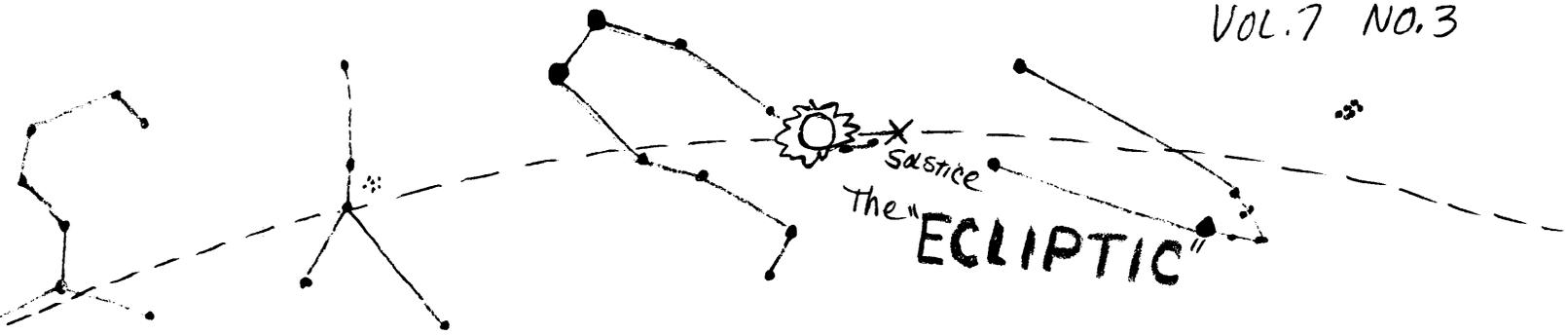


June-July 1981
VOL. 7 NO. 3



Newsletter of the
LACKAWANNA
ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY
SCRANTON, PENNSYLVANIA

LAS OFFICERS AND BOARD MEMBERS

President - Joe Kamichitis
Vice President/Historian - Jo-Ann Pluciennik
Secretary - Mary Ellen Granville
Treasurer/ALCOR - John D. Sabia
Junior Vice Presidents - Jill Adelstein/John Koshinski
Members-at-Large - Joe Bartos
 Debbie Holmes
 Bill Mecca

JULY AND AUGUST MEETINGS

The summer meetings of the LAS will be held on Saturday, July 11th and Saturday, August 8th, 1981. Both of these meetings will be held at the Keystone Junior College/LAS Observatories and each will be a combination cookout/meeting/observing session. The moon will be around first quarter and good weather has been arranged. The fun begins about 5:00 p.m. but you can come at your convenience anytime during the evening. A charcoal grill will be provided so everyone is invited to bring some food and beverages.

The July get-together will highlight Mr. Al Andrade, famous LAS member and rocket expert, a veritable reincarnation of Werner Von Braun, who will give a presentation and demonstration of model rocketry with actual flights promised. Also, John Sabia will give a report on his recent trip deep into the southern Milky Way of Scorpius and Ophiuchus.

On August 8th we will hopefully have photographs of the July lunar eclipse plus reports and photos of the Stellafane happening.

Please mark these dates on your calendar and plan to attend, since, to hold down postage expenses, there will be no, or limited, post card announcements of the meetings.

