

Newsletter of the Baton Rouge Astronomical Society

OCTOBER 2010

The Next Meeting of the Baton Rouge Astronomical Society will be October 11, 2010 at 7 PM. We will be meeting at the Highland Road Observatory. The meeting starts at 7 PM.

Vice President's Message and Program Notes

Hey Everyone,

We had a great meeting last month and thanks again to Charles Genovese for stepping in to give a presentation at the last minute. It is amazing how far amateur astronomy has come in such a short time. (Especially for those with dedication and a fearless penchant for taking things apart like Charles!)

This month's meeting will not feature a guest speaker. Following up on the idea of some "activity" driven meetings, we are once again going to try to get ourselves outside to see some of the things we like to talk and learn about! The sky is looking quite nice these days with the weather cooling off. We are going to compile a checklist of objects to view and get several telescopes set up to use. If you don't get to do as much viewing as you would like, this is a great time to come out. This will also be a great opportunity for anyone that may not own their own telescope or those that are inexperienced at finding celestial objects to get some tips from others that may. This is weather permitting, of course, and in the event of clouds or rain, we will have a back-up presentation inside.

Our club is growing, and so is the interest in astronomy and science in our community. This can be seen at outreach events like the one in September at the Cortana Mall and in the consistent number of visitors to the HRPO on Friday and Saturday nights. We have a lot of ideas on the table including future outreach, scholarship awards, defending our dark skies and even taking part in contributing observing data to scientific institutions. Whether you know a lot about astronomy, or a little, we would love to get your input, concerns and ideas on what we are doing so please join us at the meeting this month and hope for clear skies!

Ben Toman,
BRAS Vice President

President's Message — October, 2010

The Disappearance of the Lady and the Appearance of the Warrior

If you have been watching the evening sky, you have seen the lovely lady Venus shining brightly in the Western sky. However, she is slowly beginning to retreat due to her shyness and her modesty. She does not seem to want to cross the entire sky but only stays close to the horizon in the evening or morning sky and to not make a spectacle of her comings and goings.

One reason that Venus may have decided to retreat to her privacy is that the great warrior, Jupiter, has made his grand appearance in the Eastern sky along with his 4 loyal generals traveling with him. We have used our secret intelligence gathering sources and have been able to observe this great general from afar and, I can admit, his entrance onto the current scene has been breathtaking for the public. Clear nights for the last few nights have meant that we can observe his actions and predict that he will continue to march across the sky for several more months to come. In the meantime, Venus may peak her head out in the early morning by Christmas to check on Jupiter's position.

BRAS Usage of a 14" Meade LX-200 with GPS

We have had talks with one of the BRAS members who is considering "parking" his 14" Meade LX-200 at HRPO and allowing the BRAS membership to use it. Obviously, we will need to have a training session and a member wanting to use the scope will need to learn how to operate it and go through some practice runs. The unit is on a scope buggy which means we can hopefully roll it out to the pads for operation and then easily roll it back into HRPO for storage.

If we can work out the details and get enough members interested in using the scope, I suggest that we begin another project that would include imaging through this scope. Who can get the best image of a target to be put on BRAS's new flat screen monitor to show off? It could be a planet, the moon, a Messier object, a Nebula or whatever you want to work on. This may not be something that we can qualify for in the next month or so but in short order, we should be ready to have BRAS members creating good images from the 14" Meade. I, for one, look forward to operating it and of imaging through it.

Marvin E Owen, President, BRAS, October, 2010

B.R.A.S. Meeting Notes for 9-13-10

7:10 - start Club President Marvin has everyone introduce themselves. Wally P. gives a short History of Club beginnings.

Old Business: Trevor M. brought up the "Science Student Award" for discussion & it is deferred to the next business meeting.

New Business: Chris K. (HRPO Manager) suggested projects for the club, including an ongoing tracking of Comet Hartley 2 – brightening for the week-end of Oct.9.

NASA & U of Maryland need amateur observations of the comet. See Chris,
or, <aop.astro.umd.edu

Treasurer Bob S. got us to re-up our yearly dues (by vote) for The International Dark Sky Org.

Our Thanks were extended to Wally, Merrell, Ben, Chris, Barrow, Art, Trevor for their S.T.E.M. Expo at Cortana Mall Sept 11th

Marvin recounted his experience contacting the I.S.S. last week with 2 meter mobile HAM radio sitting in the Walmart parking lot.

7:35-Evening's Program

Dr. Charles Genovese – Astro Photography

The Doctor started with an early history of CCD work & his involvement. And then it got complicated. He showed & explained some of his late work, then recommended Registax image processing. Thank You, Doctor.

