

NOVEMBER 2018

★ HOUSTON ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY ★

GUIDESTAR

FOSTERING THE SCIENCE AND ART OF ASTRONOMY
THROUGH PROGRAMS THAT SERVE OUR MEMBERSHIP
AND THE COMMUNITY



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November 2, 2018 at 8:00 PM

Whats up at HAS ? Members of the HAS Leadership Team



Tonight's meeting is the 2018 Annual Meeting of the Membership of the Houston Astronomical Society. Members of the HAS Leadership Team will discuss Society demographics, trends, plans, and programs as well as solicit input and support from you. For the past several years, your Leadership Team has been holding an all-day meeting in January to plan the direction and activities of HAS for the coming year. This panel discussion is meant to encourage discussion with and input by the members of HAS in preparation for this annual planning meeting. Potential topics include Novice labs and the VSIG, Outreach, initiatives to engage and train more women members, loaner telescope program, novice program, and dark site activities. Each topic will be given about 5 minutes for heavy discussion before we move on to the next topic.

Novice Meeting Presentation

Solar Observing - White light and Ha by Craig Lamison

The novice meeting starts at 7:00 PM

Upcoming Events

Other Meetings

Johnson Space Center Astronomical Society | jscas.net

Meets in the Lunar and Planetary Institute on the 2nd Friday of each month.

Fort Bend Astronomy Club | fbac.org/club_meetings.htm.

Meets the third Friday of the month at 8:00 p.m. at the Houston Community College Southwest Campus in Stafford, Texas.

North Houston Astronomy Club | astronomyclub.org

Meets at 7:30 p.m. on the 4th Friday of each month in the Teaching Theatre of the Student Center at Kingwood College. Call 281-312-1650 or E-mail bill.leach@nhmccd.edu.

Brazosport Astronomy Club

Meets the third Tuesday of each month at the Brazosport planetarium at 7:45 p.m. The Brazosport planetarium is located at 400 College Boulevard, Clute, TX, 77531. For more information call 979-265-3376.

HAS Meetings

All meetings are at the University of Houston Science and Research building. See the last page for directions to the location and more information.

Novice meeting

7:00 p.m. room
117 Science & Research 1 Bldg

General meeting

8:00 p.m. room
117 Science & Research 1 Bldg

General Membership Meeting

The Houston Astronomical Society holds its regular monthly General Membership Meeting on the first Friday of each month, unless rescheduled due to a holiday or a conflict with other events at the University of Houston.

Board of Directors Meeting

The Board of Directors Meeting is held on dates and at locations scheduled by the board. Information provided to GuideStar will be published. The meetings are open to all members of the Society in good standing. Attendance is encouraged.



**Houston
Astronomical
Society**



GuideStar_HAS



**STARLINE
832-go4-HAS0**

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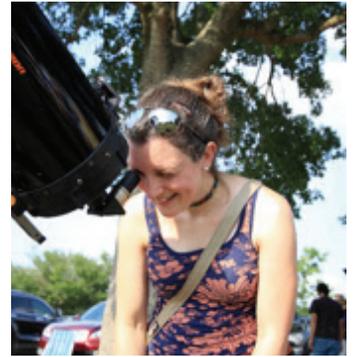
HAS Board Meeting

HAS Board meetings are scheduled regularly. All members are invited to attend these meetings, but only board members can vote on issues brought before the board. Meetings are held at the Trini Mendenhall Community Center (1414 Wirt Road) at 6:30 p.m. on the date specified the calendar.

How is HAS Doing?

As a large astronomy club serving a major US metropolitan area, HAS in a very real way has a schizophrenic identity. On the one hand, we have members who have spent much of their adult lives in the hobby and have been a part of HAS for decades. On the other, we attract many new members every year, who are mostly younger, and many are just entering the hobby.

If you look at the demographics of HAS, nearly 50% of our members have been members for two years or less, and 80% have been members for less than 8 years. Yet it seems that our more experienced members (those with 5 or more years as members) seem to be our most active members. Looked at from this perspective, one could view our membership in terms of two main groups – the Old Guard and the Newbies.



