

# THE ECLIPTIC

Lackawanna Astronomical Society

Volume 25 No. 2

April-August

## Officers for 1999:

President - Jo-Ann Kamichitis

Vice-President - Diane Musewicz

Secretary - Carol Leola

Treasurer - Joe Kamichitis

Jr Vice-President - Adam Basalyga

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

## CALENDAR OF ACTIVITIES

- JUNE** 1 7:30 PM Regular Meeting (observatory)  
5 6:00 PM Club Night/Cookout (Obs)  
8 8:00 PM Board Meeting (Home of Joe Krott)  
18 9:00 PM Lackawanna State Park Star Party #1  
27 1:00 PM SOLAR OBSERVING KCO/LAS observatories
- JULY** 5 8:00 PM KCO July Lecture Series begins  
6 7:30 PM Regular Meeting (Obs)  
8 9:00 PM Promised Land Star Party # 1  
10 6:00 PM Club Night/Cookout (Obs)  
16 9:00 PM LSP Star Party # 2  
25 1:00 PM SOLAR OBSERVING KCO/LAS observatories
- AUG** 3 7:30 PM Regular Meeting (Obs)  
5 9:00 PM PLSP Star Party # 2  
7 6:00 PM Club Night/Cookout (Obs)  
10 8:00 PM Board Meeting (Home of Joe Krott)  
20 9:00 PM LSP Star Party # 3  
29 1:00 PM SOLAR OBSERVING KCO/LAS observatories
- SEPT** 7 7:30 PM Regular Meeting (Obs)  
11 6:00 PM Club Night/Cookout (Obs)  
14 8:00 PM Board Meeting (Home of Joe Krott)  
26 1:00 PM SOLAR OBSERVING KCO/LAS observatories
- OCT** 23 6:00 PM The LAS 40th (or 41st) Anniversary Dinner

## SUMMER STAR PARTIES 1999

The summer public star parties at Lackawanna State Park and Promised Land State Park are back by popular demand. These all begin at 9 PM with a slide program but you might want to come earlier to set up your scope. We're at LSP on Fridays on 6/18, 7/16, and 8/20 setting up just beyond the contact station at the entrance to the camping area. The slide program is at the natural amphitheater.

We're at PLSP on Thursdays July 8 and August 5 at the Deerfield camping area. The slide program here is indoors and will be given no matter what the weather. Curiously enough, at both places we set up near dumping stations!?

At each park we can get between 50 and 150 people so the more members and telescopes we have, the better. Mark your calendars; we'll see you there.

## JULY LECTURE SERIES

The July lecture series at KCO is expected to begin on Monday July 5 and run through Wednesday July 28. These public sessions are held Monday and Wednesday and consist of a slide program and viewing afterward. (Monday's program is repeated on Wednesday.) The official starting time hasn't been set yet but it will probably 7:30 or 8:00 PM.

While KCO public sessions are not club events, all club members are invited to come up to attend the program and observe as part of the public or bring a telescope and help dazzle the crowds.

The regular fall public nights begin probably on September 15.

## SUMMER OBSERVING

The fair weather observers should be out in force pretty soon. Most clear Friday and Saturdays should stand the chance of having 15 or 20 people and a dozen or so telescopes set up at the observatory. This will be especially true when Jupiter and Saturn come back in the evening. Mars didn't seem to generate much interest.

If you want to look through low-tech reflectors from 6 to 25 inches now's your chance. If your tastes run towards high-tech observing you're also in luck. In the past couple of years we've seen an influx of digital

setting circles, CCD cameras, and laptop computers glowing in the field. Many people can't tell a star-hop from a bunny-hop.

We've heard several times that we don't show people Uranus, Neptune, and Pluto because they "look like dots". This year we should make the effort to find Uranus and Neptune on a regular basis, on demand, so to speak. If I remember right, Walter Scott Houston said several years ago (at Stellafane, I think) that any decently skilled amateur astronomer should be able to find these planets in no more than five minutes. That was before digital setting circles. Pluto this year should be a relative piece of cake. It's near a naked-eye star so at least its general field will be easy to locate. With CCD cameras starting to become common, we should get photos of Pluto as well. (Er, sorry, I mean "images".)

Joe Kamichitis

## EDITOR'S NOTE

I'm the one who says we don't bother to look for them. By the way, I seem to recall at least one night a few years ago when one of our more than reasonably skilled observers (who shall remain nameless) spent the better part of the night looking for Uranus just to fill a request, and didn't find it until after the petitioner left.

