



Newsletter of the Baton Rouge Astronomical Society

[www.braastro.org](http://www.braastro.org)

**July 2012**

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**An important note:**

**The April 2012 BRAS meeting WILL NOT BE HELD AT THE HRPO.**

**The meeting will be at Blue Cross Blue Shield of Louisiana.**

**5525 Reitz Ave. in Baton Rouge on Monday July 9th at 7:00 PM**

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Hi Everyone,

I hope you are enjoying the summer and finding ways to keep cool. The summer is such a mixed bag for us here in Louisiana when it comes to observing, too. Sure, we have lots of amazing clusters and nebulae with that view of the center of our galaxy, but with comes the mosquitoes and oppressive heat and humidity. If you see a clear night coming up, though, try to brave the elements for a bit and get out to see some of these wonderful sights.

This month I'm putting out a call for members that may want to become a bit more active in the club. Several club members, along with the officers, have been brainstorming over the last...oh...couple of YEARS and we've had lots of ideas and even started to formulate plans of action. However, like what happens with so many ideas, they've been lingering in limbo and need the boost to get them put into action. Over the next several weeks, I hope to get a good prioritization of these ideas and plans and get some folks working on them to get them moving. Here are a few of the ideas that have been either been pitched or are currently in the works already:

- Reorganizing the BRAS closet at the HRPO.
- A BRAS Dark Sky Advocacy initiative that would include presenting our first award recognizing good lighting, among other things.
- Organizing an exhibition of Astrophotography by club members to be displayed at libraries in the EBRP library system.
- Continuing outreach in the community.
- Developing our own Observing Clubs similar to those offered by the Astronomical League, but requiring fewer observations to obtain a certificate and thereby making them a bit less daunting for those of us with less experience or less TIME for observing. They would also serve as a stepping stone for an AL certificate if one were to continue observations.

These are just some of the many ideas that have been put out lately and they are all great. However, it's a lot of work for only a handful of people to implement it all. If you would like to lend a hand in any of these projects, please let me know. Also, if you have any ideas that you think may be good to add to our list, shout it out! As I said, first we'll be prioritizing these ideas and then hopefully start making some headway on implementation soon.

I hope to see you at our next meeting and as always, feel free to bring along a friend, relative, co-worker, family member or all of the above.

Clear Skies,  
Ben Toman  
BRAS President

## NOTES FROM THE VICE PRESIDENT

This month's meeting will be at the Blue Cross Blue Shield building, where we met a few months ago. We will watch a film called the Ultimate Private Observatory.

The observatory belongs to Joseph Aymond, brother of PAS VP Kirk Aymond, who spoke at a past BRAS meeting. Aymond's observatory was built after Katrina to withstand a direct hit from an F5 tornado. It features mind-boggling computerized, hydraulic, and electro-mechanical technologies. You've heard me say this before. The amazing creativity, design, detail, and professionalism of his facility is all the more striking when you realize Joseph has no training in hydraulics or electro-mechanical design. You can read an article David Levy wrote about the observatory at this address, although the observatory website linked in the article is down for maintenance. I guess you will just have to come see the video.

<http://www.skyandtelescope.com/community/skyblog/davidlevy/37497134.html>

### ASTRONOMY WEBSITES:

Bring the addresses and any other information about any interesting astronomy websites you want to share with the group. We will spend an informal evening at the August meeting exploring some of those sites. While on that subject, check out the BRAS Facebook page. Put something on it.

Merrill Hess  
BRAS Vice President



## **MESSAGE FROM HRPO**

### RESULTS OF A.R.R.L. FIELD DAY

There was a nice patron turnout, comparable to last year. The Baton Rouge Amateur Radio Club made more contacts than in 2011. Jeremy Gerald secured a visit from WVLA, so there was some additional coverage. “Scoring” results are released in September.

### VIEWING TIMES FOR JUPITER’S GREAT RED SPOT

I’m in the habit of adapting the *Sky & Telescope* transit predictions for the GRS and posting them on the B.R.A.S. Forum. The entry for July—the first one since the night sky lost Jupiter some months back—is already up. Additional entries will be added continuously, for every remaining month this year. If anyone sees an error, please let me know.

### THE CITY DARK BROADCASTING ON L.P.B

Sunday, 8 July at 11pm on 27.1

Monday, 9 July at 11am on 27.2

*The City Dark* had its Louisiana premiere in January at the Independence Park Theatre. Now it will be shown on the documentary program *P.O.V.* Sunday night and the next morning. Please check TV listings to confirm these showings.

