

Longmont Astronomical Society

January 2005



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Image on the front page: This is a RGB image with 3 minute exposures through each filter. Brian Kimball

The Home Planet Stellar Views

Hello Dark Sky Marines, I first want to thank the old Officers of LAS , Bob Spohn as President, will be hard act to follow, but I consider it a honor and privilege to serve as next President of LAS Club. Bob remains on as ALCOR rep, Bill Possel was past representative. Dick Mallot is now Vice president, Melinda Diehl who was VP moved to Texas and says hello to all. Monica Martens stepped down from Treasurer, and Julie Carmen will be our new Treasurer now. Philippe Bridenne is doing a wonderful job as newsletter editor and we are lucky to keep him on to continue to do his big part in the LAS club. Newsletter editor takes the most time to get together every month. Thanks Philippe! Ray Warren was also re-elected as Fund Raising and sales of club merchandise. Steve Albers was re-elected web Master and Mark Propp Secretary. Mark will take care of the web server also. Mike Hotka is official JPL ambassador and Master observer. He will be helping members get their Messier certificates and others, Bob Spohn, and I will also help get these going for club members who are interested. Michelle Lavers will continue to help with Tri town star parties. Leigh Pierson is still equipment manager of club telescopes. Both have been doing an excellent job as telescope builders. They both deserve a lot of credit for all their many hours spent freely to help others have scopes too. Brian Simpson who also has been doing the Star maps for years now will continue to help club.

As President, I can make new positions in our club. As we have a bunch of books that are not currently being accessible by our members, I will appoint Monica Martens as our (much needed) new Librarian position. New position, Astro Imager will be Brian Kimball. Brian has dazzled us with his great shots, I probably have sent you some in past e mails. As you can see it takes a lot of people to keep it all going and others I did not mention, such as Tim Brown, Terry Frazier, Bill Travis, Bob Noble, Karen Mendenhall, Kirk Schneider, and so many more who have helped and of course all the spouses who put up with us. Thanks to all who make up the LAS club, we are known through out Colorado and Wyoming as the die-hards, dark sky marines, who do the extreme.

Deep Impact launch was a success! Jim Crane was overlooking the launch for Ball Aerospace from Florida. Maybe we can get Jim to do a talk on it and show us some pictures.

Comet Machholz has been the views of the month. I hope all got to see it as it buzzed by M45, Pleiades on Friday the 7th. It is still visible and worth checking out. Astro imager Brian Kimball took pretty nice shot of Comet and M45. (front page)

Saturn is always a favorite view, along with so many more.

Snowy at Pawnee so no report for new moon adventures but I will keep you posted on new star parties.

Sterling is coming up soon, will be in touch with Bob Loomis Park Ranger there. Date has not been set yet.

Michelle Lavers is working on the Mayor of Frederick to get star parties for Tri town moved to golf course area. She will give report and keep us posted.

Flanders viewing will continue and maybe get some people to do Messier certificates.

Our banquet was a huge success. After last year with David Levy it was tuff act to follow. Clark Chapman, from South West research gave talk on asteroid hitting Earth. Very interesting indeed!

Ray Warren sold about 300 dollars worth of stuff at the banquet and gave away 50 door prizes.

The years go by, LAS is 18 years old, and going strong. Our old Friend Dr Bob Stencel, DU, gave short talk and also invited us to Mt Evans observatory for 4th of July to observe the Deep Impact of Temple 1 comet rendez-vous. I am not sure if it will be visible from Colorado at night here, but if so at 14,250 ft, the highest telescope in the world, it would be another extreme astronomy adventure for those who dare. I will start a list and keep all posted on trip there. I will be going, God willing. Check out our LAS web site and click on Mt Evans photos when Mark Vincent and I spent the night with Dr Bob at observatory. It's a twin 28" mirror telescope. You may also bring your own scopes but weather even in summer is extremely cold, below freezing probably, just dress like you would go to Pawnee in winter time.

The cosmic connections keep it all spinning and I hope to make this another great year for LAS.

