



President's Message - September 2011



Finally, finally it seems as if the cooler weather is approaching. Hopefully the clouds will dissipate and clear skies will follow. Jupiter is rising early, Mars is a few hours behind, and if you're really lucky you can still catch a glimpse of Saturn just before sunset.

Our August meeting was a nice treat. Former member, Michael Sherick, invited us to his home to check out his automated telescopes. We actually got to see some imaging done with the instruments in Las Cruces and received a tour of his workshop where he is working on the new telescope for his Cloudcroft observatory. For someone who does not do any imaging (yet), I was truly impressed by the great view of M31 after a 30 second exposure on his CCD. It makes me want to accelerate my plans for my own observatory.

Another former member, Harold Weisbrod, donated his 8-inch Celestron to the Society for outreach. I have this instrument and after checking it out will hand it over to our Loaner Telescope Chair (Janet Stevens) to add to our inventory. Michael Sherick also donated a smaller Meade which will be checked out as well and will be given to Janet for the Loaner program.

In addition, current member, Jerry McMahan donated an Orion metal carrying box including 5 Orion eyepieces plus a Barlow and six filters. This will greatly help our Loaner Telescope program. Of course we are looking for additional eyepieces to really make the program fly.

Elections for officers are coming at the October Annual Meeting so if you are interested in any of these positions, please contact the Nominations Committee. Positions available include President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer and Director-at-Large. Some current officers have agreed to continue for the next year, but there are still several open slots.

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

Also, please don't forget to pay your dues; it's our major source of income which is needed for many of the projects scheduled for 2011 and 2012. Thanks!

I hope you are able to attend our September 23rd meeting. The monthly "Show & Tell", chaired by David Anderson will start at 7:00. Please check our website (aslc-nm.org) for details on the monthly presentation.

Your President,
Ron J. Kramer



The Astronomical Society of Las Cruces (ASLC) is dedicated to expanding public awareness and understanding of the wonders of the universe. ASLC holds frequent observing sessions and star parties and provides opportunities to work on club and public educational projects. Members receive the High Desert Observer, our monthly newsletter, membership in the Astronomical League, including AL's quarterly A.L. Reflector. Club dues are \$30.00 per year, including electronic delivery. Send dues payable to ASLC with an application form or note to: Treasurer ASLC, PO Box 921, Las Cruces, NM 88004

ASLC members are entitled to a \$10.00 discount to Sky and Telescope magazine.

ASLC OFFICERS, 2011

Board@aslc-nm.org

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

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

Treasurer: Janet Stevens
Treasurer@aslc-nm.org

Secretary: John McCullough
Secretary@aslc-nm.org

Immediate Past President
Bert Stevens
Ppresident@aslc-nm.org

Directors:

Wes Baker
Director1@aslc-nm.org

Nils Allen
Director2@aslc-nm.org

Education Chairman: Rich Richins
Education@aslc-nm.org

Newsletter Editor: Bert Stevens
blslcnm@comcast.net

Emeritus (life) Member
Walter Haas

This Month's Observer

President's Message.....	1
Next Meeting.....	2
September Outreach Activities Roundup	3
Upham Deep Sky Observing Report	3
Tombaugh Observatory Use	4
August Meeting Minutes	10

Next Meeting

Our speaker for the September meeting is Phil Simpson who will discuss his new book on the constellations.

Articles Needed

The High Desert Observer is **your** astronomical society newsletter. The quality of the newsletter can only be obtained if we get high quality articles from people like **you**. Please take some time and write an article on what you are doing in astronomy that you would like to share with your fellow amateur astronomers. Thanks in advance for your efforts!.

Events

ASLC hosts both a deep sky viewing and imaging at our dark sky location in Upham and a public in-town observing session for the public at the International Delights Cafe. Both sessions begin at dusk. We also frequently provide solar observing at the Farmer's Market on Saturday mornings. For information on these and other events, please see the ASLC website at <http://www.aslc-nm.org> .



