

aslc bulletin

ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY of LAS CRUCES
New Mexico
www.aslc-nm.org



SEPTEMBER - OCTOBER 2004

THIS MONTH - September [Dave Dockery]

Regular Meeting; September 24; 7:30 PM, Room 77; Dona Ana Branch Community College

"Beginners Corner" at 7:00 PM, an open discussion prior to the meeting on astro-technical fundamentals.

Program: *Dave Dockery; "Astrophotography Using Digital SLR Cameras"* Dave will give a version of his excellent workshop covering the basics of astro-imaging using DSLR cameras including; mounting hardware, filters, compensation for poor H-Alpha response, focusing techniques, and a brief demonstration of Images Plus - image processing software designed for commercial digital camera astrophotographers. Dave presented this material at the White Sands Star Party where it was very well received.

Business Nominating Committee will submit 2005 Officer candidate list for approval. Floor nominations will be accepted. Floor nominees must be present, or the nominator must have a letter certifying nominees' willingness to serve.

LAST MONTH - August [Mark Vincent]

Regular Meeting; August 27

Program *Mark Vincent* observed the "Venus transit from Bay City State Park, Michigan," with members of the Sunset Astronomical Society. They were all disappointed when the haze on the horizon blocked the view of sunrise. That all was forgotten minutes later as a very red sun rose through the haze. What an awesome *NAKED EYE TRANSIT!* For about two minutes they all just stared at the sun with out filters and marveled at how large Venus appeared. Mark showed a few of his own tranist images and some from other Michigan astronomy clubs. He also talked about the upcoming *Palisana occultation* (which crossed over the *White Sands Star Party*).

http://www.asteroidoccultation.com/2004_09/0912_914_1908.htm

NEXT MONTH - October [TBA]

Regular Meeting; October 22; 7:30 PM, Room 77; Dona Ana Branch Community College

Program "To Be Announced"

Business Election of Officers for 2005. Ballots will be printed in the Oct/Nov issue of the ASLC Bulletin. RASC Observers Handbooks may be available. See *News and Views*

NEWS & VIEWS

There will be an excellent Lunar Eclipse on October 27th. The eclipse starts at moonrise 6:06 pm and isn't entirely over until 12:03 am. The total eclipse will begin at 8:23 pm and end at 9:45 pm. Last year we held a Lunar Eclipse viewing at the Tombaugh Observatory on campus with a fairly good turn out. As good as it was we have had better crowds at some of our school star parties. In view of that I would suggest that we try to plan to accommodate as many schools with Lunar Eclipse programs as we can get members to support. Possibly we can get the NMSU Astronomy department to put something on at the Tombaugh Observatory. Also White Sands Missile Range Public Information office would like to do something for this event as well, but that could be done at the school there. Any comments, suggestions or better ideas? Richard

Subject: Book Review: Moon Observer's Guide by Peter Grego

Why observe the moon? In the introduction to his splendid guide, Peter Grego asks and then answers that question. But he not only answers the question, he does so with a grace and style that alert the reader to the fact he is not only dealing with a trusty guide to the moon's surface, but someone whose own love for observing will prove to be contagious. While many people can guide you from one crater to the next, only a few

can point you to the excitement and mystery of the moon at the same time. Paperback: 192 pages ; Dimensions (in inches): 0.52 x 7.81 x 4.99 Publisher: Firefly Books (J); (February 2004) ISBN: 1552978885 And it's available from Amazon.com, etc.

WSSP VI September 10-11

This years White Sands Star Party was another great one. Attendance seemed to be down a little from years past but this left plenty of room for campsites and equipment. Registered ASLC astronomers included Steve Barkes, Rich Richins, and myself. We also had several other members drop by during the public viewing session on Saturday. There was an interesting lecture Friday night on human intelligence, evolution, and how we've begun the migration into space by Dr. Bacon of NASA. He was a very dynamic and engaging speaker with lot's of anecdotes from the space program. The weather that night was clear but a little breezy so we spent the rest of the evening doing more visiting and polar aligning than imaging. Rich did get in some piggyback shots of M31 with his Digital Rebel, including an amazing 60 minute exposure (thanks to falling asleep at the shutter release.) Perhaps he'll share that shot with the club sometime. It makes a strong case for drinking more coffee at these events...



