

A night sky with the Milky Way galaxy and a telescope on a rooftop observatory. The telescope is illuminated with red and blue lights, and the observatory structure is visible in the background.

# San Diego Astronomy Association

**New Member Handbook**

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**Cover Photograph** – The view from inside the Terry Arnold Remote Observatory (TARO) at TDS. Courtesy of member Cassiano Carromeu

# San Diego Astronomy Association

Celebrating Over 50 Years of Astronomical Outreach



## Welcome to membership in the San Diego Astronomy Association!

The SDAA is an organization created to further the education of its members and the public in astronomy and the related physical sciences. Membership is composed of people from all walks of life who share the same fascination for the Universe around them.

If you have a telescope, please jump in and attend any of SDAA's star party events and our site at Tierra Del Sol. If you are learning how to use your telescope, SDAA members will be glad to help you at these events. If you are thinking about obtaining a telescope, the best advice is to defer any purchase until you have attended any of our star parties to see what works best for your interests. In addition to visual observing, SDAA has monthly meetings with lectures on space and astronomy topics and an active imaging group.

Each month, the SDAA holds regularly scheduled events.

- On the first Wednesday of every month, SDAA members set up their telescopes west of the fountain by the Natural History Museum for public viewing.
- On the second Friday of each month, SDAA members set up their telescopes at Mission Trails Regional Park, in the Kumeyaay Campground parking area for public viewing.
- On the second Saturday of each month, SDAA members set up their telescopes at the Oak Oasis County Park on Wildcat Canyon Rd, Lakeside, for public viewing.
- Program Meetings are held the third Wednesday of every month (except December and January) at 7:00 p.m. at the Mission Trails Regional Park Visitor and Interpretative Center. Topics and speakers are varied and are announced in the monthly newsletter. Directions can be found at their web site [http://www.mtrp.org/visitor\\_center.asp](http://www.mtrp.org/visitor_center.asp) and <http://www.sdaa.org/program.htm>.
- On the third Friday of every other month, SDAA members set up their telescopes at the Sycamore Canyon, Gooden Ranch trailhead off Hwy 67, Lakeside, for public viewing.
- On the fourth Wednesday of every month (except November and December), the Astro Imaging Special Interest Group (AISIG) meets at 7:00 p.m., at Mission Trails Regional Park. AISIG is comprised of astro-imagers with a wide variety of skills, who share a common interest in imaging (for information, contact [AISIG@sdaa.org](mailto:AISIG@sdaa.org)).
- On the fourth Friday of each month, SDAA members set up their telescopes at West Sycamore Park, part of Mission Trails Regional Park, at the end of Stonebridge Parkway in Scripps Ranch for public viewing.

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- The Outreach Special Interest Group (OSIG) is made up of volunteers who share their interest in astronomy with the community. OSIG holds observing sessions in schools and in public parks around the county and conducts training for SDAA outreach volunteers. New members are always welcome (for more information contact [Outreach@sdaa.org](mailto:Outreach@sdaa.org)).
- Each fall, SDAA hosts a bar-b-que and viewing party at TDS.
- In January or February, there is an Annual Banquet and general membership meeting.

SDAA calendar information is contained on our website at: <http://www.sdaa.org/calendar.htm> and outreach information is on the calendar at: [http://www.sdaa.org/calendar\\_outreach.htm](http://www.sdaa.org/calendar_outreach.htm).

You can communicate with SDAA by email or letter. The SDAA has a web site: <http://www.sdaa.org>, where you can view past newsletters and get the latest information about the club, find contacts, membership information, merchandise and numerous other resources. Or you can join our Group at <https://groups.io/g/SDAA>. Our e-mail is: [sdaa@sdaa.org](mailto:sdaa@sdaa.org).

Our mailing address is:

SDAA  
PO Box 23215  
San Diego, CA 92193-3215.

Magazines you subscribed to through the SDAA should start arriving within a month or two. All members receive an informative monthly newsletter via email, containing articles of interest, notices on SDAA events, and other information. If you are a Contributing member, you also receive the information necessary to access the Tierra del Sol Observing Site.

Directions to the Tierra del Sol Observing Site, a map and a list of rules for safe use of the TDS site are found elsewhere in this manual. The site is open to all SDAA members and the public on two Saturday nights each month closest to the Last Quarter and New Moon. The newsletter lists the exact dates for each month. In addition, Contributing members may use the Site whenever they wish.

Happy Observing!

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## Contacting SDAA

**Current Officers and contacts are listed at:** <https://sdaa.org/contacts.htm>

P.O. Box 23215 San Diego, CA 92193-3215

E-mail - [sdaa@sdaa.org](mailto:sdaa@sdaa.org)

## BY-LAWS OF SAN DIEGO ASTRONOMY ASSOCIATION

### Article I – Membership and Dues

#### *Section 1.0 -Membership Application*

Applications for membership shall be made to the Board of Directors who will review each application within 45 days of receipt. No application shall be considered unless accompanied by all dues applicable, which shall be returned if the application is not accepted.

#### *Section 2.0 -Classes of Membership*

- |  |                        |                  |
|--|------------------------|------------------|
| A. Basic Member                          | B. Contributing Member | C. Family Member |
| D. Associate Member (Under 18 years old) | E. Honorary Membership |                  |

#### *Section 3.0 -Privileges of Membership*

Except as noted elsewhere in this article, privileges of membership shall include the right to vote, hold office and attend board meetings. Other privileges include the use of the library and other club equipment and facilities, and other such privileges as may be designated by the Board of Directors.

#### *3.1-Basic Member*

This class of membership includes those privileges as described in 3.0.

#### *3.2 -Contributing Member*

This class of membership has all the privileges as noted in 3.0, plus unlimited access to the club observing site, as well as other privileges as designated by the Board of Directors outlined in the Operational Procedures.

#### *3.3-Family Member*

This membership is available to a person who is in the immediate family of a Basic or Contributing Member. This membership has the same rights and privileges as the Basic Membership.

#### *3.4 -Associate Member*

This membership is available to persons under the age of 18 and is granted by the Board of Directors under conditions of special circumstances. An associate member cannot serve as an officer of the corporation.

