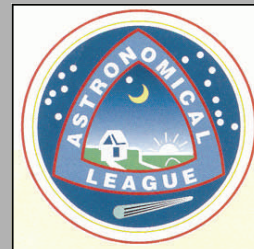




ASSET NEWSLETTER

STARGAZER

ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY OF SOUTH EAST TEXAS
P O BOX 7943
BEAUMONT, TEXAS 77726-7943



President - Lonnie Mosley
president@asset-astronomer.org

Vice President - Eddie Treviño
vice-president@asset-astronomer.org

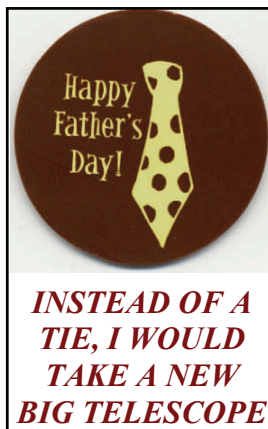
Secretary - Brenda Tantzen
secretary@asset-astronomer.org

Treasurer - Roger Dillon
treasurer@asset-astronomer.org

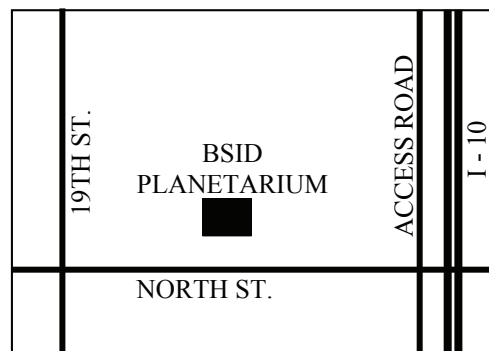
Newsletter Editor - Howard Minor
newslettered@asset-astronomer.org

JUNE 2011

**ASSET CLUB MEETING IS AT
THE BSID PLANETARIUM
FRIDAY THE 10TH,
7:00 PM, COME GET THE
LATEST ASTRONOMY NEWS.
OUR PRE DINNER IS AT
JOHNNIE CARINO'S
REPEAT, THE PLANETARIUM**



THE CLUB WEB SITE:
asset-astronomer.org



Hello all; here's The Word

I am looking forward to our June meeting; it should be a very informative one. It is going to be **held at the BSID planetarium**. I hope you are able to attend and if you can bring a friend. We may even have a surprise speaker! You will have to attend to see who it is.

Have you looked at our web site lately? It has a new look and some great new features. Twitter is a great way for up to date information to be shared, and Facebook is a good way for our members to keep in touch. If you have suggestions or pictures and videos you would like to see on our web page, contact Will and let him know.

Hopefully the weather is starting to improve (if you can put up with the wind) and we can start holding more star parties. A few members got together at Hillister on Sunday and had some good observing time.

Continued on page 2



ASSET Minutes Friday, May 13th, 2011 by Jane for Brenda

We had a good turnout for our pre-meeting meal at Outback, with 15 attending.

Lonnie reported that Will was on the radio in a 30-minute segment. Will told about our club and gave general astronomy information—types of scopes, etc. Will put it on iphoneastronomy.com. Roger said he had a revised roster available and that we now have 28 members. He filed 5 years of tax returns, and we still have the 501-C3 designation. He talked about dates for viewing Purbach X on the moon and had a sheet to pass out.

Awards were given to Lea Ann, Bubba and Will for the AL Astronomy Outreach Program. Sharon Rigsby suggested starting a continuing education class on basic astronomy this fall through BSID. Topics could include intro. to night sky, naked eye sky objects, solar system objects, and intro to telescopes.

Jane's minutes continued on page 5

THE OBSERVING CORNER - BY OUR MEMBERS

MAY 28TH, THE RANCH STAR PARTY

Hey guys & gals, where were you? Jane and I, Justin and Gerald were the adventurous members that enjoyed the skies at the Ranch. We had clear skies, a wonderful sunset and deer in the meadow. The cows lined up at the fence to watch us set up. Justin took some pictures and has a new (used) C-8, and had been ready to get out and try it. Gerald was planning on observing some special doubles and carbon stars. Jane was wanting to do some doubles and globulars. As for myself I wanted to see the supernova in 3972 again plus some Herschel II's.

The high points turned out to be the Hubble Telescope going across the southern sky; very cool. I had the times for that. Also Gerald located another Double Double in Ophiuchus like in Lyra, just above the head of Scorpius and it was the best similar double double I had ever seen. Justin finally got his C-8 where he could locate objects. Jane knocked out a few globulars for the AL Certificate and I could not see the Supernova, but I did do some Herschel II's. The Supernova may have faded below 14th magnitude already.

I know it was Memorial Weekend, but we hoped more of you could have come.