HAS Transit of Venus Event 6-5-2012

It also naturally leads to the question, with such a dichotomy in our membership, is HAS serving our members? In order to answer this question, we need to understand our members and what membership in HAS means to each group.

The Old Guard

It almost seems cliché that amateur astronomy is a “greying” hobby, doomed to diminish as the average age in the hobby increases year by year. Take a look around at a large star party, like TSP. The vast majority of attendees are baby boomers and older. Many are retired and enjoying a hobby they started in their early years. They were inspired by the birth and growth of the Space Age.

Many started in the hobby when owning good quality astronomy gear either required a large expense or meant that you spent the time and energy to build your own gear. Being a member of an astronomy club was one way to ensure you had access to bigger aperture equipment and the means to build your own. They got involved in amateur astronomy because it filled a need they had to personally experience the universe that was “expanding” before them as new astronomical discoveries were made and the Solar System was explored.

Access to good quality “scientific” information and data was not easy to come by, and astronomy clubs filled in the gap by accumulating libraries for their members use, publishing local newsletters filled with observing list and guides, tips on using and building astronomy equipment, and other information relevant to the hobby. Club meetings included talks by professional astronomers or experienced amateurs who could share the news of the latest discoveries. They organized star parties where normally solitary observers could converge and share observing experiences, new projects and new ideas.

The Newbies

Flash forward to the first decade of the New Millennium. By 2010 good quality relatively inexpensive astronomy gear was common and easy to come by. It incorporated a great deal of new technology, which made setting up, aligning and finding deep space objects much easier than using manual methods. Coupled with a phenomenal amount of astronomy information on the internet, from professional tools and data, to how to videos on every aspect of amateur astronomy, our hobby has become much more accessible. These days, New Astronomers can become successful much quicker than their predecessors of the Old Guard.

Today the much of the experience of amateur astronomy is online. It is much different and easier to come by than it was for the Old Guard (many of whom are also no slouches at working it online too). It is possible to access professional level immersive simulations of planetary fly-bys using real data, rent and operate high end remote telescopes in great observing locations, and participate in observing sessions streaming online. Add in astronomy forums and social media groups and its easy to think of doing amateur astronomy from your home recliner, complete with an online virtual astronomy club meeting via social media.

So Where Does HAS Fit In?

Amateur astronomy in many respects is a solitary hobby. We learn about the science of astronomy mostly on our own. We plan and

make most of our observations by ourselves. It is the nature of the beast. We take pride in our accomplishments. Sharing them with others who truly understand what it takes to make them adds a considerably to the experience of completing that observing list or completing that astro image you have worked so hard on. All of this can be done in an online forum, so where does HAS fit in?

I'm a tail end Baby Boomer so while I am a member of the Old Guard by age, I started in astronomy in 2003, and see amateur astronomy a bit more from the perspective of the Newbies. The internet and astronomy technology have always been a part of my astronomy experience. That to me has been my direct personal the eyepiece or the camera on community I have from being a part directly with other HAS members.

“what has been most important to me has been my direct personal experience with the universe, through the eyepiece or the camera on my telescope. So has the sense of community I have from being a part of HAS, and sharing these experiences directly with other HAS members.”

said, what has been most important experience with the universe, through my telescope. So has the sense of of HAS, and sharing these experiences

There is something almost magic that with your own eyes, and understand know the science behind it. Some of my own eyes have been observing an 12 billion light years away, or a super Impact mission or the transit of Venus. All of these observations I made were facilitated by more experienced HAS members at the Columbus dark site, or at an HAS event.

happens when you observe the universe what you are observing because you my most memorable observations with Active Galactic Nucleus in outburst over nova in M51 or the results of the Deep

Whats in it for HAS for its Members?

Which brings us back to our question; is HAS fully serving its members? I believe the answer is a qualified yes. We are, but we could do better.

For both Newbies and Old Guard Members, operation and maintenance of our Columbus dark site and observatory is one of the main things that HAS does for all of our members. Dubbed “HAStronomy Village” it’s a unique facility which provides our members with a safe, well equipped and reasonably dark place to observe, within a 2 hour or less drive from almost everywhere in the Houston area.

In recent years, the facilities have been significantly upgraded and made more woman and family friendly. As a result, on any good observing weekend, its common to find 30 or more members using it, and a true “community of observers” has developed who meet regularly at the site.

