

By PETER PEGNAM
Citizen Staff Writer

In Tucson to see the stars

Adult camp at UA draws amateur astronomers from all over

The nighttime sky of southern Arizona is a shining star for amateur astronomers from around the country.

After the University of Arizona held its first Astronomy Camp for Adults last spring, the Boston Globe ran a two-sentence item about it.

Within a space of 20 minutes, 52 phone calls from the East Coast poured into the Tucson office of the Arizona Alumni Association, which handles camp registration.

Callers wanted to know when the next camp would be held. The answer was Sept. 27 to 30.

Participants spend their time at the UA observatory in the solitude atop Mount Lemmon in the Santa Catalina Mountains.

The camp is again a big hit across the nation.

During the spring camp, only three of the 20 participants were from Arizona. Most came from Massachusetts, but Canada, Texas and the Midwest also were represented.

This fall, the story is the same.

Only two of the 15 are from Arizona.

They come from all walks of life and for many reasons.

"We have just about as broad a range of career fields as you could imagine," said Joan Morrill of the alumni association. "We have a neurosurgeon, an architect.

"We have one woman who said this was her survival course because her husband is an amateur astronomer and she wanted to

learn more about it."

They use the large 40- and 60-inch telescopes at the observatory and take along portable scopes as well.

Some use the opportunity to shoot time-lapse photographs.

"They produce some really neat shots," Morrill said.

The star-gazers can use the scopes as late as dawn when they saunter off to bed in the dormitories at the site.

In the afternoon, there are lectures from the pros on a variety of subjects.

UA's similar camps for children also have captured the national spotlight.

Two national astronomy magazines have mentioned those.

The result was the same as for the adult camps.

"We had 10 different states represented with the kids this past year," Morrill said.

Another adult session is scheduled for Oct. 26 to 28, and there are still six vacancies. People interested can call Morrill at 621-5233. The cost for the camp is \$275.

8 Friday 9/27/90