

Newsletter of the Baton Rouge Astronomical Society

JANUARY, 2011

The Next Meeting of the Baton Rouge Astronomical Society will be Monday, January 10 at 7 PM at the Highland Road Park Observatory. The meeting starts at 7 PM and will last about an hour and a half.



To the Membership

We are now off to a new year that should be good for the economy as well as for amateur observing. Membership in BRAS and joining in some of our activities can help you be a better observer and volunteer for outreach to the public.

2011 is the **YEAR OF THE RABBIT** which is supposed to be a placid year, very much welcomed and needed after the ferocious year of the Tiger. Good taste and refinement will shine on everything and people will acknowledge that persuasion is better than force. However, the dark force still reigns supreme in the heavens until the dark matter and dark energy can be better defined.

A person born in the year of the Rabbit is said to derive his essence from the moon. Well, we have a program for anyone that was born in a prior year of the Rabbit in that we have several observing programs to observe and learn more about ole Luna, our moon.

When a Westerner gazes at the Moon, he may joke that it is a ball of cheese or talk about the Man in the Moon. However, when the Chinese look at the Moon, they see the Nmoon Hare standing near a rock under a Cassia tree and holding the Elizir of Immortality in his hand. Can you find that picture in the moon?

Happy New Year.....Marvin E Owen, President, BRAS

MESSAGE FROM HRPO

Two wonderful celestial events were seen from HRPO grounds this past month. On 13/14 December the Geminid Meteor Shower drew 120 patrons. Trevor stopped counting at forty streaks; at 1am several people, including myself, saw a massive yellow fireball shoot toward the east. This was the first HRPO event I programmed during which there were below-freezing temperatures.

For the total lunar eclipse on 20/21 December almost 200 visitors were here. The enthusiastic crowd stayed until 2:30am to 3am, when clouds ended the viewing session.

And how about this? The night of 23 December, Greg Guzik and his son Glen used the 200GS to video the International Space Station as it went overhead! Fred has posted the video under "Images" on the front page of the HRPO website.

As for 2010 in general, preliminary numbers suggest HRPO attendance hit 8200 visits—a definite increase over 2009's 7550. The good weather for the meteor showers, the year having a lunar eclipse, and a record turnout for International Astronomy Day all helped. However, that number couldn't have been reached without the hard and consistent work of BRAS volunteers. Thanks so much.

2011's International Astronomy Day is Saturday, 7 May from 3pm to 11pm. Please start thinking about whether you will be able to devote two to four hours on site. Last year's event saw 788 visitors; we're looking at possibly 1000 visitors this time!

Christopher

CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS

Learn to Use Your Telescope: Saturday, 15 January from 3pm to 7pm
Four to six volunteers. To assist registrants with their telescopes. As people sign-up, we will contact them to find out the particulars of their scopes, then pass the information along to BRAS so we can prepare for what will show up! Of course, volunteers for this event must have some working background of the telescope.

Evening Sky Viewing: Saturday, 22 January and Saturday, 12 February from 6pm to 10pm.

One or two volunteers. To staff marshmallow roast, work simple 6" Dob, demonstrate air cannon, gyroscope, etc. All needed training given.

HRPO FRIDAY NIGHT LECTURE SERIES

*14 JANUARY: "Seeing the Cores of Stars"

*21 JANUARY: "Wonders of the Winter Sky"

*28 JANUARY: "Apollo 14 40th Anniversary"

*4 FEBRUARY: "Olbers' Paradox"

Hey Everyone!

I hope the holidays went well for y'all. Our meeting/party in December was great. Over 30 members in attendance! Thanks again to Mike Carambat for showing off his home observatory and to Ashley Toman for once again sharing her music with us.

Well, it's 2011 already. We're kicking off our 30th year with bang. Professor Ed Shihadeh will be presenting on high powered rocketry. Unlike the small rockets you buy at the toy store and launch at home or in the park, these are giants. Between 2 feet and 15 feet tall in some cases and capable of reaching over 10,000 feet in altitude! Dr. Shihadeh will discuss the materials and construction of the rockets, as well as their propulsion systems and recovery components. Included will be a short video of footage taken by an on-board camera as the rocket launched to extreme altitude.

