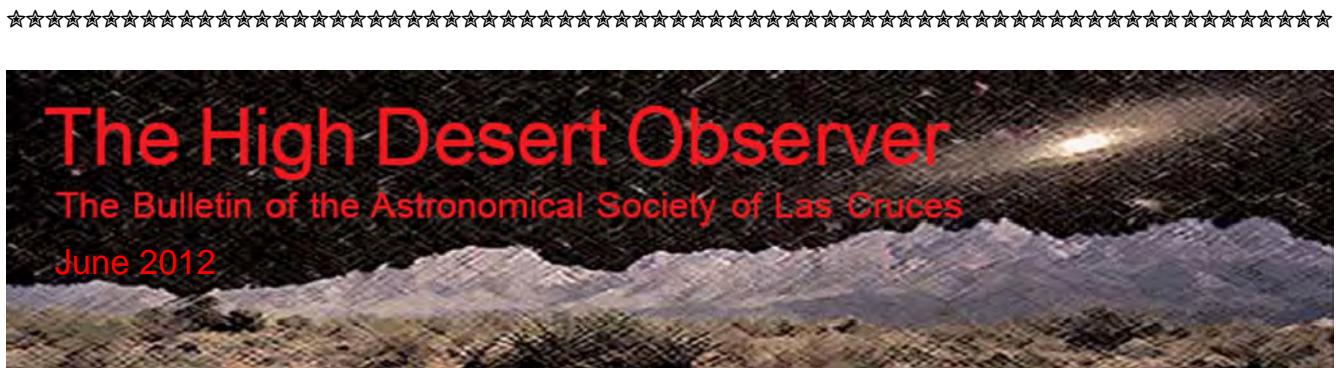


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President's Message - June 2012



Well, we survived the Venus Transit on June 5 (local time) and a great time was had by all. Well over 100 people showed up for this "once in a lifetime event" (actually, twice in a lifetime if you were lucky enough to be in position in 2004, when the Sun rose during the latter part of the Transit). There was a "Eureka" moment at First Contact, when the planet's disk started "gouging out" the limb of the Sun. Just before "Second Contact" (when you could see the entire disk of Venus with the Sun behind it), we could actually see the Sun's light passing through the dense Venus atmosphere, casting an eerie glow.

Too bad we now have to wait until 2117 for the next one. I don't know about you, but I'm already making plans. Mark it on your calendar.

Besides the two major astronomical events so far (eclipse and transit) and all the Outreach programs we have had, 2012 is shaping up to be a great year for our Society. This year we have already added eleven new members and have raised more than \$750 in donations. We will also be applying for a few grants to help fund the Leasburg Dam State Park Observatory which should have its groundbreaking ceremony in July. We're aiming for "first light" before the end of the year. We originally allocated \$8,000 from our Treasury for the Observatory (in 2007), which has never been spent. I am pleased to say the FY 2013 budget will allocate \$10,000 for the Observatory which is pretty close to the original allocation plus the interest earned over the past 5 years.

With the State agreeing to pay for the building, grounds, sliding roof, doors, etc., our Society only has to provide the equipment inside the Observatory and the "warm room" plus the manpower for our Outreach programs. We will also train Leasburg Dam Park officials in the proper use of the equipment.

All of the archaeological, historical and environmental reports have been submitted and we are now just waiting for the State's new Fiscal Year (starting July 1, 2013) so the funding can be released (estimated at \$65,000) and contracts for the building can be finalized. We estimate 3-4 months construction time.

I will take over as Chair of our Fund Raising Committee until we are able to find a permanent replacement. If you are interested in this position please contact me. We have the funds for the Observatory, but it would be preferred if we could replenish the money over the next 1-2 years and plan for further activities.

Ann McPhee still has lots of apparel for sale, including hats, t-shirts (short- and long-sleeved), hoodies and denim shirts. Please talk to her at the next meeting if you're interested in purchasing this gear.

Votes on the revised By-Laws will be tallied at the June 22 meeting. If you have not already done so, please submit your Ballot by email or regular mail before the meeting. There are changes to the revised By-Laws which update the 1967 original document. These changes are mandated by State and Federal tax laws so it is imperative that voting is concluded on time.

