



The High Desert Observer

The Bulletin of the Astronomical Society of Las Cruces

November, 2012

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 Society and public educational projects. Members receive the High Desert Observer, our monthly newsletter, plus membership to the Astronomical League, which includes their quarterly publication, Reflector.

Individual Dues are \$30.00 per year (from January 1 to December 31), Family Dues are \$36.00 and Student (full-time) Dues are \$24.00, which includes electronic delivery of the HDO. Prorated dues are available for new members. Dues are 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 \$5.00 (per year) Sky and Telescope magazine discount.

ASLC Board of Directors, 2012

Board@aslc-nm.org

President: Ron J. Kramer; President@aslc-nm.org

Vice President: Tracy Stuart; VP@aslc-nm.org

Treasurer: Patricia Conley; Treasurer@aslc-nm.org

Secretary: John McCullough; Secretary@aslc-nm.org

Director-at-Large: Steve Shaffer; Director1@aslc-nm.org

Director-at-Large: David Anderson; Director2@aslc-nm.org

Director Emeritus: Walter Haas

Committee Chairs

ALCOR: Patricia Conley; tconley00@hotmail.com

Apparel: Ron Kramer; ronjkramer@aol.com

Education: Rich Richins; education@aslc-nm.org

Grants: Sidney Webb; sidwebb@gmail.com

Librarian: Brenner Fody; mebrennerf@live.com

Loaner Telescope: Ron Kramer; ronjkramer@aol.com

Membership: John McCullough; Secretary@aslc-nm.org

Night Sky Network: OPEN

Observatory:

- Leasburg Dam: Ron Kramer; ronjkramer@aol.com

- Tombaugh: Steve Shaffer; Director1@aslc-nm.org

Outreach: Chuck Sterling; csterlin@zianet.com

Publicity: Daniel Giron; astrofix@comcast.net

Web-Site; Joseph Clower; j.clower@hotmail.com

HDO Editor: Ron Kramer; ronjkramer@aol.com

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November Meeting (Note DATE Change)

Our October meeting will be held on Friday, November 16, in Room 77 at Doña Ana Community College, with the following schedule (please note the date change for November only - due to the Thanksgiving holiday):

7:00 pm - 7:30 pm Show & Tell

7:30 pm - 8:00 pm Business Meeting

8:00 pm - 9:00 pm Guest Speaker & Presentation

This month's speaker is Fred Pilcher. He will discuss the Aztec and Mayan Calendars.

December Meeting

In lieu of our December Meeting there will be our Annual Holiday Party, to be held at Las Cruces Airport, EAA Hanger. Starting at 5:30 pm there will be food, drink, entertainment, gift-exchange (bring one/get one) and a few surprises.

Please contact me if you plan to attend.

If your last name begins with "A" - "M"
- bring a salad or dessert

If your last name begins with "N" - "Z"
- bring a side dish

We also need volunteers for decorations & set-up, gift-exchange, entertainment, clean-up, etc.

A Note From the President, November, 2012



With the Elections finally over, we can now get back to our daily lives. No more campaigning, no more spending huge sums of money and time seeking office. And, thankfully, no more rhetoric and empty promises. Of course I'm talking about the ASLC elections which were held at the October 26 meeting. Our new slate of Directors and Officers, effective January, 1, 2013 will be:

- President: Chuck Sterling
- Vice President: Jerry Gaber
- Secretary: John McCullough
- Treasurer: Patricia Conley
- Director-at-Large: Steve Shaffer
- Director-at-Large: David Anderson
- Director Emeritus: Walter Haas
- Immediate Past President: Ron Kramer

I would like to congratulate the new officers and wish them a successful term in office.

The past two years as President have been very rewarding. We were able to expand on several programs, including the Leasburg Dam State Park Observatory, the Telescope Loaner Program and our Outreach activities. Most Committee positions are filled and several new ones have been added including Publicity, Grants/Fundraising and Librarian. Our membership is increasing (we added more than 20 new members in 2012) and our Treasury is stable,

The 2012 Holiday Party, scheduled for Saturday, December 1, 2012, will be held at the Las Cruces Airport, EAA Hanger. Starting at 5:30 pm, it will be a "pot luck" dinner, with everyone bringing something to eat. Those people whose last name starts with the letters "A" - "M" should bring either a salad or dessert. If your last name starts with "N" - "Z" please bring a side dish.

