The High Desert Observer

The Bulletin of The Astronomical Society of Las Cruces

July, 2005

Friends Lost and Found

Jed, right, during his induction into the White Sands Hall of Fame last year.

Our club lost a dear friend late last month with the passing of Jed Durrenberger. Jed was one of our founding members and an ardent supporter of the ASLC having held virtually every club office numerous times. According to founding members Walter Haas and Cecil Post, Jed, his first wife Esther, and his second wife Marty arguably did more than most other members to keep the society active and alive over the years. (Walter suggests that the after meeting snacks may have played a role!) Jed apparently also had a singular talent for finding famous scientists as monthly speakers.

I first met Jed at a monthly meeting about two years ago - shortly after joining the club. I had just printed a large image of the moon (my first adventure in astroimaging) and had brought the poster-sized image to show the club. Following the meeting, Jed approached me and complimented me on my effort. He also said how wonderful it was to see newer members becoming so actively involved. Jed's kind words meant a lot to me. They encouraged me, and showed me what a great organization I was getting involved in.

Now it's not my nature to brag, but I think I was right. ASLC has turned out to be a pretty darned good club. It's because of the selfless efforts of our members, past and present, that the club has prospered and grown. To all of you who have sacrificed your time and energy to contribute to this spirit, I offer my most heartfelt thanks. Thanks for supporting the club that Jed loved so much.

One of Jed's final acts was to donate a 12" Orion Telescope to our club for use in our educational and outreach efforts. The donation and a remembrance of Jed's life will take place in a week or two. I'll make a formal announcement when I get the information. However, as noble as Jed's gift is, I believe his more lasting legacy is the club that he helped to form and grow through his care, vision and support.

- Rich Richins, ASLC President

Upcoming ASLC Events

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

July 19 - Digital Processing Clinic (7:00, DABCC)
July 22 - ASLC Board Meeting (7:00, DABCC)
July 22 - ASLC Meeting (7:30, DABCC)
August 6 - DSO (Upham)
August 13 - MoonGaze (Int'l Delights)

This Month's Observer

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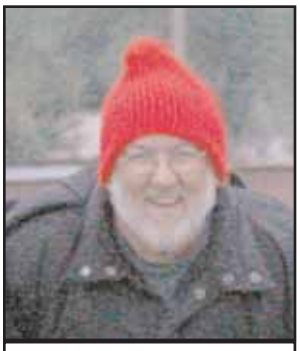
ASLC Meeting Highlights

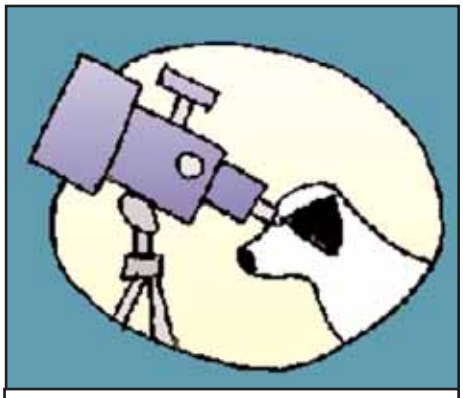
July Meeting: "Low-Cost Webcam Autoguiding" by Steve Barkes.



No, it's not Santa Claus. It's our very own Steve Barkes at this year's Texas Star Party. Steve will be the ASLC guest speaker this month.

Interested in getting into Astrophotograhy? Looking for a cost effective way to autoguide your mount? Steve Barkes will be discussing the need for autoguiding and the use of low-cost web cameras to be used as autoguiders. Details will be provided on the common errors associated with astronomical mounts, how they can be measured and corrected using economical hardware and software.

In addition, Steve has recevied a new astronomical CCD camera from Stephen Chambers in England. The Artemis 429 camera is currently on loan to allow for software development of guiding software. There will be a show and tell on the unique features of the camera



Barkosoftware's Guidedog has become the standard in webcam autoguiding. Come learn more about Guidedog and its future at the July ASLC Meeting.

The monthly ASLC meeting takes place in room 77 at the main Dona Ana Branch Community College (just South of NMSU).

