

THE ECLIPTIC

Lackawanna Astronomical Society

Vol. 26 No. 2

June - September 2000

Officers for 2000:

President - Carol Leola

Vice-President - Diane Musewicz

Secretary - Jo-Ann Kamichitis

Treasurer - Joe Kamichitis

At-Large Members - Mike Hodowanitz, Ray Krake, Jim Spangler

CALENDAR OF ACTIVITIES

(All activities are PM and are at the Observatory unless noted otherwise.)

June 6 Tues. LAS Meeting 7:30
9 Fri. LSP star Party #1 9:00
10 Sat. Cookout/Observing night 6:00
13 Tues. Board Meeting 8:30
18 Solar Sunday 1:00 to 3:00

July 3 & 5, 10 & 12, 17 & 19, 24 & 26, Mon. & Wed. 8:00
KCO Summer Lecture Series (each Mon. is a different lecture repeated on Wed.)
7 Fri. LSP star Party #2 9:00
8 Sat. Cookout/Observing night 6:00
11 Tues. LAS Meeting (postponed due to holiday on the 4th) 7:30
16 Solar Sunday 1:00 to 3:00
20 Thurs. PLSP Star Party #1 9:00

August 1 Tues. LAS Meeting 7:30
4 Fri. LSP star Party #3 9:00
5 Sat. Cookout/Observing night 6:00
8 Tues. Board Meeting 8:30
11 Fri., 12 Sat. Perseid Meteor Shower Watch 9:00
13 Solar Sunday 1:00 to 3:00
24 Thurs. PLSP Star Party #2 9:00

September 5 Tues. LAS Meeting 7:30
6 Wed. KCO Public Nights begin 8:00
9 Sat. Cookout/Observing night 6:00 (last chance)
12 Tues. Board Meeting 8:30
17 Solar Sunday 1:00 to 3:00

KEYHOLDER LIST 2000

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 on unscheduled nights, contact Jo-Ann and John first. Ray says that he and Nancy like to get to the observatory early, sometimes even before nightfall (!), so if you think the same way, call them first.

John D. Sabia	586-0789
Jo-Ann Kamichitis	343-4006
Ray Krake	344-9105
Joe Krott	587-5917
Carol Leola	586-1582
Ron Murazzi	945-9645
Don Murray	343-2394
Jim Spangler	587-3972
Mike Hodowanitz	383-7165
Dave Barrett at PMO	842-1500

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

LAS members are encouraged to bring up their own scopes but there are several scopes available up at the observatory for member use, including the club's 17½" Coulter Dob, homebuilt 12" Dob, and the 8" f/10 Dob. Members must be trained and checked out on the use of the 11" SCT before they can "solo" on it.

I Haven't Had So Much Fun Since The Last Time I Went Observing ...

Back when my sister's kids were small, we'd sit spellbound watching the fishing shows on PBS (the only thing that enthralled us more were cooking shows). At the end of one of those shows the host would proclaim "I haven't had so much fun since the last time I went fishin'." It made me laugh but I also always felt that that was the mark of a great hobby.

Astronomy has that quality too, a least for me as a low-tech astronomer. High-tech astronomy lends itself more to frustration, but I guess if you approach each glitch with the mindset that it's an intriguing puzzle to be solved rather than a pain in the whatever, you won't let that stuff get you down. For us low-tech types with Dobson mounted scopes that only have a Telrad for a finder, the only real problems we face are clouds and dew. Even when the worst happens, and observing is difficult or

impossible, if you're with an observing group you get to fall back coffee accompanied by general conversation, gripe sessions about the weather and light pollution, discussions of dream scopes, planning further observations.

This camaraderie is what makes observing sessions at KCO, whether scheduled or impromptu, such fun for me. So much better than my early days observing in my back yard. The skies are still better in Fleetville than in my city yard, I know that I'm not really a lone eccentric, running the risk of being reported as a prowler and somehow the "bump in the night" sounds caused by possums and skunks at home are creepier even, than the coyotes that howl in Fleetville.

In addition you get egged on to do better observing. "Let's look for that diamond shaped feature that is supposed to be in M 61." "Let's try for the "antennae", those interacting galaxies in Corvus." You can get to try out other people's eyepieces in your scope before you spend the big bucks, as well as get to compare the detail visible in say, the Veil, in various size scopes. It's amazing what you can see when you really look carefully. You could even find yourself swept along into detailed lunar or planetary observing using the Clark. Now that's living!

