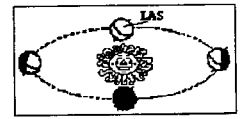


# The ECLIPTIC



Volume 23 Issue 2

MARCH/APRIL 1997

## LAS OFFICERS and BOARD MEMBERS FOR 1997

<b>PRESIDENT</b> Joe Kamichitis	<b>VICE PRESIDENT</b> John D. Sabia
<b>SECRETARY</b> Carol Leola	<b>TREASURER</b> Cindy Krott
<b>AT-LARGE MEMBERS</b> Joe Krott/ Bob Maleninsky Jim Spangler	

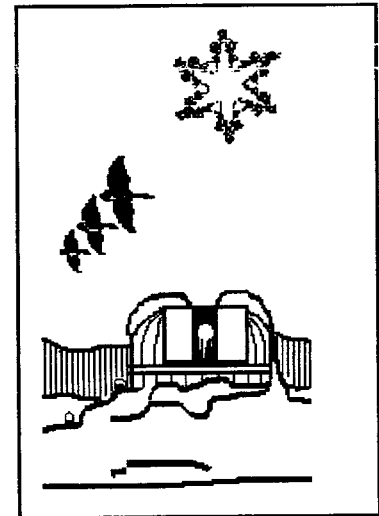
## Calendar of Activities

### MARCH-

- March Meeting** Tuesday, March 4 7:30PM at KC/LASO  
**Messier Marathon** Friday, March 7-8 (or Saturday March 8-9) 7PM at KC/LASO  
 (the first good clear night)  
**Club Night** Saturday, March 8th 8:30PM at the KC/LASO  
**Board Meeting** Tuesday, March 11th 8 PM at the home of Joe and Cindy Krott  
**Lunar Eclipse Watch** From your home or join us at KC/LASO

### APRIL-

- April Meeting** Tuesday, April 1 (seriously!) 7:30PM at KC/LASO  
**Club Night** Saturday, April 5 8:30PM at the KC/LASO  
**Board Meeting** Tuesday, April 8 8 PM at the home of Joe and Cindy Krott  
**Astronomy Day** Saturday, April 12 6 PM at the observatory



### MAY-

- May Meeting** Tuesday, May 6 7:30PM at KC/LASO  
**Club Night** Saturday, May 10 8:30PM at the KC/LASO  
**Board Meeting** Tuesday, May 13 8 PM at the home of Joe and Cindy Krott

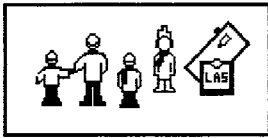
### Notes: Keystone College Observatory Public Nights

Sessions for spring 1997 will begin on Wednesday, March 12 and continue each Wednesday at 7:30 until May 28. In addition to Wednesdays, because of Comet Hale-Bopp, the observatory will also be open on Thursday nights beginning March 27 but only if weather permits. Look for an article in the newspaper for details about this. Members are certainly welcome to come on these days but this is not a club activity. We will, however, be grateful for any and all assistance since we can expect the usual large crowds to show up.

**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!! \***

**Messier Marathon 1997**



Still bristling from the success and excitement of last year's marathon, the club will hold its second annual Messier Marathon this year on March 7-8 (or 8-9 as a cloud-out date) at the observatory. My computer tells me that the sun goes down then about 6:40 so we should be trickling in between 7 and 7:30 to get those elusive objects that will set not long after. We set up along the west side of the parking lot for its better visibility but anyone is welcome to move into the courtyard as the evening goes on. It would be best to park along the east side of the parking lot. We'll have coffee and tea all night and you're welcome to bring some food along.

For more details, see the Messier Marathon article in the last Ecliptic.

An added bonus this year will be comet Hale-Bopp which will be moving into the constellation Lacerta (one of my personal favorites). Even though this comet may not be as spectacular as we once thought it might be, it's still impressive and it's not to be missed.

