

Newsletter of the Baton Rouge Astronomical Society

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE-May, 2011

If you haven't paid your dues recently, you may want to check the list in this newsletter of currently due amounts. If a member has gone more than 4 months past due, the Treasurer drops their name from the membership list.

Saturday, May 8 is **International Astronomy Day** worldwide and at the Observatory. Chris still needs BRAS volunteers to help with the expected crowds. It will be from 3 PM until 11 PM and it should be a lot of fun. For the night viewing, the moon should be in its first crescent in the West and Saturn is already looking proud in the Eastern sky. Have you ever seen the Ghost of Jupiter? It is a good target that you can see during the Astronomy Day (nighttime) festivities.

Have you got an extra \$3,700 and want to take a great trip. I notice that Sky & Telescope is offering a trip next September to Chile to visit some of the "world's leading professional observatories" and the skies are almost always clear. If BRAS wants to send a representative on the trip, I may be able to find the time to represent the club. I would also be willing to give a talk about my trip when I return. After all, for a club expenditure of \$3,700, why wouldn't I be expected to tell about it. Oh Well, so much for the afternoon fantasy trip.....

A Great Time to Live

Have you ever taken the time to think about the time in which we live. 400 years ago, Galileo brought about some major changes to the world but they were slow in being accepted. Earlier last century, Albert Einstein proposed a lot of far reaching situations but it took time for them to be accepted. Can you imagine how they must have lived without the benefits of computers and the internet. It is hard for me to realize that in our time, Bin Laden can be taken out on the other side of the world but we know about it almost as it is happening. We live in an amazing world today.

Not only is our world pretty amazing, we are in a tremendous technological explosion of information. We have learned more about our universe in the last 40 years that much of all of the time prior to then. That includes the trips to the Moon with the recovery of material that now tells us that the Moon is the result of a collision between the Earth and Thea that resulted in debris creating rings around the Earth for a while and then the creation of Luna. What would Galileo think if he were told that scenario.

Further, until just 10 years ago, we had no idea of other worlds existing in our universe. Today, scientists have already confirmed in excess of 500 planets revolving around stars. With more stars in our universe that there are grains of sand on all the beaches in Earth, you can bet that there are millions of other planets to find also. This is truly an amazing time that we are living in.

Again using the comparison with my favorite friend, Galileo, can you imagine his amazement of the photos that we are able to take from our ground telescopes, let alone the fantastic photos from Hubble or the other exotic telescopes circling the Earth. We, in our present world, have taken exploration and expanded technology for granted even to the point of being ticked off when our Iphone takes many seconds to download something. We should all be more appreciative of the time in which we are living.

As a Ham Radio operator, N5HE, I was amazed several months ago when I had a short conversation on my ham radio with Col Doug Wheelock while he was on the International Space Station. I asked him a question about "where are you from" hoping that he would tell me his home city. He misunderstood and thought I was talking about right then and said "we just left Argentina and we are now over the Bahamas". Can any of us comprehend someone flying in space and being able to talk to us lowly Earth bound people.

I hope that we all can recognize the great time in which we are living and can learn to appreciate this time of expanding technology.

More important to us as BRAS members,

MARVIN

VICE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Hi Everyone,

Last month's meeting was great. Dr. Petculescu gave a wonderful presentation and it was pretty interesting to hear how the atmosphere's of some of our celestial neighbors could affect sound. Hopefully it won't be the last time we "hear" from him. (I couldn't resist...sorry.)

This month, of course, we are having our meeting supplemented by some Jambalaya. BRAS will provide the Jambalaya, beans and beverages. Feel free to bring along anything else to pass, but it's not required as this isn't the big pot luck we have in December. We'll hear some club news and surely talk about how Astronomy Day 2011 went over.

We'll also be hearing from BRAS member Trevor McGuire this month. Several weeks ago, Trevor gave a talk for a Friday night lecture on **Olber's Paradox**. He will reprise this interesting subject for our club this month. If you've never heard of Olber's Paradox...I guess you'd better come to the meeting!

