

San Diego Astronomy Association

Celebrating Over 50 Years of Astronomical Outreach



May 2026

May Program Meeting

<https://www.sdaa.org/>
A Non-Profit Educational Association
P.O. Box 23215, San Diego, CA 92193-3215

Next SDAA Business Meeting

May 12th at 7:00pm

Via Zoom

Next Program Meeting

May 20th 2026

Via Zoom

May 20th 7:00pm

Speaker: Joel Martin, Ph.D.

Topic: The Magical Bahtinov Focusing Mask - How it Works and How to Use It, From Beginner to Expert

In addition, we will have at least one science fair winner who will be presenting a winning science fair experiment to the club.

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Register in advance for this meeting:

https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZYkf-2rrTgsE9D7YsRX-mGVVgS_ovMJHX5B

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.

Newsletter Deadline

The deadline to submit articles for publication is the **15th** of each month.

Link to SDAA Merchandise Store <https://sdaa28.wildapricot.org/SDAA-Store>

Link to Outreach Calendar <https://calendar.google.com/calendar/embed?src=g-calendar@sdaa.org&ctz=America/Los>



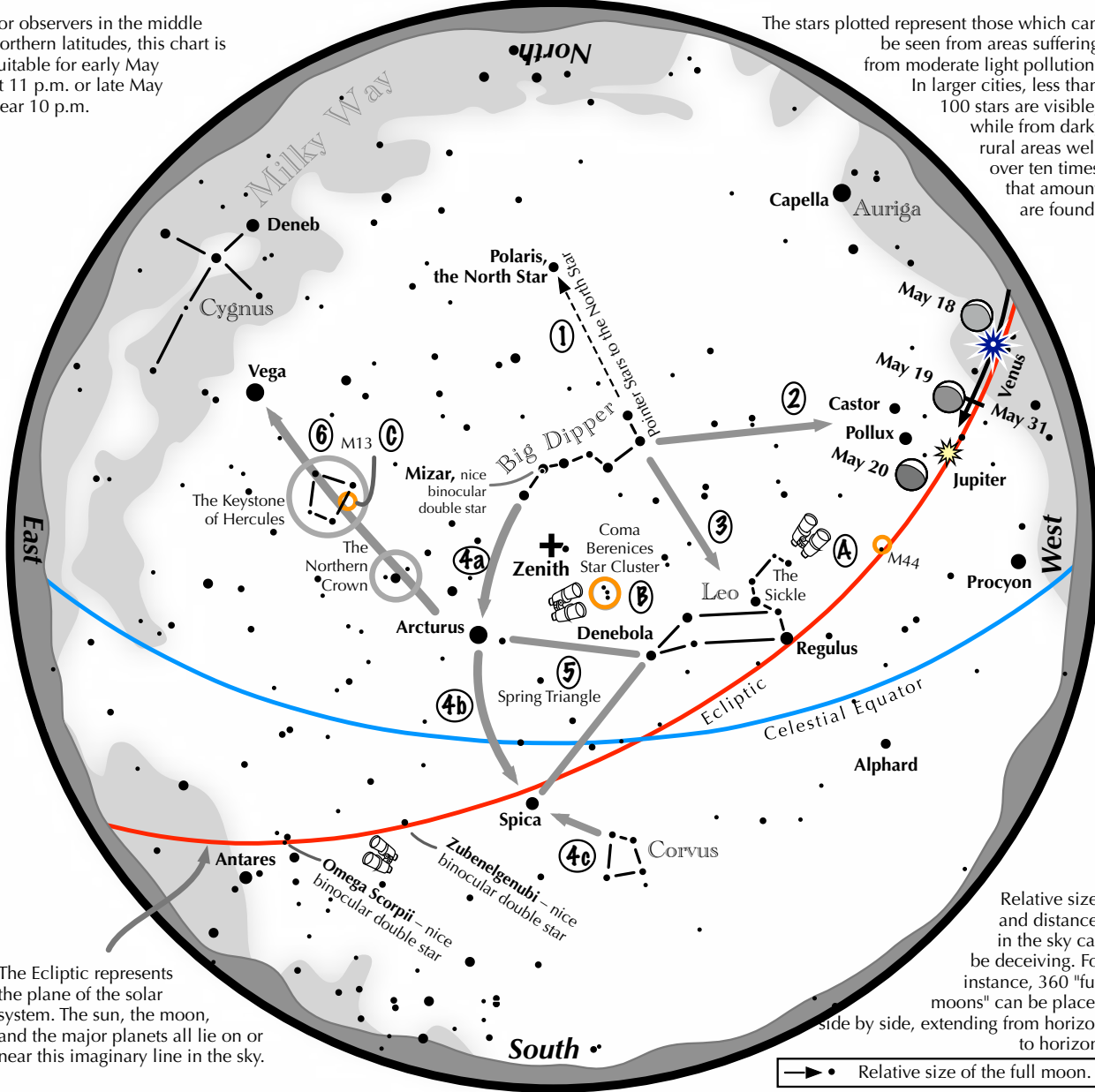
San Diego Astronomy Association

Navigating the May Night Sky

2026

For observers in the middle northern latitudes, this chart is suitable for early May at 11 p.m. or late May near 10 p.m.

The stars plotted represent those which can be seen from areas suffering from moderate light pollution. In larger cities, less than 100 stars are visible, while from dark, rural areas well over ten times that amount are found.



