



TALLAHASSEE
ASTRONOMICAL
SOCIETY

Member Handbook v3.1

[r3.1]

**TALLAHASSEE
ASTRONOMICAL
SOCIETY**

MEMBER HANDBOOK

March 2009



HISTORY

The Tallahassee Astronomical Society (TAS) has its roots in the old Florida State University Astronomical Society that was active in the late 1960's. At that time the club ran the FSU planetarium (an old Spitz A1) and the membership was close to 60 people.

The Club had faded away by 1975 except for a few folks that kept the flames flickering. In 1991 those few got together and decided to start up the club again. Since then, the years have brought many changes and benefits. However, the future of the Society is up to our members and you!

CONDITIONS

As a member you agree to hold harmless the Tallahassee Astronomical Society and its members along with the owners of property used for club activities from any liability resulting from personal injury or personal property damage sustained by you or your guests while participating in any TAS function. This is a non-negotiable condition of membership. Membership in TAS is considered to be automatic acceptance of this condition. If you find this unacceptable please contact our treasurer for a refund of your dues. It is your responsibility to inform your guests of this condition of participation in TAS activities.

DUES

Dues for regular membership are \$24.00 per year. Students may join for \$12.00 per year.

BENIFITS

► **Astronomical League Membership**

You get a quarterly newsletter, "The Reflector," from the League along with a 10% discount on League astronomy books and charts. You may also participate in League award observing programs that make learning about astronomy easy and enjoyable.

► **Discounts**

We currently offer discounts on subscriptions to *Sky & Telescope* and *Astronomy* magazines.

Books sold by these publishers are also available through the club at as much as a 33% below list price. Contact the club treasurer for details. These great discounts can add up to half a years dues!

► **Dark Sites –**

We are currently using the North Florida Community College/Green Technologies site three miles west of Monticello and a field on a hill in Ashville (9 miles north of Greenville). TAS is working to secure these sites for its observatory. The facilities available at the Monticello site are:

- ✧ **AC power**
- ✧ **Large building with bathroom**

► **Activities**

- Sidewalk astronomy at Tallahassee/Leon County parks or greenways
- Monthly dark site observation sessions
- Astronomical League observing programs for binoculars, telescopes and naked eye
- Telescopic binary star program
- Special lectures and presentations
- Public events, outreach and more...



TAS member Clyde Henderson at our Telescope Workshop

► **Lending Library**

We have an extensive library of over 50 astronomical titles as well as periodicals, software, slides and videos. They are only



available for lending to members of TAS. Please see a Board member at a regular TAS meeting to borrow from the library.

MEETINGS

► *Indoor Meetings*

General Meeting - TAS has one monthly indoor meeting in which we share current astronomical happenings, discuss business, and have presentations by members and invited guests.

This meeting is held on the third Monday of each month on the first floor of the Challenger Learning Center. The center is located in the Kleman Plaza (behind City Hall) in downtown Tallahassee. Meetings start at 7 PM and usually end by 8:30 PM. The building is located on the northeast corner of the Plaza. There is a charge for parking in the Kleman Plaza parking garage. However across College Avenue you may park in the USPS parking lot after hours. Please feel free to bring guests to this meeting, it is open to the public.

BOD Meeting — Held at 6 PM prior to the general membership meeting. This meeting is open to TAS members only! Votes are taken on pending business and setting the agenda for the next general meeting.

► *Outdoor Meetings*

Lake Ella - We try to have one session at Lake Ella each month, to share our 'scopes and knowledge with the general public. Please check our monthly calendar of events to find the day and time of the next meeting. Come and join the fun! Lake Ella is a City Park located on North Monroe.

J.R. Alford Greenway – TAS has an agreement with Leon County to use this park off Pedrick Road. We hold special events there but it also is available to members for observing closer to home. Viewing to the North, East and South are wonderful.



School For Arts and Sciences out for a viewing at Lake Alford Greenway

NFCC/Green Technologies and Ashville sites -

Are used for our monthly observation sessions and special group sessions. Weather permitting we meet on the Saturday closest to the New Moon every month at a TAS dark site. Please check our monthly calendar to find the day of the next meeting. There is usually a good showing and it is a great opportunity to learn about telescopes and the night sky. The viewing is spectacular! Access for regular members is limited to monthly observation sessions and special observations planned in advance. Please check the General Observation section of this document for the rules on using this site!

► *Special Events*

Dark Site Workday and Picnic – From time to time we schedule a workday at our dark sites to perform needed maintenance. We use this as a good excuse to have a picnic.

