

# NOVA



Official Newsletter of the Salt Lake Astronomical Society  
Volume 50 Number 5 May 2020

**SLAS's Newsletter's 50th year of publication.**

**Please Welcome The Newest SLAS Members!**

Deitrick, Todd

Nielsen, Laura

Payne, William



**Justin Davenport** got this image of Venus in front of the Pleiades on 3 April 2020.

## **ANNOUNCEMENT OF ALL SLAS EVENTS ON HOLD AND A SPOC UPDATE**

Owing to concerns over the COVID-19 pandemic all SLAS events are currently on hold. The board will be sending out email SLAS Blasts advising the membership about any changes.

Due to the rapid spread of the COVID-19 virus the state of Utah along with the rest of the United States went into a "Social Distancing" mode (discouraging group meetings and keeping individuals separated by a minimum of six feet) all SLAS events were put on hold the first of March. The March general meeting was cancelled, and notice has been sent out that the April general meeting will also be cancelled.

### **Stansbury Park Observatory Complex SPOC**

The observatory was de-winterized and made ready for the star party season on the afternoon of March 12, 2020. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic all refresher training on the telescopes has been placed on hold until such time that the virus threat has passed.

Early in 2020 efforts were made to find a mount suitable to accommodate the 11-inch D&G optical tube for what is now called the "Siegfried Jachmann Memorial Telescope". Member Chuck Hards was asked to try and locate a German Equatorial mount that would meet our needs.

Through his efforts, a used mount was located in South Carolina and efforts were made to purchase this mount and have it shipped to Salt Lake City. During January of 2020 a donation fund was started to purchase this mount and fabricate the equipment needed to make the telescope operational.

As of this writing, \$2,395 had been donated into this fund. The purchase of the mount was \$1,100 plus \$200 for the seller to crate the mount for shipping. It was estimated that the shipment of the mount was \$450 for a total delivered cost of the mount at \$1,750. The mount is currently stored in the Kolob Building at SPOC and fabrication will start after the COVID-19 threat has passed.

Thanks  
Rodger C. Fry

## **SALT LAKE ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY BOARD MEETING April 8, 2020**

Special Note: Due to the COVID-19 virus outbreak and concerns, this Board meeting was held virtually.

Board Members in Attendance:  
Luke Moses, John Drabik, Rodger Fry, Daland Speirs

Other Members in Attendance:  
Joan Carman, Patrick Wiggins

Location: Online virtual meeting using Google Meetings

President Luke Moses called the meeting to order: 7:04 PM

Luke noted that we have changed insurance providers for our general liability coverage, to Auto-Owners Insurance [Cincinnati]. This will provide the coverage the Board decided at a prior meeting, and should save SLAS about \$1,000 per year.

Luke asked Rodger for SPOC facility updates. Rodger reported that SPOC has been de-winterized but further preparations are on hold until after the virus warnings are lifted. He noted that the GEM mount for the Jachmann Memorial Telescope has been received; the mount, prep work, and shipping currently total about \$1,750 spent so far.

Motion by John that the recently received Utah State Sales Tax refund of \$625.99 be applied to the memorial telescope fund. Second by Rodger. During discussion, Joan mentioned that she felt much of that amount was due to library program telescope purchases and should be returned to the loaner telescope account. Luke mentioned that it may be more appropriate to put the money into the General fund for future flexibility.

John noted that the current memorial telescope donations are at roughly the half-way point of about \$2,500 out of the \$5,000 target. John asked if the money was put back into the library

fund how it would be used. Luke asked John to try to determine how much of the \$625 is due to the telescope purchases in 2019 and early 2020. The motion is tabled until the next Board meeting.

[UPDATE: after reviewing the receipts submitted by Joan for telescope purchases, the total is \$232.76 (\$36.45 plus \$196.31), i.e., \$393.23 is due to taxes on other purchases or expenses).

Discussion turned to the recently donated observatory and equipment. Those on the call were in general agreement that it should be donated to another group, or sold and with the proceeds used by SLAS.

Luke noted that the prior owner did not place limitations on SLAS as to disposition and that he indicated that SLAS was free to sell the observatory and/or equipment if desired. Daland thinks we should keep the 14" telescope for portable star parties. Luke and Patrick noted that the telescope requires the heavy mount and pier and is not suitable for portable use as a result.

Others who were at the disassembly agreed that the telescope is not portable. Patrick would like to consider selling the building, separate from consideration of selling the other equipment. Those on the call agreed that the small size of the dome and the fiberglass construction could make it an attractive target for vandalism if installed at SPOC.

It was decided that there would be no further action taken until the Board can meet at SPOC, create an inventory of the donated equipment, and discuss further options.

Daland received another request for a star party at SPOC, from a commercial firm, and he would like to know how to respond to them. He does not know if they have a 501(c)(3) status. Luke noted insurance and liability concerns and that SLAS does not currently track members who might be interested in supporting commercially-oriented star parties.

