



President's Message - July 2012



The summer monsoons are here. Temperatures are a bit lower, humidity is up and we're even seeing a drop or two of rain. These monsoons don't quite compare with those in Asia (particularly Thailand, where you can receive 12" of rain in 6 hours), but the rain and clouds help keep the temperature under 100 degrees.

Of course all the clouds do not do much good for our observing, but there have been a few moderately clear evenings. The rain also helps clear the dust from the air.

By-Laws

We finally received the necessary votes to approve the revised ASLC By-Laws. The replaced By-Laws, written and approved in 1967 will be placed into our archives. We are now officially able to use e-mail for communications, which did not exist in 1967. We also added the necessary verbiage dictated by the State and Federal Tax Authorities, including a "conflict of interest" statement. Some of the duties of the Board of Directors have been clarified and we simplified the procedure for making further amendments to the By-Laws.

The new By-Laws, effective July 1, 2012 are on our website (www.aslc-nm.org). Please contact any Board member if you have any questions or need clarification.

I want to thank all the members who voted for the amended document, and especially thank Tracy Stuart (your Vice President) and Trish Conley (your Treasurer) for the hours of work dedicated to this task.

Board of Directors Meeting

The ASLC Board of Directors held its quarterly meeting on July 11. The major results of the Board Meeting were:

- The Board approved the Fiscal Year 2013 Budget, which runs from October 1, 2012 through September 30, 2013. Next year we will run a deficit, due to the construction of the Leasburg Dam State Park Observatory. \$10,000 of our bank account has been allocated to this project which will enable us to purchase the computers, camera and other electronics necessary to make the Observatory ideal for both Outreach and Research. Groundbreaking on the Observatory is slated for August 2012 and we will not start purchasing any equipment until October 2012. The Observatory will be open to ASLC members for their own independent research and will be used for Outreach programs to the public. The State is building the structure, saving us about \$75,000. A copy of the Budget is in this edition of HDO.
- The Board approved the purchase of 10 eyepieces plus an EXT-90 from the Ken Kile estate. Both acquisitions will be used for the Loaner Telescope Program. We now have four instruments available to Society members for loan.

(Continued on Page 3)



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, membership in the Astronomical League, including AL's quarterly A.L. Reflector. Society 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

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

Immediate Past President

Directors:

Steve Shaffer

Director1@aslc-nm.org

David Anderson

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
June and July Outreach Activities Roundup.....	3
ASLC Budget for Fiscal Year 2013	5
June 2012 Meeting Minutes.....	6

Next Meeting

Our July meeting will be held on Friday, July 27, in Room 77 at Doña Ana Community College, starting at 7:30 p.m. Do not forget that Show and Tell will start at 7:00 p.m.

Our July presentation will be Candace Gray, a Graduate Assistant at NMSU. She will talk about solar activity and its effect on planets. The Sun has a 22 year cycle of activity and we are approaching solar maximum, which will peak next year. She will discuss the cycle, why it happens and the kind of activity that occurs. These include solar flares and coronal mass ejections, which can affect the Earth in dangerous and beautiful ways. She will also discuss the recent activity of the Sun, which has been quite large and exciting! She studies the nightglow/aurora on Venus and how it's connected to solar activity, so she will discuss the auroras on Earth and Venus and possibly the aurora on Jupiter and Saturn, if she doesn't run out of time.

As always, all ASLC members are invited to join us for dinner at Lorenzo's Italian Restaurant on University, starting at 5:45 pm on Friday, July 27. Each member pays their own way, and the Society pays for the Speaker's dinner.

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>.

Outreach

Outreach is a very important ASLC activity. We can always use more volunteers to help educate the public. Even if you do not have a telescope, we can always use more members to help answer questions at the events and point out constellations in the sky.