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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, 2012

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Next Meeting

Our June meeting will be held on Friday, June 22, in Room 77 at Doña Ana Community College, starting at 7:30 p.m. Do not forget that Show and Tell will start at 7:00 p.m.

This month's speaker is Loretta Hall, the author of *Out of This World; New Mexico's Contributions to Space Travel*. Astronaut Buzz Aldrin said of her book, "We must rekindle the sense of adventure and the irresistible urge for exploration beyond this planet that took us to the Moon and, I hope, will take us to Mars. In her entertaining, inspiring Out of This World, Loretta Hall reveals the grit, determination, daring, and down-to-earth humanness of adventures who brought us to the verge of making space travel available to everyone."

Per our new policy, all ASLC members are invited to join us for dinner at Lorenzo's Italian Restaurant, on University (across from Pan Am Center). Dinner will start at 5:00 pm, on Friday, June 22, and will conclude around 6:40. Each person is responsible for the cost of their food and drinks; the ASLC will pay the bill for Loretta.

Please RSVP to "ronjkramer@aol.com" so the necessary reservations can be made. The RSVP should be sent by June 21.

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 <http://www.aslc-nm.org> .

Outreach

Outreach is a very important ASLC activity. We can always use more volunteers to help educate the public. Even if you do not have a telescope, we can always use more members to help answer questions at the events and point out constellations in the sky.

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President's Message – June 2012

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I now have all the Loaner Telescopes in my garage. These are available to all members at the rate of \$10.00 per month per instrument. It's a simple way to determine what type of instrument you should purchase as you can "practice" on one of these. Or, if you just need a bit more aperture to study a certain object in space and can't justify spending over a thousand dollars for a larger telescope at the moment.

The equipment includes a 12-inch Dobsonian, a 100-mm (4-inch) Classic Unitron Refractor and a Meade EXT90 with Autostar. Additional equipment will be available in the future. Further information is on our website, at www.aslc-nm.org

Our June meeting, on the 22nd will feature Loretta Hall, author of *Out of This World; New Mexico's Contributions to Space Travel*. This book, was reviewed by Astronaut Buzz Aldrin, who said, "We must rekindle the sense of adventure and the irresistible urge for exploration beyond this planet that took us to the Moon and, I hope, will take us to Mars. In her entertaining, inspiring *Out of This World*, Loretta Hall reveals the grit, determination, daring and down-to-earth humanness of adventurers who brought us to the verge of making space travel available to everyone." Please join us for this wonderful presentation.

Hope you all have clear, and dark, skies.

Ron J. Kramer

May and June Outreach Activities Roundup

By Jerry McMahan

Partial Solar Eclipse – May 20, 2012

Much has already been said about the eclipse, but I would like to repeat thanks to Daniel Giron and Trish Conley for the work they did to advertise the event. Rich Richins also did a great job of finding a place to set up so that we had a clear view of the West until Sun down.

Daniel and Trish also manned the table and handed out solar glasses. Rich set up two telescopes including one of the H-Alpha 'scopes. Jerry Gaber and his wife had two 'scopes including the other Society H-Alpha telescope. Chuck Sterling had his 100-mm telescope connected to a laptop so that people could view the eclipse on the computer screen. He also made a time lapse video of the event. I had the 125mm EXT. President Ron was not there, but did get a good picture that clearly demonstrated what an annular eclipse looks like since he was very near the center line.

NMSU Open House at the Clyde Tombaugh Observatory – May 25, 2012

The open house was held on May 25. For the second month in a row, it was on the same night as the Society meeting. Steve Shaffer opened the Society's observatory. I joined him after the meeting and a couple of Society members stopped by as well. I am going to start taking notes since Ron has convinced me that senility is to blame for my bad memory. Tracking, with the 12.5-inch was good until the end. We don't know why it suddenly had tracking problems. Does it mean that something starts sticking at certain positions? It does seem to happen at about the same point.

New Mexico State does not offer summer classes in Astronomy so they will not have any open houses during the summer. There is some type of program that might provide observing, but the NMSU people did not know for sure, though Steve Barkes might have more information about it. The Community College will have a

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summer class. Since Robert Hastings will be teaching the class, Rich Richins may know if they will use the facilities.

Moongaze - May 26, 2012

The monthly Moongaze was held at the International Delights Cafe. Chuck Sterling, Steve Shaffer, Dave Anderson, Danial Giron and Jerry McMahan were present with other Society members making an appearance as observers. Saturn and the Moon were the main targets. Chuck may have put his 10-inch on Mars at least once.