John read from prior Board meeting minutes that the SLAS policy is that we currently provide star party support only for 501(c)(3) organizations, specifically libraries/schools, and that the Board considered investigating whether it might be possible to gather member names who might be interested in supporting requests such as those Daland received, but with no affiliation with SLAS conducting the event (i.e., we are limited to possibly gathering names of SLAS members who might, as private citizens, be willing to assist at commercial star parties including providing their own equipment.) Luke will create an email blast asking for volunteers.

Luke asked for the Secretary / Treasurer report. It is provided separately. Highlights for March are:

1) Received \$1,383.08 in March plus \$1.12 interest and \$625.99 Utah Sales Tax reimbursement. Receipts include \$218.63 in donations for the Jachmann memorial telescope. The designated amounts bring the Jachmann donations to roughly \$2,500, about half of the fundraising target of \$5,000. \$1,300 of the donated funds were used to purchase and crate the GEM mount; shipping charges were \$444.43 (paid in April).

2) Expected April expenditures outstanding are \$75 for the Solicitation Permit fee, \$14 for Salt Lake County telescope repair parts, and \$15 for Fedex charges for overnight delivery of GEM payment.

3) SLAS welcomed three new members in March:  
Jeannie Gamble Katherine Dwight John Bell

4) For the period from 1/1/2020 to 4/6/2020, we have 26 Astronomical League signups. The list has been delivered to Aleta Cox for coordination with the League.

5) The donated observatory from Mr Robert Hill was disassembled and moved to SPOC on 3/15/2020.

Patrick asked whether he should continue publishing NOVA during the virus hiatus. Consensus that it is good to continue, but not to include scheduling info for meetings or star parties until the situation has cleared.

Joan asked whether we could have a Zoom (internet) presentation in May, for a famous scientist session (Herschel, etc. A recent session was held featuring the same presenter acting in the

role of Isaac Newton, and the session was successful). John noted recent security concerns with Zoom in particular, but publishing meeting info on the SLAS site could result in abuse of other web conferencing tools as well.

Luke suggested that if we have a session we publish conference details to SLAS members only, and then place a notice on the web site so that members of the general public who would like to attend can email the Secretary, who will then send the meeting information and keep track of those who apply. This should reduce the chance of a Zoom security breach.

John mentioned that he had sent the April (only) SLAS books page to Patrick for publication on slas.us. Patrick asked that John send the year-to-date info instead, as a PDF, and John agreed to do so.

There being no further business, Luke adjourned the meeting.

Meeting adjourned: 7:57 PM

## **MINUTES OF THE SALT LAKE ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY GENERAL MEETING**

15 April 2020

Meeting was cancelled out of concerns over the COVID-19 pandemic.



**Leslie Fowler** and friend at the fabric shop where they work model their spacey COVID-19 masks.

## **SLAS Member Information**

The SLAS Member Information file is available at <http://slas.us/slasbooks/NEWMEM.PDF>.

## **Loaner Telescopes For SLAS Members**

SLAS has several scopes available for loan to current SLAS members. Check the SLAS website under "[Membership Benefits](#)" for details.

**Contact Us** [slasinfo@slas.us](mailto:slasinfo@slas.us)

## **2020 SLAS Board of Directors**

President	Luke Moses
Meetings	
Vice President	Rodger Fry
Publicity, PR and Web Content	
Secretary-Treasurer	John Drabik
Membership Dues & Renewals	
Board Member at Large	Tom Sevcik
SPOC Star Party Coordinator	
Board Member at Large	Daland Speirs
School & Special Star Parties	

## **Appointed Positions**

Astronomical League Contact	Aleta Cox
Equipment Manager	Luke Moses
Historian	Patrick Wiggins
NASA Night Sky Ambassador	Ann House
Newsletter Editor	Patrick Wiggins
Observatory Director	Rodger Fry
Private Star Party Coordinator	Don Colton
Webmaster	Ken Warner
ZAP Grant Writer	Jim Keane

## **SPOC Advisory Committee**

Chair through JAN 2021	Rodger Fry
Member through JAN 2021	Rodger Fry
Member through JAN 2021	Stan Eriksen
Member through DEC 2020	Larry Holmes
Member through FEB 2022	Leslie Fowler
Member through DEC 2020	Patrick Wiggins
Member through JAN 2021	Jim Keane
Member while SLAS President	Luke Moses
Member through FEB 2022	Tony Lau
Member as Obser. Dir. Emeritus	Bruce Grim
Member while Harmons Rep.	Vacant

## **SPOC Telescope Instruction Coordinators**

Refractor	Marlene Egger
Ealing	Jim Keane
Grim	Rodger Fry
Clements	Leslie Fowler

## Events Calendar

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### May 2020

11 Board Meeting to be held on line. Details to be announced via SLAS Blast emails.

18 General Meeting to be held on line. Details to be announced via SLAS Blast emails.

NOVA is a publication of the Salt Lake Astronomical Society, a non-profit organization. Nova contains minutes of meetings, Board member names & contact info, activities, reports and special club events. The editor of NOVA is appointed by the SLAS Vice-President. Members are encouraged to contribute content. Current editor is Patrick Wiggins, 4099wiggins@gmail.com.