President's Message – July 2012

(Continued from Page 1)

- Tracy will be putting together a "New Member Package" which will include a copy of our new By-Laws, a copy of *Reflector* magazine, a roster with members' names and e-mail, a copy of the ASLC brochure and other items. One packet will be given to each new member (one packet per family as well).
- The ASLC and the Albuquerque Astronomical Society are planning a joint State-Wide Star Party in the Fall. All societies in New Mexico will be asked to join in, including Silver City, Alamogordo, Carlsbad, etc. This will be an overnight visit at (planned) Heritage Site (south of Socorro, NM on I-25), which offers very dark and pristine skies. All members will be invited to join us at this event. If successful, it will be held annually (or more frequently).

Loaner Telescope Program

As mentioned above, we now have four telescopes in the program. Two EXT-90s, a four-inch Unitron Refractor and a 12-inch Dobsonian. The two EXT's are accounted for but the other two scopes are available immediately. Let me know if you have an interest in borrowing these telescopes.

Ann McPhee still has lots of apparel for sale, including hats, t-shirts (short- and long-sleeved), hoodies and denim shirts. Please see to her at the next meeting if you're interested in purchasing this gear.

Our July presentation will be Candace Gray, a Graduate Assistant at NMSU. She will talk about solar activity and its effect on planets. The Sun has a 22-year cycle of activity and we are approaching solar maximum, which will peak next year. She will discuss the cycle, why it happens and the kind of activity that occurs. These include solar flares and coronal mass ejections, which can affect the Earth in dangerous and beautiful ways. She will also discuss the recent activity of the Sun, which has been quite large and exciting! She studies the nightglow/aurora on Venus and how it's connected to solar activity, so she will discuss the auroras on Earth and Venus and possibly the aurora on Jupiter and Saturn, if she doesn't run out of time.

As always, all ASLC members are invited to join us for dinner at Lorenzo's Italian Restaurant on University, starting at 5:45 pm on Friday, July 27. Each member pays their own way, and the Society pays for the Speaker's dinner.

I hope to see you all at the next meeting.

Your president,
Ron J. Kramer

June and July Outreach Activities Roundup

By Jerry McMahan

Moongaze - June 23, 2012 and June 30, 2012

We did have a Moongaze double header at the end of June. We have done two Saturdays in a row a couple of other times, when the Moon phase was between first quarter views. On June 23, the crescent was thin and there is not a lot to see, other than Earth Shine and even that was not ideal. We also did not have the Moon above the building.



Stan and his wife stopped by. Robert Brink, who was at the previous meeting, attended this and the previous Moongaze and stayed all evening. Steve Shaffer and Jerry McMahan had the usual telescopes. Chuck Sterling missed this one, which is rare for him, but he was out of town fishing with family members. Chuck did catch a fish and estimated its value at about \$400 per pound.

On Saturday, June 30, the Moon was at a nearly full phase. The terminator was placed to give a good view of the craters Aristarchus and Herodotus, as well as the rill system Schroder's valley. Steve Shaffer, Jerry McMahan and Chuck Sterling attended.

It did not appear very promising. I set up the EXT-125 and had to cover it with a trash bag when it started to rain. We had almost decided that it was hopeless when it started to clear up. We had a pretty good session with the Moon and Saturn, until about 10:30 p.m. when it started to cloud up again. I was nearly finished putting up the EXT when a light rain started again. It was fairly clear when I got home.

Chuck did not bring his expensive fish and I doubt if you will see it at Show and Tell since it has probably been eaten.

Radium Springs

As some of you may have seen from Ron's e-mail, an attempt was made to have a star party at Radium Springs. Ron Kramer, Ann McPhee and her husband, and Jerry McMahan made the attempt, but it rained and there did not look like there would be any clear spaces in the sky, so we had to give up.

Vado, NM - July 16, 2012

Ron Kramer and Jerry McMahan set up solar telescopes in Vado. The Sun was high in the sky, which made it a little awkward and rather hot. Ron brought the H-Alpha double stack and I had a white light filter on the EXT-125. The students were from Gadsden Middle School. After the observing session, Ron had a question and answer session inside, where it was a bit cooler.

