

The High Desert Observer

November 2021

This Month's Meeting

Meeting will be virtual via Zoom®
Friday, November 19th at 7 p.m.

Clyde W. Tombaugh Speaker Series



Luci Finucan

The Greenbank Radio Observatory

Green Bank Observatory is a radio observatory in the rural mountains of West Virginia, and is home to the world's largest fully-steerable telescope, and the world's third-largest moving structure on land! Luci Finucan will discuss the Observatory's history, the National Radio Quiet Zone, and the telescopes and the science they produce. There will be plenty of time available for questions and discussion afterwards.



In This Issue

This Month's Meeting & Presentation	Page 1
From the Desk of the President - Ed Montes	Page 2
Club Activities	
"Update on ASLC-West" - Mike Nuss	Page 4
"Las Cruces Renaissance Faire"	Page 5
October Meeting Minutes - John McCullough	Page 7
Member Images	
Jeff Johnson, Mike Sherick	Page 9

Coming Events

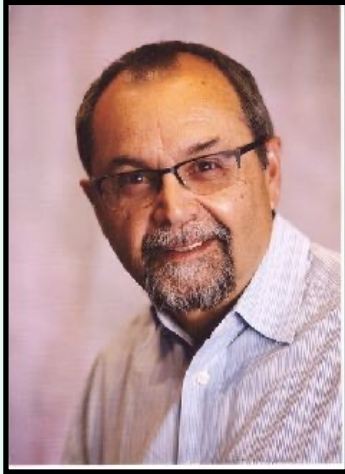
Monthly, on an evening close to the first-quarter moon, ASLC hosts a public "MoonGaze" observing session currently at the Plaza de Las Cruces. We also hold occasional special evening sessions at Tombaugh Observatory on the NMSU campus.

Also monthly, the ASLC welcomes public viewing at the Leasburg Dam State Park Observatory 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.

Keep updated on the dates, times, and locations through this [link](#) with additional information available at our website www.aslc-nm.org as well as our [Facebook](#) page.

From the Desk of Ed Montes ASLC President

It's November again, the cold nights will soon take over and bright winter stars will soon be upon us in the evening sky.



Thanks to the diligent work of Jerry Gaber, Steve Barkes and Dave Doctor our Leasburg Observatory now has upgraded computer hardware and all the newly installed versions of the software needed to spot those faintly glowing fuzzies we love to find. Much thanks to Jerry, Steve and Dave for their persistence in getting this done!

Big thanks to everyone who participated in preparing and staffing the booth at the Renaissance ArtsFaire in Young Park. It was certainly fun and we succeeded in conducting a ton of outreach. I'm sure we had several hundred eyes peering through our eyepieces viewing the sun in white light and H-alpha, the moon and Venus. Lots of oohs and aahs.

Also, congrats to the ASLC-West contingent. They have been engaging in outreach events. Mike Nuss will be giving us a regular report on those activities.

Leasburg "Inreach" Event

Now that the Leasburg upgrade is in place, and that we've had to opportunity to test drive it in a public outreach event, the Board has discussed the possibility of holding an "inreach" event

exclusively for members of the ASLC. The concept is that we would hold an observing session at the Observatory to highlight to you, our members, the resources that are available at the site, in particular our 16-inch Meade LX200. It's quite a piece of equipment and gives really wonderful views of all those objects we love to look at. While many members have been out to Leasburg for observing sessions or for outreach events, many others have never been there. We want everyone in the club to know that the resources here are for all members. Such an event would give us the opportunity to physically gather as a club. It's not intended as a club meeting, just a gathering to enjoy the sky and each other's company.

Our thought is not to supersede the scheduled outreach that we do each month. So, we have 3 options: (1) on the Sunday immediately after the Saturday outreach (2) during a week-night after an outreach (3) the following Saturday after an outreach. Please send me your thoughts about when would be best, either to my email, ejm.astron@gmail.com or respond to a groups.io message that I will be posting on this subject.

ASLC Holiday Party

As we close in on the holidays, it's time to start planning our holiday party. We briefly discussed this on a previous Zoom club meeting and decided on Saturday, Dec. 4 at 6pm. The board then discussed this further and came up with the following plan. The venue will be my house at 5621 Camino Escondida. In light of COVID we are asking that all attendees be fully vaccinated (but not necessarily boosted, though it's good if you are). The club will provide one main dish (enough for all guests) and some beverages, but this is really a pot luck event. We will post guidelines with categories: appetizer, main dish, side dish, dessert, beverage so that we have a really nice variety of food and all bases are covered. Obviously, we need a fairly accurate count of who is coming and what they are bringing so please

RSVP to the groups.io message I will post (or to me, ejm.astron@gmail.com). All this is, of course, contingent on the state of COVID in the community. I'm hoping for a really nice get-together!