If you wish to participate in the gift exchange, please bring a wrapped gift (under \$25.00) with your name on it. All participants will be given a number. These numbers will be drawn at random and the holder of the ticket will take any gift. This will continue until all gifts are drawn.

Please let me know if you are coming, and what you are bringing (for food).

Contact me if you have any questions. Thanks.

We have lots of apparel for sale, including hats, t-shirts (short- and long-sleeved), hoodies and denim shirts. Please talk to (or email) me at the next meeting if you're interested in purchasing this gear. We are also looking for a replacement Quartermaster, who will be responsible for ordering and maintaining our apparel inventory,

As usual, instead of a December meeting we will hold our Annual Holiday Party.

The following meeting will be on Friday, January 25th, starting at 7:00 pm.

Ron J. Kramer

October, 2012 Outreach Events by Jerry McMahan

Tombaugh Elementary School, Wednesday, October 17

We had the Moon low in the sky early. I saw that a basketball goal would be in the way from where I was set up. Chuck noticed it as well. I decided not to move the five-inch since the Moon would be low in the sky and that was a mistake.

There were thin clouds through which the Moon and the Summer Triangle stars could be seen and little more. People with GOTOs could get on Albireo. My GOTO is not working very well so I was just on a couple of stars for most of the evening.

We did have number of participants with telescopes despite the lack of targets. Kyle Degrave, Rakesh Nath and Nikki Nielsen, from the NMSU Astronomy Department, brought an 8-inch Schmidt Cassegrain. Bert Verstraete brought his SC. I need to learn to spell Bert's last name, or get him to change it. I guess he would prefer the former. Sid Webb had his new Orion 10 inch GOTO Dobsonian, Chuck Sterling had his 10-inch SC, Steve Shaffer had the small Dobsonian and I had the above mentioned with the semi GOTO.

Clyde Tombaugh Observatory open house, Friday, October 10

Steve Shaffer opened the club dome. I came to help, but as usual Steve did most of the work. The telescope tracked very well all evening. Dave Anderson mentioned at the meeting that he enjoyed looking through the telescopes at the other two domes. I was told in the past that the two other scopes were 14-inches each. This time they said they were both 12-inch mirrors. Maybe I will call them 13-inches.

Moongaze, Saturday, October 20

It was Astronomy Day and this was part of our program. The other part was held at Mayfield High Schools Field of Dreams. Chuck Sterling and I were at the International Delights. Steve Shaffer, who usually attends, was at the other site. Dave Anderson and Danial Giron stopped by after finishing at the school.

Robert Hastings, who teaches Astronomy at the Community College, sent some of his students to look through our telescopes and ask questions. The East Mesa Campus has the classes during the day, so he doesn't get a chance to have night sessions with them. Two girls spent a lot of time asking Chuck questions. We told them that we were impressed with their dedication to the class.

Astronomy Day, Saturday, October 20 by Ron Kramer

After some initial confusion regarding the venue, it was finally determined that we would hold our Astronomy Day at the Legends West Park, which is just to the southwest of the Field of Dreams. Since the park itself is in a grassy area, but lower than the typical ground level by about 15 feet, once on the scene the ASLC members decided to move the venue to the adjacent parking lot. After setting up several solar scopes (including the double-stack) we were treated to several wonderful flares and prominences. The ASLC members in attendance (Steve Shaffer, Jerry McMahan, Tracy Stuart, Daniel Giron, Judy Kile, Ron Kramer) hung around for the rise of Jupiter, and then packed up. Total attendance was about 50 and many questions were asked by the public.



Concert at Leasburg Park, Saturday October 27

After a concert, we set up telescopes. Actually I started setting up before the singer had finished. I didn't even know that my power supply had a siren, let alone how to turn it off. I did get it figured out after an embarrassing minute.

Ron Kramer had his 5-inch refractor, which tracks now. Steve Shaffer had the little Dobsonian and Niles Allen had a two scopes on the same mount. One was a 60mm refractor and the other was a larger refractor. He used the smaller scope as a finder. It was Niles that first suggested that I start writing up the outreach events since the HDO was always asking for material.

I had the 5-inch Mak. I actually did a real alignment twice. I failed both times. The third time, I lied to it (yes the stars are centered) and it worked. It missed the Moon by a degree and a half, but it tracked perfectly all evening. Steve says the telescope is just used to me lying to it.