Chaparral, NM – July 19, 2012

Another solar event was scheduled at 1:00 p.m. Ron and Jerry McMahan were in attendance again. This was a group of mostly middle school age kids. Ron had the double stack H-Alpha scope again. I brought the EXT again. Ron said that the students had some very intelligent questions, such as why you can get different magnifications with different eyepieces. The question apparently came from the student's own knowledge that this was true.

I had a late start, since my GPS said that I was at the 400 street address, when I was actually at 753. I had trouble finding the right place because my GPS doesn't like me and I have trouble seeing those small numbers on mail boxes. It meant pulling over at every mail box.

We did have clouds and several times we had to wait until the Sun was in the clear again. When I finally got the Sun, there was only one tiny little sunspot to show the kids. Ron had no problems with tracking so the Sun was always there when the cloud passed by. At least it was not as hot as it was for our session in Vado..

The High Desert Observer



ASLC Budget FY 2013 (October 1, 2012 - September 30, 2013)

By Ron Kramer, President, ASLC

	<i>FY2012 Budget</i>	<i>FY2013 Budget</i>
OPENING BALANCE		
Checking	\$ 1,740.00	\$ 2,171.82
Savings	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 1,338.95
Money Market		\$ 15,000.00
Petty Cash		\$ 84.00
CD	\$ 20,000.00	\$ 5,974.00
Sub-Total	\$ 23,740.00	\$ 24,568.77
INCOME		
Apparel	\$ 400.00	\$ 400.00
Books & Calendars	\$ -	\$ 420.00
Donations (incl. Photos)	\$ -	\$ 350.00
Grants	\$ -	\$ 1,000.00
HDO	\$ 10.00	\$ 18.00
Membership Dues (**)	\$ 1,530.00	\$ 1,800.00
Sale of Society Equipment	\$ -	\$ 250.00
Telescope Loaner Program	\$ -	\$ 100.00
Sub-Total	\$ 1,940.00	\$ 4,338.00
EXPENSES		
Apparel	\$ 350.00	\$ 350.00
Astro. League Membership	\$ 255.00	\$ 350.00
Books & Calendars	\$ -	\$ 400.00
Discretionary Funds	\$ -	\$ 200.00
Donations	\$ 100.00	\$ 100.00
Guest Speaker Dinner	\$ -	\$ 100.00
HDO (mail)	\$ 120.00	\$ 120.00
Holiday Party	\$ 350.00	\$ 350.00
IDA Membership	\$ 50.00	\$ 50.00
Insurance	\$ 711.00	\$ 900.00
Leasburg Observatory (*)	\$ -	\$ 10,000.00
Loaner Telescope Program	\$ -	\$ 250.00
Maintenance	\$ -	\$ 100.00
Photos for Events	\$ 100.00	\$ 100.00
PO Box	\$ 65.00	\$ 74.00
Publicity/Outreach	\$ 350.00	\$ 450.00
Safe Deposit Box	\$ 35.00	\$ 37.65
Tax Refiling	\$ -	\$ 10.00
Tombaugh Observatory	\$ -	\$ 200.00
Website	\$ -	\$ 400.00
Sub-Total	\$ 2,486.00	\$ 14,541.65
SURPLUS/DEFECIT		
Total Income	\$ 1,940.00	\$ 4,338.00
Total Expenses	\$ 2,486.00	\$ 14,541.65
Sub-Total	\$ (546.00)	\$ (10,203.65)



CLOSING BALANCE		
Checking	\$ 1,490.00	
Savings	\$ 1,854.00	
Money Market		
Petty Cash		
CD	\$ 20,050.00	
Sub-Total	\$ 23,394.00	\$ 14,365.12

(*) Item will be depreciated over X years

(**) Membership Dues based on 50 members in FY2012 and 60 members in FY 2013

Minutes, June 2012 ASLC General Meeting

By John McCullough, Secretary, ASLC

Show and Tell:

David Anderson started off this month's session of Show and Tell.

