The ASLC offers greetings from the nearly 100 professional and amateur astronomers that comprise our membership. Whether you are new to astronomy or a seasoned veteran, we’re sure you will find participation in our group to be enjoyable and fulfilling. The ASLC was formed in 1951 by a group of dedicated astronomers, which included the discoverer of the planet Pluto, Clyde Tombaugh. So, for more than sixty years, we’ve been sharing the universe with our community under the very dark and transparent skies of southern New Mexico.

Although several ASLC members collect scientific data, most of us do astronomy for fun. For example, the ASLC hosts public observing events such as our monthly Moon Gaze and dark-sky observing at the club’s observatory in Radium Springs. We also support countless star parties for local schools, scouting groups, and other organizations. For new telescope purchases, the ASLC is always willing to help with equipment recommendations and/or training. And, for those members who don’t own a telescope, we offer the free use of equipment via our telescope loaner program. Our monthly club meeting is usually on the fourth Friday of each month. Please feel free to join us!

The information contained in this packet should help acquaint you with our various activities including our regular meetings and events, our observing sites, and selected special events. There is also information regarding our publications, education programs and workshops, and a variety of additional resources to help you get started in this hobby. If you’re interested in joining us, a membership application is also included. Additional information may be obtained on our club’s website, aslc-nm.org
ASLC Monthly Meeting and Outreach Events

Club Meetings
Meetings are usually held on the fourth Friday of each month at 7:00 p.m. We get together at the Good Samaritan Society’s social center at 3011 Buena Vida Circle, which is off of South Telshor and across the street from Memorial Medical Center (see maps at bottom of site). We discuss recent and upcoming projects, share our night-sky adventures, and sometimes detail new projects or purchases as part of Show & Tell.

In addition to conducting club business, a featured speaker is sometimes invited to do a presentation on an astronomy-related topic. Over the years, several world-renowned individuals have done presentations for our club, including: Howard J. Brewington, Dr. Alan Hale, John Dobson, John Dobbins, Fred Whipple, and J. Allen Hynek. Faculty members from the NMSU Astronomy Department are frequent speakers as well.

Club members also do several presentations each year. We often have a post-TSP (Texas Star Party) report in May or June given by the members who attended the event. It’s a chance to hear stories about the antics of our members during their week of sleep deprivation. The December meeting is our holiday banquet and consists of a review of all of the club’s activities during the prior year. We also give away numerous door prizes at the holiday party. Check our web page, http://www.aslc-nm.org/, for meeting and event dates. Our monthly club meetings are about two hours in length.

And as a side note, Good Sam’s does not allow us to bring any food or drink into their meeting room other than bottled water. ASLC provides bottled water at each meeting. After the meetings, we welcome members to relocate with us to a local restaurant for refreshments and socializing. Of late, we’ve been going the Pecan Grill on Telshor.

Our Monthly Moon Gaze at International Delights Café
On Saturday nights nearest the first quarter moon, the club holds their Moon Gaze event for the public. We set up our scopes around sunset in front of the International Delights Café on the NE corner of El Paseo and Idaho. The primary viewing target is obviously the moon. But, if bright planets are visible, we’ll usually have telescopes pointed at them as well. It’s a leisurely affair with people stopping by for a look throughout the evening. It’s also an opportunity to catch up with friends, try out new equipment, and plan future activities. We usually observe for about 2-3 hours.

Our Leasburg Dam Observatory
Usually once a month, the ASLC holds public dark-sky observing at the Leasburg Dam State Park (LDSP), where our roll-roof observatory is located. The primary instrument housed at Leasburg is a 16-inch Cassegrain telescope that offers fantastic views of the planets and deep-sky objects. This event is typically done on Saturdays nearest the third quarter moon. LDSP is located about 15 miles north of Las Cruces (take exit-19 off Interstate 25 and follow the signs).
Special Events and Outings

**Astronomy Day:** Astronomy Day is a grass roots movement to share the joy of astronomy with the general population - "Bringing Astronomy to the People." On Astronomy Day, thousands of people who have never looked through a telescope will have an opportunity to see first hand what excites so many amateur and professional astronomers. ASLC holds events during the day at selected locations. We set up several telescopes, display some of our astrophotography, and talk with people about the wonders of our hobby. During the evening, we have a public star party and occasionally in collaboration with the NMSU Astronomy Department.

**Renaissance Faire:** Each November, the Las Cruces Fine Arts Council hosts a Renaissance Faire at Young Park. The two-day event draws thousands of local residents. ASLC has been a participant for the last several years. The club sets up telescopes through which individuals can safely view the sun. We also display astrophotography, demonstrate telescope building, and talk with hundreds of interested individuals about club activities (all the while wearing period costumes). In 2004, the club won an award for having the best-costumed booth. It’s great fun!

**Texas Star Party:** The granddaddy of dark-sky star parties is only a four-hour drive from Las Cruces. TSP is a week long event held each spring at the Prude Ranch near Fort Davis, Texas. The ranch offers a swimming pool and a meal plan (for those wishing it). Individuals may rent cabins or camp in the fields. There are even RV hook-ups. The pristine skies are near perfect for visual observation and astrophotography. TSP challenges its participants with several lists of objects to find - some fairly easy, some definitely not. If you want to see some fancy hardware, this is the place to be. Many of the scopes you’ll see at the TSP aren’t measured by their aperture, but rather by how many SUVs it cost to buy them. Fancy as they are, nearly all participants are happy to share a view through their equipment. Dozens of vendors also attend the event, and there are educational presentations throughout the week.