Thanks again to all who have served the club so well.. See you in the dark. Bye, Gary, (just call me Mr. President)

PS. LAS member, Pete Petersen from Niwot had a stroke and I would like everybody to sign a get well card, he will be in our prayers for a complete recovery.

Calendar

Saturday, February 5th – New Moon party – Cactus Flats

Saturday, February, 12th – 1st Quarter party – Flanders Park

Thursday, February 17th – Regular meeting – FRCC – 7:00

December meeting notes

LAS meeting notes 12/16/2004

President Bob Spohn chaired the meeting.

Webmaster report from Steve Albers: Latest images from Cassini, including first close-up views of moon Dionne.

Publicity and Fundraising report from Ray Warren. New books for drawing. New sticker designs. Lots of goodies. Sales during break. We have order for 60 planispheres, to accompany packets for students. New prizes for Astronomy Day, 6 Skywatching books by David Levy, along with video from banquet last year. Want to create 100 planispheres for Astronomy Day, looking for people to help create planispheres. Clearance special on holiday planispheres.

Telescope report by Don Bunker. Last two weekends, good sessions building scopes. One scope coming together, asking club to approve obtaining 10 more focusers. We are off and running, looking forward to good winter of fun making scopes.

Old business:

Sign up for the banquet. Banquet is a good time, good food and company. Wayside Inn in Berthoud.

The suggestion box for short topics will be starting next month. First short topic will be on celestial coordinates, much requested.

Tim Brown is in the Reflector for exoplanet discoveries.

Bob received email, looking for families for reality television show. Casting division for Fox "Trading Spouses." They are looking for family of astronomers. There must be two parents and children over 6 living at home. If you want to be on TV, see Bob. Bob will email the info to the list. This is legitimate, Bob verified.

Club officer election

Bob passing out ballots with last month's nominees. Paid members are eligible to vote, non-members please abstain. Reopen nominations for President, Gary Garzone is current nominee. Dick Mallot nominated tonight.

Vice President, we have Michelle Lavers, Dick Mallot, Gary Garzone, and Julie Carmen. Gary Garzone removed name from Vice President. No additional VP nominations.

Secretary, Mark Propp nominated last month. No additional nominations.

Treasurer, John Pedersen and Julie Carmen. No additional nominations.

AL correspondent: Bob Spohn nominated last month. Michael Hotka nominated tonight.
Newsletter Editor: Philippe Bridenne nominated last month. No additional nominations.
Publicity/Fundraising Chair: Ray Warren and Mike Hotka nominated last month.

During balloting, Bob Spohn acknowledged and thanked all of the officers for their work in 2004.

Saturday, public star party at Flanders Park. Hope everyone can make it, weather report looks pretty good.

Any observations? Steve Albers, Jupiter occultation by the moon. Pretty rare, last time in 1980s. Saw one last week, Tuesday morning at 3 am. Had Binoculars, saw Jupiter come from behind the moon. Saw Ganymede pop out first. Also saw meteor. Might be another twenty years until next visible one.

Gary reported on Geminids observations.

Terry Frazier reported that Gary Garzone has been found to have an illegal alien nanny, and mob ties. Hehe.

Fiske report from Julie Carmen.

Opportunity to buy goodies from Fiske store. Messier objects poster, observer handbook and logbook, T-shirts, etc. In the fall we had over 100 students enroll as majors in APS department, most ever. Astronomy is on the up. Article, more and more amateurs working with professional astronomers on research projects, very exciting. Astronomy day coming up. Spring schedule coming soon. Thanks for volunteers helping with observing. Looking for more volunteers, talk to Julie.

Election results in, hanging chads, multiple recounts:

Gary Garzone, President.
Mark Propp, Secretary.
Ray Publicity.
Dick Mallot, VP (run
Julie Carmen, Fiske rep.
Bob Spohn, AL correspondent.
Philippe Bridenne, newsletter editor.

BREAK ---

Professor Nick Schneider, husband of Erika Ellington (previous speaker at LAS meeting at Fiske).
Welcome to Dr. Schneider!