#### *3.5 -Honorary Member*

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An honorary member is a distinguished member of the astronomy community, who by virtue of their standing in their field brings considerable talent and expertise to the association. An honorary member shall have all the rights and privileges of a Contributing Member, except that no honorary member may hold office.

#### *Section 4.0 -Voting*

Each member shall have only 1 (one) vote, regardless of class.

#### *Section 5.0-Dues*

The annual dues shall be established by the Board of Directors, and outlined in the Operations Procedures. The annual dues structure shall be arranged to allow operation of the Association in a fiscally responsible and solvent manner, at the same time retaining the smallest fees possible.

#### *Section 6.0 -Payment of Dues*

Dues shall become due and payable on the annual anniversary date of first joining. Any member whose dues are delinquent for more than 60 days shall automatically be terminated from membership.

## **Article II – Officers and Their Election**

#### *Section 1.0 -Officers*

The officers of this corporation shall be President, Vice–President, Recording Secretary, Corresponding Secretary and Treasurer. They shall be members in good standing and shall be 18 years or older at the time of taking office.

#### *Section 2.0 -Election of Officers*

Officers shall be elected annually. If there is but one nominee for any office, there shall be a motion before the Board of Directors that the Recording Secretary cast the elective ballot of the organization for the nominee.

#### *Section 3.0 -Terms of Office*

Officers shall assume their duties at the January membership meeting of the corporation. Officers shall serve for a term of two years or until their successors are elected. Terms of office shall be staggered; with the President, Vice–President, and Corresponding Secretary elected together biannually on even years and the Recording Secretary and Treasurer elected together on the alternate intervening years.

#### *Section 4.0 -Term Limits*

A person shall not be eligible to serve more than two consecutive terms in the same office.

#### *Section 5.0 -Nominating Committee*

There shall be a nominating committee consisting of three members, one of which shall be elected by the Board of Directors from its body, and two elected by the membership at the regular meeting in October.

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The President shall appoint one of the three to serve as Chairman of the Committee. The purpose of this committee is to solicit and accept nominations for the position open to election.

## *Section 6.0 -Nominations*

The nominating committee shall solicit nominees for each office to be filled and report at the regular membership meeting in November. Following the report of the Nominating Committee, an opportunity shall be given for final nominations from the floor.

## *Section 7.0 -Ballots*

The Board of Directors shall submit each office for which there is more than one nominee to all the voting members by mail ballot. The candidate receiving greatest number of votes shall be elected to office.

## *Section 8.0 -Nomination Eligibility*

Only those who have consented to serve, if elected, shall be eligible for nomination, either by the committee or from the floor.

## *Section 9.0 -Office Vacancy*

A vacancy occurring in any office shall be filled by an appointee designated by the Board of Directors. The appointee shall hold the position until the next election.

## **Article III – Duties of Officers**

### *Section 1.0 -President*

The President shall preside at all meetings of the membership and of the Board of Directors, shall appoint the chairmen of standing and special committees, shall coordinate the work of the officers and committees to promote the purposes of this corporation, and shall, with the Recording Secretary, when properly authorized, execute all legal documents in the name of the corporation.

### *Section 2.0 -Vice-President*

The Vice-President shall act as aide to the President, shall perform the duties of the President in his absence or inability to serve, and shall be ex-officio chairman of the Program Committee.

### *Section 3.0 -Recording Secretary*

When required, the Recording Secretary shall record the minutes of all membership meetings and all Board of Directors meetings, shall be the custodian of the official copy of Articles of Incorporation and By-Laws, shall, with the President and properly authorized, execute all legal documents in the name of the corporation, and shall perform such other duties as may be delegated to the Recording Secretary. Minutes of all meetings of the Board of Directors and membership shall be read at the next succeeding meeting.

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## *Section 4.0 -Corresponding Secretary*

The Corresponding Secretary shall keep the correspondence records of the organization and prepare and send such communications as may be authorized by the membership or Board of Directors and shall perform such other duties as may be delegated to the Corresponding Secretary.

## *Section 5.0 -Treasurer*

The Treasurer shall receive all moneys of the corporation, shall keep an accurate record of receipts and expenditures including the official Membership Book and Dues accounts, and shall disburse treasury funds for all obligations of the corporation provided they are incurred in accordance with the provisions of the Articles of Incorporation and By-Laws. The Treasurer shall present a financial statement when requested by the Board of Directors. An annual report shall be available to the membership. The Treasurer's accounts shall be examined annually by an auditing committee of not less than three members who, satisfied that the Treasurer's annual report is correct, shall sign a statement of that fact at the end of the report. The Auditing Committee shall be appointed by the Board of Directors.

## *Section 6.0 -Leaving Office*

All officers shall deliver to their successors all official corporation records and property by the first business meeting in January following their election.

## *Section 7.0 -Absences*

The position of any officer who is absent from three successive membership and/or Board of Directors meetings shall be declared vacant unless such absence is excused by the Board of Directors.

## **Article IV – Meetings**

### *Section 1.0 -Schedule*

Regular meetings of this organization shall be held at such place and time as may be determined by the Board of Directors.

### *Section 2.0 -Special Meetings*

A special membership meeting of the organization may be called by the Board of Directors, but only after five days' written notice to each member of the time, place and purpose of such a meeting has been given. Such a special membership meeting shall be limited to the transaction of business directly related to the stated purpose.

### *Section 3.0 -Quorum*

A quorum of members shall consist of at least one officer present to conduct the meeting plus at least 10% of the members at any regular meeting or special business meeting of the organization, provided that a quorum shall constitute no less than 7 members. This section does not pertain to regular meetings of the Board of Directors, who shall meet at least once each month.



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## *Section 4.0 -Eligibility to Participate*

The privilege of being nominated to or holding office, introducing motions, debating and voting, shall be limited to members of the organization whose dues are not delinquent.

## **Article V – Board of Directors**

### *Section 1.0 -Duties*

The Board of Directors shall direct the affairs of the Corporation and determine its policies insofar as may be consistent with these By-Laws and to the extent authorized or permitted by law.