I've been using some new books in my observing, in addition to the "Edmund Mag 6 Atlas", and the "Atlas 2000" laminated desk edition by Tirion (both have been "enhanced" by me drawing in the constellation figures), and the Sky Spot Telrad books for the "Messier Objects" and "Overlooked Objects". I can't recommend these following books enough ... "The Year Round Messier Marathon Field Guide" by Harvard Pennington, and the 2 volume set, "The Night Sky Observer's Guide" by Kepple and Sanner. Both are just great for identifying what you've found and helping you choose just what to aim for. Great companions for your trusty old dog-eared copies of Burnham's "Observer's Guides".

After a few hours spent rummaging through the sky, I'm soon in a great mood. One I haven't been in since the last time I went observing!

Jo-Ann Kamichitis

Aurora!

Join us on Solar Sundays to observe the sun in white light and with an H-Alpha filter. It keeps getting better and more interesting as the sun approaches sunspot maximum. Who knows! We may yet have more thrills such as the one on April 6-7, 2000.

John Sabia, Joe and I were at Keystone College Observatory dazzling a batch of girl scouts with views through the Clark of the crescent moon along with Jupiter and Saturn so fetchingly grouped nearby with Mars when John shouted to me to look out the slit. What could have him so hepped up?

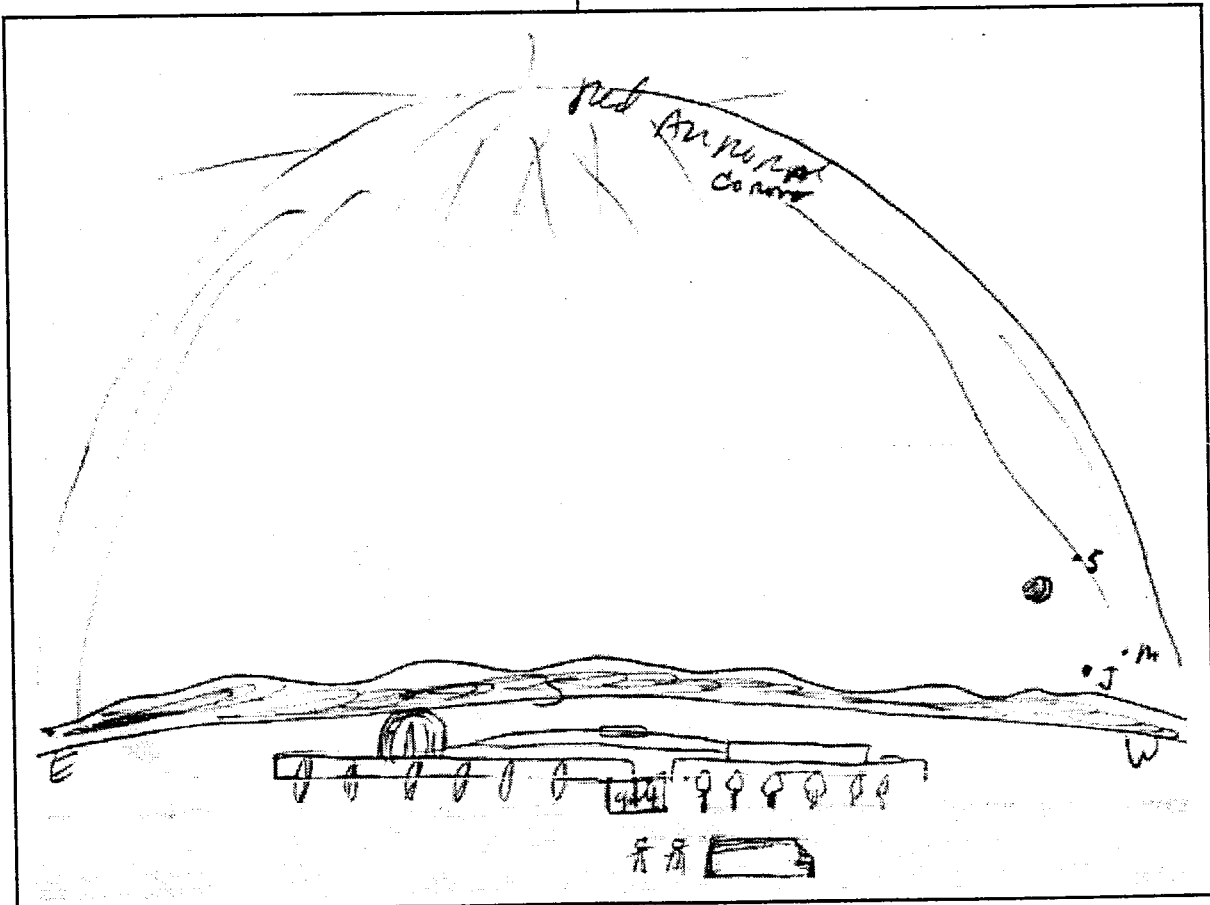
Yikes! There it was! A thick bright pink and red streak right among the planets.

