

JANUARY-FEBRUARY 1991

Newsletter of the LACKAWANNA ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY, Scranton, Pennsylvania

LAS OFFICERS AND BOARD MEMBERS FOR 1991

PRESIDENT Steve Gedrich

VICE PRESIDENT John D. Sabia

SECRETARY Joe Kamichitis

TREASURER Diane Mesevicz

AT-LARGE MEMBERS: Phil Cruikshank / Bernie Gillet / Don Murreg

LAS CALENDAR

LAS MEETINGS: Tuesdays, 7:30 PM at Allied Services, Morgan Highway, Scranton, PA

January 8, 1991

February 5, 1991

March 5, 1991

CLUB NIGHTS: Saturdays, 9:00 PM if clear, at KJC/LAS Observatories, Fleetville, PA

January 12, 1991

February 9, 1991

March 9, 1991

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETINGS: Tuesdays, 8:30 PM at the home of D. Mesevicz, Scranton, PA

Any interested member may attend -- call 961-1264 for directions.

January 15, 1991

February 12, 1991

March 12, 1991

KJC PUBLIC NIGHTS: On hiatus until a date to be announced (usually midMarch)

On all clear official club nights, a KJC/LASO keyholder will be present. If the weather is at all questionable, please call either John D. Sabia at 586-0789, or Joe and Jo-Ann Kamichitis at 343-4006, in order to be sure that someone will be there (and maybe inspire them to take a chance on an "iffy" night!) On other clear nights, check with the keyholders or call the Observatory number (945-3665). Let the phone ring long since we may be outside, and may not hear it right away.

* TO GET TO KJC/LASO, TAKE I-81, EITHER EXIT 61 OR 62 AND HEAD TOWARDS FLEETVILLE. THE OBSERVATORIES ARE LOCATED AT THE INTERSECTION OF ROUTE 107 AND HACK ROAD. IF YOU FIND YOURSELF AT FLEETVILLE CORNERS, YOU'VE GONE TOO FAR!! *



PRESIDENT'S RAMBLINGS

The January LAS meeting will have several programs - reports on last years activities by the out-going officers, a discussion of upcoming events and recent observations by members, and probably a video tape presentation (don't forget this site is the only one where we're able to make use of videotapes!)

Steve Gedrich, the incoming president has plans he will reveal about possible club observing projects and other activities for the year. Be there to give him your encouragement and input.

Jo-Ann Kamichitis

HUBBLE NOTES by Rob Thomas



Reprinted from the Astronomical Society of the Palm Beaches, Inc.

Now that we have finally gotten the Hubble Space Telescope into orbit, what about the man that it is named after?

Edwin Powell Hubble was born in Marshfield, Missouri on November 20, 1889. Hubble, the son of a lawyer, was interested in

the law to begin with and, as a Rhodes scholar at Oxford University in 1910, took his degree in that field. His interest, however, had already begun to turn to astronomy under the influence of Millikin and Hale. Finding himself irresistibly attracted to the field still, he abandoned law and worked at Yerkes Observatory from 1914 to 1917. In 1919 he began work at Mount Wilson Observatory in California where he had at his disposal the 100-inch telescope and where he remained until his death on September 28, 1953.

At Mount Wilson, Hubble's interest turned to the patches of luminous nebulae, some of which had first been systematically observed by Messier 150 years before and which were still question marks in the sky. By this time the dimension of our galaxy had been worked out, but the question still remained whether anything besides the Magellanic Clouds lay outside the galaxy.

Suspicion turned to the nebulae. Some were undoubtedly clouds of dust and gas illuminated by stars shining within them, and were definitely part of our galaxy. The

luminosity of others, however, like M-31 could not be attributed to the visible stars. If stars were there, they would have to be a large mass of extremely dim ones, producing an effect like that of the Milky Way.

In 1924 Hubble and his telescope (the largest of its day) were finally able to enlarge the nebulae to the point of making individual stars within it visible. Using the period-luminosity law, he concluded that M-31 was some 800,000 light-years away, 8 times farther away than the farthest star in our own galaxy. Other nebulae were placed farther still, their distances ranging into the billions of light-years. In this way, Hubble founded the study of the existence of what he called "extragalactic nebulae".

