



President's Message - April 2011



Welcome to April! It is still a bit windy, and a few clouds, but the overall weather is improving. Orion and the winter constellations are setting earlier and earlier, while the spring constellations and Saturn are rising, with some wonderful things to see.

The March meeting was exciting as we discussed the new Society brochure, the A.L.P.O. Conference, the Tombaugh and Leasburg Observatories and many other programs your Society is offering. The Association of Lunar and Planetary Observers (A.L.P.O.) planning is progressing, but we still need a few volunteers to fill some important positions. Please contact Bert Stevens for details.

The Society's By-Laws have been revised (most recent version is from 1967) and are included in this edition of HDO for your reading pleasure. They will be voted on (acceptance) at the April 22 meeting. The Budget Committee has also finalized the 2011 Budget and it is included in this HDO. It will also be voted on at the April meeting.

A Board Meeting was held on April 14 and we will be reporting the results of this in April as well.

We still have a number of projects on our schedule for this year, including a membership drive, fund raising and creating of a Publicity Committee. Please let John McCullough or I know if you have any ideas on these (John is the Chair of the Membership Committee)

Don't forget we also have a variety of apparel items, including shirts, hoodies, hats, etc. available for sale. Your Society earns \$1.00 per item sold which helps our treasury. Contact Ann McPhee for details.

Please don't forget to pay your dues; it's our major source of income which is needed for many of the projects scheduled for 2011. Thanks!

Our presentation in April is entitled "Comet Fly-bys" and will be presented by NMSU Astronomy Graduate Student Adam McKay. I hope you're able to attend. Please check our website (aslc-nm.org) for details.

Your President,
Ron J. Kramer



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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President: Ron J. Kramer

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Vice President: Tracy Stuart

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Treasurer: Janet Stevens

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Next Meeting

Adam McKay, a grad student at NMSU, will present a brief review of what comets are and why astronomers want to study them. He will then talk about two recent comet flybys (DIXI for comet P/103P/ Hartley and Stardust-NEXT for comet 9P/Tempel) and provide us with some of the first results from those missions. Mr. McKay will conclude with some ground-based observations of P/103P that he and his collaborators made in support of the DIXI mission and preliminary results from those observations.

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> .



March Outreach Activities Roundup

By Jerry McMahan

Cesar Chavez Elementary, March 11, 2011

Chuck Sterling, Steve Shaffer, Steve Barkes, Bert Verstaete, Ann McPhee, Ron Kramer, Trish Conley, and Jerry McMahan attended. Chuck had a 100-mm refractor, Steve Shaffer had the 8-inch Dobsonian, Steve Barkes had a refractor, Ron and Trish had a 5-inch refractor and 100mm binoculars. Ann had her 10-inch Dobsonian, Bert brought an 8-inch Schmidt Cassegrain, and Jerry had the 125-mm EXT.

The night was very clear and was not cold, so it was a nice night for society members as well as the observers. One unusual item was that there was a galaxy located between Jupiter and its moon, Callisto. It was NCG 199. We were not actually able to see it due to evening twilight, the glare of Jupiter, and the lack of any large telescopes, but it was a surprised to see it in the printout of the positions of the moons of Jupiter..

Moongaze - March 12, 2011

The greatest suspense of the night was whether we would be able to see anything at all due to clouds that hung around all evening. The only object visible for the most of the evening was the Moon and it was only seen through thin clouds or not at all. We had our first view of Saturn near the end of the session.

Chuck Sterling brought the 100-mm refractor, Steve Shaffer had his 8-inch Dobsonian, Jerry McMahan had the 125-mm Maksutov-Cassegrain. Ann McPhee brought the 10-inch Dobsonian, but left it in the car since the clouds did not make it worth setting it up. As a result, I got to avoid work while Ann explained to viewers what they were seeing on the Moon though the 125-mm Mak.