The Ecliptic represents the plane of the solar system. The sun, the moon, and the major planets all lie on or near this imaginary line in the sky.

Relative sizes and distances in the sky can be deceiving. For instance, 360 "full moons" can be placed side by side, extending from horizon to horizon.

→ • Relative size of the full moon.

Navigating the May night sky: Simply start with what you know or with what you can easily find.

- 1 Extend a line northward from the two stars at the tip of the Big Dipper's bowl. It passes by Polaris, the North Star.
- 2 Through the two diagonal stars of the Dipper's bowl, draw a line pointing to the twin stars of Castor and Pollux in Gemini.
- 3 Directly below the Dipper's bowl reclines the constellation Leo with its primary star, Regulus.
- 4 Follow the arc of the Dipper's handle. It first intersects Arcturus, then continues to Spica.
Confirm Spica by noting that two moderately bright stars just to its southwest form a straight line with it.
- 5 Arcturus, Spica, and Denebola form the Spring Triangle, a large equilateral triangle.
- 6 Draw a line from Arcturus to Vega. One-third of the way sits "The Northern Crown." Two-thirds of the way hides the "Keystone of Hercules." A dark sky is needed to see these two dim stellar configurations.

Binocular Highlights

A: M44, a star cluster barely visible to the naked eye, lies to the southeast of Pollux. **B:** Look near the zenith for the loose star cluster of Coma Berenices. **C:** M13, a round glow from a cluster of over 500,000 stars.