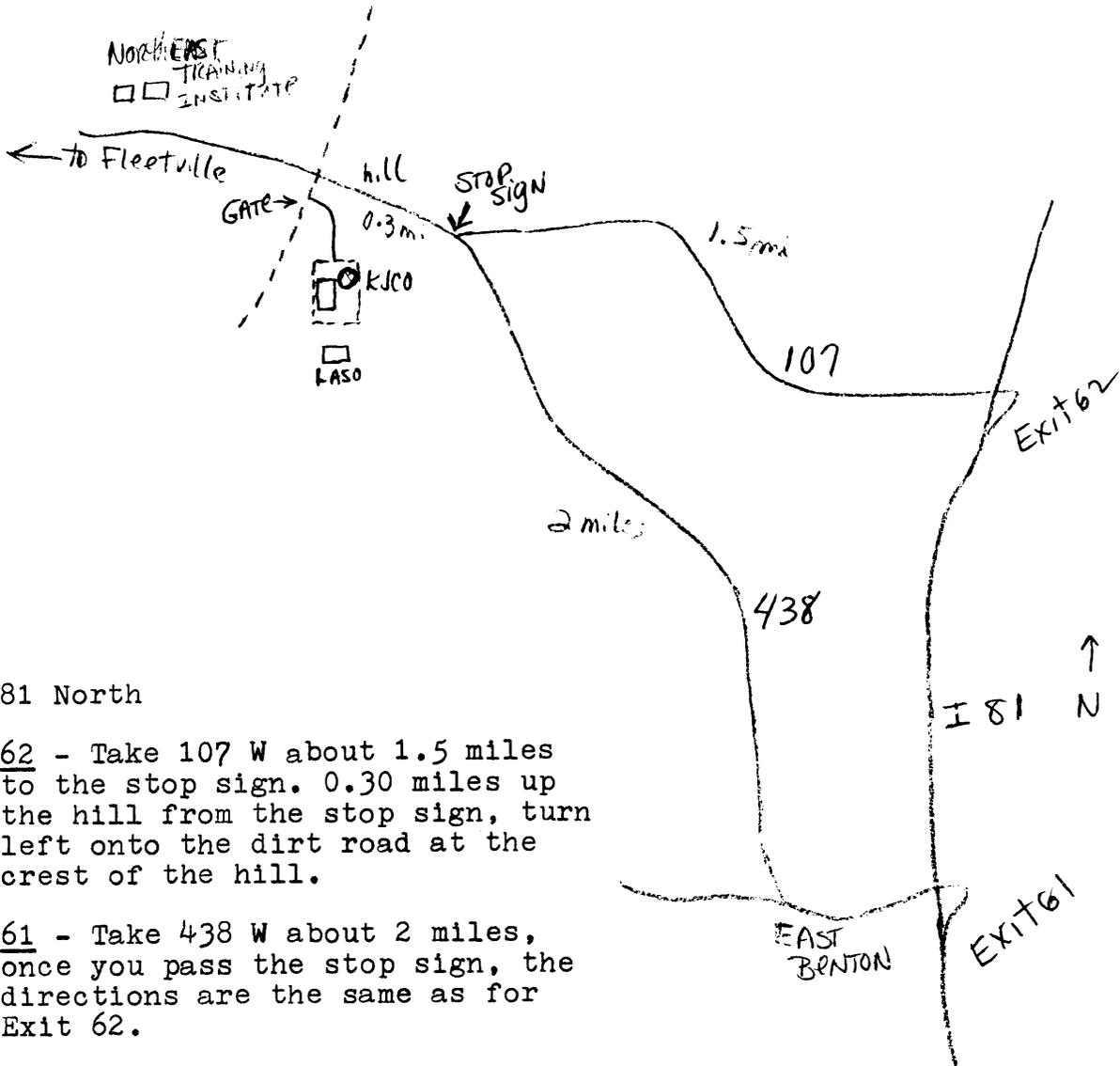
CALENDAR OF SUMMER ACTIVITIES

<u>Day & Date</u>	<u>Meeting/Activity</u>	<u>Location & Time</u>
Thurs, June 11	Board Meeting	8PM home of J. Pluciennik
Thurs, July 9	Star Night & Display	7PM Promised Land Park
Sat, July 11	meeting/cookout/star night	5PM KJC/LAS Observatories
Thurs, July 16	Partial Lunar eclipse observing session	10PM KJC/LAS Observatories
Tues, July 21	Board Meeting	8PM home of J. Pluciennik

<u>Day & Date</u>	<u>Meeting/Activity</u>	<u>Location & Time</u>
Sat, Aug 8	meeting/cookout/star night	5PM KJC/LAS Observatories
Tues, Aug 18	Board Meeting	8PM home of J. Pluciennik

Members interested in attending board meetings should contact J. Pluciennik to see if there are any schedule changes.