Chuck noticed that the Moon will be at one of those in between phases for the June Moongaze, and has suggested that we do two weeks in a row. We will have a Moongaze on Saturday, June 23, and another on Saturday, June 30. We have done consecutive weeks a couple of other times as well. On June 23, when the Moon phase is a thin crescent, we will not have it for very long, but we do have strong Earth Shine to point out. On the 30th, the Moon is closer to full, but does provide more features to point out.

Venus Transit, Veteran's Park – June 5, 2012

The Transit of Venus, across the surface of the Sun, was observed from the Veterans Memorial Park. We had more telescopes set up than I have seen for any event, so I will apologize for not knowing everyone that was present. We were set up at two different locations at the park so I am more likely to have missed members at the upper location to the East.

Jerry Gaber and his wife had two scopes including one of the H-Alpha telescopes. Wes and Carol Baker had a 40-mm H-Alpha PST ‘scope. I was impressed with the view through this telescope. As Wes said, it gives a lot of bang for the buck. Brent Emanuel was also at the upper location.

I had the EXT 125 with a 40-mm eyepiece and a 0.5x focal reducer which made it possible for me to get the entire Sun in the field of view without it drifting out of the field very often. Chuck Sterling had the 100-mm refractor connected to the laptop so the event could be observed on the screen. He also made a time elapse movie of the transit. Chuck's wife, daughter, son in-law, and Dorian, his new grandson, also attended. Rich Richins manned the other H-Alpha ‘scope. Tracy Stuart had a 90-mm Maksutov and Ron Kramer had his 5-inch Meade refractor. I know that Steve Barkes was there as well. Trish Conley and Daniel Giron were at the table and again did a great job of promoting the event.

I informed Ron that the next Venus transit would be on December 10, 2117, at about 3:00 PM from our location. He assured me that he was making plans to set up for that one as well. I told him that I would loan him the solar filter, to use with his refractor, for that event as well.

Recollections from Texas Star Party 2012.

By Dave Dockery

Rolling Into the Ranch

Rich Richins (rr) received permission to set up camp at Texas Star Party a day early this year, thanks to his volunteering to man the front gate. We all know rr (aka Sheriff Rick) is special and apparently the TSP honchos are coming to that realization as well. This allowed us to beat the crowd and pick the optimum spot for Camp ASLC 2012. Note: we usually have to get up at the crack of dawn, race down to Ft. Davis to get in a long line, wait for hours for them to let us in, and then race up the middle observing field only to find that our arch nemesis, Dr. Jim and his (wealthy Dr. buddy) henchmen, have already taken the prime spot and pushed us down toward the burro corral with all its associated odiferous smells and flies. This year rr and I rolled in late Saturday afternoon and had the whole field to ourselves. We nabbed the prime spot with no muss or fuss, set up camp, staked out our telescope tarps, and then ambled off to dinner in town. TSP 2012 was off to a good start!

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The Crew.

We had a smaller group this year than we've had for a while. Steve Barkes got to sleep in on Sunday morning and finally rolled in mid-afternoon. Kirby joined us on Monday and Joe Ewing was also there, though we didn't know it until he won a prize at the Great Texas Giveaway on Friday night. (Joe, please stop by the camp and say "hey" next year.) We missed many of the regulars, Chuck, Jerry, Vince, Steve Smith, Nils & Bonnie, and reminisced several times about Dick Olsen (especially when the old Scorpius Jewel Box rose above the hills.)

Last Man Standing.

This was my eleventh year at Texas Star Party and there have been some good weather years, some bad weather years, and a couple of really great ones. I'm happy to report that this year may have been the best I've seen. We were able to get out under the stars a good part of every single night, which made for some very tired but happy campers. The week started out cold but clear with very good transparency. I usually judge the transparency at TSP by how well I can see Omega Centauri naked eye and there were a couple of nights it was exceptional. By mid-week the temperature had warmed but there were a few clouds and the transparency wasn't as good. By the end of the week we were back to really good conditions but most of us were so tired that we couldn't stay up all night to take advantage of it. Over the years we've gotten in the habit of keeping track of which of us was the last astronomer on the field each night. The "last man standing" then has bragging rights for the next day. I believe rr had the most LMS points for the week this year though I still contend that time spent sleeping on a lounge chair at the telescope should be subtracted from the time you shutdown and go to bed. And the nights you were the only guy at the star party don't count! Well done anyway, rr.

