

# *Pajarito Astronomers*

**P.O. Box 1092, Los Alamos NM 87544**

President      Robert Davenport      667-6935      MS K400  
Vice President      David Hollowell      665-4223      MS T085  
Secretary      Don Casperson      667-1475      MS D436

[www.la.unm.edu/~beach/pajarito.html](http://www.la.unm.edu/~beach/pajarito.html)

March 10, 2005

Dear Members,

**Dark Nights For 2005:** Here are the dates for the 2005 County-Sponsored Dark Nights that have been accepted by the Los Alamos County Parks and Rec. Note that the weather can cancel any of these dates.

Dark Nights begin at sunset at Spirio Soccer Field at Overlook Park in White Rock, except for the June Dark Night, when the soccer field will be closed (for construction). The solar-system objects listed in this table are those that may be visible between sunset and 1:00 AM. Also visible will be a variety of colorful double stars, galaxies, gaseous nebulae, open star clusters, and globular star clusters. A constellation tour of the night sky will be provided. The public is invited and encouraged to attend. Observing will end before 1:00 AM. Call Dave Hollowell, 662-4272 for information.

<b>DARK NIGHT DATE</b>	<b>SUNSET</b>	<b>SKY ACTIVITY BEFORE 1:00 A.M.</b>
Saturday, April 9	7:30 PM	1-day-old Moon, Jupiter, Saturn
Saturday, May 7	8:00 PM	Venus, Jupiter, Saturn
Saturday, June 4	8:15 PM	Venus, Jupiter, Saturn
Saturday, July 9	8:15 PM	3-day-old Moon, Mercury, Venus, Jupiter, Saturn, (Uranus and Neptune later)
Saturday, Aug. 27	7:45 PM	Venus, Jupiter, Uranus, Neptune, (Mars later)
Saturday, Sept. 24	7:00 PM	Venus, Jupiter, Uranus, Neptune, (Mars later)
Saturday, Oct. 8	6:45 PM	5-day-old Moon, Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, Uranus, Neptune, Draconid meteors
Saturday, Nov. 5	5:00 PM	3-day-old Moon, Mercury, Venus, Mars, Uranus, Neptune

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**County Science Fair:** Bob Davenport and David Hollowell judged the space science projects at the Los Alamos County Science Fair on January 28th. While neither of the two high-school science fair projects dealt with space science, there were a number of junior and elementary projects to review. In addition to awards of Mars space photos and \$15, we also had two donated astronomy calendars (from Tom Beach and Joyce Guzik) to present. We decided to award one of those calendars and the space photos to the Aspen elementary 2nd grade class project on understanding weather. We also awarded space photos to Victoria Wang of Barranca Elementary for her project "The Mirror Spoon, In and Out" (researching the optics of a shiny ladle). Emily Funsten of Barranca Elementary received \$15 and space photos for her Internet research project ("Sun Spin") using sunspot observations to determine solar spin rate. Stacey Martin of Aspen Elementary received \$15, space photos, and the other astronomy calendar for her night-time photography project "Star Movement and Rotation of the Earth." Finally, in the junior category, Chris Coriz was awarded \$15 and space photos for a home-made magnetometer project "How Does the Sun Affect Earth's Magnetic Field." Emily Funsten and Chris Coriz sent nice thank you notes to the Pajarito Astronomers.

**Pinon Science Night:** Pinon Elementary held their Science Night on January 25<sup>th</sup>. Jerry Foropoulos, Steve Becker, and Don Casperson set up the Starlab in the gymnasium. Over eighty children and their parents went through making it one of the big attractions of the night. Didier Saumon set up his 10" telescope outside along with Bob Davenport who brought two 4.5" telescopes. Approximately forty children saw Saturn, the Moon, the Orion Nebula, the Pleiades, and Comet Macholtz. Barbara Blair of Pinon Elementary School sent a nice thank you note to the Pajarito Astronomers.

**Officer Elections:** Fourteen ballots were returned with no write-ins. All candidates were running unopposed. Bob Davenport will be serving as President this year; many thanks to Steve Becker for serving many years in this position. Dave Hollowell will be serve again as Vice-president and Don Casperson will serve again as Secretary. Thanks to Dave and Don for helping the club again this year.

**Messier Marathon:** If anyone participated in a Messier Marathon (March 10-11 are best dates this year) please let us know how you did.

**This information on Rocky Mountain Star Stare is from the Colorado Springs Astronomical Society:** Rocky Mountain Star Stare (RMSS) will be held this year July 7 - 10, 2005. The Colorado Springs Astronomical Society, host for RMSS, has a working relationship with the Pike National Forest to hold RMSS in different locations each year northwest of Lake George Colorado. This year's location is known to the club as Tarryall Meadows, and is our most favorite site for summer star gazing!!

Registration will be available very soon on our website at [www.rmss.org](http://www.rmss.org). New this year, we are accepting payment thru Paypal! You may continue to register by printing and mailing the application as in previous years. RMSS is a unique experience, combining a rustic camping experience with wonderful dark skies. We are one of the lowest prices Star Parties in the nation! Plan now to attend - for more information, visit our website, at [www.rmss.org](http://www.rmss.org).

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**Survey:** Since I'm new as President of the Pajarito Astronomers, I'd like to find out what club activities people are interested in. If you would take a moment to fill out the following quick survey I'd appreciate it. Also, if you are interested in discussing these or any other ideas please give any of the officers a call.

1. What ideas do you have for club events, talks, web page or newsletter changes or anything else club-related that you would like to see?
2. Are there any astronomy-related talks you would like to hear?
3. Are there any astronomy-related topics you would like to give a talk on?
4. Do you have any suggestions for where we might hold our June Dark Night this year?
5. Would you be interested in some sort of organized trip with other members to a nearby star party?  
Do any of the following star parties interest you?
  - a. Rocky Mountain Star Star (July 7-10)
  - b. Enchanted Skies (Sept. 20-24)
  - c. White Sands (Sept. 30-Oct. 1)
  - d. Okie-Tex (Oct. 1-9)
6. Would you be interested in a special event Dark Night during fall or summer at the Valle Caldera Preserve? Estimated cost would be \$30 per adult and \$15 per child.
7. Would you be interested in the club sponsoring a telescope-lending program – either for club members or local kids? The idea would be for people to lend their own telescopes if they have extras and put basic information up on the web page. Other ideas are welcome. I have three small scopes I'd be willing to lend.
8. Do any of you have astronomy photos you've taken that you would share with others on our web page?

Thanks for your input!