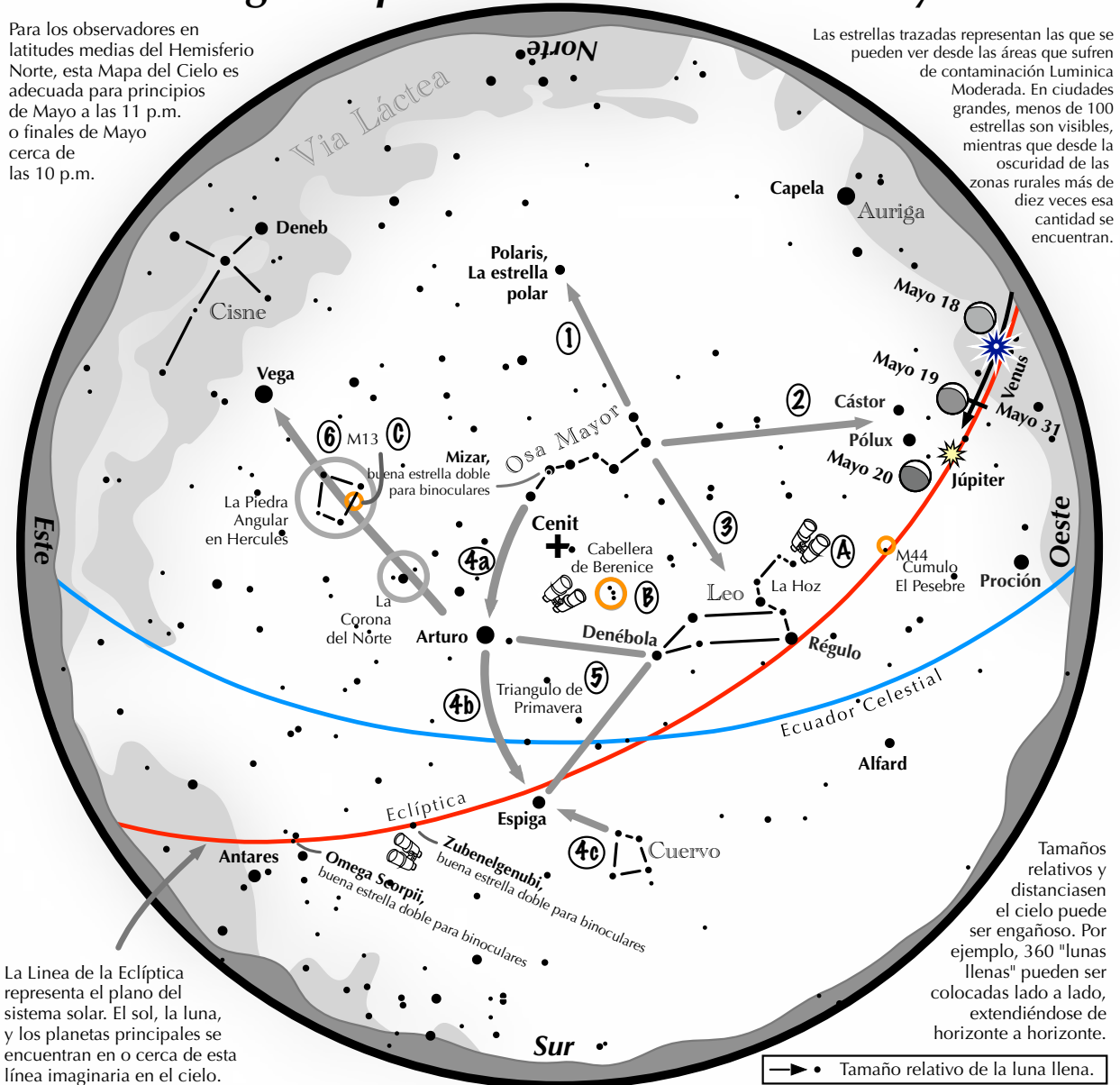


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Navegando por el cielo nocturno de Mayo 2026

Para los observadores en latitudes medias del Hemisferio Norte, esta Mapa del Cielo es adecuada para principios de Mayo a las 11 p.m. o finales de Mayo cerca de las 10 p.m.

Las estrellas trazadas representan las que se pueden ver desde las áreas que sufren de contaminación Luminica Moderada. En ciudades grandes, menos de 100 estrellas son visibles, mientras que desde la oscuridad de las zonas rurales más de diez veces esa cantidad se encuentran.



La Línea de la Eclíptica representa el plano del sistema solar. El sol, la luna, y los planetas principales se encuentran en o cerca de esta línea imaginaria en el cielo.

Tamaños relativos y distancias en el cielo puede ser engañoso. Por ejemplo, 360 "lunas llenas" pueden ser colocadas lado a lado, extendiéndose de horizonte a horizonte.

→ • Tamaño relativo de la luna llena.

Navegando por el cielo nocturno: simplemente comienza con lo que sabe o con lo que puede encontrar fácilmente.