### *Section 2.0-Composition*

The Board of Directors shall be composed of nine (9) members and shall consist of the five (5) officers of the corporation and four (4) directors elected from the membership.

### *Section 3.0 -Directors Terms of Office*

Directors other than the officers shall be elected for one (1) year at a time and under the conditions prescribed for the regular election of officers.

### *Section 4.0 -Quorum of Directors*

A quorum of the Board of Directors shall be four, provided at least two officers are present and one of those is either the President or the Vice President.

### *Section 5.0-Dues Structure*

The Board of Directors shall have authority to raise membership dues if and when necessary to cover increased cost of publications, correspondence, postage and other operating expenses.

## **Article VI – Committees**

### *Section 1.0 -Appointment of Committees*

The Board of Directors shall appoint, when necessary, standing committees of the Corporation.

### *Section 2.0 -Appointment of Members*

The chairmen of standing committees may appoint any member of their choice to serve on their respective committee.

### *Section 3.0 -Terms of Committees*

Special committees may be created at any time by the membership at any meeting of the Board of Directors. Unless otherwise ordered, special committees shall be appointed by the Board of Directors for a specific purpose and expire automatically at the conclusion of their mission.

### *Section 4.0 -Presidential Membership*

The President shall be an ex-officio member of all committees except the Nominating Committee.

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## *Section 5.0 -Revocation of Appointment*

The Chairman and membership of any standing or special committee may have their appointments revoked by action of the Board of Directors.

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## **SAN DIEGO ASTRONOMY ASSOCIATION RULES FOR THE TIERRA DEL SOL OBSERVING SITE**

These rules are intended to provide access and use of the San Diego Astronomy Association property for as many members and guests as possible, yet permit each person to pursue the study and enjoyment of astronomy to their fullest satisfaction.

Access to the property is a privilege of membership. All members and guests are required to abide by the rules outlined below and to always conduct themselves in a dignified and orderly manner. The Board of Directors and the Site Host(s) will handle violations. Violations could result in ejection from the property, loss of privileges, or dismissal from the SDAA.

1. Access to the property will be by combination only, except during regularly scheduled Star Parties. Members are responsible for their guests.
2. Everyone is responsible for their own litter. If you bring it in, take it out!
3. No open fires are permitted without Board approval and a State forestry burning permit. Bar-B-Cues are permitted only in the posted, designated areas and shall not be left unattended. Smoking is permitted only in private vehicles, with doors and windows closed, or in the Southeast corner (near restrooms) or Northwest corner of the public parking area, and away from vegetation. Smoking materials (matches, butts, etc.) are never to be discarded or dumped at TDS, no matter how “cold” they may be.
4. Members and guests shall use only the minimum light necessary for safety. Light must be red or masked in red to preserve night vision. Lights shall be kept pointing toward the ground whenever possible. The use of laser pointers is prohibited at all times. Laptop computers should use a red filter and be masked or shielded so that no stray light escapes the sides of the display. Check and be sure it is clear to use lights before proceeding in or out of any area. Be considerate of others and their night vision and photography efforts.
5. Noise shall be kept to a minimum. No loud music, horns, yelling, etc., especially between the designated quiet hours of 8:00 p.m. and 10:00 a.m.
6. Dust shall be kept to a minimum. Except for those with disabilities, the use of any wheeled vehicle, bicycle or motorized vehicle is prohibited, except to go to and from your observing area. Vehicle speed on the property should be no faster than 3 MPH.
7. Discharging of firearms is prohibited.
8. The Board of Directors must approve removal of brush, trees, or any other flora and fauna.

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9. The last Contributing member to leave the site is responsible for turning off all lights, power and water, securing all equipment, assuring no others are on the property, and locking all doors and gates.

10. Site users will be familiar with the SDAA Star Party Rules.

11. On official public star party nights, the Board will appoint a host(s) to be responsible for the enforcement of the rules, and the operation of the property during the observing session. Their duties will be defined by the Board and the appointment rotated among the Contributing members.

12. On non-star party nights, guests must be accompanied by a Contributing member.

13. All pets must be controlled by a leash at all times. Owners are responsible for the actions of and their pets and for cleaning up after their pets.

14. Parking in the public pad area shall be on the north side of each pad; do NOT park or drive on the concrete pads. Guests shall park their vehicles in the areas designated for parking, and not along the public pads or in the accesses to the private pad areas. Public Pad access is on a first come, first served basis; no reserving or "Saving" of spots is allowed. Physical space used on the Public Pad should be kept to a maximum of the width of your vehicle plus 18" to each side. If, conditions warrant, more space may be used, but only after observing has begun.

15. Groups, either students or friends of members, larger than 8 in number, must be approved by the Board of Directors prior to their visit. All groups, of any size, must abide by the above rules, must arrive before dark and must have a prearranged departure time. The group MUST be instructed in white light etiquette before the night of the visit. Regardless of the night of the visit, weekdays or non-star party weekends, these rules must be strictly obeyed. Failure to comply with these rules will be punishable, as deemed necessary, by the Board of Directors.

16. When children are helped up onto ladders or step stools, they should always be accompanied by a parent and supervised. You should never contact a child for any reason in the dark unless it is a bona fide emergency to prevent injury.

17. Extended Stay - The SDAA's major use permit and insurance prohibit onsite residency. As such, members are limited to a maximum of two weeks stay three times per year, with subsequent two-week stays separated by a minimum of one week (they cannot run back-to-back). All supplies, tents, boxes, scopes, etc., shall be removed from the pad when vacated. Pads shall be kept neat, tidy, and in good order. The appearance of permanent residency will not be tolerated.

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## Emergencies

Dealing with an emergency depends upon the venue. In general, representatives of the host group should step in to address an emergency. In lieu of other direction, the following apply:

1. Do not panic. This seems like such a simple and mundane rule, but it is important not to panic. Keeping a clear head can save lives, including your own.
2. Call the appropriate authorities, and carefully and calmly describe the situation to them.
3. Do not move an individual who is down unless they are in imminent danger.
4. **If you have not been trained in emergency medical techniques, do not apply medical assistance unless someone is in imminent danger of death. Wait for paramedics or other trained personnel to arrive.**
5. Keep others clear of the area so that emergency vehicles are able to quickly arrive and offer assistance.