If you are new to HAS make it a point to get to the site – no experience is necessary. On a good night there will be plenty of people around to show and share the night sky with you.

In addition, HAS has several programs aimed at New Astronomers, like our telescope loaner program. Not only can you borrow a scope from HAS, but Loaner Scope Chairman Allen Wilkerson will give you a lesson in how to set it up, adjust it and use it before you check it out. Learn how to observe before you spend your money on a telescope. In addition to the loaner scope program, we have several other programs and events aimed directly at New Astronomers. These include:

- **BYOT events** – bring your own telescope and we will help you learn how to set it up, adjust it and use it.
- **Urban Observing** – HAS has scouted out a couple of sites around the city where we can hold “pop-up” star parties. Because they are in town, they are easier to get to than traveling to Columbus. There are typically experienced amateurs there to help you learn. There is also safety in numbers, knowing that there will be other HAS members there too.

- **Novice Labs** – Stephen Jones has been running periodic Novice Labs at the dark site. This is a good way for New Astronomers to access the site for the first time, since there is always a caravan in to the site from an easy to find location in town Columbus
- **For the Old-Timers** – It is said that to live a full life, a person should spend the first third learning, the second third doing and the last third teaching. In addition to the Columbus dark site, there are lots of opportunities to mentor New Astronomers.

We need you to get involved in training New Astronomers. Volunteer to help Allen Wilkerson with loaner scope training, at a BYOT event or help Stephen Jones with the Novice Labs. Call for a “popup urban star party” and help New Astronomers gather and teach them how to observe. The rewards for doing so can be immense and will ensure that Amateur Astronomy remains a vibrant and fulfilling hobby. At the same time, you will be ensuring that HAS fulfills its mission to “Foster the Science and Art of Astronomy through Programs that Serve Our Membership and the Community”.

Attention Women Members of H.A.S.

Learn to operate the Observatory telescopes!

by Rene Gedaly



2017 Student Intern Karla Pale Photo credit: Rene Gedaly

If you've ever wanted to learn how to operate the observatory telescopes, now's your chance. The Observatory Trainers will conduct a special female-only class on operating two of the Society's permanently housed telescopes: the computer-operated Celestron C14 GoTo telescope and the F5 Newtonian reflector outfitted with digital setting circles.

After completing this training, you will be able to schedule time on a telescope—like professional astronomers do—and open up the observatory building to use one of these big scopes all evening long. Astronomy heaven has got to be observing in dark skies on a good-sized telescope without the hassle of packing, setting up, and breaking down your own rig. When you're done, close the observatory and get some shuteye in the female bunkhouse.

Date: Saturday November 10, 2018

Prerequisites: 6 months membership and completion of online site training. Knowledge of equatorial mounts.

RSVP: ChrisO@astronomyhouston.org. Class limited to 6 students.

NOMINATION OF OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS FOR 2019

The 2018 Nominating Committee has assembled the following slate of candidates for HAS elected positions.

Candidates nominated were as follows:

Role	Name
EXECUTIVE	
President	Don Selle
Vice President	Joe Khalaf
Secretary	Rob Morehead
Treasurer	Mike Edstrom
BOARD OF DIRECTORS	
Director	Walt Cooney
Director	Mark Ferraz
Director	Sherry Irby
Director	Allen Wilkerson
Director	Bram Weisman
Director	Doug McCormick
Youth Director	Lauren Herrington
STANDING COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS	
Audit	Bill Flanagan
Education & Outreach	Debbie Moran, Joe Khalaf
Field Trip & Observing	Jim King
Membership	Bill Kowalczyk
Novice	Debbie Moran
Observatory	Chris Ober

Voting will be done in person at the AGM, and by electronic ballot in the week following the AGM. Members present at the AGM shall be entitled to vote in Person. Having voted at the meeting, they will not be able to vote electronically.

Members not attending the AGM shall be eligible to vote electronically. Electronic voting shall be open for 7 days, from 5 November through 11 November and available to members via a link to the ballot on the Members Only pages. Each member eligible to vote must be logged into the HAS website and shall be able to vote once for each position.

Results of the voting shall be announced via the HAS website shortly after voting is closed on 11 November.

