San Diego Astronomy Association

Celebrating Over 50 Years of Astronomical Outreach

July 2026

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

Next SDAA Business Meeting
July 14th at 7:00pm

Via Zoom

Next Program Meeting
July 29th 2026

9990 AleSmith Court
San Diego, CA 92126

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San Diego Astronomy Association
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Newsletter Deadline
The deadline to submit articles for publication is the **15th** of each month.

July Program Meeting

The next program meeting will be hosted in person at AleSmith Brewery on Wednesday, July 29 at 7pm.

Speaker announcement and formal registration email to follow.

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

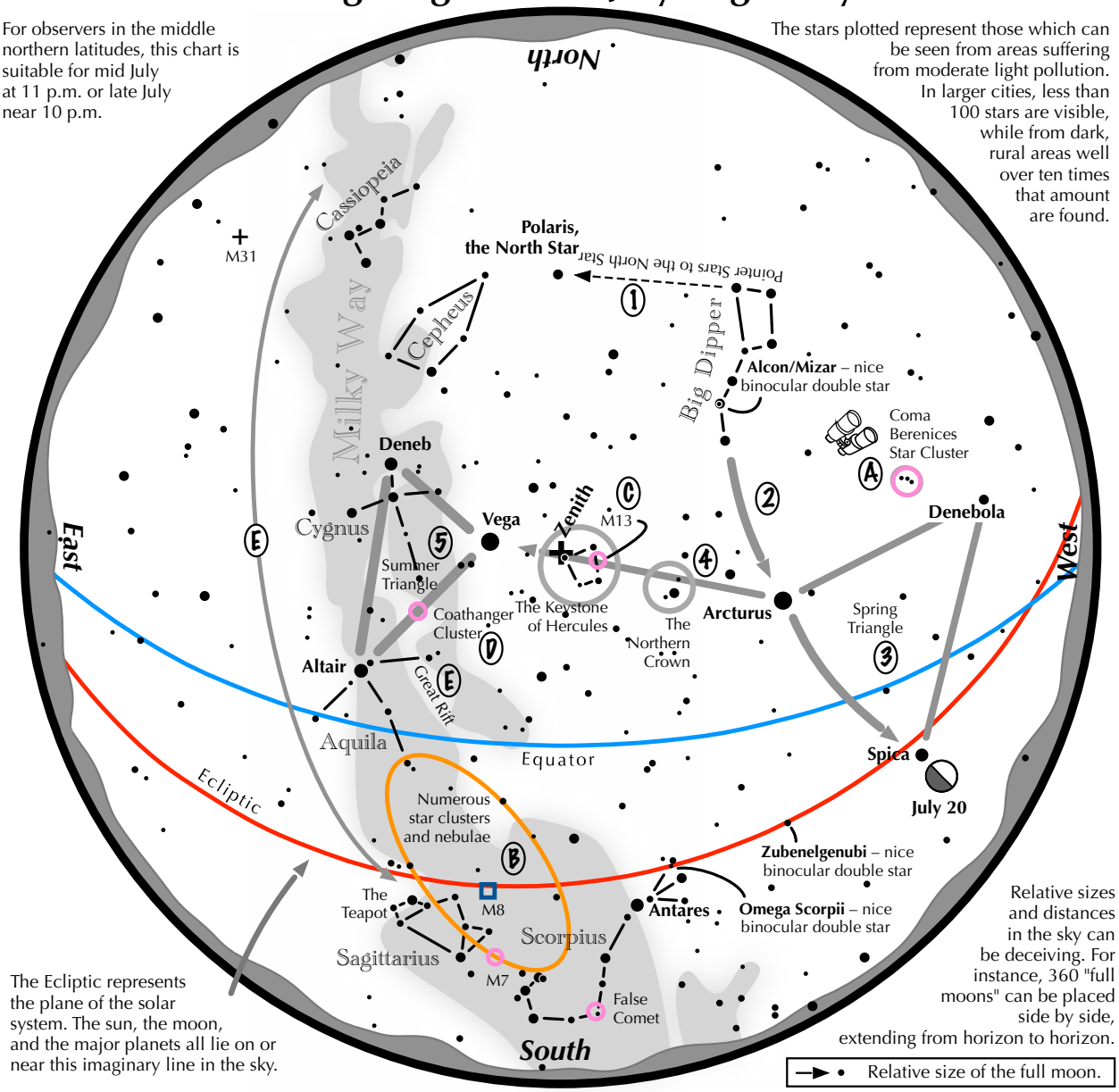
Link to Outreach Calendar https://calendar.google.com/calendar/embed?src=g-calendar@sdaa.org&ctz=America/Los_

Navigating the mid July Night Sky

2026

For observers in the middle northern latitudes, this chart is suitable for mid July at 11 p.m. or late July 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 mid July night sky: Simply start with what you know or with what you can easily find.