The above rules are general guidelines for conduct on SDAA property. All members and guests must be considerate of the other members and shall conduct themselves accordingly. Courtesy and common sense are the keys to successful and enjoyable group observing. Each person must help in protecting the property and equipment of the Club.

Help keep operating and maintenance costs to a minimum by prudent use of the site, observance of the rules, and by reporting violations or other problems as they occur to the Board or host. In addition to these rules, all County, State, Federal, and Forestry Laws are applicable, shall be observed and are enforced.

## **SAN DIEGO ASTRONOMY ASSOCIATION RULES FOR RECREATIONAL VEHICLE (RV) USE AT THE TIERRA DEL SOL OBSERVING SITE**

These rules are intended for Recreational Vehicle (RV) use on the San Diego Astronomy Association property. It is the intent of the Board of Directors to provide for as many members and guests as possible, yet permit each person to pursue the study and enjoyment of astronomy to their fullest satisfaction.

Access to the property is a privilege of membership. All members and guests are required to abide by the rules outlined in the San Diego Astronomy Association Rules for the Tierra del Sol Observing Site, and those members bringing RVs onto the site must abide by this set of rules in addition to the Rules for the Tierra del Sol Observing Site. Violations will be handled by the Board of Directors and the Site Host. Violations could result in ejection from the property, loss of privileges, or dismissal from the SDAA.

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1. RV parking is limited to the northwest corner of the Tierra del Sol Observing property. An area on the property will be demarcated for RV use, and parking or placing an RV in any other area is not permitted. The private fenced observatory area is excluded from this rule and owners and guests of observatory owners may park their RVs next to their observatory.
2. The number of RVs allowed on the property at any given time will be limited to the number of RVs that will fit in the demarcated area. The area of demarcation overlaps the area set aside for tent camping, and tents will have priority over the use of the area. RV parking is on a first-come, first-serve basis. RVs arriving after the demarcated area is filled must park off the property (and subsequently under the rules and guidelines of the BLM or property owners). RVs which park off the Tierra del Sol Observing property and are in the vicinity for SDAA functions or to use the Tierra del Sol Observing property must follow this set of rules.
3. RVs are not allowed to hook up to Tierra del Sol Observing property electricity or water, nor are they allowed to dump any waste material on the Tierra del Sol Observing property. Electrical and water operations must be self-contained, and not trespass onto the Tierra del Sol Observing property. Generator operation is not allowed on the Tierra del Sol Observing property during the quiet hours specified in the Rules for the Tierra del Sol Observing Site or if it interferes with the peaceful enjoyment of the site. RVs must adhere to the “Extended Stay” policy as specified in the Rules for the Tierra Del Sol Observing Site.
4. RVs will provide full shielding from light trespass. Complete red lighting is preferable, but other forms of light block are acceptable. No white light will trespass onto the Tierra del Sol Observing property at any time from an RV, including when a door, window or vent is opened.
5. RVs will not provide any form of view block to any observer on the Tierra del Sol Observing property, nor will an RV provide any form of disturbance to any observer on the Tierra del Sol Observing property.
6. The SDAA Board of Directors, or its appointed representatives, will have sole discretion in judging when a vehicle is considered an RV and must adhere to the above rules. The SDAA Board of Directors, or its appointed representatives, will also have sole discretion in controlling the use of RVs at the Tierra del Sol Observing property. The TDS property, including private pads and observatories are not to be used as second homes or campsites, and the appearance of permanent or semi-permanent residency will not be tolerated.

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## Observatory Training & Use Policy

This document presents policy for the training and use of the San Diego Astronomy Association's Observatory and the 22" Lipp Telescope.

### Training

Training is open to those who have been Contributing Members in good standing for at least one year. The Association will hold training classes at the observatory when enough interest warrants a class. Date, time and curricula of the class shall be at the discretion of the Observatory Director, who will maintain an "Active User" list of all members certified to operate the Lipp telescope. Class size may be limited due to the constraints of teaching in the small environs of the observatory. In instances where class size must be limited, preference will be given based on club seniority. Participants not able to attend a class will be placed on a waiting list for the next class.

To use the Lipp telescope and observatory, members must be trained and certified in its use and operation by the observatory director or his/her designee. The training class is intended to familiarize users with the specific operational functions of the Lipp telescope and observatory. After completion of the training class, the member must demonstrate sufficient skills to safely operate all aspects of the observatory, including the telescope and its accessories, and be certified by the observatory director. Once certified, the member will be placed on the "Active User" list.

### Use

Once a member is trained, they can reserve the telescope for personal use, as long as the following provisions are met:

- 1) The member must host one public observing session at the observatory within six (6) months of completing the training class.
- 2) After the hosting requirement is met, members must use the observatory at least once per year to remain on the active user list. Members not meeting this requirement must retake the training class before being allowed to use the observatory again.
- 3) After the hosting requirement is met, members can reserve any open night except the Saturday nights of the public star parties at Tierra del Sol (two nights a month).. The Friday night preceding the Saturday night public star parties is automatically reserved for the star party host's personal use.

The procedure for reserving and using the observatory is as follows:

- 1) Contact the Observatory Director to reserve the desired date. The Observatory Director will confirm its usability on the desired date. Reservation is on a first-come first-serve basis.
- 2) The Observatory Director will supply the member with the combinations to the observatory, which regularly change to ensure security and control of the observatory.

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- 3) The member will report back to the Observatory Director any problems or concerns with the observatory. No member is to make repairs, corrections, modifications, or to perform any work on the observatory, the telescope, or equipment without the express permission of the Observatory Director or the Board of Directors.

This policy is set forth in order to assure the SDAA's control of and the use of the observatory. The SDAA reserves the right to modify this policy at any point and without notice to the membership. Any member not complying with the policy as set may lose use privileges of the observatory, and will only be reinstated at the discretion of the Observatory Director and/or the Board of Directors.



