



Newsletter of the Baton Rouge Astronomical Society

April 2011

The next meeting of the Baton Rouge Astronomical Society will be April 11. We will meet at the Highland Road Observatory. The meeting will start at 7:00 p.m. Please arrive a few minutes early.

Program: *Planetary Acoustics - Sounds of the Planets*

Hey Everyone,

I hope everyone that made it out to the last meeting had as good a time with John Filostrat as I did. The Michoud Assembly Facility certainly has a lot of potential. John told us that we are more than welcome to bring a group down there for a nice tour of the facility. That may be a fun summer outing.

I'm excited about our guest speaker for this month. He is Dr. Andi Petculescu of the University of Louisiana Lafayette's Physics department. Dr. Petculescu specializes in experimental acoustics and does a lot of work with planetary acoustics. Imagine people setting foot on Mars for the first time. We have a pretty good idea of what they would be seeing, but what would they hear? There are several celestial bodies in our Solar System that have atmospheres that allow sound to travel. Titan, Mars, Venus...just to name a few. Dr. Petculescu's work includes creating simulations of what human speech would sound like in some of these different atmospheres, and even a Bach Toccata and Fugue. He has been spearheading proposals to NASA to include more sound capturing / measuring devices on the various landers that have been (and ARE being) developed. I hope you will all join us to come hear what promises to be one of the more unique presentations we've had at one of our meetings.

We also may get to hear a bit about this year's Hodges Gardens Star Party which happened March 30th - April 3rd. We had several club members in attendance this year, and if you were one of them, please come and share some of your experiences with the rest of us. So, come on out to this month's meeting! It would be great to see you and nice to have a good size audience for our guest. As always, don't hesitate to tell a friend or neighbor.

Thanks and see you soon!

Ben, VP, Programs

Ben Toman <tomanben@gmail.com>

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MESSAGE FROM HRPO

Or should I say, “message from HGSP” because that’s still where my mind is. It was awesome! Wednesday evening was spotty at best, with haze seemingly developing right above our heads (although I was able to sketch Leo Minor, Leo and Ursa Major). Thursday evening started the same way, but from 3am to sunrise the clouds disappeared and the seeing and transparency improved greatly. It was a treat to see the summer constellations in their full glory—Böotes, Hercules and the like. Even the “C” of Corona Borealis was quite distinct. Ben Toman, Trevor McGuire and I (mostly Ben and Trevor) accomplished a lot in our continued pursuit of various AL certificates. Steve Edmiston kindly allowed us to view Omega Centauri through his 18” Dob. Barrow Leake impressed everyone with his array of observing equipment. I sincerely hope anyone who could not make it this year try to be a part of the Hodges Gardens experience in 2012. If I’m not mistaken, Don Weinell already has the date set. Thanks to him for his unerring management of this star party. Thanks to Kim Kelly for being our helpful point person on the staff up there.

CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS

ON SITE

Evening Sky Viewing: Saturday, 9 April from 6pm to 10pm. *One or two volunteers.* To staff marshmallow roast, work simple 6” Dob, demonstrate air cannon, gyroscope, etc. All needed training given.

International Astronomy Day: Saturday, 7 May from 3pm to 10pm. *Ten to twelve volunteers for three- to six-hour shifts.* Any number of activities; contact me as soon as you can. All needed training given. NOTE: This is the largest and most successful HRPO event of the year. Last year we received over 700 visitors and on 7 May 2011 we expect at least 1000. We really do need all the help we can get, so don’t be shy about volunteering!

OUTREACH

Earth Day: Sunday, 17 April from 12pm to 8:30pm. *Two or three volunteers for three- to four-hour shifts.* Hydrogen-alpha telescope and demos.
Christopher

