Longmont Astronomical Society
November 2002

Leonids Reports
Amateur astro pictures

Constellation of the month Gemini
Star map of the month, by Brian Simpson

Editor notes
LAS star member of the month
Brian Kimball and myself Gary G, get photos shown this month. Brian has so many good ones will do slide show this month at meeting. First is moon by myself several nights before the Leonid meteor shower. Despite the clouds early in evening of the Leonids shower, I took some pictures of the moon. Brian's galaxy pictures are awesome. NGC 891, great edge on galaxy. In Andromeda, the chained princess, about 10th mag. NGC 4565 coma Berenices, 10th mag.
The two brightest stars Castor and Pollux are a familiar sight to most. Gemini the twins in many ancient cultures. Orion is just to the right and down some from the twin. Castor (alpha Geminorum) is actually a sextuple star. You can only see a double star with about 3 arc seconds separation. William Herschel discovered Uranus near Eta Geminorum in 1781 and Clyde Tombaugh discovered Pluto near Delta Geminorum in 1930. M35 bright open cluster is beautiful in small scope or binoculars. NGC 2158 is a smaller fainter open cluster on it's southwest edge, being 16,000 light years away, five times the distance to M35.

NGC 2392 or also known as the clown face or Eskimo Nebula. This strange looking planetary nebula has a bright center star. The blue green tint of it's 40 arc second disc will give it away. Happy hunting. This is for sure a dark sky object, about 10th mag. The Orion and Gemini constellations are up early these days so get out for a photon adventure. bye, gary g
Editor Notes

The Leonids were not near the show of last year, but heck, when was the last full moon meteor shower you have been to????? This meteor shower was my first full moon one. I will reprint some of the Chatter on the FRAC about Leonid reports. I was happy to see Jan Kok President of NCAS, Fort Collins show up. We were trying to see meteor hits on the moon with my 16 scope. I saw one I think maybe more but even with two and three filters moon was bright indeed. Clouds did clear for the faithful , and we endured the cold for another one of nature’s really big shows. We did not witness any sizable bolides like I expected to. Several good ones but nothing super. Hope some of you got out, last chance for Leonid meteor shower for some time to come they say.

I am lacking for star party pictures, will have to reprint some from the past. I did not get to any overnight events other than Leonids. Sorry no pictures, was too dark after set up of viewing site at Martin Butley’s place in Hygiene. Keep it cosmic, bye, aperturemon

LAS star member of the month

Martin Butley and his wife Gail get the nomination this month. He has been to many a star party and let us use his field in Hygiene for local near sky Leonids meteor shower. I have talked him into a bigger scope, 14.5 inch star master scope he bought about a 2 years ago. The star master scope is an excellent scope with tracking and hand controller on big Dob. Marty set up all kinds of food and drink and was a most gracious host for the evening which lasted until dawn on a work night no less. Thanks Marty, Pam Wheaton said she would bake us cookies for another near sky star party soon. Like most people he is very busy guy, Veterinarian doctor, so time to get to dark sky is hard for him but he has come out for the big events. Great place to view for urban skies so close to town. We will do it again, thanks, gary g
Leonid Reports from the Dark side

Well there was lots of emails on the Leonids this month. I will reprint some of them for all to hear what we were doing this past month. Stars r us, love to share some of the fun we had once again. See you in the dark maybe???          Jim Sapp, Karen Mendenhall, Pam Wheaton and Tom Teters and others ,enjoy, bye , Gary

