Saguaro Skies

Saguaro Astronomy Club, Phoenix, AZ
Volume 50, Issue 5
May 2026

The President's Corner

No meeting's we'll have July or August,
Meeting attendees voted, that's why.
But no VP has risen,
It's not like its prison,
So more of these limericks I'll try!

With summer comes the great heat,
So, July and August we don't meet.
But that gives you some time,
To make up your mind,
If, for you, the VP position is sweet.

Spring Star Parties come and they go.
They're fun in the dark, we all know.
But without a VP,
And none I can see,
Next year might be the end of the SAC show.

There once was a member from SAC,
With courage and strength, they did stack,
The duties of Vice President,
A choice made 'though hesitant,
To help the club not start to crack.

OK, that out of the way, the *South Rim Grand Canyon Star Party* is upon us. Some of us have volunteered to participate with the *Tucson Astronomical Association* which is hosting the star party as they usually do. It will feel odd and bittersweet for those of us who have been assisting with the *North Rim Star Party,* but conditions dictate that it is the south rim or nothing for this and maybe several years to come. Steve Rottas will head up coordination between SAC and TAA.

Then the long hot summer will be upon us. **We will not meet until September!** That gives you plenty of time to come up with some presentations to entertain members at our September or later meetings. However, if you fear public speaking, why not write up your activity for inclusion in the SAC Newsletter. Send your info to Rick Rotramel, please. And don't forget Mike Wilmoth, he can use more photos for SAC's *Facebook* page.

Clear skies, Tom Curry

Photo: Susan Trask

SAC on Facebook:
SAC has a Facebook moderator!
Mike Willmoth

Quick Calendar

At the clubhouse, 3030 Mission Ln, Phoenix, AZ:
SAC meets **Friday, May 29th, @ 7:00 pm**

Note: No SAC General Mtgs. in July or August!

Inside this issue:

* Scorpius setting in the southwest.

Editor Notes

Hi Folks,

Such-A-Deal has eight old ads, check them out.

Bits & Pisces has the April 10th SAC general meeting minutes.

SAC Observing has for you daily astronomy data from *The Astronomical Calendar.* Also, Tom Curry reports on the *Spring Star Party and Messier Marathon* held April 17 & 18.

SAC Sky has info on the stars and planet locations this month for you all.

Enjoy,

Rick Rotramel

< Left: SAC Webmaster, Terry Shay

Right: SAC ATM Leader, Paul Lind >

Photos (3): Susan Trask

Schedule of Events 2026

SAC General Meetings

Jan 9	Feb. 6	March 6	April 10
May 29	June 26	~~July 24~~ (Cancelled)	~~August 21~~ (Cancelled)
Sept. 25	Oct. 23 Nominations	Nov. 20 Elections	XmasParty Sat,Dec.12

Meetings held at the Heritage Heights Clubhouse
3030 E Mission Ln, Phoenix, AZ
(SE of State Route 51 and 32nd Street)
Meeting time: 7:00 PM

View video recordings of the ***past*** Zoom meetings here:
https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCEKTfI0gwebABZXwKbhe9oA

Grand Canyon Star Party South Rim

June 6– 13, (the North Rim portion canceled, due to the *DRAGON BRAVO FIRE* last year.)

Update: Park Closures at South Rim: (Water pipe)

Alerts & Conditions - Grand Canyon National Park (U.S. National Park Service) (CTRL Click for info)

SAC Officers

President: Tom Curry >

Vice President: (Open Position) >

Secretary: Michael Poppre >

Treasurer: Jack Jones >

Properties: Ken Milward >

Photos: Susan Trask (2), Sandy Milward (2)

SAC-Forum Email Discussion Group

Join this email discussion group for all SAC business and newsletter release notifications.

Go to Groups.io, search for the group SAC-Forum (or "SAC Forum"). Click on the button down the page to join the group. Your application will be accepted in a day or so by the moderators. Alternatively, send an email to:

SAC-forum+subscribe@groups.io

After your membership is set, go to the Subscription tab on the left. Set your preference as to how you should receive messages.

For help, email **SAC-forum+help@groups.io**

Such-A- Deal

Ads placed here are free to SAC members and friends. SAC is not responsible for the quality of the items. If you wish to place an ad here to sell your telescope or an astronomy related items, contact the editor at: rrotramel601@gmail.com

For Sale - Meade LX200 GPS, 8" Telescope/Eyepieces

Good condition. Includes Autostar, UHC coatings and case of eyepieces.
Scope is about 10 years old, used sparingly.
Location: Phoenix area. Not interested in shipping.
Will deliver within local area or arrange for pick up.
Owner is motivated to sell.

Asking $1300.00 as a package.

For questions/inquiries call Stephan at 310-339-4586

For Sale - 1. LX200 8 inch telescope with tripod.

2. LX200 10 inch telescope, f6.3 with tripod

3. Losmandy mount with rings for 10 inch scope

4. Telrad

5. Meade 8X50 alignment (finder scope)

6. Mini-Borg 50, 50mm f5 finder scope

7. Dew shield with power

8. SBIG CFT-8A With filter wheel RGB

9. SBIG ST-i guide camera

10. Wedge for LX-200 10"

11. Extra power cords for LX-200s

Asking $3000 for all items as a package.

contact Frank (480) 882-3485

Astronomy Equipment Big Sale

For Sale (Ctrl+Click for info)

Contact me at eridanibrew@gmail.com for questions or to make an offer. I am pretty firm on these prices; I think they are pretty low.

