



Information Packet

Welcome To The Astronomical Society Of Las Cruces

Hello from the nearly 100 professional and amateur astronomers that comprise ASLC's membership. Whether you are new to astronomy or a seasoned veteran, we're sure you will find participation in our group to be enjoyable and fulfilling. The ASLC was formed in 1951 by a group of dedicated astronomers including Clyde Tombaugh, who had discovered Pluto in 1930. For more than seventy years, we've been sharing the universe with our community under the dark skies of southern New Mexico.



Several members of the club do astrophotography. This image of the 'Monkey Head Nebula' in Orion is by Mike Sherick.



Each month, on a Saturday evening close to the first quarter Moon, members host our MoonGaze event at the Plaza de Las Cruces.

Some members do scientific research; all of us enjoy sharing our hobby with the public. The club hosts public observing events such as our monthly downtown MoonGaze and dark-sky observing at the club's observatory at Leasburg Dam SP. We also support countless star parties for local schools, scouting groups, and other organizations. For new telescope purchases, ASLC is always willing to help with equipment recommendations and/or training. And, for those members who don't own a telescope, we offer the free use of equipment via our telescope loaner program.

Our monthly club meeting is usually on the fourth Friday of each month. Please feel free to join us either via Zoom or in person.

The information contained in this packet should help acquaint you with our various activities including our regular meetings and events, our observing sites, and selected special events. There is also information regarding available astronomy publications, and a variety of additional resources to help you get started in this hobby. If you're interested in joining us, a membership application is included. Additional information may be obtained on our club's website, aslc-nm.org

ASLC Monthly Meeting and Outreach Events

Club Meetings

Meetings are usually held on the fourth Friday of each month at 7:00 p.m. We get together at the Mesilla Valley Radio Clubhouse, 6609 Jefferson Ave. Las Cruces, NM (see maps at bottom of site). We discuss recent and upcoming projects, share our night-sky adventures, and sometimes detail new projects or purchases as part of Show & Tell. Meetings are also aired via Zoom® so that presenters and participants from around the country can join in.

In addition to conducting club business, we feature the Tombaugh Lecture Series with a speaker invited to give a presentation on an astronomy-related topic. Over the years, several world-renowned individuals have done presentations for our club, including: Howard J. Brewington, Dr. Alan Hale, John Dobson, John Dobbins, Fred Whipple, and J. Allen Hynek. Faculty and students from the NMSU Astronomy Department are frequent speakers as well.

Club members also give several presentations each year. We often have post star-party reports by members who attend various events. It's a chance to hear stories about the antics of our members during their week of sleep deprivation. The December meeting is our holiday banquet and consists of as an informal and enjoyable social gathering. Check our web page, <http://www.aslc-nm.org> for meeting and event dates. Our monthly club meetings are about 90 minutes in length.

Our Monthly MoonGaze at Plaza de Las Cruces

On Saturday nights nearest the first quarter moon, the club holds their *Moon Gaze* event for the public. We set up our scopes around sunset at various locations throughout the city. The primary viewing target is obviously the moon. However, if bright planets are visible, we'll usually have telescopes pointed at them as well. It's a leisurely affair with people stopping by for a look throughout the evening. It's also an opportunity to catch up with friends, try out new equipment, and plan future activities. We usually observe for about 2-3 hours. Dates and a map of the venue can be found at the ASLC-NM.org website.



Dark Sky Observing at the Walter Haas Observatory



Once a month, ASLC holds public dark-sky observing at Leasburg Dam State Park (LDSP), where the Walter Haas Observatory, our roll-roof observatory, is located. The primary instrument housed at Leasburg is a 16-inch Cassegrain telescope that offers fantastic views of the planets and deep-sky objects. Additional telescopes for public viewing are usually brought by several club members. This event is typically done on Saturdays nearest the third quarter moon. LDSP is located about 15 miles north of Las Cruces (take exit-19 off Interstate 25 and follow the signs). Venue maps and viewing dates can be found on the ASLC-NM.org web site.

Special Events and Outings

Astronomy Day: Astronomy Day is a grass roots movement to share the joy of astronomy with the general population -"Bringing Astronomy to the People." On Astronomy Day, thousands of people who have never looked through a telescope will have an opportunity to see first hand what excites so many amateur and professional astronomers. ASLC holds events during the day at selected locations. We set up several telescopes, display some of our astrophotography, and talk with people about the wonders of our hobby. During the evening, we have a public star party and occasionally in collaboration with the NMSU Astronomy Department.



