

Newsletter of the Baton Rouge Astronomical Society

www.braastro.org

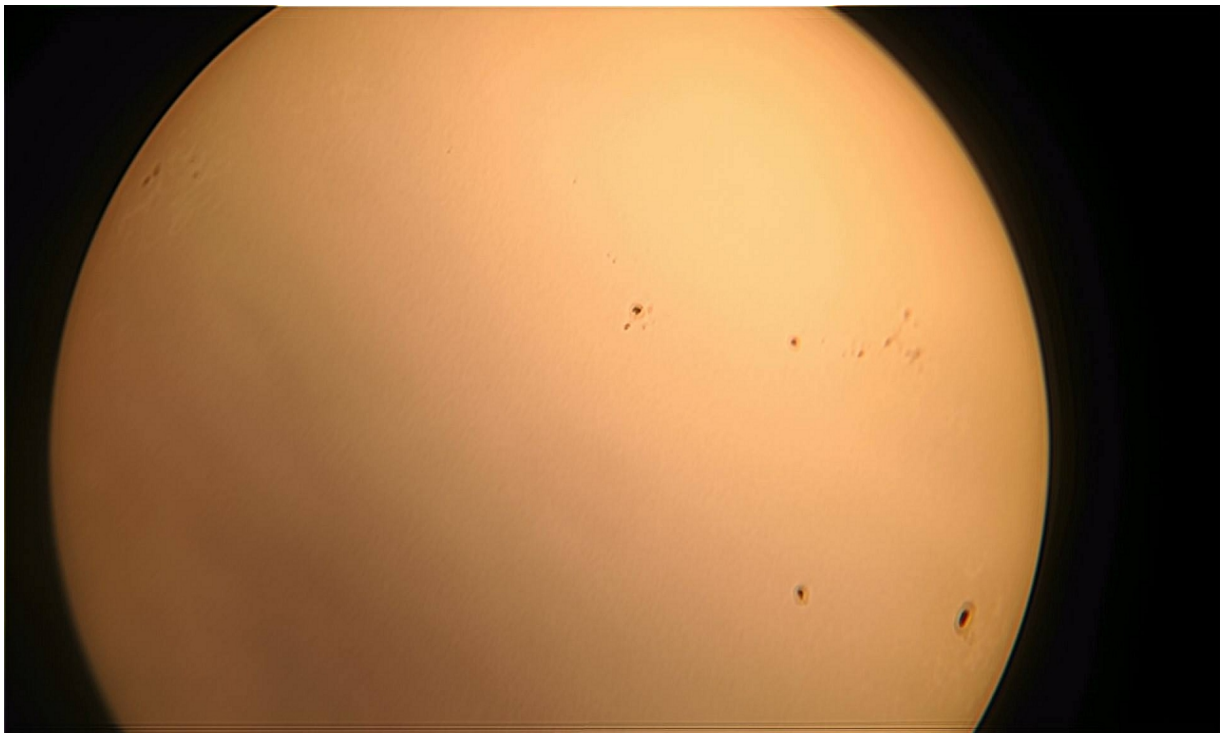


December 2013

Next meeting Dec 9th 7:00PM at the HRPO

Dark Site Observing Dates:

Primary on Dec. 2nd | Secondary on Dec. 9th



Smartphone photography – 10" SkyQuest + iPhone on adapter



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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Hi Everyone,

Well, this is it. My final President's Message for the newsletter. It has been my pleasure and an honor to serve for the past 2 years and I'm looking forward to offering my support to the incoming officers for 2014. These positions are crucial to the continued forward progression of our club and along with my gratitude and congratulations to our outgoing officers, Merrill Hess-VP, Charles Edwards-Secretary, Rory Bentley-Co-Secretary and Geoff Michelli-Treasurer; I offer thanks in advance to those that are stepping up to offer their services for the upcoming year. I think it's important to recognize the fact that these positions provide no pay or benefits whatsoever to those that take them. The members that volunteer do so because they love this hobby. They are dedicated to our club and trying to make it the best place to come for those in our community that have a similar interest in amateur astronomy.