July Beginner's Corner:

(nothing submitted)

June Meeting: "Sharing the Night Sky" by John York.

John York presented a talk aimed at improving our club's ability to share information and viewing opportunities with the public so as to give them the best bang for their buck. John guided us through his very useful book, "Sharing the Night Sky", during his presentation, showing us how the information was organized to be of maximum use when talking with the public about various planets and deep sky objects. He had many insightful suggestions for improving our star party technique. One which I found very useful was to frame a portion of the sky at successively higher magnifications (using larger telescopes under higher magnifications) until an object is fully resolved. This helps to give the observers a better feel for the object's size and position in the sky (instead of simply showing M13 at 300x). We'll have to try this approach at our next public outing!

John had a number of giveaways to keep the audience involved. Most involved identifying insects, animals or vistas in the mountains surrounding El Paso. Folks that could identify the bug or location received prints of Hubble shots or Mars maps. If nobody could identify the subject, ASLC officers received the prizes. The USGS Mars Map proudly hanging in my garage is a testiment to our members' lack of entomological and geographical prowess.

John had his book for sale following the meeting at the incredible price of only $10. Judging from the line at the front of the room following the meeting, our members were impressed with John and his book. btw - John joined the club following the meeting.

June's Beginner's Corner:

(nothing submitted)

July Sky Map

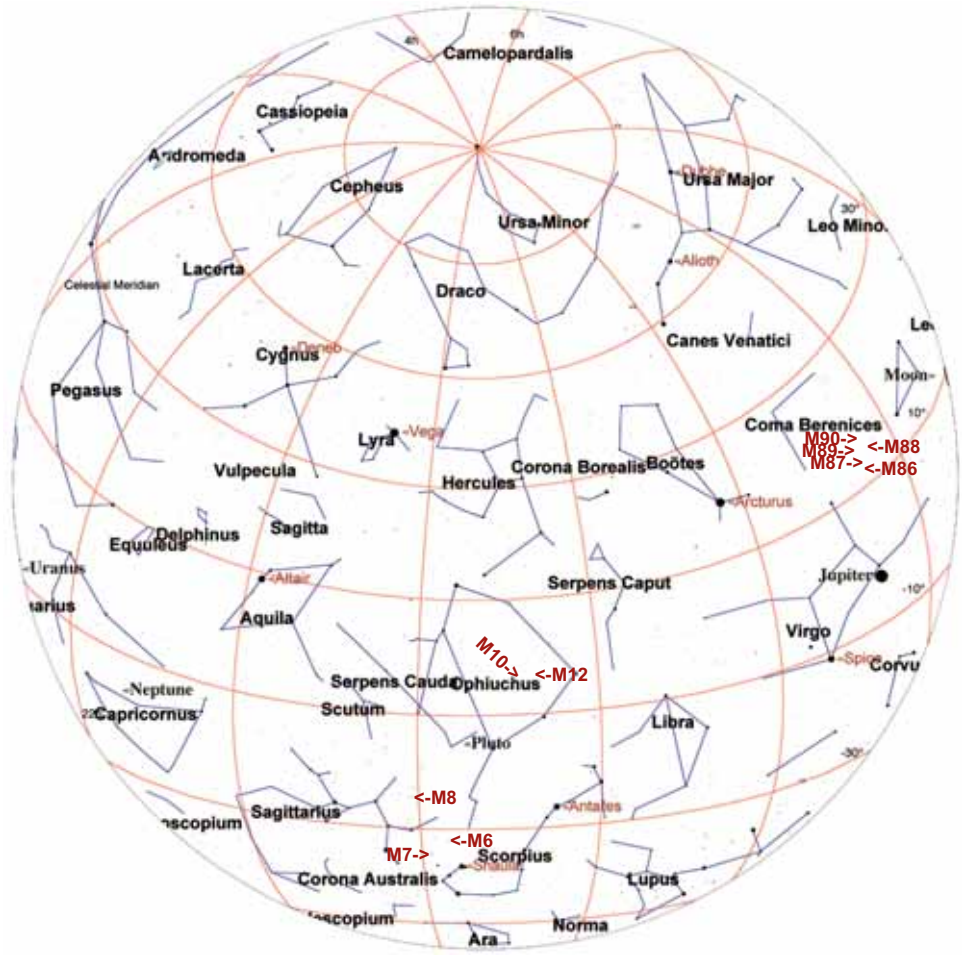
Chart shows positions of objects at about 10 pm (MDT) for mid July, about 9 pm for late July and about 8 pm for mid August


