GUIDESTAR

July 2020

Fostering the Science and Art of Astronomy Through Programs that Serve our Membership and the Community

Cover Image: NGC 7023 The Iris Nebula by HAS Jeff Lepp - taken at the Columbus Dark Site
When the leadership team met in January to plan out our upcoming year’s activities, one of the things I really wanted to focus on in 2020 was member engagement. I’ve heard from others during the time I’ve spent on the leadership team here that, while the Houston Astronomical Society has a great number of amenities for members available to them, we could do more to interact with our members outside of our monthly meetings. During that planning session, I had a series of member events - socials at bars and restaurants, field trips, and so on - that I wanted to start arranging for this year and beyond, and I had challenged all of the leaders to help us ideate on other things we could do to help in this endeavor. I wanted to make sure that we were doing more to pull people in – especially our new members – to this hobby we all love. I don’t think I’ve ever run across anyone who wasn’t absolutely fascinated by space and wanted to learn more about it but taking that next step into a real lifelong journey into learning about the cosmos was always the hardest part. That’s where a club of like-minded individuals, like the Houston Astronomical Society, could help novices take that leap into becoming lifelong amateur astronomers.
HAS Meeting

August 07, 2020, 7:00PM - Via Zoom

Bill Pellerin presents

The Life Cycle of Stars
Stellar Evolution

Register for the Zoom Presentation
Novice Presentation- Via Zoom
August 06, 2020, 7:00PM:

Gems of the August Night Sky

by Debbie Moran

Novice Chairperson Debbie Moran will lead us on a tour of the August night sky and some of the Do Not Miss celestial objects we should have on our observing lists!

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Register for the Zoom Presentation
It's pretty clear by now that the Covid-19 is going to be here with us for a while longer. We have changed our behaviors to adapt (as people for countless generations before us have done) and are still actively pursuing our love of the night sky, even if things are a little different now. While due to cancellations, there is no replacing the star party experience many of us enjoy each year, or the absence of face to face outreach events, we are still finding ways to get out and do astronomy.

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This month for the challenge object we’re really going to change things up and go for something closer to home than the deep sky challenges we’ve been putting up there. Anyone in this group really get into looking for the moons of the planets? I know we all probably love the four bright moons of Jupiter and have observed them plenty, but before I rejoined the club several years ago I hadn’t ever put much thought into the others. Saturn has a lovely set of moons, and while none of them are as bright as Jupiter’s big four, a great many of them are brighter than any of the OTHER moons of Jupiter. Titan and Rhea are visible in pretty small telescopes, and an 8-inch should also easily pull in Dione, Tethys and Iapetus. What struck me to mention this today is that recently at the Dark Site with my 16”, I accomplished my first certain observation of Enceladus, and my first even suspected observation of Mimas. That brings me to 7 moons of Saturn observed. Quite a nifty observation.

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Summer Triangle Corner: Deneb
by David Prosper

The Summer Triangle is high in the sky after sunset this month for observers in the Northern Hemisphere, its component stars seemingly brighter than before, as they have risen out of the thick, murky air low on the horizon and into the crisper skies overhead. Deneb, while still bright when lower in the sky, now positively sparkles overhead as night begins. What makes Deneb special, in addition to being one of the three points of the Summer Triangle? Its brilliance has stirred the imaginations of people for thousands of years!

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Asterisms - August 2020

ET, NGC 457, Owl Cluster, Caldwell 13, Kachina Doll Cluster
by: Steve Goldberg

IMessier Objects - August 2020
This is a series of columns primarily revolving around observing the Messier Catalogue. The intent is to provide the reader a sampling of the Messier objects each month that are most visible in the time frame the column is published. Hence, these deep sky objects should be easily identifiable in and around the month of August. Some months may have a special treat in addition to the Messier Objects. Check the trailer.

Shallow Sky Object of the Month

M57

By Bill Pellerin

Originally Published in the August, 2011 Guidestar

You’ve probably seen this object many times, but I want you to see it again, and this time with different eyes. You’ll see it differently because you will understand its place in the cosmic scheme of things.