1. Extend a line north from the two stars at the tip of the Big Dipper's bowl. It passes by Polaris, the North Star.
2. Follow the arc of the Dipper's handle. It first intersects Arcturus, the brightest star in the July evening sky, then continues to Spica.
3. Arcturus, Spica, and Denebola form the Spring Triangle, a large equilateral triangle.
4. To the northeast of Arcturus shines another star of similar brightness, Vega. Draw a line from Arcturus to Vega. It first meets "The Northern Crown," then the "Keystone of Hercules." A dark sky is needed to see these two dim stellar configurations.
5. High in the East lies the Summer Triangle stars of Vega, Altair, and Deneb.

Binocular Highlights

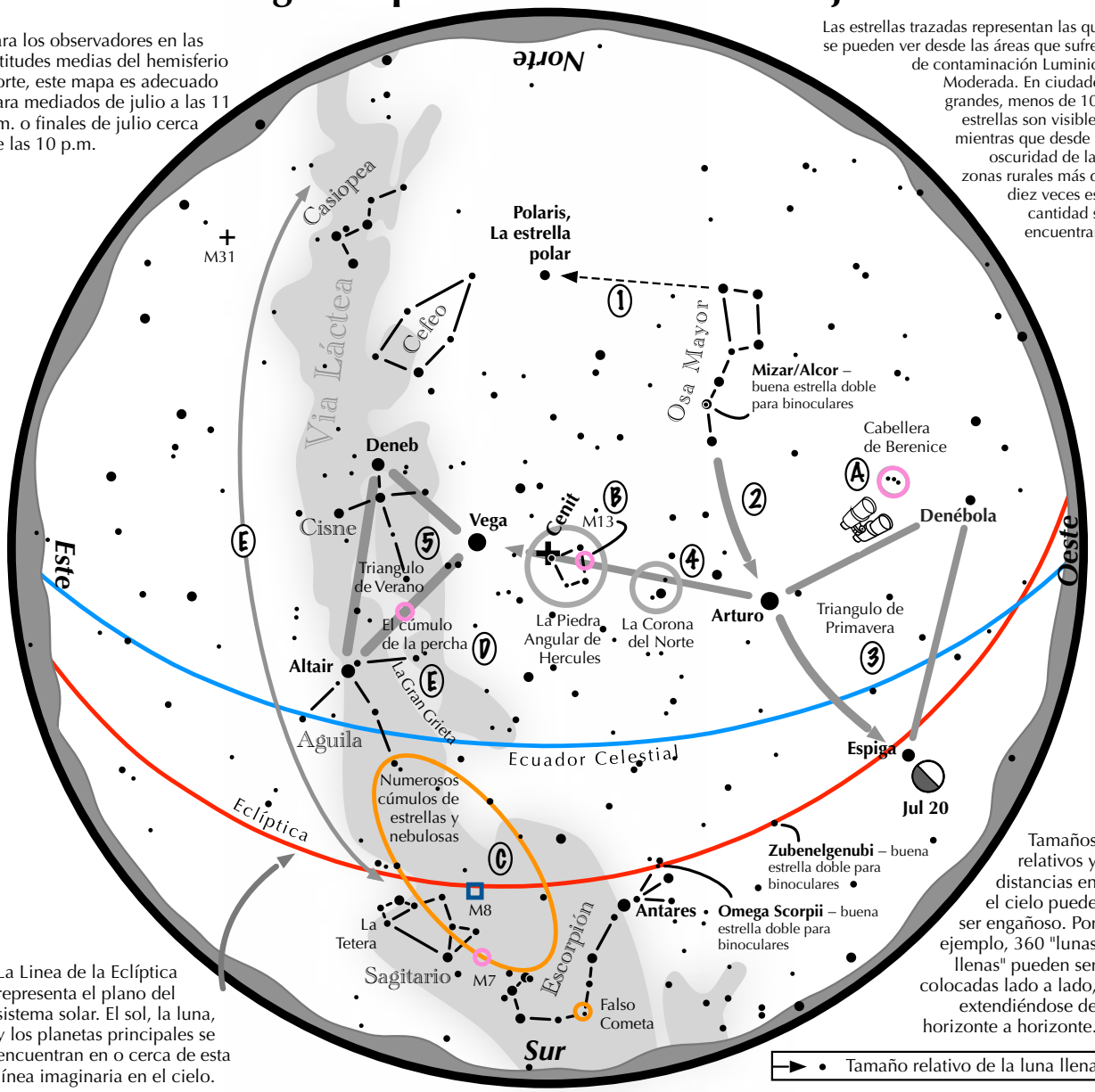
A: Between Denebola and the tip of the Big Dipper's handle, lie the stars of the Coma Berenices Star Cluster.
B: Between the bright stars Antares and Altair, hides an area containing many star clusters and nebulae.
C: On the western side of the Keystone glows the Great Hercules Cluster, containing nearly 1 million stars.
D: 40% of the way between Altair and Vega, twinkles the "Coathanger," a group of stars outlining a coathanger.
E: Sweep along the Milky Way for an astounding number of faint glows and dark bays, including the Great Rift.