Hubble went on to classify the galaxies according to shape and to make suggestions as to the possible course of their evolution. When the 200-inch telescope was installed at Mount Palomar, Hubble was the first individual to have the honor to look through it.





As I thumb through the
Observer's Handbook,
The sky's so big I know
not where to look.
Peering at those
wondrous sights up
above,
In awe I stare; oh no, I've
lost a glove.

First, I see Taurus and the
Pleiades:
Those seven beautiful
sister-ladies.
Orion, star nursery red
and blue,
Dust and gas give
Trapezium its hue.

M31, a spiral galaxy:
It is a commonly thought
fallacy.
That everyone expects this
to look
As it's depicted in many
a book.

Next Auriga and bright
white Capella,
Twinkling, as I reach for
my camera.
I try to seize this sight, so
inspiring;
But the results will prove
disappointing.

Into Cancer, the lord
Jupiter dances,
But now my view is
hampered by branches.
Cars stream by, lighting
the way home from
bars.

As I endeavour to steal
glimpses of Mars.

I try again to capture
Jupiter,
But God, the wind and the
cold are bitter.
Preparing to photograph
Aries,
I mourn for my dead
flashlight batteries.

Blindly stumbling into a
neighbour's fence,
Into the snow, sinks my
favourite lens.
A last backward glance
shows an aurora,
Of course, circled by a
cloudy aura.

Another awfully
productive night.
A half a roll of film, and
near frostbite.
Why must the best sights
be in this season?
Am I the only one tired of
freezin'?

Louise E. Whalen

Reprinted from Ottawa
Centre RASC Astronomer,
December 1990 issue.

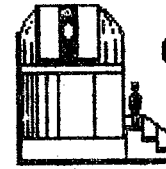
FOR SALE
(BY OWNER,
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7 x 50 Bushnell CF Custom
Binoculars, like new, used
5 times, asking \$135.00
Don Murray - 343-2394

6" f/8 Edmund Newtonian
on German Equatorial

mount well used, about 20
years old. Mirror should
be resilvered. Make best
offer.

Contact Debbie Falmer,
24 Oak Grove Trail
Nashua, NH 03062



OBSERVATORY
ASIDES

Since it seems to be the
time of year for reform
movements, here's one of
my big plans -- Keep
better records!!

Last year we had
miscellaneous people
keeping the minutes
because the secretary for
reasons pretty much
beyond her control
couldn't always make it to
the meetings. I've been
trying to re-construct
whatever minutes seem to
be missing from my
"president's scribbles"
-- pretty thin stuff to
work with. This has led to
my biggest resolution --
admit it when you're not
suited to a job. At least
I've kept that resolution
by not running for
another term as
president. It just goes to
show what this club is
like, that a disorganized
person like I am could be
elected president,
secretary or treasurer,
repeatedly.

At various times, either

John or I have been the historian. I accumulate everything; John will organize it all and discard the utter trivia I let pile up (old club junk mail, etc.). Looking to organize a bit myself I decided to look through back issues of the newsletter and club minutes to find out who were the officers and when.

You might think that the worst records would have been kept in the dim dark early days of the club -- but nooooo. It seems the busier we were, the poorer the records were. I've yet to finally clear out the rubble I've left in my mother's house, but so far it seems the minutes for these years are missing or partially missing -- 1977, 1978, 1979, 1980, 1981, 1982, 1984, and 1985.

In some of these years (1978, 1979) we had secretaries who just never showed up or who moved away. In other years, I'm not sure what happened, since I know those secretaries were present at the meetings. In 1980, because of no minutes and the newsletter not being published we have no idea who the officers were except for President - Jo-Ann Pluciennik, and Junior Vice John Koshinski. (This in

particular is pretty embarrassing to admit.) For most of the other missing years, the newsletter gives us a record of club activities.