We apparently had a UFO sighting late in the session. Steve described it as a triangular shaped pattern of lights. The clouds were fairly high level, but any thing above them would not have been visible. The security guard also saw it. At the society meeting, Steve asked me what I thought it was, but I did not remember seeing it. I may have been inside the restaurant at the time. If Steve didn't know what it was, I am sure I would not have been able to identify it anyway. Steve seems sure that I did see it. Maybe I was later abducted by aliens and had my memory erased. In my case, that would not be evidence of advanced technology. Maybe I can spot the mystery object at the April 9 Moongaze.

Proposed By-Laws

By Ron Kramer, President

Your Vice President, Tracy Stuart and I have been busy reviewing the current Society By-Laws, dated in 1967 and found some things which needed revision to bring them to current recognized standards. Most of the proposed changes are with format (replacing "Section 1, Section 2" with "1", "2"). Other changes deal with better defining Family Memberships and removing some duplicate information.

These Revised By-Laws have been sent to the Board of Directors and no changes were forthcoming by the Board. They were approved by the Board at its April 14 meeting. They are now presented to the General Membership for review and comment.

If you have any comments or suggestions, please email them to me at "president@aslc-nm.org" before April 20 (our next General Meeting is April 22). If no further comments are forthcoming, the Board will assume all members agree with the Revisions and we will open the Revised By-Laws to an Acceptance Vote at the April 22 meeting, without further discussion. Thank you for your cooperation.



Proposed Club BY-LAWS

Revised 1 April 2011; Effective 1 May 2011

By-Laws for the regulation, except as otherwise provided by statute or its Articles of Incorporation of the ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY OF LAS CRUCES (a New Mexico nonprofit corporation)

I. MEMBERSHIP

- 1. Qualifications for voting membership in the Society are: an interest in astronomy, age of sixteen (16) years or more, and good character.
- 2. Classes of membership are:
 - a) Individual Membership: a membership held solely by one person.
 - b) Family Membership: a membership held in common by persons of one family. Family here means either (1): parents, or a parent, and children, or, (2): a married couple. All individuals who are included in a family membership must be duly qualified under Section 1 of this By-Law, and all must use the same mailing address.
 - c) Honorary Membership: honorary membership may be bestowed upon individuals who are not members, or upon organizations, in recognition of outstanding service to the Society. Such bestowal must be approved first by the Board of Directors, then by a majority vote at a duly held meeting of members.

II. RIGHTS AND PRIVILEGES OF MEMBERS

- 1. Every member of the Society who holds individual membership or who is part of a family membership, and who is in good standing, has the right to vote on Society business. There will be one vote per family member, age of sixteen (16) or over.
 - a) The Society does not permit voting by proxy.
 - b) Honorary members may vote on Society business.
- 2. Every member who is part of a family membership has all the rights and privileges of an individual member, provided: that the Society is not bound to furnish more than one copy of any publication, notice, or communication, except ballots, to a family membership.
- 3. Every member who has the right to vote on Society business and who is twenty-one (21) years old or older is eligible to hold an office or directorate in the Society.
- 4. All members in good standing have equal rights to take part in the activities, and to use the properties, of the Society, such rights to be exercised under the management and supervision of the Board of Directors or appointees of the Board. Other aspects of members' property rights are as set forth in Article VII, Articles of Incorporation.
- 5. All questions of eligibility, classification, or rights of members will be decided by the Board of Directors and the Board's decision shall be final.

III. MEETINGS

- 1. The President shall call all meetings of the Society, both regular and special.
- 2. A regular meeting shall be held each month, unless otherwise ordered by the President or the Board of Directors. The regular meeting held in October will be the annual meeting of the Society.
- 3. A special meeting shall be held at the discretion of the President, or at the direction of the Board of Directors, or on written demand of a majority of the members who are qualified to vote.



4. Notice of each regular meeting shall be by publication on the society's web site, via e-mail, and/or by the media not less than five (5) nor more than thirty (30) days before the meeting, excluding the day of the meeting. Notice of a special meeting must state time, place, and reason for calling the meeting and shall be made by publication on the society's web site, the media and e-mail to members not less than five (5) days before the special meeting.
5. At any duly held meeting, the presence in person of twenty percent (20%) of the members who are duly qualified to vote will constitute a quorum. Every act done or decision made by a majority of the members present at a meeting duly held at which a quorum is present shall be regarded as the act of the full membership, except as may be otherwise provided by statute or by these By-Laws.