Night after Night.

One of the great things about a star party is that you leave your equipment set up for days at a time and plan projects/activities that take more than one night. I typically spend a good part of the first night checking out equipment, getting the imaging rig polar aligned, and just remembering how everything works. Then we

typically settle into a regular routine of observing, imaging, data collection, and generally working whatever is on the evening plan. The ranch has a walk-up café that operates all night and we'll usually take a break and wander down for something hot to drink around midnight. If you're feeling extra adventurous you can even get a brisket burrito or Frito pie (warning: keep some antacid handy.)



I tried to keep things simple and easy this year by limiting my imaging plan to narrowband H-Alpha CCD work and wide-field DSLR targets. Unfortunately, most of the emission nebula regions set early and rise late this time of year so I was target-limited during the a good part of the evenings I did do a lot of observing in parallel

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though and I was able to complete two of the telescope observing lists for pins. This year John Wagoner did a great job of putting together the regular telescope observing list. It was called 2012 and had a hidden theme that took a while to figure out. It had some challenging objects to locate and it forced me to do a fair amount of star hopping, which I don't often do anymore. I really enjoyed it. I encourage anyone interested to download the observing list from the TSP website and try it out. Here's a hint on the theme: connect the dots.



Beeper and the Herd

Days are busy at TSP as well. We typically get up around 10:00 a.m. and after breakfast we'll hit the vendors, process images and data, plan the evening activities, or catch an afternoon talk. We also do an ever expanding list of extra-astronomical activities like; mountain biking into town, hiking up Mount TSP, driving to Alpine to play golf or shop, and this year we added flying RC airplanes and helicopters. We located a suitable flying area early in the week, just north of the Prude Ranch horse corral, and pretty much flew every day we could. We even flew some days we probably shouldn't have (20 mph gusts!) Now rr only flew once during the week because he has a deep seated aversion to crashing his plane (he prefers to keep it pretty so he can hang it above the fireplace mantle at home), whereas Steve and I are pretty much game to go in anything less than a Category Four hurricane. Our planes are made from crash resistant foam and are easily repaired with a little five-minute epoxy and strapping tape however they do get a little rough around the edges after slamming into the rocks and cactus a few times.

One afternoon we got to the flying field and soon found ourselves surrounded by a herd of ten or fifteen horses. The horses were very interested in our airplanes. I guess they must have thought they looked like food because I had to keep revving up my propeller just to keep one of the pushy ones from nibbling on my tail. In all the excitement, I somehow locked my keys in the car (I still think it was one of the horses trying to keep us there until we fed them).

Steve and I walked back to camp and I asked the folks at the ranch about finding a locksmith. They told me that one of their ranch-hands "Beeper" just happened to be the only locksmith in the area and they'd have him meet

me right after he got done pumping out the septic tank. Sure enough Beeper turned up a little later and took me back out to the car. Beeper is a tall lanky cowboy with a hearing impairment that affects his speech and a heavy Texas drawl mixed in to make conversing even more interesting. And Beeper loves to talk! He talked about being a locksmith (I think) and he talked about the horses (I'm pretty sure) and he even talked about RC planes (I know because of the hand gestures). The only thing Beeper said clearly was that the charge for unlocking my car was \$50.00, which I was more than happy to pay. Thanks again, Beeper!



Happy Trails

Friday night, Al Nagler gave a great talk that covered his background and the design work he did for the NASA Moon missions that eventually led to his amazing eyepiece designs. Al's talk was followed by the "Great Texas Giveaway, Part 1" where they draw tickets out of a box and give away astronomical stuff to the star party attendees. ASLC actually did pretty well this year and by some strange coincidence they called us up one after another. Joe Ewing won first, then I won a \$50.00 gift certificate to Scope Stuff (payback for the car key fiasco), and then rr won a really nice book on telescope design. After three ASLC winners in a row they announced the next prize was an Ethos eyepiece. Could it be four in a row??? Steve and Kirby were about to explode but then... naaa, it went to someone else. Conditions outside were terrific and made for a great last night for most of us. Kirbini, Steve, and I packed up and headed home the next day leaving Sheriff Rick all alone at the Saturday night meteor shower but that's another story. The following are some of the images we collected this year. Please consider joining us at the 2013 Texas Star Party, if the world doesn't end in December.