- **See next page for start of ads for this *Big Sale***

Such-A- Deal

Ads placed here are free to SAC members and friends. SAC is not responsible for the quality of the items. If you wish to place an ad here to sell your telescope or an astronomy related items, contact the editor at: rrotramel601@gmail.com

Astronomy Equipment Big Sale

For Sale (Ctrl+Click for info)

Contact me at eridanibrew@gmail.com for questions or to make an offer. I am pretty firm on these prices; I think they are pretty low.

SBig Guide Scope ***Price: $25 (Orig. Cost: $250)***

This is a small scope/lens similar to an St-i, with a mounting bracket and small USB camera. The product was intended to provide an easy autoguider in a small package. Unfortunately, the image scales did not work at all for my setup. I expect it should work OK with a main imaging camera with 3 or more arcsecond/pixel.

See the following pages for more items for sale.

Astronomy Equipment Big Sale (continued)

Cameras for sale:

SBig STF8300M ***Price $1500 (original cost $3500)***

Includes filters (Astrodon LRGB, Ha, Oiii, Sii) in 8 position filter wheel. Original ST-i guider failed, replaced with QHY5III290 (available separately). Added aluminum threaded rings to guide port to help focus.
Includes Pelican Case, cables.

QSI683-wsg ***Price $1400 (original cost $3000)***

Includes filter wheel with filters, guide port. Has a partial column of bad pixels, easily fixed with dark/bias frames

SBig ST2000XM ***Price $200 (original cost $1200)***

My first quality camera - it is wonderful. I used it for quite awhile. 100,000 e- well depth produces excellent contrast in images. USB connection. Image shows my camera with CFW10 filter wheel attached to a Takahashi Sky90. Only design problem - the guide chip is behind the filters, so I often can't guide with it (especially narrow band). The guide chip no longer works on this unit. Includes CFW10, with original LRGB filters. W/Pelican case & desiccant packs.

QHY5III290 ***Price $50 (original cost $250)***

SOLD!

I have used this as both a monochrome planetary camera and as a guide camera. It works very well. In the second image the camera is installed in the STF8300M guide port. The aluminum rings I made to help focus are visible.

ZWO ASI120M ***Price $50 (original cost $250)***

Monochrome camera used primarily as the guider for the QSI683. Worked very well.

ZWO ASI290MC ***Price $75 (original cost $350)***

SOLD!

Color planetary camera. Used very little (I stopped doing planetary).

Fishcamp Guide camera ***Price $10 (original cost $300)***

This was a very solid, well built guide camera. It uses the same chip as the original Orion guider, but does it much better.
Unfortunately, at Windows 7? 8? the driver didn't work anymore and I couldn't find a replacement driver.
This could be a fun project to write a driver for it. Or, at least it comes in a nice case.

Canon EOS Rebel 450D with Hotech Halpha mod for astronomy. ***Price $50 (original cost $500)***

Astronomy Equipment Big Sale (continued)

Mount for sale:

Software Bisque Paramount MX *Price $5000 (original cost $9000,* currently costs $12-18000 *)*

This is the original MX, not the Version II
It has sat for awhile, so it likely needs replacement of the two rubber drive belts. Here in Arizona I need to replace them every couple of years.
I have the original shipping boxes.
Includes TPoint, a truly magnificent tool. TPoint also handles alignment of the mount to great precision.
Includes 2 large counterweights and the shaft extension.

Dome for sale:

ExploraDome *Price $1500 (original cost $8000)*

This is the 8 foot dome with aluminum roof panels for a 10 foot square building. I used a pre-existing building.
Has an 8 foot pier (2 four foot sections) with Paramount adaptor plate to hold the mount high.
Originally automation hardware/software by Foster Systems to open the shutter and rotate the dome.
Replaced the tracking and shutter controllers with Arduino based systems. Image 4 shows the Arduino tracking controller (smaller black box) on top of a 12V power supply. Image 5 shows the Arduino Shutter controller.
Modified the tracking system to improve reliability and accuracy. Figure 3 shows an added fence on the rotation motor. Originally the dome position was determined by counting the holes in the track. This gives 1 cm precision on the dome position instead of the original 4 cm.
Wrote a VB.NET ASCOM driver to drive the 2 Arduino controllers.
Includes dome and 10' wide building panels around top of roof.
The Dome was painted with a special Arizona paint to reflect the sun, cooling the building. Originally the building was at 135 F.
Images 3 and 5 show Home Depot radiant barrier material fastened to the dome interior to further reduce Arizona heat. This stuff is amazing! The building is now down to 90 F, so the 2 air conditioners can get it down to 82 F.
Figure 6 shows someone else's dome, showing how the top shutter slides back over the dome and the lower shutter hinges open.
Buyer needs to remove dome, ship it to destination.

