



Newsletter of the Baton Rouge Astronomical Society

**March 2011**

**The Next Meeting of the  
Baton Rouge Astronomical Society  
will be March 14, 2011  
at 7 PM.**

We will be meeting at the Highland Road Observatory. The meeting starts at 7 PM. Please arrive a few minutes earlier .

**PROGRAM NOTES: The Future of the Michoud Facility -  
Post Space Shuttle**

This month's meeting we will be hosting John Filostrat of Jacobs Technology, Inc., which is the Advanced Technology arm of Jacobs Engineering. For those of you that don't know, they were some of the folks working on the Constellation project at NASA's Michoud facility near New Orleans. They have been involved with NASA since the Mercury Project days and their list of clients also includes the DOD, U.S. Special Operations Command, Boeing, Lockheed Martin and many others. Mr. Filostrat will be letting us know what's going on at the Michoud facility in light of the recent setbacks regarding the Constellation Program. *(VP message continued on page 2 )*

Thanks,  
Ben, VP, Programs  
Ben Toman <tomanben@gmail.com>

**Baton Rouge Astronomical Society  
Thirty Years and Still Growing!**

## Message From the Vice President

Hey Everyone,

First of all, thank you again to Dr. Brad Schaefer for stepping in at the last minute to fill our program for last month's meeting. I know I learned a lot about extinction as it applies to astronomical observation and we even capped it off by heading outside and putting our knowledge to work by interpreting the magnitude of Epsilon Auriga. With that one little observation, we then had the opportunity (later on at home) to report our individual observation to the AAVSO (American Association of Variable Star Observers) and actually help out (in a small way) with astronomical research.

Also, a quick congratulations to Joe Longuepee for his entry into the Astronomical League's Messier Club and Christopher Kersey for his entry into the Lunar Club. Joe has now achieved that eternal fame of having his name printed in an issue of Reflector this month and Christopher's should be in the next issue. Great job, guys!

The weather's warming up and Hodges Gardens Star Party is just around the corner now. (Check out our website, [brastro.org](http://brastro.org), for more info on that!) This is a great time to start dusting off the scopes and start tackling some observations before mosquito season gets here! If you have a decent sky at your house, don't be afraid to invite your neighbors over to take a peek through your scope. And in the mean time, invite them and your friends to our next meeting, of course! We've been having pretty good attendance, but it can always be better.

Hope to see you there!

Ben Toman

BRAS VP

## Rockefeller Road Trip and Hodges Gardens State Park

Our annual Rockefeller Road Trip took place this year on the last weekend of January. Approximately 12-15 BRAS members and friends got together for a night of stargazing a a day of birding, shell collecting, and general sightseeing along the coast of southwest Louisiana. The skies were clear and unseasonably warm on Friday night. A beautiful dark sky to the south of our location was enjoyed. To the north, however, the skies are somewhat obstructed by buildings and trees. Saturday was clear but breezy. A larger number of Roseatte Spoonbills were seen in the marsh this year. Other species of waterfowl, though, seemed to be fewer. As far as I know, no alligators were seen. Crabs were also sparse, but luckily plenty of other good food was shared by all. Clouds rolled in during Saturday afternoon, so the telescopes remained covered Saturday night. Sunday morning began with a light mist, but by the time most of us were on the road back to Baton Rouge, heavy rain set in. All in all, it was an enjoyable weekend and one that we continue to look forward to each January.

Coming up in a few short weeks will be the 3rd Annual Hodges Gardens Star Party. The event begins on Wednesday, March 30th, and continues to Sunday, April 3rd. Google our website for all the specifics. Because of Mardi Gras falling so close to the new moon weekend of March, we decided to back the event up a few weeks this year. So, temperatures should be a little warmer than in the past. The famous gardens will also be in full bloom. Bring your cameras as well as your telescopes. We've decided to schedule a "swap meet" on Saturday afternoon, so if you have any "treasures" you want to sell or trade, be sure to pack them along.

Don Weinell

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