



Saguaro Astronomy Club

Phoenix, Arizona

www.saguaroastro.org

General Information

The Saguaro Astronomy Club (SAC) is a thriving community of amateur astronomers in the Valley of the Sun. This sheet provides brief details on topics of interest to visitors and new members. More information is available on our website at the URL above.

History

The Saguaro Astronomy Club was founded in 1977 by a small group of astronomy enthusiasts who shared a passion for their hobby and a desire to focus on observing activities and the science of astronomy. Some of the charter members regularly attend meetings 36 years later. A more complete history of the club is available by clicking the "Information" and "History of SAC" links on the website.

Membership

Anyone with an interest in astronomy may join SAC. While most members have one or more telescopes, and some qualify as highly advanced amateur astronomers, it is not necessary to own any equipment or possess any particular level of knowledge in order to participate in club activities. Questions and requests for assistance from novices are welcomed.

Membership fees are waived for students from elementary school through college; a reduced fee is available to seniors aged 65 and older upon request. See the Treasurer, join using the website page, or complete and mail the form provided in each newsletter if you would like to join SAC.

Meetings

SAC meets monthly, generally on the Friday nearest Full Moon. The meeting schedule for the year is published on the website Events Calendar. Club meetings are composed of a brief segment

covering business matters and announcements, a longer Show & Tell segment where members describe their recent activities, and a featured speaker. All club members are invited to participate in Show & Tell. Our break before the featured speaker is a key component of each meeting as it allows time for members to interact with each other directly, usually while enjoying a cookie or other tasty snack. Featured speakers generally provide a 45-minute to one-hour talk.

Meetings convene promptly at 7:30 p.m. MST and end no later than 10:00 p.m. The featured speaker for the upcoming meeting is announced in the newsletter and on the website a week or two in advance.

Sanctioned Events

SAC hosts three formal gatherings each year. The semi-annual Thunderbird Star Parties are open to the public at large. Club members are invited to share views of the sky with people of all ages at Thunderbird Conservation Park in Glendale. These events are scheduled to coincide with the crescent or first quarter Moon in May and October.

Each spring, SAC hosts the All-Arizona Messier Marathon (AAMM), a major star party at a dark site in the western part of the state. The AAMM is scheduled for the best weekend to allow observation of as many of the 110 objects in the Messier Catalog as possible. SAC coordinates with the East Valley Astronomy Club for both the AAMM and EVAC's annual All Arizona Star Party which takes place in October. Members of both clubs, along with amateur astronomers from across the Southwest and beyond, are usually in attendance at both of these major outings.

In addition to the sanctioned events, SAC also

sponsors the North Rim portion of the Grand Canyon Star Party each June. Information about all sanctioned and hosted events is provided on the website and will appear in the newsletter as each draws near.

Informal Observing

Whenever the sky is clear and the Moon sets early or rises late, there are likely to be club members observing at any of several sites around the state. These informal sessions are coordinated through messages posted to the SAC-Forum and AZ-Observing lists, and generally take place on the low desert in the winter and at higher elevations during the warmer months of the year. The website has maps and location information for several of the more popular sites.

Committees

There are several committees presently associated with the club. The Novice Committee is dedicated to assisting members who are new to astronomy with any questions they may have about the hobby, helping people with equipment issues and generally welcoming them to the club.

The Grand Canyon Star Party - North Rim Committee works with the National Park Service to ensure that telescopes and observers are available for that event, and to assist volunteers who will be offering their time and equipment for public viewing. Both the Novice Committee and Grand Canyon Star Party - North Rim Committee are chaired by Steve Dodder.

The Amateur Telescope Makers (ATM) Committee is chaired by Paul Lind, who also hosts meetings at his home shop from autumn through spring. These meetings generally take place on the Tuesday prior to the monthly club meeting. Activities range from fabrication of new equipment to the repair of existing instruments. This informal meeting is also dedicated to astrophotography, so it is a good forum for discussion related to that discipline as well as general conversation about all things astronomical.

Watch the SAC-Forum and the website Events Calendar for the address and specific date and time of each meeting.

The full list of committees is provided in each newsletter. If there is a committee of interest to you, feel free to contact the chairperson.

Newsletter

SAC publishes a monthly newsletter which provides up-to-date information about upcoming events, columns devoted to observing topics, items offered for sale by club members and other items pertaining to astronomy. Current and past newsletters may be downloaded from the website.

Mailing Lists

The club maintains several mailing lists. One such list is the SAC-Forum, which is provided for discussion and notices of general astronomical interest. Anyone may subscribe to this list by sending a message to:

sac-forum-request@freelists.org

Subject: subscribe

You may unsubscribe from the list by sending a message to the same address:

Subject: unsubscribe

Information about other mailing lists is available by following the "Information/Email Discussion Lists" link on the SAC website.

Contact Information

Please contact any board member with general questions related to club activities, or committee chairpersons for specific topics. Club officers are available via the Contact link on the SAC website.

