



aslc bulletin

The Bulletin of The Astronomical Society of Las Cruces
www.aslc-nm.org

November-December, 2004

Total Lunar Eclipse Graces Our Evening Sky

On Wednesday, 27 October, several members of the ASLC supported a public lunar eclipse viewing on the NMSU campus. The NMSU astronomy department was on hand manning their two observatories. Mark Vincent opened up the ASLC dome as well. My original plan was to image the eclipse, but with the extremely pessimistic weather forecast I decided to help out at the campus instead.

We arrived around 7:15pm and began to setup up various telescopes and binoculars. Nils setup his 5" Burgess refractor and a pair of 15x70 binoculars. I setup my 80mm Stellarvue AT1010 refractor. Vince showed up with his binoculars, and John McCullough, Cindye, and Richard were there to provide moral support and help to answer questions.

While not a large crowd, we had a steady flow of people on each of the scopes, and through the domes. There were lots of questions on what was happening, why the moon was red, etc. The people were very much impressed by the views through the scopes and binoculars, and all seem to really appreciate our efforts in supporting the event.

We had a few people bring their own telescopes, and Nils was there to help them with pointing the scopes, and providing advice on their use. The public's enthusiasm really gives you the feeling that what we were doing was worthwhile. Nils was also able to drum some interest in the next Telescope Making Workshop as well.

All in all, it was a really nice event. The weather cooperated until totality, and then we had some clouds which later cleared as the shadow started to recede across the lunar surface.

The length of totality was quite impressive, and the seeing was actually quite good. It was pretty much the consensus that the best views were to be had through binoculars or the short focal length refractor. In addition, widefield views including background stars during totality were particularly pleasing.

To those who didn't make it out, you missed a very nice time, and beautiful show.

-- Steve Barkes



The lunar eclipse of October, 2004 captured just East of DABCC by Rich Richins with a Canon 300D and Celestron 11" SCT.



"Exit Totality" by Dave Dockery. Imaged with Canon 300D through his Televue-85

Upcoming ASLC Events

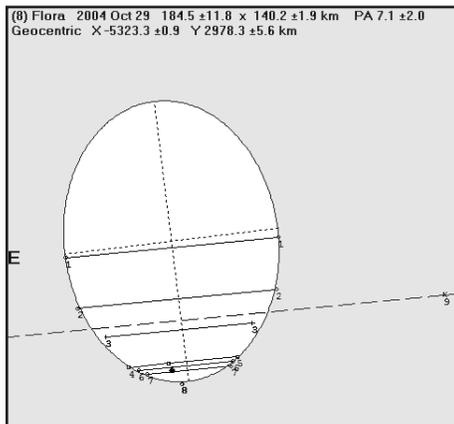
Please see the ASLC website aslc-nm.org for more information

- November 13, 20 - Telescope Making Workshop
- November 19 - ASLC Monthly Meeting (7:30 pm, DABCC)
- November 20 - MoonGaze (International Delights Cafe)
- December 11 - Deep Sky Observing (Upham)
- December 17 - ASLC Christmas Dinner
- December 18 - MoonGaze (International Delights Cafe)

ASLC - Sharing the Universe With Our Community for Over 50 Years
ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY of LAS CRUCES PO Box 921 Las Cruces, NM 88004

Local Astronomers' observations show Asteroid Flora larger than expected

On October 29, local astronomers working in collaboration with IOTA, the International Occultation Timing Association, monitored the occultation of the 9.4-magnitude star, SAO 79355, by Flora. According to IOTA's David Dunham, the observations of the occultation from 7 stations in New Mexico "are fit well by an ellipse of dimensions 140 +/-2 km by 184 +/-12 km, significantly larger than the predicted diameter of 135 km". Robert James observed a flash midway in the occultation which accounts for his split timing. Given the poor seeing and position of the observations (only 17 degrees above the horizon), it's possible that the flash was due to scintillation. Interestingly, the occultation occurred 13 seconds earlier than predicted.