It was about a day before full Moon. I knew that the crater Wargentín should be visible, but could not spot it at a magnification of 76. Niles went to 130 power and it was obvious. It is a crater that is nearly filled to the brim with lava.

We didn't have a big crowd, but several people stayed late, even though it was getting pretty cold, to observe and ask questions.

Renaissance Faire, Saturday - Sunday, November 3 - 4 by Tracy Stuart

THE SUN WAS QUITE BUT THE FAIRE WASN'T

The weekend of November 3rd and 4th the Society participated in the Renaissance Faire. Eleven members of our group manned five telescopes to give the public a look at the sun in both Hydrogen alpha and white light. Unlike a couple of weeks ago at Astronomy Day, the sun was very quiet as far as spots were concerned. We only saw a couple of small ones both days. The H-alpha did show some very nice prominences which impressed our guests. We had a steady stream of people both days and I estimate we handled at least a few hundred each day. In fact as soon as Ron, Trish, and I set up the first three scopes the others setting up their booths around us were coming by to have a look.

The members of the society working at the booth were judged to have the "Best Costumes in the Realm" and the society we awarded \$50. That plus the donations we received more that covered the entry fee. I would say we had a very successful Ren Fair this year, as we always do.

I would like to thank again the members who volunteered, most of whom went above and beyond. I really appreciate your help.

Events

ASLC hosts deep-sky viewing and imaging at our dark sky location in Upham. We also have public in-town observing sessions at both the International Delights Cafe (1245 El Paseo) and at Tombaugh Observatory (on the NMSU Campus). All sessions begin at dusk.

We frequently offer solar observing at the Farmer's Market on Saturday mornings. For further information please visit our website at www.aslc-nm.org.

Outreach

Outreach is a very important part of ASLC. We are always looking for more volunteers to help us educate the public. Even if you do not have a portable telescope to bring to the events, please consider attending our public outreach programs to help answer questions, share knowledge and point out constellations in the sky.

Calendar of Events: November 2012 - January 2013 (Mountain Time - 24 hr. clock)

Nov	13	15:08	New Moon
	16	19:00	ASLC MONTHLY MEETING
	17	17:00	OUTREACH; Music Under The Stars, Franklin Mountains (El Paso) State Park
	17	19:00	OUTREACH: ASLC MoonGaze (at International Delights Cafe)
	17	03:10	Leonids Meteor Shower
	20	07:31	First Quarter Moon
	28	07:46	Full Moon
	30	20:00	NMSU Open House (Tombaugh Observatory)
Dec	01	17:30	ASLC Holiday Party (Las Cruces Airport, EAA Hanger)
	04	15:59	Mercury Western Elongation
	06	08:32	Last Quarter Moon
	07	18:00	ASLC MoonGaze (at International Delights Cafe)
	08	17:00	OUTREACH; NSO + ASLC Star Party; Leasburg Dam State Park
	09	02:30	Moon - Spica Conjunction
	10	05:46	Moon - Saturn Conjunction
	11	06:48	Moon - Venus Conjunction
	13	01:42	New Moon
	13		Geminid Meteor Shower
	15	16:00	OUTREACH; Music Under The Stars Star Party; Leasburg Dam State Park
	19	22:19	First Quarter Moon
	21	04:12	Winter Solstice
	21	19:00	NMSU Open House (Tombaugh Observatory)
	22	18:00	OUTREACH: ASLC MoonGaze (at International Delights Cafe)
	22	01:00	Ursids Meteor Shower
	28	03:21	Full Moon
Jan	01		Venus Western Elongation
	03	06:00	Quadrantids Meteor Shower
	04	20:58	Last Quarter Moon
	05	12:54	Moon - Spica Conjunction
	10	04:36	Moon - Venus Conjunction
	11	12:44	New Moon
	18	19:00	NMSU Open House (Tombaugh Observatory)
	18	01:44	First Quarter Moon
	19	18:00	OUTREACH: ASLC MoonGaze (at International Delights Cafe)
	21	19:57	Moon - Jupiter Conjunction
	25	19:00	ASLC MONTHLY MEETING
	26	03:21	Full Moon

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

Minutes, October 2012 ASLC Meeting

Show & Tell:

David Anderson started the session with a description of the New Mexico State University (NMSU) astronomy Open House. The Open House includes the two (2) university domes and, most nights, the Society's dome containing the Clyde Tombaugh-built telescope. At the last event a week ago, a steady stream of people viewed the Moon, M31, Neptune, and other objects. The next event will be 30 November. Robert Williams displayed a hat/cap with neck flap that he got at Big Daddy's Flea Market for \$6. It may be possible to purchase a quantity of these to embroider with the ASLC logo.