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IC 443 (The Jellyfish Nebula) captured using an H-Alpha Narrowband filter. (By Dave Dockery)



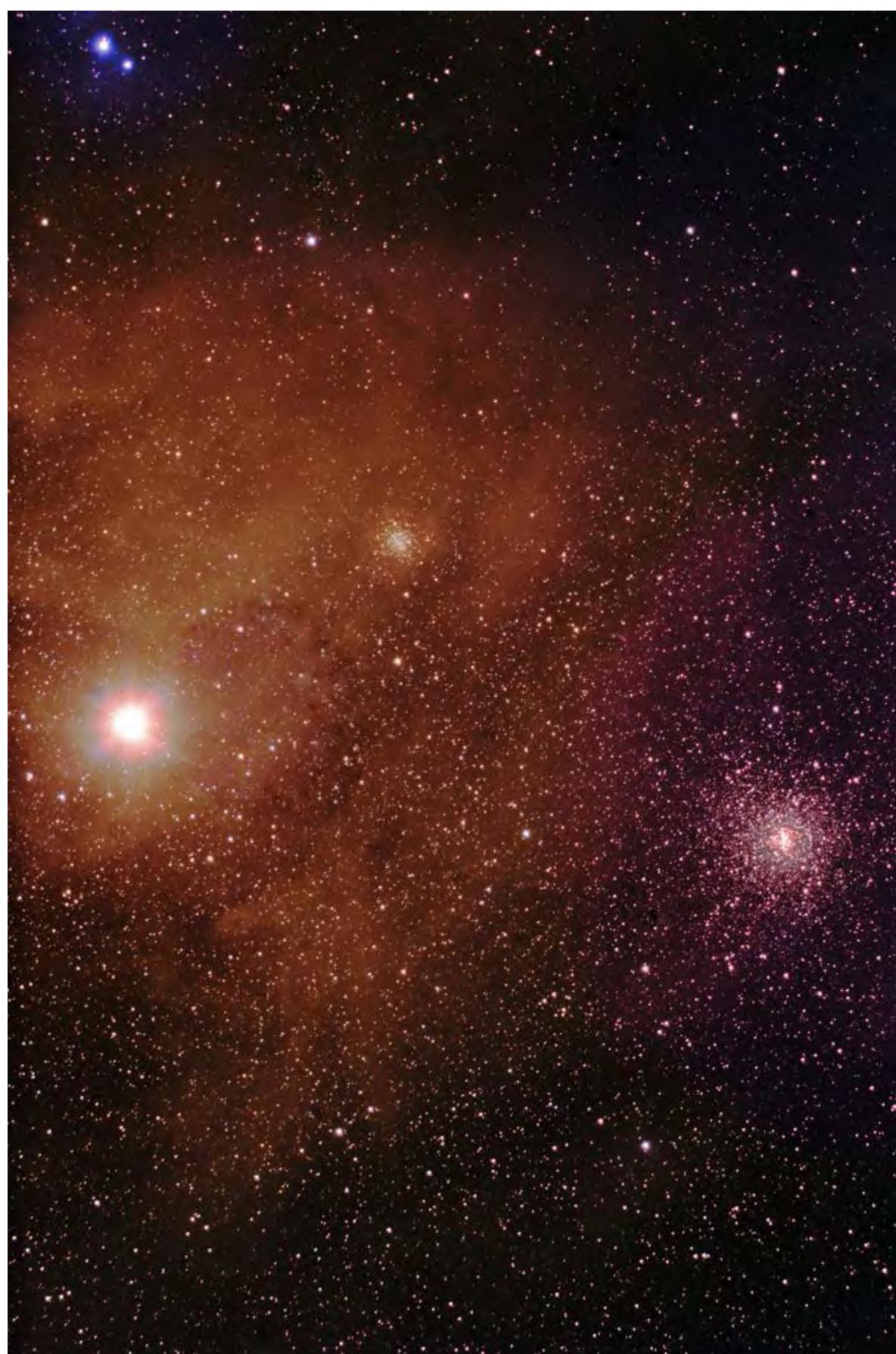
Rho Ophiuchi region captured using a Canon T2i DSLR and 100-mm lens. (By Rich Richins)

