

Longmont Astronomical Society

August 2006



North American Nebula by Brian Kimball

*The Home Planet Stellar Views
Calendar*

July Meeting Notes

Observing at John Martin State Park by Mike Hotka

Weekend Under The Stars report by John Figoski

Weekend Under The Stars report by Gary Garzone

Night Sky Network toolkit review by Mike Hotka

Classified

The LAS Warehouse

September Sky Map

The Home Planet Stellar Views

Hey astronomers,

We have had a pretty cloudy run this month. We have gotten some views in yard but it seems to be cloudy early evenings and even late into the night. The best views of the year so far were at WUTS, Weekend Under The Stars, at Fox park once again. Wow!! We just love those dark skies and we were lucky enough to be there for several great nights of viewing, from our best dark sky site, with cool temperatures to beat the summer heat waves we were having. I plan to be there August 18th and 19th. The new moon is on Wednesday the 23rd. Moon rises Friday night, the 18th, at 1:50 am or really Saturday morning and at 2:52 am on the 19th, really Sunday morning. That leaves us dark skies till 2 and 3 am that will work for me. I usually quit by then anyway. The new moon being on Wednesday gives us two chances for dark sky viewing this month on the weekends. I may even go back again on the 25th and 26th for the last chance dark sky viewing for summer months at those high elevations.

The CU mountain research center weekend is also coming up on the 25th and 26th of August. This is a good almost local event with high elevation to beat out some of the Front Range sky glow. Vern will be there along with some BASS and LAS members. This is a BASS and LAS event. Still time to get in on this one, let Vern know with an e mail. The Moon sets 8:37 pm on Friday and 8:56 pm on Saturday night, so dark the rest of the night. Sorry I may be back at Fox Park again if at all possible. Price of gas this might be last chance till next summer. MRSC is a good spot for so close to home. Nice place and no tenting for those who would like a Kitchen, warm room to sleep in and showers.

Philippe Bridenne is moving back to France. We will really miss him. He has been an awesome LAS member for years. He has done such a great job with keeping the newsletter going for us, helped with so many star parties I can not even count all the ways he has helped us. I wish there was a certificate for outstanding employee of the year award for him. We need a new newsletter guy so anybody with the desire, please step forward and job can be yours. Philippe and I will help you get started. Nobody ever wants to volunteer but those who serve find it very rewarding to give something back, true sign of success is when you Learn, earn and return to society what you can. Astronomy is a life long learning adventure, lets keep it all going .Philippe you're the best, thanks old buddy, we will miss you and you are always welcome to come back and visit when you can.

Perseids were washed out by the moon light mostly and the clouds too. I stayed up for two nights and saw only a few meteors, but those were long streaks that had trails that took a second or two to disappear. There will be other meteor showers to watch, they can be awesome on great night in a dark place. You remember the Leonids meteor storm several years back now, Wow! That was a great meteor shower.

Vern Raben and Brian Kimball are still amazing us with their great astronomy pictures, keep them coming you guys. We really do enjoy seeing them, you inspire people to get out and see for themselves the wonders you have showed us.

We are always looking for guest speakers so if anybody has some contacts for club, let me know. Hope to see you in the dark at one of our next star parties. Later, Gary

Calendar

Aug:	New Moon:	21 st to 23 rd – WUTS at Fox Park (check date and insert web site)
	1st qtr:	5 th – Flanders Park
	Meeting:	17 th – Topics: Video imaging presentation by Vern Raben
Sep:	New Moon:	23 rd – Pawnee
	1st qtr:	2 nd – Flanders Park. This is Labor Day weekend.
	Meeting:	21 st – Topics: Andrew Planck?
	1st qtr:	30 th – Flanders Park
Oct:	New Moon:	21 st - Pawnee
	1st qtr:	28 th – Flanders Park
	Meeting:	18 th – Topics: Solar presentation?
Nov:	New Moon:	18 th - Pawnee
	1st qtr:	25 th – Flanders Park. This is Thanksgiving weekend.
	Meeting:	16 th – Swap Meet/Nominations
Dec:	New Moon:	23 rd - Pawnee
	1st qtr:	30 th – Flanders Park
	Meeting:	21 st – Topics: Elections

July 2006 Meeting notes

Philippe Bridenne called meeting to order.

