



President's Message - February 2012



We had a great meeting last month with about 30 members attending plus six guests, several joining our Society that very evening. We talked about the Leasburg Dam State Park Observatory, introduced the new Treasurer (Patricia Conley) and Director-at-Large (David Anderson), showed the new book by fellow ASLC member Phil Simpson, and had a wonderful presentation by Fred Pilcher. See the minutes for more details.

We are planning a new event at the Bureau of Land Management's Dripping Springs Natural Area on Saturday, March 31. Daniel Park, a musician living in Albuquerque will provide the music (oldies, modern and everything in between). The Friends of the Organs will provide the food and the ASLC will provide the telescopes. The event will begin at approximately 5:30 p.m. Any ASLC member bringing a telescope will be fed for free (we work for food!!!). We will talk a bit more about this at the February 24 meeting.

We also have a star party scheduled at Desert Hills Elementary on Thursday, February 23. Contact Chuck Sterling for more information.

I will be giving a presentation, *Astronomy in DaVinci's Time* on Saturday, March 10 at Silver City Astronomy Club. Contact me for more information.

Due to a change in Federal Tax Law, which we were unaware of, our 501(c)(3) Non-Profit Status was changed. This problem was identified and is now in the process of being resolved and will be retroactive upon finalization.

On Saturday, January 7, Las Cruces held a New Mexico Statehood Centennial Parade. Organizations were invited to follow a theme, and had to represent a particular decade. We were given very little advance notice, but designed two banners shown on Page 5. These banners will also be used at other events like the Renaissance Faire, Astronomy Day, and the SEA Share Fair.

We represented the 1950's since we were founded in 1951, and the banners were hung from my 1959 GMC pickup, with 1950's rock & roll music blaring from the CD player. Right behind the truck was a float from Frankey's Oldies But Goodies Doo Wop Band, playing live music from the same period.

There were over a thousand participants in the parade, including several schools, Native American tribes, Keep Las Cruces Beautiful, a military color guard and other wonderful groups. It is estimated up to 20,000 spectators were on hand to view the parade.

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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

The February meeting will be held on Friday, February 24, in Room 77 at Doña Ana Community College. "Show and Tell" begins at 7:00 p.m., while the regular meeting starts at 7:30 p.m. Our speaker for this meeting is Patricia Hynes. She will be discussing the "New Mexico NASA EPSCoR Program".

Dr. Hynes will briefly introduce herself and the name of the program she run at NMSU. Next she will discuss the astronomy programs they fund, which can be found on their website at: http://www.nmspacegrant.com/nasa_epscor.php. Scroll to the bottom of the page and you will find hyperlinks to the four astronomy projects funded by the program.

Dr. Hynes is not an astronomer, but should you have any questions on the projects, please e-mail them to her and she will do her best to get answers prior to the talk.

She will also speak on the educational work they are doing with K-Ph.D. programs across the country, and discuss the International Symposium for Personal and Commercial Spaceflight and the Community Partnership luncheon.

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>.



President’s Message – February 2012

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Special thanks to Trish Conley and Tracy Stuart for their support on this one. We also saw Wes and Carol Baker and Chuck Sterling taking photos.

I would also like to introduce Raymond Madson as our new Publicity Committee Chair. He will be tasked with "spreading the word" about our organization, working with the press, radio, television, etc. By informing the media about our activities, events and meetings, we can gain new membership. We can also avoid schedule conflicts with NMSU and other local organizations, where we both hold events on the same date and time.

The Board of Directors is considering changing the meeting times. This will be discussed at the February meeting. We are considering of the following times:

- 7:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.: Business Meeting
- 7:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.: Show & Tell
- 8:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.: Presentation

Do not forget we still have plenty of apparel for sale, including hats, t-shirts (short and long sleeved), hoodies and denim shirts. Please talk to Ann McPhee if you are interested in showing your support for our Society.

I am looking forward to seeing you all at the February 24th meeting, starting at 7:00 p.m. Our guest speaker will be Dr. Patricia Hynes, Director of the New Mexico Space Grant Consortium.