IV. OFFICERS

1. The officers of the Society will be: a President, a Vice-President, a Secretary, and a Treasurer.
2. Officers shall hold office for one (1) year or until their respective successors have been elected and have taken office. The President and Vice-President will not serve more than two (2) consecutive full terms in the same office. The Secretary and Treasurer may serve an indefinite number of terms.
3. The President shall be the chief executive officer of the corporation and shall preside at all duly held meetings of the members, and at all meetings of the Board of Directors; shall have the general power and duties of management usually vested in the chief executive officer of a corporation; and shall have such other powers and perform such other duties as may be assigned to him in these By-Laws, or by the Board of Directors.
 - a) In the absence or disability of the President, the Vice-President shall perform all the duties of the President, and in so acting, shall have all the powers of the President. The Vice-President shall have such powers and perform such other duties as may be assigned to him by the Board of Directors.
4. The Secretary shall:
 - a) Keep minutes of all meetings of the members and of the Board of Directors, showing the time and place of holding, whether regular or special, and if special, how authorized, the notice thereof given, the names of those present at Directors' meetings, the number of members present at members' meetings and entitled to vote thereat, the proceedings thereof, the name of the presiding officer, and the signature of the Secretary.
 - b) Have custody of the records of the Society, except the records that pertain to the office of Treasurer; and keep them at the principal office of the Society or at a place or places designated by the Board of Directors.
 - c) Keep a membership register showing the names of the members, their addresses, e-mail addresses, class of membership, and current voting status.
 - d) Give due notice of all the meetings of the members and of the Board of Directors as set forth in Section 4, By-Laws III.
 - e) Prepare ballots for elections of officers and Directors, and for other elections in which the vote is taken by ballot, and deliver one of said ballots to every voting member of the Society.
 - f) Attend to Society correspondence and reports at the direction of the President.
 - g) Perform such other secretarial duties as may be assigned by the Board of Directors.
5. The Treasurer shall:
 - a) Keep and maintain adequate and correct accounts of the properties and business transactions of the corporation, including accounts of its assets, liabilities, receipts, disbursements, gains, and losses. The books of account shall be open at reasonable times to inspection by any Director.
 - b) Receive and deposit all moneys in the name and to the credit of the corporation in the bank designated by the Board of Directors.



- c) Disburse the funds of the corporation in any manner duly authorized by the Board of Directors.
- d) Render to the President and the Directors, whenever they request it, an account of all their transactions as Treasurer and of the financial condition of the Corporation; and make a general report to the membership at each monthly meeting as well as an annual financial status report to the membership at the annual meeting.
- e) Prepare financial and tax reports as required by local, state, and federal governments, based on corporate records.
- f) Be responsible for the distribution of an annual operating budget, and for the collection and disbursement of Society funds within the budget as approved.
- g) Have such other powers and perform such other duties as may be assigned by the Board of Directors.

V. BOARD OF DIRECTORS

1. The Directors of this Society, to be known jointly as the Board of Directors, shall be seven (7) in number. The seven directorates shall be filled by: (1) the President, (2) the Vice-President, (3) the Secretary, (4) the Treasurer, (5) the immediate past-President, (6) and (7) by Directors who are to be elected at each annual election. An elected director shall serve as elected director no more than two consecutive terms.
2. An organizational meeting of the Board of Directors shall be held within three weeks after the annual election, and a minimum of three additional meetings of the Board of Directors shall be held during the fiscal year. The presence of five or more Directors at a meeting of the Board will constitute a quorum.
3. Subject to the limitations of the Articles of Incorporation, of the By-Laws, and of New Mexico law as to action to be authorized or approved by the members and subject to the duties of Directors as prescribed by the By-Laws, all corporate powers shall be exercised by, and the business affairs of the Society shall be controlled by, the Board of Directors. Without prejudice to such general powers but subject to the same limitations, it is hereby expressly declared that the Directors shall have the following powers, to wit:
 - a) To establish in Doña Ana County, New Mexico, an office for the transaction of the business of the Society and to change the location of said office at its discretion, within the limits of Doña Ana County.
 - b) To select and remove agents and employees of the Society, prescribe such powers and duties for them as may not be inconsistent with law, with the Articles of Incorporation, or the By-Laws, fix their compensation, and require from them security for faithful service.
 - c) To conduct, manage and control the affairs and business of the Society, and to make such rules and regulations therefore not inconsistent with law, or with the Articles of Incorporation, or the By-Laws, as they may deem best.
 - d) To appoint such committees as they deem necessary, and prescribe the duties and term of existence thereof.

