

THE ECLIPTIC

Lackawanna Astronomical Society

Volume 24 No. 2

June - August 1998

Officers for 1998:

President - Jo-Ann Kamichitis

Vice-President - John Sabia

Secretary - Carol Leola

Treasurer - Joe Kamichitis

Jr Vice-President - Adam Basalyga

At-Large Members - Joe Krott, Ron Murazzi, Jim Spangler

Calendar of Activities:

June 26	9:00	Lackawanna State Park Star Party
July 7	7:30	Regular Meeting (Obs)
July 14	8:00	Board Meeting (Joe and Cindy's) (may be cancelled)
July 16	9:00	Promised Land State Park Star Party (see article)
July 18	~6:30	Club Night/Cookout (Obs)
July 31	9:00	LSP Star Party
August 4	7:30	Regular Meeting (Obs)
August 11	8:00	Board Meeting (Joe and Cindy's)
August 13	9:00	PLSP Star Party
August 15	~6:30	Club Night/Cookout (Obs)
August 28	9:00	LSP Star Party
September 1	7:30	Regular Meeting (Obs)
September 8	8:00	Board Meeting (Joe and Cindy's)
September 19	~6:30	Club Night/Cookout (Obs)

Reasons To Party:

June 26, Charles Messier born 1730

July 4, Henrietta Leavitt born 1868

July 23, New Moon

June 29, George Ellery Hale born 1868

July 10, Alvan Clark born 1832

August 21, New Moon

The Club offers its **CONDOLENCES** to Bill Speare on the death of his mother last month.

KCO July Lecture Series begins on July 6 and continues through July 29. These are Monday and Wednesday events and begin at 8:30 PM. Monday's program is repeated on Wednesday. Club members are welcome to come up for the slide program and observing afterward. You can observe on your own or assist the staff with the public observing. The actual dates are: July 6 & 8, 13 & 15, 20 & 22, and 27 & 29.

Club Nights and Cookouts The Club Night schedule has been changed. Normally the official Club observing session is the Saturday following the meeting but sheer chance, I'm sure, puts that day around full moon for nearly the rest of the year. We've changed the dates to give us more favorable observing. The next three dates are: Saturday 7/18, 8/15, and 9/19. By popular demand these are also cookout nights. We'll have a grill set up from about 6 or 7 PM so bring some food and refreshments if you want and come up when you can. We usually have solar viewing too. These events are becoming very popular so if you want to look through a LOT of scopes, this is the place to be. Adding to our amenities this year is an actual picnic table brought up John Sabia. We're not asking where he got it but thanks John.

Summer Star Parties Once again we will be holding star parties at two local state parks. We will be at Lackawanna State Park (LSP) on three Fridays - June 26, July 31, and August 28 beginning at 9:00. We will have a slide program at the amphitheatre and observe just off the parking area near the campgrounds. Bring your telescopes or just come to help out.

Promised Land State Park (PLSP) this year is a different story. The park was closed for weeks

due to tornado damage but things should be back to "normal" by July and August. Right now though we have tentative dates scheduled. These are Thursday July 16 and August 13 and begin at 9 PM with a slide program and observing after. If there are any changes we'll announce them at the July meeting.

Fall Bus Trip We have a bus trip arranged to the Museum of Science and Technology in Syracuse NY. This will be on Saturday October 10 leaving from the Keyser-Oak Shopping Center at 7 AM. We will leave Syracuse at 5 PM. Ticket prices for the trip will be announced.

Stellafane The annual Stellafane Convention in Springfield VT is set this year for Saturday July 25. There are also activities and talks on Friday the 24th. Registration is \$12 before July 1 and \$15 after. There may be around 10 club members going all ready. Do I hear "Group Shot"?

12" Schmidt-Cassegrain The 12" Meade Schmidt-Cassegrain telescope, the purchase of which was approved by the club, was ordered in mid April and you would think it would be here by now but it isn't. The Meade engineers must be taking extra care to give us the perfection we expect. We really can't do much about mounting it until it arrives so "first light" might not be the very day it comes in. Club members have responded very generously toward the purchase of this telescope. We've received over \$500 in money and equipment donations without having any formal requests. Contributors will be recognized here in a later edition.

By the way, some members were apparently confused as to what scope was being replaced fearing that we were going to replace the 9" "Clark" refractor with a 12" S-C tube! Not so!

What we're doing is taking the 12 1/2" Newtonian off the mount in the LAS observatory (not Keystone's observatory) and exchanging it with the Meade 12" S-C tube. The 12 1/2" will still see service but on a Dobsonian mount.

New Observing Area at the Observatory.

Turning the field into a lawn between the LASO building and the KCO courtyard fence has turned out to be one great idea! At a recent observing session we had 10 vehicles parked there as well as another half dozen in the main parking lot. Cutting the field was initially a club work party project but since then Ron Murazzi has been cutting it himself. The grass has been growing fast with the wet weather we've had since the first cutting and if left to a formal work party it would be a foot high when we got to it. Thanks Ron!

We have no formal rules for parking in the new area, at least not yet. Some ideas passed around are as follows:

1. People needing AC power should park nearest the LASO building.
2. Parking your car facing east or west and setting up in line with your car seems most logical.
3. Try to leave enough room on the west side of the field for a car to drive by. This may help avoid using back-up lights when you leave. If you leave early, tell other people so they can shield their eyes or stop taking photos. Headlights should not be used at all until you are well out into the main parking lot and facing away from the observatory.