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Antares /
M4 region
captured
using a
Canon
550D
DSLR and
90mm
refractor
(By Kirby
Benson)

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Notes from the Sheriff - Saturday (early) Arrival:

Rich (aka Sheriff Rich or Rick) has been volunteering at the TSP gate since the first year he attended. Imagine his surprise when he got a phone call from Dave (Mr. TSP) Clark offering him early entry if he'd work the gate on opening day. For so many years, I'd heard how great the skies were on the Saturday before TSP. Finally, I could see for myself. The drive there was anything but enjoyable. There was a major dust storm between Las Cruces and El Paso, and a fair side wind from El Paso to the venue. I got there around three in the afternoon, and set about to spread out equipment, and set up as much of the canopy as possible so that no 'undesirables' could get too close to us. Unfortunately, in my zeal to set up a canopy over my truck (to control daytime heat), a gust of wind came up, and blew my canopy over my truck and it decided to try to mate with Dave's big canopy (which didn't have its cover on yet). Fortunately, it was cool enough during the week that I didn't need the new-defunct canopy. Still, the thought of an extra night of observing and imaging was there.

Dave came in a few hours later to set up his tent trailer (my home for one night). He stayed long enough to set up a few tarps, and we had dinner in Fort Davis. Dave went on to a motel for the night; Rich went back to the ranch. As dusk approached, the wind died down, and the 'scope covers came off. I got aligned and started doing some wide field Ha imaging. The wind came back up a bit and made observing difficult, so the cover went back on the Dob, and I figured I'd just enjoy looking at the night sky and would continue imaging, since a little wind doesn't matter when one images at 15mm focal length. I went up to the bathroom for a short bit. When I came out, it was as though the fog had rolled into San Francisco. All that dust was settling down to the ground. It was freakin' surreal. I lost sight of the surrounding hills, and decided to stop imaging before that dust got into everything. I was in bed by midnight, but had won my first "last man standing" award (the first of many).

A Minor Event at TSP 2012 by Kirbini

It was a peaceful evening at TSP. I was minding my own business and contemplating the night ahead and all the images that might be possible and just as I was about to nod off and get a little nap in.....

Suddenly the chair began to shake; there was a low roar and then an explosion. I was now totally awake and freaking out as I am sure you, dear reader, would do (freaking out, that is). Just as I began to get my bearings after the shock and began to look around there was another earth shaking event.

KaaBoom! I looked around, and there was a mini-crater next to my chair and another one about three feet from my telescope and the computer! And then, there came a buzzing, high pitched whine as if there was a dive bomber coming down out of the sky. I looked up and there it was; a Messerschmitt Me 262 and it was followed by a Nakajima B5N with a large red sun on the tail (with the image of Brother Steve emblazed in the center of that sun).

I thought the Messerschmitt was going to plow right into me when it pulled up at the last minute and a tiny parachute came floating down with a .22 shell casing attached. I grabbed the shell casing and pulled a itty bitty note out.

"Turn all your astronomy equipment and computers over to Sheriff Rich or the next bomblet will be for you, Kid!" wrote Master Dave (I knew it was Master Dave because he signed it Master Dave). Then it suddenly dawned on me, they brought these planes to TSP in order to confiscate all the equipment and electronics. These guys mean business! By these guys I mean Master Dave, Sheriff Rich and Brother Steve. So there, I named the rascals.

I hardly had time to contemplate this ultimatum when a new threat appeared out the twilight. This time it was the dreaded Breda Ba.88, the attack aircraft supremo and it also had the Sheriff Rich logo on the side. I now knew if I was to return to Las Cruces and my wife, two dogs and three cats I would need to surrender the telescope, mount and computer (with digital images, of course) to these guys.

Oh well, we just came to have fun and I really didn't need the equipment to do that.