September Outreach Activities Roundup

By Jerry McMahan

Open House at the Clyde Tombaugh Observatory - September 2, 2011

The Society participated, with the NMSU Astronomy Department, on Friday, September 2, 2011. Steve Schaffer opened the dome for the Society's 12.5-inch Cassegrain telescope. He was joined by Jerry McMahan. The event was even of interest to some of the students and astronomers from the Community College and NMSU, since some of them did not know what was hiding in the South dome.

The other two domes contain a Meade 14-inch and Celestron 14-inch Schmidt-Cassegrains. The Astronomy Department also had a 16-inch Meade Dobsonian set up outside the domes. The 16-inch was on Comet Garradd (C/2009 P1), while the other 'scopes were on M27, the Dumbbell Nebula, and on the double star Albireo.

Steve had the Society scope on the Moon, using a 75mm (!!!) eyepiece that allowed observers to barely get the entire Moon in the field of view. The waiting line to see the Moon was very long all evening.

When the Moon became too low to observe, many people were still in line and were disappointed that we had lost the view. We told them about the Moongaze at the International Delights the next night. Some of them did show up at the Moongaze to view the Moon.

After the Moon, Steve moved the scope to M57, the Ring Nebula and then Albireo. We finish up at about 11:45 p.m. The Astronomy Department had been long gone by that time.

Moongaze - September 3, 2011

Clouds were a problem at the International Delights the entire evening. We did have enough breaks in the clouds to be able to see the Moon for most of the night. Saturn was low and behind clouds, so we did not get a last chance to observe it for this year. By about 10:30 p.m., the Moon disappeared behind clouds and did not reappear and neither did anything else in the sky. It was the earliest that we have ever had to pack up and leave.

The Moon was a day before first quarter and was in near-conjunction with a star that appeared just off of the limb. According to Sky Charts, the star was Dschubba (7 Del Sco) in the head of the Scorpion.

Chuck Sterling, Steve Schaffer, Dave Anderson and Jerry McMahan were in attendance. We had the usual 10-inch Schmidt Cassegrain, 5-inch Maksutov and 4.5-inch Dobsonian. Dave brought a 30mm refractor that he made himself. If there is a competition for the cutest telescope, Dave should enter this refractor.

One lady thought I looked familiar and asked if I "had ever taught anyone?" After some discussion it was determined that she was a Canutillo 1995 graduate and that I had been her math teacher. I did not ask her if she learned anything.

Upham Deep Sky Observing Report – August 27, 2011

By Dave Dockery

Stanley, Michelle, Steve Shaffer and I were the only ones to make the trip to Upham last night. We were all a little surprised there weren't more people at the first nice DSO night in months. It was a beautiful clear night with the Milky Way running along the meridian as night fell. Conditions were warm with a light breeze, fairly steady seeing, and good transparency until around 11:00 p.m. when clouds rolled in from the north.



I planned to image the supernova in M101 and then the comet in Sagitta but it took a while to get everything working so I was only able to get fifty minutes on M101 before clouds shut us down. The processed image is reproduced below with the supernova labeled. The supernova is now one of the brightest stars in the galactic field and was easy to observe in both Stanley’s 12-inch and my 14-inch reflector. I am not sure if Steve was observing it in his ‘scope as well. Stanley made a drawing and it was actually the first star he put down on the paper, before he even knew it was the nova.

The image (below) was taken with a modified Canon DSLR (10 x 5minutes at ISO 800) using a 190mm Mak-Newtonian reflector working at f/5.3. I wasn’t able to pull out much color due to the limited exposure time.

We also observed Comet Garradd. It was initially very close to the star Zeta Sagitta and I overlooked it several times when I first swept around looking for it. It was actually fairly well defined at 113x with a bright core and the hint of a tail (as seen in Rich Richins’ photo from the previous night). Garradd is currently moving fairly quickly and the relative motion was very apparent after only twenty or thirty minutes. Unfortunately, I didn’t get



an image before we were clouded out. Guess I’ll save that for the Okie-Tex Star Party next month.

As Steve said earlier, the road is in excellent condition. They’ve cut back the mesquite brush after the final turn and graded that last half mile down past the DSO site. The main Upham road has been bladed recently as well, so there is no excuse for not coming out next month...