We scurried to get out of the dome (miraculously no Girl Scouts were trampled by me although it was a near thing). Quite the frenzy of activity ensued while we tried to explain to the group just why John and I were gibbering in excitement. We struggled to find

and set up tripods and cameras, all the while answering questions from the kids and pointing out to them just where to look, and just how lucky they were to see such a fine display. So red, such a well defined corona, so wide in extent (in Orion! below Sirius! overhead!). Not to mention trying to dash inside to call up various friends and family members to GO OUT AND LOOK and then spread the word too!

Neither John nor I had any luck with our photos but at that, it would be impossible to capture the full sweep and feel of the event with a normal lens anyway. The display lasted at most 45 minutes but we were happy to find out via our answering machine at home just how many LASers saw it, even in the midst of security lights. I hear some even got photos. The best thing was that it was a surprise. How I love surprises.

It gets annoying to be warned of solar storms and then nothing shows up for us. We hadn't heard any of the warnings that had been issued, and in fact I had been



ignoring the planetary groupings because so many of my online buddies wind up asking me what the groupings MEAN and I'm tired of being such a party pooper and having to say "Nothing!"

I have never been so grateful for a Girl Scout troop night, since if it wasn't for them I'd probably not been out until well after it got dark and would have missed everything.

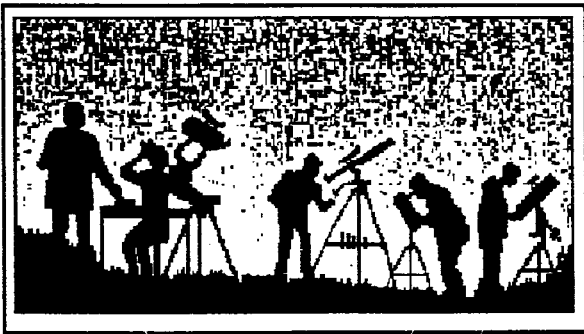
Jo-Ann Kamichitis

Dues Have Been Due for 2000:

If you haven't renewed your membership already, you'll find a dues notice enclosed. (Or if you paid and you still got a dues notice, then the treasurer slipped up; let me know about it.)

Another reminder: current members can get a subscription to "Sky and Telescope" at a discount rate of \$29.95. This is \$10.00 off the normal subscription price. (In effect, you join the Club for free!) Subscribers through the Club also get 10% off merchandise purchased from Sky Publishing. (Will the benefits never end?!)

Joe Kamichitis



SUMMER STAR PARTIES 2000

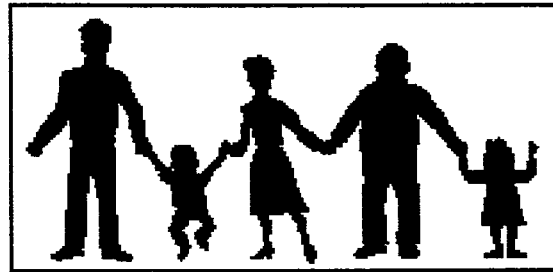
The summer public star parties at Lackawanna State Park and Promised Land State Park are back by popular demand. These all begin at 9 PM with a slide program but you might want to come earlier to set up your scope. We're at LSP on Fridays on 6/09, 7/07, and 8/04 setting up just beyond the contact station at the entrance to the camping area. The slide program is at the natural amphitheater.