LET THE NIGHT SKY LIGHT UP YOUR LIFE!

Howard

Will's Observing report:



Anyone notice summer is here? I have, and its not because of the heat or mosquitos, its the summer objects! I absolutly love these summer Messiers and constellations. Lots of nice faint fuzzies and perfect bino objects. Ive been working on finishing my bino Messiers and the regular Messiers. Well over half way on both! I'm hoping to be able to get out with all this dry weather and take in some photons! I encourage all of you to do the same!

Until next time!

Will

Continued from page 1 (Lonnie's Word)

I guess with the holiday it was hard to find the time to get out. I thought I was going to be able to go, but it didn't work out that way. Hopefully next month will be better. Make sure you look at the first page of this newsletter for the location of our pre-meeting meal. I hope to see you there. This is a really great newsletter. It is very informative and a great place for you to get information out to your fellow members. If you were able to do some observing during the month, send Howard an e-mail about it and he will include it. Thanks to Howard and Jane for all your hard work on our newsletter.

Lonnie

Fun astronomy facts about stars

1. Lightning is about 3 times hotter than our Sun. 2. The Sun is around 4.5 billion years old. 3. The Sun causes the ocean currents and weather patterns on Earth. 4. The energy produced by the Sun is 383 billion trillion kilowatts. 5. The center of the Sun is called the core. 6. Particles given off from explosions on the Sun are visible from earth... we know this as the aurora. 7. The closest star to our solar system is called Proxima Centauri and it's over 4 light years away. 8. The light of the Sun takes 8 minutes to reach Earth.

ASSET Newsletter – June 2011



Several of our members have been receiving award pins and certificates for completing Astronomical League observing programs. If you have not started an observing program you might want to consider one or two. There are almost 50 different observing club programs to choose from. They cover most aspects of astronomy and also include programs geared to kids.

There are programs for observing with binoculars or telescopes. And there are programs for observing multiple types of deep sky objects, like the Messier or Caldwell programs, and for specific types of deep sky objects like globular clusters, double stars or flat galaxies.

Some awards require as few as 6 hours of observing (the Meteor Club), some require observation of as few as 50 objects (the Binocular Messier Club), some require observation of as many as 400 objects (the Hershel clubs), but most require observation of about 100 objects. Some programs lend themselves to observing in less than dark sky locations. These include the double star program and the urban observing program.

Programs that I have just become familiar with are the Dark Nebula club, the Galaxy Groups and Clusters club and the Local Galaxy Group club. I may start one of those while at TSP this year. They are all intriguing. And the Globular Cluster club is another one of interest. We have a couple of members that have or soon will complete the requirements for that award.

Go to the Astronomical League web site to review the complete list of observing club programs. You should find one or two you would be interested in working on. They help you learn the night sky and it is fun to learn about, search for, find and observe the wonders of the universe you will encounter through these programs.

Hope to see you at the June meeting. Clear Skies!

Roger

READ NOW; for Saturday, June 4

Saturn provides observers with telescopes magnificent views of its ring system. But the planet offers much more. View Saturn tonight into Sunday morning and you'll get a great display of the planet's moons on the move. The brightest moon, 8th-magnitude Titan, lies 1' southwest of Saturn and will guide your eye to Tethys, Dione, and Rhea. (These 10th-magnitude moons glow brightly enough that a 6-inch scope easily shows them.) All four moons lie within about 30" of one another. Titan, Tethys, and Dione form a straight line while Rhea completes a triangle with Titan and Tethys. Dione quickly spoils this alignment as it moves off to the east. Twelfth-magnitude Enceladus proves more challenging. It hugs the rings closely, completing an orbit every 1.4 days. If you can see Dione and Tethys clearly, try to spot Enceladus. By 2 a.m. EDT, it will have moved from near Saturn to a position about half-way from Tethys to the rings' edge. You'll need a 12-inch or larger scope and excellent conditions to glimpse 13th-magnitude Mimas.

from astronomy.com



SUMMER IS COMING OR IS IT HERE?

In the Northern Hemisphere, summer solstice begins Jun 21 2011 at 1:16 P.M. EDT

Sol + stice derives from a combination of Latin words meaning "sun" + "to stand still." As the days lengthen, the sun rises higher and higher until it seems to stand still in the sky.

As a major celestial event, the Summer Solstice results in the longest day and the shortest night of the year. The Northern Hemisphere celebrates in June, but the people on the Southern half of the earth have their longest summer day in December. Midsummer was thought to be a time of magic, when evil spirits were said to appear. To thwart them, Pagans often wore protective garlands of herbs and flowers.

Our Meeting is at the BSID Planetarium on North Street just West of I-10. Check the Map on page 1. We will have refreshments and our regular program. It is always fun in the planetarium.