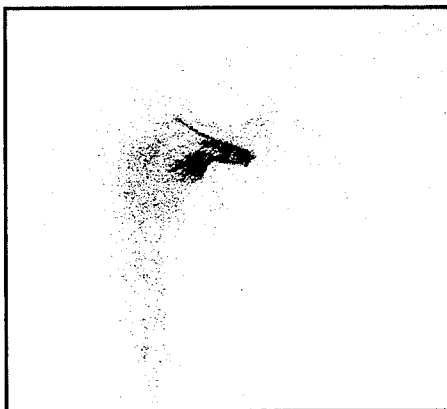


**Comet Hale-Bopp**

The Club has no official observing sessions planned to see the comet. The comet is currently and early morning object and members are basically on their own for observing at this time. John Sabia, however, has been observing the comet in the morning quite fre-

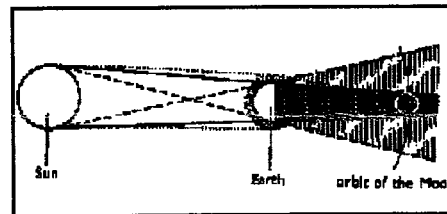
quently and he would probably be happy to have company so members wishing to see the comet before sunrise can call John to see what his plans are on any given day.

When the comet moves into the evening sky in the last half of March we will be at the observatory several time a week for other scheduled events anyway. If the clear weather and no or little moonlight coincide chances are someone will be going to the observatory even when it would not be normally open so call around if you want to go up.



HALE-BOPP'S coma as drawn by John D Sabia

**Lunar Eclipse 1997**



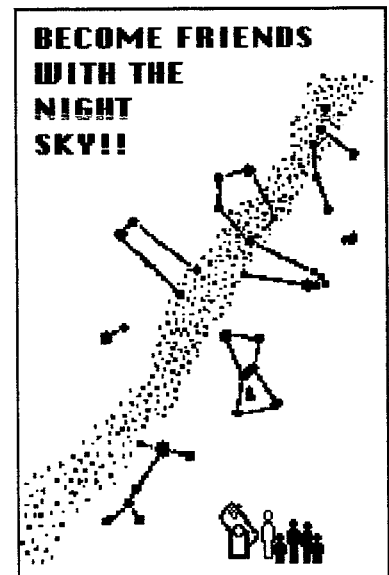
We generally don't get too fired up about partial lunar eclipses but the eclipse on Sunday March 23 will have 92% of the moon in shadow. This is enough to get the feeling of a total eclipse and should be interesting enough to observe with more than a glance. If it's clear, club members will be at the observatory but probably not too early. The moon enters the umbra just a few minutes before 10 PM so

chances are we won't be there before 9 o'clock. It would be a good idea to call first if you want to get there early. The maximum eclipse is 11:39 and the umbral coverage is over at 1:21 AM.

**Astronomy Day 1997**

National Astronomy Day this year falls on Saturday April 12. The moon is near first quarter. Hale-Bopp, however, will be in the evening sky low in the northwest by then and will be better seen the Saturday before. But, since the public also likes viewing the moon and since they'll have plenty of other chances to see the comet, we'll have our Astronomy Day activities on April 12th. April 5th is our Club Night so we'll be at the observatory if it's clear anyway.

Activities will be similar to those in the past. We will get to the observatory about 6 PM to set up for solar observing. After dark, we will show the public the moon and the comet and move on to planets (Mars), galaxies, double stars, nebulae, and clusters. We will have at least one slide program and probably a video running also, and as usual, a good time will be had by all.



This has been our **SPRING OBSERVING FRENZY** all-news issue. (PLEASE let the cloudy times be over!!!!) In the spirit of optimism about clearer times to come, we've enclosed Hale-Bopp maps, a dues notice (Shame on you laggards!), a flyer for the Northeast Astroforum, a Messier Marathon plan of attack, and new copies of the forms for certification as an accomplished LAS observer of the skies. The next issue will contain more of the observations, commentary and reminiscences of our LASers that we're used to in these pages

## **A Frantic, Frosty, February Evening**

by Bob Maleninsky

On Sunday, February 9th, it finally happened. A clear night combined with a clear schedule. I'd been carrying around my eyepiece case and a roll of slide film in the trunk of my car for about a month and a half. I'd been waiting for a chance to photograph Saturn before it became lost in the mirk of the horizon. The day was beautiful, clear blue without a cloud in sight, but very cold.