### FRIDAY NIGHT LECTURE SERIES

*all start at 7:30pm*

7 July: “Mars Pathfinder 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary” [Chris that’s-right]

14 July: “The Voyager Spacecraft” [Jorge Soto]

21 July: “Dawn to Ceres” [Chris once-again]

28 July: “Wonders of the Summer Sky” [Erin Anding]

### CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS: ON SITE

\*Saturday, 4 August from 6pm to 10pm. *One additional volunteer in addition to regular BRAS compliment.* Evening Sky Viewing Plus. Marshmallow roast, demo and clock tables. Easy; training provided.

### CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS: OUTREACH

\*Tuesday, 10 July from 2pm to 4pm, Delmont Gardens Library (3351 Lorraine Street)

\*Thursday, 12 July from 2:30pm to 4:30pm, Baker Library (3501 Groom Road)

\*Tuesday, 17 July from 2:30pm to 4:30pm, Greenwell Springs Lib. (11300 Gwl. Springs)

\*Thursday, 19 July from 2pm to 4pm, Carver Library (720 Terrace Street)

*One or two volunteers each.* All of these will basically be introductory talks about HRPO. Saturday night science demonstrations will probably accompany us.

## OUTREACH

### **Volunteers Needed for the International Planetarium Society in Baton Rouge on July 21-26 2012**

I am writing to share this unique opportunity for our community with you and your organization. This event is being sponsored by LASM. Two years ago, the IPS met in Alexandria, Egypt and their next meeting will be held in Beijing in 2014. The organizers expect up to 500 delegates from 40+ countries.

As the Volunteer Chair for this event, I would like to extend this opportunity to you and your organization at this once in a lifetime event. My objective is to have volunteers and subcommittee chairs and members from across the Baton Rouge Metro area and from a variety of organizations. This is our chance to shine a positive light on Baton Rouge and extend a bit of southern hospitality to the international delegates.

If you or someone you know that would be interested in assisting with this event or being a subcommittee chair, please have them contact me. Feel free to share this invitation with anyone that may be interested in volunteering.

Thank you,

Kathleen S. Giesfeldt  
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#### **Potential Sources of Volunteers (not limited to):**

- Southern University: Sororities/fraternities, Physics and Science Organizations
- LSU including: LSU translators, LSU-SWE, LSU-SHIP, APO, Physics and Science Organization, Sororities/fraternities
- BR Community College
- EBR & WBR High school teachers and students (service hours!) (Beta Clubs)
- United Way: Volunteers United, RSVP
- BREC Observatory club
- CAN!: EXC!TE, EMCOT, ACE, Teams, WIN, BEST, and the Annuitants Clubs
- Girl and Boy Scouts

#### **Types of Volunteer Commitments:**

- Subcommittee chairs and assistance with the coordination of the event.
- Volunteers: work in blocks of 2-4 hours. Perks include: access to the conference, planetarium & t-shirt

#### **Subcommittee Chairs Needed for the Event:**

1. Registration
2. Logistics
3. Translators

#### 4. Volunteer Organizations

##### **Highlighted Needs for the Event:**

1. Registration
2. Logistics
3. Contacting Volunteer organizations
4. Room Monitors
5. Participant conference bag preparation
6. Set-up/tear-down of displays and conference rooms
7. Runners
8. Translators

##### **Calendar:**

Feb-March: recruit volunteers

April-May: train volunteers

June-July: on-site training

## PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES

The June 2012 meeting was held at LIGO.

No official business was discussed

Good times were had by all.

-Charles Edwards  
BRAS Secretary

-Rory Bentley  
BRAS Co-Secretary



## TREASURER'S NOTES

The push continues (as I have done in past newsletters) to urge people receiving the newsletter via the good ole' postal system to let me send you the newsletter via email. If you don't want to switch to email delivery because you like having a paper copy, fear not! I always bring plenty of paper copies with me to the monthly meetings.

As Merrill mentioned in the VP notes, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Louisiana is hosting this month's meeting. They have some nice conference facilities there, and are letting us use them to watch the Hubble movie. I've included a couple of maps that should help you find it. If you have any problems, give me a call.

-Geoff Michelli  
BRAS Treasurer