VI. FINANCES

1. The fiscal year of the Society shall be from October 1 through September 30.
2. Within ninety (90) days after the end of the fiscal year, a review or audit of the financial statements and accounts will be made, The auditor will be selected by the members at the regular meeting held in July.
3. An annual budget will be prepared by a committee composed of the President, Treasurer, and one member chosen from the membership and submitted to the members at the regular meeting held in July. The budget will show anticipated receipts and expenditures of the Society, and will serve as a guide in the management of its financial affairs.
4. The assumption of any debt, or the pledge of any property or asset of the Society as security for debt, or the sale, exchange, or disposal in any manner of property or assets of the Society, or the expenditure of any funds beyond those allocated to the annual budget, shall require prior approval of a majority at a duly held meeting of members.



VII. DUES

1. Dues for each membership shall be reckoned and paid as of January first for membership periods of twelve (12) months, provided: that a new member may be granted an initial membership period from the time of joining until the end of the year. Dues for such irregular initial periods will be adjusted at a rate of one twelfth (1/12) of the annual dues rate per month.
2. The annual dues for an Individual Membership shall be set by the Board of Directors.
3. The annual dues for a Family Membership shall be as for an Individual Membership, plus a nominal fee for each additional family member, as set by the Board of Directors.
4. Dues payable by a member who is a bona fide student at an accredited institution of learning may be reduced, as determined by the Board of Directors.
5. All dues must be paid in advance. After dues have remained due and unpaid for 60 days, the membership thus delinquent will be dropped from the Society's roster. Members whose dues have been delinquent for twelve (12) months or less must pay all delinquent dues to reinstate their membership.
6. Honorary members will not be required to pay dues.

VIII. NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS

1. A Nominating Committee of three members will be elected by vote of the members at the regular meeting in July. This Committee will also serve as tellers at the annual election. All members who qualify under Section 3, By-Law II, except the President, may serve on the Nominating Committee. The Committee will select one of its members to be Chair.
2. Said Committee will nominate at least one candidate for each office and each directorate to be filled. Only members who are qualified as set forth in Section 3, By-Law II, and who agree to serve if elected, may be nominated. The list of candidates submitted by the Nominating Committee will be announced at the regular meeting in September. Nominations may be made from the floor at the regular meeting, provided that only members who are present may be nominated from the floor, unless the nominator delivers to the Secretary a signed statement from the absent nominee stating that they will accept the nomination and will serve if elected.
3. A written ballot will be used. Each nominee will be listed under the office for which they are a candidate, and a blank space will be provided under each office for a write-in candidate. Each voter is to mark their ballot to indicate their choice for each office and submit the ballot before the tellers begin their count.
4. At the annual meeting, the Chair of the Nominating Committee will collect the ballots and with the other two members of the Nominating Committee will count and tally the votes. The Committee Chair will certify the tally in writing and deliver the certification to the President. The official announcement of the election results will be made by the President.
5. If a member or members of the Nominating Committee do not attend the annual meeting, such member or members of the Committee as are present will choose substitutes, from among the voting members present, to bring the number of tellers to three.

IX. RESIGNATIONS, REMOVALS, VACANCIES

1. Any officer or director may resign at any time by giving written notice to the Board of Directors. Such resignation will be effective on the date it is received, or at any later time specified in the notice.
2. Any officer or director may be removed from office for cause by the Board of Directors at any meeting thereof, by concurring votes of five (5) members of the Board.
3. A vacancy in any office or directorate, however caused or occurring, shall be filled by the Board of Directors. The Board first shall declare that a specific vacancy exists. When the office of President has been declared vacant, the



Board will authorize the Vice-President to assume the duties and title of President. When other office or directorate is declared vacant, the Board will appoint to the post a member of the Society who is duly qualified under Section 3, By-Law II. Such appointment will be for a term to end not later than the date of the next following annual election held by the Society.

