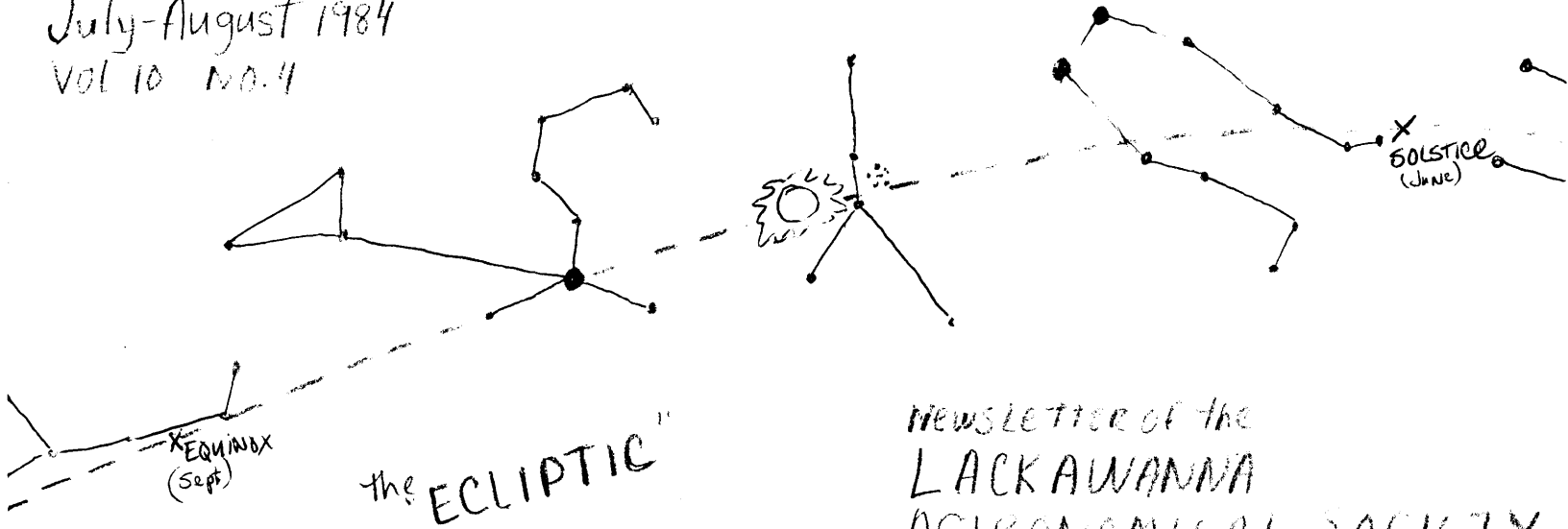


July-August 1984
Vol 10 No. 4



Newsletter of the
LACKAWANNA
ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY
SCRANTON, PENNSYLVANIA

LAS OFFICERS AND BOARD MEMBERS FOR 1984

President - Jo-Ann Pluciennik
Secretary - J. Michael Schirra
Junior Vice President - Robert Bolock
At-Large Members - Debbie Holmes/Frank Maros/LuAnn Naughton
Vice President - John D. Sabia
Treasurer - Joe Kamichitis

LAS CALENDAR

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!! IMPORTANT SUMMER EVENTS

<u>DATE</u>	<u>ACTIVITY</u>	<u>PLACE</u>	<u>TIME</u>
1984 July 1 Sunday	Solar observing and eclipse photo display	Everhart Museum	2-5:00 PM
July 7 Saturday	LAS Cookout Regular monthly meeting and observing session	KJC/LASO, Fleetville " "	6:00 PM 8:00 PM
July 9 and 11	July lecture series. "The Sun" Tom Cupillari (observing follows)	KJC Observatory	8:00 PM
July 10 Tuesday	Star Party for 4-H Camp	Hickory Run State Park	8:45 PM
July 16 and 18	July lecture series J. Pluciennik - "The Planets" (observing follows)	KJC Observatory	8:00 PM
July 17 Tuesday	Board of Directors meeting	home of J. Pluciennik	8:00 PM
July 23 and 25	July lecture series. J. Sabia "Is the Sun a Binary Star?" (observing follows)	KJC Observatory	8:00 PM
July 27 to 29	ATM Convention (Keyholders will be in VT)	Stellafane - Springfield Vermont	(KJCO not open to members)
July 30 August 1	July Lecture series T. Cupillari (topic to be announced)	KJC Observatory	8:00 PM
August 2 Thursday	Star Party	Promised Land State Park Greentown, PA	9:00 PM