Milky Way Safari - by Dauna Coulter and Dr. Tony Phillips

Safari, anyone? Citizen scientists are invited to join a hunt through the galaxy. As a volunteer for Zooniverse's Milky Way Project, you'll track down exotic creatures like mysterious gas bubbles, twisted green knots of dust and gas, and the notorious "red fuzzies."

"The project began about four months ago," says astrophysicist Robert Simpson of Oxford University. "Already, more than 18,000 people are scouting the Milky Way for these quarry."

The volunteers have been scrutinizing infrared images of the Milky Way's inner regions gathered by NASA's Spitzer Space Telescope. Spitzer's high resolution in infrared helps it pierce the cloaking haze of interstellar gas and dust, revealing strange and beautiful structures invisible to conventional telescopes. The Milky Way Project is helping astronomers catalogue these intriguing features, map our galaxy, and plan future research.

"Participants use drawing tools to flag the objects," explains Simpson. "So far they've made over a million drawings and classified over 300,000 images."

Scientists are especially interested in bubble-like objects believed to represent areas of active star formation. "Every bubble signifies hundreds to thousands of young, hot stars. Our volunteers have circled almost 300,000 bubble candidates, and counting," he says.

Humans are better at this than computers. Computer searches turn up only the objects precisely defined in a program, missing the ones that don't fit a specified mold. A computer would, for example, overlook partial bubbles and those that are skewed into unusual shapes.

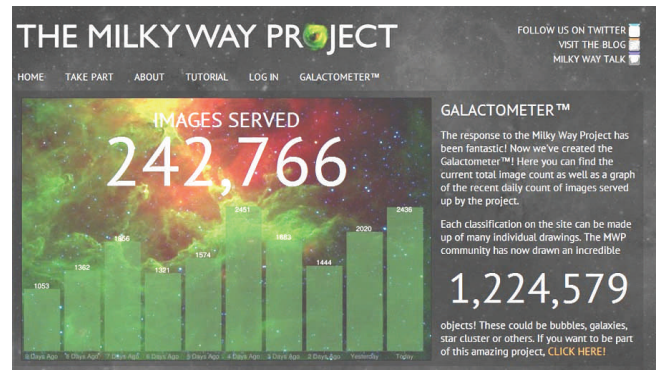
"People are more flexible. They tend to pick out patterns computers don't pick up and find things that just look interesting. They're less precise, but very complementary to computer searches, making it less likely we'll miss structures that deserve a closer look. And just the sheer numbers of eyes on the prize mean more comprehensive coverage."

Along the way the project scientists distill the volunteers' data to eliminate repetitive finds (such as different people spotting the same bubbles) and other distortions.

The project's main site (<http://www.milkywayproject.org>) includes links to a blog and a site called Milky Way Talk. Here "hunters" can post comments, chat about images they've found, tag the ones they consider especially intriguing, vote for their favorite images (see the winners at <http://talk.milkywayproject.org/collections/CMWS00002u>), and more.

Zooniverse invites public participation in science missions both to garner interest in science and to help scientists achieve their goals. More than 400,000 volunteers are involved in their projects at the moment. If you want to help with the Milky Way Project, visit the site, take the tutorial, and ... happy hunting!

You can get a preview some of the bubbles at Spitzer's own web site, <http://www.spitzer.caltech.edu/>. Kids will enjoy looking for bubbles in space pictures while playing the Spitzer concentration game at <http://spaceplace.nasa.gov/spitzer-concentration/>.



This article was provided by the Jet Propulsion Laboratory, California Institute of Technology, under a contract with the National Aeronautics and Space Administration.



(Continued from page 1 Jane's Minutes)

This would be held at the planetarium, maybe one night a week. Bill, Howard, Will and Lonnie were all willing to teach a session. Discussed the need to promote the class.

Howard reported on NGC 3972, a huge super nova taking place in the bowl of the Big Dipper. Lonnie gave a report on NASA's Kepler. He said the spacecraft found 1,235 potential planets, 54 located within "Goldilocks," which is the just right range of distances around a star in which liquid water could crystallize on planets' surfaces. Roger gave a presentation and showed pictures on El Dorado.

Thanks Will and Courtney for providing refreshments. Sharon Rigsby will do refreshments in June. We ended the evening by watching a video on Voyager 1 & 2. There were 21 members present.

Jane Minor

Q. What is an Iridium flare? An Iridium flare is caused by the sun being reflected from one of the three *main mission antennae* (MMA) of an Iridium satellite. The MMAs are flat, highly polished aluminium surfaces, and when the angles are just right, they can reflect the sun just like a mirror. There are over 80 of these communications satellites in orbit, and they are operated by the Iridium LLC Consortium.