Tombaugh Observatory Use -- Version 09/11/2011

By David Anderson and Steve Shaffer from a class by Dave Dockery

The Tombaugh Observatory available to Astronomy Society of Las Cruces (ASLC) houses a 12.5-inch, F = 200 inches (5080mm), f/16 classical Cassegrainian telescope. The telescope was constructed in the 70’s by Clyde Tombaugh and early members of ASLC. The housing was made from an Honest John missile body hack sawed to length. Mirrors were ground and polished in the optics shop at White Sands Missile Range. The mount is a gravity driven model manufactured by Grubb’s of Dublin in 1895.



As shown below, every part of this telescope and mount is made from heavy, unyielding metal. Colliding with the equipment will hurt you, not it. **Watch your head.**

Eyepieces and diagonal do not have a retention groove and can fall out if not restrained well. The eyepiece set screw is nylon or plastic. It will not cause damage so tighten it firmly on eyepieces and the diagonal.

The eyepieces are not threaded for filters. The diagonal is threaded but that may not be an acceptable option. If you need to use filters to enhance planet details, you will need to bring your own threaded eyepiece and filters.

The light switch is on the left as you enter the east door. Begin by recording your visit in the log book. Use a ladder to get up to the panel at the bottom of the dome shutter. The shutter should have

been left facing north. Remove the screws and panel, placing the panel on the roof directly in front of the opening. Rotate the dome to the direction of the sky to be viewed. The rotation control is mounted on the east wall just to the right of the doorway. Open the dome shutter by plugging in the control cord dangling down from the motor at the top of the dome and turning the switch to open. When the shutter comes within a foot of vertical, turn the switch to off. Turn the switch to open and then to off until vertical is reached. Raise the bottom of the shutter to no more than straight over head. Going too far past that point will run it out of engagement with the motor drive. If this happens see Appendix A for instructions on reengaging it.



Photo 1 - Overview

Remove the blanket which serves as a dust cover. Climb up the ladder and remove the large cap on the upper end of the telescope tube. Prepare the Telrad finder by sliding open the battery door, raising the battery holder, and placing the loose AA cell in the holder. Verify the polarity of the AA cell is correct before putting it into the

holder. Replace the holder and door panel. Mount the Telrad finder on top of the telescope tube from the ladder, tightening the two thumb screws to hold it in.

