

Newsletter of the Baton Rouge Astronomical Society

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

**June 2012**

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**An important note:**

**The June 2012 BRAS meeting WILL NOT BE HELD AT THE HRPO on the usual day.  
The meeting will be at LIGO on Saturday, June 16th at 11:00 AM**

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Hi Everyone,

The summer months are upon us and with them the short nights, super high humidity/temperatures and armies of mosquitoes. It's hard to resist going out to check out the wonderful summer sky, though, filled with clusters, galaxies and nebulae. I hope you all get a chance to see some of the spectacular sights the center of our Milky Way galaxy has to offer.

As far as our club goes, this is the second year we are going ahead with meetings in the summer months of June and July. We figure not everyone goes away for break so why not keep getting together and having some fun with astronomy for those that are around. As I'm sure you'll see in the other parts of this newsletter, we will NOT be having our meeting on the normal Monday this month. Just as last summer, we will be making a trip out to LIGO on their Science Saturday, June 16th. Food, science and fun to be had by all!

We had a great turn out for the Transit of Venus and I really hope you all were able to see the event since it won't occur again for 105 years. The clouds did their best to spoil it, but we ended up with enough clear sky time to let all of the people that came out to the HRPO (my estimate was at least 300 people!) a chance to see it through one of several telescopes we had set up. If you have any good pictures or video of it, feel free to post it to the website or the Facebook page to share with everyone.

Finally, the International Planetarium Society conference is just around the corner now. We have several members that have already signed up with them for volunteer shifts, but I'm sure they could use more help. They now have an electronic sign-up page at this address <http://bit.ly/ipsvolunteer> If you are still interested in offering a helping hand for this exciting event, please check it out.

Thank you all for continuing to be a part of this great club. Attendance at our meetings has been great and we steadily add new members. As I always say, don't keep our club a secret. If you know someone you think might be interested in what we have to offer, invite them out to a meeting or just to visit the HRPO on a weekend night. A feast of food and science at LIGO on June 16th would be a great time.

Clear Skies,  
Ben Toman  
BRAS President

## NOTES FROM THE VICE PRESIDENT

This month's meeting will be held at the Laser Interferometer Gravitational-Wave Observatory. Otherwise known as **LIGO**.

The physical address is:

LIGO Livingston Observatory  
19100 LIGO Lane  
Livingston, LA 70754

You can get directions from their website by visiting the following URL:

<http://www.ligo-la.caltech.edu/LLO/directionwel.htm>

We will all gather in the pavilion at 11:00 AM on Saturday, June 16th. This will be a pot-luck lunch, so make your favorite dish and bring it along. BRAS will provide the main dish, utensils, drinks, plates, and cups. We'll be having food, fun, and socializing for a couple hours until 1:00 PM.

At 1:00, the public tours will begin. You'll be able to learn a lot about the facility. The tours end at 5:00 PM, but you're free to leave before then.

See you all there, and don't forget...

The meeting will not be held at the HRPO!

Merrill Hess  
BRAS Vice President

## MESSAGE FROM HRPO

### RESULTS OF TRANSIT OF VENUS

This was simply astounding. WVLA, WBRZ, Fox and The Baton Rouge *Advocate* were on-site. 300 pairs of solar glasses were sold in ninety minutes! In one week our daily hit counter for the HRPO site more than quadrupled. I also believe, due to BRAS' first press release, the club garnered a lot more publicity than it would have otherwise. Thanks to Trey Anding, Mike Carambat, Murali Chakravarthi, Trevor McGuire, John Nagle, Roslyn Readinger, Briar Richard, Ben Toman and any BRAS members I may be forgetting. Many made great sketches and images, and Tom Northrop snapped a picture of the Black Drop Effect appearing in John LeBlanc's "sun funnel". The cake looked great, and tasted better. Though I haven't finished the estimate, all indications suggest a minimum of 500 people were here.

### FRIDAY NIGHT LECTURE SERIES

*all start at 7:30pm*

15 June: "Black Holes—The One-Way Trip" [Peter Lazar]

22 June: "LIGO—The Fantastic Search" [Amber Stuver]

29 June: "The Last Flight of Amelia Earhart" [Chris take-a-guess]

### CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS: ON SITE

\*Saturday, 30 June 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

\*Thursday, 14 June from 2:30pm to 4:30pm, Bluebonnet Library (9200 Bluebonnet).

\*Thursday, 21 June from 2:30pm to 4:30pm, Jones Creek Library (6222 Jones Creek).

\*Thursday, 28 June from 3pm to 5pm, Zachary Library (1900 Church Street).

\*Tuesday, 3 July from 10am to 12pm, Eden Park Library (5131 Greenwell Springs).

\*Thursday, 5 July from 10am to 12pm, Pride Library (13600 Pride-Port Hudson).

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

### A.R.R.L. FIELD DAY

\*Saturday, 23 June from 2pm to 10pm. This is not a call for volunteers; however, I strongly encourage as many BRAS members as possible to attend this always exciting event. With a "ham" radio rig and the requisite license, one can talk across the country with no monthly bill, possibly communicate with astronauts on board the International Space Station (as our own Marvin Owen has) and possess an emergency back-up if cell phone and internet access are unavailable. In the past several years the Baton Rouge Amateur Radio Club has scored in the top three in its category.

