

The ECLIPTIC

LAS Officers for 2004

President - Jo-Ann Kamichitis **Vice-President - Diane Musewicz**
Secretary - Carol Leola **Treasurer - Joe Kamichitis**
Jr Vice-President - John Novajosky
At-Large Members - John Nallin , Bob Smith , Jim Spangler

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

March 2	Tuesday	Regular meeting	7:30	
6	Saturday	Club Night	~8:30	
9	Tuesday	Board Meeting	8:30	
17	Wednesday	Public Nights begin	7:30	
19	Friday	Messier Marathon	Practice Session (about 7:00)	
20	Saturday	Messier Marathon	The Real Thing (7PM to Dawn)	
April 6	Tuesday	Regular meeting	7:30	
10	Saturday	Club Night	~8:30	
13	Tuesday	Board Meeting	8:30	
24	Saturday	Astronomy Day	6:30	Bring your friends!
May 4	Tuesday	Regular meeting	7:30	
8	Saturday	Club Night	~8:30	
11	Tuesday	Board Meeting	8:30	

(All events are PM and are at the observatory unless otherwise indicated.
Club Nights feature a tape from the astronomy series by Alex Filippenko.)

Northeast Astronomy Forum (NEAF):

This popular vendor convention sponsored by the Rockland Astronomy Club and "Sky & Telescope" isn't one of our club events but several club members are involved each year both as attendees and as vendors. The event is over the weekend of April 17-18. One of this years speakers is Barbara Wilson, the only known competitor to our own Dave Barrett, as a visual observer.

See "Sky & Telescope" (and "Astronomy") for details or e-mail Don Urban at SummerStarParty@RocklandAstronomy.com. Look in the April 2004 issue of Sky and Telescope and you will find a picture of famous LASers, Jamin and Kathy Merritt at last years NEAF, at their telescope booth.

KEYHOLDERS LIST

All Keyholders have the keys to the gate and the LAS observatory.

Only the observatory assistants also have the keys to TGC Observatory's classroom building and the dome. So for the most comfort while observing on unscheduled nights, contact Jo-Ann and John first.

Both Dave Barrett and Jim Waltich 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

Dave Barrett 488-6421
Joe Krott 587-5917
Carol Leola 586-1582

Ron Murazzi 945-9645
Don Murray 343-2394
Jim Spangler 587-3972
Jim Waltich 822-5245

TGCO phone 945-3665

Please keep in mind that just taking your chances is not the most reliable way to be guaranteed entry and that some of us like knowing that someone else wants to be up there besides us.

LAS members are encouraged to bring up their own scopes but there are several scopes available up at the observatory for member use.

LAS March / April Madness (who needs basketball!)

Meeting March 2

Famous LASer and eclipse fanatic, Bill Speare, will show us slides of his 22nd total solar eclipse trip in December 2003. This time he went to Antarctica, even flying over the South Pole, and as long as he was in the neighborhood (that is, the Southern Hemisphere) he also visited several of the Andean observatories and saw such sights as Macchu Picchu. Should be great! I hear that this trip knocked Bill's own socks off.

Club Night March 6

Fight winter astro-amnesia ... a common syndrome brought on by MONTHS of skies that were too cloudy or nights that were too darn cold.

This event is never cancelled ... except of course for ice storms, blizzards, flash floods or tornado watches. Cloudy? Snow flurries or rain showers? Then we just watch the astronomy course tapes and have some coffee.

Use this as a chance to reacquaint yourself with your scope

and the night sky in preparation for the ...

Ta Da! Spring Messier Marathon! March 19 and 20th

Arrive as soon as possible and stay up all night to find and observe as many Messier objects out of 110 that you can. Or just show up and observe what you choose, for as long as you choose. Jupiter and Saturn will be the chief distractions.

We hope for clear skies all night but that seldom happens.

April meeting will feature John D. Sabia talking about the highly anticipated bright spring comets

In May, Jo-Ann Kamichitis will give a talk about the planet Venus especially featuring the transit of the sun by Venus that will occur in June.

LAS meetings are really always "member's nights", so if you have any observations, sketches, images or video to share bring them to the meetings.