Thanks for inviting me, and thanks for not electing me to any office.

I am a faculty member at UC, undergraduate and graduate observational astronomy. Welcome anyone to come sit in, or take class for credit. We are not volunteering to change spouses for the TV show. I am coauthor of introductory textbook. I am pleased to donate the book to LAS. I wrote the section on Planets. Book is normally \$90.

I am a 3d nut, if you haven't seen the 3D mars images, I recommend. Perhaps I will show those for you another time.

I am a Lyons resident, along with a number of your members. Thanks to members who brought scopes to Lyons Elementary, and we look forward to doing it again on tax day this year.

Topic: Jupiter's Magnetosphere: A volcano-powered Nebula

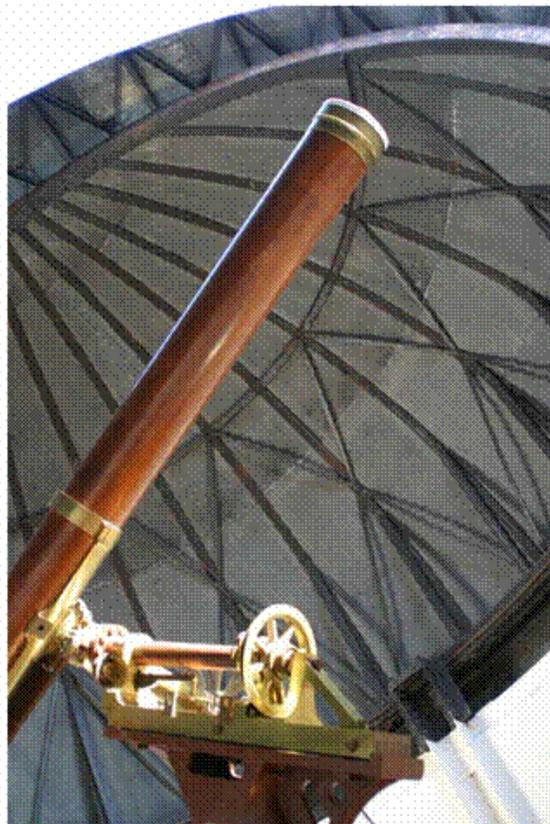
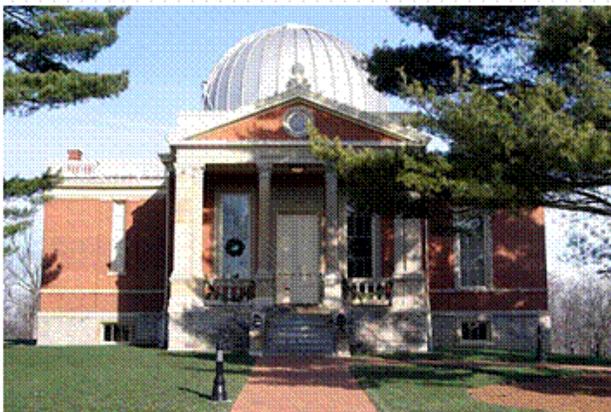
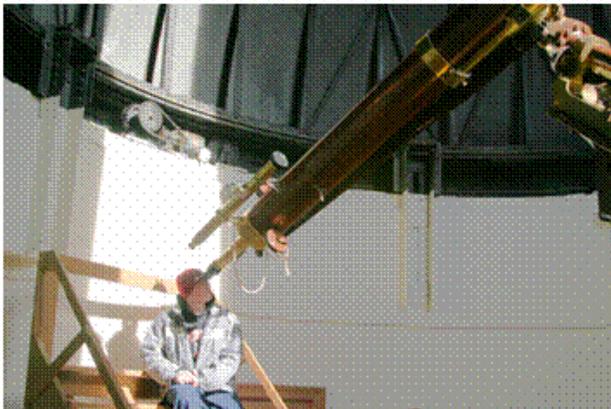
1. Zooming in on Io
2. Why is Io so amazing?
3. What does Io do to Jupiter?
4. What's next -- JMEX?