Stuff on fund raising for club??
Hi Bill, > Jim - I'll help beat that horse -    Hee hee. Poor old nag is about dead, huh? :) How the heck did we get started on this? Oh well... > from belonging to two large clubs in LA, ...> ...Same kind of stats on members there too - In off-list e-mails, I think a couple of folks have it figured out. I'll put my neck in this noose and stand on this horse's rump and patch a couple of snippets from them (no names) in here and see what falls out: Snippet #1:------:-> First of all, I think the lack of participation in [ASTRO-CLUB] is due to the fact that people *want* it that way. That may sound a bit goofy, ...$$ It doesn't sound goofy at all. I think it's the only conclusion we can make... [based on observational evidence] Snippet #2:------:-> [the main reason a person] joins a club is for social interaction, so the$$ [ASTRO-CLUB] meets this requirement$$ easily. Other than that, I feel that the majority don't need - or want $$ anything else out of the club.$$ Yes. I think [a club's] REAL public charter is simply to provide a$$ medium for astro-interested people to meet each other, and perhaps to have a$$ place for general communication/announcements that may interest some of them.$$ Whatever activities they pursue outside of$$ the meetings they prefer to do on their own.$$ Mostly, yes. Or in small groups at most. [it seems] Snippet #3:------:-> as much trouble with this problem as the [ASTRO-CLUB] does.$$ He had no solutions$$ either, just the typical officer frustration.$$ You know something? Maybe it really isn't any trouble at all. Maybe there$$ REAL trouble IS the officers - and their expectations! THEY (we) are the$$ ones that get frustrated. I don't think the general population does.$$ [Gasp!] The enemy is us! Oh, Nooooooo!!! =O :)$$ In fact, come to think of it...those that meet out in the$dark - don't have officers,$ and don't have problems either. I think that proves the theory that the$$ purpose of the "official" club ... is to provide a place to meet the folks$$ you wind up doing the hobby with - in the way that feels the most$$ comfortable.------:END Snippets > I guess there are folks who enjoy observing and ones> who enjoy the administrative roles. The intersection> of these two personalities is very small. Everyone has their own talents and their own facets they like of any given set of activities. We need them all I guess. > Not sure> how you change that. Maybe it shouldn't be changed. I guess it's the natural order of things and we should all just relax and keep looking up! :)    hee hee        So whatcha think, gang? FLAME SUIT=ON - Jim S.

Letter from dave Street

Hi all! This is a message for the whole LAS group, but is being sent to you all first to transfer it
when/how you see fit. VERY quickly and briefly as I'm leaving for the airport in about 10
minutes. First, let me apologize for being so distant from my favorite astro geeks! I've missed you
TERRIBLY this summer. My 'short' project in Ann Arbor that was supposed to end in
August/September JUST finished! I came home (for the first time since June!) last week but have
intentionally kept a low profile to spend as much time with my family as possible. It's very
encouraging and gratifying to see how well the LAS has been moving along under your efforts. It
took a while to 'slog' through something like 500 e-mails that had stacked up over the summer,
but it was well worth it to see how the group has been doing. Unfortunately, there's still a bit of
wrap-up in Ann Arbor, but I do plan to be back December 6th (honest!). This is your first
warning ;-) I'm looking forward to re-connecting with ya'll again (soon!!!). Now on to sad news.
I heard about Les Shaw's son on early Monday morning (just before I was scheduled to fly back).
To make a long story short, instead I got together with Les (and his wife Peggy) on
Monday afternoon. As can be expected, this is a very difficult time for them. However, they did
want to pass on to the group that they very much appreciate the outpouring of support they have
received during this time. They apologize for being a bit distracted and not responding to each
individual. They are very grateful to know that all of you care so much. Also, if one wishes to
attend, there will be a memorial service at the Howe Mortuary in Boulder on Thursday (11/21/02)
afternoon at 2pm. As for flowers or other gifts, anything would be readily accepted but they did
mention that they were putting together an account for their son's daughter's college fund. Well,
gotta buzz. Hope to see ya'll again and bore you to tears with stories of Michigan from this
summer. Till later.

