

# THE ECLIPTIC

Lackawanna Astronomical Society

Vol. 27 No. 1

January - May 2001

## Officers for 2001:

**President - Carol Leola**

**Vice-President - Jim Spangler**

**Secretary - Jo-Ann Kamichitis**

**Treasurer - Joe Kamichitis**

**At-Large Members - Ray Krake, Diane Musewicz, John Nallin**

## CALENDAR OF ACTIVITIES

(All activities are PM and are at the Observatory unless noted otherwise. Observing sessions are usually automatically cancelled if skies are cloudy. If the weather is questionable, call around to see if anyone is going up.)

- |       |        |                                     |
|-------|--------|-------------------------------------|
| Feb 6 | 7:30   | Regular Meeting                     |
| 10    | 8:30   | Club Night                          |
| 13    | 8:30   | Board Meeting                       |
| 18    | 1-3    | Solar Observing Day                 |
| Mar 6 | 7:30   | Regular Meeting                     |
| 10    | 8:30   | Club Night                          |
| 13    | 8:30   | Board Meeting                       |
| 14    | 7:30   | Probable start of KCO Public Nights |
| 16    | 8:30   | Messier Marathon Practice I         |
| 17    | 8:30   | Messier Marathon Practice II        |
| 18    | 1-3    | Solar Observing Day                 |
| 23    | Sunset | Messier Marathon I                  |
| 24    | Sunset | Messier Marathon II                 |
| Apr 1 | 2 AM   | Daylight Savings Time begins        |
| 3     | 7:30   | Regular Meeting                     |
| 7     | 9:00   | Club Night                          |
| 10    | 8:30   | Board Meeting                       |
| 22    | 1-3    | Solar Observing Day                 |
| May 1 | 7:30   | Regular Meeting                     |
| 5     | 9:00   | Club Night                          |
| 8     | 8:30   | Board Meeting                       |
| 20    | 1-3    | Solar Observing Day                 |

## 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" Coultter 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.

#### EDITOR'S REQUEST ... PLEASE!!!!

We need to hear from YOU!

Tell us what got you started in the hobby.  
 Tell us about your favorite scope.  
 Tell us any funny or interesting things that have happened to you while observing.  
 Tell us about your favorite celestial objects to observe.  
 Send us your best astro photo or sketches.  
 Make up crossword puzzles or word search or anagrams.  
 Send us your poems, cartoons, jokes..

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.

#### MESSIER MARATHONS

We try to get up there at sunset and stay until sunrise. The object is to see all the Messier objects in one night! According to the Messier Marathon books it's really simple. (Okaay!) Come on up for a reality check .

Coffee and donuts will be provided as will Messier checklists.

Dress really warm. Take a shot at seeing as much as you can ... so far we haven't been mocking people who just go browsing through the night sky instead. We're mostly into trying to better our personal best.

#### IS THAT A LIGHT AT THE END OF THE TUNNEL??

Surely it can't stay cloudy forever! I am starting to fear that I'll be turning into revered (kinda) LAS life member, Bill Speare, soon. Ranting at the skies "Anyone from this area who owns a telescope is NUTS!"

Nope I'm trying to stay hopeful. I was cheered to see in the Bays Mountain Astronomy Club's newsletter (Kingsport TN) that the guy who writes the Jerryatric Astronomer column MUST be older than me by at least 10 years. Great! Besides, up and coming is spring! I have been hearing chickadees singing not just calling, and we've had to scurry to repair a hole in our eaves which starlings are already scouting out as a possible nest site! What more proof do you need?

This can only mean we'll get our chance to observe again without worrying about slipping on ice and snow. Messier Marathon nights, T. G. Cupillari observatory public nights, Astronomy Day are almost upon us and soon after that LAS cookout/observing sessions and our State Park Star Parties!

Shirtsleeve observing, I love it. Sure at one time I didn't mind the occasional snowshoe trek down the TGC Observatory driveway but I've "matured" now and have too much equipment to haul these days. Now I live for the famous Nancy Krake brownies and the prospects of a midnight hot dog.

I can't wait until we start getting lots of reports in like the ones that follow this note.