Astronomy Equipment Big Sale (continued)

Miscellaneous:

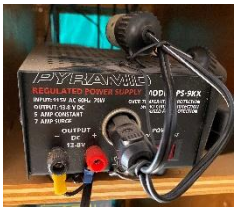
Optec Focuser *Price $300 (original cost $1200)*

2" Crayford style; very solid.
Includes adaptor to connect to Edge 11".
Connects via RS232 cable.
Edgeport USB to RS232 converter box available (See below).

EdgePort USB-RS232 Converter *Price $50 (original cost $250)*

Some equipment (especially older things) still use RS-232 connections. This box takes a single USB port and provides 4 COM ports.

Pyramid 12V 5 Amp Power Supply *Price $25 (original cost $100)*



Typical 12V power supply.

Has connector to run 2 cigarette plugs, or wire directly as seen in the image.

Samlex 12V 30 Amp Switching Power Supply *Price $150 (original cost $300)*

In the first image this is the larger black box under the dome rotation controller.
This is a higher 30 Amp power supply. I run the output through a RigRunner (visible on the right of the first image) to supply power to the dome rotation motor, the dome shutter motors, and a couple of other minor things. My dome motors require 10 Amps.
The RigRunner is included.

Optec Pyxis 2" Rotator *Price $250 (original cost $1200)*

This is the original Pyxis rotator from Optec.

Modjack RS232 input.

Edgeport USB to RS232 converter box available (See above).

WiFi DAP-1552 Bridge *Price $25 (original cost $150)*

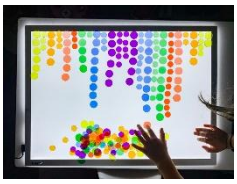
My dome is perhaps 60 feet from the router in the house. This is too far to get router WiFi reception. Instead of running a cable from the house, this bridge receives the router WiFi, amplifies it, and provides 4 ethernet ports to the systems in the dome.

Astronomy Equipment Big Sale (continued)

Home Built LED Light Panel *Price $50 (original cost $100)*

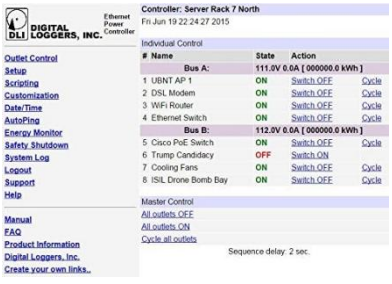
This is my fifth attempt at building a Light Panel to automate taking calibration bias and per-filter flat images. This one actually works pretty well. It is built around a 2 foot by 2 foot industrial LED lighting panel intended for ceilings of office buildings (like fluorescent light fixtures). The intensity of the light can be controlled by a resistor (a dimmer switch). The small pink box contains an Arduino and digital resistors (included). The Arduino connects to the computer via USB**.** The panel is mounted on a table fixture allowing adjustment in 3 axes to get it perpendicular to the OTA. This is important - the OTA needs to be perpendicular to the light panel, or you get off center frames. In a small dome you can't just hang the panel on the wall and be positioned appropriately relative to the telescope. The LED panel is very bright even at low settings. Two translucent 1/4" acryllic panels slide into the frame to dim it further. One or both panels can be removed as needed. I wrote a (VB.NET) software utility to determine the correct resistor setting and exposure for each filter (LRGB and narrowband) with about a 3 second camera exposure. Once these settings are determined they are re-used for each calibration run. Since I run ACP, these settings are easy to put into the ACP calibration script. The closed dome is dark enough that frames can be shot during the day, even on Arizona-bright days. I wrote a script to run calibrations during the day rather than waste darkness hours. Depending on the night's target, I typically run 25 bias and 25 of each filter needed for the night. I might need both 1x1 and 2x2 binning, so potentially I need 1600 frames although typically a few hundred. This takes 30-60 minutes. A PixInsight script assembles the individual frames into master frames for use that evening.

LEDLightTable *Price $10 (original cost $150)*



I originally bought this for one of my earlier attempts for a light panel for exposing calibration images (like the Light Panel above). It didn't work - it is too bright and not controllable from the computer. In addition, it runs the screen by scanning down the LEDs by row, so an exposure shows the panel partially lit depending on where you caught the scanning process.
It is intended to be used as a children's toy, and to do tracing work.
Includes power cable.

DLI Internet Power Controller *Price $150 (original cost $500)*



OK, you need one of these. This lets you power up/down equipment from *ANYWHERE* on the Internet.
There are 16 switchable standard outlets in the back of the unit, 8 banks of 2 outlets (second image). Each bank is switchable; for example, perhaps you have a camera and its focuser plugged into one bank. A single command will turn on both devices.
The unit has an ethernet port in front which attaches to your local network (first image). It also has switches to manually control each bank of outlets.

From a browser you access the device by its IP address (i.e., 192.168.2.100). You get the screen in the third image (there are several screens to configure the device). Now you can access all of the devices through the network. For example, I can be in Los Angeles and power everything up for the night. When I am running from the house it is easier to turn things on and off rather than running out to the observatory.

There are more “miscellaneous” other items for sale, you can find them on my website.