LAS CALENDAR

<u>DATE</u>	<u>ACTIVITY</u>	<u>PLACE</u>	<u>TIME</u>
August 7 Tuesday	Regular monthly meeting	Everhart Museum	7:30 PM
August 11 Saturday	club night/cookout (Perseid meteor shower peak)	KJC/LASO, Fleetville	6:00 PM
August 18 Saturday	25th Anniversary celebration Open House	KJC/LASO	6:00 PM
August 21 Tuesday	Board of Directors meeting	home of J. Pluciennik	8:00 PM
August 23 Thursday	Star Party	Promised Land State Park Greentown, PA	8:30 PM

On all official club nights, a keyholder to KJC/LASO will be present (either John Sabia or Jo-Ann Pluciennik.) On other clear weekend nights, contact J. Pluciennik (346-3268) to see if the place will be unlocked or whether you will have to bring your own 'scopes and warm up in your car. KJC Observatory's phone number is 945-3665, but people are not always near to the phone to hear it. KJC/LASO is on Route 107, about halfway from Exit 61 of I-81, as you head to Fleetville Corners. You take a left on Hack Road.

PROMISED LAND PROGRAMS FOR 1984

As the LAS/Promised Land State Park liaison, I would like to inform all members that our annual series of programs at that park is under way. The dates this year are June 21 at 9:30, August 2 at 9:00, and August 23 at 8:30. I'll give you 30 seconds to mark your calendar (pause) O.K. These are all on Thursday nights and we'll be there for a slide program even if skies are not clear -- in other words, no rain dates. We have always gotten very good response at these presentations (some have had nearly 200 people) and to function smoothly, we need at least a half dozen members and 4 or 5 telescopes.

The June 21 program has, of course, already been given; it went like this . . . the sky was absolutely fantastic, clear and dark, no moon, better than at the observatory, probably as good as you are going to see in this part of the country. We had 2 telescopes and 2 club members who showed up, namely Jo-Ann who gave the slide program and I who set up the telescopes. Luckily the crowd was small, only about 45 people.

So tear yourself away from your data reduction and your reruns of "Cheers", throw a telescope in your car, and help represent the Club at Promised Land in August. A pleasant early evening drive will get you there by taking I-84 East to Exit 7, go right (south) on 390 for 4.6 miles to the Park Office, turn left and go 1 mile to the Nature Museum where we'll be for the slide program. The telescopes will be set up in the field a few feet up the road. See you there.

Joe Karichitis

LAS SUMMER PLANS
GETTING THE MOST OUT OF YOUR HOBBY!

At last the season has arrived when you can observe without needing "life support systems" such as down jackets. This time of the year gives you arm chair astronomers some gradual, painless, comfortable ways to slip into being an active LAS member. There's nothing like meeting the universe in person to deepen your enjoyment of amateur astronomy. This meeting, I might add, does not require a lot of equipment, just observant eyes and intellectual alertness.

Join us this Sunday, July 1st, from 2 to 5 PM in front of the Everhart Museum, and get to know the face of the sun personally. Help us inform the public and take the opportunity to see the grand opening of the museum's display of solar eclipse photos. These are all photos taken by Bill Speare, famous LAS member and veteran of seven eclipse expeditions. Bill is the science curator at the Everhart Museum.

You can also be a big help at any of the star parties we have scheduled. Even if you can only pick out the major constellations, you still know more than the general public. We need people to operate telescopes and also to stand around and answer questions about the LAS and the planets we'll be viewing. (Brush up on Saturn, Mars, and Jupiter.)

We are especially concerned about the July 10 star party at Hickory Run State Park. This is a new location for us so we'll have to allow extra travel time for finding the place which is about 40 miles from Scranton. We are guaranteed a captive audience of "100 to 140 4-H members between the ages of 8 and 17 from Wayne, Pike and Monroe County." We will really need your assistance. If you want to come down and help out but need a ride or want to car caravan down, please contact John Sabia, Joe Kamichitis or Jo-Ann Pluciennik at any time and we'll make arrangements. We're really counting on you, especially those who've helped out before.