**Okie-Tex Star Party:** Faithfully, in late September, ASLC’s hard-core members make the 8-hour trek to Kenton, Oklahoma for this event. Held at Camp Billy Joe, this site offers some of the darkest skies in the southwest. Although a little rustic as compared to the Texas Star Party, Okie-Tex has showers and flush toilets, a chow hall, vendors, a late-night snack bar, a large tent for presentations, great speakers, friendly staff, and electricity on the observing fields for scopes and computers. Even more impressive, however, are the naked-eye views of the Milky Way in the Sagittarius region of the early evening sky. Spectacular!
Education, Special Clinics, Field Trips

The club has active educational programs as well as public outreach courses, field trips, and clinics. Their notifications are detailed in our monthly bulletin.

Once or twice each year, ASLC sponsors a basic astronomy class, which is provided by several club members. The course includes information about observing, telescope selection, deep sky objects, and many other astronomy-related topics. Participants are encouraged to join the club to continue their education.

In recent years, the Astronomical Society of Las Cruces has conducted a telescope-making workshop under the direction of telescope expert, Nils Allen. Participants built a lovely 4.5" Dobsonian-type telescope using a cardboard mailing tube, precut plywood, and supplied optics; a nominal fee was charged to cover supplies. Nils also worked with club members on larger telescope-making projects such as repairs or upgrades to their existing scopes.

Occasionally, the club holds more advanced courses, workshops, or field trips. Recent examples include a webcam astrophotography workshop, an intermediate astronomy course, a short course on optics and observing techniques, a ‘behind-the-scenes’ tour of the Very Large Array, and a guided tour of the solar observatory at Sunspot. Check the club’s website, aslc-nm.org for upcoming club events and the latest news.
The High Desert Observer (HDO) is our monthly club bulletin. It contains news, announcements, feature articles, upcoming events, star charts, and other items of interest. The HDO is also the place to get information about upcoming club presentations. Around the 10th of each month, the HDO is emailed to club members as an Adobe pdf file. Club members are highly encouraged to submit articles of general interest for publication.

The Reflector

ASLC members also receive automatic membership in the Astronomical League (AL). AL membership has many benefits including participation in its observing groups, e.g., The Messier and Lunar Observing Clubs. Another excellent benefit of AL membership is The Reflector, which is AL’s quarterly magazine. The Reflector is published in March, June, September and December and contains news and features from throughout the world of astronomy.

Sky and Telescope

Sky and Telescope is written for the knowledgeable amateur astronomer and includes articles on space science, astronomy, observatories, planetariums, telescopes and celestial events. S&T is widely read by professional astronomers and is probably bought by more amateur astronomers worldwide than any other astronomy magazine. ASLC members receive a discount on the subscription price for S&T. Check with the club treasurer for the latest price and to subscribe at club rates.

Club Member Websites

In addition to the main club webpage (aslcnm.org), several ASLC club members maintain their own web sites containing information and/or images. Links to the sites may be found on the club’s website, aslc-nm.org

Astrophotography by Dave Dockery
Desert Moon Observatory
Enchanted Skies
Budget Astronomy
Jerry Gabers Astronomy Page
Bert Verstraete’s Astrophotography Page

Barkosoftware
Jornada Observatory
Steve Smith’s Astronomy Site
Imaging the Heavens
George’s Astrophotography
The Big Eye
ASLC New-Member Profile

Please take a few moments to tell us about yourself and your astronomical interests. Please mail the completed form and a $30 check payable to ASLC to: PO Box 921, Las Cruces, NM 88004. Alternatively, you can bring the form and check to any monthly club meeting.

Your Name: __________________________________________

Your Mailing Address: __________________________________________

City/State/Zip: __________________________________________

Phone Number (home): _____________________ (work): _____________________

Is it OK to publish your home phone number in our member directory? yes  no (circle one)

Your email address: __________________________________________

Is it OK to publish your email address in our member directory? yes  no (circle one)

Are you or have you been a professional astronomer?? ______

How long have you been active as an amateur or professional astronomer? ______________

Do you own a telescope? ___________ Make/Model: ________________________

What types of astronomy are you interested in (check all that apply):

Visual Astronomy _____ Astrophotography _____ Variable Star Observing _____

Occultation Timing _____ Minor Planet Observing _____ Telescope Making _____

Archeo-astronomy _____ Public Outreach _____ Education (classroom) _____

Spectroscopy _____ Other (please list) ______________________________

What equipment do you own?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

What can the ASLC do to enhance your astronomy experience?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________
ASLC IMAGE GALLERY

(All images captured by ASLC members)

THE ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY
of Las Cruces, New Mexico
PO Box 921, Las Cruces, NM 88004

ASLC - Sharing the Universe
With Our Community for
More than 60 Years

http://www.aslc-nm.org/
FYI, The Astronomical Society normally meets on the last Friday of each month at 7:00 p.m. in the Good Samaritan’s Activity Center at 3011 Buena Vida Circle, which is on S. Telshor and across from the Memorial Medical Center.