Copy and paste this link into your web browser:

For Sale (brewsky.space) (Ctrl+Click to follow link))

eridanibrew@gmail.com Robert Brewington

Such-A- Deal

Ads placed here are free to SAC members and friends. SAC is not responsible for the quality of the items. If you wish to place an ad here to sell your telescope or an astronomy related items, contact the editor at

mailto:rrotramel601@gmail.com

Telescope Equipment For Sale

** Ads on this page were submitted through the SAC Website*

Meade 8" LS8-8ACF

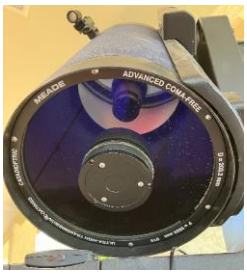
- ACF (Advance Coma Free) optics with UHTC coatings (Ultra High Transmission Coatings)
- LightSwitch Technology: Once the scope is turned on, it permits the scope to automatically level itself and find north (Meade calls this Level/North Technology), then with the use of its internal ECLIPSE CCD camera and on board GPS, alight itself to the night sky without any user intervention. The steps are simple, flip the switch. Once the scope is turned on, you're greeted by the "Astronomer Inside". The "Astronomer Inside" gives you a brief introduction to the LS 8, and informs you of each and every step of the way during the alignment process.
- Eyepieces: Meade 8.8mm and 24mm UWA Series 5000, 82° apparent field of view
- Tele Vue Qwik Point Finderscope
- Tripod
- 602 736-9221
- I'm near 7th St. and Thunderbird. Buyers pick up.
- ***$ Best Offer $***

Email Contact – Click Link Below:

mailto:lorraine.drobny@cox.net

Lorraine Drobny

602 736-9221



Orion 80mm ED Refractor with case

- Orion 80mm, f/7. 5, F.L. 600mm Telescope
- With hard case
- **$ Best Offer $**

Lorraine Drobny, 602 736-9221 lorraine.drobny@cox.net

Celestron Focus Motor, Meade Imager, Eyepieces & Misc. Attachments

- Focus Motor for SCT and EdgeHD Telescopes Sold!
- Several Eyepieces and Misc. attachments Sold!
- Meade Flip Mirror System, Model 644 Sold!
- Meade Deep Sky Imager, Mono CCD Camera
- **$ Best Offer $**
- Lorraine Drobny , 602 736-9221

lorraine.drobny@cox.net

Such-A- Deal

Ads placed here are free to SAC members and friends. SAC is not responsible for the quality of the items. If you wish to place an ad here to sell your telescope or an astronomy related items, contact the editor at

mailto:rrotramel601@gmail.com

Telescope For Sale:

Vintage Unitron 60mm f15 Telescope

- OTA with four eyepieces, rotating eyepiece mount, barlow, finderscope and wooden carrying case.
- WITH tripod.
- "I think it is the 114 model from the late 1950's or early 1960's with the original box..."
- Paul Jorgenson, KE7HR
- Email Contact: ke7hr@cox.net
- **Asking $250.00**

Celestron C-14 on a Losmandy G11GT Mount

- It is in excellent working condition with very good optics. The Gemini ll was recently upgraded to the latest firmware by Losmandy.
- The OTA is on a Losmandy dove tail and it comes with the heavy duty folding tripod.
- It sadly sits in my garage more than under the stars.
- I know the GC Star party is coming up. Since I live in Mesquite, NV, I can bring it to the North Rim if there is someone interested in purchasing it. They can inspect both the mount and optics with no pressure to purchase.

- I am **asking $6000**
- Thank you for reading this,
- Vince Clements
- (209) 224-1894
- teachu2ride@gmail.com

Bits and Pisces

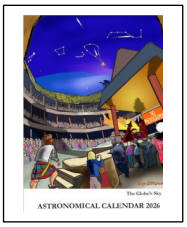
SAC General Meeting, April 10, Meeting Minutes

Report by SAC Secretary, Michael Poppre

- Meeting opened at 7:08 pm by President Tom Curry, with 20 members and 1 guest in attendance.
- Treasurer Jack Jones reported a total of $4,381 in the accounts. He also reported the club as 22 paid members so far in 2026.
- Tom announced several dates for outreach and STEM judging opportunities. He also mentioned the annual *Spring Star Party and Messier Marathon* would be held April 17th & 18th at the Hovatter North site. Details on that next month.
- Tom also reported that SAC had been donated two 8" Dobs and these were for sale. Details in the newsletter.
- ATM report - Paul Lind reported having 5 participants at his workshop (including Paul). Work continued on the 14" mirror grinding project. (Plus, the eating of many cookies and general gum flapping.)
- Steve Rottas mentioned the *Grand Canyon Star Party*, he mentioned all info for ,anyone interested is to be found on the Tucson Astronomy club webpage, TAAA..
- The main feature was Tom Curry showing his H400 photographic progress for the best images he had. This included items enhanced by his night vision scope.
- The next meeting will be May 29th (due to two full moons in May, meetings were shifted to later in the month.)
- There will be NO meetings in July and August.
- Meeting was adjourned at 8:14 pm.