Call to Order:

Ron Kramer, President, Astronomical Society of Las Cruces (ASLC), called the business meeting to order at 7:30 p.m., 22 June 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. Almost anything is "fair game" for a topic. Ron asked that attendees be sure to sign in.

Ron welcomed visitors to tonight's meeting: Robert Brink is attending his first meeting tonight. He is relatively new to Las Cruces, as he was living in El Paso. He has always been a "sky gazer" and is interested in learning more about stellar objects and viewing techniques.

There were no other guests or new members present.

Secretary's Report:

The Secretary, John McCullough, reported that the minutes for the May 2012 meeting were submitted for publication in the June edition of the Society newsletter, the High Desert Observer (HDO). Tracy Stuart moved that the minutes from the May general meeting be accepted as submitted; Robert Williams 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. There was a surplus of \$127.66 for the month. Major outlays in the next month will be Astronomical League (AL) dues and PO box rental. There was not an additional Treasurer's report.



Committee Reports:

Apparel Committee:

Ann McPhee, Committee Chairman, reported there remains \$546.60 of inventory and \$1649.50 of apparel has been sold. Hats and/or caps with neck shields are the next apparel item being investigated. This is a fund raising opportunity for the Society as \$1.00 from the sale of each item benefit's the Society. Items will be available for purchase following tonight's meeting.

Loaner Telescope Program:

Ron Kramer continues to act as Committee Chairman. He presented the new policy and usage agreement and a list of Society equipment available for use. The rate for telescope usage is \$10.00 per month for a period of up to three (3) months. Additional months are possible if there is not a current request for a particular piece of equipment. This is a good way for new astronomers to try out different types of telescopes and the Society has three (3) very capable telescopes: a 100 mm refractor, a EXT-90 (small 90 mm) Go-To, and a 12-inch Dobsonian. Smaller equipment (i.e., eyepieces) are also available. The Society also has two (2) solar telescopes that are mainly used for outreach. Ron stated that excess and/or redundant equipment may be offered for sale to members or the public to raise funds for the Society. Members may contact Ron if they have questions about the new policy, including how to donate equipment to the program.

Membership:

John McCullough, Committee Chairman, reported that four (4) people had joined the Society this month as new or renewing members. Fifteen (15) people have joined the Society since the first of the year.

Leasburg Dam State Park (LDSP) Observatory Committee:

Ron Kramer, Committee Chairman, reported on the construction of the observatory at LDSP. The State of New Mexico Parks Department will build or buy a sliding roof structure; total construction cost is expected to be approximately \$75,000. The archeological report is complete, the environmental impact report is complete, and the historical investigation is complete, all indicate no barriers to construction. Funds are expected to be released 01 July (the start of the State's fiscal year) with groundbreaking shortly thereafter. New Mexico State University (NMSU) has provided a 16-inch Meade LX200 on a permanent loan basis to the Society for public outreach and education. The Society will provide additional research grade peripherals, support tools and operational expertise. The grand total cost for this project is expected to be about \$100,000. First light is expected by the end of this year.

Tombaugh Observatory:

Steve Shaffer, Committee Chairman, was not present because he was supporting an Observatory open house and star party on the NMSU campus.

Outreach Committee:

Chuck Sterling, Outreach Coordinator, was not present. Ron Kramer reported excellent public response for the Venus Transit on 05 June. Ron will make an astronomy presentation, "Astronomy: The Early Years" at Branigan Library, 09 July, 2:00 pm in the Roadrunner Room. Dona Ana County Health and Human Services would like the Society to conduct three (3) small star parties this summer for their clients. More details will follow, watch the Yahoo! group.

Publicity:

Daniel Giron, Committee Chairman, was not present but has been very active. The Society has received good exposure in the community, papers, radio and other media.