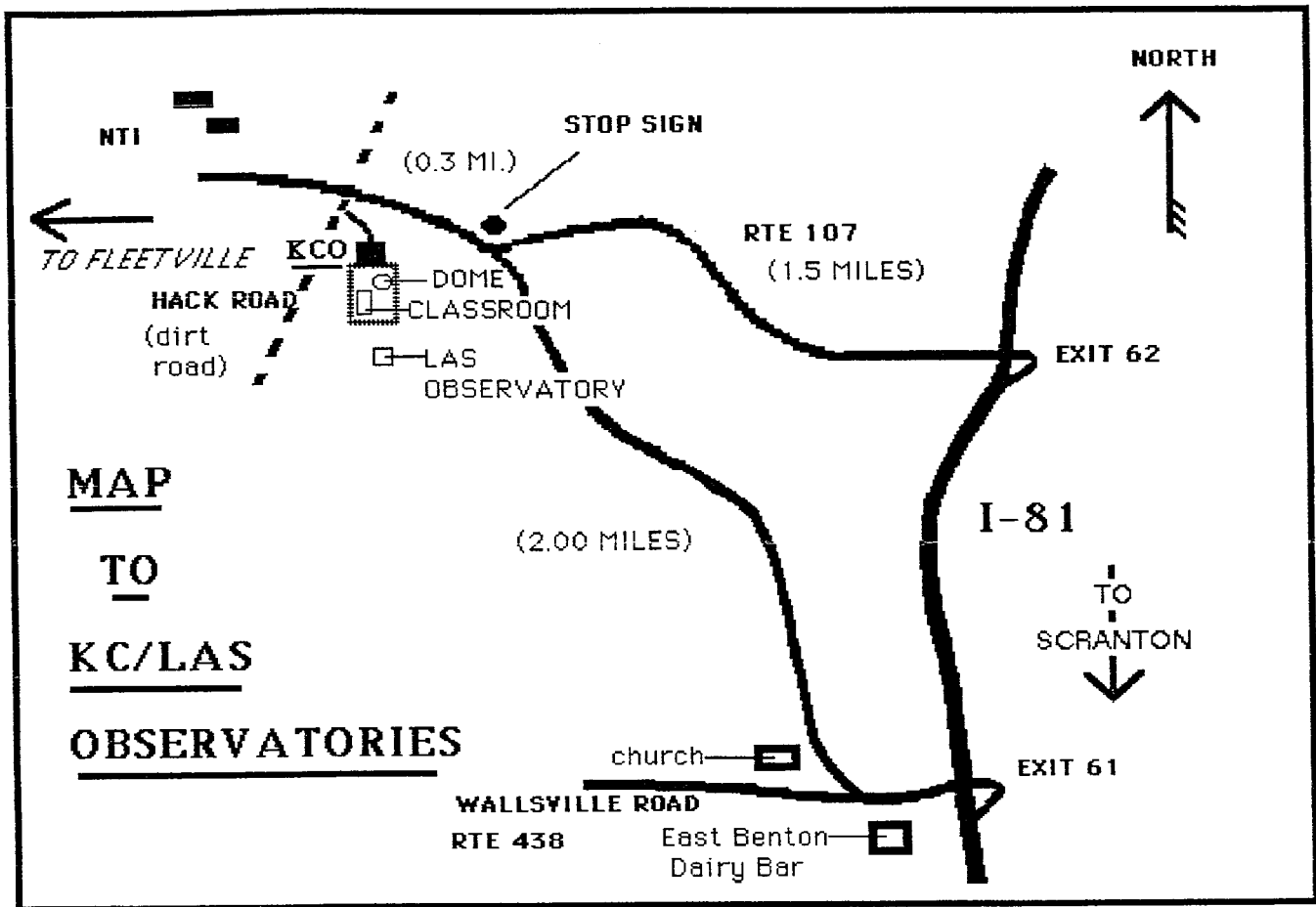
These "rules" apply only on, say, Friday or Saturday nights or during the week if the observatory is officially open and you might expect 8 or 10 cars. If you're observing yourself with a keyholder and a few others on a weeknight then you can park any way you all agree on.

Recent Observations Now that Kembles Cascade has had its 15 minutes of fame, to take its place we have, yes, iridium satellites! Ordinarily, a large number of bright satellites being placed in orbit would have amateur astronomers up in arms (as if that would matter!?) but instead there we are, dropping our hard science 5 minutes before the satellite is scheduled to appear, heads raised, gazing northeast (usually) watching, wondering if we read the time table right, until someone yells "I see it!" "Where?" Then everyone sees it. "That's amazing! Look how bright it is!" And it gets brighter still. -6! (With a downward spike due to some astigmatism.) It fades as quickly as it brightened, it's gone. "I can still see it - use averted vision."

How do these things get into orbit? Dennis di Cicco fires them out of his chimney. Don't believe it? See the photo on page 30 May 98 S&T.

Speaking of pictures, check out that snazzy couple in July 98 S&T page 26. I'm trying to get an 8 x 10 and a couple of wallets. I think that's also Tal on page 54 Feb 98 S&T. Check out his backyard observatory.

Joe Kamichitis



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