X. TRIAL OF MEMBERS

- 1. Charges brought against a member will be referred to the Board of Directors. The Directors will appoint a committee of five (5), with instructions to investigate the charges and to determine what action should be taken. The Board will review the committee's report, and instruct the committee chairman to present it, with the proper resolutions, at a duly held meeting of the Society. Proceedings will be as outlined in *Robert's Rules of Order, Revised*.

XI. PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITY

- 1. The rules contained in *Robert's Rules of Order, Revised* shall govern the Society and the order of business of the meetings in all cases to which they are applicable and insofar as they are compatible with the Articles of Incorporation and By-Laws of this corporation. The President may appoint a Parliamentarian, other than an officer, who will be responsible for resolving point of order.

XII. AMENDMENTS

- 1. These By-Laws may be amended or repealed by approval of two-thirds (2/3) of the members entitled to vote.
 - a) The Secretary will post on the web site a copy of the full text of a proposed amendment, and send an e-mail to all voting members that it will be voted on at a duly held regular meeting.
 - b) Completed ballots may be delivered to the Secretary via e-mail. The ballots received will be checked and the votes tallied by the Secretary. At the designated regular meeting the Secretary shall distribute ballots to attending voting members who have not already voted. The members shall mark the ballot and return it to the Secretary. The Secretary and two appointed members shall count the ballots and report the tally to the President. Voting will continue until the adoption of the proposed amendment is authorized or refused, but not longer than ninety (90) days from the date of written notice to the members of the full text thereof.
 - c) The Secretary will retain the ballots and related data until the Board of Directors has reviewed them and has declared the election concluded.
- 2. The Articles of Incorporation may be amended by the procedure set forth in Section 1 of this By-Law.

- End of ASLC By-Laws -

ASLC Budget 2011

By Ron Kramer, President

Janet Stevens (Treasurer), Bert Stevens (Acting Treasurer in Janet's earlier absence), Rich Richins (Member-at-Large) and I have prepared an Operating Budget for F.Y. 2011, which is shown below. This were presented to the Board of Directors at the April 14 Board Meeting. Their changes are incorporated below.

Please note the figures include some money already spent (voted on by the General Membership) and some normal operating expenses (AL membership, etc.). In addition the Membership Dues is about

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50% of the normal amount collected during a year since we adjusted the Membership Expiration Date of all members to December 31, 2011. This amount will be somewhat higher in 2012 as the dues collection will be for the entire year.

They are also now presented to the General Membership for review and comment. If you have any comments or suggestions, please email them to me at "president@aslc-nm.org" before April 20 (our next General Meeting is April 22).

If no further comments are forthcoming, the Board will assume all members agree with the 2011 Budget and we will open the Budget to an Acceptance Vote at the April 22 meeting, without further discussion. Thank you for your cooperation.

ASLC Budget 2011 (most figures are rounded)

OPENING ACCOUNT BALANCE		Notes
Checking	\$ 1,600.00	
Saving	\$ 2,000.00	
CD	\$ 19,000.00	
Sub-Total	\$ 22,600.00	

INCOME		
Membership Dues	\$ 1,050.00	Lower than normal due to new expiration date
Apparel	\$ 400.00	
Photos at Events	\$ 200.00	Kirby & Chuck images
A.L.P.O. Conference	\$ 6,300.00	
Donations	\$ 50.00	
HDO	\$ 40.00	
Telescope Loaner Programs	\$ -	
Grants	\$ -	
Sub-Total	\$ 8,040.00	