Society Website:

Steve Barkes, web master, was not present.



Society By-Laws Revisions:

Copies of the proposed By-Laws revisions and ballots for members to indicate their preference have been sent out via e-mail and USPS. Copies of the revisions are available for review and ballots are available for voting at tonight's meeting. The Board of Directors is actively seeking return of ballots from members on this issue.

There were no additional committee or officer reports.

Old Business:

Society By-Laws Revision

Sufficient "aye" ballots have been received for the by-laws revision to be accepted. The revised By-Laws will be effective 01 July 2012.

There was no additional old business for discussion.

New Business:

Kenneth Kile:

New member Kenneth Kile suffered a massive heart attack on 05 June and is in very bad shape. The prognosis is not positive (probably terminal). Robert Williams moved that the Society make a \$50 donation to the Kile family's charity of choice; Vince Dovydaitis seconded. The motion passed by acclamation.

Fund Raising/Grants:

The Society needs a "go-to" person for grant proposal writing. If you are familiar with this process or know of someone with grant writing experience/expertise who can help the Society, please let Ron know as soon as possible.

There was no additional new business for discussion.

Announcements:

Items for Sale:

As noted in the Loaner Telescope program report, unused Society-owned equipment may be offered to the membership in a silent auction.

Vince Dovydaitis has a used 12-inch Dobsonian for sale. He paid \$500, is asking \$300. Contact him for details.

A 14-inch Celestron optical tube assembly (OTA) was offered to the Society. Bill Stein has purchased it.

No additional items were announced for sale.

Announcements:

There were no announcements made.

Recognitions/Achievements:

John Kutney has applied for the Master Observer Award from the Astronomical League (AL). To qualify for this recognition, a candidate must acquire multiple (10) observing awards. John has received the Herschel 400, Lunar, Binocular Messier, Southern ARP, Flat Galaxy, Planetary Nebula, Advanced Open Cluster, Globular Cluster, Messier, and Double Star society certificates and the Caldwell Observing Award for this recognition. John was not present.



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

John McCullough moved to adjourn the business portion of the meeting, Robert Williams seconded. The motion carried. The business portion of the meeting was adjourned at 8:04 p.m.

Presentation:

This month's presentation was made by Loretta Hall, Space Ambassador and author of "Out of This World: New Mexico's Contributions to Space Travel". Buzz Aldrin said of her book, "We must rekindle the sense of adventure and the irresistible urge for exploration beyond this planet that took us to the Moon and, I hope, will take us to Mars. In her entertaining, inspiring Out of This World, Loretta Hall reveals the grit, determination, daring, and down-to-earth humanness of adventures who brought us to the verge of making space travel available to everyone." Ms. Hall took members on a trip through the decades of space travel-related happenings in New Mexico in this centennial year.

The presentation was followed by images and discussion of the recent annular solar eclipse.

The June meeting of the Astronomical Society of Las Cruces concluded at 9:10 p.m.

-Respectfully submitted by John McCullough, ASLC Secretary



Jupiter and the Galilean Moons reappear from behind the Moon on July 15, 2012
Astronomy Picture of the Day – July 20, 2012 -- <http://apod.nasa.gov/apod/ap120720.html>



Calendar of Events July/August 2012 (MDT)

July 22	7:30 p.m.	July ASLC General Meeting
28	3:00 p.m.	Southern Delta Aquarid meteor shower peaks
Aug 01	9:27 p.m.	Full Moon
07	11 a.m.	Mercury stationary
09	12:55 p.m.	Last Quarter Moon
12	6 a.m.	Perseid Meteor Shower Peaks
12	6 p.m.	Mars near Spica
16	6 a.m.	Mercury greatest distance from Sun (19 degrees)
17	2 a.m.	Mars 3-degrees south of Saturn
17	9:54 a.m.	New Moon
24	7:54 a.m.	First Quarter Moon
24	7:30 p.m.	August ASLC General 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