Lackawanna Astronomical Society

We're at PLSP on Thursdays July 20 and August 24 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. No scope? Then you can help with crowd control, block annoying lights, guard equipment and answer general questions from the public.

Mark your calendars; we'll see you there.



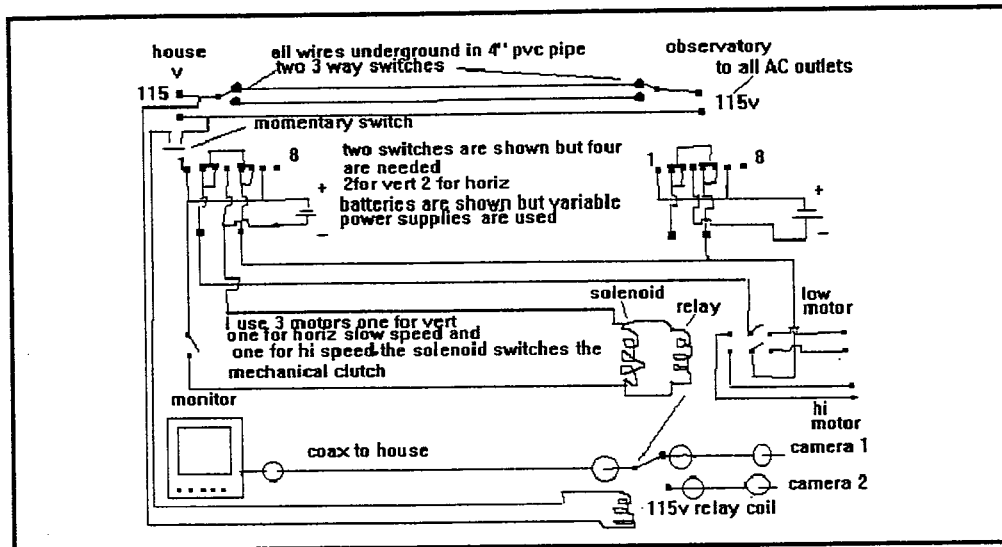
COOKOUT / OBSERVING SESSIONS

Each of our summer Club Observing nights will be preceded by a cookout-potluck. These VERY casual events are meant to allow for socializing while waiting for scopes to cool down and twilight to end. There will be a gas grill set up for everyone's use. Bring your favorite picnic foods, beverages and a little extra to share. You needn't get too carried away since no one has to feed the whole crowd. If you don't cook bring some snack food or come on up anyway. No one keeps score.

No scope of your own? Don't know anything about the sky? Then this is the event for you! People will be happy to point out the constellations, or show you stuff in their scopes. There are club owned scopes you can learn to operate or learn how to set up your own scope. There are sure to be astrophotographers and CCD imagers doing their thing too. Watch and ask questions.

You can learn a lot at a cookout!

Scranton, Pa



Subj: Astronomy

Date: 10/25/99 4:17:44 PM Eastern Daylight Time
 From: sidorski@nep.net (edward sidorski)
 To: JoAnnKami@aol.com

Dear JoAnn,

I see your whining in the Ecliptic and as I was trying to use Paint Brush on my computer I decided to send you an attachment of how I rigged up my computer to be remote controlled from my computer room so that I don't freeze in the winter time.

It is a rather crude drawing but I am still practicing, for instance the first message that I typed out I lost and this in another attempt at explaining what I did, for instance, after I blew up the first camera that I bought, I bought two more so that I could have a wide angle view with one camera and then a higher power view from the camera attached to the main telescope.

Some bugs still have to be worked out but I am able now to find objects without going outside to reposition the telescope, I have been observing the moon and Jupiter and Saturn but the resolution of the cameras is so low that I could only see the four moons of jupiter with no detail on the planet itself and Saturn is a dissapointment as all I can see is the planet itself and the rings but no moons, but what the heck I can study the moon from the warmth of the house.

Ed Sidorski

Subj: schematic

Date: 11/10/1999 10:01:43 AM Eastern Standard Time
 From: sidorski@nep.net (edward sidorski)
 Reply-to: sidorski@nep.net
 To: JoAnnKami@aol.com

Dear Jo-Ann,

The schematic that I sent to you is more or less self explanatory but the story goes that I wanted to be able to observe from the warmth of my computer room so I devised a plan to do just that.