Dave Ewing report

on 11/19/02 5:23 AM, J&S at jsstars@worldnet.att.net wrote: >
Quick report: I dragged my complaining posterior out of the rack about 3:00 AM and>
grabbed some coffee and plopped into the lawn chair by 3:25. The light>
polluted sky was 60 or
70 percent obscured by fast-moving moonlit clouds and> I counted about 2 or 3 meteors per
minute on average until about 4:00 when> the average seemed to increase to about 5 or 8 per
minute. By 4:15 the> clouds had pretty much covered the sky. By 5:00 things cleared pretty well>
and I went out for another 10 minutes but the rate seemed to have fallen off> to about 1 or 2 per
minute. I didn't see any bright green streakers. :(< I'll call that about 200 per hour, peaking at
about 400 from here. A> far cry from the 8000+ per hour we were seeing this time last year from a>
clear dark sky. But of course, under this Denver/Longmont nebula I couldn't> see the
background of faint ones that make up the majority of what can be> seen out in the dark.> It
was nice to have the memory of last year's experience refreshed> though. And from south-west of
Hygiene. :>) I was too tired to go spend the night at the gathering in downtown Hygienos I
resorted poking my head out a couple of different times. Around 12:30 the sky was almost
completely covered, and I never even went outside. At 2:00, things had cleared so that I could see
maybe 1/4 of the sky. (Intentionally was laying down in a spot that obscured the very bright
moon, so that cut off nearly half the sky already.) From 2:18 to 2:33 I counted only 9 Leonids (plus
2 non-Leonids). Not particularly impressive. I went back to sleep after reluctantly setting my alarm for 3:30. At 3:30, things were even clearer. I walked outside in my stocking feet and no coat, determined to go right back to bed if I wasn't immediately inundated by fireballs. Two meteors streaked by within 30 seconds. Good enough! From 3:47 to 4:02 I counted 40 Leonids. Not bad at all. Considering only about 1/3 of the bright sky was showing stars. This matches Jim's rate pretty closely. One of the meteors was at least magnitude -3, and it showed through probably the thickest cloud at the time. It's real magnitude must have been much brighter. I also saw one kind of faint meteor skip. And another two came in exactly matched pair - same time, same length, same brightness, and separated by about 7° in the sky. From 4:02 to 4:17 I counted only 19 more. This differs from Jim's report considerably, but for me the sky was covered with a thickening haze during that time. After that I decided to call it a night. The peak rate for me matches about what I saw from stormy North Platte, NE last year. So that makes two years running with conditions that just didn't work out. I can only imagine how impressive they would have been from dark skies....

In a message dated 11/19/02 8:53:05 PM Mountain Standard Dave At 02:48 PM 10/26/02 -0600, you wrote:

> Maybe it shouldn't be changed. I guess it's the natural order of things and we should all just relax and keep looking up! :)
> hee hee>
> So whatcha think, gang?>>FLAME SPLIT=ON>>- Jim S. As a hobby Astronomy provides a wide spectrum of specific topics of interest. It also requires a lot of dedication to stand out in the dark allnight fighting bugs, cold and fatigue. Look how many folks at most starparties (WUTS etc.) that are asleep by 1:00 am, it is a demanding hobby. I was an observational amateur astronomer long before I ever joined an astronomy club, so my perception of what an astronomy club is does may have been a little skewed towards a focus on observing. Astronomy is probably one of the few natural science hobbies you can engage in by clicking a mouse button in the comfort of your home. I wonder how many people get discouraged about astronomy when they look at M27 in even a large telescope after seeing Hubble pictures of the same object on CNN? Clubs tend to evolve into what the majority of membership wants, guess that's the way things are. I think I'm going to spend next weekend in the dark, with my telescope pointing at some far off source of light, and just enjoy the view, for me that's all that matters. See ya in the Dark! DD

Pam wheaton report

Monica! Welcome to MY world with the guys (and gals)! <smiles> Thank goodness these are folks who educate us rather than roll their eyes! (I am an accountant with a love for the universe, however elementary I must make it for me to understand. Fortunately, my eyes do not need a Ph.D. to 'see the light'.) Pam(Finder of the Duck Nebula!) PS. It was a fabulous experience for me to be with Gary and the gang! I will bake pies for Martin if he would kindly have us again! THANK YOU SO VERY MUCH! (Can't believe Gary thought it was cold...he must be a Floridian in disguise.) — Original Message —

From: Alphal.lyra@aol.com [mailto:Alphal.lyra@aol.com]
Sent: Tuesday, November 19, 2002 9:14 PM Time, mmartens@illinoisalumni.org writes:

At the risk of sounding like a newly, is the "duck nebula" really a nebula? Or something else.
I tried to rewrite that with humor, yet subtlety, not being sure how it would come across... Hard to do it humorously sometimes without outright saying what it was, so maybe I didn't do so good, plus was playing with Jim Sapp a bit with his "near sky happens," so it's understandable how that may have been an "insider" joke to some extent... :) 

It was actually a cloud passing directly overhead that was this absolutely _perfect_ image of a duck! So funny! And not like a real duck, but rather a rubber ducky or toy duck of sorts--just perfect!