Jo-Ann Kamichitis

**Leonids 2000 !!!!**

Observer - John D. Sabia

Location - Clarks Summit, PA 75.66W 41.5N

Date - November 17, 2000 EST / November 17, 2000 UT

Time - 1:00 - 4:30 EST / 6:00 - 9:30 UT

Instruments - lawn chair, sleeping bag, watch, flashlight, and eyes.

Filter - None

Leonids 2000, From Northeast Penna.

The promise of a clear skies for this year's meteor shower did not look good. Heavy clouds covered the region all of the daylight hours and into the early evening. A small break in the cover occurred at 9:00 p.m. local time, only to cover up again by 10:30 local EST.

Weather maps and newscast showed a "tongue" of dry clear air following this front and preceding the next. It had been stable most of the day, moving slowly NNE. Other observers and I estimated it would reach over our position sometime in the early morning hours on Friday November, 17.

It did just that.

Observing from an open field, the clouds, moving quickly, slowly broke up and were completely gone by 1:30 a.m. EST (6:00 UT). I started my first of three hourly observing runs.

The first hour was lackluster, clouds covered 50 % of the Eastern sky the first half of the session. This did help cover some of the glare of the Moon. I set my observation point to the stars iota and chi Ursae Majoris, and could view the skies from Ursa Minor on my left to Lynx, Auriga, Gemini with the Moon for interference. More towards my right I could see Canis Minor, and sections of Monoceros and Orion. Used the star zeta Ursae Minoris to estimate limiting magnitude at 4.3. The total for the first hour was a dismal 5 Leonids and 2 sporadic.

I took a 12-minute break from the temperature, and the snorting of the deer behind me. I had parked my back too close to their wild apple tree for them to feed. The deer had moved on, only the howling of coyotes were heard from the rest of the morning. Resumed the second hour watch with my gaze in the same direction of the sky. Skies remained 100 % clear for the full hour. Estimated the limiting magnitude in that area to be 4.7 by using stars of Leo Minor and those around lambda and mu Ursae Majoris.

This second hour was most exciting. In the first half hour 16 Leonids were seen. Most were brighter than 2nd magnitude with long trains, some blue in color other with an orange/red hue. Trains averaged 5 to 8 degrees in length. The

second half equaled the first with brilliant meteors and slow fading trains. There was a great flurry of activity at one point near the end of the hour. In the region just outside of the Sickle of Leo three 2nd magnitude streaked around the radiant in a matter of 20 seconds. The first was a 5 degree blue train meteor to the north, followed by two 7 degree orange colored meteors. One travelling east and on the left side of Regulus, the next seen above and right of Regulus travelling south southeast. They were some of the last to be recorded at the end of the second hour.

Not wanting to miss another display like this, the third and final hour began immediately after the second. Wide awake and adrenaline pumping, I set my sites towards lambda and mu Ursae Majoris. The meteors of the Leonids did appear but most were 2nd to 3rd magnitude, very few above 2nd. And most were short trains 3 to 5 degrees long. Colors of blue and orange/red still seen. There were long time stretches between bright meteors. Just as the hour was almost over the most spectacular meteor of the night blazed forth 10 degrees directly below Regulus a -6 to -8 Leonid swiftly streaked towards the eastern horizon. It ended with a brief terminal burst near -8 magnitude. The 15 degree orange and blue train lasted some 10 seconds before disappearing to the eye. This one was seen at 4:28 EST and by far the highlight of the morning.

Summary of observations for November 17, 2000  
EST / UT time

	Leonids	Sporadic	Limit Mag
1:17 to 2:17 a.m. EST			
6:17 to 7:17 UT	5	1	4.3
2:29 to 3:29 a.m. EST			
7:29 to 8:29 UT	32	1	4.7
3:30 to 4:30 a.m. EST			
8:30 to 9:30 UT	28	4	4.7

One other item to note. While watching the region of lambda and mu Ursae Majoris, a point light object brightened to equal the star lambda. It was situated to the left of the star close to RA 10h 25m DEC 44' 00" I suspect it to be a satellite but did not see movement or find any trace of a moving object afterwards. This appeared at 3:03 EST.

