



# ASLC Information Packet

## Welcome To The Astronomical Society Of Las Cruces

The ASLC offers greetings from the nearly 100 professional and amateur astronomers that comprise our 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, which included the discoverer of the planet Pluto, Clyde Tombaugh. So, for more than sixty years, we've been sharing the universe with our community under the very dark and transparent skies of southern New Mexico.



Several members of the club do astrophotography. This image of the Andromeda galaxy is by Dave Dockery



On Saturday evenings around the first-quarter moon, club members host our monthly Moon Gaze event in front of The International Delights Cafe on El Paseo.

Although some ASLC members collect scientific data, most of us do astronomy for fun. For example, the ASLC hosts public observing events such as our monthly MoonGaze and dark-sky observing at the club's observatory in nearby Radium Springs, NM. We also support countless star parties for local schools, scouting groups, and other organizations. For new telescope purchases, the 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!

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 also included. Additional information may be obtained on our club's website, [aslc-nm.org](http://aslc-nm.org)

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# 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 currently get together at the Mesilla Valley Radio Club 'Shack' located at 6609 Jefferson Ln., Las Cruces. 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, the club invites a featured speaker as part of our continuing Clyde W. Tombaugh Lecture Series. Over the years, several world-renowned individuals have done presentations for our club, including: Al Nagler, Vic Maris, Dr. Alan Hale, John Dobson, John Dobbins, Fred Whipple, and J. Allen Hynek. Faculty and graduate student members from the NMSU Astronomy Department are frequent speakers as well. Video recordings of the presentations are available. Club members also do several presentations each year. We often have a post-star party given by the members who attended. 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 a review of all of the club's activities during the prior year. We also give away numerous door prizes at the holiday party. 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 Moon Gaze

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. But, 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. We're currently doing our Moon Gazes at the Plaza de Las Cruces – 100 Main Street, Las Cruces



## Our Leasburg Dam Observatory

Once a month, the ASLC holds public dark-sky observing at the Leasburg Dam State Park (LDSP), where 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. 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).

## 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.

**Renaissance Faire:** Each November, the Las Cruces Fine Arts Council hosts a Renaissance Faire at Young Park. The two-day event draws thousands of local residents. 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, demonstrate telescope building, and talk with hundreds of interested individuals about club activities (all the while wearing period costumes). In 2004 and 2018, the club won awards for having the best-costumed booth. It's great fun!



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

**Star Parties/Camping:** Once or twice a year, a group of ASLC astronomers will spend a week or so at a remote location to image or 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@aslcnm.org](mailto:LoanerScopes@aslcnm.org).



Orion SkyQuest 10" f/4.7



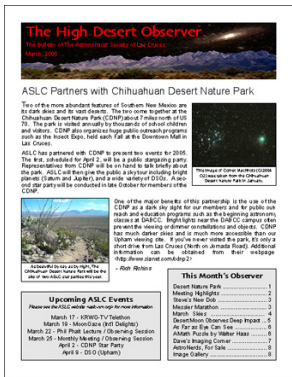
Celestron 8" SCT



Orion Intelliscope (12")

# Publications, Member Websites

## The High Desert Observer



The High Desert Observer (HDO) is our award-winning monthly club bulletin. It contains news, announcements, feature articles, upcoming events, and other items of interest. The HDO is also the place to get information about upcoming club presentations. Around the middle of each month, the HDO is emailed to club members as an Adobe pdf file.

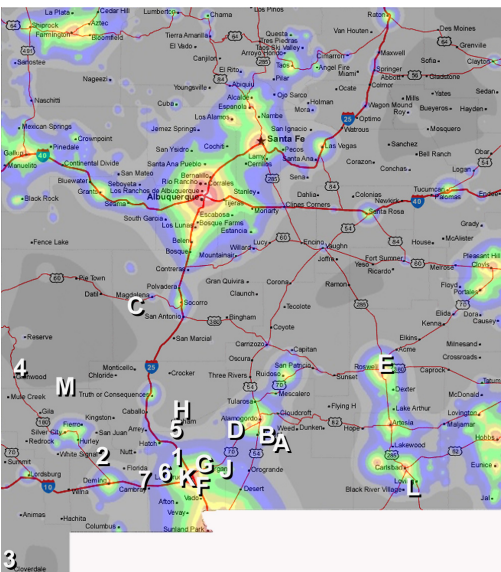
Club members are highly encouraged to submit articles of general interest for publication.

## The 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.



## Tourism and Dark Sky Observing



New Mexico has a rich history of space and rocketry science. V2 rockets were launched from White Sands Missile Range back in the 1950's. New Mexico hosts one of the largest radio telescope arrays in the world, the Very Large Array. The Sloan Digital Sky Survey Telescope is just 2 hours from town (in the Sacramento Mountains). In addition, much of Southern New Mexico is rural and offers outstanding viewing/imaging opportunities. We've assembled a tourism and dark sky observing guide for the southern half of the state to help get you started on your explorations. It's grown too large to include in this packet. Please see <http://aslc-nm.org/Tourism.html> for additional information.



## 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 1<sup>st</sup>, dues will be pro-rated, currently \$3 or \$3.50 per month, for membership through December 31<sup>st</sup>. Please make your check payable to **ASLC**. Visit us at [aslc-nm.org](http://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

*Last review – 8/5/2021*