

The High Desert Observer

December 2020



The Astronomical Society of Las Cruces (ASLC) is dedicated to expanding public awareness and understanding of the wonders of the universe. ASLC holds frequent observing sessions and star parties, providing opportunities to work on Society and public educational projects. Members receive electronic delivery of The High Desert Observer, our monthly newsletter, plus membership in the Astronomical League including their quarterly publication, *Reflector*, available in either paper or digital format. ASLC members are also entitled to a discount on a subscription to Sky and Telescope magazine.

Annual Individual Dues are \$30

Annual Family Dues are \$36

Annual Student (Full Time) Dues are \$24

Annual Dues are payable in January. Prorated dues are available for new members. Dues are payable to ASLC with an application form or note to: Treasurer ASLC, P.O. Box , Las Cruces, NM. Contact our Treasurer, Patricia Conley treasureraslcnm.org for further information.

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Coming Events (postponed due to Covid-19)

Typically, ASLC hosts public in-town observing sessions at the Pan Am Plaza on University Ave. and at Tombaugh Observatory on the NMSU campus. All sessions begin at dusk.

At our Leasburg Dam State Park Observatory, we normally hold monthly star parties. Located just 20 miles north of Las Cruces, our 16-inch Meade LX200 telescope at this site is used to observe under rather dark skies.

From the Desk of the ASLC President

Tracy Stuart

Well, it's the end of the year and my two terms as ASLC president. I want to thank you all for everything each of you has done for ASLC in making it a success. Thanks so much, and I am looking forward to next year with the hope we can once again meet in person.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year

THE ANSWER IS 42.



Monthly Meeting - December

Our next ASLC meeting will be virtual, to be held on **Friday, December 18th at 7 p.m.** Future meetings will continue to be virtual until the Covid-19 situation allows us to meet safely in person. Please note that the ASLC will not be holding other meetings, gatherings or public outreach events until it is deemed safe to do so. Please practice proper hygiene, social-distance and wear your mask!

ASLC Board of Directors board@aslc-nm.org

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Minutes, November 2020 ASLC Meeting

Tracy Stuart, President, Astronomical Society of Las Cruces (ASLC, the Society), called the November 2020 meeting at 7:00 pm. He welcomed attendees to tonight's meeting via ZOOM. Sixteen (16) attendees were signed in for the start of the meeting, eventually twenty-two (22) individuals participated.

Guests/Visitors:

Daniel Washburn, a former member, was attending tonight's meeting from Seattle, WA. Steve Barks and Trish Conley were attending from Steve's hospital room.

New Business:

1. Holiday Get-Together – Because of pandemic restrictions regarding group gatherings, there will not be a traditional get-together of Society members this year. After some discussion, an option to have another ZOOM meeting, potentially 18 December, was accepted. More information and an invite will follow.
2. October Minutes – The issue of the *High Desert Observer* (HDO), the Society's newsletter, was published this month, thanks to Tim Kostecky. There were no minutes from the October meeting because of technical difficulties experienced by the Secretary accessing ZOOM.
3. Observatory at Leasburg Dam State Park (LDSP) – New computer assets to support the Observatory remained under discussion. COVID restrictions and closures have presented difficulties surveying equipment and evaluating requirements. Ed Montes has talked to the LDSP chief ranger and reported the Park is very amenable to the Society utilizing the Park's internet service. The committee is considering an "upgradeable" desk top system to be located in the "warm room" of the Observatory. Ed said he expects a ~\$3000 expenditure. An update will be provided at the January 2021 meeting. Charles Turner discussed what software should be loaded on to the new system. All concerned agreed input from David Doctor upgrades was desirable.
4. Arecibo Observatory – The radio telescope in Puerto Rico is scheduled for decommissioning and demolition. Update: Structural failures caused the primary dish to self-destruct earlier this month.

Treasurer's Report:

Trish Conley, Treasurer, reported no change in the status of the Society's accounts.

