



July 2025

Meetings at Highland Road Park Observatory and online through YouTube and Jitsi

<https://meet.jit.si/brasmeet>

Calendar:

- 2 July, 5:30PM: Astronomy Night at Nicholson Hall (LSU)
- 14 July, 7PM: General Meeting at HRPO
- 30 July, 7PM: LSU's Astronomy on Tap at the Varsity

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Vice President's Word

Hi Everyone,

I hope everyone had a great June and that you're reasonably ready for what looks to be another scorching hot Summer. We've got our monthly club meeting coming up on **Monday, July 14th at 7pm at the Highland Road Park Observatory** and if you're not off on vacation somewhere, I'm hoping you'll join us. I'm still working on a program, but we'll definitely try to get outside for some more observing if the weather/clouds cooperate. That's been a hit with our members!

On the club business front, I've had some great meetings with our friends/colleagues at LSU regarding internet access and the fruits of these labors are coming soon. Our hope is that the upgrades we're adding will make our live stream for our meetings MUCH more enjoyable with better video and sound. It will also make it a much more enjoyable experience for all of us when we host a guest via the web.

We also voted to have the club purchase our own Sunspotter for use at our outreach events when appropriate. Via various member volunteers, we have an impressive array for solar observing and the Sunspotter is yet another great addition to that. I feel pretty great about how much we're able to offer now as community educators.

The meeting last month was a lot of fun. The pizza brought out a few members we hadn't seen in a long time and it's always great to catch up. I really enjoyed presenting about Charles Messier and had a lot of great comments from those in attendance. Unfortunately, clouds overhead curtailed the plans to try locating some of those Messier objects ourselves, but we'll try again after next month's meeting so start hoping for some clear skies now!

So, take a look at the sky happenings this month and I hope you get a chance to pop outside and indulge your love of our night sky. (Or of the Sun if you're one of our Solar observers!) If you get some pictures, send them our way so we can show them off here in the newsletter!!

Clear Skies,

Ben Toman

Vice-President



Messier-ing around: Ben Toman speaks with the club about the life of Charles Messier during the June BRAS meeting.



After party: Annette breaks out the cake to help Chris celebrate a milestone birthday. Happy birthday, Chris, from all of us at the Baton Rouge Astronomical Society: keep on rocking—but, you know, keep looking up, too.

Outreach Report

Hi Everyone,

Just a short report this month. The dog days of Summer are here and everything has slowed down as far as our outreach goes.

We did have a fantastic visit to Lafayette with the Little Lamb's kid camp. Scott, Susan, Roz, Chad, Chris R., Annette and myself had 6 different learning stations going for the kids and we all had a lot of fun. (Of course, descending on Chris and Annette's house for lunch was even more fun!)

As I'm writing this, we still have one more outreach this month, our appearance at Dino Days downtown at the Louisiana Art and Science Museum. We always have a great time down there and we're looking forward to another fun outing there.

On a final note, we had a productive training session a few weeks ago, too. We bounced around some great ideas that we'll be working to implement for some of our future events.

Nothing in the wings for July, so get some rest and try to stay cool!

Clear Skies,

Ben Toman

Outreach Chairperson



Top: Ben introduces us to our audience at the Little Lambs daycamp.

Middle: Susan, Annette, and Chad engage the children with STEM models.

Bottom: Chris walks the kids around the solar system and Ben shows how to make an impact.

Secretary's Summary

- 24 people in attendance, pizza and sweets were had
- Don says Hi (he's still on vacation)
- Ben gave an overview of what we had done in the month of May
- Ben talked about future outreaches
- After a discussion about its usefulness for outreaches, the club voted to acquire a Sunspotter device.
- Ben gave a presentation on the life of Charles Messier
- A raffle was had



The team gathers for a group shot before heading home: Front: Annette and Susan. Back: Scott, Roz, Ben, Chris, and Chad.



From the Road, Ben yells at Scott to get back in the van as he tries to grab this photo of the rainbow that welcomed them to Lafayette (without using profanity, we promise, Ashley).

Observatory Notes

Nothing submitted before the publishing deadline.