EXPENSES		
Astronomical League Memberships	\$ 350.00	
Publicity/Outreach	\$ 355.00	Brochure, Ren. Faire, etc.
Apparel	\$ 350.00	
Insurance	\$ 600.00	
Holiday Party	\$ 350.00	
Loaner Telescope Maintenance	\$ -	Repairs, eyepieces, etc.
Leasburg Observatory	\$ -	
Tombaugh Observatory	\$ -	
A.L.P.O. Conference	\$ 6,500.00	
Safe Deposit Box	\$ 25.00	
IDA Membership	\$ 50.00	
Maintenance	\$ -	
Photos for Events	\$ 100.00	
HDO (mail)	\$ 175.00	
PO Box	\$ 70.00	
Sub-Total	\$ 8,925.00	

SURPLUS/DEFICIT		



Total Income	\$ 8,040.00	
Total Expenses	\$ 8,925.00	
Sub-Total	\$ (885.00)	

OPENING ACCOUNT BALANCE		
Checking	\$ 1,715.00	
Saving	\$ 1,000.00	
CD	\$ 19,000.00	
Sub-Total	\$ 21,715.00	

Minutes, March 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 7:32 p.m., 25 March 2011, Rm. 77, Doña Ana Community College (DACC), Las Cruces, New Mexico.

President's Comments:

Ron Kramer welcomed the group, especially noting Janet Stevens' return following surgery. He also noted the availability of badges for current members and the sign-in rosters for members and guests and visitors. Ron had been approached by Tom Hobby, a long-time volunteer at McDonald Observatory, who is reducing his equipment and reference material inventories. Tom gave Ron a number of astronomy texts that are available to the membership at no charge after the meeting. Many thanks to Tom.

Secretary's Report:

The Secretary, John McCullough, reported that the minutes for the February 2011 meeting were submitted for publication in the Society newsletter, the *High Desert Observer* (HDO). Tracy Stuart moved that the minutes from the February general meeting be accepted as submitted; Janet Stevens seconded. The motion passed by acclamation. There was not an additional Secretary's report.

Vice-President's Report:

The Vice-President, Tracy Stuart, as chairman for presentations, reported that the speaker for the July meeting will be a NMSU Astronomy Department professor. Speakers for the September and November meetings have not been committed. There was no additional Vice-President's report.

Treasurer's Report:

The Treasurer, Janet Stevens, was present for the first time this year. She reported on the status of the Society's accounts. She also reported that the Astronomical League (AL) has a new insurance carrier resulting in different policy/coverage levels for member societies. The new basic liability coverage is \$265 but may have fewer benefits than the previous policy. The options and costs will be discussed at the next board meeting. If adequate coverage costs significantly more than what the Society has paid in the past, a dues increase may be necessary. All options will be presented to the membership before action is taken. Thanks to Bert Stevens, Past President, for filling in during Janet's absence. There was not an additional Treasurer's report.

Committee Reports:

ALPO 2011 Convention Committee:

Bert Stevens, Committee Chairman, noted that New Mexico State University (NMSU) is currently on spring



break so that use of dorms and classrooms in July is still pending. Fred Pilcher has been in contact with Sleep Inn and rooms are available for \$70 per night with many amenities included. Ron Kramer has contacted the NMSU Golf Club regarding banquet facilities. They are available for \$125 per hour (3 hours = \$375). Dinner catering by Lorenzo's at \$25 per person is also available. Ron Kramer will start working on contract agreements.

Ann McPhee, Excursion chair, is working on possible day trips to the VLA, Space History Hall of Fame/Museum, Spaceport USA, Sun Spot/Apache Peak. She has contacted Las Cruces Shuttle Service for van transport and received quotes of \$50 per hour for the first van, \$45 per hour for a second van. Ann has also contacted two cafes to provide box lunches for the day trips. Three weeks notice for reservations will be required.

Robert Williams will be Registrar for the convention but will need help for the several days that participants (50 to 60 expected) will have to check in starting 19 July. Catering for snacks at breaks and a group evening meal on Friday also need to be arranged. Bert is also trying to set up a page on A.L.P.O.'s website to post details on the convention. He needs volunteers to handle publicity, both local and international, and someone to set-up a "swap table" during the convention. A list of positions that still need to be filled is in the current issue of the *High Desert Observer* (HDO).