Jo-Ann Kamichitis

## RECENT OBSERVATIONS

PRETTY DUMB TITLE Award goes to a guy named Roger Tayler for his book called "The Sun as a Star". Well - duhh!, what else would the sun be as - a hockey puck?! I hope this is part of a series. I can't wait for "Vesta as an Asteroid", or "The Moon as a Satellite", or "Halley's Comet as a Comet".

LOOSEST USE OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE Award goes to — Celeston, for describing their bolted-on polar alignment finder which sticks out about 3 inches from the polar shaft of their CI-700 mount as "built-in".

MOST GROSSLY OVERPRICED PIECE OF EQUIPMENT Award goes to — Orion, for charging \$459 for a 4" diameter metal pier with legs. Then again, they didn't specify the type of metal. Maybe it's made from titanium.

Joe Kamichitis

**40th ANNIVERSARY DINNER  
Oct 23, 1999**

The LAS came into being in 1959, according to all historical reckoning, except for some piece of paper Don Murray claims to have that uses the name and is dated 1958. At any rate even with our usual dispute going on, we are, as usual, going to ignore Don and celebrate our 40th anniversary this year.

There will be a dinner held at the Inne of the Abingtons. This is very easy to find since it is only about one mile west from Exit 60 on Rt 81.

We will have a social hour first at 6 PM (soda, veggie platter, cheese, crackers, etc, cash bar for those who want something other than soda) and what sounds to me to be a great a dinner buffet at 7 PM.

Guest speaker will be well known amateur astronomer Phil Harrington, author of StarWare and several articles about observing.

A separate mailing will be going out about this dinner. The price will be no more than \$15 . Mark your calendars now. (It's a full moon night anyway so you won't be missing dark skies.)

Jo-Ann Kamichitis

**THE ELDERS**

Just thought I'd mention a few of the people who are our longest duration members, who have been members with no gaps in paying their membership dues.

40 years

Don Murray, Jane Swarts (both since day one)

30 years plus

John D Sabia, Debbie Palmer, Bill Speare

20 years plus

Diane Musewicz, Jo-Ann Kamichitis, Ed Sidorski, Ed Swarts, Joe Mazzarella III

Just to clarify things, most of us joined the club while quite young.

Join us! It sounds like a lot of fun, good food and fellowship.

Jo-Ann Kamichitis

**E-MAIL HOT LINE**

In an effort to get timely information out to at least a substantial percentage of club members between meetings and newsletters, we'll be working on an e-mail notification system. About a third (probably more) of the club has an e-mail address so we can reach a lot of people quickly to inform or remind them of special events, meeting changes, work parties, emergency observing sessions, etc.

One problem is that of the addresses I have many are old and I know that some are no longer valid, and others I'm not quite sure of. In the next few weeks I'll be sending out test messages to verify the e-mail addresses that I have. Those that are returned as invalid I'll try to update. If you read this before test messages go out and you know that your e-mail address has changed in the last year or so let me know at: jkam@epix.net. Use "LAS" somewhere in the subject so I'll know it's from an LAS member. E-mail I don't recognize I delete. If you've recently gotten an e-mail address and you're pretty sure the club does not have it, let me know about it.

We have no current plans to publish e-mail addresses but your address may be seen by other people to whom the messages go. If you want your e-mail address kept private, let me know and I'll remove you from the list.

Joe Kamichitis

**KEYHOLDER LIST**

Want to observe on a nonscheduled night? Contact these people to see if they will be up there. All Keyholders have the keys to the gate and the LAS observatory. Only the observatory assistants also have the keys to Keystone College Observatory's classroom building and the dome. So for the most comfort while observing, contact Jo-Ann and John first.

John D. Sabia	586-0789
Jo-Ann Kamichitis	343-4006
Phil Cruikshank	675-8345
Joe Krott	587-5917
Carol Leola	586-1582
Bob Maleninsky	343-3422
Ron Murazzi	945-9645
Don Murray	343-2394
Jim Spangler	587-3972

KCO phone 945-3665 (let it ring for a long time since people are not usually inside and it takes them time to respond)