ASTRONOMY DAY April 24, 2004

We'll be open to the public at 6:30PM. If you are going to bring a scope try to get there at 5:30. We'll be running videos, a slide show, solar observing for a while, then viewing the moon, Saturn and Jupiter. We will have snacks too.

DUES are DUE for 2004.

If you're not in the 50% of members who have paid their dues for this year, then you should find a dues notice included with this newsletter. If there is a notice enclosed and you feel you have paid up for this year, let me know.

Joe Kamichitis, Treasurer

What's In It For Me? Why Should I Pay My LAS Dues?

As president, but even as just a member, I believe you get MORE than you pay for in your LAS membership. I also think you get more out of the LAS the more you participate. There must be something good about a club that has members who have continuously paid dues for 20, 30, even 40+ years. Lets examine some of these in more detail.

Use of the really fine TGCO facility and site.

So much nicer to observe with others and have a place to warm up.

You get to compare views and equipment, as well as face

the coyote noises and other things that go bump in the night, with a cheerier point of view.

You even get to use the TGCO 9 1/2" modernized Alvan Clark refractor on the moon and planets.

LAS lending library

We have a subscription to S&T as well as books you can borrow for a month at a time ... general astronomy, observing techniques, telescope making, astronomy history etc.

This also includes the **LAS Loaner telescope** ... a fine 6 inch f/8 Newtonian (a Criterion RV6) now mounted as a Dobsonian, which, with basic atlases, eyepiece set and a Telrad, can be also borrowed for a month free of charge.

LAS Club Observing Nights

These nights are meant for sharing so feel free to pick the brains of veteran observers or show them new approaches.

Bring your scope up to the place and learn how to use it, or how to tweak the daylight out of it and get the best images you can.

Learn how to use atlases, to Telrad your way around the sky or star hop, **even if you don't own a scope** ... you can use the LAS's 17.5 " f/4.5 Odyssey and 12.5 " f/5.6 LAS home ground reflector that are now beautifully mounted as truss tube Dobsonians. It takes almost no training to use these scopes and they will give you some spectacular views that are almost guaranteed to infect you with aperture fever. ... and at a price you can afford!

Want to get more high tech? Then get trained to use the club's equatorially mounted C11, use the club's OM1 to try astrophotography or our Nikon 995 digital camera for astro imaging of the moon and planets.

Monthly Club Meetings

EVERY month is member's night in the LAS.

Club members give informative talks and share observations and project results. Plus there is always coffee and often snacks.

Public Events

While we do try to have the LAS be both BY and FOR members, we also aim to bring astronomy to the public. It is often the most fun you can have with your hobby. LAS members help out at TGCO public nights and we also run Astronomy Day as well as several summer star parties for the public.

Improving your knowledge and observing skills, meeting people and making new friends, that's what keeps folks re-upping year after year ... along with the coffee of course.

Jo-Ann Kamichitis, LAS president

Up-coming Events in the Summer Ecliptic

Summer Star Parties ... at Lackawanna, Promised Land, and Frances Slocum State Parks and Lacawac Wildlife Sanctuary (dates not yet finalized)

Summer Cookouts running from May to October, (continuing the astronomy course tapes)

Solar Observing with both white light and H-Alpha filters (dates to be finalized)

Revamped LAS Observing Certificate Program and Observing Classes (still under development by Jo-Ann Kamichitis, John Sabia and Carol Leola) Not meant to be a general astronomy course but to be project oriented.

Editor's note:

In it's current form the ECLIPTIC comes out 2 or 3 times a year on an "as needed" basis. It is primarily used to keep LASers informed of activities and important dates.

This "snail mail" paper form you are receiving is supplemented by e-mail reminders and, for the Christmas party, some phone calls. (By the way PLEASE keep us up-to-date with any e-mail address changes).

In the 30 year existence of the newsletter, during which time I have been the editor, the ECLIPTIC has morphed several times. It has come out monthly then quarterly then not at all for 2 years or so then 6 times a year and now a few times a year.