Philippe will be relocating to France with his company. Good news for Philippe and his family, bad news for LAS! He is willing to continue doing the LAS newsletter remotely, until election of new newsletter editor at end of year. Philippe said he learned so much from LAS, with the great presentations and smart people. He had many great experiences with LAS but the banquet with David Levy was one of the highlights. Recently Philippe did some observing with the community star parties and kids, and an article was published in the local Erie Review newspaper. Philippe submitted also another article for the "Easy Chair Magazine." He already did some observing in France (the transit of Venus in July 2004).

Many thanks to Philippe! He introduced me (Mark Propp) to LAS at my first star party, and he got me hooked on observing.

Philippe will be sorely missed. He has contributed so much to LAS, and has been a great friend and pillar to our society. Best wishes and Bon Voyage!

We had a visitor from land of eternal clouds in SE Michigan, relocating to Longmont: J.D. Birchmeier. He is a retired physics teacher, online educator. He wrote and taught a course in human space exploration. The following year he wrote and taught an astronomy course. Welcome!

Welcome to Mark Bagdy, Nick and Caroline Kerpchar.

Secretary report by Mark Propp: Considering, with webmaster, Steve Albers, adding a calendar of LAS events to web site.

Newsletter report by Philippe Bridenne: Newsletter includes Star Party reports, with Star party in Erie neighborhood, Fox Park, Rocky Mountain Star Party report. The Night Sky newsletter is included, with new website. Philippe brought old Sky & Telescope magazines before he threw them out.

Bill Travis announced the MRS Star Party: Last year BASS and LAS had a star party at the CU Research Station up by Nederland during Labor Day weekend. We are doing it again this year Friday 25th and Saturday 26th of August. Vern sent announcement to the LAS email list 3 or 4 days ago with some details. The observing site is located at 9,000 feet, nice and cool in August. There is an observatory up there with a 12" Mead SCT we can use. We can have plenty of scopes in a small area around observatory. There is a new lodge, with bunk rooms, kitchen, meeting rooms, showers, rentable room with 4 bunks, \$50 a room. There will be a BBQ Friday night. The program on Saturday will include an astronomy presentation. We hope for good viewing at high elevation, relatively dark skies, relatively close by. RSVP if you want to participate in pot luck or BBQ, or if you want a room, hopefully sorted out by August 1. Julie Carmen did a great job organizing last year. The potluck dinner was excellent.

LAS librarian Dieter has an inventory of the LAS library, also on the website, so you can check out tonight, or via email on the web.

Philippe gave a set of DVDs to Dieter, created from Night Sky Network telecasts. He edited the video and audio synced together, creating programs about 1 hour each. Nice presentation with interactive Q&A with astronomy experts. We have 5 DVDs: Stardust, Mars Rover, Spitzer Telescope, Photography from the Shuttle, and more. Night Sky Network teleconferences are great, very educational, and the end of the teleconference they have a drawing to give away a book or goodie every week. You just have to call a 800 number.

We had a quick auction of an astronomy image offered by Brian Kimball: the Pelican nebula in HA.

Presentation by Mark Bagdy. Mark was here again to talk about two things, starting with Night Sky Network. You can sign up for the Night Sky Network. It is orchestrated through the Astronomical Society of the Pacific, along with JPL, high quality material tested with astronomy clubs. We have four of these outreach kits. Kits are great for presenting to kids, show and tell. Planet Quest, Our Galaxy Our Universe (very cool kit), Surviving a Black Hole. Kits are great visual demonstrations, appropriate for different ages, some outdoor and indoor activities. Kit on how telescopes work. Kit on showing distances relative to solar system size of a quarter, to light-years at scale of miles. Demonstrate within a spoon the upside down images in concave focal points. Other very simple tools to demonstrate photons and light rays. Useful for learning about how my own telescope works! How to determine focal length, and apparent field of view.

Next topic, an update on astronomy at Estes Park. A lot going on in Estes Park, exciting but may entail me handing off the contact role for NSN. I've always wondered why Estes Park doesn't have an astronomy club, I asked, and now I'm the president of a new one: Estes Valley Astronomical Society, not actively promoting it yet. We have four members, including Mike Connelly, moving from Longmont to Estes Park. Angels above is the non-profit organization, to create Estes Park Memorial Observatory. We have land at school grounds for the observatory. This is to carry out wishes of Mike's kids, who were killed in a tragic motorcycle accident. We are excited about it! Estes Park has dark skies and 3 million people coming through every year to see the Rocky Mountain Park. There is a desire, we want to cultivate it. We are trying to get the word out, and looking for contributions. Mike: we have looked at other observatories, and gotten good advice on how to proceed. The survey should be completed at the end of the month. Gong for bids on warm room, looking to build our own dome with Berthoud's design. We are making it bigger at Berthoud's advice.