Left & Right:
ASLC Camp

Below Left:
Sunset Yucca

Below Right:
Beautiful
home-built
mount



Saturday, Steve and I both gave workshops at the Space Museum and that evening was the pizza party, more lectures, and the public observation session. For the observing session, AAC assigned different objects for the astronomers to display and gave participants observing lists to be signed off by the astronomers as they came around and observed objects. Completed lists got the participant a prize. There was a good crowd and we were very busy from 9:00pm until the end of the public session around 11:00. It was a lot of fun for both the astronomers and the observers and I especially enjoyed the kids. I had also hoped to try and record the occultation at 11:16 but found to my dismay the email I brought with occultation info did not include the star coordinates, (so much for being prepared.) This



was another successful well-organized event and the Alamogordo Astronomy Club, National Park Service, and New Mexico Space Museum should be commended for their fine work. I hope we see a few more ASLC participants next year. ... *Dave Dockery*

For more, visit Dave's site at: <http://www.zianet.com/dave.dockery/WSSP6.htm>.

It's Time to Order next years "RASC Observers Handbook" put out by the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada each year. These books have been selling for about \$26. We have been ordering a large enough quantity that we have been able to get them for \$15. I am not sure what the cost of the 2005 edition will be, but we already have 20 people signed up to buy one. The next quantity break is at 25 so we need five more orders, I am confident that we will get those. It is my intention to send in the order on the first of October with hopes that they will arrive in time for our October meeting. If you would like to order one and haven't already, let me know by calling 523-4449 (leave your name and how many you want on my answering machine if I am not home). Or send me an e-mail at RCJ@Jones-Ranch.Net. I will collect the money for these when they arrive. *Richard Jones*

Enchanted Skies Star Party Gets Bigger and Better for 2004! October 5-9, 2004

The Enchanted Skies Star Party is adding several exciting new features for 2004, including a unique opportunity for a night of observing at an elevation of 10,000 feet. In addition, we're hosting three new hands-on workshops designed to give you added skills to enhance your enjoyment of astronomy. We'll continue our decade-long tradition of presenting outstanding lectures by leading professional and amateur astronomers, and of course, we'll once again gather at Socorro County's Pound Ranch for a night of great food, Southwestern entertainment and excellent, dark-sky observing. Our star party is expanding to five days, running from Tuesday, October 5, thru Saturday, October 9, 2004. <http://www.socorro-nm.com/starparty/>

21st Annual OKIE-TEX Star Party October 9 - 16 , 2004

The Oklahoma City Astronomy Club Is Pleased To Announce Okie-Tex Star Party. The Okie-Tex Star Party started as a weekend retreat for members of our club has now grown to a star party of national and international fame! Okie-Tex is consistently ranked as one of the TOP TEN star parties in the nation! How to Get There Camp Billy Joe, which is on the outskirts of Kenton, Oklahoma, is located 37 miles west of Boise City on State Highway 325. For Brochure and Registration forms, updates and additional information. Please check our web site at <http://www.okie-tex.com> ... *Larry Beatty Star Party Coordinator*

The Southern New Mexico Star Party held twice a year at City of Rocks State Park is only a few weeks away. This year the event starts on Thursday October 7th and ends on Sunday October 10th. We hold the Star Party at the reservation area so that attendees can leave their equipment set up next to the pavilion where they have a place to store gear out of the weather and a place to move their telescopes to if the need arises. Registration forms may be found at- <http://Astronomy-National-Public-Observatory.org>