Informal club nights are any clear Friday or Saturday night at KJC/LAS Observatories. Contact J. Kamichitis (346-4562), J. Pluciennik (346-3268) or J. Sabia (586-0789).



Take 81 North

Exit 62 - Take 107 W about 1.5 miles to the stop sign. 0.30 miles up the hill from the stop sign, turn left onto the dirt road at the crest of the hill.

Exit 61 - Take 438 W about 2 miles, once you pass the stop sign, the directions are the same as for Exit 62.

LAS PROMISED LAND PROGRAM

The LAS has been invited by officials at Promised Land State Park to give a program there during the summer. We have accepted the invitation and will give a presentation similar to our Astronomy Day activities. The probable date for this is Thursday, the 9th of July with a rain date of August 6th. Details are still being arranged but we will probably begin to set up about 7PM at the Nature Museum near the Pickerel Point Contact Station with an exhibit and slide show on general astronomy. Around nightfall, we will have telescope viewing in a nearby open area. LAS members willing to participate are welcome to contact one of the officers. We would like to have several members on hand to assist in setting up, handling the public, answering questions, and working with the telescopes. Brush up on Jupiter, Saturn, and the moon.

Promised Land is easy to get to. Just take 84 east to exit 7 (marked Promised Land) and take 390 south for about 4 miles to the main park office building. The Pickerel Point station is down the road just across from the front of the main office.

Hope to see you there.

Joe Kamichitis

KJC SUMMER LECTURES

Tom Cupillari, KJC Observatory Director, announces that the KJCO Summer lecture series begins July 6 and runs until July 29. There will be four different lectures given on successive Monday nights and repeated on the following Wednesday. Observing sessions will be held after the lectures. Topics scheduled so far include the "Voyager-Saturn Encounter," "Galaxies," and "Commercially Available Telescopes." Lectures start at approximately 8PM.

While May 9, the national observance of Astronomy Day, was beautiful in Scranton, the LAS's day of choice, May 16, was another matter entirely. It was more a weather watcher's dream. The day began as sunny and warm, and turned colder, windy, overcast, and finally drizzly. This was particularly unfortunate, since our location was a covered, but open-walled, picnic pavilion at McDade Park.

The area turned out to be a natural wind tunnel, necessitating the tacking down of the astrophoto display to the tables, and leading to damage to a projection screen.

Not many public sought us out in the bad weather, and there were few casual passers-by. Luckily we encountered several girl scouts in the pavilion when we first set up, and were able to show them some really nice sunspot groups (as well as count them in our tally of up to 45 people.)

The display had several telescopes, including a C-90, an Astroscan, a 2.4" Tasco refractor, a 4" Tasco reflector, a 3½" Sears refractor and an 8" Meade reflector.

While we seem to be forced to concede the Edmund Scientific prize for astronomy this year, we do want to thank all the members who came up and helped out. This year, the members' participation was the best yet. Thanks again to Jill Adelstein, Scott Bailey, Claude Fanucci, Joe Kamichitis, John Koshinski, John Kosek, John Laskowski (a former member pretending to be current), Bob Malainsky, Diane Musewicz (a former officer who came with her daughter pretending to be members of the public), Jo-Ann Pluciennik, and anyone we may have overlooked.

Jo-Ann Pluciennik

OBSERVING NOTES

ANTIGONE AND S SCUTI

I attempted to observe the occultation of S Scuti by Antigone, scheduled for 11PM EDST on the night of June 4-5. Using 10 x 50 Zeiss binoculars, I began to continuously monitor S Scuti, from 10:45 PM to 11:20 PM, from my home in Clarks Summit. S Scuti was at 7.0 mag. and my faintest-seen star registered at 8.2 (AAVSO Atlas as a reference.)

