

THE ECLIPTIC

Lackawanna Astronomical Society

Volume 24 No. 3

Sept - October 1998

Officers for 1998:

President - Jo-Ann Kamichitis

Secretary - Carol Leola

Jr Vice-President - Adam Basalyga

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

Vice-President - John Sabia

Treasurer - Joe Kamichitis

Calendar of Activities:

Sept 1	7:30	Regular Meeting (Observatory)
Sept 9	7:30	KCO Public Nights begin (Obs)
Sept 10	8:30	Board Meeting (Joe and Cindy's)
Sept 19	~6:30	Club Night/Cookout (Obs)
Oct 3	10 to 5	Televue Day at Pocono Mt Optics
Oct 6	7:30	Regular Meeting (Obs)
Oct 10	7:00 AM	Bus Trip to Syracuse NY (See article inside)
Oct 13	8:00	Board Meeting (Joe and Cindy's)
Oct 17	~8:30	Club Night (Obs)
Nov 3	7:30	Election Meeting (Obs)
Nov 10	8:00	Board Meeting (Joe and Cindy's)
Nov 14	~8:30	Club Night (Obs)

Reasons To Party:

Sept 15 Jupiter at Opposition

Sept 20 New Moon

Sept 23 First Day of Fall (Northern Hemisphere)

Oct 8 Hertzprung born 1873

Oct 20 New Moon

Oct 23 Saturn at Opposition

Oct 24 Last Day of Daylight Savings Time

Oct 25 First Day of Standard Time

Oct 25 Russell born 1877

Nov 2 Harlow Shapley born 1835

BUS TRIP

The Club will have a bus trip to the Museum of Science and Technology in Syracuse NY on Saturday Oct 10. The Jo-Jo Travelers bus will leave the Keyser-Oak Shopping Center at 7:00 AM. We will leave Syracuse at 5:00 PM.

Entrance fee at the Museum is \$4.75 for adults and \$3.75 for children under 12. Entrance fee plus the I-Max theatre is \$9.75 (\$7.75 for under 12 or over 65). The planetarium costs \$1.00. These fees are all paid at the Museum. The bus ticket prices are \$20 for adults and \$10 for kids under 14. Please use the enclosed form for your reservations.

Keystone College Observatory

Public Nights for the fall season begin on Sept 9 and continue every Wednesday at 7:30 PM through November 18. The sessions are held whether or not skies are clear and include a slide program and observing afterward. All Club members are invited to attend. You can observe on your own or assist with the public. Bring your scopes if you wish.

TELEVUE DAY

The Annual Televue Day at Pocono Mtn Optics will be held on Saturday Oct 3 from 10 AM to 5 PM. All Club members and public are invited. Meet Al Nagler in person and see and try his full line of telescopes, eyepieces, and accessories. Refreshments will be available. Register for door prizes. Meet reps from other companies. Previous years have had folks from Meade, Kendrick Studios, and Software Bisque to name a few. See the "Yard Scope". If skies are clear that night, Al and friends will be at the observatory for a memorable night of viewing. You haven't lived until you've seen M31 through a Bizzaro 85!

RECENT OBSERVATIONS

The recent influx of active observers, the increase in the number of keyholders, and the mowing of the field between the LAS observatory and the KCO compound has resulted in not only more observing sessions but in the number of people attending them. Even weekdays sometimes find a half dozen members at the observatory. This past weekend (the 6th) had 10 vehicles, 16 people, and 13 telescopes set up and it was a full moon! The main attraction, of course, were Jupiter and Saturn, and even though at times it seemed that the main objective was comparing scopes, eyepieces, and dew zappers, I'm sure some actual observing was done too. Someone must have a notebook to prove it.

The new members in the past few years must not have come from mainstream America though. Statistics show that fewer people are smoking and yet it seems that the majority of new members are smokers. Concentrations of cigarette butts on the ground are showing up with increasing frequency even inside the compound where there are two receptacles provided for cigarette disposal. Some members actually carry an ash tray with them or use an empty soda bottle and a big thanks goes out to them. All club members are asked to dispose of their cigarette butts in a way that is not, let's say, visually disturbing. This is especially true inside the compound since this is where the public attending KCO functions generally are. There is no smoking at all in the classroom building or in either observatory. Keep in mind that we are guests on someone else's property.

Another situation has come up too although club members may not be involved. For reasons known only to themselves, the maintenance crew from the college cut a large swath of grass around the left side of the main gate! This virtually advertises the fact that if the gate is closed you are able to simply drive around it. The only thing missing is a flashing neon sign complete with arrow! Obvious signs of people driving around the gate have been found by members up there observing. No LAS member should drive around the gate. If the gate is locked then wait until a keyholder comes. If you are there on an unscheduled night thinking that someone might come up to observe and the gate is closed, check the gate to see if it's closed but not locked. Then you can open the gate and drive in after closing the gate behind you. On any clear, unscheduled nights you should call around to see if anyone is coming up.