Fascinating presentation and video! Thanks Dr. Schneider

The Cincinnati Observatory by Bill Possel

While on Christmas vacation in Ohio, I had an opportunity to visit the birthplace of American astronomy - the Cincinnati Observatory. When I arrived, the observatory staff was busy giving a lecture and demonstration to a class of local high school students so I just walked around the buildings. The observatory is located on top of a hill in a pretty part of town called Mt Lookout.

The observatory was founded by Ormsby McKnight Mitchel (who later discovered the “Mountains of Mitchel” on Mars) in 1842. He was a professor and generated local interest in astronomy through a series of lectures. The Cincinnati Astronomical Society (CAS) was formed by Mitchel and 300 “shareholders” who helped fund the new telescope. Mitchel had the observatory building constructed and bought a 12 inch objective lens from Fraunhofer of Munich. This lens was later refigured to 11 inches and the refractor’s tube shortened. The telescope was built by Merz & Mahler and is the oldest telescope still in use in the US. In 1904 another observatory building was added and the new owners, the University of Cincinnati, purchased a 16 inch Alvin Clark & Sons. During the 1900’s both telescopes were active in minor planet research and public education. With the high school students, I looked at the sun through the Merz with a solar filter - very nice! The 160+ year old telescope tube is an English Oak veneer and still in excellent condition.



Today the Cincinnati Observatory Center, a partnership between the university, the observatory's neighborhood residents, and the local amateur astronomers, manages the buildings and grounds. These magnificent telescopes are still active today with classes for local K-12 schools and amateurs giving public viewing sessions. Also, the Friends of the Observatory (FOTO) and CAS are working to develop techniques to use the scopes for variable star measurements and extra-solar planet search. The University of Cincinnati continues to fund the observatory but the center hopes to run operations independently within the next five years. After the students left, I talked with the staff for a while. I think the road ahead for the observatory will be challenging especially raising sufficient funds to keep this historic facility running. But Cincinnati is a great city and they value their history. The local amateurs seemed determined and I believe the "O" will continue to inspire future astronomers. If you're ever in the area, make sure you visit it. For my information, their website is <http://www.cincinnatiobservatory.org/>

Cactus Flat report by Bill Possel

Here's a report on January 8th's viewing at Cactus Flats. We had a pretty good night with Bob, Dave and Eric (high school students and members of LAS) with their 10" dobsonian, 5" reflector/eq mount and 70mm refractor. Also, Dan LaFaive showed up later with his Celestron SCT. I had my 20" Starmaster.

The first few hours we struggled to catch objects between clouds or just view to the north which stayed mostly clear. It was pretty cold, around 20 degrees, with a slight breeze - just cold enough to remind you that it's January!

But once the skies cleared, we really had some nice views! Thors' Helmet (NGC 2359) and the Medusa nebula (Abell 21) were impressive along with the usual inspiring objects - Orion nebula, M31, M33, Double Cluster and, of course, Saturn!

Dan had Saturn in his scope at over 400x - what a sight!

Comet Macholz was easily seen naked eye and with the telescope its nucleus looked like a bright star. Dave and Bob even found the Cat's Eye planetary nebula with the 5".



Some objects were ones I'd never seen before. I saw these once the skies really cleared up around 10pm. NGC 896/IC 1795 in Cassiopeia, according to The Night Sky Observer's Guide, are pretty faint. But last night, with an OIII, both were visible as distinct nebulous patches. IC 1795 was larger with several stars imbedded and NGC 896 was a blotch just above it. These were easy to spot with the transparent dark skies.



I also looked at galaxies in Gemini. NGC 2389 is part of a trio of dim, small galaxies but each is distinct. The smallest is an edge-on and the others are elongated/oval. Then I looked at NGC 2274/2275. At 257x I could see two galaxies very close together with several stars in the field. A third really faint galaxy was at the edge of the field. So many galaxies, so little time!

Hope to see everyone next month! Clear skies! Bill Possel

Flanders Star Part report by Dick Mallot

We had about a dozen or so folks show up for the star party at Flanders in December. Had a very nice time out there as it was not too cold.