Timings					
Sta #	Observer	Location	D, U.T	R, U.T.	Duration
			h m s	h m s	(seconds)
1	David Dunham	Caballo	71735.9	71746.8	10.9
2	David Dunham	Rincon (remote)	71735.6	71745.8	10.2
3	William Stein	Radium Springs	71736.9	71744.4	7.5
4	Robert A. James	Las Cruces	71737.00	71739.03	2.03
5	Robert A. James	Las Cruces	71739.05	71742.57	3.52
6	Rich Richins	Las Cruces	71737.53	71742.38	4.85
7	Mark Vincent	Las Cruces	71737.80	71742.10	4.30
8	Paul Maley	Orogrande	71740.96	71740.99	0.03

A Name for our Bulletin

After who knows how many years, it's time to name our bulletin. Al Bailey, the long-time publisher of the "aslC bulletin," tried at least once to get a name for the bulletin and has provided a list of several good names. Several others have chimed in giving us a fairly formidable list to narrow down.

Please take a look at the list and think of which name(s) best embrace our club's history, location and/or traditions. You're also welcome to add to the list. We'll spend a few minutes at the November meeting narrowing down the list, then make a final decision at the December meeting (also known as the Christmas Party).

The List

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|----------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|
| News & Views | Border Skies | Southern New Mexico Nebula |
| Pluto Ponderer | Clear Skies | Deep Space Messenger |
| Chihuahuan Skies | Enchanted Skies | Outer Planet |
| Desert Stars | Monthly Mirror | The ASLC News Nebula |
| Evening Star | Monthly Imager | The Observatory |
| Daily Planet | Telrad Tattler | Guidestar |
| Southern Skies | Eyepiece (Enchanted Eye?) | Observer |
| Desert Skies | Reflector | Sun News |
| High Desert Observer | Refractor | Las Cruces Planet Press |
| Las Cruces Stargazer | Tracker | ASLC Eye on the Sky |

ASLC's Second Year at Renaissance Faire an Award-Winning Event

Passing almost as quickly as a shooting star, the 33rd Annual Renaissance Faire has come and gone. For the second year in a row, ASLC members manned its star booth in the Children's Realm to give Ren Faire goers a glimpse of the sun, the moon and the magic of the universe. Although charismatic and almost stunning in their award-winning costumes, ASLC booth volunteers had to take a backseat to the true center of attention – the telescopes. Thanks to ASLC wizards Richard Jones and Bert Verstraete, two telescopes equipped with filters for solar viewing were available throughout the weekend for kids and adults of all ages to observe the sun. Even though sporadic cloud cover compromised the view off and on, the overall solar observation - complete with sunspot activity - was spectacular and well received by the public.

ASLC's telescope-building guru, Nils Allen attracted his own share of awe and amazement both Saturday and Sunday with his step-by-step telescope building demonstration. Nils aptly managed to answer technical questions, assemble, disassemble and re-assemble the 4.5-inch homemade telescope for Ren Faire onlookers all within the 14-hour, 2-day span.

And back to the award-winning costumes...ASLC Ren Faire participants had a moment in the spotlight Saturday as the DAAC Renaissance Faire royalty presented them with an award for the Best Costumes in the Children's Realm. Great job members!

Photo images of the sun, moon, comets, nebulas and other dynamic shots of the universe that were on display at the booth by ASLC astro-photographers Dave Dockery, Rich Richins and Bert Verstraete, received rave reviews, "oohs" and "ahhs" by passersby that took the time to stop and enjoy them. As members on a mission to educate and recruit, there was also a wealth of astronomical information available to share with anyone stopping by the ASLC booth. In addition to numerous handouts that ranged from sky charts and moon maps to children's dot-to-dot and word searches, ASLC Ren Faire volunteers eagerly jumped in to answer questions, share knowledge and promote ASLC membership.



Participants in the award-winning ASLC Renaissance Faire booth pose in front of our display.

Thanks to the generous contributions from ASLC members Dave Dockery, Rich Richins and Nils Allen, the ASLC two-day raffles generated more than \$63 in donations in support of Project Astro. Congratulations to the following winners!