The content has ranged from an activities calendar to being filled with observations, reports on club activities, ruminations of the state of the hobby, articles about astronomy topics that interest particular members, cartoons and even poems ... almost all by LASers.

We have had the occasional reprint of articles of interest from other newsletters and once we even had something from the Ecliptic reprinted in another newsletter that got re-reprinted in Astronomy magazine!

The newsletter is both a chore and a lot of fun. If anyone in the club would like to take over the newsletter so it can come out on a more regular basis or more often, please contact me at the following address or e-mail.

Jo-Ann Kamichitis
1047 Mohawk Street
Scranton PA 18508

JoAnnKami@aol.com

As ever, we are soliciting articles for the next ECLIPTIC. Who knows YOU may even get published on a timely basis!

An Interesting Quest

When the Moon is about 3 days past New Moon or Full Moon, take up the following quest.

Look for a straight cleft running in a South East direction from the South wall of the crater Biot to the East wall of the crater Petavius.

The Cleft is mentioned on pg. 218 of "The Moon" by Wilkins and Moore" and is indicated on the map for section "X" of that text.

Before 1961 when one looked at the Moon with the naked eye, East was on the left and West was on the right. The opposite of the Earth and the way we view the Moon today. It was done that way so that the Moons direction coincided with the direction on the celestial sphere.

In 1961 the International Astronomical Union changed it to the system we have today. With naked eye view, East on the right and West on the left. I only mention this because "The Moon" by Wilkins and Moore uses the pre 1961 system. One must be careful to know the system the author is using.

The Cleft is not shown in -

- "Photographic Lunar Atlas", edited by G. P. Kuiper
- "Atlas of the Moon" by A. Rukl
- "Atlas of the Lunar Terminator" by Jon E. Westfall
- "A Portfolio of Lunar Drawings" by Harold Hill
- "The Times Atlas of the Moon"
- "Atlas of the Moon" by Vincent de Callatay
- "Lunar Orbiter, Photographic Atlas of the Moon" by Bowker and Hughes

Based on the findings in all those atlases, I'd say the Cleft does not exist. But it would be certainly interesting to hunt for..

Don Murray

Public Nights at TGCO

Just a reminder they are every Wed night until the end of May. They are free to all.

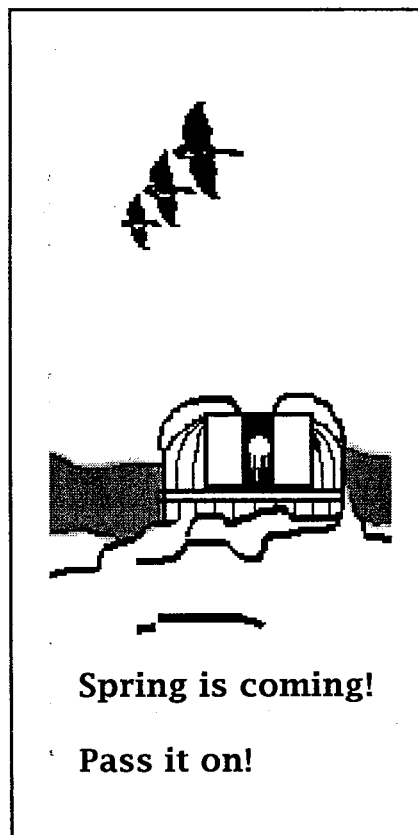
Slide shows and speakers change each week.

Weather permitting, observing follows the slide shows.

If something good is happening early or the weather looks like it may turn ugly, the observing may go on before the slide show.