San Diego Astronomy Association

Navegando por el cielo nocturno de julio 2026

Para los observadores en las latitudes medias del hemisferio norte, este mapa es adecuado para mediados de julio a las 11 pm. o finales de julio 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 Linea 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 comience 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. Siga el arco del mango del tazón de la Osa Mayor. Primero cruza Arturo, luego continúa hacia Espiga.
3. Arturo, Espiga y Denébola forman el triángulo de primavera, un gran triángulo equilátero.
4. 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.
5. En lo alto del este se encuentran las tres estrellas brillantes del Triángulo de verano: Vega, Altair y Deneb.

Puntos destacados con binoculares

A: Mira alto en el este para ver el cúmulo de estrellas perdidas de Cabellera de Berenice. **B:** M13, un brillo redondo de un cúmulo de más de 500,000 estrellas. **C:** Entre las brillantes estrellas de Antares y Altair, se esconde un área que contiene muchos cúmulos de estrellas y nebulosas. **D:** Casi a la mitad de la distancia entre Altair y Vega, Brilla la "Percha," un grupo de estrellas que describe un perchero.

Traducción al español por Dr. Salvador Aguirre

Liga Astronómica

M6 & M7

When these two big, bright, and beautiful open star clusters appear in the early evening in early July, summer is upon us.