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Minutes, April 2012 ASLC General Meeting

By John McCullough, Secretary, ASLC

Show and Tell:

David Anderson introduced Jerry Gaber and John Kutney as planned participants. David started the session with his Mark II light box that fits his 80-mm telescope for preparing exposure flats. He also showed a plate he uses to assist in leveling his tripod. Jerry also presented a light box he built that adapts to several of his ‘scopes to reduce the effects of less than perfect optics when he is imaging. John presented his 5800 Deep Sky Objects catalog from Valparaiso University in Spain that is available as a freeware download. Kenneth Kile passed around an article on “Build Your Own Observatory” from Sky at Night, a U.K. publication.

Call to Order:

Ron Kramer, President, Astronomical Society of Las Cruces (ASLC), called the meeting to order at 7:30 pm., 25 May 2012, Room 77, Doña Ana Community College (DACC), Las Cruces, New Mexico.

President's Comments:

Ron Kramer welcomed the group, noting that the Show & Tell session starts at 7:00 p.m. and the business session at 7:30 p.m. so that the presentation can start at 8:00 p.m. or shortly after. Ron thanked David Anderson for presenting the “Show & Tell” and the contributors for their interesting topics. Norman Butler, first-time visitor and newly relocated to Las Cruces from Hong Kong, mainland China, and other locations, is an avid amateur and a friend and former student of member Fred Pilcher. Brent Emmanuel, a renewing member, is back after an absence of a couple of years. Kenneth and Judy Kile are joining as new members tonight. Cynthia Summers is visiting again tonight.

There were no other guests or new members present.

Secretary's Report:

The Secretary, John McCullough, reported that the minutes for the April 2012 meeting were submitted for publication in the Society newsletter, the High Desert Observer (HDO). Robert Williams moved that the minutes from the April general meeting be accepted as submitted; Tracy Stuart seconded. The motion passed by acclamation. There was not an additional Secretary's report.

Treasurer's Report:

The Treasurer, Trish Conley, reported on the status of the Society's accounts, noting there was a \$266 positive budget balance for May and that the Society's Certificate of Deposit (CD) matures on 31 May. There was not an additional Treasurer's report.

Committee Reports:

Apparel Committee:

Ann McPhee, Committee Chairman, reported total sales of Society-logoed apparel at \$1,649.50 to date with \$546.60 worth of inventory remaining. She still has items available for purchase following tonight's meeting. Wes Baker suggested looking at hats or caps with a neck cape for the number of solar events conducted by the Society. Ann will check prices and availability. This is a fund raising effort for the Society.

Loaner Telescope Program:

Ron Kramer, acting Committee Chairman, presented the new agreement he will use to loan equipment to Society members. He also presented a list of the Society-owned equipment available for use by members for \$10 per month; the list includes approximate replacement cost if lost or damaged by the borrower. He noted that this is a

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means for new member astronomers to work with a variety of telescopes before they purchase one. Wes Baker noted that an EXT 90 he had on loan was returned tonight. See Ron after the meeting if you have questions, including the method for making equipment donations to the Society.

Membership:

John McCullough, Committee Chairman, thanked Trish Conley for her efforts maintaining the current membership roster. He expects to work closely with the new Publicity Committee Chairman, Daniel Giron.

Leasburg Dam State Park (LDSP) Observatory Committee:

Ron Kramer reported that he is waiting on the Cooperative Agreement from the State of New Mexico and the Park. There have been some changes to the proposed plans and the State is awaiting bids from contractors for concrete and electrical work. Ground breaking is expected in early July with "first light" by the end of the year. A working list of equipment for the observatory is planned to be complete by 01 June. An observatory director or Observatory Committee Chair is required to direct future events at the observatory.

Tombaugh Observatory:

Steve Shaffer, Committee Chairman, was not present. He is at the Observatory on campus assisting with the New Mexico State University's (NMSU's) Astronomy Department's monthly star party. He has reported to Ron Kramer that the Observatory structure needs sealing, perhaps with an elastomeric coating, to make it water-tight. Research is needed to find out if this is something NMSU Maintenance will do, if the Society is responsible, or if other arrangements must be made.

Outreach Committee:

Chuck Sterling, Outreach Coordinator, reported on recently completed and upcoming scheduled events. Viewing of the annular solar eclipse on 20 May required scrambling for a viewing location. The final location was the parking lot at Morningstar United Methodist Church. Over 200 people attended and there was a shortage of solar glasses. A Science Night was planned at Mesilla Valley Elementary on 03 May, but it was clouded out. Several members supported the Las Cruces Public School District "Count Me In" at the Field of Dreams on 22 May. A Girl Scout solar event was held at Mesilla Valley Bosque State Park; another one at Aguirre Springs was canceled. A star party was held on 01 May at La Academia de Idiomas y Cultura Dolores Huerta. A Venus Transit event will be held on 05 June at Veterans' Park.