Lee Pierson, equipment manager, we turned in 255 pounds of cans for \$150.45!

-- BREAK --

Auction for Brian Kimball nebula image: sold for \$6.00

We had scheduled a 2nd speaker, but he didn't show, so Philippe is showing a presentation from the Night Sky Network. Distances are hard for people to grasp, what does it mean to say something is 23 light years away? This kit shows our solar system, about the scale of a quarter. M1 would be 160 miles from our quarter. M42 would be at 40 miles from our solar system quarter! In the toolkit we have various CDs, for Orion, Big Dipper, and so on. The Whirlpool Galaxy would be at 925,000 miles away. M10 would be at 360 miles away and two miles across! M31 is 57,500 miles to our scale, 2.3 million light years in the real universe. Quarter of the way to the moon!

Our galaxy, can of Morton salt container, 200,000 containers, spread in a big disk, no grain (star) closer than 7 miles to each other!

The scale of the sun, football field with solar system scale, a nickel on the 0 yard line is the sun. You can't see any of the planets because they are smaller than grain of sand,

Observing at John Martin State Park by Mike Hotka

I went south to John Martin State Park to see some objects that just hug the horizon from here. I thought it was a good idea, but to say the least, the weather had other plans.

I drove down to the park west of Lamar Saturday afternoon. When I got there, the clouds were teasing to stick around, but after sunset, they departed. The wind was dying down also. It looked to be a great evening brewing.

What I didn't know was the wind was brewing just north of me. About 10:00 PM it started blowing and blowing and increasing in vigor until it lit the light, LITERALLY!!!

They have this wind monitor for boaters on the lake that when the wind hits 30 MPH, it starts to strobe. Well, about 11:30 PM, it was blinking. I DID find 10 planetary nebulas in this wind, even with chart pages blowing in the wind and a couple of my star charts taking off for Kansas. I tried for one more planetary, but with then wind went the seeing. I couldn't find the 11th magnitude little glowing ember of a star, so I packed it up.

Then the light started blinking twice the frequency it was just a few minutes before. Questioning the ranger this morning, the wind was in excess of 40 mph.

Boy, do I know how to find FUN?!?!?

Anyway, I bagged 10 planetary nebulas in the far southern sky that from up here, lie just on the horizon. Down there, they were a few degrees higher in the sky, enough to make the difference whether I saw them or not.

I like John Martin State Park, but it's a bit of a drive. It is 225 miles from my front door to the campsite. They have nice showers and there were NO other campers in the primitive campground. I like this location for there is nothing south of it, so that part of the sky is dark. I could see a bit of a light dome from Lamar to the east and Las Animas to the west.

A local science teacher was doing a public star night at the park and I had a couple of people stop and ask if "I" was giving a talk. I had to point them in the right direction. Other than seeing the planetary nebulas, the other highlight of the weekend was that one of the park rangers wanted to know if I was going to help the

astramaner with the program tonight. I have been called an astronomer, an astrologer, but NEVER an astramaner (say it phonetically). It was cute!

Weekend Under The Stars report by John Figoski

At Fox Park (WUTS) this weekend we had two great evenings.

With regard to viewing sites low in the South, I spent most of Saturday checking out southern Scorpius and Sagittarius after they were past meridian. I probably never got higher than 10 degrees off the horizon. There were no light to the south and the transparency was quite good due to the 9,000 ft altitude.

I even picked up M83 in Hydra (7th magnitude, face-on galaxy) and had the top of a tree in the same view! It was no more than 2 degrees above the SW horizon but I could see the nucleus and even the faint glow of the galaxy itself.

It seems like we're always trying to push the limits of something.

Weekend Under The Stars report by Gary Garzone

Fox Park Weekend Under The Stars was another one of those great views weekend to make it all worth while. Sometimes it's hard to endure the bad weekends we get. We have had bad luck viewing last several adventures out with the die-hards, so we were in dire need of a good dark sky viewing weekend.

We had rain Thursday afternoon, so very dewy after the skies cleared about 11pm, great views for several hours of very good sky, most people were dewed up by early morning hours, but a few of us have been down that road and were prepared with dew heaters and kept going.