## OUTREACH

We need one or two volunteers to help out with an event in St. Francisville on June 25th. It's an event being held at a girl scout campout. We'll be able to pick the times that we can bring scopes and show some of the summer night sky objects.

Feel free to contact me if you're interested.

-Trevor McGuire  
BRAS Outreach Coordinator

### **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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WK 225-977-5822  
Cell 865-386-3292

#### **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

Art Barrios announced that BRAS has a new dark sky site, and gave the location, layout and directions to the new site. Viewing dates were May 19th and the 25th; and June 16th and the 23rd.

Kathleen Giesfeldt spoke about the need for volunteers for hosting the International Planetarium Society in July. She said volunteer training would begin on May 19th.

Ben Toman said he would keep the contact list for this event.

Chris Kersey said that 600 people attended the Astronomy Day celebration; also, the observatory will be open on June 5th from 4 p.m. until midnight for the Venus transit of the sun. He said that volunteers will be needed for this event, and that the Astronomical Society will award a certificate for observing the transit.

Jacob Desroches received the Sky Puppy certificate.

Merrill Hess announced that the annual potluck supper will be held at the LIGO facility on Saturday, June 16th at 11:00 a. m.

The July meeting will be held at the Blue Cross building on Bluebonnet. The video "The Ultimate 5 Minute Observatory" will be shown.

Bill Buck gave a talk on his trip to New Mexico, and on observing under New Mexico skies.

A raffle was held, and the meeting adjourned.

-Charles Edwards  
BRAS Secretary

-Rory Bentley  
BRAS Co-Secretary

## OBSERVING NOTES

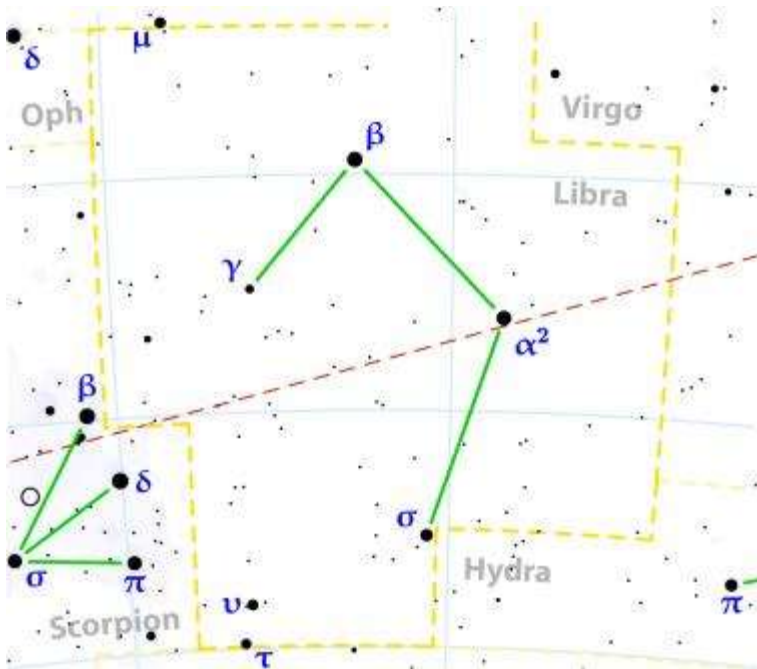
### Constellation of the Month

## Libra: The Scales

The ancient Greeks identified the stars of Libra as part of the constellation Scorpius representing the claws of the Scorpion. Later, in the time of the ancient Romans it was separated out and became quite a favorite. The Moon was said to be located in the constellation Libra during the founding of the city of Rome. The Romans saw this as a sign that the heavens were in balance as it also corresponded with equivalent day and night hours at the time of the autumn equinox.

Libra contains a star named Gliese 581 which has been shown to contain at least 6 planets! Two of the planets are actually located in the “habitable zone” where liquid water and possibly life could exist on their surfaces. ET phone home!

### Star Chart



### Position in the Sky

Right Ascension: 15 hours    Declination: -15 degrees

### Named Stars

Zuben Elgenubi (Alpha 2 Lib)  
Zuben Elschemali (Beta Lib)  
Zuben Elakrab (Gamma Lib)  
Zuben Elakribi (Delta Lib)  
Brachium (Sigma Lib)



## **Deep Sky Objects**

None

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### **Meteor Showers: June Bootids**

Duration: June 22<sup>nd</sup> to July 2<sup>nd</sup>

Peak: June 27<sup>th</sup>

Radiant: Constellation Booties

Right Ascension: 15 hours

Declination: 48 degrees

Expected Rate: variable

Origin: Pons–Winnecke

### **BRAS Dark Sky Site Viewing Dates**

June 16<sup>th</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup>

Directions: From Baton Rouge take I-10 west to exit 135 Ramah/Maringouin. At Highway 3000 take a right and go about 100 feet and take a left. Go about 200 feet and take a right. This will take you to the levee road where you take a right. Travel north on the levee road for about 1/3 of a mile and just past a left hand curve you will see a gravel road leading up the levee. Go up and over the levee there and park on the other side of the levee.

For more information check out the BRAS website at <http://www.brastro.org>

Art Barrios

BRAS Observing Chairman

[art.barrios@cox.net](mailto:art.barrios@cox.net)

## TREASURER'S NOTES

I've had a couple folks switch over to the email newsletter, and I'd like to make another call (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.

I'll see you all at LIGO!

-Geoff Michelli  
BRAS Treasurer