Near sky happens! :) 

--KarenM

Hi Folks, How did the Leonids go for you? I watched the Leonids from an empty lot next to my apartment in Broomfield. This for the better part of two hours from 2:30 - 4:25 AM MST (9:30-11:25 UT). The skies were mostly clear, a surprise given that a cold front was moving through. To make it short, the rate was so low that I wasn't counting. There were a few meteors that were bright enough to be visible. These left short trails that glowed for a few seconds. The Moon certainly prevented me from seeing fainter meteors, but not that many (see below). The best I could tell, the peak occurred between 10:45 and 11:00 UT. The rate may have been as optimistic as 100 per hour. The time matchesthat in the Sky and Telescope report. To help make up for the moonlight, I used my 3X Night Owl image intensifier much of the time. It provides a field of view that just encompasses Orion's body and easily showed a number of stars in M44. Even with the Night Owl, I did not see that many. Only a few times did I simultaneously see two meteors. As a backup, I listened to FM 88.9. This frequency was quite active last year, frequently bringing in two or three stations. Last night, only one station, and that quite infrequently. I was pleased to see a faint meteor about 30-40 deg elevation to the NW through the Night Owl that exactly corresponded with a ping on the radio. I recall a similar direction correlation last year. One report I received from a local reported "We think we saw 50-100 meteors per minute at the peak (~3:40 AM)..." I leave it up to you to decide what they were viewing. Hope you had fun viewing. Let's hope next year comes as a surprise!-Mark Vincent

All... I have been following this thread with some interest. At the last LAS meeting, I proposed some aggressive fund raising activities in order to swell the bank account so that we can purchase/lease our own observing site, improve that site with some kind of building/trailer with a toilet and shower, and own our own meeting place. I asked for 75% club participation in the fund raising, or we will not do it. From what I have seen, we probably will not be able to do it. But, if I keep on the people, maybe in a couple of years, the membership will warm up to idea(s). When I took over the secretary/treasurer job, I found myself writing checks almost all year long for one thing or another. I was trying to contact people to get them to pay up. It took almost two years (two membership cycles) to get the club to warm up to the dues letter I send out and get them on an annual cycle for magazine subscriptions. In the beginning, people would get around to paying
their dues in June...lots of resistance to the change. This year, we are currently at 85% dues collected for 2003. A HUGE turn around from 2 yrs ago when we would be lucky to have 30% dues collected by Dec 31st. Just my 2 cents worth... Michael "Curran, Marty" wrote:>

> The CAS membership has been over 80 for almost 10 years now and at any given time, the maximum number of people that will attend or have attended a star party; major or otherwise, is roughly 6. Pretty interesting. I have been scheduling start parties at Camp Jack for two years now and so far, there have been no more than 5 people any time with it mostly just being myself. I am going to schedule the star parties this year but I don't think I will be there. I am going to go to Foxpark as many times this year as I can.> > Marty C> > -----Original Message----->

> From: David Dunn [mailto:dj Dunn@earthlink.net]>
> Sent: Wednesday, October 23, 2002 8:52 AM>
> To: front-range-tac@seds.org>
> Subject: Re: [FRAC] How Many?>
> At 06:18 AM 10/23/02 -0600, you wrote: > > P.S. There are a number of very active observers that do not have memberships in any club as well. If they did, the percentage of active vs. social members in the clubs would increase. > > Jim S. > > Moi ?> > DD -- Michael A. HotkaSUN Microsystems>
> michael.hotka@central.sun.com

Greetings astro-friends, Well this Leonid meteor report is hardly worth writing about. CCDPete and I made it out to Cactus Flats around 1:30, it was quite windy so we trucked it over to The Crow. Cloud cover was 90% with a small clear band on the horizon, which we began to "will" to enlarge. It didn't work! Pete set up his prize winning 5" Meade and we peaked at Jupiter & Saturn, when the cloud relented. But it was a night of sucker holes for us. Around 3-3:30 we saw about 12 meteors through thin cover. It sounds like this was the best time to be observing from the foothills. We wasted a lot of gas. Well the company was good. It can only get better, tomt