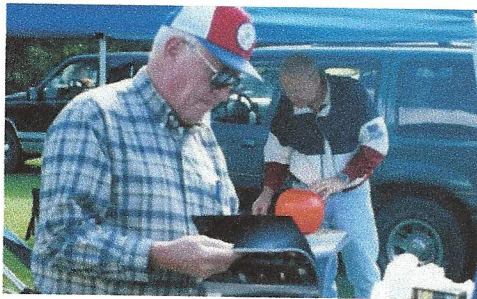
The Raffle was held & the meeting was closed. Charles continued with exhibiting equipment he had brought for us to examine.

Dave Thomas

Deep South Regional StarGaze November 3-7

Extra registration forms at the October 11th meeting.

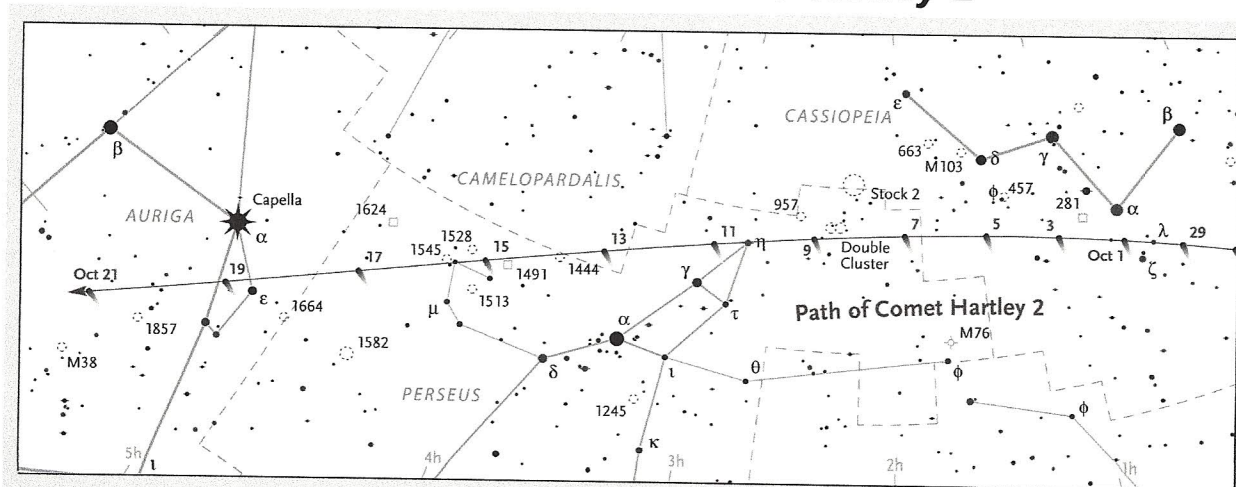
Sample pictures from last year. Activities include: discussions, looking over equipment, raffles, vendors, lectures, food, camping, hiking, solargazing, relaxing and more. At night stargazing under nice dark skies. Yes, the Milky Way is real, and you can see it with just your eyes.



2011 ASTRONOMY CALENDARS

ASTRONOMY's *Deep Space Mysteries 2011 Calendars* HAVE ARRIVED! Member price is \$10. If ordered from *Astronomy Magazine* the calendar would cost you \$12.95 plus several dollars for shipping. These is the best astronomy related calendar on the market. Save yourself some time and money, and while your at it help out the club.

Finder Chart for Comet Hartley 2



BRAS Observing Notes

October / November 2010

Constellation of the Month

Cepheus: The King

This relatively dim constellation is home to one of the first variable stars ever discovered. Amateur astronomer John Goodricke discovered the variability of Delta Cephei in 1784 from an observatory in York, England. Delta Cephei became the prototype for a class of variable stars known as Cepheid variables. Delta Cephei varies in brightness from magnitude 3.6 to 4.3 over a period of about 5 days.

The relationship between the luminosity and the period of pulsation of Cepheid variable stars is precise enough to allow them to be used as "standard candles". This relationship was discovered in 1908 by Henrietta Swan Leavitt. This relationship allowed Harlow Shapley to place constraints on the size of the Milky Way in 1915 and also allowed Edwin Hubble to discover that the universe was actually bigger than the Milky Way galaxy in 1924. Thanks Cepheids!