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## Frequently Asked Questions

**Q. I don't own a scope; can I still come to TDS?**

**A.** Yes. Coming to a TDS star party gives you an opportunity to look through many different types of telescopes and talk to their owners. Every amateur astronomer is proud to let you look through his scope and more than willing to tell you about it. In addition, there are "loaner" scopes available for you to use at the star parties. See our Observatory Director, Jim Traweek, about checking out one of the loaner scopes.

**Q. I'm going to TDS with my scope for my first star party. What should I bring with me?**

**A.** A red light flashlight is highly recommended. You can make one yourself, with the instructions in this handbook, or purchase one from many of the Astronomy Shops in town or on the web. If your scope can use AC power, then bring an extension cord and maybe an outlet strip, you may not be able to park right next to one of the outlet boxes on the public pads. The public pads are made of concrete, and some members bring a piece of outdoor carpet to put their scope on, especially if they have to kneel down to use it, it's much softer on your knees. A folding chair is also nice to have; you can get very tired standing all night. If you use charts or reference books, then a folding camp table is also recommended. We suggest that you keep your table and chairs off the pad and on the dirt, saving as much room as possible for telescopes on the concrete. Patience, lots and lots of patience. Your first night at a dark sky site can be overwhelming so don't be afraid to ask questions of other members. There's no such thing as a dumb question, not asking questions is the only dumb thing you can do.

**Q. My spouse doesn't enjoy astronomy but likes to come along and read, what can he/she do?**

**A.** The building that houses the club scope also has a heated "Warming Room" where non-astronomers can go to read, knit, make coffee, use the microwave, etc. There is a coffee pot and a microwave there for members use. The light in the warming room is a soft red color, so as not to be too damaging to observer's night vision, but is bright enough to read by. This is also the location of the library, where many astronomy related books and magazines are kept.

**Q. My car has "automatic" headlights, and I know white light is bad, what do I do?**

**A.** Look at your dashboard carefully, most "automatic" headlights have a switch that allow you to turn the feature off, as well as manual "on" positions. Turn it to the off position before you turn the ignition on to leave. If your car has the daytime "running lights" which can't be turned off, either find the fuse to disable these lights, or tape some cardboard over the lamps until you are away from the site and can remove them. One suggestion that has been found to work on newer Ford and GM vehicles is to put the emergency brake on, just a bit (one or two "clicks"). This seems to disable the daytime running lights, and won't hurt your breaks. Just remember to take the break off, once you are away from the sight. Don't overlook your interior "dome" lights, you'd be surprised at the amount of light these produce when your eyes are dark adapted. If your car has the feature to turn them off, do so, otherwise, most members pull the fuse for these before coming to the site. If all else fails, pull the bulbs from the sockets or put a piece of cardboard over the offending lamps.

**Q. When I leave, can I turn on my "Parking Lights" to help see?**

**A.** If you absolutely must, then do so, but if possible, get someone to walk in front of you with a red flashlight to light the way for you, even the bright amber light from "Parking Lamps" can ruin a person's night vision.

**Q. How do I get a "Private Pad"?**

**A.** Private pads are obtained on a first come, first served basis, by applying for one to our "Private Pad Director". Your name will be put on the bottom of the list, the member at the top of the list will get the next available pad, and he/she is taken off the list. Private pads must be used, by the lessee, at least four times a year, in order to maintain their lease. Once you obtain a pad, you will be given the rules for its use by the Pad Director. The club is endeavoring to make more pads available, and some members are willing to share their pad with others. See the map of pad owners willing to share their pad at the following URL: [http://www.sdaa.org/\\_docs/\\_tds/TDS\\_PadSharersMap.pdf](http://www.sdaa.org/_docs/_tds/TDS_PadSharersMap.pdf). The Private Pad Director can be reached at [pads@sdaa.org](mailto:pads@sdaa.org) or at star parties.

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**Q. I'm a Contributing Member and want to use the site on a night other than a Star Party night, how do I open up?**

**A.** To open the site you'll need the combination that appears on your monthly newsletter. This combination will open the main gate locks, the lock on the pump, the lock on the power switch and the gate lock to the warming room. The combination to the warming room door and the restroom doors is also on the label. It's suggested that you have a Board member or the "New Member Mentor" give you a tour showing the location of the pump and electrical boxes before your first visit by yourself. Once you enter the site, it is suggested that you lock the gate behind you, to keep unauthorized people from entering the site. When you are through at the site, make sure that you are the last person leaving (check the observatory buildings too), before turning off the power and pump, and make sure that all doors are locked and that the combination locks are on securely and the combination numbers are spun. Don't forget to take away any trash that you might have created in the bathrooms or around your site.

**Q. How long may I stay at TDS?**

**A.** Due to the limitations of the SDAA property use permit regarding residency, insurance restrictions and excessive utilities usage, members are limited to a maximum of two weeks stay three times per year, with subsequent two-week stays separated by a minimum of one week (they cannot run back-to-back). All supplies, tents, boxes, scopes, etc., shall be removed from the pad when vacated. Pads shall be kept neat, tidy, and in good order. The appearance of permanent residency will not be tolerated.

**Q. Is the magazine subscription (Sky & Telescope and/or Astronomy Magazine) a good deal for members?**

**A.** Generally, yes, but the publishers may offer "special" rates that will be the same or less than those offered by the club.

**Q. My magazine subscription renewal for Sky & Telescope (or Astronomy), just came in the mail, what do I do with it?**

**A.** This is a reminder, for most members, that their membership is about to expire. You don't need to do anything with the renewal card from the magazine, but you can forward it to the club, along with your renewal application, if you wish. If you don't want the subscription to continue, make sure you leave the boxes unchecked on the renewal application, and your subscription will cease.