The variable should have become invisible with the binoculars. From my observations of that evening, I did not detect any such event. This area must have not been in the path of the occultation (the exact position of the path is frequently off a bit, compared to the predicted path.)

The next opportunity for such an event is August 26, 11:40PM EDST. Asteroid Artemis (mag. 11.3) and star SAO 126198 (mag. 8.7), a possible 2.7 magnitude drop.

John D. Sabia

BUILDING PROGRESS REPORT

In the past few weeks, the building committee, with assistants has managed to build a desk and table for the 12" scope building. Dave Davis, who has volunteered to put in the electrical power (so all we pay for is the materials) was up to check the place and decide on exactly what was needed. The trench from the 12" scope building to the classroom building has been half completed. (No easy task in that rocky terrain.)

Still to be done is the completion of the burying of the cable, some interior and exterior painting, and some final touches. This is all expected to be completed by the end of the summer.

"Thank you"s go to these workers: Claude and Alice Fanucci, Les Dymond, Mark Wisniewsky, Bill Mecca, John Tacchino, Joe Kamichitis and John Sabia.

SPRINGTIME NIGHTS

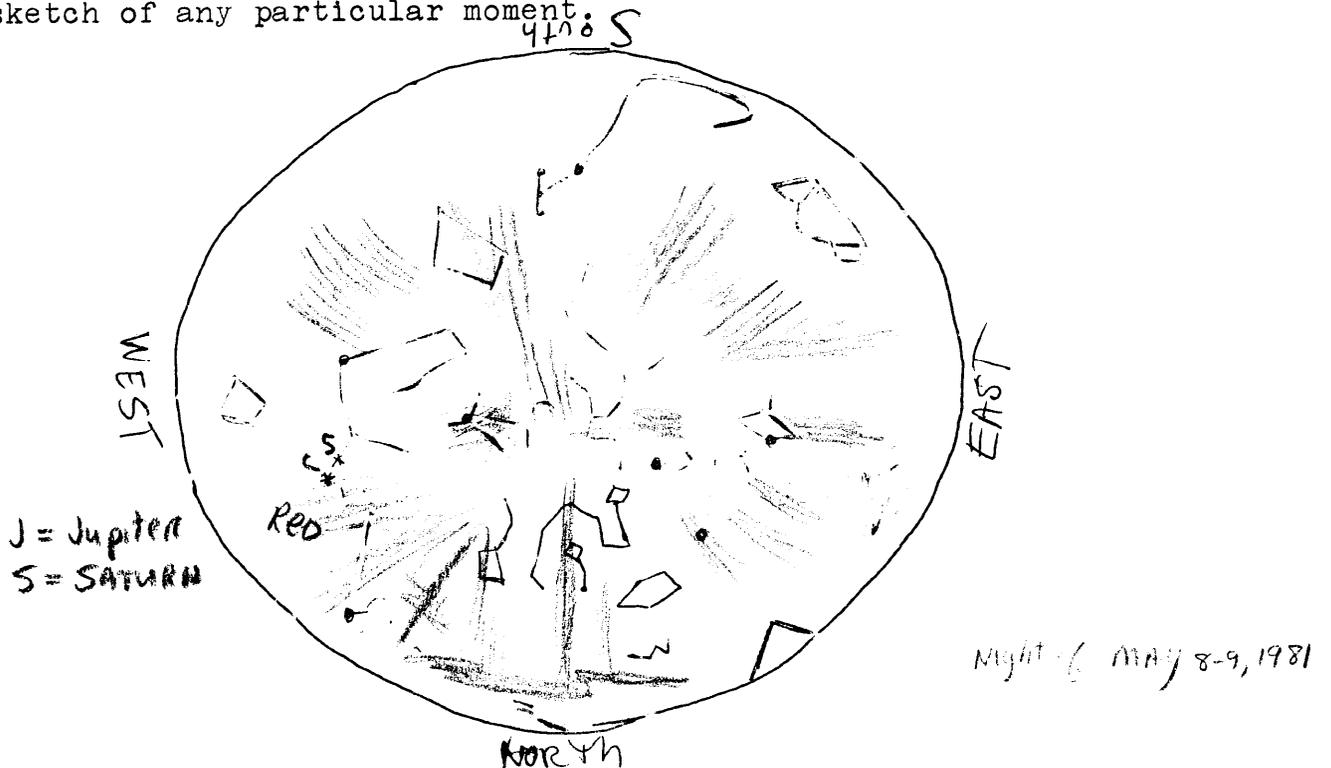
The night sky is a continual reminder of the changing seasons. Cygnus, Scorpius and the Summer Milky Way have been breathtakingly prominent at times. M31 has been rising, well before a shockingly-early morning twilight. We've had some exceptional nights.