Our final meeting of 2013 will be Monday, December 9th at 7PM at the Highland Road Park Observatory. As always, this will be a pot luck feast occasion. We'll have food, music and fun! This is a great meeting for just hanging out with nice people that have a common interest in astronomy so if you've never been out to a meeting, this is good one to come introduce yourself. BRAS will provide the plates, cups, utensils, napkins, beverages and some sort of entree-type dish such as jambalaya. We usually have a good number of people and lots of great food.

We are also selling tickets for our Big Raffle. There are 3 prizes available: Orion 8" Skyquest XT Dobsonian Telescope (it's used, but in great working shape), Folding Collapsible Table (great for keeping eyepiece cases and books while observing) and Folding Observing Chair (perfect for meteor hunting or binocular viewing.) All items were generously donated to the club and the ticket sales are an excellent fund raiser for future projects. (Past purchases have included the large LCD TV mounted at the HRPO, the Sky Quality Meter, Smartphone Eyepiece Adapter and various items purchased to donate to the HRPO for events such as Astronomy Day and Spooky Spectrum.)

Tickets for the raffle are \$5 each or you can get 6 for \$25. Once we have taken in enough money, we will conduct the drawing. Since we put the ticket purchaser's name and phone number on each ticket bought, you need not be present to win. Come on out to the December meeting and buy some tickets and you could go home with a nice 8" scope!

Finally, please make sure you read the brief announcement about our newest Dark Sky Campaign, 20/20 Vision. This is an exciting and challenging project that can really make a difference in our community. Don't be fooled by the 3 year timeline. In order for this campaign to be successful, we need action now. Your thoughts and input are greatly appreciated so let us know what you are thinking and if you can help!

Thanks again for the honor of serving as your club President and I hope to see you all at our meeting in December.

Clear Skies,
Ben Toman
BRAS President



NOTES FROM THE VICE PRESIDENT

With Autumn and Winter come cold fronts and clear skies behind them. These are some of our best nights for observing deep sky objects here in Louisiana. It is also a time for celebration, whether you are Christian, Jew, Pagan, or Frisbeetarian (the belief that when you die, your soul flies up and gets stuck on the roof of your house.). OK, maybe not that one, but you know what I mean.

Maybe by the time you get this newsletter we will know whether ISON will be a “Christmas Star” this year. By the way, recently discovered Comet Lovejoy is putting on a good show between Ursa Major and Leo Minor. Right now it is visible almost all night. Use binoculars.

Please be sure to attend our next BRAS meeting when we will have our annual Christmas dinner. No real program. It is a time for good food and just socializing with our fellow members. We can even talk astronomy. We may have a guest who will speak for a few moments on his activities.

Kerry Kennedy of Lafayette, said he would try to attend and give a brief overview of his efforts to educate people on safe and effective lighting. He calls his efforts to save the night sky, Acadiana Dark Skies. Look it up on Facebook and “Like” it to support his efforts and receive updates on his activities and other news in reducing light pollution. It works. I was surprised to see one of my neighbors frequently “Likes” his posting and I’ve never spoken to her about light pollution.

Also, it is time for annual BRAS officer elections. As you know from the past, it doesn’t take long. Ben and I are term limited, so we will have to elect new officers for President and Vice-President. Pick your nominations or you can nominate yourself.

It has been an honor to serve these last two years as Vice-President. It is our most challenging position because the VP is responsible for lining up BRAS meeting activities. After a while, it is challenging to come up with something new and engaging that will interest most or all members. Thank you for the support you have given me. Be assured that whoever follows me in that position will not be alone in their efforts. I have a couple of speakers in reserve that I can pass on to them. I know others have ideas as well. In fact, bring your ideas to the next meeting and we can discuss them.

Once again, bring yourself and your appetite, and let’s send this year out in style.

Merill Hess
BRAS Vice President



MESSAGE FROM THE **HRPO**

FRIDAY NIGHT LECTURE SERIES

all start at 7:30pm

6 December: "Looking for Meteors"

13 December: "The Star of Bethlehem"

20 December: "Apollo 8—Around the Moon and Back"

CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS: ON SITE

*Saturday, 7 December from 3:45pm to 5:45pm. *Two volunteers.* **Planet Time: Venus.** Telescope operation. Moderate.