Your President,
Ron J. Kramer

February Outreach Activities Roundup

By Jerry McMahan

Sunrise Elementary School - February 3, 2012

We had a number of telescopes available at Sunrise Elementary and it was a good thing. We had long lines of young observers at each telescope. We think some of them may have come from the adjacent Cesar Chavez Elementary. I believe Chuck told some one that they could attend also.

Society members in attendance included Chuck Sterling with his ten-inch, Daniel Giron, who was on Chuck's 100-mm refractor, Jerry Gaber with his 16-inch Dobsonian, Steve Schaffer and the 4.5-inch Dobsonian, Bert Verstraete and his 8-inch Celestron. President Ron Kramer and Trish Conley had the 5-inch Meade refractor and Jerry McMahan with the usual 5-inch Maksutov.

It was partly cloudy with a slight breeze that made it a cold session, but the clouds did not have much effect on the objects being observed, which included Jupiter, Venus, the Moon, the Orion Nebula, the Double Cluster and perhaps other things that I did not hear about. The school is well out-of-town, so despite the Moon, city lights did not add to the view of the Orion nebula. This is one of the best schools to avoid light pollution.

Chuck had found that an Iridium Flare was predicted to be visible, so at the proper time, the audience was directed toward its position. It was very bright and a real crowd pleaser.



The New Mexico Centennial Day Parade in Las Cruces

By Chuck Sterling

This is for the folks scattered around the country that are surprised at how well we speak English or wonder if they should accept a check written on a New Mexico Bank: New Mexico has joined the Union. We are now a state in the United States of America. To the inevitable questions, “Really? When?”, I tactlessly respond, “1912”.

Las Cruces had a rather large parade a few weeks ago to celebrate this centennial, in which ASLC participated and during which I snapped (or beeped) nearly five hundred pictures of floats, cars, motorcycles, horses, and gosh, I forget what all. Oh yes, there was a classic GMC pickup truck containing Ron Kramer and Trish Conley with Tracy Stuart walking shotgun. Banners on both sides of the truck refer to a few ASLC activities and accomplishments over the years since its founding in 1951 by Clyde Tombaugh, Walter Haas, Jed



Durrenberger, and other unsung heroes.

Astronomy was otherwise well represented by several other organizations, including the Clyde W. Tombaugh Elementary School. Certainly no surprise, the kids proudly proclaimed “We believe Pluto is a planet”, a view many of us share in spite of its “odd” orbit.



The folks from the National Solar Observatory, “Sunspot”, in the Sacramento

Mountains near Cloudcroft were also on hand with a large orange globe floating above with human-readable sunspots.



Not to be outdone, Spaceport America, one of the more recent additions to New Mexico's list of scientific endeavors, brought up the end of the parade as the earlier floats, cars, and I forget what all passed by on the other side of the street returning to their starting points.



Yes, this was quite impressive to a country boy from Michigan, where as a boy the longest parade I remember seeing was a line of trucks waiting to be emptied of their loads of sugar beets...

Here are the Astronomical Society of Las Cruces banners displayed at the parade:





ASLC 2012 Budget

By Patricia Conley, Treasurer, ASLC

Normally the Budget is presented to the membership at the July meeting prior to the beginning of the fiscal year (October 1 to September 31). However, this budget for the current fiscal year (October 1, 2011 through September 31, 2012) was never passed by the Board, due to a lacked of a quorum. We were able to get this passed at the January Board Meeting and now present it for your approval.

The general membership will be voting at on the budget at the February meeting. Please review the proposed budget presented below prior to the meeting. If you have any questions, feel free to contact me at treasurer@aslc-nm.org.