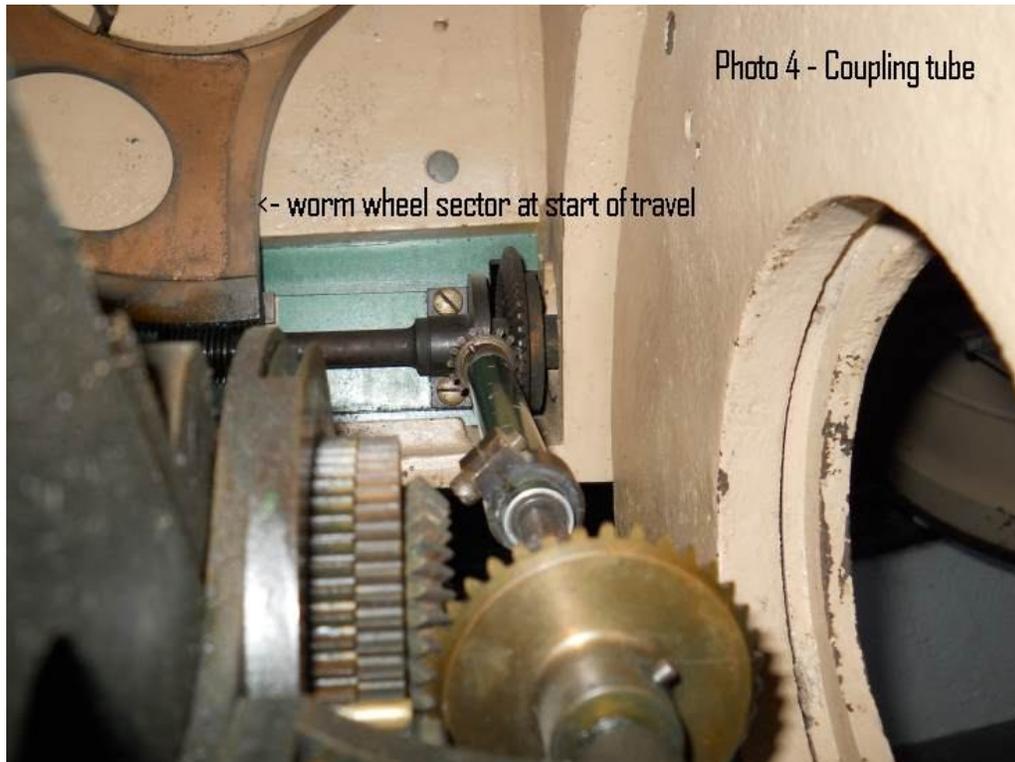


Photo 2 - Motor crank

Wind up the gravity motor by turning the crank. A weight inside the column is attached by cable to a capstan. As you crank, the capstan turns, raising the weight. When you finish and engage the motor, the weight moves downward due to gravity, turning the capstan's shaft. The capstan's shaft connects to a fly-ball governor which adjusts and regulates its speed. From there the shaft is coupled through several bevel gears to the worm shaft. The worm turns the worm wheel sector which moves the telescope in right ascension.



Sliding the green coupling tube upward engages its bevel gear with the mating gear and couples the gravity motor to the telescope. Look at the worm wheel sector. If it is not at the beginning of its travel, it should be rewound. See the description for this below. After the worm wheel sector is set to the beginning of its travel, slide the green coupling tube upward and tighten its clamp.

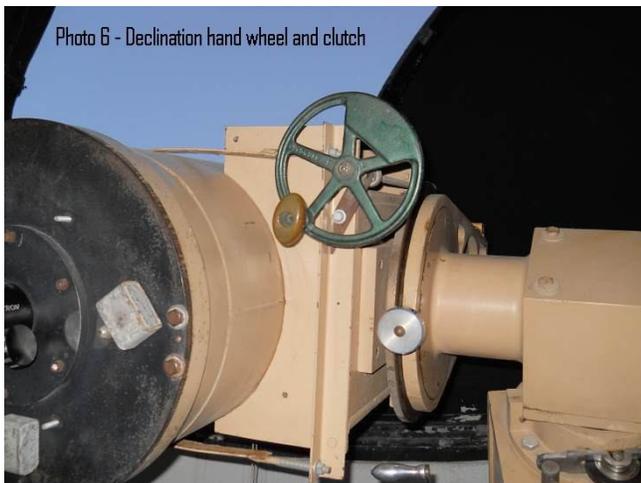


This shows the green coupling tube from inside the frame. The bevel gear pair at the bottom connects the gravity motor shaft from the fly-ball governor to the green coupling tube. The green coupling tube has another bevel gear at the top which engages with one above it on the worm shaft. Slide the tube upward until the bevel gears engage and tighten the clamp to keep it in place. The gravity motor is then coupled to the worm wheel sector which moves the telescope in right ascension.



Move the lever on the top of the green housing to the left to start the gravity motor. The telescope should now be moving in right ascension compensating for the earth's rotation. The pointer above the scale marked F / S (fast / slow) controls tracking speed by adjusting the fly-ball governor. It needs to be adjusted for the type of target being tracked such as star, planet, or moon. It will require trial and error to find the right speed.

Loosen the nylon set screw in the focus tube, and remove the focus tube dust cover. Insert an eyepiece in the focus tube, securing it tightly with the nylon set screw. Move the telescope to the desired target.



