

Newsletter of the Baton Rouge Astronomical Society

www.brastro.org

November 2011

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NOTES FROM THE VICE PRESIDENT

Hey Everyone,

I can't believe we only have 2 meetings left for 2011. Our last meeting was well attended and it was great to meet and hear from Dr. Maor. With all of the great science going on at both LSU and ULL that we've been able to hear about, we should all feel proud to have these universities right here in our own state. (Not to mention just about in our own backyards!)

Our next meeting will be **Monday, November 14th at the HRPO at 7PM**. We have a lot on the table, too. We'll get a report on the Deep South Regional Stargaze which occurred over Halloween weekend, we have some more AL certificates to give out as well as one from the AAVSO (and we'll be hearing more about one of those in particular), and most importantly, we'll be fielding nominations for the officer positions for 2012. (You really want to make this meeting because I've been assured that in the absence of volunteers, it's not unheard of for absent members to find they've been newly nominated for officer positions! But seriously, these positions are important for keeping our club a vital, active entity so please think of anyone you feel should be nominated for a position, or let someone know if you would like to be nominated yourself.)

I hope to see you all out there for this month's meeting. As I said, even though there is no guest lecturer, we have more than enough stuff to make a fun meeting. Also, it would be really nice to have some of the scopes out at the HRPO taken out for a bit of use. (Especially the ones that rarely get used.) If the weather looks like it will cooperate, feel free to bring out some eyepieces and we can do a little observing after the main meeting stuff is done. (We have plenty of eyepieces, too, if you don't want to bring yours.) For some of you newer members that may not have much experience with telescopes, this would be a great time to come out and get some hands on learning from more experienced members. The Moon won't be up until later that night, but Jupiter will be blazing away.

Again, hope to see you out there. As always, this is NOT a secret society nor is it a secret meeting. Please feel free to tell a friend, neighbor or co-worker about us and this meeting. Meetings are always free and open to the public.

Thanks and see you soon,
Ben Toman
BRAS VP

OUTREACH

Trevor McGuire has worked out a plan of outreach with CC's Coffee on Jefferson Highway and Best Buy on Millerville Road where we can have telescopes setup at these two locations. We may need some volunteers to operate a scope or talk to the public at these various times so if you are available and interested in having a good time, talk to Trevor or let me know and we will try to fit you in.

The event on October 4th had a good turnout. 35 people got to look at the moon, Jupiter and Alberio. The November event was an even bigger success with 85 people coming by to look through the scopes that were set up. Make sure and let all your friends, family and co-workers know to come out to the Jefferson Highway CC's Coffee on December 6th to join in the fun!

SIDEWALK ASTRONOMY

Come see the
wonders of the
night sky for free!



All events start at sundown

October 4th	CC's on Jefferson
November 1st	Millerville Best Buy
December 6th	CC's on Jefferson
January 31st	Millerville Best Buy
February 28th	CC's on Jefferson
March 27th	Millerville Best Buy

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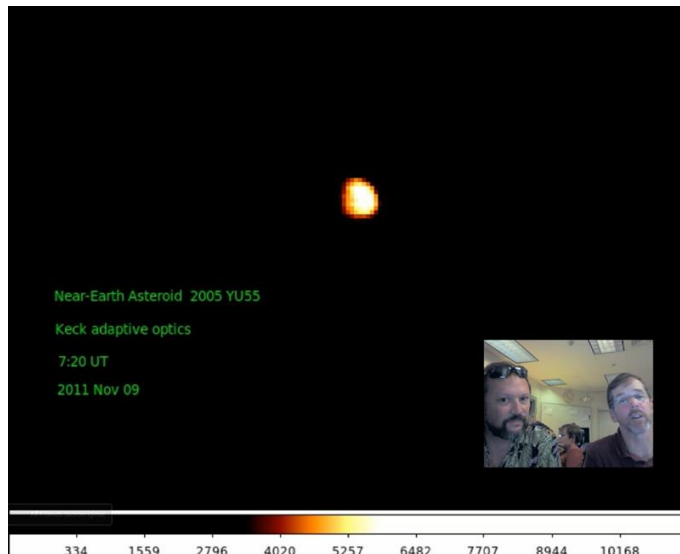
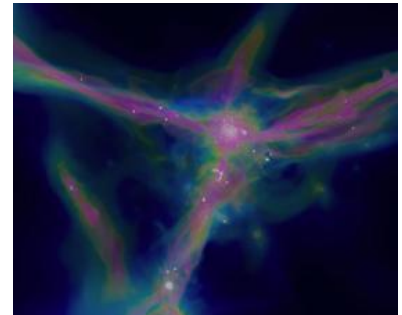
LATEST NEWS