*Friday, 13 December from 8:30pm to 1:30am. *Three volunteers each for three-hour shifts.* **Geminid Meteor Shower.** Small telescope; floating; enforcement of rules. Easy; training provided.

*Saturday, 21 December from 6pm to 10pm. *Two volunteers in addition to regular BRAS compliment.* **Evening Sky Viewing Plus.** Marshmallow roast, demo and clock tables; small telescope; setup and takedown. Easy; training provided.

*Saturday, 4 January from 3pm to 7pm. *Eight or nine volunteers.* **Learn Your Telescope.** Instructing registrants in the use of their personal telescopes. Previous telescope knowledge required.

*Saturday, 11 January from 3pm to 7pm. *Eight or nine volunteers.* **Learn Your Binocular.** Instructing registrants in the use of their personal binoculars. Previous binocular knowledge required.

20OGS OPERATING EQUIPMENT

Professor Schaefer and his class will be exclusive users of the 20OGS until the first week in December. Professor Guzik will then continue updating the computer system as parts get to Baton Rouge. In the meantime, a hopeful return-to-public-viewing date will occur sometime between mid-December and mid-January.



2013 SPOOKY SPECTRUM

Saturday saw the highest-attended Spooky Spectrum in the seven-year history of the event, with **419 patrons** on site. This is spectacular, as neither LSU telescope was running and there was a home LSU game. This success may be connected with the earlier start time of 6pm.

Thanks to Murali Chakravarthi, Briar Richard and Rory Bentley for telescope operations. Thanks to Emily Luikart and Roslyn Readinger for staffing the welcome table. Thanks to Amy Brouillette for the campfire stories and staffing the redemption table. Thanks to Tom Northrop for the Scope-on-a-Rope operation and the tours of the upstairs dome. Thanks to Stephanie Northrop for staffing the front desk. Thanks to Wally Pursell and Craig Brenden for general expertise. Thanks to Justin Northrop, Kristin Troxclair and Clint Gayle for staffing the demo table and running campfire. Thanks to Rebekah Northrop and Matthew Dreher for all-around assistance and “gopher”ing. Thanks to Ben Toman for cleanup help. Thanks to Ashley Toman for decorations.

Thanks to Susannah Magnuson, Jeannette Thompson and their colleagues from The Dunham School for putting together and running the chemistry demonstrations. Thanks to George Stanley at LSU Chemistry for the donation of chemicals. Thanks to John Snow’s Taco de Paco for the great food. Thanks to Fred Barnett for getting the word out on HRPO’s site, and to Erin O’Neill for putting the information on BREC’s site. Thanks to Brandon Smith, as always, for support from HQ.

The 2014 Spooky Spectrum event will be on **Saturday, 25 October**.



INTRODUCING THE 20/20 VISION CAMPAIGN

BRAS is hereby announcing a campaign to darken the skies over HRPO. The club will use a Sky Quality Meter—a device for obtaining a numerical value for the artificial brightness over an area—to take measurements. HRPO's SQM reading right now is 18.7, and BRAS wants to improve it to 20.0 by HRPO's twentieth anniversary in 2017.