Proposed 2012 ASLC Budget (October 1, 2011 to September 31, 2012):

	7/5/2011	Notes	Proposed 1/16/12	Revised 1/20/12
OPENING BALANCE				
Checking	\$ 1,600.00		\$ 1,740.00	\$ 1,740.00
Saving	\$ 2,000.00		\$ 2,000.00	\$ 2,000.00
CD	\$ 20,000.00		\$ 20,000.00	\$ 20,640.00
Sub-Total	\$ 23,600.00		\$ 23,740.00	\$ 24,380.00
INCOME				
A.L.P.O. Conference	\$ -		\$ -	\$ -
Apparel	\$ 400.00		\$ 400.00	\$ 400.00
Donations	\$ 50.00		\$ -	\$ -
Grants	\$ -		\$ -	\$ -
HDO	\$ 40.00		\$ 40.00	\$ 10.00
Interest on CD				\$ 360.00
Membership Dues	\$ 1,800.00		\$ 1,530.00	\$ 1,530.00
Photos at Events	\$ 200.00	Kirby & Chuck images	\$ 200.00	\$ 200.00
Telescope Loaner Programs	\$ -		\$ -	\$ -
Sub-Total	\$ 2,490.00		\$ 2,170.00	\$ 2,500.00
EXPENSES				
A.L.P.O. Conference	\$ -		\$ -	\$ -
Apparel	\$ 350.00		\$ 350.00	\$ 350.00
Astro. League Memberships	\$ 310.00		\$ 255.00	\$ 255.00
HDO (mail)	\$ 175.00			\$ 120.00
Holiday Party	\$ 400.00		\$ 350.00	\$ 350.00
IDA Membership	\$ 50.00		\$ 50.00	\$ 50.00
Insurance	\$ 600.00		\$ 711.00	\$ 711.00
Leasburg Observatory	\$ -	Capital Expense		
Loaner Telescope Maintenance	\$ -	Repairs, eyepieces, etc.	\$ -	\$ -
Maintenance	\$ -		\$ -	\$ -
Patsy Tombaugh Donation	\$ 100.00	\$50 to Hospice, \$50 to Symphony		\$ 100.00
Photos for Events	\$ 100.00		\$ 100.00	\$ 100.00
PO Box	\$ 70.00		\$ 65.00	\$ 65.00

The High Desert Observer



Publicity/Outreach	\$ 350.00	Business Cards, Renaissance Faire, etc.	\$ 350.00	\$ 350.00
Safe Deposit Box	\$ 25.00		\$ 35.00	\$ 35.00
Tombaugh Observatory	\$ -			
Sub-Total	\$ 2,530.00		\$ 2,266.00	\$ 2,486.00
<i>SURPLUS/DEFICIT</i>				
Total Income	\$ 2,490.00		\$ 2,170.00	\$ 2,500.00
Total Expenses	\$ 2,530.00		\$ 2,266.00	\$ 2,486.00
Sub-Total	\$ (40.00)		\$ (96.00)	\$ 14.00
<i>CLOSING BALANCE</i>				
Checking	\$ 1,560.00		\$ 1,740.00	\$ 1,500.00
Saving	\$ 2,000.00		\$ 1,854.00	\$ 1,854.00
CD	\$ 20,000.00		\$ 20,050.00	\$ 21,000.00
Sub-Total	\$ 23,560.00		\$ 23,644.00	\$ 24,354.00
July budget never approved as we did not have a Quorum				
NOTE: does not include any expenses for Leasburg Observatory				
NOTE: does not include any sales of excess equipment				
NOTE: 1/20/12 the Treasurer determined there would be \$360 interest on the CD in FY 2012 and current				
CD balance is \$20,460				

Minutes, January 2012 ASLC General Meeting

By John McCullough, Secretary, ASLC

Show and Tell:

David Anderson started off this month's session by demonstrating a small, beginner-friendly telescope he built from bits and pieces he acquired from various sources, including Surplus Shed.

Call to Order:

Ron Kramer, President, Astronomical Society of Las Cruces (ASLC), called the business meeting to order at 7:12 pm., 27 January 2012, Room 77, Dona Ana Community College, Las Cruces, New Mexico.

President's Comments:

Ron Kramer, President, welcomed the group, noting that tonight's meeting was again preceded by a "Show and Tell" session organized by David Anderson. Ron thanked Dave and noted that presentations for "Show & Tell" do not have to be highly technical to be informative.

