



## **July Outreach Activities Roundup**

By Jerry McMahan

### **White Sands Star Party (Sort of) - June 30, 2011**

A star party was held at the Base on Thursday, June 30. Society members included Ron Kramer, Trish Conley, Stan Chiochio and his wife Carol, Chuck Sterling and Jerry McMahan. Thursday evening, Ron set up the 5-inch Meade refractor. Carol and Stan set up their 8-inch Celestron. Chuck and Jerry brought the 10-inch and 5-inch which stayed in Chuck's van since the sky was completely cloud-covered the entire evening.

The mostly middle-school-aged students, along with some others in grades seven through twelve, were camped out in tents. It was disappointing that no breaks in the clouds appeared at all. The star party was reduced to a question and answer session. Near the end, I did feel three drops of rain within a 5 minute period, a real downpour.

I was surprised, when I got home, that there was a lot of clear sky visible from the west side of the mountain. I probably should not have been surprised since the pattern has seemed to be that most of the clouds, over the previous several days, were on the east side of the mountain.

Deadline for this HDO is Friday, July 8, so the Moongaze on the ninth will have to wait until next month.

(The mother one of the girls at the event works for me and told me that even though the sky was overcast, the girls greatly enjoyed the question and answer session. The mother suggested that this should be part of each outreach event. -Ed.)

## **The Unwritten Article**

By An Unknown Member of the ASLC

### **Introduction**

We needed you to write an article to appear here.

### **Blank Space Due to No Article**

**Remember the ALPO Conference July 22/23 in Guthrie Hall 201. You can register at the door to hear the great talks. You can also attend the barbeque and banquet even if you do not register for the conference at a special rate.**



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 and provides opportunities to work on club and public educational projects. Members receive the High Desert Observer, our monthly newsletter, membership in the Astronomical League, including AL's quarterly A.L. Reflector. Club dues are \$30.00 per year, including electronic delivery. Send dues payable to ASLC with an application form or note to: Treasurer ASLC, PO Box 921, Las Cruces, NM 88004

ASLC members are entitled to a \$10.00 discount to Sky and Telescope magazine.

ASLC OFFICERS, 2011

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This Month's Observer

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Next Meeting

The July meeting will be presented by our own vice-president, Tracy Stuart. He will present a brief, non-mathematical, review of string theory to include the graviton and the six different theories that are just different views of the same theory. Then he will talk about a couple of ideas about testing string theory.

Articles Needed

The High Desert Observer is **your** astronomical society newsletter. The quality of the newsletter can only be obtained if we get high quality articles from people like **you**. Please take some time and write an article on what you are doing in astronomy that you would like to share with your fellow amateur astronomers. Thanks in advance for your efforts!.

Events

ASLC hosts both a deep sky viewing and imaging at our dark sky location in Upham and a public in-town observing session for the public at the International Delights Cafe. Both sessions begin at dusk. We also frequently provide solar observing at the Farmer's Market on Saturday mornings. For information on these and other events, please see the ASLC website at <http://www.aslc-nm.org> .



## Minutes, June 2011 ASLC General Meeting

By John McCullough, Secretary, ASLC

### Call to Order:

Ron Kramer, President, Astronomical Society of Las Cruces (ASLC), called the meeting to order at 7:30 pm., 24 June 2011, Rm. 77, Doña Ana Community College (DACC), Las Cruces, New Mexico.

### President's Comments:

Ron Kramer welcomed the group, noting that tonight's meeting was preceded by a "Show and Tell" session organized by Dave Anderson. There were no new members present, but two (2) guests were present: Tim Barber from Wheaton College, Massachusetts, is in New Mexico visiting Fred Pilcher and New Mexico Skies, and Ron Pickman, a former space shuttle engineer and now an instructor at Central Florida University, is visiting from Florida.

### Secretary's Report:

The Secretary, John McCullough, reported that the minutes for the May 2011 meeting were submitted for publication in the June edition of the Society newsletter, the High Desert Observer (HDO). Tracy Stuart moved that the minutes from the May general meeting be accepted as submitted; Robert Williams seconded. The motion passed by acclamation. John noted that printed copies of the May HDO have not been mailed yet. There was not an additional Secretary's report.

### Vice-President's Report:

The Vice-President, Tracy Stuart, as chairman for presentations, did not report any changes to the presentation schedule. There was no additional Vice-President's report.

### Treasurer's Report:

The Treasurer, Janet Stevens, provided a report on the status of the Society's accounts. There was not an additional Treasurer's report.

### Committee Reports:

#### Association of Lunar and Planetary Observers (ALPO) 2011 Convention Committee:

Bert Stevens, Committee Chairman, reported ten (10) registrants to date. The excursions to the VLA/Socorro and SunSpot/WSMR have two (2) reservations each; vehicle size for each tour may be reduced as a result. An email call for volunteer commitments will go out next week. Snacks and beverages for the paper session breaks may be an issue as Aramark is no longer handling those services for New Mexico State University (NMSU). Fred Pilcher continues to coordinate hotel reservations. Cost of the Friday night "cook-out" needs to be set and publicized. Bert noted that an initial amount of funds had been borrowed from Society accounts to pay initial deposits for venues and services, but will be repaid out of proceeds from the convention. Bert encourages Society members to register prior to 01 July. A list of positions that still need to be filled was in the last issue of the High Desert Observer (HDO).

#### Apparel Committee:

Ann McPhee, Committee Chairman, was not present at tonight's meeting.