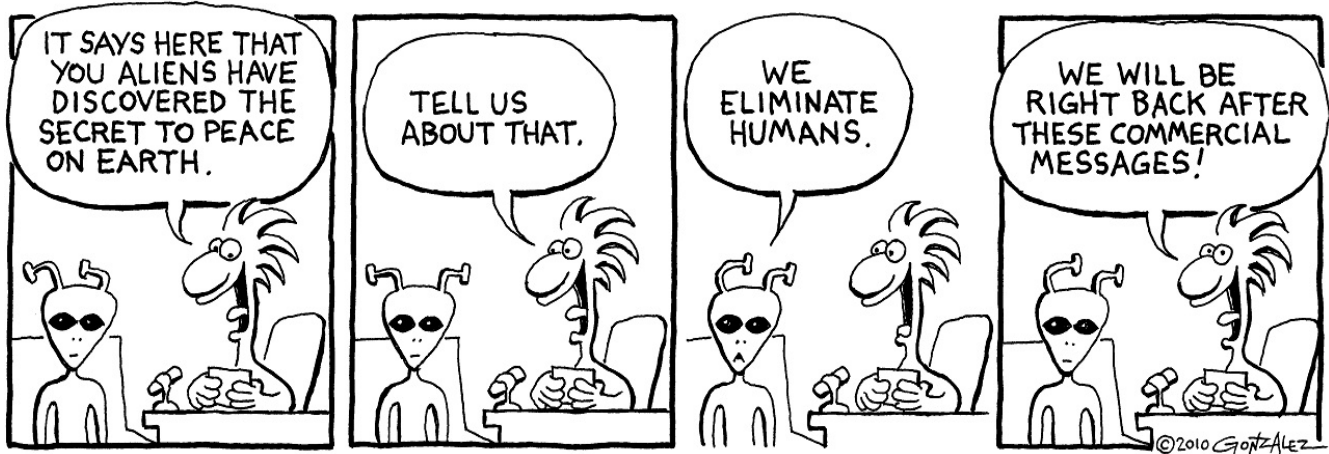
This would benefit BRAS members who use the Observatory to obtain observing certificates and to create beautiful astrophotography. This would benefit those physics majors who need to use the HRPO scopes to obtain their bachelor's degrees. This would benefit HRPO patrons who visit to see amazing views of deep-sky objects such as the Orion Nebula and the Andromeda Galaxy. Finally, 20.0 is the SQM threshold to qualify a public location for the bronze-level Dark Sky Reserve designation from the International Dark Sky Association.

The first public announcements of the 20/20 Vision Campaign were in the BRAS Forum on 22 November and the *Planetary Post* on 25 November. The Forum thread will be updated on a weekly basis.

Join us in the effort to return a dark sky to Baton Rouge! More details to come.