Refer to the yahooroups.com for details.

Publicity:

Ron Kramer stated that there had been issues with the previous chair. Daniel Giron will become the new chair. Daniel provided an update on his efforts so far. He thought the solar eclipse event was very successful based on attendees' responses, considering the change of venue. Announcements were in the Bulletin and Pulse and there were fliers at Mesilla Valley Kitchen and Papa John's. The Sun-News had a very good article and Trish Conley was interviewed on 101.1 Gold radio announcing the event. The upcoming Venus Transit will get more airplay and there will be articles in Southwest Senior, Pulse, and the Bulletin by next Tuesday. Daniel will try to get the event noted on KFOX and KVIA television stations. He will need additional fliers and updates on the Society website. Daniel asked if the Society participates in the Electric Light Parade on 03 July or is interested in entering the parade. No decision was reached on that issue.

Society Website:

Steve Barkes, web master, was not present.

Society By-Laws Revisions:

Copies of the proposed By-Laws revisions and ballots for members to indicate their preference have been sent out via e-mail and USPS. Copies of the revisions are available for review and ballots are available for voting at tonight's meeting. The Board of Directors is actively seeking return of ballots from members on this issue.

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2012-2013 Budget Committee:

Creating the budget is in progress. The President, Treasurer and a member at large (Robert Williams) will finalize the budget and present it to the membership. The committee held its first meeting for 2012 and increased the allowance for the LDSP observatory by \$1000 plus \$100 for the Publicity and \$200 for increased insurance costs.

There were no additional committee or officer reports.

Old Business:

There was no old business discussed.

New Business:

Fund Raising:

A chairperson with grant writing experience is needed. A \$5,000 grant is available through the Space Consortium (Dr. Pat Hynes).

Swap/Auction:

This will be the topic of a future meeting. Excess equipment and various equipment donations may be dispersed sometime in the future.

Venus Transit Viewing

The Society plans to set up a number of solar scopes at Veterans' Park on 05 June, see above.

Society Brochure

Additional copies of the brochure are being printed.

Honorary Lifetime Membership

Ron recommended that the Society grant long-time member Cecil Post an Honorary Lifetime Membership. Chuck Sterling made a motion that this be done, effective 01 June 2012, Fred Pilcher seconded. The motion carried by affirmation.

Dark Sky Association

The Society is a member of the DSA. A number of DVDs have been sent for use by members. A banner of the Sun and multiple outreach resources are available.

There was no additional new business for discussion.

Announcements:

Items for Sale:

A set of binoculars is available for sale. See Ron Kramer after the meeting for details.

No additional items were announced for sale.

Announcements:

There were no announcements made.

Recognitions/Achievements:

There were no recognitions or achievements announced.

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Tracy Stuart moved to adjourn the business portion of the meeting at 8:14 p.m., Fred Pilcher seconded. The motion carried.

Presentation:

The program for May was presented by Society member Fred Pilcher. Fred discussed NASA's Dawn mission, a spacecraft which is exploring the asteroid Vesta and will also be sent to the largest asteroid, Ceres.

The presentation was followed by images and discussion of the recent annular solar eclipse.

The May meeting of the Astronomical Society of Las Cruces concluded at 9:00 p.m.

-Respectfully submitted by John McCullough, ASLC Secretary



May 20, 2012 Annular Solar Eclipse, taken by Dave Dockery

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Calendar of Events June/July 2012 (MDT)

June 22	7:30 p.m.	June ASLC General Meeting
26	9:30 p.m.	First Quarter Moon
30	8 p.m.	Mercury greatest distance from Sun (26 degrees)
July 03	12:52 p.m.	Full Moon
04	8 p.m.	Earth farthest from Sun for this year
09	Morning	Venus near Aldebaran
10	7:48 p.m.	Last Quarter Moon
12	10 a.m.	Venus greatest brilliance
18	10:24 p.m.	New Moon
26	2:56 a.m.	First Quarter Moon
27	7:30 p.m.	July ASLC General 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
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