Call to Order:

Ron Kramer, President, Astronomical Society of Las Cruces (ASLC), called the business meeting to order at 7:25 pm., 25 October 2012, Room 114M, Dona Ana Community College, Las Cruces, New Mexico.

President's Comments:

Ron Kramer, President, welcomed the group to tonight's meeting. He thanked David for the "Show and Tell" session. Ron noted that there were a number of topics to be discussed, thus the slightly early Call to Order.

There were no new members or guests present at tonight's meeting, but Ron asked that all members be sure to check in on the roster.

Secretary's Report:

The Secretary, John McCullough, reported that the minutes for the September

2012 meeting were submitted for publication in the October issue of the Society newsletter, the High Desert Observer (HDO). There was an inadvertent omission in the published version: Fred Pilcher, chairman of the 2013 Nominating Committee, had presented three (3) candidate names for the position of Director-at-Large. These were David Anderson, Steve Shaffer, and Rich Richins. Rich later removed his name from consideration but was already included in the minutes and on the ballot. Ron Kramer moved that the minutes from the September general meeting be accepted as amended and submitted; Chuck Sterling seconded. The motion passed by acclamation. There was not an additional Secretary's report.

Treasurer's Report:

The Treasurer, Trish Conley, reported that the Society had received \$63 for apparel and \$40 for a telescope since the last report. There were no significant balance changes since the August report (last made by the Treasurer). A hard copy of this month's report was pending printer repair. Major expenditures for the Leasburg Dam State Park (LDSP) observatory are pending. Ron Kramer noted an equipment donation for the LDSP observatory had been received, but more are needed, including 2" eyepieces. Tracy Stuart moved that the Treasurer's report be accepted, Robert Williams seconded.

The motion passed by acclamation. There was not an additional Treasurer's report.

Committee Reports:

Apparel:

Ann McPhee, Committee Chair, was not present. Ron Kramer, temporary Committee chair, reported on apparel sales and noted that jackets, "hoodies", and other items will be available after the meeting. An order for additional items is pending requests for specific items, particularly cool weather items. Ron will continue to fill in as temporary Committee chair, but a new chair will be required.

Education:

Rich Richins, Committee Chairman, was not present. There was no committee report.

Fund-Raising and Grants:

Sidney Webb, Committee Chairman, has a grant application pending with the New Mexico Space Consortium that has a deadline of 11 November 2012. This is for up to \$5000 to support the Leasburg Dam State Park (LDSP) observatory equipment requirements but includes outreach to the local community. Any other ideas for fund-raising efforts are welcome.

Society Library:

Brenner Fody, the new Librarian, arrived late. He reported that there are 155 titles in the library published from 1840-1990 and the listing is available on the Yahoo! group. Volumes are available for checkout by members with advanced notice. The listing may eventually include the book publisher and the publishing date. Additional donations are welcome.

Loaner Telescope Program:

Ron Kramer, acting Committee Chairman, reported the program is doing well.

The loan agreement is in place, is working well, and has generated \$80 for the Society. One telescope is currently on loan to Robert Williams. Ron is working on additional telescopes, including a 10" Dobsonian, to add to the program. Jerry Gaber will help with the repair efforts. This is a good way for new members to work with a variety of telescope systems if they are uncertain about which type will fit their needs. Members may contact Ron if they have questions about the loaner policy, including how to donate equipment to the program.

Membership:

John McCullough, Committee Chairman, reported that membership for the year is up with the addition of seventeen new members, some of whom are very active in the Society. However, it was noted that more participation is needed from the longer-term membership. John encouraged members to participate in the upcoming Renaissance Arts Faire that is a major opportunity to interface with the community.