My beautiful assistant, Inge, (actually Kim Bittencourt, but Inge sounds like a better name for a beautiful assistant) and I had been out for a drive and decided to stop at the LASO. We arrived before sunset and rolled the roof off to let things cool down. I'd never used the club's camera body before so I decided to take it to the car to familiarize myself with it and to load it. After a short time, we had figured everything out except how to get it open to load the film! We tried all the buttons and levers, nothing happened! The sun had set and darkness would be upon us shortly. I looked in the camera box for instructions - none! The beautiful crescent moon (another object I wanted to photograph), was slipping closer to the horizon and we couldn't get the camera open yet! By a stroke of luck, Kim (oops! I mean Inge) pulled the film rewind knob upward and the camera back popped opened. Fantastic! I loaded the film and we went back to the observatory.

I found the eyepiece adapter and T-mount and proceeded to put an eyepiece in, then put the assembly on the

camera. I aimed the 12" to the crescent moon, focused, and centered the image and took a shot. "Click", but it didn't sound right. The mirror in the camera didn't cycle through its whole motion as it should. I took the T-mount off and looked at it - the eyepiece must be too long I thought so I switched to a shorter eyepiece and tried again. "Click", this time it sounded right and I proceeded to take more pictures of the moon as it and Saturn drifted closer and closer to the horizon. Next I turned the scope towards Saturn and focused it - nice and sharp so I took a few shots, but the image was too small with the 20mm eyepiece I was using. I decided to use a 7mm research grade orthoscopic eyepiece I had. I took the camera out of the focuser and over to the bench. I started to unscrew the adapter when it separated from the t-mount. I looked to see if it was a threaded piece but it was only machined with jeweler's screws holding it in place. The screws had loosened up and allowed it to separate. If I couldn't retighten the screws, my night of photography would be abruptly ended. I looked in my eyepiece case for a small screwdriver - nothing! By this time, Kim and I were freezing. We didn't think we'd be at the observatory so we weren't dressed for the cold. We decided to quickly thaw out in the car then go back to see if we could solve the problem. Meanwhile, it seemed Saturn was racing towards the horizon.

After warming up briefly, my brain thawed and I realized I had a small tool kit in my trunk. I hurriedly opened the trunk and retrieved it. There were three small screwdrivers in it, surely one of them would work. Of course not! There were all a little too wide or a little too thick. We frantically searched

the observatory's cabinet - Allen wrenches but no small screwdrivers. We checked the plastic bins on the work table - nothing! Then it hit me - a hairpin. Kim has long hair, maybe she has a hairpin. She did! The end of it was round and it was made of spring steel, very hard to break with frozen fingers. Then I remembered the pliers in the tool kit - that worked. I snapped the end off and tried the hairpin on a screw. It was the right width and fit in the hole but it was too thick for the slot of the screw. I tried rubbing it back and forth on the concrete floor to grind the edge slightly. It worked!