On November 8th, 2011, Russia launched a rocket from Kazakhstan with a 15 ton spacecraft that was destined for the Martian moon Phobos. The mission was called Phobos-Grunt (grunt means “soil” in Russian). Once the rocket got into low-earth orbit, though, a planned engine firing that would have pushed it towards Mars never occurred. Now the probe is stuck in a degrading orbit around our planet. Since the rocket didn’t fire, it still has all of its fuel: unsymmetrical dimethylhydrazine and nitrogen tetroxide (fuel and oxidizer for those of us who aren’t chemists). Russia says that the probe is carrying roughly 10 tons of that stuff.

Luckily, most of the fuel will most likely vaporize as it reenters our atmosphere, but they’re saying that it still may have some of the highly toxic fuel onboard when whatever is left of the probe hits the ground. The Russian media is calling this “the most toxic falling satellite ever.” It is expected to fall back to earth sometime early next month.

Peering out to some points in space around 12 billion light-years away, scientists have found clouds of gas that contain only hydrogen and deuterium. These are the elements that were formed minutes after the big bang. This is the first time that anyone has found gas clouds with only these two elements, leading to the belief that these are clouds of gas that have never taken part in any star formation, and that they are pristine clouds left over from the big bang.



This image was taken by the [Keck Observatory](#) in Hawaii. It was the first image taken of the Asteroid 2005 YU55. Last week, on November 8th, the asteroid passed within 202,000 miles of the Earth. The 10-meter adaptive optic telescope took this image in infrared with a one second exposure



NOTES FROM THE 2011 DEEP SOUTH REGIONAL STAR GAZE

First looking forward - it's official, the dates for next year's DSRSG are Wednesday, 11/7 to Sunday, 11/11. (We begin a day after national elections.)

Looking back at this year -

We had a registration of 93 which is right in line with what our numbers were for the past two years give or take just a few registrants. This is a bit low compared to previous years at Percy Quin State Park when our numbers would average about 140, but considering that those numbers were inflated by "day registrants" when the fees were a bit lower, the change in attendance is not unusual. Additionally there were a fair number of people this year that could not make it due to schedule/work conflicts and competition from other star parties.

Our weather this year worked out very well. We were basically clear all night on both Wednesday and Saturday, and we were clear for the first half of the night on Thursday and the second half of the night on Friday. Essentially we had the equivalent of 3 totally clear nights. The rain before the DSRSG plus the rain we got after midnight on Thursday night/Friday morning was enough to keep the dust down but not so much that either the observing field or the roads got too sloppy.

Readings with my Sky Quality Meter indicated that we had 6.2 magnitude skies on the first 3 nights when we had observable conditions and 6.3 magnitude skies on Saturday. While we have had better (6.5 magnitude skies), what we had was good. We would need to travel about 750 miles west for appreciably better skies.

I think too that no one can argue the fact that the meals and accommodations at the Feliciana Retreat Center are just about the best that you can get. It is a very nice place to hold an event like ours.

