



From your CFAS Board of Directors and Officers,

Welcome to CFAS!

We hope that the following information will help you get the most from your membership in CFAS. CFAS members possess a broad range of knowledge and experience in astronomy. Most long term members joined an astronomy organization when just starting their life long joy of astronomy. They learned from experienced members, and are now willing to share their knowledge with others new to this fascinating hobby. We understand astronomy is not easy, and learning the sky takes time and patience. CFAS Board and fellow members are all willing and able to assist you in getting the most from your membership in CFAS, and to help you grow in your knowledge and experience of Astronomy. The CFAS Board of Directors and members at large are available to answer any questions you may have. Questions are expected, so please do not hesitate to ask any of us questions about astronomy, your equipment or CFAS activities. If you have any concerns, needs, ideas, or desires that are not being met, please contact any board member or e-mail the board at board@cfas.org

Our History

CFAS, a 501(c)(3) organization founded in 1978, is dedicated to the advancement of amateur astronomy and science through education and public outreach. CFAS provides many benefits to its members through its observing, lecture and, classes, but also is obligated to bring astronomy to the general public. CFAS is recognized as one of the more active astronomy organizations in the country, conducting numerous public outreach astronomy events annually. Members who participate find that it is one of the most rewarding experiences an amateur astronomer can have. This is also a great way to get to know other members and learn about astronomy.

Volunteering

CFAS is an all-volunteer organization, and as such is only as good as our volunteers. Regardless of your experience level there are many volunteer opportunities available; becoming an active member will help you get the most enjoyment from your membership.

Board or Committee Member - If you look at the board contact list you will see that many members wear multiple hats. Everyone in CFAS has something to offer and participation enhances the benefit of membership. Your participation is not only appreciated, but is required for the society to survive.

Any committee can use help. It is a good way to learn, **but the following need volunteers now:**

Outreach Committee Is the easiest and most readily available event for any member to volunteer for; seldom does anyone do an outreach event alone. You don't need a telescope or great knowledge of the sky to be a successful volunteer, as most objects observed are planetary and naked eye nebulae. Volunteers are needed to join the committee and participate in the events. Contact the Outreach chairman.

Observing Committee is responsible for the CFAS observing sessions for the membership. **A committee Chairman is needed.** CFAS utilizes various dark sky sites as close as possible to the Orlando area to allow observing deep sky objects. Each site has a manager to organize observing sessions during periods around the new moon. The committee also administers the Observing certificate program. Close in observing sessions for moon and planetary viewing are in the planning stage. Volunteers are needed to assist in running this program that is important to members new to astronomy. Contact the CFAS president.

Astrolog Editor Web publishes a quarterly newsletter the ASTROLOG. Articles are provided by the committee chairs, officers and members. The present Editor will retired this January. A member needs to step up to take on this responsibility. Contact the CFAS president.

CFAS Web Site (www.cfas.org)

Our web site is your main source for what is happening and when. Please join the website as soon as possible. On the web site you will find:

FORUMS – The forum groups are CFAS *Home*, *Observing and Astrophotography* . Each group can have several sub topics.

CALENDAR – Use the link from the top menu of the page to view what activities are scheduled for meetings and outreach.

GALLERY – Members share photos of events they attend, astrophotography images, and other astronomy-related images they have.

OUTREACH EVENTS – Listed on the calendar and in the forums, outreach is one of the most rewarding things we do with our telescopes and binoculars, and laser pointers! Outreach events are held at the SCC campus, schools, churches, scouting groups, libraries, and more, to show and introduce people to our night's sky. Regardless of the prevailing light pollution in our area there is something to see. There can be upwards of 300 people attending these events. New members are encouraged to support these events with or without a telescope.

ASTROLOG – Our quarterly newsletter contains articles, photos, and other great information about CFAS. Contributors are always welcome so don't be bashful! The link to the *Astrolog* is on the home page of the web site, select the Year and Quarter from the drop down boxes and click Download Issue. The PDF file will open.

MEETINGS

General CFAS meetings are held the 2nd Wednesday of each month (except August) at the Emil Buehler Perpetual Trust Planetarium at Seminole State College. Meetings are open to the public, generally start at 7PM and may run until 9PM. Check the web site for the evening's program and to confirm dates, times, and location.

The CFAS Board meets at 7PM on the 1st Wednesday of each month at Perkins Restaurant (6425 University Blvd, Winter Park FL 32792). Check the web site to confirm dates and times. This meeting is open to all members!