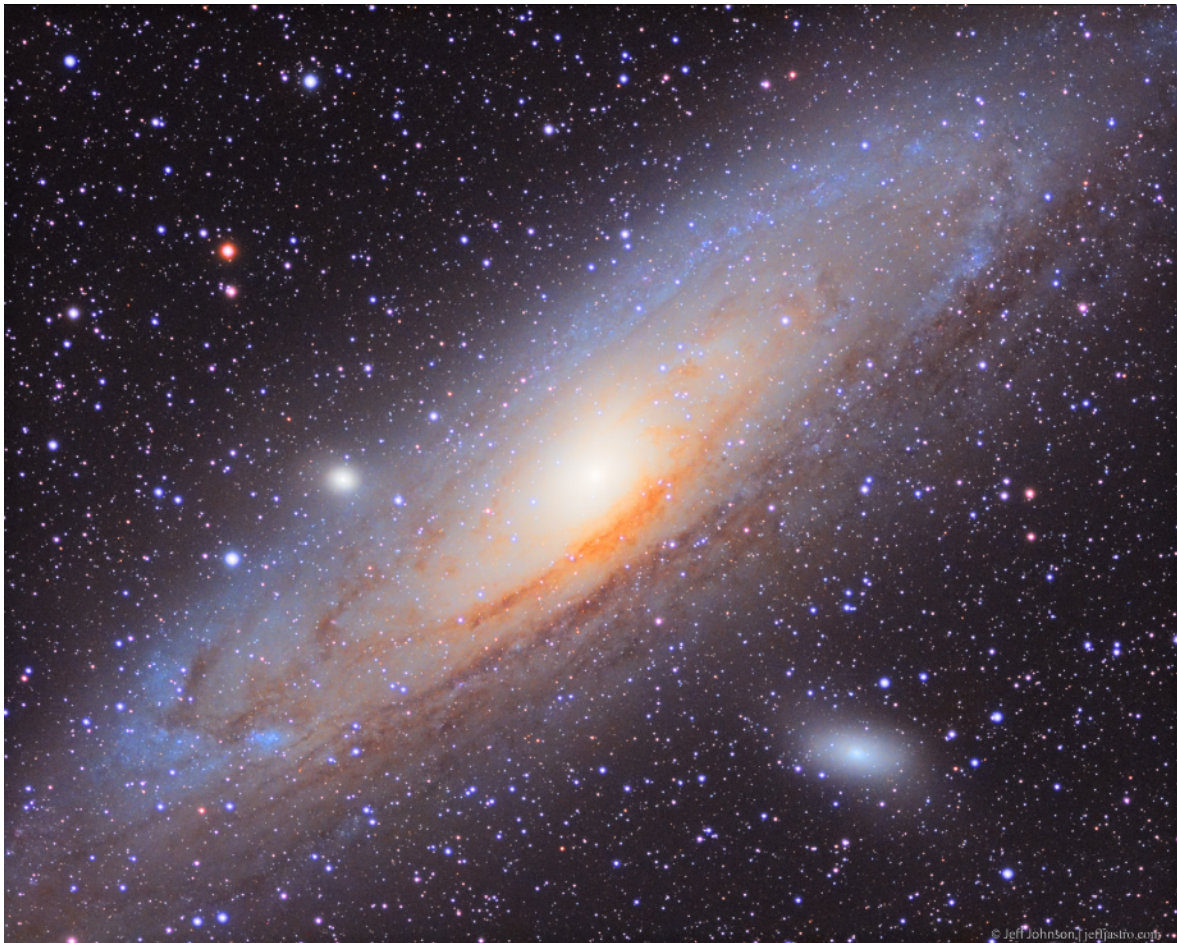
Presentation:

Tonight's presentation was by Society member Dr. Alex Woronow on "Drizzle – What is it?". Turns out that in this case, Drizzle is a photographic technique developed by the Hubble Space Telescope team to improve image resolution. Alex discussed how this method, along with dithering can be used to process images, but may be beyond the average amateur's needs.

The November 2020 meeting was adjourned at 8:08 pm.

Member Images

M31 Andromeda Galaxy
Jeff Johnson



From backyard in Las Cruces
Equipment: FS-60C, EM200, QSI690wsg, 25x5minL (bin1x1); 4x5min ea RGB (bin2x2); AstroArt5, CS4, PI (very slightly cropped, 10xdarks/flats/fdarks/bias)

California Nebula (NGC 1499) & Surrounding Area
Rich Richins



Imaged at Rusty's, Rodeo NM - October 2020

California Nebula (NGC 1499)
Robert Kimball



Image was taken with W.O. Redcat telescope and ZWO ASI6200 camera. Roughly a 7 hour LRGB combination.
Imaged at Rusty's, Rodeo NM - October 2020

Geminid Meteor Across Big Dipper
Ed Montes



December 14 - Early Morning - Las Cruces NM