Live Meetings

The Board has also discussed live meetings. In order to get past hazy discussions we decided that we needed a specific target date, so we have designated March 25, 2022 as the day to aim at to have live meeting at a venue to be decided. We don't know whether Good Samaritan will definitely be available. Steve Barkes is checking whether the Mesilla Valley Radio Club will let us use their club house. There is at least one other venue that might work. A March date gives us time to explore the options, while at the same time providing a particular point in time, hopefully far enough out that the COVID issue is reduced. Obviously, we will continue to consider the safety of our members as we make our final decision. Note, we plan to continue Zoom sessions even after we start live meetings, regardless of when that is; two reasons: in consideration of members who are still wary of

live meetings and in order to attract speakers by removing any travel requirements.

We are currently getting an attendance of about 20 members per meeting. I would like to increase this number. Those of you not attending, please send me email or post on groups.io your reasons for not attending, and what we might be able to do to attract you to attend.

Speaker this Month

Our speaker this month is Luci Finucan. She is from the Greenbank Radio Observatory in West Virginia and will be conducting us on a virtual tour of the Observatory. Several months ago the Radio Club engaged her on a similar Zoom session which was most illuminating. I expect that she will do a similarly excellent job for us.

That's it for now. Clear skies!

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 \$36; Family \$42; Student (Full Time) \$24. Dues are payable in January and partial year prorated for new members. Please contact our Treasurer, Patricia Conley, treasurer@aslc-nm.org for further information.

Club Activities:

Update from ASLC-West

by Mike Nuss

The ASLC, although Las Cruces centric, has members from throughout southern and central New Mexico (and even from outside the state), with a significant contingent located in the Deming/Silver City region. I am part of this group which is referred to as "ASLC-West".

Having been tied down due to COVID-19 constraints, we have fortunately resumed our astronomy presentations at Rockhound and City of The Rocks State Parks, which are conveniently located and impressively dark-sky sites.

The most recent two outreach programs at City of The Rocks were blessed with a plethora of Cub Scouts. Good weather and warm evenings sure help during this time of the year.

ASLC-West member Gary Starkweather and his wife Vandy have fulfilled an ambitious dream that includes three large observatory domes. We are looking forward to a writeup from Gary and Vandy about this remarkable feat and their planned uses of them.

The pictures are from last Friday & Saturday evening presentations (November 5th and 6th), courtesy of Jan Farnam.



Las Cruces Renaissance Faire

Photos By Ranimo Bush

After a one-year hiatus due to COVID-19, the ASLC had another good showing at the 2021 “50th Year” Anniversary of the Las Cruces Renaissance Faire in early November. This yearly event is one that gives the ASLC a great opportunity to showcase our members, programs, and enthusiasm to a throng of people over a two day period. Of course, only daytime viewing, but the sun was showing good activity!





ASLC Board of Directors

President:	Ed Montes	board@aslc-nm.org
Vice President:	Tim Kostecky	president@aslc-nm.org
Treasurer:	Patricia Conley	vp@acslc-nm.org
Secretary:	John McCullough	treasurer@aslc-nm.org
Director:	Michael Nuss	secretary@aslc-nm.org
Director:	Rani Bush	director1@aslc-nm.org
Past Pres:	Tracy Stuart	director2@aslc-nm.org
		tracystuart@comcast.net

Committee Chairs

ALCOR:	Patricia Conly	tconly00@hotmail.com
Calendar:	Stephen Wood	clearskies2u@gmail.com
Education:	Rich Richins	education@aslc-nm.org
Loaner Program:	Tim Kostecky	tim.kostel@cloud.com
Observatories:		
Leasburg Dam:	David Doctor	astrodoc71@gmail.com
Tombaugh:	Steve Shaffer	sshaffer@zianet.com
Outreach:	Stephen Wood	clearskies2u@gmail.com
Website:	Steve Barks	steve.barks@gmail.com
HDO Editor:	Tim Kostecky	tim.kostel@icloud.com

Minutes of October 2021 Meeting

John McCullough - Secretary

Ed Montes, President, Astronomical Society of Las Cruces (ASLC, the Society), called the October 2021 meeting to order at 7:05 pm on 23 October 2021. He welcomed attendees to tonight's meeting via ZOOM. Sixteen (16) attendees were signed in for the start of the meeting.

Ed welcomed the group and announced that the minutes from the September 2021 meeting (thanks to John McCullough, Secretary) were published in the October issue of the Society newsletter, the High Desert Observer (HDO) (thanks to Tim Kostelecky, HDO Editor). Ed asked if there were any required additions, deletions, or corrections to the minutes as submitted. None being offered, a motion to accept the September 2021 minutes as published was offered by Steve Barkes, seconded by Bernie Jezarcek. There being no objections, the motion was passed by acclamation. This is the Society's Annual Meeting.

Ed introduced tonight's speaker, Tim Kostelecky.