Major prizes won this year -

Set of three 100 degree Explore Scientific eyepieces (9 mm, 14 mm and 20 mm) won by Mike Danielson (Pontchartrain Astronomy Society)

Celestron CG-4 mount with motor drive and polar scope and bundled with an Orion ST80 telescope (complete) won by Hunter Trimble of San Antonio, TX

\$400 cash - won by Conner Walls (15 y.o.) (Baton Rouge Astronomical Society)

Numerous other prizes were won by our attendees.

Looking back ahead now to 2012 - there are some advantages to the later dates - since it is approximately 2 weeks later plus we are holding the DSRSG after we revert back to "Standard Time", we will get the winter objects up two hours earlier. This will make the Orion and Monoceros region much more favorably placed for those of us that basically call it a night by midnight. We will lose some summer objects (Sagittarius) but Cygnus will still be high in the sky during the early evening.

Regarding attendance, we will make an extra effort to promote the 2012 DSRSG well as it will be our 30th DSRSG. I anticipate that attendance will be 20 to 30% higher. The fact that we will not be in date conflict with other star parties will help us achieve this goal.

With more people this will mean that we will need all the resources of the Feliciana Retreat Center. As I said at breakfast on Sunday we need to try to maximize utilization of the Lodge in that we would rather have the rooms occupied for multiple nights as opposed to just one person in a Lodge room for just one night. The cottages can better accommodate 1 person for just one night, to this end the most equitable way to try to maximize multi-night use of the Lodge will be to do the following:

We will open registration which includes Lodge registration on a certain week (yet to be determined), but this first week of registration is for 2 or more in a Lodge room for 3 or 4 nights. After the first week, the 2nd week is opened to this same group plus those that want a Lodge room as a single for 3 or 4 nights or a double for 2 or more nights. The 3rd week is for all that want a lodge room regardless of number per room or number of nights. Lodge rooms may very well still be available after 3 weeks, but we just want to encourage multiple night use by two or more per room. More details on this as we get closer to the 2012 DSRSG.

Programs - programs can be a mixed bag. Due to relatively low attendance on Wednesday and Thursday, our programs do not begin until Friday. Even then, program attendance typically runs about 15 to 20 people or about 1/5 of total registration. We would like to see greater attendance at the programs so maybe we will move door prize drawings to the meeting room? Just a thought, we will keep you posted.

We will have a special guest speaker next year and we hope to have at least one vendor in attendance.

-Barry Simon

TREASURER'S REPORT

There is a new schedule for membership dues. Starting in 2012, all memberships will be for the calendar year and will be renewed at the end of the year.

The following memberships are expiring before the end of 2011, and should be renewed by paying \$5.00 for the remaining quarter of 2011, as well as the dues for 2012. This is a total of \$25.00. Once this is paid, your membership will be paid up through the end of 2012.

Member	Expiration Date
Art Barrios	November 2011
Muralidar Chakravarthi	November 2011
Karen Cashio	July 2011
Tyler Guidry	October 2011
Hansel Harlan	November 2011
Mark Hughes	July 2011
Prasad Kalghati	September 2011
F.B. & Susan Leake	October 2011
Joseph Livingston	September 2011
Corey Luth	October 2011
Trevor McGuire	September 2011
John Murphy	November 2011
Geoff Michelli	November 2011
Michael Russo	August 2011
Brad & Martha Schaefer	November 2011
Mohammed Shafi Syed	September 2011
Luke Sheldon	November 2011
Dave Thomas	October 2011
Stephen Turri	November 2011
Ben & Ashley Toman	September 2011
Connor Walls	November 2011

-Bob Sinitiere
BRAS Treasurer

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 Bob Sinitiere, Treasurer
14558 Cottinham Ct.
Baton Rouge, LA 70817-3543

If you have questions about dues or receiving your newsletter, call Bob at (225) 755-2079 or send an email to bobstar9@bellsouth.net

Regular Membership	\$20.00	\$ _____
Each Additional Family Member	\$5.00	\$ _____
Student Membership (through age 17)	\$10.00	\$ _____
Donation* toward club building fund or (specify)		\$ _____

TOTAL ENCLOSED		\$ _____

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