PLEASE NOTE that the July meeting is not on the usual day, nor at the usual place, nor at the usual time! It will be Saturday, July 7, at 8:00 PM at Keystone Observatory, Fleetville. Come up at 6:00, bring a picnic basket and join the summer cookout. Stick around till late and join the observing session. We look forward to acquainting you with your club's facilities.

The meeting program in July includes a slide/talk "Solar System Update" by Ron Benjamin and LuAnn Naughton, as well as Mike Schirra and Bill Speare's recounting of their "cliff hanging" experiences at the May 30 eclipse (including their slides.) In August, we'll have a Stellafane report as well as some discussion of recent discoveries and theories in astronomy. We may also have a film (as yet uncertain.)

Enrich your summer by adding amateur astronomy to your usual round of swimming, tennis, softball, movies, etc.

Remember moonlight and starlight have not yet been connected with any health hazards. Bring along family members and friends. We may even make some converts to astronomy.

See you there.

Jo-Ann Pluciennik
President

HOW TO GET TO WHERE IT'S ALL HAPPENING

Hickory Run State Park 4-H Camp Shehaqua - From the Northeast Extension of the Pennsylvania Turnpike, take Exit 35 and drive west on PA Rt. 940 for 3 miles - then turn south on PA Rt. 534 for 6 miles. Follow signs into Hickory Run State Park. After passing the park office on the right, take the next left turn. Go about $\frac{1}{2}$ mile - take another left following signs to 4-H Camp Shehaqua. Turn right up into 4-H Camp Shehaqua.

KJC/LASO - is on Route 107, about halfway from Exit 61 of I-81, as you head to Fleetville Corners. You take a left on Hack Road.

Promised Land State Park - Take 84 East to Exit 7, go right (south) on 390 for 4.6 miles to the Park Office, turn left and go 1 mile to the Nature Museum.

PROGRESS REPORT

You have been hearing the last two months about the Meade mount. Well, it's almost ready for use. For now, it's sitting on the post in the observatory complex covered by a wood shelter, manufactured by the Joe Kamichitis Construction Company.

Last week Joe and I were polar aligning using a 6" f/5 reflector as the primary scope. We used a popular method of watching the movement of a star north or south of the east-west cross hair. It appears to be in very close alignment. A second session with higher magnification will get it even more accurate and we'll be set for some constellation photographs with a battery of cameras.

Some of the other photo projects we are attempting are:

1. The movement of the planet Uranus in the constellation of Scorpius.
2. The movement of Neptune in the constellation Sagittarius.
3. Exposure ranges with black and white hypered 2415 and Tri-X non-hypered film with and without filters.

(Some of this will be preparation for wide field photos of the area where Halley's Comet will be situated.)

As an LAS member, you can also place your own scope on the mount for use. For Newtonian's all that is needed is the scope and cradle rings (and maybe an extra counterweight for heavier scopes.)

Come on up and try your own photographic skills on a polar aligned mount. Of course, those of you who relish spending an hour or so polar aligning your own equatorial mount still have that as an option.

John D. Sabia

MEMBER NEWS/NEW MEMBERS

Congratulations to Jill Adelstein and Scott Bailey on their recent graduations from high school. Jill was graduated from Abington Heights; Scott from Riverside H. S. Both Jill and Scott have been LAS members for 5 or 6 years and have served as members-at-large and junior vice presidents. Scott has also been president of Riverside H. S.'s astronomy club. (They have an observatory complete with a 14" Celestron.) We wish them both success as they go on to college in the fall.

Congratulations to LAS members Ron Benjamin and LuAnn Naughton on their marriage Saturday, June 23, (even though, because of the preparations, LuAnn had to miss our most recent board meeting.)

Congratulations to Jim and Karen Filipski on the birth of their son Brandt in February. While not currently a member, Jim was one of the most active observers we had, with several astrophotographs published. Jim also served the LAS as a board member, vice president, and on the committee planning LASO and the incorporation of the LAS.

Please add these members' names and addresses to your LAS membership list.