SAC Observing

Astronomical Calendar 2026

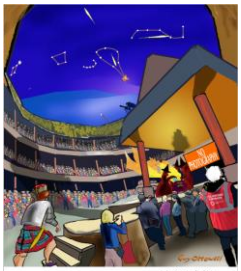


2026 MAY

1162.225	May	1	Fri	17:24	Full Moon
1162.854	May	2	SAT	9	Venus 6.4° N of Aldebaran; 28° and 29° from Sun in evening sky; magnitudes -3.9 and 0.9
1163.167	May	2	SAT	16	Uranus 4.2° SE of the Pleiades; 18° and 19° from Sun in evening sky
1164.646	May	4	Mon	4	Moon 0.52° SE of Antares; 153° from Sun in morning sky; magnitudes -11.9 and 1.0
1165.442	May	4	Mon	23	Moon at apogee; distance 63.63 Earth-radii
1166.406	May	5	Tue	22	Mars and Neptune at heliocentric conjunction; longitude 2.1°
1166.425	May	5	Tue	22	Pluto stationary in longitude; starts retrograde motion
1166.5	May	6	Wed	0	Eta Aquarid meteors; ZHR 50; 4 days before Last Quarter Moon
1168.349	May	7	Thu	20	Pluto stationary in right ascension; starts retrograde motion
1170.384	May	9	SAT	21:13	Last quarter Moon
1171.692	May	11	Mon	4:37	Moon at ascending node; longitude 335.9°
1173.223	May	12	Tue	17	Mars and Saturn at heliocentric conjunction; longitude 6.4°
1173.771	May	13	Wed	7	Moon 3.7° NNW of Neptune; 49° from Sun in morning sky; magnitudes -8.2 and 7.9
1174.243	May	13	Wed	18	Mercury at ascending node through the ecliptic plane
1174.250	May	13	Wed	18	Moon 5.1° NNW of Saturn; 43° from Sun in morning sky; magnitudes -7.8 and 0.9
1174.546	May	14	Thu	1	The equation of time is at a maximum of 3.64 minutes
1174.851	May	14	Thu	8	Sun enters Taurus, at longitude 53.57° on the ecliptic
1175.092	May	14	Thu	14	Mercury at superior conjunction with the Sun; 1.323 AU from Earth; latitude 0.63°
1175.396	May	14	Thu	22	Moon 4.7° NNW of Mars; 27° from Sun in morning sky; magnitudes -6.7 and 1.2
1175.615	May	15	Fri	3	Venus at perihelion; 0.7184 AU from the Sun
1177.335	May	16	SAT	20:02	New Moon; beginning of lunation 1279
1177.542	May	17	SUN	1	Moon, Mercury, and the Pleiades within circle of diameter 4.40°; only about 5° from the Sun; magnitudes -5, -2, 3
1177.542	May	17	SUN	1	Mercury, Uranus, and the Pleiades within circle of diameter 4.30°; only about 5° from the Sun; magnitudes -2, 6, 3
1177.563	May	17	SUN	2	Moon 4.4° N of Mercury; 6° and 3° from Sun in evening sky; magnitudes -4.7 and -2.0
1177.646	May	17	SUN	4	Moon 1.00° N of Pleiades; 7° and 6° from Sun in evening sky
1177.658	May	17	SUN	4	Moon, Uranus, and the Pleiades within circle of diameter 5.16°; about 6° from the Sun in the evening sky; magnitudes -5, 6, 3
1177.658	May	17	SUN	4	Moon, Mercury, and Uranus within circle of diameter 5.16°; only about 5° from the Sun; magnitudes -5, -2, 6
1177.708	May	17	SUN	5	Moon 5.2° N of Uranus; 7° and 5° from Sun in evening sky; magnitudes -4.8 and 5.8
1178.073	May	17	SUN	13:45	Moon at perigee; distance 56.14 Earth-radii; only 17.7 hours after new Moon