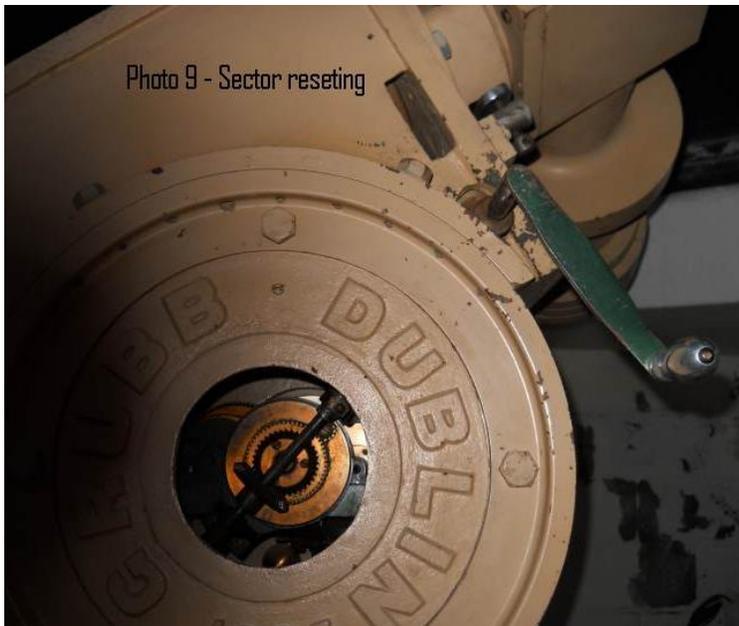
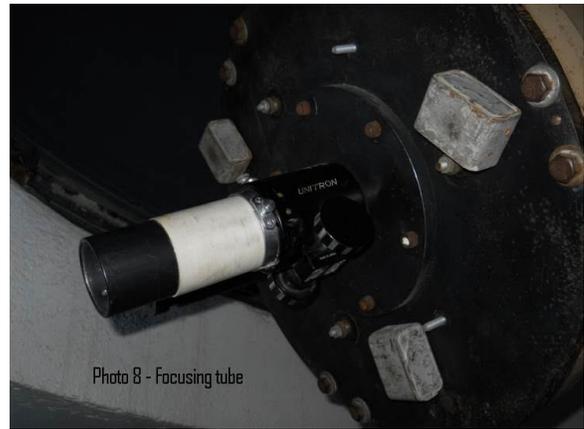
The declination hand wheel and clutch are shown above. The clutch locks declination movement to the hand wheel. The hand wheel allows fine movement, but may not be as convenient as loosening the clutch and pushing the optical tube where you want it. Retighten the clutch when done.



The right ascension hand wheel and clutch are on the back side of the mount. The clutch is at the top and may be difficult to reach. The right ascension hand wheel moves the telescope faster than the declination hand wheel. It is harder to set to a precise position. Again, it can be disengaged and pushed. Retighten the clutch when done.



Focus the telescope by loosening the metal set screw at the bottom of the focus tube and sliding the white tube in and out for a coarse focus. Tighten the metal set screw when near focus is found and use the focus knob to get a precise focus. Tracking should last for an hour or more but will probably require some moving to keep the telescope on target during this time. Tracking will stop when the weight reaches the floor or when the worm wheel sector reaches the end of its travel. Turn the crank as shown earlier to raise the weight.



If the worm wheel sector has reached its end of travel, disengage the motor by loosening the clamp on the green coupling tube. Then remove the crank from its square pin, placing it on the square pin on the opposite side as shown above. Turn the crank clockwise while facing it. This will turn the worm and move the worm wheel sector back to its starting point.

Turning the crank moves the right ascension worm wheel sector back to its starting point. The telescope will have to be moved back on target after moving the worm wheel sector. Reengage the motor by raising the green coupling tube until the bevel gears engage and tighten its clamp.

The only thing to remember in moving the telescope is to keep the optical tube pointing

above horizontal. Moving downward past horizontal may let internal mirrors move out of place.

