

September 2025

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

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

Calendar:

- 2 September, 6PM: Sidewalk Astronomy at Perkins' Rowe
- 4 September, 3PM: BREC Volunteer Fair at Wommack Ballroom
- 8 September, 7PM: Monthly meeting at Highland Road Park Observatory
- 9 September, 12:30PM: Francois Bend Assisted Living in Gonzales
- 19 September, 11PM: Transit of Titan Event at HRPO
- 11 September, 4:30PM: Holden School Family Math/Science Night in Livingston
- 27 September, 8PM: Star Party at Landolt Observatory
- 30 September, 6PM: Sidewalk Astronomy at Perkins' Rowe
- 4 October:
 - 7PM: HRPO Spooky Spectrum
 - 8PM: Star Party at Landolt Observatory
- 7 October, 6:30PM: Louisiana Master Naturalist Full Moon Levee Walk
- 18 October, 10AM: Baton Rouge Maker Faire
- 28 October, 6PM: Sidewalk Astronomy at Perkins' Rowe
- 29 October, 7PM: LSU's Astronomy on Tap at The Varsity
- 18 November-23 November: Deep South Star Gaze at Feliciana Retreat Center

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Vice President's Word

Hi Everyone,

First things first! Thank you to Amy Northrup for a fun and informative presentation on NASA's Clipper mission last month. We had a lot of questions and interaction from the attendees and that's great to see.

We also got lucky with some clear sky afterwards and headed outside for some viewing. We had mounted binos and two Seestars set up catching whatever we could. We'll continue to try to do some observing after each monthly meeting until about 10pm so I encourage you to stick around. It's a great time to learn some practical observing AND/OR a great time to share your knowledge.

Our next monthly meeting will be on Monday, September 8th at 7pm at the Highland Road Park Observatory. We'll be hosting Dr. Carlos Gary-Bicas, a planetary scientist with LSU's Department of Physics and Astronomy. He'll be giving a presentation titled, Our Cosmic Oasis and the Search for Life Beyond. Yeah, pretty cool! (A few of us saw a shortened version of this talk last month at Astronomy on Tap and I'm looking forward to hearing the expanded version.)

We'll be continuing to sell tickets for the latest C8 tube, too. Come get a ticket. It could be YOUR next scope!

As I mentioned at the meeting last month, I'm encouraging you all to get out to LIGO on one of their upcoming Science Saturdays. (You can check out the LIGO-Livingston website for more details.) In particular, I'm in the process of organizing a club get together on their Science Saturday October 4th. The hours are 10am-4pm so it would be fun to do a picnic out there and maybe bring some solar scopes to share views with other patrons attending. I hope you'll be able to join us!

Finally, we should be seeing the return of our President, Don, from his Summer hiatus up North soon. Hopefully we can get a great report from him on his Summer doings. (I know they included some Summer star parties!)

I hope y'all have a great rest of your Summer. Be sure to check out the internet (and our own observing notes section!) for some cool things to get out and observe. (Did anyone catch the transit of Titan across Saturn yet? Let us know!)

Clear Skies and Happy Observing,

Ben Toman

Vice President

Outreach Report

Hi Everyone,

And just like that, Summer is coming to a close. The days are getting shorter again and it's just in time for the return of Sidewalk Astronomy and other fun stuff.

As far as what we've been up to since the last newsletter, we really only had one event that was handled soundly by Scott, Roz and Chad. It was actually a first for us as it was an outreach for a group of 4-5 year olds!

We're not used to dealing with that age range exclusively, but we figured we'd give it a try as the Country Day School was desperately looking for good educational opportunities for their kids. I'm happy to say they were extremely pleased with what we were able to offer so we'll definitely be asked back again. (They even have 2 other campuses that will want us!)

Now for what's coming up. It's that time of year and the calendar is filling. As always, please take a look at the schedule of events below and let me know if you'd be able to help out. We've got a couple of new faces helping out, but I'd love to see even more participation from the club. Just let me know if you'd like to come out. **No experience necessary!** We can teach you the ropes!!

Finally, this list is NOT complete. We may be adding Sidewalk Astronomy dates for the Library in Gonzales and also some outreach at a local retirement home. Keep your eyes peeled for further updates!