Continued next page…

SAC Observing



40 Astronomical Calendar 2026

1178.229	May	17	SUN	18	Mercury 3.4° SE of the Pleiades; 4° and 5° from Sun in evening sky
1178.5	May	18	Mon	0	Mercury 0.90° NNW of Uranus; 4° from Sun in evening sky; magnitudes -1.9 and 5.8
1178.916	May	18	Mon	10	Mercury at perihelion; 0.3075 AU from the Sun
1179.604	May	19	Tue	3	Moon 2.95° N of Venus; 33° and 32° from Sun in evening sky; magnitudes -7.1 and -4.0
1179.700	May	19	Tue	5	Moon, Venus, and M35 cluster within circle of diameter 3.69°; about 33° from the Sun in the evening sky; magnitudes -7, -4, 5
1179.771	May	19	Tue	7	Moon 3.6° N of M35 cluster; 35° and 34° from Sun in evening sky; magnitudes -7.3 and 5.3
1180.958	May	20	Wed	11	Moon 6.6° S of Castor; 51° and 52° from Sun in evening sky; magnitudes -8.4 and 1.5
1181.104	May	20	Wed	15	Moon 3.0° NNE of Jupiter; 53° and 52° from Sun in evening sky; magnitudes -8.5 and -1.9
1181.167	May	20	Wed	16	Moon 3.4° SSW of Pollux; 54° from Sun in evening sky; magnitudes -8.5 and 1.2
1181.521	May	21	Thu	1	Venus 0.76° N of M35 cluster; 32° from Sun in evening sky; magnitudes -4.0 and 5.3
1181.524	May	21	Thu	1	Sun enters the astrological sign Gemini, i.e. its longitude is 60°
1182.188	May	21	Thu	17	Moon 1.03° NE of Beehive Cluster; 67° from Sun in evening sky; magnitudes -9.2 and 3.7
1182.235	May	21	Thu	18	Venus at northernmost declination, 25.08°
1182.458	May	21	Thu	23	Mercury 6.8° NNW of Aldebaran; 9° and 11° from Sun in evening sky; magnitudes -1.5 and 0.9
1183.102	May	22	Fri	14	Uranus at conjunction with the Sun; 20.477 AU from Earth; latitude -0.17°
1183.833	May	23	SAT	8	Moon 0.39° SE of Regulus; 88° from Sun in evening sky; magnitudes -10.1 and 1.4
1183.966	May	23	SAT	11:11	First quarter Moon
1184.144	May	23	SAT	15:28	Moon at descending node; longitude 154.7°
1184.5	May	24	SUN		Whit Sunday
1188.083	May	27	Wed	14	Moon 1.80° SSW of Spica; 138° from Sun in evening sky; magnitudes -11.5 and 1.0
1189.121	May	28	Thu	15	Mercury at northernmost latitude from the ecliptic plane, 7.0°
1190.042	May	29	Fri	13	Jupiter 6.3° S of Pollux; 45° and 46° from Sun in evening sky; magnitudes -1.9 and 1.2
1191.865	May	31	SUN	8:46	Full Moon
1191.896	May	31	SUN	10	Moon 0.42° SE of Antares; 175° from Sun in evening midnight sky; magnitudes -12.4 and 1.0

SAC Observing

The Spring Star Party and Messier Marathon, April 17 & 18

Report & Photos By: Tom Curry

It was a dark and stormy night. OK, it was sort of dark, about as dark there as I have seen, even with the solar installation work going on to the south. And, it was cloudy Thursday night, but not stormy. A few SAC members showed up Thursday, Steve Rottas having arrived Wednesday. With the clouds that evening, most of us decided to sit around and BS the evening away.

The Hovatter Road North observing field

The sunset that evening was a pretty consolation to the cloudy conditions.

There was some tempting clear sky to the north and to the west around 10 p.m., but by that time I believe only Scott Cunningham decided to work the sky.

The solar installation work continued to the south, but was not a major issue for us, most of us positioning our vehicles to block the glaring work lights from our telescopes. The quarry was silent, not even the bright security light was on, and it appeared few gravel trucks had been running Hovatter Road, as the road was relatively smooth.

Continued next page…

SAC Observing, continued

Friday was a comfortable day of sloth, sitting in the shade of the accommodating trailer awnings. Steve had his solar telescope set up so there was a small amount of observing going on during the day. The breeze, or wind more accurately, was plenty strong at times, but made the heat of the day more tolerable. A few others came in that afternoon, mostly EVAC members, although an individual from Springerville and his parents from Payson showed up, but camped well away from the SAC area.

The high thin clouds that had been threatening us all day dissipated by dark, and the night was one of the darker ones, according to my light meter. Observing was good, but most of us oldsters went to bed by midnight.

Saturday was a warmer, but calmer day. Several more individuals came during the day and by the evening there might have been between 40 and 50 at the site, although a few departed during the evening.

Before dinner there was a small swap meet, with Joe Goss supplying most of the stuff to swap. A few of us took financial advantage of Joe and got things he was anxious to get out of his house.

Steve Rottas had smoked some pork butt for sandwiches, for our dinner that evening, with corn and green beans, assorted bags of chips, and an abundance of desserts baked by Steve's wife Pam. A big thanks to Steve and Pam and a special thanks to Sandy Milward for assisting Steve with the dinner. The turnout for the dinner was less than hoped for, but some late comers, delayed by the setting up of their massive Dob, helped to make up with more donated funds.

Dinner

Raffle

There was no raffle per se, but Alex McClure from *Sky Watcher* came with a *Star Adventure 2i Pro* pack to donate, so those attending the dinner were entered into a drawing. The drawing disappointed numerous people, but not Lynn and Dorlynn Blackburn who were the lucky winners of the *Star Adventure*!