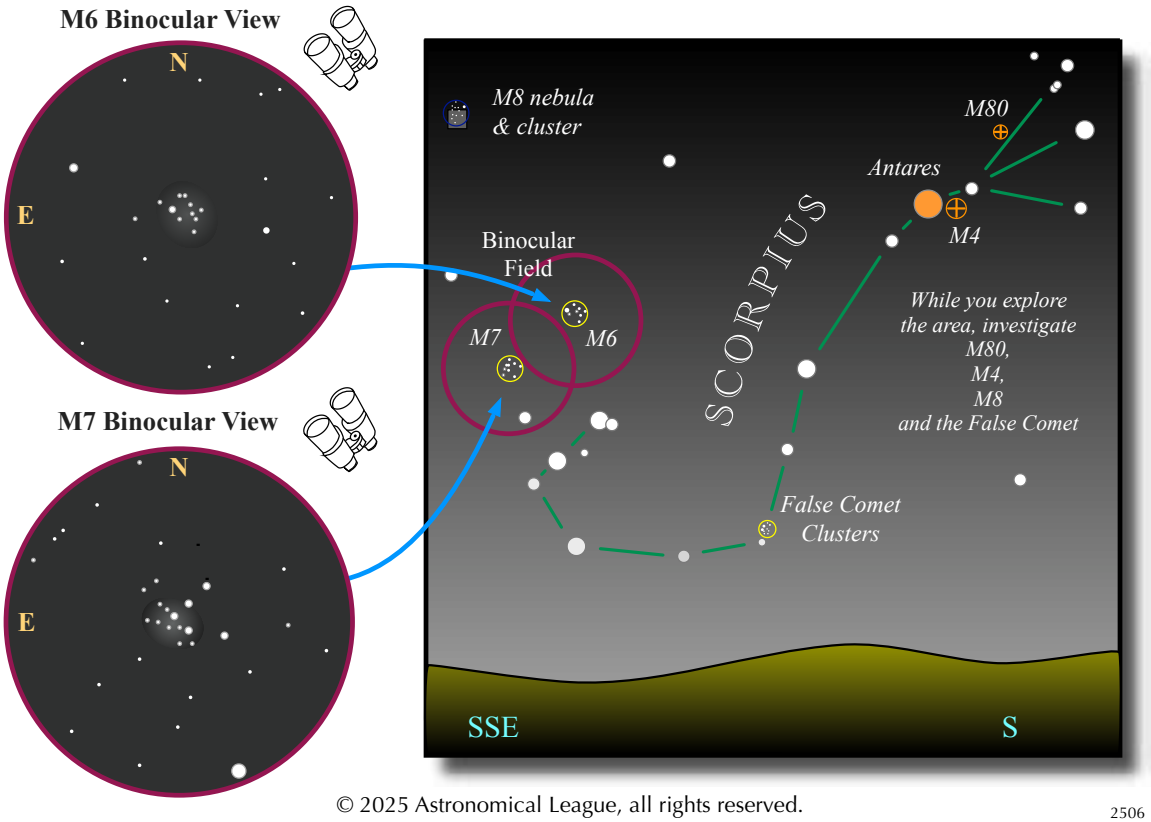
If you have recently begun your journey under the stars, why not whet your appetite by exploring southeastern Scorpius and its two wonderful open star clusters, M6 & M7. You will return to them year after year!

While they are visible to the unaided eye from a dark location, binoculars help greatly.

1. Identify Scorpius standing low in the south-southeast on an early summer evening. As summer progresses, it is ascends low in the south, then swings low in the southwest in the early fall.
2. From red Antares, direct your gaze southward down the scorpion's back, then turn eastward.
3. When its tail hooks northward, continue the length of that hook.
4. M6 and M7 should be plainly visible in the binocular field.

M6:
A faint hazy glow is seen by the unaided eye from a dark, clear site. Two dozen stellar lights can be discerned with 10x50 binoculars.
- Integrated Magnitude: 4.2
- Size: 33 minutes

M7:
A glittery glow is easily spotted off the scorpion's tail by the unaided eye. Binoculars reveal many faint stars.
- Integrated Magnitude: 3.3
- Size: 80 minutes



2506

We Have Winners!

The inaugural SDAA Sponsored San Diego County Fair Photography Prizes have been awarded! On June 6th, two intrepid SDAA photographers braved the pre-opening fair construction zone to find the photography gallery. Most of the images to be judged were in the Night section of the gallery, but there were also images that were considered in several other sections including Large Format and Abstract. In the end, and after much discussion, our judges decided on two images.

The first is a deep sky image of the Squid and Flying Bat Nebula taken from TDS by our very own Mark Eby. One of our judges commented that he had been trying to get a good image of that complex for quite some time and was very impressed with what Mark accomplished. The Squid and Flying Bat Nebula, Sh2-129, is a faint region of Ha gas about 2300 light years from earth spanning an area of about 80 light years. The very faint teal colored "Squid" is OU5 and was discovered by astro-imager Nicolas Outters in2011. OU4 was originally thought to be a planetary nebula that resulted from an exploding star, but is now believed to be an outflow from the bright central stars of Sh-129. This was Mark's 2nd attempt at catching the Squid. He upgraded the narrowband filters to 3nm with made a big difference. NoiseXTerminator also enabled greater intensity stretching. He used a StellarView SV70T refractor with a SFFR-70APO Focal-reducer/Field-flattener and a Celestron CI-700 Mount. The camera was a ZWO ASI1600MMC monochrome with ZWO LRGB filters and Antlia 3nm SHO filters. The total exposure was Ha:(12) 300 secs @ gain=300, OIII: (24) 300 secs @ gain = 300, RGB: each channel (10) 120 sec @ gain=200 and he processed the image using Nebulosity and Pixinsight.