Ron welcomed several visitors to tonight's meeting: Fred Pilcher introduced his guests, Daniel Klingsmith and Tony Velasquez. New member Donna Aranda was attending her first meeting and former member Daniel Giron was attending after a long absence. Also present were guests Karl Ray, Jim Morgan, and Sidney Webb.

Ron reported that Robert Yearley, who had been elected Treasurer for 2012, had found it necessary to resign because of personal issues. Patricia (Trish) Conley subsequently volunteered to resign as Director-at-Large and fill the Treasurer position. David Anderson volunteered to fill the subsequent vacant Director-at-Large position.



Secretary's Report:

The Secretary, John McCullough, reported that the minutes for the November 2011 meeting were submitted for publication in the January edition of the Society newsletter, the High Desert Observer (HDO). Trish Conley reported a non sequitur in the Committee Reports section. John noted the inaccuracy and will correct it in the electronic version. Tracy Stuart moved that the minutes from the November general meeting be accepted as corrected; Bert Stevens seconded. The motion passed by acclamation. There was not an additional Secretary's report.

Treasurer's Report:

The Treasurer, Trish Conley, provided a report on the status of the Society's accounts. She also requested that all members' annual dues for 2012 be paid as soon as possible (the Society's dues year runs from 01 Jan to 31 Dec). Expenditures for the year so far include \$242 for New Mexico Centennial Parade banners, \$90 for fundraising photos, \$10 New Mexico Corporation fee, and \$100 in memory of Patsy Tombaugh (\$50 to both the Las Cruces Symphony Association and the Mesilla Valley Hospice). The Society budget for 2012 is being assembled and should be presented to the membership at the February meeting. There was not an additional Treasurer's report.

Committee Reports:

Apparel Committee:

Ann McPhee, Committee Chairman, reported there remains \$612 of inventory and \$1581 of apparel has been sold. Items will be available for purchase following tonight's meeting. She suggested that warmer, cool weather apparel may need to be ordered.

Loaner Telescope Program:

Janet Stevens, Committee Chairman, is recovering from surgery at home and was not present. Trish Conley asked that members let her know if they have Society equipment in their possession.

Membership:

John McCullough, Committee Chairman, asked that members register their presence on the forms provided at the entrance to the room.

Leasburg Observatory Committee:

Ron Kramer, Committee Chairman, reported on committee actions for the benefit of new members. The Society is supporting the construction of an observatory at LDSP despite some light issues because of proximity to Las Cruces. New Mexico State University (NMSU) has provided a 16" Meade LX200 on a permanent basis for public outreach and education. The New Mexico Parks Department will build the structure (no cost to the Society) and the archeological survey is underway. The Parks Department investment could be on the order of \$55000 and will include an adjustable height telescope mount to be Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant and a commercial roll-off roof structure from Ohio. The Society will provide research grade peripheral and support tools and operational expertise. First light is expected by the end of this year.

Tombaugh Observatory:

Steve Shaffer was not present because he is supporting an observatory open house and star party on campus.

Outreach Committee:

Chuck Sterling, Outreach Coordinator, was also on campus supporting the observatory open house and star party. Ron Kramer reported he will make an astronomy presentation at Cesar Chavez Elementary on 30 Jan followed by a Sun Gaze on 03 Feb. The SEA ShareFair on 11 Feb has been postponed because of liability insurance delays at Mesilla Valley Mall. Ron and Trish Conley will support a Sky Safari program by the Museum of Natural History on 28 Jan. Ron will do a presentation in Silver City on 10 Mar.



Society Website:

Steve Barkes, Webmaster, needs inputs from members to update the calendar, images, and events schedule. The link to the archived lectures/presentations appears to be damaged and Steve is checking into this. The Society has applied for membership in the Night Sky Network (a 6-week process). If approved, this will add an astro-events calendar link to the website. This year’s Messier Marathon is planned for 24 Mar; details will be on the website.

There were no additional committee or officer reports.

Old Business:

Publicity Committee:

The Society needs to establish such a committee, especially so there is a single point of contact (POC), the chairperson, to interface with the public and other organizations. Please let Ron Kramer know if you are willing to serve on this committee, especially as its chair.

