

THE MINOR PLANET BULLETIN

BULLETIN OF THE MINOR PLANETS SECTION OF THE
ASSOCIATION OF LUNAR AND PLANETARY OBSERVERS

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SECTION NEWS: ROBERT STEPHENS NAMED ASSOCIATE COORDINATOR OF THE MINOR PLANETS SECTION

Frederick Pilcher, Coordinator
ALPO Minor Planets Section

I am pleased to announce that Robert Stephens has accepted an invitation to the position of Associate Coordinator of the Minor Planets Section of the ALPO. As Associate Coordinator, Bob will assist and advise Coordinator Frederick Pilcher on the affairs of the Minor Planets Section. Pilcher anticipates retiring as Section Coordinator at an undetermined date a few years hence. At that time Stephens will advance to Section Coordinator.

Bob started observing asteroid lightcurves in 1999 and in the more than 20 subsequent years he has authored or co-authored over 300 research papers, including almost 1100 asteroid lightcurves, and 18 binary asteroid discoveries. He is a Full Member of the American Astronomical Society and a member of its Division for Planetary Sciences. Stephens is Treasurer of both the American Association of Variable Star Observers and the Society for Astronomical Sciences. He is also past President and past Treasurer of the Riverside Astronomical Society. Asteroid (39890) Bobstephens was named in his honor by the International Astronomical Union.

Please join me in welcoming Bob to this new role and in offering thanks for agreeing to this service.

CALL FOR OBSERVATIONS

Frederick Pilcher
4438 Organ Mesa Loop
Las Cruces, NM 88011 USA
fpilcher35@gmail.com

Observers who have made visual, photographic, or CCD measurements of positions of minor planets in calendar year 2021 are encouraged to report them to this author on or before 2022 April 1. This will be the deadline for receipt of reports, for which results can be included in the "General Report of Position Observations for 2021," to be published in *MPB* Vol. 49, No. 3.

CALL FOR MINOR PLANET OBSERVERS TO JOIN THE ALPO EXOPLANET SECTION

Jerry Hubbell
Acting Coordinator, Exoplanet Section
Association of Lunar and Planetary Observers (ALPO)
Mark Slade Remote Observatory (MSRO) W54
Wilderness, VA USA
jerry.hubbell@alpo-astronomy.org

This is a call for interested minor planet observers to join in the effort to observe exoplanets as a member of the Exoplanet Section of the Association of Lunar and Planetary Observers (ALPO). Minor planet observers already possess a large part of the requisite skills and knowledge to perform effective observations and provide high-quality data.

In November 2020, the ALPO Board of Directors approved the formation of the Exoplanet Section and appointed this author as the Acting Coordinator. The initial mission of the Exoplanet Section is to train members in the current techniques used to obtain high quality data and perform the high-precision measurements needed to not only detect exoplanets using the transit method, but also to model the measured exoplanet orbit. This modeling will help to refine the ephemerides of the exoplanet and contribute valuable data needed to fully understand these new celestial bodies.

The Exoplanet Section was originally formed with the following groups:

1. Instrumentation Group
2. Observing Program Group
3. Analysis & Modeling Group
4. Exoplanet Data Reporting Group
5. Exoplanet Observation Training Group

The primary goal of the Instrumentation Group is to define and demonstrate valid instrument configurations and components including the selection of off-the-shelf instruments, the determination of configuration settings and parameters, and researching the use and application of new instrument systems, subsystems, and components. Additional work is needed to understand and measure the different sources of error due to the instruments used for the observation of exoplanet transits.