Clear Skies,

Ben Toman

Outreach Chairperson

Upcoming Events

Tuesday, September 2nd, 6pm-9pm

Sidewalk Astronomy at Perkins Rowe

Thursday, September 4th, 3pm-6pm

BREC Volunteer Fair at Wommack Ballroom

Demos and Club/HRPO Info

Tuesday, September 9th, 12:30pm-2:30pm

Francois Bend Assisted Living-Gonzales

Solar observing

Thursday, September 11th, 4:30-6:30pm

Holden School Family Math/Science Night (Livingston Parish)

Demos, club info, possible solar observing

Tuesday, September 30th, 6pm-9pm

Sidewalk Astronomy at Perkins Rowe

Tuesday, October 7th, 6:30pm-? (Not long)

Louisiana Master Naturalists

Full Moon Levee Walk

(Meeting up on the levee near Skip Bertman Dr.)

Sidewalk Astronomy type observing

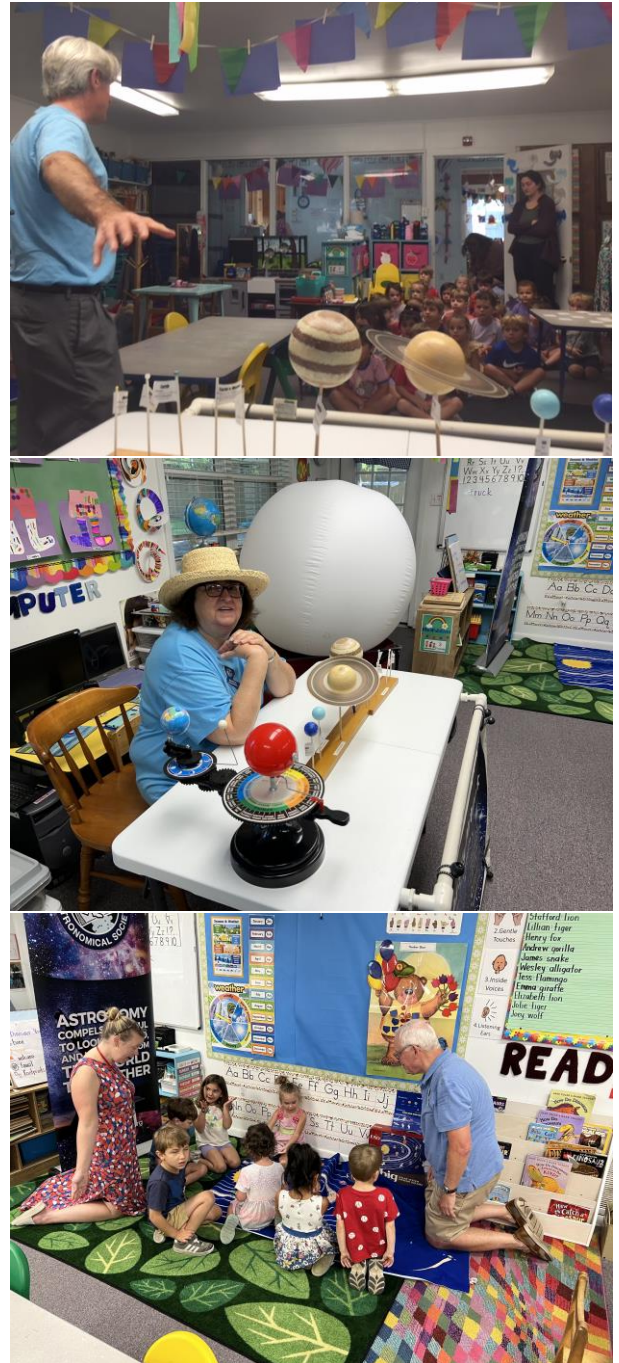
Saturday, October 18th, 10am-4pm

Baton Rouge Maker Faire (Main Library)