Oddbox

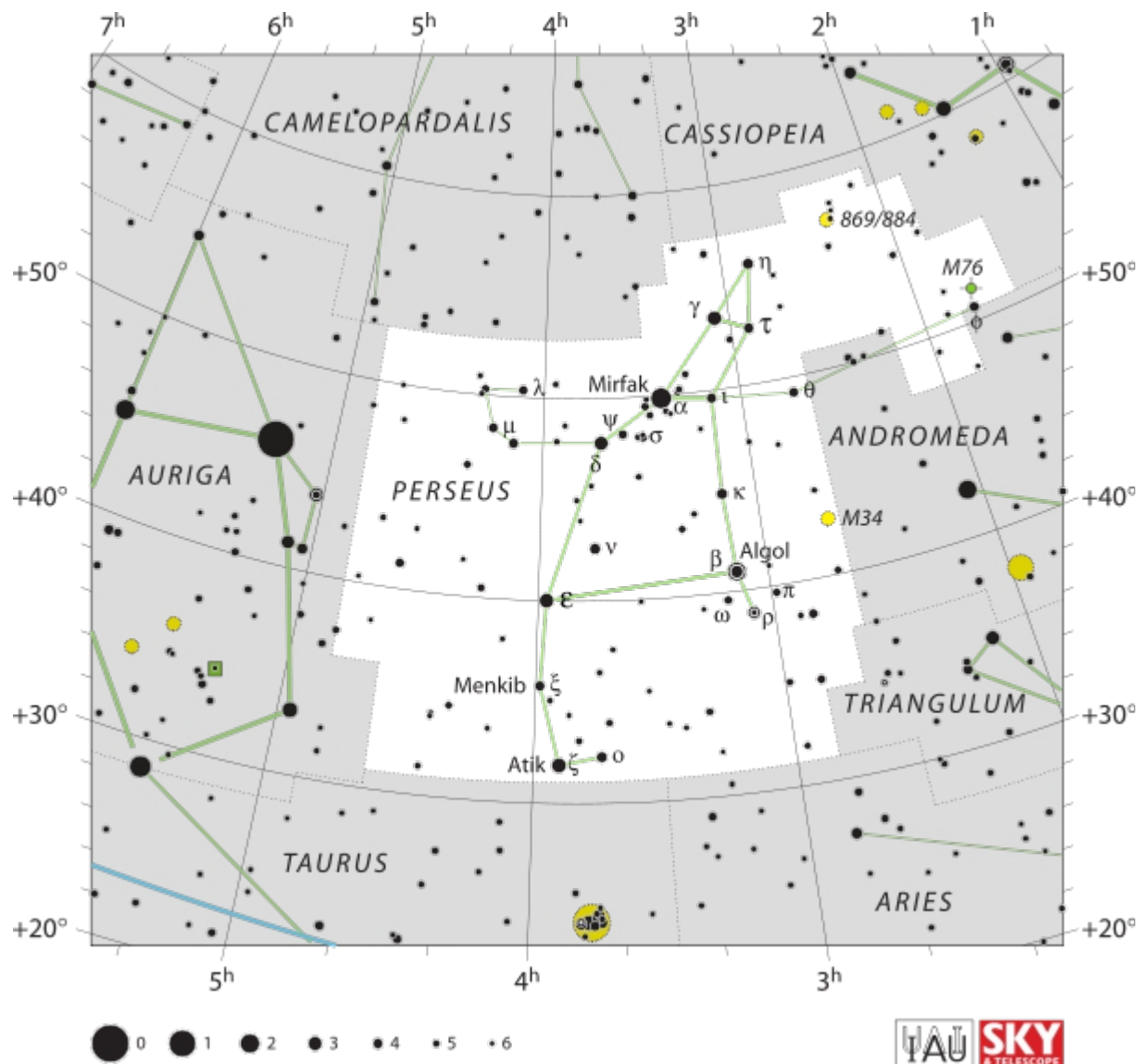
by Bob Gonzalez



MONTHLY OBSERVING NOTES

Constellation of the Month: Perseus

Position: RA 3 hr, Dec. + 45 deg



Perseus

The Greek constellation of Perseus may have been derived from the Babylonian constellation known as the Old Man (MUL.SHU.GI), which was associated with East in the MUL.APIN—an astronomical compilation dating to around 1000 BCE. In Greek mythology, Perseus was the son of Danae, who was sent by King Polydectes to bring the head of Medusa the Gorgon—who was so ugly that every living creature who gazed upon her turned to stone—as a wedding gift. Perseus was able to slay Medusa in her sleep, and Pegasus and Chrysaor appeared from her body. Perseus then continued to the land of King Cepheus, whose daughter Andromeda was going to be sacrificed to Cetus the sea monster. Perseus rescued the princess Andromeda from Cetus by turning it to stone with Medusa's head. Perseus then turned Polydectes and his followers to stone and appointed Dictys the fisherman king. Perseus and Andromeda wed and had six children. In the sky, Perseus lies near the constellations Andromeda, Cepheus, Cassiopeia (Andromeda's mother), Cetus, and Pegasus.

Perseus is bordered by Aries and Taurus to the south, Auriga to the east, Camelopardalis and Cassiopea to the north, and Andromeda and Triangulum to the west. Covering 615 square degrees, it ranks twenty-fourth of the 88 constellations in size. It appears prominently in the northern sky during the Northern Hemisphere's spring. 19 stars form the constellation's main asterism. The constellation's boundaries, as set by Eugène Delporte in 1930, are defined by a 26-sided polygon. In the equatorial coordinate system, the right ascension coordinates of these borders lie between 01h 29.1m and 04h 51.2m, while the declination coordinates are between 30.92° and 59.11°. The International Astronomical Union (IAU) adopted the three-letter abbreviation "Per" for the constellation in 1922.