Squid and Flying Bat Nebulae by Mark Eby

The second is a night sky image of an Ancient Bristlecone with the Milky Way arcing over it taken by Craig Collins. Craig came across the scene while hiking at 11,350 feet at night through Patriarch Grove of the Ancient Bristlecone Pine Forest. For those who haven't been there, the forest sits in the White Mountains above Bishop, CA. The tree is likely more than 3,000 years old meaning it was a sapling during the Bronze Age, about the time Stonehenge or the Great Pyramid were built. The trees are sculpted by high winds and fierce winter storms that have been clocked at more than 200 miles per hour. Due to its remote location and high altitude, the forest is impossibly quiet at night, and the overhead stars seem to blaze out of the sky. He set up his gear and at exactly midnight, the Milky Way wheeled into perfect symmetry with the ancient tree. In Craig's words, "I take a series of photos, and when I'm done, I step up to the tree, put my hand on its wind-polished trunk, and think back to all the empires that have risen and fallen during its time on earth. I then gather my camera and tripod and walk down the trail and into the night." Craig took the image with an Olympus EM-1 Mk III. It is a single exposure of 25 seconds with a 12mm (24mm full frame equivalent) at f2.0 and ISO 3200. He hit the tree with a couple of quick sweeps of a Lume Cube LED panel.

Swept Back by the Milky Way by Craig Collins

Congratulations to both Mark and Craig. In addition to a cash prize, both are receiving 1 year of SDAA membership. The club is going to sponsor a pair of prizes again next year so start getting your images ready for next summer's fair.

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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https://sdaa.org/contacts/

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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 Board of Directors Meeting
June 9, 2026 - Unapproved and subject to revision

1. **Call to Order**

The meeting was held via Zoom and was called to order at 7:21pm with following BOD members in attendance: Dave Decker, President; Jim Love, Vice President; Mike Chasin, Treasurer; Kin Searcy, Recording Secretary; Ross Salinger, Corresponding Secretary; Drew Koning, Director. Absent and excused were: Damon Blackman, Director; Francisco Contreras, Director; Tom Kennedy, Director.

2. **Approval of Last Meeting Minutes**

The May meeting minutes V1.2 were approved by unanimous resolution. (Motion: R. Salinger/ Second: M. Chasin)

3. **Members Present**

Krista Hibert, Prascilla Morquecho, Bee Pagarigan, Woody Schlom, Gracie Schutze, and David Wood were present. Gracie Schutze announced that she is relocating to San Antonio for personal reasons and the BOD thanked her for all her support to SDAA.

4. **Treasurer's Report**

Membership is 793. M. Chasin noted that revenue is trending better than forecast and Federal, and State tax returns have been filed and the RRF-1 (annual registration report for non-profits) has been filed with the state.

The Treasurer's report was approved by unanimous resolution subject to correction of the number of student memberships from 33 to 3. (Motion: K. Searcy/Second: J. Love).

5. **Standard Reports**

As of the April meeting, the standard reports are being archived in an on-line directory and not documented in the minutes unless directed by the presiding officer. 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.

6. **Pending/Urgent Business**

a) Budget FY 26/27

A draft budget has been under discussion for the past month based on input from SDAA teams and committees, BOD members, and a financial strategy relative to the SDAA Foundation. Following consultation with SDAA's attorney prior to this meeting, the BOD decided to transfer several SDAA activities to Foundation management and funding, such as the annual banquet, certain infrastructure projects, new member benefits being defined, and science fair awards. The BOD recognized that the Foundation staffing and procedures will have to grow to execute these projects professionally. The budget reflects a transfer of $101,000 in project value to the Foundation for execution to benefit SDAA and a $50,000 grant to SDAA for discretionary use. The BOD unanimously approved the draft budget as marked up at the meeting. (Motion: K. Searcy/Second: J. Love).