After waiting one week short of four months for the 12" Meade tube assembly to arrive, it did, but it came in damaged! The three months it took to build it were thrown out the window by the three minutes someone took to pack it! The lens cover was dented and bent and loose in the box and bounced against the corrector plate scratching it. The telescope was sent back. This further delay, coupled with the high cost of mounting rings, caused the Board to rethink its strategy. Our plans were to upgrade the 25 year old mount as well as the telescope itself but because of costs this could be several years down the road.

Having no idea when the replacement tube assembly would be in, we cancelled the order and decided to take a more modest course to upgrade the LAS observatory instrument.

We found a used but mint condition CG-11 which is a Celestron 11 inch tube on a Losmandy G-11 mount. (The Celestron C-11 was one of our original choices). This German equatorial mount, well known for its quality, has push-button controls on both axes, and comes with digital setting circles, a polar axis scope, and a dew prevention system all for no more than about \$450 over the price we would have spent for just the 12" tube and mounting rings. Once adapted to the permanent pier we believe this mount and telescope will serve the club well for both general viewing and more "serious" pursuits of photography and ccd imaging.

Joe Kamichitis

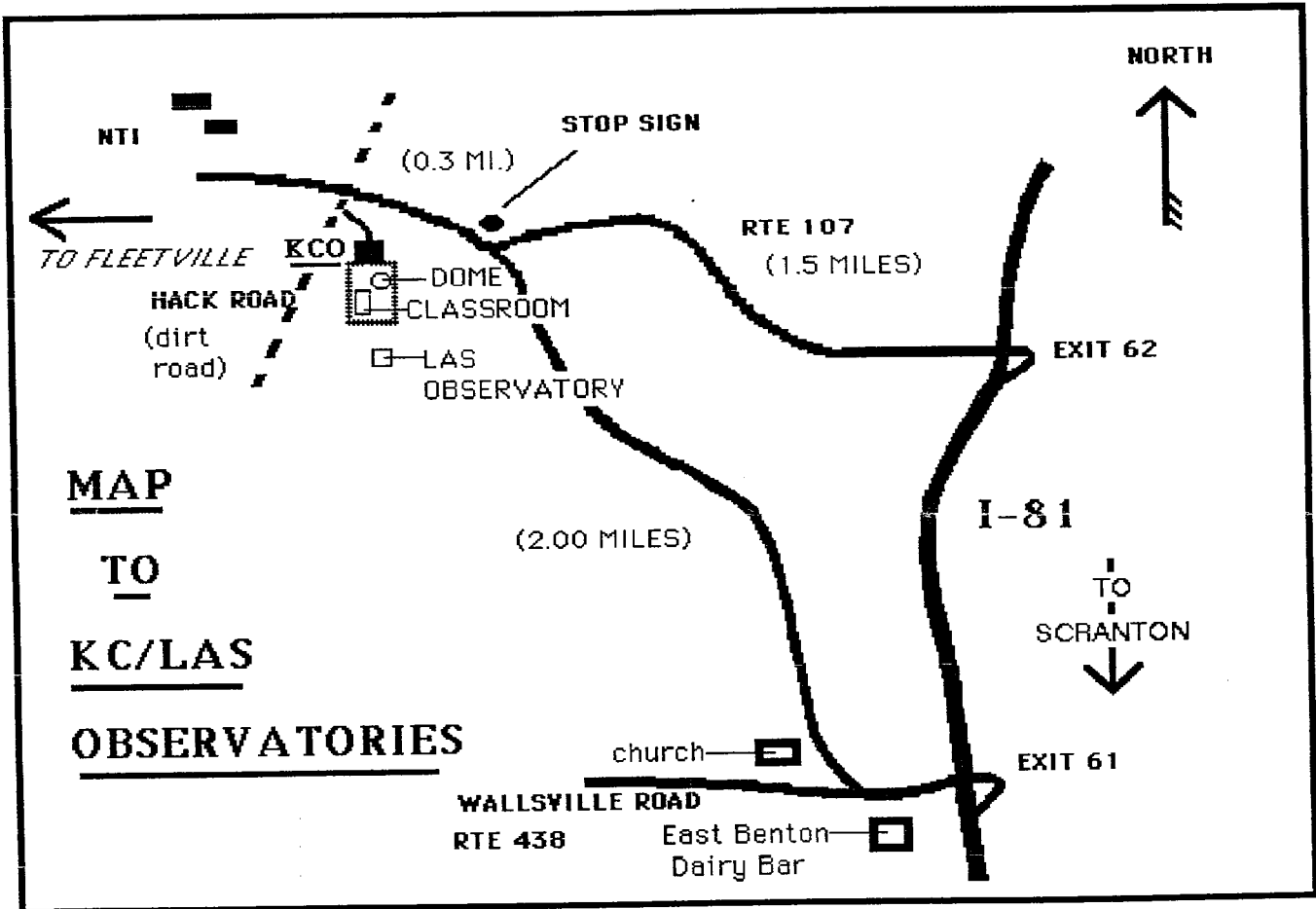
**WANT TO OBSERVE?
SEE IF THESE PEOPLE WILL
BE UP AT THE
OBSERVATORY.**

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.



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Printed through the courtesy of: Office Furniture/USA, 321 - 327 Pear St. Scranton, PA 18505