Presentation:

Tonight's Tombaugh Series speaker was ASLC's Tim Kostelecky on "Old and Unstable - My Experience with Long-Period Variable Stars". Tim Kostelecky spent most of his adult life observing the sky through the bottom of a beer glass, having recently retired from his career as a brewing chemist. Brewing science was great, but since childhood his first love was astronomy, acquiring a telescope at 9 years of age — and unsurprisingly has had quite a collection since then. In addition to his personal relationship with the cosmos, Tim has been involved with several outreach programs including the Pine Valley Observatory in Colorado, Goldendale Observatory State Park in Washington state, and of course, now the Astronomical Society of Las Cruces. Tim has been a visual telescopist

and enjoys the subtle spectacularity it brings to the senses, along with the appreciation of the universe it instills. He tried astrophotography in the days of film but was not happy with his results. Tim became interested in variable stars and their associated measurements about eight (8) years ago. He started recording his observations as part of the American Association of Variable Star Observers (AAVSO) observing programs. He has recently developed some artistic expression through astrosketching.

Officer/Committee Reports:

Treasurer:

Trish Conley, Treasurer, provided the annual report on the status of the Society's accounts. The Society had income of \$511 for the last fiscal year. There was a recent expenditure of \$1807 for replacement computers for the Observatory at Leasburg Dam State Park (LDSP). Accounts show a positive balance of \$6 for the year-to-date.

Outreach:

Stephen Wood, program coordinator, was not present at tonight's meeting. In his stead, Ed Montes reported that there was a very successful event at LDSP on 02 October. There was good support from Society members and a very good turnout of the public. The last Moon Gaze at the Las Cruces Downtown Plaza on 16 October was also very successful with approximately 100 people looking through two telescopes. There were lots of questions and lots of fun.

Charles Turner and Mike Nuss held a star party at City of Rocks State Park this month. As the first outing since the park reopened, they had a very interested crowd of about seventy-five people attend.

A star party for the White Sands Missile Range Cub Scouts will be held in November. More details, including the date and access requirements to the Missile Range, are pending. Members are asked to check the Events Calendar for updates.

The Observatory at Leasburg Dam State Park (LDSP):

Steve Barkes and Jerry Gaber have received two new ACER gaming laptops to support the Observatory. Software has been loaded and the computers are being set up at the Observatory; firmware will need to be upgraded at some point. Either computer will be able to control the telescope or support imaging. The storage area needs to be cleaned up and organized and support documentation updated. Steve and/or Jerry will update Dave Doctor on progress when possible. The next event is planned for 30 October.

Deming Area (ASLC-West) Activity Report:

Mike Nuss has volunteered to start reporting on ASLC activities in the Deming area, for City of Rocks and in the HDO. He noted that several personal observatories are getting up and running despite new, intrusive lights in the area. Area members may initiate a Moon Gaze program and other recruitment efforts.

Election Committee:

Tim Kostelecky, committee chair, noted a limited officer ballot return. Of the ballots received, there were no exceptions to the slate of candidates offered. Tim recommended that the election results be accepted. With no objections from the members in attendance, officers for 2022 are as follows:

President: Ed Montes
 Secretary: John McCullough
 Vice-President: Tim Kostelecky
 Director-at-Large #1: Mike Nuss
 Treasurer: Patricia (Trish) Conley
 Director-at-Large #2: Rani Bush

Tracy Stuart will continue as Immediate Past President.

A meeting of the new Board of Directors will take place in the next three weeks in accordance with the bylaws.

Meetings/Presentations:

A presentation from the Green Bank Observatory in Green Bank, West Virginia, will be the November program. The November meeting will be on the 19th, one week earlier than usual for the Thanksgiving holiday.

Ed Montes continues to work with staff at Good Samaritan Village (GSV) to resume inperson meetings but is exploring other potential venues as well.

Old Business:

The 50th Renaissance Arts Faire 2021 will be 0607 November at Young Park. Setup in Space #2 will take place on 05 November and teardown on 07 November. Steve Barkes and Tim Kostelecky will have pickup trucks available. As many volunteers as possible are needed for all aspects of the ASLC's participation in this event, one of the primary outreach events for the Society. Period costumes are necessary for ASLC booth workers on Saturday and Sunday and Trish Conley has some available. Contact her via email or the io.groups if you can help or if you need help locating a costume. Ed will provide additional information via the io.group. Booth volunteers do not pay an admission fee to the Faire.

No additional old business was considered.

New Business:

A Holiday Party will be held in lieu of the December monthly meeting. The format will be a potluck dinner at Ed Montes' home, probably on 04 December. Attendees must be fully vaccinated. More details to follow.

A former ASLC member is selling all his astronomy equipment. He is asking \$3200 (may be high compared to AstroMart) for the lot. Details will be posted in the HDO.

Tracy Stuart has items to pass to the acting President. He also has RenFaire ASLC apparel for Rani Bush, Apparel Committee chair.

No additional new business was offered for consideration.

The October 2021 meeting was adjourned at 8:53 pm.

-Respectfully submitted:
 John McCullough
 Secretary, ASLC

Member Images

M27 - Dumbbell Nebula in Vulpecula - Jeff Johnson



M27 from 28 Oct - 6x10min L, 4x10min Ha, 2x5min ea RGB. This image is LHaRGB, where Ha:R (80:20) was used for the Red channel, and L+Ha for Luminance.

IC1805 - Heart Nebula in Cassiopeia - Mike Sherick



Detail from inner region of IC1805