Once again, I hope to see many of you out at the HRPO for our meeting. It's always great to catch up with everyone. And please, if you know someone that may be interested in astronomy (or free Jambalaya!), invite them to the meeting. You never know, it could be their first step in to a new hobby/obsession :)

See You Soon,

Ben Toman

BRAS VP

MESSAGE FROM HRPO

By the time you receive this IAD will probably be about thirty-six hours away. We're hoping it will go down smoothly. HRPO is half-staffed at this time and I'm more than a little apprehensive. I also have not received any commitment from a robot team at this time. However, the GyroXtreme is returning after sitting out last year, and we're have some solid exhibitors and good food (hot dogs, sandwiches, snowballs and hot chocolate). Welcome to LSU's mathematics department and to the vendor A Coffee Truck, which will both participate for the first time this year.

The weather forecast so far is good considering precipitation, but "mostly cloudy" is listed for that night. Hopefully it'll be the "mostly cloudy" we experience this past weekend—the clouds broke up over the course of forty-five minutes, leave a wide-open sky.

Thanks to all who are volunteering.

Christopher

CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS

ON SITE

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

River Center Library: Thursday, 2 June from 1:30pm to 3pm.

Greenwell Springs Library: Tuesday, 7 June from 2:30pm to 5:30pm.

Baker Library: Thursday, 9 June from 2pm to 5pm.

One volunteer each. Hydrogen-alpha telescope and demos.

REMAINING SHUTTLE LAUNCH

Thursday, 28 June starting at 2pm

If this isn't a good excuse for a party, I don't know what is. So we'll have one! I'm assuming this is the last launch, although in an interview Mark Kelly gave the opinion that one more flight was very possible. (I don't really think it needs stating here, but shuttle launches are notorious for not taking place during the first planned day. Be warned.)

BRAS Observing Notes

May / June 2011

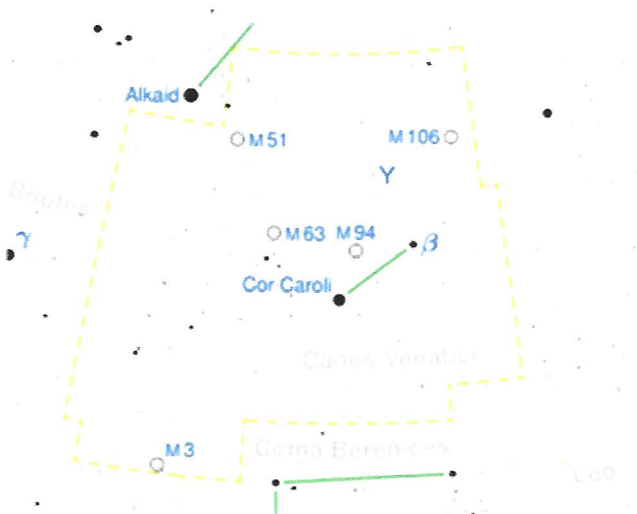
Constellation of the Month

Canes Venatici: The Hunting Dogs

This small constellation was created in 1687 by the Polish astronomer Johannes Hevelius. Canes Venatici represents two dogs being led by Bootes the Herdsman while hot on the heels of the Great Bear. Why are they seen as dogs? The story goes that in the time of the early Greeks the stars in front of Bootes were thought to be a shepherd's staff and were listed as such in Ptolemy's Almagest. When this work was translated into Arabic the Greek word for staff was incorrectly translated into the word for dog. Henceforth Bootes is said to have a "staff with dogs". Too bad Google translate had not yet been invented or they might have gotten it right!

One nice thing about Canes Venatici is the rich number of deep sky objects that are contained within its boundaries. There are total of 5 Messier objects with four of them being galaxies. These include such famous objects as the Whirlpool Galaxy (M51) and the Sunflower Galaxy (M63).