Source: Wikipedia



Abbreviation	Per
Genitive	Persei
Pronunciation	/'pɜrsi:əs/ or /'pɜrsju:s/ ; genitive /'pɜrsi:.aɪ/
Symbolism	Perseus
Right ascension	3 h
Declination	+45°
Quadrant	NQ1
Area	615 sq. deg. (24th)
Main stars	19
Bayer/Flamsteed stars	65
Stars with planets	7
Stars brighter than 3.00m	5
Stars within 10.00 pc (32.62 ly)	0
Brightest star	α Per(Mirfak) (1.79m)
Nearest star	GJ 3182 (33.62ly, 10.31pc)
Messier objects	2
Meteor showers	Perseids September Perseids
	Aries
	Taurus
	Auriga
Bordering constellations	Camelopardalis Cassiopeia Andromeda Triangulum
Visible at latitudes between +90° and −35°. Best visible at 21:00 (9 p.m.) during the month of December.	

Source: Wikipedia



OUTREACH CHAIRPERSON'S NOTES

Outreach Report:

The second installment of Sidewalk Astronomy at Jones Creek Library was more successful than the first in some ways, and less successful in others. First, the new position in the parking lot was far superior to October's position, but the freezing (literally) temperatures kept lots of people warm and cozy inside the library. We will stick with the position, and hope for slightly warmer temperatures in future events.

Speaking of future events, during the month of December, the Baton Rouge Arts Market is held every Saturday morning leading up to christmas from 8 to noon. Last year, we had solar telescopes at each of these events, and I would like to do that again this year. The events typically have several hundred people at them, and they are very engaged and interested in the telescopes. I've done the events alone many times, and with when I have help, it is so much better! Between the Sidewalk event for December and the three Arts Market events, anyone could very nearly finish the basic level of the Astronomical League Outreach Club (only a single 2-hour event short). As always, I can bring a spare telescope, or you can just help out by talking to patrons who are in line. I will be unveiling my new (to me) Lunt hydrogen-alpha solar scope at the December 7th event!

-Trevor McGuire



MINUTES FROM OCTOBER MEETING

- Members participated in a web cast seminar or webinar. Tom Field gave a talk on spectroscopy and how amateur astronomers can participate. Afterwards, he took members' questions.
 - Trevor reported progress in setting up the Goodwood library telescope program.
 - The prospective purchase of a new computer by the club was discussed.
 - Members discussed the recent Deep South Regional Stargaze.
 - Chris said the observatory telescope may be working again by mid-December.
 - Merrill said he would like to give out surplus equipment as door prizes.
 - Trevor asked for two volunteers for outreach at the Baker library.
 - Ben showed an XT8 Dobsonian telescope to be raffled off at a future date.
 - Nominations for new officers are:
 - Merrill Hess – President
 - Murali – Vice President
 - Rosalynn – Secretary
 - Trey Anding – Treasurer
- John Nagle is observing chairman
Nominations are still open.
- Chris said the observatory will offer a telescope class on January 4th, 2014, and two binocular classes on January 11th and February 8th.
 - A raffle was held, and the meeting adjourned.



BATON ROUGE ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION



You can pay your membership dues at our next meeting or send your dues to:

Baton Rouge Astronomical Society, Inc.
c/o Geoff Michelli, Treasurer
10457 Barry Dr.
Baton Rouge, LA 70809

If you have questions about dues or receiving your newsletter, call Geoff at (225) 573-4313 or send an email to geoff@michelli.net

For new members joining, the amount is pro-rated for the initial year based on which quarter the membership begins. The rates are reflected below. 4th quarter rates also cover the following year.

Jan - Mar	\$20.00	\$ _____
Apr - Jun	\$15.00	
Jul - Sep	\$10.00	
Oct - Dec	\$25.00	

Each Additional Family Member	\$5.00	\$ _____
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Student Membership (through age 17)	\$10.00	\$ _____
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Donation* toward club building fund or (specify) _____		\$ _____
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TOTAL ENCLOSED		\$ _____
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Membership renewals are \$20, and are due in January of each year.

Date _____

Name _____

Address _____

Phone Home _____

Cell _____

Work _____

Email _____

The Society's newsletter Night Visions is sent via email.

If you prefer to receive the newsletter via mail, please check this box ☐

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

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 Park 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