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## INSTRUCTIONS TO SAN DIEGO ASTRONOMY ASSOCIATION'S TIERRA DEL SOL OBSERVING SITE

1. Go East on Interstate 8. The distance is dependent upon where you get on, but it's about 58 miles from Interstate 5.

2. Take the "Crestwood / Live Oak Springs" exit and turn right at the stop onto "Old Highway 80".

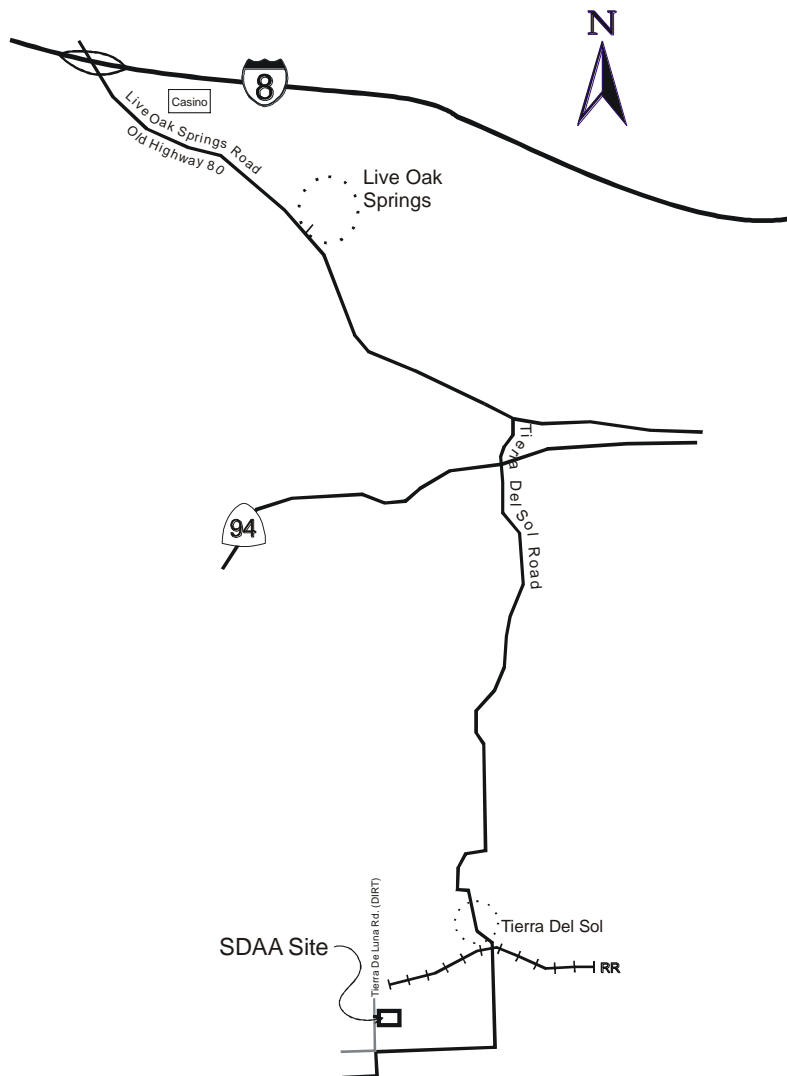
3. Go Southeast on "Old Highway 80", past the Golden Acorn Casino, approximately 4.2 miles and turn right onto "Tierra Del Sol Road" at the crest of the hill.

4. Go South on "Tierra Del Sol Road". You cross "Highway 94" about 300 yards after turning onto "Tierra Del Sol Road". Continue South on "Tierra Del Sol Road".

5. You'll pass through the small community of Tierra Del Sol approximately 3.5 miles from "Old Highway 80". The road will then cross some railroad tracks (when you cross the tracks you are almost there). Continue South another half mile (approximately) and the road makes a sharp right hand turn (towards West). Follow this for another half mile (approximately).

6. When "Tierra Del Sol Road" makes a sharp left hand turn (towards the South), you'll see a small sign that says "SDAA" pointing to the right and two dirt roads, one going West and one going North. Turn right onto the North bound dirt road, this is "Tierra De Luna".

7. Go North on the dirt road and turn right into the SDAA site (about 400 yards up the road). The entrance is marked by a sign, a red steel gate and a chain link gate. Public parking is to the left as you enter. See parking instructions on next page.