The Nominating Committee members were:

Joe Khalaf – Chairman, along with Sherry Irby, Ed Fraini, Chris Ober and Mark Ferraz

Magnetic Waves Create Chaos in Star Forming Clouds

12 September 2018

New research by Stella Offner, assistant professor of [astronomy](#) at The University of Texas at Austin, finds that magnetic waves are an important factor driving the process of star formation within the enormous clouds that birth stars. Her research sheds light on the processes that are responsible for setting the properties of stars, which in turn affects the formation of planets orbiting them, and, ultimately, life on those planets. The research is published in the current issue of the journal *Nature Astronomy*.

Offner used a supercomputer to make models of the multitude of processes happening inside a cloud where stars are forming, in an effort to sort out which processes lead to which effects.

“These clouds are violent places,” Offner said. “It’s an extreme environment with all kinds of different physics happening at once,” including gravity and turbulence as well as radiation and winds from forming stars (called stellar feedback). The fundamental question, Offner said, is: “Why are the motions in these clouds so violent?”

Some astronomers attribute the observed motions to gravitational collapse, while others attribute it to turbulence and stellar feedback. Offner wanted to test these theories and study how stars shape their birth environment, but it’s virtually impossible to use telescope observations of these clouds to separate the influence of the various processes, she said.

“That’s why we need computer models,” Offner explained.

After comparing models of clouds with gravity, magnetic fields, and stars, Offner noticed extra motions.

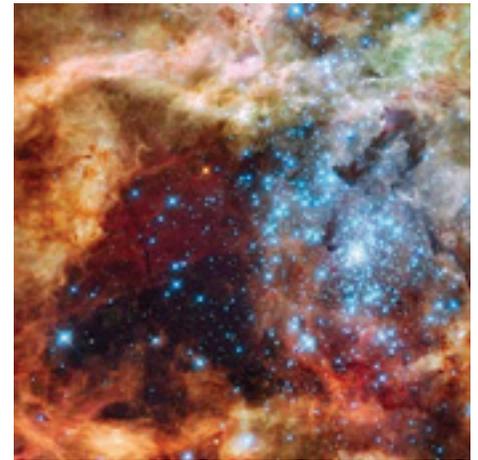
Her models showed that stellar winds interacting with the cloud magnetic field generated energy and influenced gas at far greater distances across the cloud than previously thought: These local magnetic fields caused action at a distance.

“Think of the magnetic fields like rubber bands that stretch across the cloud,” Offner said. “The winds push the field — it’s like rubber bands being plucked. The waves outrun the wind and cause distant motions.”

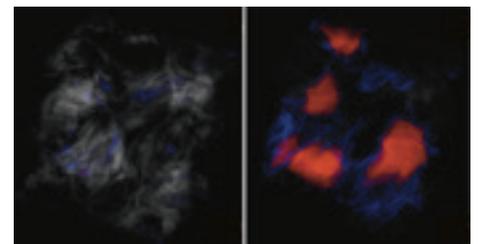
This research has implications for the tug-of-war between feedback — that is, the effect that the newly formed star has on its environment — and gravity on the scale of solar systems up to entire galaxies, Offner said.

As for the next step, Offner says she plans to study this process on larger scales, both in time and space. Her current study focused on one area within star-forming clouds; she said future studies will study the effects of magnetic fields and feedback on scales larger than a single cloud.

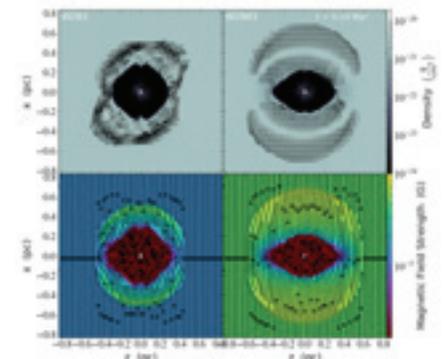
This work was supported by a [National Science Foundation](#) Career Award to Stella Offner. Note to editors: Stella Offner has written [a blog post on this research for Nature](#).