Yes, you read that right, our 30th year! It would be great to see you all at the meeting. It would be REALLY great if you told a friend or neighbor about the meeting, or the club. We are a great group of people with a respectably strong membership, but we have plenty of room to grow and with the increasing number of visitors each year to the HRPO, we're going to need all the help we can get.

Hope to see you there!

Ben Toman

BRAS VP

ASTRONOMICAL LEAGUE OBSERVING CLUBS

For the past couple of months, we've been talking a lot about the Observing Clubs offered by the Astronomical League (of which all of us are a part by being BRAS members.) These clubs are great for the whole range of amateur astronomers. Beginner to professional, there's a club for you!

The Observing Clubs can be found on the Astronomical League's website, www.astroleague.org. From there, just click on "Observing Clubs" at the top of the page. You'll find all the information you need and several links allowing you to pull up the clubs by name, level of difficulty or even equipment needed. You don't even need to own a telescope for some of these. (i.e., Meteor Club, Constellation Hunter Club, etc.)

If you're wondering what to go look for in the night sky next, try checking out these clubs for some ideas. They really provide a great opportunity to do some fun viewing and to learn a lot about what you're looking at. And, of course, there's the fame that goes along with having your accomplishment published in Reflector (The Astronomical League's newsletter.)

BRAS Observing Notes

January / February 2011

Constellation of the Month

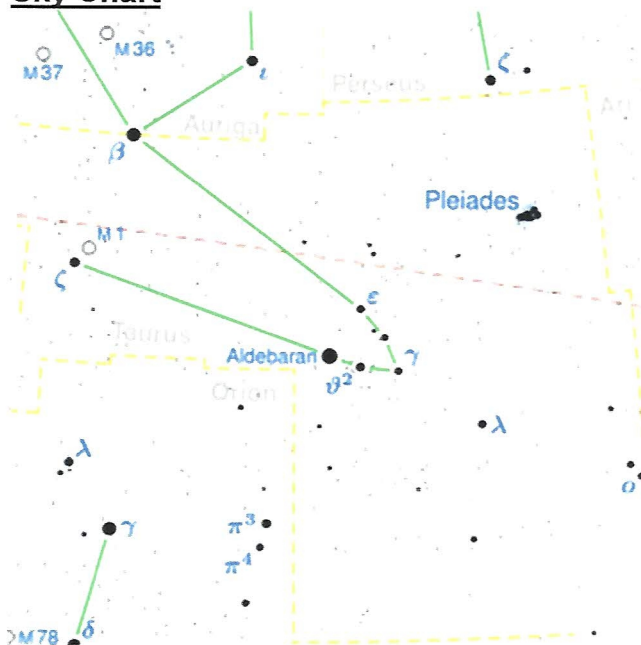
Taurus: The Bull

The constellation of the bull is believed to be one of the oldest identified star patterns with references dating back as far as early Mesopotamia and Babylon. This "Heavenly Bull" was worshipped by the ancient Egyptians as the bringer of new life in spring.

The easily recognizable "V" shaped grouping of stars that make up the head of Taurus is actually part of the Haydes star cluster. The brightest star of the constellation is the red giant Aldebaran representing the fiery right eye of Taurus which glares menacingly towards the constellation Orion. Moving north-east from the head we find another famous star cluster, the Pleiades, which appear as part of the bulls back.

The tips of the horns of Taurus are marked by Beta and Zeta Tauri. Just to the right of Zeta Tauri is found the supernova remnant and sub second pulsar known as the Crab Nebula or M1. The nebula is the result of a supernova recorded by Chinese astronomers in 1054.