Friday was totally clear all night long. The Milky way was so bright from there and stretched all the way across the skies to trees in the Tea Pot. I would drive all that way just for that view. Saturday it was clear but clouded up by 3 am or so with clouds covering the skies a bit. We stayed up till 4 am Saturday that's how good it was; we pushed it some as usual.

We had big crowds but not as big as in past, 200 people maybe. We went to Jelm 92 inch scope for Friday day tour. I will send off some pictures as usual. I love seeing some of the old die-hards who showed up. Tom T it was good to see you at a dark sky site again. Steve L too, whole gang except Jim S, where were you? Many people were asking for you Jim.

Thanks to CAS and LASSO, for putting this on again. Marty and Marcy, Marv, John, Robert R and so many more who helped make it another Foxtastic couple of nights under the heavens.

The Milky Way was casting its shadow, how cool, so bright it was to see it under such good conditions. We are so lucky at times; most people never get the views we do at Fox Park. Have scope will travel, is still my motto. We can maybe do it again next month at Fox park new moon dark sky viewing?? See you in the dark, later, Gary

Night Sky Network toolkit review by Mike Hotka

An additional benefit of being a member of LAS is that you are also affiliated with the Night Sky Network. This is an organization that is part of the Jet Propulsion Laboratories Public Outreach Program.

Along with interesting and informative monthly speakers you can use a toll-free telephone number to dial into and listen to, our club also receives something called an Outreach Toolkit. This toolkit will aid you in talking astronomy to people.

Our club currently has four of these toolkits in our library that can be checked out. I have had the opportunity to review the contents of and use 2 of them in recent interactions with the general public.

One thing I have noticed about amateur astronomers interacting with the general public is we tend to overwhelm them with facts and numbers, which have meaning to us, but without a lot of explanation to define

terms and concepts, is meaningless to the average listener. Once overwhelmed, they usually stop listening and tend to have a bad impression of astronomy that it's only for "smart" people.

That is where these toolkits come in. Each toolkit comes with an instructional DVD to teach you how to use the various parts of the toolkit. They also come with a resource CD, which can be used to reproduce materials in the toolkit, along with other information not contained elsewhere in the toolkit. The toolkit has a certain script to it and if you wish to use the scripted material, it can be found on this resource CD. But it is not necessary to use the script, or all parts of the toolkit all of the time. These toolkits are designed to address the most commonly questions people ask based upon the topic of the toolkit.

The first toolkit I opened, Our Galaxy, Our Universe, answers the question "How far away is that thing we are looking at?" This toolkit uses the concept of light years, which for some people, is one of those overwhelming concepts. But is also uses the concept of miles, which is a fascinating way to frame these distances. They have these computer CD disks, which they have attached sticky labels onto. These labels contain printed references the brighter objects in different parts of the sky, in light years and miles. The reference to miles is that if you make our solar system the size of a quarter, then M13 is 625 miles away, or like from here to Des Moines, Iowa, if they know where Des Moines is. This is something they can easily grasp, for everyone in the US knows what a mile is.

On the resource CD, you can print a set of these labels, which I did. I then used a glue stick and some old CDs I had to make my own set of these distance CDs. I can take these with me wherever I go and quickly find the object on the CD we are looking and use the quarter analogy on the audience.

I found this to be very useful and used it the other night at the Little Thompson Observatory on the group there. I was surprised to find how well received it was. I used the M13 analogy with 625 miles as compared to 25,000 light years away.

The other toolkit I reviewed was the latest one we received and is called Telescopes: Eyes on our Universe. This toolkit has exercises suited for a classroom type of audience as well as those standing in line at your telescope.

One thing I like to do at a star party, when people are waiting in line to look in my eyepiece, is to share with the factoids about what they are looking at, or about my telescope. This toolkit is perfect for giving you information that is easy for people to understand for just this purpose.

This toolkit answers questions like, "How far can you see with this telescope?" and "Can you see the flag on the moon that the astronauts left?" There are many more questions this toolkit answers. It was these two questions that I used the concepts from this toolkit to answer the other night at LTO.

This toolkit also talks a lot about your eye and how it works at night. If you have never read or heard this information, it is very useful and can answer questions, this toolkit addresses, such as "Why can't I see color and details in this eyepiece like I can see in the Hubble Telescope picture I saw of this object?" Understanding how your eye works is important to be able to answer this question for people.

For these two toolkits, I watched the training DVD and noted the ideas and concepts being presented by the toolkit. I can now choose how to use the information from the toolkits, when appropriate, in answering people's questions, where ever they might ask them.