Apparel Committee:

Ann McPhee, Committee Chairman, still has items available for purchase following tonight's meeting. She also had a sample of a long-sleeve t-shirt that would have the Society logo embroidered on it for potential addition to the inventory. Ann passed around a survey sheet for members to indicate interest and preference; cost is estimated to be \$19-\$20. She reported that \$646.78 of inventory still remained and that \$1260 had been sold as of 25 March. This is a fund raising effort for the Society.

Loaner Telescope Program:

Janet Stevens, Committee Chairman, still needs eyepieces for the telescopes the Society already owns. If additional hardware donations were not forthcoming, the Society may have to allocate funds to support the Loaner program.

Membership:

John McCullough, Committee Chairman, reported that he has not received a response from Andy Oliver, editor of the Reflector (the AL newsletter) regarding multiple issues being delivered to the same address. Until he does, he asks that members with multiple issues of the Reflector donate them to the Society for use as handouts at public outreach events. John also reiterated the use of the attendance rosters to help keep membership information up-to-date and to follow-up with visitors. Visitors at tonight's meeting included returning visitors Michelle Litwiller, Kim and Pat Morgan, and Michael Edwards from Las Cruces, and Joe Sprackla from El Paso. John expects to utilize the new Society brochure extensively to inform the wider community of Society activities and promote membership. He is also reviewing materials and suggestions available through the AL to enhance membership in the Society.

Leasburg Observatory Committee:

Rich Richins, Committee Chairman, reported that the park manager had held a 5-year planning meeting, but that Rich was unable to attend. Rich has telephoned and emailed the manager several times requesting meetings between the manager, Ron Kramer, and Rich without receiving replies. Rich has informed the manager that the Society is very interested in participating in discussions regarding development of the park.

Tombaugh Observatory:

Ron Kramer has the keys to the observatory but will not issue them until a basic training on telescope operation is held. Dave Dockery has volunteered to conduct the training and a notice requesting interest has been posted on the yahoo group. At least ten (10) of the members present at the March meeting indicated interest in learning how to operate the telescope in the on-campus observatory.



Outreach Committee:

Chuck Sterling, Outreach Coordinator, was not present to update the calendar of near-term events. Refer to the yahoo.com for details.

Society Website:

Steve Barkes, webmaster, reported that he continues to get sections of the website up-to-date. Members should contact him or Ron Kramer with inputs for the site, however, Steve does not have time to do extensive background research on topics, so members must provide that.

Education Committee:

Rich Richins, Committee Chairman, was not present to provide a status update.

Historian:

Joseph Mancilla, Society Historian, was not present to provide a status update.

There were no additional committee or officer reports.

Old Business:

Membership Dues:

The new dues schedule is now in place. All members should make an effort to become current through the end of the 2011 membership year.

Society By-laws:

Nils Allen and Kirby Benson started working in 2008 to update the By-laws, primarily by modernizing the language. Ron Kramer and Tracy Stuart, President and Vice-President, respectively, will continue this work over the next few months for presentation to the membership.

Society Brochure:

Ron Kramer presented the latest draft of the proposed brochure incorporating suggestions from the membership. The finalized version is expected to cost:
\$200 500 copies
\$250 1000 copies (should cover 2011)

Additional comments were noted including expansion on the benefits of membership in the Society. Fred Pilcher moved that \$250 of Society funds be allocated to print 1000 copies of the revised brochure, Bert Stevens seconded. The motion passed. Tracy Stuart moved that Ron Kramer be reimbursed the \$90 he spent on the first run of 50 copies for use at the recent ShareFair, Robert Williams seconded. The motion passed with some opposition.

Outreach Budget:

Allocating funds for public outreach was mentioned but tabled for the time being.

Messier Marathon:

Steve Barkes is organizing the 2011 event at the Upham DSO this weekend. See him after the meeting.

Budget Committee:

Kim Morgan had volunteered to be the member-at-large on the committee but will be out of town next month. Rich Richins volunteered to replace him at the meeting the first week of April.

There was no additional old business discussed.



New Business:

April Meeting:

The April meeting falls on the 22nd which is a religious holiday. Should the meeting be moved to the 29th to avoid conflict? After discussion, it was decided that moving too many of the monthly meetings from the fourth Friday caused confusion and that the April meeting will be on the 22nd.