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OBSERVING – CFAS holds observing sessions for members at several sites, including the Ocala Observing Site, Kissimmee Prairie Preserve, Chiefland Astronomy Village, and various sites in the metro Orlando area, such as the local airports. Each observing site manages an email list of those members wishing to group observe at that specific site. These observing activities are held during periods of new moon, but are in a sense ad hoc in that they depend upon local weather conditions that vary significantly here in Florida. Any email list member can send a group message proposing an observing session. There are no close- in "dark sky" sites available in the Central Florida area, but we do have approved access to "darker sky" sites for member use. These are listed below:

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Ocala National Forest – The Ocala Dark sky site is located at the old Navy range station off of Florida highway 19, about 13 miles north of Umatilla, Florida and a mile south of Florida Highway 40. There are signs for a US Navy facility marking the road to the site (NFS road 524). CFAS has an agreement with the National Forest Service to have private access to this area on specific new moon nights. To participate, contact the site coordinator listed on the CFAS Officers page or the CFAS Observing Sites page from the Contents Menu on the right of the Home page.

Harmony, Florida – The Harmony Dark Sky Observing site located in the Harmony community development southeast of St. Cloud, Florida has been closed. CFAS is in the process in securing another observing site some 12 miles south east of Harmony. Information on when this new site at Forever Florida will

be available for CFAS members will be distributed to the membership as soon as a formal agreement has been reached.

Kissimmee Prairie Preserve Florida State Park – The KPP dark sky site at the KPP Florida campground is used by CFAS for an annual star party held in the Fall during the new moon. The camp ground is located off of US 441, about 25 miles northwest of Okeechobee, Florida. Take County Road 724 west off of US 441, and follow the signs (about 13 miles to the campground). CFAS observers typically camp out and must pay for their site through the Florida State Parks web site, (<http://www.floridastateparks.org/kissimmeeprairie/default.cfm>). CFAS has partnered with KPP to assist in having the site certified as an International Dark Sky observing site.

Chiefland Observers -- Many CFAS members also join the **Chiefland Observers**. These CFAS members form an email group that organizes adhoc observing sessions at the Chiefland Astronomy Village site during new moon periods. For more information on the Chiefland observers go to this site: [Chiefland Observers Member](#) . Chiefland memberships now require yearly dues. Chiefland observers is separate from the CSPG organization also at the Chiefland Astronomy Village.

LOANER TELESCOPES – No telescope? No Problem!

CFAS owns and maintains telescopes in two categories: *Outreach* and *Loaner* telescopes. Loaner telescopes are available for check out through the observing committee. Regular members may check out telescopes for up to 30 days; Patron members can check out telescopes for 90 days. Check outs are normally scheduled at monthly meetings although special arrangements can be made. CFAS members can reserve telescopes by contacting the Loaner Telescope Manager, Francisco Gonzalez from the CFAS Loaner Scopes page.

CFAS on Facebook

For more interaction with CFAS members join the CFAS Discussion group on Facebook. This is a closed Facebook group that provide daily information on astronomy related events, history and CFAS activities.

AFFILIATIONS – CFAS is partnered with:

NASA Night Sky Network (<https://nightsky.jpl.nasa.gov/>) – a tremendous resource for astronomy resources that CFAS uses for outreach and educational events.

The Astronomical League (AL) (<http://www.astroleague.org/>) – the AL has a number of astronomy certification programs available. The following are currently endorsed by CFAS: Moon, Messier, Caldwell and Herschel 400. Additional AL observing programs are *Binocular* (16 available), *Telescope* (29 available) and *Naked Eye* (14 available).

The AL Sky Puppies Program is designed specifically for the younger observer. The AL encourages young observers to hone their skills early since most hobbies and vocational interests begin at an early age. The **REFLECTOR** is the Quarterly News Magazine sent to each member. It is available for download on the AL web site.

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Emil Buehler Perpetual Trust Planetarium at Seminole State College – SSC hosts the CFAS monthly meetings and has Planetarium Events available for the public. You can check their schedule on their web page, <http://www.seminolestate.edu/planet/>.

International Dark-Sky Association (IDA) (<http://www.darksky.org/>) – Light pollution is a global problem that not only affects astronomers, but affects the circadian rhythm of all flora and fauna. CFAS is committed to sharing dark sky lighting ideas to everyone. The IDA created *Losing the Dark* - a Short Public Service Announcement on Light Pollution. You can download this terrific presentation FREE at <http://www.darksky.org/resources?id=252!>

There are several other documents in your membership packet that you may find of value. One significant item is an **Astronomy Observation Log**. Keeping a log is probably one of the most overlooked ways to become familiar with the night sky. When you record and draw what you have seen you are better able to find and recognize it in the night's sky again. You can download the entire 52 page log from the CFAS web site New Member Info page.

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On behalf of your CFAS Board of Directors and all CFAS Members, Clear Skies! & welcome to CFAS!

Derek Demeter, CFAS President

"We live on a mote of dust suspended in a sunbeam." [Carl Sagan 1934-1996]