ASTRONOMICAL LEAGUE OBSERVING PROGRAMS - THE LIST IS GROWING

The programs are now broken into 3 groups, Beginner, Intermediate, and Advanced. In these groups there are 35 observing programs with 16 in Beginner, 11 in intermediate and 8 in the Advanced program.

It is surprising to me that some of the programs are ranked in the wrong group, in my opinion. So look up the AL web site and see all the programs for certificates. The programs that are required for a Masters Certificate will need to be realigned. But that does create a problem for persons who have already completed a Masters or who are working on certificates.

It may be a very good idea to carefully choose your programs you should do and what order.

A REMINDER ABOUT STELLARIUM; YOU CAN DOWNLOAD ON YOUR PC

Stellarium is a free open source planetarium for your computer. It shows a realistic sky in 3D, just like what you see with the naked eye, binoculars or a telescope. It features in version 0.10.6:

- default catalogue of over 600,000 stars
- asterisms and illustrations of the constellations
- constellations for twelve different cultures
- images of nebulae (full Messier catalogue)
- realistic Milky Way
- very realistic atmosphere, sunrise and sunset
- the planets and their satellites

So download the Stellarium program and start enjoying playing with your own planetarium.



Courtesy W.M. Keck Observatory Not only is it possible to see lasers coming from the Subaru telescope, left, and the domed Keck telescopes at the summit of Mauna Kea, also visible are star trails and light pollution from as far away as Honolulu.



Snapshot from Mauna Kea captures starry light show By Star-Advertiser staff

A stunning time-lapse photograph, taken at the summit of Mauna Kea Thursday night, shows the circular sweep of the stars as the Earth rotates eastward on its axis — as well as light from as far away as Honolulu. W.M. Keck Observatory staffer Andrew Cooper took the shot, facing northwest toward the Subaru Telescope and the Keck I and Keck II domes, which are shining lasers that look like searchlights in the crystal clear sky.

The lasers help the observatories correct for atmospheric distortion. At 13,796 feet in altitude and generally dry, Mauna Kea is already one of the premier spots in the world for astronomy, but light pollution remains a concern. Visible in the shot are Kailua-Kona to the left and Honolulu behind the center telescope.

From Star Advertiser. Com

ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY OF SOUTH EAST TEXAS MONTHLY CALENDAR

~ June 2011 ~						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
REMEMBER THE 10TH; BSID PLANETARIUM PREMEAL AT JONNIE CORINO'S			1 NEW MOON ●	2	3	4 CLAIBORNE PARK SP
5	6	7	8 FIRST QUARTER ◐	9	10 ASSET CLUB MEETING 7:00PM	11
12 	13 Moon closest to Earth, Perigee	14	15 FULL MOON ○	16	17	18
19	20	21 	22 LAST QUARTER ◑	23	24 Moon farthest from Earth, Apogee	25 RANCH STAR PARTY
26	27	28	29	30	Notes:	

The Solar System in JUNE 2011 :

Mercury - The planet MERCURY lingers too close to the sun for viewing in the morning skies for the first 3 weeks of June, however during the last week of this month, the tiny planet will be above the WEST horizon, about 45 minutes after sunset. It will be to the LEFT of the two stars CASTOR and POLLUX. - In TAURUS

Venus - A very poor month for viewing the most striking naked eye planet in the skies; brilliant Venus rises only a short time before sunrise, about two hours before sunrise. - in ARIES

Mars - Mars is far from Earth and quite small telescopically, and is nothing but a curiosity during June 2011, peeking up above the eastern horizon near VENUS this month. - In ARIES.

Jupiter - The mightiest of planets, JUPITER rises about 3:30 a.m. local time, just ahead of Venus and Mars and is in the glow of morning dawn shortly after. Not a good month for this huge planet. - In PISCES.

Saturn - Saturn is moving into the western skies this month and will SET nearly due west at about 2 a.m.local time by month's end. Look for the ringed planet to the right of the bright star SPICA, in the constellation of Virgo. NOTE that on the evenings of June 9-11, about one hour after sunset, Saturn and the bright star PORIMA will be less than ONE QUARTER degree apart in the sky....this will allow both of them to appear in the same moderately wide field of view of any telescope; - in VIRGO

Uranus - This distant, blue world is visible easily in a 5-6 inch telescope; look for this bluish world, a bit higher in the sky and south and west of JUPITER all month, rising about 2 a.m. - in PISCES.

Neptune - Even more distant than Uranus (1 billion, 874 million miles) Neptune rises more than one hour ahead of Uranus (about midnight on June 10) but is more difficult to see; it appears starlike in all but the largest telescopes. - in CAPRICORNUS.

Pluto - Now located in the border regions between Sagittarius and Ophiuchus, our distant planet will be easy to locate with good star programs or star charts. At magnitude 14, Pluto rises about 9:30 p.m. is overhead about 2 am. local time. - In SAGITTARIUS.