Earthrise Project Benefit Event *Postponed!* Memo from Alan Hale ahale@swisr.org

After all your help in getting the word out on our planned event next month, now I get to tell you that we're postponing it. I've just had a couple of long conversations with the Star Trek promoter I'm working with (the same one, incidentally, who put on the "Beam Me Up, Scotty!" event in L.A. a couple of weeks ago) and we've decided there's just not enough time to do things properly. So, we're now looking at holding it next summer -- specifically, on the weekend of July 23, to mark the 10th anniversary of the discovery of Hale-Bopp, although that date is still tentative. I'll keep you informed as things develop. I do hope you and other Society members will still be willing to help out, although the fact that that's near full moon, and also during monsoon time here in NM, should probably be kept in mind. ...*Sincerely, Alan* <http://swisr.org/earthrise.html>

LOOKING AHEAD Renaissance Faire 2004?

Last year's Renaissance Fair was a success! The Ren-Faire committee is putting together an application to have a booth in the Children's Realm at this year's Faire. If you have other ideas on what we could do, or have resources to carry out any of these ideas, please contact the Renaissance Faire Committee. The Fair is getting close and we need to decide what we'll do and get to work with the details. ...*John McCullough*



Photo © Charlotte Lipson

ASLC OFFICERS 2004 Board@aslc-nm.org

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MEMBERSHIP in the ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY of Las CRUCES, offers:

Frequent observing sessions and parties; Opportunities to work on club and public educational projects and the ASLC Bulletin, our monthly newsletter, plus the quarterly A.L. Reflector, newsletter of the Astronomical League. Also, as an ASLC member you are entitled to the \$10 club discounted rate on subscriptions to Sky and Telescope magazine. To join the ASLC, or renew membership; your dues are only, \$35.00 per year. For those who opt to receive this BULLETIN electronically, a \$5.00 discount will apply. The optional club discounted *Sky and Telescope* presently adds \$33.00, totaling \$68 or \$63 per year. At either of these rates, mail dues, payable to **A.S.L.C.** with application form or a note to:

Treasurer ASLC, PO Box 921, Las Cruces, NM 88004

Sky & Tel. subscribers MUST submit their renewal through the Society Treasurer for the special club rate.

To avoid a lapse in delivery, this must be done when S&T sends their reminder, 4 months in advance.

Members so equipped are encouraged to receive this BULLETIN electronically.

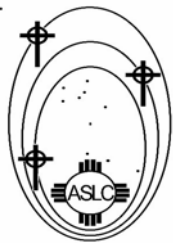
CALENDAR September - October 2004

New Moon:	September 14 / Tuesday	October 14 / Thursday
Public Star Parties: La Llarona Park	Sept 4 Saturday	Oct 9 Saturday
Dark Sky Gatherings: Upham DSO site	Sept 11 Saturday	Oct 16 Saturday
Moongazes: International Delights Café	Sept 25 Saturday	Oct 23 Saturday
Postponed Earthrise Project Benefit Event	See News & Views http://swisr.org/earthrise.html	
Sep 22/We Autumnal Equinox 4:30 pm	http://weather.wsmr.army.mil/astro.htm	
Sep 24/Fri Regular Meeting 730 pm DABCC	Prog: Dave Dockery; Business; <i>Nominations for 2005</i>	
Oct 5-9 ESSP XI; Enchanted Skies Star Party	http://www.socorro-nm.com/starparty/	
Oct 7-10 NPO Southern NM Star Party	http://Astronomy-National-Public-Observatory.org	
Oct 9-16 21st Annual Oakie-Tex Star Party	http://www.okie-tex.com	
Oct 22/Fri Regular Meeting 730 pm DABCC	Prog. TBA; Business; <i>Election of Officers for 2005</i>	
Oct 27/We Lunar Eclipse	Begins at Moonrise (over the Organ Mountains) Totality 8:23 - 9:45 pm	
Oct 31/Su Mountain Standard Time Resumes 01:00	Set your timepiece <i>back</i> one hour!	
Nov 6-7 Renaissance Faire	See "Looking Ahead" http://www.zianet.com/daac/renfaire.htm	

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of Las Cruces, New Mexico

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