIS-WORLD" AWARD 2011 from Astronomy Magazine for Outstanding Public Programming.

TAAS is honored to receive an "Editor's Pick 2013 Best of the City" award from Albuquerque Magazine. BEST PLACE TO STARGAZE CELESTIAL EDITION

MEMBERSHIP

You can join TAAS or renew your membership online. Just go to www.taas.org and select "Join Us!" or "Renew Your Membership" from the main menu on the left side. Annual dues are $30 for a regular membership, $15 for educators and active military, and $5 for students. Only regular members are eligible to vote in society matters. Our new member information packet can be viewed or downloaded from the same location on the website. You can pay your dues on line through PayPal, by Visa, MasterCard, or American Express. To pay by check, mail your check to TAAS, P.O. Box 50581, Albuquerque, NM 87181-0581 or give it to the treasurer at one of our meetings.

ARTICLES/ADVERTISEMENTS

Articles, personal astronomical classified advertisements and advertisements for businesses related to astronomy must be submitted by the deadline shown on the Society calendar (generally the Friday 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 or compatible word processor format; ASCII and RTF are acceptable. One space between paragraphs is preferred. One column is approximately 350 words. Contact the Newsletter Editor at editor@TAAS.org for more information.

Note that the Sidereal Times is no longer mailed. It is posted on the TAAS website, www.TAAS.org.

Send submissions or correspondence to editor@TAAS.org.

TAAS ONLINE

TAAS website: http://www.TAAS.org

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• Programs . . .
• TAAS 200
• TAAS Fabulous Fifty
• Educational Outreach: School Star Parties, Solar Astronomy Outreach
• Equipment Trader
• Telescope Loaner Program
• Telescope Making and Maintenance . . . And more
• Online Sidereal Times
• Calendar of TAAS Events
• Members' Guide
• Links to Astronomy Resources and Members' Blogs

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Members' Google Group: TAAS_talk@googlegroups.com

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MAGAZINES

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