- 1 Haz una línea hacia el norte desde las dos estrellas en la punta de la Osa Mayor. Pasa por Polaris, la estrella polar.
- 2 A través de las dos estrellas diagonales de la Osa Mayor, dibuja una línea que apunta a las estrellas gemelas de Cástor y Pólux en Géminis. Directamente debajo del tazón de la Osa Mayor se encuentra Leo con su estrella principal, Régulo.
- 3 Siga el arco del mango del tazón de la Osa Mayor. Primero cruza Arturo, luego continúa hacia Espiga, luego Cuervo.
- 4 Arturo, Espiga y Denébola forman el triángulo de primavera, un gran triángulo equilátero.
- 5 Dibuja una línea desde Arturo a Vega. Un tercio del camino se encuentra "La Corona del Norte". Dos tercios de esa distancia llevan a la "piedra angular de Hércules." Se necesita un cielo oscuro para ver estas dos configuraciones estelares tenues.
- 6

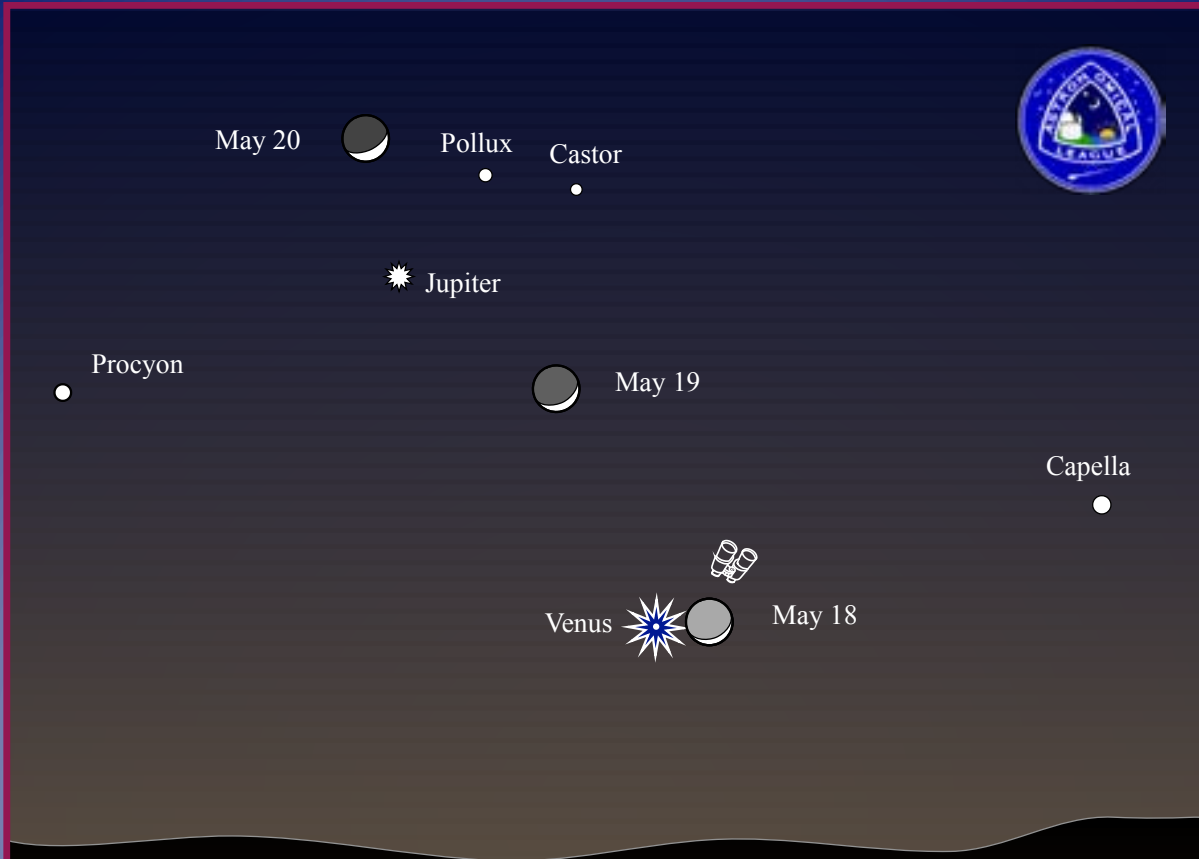
Puntos destacados con binoculares

- A: M44 (Cumulo El Pesebre), un cúmulo de estrellas apenas perceptible a simple vista, se encuentra al sureste de Pólux.
- B: Mira alto en el este para ver el cúmulo de estrellas perdidas de Cabellera de Berenice.
- C: M13, un brillo redondo de un cúmulo de más de 500,000 estrellas.