Las Cruces Lighting Ordinance

The City Council will meet at 5:30 pm, 31 Jan, at City Hall to discuss Part II of this ordinance. Part I was discussed in early January and dealt primarily with business and commercial lighting issues. The Society needs supporters, not agitators, and will focus on mandatory enforcement and penalties of the ordinance and elimination of “grandfathering” all existing non-conforming installations.

There was no additional old business discussed.

New Business:

Janet Stevens is home recovering from recent surgery.

New Mexico Centennial Parade:

The Society had banners made and participated with a display in the parade section representing the 1950’s. There were approximately 2000 parade participants and 10000 viewers.

Fundraising:

The Society needs a “go-to” person for grant proposal writing. Let Ron know if you are familiar with this process or know of someone who can help the Society.

ASLC PO Box:

We are looking for the third P.O. Box key. Janet Stevens, now Trish Conley, has one and John McCullough has one. If you have the third one, please contact Trish.

Book Signing:

Phil Simpson’s “Guide to the Constellations” has been published. Phil has a number of copies with him tonight, for sale for \$25+tax, and signing. See him after the meeting.

RASC Handbook:

Bert Stevens still has copies available for \$23.

There was no additional new business for discussion.

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Announcements:

Items for Sale:

Jerry Gaber has several items for sale at discount to Society members. Otherwise, they will go on AstroMart.

No additional items were announced for sale.

Announcements:

- Bert Stevens needs articles for the HDO.
- Tracy Stuart needs leads on presentation speakers.
- Robert Williams announced that Texas Star Party (TSP) registration is open. The event is 15-20 Apr.
- The Enchanted Sky Star Party at Socorro, NM, is in October.
- A memorial service for Patsy Tombaugh will be held at 2:00 p.m., Sunday, 12 Feb, at the Unitarian Universalist Church, 2000 S. Solano.

There were no additional announcements made.

Recognitions/Achievements:

John Kutney has applied for the Astronomical League (AL) Lunar Club Award.

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

Steve Barkes moved to adjourn the business portion of the meeting, Jerry Gaber seconded. The motion carried. The business portion of the meeting was adjourned at 7:55 pm.

Presentation:

Fred Pilcher, Society member, presented "The Yarkovsky and YORP Effects or How Lowly Photons Control the Destiny of Planets". All objects with temperature above absolute zero, that is, of course, all objects, radiate electromagnetic radiation. By the De Broglie relation, the photons of this radiation carry momentum. Radiation from a surface is therefore analogous to rocket exhaust, and the radiating object recoils like the rocket body. The recoil is very small and completely negligible for larger bodies. For objects of 60 kilometers and smaller the net effect over the lifetime of the solar system can be large. Bodies in this size range can be moved toward or away from the Sun, or be deflected into orbits crossing the orbits of the major planets. The rotation periods can increase or decrease, sometimes by large amounts, the axes of rotation can become reoriented in space. It is even possible that a piece can become detached to become an orbiting satellite or, in some cases, move away to become an independent Sun-orbiting object. The Yarkovsky effect has a major role in delivering killer asteroids to the Earth.

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 January meeting of the Astronomical Society of Las Cruces concluded at 8:55 p.m.

-Respectfully submitted by John McCullough, ASLC Secretary



Calendar of Events February/March 2012 (MST)

Feb. 21	3:35 p.m.	New Moon
24	7:30 p.m.	February ASLC Meeting
29	6:21 p.m.	First Quarter Moon
Mar. 03	1 p.m.	Mars at opposition
05	3 a.m.	Mercury greatest distance east of the Sun (18 degrees)
05	10 a.m.	Mars closest to Earth
08	2:39 a.m.	Full Moon
11	2 a.m.	Daylight Savings Time Begins
14	7:25 p.m.	Last Quarter Moon
19	11:14 p.m.	March Equinox
22	8:37 a.m.	New Moon
24	7:30 p.m.	March 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
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ASLC - Sharing the Universe
With Our Community
for Over 50 Years