Sky Map



Chart centered on 15 July 2025 at 10PM. For an interactive sky map, go to <https://in-the-sky.org>

Quick Picks—Events for July

- Wed 2 [Mercury](#) 1.2°S of Beehive
- Wed 2 [First Quarter Moon](#)
- Thu 3 Earth at Aphelion - Dist: 1.0166 AU
- Thu 3 Spica 0.8°N of [Moon](#)
- Thu 3 [Mercury](#) at Greatest Eastern Elongation - 25.90°
- Fri 4 [Venus](#) 6.5°S of Pleiades
- Fri 4 [Moon](#) Apogee at 404,627 km.
- Mon 7 Antares 0.4°N of [Moon](#)
- Thu 10 [Full Moon](#)
- Sun 13 [Venus](#) 3.1°N of Aldebaran
- Mon 14 [Mercury](#) at Aphelion
- Wed 16 [Saturn](#) 3.8°S of [Moon](#)
- Thu 17 [Last Quarter Moon](#)
- Sun 20 Pleiades 0.7°S of [Moon](#)
- Sun 20 [Moon](#) Perigee at 368,047 km.
- Tue 22 [Jupiter](#) 4.9°S of [Moon](#)
- Thu 24 [New Moon](#)
- Sat 26 Regulus 1.4°S of [Moon](#)
- Sun 27 Delta-Aquarid Meteor Shower
- Mon 28 [Mars](#) 1.3°N of [Moon](#)
- Thu 31 Spica 1.0°N of [Moon](#)
- Thu 31 [Mercury](#) in Inferior Conjunction

See stellarium.com for exact times and distances for your location.

Looking up



July's Night Sky Notes: Spy the Scorpion

By: Kat Troche

As summer deepens in the Northern Hemisphere, a familiar constellation rises with the galactic core of the Milky Way each evening: Scorpion the Scorpion. One of the twelve zodiacal constellations, Scorpion contains many notable objects, making it an observer's delight during the warmer months. Here are some items to spy in July:



The star map of the Scorpius constellation highlights the star Antares and several notable deep-sky objects like the Rho Ophiuchi Complex, Messier 4, the Cat's Paw Nebula, and Caldwell 76, the Baby Scorpion Cluster. Credit: Stellarium Web

- **Antares:** referred to as “the heart of the scorpion,” this supergiant has a distinct reddish hue and is visible to the naked eye. If you have good skies, try to split this binary star with a medium-sized telescope. Antares is a double star with a white main-sequence companion that comes in at a 5.4 magnitude.
- **[Messier 4:](#)** one of the easiest globular clusters to find, M4 is the closest of these star clusters to Earth at 5,500 light years. With a magnitude of about 5.6, you can spot this with a small or medium-sized telescope in average skies. Darker skies will reveal the bright core. Use Antares as a guide star for this short trip across the sky.
- **[Caldwell 76:](#)** If you prefer open star clusters, locate C76, also known as the Baby Scorpion Cluster, right where the ‘stinger’ of Scorpius starts to curve. At a magnitude of 2.6, it is slightly brighter than M4, albeit smaller, and can be spotted with binoculars and the naked eye under good sky conditions.

Lastly, if you have an astrophotography set up, capture the [Cat's Paw Nebula](#) near the stinger of Scorpius. You can also capture the [Rho Ophiuchi cloud complex](#) in the nearby constellation Ophiuchus. Brilliant Antares can be found at the center of this wondrous structure.



A digital map of the Rho Ophiuchi Complex. Credit: Stellarium Web

Manaiakalani

While many cultures tell tales of a ‘scorpion’ in the sky, several Polynesian cultures see the same stars as the demigod Māui's fishhook, [Manaiakalani](#). It is said that Māui didn't just use his hook for giant fish in the sea, but to pull new islands from the bottom of the ocean. There are many references to the Milky Way

representing a fish. As Manaiakalani rises from the southeast, it appears to pull the great celestial fish across a glittering sea of stars.

Measure Your Darkness

While you can use smartphone apps or dedicated devices like a Sky Quality Meter, Scorpius is a great constellation to measure your sky darkness with! On a clear night, can you trail the curve of the tail? Can you see the scorpion's heart? Use our free printable [Dark Sky Wheel](#), featuring the stars of Scorpius on one side and Orion on the other for measurements during cooler months. You can find this resource and more in the [Big Astronomy Toolkit](#).



Freak Accident: Roz shines a light to help figure out what caused Ben to slip and fall outside of the Observatory meeting. Looks like it was a pile of ice. We suspect a freak, localized hail storm.

Contact Information

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