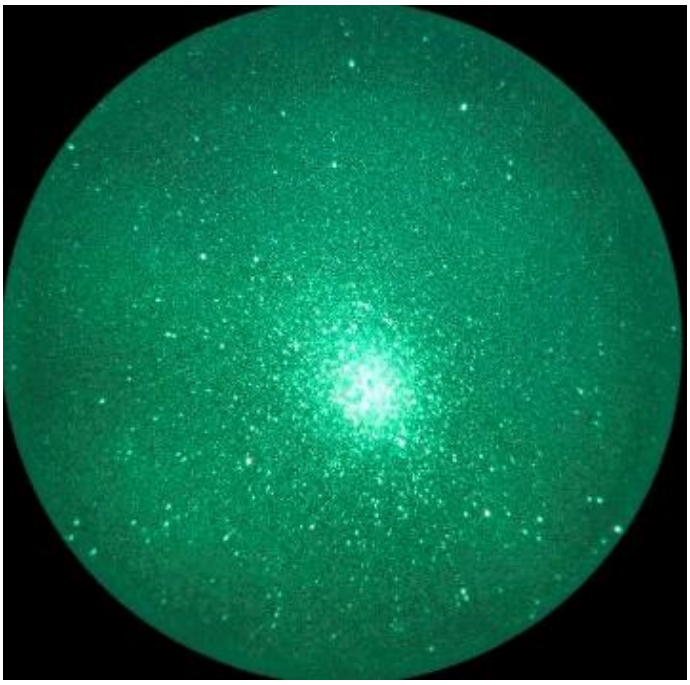
← Left

One of the highlights of the evening was or were visits from 5-year-old Rose and her father Brian. Rose was quite interested in what each of us were doing and seeing. It was her first star party. She was a cutie! She also was a friend to all the dogs.

Continued next page…

SAC Observing, conclusion.

The seeing Saturday night was not as good as the evening before, at least from what I could tell. Omega Centauri was an easy bino view the night before, almost naked eye, but Saturday night the haze or thin clouds to the south dimmed its sparkle.



Omega Centauri, *night vision imaged by Tom Curry*

The forecast was for clouds to roll in around midnight, but, again, most of us were in bed by midnight. Shortly after midnight, a front came through and so did the wind again.

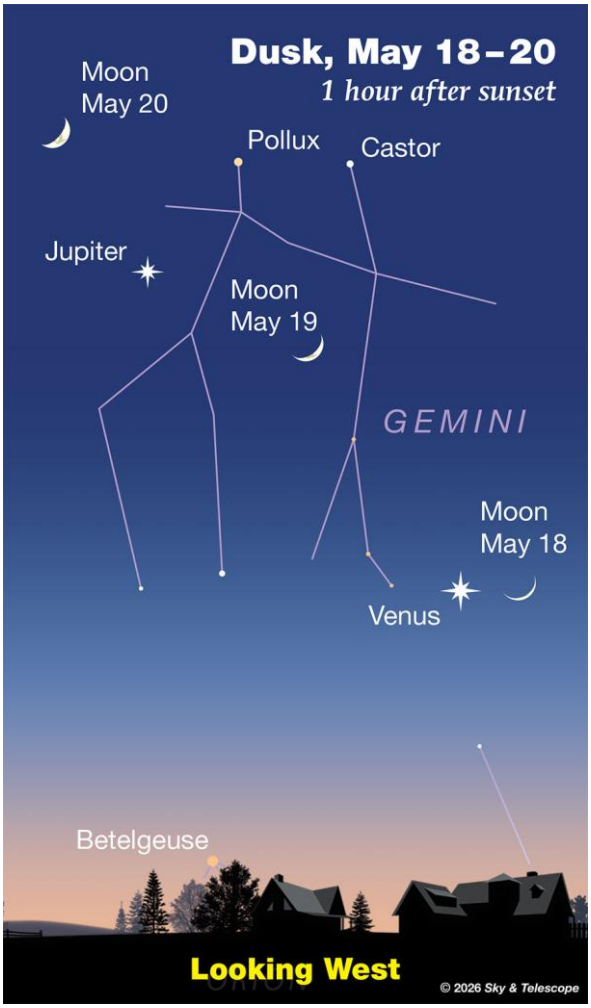
Sunday, we woke to a cloudy sky with an occasional break in the clouds allowing the morning sun to peek through. Most people left before Steve and I had our coffee, with others not far behind. I was gone by a little after 10 a.m. but the clouds were not.

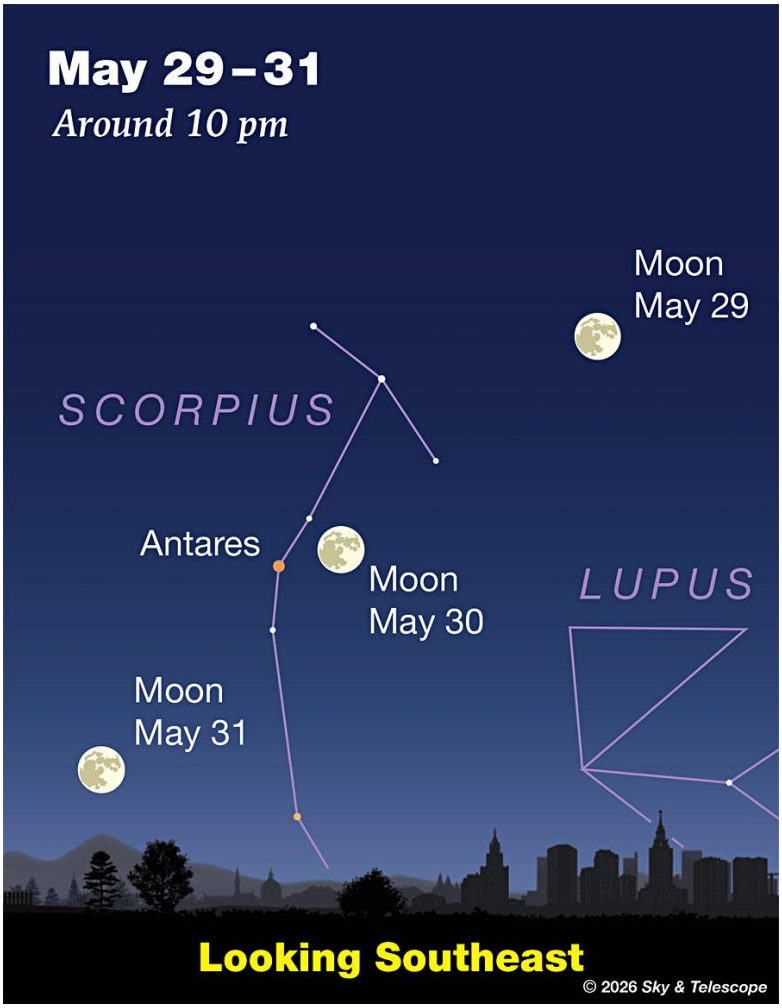
SAC's own Joan McGue and Terry Shaw were the only participants to turn in Messier Marathon forms, so it should be easy for Mike Poppre to determine the best of the night. I was looking at a variety of objects, and did photograph 10 of the Messier objects, just for kicks, if that counts.