Maybe all of this lack of history is preying on my mind because I'm smack into middle age, but it's even driving me to consider making phone calls to the former secretaries to see if any one recalls what happened to their minutes or whether or not they ever got the old minutes from their predecessors.

I'm even considering reorganizing my minutes for 1986 in a form any standard human could recognize as a series of coherent statements!! (There's no such thing as "Robert's Rules of Order" police corps is there?)

Maybe I should relax about the whole thing, after all we must be doing something right -- we keep growing in size all the time. Besides consider this quote from that excellent newsletter "The Practical Observer" July 1990 issue, page 16.

"One success story about a more casual club is that of The Local Group of Deep Kay Observers, based in Brandenton, Florida. This club would

seem to have taken the work "casual" to an extreme, but with great success! There is no organization to the club at all - no officers, directors, board members, chairman, committees - or bureaucracy! In an article about the club which appeared in the Fall 1987 New Horizons, the club boasts a membership list of 110 since its formation in 1983 and a turn out of 75%! And 25 to 30 members show up even if it's raining! At the heart of this club is the "Core Group" which consists of members who are the hard core type (in 1987 they had 16 people). If any decisions must be made, these are the people who make them, usually in an informal setting. It would seem to be a hybrid club of sorts, a core of the very serious running an operation who's main goal is just to have a good time and get people out in the field to observe."

Maybe we should strive for the more casual style. It seems like the laws of the new science of chaos (which I've just started struggling through some readings about) may work in clubs to produce stability, just as they seem to work to produce the persistent big storms on Jupiter and Neptune.

Come on up! At least from the naked-eye point of view, the wheel of the sky turns in such a way that you still get that soothing impression of the classical clockwork universe.

Jo-Ann Kamichitis

★ DUES ARE DUE NOW
(AND WERE DUE
SINCE DECEMBER)

Don't take it personally if you've paid your dues for 1991 already and find the dues notice is on the last page of the newsletter. We should have noted on the address label that you are paid up for 1991. If no such notation has been made,

then you should take the dues notice especially personally, since WE DO MEAN YOU! If there is any mistake, please let us know at once.

If you do not need to send the dues form, why not pass it on to an interested friend or relative (particularly any lottery winners)?



The Ecliptic is the bimonthly (more or less) newsletter of the Lackawanna Astronomical Society. A subscription to *The Ecliptic* is one of the