Society Apparel:

Ann McPhee reported the results of her survey. Ann moved that \$276 of Society funds be allocated for the first run of 12 shirts, Rich Richins seconded. The motion passed.

There was no additional new business for discussion.

Announcements:

Items for Sale:

The Society has been contacted by an amateur astronomer in El Paso who has an 8-inch Celestron for sale. The asking price is \$400.

No additional items were announced for sale.

Announcements:

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:

Bert Stevens announced he had submitted his 20,000th minor planet observation. Congratulations, Bert.

No additional recognitions or achievements were announced.

John McCullough moved to adjourn the business portion of the meeting at 8:35 p.m., Bert Stevens seconded. The motion carried.

Presentation:

The March program was presented by Society President Ron Kramer on "Astro-Philately - A Rising Star". Astronomy's, or star-gazing's, origins are lost in prehistory. Stamp collecting, or philately, began in 1840 in Great Britain with the issuance of the first adhesive postage stamps. Ron's passions since an early age (in the early 1950's) have been astronomy and the space program and stamp collecting. He has been combining these passions ever since. Ron displayed some examples of both foreign and domestic stamps associated with astronomy and space exploration. His focus is on space-related first day covers. Ron has collected 100,000's of such covers and in fact had a business related to them for a number of years. Ron entertained several questions concerning the value and rarity of various space covers.

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

-Respectfully submitted by John McCullough, ASLC Secretary



For Sale

William Optics Zenith Star 66 SD Doublet APO
Blue (includes WO 2" Extender) - in all original packaging - Asking price \$300

SPECIFICATIONS...

- Aperture: 66mm (2.6")
- Focal Ratio: F/5.9
- Focal Length: 388mm
- Objective Type: SD Doublet, Air Spaced
- Coatings: Fully Multi-Coated
- Resolving Power: 1.78"
- Limiting Magnitude: 10.8
- Lens Shade: Retractable
- L- type Mount: L Bracket Based
- Field Stops: 10 Baffles
- Dew Shield O.D.: 3.3" (85 mm)
- Tube Diameter: 2.95" (75 mm)
- Tube Weight: 3.5 lbs. (1.7 kg)
- Case: aluminum
- Case Dimensions (WxHxD): 15" x 9.6" x 6.5"
- Case Water Resistant: Yes
- Focuser: 1.6" (40.6 mm) 360° Rotatable Design Crayford with 1:10 dual-speed microfocuser

Additional accessory included: William Optics 2"SCT/ZS66 Adapter/Extender



Images shot using scope:

- http://jeffjastro.com/solarsystem/Lulin_2Mar09.htm
- http://jeffjastro.com/dso/M65M66NGC3628_9Feb08.htm
- http://jeffjastro.com/dso/M45_9Feb08.htm
- http://jeffjastro.com/dso/M31_18Oct07.htm

Scope in like-new condition, optics never touched, always covered except for imaging. Scope kept completely sealed from dust/moisture and in home when not used.

Contact Jeffrey Johnson: jeffj@jeffjastro.com



Calendar of Events April/May 2011 (MDT)

Apr. 22	7:30 p.m.	April ASLC Meeting
24	8:47 p.m.	Last Quarter Moon
May 01	5 a.m.	Mars 0.4 degrees north of Jupiter
03	12:51 a.m.	New Moon
06	6 a.m.	Eta Aquarid meteor shower peaks
07	1 p.m.	Mercury at maximum distance west of the Sun (27 degrees)
07	9 p.m.	Venus 1.4 degrees north of Mercury
10	2:33 p.m.	First Quarter Moon
10	4 p.m.	Mercury 2 degrees south of Jupiter
11	3 a.m.	Venus 0.6 degrees south of Jupiter
17	5:09 a.m.	Full Moon
18	2 a.m.	Venus 1.4 degrees north of Mercury
19	7 p.m.	Mercury 2 degrees south of Mars
27	7:30 p.m.	May ASLC Meeting

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

ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY of Las Cruces
PO Box 921
Las Cruces, NM 88004



ASLC - Sharing the Universe
 With Our Community
 for Over 50 Years