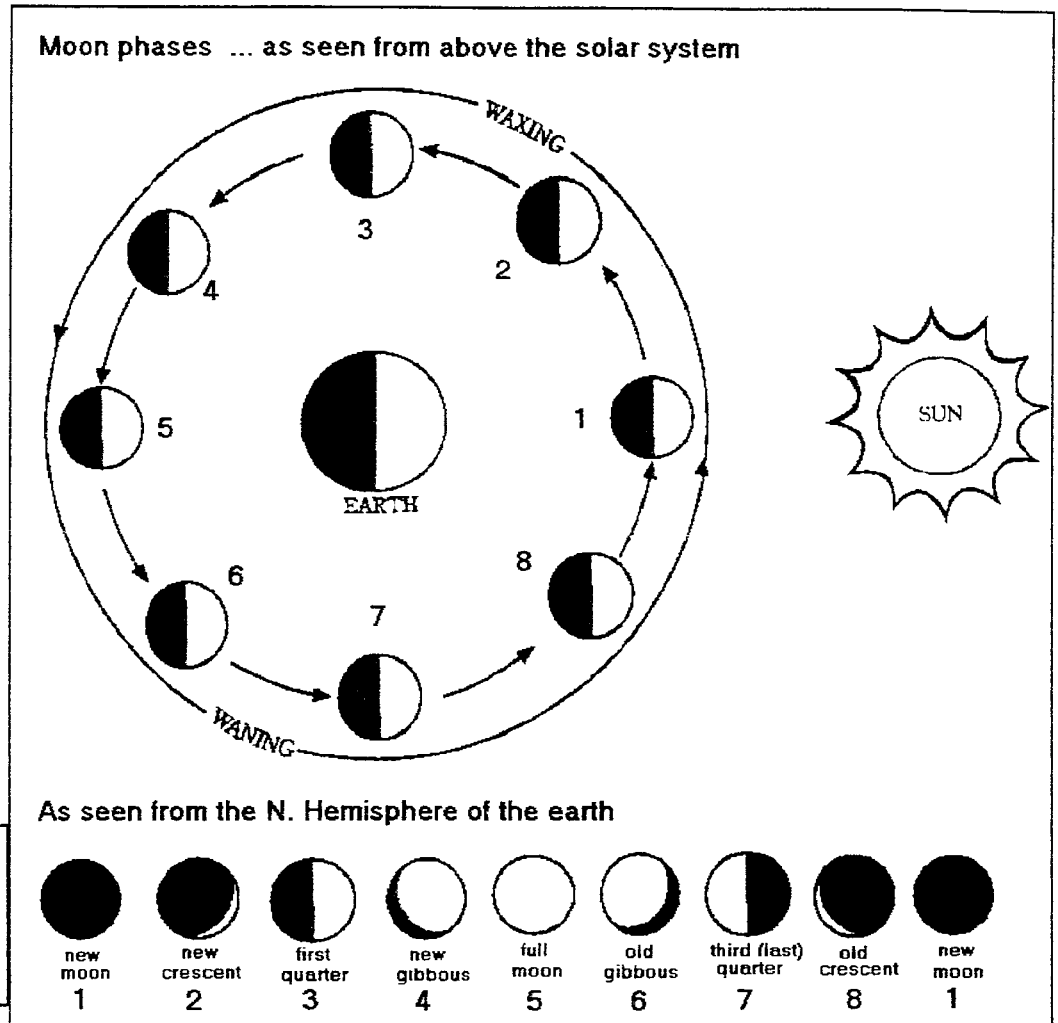
**DUES ARE (STILL) DUE FOR 1999**

You still have a chance to fulfill your dream of becoming a renewing member of the LAS.

The final dues notice is enclosed. Again, if by some chance you've already renewed and there is a notice enclosed - - sorry. Just let me know and I'll check my records.

Joe Kamichitis

The moon diagram to the right is related to your free bonus! The Dial-A-Phase Cut-Out that is enclosed.



**Directions to KCO/LASO**

Take I 81 north to exit 62. Turn left on rt 107 , you'll go about 1.5 miles and there will be a stop sign. Take a right and go another 0.3 miles , you will be at Hack Road (a dirt road) . Take a left and you will see a big sign for the observatory immediately on your left. The gate is right next to it.