When you are finished, loosen the green coupling tube's clamp to uncouple the gravity motor and allow it to spin down. The run / stop lever must remain to the left in the run position. The weight should move down to the floor inside the mount. Remove the Telrad finder from the top of the telescope tube. Slide the battery compartment door open. Pull up the battery holder, remove the cells, and place them in the plastic bag. Replace the battery holder and slide the cover back in the groove. Store the Telrad finder back in the eyepiece box in its cutout. The cells in the plastic bag can be placed on the foam without keeping the box from closing. Remove any eyepiece used from





the eyepiece box and replace it there. Replace all dust caps. Don't forget the large cap at the top of the telescope tube. Drape the blanket over the telescope body and mount, covering the openings. Wrap it so it will stay in place. Secure it with the bungee cord. Rotate the dome so the opening is to the north. Retrieve the door from the roof, replacing it and securing it with its screws. Close the shutter by plugging the control cord into the wall socket and turning the switch to close. There is no automatic stop so turn the switch to off a foot or so before the shutter is closed. Move the switch from off to close to off a time or two to finish closing. Check to see that all materials are put away. Verify you have the door key. Close the doors and check that they are locked.

Appendix A: Reengaging the Shutter with the Motor Drive

The shutter door's drive does not have an automatic stop at either end of its travel. When the door is at either end of its travel, gravity assists in its movement and the motor coasts with no load. Turning the motor off does not stop movement right away because the motor will coast a short distance. At either end of the shutter travel turn the motor off before the shutter reaches the desired place and wait for the coasting to finish. Then turn the switch from off to on to off until the shutter has moved to its position.

If the shutter opens too far at the top of its travel (a little past vertical) it will coast past the end of its drive mechanism and disengage. If this happens, the shutter must be reengaged to its drive. First rotate the dome until the shutter is at one of the four corners of the building. Climb the ladder and get on the roof next to the shutter. There will be room to stand if you've rotated the shutter to a corner. While someone below turns the drive motor to close, lift the shutter until it reengages. The shutter will probably stick at the bottom of its travel when disengaged. Jerk it upward to free it.

Appendix B: Viewing Ladder.

The first try was to position the ladder so that the handrail was between the viewer and the eyepiece. But that required the viewer to walk up the ladder and turn 180 degrees to look in the eyepiece. By rotating the ladder 180 degrees the viewer could walk up the ladder, view, and then turn 180 degrees to go back down. The handrail was now on the side opposite of the eyepiece.

Appendix C: List of Equipment

None of the eyepieces have a manufacturer, part number or focal length (mm) on them. The Sticker refers to a self adhesive sticker that has writing on it. The 31.XXX is hand engraved and the "T" should be upside down and may be some sort of alignment mark?

15mm felt tip pen, 22mm felt tip pen

1.25-inch eyepieces:

26mm MPL 5 elements Sticker

Miscellaneous:

1.25-inch to 2-inch adapter

2-inch diagonal

Telrad finder

2-inch eyepieces:

32mm MPL, 5 element, Sticker

45mm Erfle, 5 element, Sticker

52mm MPL, 5 element, 31.775 T (upside down) Sticker and engraved

62mm rke?, 3 element, 31.519 T (upside down) Sticker and engraved

75mm MPL, 5 element, 31.775 T (upside down) Sticker and engraved



Minutes, August 2011 ASLC General Meeting

By John McCullough, Secretary, ASLC

Show and Tell:

David Anderson began the session followed by John Kutney describing viewing dim galaxies. John demonstrated using Deep Sky Astronomy software by Jose Torres at the University of Valencia available at <http://www.ur.es/jrtorres/index.html>. He also displayed a dark sky map showing how some areas of New Mexico still enjoy comparatively dark skies for visual observing.

Call to Order:

Ron Kramer, President, Astronomical Society of Las Cruces (ASLC), called the business meeting to order at 7:30 p.m., 26 August 2011, at the home of Mike and Carol Sherrick, Las Cruces, New Mexico.

President's Comments:

Ron Kramer welcomed the group, noting that tonight's meeting was again preceded by a "Show and Tell" session organized by David Anderson; thanks to Dave. Ron also thanked the Sherricks for again hosting the Society's meeting in their beautiful home. There were no new members or guests present at tonight's meeting.

