

Southwest Region of the Astronomical League

Report to AL Council, July 27, 2022

Submitted by SWRAL Regional Rep: Edward P. Flaspoebler, Jr.

SWRAL - the Southwest Region of the Astronomical League - is one of the ten regions of the Astronomical League. It consists of AL member clubs and At-Large members located in Texas, New Mexico and parts of Oklahoma.

While SWRAL has assisted area clubs with events such as Okie-Tex Star Party, El Dorado Star Party and the Hill Country Astronomers Spring Banquet, the main focus has been its involvement with the annual Texas Star Party.

The SWRAL holds its annual meeting each year during the week of TSP, where there is the prospect of both high and convenient attendance by SWRAL clubs.

The following slate of candidates was elected as SWRAL officers, at the SWRAL Annual Meeting, held April 29, 2022, during the Texas Star Party.

- Chairman: David Moody, Canyon Lake
- Vice-Chairman: Gary Carter, Fairview
- Secretary: Anne Adkins, Ft Davis
- Treasurer: Allen Gilchrist, Ft Davis
- Regional Representative: Vacant, due to the death of John Wagoner

The position of SWRAL Regional Representative was later filled when AL President Carroll Iorg appointed Edward Flaspoebler to fill the vacant position.

SWRAL currently coordinates with Texas Star Party, Inc, to organize and host the annual Texas Star Party, Eldorado Star Party and Oki-Tex Star Party.

In addition to organizing and hosting the annual Texas Star Party, El Dorado Star Party, and Oki-Tex Star Party, SWRAL is currently looking for new ways to serve member societies in the region.

SWRAL currently has approximately \$800 in its checking account, an amount left over from a disbursement by Texas Star Party, Inc. to SWRAL to use as donations to member societies of the region in recognition of volunteer efforts by various club members during TSP.

Member Societies of the Southwest Region of the Astronomical League:

- Alamogordo Amateur Astronomers (Alamogordo NM)
- Albuquerque Astronomical Society
- Amarillo Astronomy Club
- Astronomical Society of South East Texas (Beaumont)
- Astronomical Society of Las Cruces (Las Cruces, NM)
- Austin Astronomical Society
- Big Bend Astronomers (Ft Davis)
- Brazos Valley Astronomy Club
- Central Texas Astronomical Society (Temple TX)
- City Lights Astronomical Society for Students
- Clovis Astronomy Club (Clovis NM)
- Corpus Christi Astronomy Club
- Crossroads Astronomy Club (Nursery, TX)
- Fort Bend Astronomy Club
- Fort Worth Astronomical Society
- Hill Country Astronomers (Fredericksburg, TX)
- Houston Astronomical Society
- North Houston Astronomy Club
- Kingsville Astronomical Society
- Leonardo's Star Quest Astronomy Club (Enid, OK)
- Mason Star Gazers (Mason, TX)
- Odyssey Astronomy Club (Midwest City OK)
- Oklahoma City Astronomy Club and Okie-Tex Star Party
- Psalm 19 Astronomy Society (Austin, TX)
- Red River Astronomy Club (Texarkana, TX)
- Rio Rancho Astronomical Society (Rio Rancho, NM)
- Roswell Astronomy Club (Roswell, NM)
- San Angelo Amateur Astronomical Assoc.
- San Antonio Astronomical Association
- San Antonio League of Sidewalk Astronomers
- South Plains Astronomy Club (Lubbock TX)
- Texas Astronomical Society of Dallas
- Trinity Christian Academy Astronomy Club (Carrollton TX)
- West Texas Astronomers (Midland TX)

Texas Star Party, Inc.

Overview:

Texas Star Party, Inc. is a Texas Non-Profit Corporation, formed in 1997, when it became clear to the TSP founders and volunteers that TSP needed the protections that are afforded corporations, including protecting the name and custodianship of the organization.

TSP has also been granted Non-Profit status by the IRS as a 501(c)(3) Corporation, for educational and scientific purposes, since March 1997.

TSP works with other organizations, including The University of Texas McDonald Observatory and the Southwest Region of the Astronomical League, to implement the annual event. Many of its volunteers are also members of SWRAL astronomy clubs.

Purpose:

The primary purpose of this Corporation is to promote the science of Astronomy through various educational activities which:

- Encourage visual and instrumented astronomical observing,
- Enhance theoretical and practical understanding of astronomy,
- Encourage individuals to design and produce astronomical-related equipment, including telescopes and innovative accessories, and to ensure the future of astronomical observing by encouraging the preservation of night-time dark skies.

Board of Directors:

Directors are chosen to bring a broad spectrum of viewpoints of the amateur astronomy community from across Texas. Each director has shown a commitment to the TSP event, through their volunteerism and familiarity with the operations and philosophy of TSP, and willingness to preserve the fundamentals that make TSP successful.

The primary responsibility of the Board of Directors is to define and enforce the general policies for the TSP event, and to provide a decision-making body when the TSP operations officials need guidance regarding the direction or future directions of TSP.

Officers

- George Ellis, Chairman
- Karl S. Baltz, Sr., President
- Anne Adkins, Secretary
- Treasurer TBA

General Board

- Steve Goldberg, Houston
- Steve Coleman, Van Alstyne
- Allen Gilchrist, Ft Davis
- Rick Kirchhof, Austin
- David Moody, Canyon Lake
- Scott Mitchell, Houston
- Ted Saker, Columbus
- Christina Legrand, Albuquerque
- Becky Ramotowski, Tijeras

Honorary Directors

- Deborah Byrd, Austin
- Amelia Goldberg, Houston
- John Wagoner, Plano

Board Advisors

- Gary Carter, Fairview
- Rene Gedaly, Crystal Beach

TSP Operations Committee:

The operation and management of day to day business of the organization and each year's TSP event is handled by this committee:

- Karl S. Baltz, Sr., President of Operations (Bay City, Texas)
- Rene Gedaly (The Woodlands, TX)
- Rick Kirchhof (Llano, Texas),
- Scott Mitchell (Houston, Texas).

This committee is the main management team of the Texas Star Party, Inc.. The team is responsible for managing the day to day business affairs of the organization. This includes the planning, organizing, running and managing our Annual Star Party Event, and all of the volunteers that host our annual Texas Star Party at Prude Ranch outside of Fort Davis, Texas. This team manages the various sub-committees comprised of volunteers that perform the various work assignments needed to host the Annual Star Party. Refer to the list below see other teams/committees created to perform the various work assignments. This is not an all inclusive list of areas where volunteers are needed. This list will be expanded as the need arises. Some are active all year round and some just during what we consider our TSP Event season.

- Dark-Out (foil and lights)
- Electronic Communications, Ham Radio, Emergency Response
- Event Information (Weather Satellite, FM Radio)
- Front Gate and Security

- Guest Speakers (evening talks)
- Paper Sessions (daytime talks)
- Power Distribution (electricity in fields)
- Programs – Observing, ATM, Astrophotography
- Publications & Printing
- Ranch Reservations
- Registration
- Tours
- Vendors & Door Prizes
- Youth recruitment: K-12 and Tertiary Education students
- Live Streaming Broadcast during TSP Event and periodic Live Virtual Events.
- Public Outreach
- Advertising and Marketing
- Field Inspection for Trip Hazards, White Light Violations, Red Filters on Computer Screens, non-authorized electronic equipment using Power Grid.
- Group Photo
- Covid19/Declared Pandemic Protocols
- Health, Medical and Safety Personnel
- Texas Star Party Spouses and Family
- Astrophotography and Art Competition

“Friends of TSP” and Donations

One of our primary sources of funds is through donations to our “Friends of TSP” fund.