You will notice that I have house labled on the left side of the schematic and observatory on the right but there is 50 feet of cables buried in a 4 inch pvc pipe between them, so that I could cut the grass without having to move the cables all the time.

I purchased the two cameras that I am using from MCM Electronics who's address is 650 Congress Park Dr. Centerville OH 45459-4072 (just send your name and address for a free catatlogue).

I only showed one set of switches but two are needed one for Right Ascencion and one for elevation, I have two motors for RA and a solenoid that is used to move the mechanical clutch from low speed motor to high speed motor and the relay is paralled with the solenoid to switch the 12 volts dc to the two motors.

The two cameras are switched by the momentary switch to a 115 volt AC because it is a stepper relay which is a two position relay. I didn't show the Selsyn

motors as I have disconnected them and that leaves me with 5 extra wires for other purposes in the future. I have been able to track Jupiter, Saturn and the moon but due to the low resolution of these cameras I can't discern any detail on Jupiter but the four moons show pretty good, the moon is the best and just recently I have been observing the sun as I explained to you in the last E-mail.

I still have to go out to the observatory to open the doors and move back the roof and I have a B/W TV on a shelf which I use to position the telescope so an object shows on the screen and then I run into the house to direct the telescope from inside where I have the main monitor.

If anybody has any questions they can contact me at (sidorski@nep.net) and I will try to answer them.
Edward Sidorski

EDITOR'S WHINING (as referred to by Ed)

I'm finally getting the hang of this program so I want to get the ECLIPTIC out more frequently. Please send any articles, poems, observations or pictures you'd like published in the newsletter to the editor at the address listed on the last page.

I really prefer articles to be sent as TXT files (no other format please) to me at this e-mail address.

JoAnnKami@aol.com

Pictures preferably in GIF or JPG format may also be sent to that address. I can read other formats though so if you're not sure, just ask me in an e-mail.

I can also scan in prints to be used in the newsletter.

Jo-Ann Kamichitis

Two stars of Summer to Watch in July

Summer is almost here. The Milky Way can be seen on the East. The majestic planets are grouping in the early morning skies. It's the time to spend observing deep sky objects. In between looking at some old favorite nebulae with new instruments or equipment, add a few new items to that list of objects to see.

Tucked away in a corner of the Milky Way, not far from the famous Veil Nebula in Cygnus is the Delta Cepheid variable star X Cygni. Not to be confused with the more known Chi Cygni, X Cygni is at RA 20 H 43 m Dec + 35 d 35m 16s. This star will change from magnitude 5.8 to a low of 6.9 the back to 5.8 in the course of 16.38 days. This is well suited for binocular viewing. The last recorded timing of maximum light for this stars is from November of 1978. Using these values, X Cygni will climb from a minimum light on June 25, 2000 to it's maximum on July 2, 2000 EDT.

For each clear night that week make an estimate of the star's magnitude. The Moon will not be a problem in the early evening.

Not far from this X Cygni is the well known star eclipsing variable Beta Lyrae. You can catch this star's magnitude drop act the second week of July. From July 8 to the 12 this start should be at it's maximum light of 3.2. Then watch for the next four days as the light of this EB slowly drops to 4.3 on July 15, near 11:00 pm, EDT. Use the stars Gamma (3.3), Kappa (4.3) Lryae for comparisons.

The stats

X Cygni RA 20H 43m DEC + 35d 35m
Type Delta Cephei, Magnitude 5.8 - 6.9, Period 16.38 days

Comaprison Stars

SAO 69951 5.9 RA 20H 23m DEC + 37d 28m
44 Cygni 6.2 RA 20H 30m DEC + 36d 55m
SAO 70343 6.9 RA 20H 39m DEC + 35d 23m (in binocular field of view)
Time to watch June 25 to July 2, 2000