#### Loaner Telescope Program:

Janet Stevens, Committee Chairman, had no activity to report.

#### Astronomy Day 2011:

Wes Baker, Committee Chairman, had no progress to report for Astronomy Day in October. Because he has multiple conflicts, he asked that another member take over coordinating Astronomy Day activities. There were no volunteers at tonight's meeting. Ron will put out a call for volunteers on the yahoo group.



Membership:

John McCullough, Committee Chairman, had no activity to report.

Leasburg Dam State Park (LDSP) Observatory Committee:

Ron Kramer, Committee Chairman, reported that, as a result of discussion at the May meeting, he asked seven specific questions of the LDSP management. All the responses were positive. Design of the structure is in progress with the first review expected in July and inputs from the Society are possible. There are currently no plans for construction of a waste water treatment plant in the area, but this issue can be covered in the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). Also, an existing structure and MOU between the Society and LDSP should take precedence over construction of new public utilities in the area. Regarding liability for the observatory, New Mexico Parks Department will assume liability for the structure (State of NM will own it), and the Society will be responsible for the contents. Regarding longevity of LDSP, the lease of the land from the Bureau of Reclamation expires in 2017, however, a 25-year lease (to 2042) is being developed. Power for the observatory will be provided by the Park. Additional discussions are pending receipt of the initial plans.

Tombaugh Observatory:

Ron Kramer reported that the first training session will be held in July. Dave Dockery has volunteered to conduct the training and a notice requesting interest has been posted on the yahoo group.

Outreach Committee:

Chuck Sterling, Outreach Coordinator, was not present, but had announced a request for a star party at White Sands Missile Range on Thursday, 30 June via the yahoo group. Contact him if you can support.

2011 Renaissance Arts Faire:

Tracy Stuart, Committee Chairman, reported that all information for 2011 will go to Ron Kramer as the contact from 2010.

Society Website:

Steve Barkes, Webmaster, was not present.

There were no additional committee or officer reports.

**Old Business:**

Society By-laws:

Two-thirds (2/3) of the current membership must vote to accept alterations to the Society By-Laws. Ballots continue to be received, however, an insufficient number of ballots have been received to determine the fate of the By-Laws changes. The deadline has been extended to 15 July and members are urged to submit ballots either by email or regular mail

White Sands Star Party (WSSP), 2011:

James Tomaka, Alamogordo Astronomy Club, reports the current Monument manager has no interest in astronomy and the Space Museum has limited funds. Therefore, WSSP may not happen this year.

Walter Haas:

Walter is home and doing better. He is able to eat solid food and welcomes visitors. Remember his birthday is 03 July if you would like to send a card.

July Monthly Meeting:

The fourth Friday in July, 22 July, is the first scheduled event of the ALPO convention. The July meeting will be on 15 July, the third Friday.

There was no additional old business discussed.



**New Business:**

Board of Directors Meeting:

Ron Kramer announced that he wants to conduct a meeting in July. If a member of the Society has a concern to address, please contact Ron.

There was no additional new business for discussion.

**Announcements:**

Items for Sale:

The 25" Obsession for sale in Las Cruces is still available with all accessories to an astronomer in El Paso, Las Cruces, and Alamogordo for \$8800.

An older Celestron C8 with all accessories is available for \$300-\$500. Contact Ron Kramer if interested

No additional items were announced for sale.

Announcements:

Minor planet 2001MD will pass within 11,000 miles of the earth on Monday, 27 June, Bert Stevens announced.

High Desert Observer:

Bert Stevens needs articles for the HDO. If he does not receive articles, the HDO will consist of the President's message and the meeting minutes.

There were no additional announcements made.

Recognitions/Achievements:

- Thank-yous were received from Stepping Stones for Girls for several star parties conducted this spring.
- A \$100 donation from La Academia Delores Huerta was received for a star party held this year.
- John Kutney received a certificate and pin for inclusion in the Nebula Club of the Astronomical League.

There were no additional recognitions or achievements announced.

Bert Stevens moved to adjourn the business portion of the meeting, Tracy Stuart seconded. The motion carried. The business portion of the meeting was adjourned at 8:10 pm.

**Presentation:**

This month's presentation was by Robert Williams, Society member. His topic was the Texas Star Party 2011. Robert was one of five Society members that attended this year's TSP, along approximately 500 other attendees. Robert presented and narrated a series of images he obtained at the Star Party. He also included some of the astro images obtained by the Society members.

This presentation was not recorded for rebroadcast on the Internet. Other meeting presentations can be accessed on the web at <http://www.aics-research.com/lectures/aslcnm/>.

The June meeting of the Astronomical Society of Las Cruces concluded at 9:05 p.m.

-Respectfully submitted by John McCullough, ASLC Secretary



**Calendar of Events July/July 2011 (MDT)**

July	15	7:30 p.m.	July ASLC Meeting
	19	11 p.m.	Mercury at greatest elongation (east) of 27 degrees
	22	11:02 p.m.	Last Quarter Moon
	30	12:40 p.m.	New Moon
Aug	06	5:08 a.m.	First Quarter Moon
	13	Midnight	Perseid Meteor Peak
	13	12:57 p.m.	Full Moon
	21	3:54 p.m.	Last Quarter Moon
	22	5 p.m.	Neptune at opposition
	26	7:30 p.m.	August ASLC Meeting

Be sure to visit our web site for the latest updates: <http://www.aslc-nm.org>

**ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY of Las Cruces**  
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ASLC - Sharing the Universe  
 With Our Community  
 for Over 50 Years