Sky Chart

Position in the Sky

Right Ascension: 22 hours

Declination: 70 degrees

Named Stars

ALDERAMIN (Alpha Cep)

Alfirk (Beta Cep)

Alrai (Gamma Cep)

Herschel's "Garnet Star" (Mu Cep)

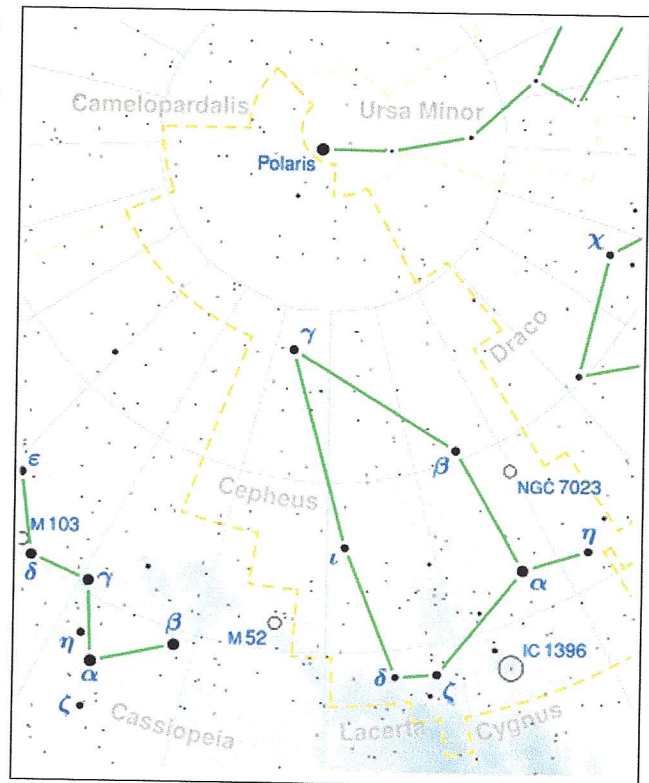
Alkurhah (Xi Cep)

Al Kalb al Rai (Rho 2 Cep)

Messier Objects

NGC 7023 (Iris Nebula)

IC 1396 (Emission Nebula)



BRAS Dark Sky Site Viewing Dates

October 2nd and 9th 2010

November 6th and 13th 2010

For more information check out the BRAS website at <http://www.braastro.org>

Directions to BRAS Dark Sky Site:

From Baton Rouge take I-10 west about 19 miles from the Mississippi River Bridge. Take exit 135, LA Hwy 3000, to Ramah-Maringouin exit. Go north about 100 feet. You will see a bait shop on left, turn left here. Go about 200 feet, you will see a gas station on right, turn right. Go about 400 feet until you come to the levee, turn left (south). Go 1.6 miles down the gravel road along the levee. You will see a road on right going up onto the levee, turn on this road and either stop on top of the levee or directly on the other side.

Art Barrios

BRAS Observing Chairman

art.barrios@cox.net

MESSAGE FROM HRPO

The 4th *Dimension Donation Drive* was a big success. On site at least, we raised \$412 while asking for \$360. So all nine clocks will be premiered at the Spooky Spectrum.

Congratulations to Ben Toman for capturing Hartley 2 with the 200GS. I have every faith that he is only the first of many BRAS members to do just that as the comet gets brighter (though rises later) as the month wears on. We had between 130 and 140 people here on 1 October in the hopes that they could see the comet. Alas... However, we're trying again tonight (2 October) and next weekend.

Well...the so-called fate of the Constellation Program seems to have been decided. I don't know how happy Tom or the rest of us are. Hopefully, though, the United States is still in the running to (once again) be first on the Moon.
Christopher

CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS: ON-SITE

Evening Sky Viewing: Saturdays from 7pm to 10pm.

One or two volunteers. To work physical science demos and telescopes and campfire. NOTE: We really do not need volunteers on Friday night on a regular basis.

The Spooky Spectrum: Saturday, 30 October from 8pm to 12am.

Three or four volunteers each for a two- or three-hour shift. Physical science demos, 6" Dob or 12" Dob, marshmallow roast, etc. Don't let guilt haunt you! Volunteer!

CALLS FOR VOLUNTEERS: OUTREACH

Watson Library: (36581 Outback Road) Thursday, 12 October from 5pm to 8pm /// *One volunteer needed for a three-hour shift.*

HRPO FRIDAY NIGHT LECTURE SERIES

*8 OCTOBER: "The Life and Death of Stars"

*15 OCTOBER: "The Astronomy of Global Warming"

*22 OCTOBER: "Wonders of the Fall Sky"

*29 OCTOBER: "Rendezvous with a Comet"

LSU PHYSICS COLLOQUIA

3:40pm in 109 Nicholson

*14 October: "String Theory Goes Condensed Matter" (Jan Zaanen of Leiden University)

LANDOLT OBSERVATORY VIEWING

Sunday, 17 October from 7:30pm to 8:30pm

