

## **Master Observer Club Coordinator:**

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### **Introduction.**

The Astronomical League currently sponsors two dozen observing programs for its members to participate in; more will be added in the future, I'm sure. These awards help to give focus and direction to many observers. Ranging from beginning programs for the novice, to those which require a major effort from an observer long committed to the hobby -- from naked eye observing to projects requiring a major light bucket -- and from orbital satellites through the shallow sky of the solar system to the deep reaches of intergalactic space, these awards have caught the imagination and attention of hundreds of amateur observers. In fact I know a number of professional astronomers who continue to hone their observational skills by participating in AL observing programs.

Many members move through one program after another (or, like me, they are working on several programs, simultaneously), constantly seeking new inspiration. Over the years, the quality of amateur observations has increased. Observers appreciate being rewarded at the completion of a program. Because of this, the League developed a Master Observer Award, which recognizes those whose interests are broad and whose skills are deep. The effort requires a breadth of observing knowledge while also permitting the observer to pursue special interests. What follows is a description of the work required to receive the Master Observer Award.

### **The Master Observer Club Rules.**

The Master Observer Award will be given to an AL member who has completed at least ten of the League's observing programs. There is a core requirement of five observing programs to be completed by all. It consists of the following clubs:

1. Messier Club
2. Binocular Messier Club
3. Lunar Club
4. Double Star
5. Herschel Club

These are currently the five most popular clubs in the League and represent a well-rounded observing program. The member will then be allowed to choose any five of the remaining AL observing programs to complete the requirements for the Master Observer Award.

Please note that only the most advanced award for any club is acceptable for a Master Observer's Award if there are levels in a program, e.g., the Honorary Certificate only for the Messier Club, the 36-hour certificate for the Meteor Club, etc. Note also that the Caldwell has both Gold and Silver Certificates. In this case, each is treated as a separate award.

Once a member has completed ten of the observing programs, she or he will be given a certificate and pin. There is, of course, no charge for the certificate and pin. If you wish to receive the award in another format (a plaque, for instance), please contact the Master Observer Award Coordinator.

The member should contact the coordinator of the Master Observer Awards with information that includes:

- A list of the awards you have completed.
- The certificate number, if possible. (If you do not have the number, an approximate time frame when you received the award would be helpful to reduce the time I have to search to verify the awards.)
- Your name, as you want it printed on the certificate.
- Your mailing address -- with zip code (as the post office will no longer deliver packages without them).
- Your telephone number.
- Your E-mail address.
- Your club affiliation (If you are a Member-At-Large, please include that information, too).

Once the awards are verified and documented, the Master Observer certificate and pin will be sent.

### **Acknowledgement**

I would like to thank John "Sparky" Sparks, a long-time friend and fellow observer from the Knoxville (TN) Observers, who presented the idea of an award for those who had mastered a wide variety of observational skills to John Wagoner in Plano, TX, who at that time coordinated of the awards for which I am now responsible. Wagoner then did the initial legwork and I added the finishing touches after he found it necessary to relinquish custody of the awards. Warren Kirbo, another friend and observing partner, who is also an artist as well as a master observer in his own right, designed the pin and logo. He is from Camilla, GA and is currently residing in Nashville, TN.