John D. Sabia

**HUGE Naked eye sunspot!**

Date: 09/20/2000 2:15:28 PM Eastern Daylight Time

It was visible on the edge of the western limb, on or just south of the equator on 9/17, Sun.

I got it with an Astrovid 2000 & 8" SCT on 9/18 and the leading spot (a.k.a. largest one) had a hollow umbra. Unfortunately, the seeing here was pretty bad and though it was visible through the EP most of the time, it isn't quite detectable on the video.

Today, 9/20, the same umbra is now "W" shaped and it's mate is serpentine shaped. The seeing was much better for today and I also got it on video. I regret being unable to attach pictures, but I need a frame grabber and a faster computer! I only have it on VHS right now.

Wendy Tordoff

**DUES 'R DUE  
for 2001.**

If you have a dues notice enclosed with this newsletter chances are pretty good that you haven't yet paid up. If you have paid and you still have a dues notice, let me know. You'll also find a convenient envelope enclosed but, sorry, you'll have to address it yourself. Please include your e-mail address too so we can keep our list up-to-date and be able to notify you quickly of important happenings.

Joe Kamichitis

**Keystone College Observatory is  
no more!**

September 22, 2000 Keystone College Observatory was renamed the Thomas G. Cupillari Observatory, Keystone College Fleetville Campus, in honor of the Observatory Director 's years of service to the college and his going into semi-retirement.

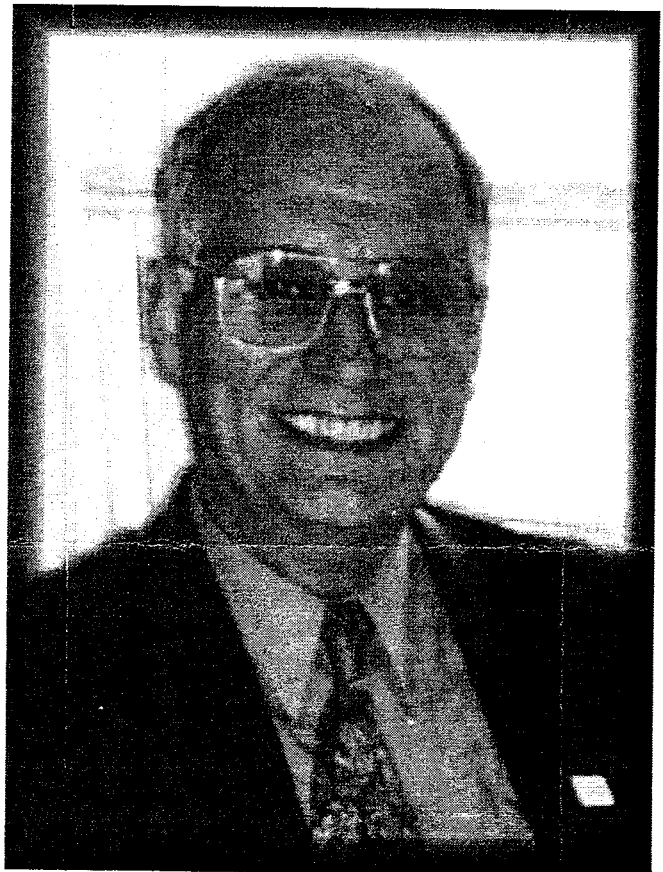
Tom Cupillari was responsible for getting the money for the 9 1/2 inch Clark Scope and for convincing Dave Garroway that we'd be the best ones to own the scope. No mean feat!

Tom has been the one who's scheduled groups, made sure the place was maintained and has managed to talk people into giving the observatory grants.

We in the LAS owe a lot to Tom for developing this fine facility and talking the college into allowing us to build our own observatory on their property. All we ever have to do is help out at public nights, especially at times of huge crowds such as were attracted by Comets Hale-Bopp and Halley as well as the Comet Shoemaker-Levy 9 impacts on Jupiter.

Congratulations to Tom on this well-deserved honor. Even though you don't seem nearly old enough to have a building named after you.