So, checkout these toolkits from our library, watch the training DVD, copy the resource CD for your own reference, and start enjoying sharing this newfound information the next time someone asks you the question, "Why can't I see the flag on the Moon?"

Classified

To buy:

To sell:

5x10 foot roll off observatory shed (\$2,000 OBO).

I can supply pictures of this shed upon request. It rolls great and offers wind and rain protection for your telescope.

Transporting it from my backyard to your location is up to you. It weighs about 800 lbs and can be moved on a car hauler type of trailer.

I am no longer need a backyard observatory so I am offering it to anyone who wants a backyard observatory. All you need to add is the telescope.

Contact Mike Hotka at mhotka@yahoo.com or call 303-438-0097.

New, never used Celestron NexStar 8i for sale. What's included besides the scope?

Steel carrying case for scope

Set of Plossi eyepieces

Set of color filters – eyepieces and filters come packed in a sturdy steel carrying case

Battery power pack and Michael Swanson's book, "NexStar User's Guide.

All of this for \$1,800. Please contact Bob Reece at 303-229-8319 or send an email to bobhistory@comcast.net

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

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, and 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

I have an ORION SKYVIEW 4.5" Reflector telescope with finder scope; equatorial mount tripod, with 9mm and 25mm lenses, 1.25 mm Barlow and extra filters. The telescope is in great condition, just toooo advanced for my amateur status. All for \$500!

Contact Anna Vayr at 303-776-7167 or via email at anna.vayr@spot.colorado.edu

I own an Orion SkyView 8" EQ reflecting telescope (in excellent condition) with an AccuTrack SVD motor to keep the scope aligned with an object. My husband and I have decided to sell it for \$500, due to space and budget constraints during our current home remodel.

We want to sell the telescope to someone who can "do it justice", which is why I'm grateful if you wouldn't mind getting the word out to other keen astronomers who may be interested in buying it. I can be contacted by this email address or home tel. 970.577.0417 or Jennifer_Taylor@psdr3.k12.co.us

I have a Meade LX200 10" Schmidt-Cassegrain Telescope

Includes: 10" optical tube assembly with EMC super multi-coatings; heavy-duty fork mount, with 4"-dia. sealed polar ball bearing, quartz-microprocessor-controlled 5.75" worm gears on both axes, and multi-function power panel display on the drive base; manual and electric slow-motion controls on both axes; setting circles in RA and DEC; handheld keypad Electronic Command Center with digital readout display, PPEC Smart Drive, 9-speed drive control on both axes, GO TO controller, High-Precision Pointing, and 64,340-object onboard celestial software library; 25 ft. power cord and adapter for telescope operation from 115v.AC; 8 x 50mm viewfinder; eyepiece-holder and diagonal prism (1.25"); variable-height field tripod.

It comes with the following items:

- Meade super wide angle 18mm (1.25")
- Meade super wide Plossl 26mm (1.25")
- Televue Nagler 4.8 mm (1.25")
- Televue Nagler 9 mm (1.25"/2")
- Televue Panoptic 22 mm (1.25"/2")
- Meade 2x Apochromatic Barlow (1.25")
- Televue 1.8x Barlow (1.25")
- Meade Variable Polarizer (1.25")
- Solar filter
- Assorted filters

Call, Chuck Peterson at 303 442 2524 asking 3,000 dollars, seldom used, like brand new in Boxes.

I have a 16" f4.5 Dobsonian for sale. It comes with a JMI two speed focuser, Sky Commander digital setting circles, rechargeable cooling fan, off axis solar filter, wheel barrel handles.

This is a nice scope and would be a great scope for any LAS member. 16 inches is very portable to dark skies, yet has a mirror that can capture 16th magnitude objects, which would allow one to do all the Astronomical League's observing clubs with no problem. And since its local, you don't have to pay any shipping.

First \$3,000 takes it home.

Please contact me privately. bnimball@comcast.net

To give:

FREE: Monitor, HP D1195A 15" CRT, will display 1024x768.

Clean, like new, works. Contact: Bob Noble nobler@att.net

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

Light blue with the lapel logo and Dobsonian telescope.

\$1 LAS un-bumper stickers

\$5 LAS Observing Log Book

\$1 LAS Whizzy Wheel (astronomy calculator)

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

\$5 - 4" LAS embroidered patch

\$1 - LAS Planisphere

September Sky Map