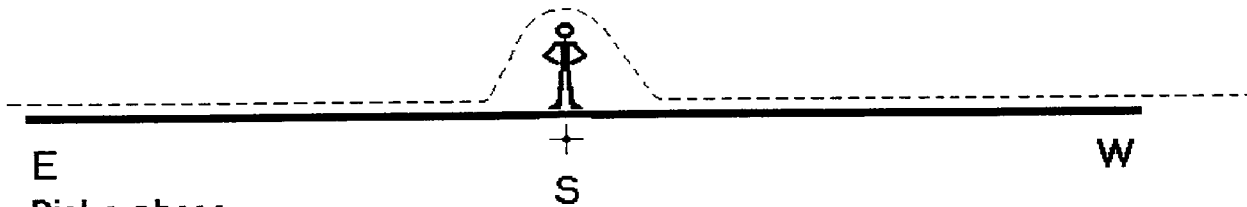
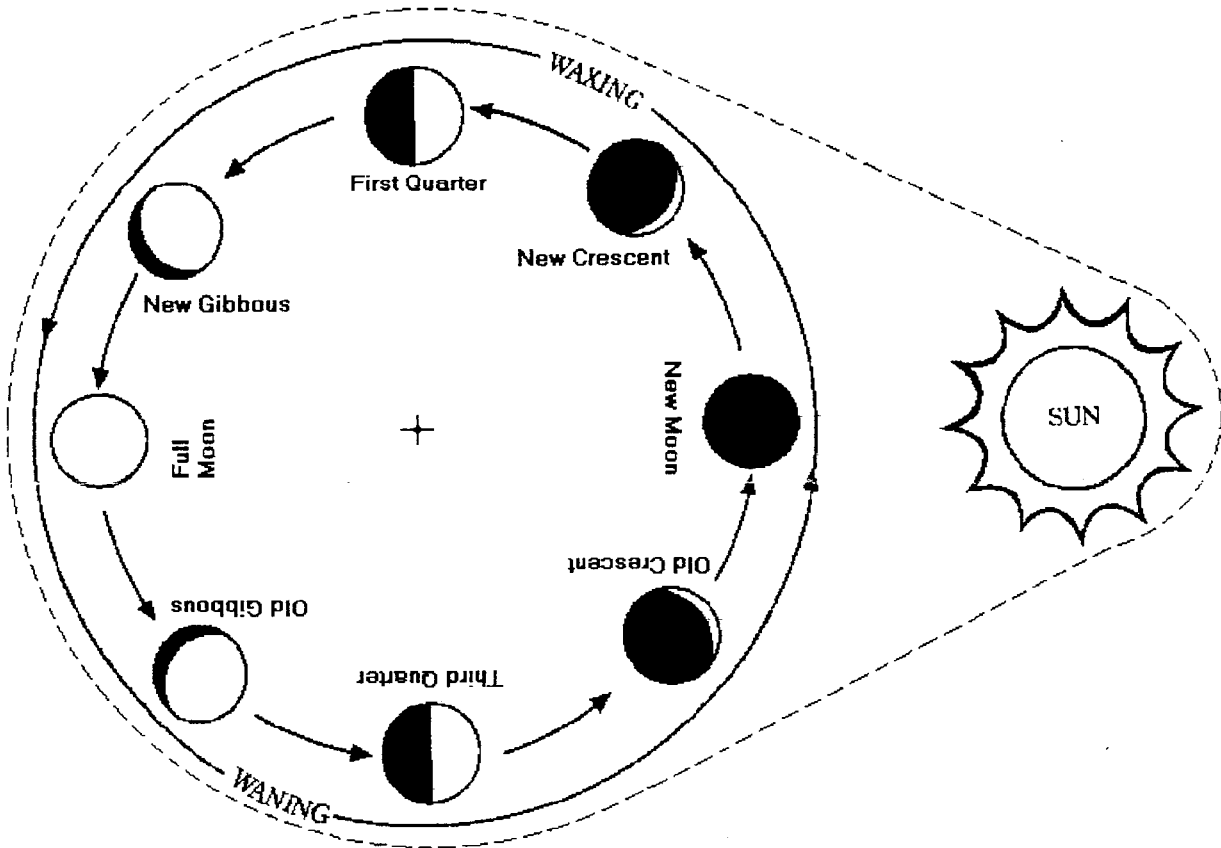
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**Dial-a-phase**

Cut out both halves of the diagram along the dotted lines.

Paste them onto stiffer paper if you like.

Connect them with a paper fastener poked through the 2 spots marked with a +

Placing the sun in the correct position should allow you to see which moon phases could possibly be seen above the horizon at that time of day.

The arrows along the moon's orbit show you the direction the moon will seem to go from one night to the next.

Notice that the lighted side of the moon always faces the sun.

**Sun positions:**

- At the west point if it is sunset
- At the east point if it is sunrise
- Over the south if it is noon
- Below the south if it is midnight

- Above the horizon and between S and W for afternoon
- Above the horizon and between E and S for morning
- Below the horizon and between E and S for late night / pre-dawn
- Below the horizon and between S and W for evening