Offner’s research will shed light on the processes inside star-forming regions such as 30 Doradus, seen in this view from Hubble Space Telescope. Credit: NASA/ESA/F. Paresce/R. ’Connell/WFC3



Models of two turbulent clouds without stars (left) and with stars launching winds (right). The colors show gas speed: grey (6-10 km/s), blue (12-25 km/s), and red (180-250 km/s). Credit: Stella Offner/UT Austin



Magnetic Waves from a Young Star
Gas density and velocity (top) and magnetic field strength and magnetic field lines (bottom) showing magnetic waves propagating ahead of the wind shell. The left and right panels show different models. The waves stand out when the surrounding gas is not turbulent. Credit: Stella Offner/UT Austin

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Courtesy of the **University Of Texas**
At Austin McDonald Observatory,
Publisher of stardate magazine
[Stardate.Org/magazine](#)

Asterisms – Kimble’s Kite, Kite Cluster

Asterism: a grouping of stars that form a recognizable pattern.

Constellation:	Cassiopeia
Right Ascension:	03h 27m 00.0s
Declination:	+71° 50' 00"
Magnitude:	7 to 8
Size:	1.5 Degrees

This month’s Asterism is called Kimble’s Kite or the Kite Cluster. It is on the border of Cassiopeia and Camelopardalis. To locate this grouping, use Delta δ and Epsilon ϵ CAS as pointers to Gamma γ CAM.



Here is a detailed finder chart with more stars between Cassiopeia and Camelopardalis.



Here is a picture showing the kite pattern. One corner is the star 15 CAS, also known as Kappa κ CAS. Since the object is about 1.5 degrees across, use your lowest power eyepiece and also see if it is in your finder



Photo courtesy of “Ugly Hedgehog® - Photography Forum”, user Jimh123.

About The Houston Astronomical Society

Welcome to Our Organization

The HAS is a group of dedicated amateur astronomers, most of whom are observers, but some are armchair astronomers. The benefits of membership are:

- Access to our 18 acre observing site west of Houston -- a great place to observe the universe!
- A telescope loaner program -- borrow a HAS telescope and try observing for yourself!
- A monthly novice meeting, site orientation meeting, and general meeting with speakers of interest. Access to meeting videos on the HAS web site.
- Opportunities to participate in programs that promote astronomy to the general public (such as Star Parties at schools)
- A yearly all-clubs meeting for Houston area organizations
- Meet other amateurs and share experiences, learn techniques, and swap stories

You're invited to attend our next meeting. You'll have a great time! All members have the right to participate in Society functions and to use the Observatory Site. Regular and Student Members receive a subscription to The Reflector. The GuideStar, the monthly publication of the Houston Astronomical Society is available on the web site. Associate Members, immediate family members of a Regular Member, have all membership rights, but do not receive publications. Sustaining members have the same rights as regular members with the additional dues treated as a donation to the Society. Sky & Telescope and Astronomy magazines are available to members at a discount.

Membership Application

You can join (or renew at the organization web site, www.astronomyhouston.org). Click the 'Join HAS' Tab. Send funds to address shown on last page of GuideStar. Attention - Treasurer, along with the following information: Name, Address, Phone Number, Special Interests in Astronomy, Do you own a Telescope? (If so, what kind?), and where you first heard of H.A.S.

Event Notification or Cancellation

HAS uses RAINEDOUT.NET to communicate late breaking updates about our various events. . Message delivery is via text messaging and e-mail. There are several ways to subscribe. If you would like to receive these notices via text messaging directly to your phone, subscribe to any of the sub-groups which interest you.

RainedOut notices will also automatically be sent to our e-mail list. Note that regular e-mail list conversations are not part of RainedOut communications and will not be sent to your phone as part of this service. Instructions to sign up for the e-mail list (a great way to keep your finger on the pulse of the club) are found here:

<http://www.astronomyhouston.org/about/email-list>.

Houston Astronomical Society

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The Houston Astronomical Society is a non-profit corporation organized under section 501 (C) 3 of the Internal Revenue Code. The Society was formed for education and scientific purposes. All contributions and gifts are deductible for federal income tax purposes. General membership meetings are open to the public and attendance is encouraged.

Check the Website

astronomyhouston.org

The HAS website not only has news and information about our society, but also a variety of features to manage your membership and connect with other club members.