July 6


July 14


July 21


July 28



Mars

In Pisces
Mag. -0.1
Rises about 12:30 am

Jupiter

In Virgo
Mag. -1.5
Rises about 12:00 pm

Saturn

In Cancer
Mag. 1.2
Near Sun!

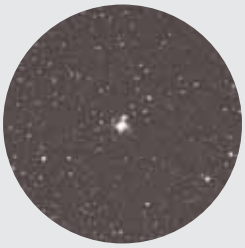
Astronomy Calendar

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

July 29	South Delta-Aquarids Peak
Aug. 1	Alpha Capricornids Peak
Aug. 8	Neptune at Opposition
Aug. 12	Perseids Peak
Aug. 13	(89) Julia Occultation

June's Challenge

The Box Nebula, NGC6309, should have been a relatively easy find - especially after Joe's Ghost Galaxy of last month.



July/August Tour

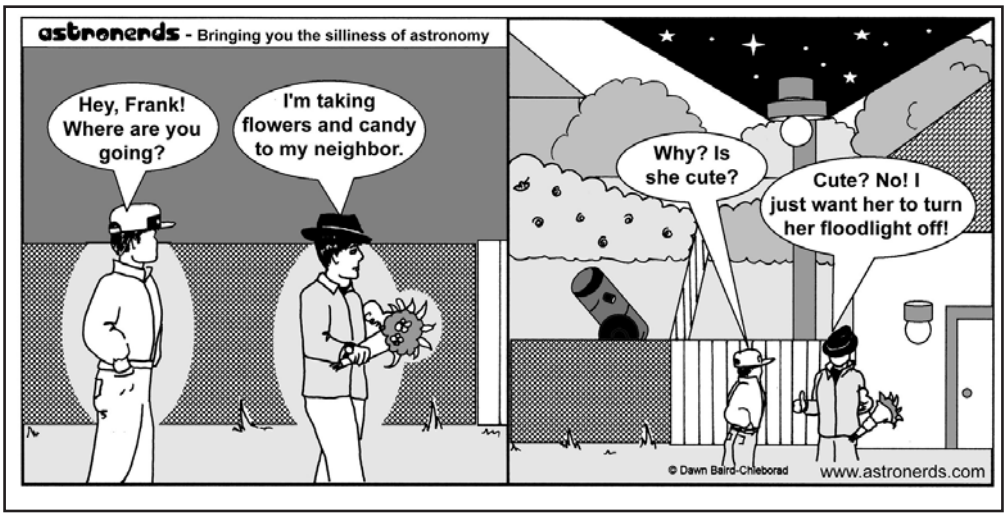
Binocular Objects

1)M6 (Open Cluster)
2) M7 (Open Cluster)
3) M8 (Open Cluster & Nebula)
4) M10 (Globular Cluster)
5) M12 (Globular Cluster)

Telescope Objects

6) M86 (Galaxy)
7) M87 (Galaxy)
8) M88 (Galaxy)
9) M89 (Galaxy)
10) M90 (Galaxy)

Joseph's Challenge - IC4604
Neb (Ophiuchus) ??, 16H 25.6m, -23° 26'



(Comic provided free of charge by www.astronerds.com)

Just in case you missed it, Rich got an APOD submission published earlier this month.

ASLC IMAGE GALLERY

The Whirlpool Galaxy, M51, showing supernova SN2005cs. The supernova was bright enough to see in a mid-sized telescope. Image by Rich Richins using his Orion ED80 and Canon 300D.

Nebulosity surrounding the star, gamma-Cygni. Image by Steve Smith using his Orion ED80 and modified Canon 300D.

Dave Dockery couldn't resist snaping this beautiful image of M13. Dave used his 10" LX200 and Canon 300D.

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