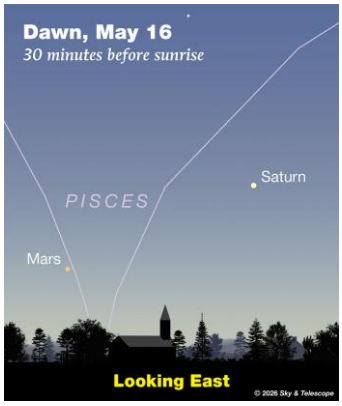
So, if you were not there, I/we know who you are, we missed you and you missed a fun weekend. If you regret not being there, there is always next year, or is there? Did I mention we still need a vice president?

Tom Curry

SAC Sky







2026 SAC Officers and Contacts

Board Members

President	Tom Curry	mailto:president@saguaroastro.org
Vice-President	Open	
Treasurer	Jack Jones	mailto:treasurer@saguaroastro.org
Secretary	Michael Poppre	
Properties	Ken Milward	mailto:properties@saguaroastro.org

Non-board Positions

Novice Leader	Steve Dodder	mailto:fester00@hotmail.com
Newsletter	Rick Rotramel	mailto:rrotramel601@gmail.com
Outreach	Sandy Milward	
Webmaster	Terry Shay	mailto:webmaster@saguaroastro.org

SAC on Facebook:

Moderator, Mike Willmoth mailto:mwillmoth@compuserve.com

2026 Board Meetings:

* Board meetings will be called by the SAC President and will contact the board members for the meeting time and date.

Saguaro Astronomy Club

Saguaro Astronomy Club (SAC), Phoenix, Arizona, was formed in 1977 to promote fellowship and the exchange of scientific information among its members-amateur astronomers. SAC meets monthly for both general meetings and star parties and regularly conducts and supports public programs on astronomy. Membership is open to anyone with these interests.

Saguaro Skies is posted as a pdf file monthly on the SAC website,

https://www.saguaroastro.org/newsletter/

for browsing or downloading for SAC members and friends of SAC. A email announcement of the monthly newsletter release is included with membership.

Direct all membership inquiries to the SAC Treasurer by using the membership form found in this newsletter. For editorial and SUCH-A-DEAL advertising inquiries, contact the Saguaro Skies Editor.

Meeting Location: The Clubhouse, 7:00 PM, 3030 E. Mission Lane, Phoenix, AZ

Contacting This Issue's Authors

If you wish to write to an author in this month's issue, contact them by sending your message to the editor of Saguaro Skies, Rick Rotramel, at: rrotramel601@gmail.com

I will then forward your questions or comments to the author.

Saguaro Skies Staff

Editor: Rick Rotramel;
Photographers: Tom Curry, Sandy Milward, Tom Polakis, Michael Poppre, Rick Rotramel and Susan Trask.

2013-2025 Contributors: Bob Christ, Mike Collins, AJ Crayon, Tom Curry, Paul Dickson, David Dillmore, Steve Dodder, Richard Harshaw, Dean Ketelsen, Kevin Kozel, Joan McGue, Sandy Milward, Andrew Perry, Tom & Jennifer Polakis, Michael Poppre, Jimmy Ray, Rick Rotramel, Steve Rottas, SAC Imagers & Observers

Saguaro Astronomy Club Membership Services

Membership -- Memberships are for the calendar year and are pro-rated for new members as follows: Jan - Mar: 100%; Apr - Jun: 75%; Jul - Sep: 50%; Oct - Dec 25%.

☐ $40 Individual Membership

☐ $50 Family Membership

Note: You can now pay with PayPal through the SAC Website. Click Below: PayPal

https://www.saguaroastro.org/join-sacpaypal/

Please print all information legibly

Date: ___/___/___ For the year of: 20__

Name: _____

Address: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____

Zip Code: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

☐ *Check here if this is updated information*

Make check payable to: SAC

Please bring your completed form to a meeting or mail it with payment to:

Jack Jones

3222 W. Lucia Dr.

Phoenix, AZ 85083