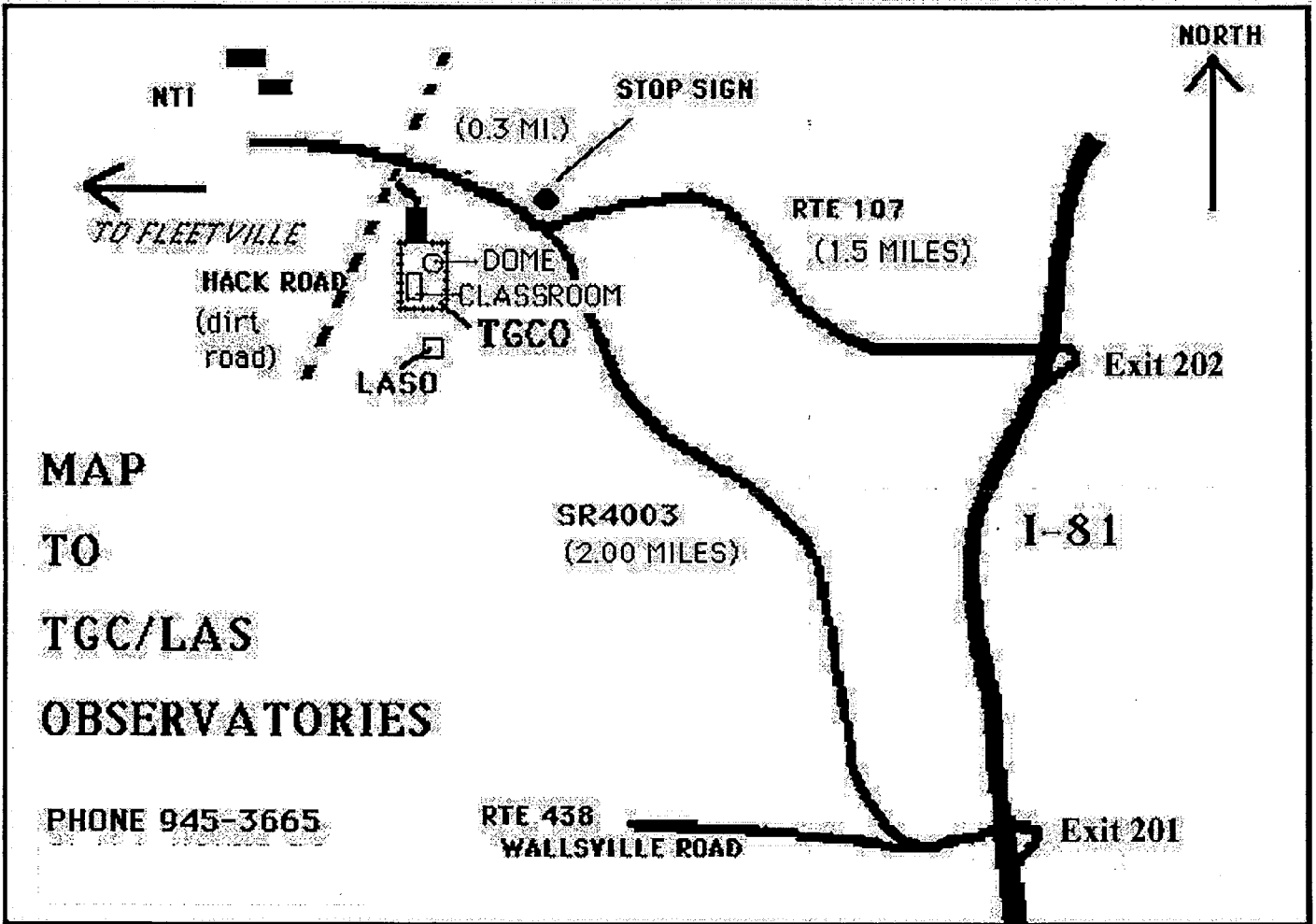
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Spring is coming!

Pass it on!



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**Articles, cartoons, news items, etc, may be sent to:
Jo-Ann Kamichitis, Editor (e-mail: JoAnnKami@aol.com)
1047 Mohawk Street
Scranton PA 18508**

Web page: <http://members.aol.com/SabiaJohn/LAS.html>

Staff: Jo-Ann Kamichitis, Joe Kamichitis, Diane Musewicz

Give Us Your Input!

Member Name _____

What would you like to see included in the Club meetings?

What format would you like to see at Club Nights?

What suggestions do you have for either

a. The proposed Club observing certificates?

b. The beginning observer class?

What day of the week would work best for you for the observing classes?

Do you want to volunteer to be ECLIPTIC Editor? _____

Or give a talk at a club meeting? _____

Or serve on a committee? _____

Send your response to the editor. Thanks.