Astronomy Day – Held in April, TAS goes all out to inform the public about astronomy.

Astronomical Events – As they occur they will be scheduled. Past events have included meteor showers, solar and lunar eclipses, comets and so on. Please our web site (<http://stargazers.org>) or ask at the next general meeting for information on any upcoming special astronomical events.

Messier Workshop – Is put on from time to time, usually in March. It's a great way to meet other amateurs from across the country or from around the world.



CURRENT CLUB INFORMATION

TAS is a great club with all sorts of things going on constantly. To obtain the latest information on club officers, events, or the current activities of our many committees, please visit our web site (<http://stargazers.org>).

GENERAL OBSERVATION

- ▶ **Use of the Society's facilities and participation in the Society's programs are AT YOUR OWN RISK!.**
- ▶ **Monticello NFCC/Green Technologies Site** is only accessible by locked gate. You need to contact a board member and make arrangements to have them get the gate unlocked.
- ▶ **Ashville Site** is located on the top of a hill via a dirt road. You may use this site at any time with notice to the land owner.

Only TAS members and their guests are allowed at the dark sites.
- ▶ **Lights off before you pull into the dark sties if it is dark!!!** If this is your first visit, get there before dark or ask a club member to lead you.
- ▶ Park your car pointing to the entrance to minimize the disturbance when you leave. Also loudly announce that a car is leaving so observers can shield their eyes.
- ▶ Cover your flashlight with red cellophane or ask a Board member for some.
- ▶ When in any doubt about moving about, ask for assistance.
- ▶ Bring the following items:
 - Flashlight with dark red lens
 - Binoculars (if you have some)
 - Chairs, chaise lounge chairs, or blankets
 - Bug repellent
 - Appropriate clothing - is most important during the cold season. We've seen people

leave early because they didn't bring enough warm clothing. In cold weather it is recommended that you wear two pairs of socks, two pair of pants, three or more shirts/sweaters, a jacket, and a ski mask. It is easy to remove excess clothing if you become too hot, but difficult to stay warm without them! For people just wandering about, bring extra blankets to bundle up in.

- ▶ Always ask before using someone's telescope. Don't be afraid to ask, most of us are happy to share!
- ▶ Alcoholic beverages, illegal or recreational drugs **MAY NOT** be brought to or used on the premises.
- ▶ Do not litter. Take your trash with you when leaving or use trash receptacles when available.
- ▶ If you smoke, deposit cigarette remains in a can or other receptacle. **Don't throw them on the ground.**
- ▶ If the observing field is dry, be aware that your car can start a fire. Keep an eye on the area around your car until the engine and exhaust cool down.

Observation Programs

These observation programs are provided by the Astronomical League and administered by TAS. Participating in a program is one of the best ways to learn the sky, your equipment, and astronomy in general. When you finish a program, the Astronomical League issues a certificate (and sometimes a pin) that is presented to you at a TAS general meeting. We have programs for just about any interest.

Meteor Observation Program

The only equipment you need for this is the plain old Mark-1 eyeball. This is a program of observing and charting the paths of meteors as they enter the atmosphere. In the process you will learn about meteor showers.

Binocular Messier List

This program consists of observing 50 Messier objects with a pair of binoculars. The program was designed for 7x35 binoculars which are the smallest and least expensive available. TAS



would recommend that the beginner start with a pair of 7x50 or 10x50 binoculars for this area. The low altitude and moisture of the Florida Panhandle make the list hard (not impossible) to finish with 7x35's although the authors of the program completed it with a pair of inexpensive WalMart 7x35's. You must keep a written record of your observations as noted above but the drawing is optional. We would recommend that you make some drawings, as this will train your eye for viewing details. There is also a program for owners of binoculars larger than 10x50's.

Binocular Deep Sky List

This is a more advance list of objects visible with binoculars. The requirements are the same, however.

Messier List

This is the basic beginner's list of telescopic objects. They consists of some of the brightest galaxies, open star clusters, globular star clusters, and assorted nebulae visible in smaller telescopes. There are 2 levels of membership in this program, the first level is Regular for observing 70 objects and the second is Honorary for observing all 110 objects. A handy log for recording your observations is available in the document section of our web site [<http://stargazers.org/documents.htm>].

Binary Star Program

Observers are introduced to the best 100 binary stars. This program requires simple

drawings of the stars as well as the standard log information.