Current members can post photos, trade gear, pay dues, manage discount magazine subscriptions, swap stories in the forum, and more.

Questions about the site? Need a hand to get your account set up? Contact webmaster@astronomyhouston.org.

The HAS web site is the winner of the 2012 Astronomical League award for excellence

To receive text messages, send any or all of the following (one at a time) to 84483

OUTREACH Public Outreach Events

STARPARTY Members only star Parties

URBAN Urban Observing Events

MEETINGS HAS Meetings

You will receive a confirmation message back for each successful enrollment.

For more information, please visit www.RainedOut.net.

About The Guidestar

Member Projects Spotlight

We want to spotlight the astronomical projects and observations that you are working on.

Send us an email at guidestar@astronomyhouston.org and tell us. Whether it be a specific research project in astronomy that you're working on, an astro league observing program, an astrophotography project, or something else, let us know so we can let the rest of the society know.

GuideStar Advertising Policies

Personal advertisements

- Members in good standing of the Houston Astronomical Society (HAS) may request that an ad be placed in the GuideStar for personal items (for sale or wanted).
- Items offered for sale must be of interest to amateur astronomers.
- No more than two telescopes may be advertised within any calendar year.
- Ads will not run for more than 3 consecutive months
- Ads will be run on a space-available basis.
- Ads must be provided to the editor in electronic format (email, text file) by the 15th of the month preceding the month-of-issue.

Commercial advertisements

- Advertisement sizes:
 - * Full page = 6.875" w x 9" h
 - * Half page = 6.875" w x 4.25" h
 - * Quarter page = 3.31" w x 4.25" h (allows for column gutter)
- Commercial advertisements will be run in the GuideStar at the following fee schedule:

Size	One time	One quarter (3 consecutive months)
Full page	\$100.00	\$250.00
Half page	\$50.00	\$125.00
Quarter page	\$25.00	\$62.50

- Artwork provided must be in electronic format (image file, PDF, etc.) and must be in the correct proportions to fit the space provided. Contact editor with questions.
- Artwork may be in color or in black and white.
- Items or services advertised must be of interest to amateur astronomers
- Payment for advertisements must be done in advance (pay to the 'Houston Astronomical Society')

The H.A.S. GuideStar is published monthly by the Houston Astronomical Society. All opinions expressed herein are those of the contributor and not necessarily of Houston Astronomical Society. The monthly Meeting Notice is included herein. GuideStar is available on the HAS web site to all members of H.A.S., and to persons interested in the organization's activities. Contributions to GuideStar by members are encouraged. Electronic submission is helpful. Submit the article in text, unformatted MS-Word format via email GuideStar@astronomyhouston.org. Copy must be received by the 15th of the month for inclusion in the issue to be available near the end of the same month. Or, bring copy to the General Membership Meeting and give it to the Editor, or phone to make special arrangements. [Contact the editor for writing guidelines.](#)

Editing & Production:

Bob Wiesner | 713-240-7059

GuideStar@astronomyhouston.org



The GuideStar is the winner of the **2012 Astronomical League Mabel Sterns Newsletter award**

Parking At The University Of Houston Main Campus

Directions to meeting

From I-45 going south (from downtown)

- exit at Cullen Boulevard
- turn right on Cullen
- turn right on Holman Street; the parking lot is past the Hoffeinz Pavilion
- Science and Research is across the street (2nd building back)

From I-45 going north (from NASA/Galveston)

- exit at Cullen Boulevard
- turn left on Cullen
- turn right on Holman Street; the parking lot is past the Hoffeinz Pavilion
- Science and Research is across the street (2nd building back)

Parking at the University of Houston Main Campus

For the monthly Houston Astronomical Society Meeting the map below shows the location of the 15C parking lot, west of Cullen Boulevard on Holman Street.

The map is from the University of Houston web site and identifies the lot that is available for parking while attending the Houston Astronomical Society monthly meeting. This parking is available from 6:30 p.m. until 10:00 p.m. on the Friday night of the HAS meeting (usually the first Friday of the month).

This parking is free. If you get a notice from the UH campus police on the night of the meeting, call the UH Security office and let them know that this area has been made available on HAS meeting night by the Parking Department.