Star Chart



Position in the Sky

Right Ascension: 13 hrs
Declination: 40 degrees

Named Stars

Cor Caroli

May Meteor Showers: Eta Aquarids

Duration: April 19 – May 28

Peak: May 6th

Radiant: Constellation Aquarius

Right Ascension: 23 hours

Declination: -15 degrees

Expected Rate: 60 per hour

Origin: Halley's Comet

BRAS Dark Sky Site Viewing Dates

May 7th and 28th 2011

June 4th and 25th 2011

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

Art Barrios
BRAS Observing Chairman
art.barrios@cox.net

TREASURER'S REPORT

BRAS now has funds on hand of \$2,343.84 and a membership roster of 75 members.

Some members have been dropped from the roles for lack of payment although they may still show up at meetings or at HRPO on a regular basis. If you have not paid your dues recently, check with Bob Sinitiere to see if your name is still on the roster.

Members that have dues currently due are:

David Dawson	3/1/2011
Jules Dellinger	3/1/2011
Richard Devall	3/1/2011
Wai Law	5/1/2011
Ronald Lawrence	5/1/2011
Diane Meyers	2/1/2011
Briar Richard	5/1/2011
Forrest Smith	3/1/2011
Jay Strange	5/1/2011

Please mail dues to:

Robert Sinitiere, Treas
14558 Cottingham Ct
Baton Rouge, La 70817-3543

If there are any corrections or if you need to contact Bob, his e-mail is bobstar9@bellsouth.net

PROPOSED DUES BILLING CHANGES

At present, all members are billed for their dues renewals on the anniversary of their membership. As a result, the Treasurer is required to keep up with records throughout the year to be sure that each member is billed timely. Also, each member needs to keep up with when the anniversary month is so that they can make timely payments.

In an attempt to simplify this process, BRAS is considering making a change to annual billings of membership dues on the basis of \$20 for the calendar year of January through December. For the initial year of transition (2011), dues for existing members will be prorated so that no one loses the benefit of their dues payments.

For new members, we propose that if a person joins during the first quarter of the year (January, February or March) the dues will be the full \$20, for those joining in the second quarter (April, May or June) the dues will be \$15, for the new members in the third quarter (June, July and August, the dues will be \$10 and if joining in the fourth quarter, the dues will be \$5. This change should simplify the work on the Treasurer plus make it easier to keep up with membership.

BATON ROUGE ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY

**You can pay your Membership Dues at our next Meeting or
Send your Dues to:**

***Baton Rouge Astronomical Society, inc.
c/o Bob Sinitiere, Treasure,
14558 Cottinham Ct.,
Baton Rouge, LA 70817-3543***

If you have questions about dues or receiving your News Letter call Bob at 755-2079

<p>◆ Regular Membership \$20.00 \$ _____</p> <p>◆ Each Additional Family Membership \$ 5.00 \$ _____</p> <p>◆ Student Membership \$10.00 \$ _____ (through age 17)</p> <p>◆ Donation* toward club building fund or (_____) \$ _____ <i>Specify</i></p> <p>TOTAL ENCLOSED \$ _____</p>	<p>Date _____</p> <p>Name _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Mailing Address</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____ Zip _____</p> <p>Phone</p> <p>(H) _____</p> <p>(C) _____</p> <p>(W) _____</p> <p>E-Mail</p> <p>_____</p>
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How do you wish to receive the Society's Newsletter *Night Visions*-

___ By Mail or by ___ E-Mail

(Please Check one)

PLEASE CHECK THAT YOUR ADDRESS AND E-MAIL ARE CURRENT AND CURRENT.

*Meetings are usually held the second Monday of each month at 7pm, except for June and July.
Most meetings are held at the Highland Road Observatory.*

*All donations to the *Baton Rouge Astronomical Society, Inc.* are tax-deductible under IRS Section 501(c)(3) & (a)(1) and also 170(b)(1)(A)(vi).

The *Baton Rouge Astronomical Society, Inc.* is a nonprofit corporation chartered under the laws of the State of Louisiana.