Following approval of the draft budget, the BOD discussed options for documenting the business relationship between SDAA and the private observatories.

b) Committee Name Changes

The BOD unanimously approved a motion to change the designation of the new Facilities, Membership, and Events Committees from "Committees" to "Teams." (Motion: R. Salinger/Second: J. Love).

c) Social Media

B. Pagarigan briefed the BOD on the activities of the interim social media action group and requested that a BOD member be named on the META account for redundancy. M. Chasin agreed to serve in that capacity for the present.

D. Decker directed that the following social media report be included in the minutes.

A task group consisting of Prascilla, Melissa, Michael, Holly, Justine, Ken, and Bee are currently overhauling the new member onboarding process and gearing up to promote SDAA to the public. We are combining this report with the social media team because both groups are working to improve club communication.

New Member Mentor
Completed Tasks:

1. Both the New Member and New Contributing Member emails have been updated in WA.
2. The audit to ensure pertinent delegated emails are being forwarded is complete.
3. The pilot program of 1:1 Zoom orientation sessions launched in May 2026 has been very well-received. To date, 90% of members took advantage of the personal Zoom sessions led by Prascilla, which provided immediate onboarding support while helping the team identify common member questions. Due to the success of this effort the team is considering expanding the program to reach lapsed members.

The team is now working toward two primary objectives: 1) **Monthly Orientations:** Transitioning to a recurring monthly schedule for new members. 2) **Digital FAQ:** Developing a comprehensive digital resource to address common inquiries.
Non-Priority:
We are exploring the feasibility (cost/logistics) for SDAA New Member Swag Merch (SDAA Beanie & Red-light flashlights) with Gene. A Merchandise Budget increase of $6545 was submitted for board review for the 2026-2027 budget.

SDAA Social Media
To effectively recruit the next generation of amateur astronomers, the committee is temporarily shifting all creative and production efforts away from Facebook to focus entirely on Instagram and YouTube (Podcast). Data from the May 2026 audit cross-referencing the Facebook roster against the Wild Apricot database highlights the platform's limited value, especially amongst our younger, targeted audience:

- **Low Club Reach:** Only 29.5% of total club members are in the Facebook group.
- **Unverified Participation:** Only 34% of the Facebook group members are verified SDAA members.
- Board Action Pending

SDAA Podcast
Topics in Production: Outreach, How to get involved with SDAA, Cruzen and Pad 70 (Ross), The Lipp (Ed), Palomar Observatory (Kin), Loaner Program (Paul & Team), TDS Private Observatories, Specialty groups- AISIG (Dave), Radio Telescopes (Curt), RED dwarf etc., Local Observatories, and Star Party Travel Tips.

d) MPC Update

J. Love reported the status of ongoing MPC projects as follows:

- County Fair Photo Contest: Judging has been completed. Results to be published when fair opens. There is an opportunity to conduct this contest next year.
- Free membership for outreach volunteers: The team is still working on implementation.
- Astronomy Camp: No update.
- TDS WIFI Network: Network is installed and functional. The BOD thanked J. Love for his quick action on this project that was approved at the May BOD meeting. Network access, surveillance, and gate interface policies need to be developed prior to widespread member use. **Action Item: BOD 06-01: D. Blackman, F. Contreras, and T. Kennedy form a team to develop needed policies for the TDS WIFI network.**

7. New Business

a) TDS Cleanup

J. Love reported that the TDS cleanup last Saturday went very well and thanked the volunteers. An entire dumpster was filled with trash and clippings.

b) 2027 Banquet

The 2027 SDAA banquet will be held at the SD Air and Space Museum on January 24, 2027. D. Wood reported that an agreement with the SD Air and Space Museum for the banquet and a contract with Bekker's Catering have been signed. UCSD professor Dr. Matthew Malkan will be the banquet speaker. His research focuses on the primary sources of energy in the Universe since the Big Bang - fusion power in stars and accretion power from massive black holes.

c) Pad 70 Project Extension

The present Pad 70 project is a proof-of-concept effort managed by R. Salinger to provide SDAA members with a quality remote imaging capability. The Pad 70 observatory was donated by John Downing along with seed funding. from his foundation. The system has been popular and reliable, and the BOD unanimously approved a notion to accept it as an operational asset of SDAA. (Motion: K. Searcy/Second: D. Koning). The BOD further unanimously approved a notion to transfer $1,100 from the Downing Pad 70 Fund for additional equipment. (Motion: K. Searcy/Second: J. Love).

d) UCSD - SDAA Partnership Agreement

F. Contreras is working on a partnership agreement with the UCSD Department of Astronomy and Astrophysics to connect undergraduate and graduate students with hands-on dark-sky observing experiences at TDS. Beginning with a pilot field trip in Fall 2026, where SDAA members would have opportunities to share practical observing and astrophotography expertise with students during the observing session, this initiative will integrate real observational data collection and image processing into UC San Diego coursework while establishing a foundation for a long-term partnership between UC San Diego and the regional amateur astronomy community.