Sharon & Joe Fidich, 1258 Short Ave., Scranton, PA 18505 344-7185

Jim & Jeremy* Pribola, Box 18, Clifford, PA 18413

Please note these address changes:

Joe Nazzarella, 229 Cambridge House West Quad., 541 Thompson St. Ann Arbor, MI 48109

Ed Sidorski, Route 3, Box 842, Susquehanna, PA 18847

CELEBRATION UPDATE

So far the 25th anniversary dinner will be Sunday, October 14, at Jay's on Main Avenue. It will be a sitdown dinner with a cash bar. Details as to the program and menu have not been finalized, but please set aside that Sunday evening for the LAS.

Our August open house will include refreshments, films and slide shows, and observing weather permitting. Volunteers will be needed to make sure LASO is spruced up and ready for company, since we expect to invite members of nearby astronomy clubs. We'll also need help with the refreshments.

J. M. Pluciennik

I AM MOTIONLESS...

"But at this moment I'm sitting on a piece of Earth at $34^{\circ} 30'$ North, which means I'm spinning west to east at a rate of about 860 miles an hour.... At the same time, my Earth is moving through its orbit around the Sun at 66,661 miles an hour, and my Sun is carrying itself and its planets toward the star Vega at something like 31,000 miles an hour. Our Sun and Vega move around the Galaxy at the blinding speed of 700,000 miles per hour.

And that's not all. Our Galaxy moves in relation to all other galaxies as they rush through the universe at a speed of better than 1,000,000 miles an hour.

So when I sit here absolutely still I'm moving in six wildly different directions at an accumulated speed of ... maybe two and a half million miles an hour. So I can never be motionless."

Stanley Mott reflecting in Space by James A. Michener. Reprinted from Pegasus astronomy newsletter of Broome County Astronomical Society.

OBSERVATORY ASIDES

You'll notice a new look at KJC/LASO this summer -- waist high grass and wild flowers; the field is now a meadow rather than a pasture since the new owner of the adjacent farm doesn't have a full herd of cattle. But don't feel that the only hazard you face is getting lost while bushwacking out to the 12". There are about 3 or 4 young cows that have been seen there these last two times. They favor the driveway as a place to sack out, and leave deposits, so do keep your eyes open while driving in with only your parking lights on, and while unloading your car.

"The best skies I've ever seen," that's the only way I can describe the view of the Milky Way at our first program at Promised Land State Park. It even beat out some of the great nights we've seen at Stellafane. Now I find myself craving a trip to the next "Texas Star Party." I wonder if the Milky Way does cast shadows there the way I've heard it claimed!! A truly star-filled sky^{ever} beats out a telescopic view of Saturn.

Viewing from the slightly more light polluted skies of KJC/LASO is still rewarding. As a life-long procrastinator, I've naturally postponed any systematic search through the galactic jungle that is the Virgo-Coma Cluster. Generally I'd just scan through the region and look at those galaxies I'd bump into. The region seemed pretty sparsely populated whenever I used that method. Last month I finally sat down with my astrocards and Tirion Atlas, and tackled the area again. It really is crowded!! In one evening I viewed and sketched a score of galaxies, using the college's 10" Dobsonian, and that just scratched the surface. It was fascinating to star-hop and check and re-check before I settled on identifications. It was fun to know I could recognize star fields and galaxies that I had just sketched. Sometimes I find myself intimidated by other more systematic observers, but once I try it myself I usually find that I've been bluffed out by the "macho amateur astronomer syndrome." (My term for all those people who sort of swagger at you and boast of their observing skills and equipment they use for astronomy. Sort of "My telescope and camera can beat yours.") Don't let that happen to you fellow stargazers!! Anyone can tackle observational astronomy.

Even milky skies may contain surprises; take for example the night of June 15-16, 1984. The combination of late sunset, lingering twilight and a 2-days-past-full moon meant we only expected a brief look at deep sky objects with the rest of the evening used for planetary observing, coffee drinking and polar aligning. But besides all that, we also were treated to a good aurora!! Before moonrise there were a few low rays and a pretty bright