Beta Lryae RA 18H 50m DEC + 33d 21m

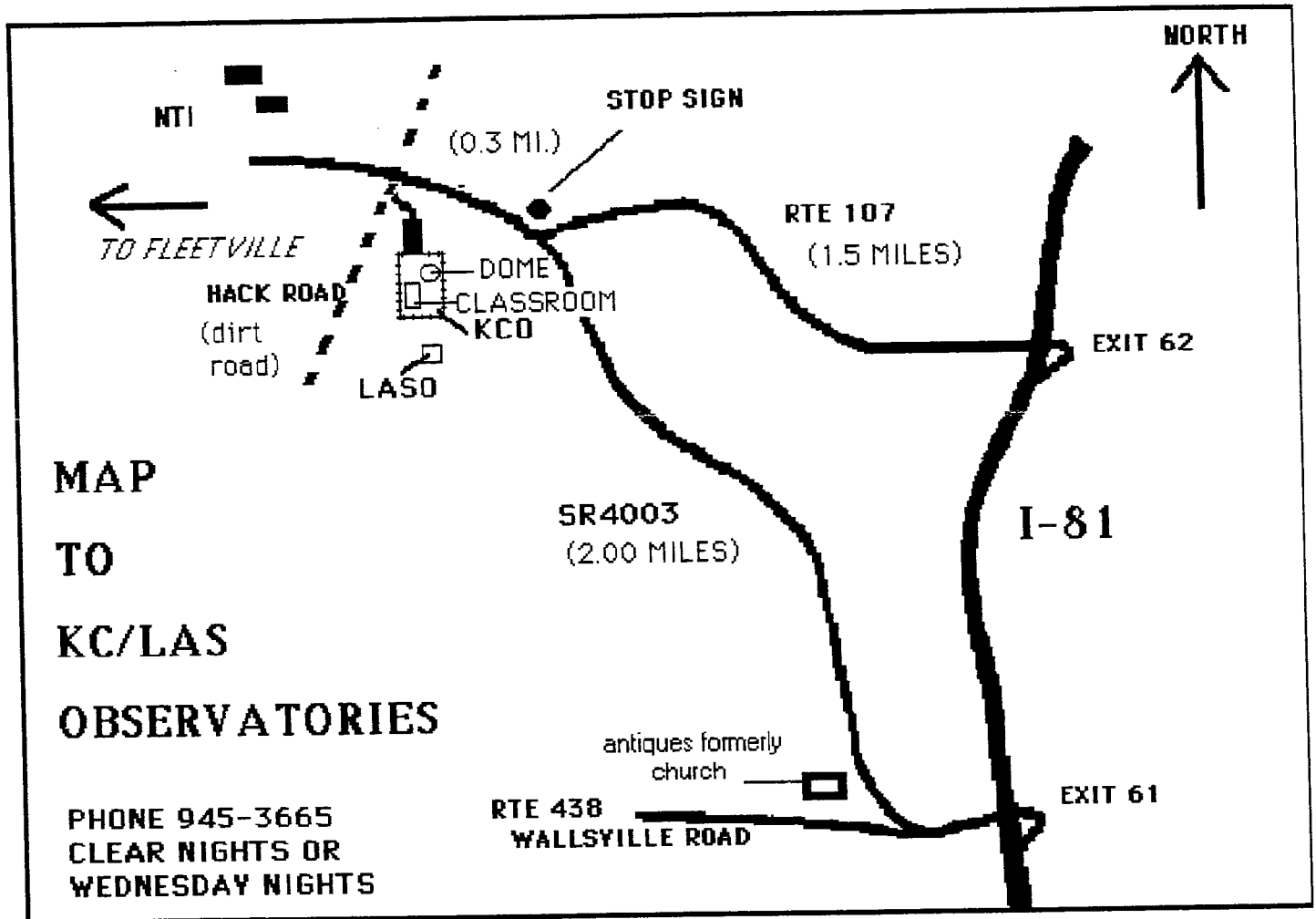
Type Eclipsing Binary, Magnitude 3.2 - 4.3 Period 12.91 days

Comparison Stars

Gamma Lyrae 3.3
Kappa Lyrae 4.3
Time to watch July 11 to July 15

Clear skies..

John D. Sabia



"The Ecliptic" is the newsletter of the Lackawanna Astronomical Society. A subscription to "The Ecliptic" is one of the benefits of membership in the LAS. No permission is needed for nonprofit use of any material published in "The Ecliptic" provided it is properly credited. Articles, cartoons, news items, etc, may be sent to:

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Printed through the courtesy of: Stone Office Equipment
321 - 327 Pear St. Scranton, PA 18505