8. Action Items and Pending Requests

Action Item: BOD 05-02: (M. Smith) was deferred until the July meeting

Action Item: BOD 06-01: D. Blackman, F. Contreras, and T. Kennedy form a team to develop needed policies for the TDS WIFI network.

9. **Adjournment**: The meeting was adjourned at 9:35pm by unanimous resolution. (Motion: K. Searcy/Second: R. Salinger)

Astrophotography 101 + Social Night Update

Our next Astrophotography 101 + Social Night is coming up on Saturday, July 11, with Saturday, July 18 as the weather backup date.

This session will focus on smart scopes, but the event is open to members interested in all kinds of astrophotography setups : smart scopes, DSLR/tracker setups, full imaging rigs, processing, or just learning what this part of the hobby is all about.

As of the latest registration data, we have 45 people registered and a waitlist started. We are especially happy to see that at least 25 registrants identified as beginner or astrophoto-curious, which is exactly who this event is meant to help.

We are looking forward to hosting a relaxed, hands-on night where members can ask questions, compare setups, get basic processing help, and meet other people interested in imaging the sky. For questions please email francisco.contreras@sdaa.org

Pad 70 Remote Imaging System

Now Open for New Reservations

Pad 70, the SDAA's fully automated remote-access observatory at Tierra Del Sol, is now available for reservation by contributing members who complete the required training and familiarization session. The facility provides a turnkey, professional-grade imaging environment that members can operate entirely from home using the club's ZeroTier VPN and Windows Remote Desktop.

Pad 70 houses an Astro-Physics AP155 refractor (1107 mm FL) on a Paramount MX+ Series 6 mount, equipped with a ZWO ASI6200MC full-frame camera, ZWO OAG-L, ZWO 174MM guide camera, Optec FocusLynx3 autofocus system, and an Optec Alnitak Flip-Flat.

The observatory is powered by solar-charged LiPo batteries and uses Canyon Wireless for internet connectivity. Roof automation is handled by the Dragon Lair/SkyRoof/SkyAlert system with redundant mount-park sensing for safety.

Members operate the system through two Windows computers on the Pad 70 LAN, accessed via ZeroTier VPN. The Observatory PC manages roof, weather, and battery systems, while the Imaging PC runs the full software stack: TheSkyX, NINA 3.2, PHD2, ASTAP, PlateSolve3, Cartes du Ciel, and Stellarium. A Kasa smart plug and camera allow remote power control and visual verification of mount position and roof status. All imaging data is uploaded in real time to a shared Google Drive.

To use Pad 70, members must complete an on-site evening training session covering remote access, safety protocols, NINA operation, Kasa controls, Pushover notifications, and the required imaging workflow. Only club-supplied NINA profiles and sequences may be used unless explicitly approved. Members must follow all safety rules, including verifying roof status, mount park state, weather conditions, and battery charge before imaging. The system's automated NINA sequences handle startup, imaging, guiding, autofocus, and shutdown.

Pad 70 is available in two-week lease blocks for experienced imagers, with additional periods offered when demand is low. New imagers may request tutored sessions using the same hardware and software. All members agree to follow the documented procedures, report issues promptly, and ensure the mount is parked, and the roof closed at the end of each run.

Members interested in reserving Pad 70 or beginning the training process should contact the support team at **sdaapad70@gmail.com or ross.salinger@sdaa.org**.

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%	Jim Traweek
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%	Ed Rumsey & Kin Searcy
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%	Bob Roth
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%	Bob Roth
Sep-12-26	Member	6:55 PM	8:18 PM	(7:41 PM)	11:30 PM	3.6%	Paul Krizak
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%	Bob Roth
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.