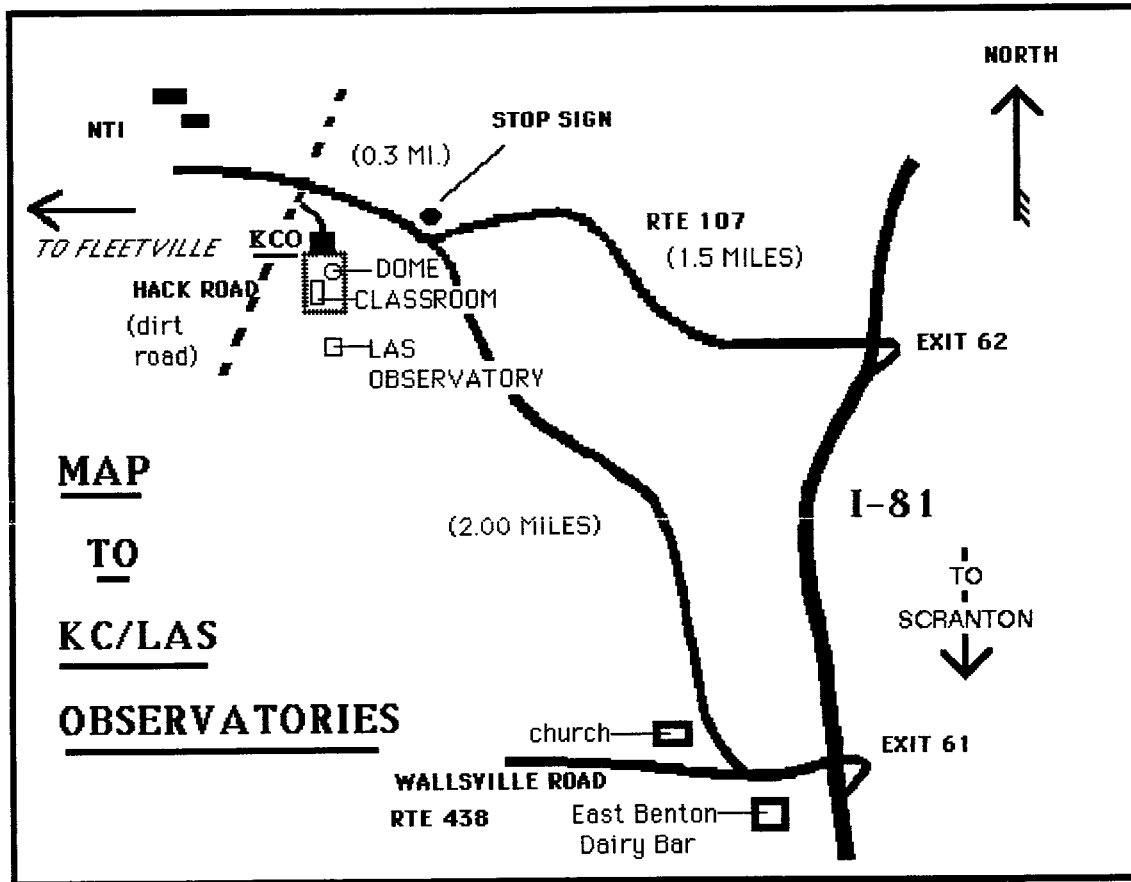
I was able to tighten the screws and finish photographing Saturn before it could dive into the rippling area near the horizon. We continued to freeze and thaw that night, but the remainder of the evening was a piece of cake. We'd beaten the moon and Saturn in the race against time and the other objects we were to photograph would around most of the night. Yep, astronomy is such a relaxing hobby!

### **KEYHOLDER LIST**

Phil Cruikshank	675-8345
Cindy & Joe Krott	587-5917
Carol Leola	586-1582
Bob Maleninsky	343-3422
Don Murray	343-2394
Jim Spangler	587-3972

These are in addition to the Observatory Assistants, John D. Sabia and Jo-Ann Kamichitis.

Keyholders can be contacted by other members who may wish to observe when the observatory is not scheduled to be open.



**THE LACKAWANNA ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY**  
 ☆ 1996 DUES NOTICE ☆

Send the completed form and a check for the correct amount,  
 payable to the LACKAWANNA ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY,

to: Cindy Krott  
 419 Highland Avenue  
 Clarks Summit, PA 18411

- \$5.00 JUNIORS (UNDER 18 YEARS OLD)
- \$8.00 ADULTS
- \$12.00 FAMILIES
- \$20.00 CONTRIBUTING MEMBERS



NAME \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE \_\_\_\_\_  
 ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_  
 CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

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