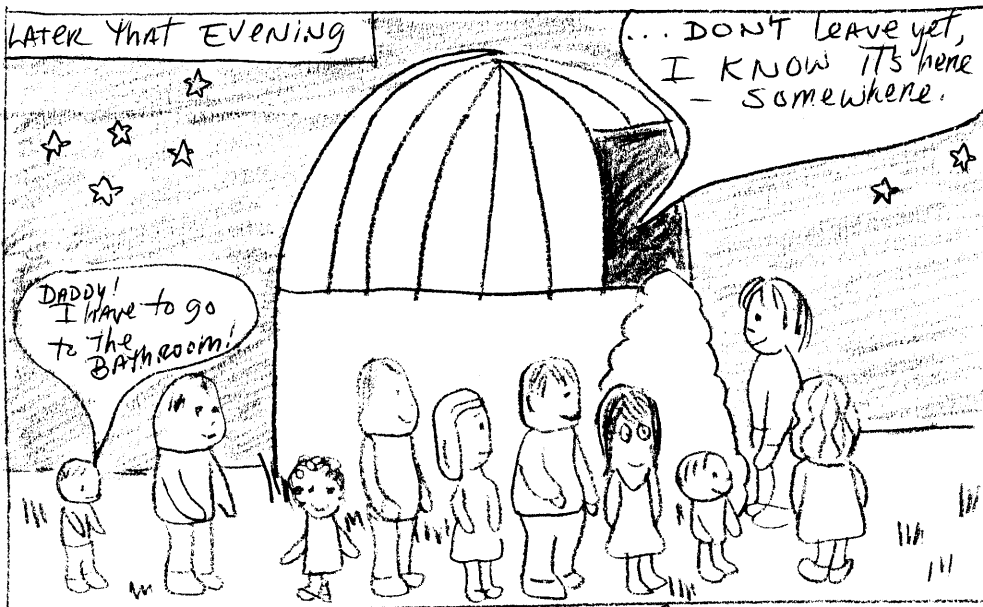
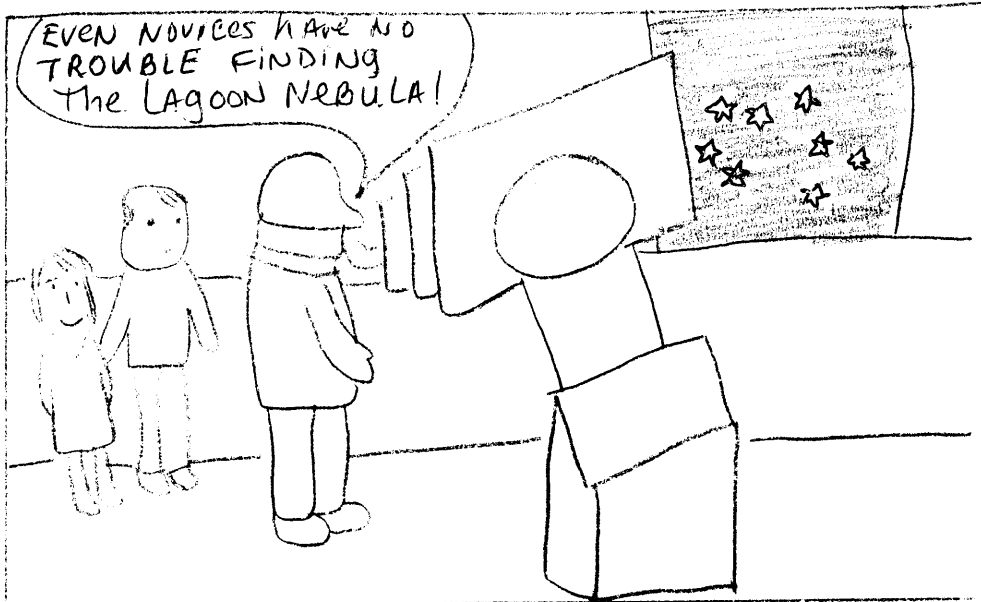
homogenous arc. This faded as the sky was brightened by moonlight, but at about 1:15 AM a bright "picket fence" of a rayed arc showed up through the Big Dipper. Photos of this can be admired at the July and August meetings.

Remember our motto, "You'll never see anything if you're not out looking."

JoAnn Pluciennik

PUBLIC OBSERVING

with Ashley Ashpit
(FROM "STAR DUST" the newsletter of Astro Soc. of Harrisburg (ASH))



Ashley's Astronomical Law-of-The-Month
→ "The larger the crowd, the fainter the object becomes."

The "Ecliptic" is the bimonthly 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, may be sent to: Jo-Ann Pluciennik, 313 East Elm Street, Scranton, PA 18505

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