The night of May 4-5 was so dark that John Sabia was able to use the 9" Clark to locate and detect the great globular cluster, Omega Centauri, even in the sky glow of Scranton. Not the definitive view perhaps, but a thrill nonetheless.

We've had two more auroras. On the night of May 8, the display was truly spectacular. It carried on for about 2½ to 3 hours, from 1AM to 3:30AM or so. Luckily we had caught it, just as it turned spectacular. To give you an idea of just how spectacular, even Bill Mecca's wife, Karen, (a determined non-observer) came out, stayed out, and admitted it was worth viewing.

There was a large area of red auroral rays and draperies to the northwest, as well as distinctly green coloring directly north. The rest was paler and white. The coloring was the most vivid I've yet seen; the shapes, the most distinctive and dynamic I've seen, except for once in Canada.

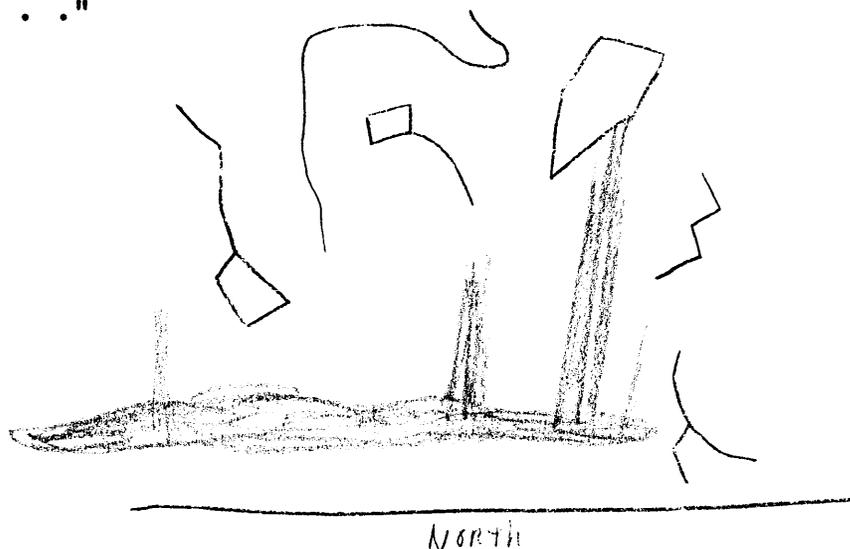
There were draperies and stabbingly sharp rays going to nearly zenith, followed by throbbing patches of white light, even into Ophiuchus. The sky was exceptionally transparent, and it was neat to see auroral rays cutting across the Milky Way in Cygnus and Scutum. The map below gives a general impression of the fullest extent of the aurora, through out the night; it is not a sketch of any particular moment.



The night of June 6-7 (about 2AM EDST) treated us to another good display, bright and distinctly greenish. Since we've become spoiled by the May activity, most of the group soon continued their interrupted trek indoors for coffee.