Secretary's Report:

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

Vice-President's Report:

The Vice-President, Tracy Stuart, as chairman for presentations, reported that there was no change to the presentation schedule. Phil Simpson has agreed to postpone his presentation (scheduled for tonight) until his book is closer to publication release. Tracy is already scheduling speakers for 2012. There was no additional Vice-President's report.

Treasurer's Report:

The Treasurer, Janet Stevens, continues to recuperate at home and was not present. Bert Stevens, Past-President, also was not present to provide a report on the status of the Society's accounts. There was not an additional Treasurer's report.

Committee Reports:

Association of Lunar and Planetary Observers (ALPO) 2011 Convention Committee:

Bert Stevens, Committee Chairman, was not present. Ron Kramer provided a summary of the conference for those present. Overall, Ron reported the Society lost about \$516 hosting the conference. He gave a breakdown of the costs and revenues. The excursions showed a profit, however, the closing banquet lost \$200+, primarily because of the greatly reduced attendance at the conference. There were thirty (30) registrants and thirty-eight (38) total participants. It was suggested that response form for feedback could be distributed. Since this requires contact information, perhaps Bert can get feed back through the ALPO. The conference was a good experience for the Society, overall. Ron thanked Bert, the rest of the planning committee, and supporting Society members for their efforts.



Apparel Committee:

Ann McPhee, Committee Chairman, reported that \$642 of inventory remains and that \$1551 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, was not present (see Treasurer’s Report above). There was no activity to report.

Astronomy Day 2011:

Astronomy Day will be held the first weekend in October. Tracy Stuart will chair the event and will get information from Wes and Carol Baker, last year’s co-chairmen. Ron Kramer has the Society’s double-stack solar scope and Rich Richins has the single-stack. Members are asked to contact Tracy to volunteer for this event.

Membership:

John McCullough, Committee Chairman, has contacted several public information web site administrators to publish the Society’s calendar of events and contacts. Society information brochures were left at the Very Large Array (VLA) and Sunspot during the ALPO Conference excursions; these will need to be replenished quarterly (websites are on the Internet).

Leasburg Observatory Committee:

Ron Kramer, Committee Chairman, reported that construction plans are due from the State’s architect for review. He expects some ideas from the park soon.

Tombaugh Observatory:

Ron Kramer reported that the first training session was complete and that dome/telescope maintenance by Dave Dockery and Steve Shaffer is in progress.

Dave Anderson says that dust caps to protect the telescope optics are needed. Ron asked for input on additional needs or improvements to the structure that can be worked with New Mexico State University (NMSU).

Outreach Committee:

Chuck Sterling, Outreach Coordinator, was not present to report on the committee’s activities. A star party at Tombaugh Elementary is planned for 03 November. Chris Jones, Alamogordo Astronomy Club (AAC), reports there will be no White Sands Star Party (WSSP) this year. The following email was received:

“Due to budget issues at the New Mexico Museum of Space History and at White Sands National Monument our traditional two-night White Sands Star Party will not be held this year. Instead, two separate star parties will take place, one public party and one overnight private party.

“The public star party will be held on the evening of September 24, from 7:30 to 9:30 PM at the evening program amphitheater. Since September 24 is National Public Lands Day, there will be no fees for anyone attending this event. This star party should be much like the very successful event we held last year. Please let me know if you plan on attending.

“A private campout star party for astronomers and immediate families will be held for one night only on October 22. It will take place at the group area next to picnic area number one. There is no fee for this event other than the fees charged by White Sands National Monument. Donations to help cover the \$50 registration fee will be accepted. Park fees include the usual entrance fee of \$3.00 per person 18 years and older and camping fees of \$3.00 per adult, \$1.50 for anyone 17 years old and younger.



“IMPORTANT: In order to avoid resource overuse only about 20 vehicles will be permitted for this event. Please register only one vehicle per family and car-pool where practical. Registrations will be accepted on a first-come, first-serve basis. If you plan to attend, please reserve your place as early as possible by email to wssp11@gmail.com. Please provide a name, address, phone number, and how many individuals and vehicles you wish to register.

“Questions may be addressed to the same email or to the voice mail at 575-585-2224.