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West

**If you can see only one celestial event this month,
see this one.**

The crescent moon passing Venus then Jupiter

Look to the west-northwest 60 minutes after sunset on May 18, 19, and 20.

- On the first evening, the crescent moon full with earthshine glows immediately next to brilliant Venus.
- The next evening finds a somewhat thicker crescent moon sitting midway between Venus and Jupiter.
- On May 20, the moon lies above Jupiter and in a line with Castor and Pollux.
- The bright stars Capella and Procyon act as boundaries helping frame the scene.

End your day with this magical scene!

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Astronomical League Notes

By Mark Smith

The Western Region of the Astronomical League (WRAL) held a very successful meeting at the Lowell Observatory in Flagstaff Arizona from April 14 through the 16th. We had 25 people attend either in person or over Zoom representing 11 of the clubs in the Western Region. While much of the discussion involved business and organizational issues like insurance, member engagement, and an increase in Copyright issues, we were also treated to a very interesting talk by Dr. Steve Howell of NASA Ames about the discovery of a companion star to Betelgeuse that actually orbits INSIDE the parent star, the night program at Lowell Observatory (including views through the historic 24" Clark Refractor) and a tour of the USGS Astrogeology Science Center where all of the Apollo Astronauts were trained and much of the data from the NASA probes and rovers is stored and analyzed.

During our discussions, it came up that many people are qualifying for Observing Awards and don't even realize it. The first example was the Outreach Award. There are 3 levels to this award, and the lowest level only requires 10 hours of outreach over at least 5 events and the next level is a total of 60 hours (10 for the Bronze Level plus another 50 hours). For many of our star party volunteers, the Bronze Level requirement is trivial and even the requirements for the Silver Level is probably fulfilled in under 6 months, all with no additional effort over and above the outreach already being performed. Are you an Imager? Chances are that you may have already completed the requirements for some of the imaging awards. Some of the other clubs have programs built around the AL Observing Awards and these programs are available to all members whether they are AL members or not. I'm hoping to duplicate something similar in the SDAA over the coming year.

Overall, it was a productive meeting, and I came back with many ideas that can hopefully be integrated into the SDAA.

If you are interested in what you've read, I invite you to explore what the Astronomical League has to offer and use it to help guide or enrich your astronomy. You may even decide to join the next time you renew your SDAA membership. If you have any questions about the Astronomical League, please don't hesitate to contact me at ALCOR@SDAA.org.



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Private Pad News – The Pad Shutdown is Near

by Mark Smith

It looks like we are getting close to getting the last box needed to perform the final electrical swap from the South Grid to the North Grid. That will finally put all of the public pads, restrooms, Cruzen, Warming Room, Lipp, and Private Observatories on the reconstructed North Grid and allow us to fully disconnect the South Grid. We expect installation to happen in the first two weeks of May with the final SDG&E inspection and power switchover occurring a couple of days later. Once the last bits of the South Grid are de-energized, we expect construction to begin in the Private Pad areas within 2-3 weeks. Pad Lessees can expect to lose access to their pads two or three days before trenching begins on in the Pad area and can expect to be without access to their pads for up to 6 weeks (current worst-case estimate, it could be as little as 2 weeks). Although pads with stand-alone power systems will still be remotely operational during construction, physical access to the pads is going to be severely limited. There will be an e-mail from the club when the shutdown is imminent, but if there is something you need to retrieve from your pad or if you have some maintenance you need done before access is restricted, you might want to head to TDS in the next week or two.

Once construction is complete, there will be an inspection and certification process followed by final inspections by the county and SDG&E before the new grid is powered up. The timing of those activities is unknown but could be several weeks. Although stand-alone power systems on the Private Pads will not be affected, any on-pad electrical infrastructure that was connected to the old grid will be permanently disconnected. While it is possible that some of that infrastructure may be able to be modified and be eligible for reconnection, such requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis and it is expected that the vast majority of current infrastructure will not be able to be modified sufficiently to be eligible for reconnection. While the exact requirements for new on-pad infrastructure are still being worked out, all work will need to be done by club approved, licensed electricians and will be subject to periodic inspection and maintenance requirements. Degradation of on-pad electrical infrastructure was a major issue with the legacy grid and we are going to work hard to avoid the same issues with the rebuilt grid.