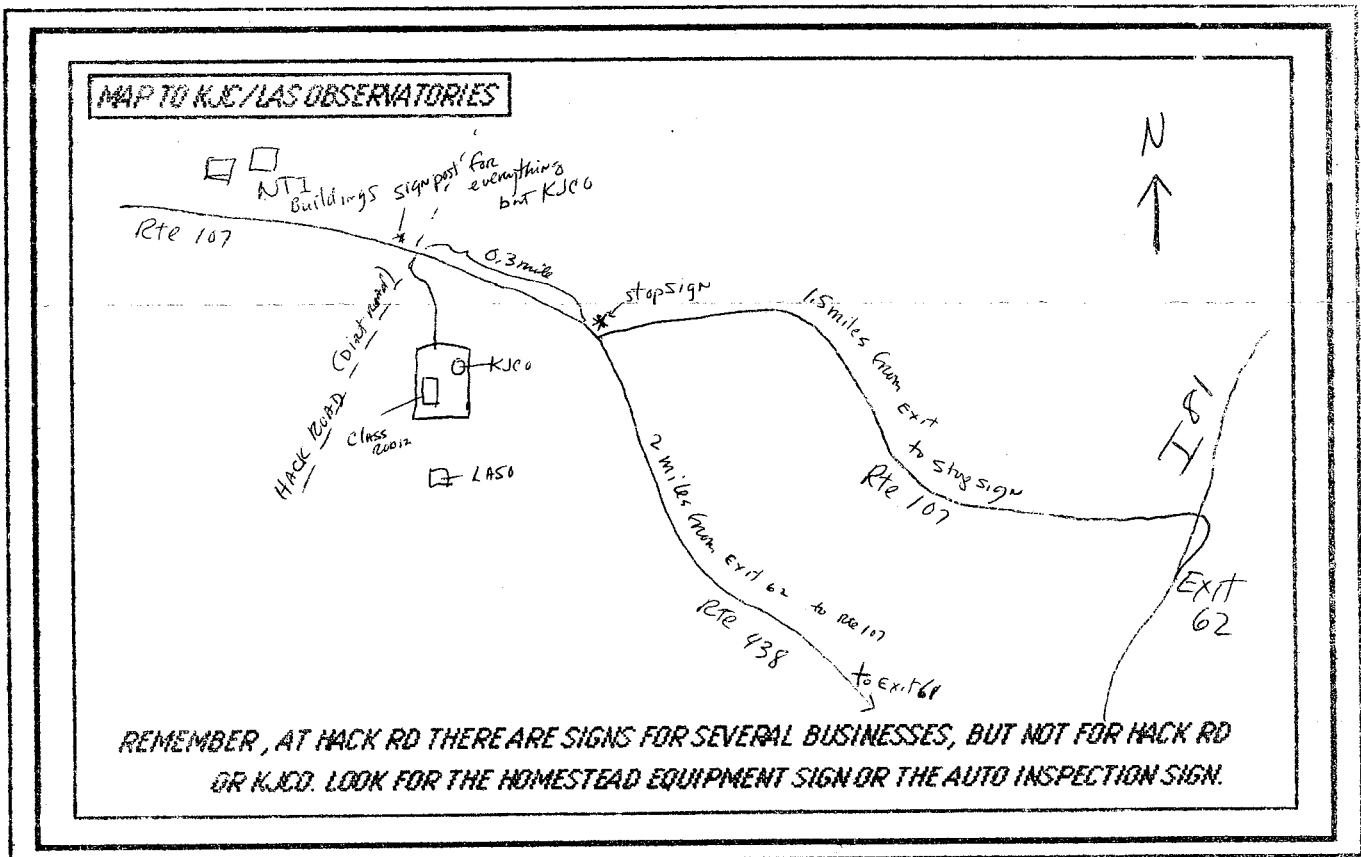
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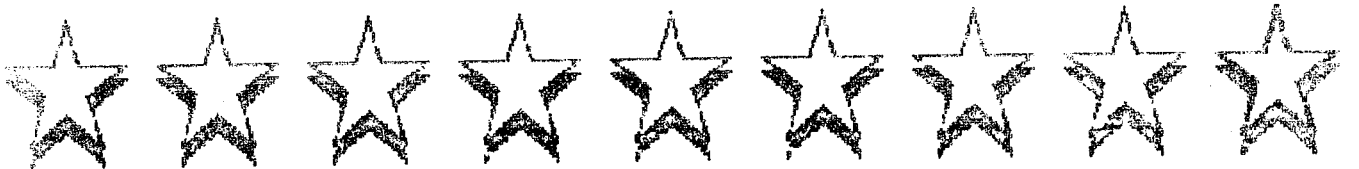
Articles, cartoons, news items, etc may be sent to:

Jo-Ann Kamichitis, editor
1047 Mohawk St
Scranton, PA 18508

Staff:

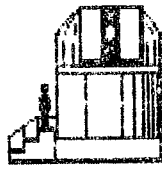
Diane Musewicz
Joe Kamichitis
Julie Musewicz
Sarah Musewicz
Matthew Musewicz
Vince Musewicz





HERE IT IS!

**THE LONG AWAITED
LACKAWANNA ASTRONOMICAL
SOCIETY DUES NOTICE
FOR 1991 !!**



STILL AT 1990 RATES ! (ALSO 1989, 1988, 1987, 1986...)

Please check off your chosen category and fill in the form below. Send the completed form and a check for the correct amount, payable to the LACKAWANNA ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY, to :

Diane Musewicz
431 Palm St.
Scranton, PA 18505

- \$5.00 JUNIORS (UNDER 18 YEARS OLD)
- \$8.00 ADULTS
- \$12.00 FAMILIES
- \$20.00 CONTRIBUTING MEMBERS
- \$100,000 LOTTERY WINNER

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