

Solar System Observers Program Chair:

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Introduction.

Welcome to the Astronomical League's *Solar System Observers Program*. The S.S.O.P. is a list of thirty-four selected projects designed to introduce you to the pleasures of planetary observing. Observing skills come only with experience. An eye trained by observing will see more, regardless of what type of optical aid is used. Good observing skills reinforce the desire to observe. Observing trains the eye to see. It is a cycle that has to be willed to happen. Given the time and effort it WILL happen. Once it happens, astronomy will become a joyful lifelong experience.

In these days of increasing light pollution, the wonders of our own solar system may well take on an increased importance among skywatchers. Dark skies and moonless nights are not a priority for any of the listed projects. If you are intrigued by the enclosed projects, I would refer you to the Association of Lunar and Planetary Observers. ALPO members regularly observe solar system objects and have contributed significantly to our understanding of this corner of the universe. For more information you may contact:

ALPO Membership Sec./Treas.,
P.O. Box 13456
Springfield, IL 62791-3456.

Whether you decide to go on to serious data collection or simply observe for your own edification - *enjoy yourself*. The sky is there for all. It is a great equalizer. Beneath its huge expanse we are all reduced to nearly infinitesimal size, but in trying to understand it we grow.

Rules and Regulations

To qualify for the A.L.'s Solar System Observers Program Certificate and pin, you need only be a member of the Astronomical League, either through an affiliated club or as a Member-at-Large, and complete twenty-five of the suggested projects. Record your observations on copies of the included log. Some observations may require sketches, but don't panic; artistic prowess is not required. Make as many copies of the log sheet as you will need. Fill in information appropriate to that project.

At the end of the projects, you will find a glossary of terms.

If you need to become a member of the Astronomical League as a Member-at-Large, contact the Executive Secretary.

To receive your Planetary Observers Club Certificate and pin, simply send a copy of your logs along with your name, address, phone number and club affiliation to

Bryan Tobias

Planetary Observers Club Chairman

3012 Morning Trail

San Antonio, TX 78247

Upon verification of your observations, your certificate and pin will be forwarded to you or your club's Award Coordinator, whomever you choose.

Happy Observing!

Bryan

PROJECT LOG

NAME OF PROJECT _____

Project Begun _____ Project Ended _____

Seeing Conditions _____

Binocular Size _____

Telescope: Type _____

Aperture _____

Focal Length _____

Eyepiece Focal Length _____

Observational Notes, Comments and Impressions:

Add pages with copies of any supplementary sketches.