Some of the highlights: Monica Martens working on her Messier award from the Astronomical League; Roy Martens showing off some excellent views with his very wide angle lens on his 12 inch scope; Julie Carmen and her husband getting some great views of Saturn and working to split some double stars like Castor.



Gary Garzone and Bob Spohn showed up later in the evening as well. Bob started practicing his new role as Astronomical League coordinator and was prodding Monica to find and document more objects. What a taskmaster he can be!!

Gary brought along his digital camera and was working on trying to take comet pictures through Julie Carmen's refractor. The comet was quite visible and a good sight for the night.

We saw some good long meteor trails as well out there that were spectacular. Had some folks from the public come by and visit for awhile as well.



I have included a couple of digital pictures from the night if you are interested. Thanks. Dick

Classified

To sell:

I am trying to sell 10" Sears Craftsman table saw

Price: \$200 sends email to Brian bnimball@msn.com or calls him at 303-678-0525

I am trying to sell a Celestron Ultima 9.25. If the deal were local I would expect closer to \$1,600 or so and accept credit cards.

<http://www.astromart.com/viewad.asp?cid=233874>

Jared Workman

Celestron Firstscope 76 3" Newtonian on an equatorial mount. In "like New" condition. Asking \$100. Please contact Jerry Kunselman (friend of Bill Possel) at 303-772-8786.

JMI NGF-DX1 focuser. Has 2 inch to 1 ½ inch adapter. \$150.00. Contact Mike Hotka at mhotka@yahoo.com
All...

I got a new (800MHz) computer & wish to sell my 3rd computer. It's a 433MHz, 64meg RAM, 9 Gig HD space, 33.6K modem, SoundBlaster sound card, with a 15" monitor, programmable keyboard & MS mouse, with Windows 98 SE for sale. \$180. No problems with it what-so-ever. Will deliver & setup within 30 miles of Ft. Collins. It would be great for a stand-alone application or a kid's computer.

Contact Tom Teters tomt@starmon.com

To buy:

Wanted: Large dob, say 14-15 inches, in good working order, preferably with digital settings circles. Thanks!

Bill Travis, 303-530-5010, wtravis@colorado.edu

If you have astronomy stuff to buy or to sell, send an email to your newsletter editor

philippe_bridenne@yahoo.com

The LAS warehouse

LAS logo T-Shirts:

Crewneck, navy blue, 8" white LAS logon on front

\$10 - S, M, L, XL

\$12 - 2XL

\$13 - 3XL

\$14 - 4XL

\$2 - 5" LAS vinyl sticker, black or white

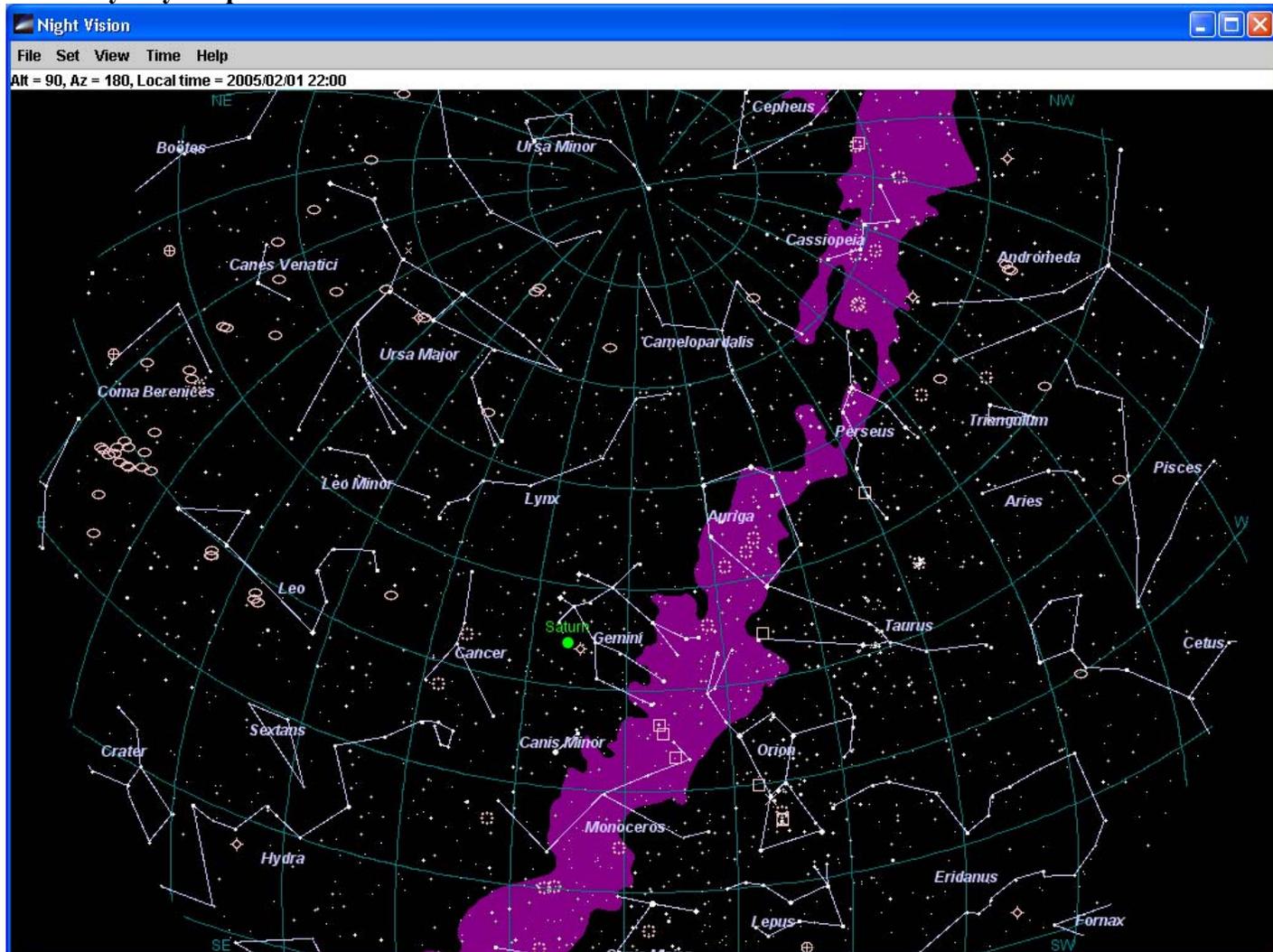
\$5 - 4" LAS embroidered patch

\$5 - VHS tape, "An Evening With David H. Levy", 3 January 2004

\$1 - LAS Planisphere

2/\$1 - LAS un-bumper sticker

February Sky Map



Myths, Stars, and Dragons by Don Cerow

While it is well known that there are a few myths which are tied to astronomical motion such as the death (setting) of Orion as the Scorpion rises, we have not fully grasped the depth of this creative spark. Many of the Mediterranean myths have their origins buried in the motions and positions of the stars; myths such as the Epic of Gilgamesh, the Babylonian Creation Myth, the Rape of Europa, Cadmus at Thebes and Jason and the Argonauts, to name a few. If we fully grasp that five thousand years ago Draco was the circumpolar constellation of the night sky (Thuban, or Alpha Draconis was at its closest approach to the pole in 2750 BC. It is a huge constellation which dominated the central pole position for thousands of years both before and after this date), then we have a clue as to why the winged serpent might be found, in mythic form, around the entire globe; in each of the many cultures whose roots remember the ancient stories of the skies as told by the stars. From the Imperial five toed Dragon of China to Thor's battling of the World Serpent, to the Lakota's Thunder Bird and the Mayan 'feathered serpent' or winged snake known as Quetzacoatl, this tale of the trail of the Dragon may be found.

Join us on this tour through time, watching as the heavens unfold, revealing the secrets of their mysteries under the dome of Fiske Planetarium on Monday, Feb 7, 2005 at 8 PM. Admission \$5 for adults.