Saturday, Nov. 6 Drawing – The Rosette Nebula, framed image by David Dockery

Winner: Lavonya Friday, Washington Elementary School Librarian, El Paso

Sunday, Nov. 7 Drawing – Organ Mountain Moon Rise, framed image by Rich Richins

Winner: Shawna Barker, Las Cruces, NM

Sunday, Nov. 7 Drawing – The National Geographic Mars Map

Winner: Diane Walker, Las Cruces, NM

Sunday, Nov. 7 Drawing – Telescope Building Workshop Scholarship, donated by instructor Nils Allen.

Winner: Art Lucero, Las Cruces, NM

ASLC's success at this year's Renaissance Faire can be best measured by the delighted facial expressions of those who looked through the telescopes to see the sun and its sunspots for the first time, by the voices young and old that asked questions about the universe, the sun, the moon, the planets – and by the simple words "thank-you" that were heard so many times throughout the weekend.

Special appreciation goes out to all of the ASLC members that contributed to the set-up, tear down and operation of the ASLC star booth, and those who took time out of their busy schedules to put together materials, share images, set-up telescopes, and the numerous other contributions that made it possible for ASLC to participate successfully in this year's Renaissance Faire. A big "atta-boy" also goes out to ASLC Renaissance Faire Committee Chairman John McCullough for a job well done in pulling everything and everyone together.

Next year's Renaissance Faire promises to be better than ever, (Right John?)

- Cindye Sellards

Late Fall Sky

Chart shows positions of objects at about 8 pm for early November, about 7 pm for late November and about 6 pm for early December