While we are waiting for electricity to return, we still have several Private Pads available. I realize that without electricity, the pads are of limited use to most members, but they still provide a viable option for many visual astronomers. In addition, if you are already a Pad Lessee, please continue to sign into your pad whenever you are at TDS whether you set up on your pad or are using the Public Pads. Although Pad Usage requirements have been waived while there is no power on the pads, the Private Pads Usage Data are the best TDS usage tracking information that we currently have.

If you have any feedback, are interested in leasing a Private Pad, or just have questions about them, please don't hesitate to contact me at pads@sdaa.org or emarksmi@san.rr.com.



Astronomical.League

on Facebook ...

Monthly sky maps,
Observing activities,
AL LIVE sessions,
League news & a whole lot more!



AL YouTube Channel

Observing Program Previews: What a program requires of the Observer.

Our View from Earth: How to find interesting celestial objects in three minutes. Perfect for club viewing.



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SDAA Contacts

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Director Gamma	DirectorGamma@sdaa.org

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Observatory Director	Observatory@sdaa.org
Private Pads	Pads@sdaa.org
Outreach	Outreach@sdaa.org
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S. County Star Parties	SouthStarParty@sdaa.org
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Editor - Andrea Kuhl
since April 2011

newsletter@sdaa.org

Assistant Editor: Craig Ewing

Have a great new piece of gear? Read an astronomy-related book that you think others should know about? How about a photograph of an SDAA Member in action? Or are you simply tired of seeing these Boxes in the Newsletter rather than something, well, interesting?

Join the campaign to rid the Newsletter of little boxes by sharing them with the membership. In return for your efforts, you will get your very own byline or photograph credit in addition to the undying gratitude of the Newsletter Editor. Just send your article or picture to Newsletter@SDAA.Org.



San Diego Astronomy Association

San Diego Astronomy Association Board of Directors Meeting April 14, 2026 - Unapproved and subject to revision

1. Call to Order

The meeting was held via Zoom and was called to order at 7:03pm with the following BOD members in attendance: Dave Decker, President; Jim Love, Vice President; Mike Chasin, Treasurer; Kin Searcy, Recording Secretary; Ross Salinger, Corresponding Secretary; Damon Blackman, Director; Francisco Contreras, Director; Tom Kennedy, Director; Drew Koning, Director (late due to IT problem and missing votes as noted).

2. Approval of Last Meeting Minutes

The March meeting minutes V1.1 were approved by unanimous resolution with D. Koning absent. (Motion: J. Love/Second: F. Contreras)

3. Members Present

Hiro Hakozaki, Jenny Koles, Bee Pagarigan, Woody Schlom, and David Wood were present.

4. Treasurer's Report

Membership is 794. F. Contreras asked if the treasurer could generate a membership graph, by category, covering the last twelve months to help understand membership trends and support development of a metric. M. Chasin agreed to investigate this.

Banquet results are awaiting final expenses, and the lease for a new ground level storage facility has been secured.

The Treasurer's report was approved by unanimous resolution with D. Koning absent. (Motion: K. Searcy/Second: F. Contreras).

5. Standard Reports

As of this meeting, the standard reports will be archived in an on-line directory and not documented in the minutes. BOD discussion and action on specific committee reports will continue to be included in the minutes. Members can contact the BOD for access to the repository.