“Chris Jones. Alamogordo Astronomy Club”

Note: The public night is 24 September. This is also the first night of the Okie-Tex Star Party. A volunteer from the Society will be needed to coordinate our participation in the White Sands event.

2011 Renaissance Arts Faire:

Tracy Stuart, Committee Chairman, reported that he has received some information for the 2011 Faire from the Dona Ana Arts Council (DAAC). Registration this year will be \$50. Tracy moved that the Society pay the increased registration fee, Wes Baker seconded. The motion passed by the members present. Ron Kramer asked for a show of hands of those present committed to supporting the Society’s Participation in RenFaire 2011. The response was unanimous.

Society Website:

Steve Barkes, webmaster, was not present. There was no update on issues regarding the Society’s web site.

There were no additional committee or officer reports.

Old Business:

Society Bylaws:

Two-thirds (2/3) of the current membership (40 of 59) must vote to accept the proposed alterations to the Society By-Laws or 20 votes to defeat acceptance. Insufficient ballots were received from members regarding the by-laws changes, for or against. The issue will be re-addressed at the December meeting.

There was no additional old business discussed.

New Business:

2012 Budget:

The budget for 2012 is still being worked. However, a potential positive income for the year is projected.

Nominating Committee:

Robert Williams, Ann McPhee, and Fred Pilcher compose the committee for 2012 and are looking for nominees to fill officer positions for next year. Suggestion slips for potential nominees were distributed. Elections will be held in November.

Annual Audit:

An audit of the Society was last performed in 2007. Another one is now due. Chuck Sterling is trying to locate a person to perform the audit.

There was no additional new business for discussion.



Announcements:

Items for Sale:

No items were announced for sale.

Announcements:

The Enchanted Skies Star Party is 28 September to 01 October. Robert Williams has more information.

Wes Baker has a number of inexpensive refractor telescopes to use as “giveaways” at Astronomy Day. Mike Sherrick has a small refractor telescope he would like to donate to the Society.

.
There were no additional announcements made.

Recognitions/Achievements:

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

Ann McPhee moved to adjourn the business portion of the meeting, Wes Baker seconded. The motion carried. The business portion of the meeting was adjourned at 8:06 p.m.

Presentation:

Following a brief social break, the monthly presentation began. This month’s presentation was by Michael Sherrick, Sagrada and JSMS Observatories, on operating a remote observatory robotically. Mike relocated to Las Cruces and Mayhill from the Los Angeles area because of light pollution considerations in that large metropolitan area. He got started in astronomy by trying to grind his own 12-inch parabolic mirror. Since then, he has built and owned a number of telescopes, including Meades and Celestrons, and has tried astrophotography using film stock.

Mike’s first observatory was a 10-foot fiberglass dome in his back yard. He now has an observatory at his home outside Las Cruces (Sagrada) and one at Mayhill (JSMS) that he operates remotely. He demonstrated the remote operation characteristics using GoToMyPC, which he prefers over Windows Remote Desktop. Mike then went through a typical viewing/imaging session setup for the robotic observatory. The demonstration ended at 9:35 pm. Mike then opened his shop for attendees to view the progress on the 24-inch ’scope that will be installed in the Mayhill observatory and gave a tour of the Sagrada Observatory.

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 August meeting of the Astronomical Society of Las Cruces concluded at 10:15 p.m.

-Respectfully submitted by John McCullough, ASLC Secretary



Calendar of Events September/October 2011 (MDT)

Sept. 23	7:30 p.m.	September ASLC Meeting
25	6 p.m.	Uranus at opposition
27	5:09 a.m.	New Moon
Oct. 01	5 a.m.	Mars 0.5 degrees south of the Beehive cluster (M44)
03	9:15 p.m.	First Quarter Moon
11	8:06 p.m.	Full Moon
13	3 p.m.	Saturn in conjunction with the Sun
19	9:30 p.m.	Last Quarter Moon
26	1:56 p.m.	New Moon
28	8 p.m.	Jupiter at opposition
28	7:30 p.m.	October ASLC Meeting

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

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



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