Participants view the Sun and bright planets at ASLC's booth at the annual Renaissance Faire.

Renaissance Faire: Each November, the Las Cruces Fine Arts Council hosts a Renaissance Faire at Young Park in Las Cruces. The two-day event draws thousands of local residents, and ASLC has been a participant for the last several years. The club sets up telescopes through which individuals can safely view the sun. We also display astrophotography and talk with hundreds of interested individuals about club activities (all the while wearing period costumes). It's great fun!

Star Parties/Camping: A couple times a year, a group of ASLC astronomers will spend a week or so at a remote location to

image and observe the night sky under pristine dark sky conditions. Popular destinations include the Texas Star Party, The Okie-Tex Star Party, Rusty's RV, and the Cosmic Campground. A communal meal (Si Señor night) is regularly scheduled. Occasional sightseeing, hiking and golf excursions are also scheduled.

Loaner Scope Program

ASLC members have access to the club's loaner scopes. These are telescopes that have been donated to the club and checked/restored by one of our members. The scopes may be used locally, used for outreach activities or taken to star parties. There is a wide variety of available scopes including a 10" Orion reflector, an 8" Celestron SCT ('C8') and an Orion 12" Intelliscope. For a complete list of available scopes, please contact the coordinator at LoanerScopes@asclnm.org.



Orion SkyQuest 10" f/4.7



Celestron 8" SCT



Orion Intelliscope (12")

Publications, Member Benefits

The High Desert Observer



The High Desert Observer (HDO) is our monthly club newsletter. It contains news, announcements, feature articles, upcoming events, star charts, and other items of interest. The HDO is also the place to get information about upcoming club presentations. A few days prior to our monthly meetings, the HDO is emailed to club members as an Adobe PDF file. Club members are highly encouraged to submit articles of general interest for publication.

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Astronomical League's "Reflector"



ASLC members also receive automatic membership in the Astronomical League (AL). AL membership has many benefits including participation in its observing groups, e.g., The Messier and Lunar Observing Clubs. Another excellent benefit of AL membership is The Reflector, which is AL's quarterly magazine. The Reflector is published in March, June, September and December and contains news and features from throughout the world of astronomy.

Sky and Telescope Magazine



Sky and Telescope is written for the knowledgeable amateur astronomer and includes articles on space science, astronomy, observatories, planetariums, telescopes and celestial events. S&T is widely read by professional astronomers and is probably bought by more amateur astronomers worldwide than any other astronomy magazine. ASLC members receive a discount on the subscription price for S&T. Check with the club treasurer for the latest price and to subscribe at club rates.



ASLC Membership Application and Member Profile

ASLC dues are **\$36** for a one (1) year single membership and **\$42** for a family membership. *You will receive the club newsletter, **High Desert Observer** (HDO), monthly via e-mail and **Reflector** magazine (also by e-mail) which is published by the Astronomical League, quarterly. In order to accommodate our annual due date of January 1st, dues will be pro-rated, currently \$3 or \$3.50 per month, for membership through December 31st. Please make your check payable to **ASLC**. Visit us at aslc-nm.org

Please take a few moments to tell us about yourself and your astronomical interests, then mail your check/money order and the completed form to: ASLC Treasurer, PO Box 921, Las Cruces, NM 88004.

Date: _____ (Optional membership types available) Amount Submitted: _____

Type of membership desired: Single Family Full-Time Student Youth

Name(s): _____

Spouse/Significant other name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Phone Number (H): _____ (W/M): _____

E-Mail Address: _____ Birthdate: _____

Occupation/Past Occupation if Retired: _____

How long have you been an amateur or professional astronomer? _____

What types of astronomy are you interested in (check all that apply): Visual Astronomy ____
Astrophotography ____ Variable Star Observing ____ Minor Planet Observing ____
Archeoastronomy ____ Spectroscopy ____ Public Outreach ____ Education ____
Occultation Timing ____ Telescope Making ____ Other (please list) _____

What equipment do you own? _____

What can the ASLC do to enhance your astronomy experience? _____

Membership Directory Privacy (please circle all that apply): **Please DO NOT list my address / phone number (H, W/M, Text) / e-mail / partner / occupation / interests** in the club's membership directory. The directory is available to ASLC board members and members with permission. It is not publically shared