Lunar Program

One hundred observations of the Moon using your eyes, binoculars and just about any size telescope are required. This program is designed for telescopes as small as 60mm. Since only the Moon is observed, it can be done within the city limits since light pollution is not a problem. A Moon map is required and can be purchased through Sky Publishing or through the Society.

Solar Program

This is a good introduction to the Sun and its characteristics. You can use any size or type of telescope. **Be very careful when observing the Sun and use only a solar filter or a telescope made specifically for solar observation!**

Herschel 400 Program

For advanced observers with telescopes of at least 10 inch diameter. The brighter objects Herschel observed with his 72 inch telescope are on this list (Amateur telescopes have come a long way!).

Herschel 800 Program

Observe all of the Herschel objects. This takes a large telescope, dark skies and lots of time.



TALLAHASSEE ASTRONOMY SOCIETY BYLAWS

The following are the Bylaws of the TALLAHASSEE ASTRONOMY SOCIETY, an association not for profit, organized which Bylaws have been duly adopted by the initial Board of Directors of the Association.

SECTION 1. PRINCIPLE OFFICE.

The principal office of the association shall be for the present at 7545 Old St. Augustine Rd. , Tallahassee, FL 32311 , and thereafter may be located at any place in Leon County, Florida as designated by the Board of Directors: provided, however, meetings of Members and Directors may be held at such places within Leon County, Florida, as may be designated by the Board of Directors.

SECTION 2. MEMBERSHIP: MEMBERS

MEETINGS VOTING

2.1 Qualification for membership shall be as set as individuals that have paid annual dues' payments.

2.2 The Members shall meet annually not later than the last day of January, commencing in 1993 ("Annual Members Meeting"). The Annual Members' Meeting shall be held at the office of the Association or at such other place in Leon County, Florida as the Board may determine and designate, and at such time and on such date in the month of January of each year as the Board may determine and designate in the notice of such meeting. The purpose of the Annual Members' Meeting shall be to elect Members of the Board of Directors and officers, and to transact such other business as scheduled by the Board.

2.3 Special meetings of the Members shall be held at any place within Leon County, Florida whenever called by the President or by a majority of the Board. A special meeting must be called by the President upon receipt of a written request from regular Members having the right to vote at least fifty-one percent (51 %) of the total number of votes entitled to be cast by regular Members.

2.4 A written notice of all Members meetings shall be given to each Member in good standing at his last known address as it appears on the books of the Association and shall be mailed to said address not less than five (5) days nor more than sixty (60) days prior to the date of the meeting. Notice given in any newsletter or other publication of the Association shall constitute sufficient notice. If an amendment to the

Articles is to be considered at a meeting, the notice shall specify the general nature of the amendment(s), but verbatim or detailed publication of the text of the proposal shall not be required.

2.5 A quorum of the Members shall consist of a majority of the Board of Directors plus any regular Members present at a noticed meeting, unless otherwise provided in the Articles. When a quorum is present at any meeting and a question which raises the jurisdiction of such meeting is presented, the decision of the majority of the Board of Directors shall be determinative of the jurisdictional question. If a majority of the Board of Directors is unable to agree on the jurisdictional question, then there shall not be jurisdiction for the meeting to proceed as to the question presented. However, if the question is one upon which a vote other than the majority vote of a quorum is required by express provisions of the Articles, then such express provision shall govern and control the required vote on the decision of such question.

2.6 If a quorum is not in attendance at a meeting, the meeting may be adjourned from time to time until a quorum, is present with no further notice of such adjourned meeting being required unless otherwise determined by the Board, or unless required by express provisions of Articles.

2.7 Minutes of all meetings shall be kept in a businesslike manner and be available for inspection by the Members and the Board of Directors at all reasonable times.

2.8 Each regular Member in good standing shall be entitled to cast one vote at a meeting. Such vote may not be cast by proxy, and cumulative voting shall not be permitted.

2.9 For the purposes of these Bylaws, a Member in good standing is a Member who is not delinquent in the payment of annual dues.

SECTION 3. BOARD OF DIRECTORS: MEETINGS.

3.1 The business and administration of the Association shall be by its Board of Directors, which shall consist of not less than three (3) nor more than seven (7) Members as determined by a majority vote of the regular Members at a meeting duly called for such purpose at which a quorum is present. Any regular Member in good standing shall be eligible for membership on the Board of Directors. The initial Board of Directors shall consist of three (3) Members. Vacancies in the Board shall be filled by vote of the remaining Board Members.