I love aurora and hate to have any go unseen, so I stayed out a bit longer. They remind me of summers I've spent in Alaska. We'd try to get the kids at the camp to get in touch with the old-time Alaska atmosphere. Sitting around the campfire, in the twilight that pretends to be night in the summers up there, we'd read (dramatically, of course) from Robert Service's poems of the Gold Rush Days. Things like this from "The shooting of Dan McGrew."

"Were you ever out in the Great Alone, when the moon was awful clear,
and the icy mountains hemmed you in with a silence you could almost hear;
with only the howl of a timberwolf, and you camped there in the cold;
a half-dead thing in a stark dead world, clean mad for the muck called
gold;
while high overhead, green, yellow and red, the North Lights swept in
bars? . . ."



night
June 6-7, 1981

Well, maybe we're not exactly in the "Great Alone," and so we hear the mysterious noises of cows, not wolves, but in winter the place does seem like a "stark dead world" and the "North Lights" are the same.

J. M. Pluciennik

MEMBER'S NEWS

Congratulations to our members, John Sabia and Delores Dalykas Sabia, who were married on May 9, 1981 (National Astronomy Day!) John has served the LAS as treasurer, president, (sometimes both at once), ALCOR, and public speaker at conventions.

Congratulations to our members Vincent and Diane Pluciennik Musewicz on the birth of their daughter, Sarah, on May 23, 1981. Diane has been treasurer and secretary of the las several times, as well as chief typist and mimeographer of the "Ecliptic." Diane and Vince are also parents of a 3-year-old astronomer, Julia, the proud owner of a 1½" plastic Woolworth refractor (a blatant attempt by her aunt to distract the tyke from her telescopes.)

NEW MEMBERS

The following have joined the LAS since the 1981 membership list was published:

Robert Bolock, 105 S. Grace St. Old Forge, PA 18518
Les Dymond, 161 W. Parker St., Scranton, PA 18505
Frank Kranick, 536 East Drinker St., Dunmore, PA 18512
Stanley Manoski, 111 Curtain St., Dupont, PA 18641
Pamela Tigrett, 8 Prescott Place, Scranton, PA 18510
Jean Hoffman, 1002 N. Irving Ave., Scranton, PA 18510

PRESIDENT'S NOTE

Your Society has a busy summer ahead with a possible bus trip to Fels Planetarium June 20th, July and August meetings, a Promised Land program July 9th, a lunar eclipse July 16th, AstroCon in August, and Stellafane, not to mention a lot of work at the observatory. Of course, all the official activity does not mean that there is no time for observing. Clear nights, especially Friday and Saturday nights, always have the possibility of an all night session at the observatory. Call around and come up. All members are asked to support the Society by attending and participating at meetings, taking part in organized activities, and joining other members for nights of viewing the heavens, which, somewhere back amid all the hustle and bustle, is why we're in this to begin with.

J. Kamichitis

OBSERVATORY ASIDES

Spring is definitely here. There's been all the signs. There's been a few occasions when a down jacket has not been appropriate attire for an all night observing session and, once or twice, you wanted your caffeine in the form of a cold soda, rather than hot coffee.

As you drive up to the buildings, fuzzy kilddeer chicks scurry away on those stilts they use for legs while the parents fly noisily and frantically trying to distract you.

At least the chicks move; the calves (18, at last count) like to sneak under the electrified fence and loiter in the driveway, ready to startle the unwary. So now that the cows are active again, we have two reminders. Drive very slowly, especially if you're just using your parking lights, as any thoughtful astronomer would. And carry a bright enough flashlight as you walk the path out to LASO, especially since the cows like to leave fresh welcome mats on or near the doorsteps.

J. M. Pluciennik

FREE GIFT

The enclosed map of the Ursa Major area was supposed to be distributed to accompany the June "Konstellation Kloseup." However, due to a mix-up, they were not. Imagine what you missed by not coming to the meeting, and hearing the slide/talk that went with this map!!

The "Ecliptic is the official publication of the Lackawanna Astronomical Society. Articles, cartoons, news items may be sent to:

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Joe Kamichitis