Leasburg Dam State Park (LDSP) Observatory Committee:

Ron Kramer, Committee Chairman, reported on the progress of construction of the observatory at LDSP. The park director had taken images of the 16" Meade to incorporate into publications for the park. The State of New Mexico Parks Department has written purchase orders and is contacting contractors; all paperwork appears to be in place. Construction may begin as early as next week and take 4 to 8 weeks to complete. Ground breaking will not occur until the Oooperative Agreement is in place. The observatory's sliding roof fabricator is pending the construction schedule. Ron has five gold-painted shovels ready for action. First light is now expected in January 2013.

Tombaugh Observatory:

Steve Shaffer, Committee Chairman, reported a good Open House last week with a steady stream of viewers. There are no issues with the telescope, but there is still leakage through the structures coating (all three structures have this issue).

Outreach Committee:

Chuck Sterling, Outreach Coordinator, reported on recent events. A star party was held at Bright Beginnings pre-school on 21 September with good attendance. A Moon Gaze was held at International Delights Café (IDC) on 22 September and 20 October (low attendance at the October event). The Tombaugh Elementary star party on 17 October had clouds, but was successful with 8-10 telescopes including support from the NMSU Astronomy Department. There will be a star party at Columbia Elementary on 08 November starting at 6:00 pm.

Renaissance Arts Faire is 03-04 November at Young Park. The Tucson (AZ) Astronomy Expo will be 10-11 November. Astronomy Day 2012 was 20 October; the location was not ideal but about fifty people attended and observed the Sun, Moon, and Jupiter. A "Music Under the Stars" event will take place at LDSP on 27 October with a star party. There will be similar events at the Franklin Mountains State Park on 17 November and in December.

Renaissance ArtsFaire 2012:

Tracy Stuart, Committee Chairman, announced this year's Faire will be 03-04 November at Young Park; set-up will be from 2:00-4:00 pm on 02 November. The booth will be in a similar location in the Vendor's area as last year. He has ten (10) passes for volunteers in the booth who will preferably be in costume. He has a projected schedule on the Yahoo! group but more volunteers are needed. Tracy expects to be on-site all day both days and needs commitments for booth set-up and tear-down on Friday and Sunday, respectively.

Publicity:

Daniel Giron, Committee Chairman, reported that with sufficient lead time, news coverage of LDSP events can be arranged. If lead time is not available, it can be covered by Society members and then submitted to news outlets.

Daniel noted that publicity for Astronomy Day 2012 gave the location as Legends West, but that the location was change "on-the-fly" and members of the public couldn't find the event. The Society needs to be conscientious about holding events when and where they are publicized. He is ready to send invitations to local dignitaries to attend the LDSP groundbreaking, but needs date and time before mailing them. Ron noted that if at all possible, Walter Haas plans to attend both the groundbreaking and First Light events. Daniel pointed out that the first Astronomy Day 2013 occurs in April and suggested that the Society start planning now.

Society Website:

Steve Barkes, web master, and his assistant, Joseph Clower, were present. Steve announced that their roles will be reversed: Joseph will take over as Webmaster and Steve will assist him. They are still working on the details of how this will work, but Steve will continue to maintain the science areas and Joseph will keep the current events areas current. Steve asked about the presentation for November's meeting: Fred Pilcher will present on the Mayan calendar and the end of time.

There were no additional committee or officer reports.

Old Business:

1. Elections - Final ballots are pending for tabulation. Fred Pilcher, Elections Committee Chairman, presented the results. Twenty-five (25) ballots were received and were unanimous for the slate of nominees. The election results were declared valid and officers for 2013 are:

President	Chuck Sterling
Vice-President	Jerry Gaber
Secretary	John McCullough
Treasurer	Patricia Conley
Director-at-Large	David Anderson
Director-at-Large	Steve Shaffer

2. Las Cruces Lighting Ordinance - The new ordinance goes into effect 31 March 2013. The Society

can provide a list of offenders through Ron Kramer to the City on a monthly basis. There will be two (2) persons on the City staff to verify complaints and enforce the code. There may be a presentation next year from Codes Enforcement regarding the new ordinance.

3. State-wide Star Party - Ron Kramer has been in communication with the TAAS (The Albuquerque Astronomy Society) president. This event will be postponed until at least March 2013. Participating clubs are expected to include Albuquerque, Silver City, Carlsbad, El Paso, Alamogordo, and Las Cruces. This event may also include a Messier Marathon.