Nov. 12



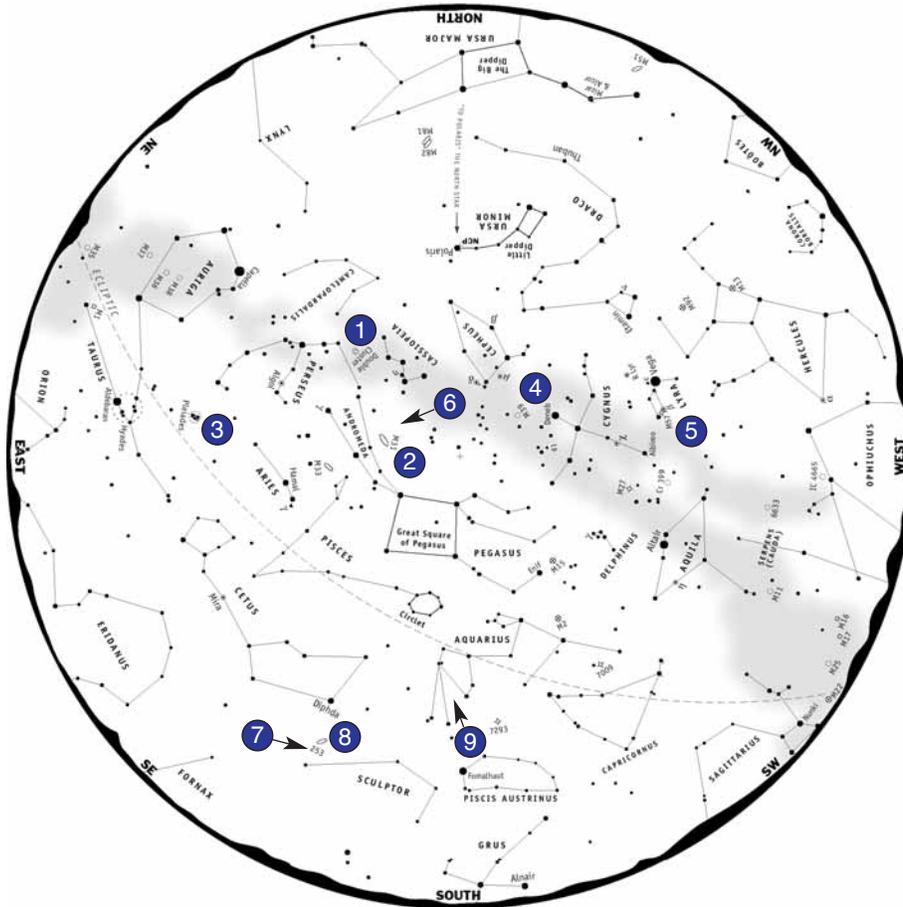
Nov. 18



Nov. 26



Dec. 04



Mars



In Libra
Mag. 1.9
Rises about 5 am

Jupiter



In Virgo
Mag. -1.8
Rises about 3 am

Saturn



In Gemini
Mag. -0.1
Rises about 9 pm

Astronomy Calendar

Please see the ASLC website <aslc-nm.org> for more information

November 12	New Moon Taurid Meteor Shower
November 17	Leonid Meteor Shower
November 18	First Quarter Moon
November 26	Full Moon
December 4	Third Quarter Moon
December 7	Moon occults Jupiter (visible in E. New Mexico)
December 13	Geminid Meteor Shower
December 21	Winter Solstice
December 22	Ursid Meteor Shower
December 26	Full Moon

November-December Sky Tour

Binocular Objects

- 1) Double Cluster
- 2) Andromeda Galaxy, M31
- 3) The Pleiades
- 4) M39 Star Cluster

Telescope Objects

- 5) M57 (The Ring Nebula)
- 6) NGC 185 (Galaxy)
- 7) NGC 288 (Globular Cluster)
- 8) NGC 253 (Sculptor Galaxy)

Challenge Object

NGC 7492 (globular cluster)

MEMBERSHIP in the ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY of LAS CRUCES (ASLC) offers...

Frequent observing sessions and parties; Opportunities to work on club and public educational projects; The *ASLC Bulletin*, our monthly newsletter; Membership in The Astronomical League, including the quarterly *A.L. Reflector*, the newsletter of The Astronomical League. ASLC members are also entitled to a \$10 club discount on subscriptions to *Sky and Telescope* magazine (discount rate is \$33/year). Dues are \$35 per year. For those who opt to receive the *ASLC Bulletin* electronically, a \$5 discount applies. Send dues, payable to A.S.L.C. with application form or a note to:

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

Sky & Tel. subscribers MUST submit their renewal through the Society Treasurer for the special club rate. To avoid a lapse in delivery, this must be done when S&T sends their reminder, 4 months in advance.

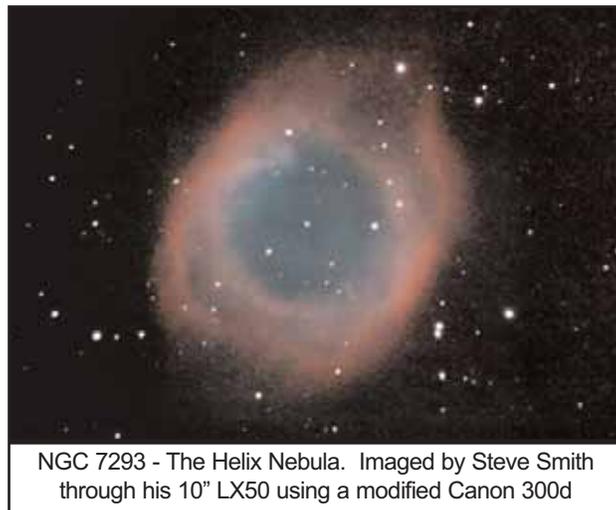
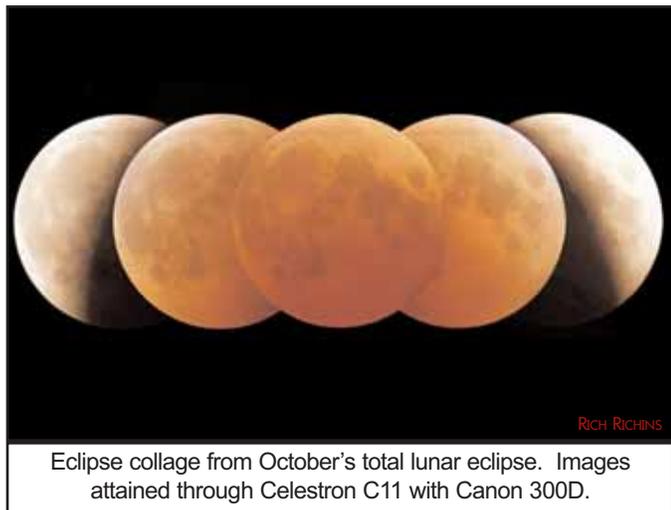
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ASLC IMAGE GALLERY



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