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6. Pending/Urgent Business

a) Strategic Plan

The BOD unanimously approved, with D. Koning absent, a motion to approve and publish the strategic plan with the following stipulations: (1) broaden the term "Executive Director" to "professional support staff" where applicable; (2) increase legibility by rendering the graphics more transparent; (3) adding a statement to contact the SDAA president for information or comments. (Motion: K. Searcy/Second: F. Contreras)

b) Draft Organization Chart

The BOD commended F. Contreras for developing a draft organization chart representing the current SDAA organization as a first step in defining SDAA's organizational transition. The BOD will conduct an in-person meeting next month to refine the organization chart.

c) Program Meetings

F. Contreras has agreed to organize monthly program meetings until a new coordinator is in place. The April program meeting will be held on 29 April to accommodate the UCSD speaker. Joel Martin will be the May speaker, and there will be a UCSD speaker in June. In addition, SDAA science fair winners will present their projects at these meetings.

D. Blackman recommended Krista Hibert and Bill Cheney as program meeting coordinators. **Action Item: BOD 04-01: D. Decker set up a zoom with the proposed program meeting coordinators and interested BOD members.**

d) Loaner Scope Budget Request

P. Krizak requested a budget increase of \$7,000 to purchase additional eyepiece kits for the loaner scope program to supply eyepieces for all available scopes and provide a quality experience with some premium eyepieces. The BOD unanimously approved an increase of \$4,000 for the remainder of this fiscal year with F. Contreras abstaining. (Motion: K. Searcy/Second: D. Koning)



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7. New Business

a) Digital Infrastructure RFP & Audit - Deferred

b) Events Committee Charter

At the March meeting, the BOD directed a change to the draft membership committee charter to remove meetings management (social, program, and banquet) to a separate events committee. The BOD unanimously approved the new Events Committee Charter. (Motion: K. Searcy/Second: F. Contreras)

c) Property Access Management and Protocols

D. Wood reported that the access gate and garage door controls will be commissioned the week of 20 April. Initial access will be set for contributing members, and a committee will be needed to manage access in the future.

d) MPC Project: Volunteer Outreach Membership

The BOD discussed a member proposal to extend a free year's membership (same type as presently held) to outreach volunteers who support a threshold of 10 outreach events that year. D. Blackman moved to approve the project on the condition that the individual who tracks and reports participation is identified. (Motion: D. Blackman/Second: R. Salinger). In discussion, M. Chasin moved to amend the motion to establish a \$1,000 cap on the program for the first year since there was no cost estimate for the proposal. (Motion: M. Chasin/Second: R. Salinger). Both the amendment and original motion were unanimously passed.

e) MPC Project: Astrophotography Camp

The BOD reviewed a member proposal for an overnight astrophotography workshop at TDS-W. The workshop would start in the afternoon, continue overnight, and finish the next day. As a proof-of-concept session, it is currently planned as a one-time event for 4-5 participants. The BOD unanimously approved a motion to approve the plan subject to the participants signing waivers with F. Contreras abstaining. (Motion: M. Chasin/Second: K. Searcy).

f) MPC Projects on TDS/TDS-W WIFI networks were deferred.



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8. Action Items

BOD 04-01: D. Decker set up a zoom with the proposed program meeting coordinators and interested BOD members.

9. **Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 9:33pm by unanimous resolution. (Motion: K. Searcy/Second: R. Salinger)

Astrophotography 101 Report

The new AISIG/SDAA Astrophotography 101 series has had a strong start. Our first in-person session was hosted at Dave Wood's home in March and drew roughly 25–35 attendees, with a wide mix of smart scopes, DSLR/widefield setups, and full imaging rigs. The feedback was very encouraging: from the follow-up survey, attendees rated the location 4.43/5, the presentation 4.86/5, and the ability to interact with other club members 4.86/5. Most importantly, 13 of 14 attendees who responded said they learned something new, and 13 of 14 said they met new people. The event also showed strong potential as an AISIG on-ramp: only 7 of 16 feedback respondents were already AISIG members, while 6 more said they were not yet members but wanted to join.

Our planned second in-person session was clouded out, so we pivoted to a virtual processing basics session instead. That Zoom call had about 25 people on at one point and turned into a lively discussion covering basic stacking and processing workflows, including Siril and PixInsight. The follow-up interest has also been promising: at least five members have already volunteered to help as future topic or station leads, with support emerging for ASIAIR, PC/NINA, and smart scopes.