4. November 2012 meeting - The monthly meeting will be 16 November (because of the Thanksgiving holiday) in the regular location, Rm. 77, DAAC.

5. Holiday party - This year's party will be 01 December (no business meeting, no HDO) at the EAA hangar, Las Cruces airport, with a potluck dinner format. Volunteers will be needed for a gift exchange, food coordination, set-up/decorations (hangar decorating will occur on 30 November), a 2012 Society presentation, and clean-up. Contact Ron Kramer via email to volunteer. More details are forthcoming.

There was no additional old business discussed.

New Business:

1. Field trip - William Wren, assistant director at McDonald Observatory, has offered the Society a tour of the facility. Details are pending. The members present exhibited enthusiasm.

2. Astronomical League *Reflector* - Ron Kramer has been filling in as an assistant editor. He will take over as editor starting with the March 2013 issue. He will need an assistant, primarily for article proofreading, starting then. Contact him if you can volunteer.

There was no additional new business for discussion.

Items for Sale:

Joseph Clower has purchased a 2.4" Celestron from the Society.

Various items from the Ken Kile estate will be for sale following the meeting.

No additional items were announced for sale.

Announcements:

Robert Williams announced the Southwest Photographic Symposium at San Andres High School from 8:00 am to 6:00 pm on 10 November 2012

Meredith Hildreth announced the Grand Opening of the Museum of Nature and Science on the Downtown Mall from 4:30 to 7:00 pm on 02 November

There were no additional announcements made.

Recognitions/Achievements:

John Kutney has submitted requirements for another certificate from the Astronomical League; award is pending.

There were no other recognitions or achievements announced at tonight's meeting.

Fed Pilcher offered a motion to adjourn and Robert Williams seconded. The motion passed by acclamation and the business portion of the meeting was adjourned at 8:18 pm

Presentation:

This month's presentation was made by Society member and President-elect Chuck Sterling on "Okie-Tex Star Party 2011-2012". The star party is held at Camp Billy Joe, a church youth camp, near Kenton, OK. Although there were some weather issues, particularly wind, it was a good time. Chuck presented several very nice astro-images taken by Society members and nice images of the star party activities.

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

The October meeting of the Astronomical Society of Las Cruces concluded at 8:50 pm.

-Respectfully submitted by John McCullough, ASLC Secretary

Classifieds

The following items are on a "first-come, first-served" basis, to all readers of the ASLC's *High Desert Observer*. If you are interested in a particular item, please contact the individual listed next to the item. In some cases the ASLC is assisting the seller, so you can contact the ASLC member.

All items are sold "as is" unless otherwise warranted by the seller. It is suggested that the buyer inspect and evaluate the item prior to purchasing. Items are non-refundable and non-returnable, unless prior agreement is made between the seller and the buyer.

If you have an item to sell, please contact ronjkramer@aol.com

The following materials (except for the LX200) will be brought to the October meeting for examination and purchase:

2. Ken Kile estate. Please contact Ron Kramer (ronjkramer@aol.com) if you're interested in any of the following. There are adapters, cables and other accessories for larger Meade scopes.

Celestial Seeker, Illuminated Constellation Finder; \$5.00

Meade, 10" LX200 with ETC-60AT Autoguider, dew remover, field tripod, JMI dolly, solar filter, rolling cart with computer and loaded software for telescope/image control, added counter weights, box with cables and accessories, etc.; \$2250.00

Meade, Variable Projection 1.25" Camera Adapter, in original box, \$35.00

Meade, Basic 1.25" Camera Adapter, in original box, \$20.00

Meade, Variable Polarizing System, 1.25"; \$25.00

Meade, #647 Flip-Mirror System, 1.25"/2"; \$110.00

Meade, T-Mount, Pentax K; \$10.00

3. The following items are part of an anonymous donation. Prices are negotiable. Please contact Ron Kramer (ronjkramer@aol.com) if interested. Our Society gets 100% of the proceeds from this material:

Argus 40 camera, uses 620 film, 75 mm lens with case, built in August, 1953; \$5.00

Canon, Canonet 28, 35mm film camera; \$5.00

Capital TK-79 Light Meter, with carrying case; \$5.00

PRO mini-flash; \$2.00

Soligor, 400mm f5.6 telephoto lens, for Pentax (needs good cleaning); \$15.00

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



ASLC - Sharing the Universe
With our Community
for Over 60 Years