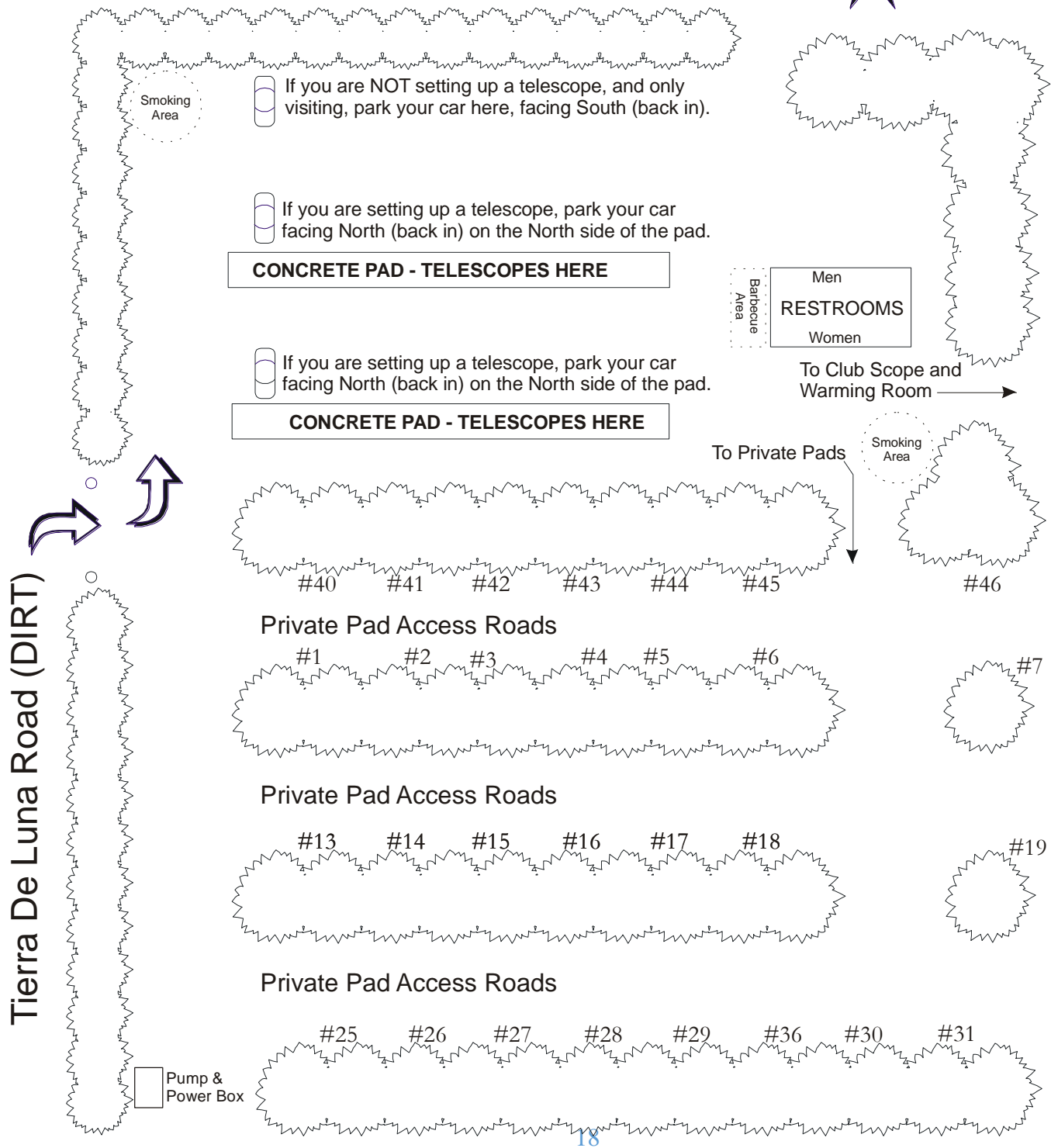


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## Where to Park at Tierra Del Sol



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## Star Party Survival Guide

By Wil Milan

Special to SPACE.com

SPACE.com's "Star-Party Survival Guide" provides you with useful tips to help make the most of your stargazing party experience this summer.

### **Come prepared**

Be aware that many star parties are held in remote locations where there are no bathroom facilities. Ask the party organizers what facilities are available and make plans accordingly. Be sure to bring some water with you and perhaps some light snacks. Being active late at night makes most people hungry. Even if you do not get hungry you will certainly need something to drink, particularly on warm summer nights. In most parts of the country you'll also want to carry bug repellent. Many insects are most active at night, and in some places mosquitoes can eat you alive in an hour. Bug repellent is available at sporting goods stores; the rub-on types seem to work better than the sprays.

### **What to wear**

Do bring warm clothes -- warmer than you think you might need. Most people are not used to being outside late at night and you may find it is a lot colder than you expected. Wear sturdy footwear, such as running shoes or hiking boots. In the dark it's hard to see what is underfoot and what you are stepping on, so your feet should be protected from sharp rocks, cactus or whatever inhabits the ground in at that site.

### **Children welcome**

Star parties are family affairs and children are welcome. If you do bring children, be sure they stay with you at all times. If they're very small and they start crying, take them back to your car until they can be quieted down. Many children become cranky if they stay up too late, but are happy to sleep in the car if they have a blanket and their favorite toys.

### **When to arrive**

It's important to arrive at the star party before dark. There are always a few stragglers who arrive after dark, but that is frowned upon because those already there don't like headlights shining at them after their vision has become dark-adapted. When you arrive after dark, you also run the risk of not finding the place at all: Many sites that are easy to find in daytime can be nearly impossible to find in the dark. If you arrive before dark you'll also have a chance to see all the scopes being set up (often interesting to watch, particularly with the really huge scopes). You'll find that most astronomers are quite talkative and willing to discuss the telescopes and how they work, particularly if you offer to help them set up. If you do have to arrive after dark, turn off your headlights far enough away from the viewing area so they won't disturb anyone. Drive in the rest of the way using your parking lights. When you first turn off your headlights the parking lights may seem inadequate, but if you give yourself a minute to become more dark-adapted you'll find you can drive just fine with just the parking lights.

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## **Bright lights, big no-no**

A car's dome and other interior lights are amazingly bright to someone whose vision is dark-adapted and you will greatly annoy a lot of people if you pop open a door and light up the countryside. Be sure you know how to disable these lights in your car before you head out to the star party. On some cars there's a simple switch for this, on others you need to yank the bulbs out of the fixtures, or even pull a fuse. As a last resort you can tape a piece of cardboard over the dome and door lights. (On some automobiles this is the only solution.) A note about exterior running lights: Some cars, General Motors models in particular, have "running lights" -- special lights that are similar to headlights, but always on. If you own such a vehicle it can cause some difficulty at a star party because you cannot turn them off. Try to use another vehicle if possible and, if not, try to park away from the group so that the lights do not disturb others.

You may find it very handy to bring a small red light. Light at the red wavelength does not affect night vision, so at a star party you'll find that it is the only one used. You are not obligated to bring your own red light, but it will be very handy for seeing your way around in the dark. You can find these at astronomy shops or at sporting goods stores. Many are just small flashlights equipped with red filters. If you do purchase a red light, don't make it a very bright one because that will defeat the purpose. A dim light works well, and you'll be amazed how bright it is once your eyes become dark-adapted.

## **Observing at a star party**

Once the observing is underway, feel free to go from scope to scope and talk with everyone. They'll be more than happy to let you look through their scopes, and will also be glad to talk about the telescope, what they're looking at and anything else that interests you. This kind of discussion and chit-chat is expected at star parties, particularly from visitors; don't feel that you are imposing on them. Most star party attendees will "make the rounds" at least once during the night to see what others are looking at and what kind of equipment they brought; feel free to join in.

Likewise, don't be afraid to ask questions about what's in the sky, where different constellations are or anything else. Astronomers, particularly amateur astronomers, are used to questions like that and they typically enjoy explaining such things to other people. Where it is dark and free of ambient light there is an interesting effect: even if you know the location of some constellations, you may find that under a dark sky there are so many stars that you can't pick out the constellations. In the days before light pollution, this is how everyone saw the sky, filled with thousands of stars. For modern city dwellers, however, it may take a bit of practice to find the constellations again.