The next Astrophotography 101 session is planned for June, with a focus on smart scopes while keeping the same beginner-friendly, social format that has worked well so far. I encourage members to join AISIG <https://sdaa.groups.io/g/AISIG>. If you have any questions, or want to help for the next one, please reach out to me directly.

francisco.contreras@sdaa.org

Francisco Contreras

Deep SkyLab on Youtube





San Diego Astronomy Association

2026 TDS Star Party Schedule

Date	Type	Sunset	Astro. Twi.	Moonrise(set)	Closing	Illumination	Hosts
Jan-10-26	Public	4:58 PM	6:25 PM	12:42 AM	9:30 PM	51.1%	Ed Rumsey
Jan-17-26	Member	5:04 PM	6:30 PM	6:56 AM	9:30 PM	1.2%	Ed Rumsey
Feb-07-26	Public	5:23 PM	6:47 PM	11:28 PM	10:00 PM	69.1%	Jim Traweek & Jannet
Feb-14-26	Member	5:30 PM	6:53 PM	5:31 AM	10:00 PM	8.0%	Ed Rumsey
Mar-14-26	Member	6:52 PM	8:14 PM	5:03 AM	11:00 PM	20.3%	Igor von Nyssen
Mar-21-26	Public	6:57 PM	8:20 PM	(10:19 PM)	11:30 PM	10.8%	Ed Rumsey & Dave Wood
Apr-11-26	Public	7:12 PM	8:37 PM	3:32 AM	11:30 PM	36.3%	Ed Rumsey & Kin Searcy
Apr-18-26	Member	7:17 PM	8:44 PM	(9:13 PM)	12:00 AM	2.9%	Jim Traweek & Craig Ewing
May-09-26	Public	7:32 PM	9:05 PM	2:01 AM	12:00 AM	53.2%	
May-16-26	Member	7:37 PM	9:12 PM	(8:03 PM)	12:00 AM	0.2%	Ed Rumsey & Kin Searcy
Jun-06-26	Public	7:50 PM	9:31 PM	12:31 AM	12:30 AM	69.0%	
Jun-13-26	Member	7:53 PM	9:35 PM	4:47 AM	12:30 AM	3.1%	Steven Myers
Jul-11-26	Member	7:55 PM	9:34 PM	3:30 AM	12:30 AM	10.8%	Ed & Kate Rumsey
Jul-18-26	Public	7:52 PM	9:29 PM	(10:47 PM)	12:30 AM	25.7%	
Aug-08-26	Public	7:37 PM	9:07 PM	2:19 AM	12:00 AM	22.1%	
Aug-15-26	Member	7:29 PM	8:58 PM	(9:14 PM)	12:00 AM	12.6%	
Sep-05-26	Public	7:04 PM	8:28 PM	1:15 AM	11:30 PM	35.5%	
Sep-12-26	Member	6:55 PM	8:18 PM	(7:41 PM)	11:30 PM	3.6%	
Oct-03-26	Public	6:27 PM	7:48 PM	12:17 AM	11:00 PM	50.0%	
Oct-10-26	Member	6:18 PM	7:39 PM	7:50 AM	10:30 PM	0.1%	Paul Krizak
Nov-07-26	Member	4:49 PM	6:13 PM	5:40 AM	9:30 PM	2.5%	
Nov-14-26	Public	4:44 PM	6:09 PM	(9:06 PM)	9:00 PM	27.2%	
Dec-05-26	Member	4:39 PM	6:06 PM	4:33 AM	9:00 PM	10.3%	
Dec-12-26	Public	4:40 PM	6:08 PM	(7:57 PM)	9:00 PM	13.1%	

SDAA is now registered with the employer fund-matching platform Benevity. If your workplace offers matching charitable donations for non-profits and uses Benevity to distribute funds, you can now designate the San Diego Astronomy Association. Thank you for supporting the SDAA!

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

Send dues and renewals to P.O. Box 23215, San Diego, CA 92193-3215 or renew on-line. The notice that your membership in SDAA will expire is sent by email. Dues are \$60 for Contributing Memberships; \$40 for Basic Membership; \$70 for Private Pads; \$5 for each Family membership.