3.2 Directors shall be elected by a majority of the votes of regular Members present at the Annual Members' Meeting at which a quorum is present. The term of the Director's service shall be as stated in the Articles, and if not so stated, shall extend until the next Annual Members' Meeting, and thereafter until his successor is duly elected and qualified or until he resigns or is removed in the manner elsewhere provided. Any person elected or designated a Director shall have all the rights, privileges, duties and obligations of a Director of the Association.

3.3 Meetings of the Board may be held at such times and places as shall be determined from time to time by a majority of the Board. Meetings of the Board may be called at any time at the discretion of the President, but shall be required upon the call of a majority of the Board.

3.4 Notice of the time and place of meetings of the Board, or adjournments thereof, shall be given to each Director personally or by mail, telephone or telegraph at least three (3) days prior to the day named for such meeting unless such notice is waived before, during or after such meeting. Any Director may waive notice of the meeting in writing before, during or after a meeting and such waiver shall be deemed equivalent to the receipt of notice by such Director.

3.5 A quorum of the Board shall consist of the Directors entitled to cast a majority of the votes of the entire Board. Matters approved by a majority of the Board shall constitute the official acts of the Board. If at any meetings of the Board there shall be less than a quorum present, those present may adjourn the meeting from time to time until a quorum is present. No further notice of the adjourned meeting need be given unless otherwise determined by the Board.

3.6 The presiding officer at all Board meetings shall be the President. In the absence of the President the Board shall designate any one of their number to preside.

3.7 Minutes of all meetings of the Board shall be kept in a businesslike manner and be available for inspection by Members and Directors at all reasonable times.

3.8 Meetings of the Board shall be opened to all Members.

3.9 Any action required or permitted to be taken at a meeting of the Board may be taken without a meeting if a consent in writing shall be signed by all the Directors entitled to vote; provided however, this provision shall not be applicable to votes cast by Directors at meetings of the membership. Such consent shall have the same force and effect as a unanimous vote of the Board.

3.10 All of the powers and duties of the Association shall be exercised by the Board. Such powers and

duties of the Board shall include, but not be limited to, all powers and duties set forth in the Articles.

3.11 Directors of the Association shall serve without compensation; provided, however, they shall be entitled to reimbursement for advances made by them for expenses of the association authorized by the Board of Directors.

SECTION 4. OFFICERS.

4.1 Executive officers of the Association shall be a President, a Vice President, a Treasurer, a Secretary and an Education Observational Director, all of whom shall be elected annually by the regular Members at the Annual Members' Meeting. Any officer may be removed without cause from office by a fifty- one percent (51 %) vote of all regular Members at any meeting of membership duly noticed for that purpose. The regular Members may, from time to time, elect such other officers and assistant officers and designate their powers and duties as they shall find to be necessary or desirable to manage the affairs of the Association. One

(1) person may hold two offices simultaneously except where the functions of such offices are incompatible; however, no person shall hold the office of President and Vice President or Secretary. Any officer may also serve as a Director of the association.

4.2 The President shall be the chief executive officer of the Association. He shall have all of the powers and duties which are usually vested in the office of President of an association not for profit, including, but not limited to, the power to appoint such committees at such times as he may, in his discretion, determine appropriate to assist in the conduct of the affairs of the association. If in attendance, the President shall preside at all meetings of the Board.

4.3 In the absence or disability of the President, the Vice President shall exercise the powers and perform the duties of the President. The Vice President shall also generally assist the President and exercise such other powers and perform such other duties as shall be prescribed by the Board.

4.4 The Secretary shall keep the minutes of all meetings of the Board and the Members, which minutes shall be kept in a businesslike manner and be available for inspection by the Members and Directors at all reasonable times. They shall have custody of the seal of the Association and affix the same to instruments requiring such seal when duly authorized and directed to do so. They shall be custodian for the association records, except for those of the Treasurer, and shall perform all of the duty's incident to the office of Secretary as may be required by the Board or the President.

4.5 The Treasurer shall have custody of all the moneys of the Association, including funds, securities and



evidences of indebtedness. He shall keep the dues roll of the Members, keep the books of the Association, and perform all of the duties incident to the office of the Treasurer.

4.6 Officers of the association shall serve without compensation; provided, however, they shall be entitled to reimbursement for advances made by them for expenses of the association authorized by the Board of Directors.

4.7 Vacancies in office shall be filled by the Board of Directors.

The fiscal year of the Association shall begin on the 1st day of January and end the 31st day of December of every year.