## **Leaving a star party:**

When you're ready to leave, don't just start the engine and drive off. Let others know that you're planning to leave and ask if anyone is in the middle of an astrophoto exposure. If anyone is, the etiquette is to wait until the exposure is finished before starting the engine or turning on any lights. Even just stepping on the brake will light the very bright taillights on the car, so be careful not to step on the brake while getting into or out of the vehicle. It's a good idea to ask the organizers of the star party when most people will be leaving so you can plan accordingly. Most club star parties usually break up a little after midnight, but that varies from club to club. It also varies with the moon. If the moon rises during the night, most people will

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start packing as soon as they see the horizon glow that precedes the moonrise. When you do leave, use your parking lights instead of headlights, just as when arriving after dark.

## **Enjoying the experience**

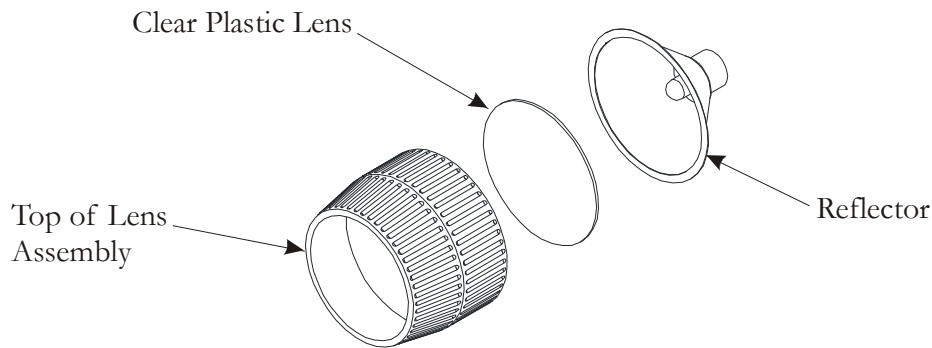
Most of all, enjoy the night sky and the company. While they are not loud and festive, star parties are very enjoyable social affairs that are also quite educational. Contact a local astronomy club and go see all the things that are right above you every night, which most people have never seen. It's an experience you'll truly enjoy.



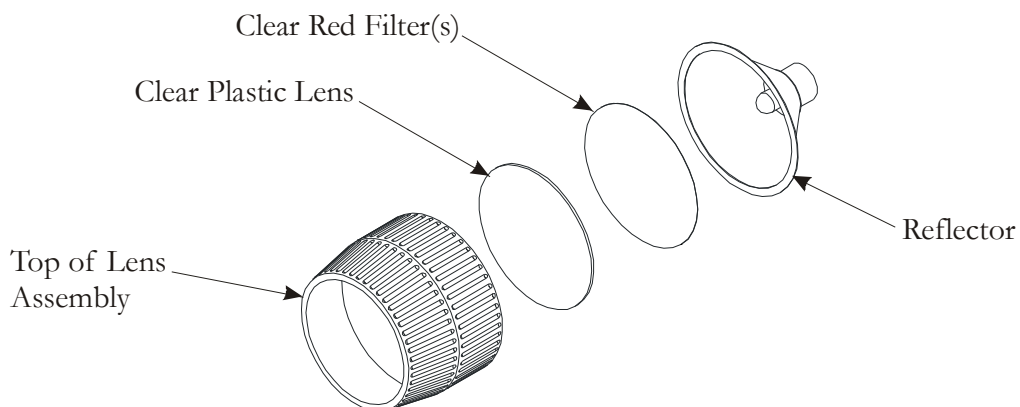
## How To Make A Red Filtered Flashlight

Red LED Flashlights and handlights can be found at many hardware stores and telescope stores. One of our corporate sponsors, OPT in Oceanside, has several versions. If you want to make your own, buy a flashlight that has a removable lens assembly, it doesn't have to be expensive, or very bright, a two "C" cell one should be fine. If you feel you'd like a smaller one, or of higher quality, then buy one of the aluminum body types that have a focusable beam, such as a Mag-Lite or Brinkman. You will also need a piece of red vinyl or cellophane.

To make your own Unscrew the lens assembly from the flashlight body. Snap out or unscrew the reflector that holds the bulb. Now snap out the clear plastic lens. Using a piece of clear red vinyl or cellophane. If you want the light an even dimmer, deeper red, cut out two pieces.



Now push the clear lens back into the lens holder, followed by the clear red filter(s). Now snap in the reflector assembly and screw the assembly back onto the flashlight body. Turn on your new red beam flashlight!



If you wish to purchase more of the filter material, it's "Transparent Red Vinyl" and is available in 2' x 4' sheets for about \$13.00 each at:

Ridout Plastics  
5535 Ruffin Road  
San Diego, CA 92123  
1-800-474-3688 - 858-560-1551



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## TDS STAR PARTY SCHEDULE

For a schedule of club events, including TDS Star Party Public and Member nights, please refer to the SDAA Calendar at:

[https://www.google.com/calendar/embed?src=g-calendar%40sdaa.org&ctz=America/Los\\_Angeles](https://www.google.com/calendar/embed?src=g-calendar%40sdaa.org&ctz=America/Los_Angeles)

Checkout the website where images are posted by club members at <http://aisig.sdaa.org>  
[https://www.flickr.com/groups/sdaa\\_aisig](https://www.flickr.com/groups/sdaa_aisig).

## New Member Mentor

For our new members, we have a mentor who will be happy to answer any questions you may have. They can be contacted at [mentor.sdaa.org](mailto:mentor.sdaa.org), or by calling the current New Member Mentor (see the contact list on page 3 of this manual).

## Social Media

To help you stay up-to-date with the latest club news and events, as well as engage your fellow club members, please join us on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. The Facebook member/group page is a closed page and requires you to request to join or receive an invite through Facebook.

**Facebook (public page):** <https://www.facebook.com/San.Diego.Astronomy.Association/>

**Facebook (member/group page):** <https://www.facebook.com/groups/SanDiegoAstronomyAssociation/>

**Twitter:** @SDAA\_tweets

**Instagram:** SDAstronomyAssociation

## Wishing you clear skies!

San Diego Astronomy Association – Delivering the Sun, the Moon, and the Stars!