Sky Chart



Position in the Sky

Right Ascension: 4 hours
Declination: 15 degrees

Named Stars in Taurus-the Bull

ALDEBARAN (Alpha Tau)
ALNATH (Beta Tau)
Hyadum I (Gamma Tau)
Hyadum II (Delta 1 Tau)
Ain (Epsilon Tau)
ALCYONE (Eta Tau)
Celaeno (16 Tau)
Electra (17 Tau)
Taygeta (19 Tau)
Maia (20 Tau)
Asterope (21 Tau)
Sterope II (22 Tau)
Merope (23 Tau)
Atlas (27 Tau)
Pleione (28 Tau)

Messier Objects

M1 Crab Nebula (supernova remnant)
M45 Pleiades (The Seven Sisters)

BRAS Dark Sky Site Viewing Dates

January 1st and 8th 2011

February 5th and 12th 2011

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

Art Barrios
BRAS Observing Chairman
art.barrios@cox.net

7:10 Dinner live music provided by Mrs. Toman

7:50 Introduction of new members New Member: Oneal Isaac

Astronomical League information & observing operations discussed by members working on projects (see last month's NL).

Election for Club Officers Results as follows

President—Marvin Owen Vice President—Ben Toman

Treasurer –Bob Sinitiere Secretary—Dave Thomas

Non-Elected Position: Public Information Officer –Stephanie Northrop

Don Weinell reported that The Annual Rockefeller Trip is set for January 28th-30th, 2011

Forrest Smith just learned, via cell phone, that his son, in China, got married.

Congratulations!

Craig Brenden requested information from anyone for the monthly newsletter

30 years Co-founders Trophy, Service from 1981, was presented to Wally Purcell, Craig Brendon, Bob Sinitiere. Don Brocksmith was not present

Merrill Hess was presented an Honorary Co-founder for Service from 1985

Congratulations & Thank You, Guys. Well Done.

2011 is the 30th Birthday for B.R.A.S.

Trevor McGuire reported on Tycho Brahe's Death Investigation.

Presentation: oakgroveobservatory.com by Mike Carambat Prairieville, La.

A montage of the construction showed us his space saving hidden passages and cat attractors. Nice Deck. Kudos to the wife.

Mike has created an Observatory at his home that has already captured some very good images. Images of bolides & meteors are interesting. They are available on his web site (still under construction). All sky imagery on a shoestring. I especially liked the door peephole lens & security camera set-up.

He is up grading & we will hear from him later. Thanks, Mike.

Secretary's report by Dave Thomas

BATON ROUGE ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY

**You can pay your Membership Dues at our next Meeting or
Send your Dues to:**

*Baton Rouge Astronomical Society, inc.
c/o Bob Sinitiere, Treasure,
14558 Cottinham Ct.,
Baton Rouge, LA 70817-3543*

**If you have questions about dues or receiving your News Letter call Bob
at 755-2079**

<p>◆ Regular Membership \$20.00 \$ _____</p> <p>◆ Each Additional Family Membership \$ 5.00 \$ _____</p> <p>◆ Student Membership \$10.00 \$ _____ (through age 17)</p> <p>◆ Donation* toward club building fund or (_____) \$ _____ <i>Specify</i></p> <p>TOTAL ENCLOSED \$ _____</p>	<p>Date _____</p> <p>Name _____</p> <p>Mailling Address _____</p> <p>_____ Zip _____</p> <p>Phone (H) _____ (C) _____ (W) _____</p> <p>E-Mail _____</p>
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How do you wish to recieve the Society's Newsletter *Night Visions-*

____ By Mail or by ____ E-Mail

(Please Check one)

**PLEASE CHECK THAT YOUR ADDRESS AND E-MAIL ARE CURRENT AND
CURRENT.**

**Meetings are usually held the second Monday of each month at 7pm, except for June and July.
Most meetings are held at the Highland Road Observatory.**

*All donations to the *Baton Rouge Astronomical Society, Inc.* are tax-deductible under IRS Section 501(c)(3) & (a)(1) and also
170(b)(1)(A)(vi).

The *Baton Rouge Astronomical Society, Inc.* is a nonprofit corporation chartered under the laws of the State of Louisiana.