THOMAS G. CUPILLARI  
TGC Observatory Director





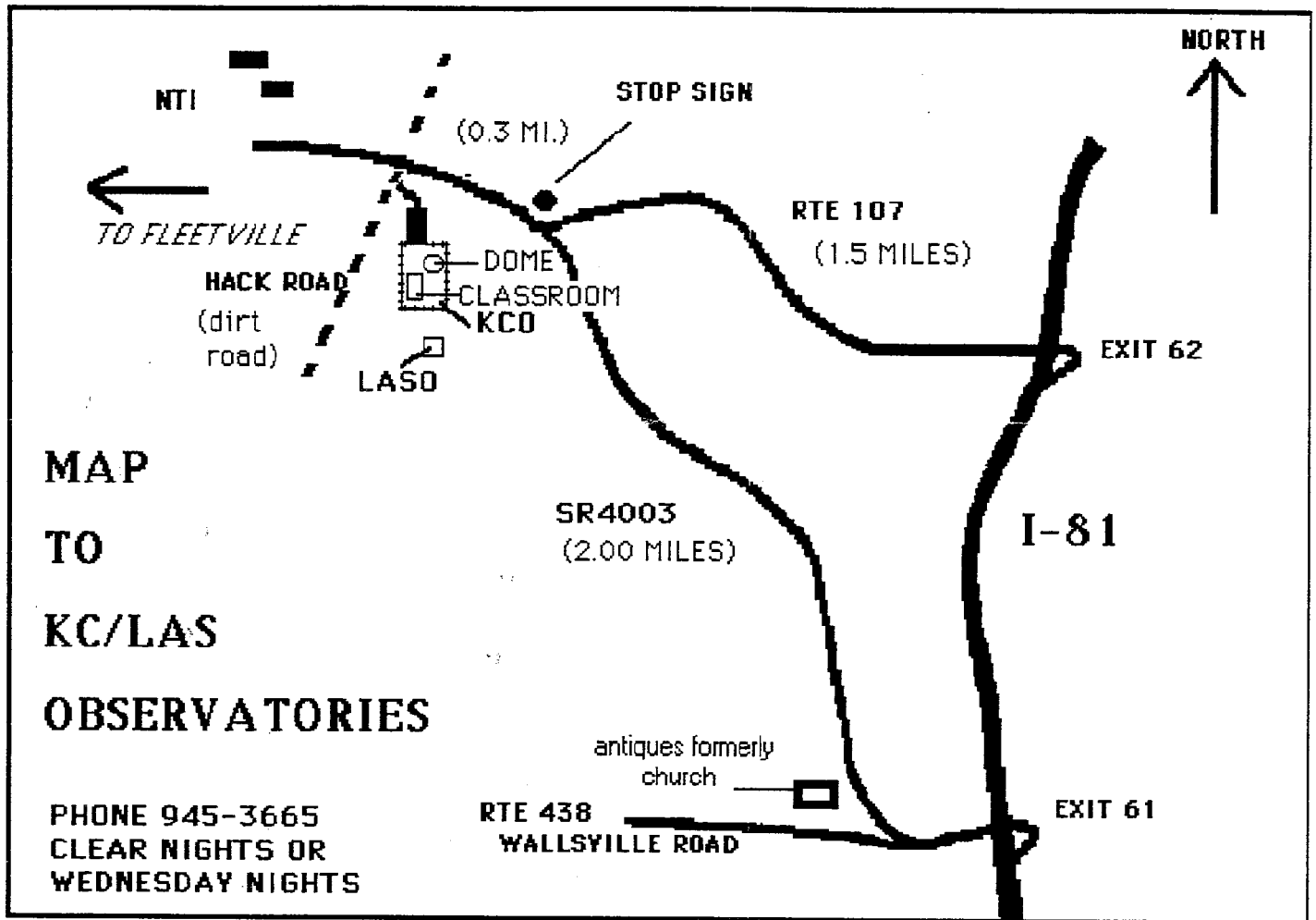
ABOVE  
Tom and Sandy Cupillari cutting the ribbon at the dedication of the newly designated Thomas G. Cuppillari Observatory, Fleetville Campus of Keystone College.

RIGHT

Joe and Jo-Ann Kamichitis meet with an old friend at the Museum of Natural History in NYC.

(We're looking for suggestions for another bus trip in 2001. Contact VP Jim Spangler with your suggestions. He's JSpan741@aol.com)





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