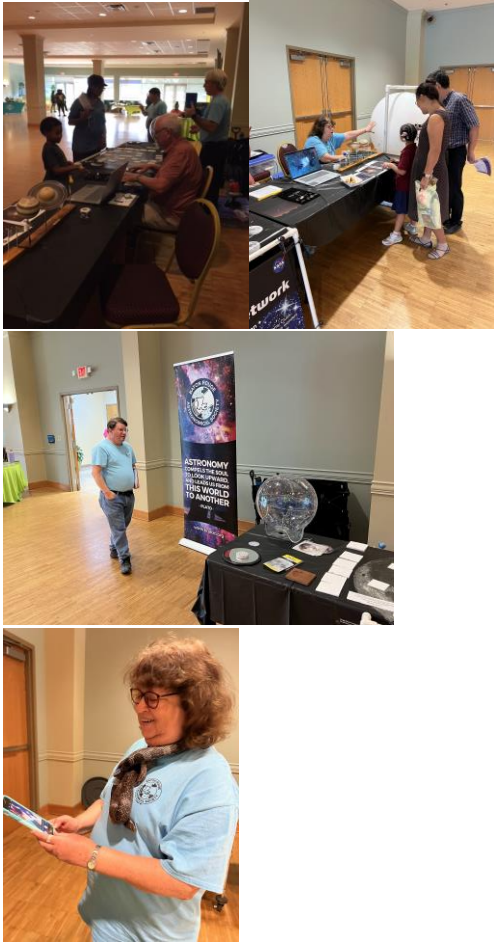
Demos, solar observing, club info

Tuesday, October 28th, 6pm-9pm

Sidewalk Astronomy at Perkins Rowe



Starting small: Top, Scott introduces the club. Middle, Roz disputes the claim she doesn't like children by showing up for the Country Day Pre-K event. Bottom, Chad engages with the children to show them around the solar system.



From the BREC Camp Unite Event: Top: Chad and Scott talk about the moon and meteorites while Roz explains the solar system. Middle, Chris greets the public. Bottom: Roz makes a new friend.



Full moon or not, People gathered at HRPO for the annual Perseid Meteor shower. The next Meteor shower at HRPO will be the Gemeni shower in December: keep your eyes on the newsletter for more information once it becomes available.

Secretary's Summary

General Meeting: 11 August 2025

- 18 people in attendance
- Don should be back in September, but no word on if he'll make it back in time for the meeting
- The evening's speaker was NASA Solar System Ambassador Amy Northrop, who spoke with the club about the Europa Clipper mission
- Ben invited the club to check out the new outreach events that had been announced since the newsletter was published. [there are also a great number of outreaches coming up, see above]
- Sidewalk Astronomy will start back up at Perkins' Rowe in September
- Ben is pushing members to try to take a trip out to LIGO Livingston for 4 October: he says that although they know they have funding through December, they can't say if their free Saturday's will continue past that due to budget cuts.
- A new \$5 raffle was started for a Celestron Super 8—this one is in fine condition and comes with a Losmondy style dovetail bar attached, though it does not have a tripod.
- Everybody was reminded that we have a loaner scope program and that the equipment can be checked out from an Officer by members for one month intervals after BRAS meetings

Planning Meeting: 30 July, 2025

- 5 members in attendance
- Steven tried to persuade the club to take over membership duties for the Inter-civic Council which he has been standing for the club for the past several years
- There is a call for a special meeting in order to review the club's collective bargaining agreement with HRPO and LSU
- The question was raised over whether or not the club wants to run a raffle for Astronomy Day in the spring for the public.



Finding himself in a dark place without stars: BRAS member and known rock addict Chris Raby takes joy in the familiar glow of lighting up his special rocks with guests at the BR Gem and Mineral Society's Annual event at Lamar Dixon.

Observatory Notes

A GALAXY OF GAMES

Friday 5 September from 5pm to 9pm

For ages twelve and older. Drinks.

This one-time-only open house will showcase those non-electronic tabletop challenges that incorporate an astronomy or STEM theme!

[Postponed from 1 August.]

SCIENCE ACADEMY

Saturdays from 10am to 12pm.

for Cadets aged eight to twelve / \$5 per Cadet per week (\$6 if out-of-parish)

advanced registration via [WebTrac](#) strongly recommended

[activity #231320] / parents may stay with or leave Cadet

Four Cadet minimum and sixteen Cadets maximum per session.

6 September = “Rockets of the Past”

13 September = “Saturn”

20 September = “The Spooky Session”

EVENING SKY VIEWING

for ages six and older / no admission fee

Saturdays (6, 27 September) from 8:30pm to 10pm

Friday 12 September from 7:30pm to 10pm

HRPO houses a 50-cm reflector, a 40-cm reflector and several smaller telescopes to bring the majesty of the night sky to the public. Trained operators, sharing duties via a rotating roster, work throughout the year in shifts. Each operator has a pre-planned list of objects to highlight. However, requests will be taken if there is time and if all present have viewed the previous target.

BATON ROUGE ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY MEETING

Monday 8 September from 7pm to 9pm

for ages fourteen and older / no admission fee

FRIDAY NIGHT LECTURE SERIES

7:30pm / for ages fourteen and older / no admission fee

12 September = “Wonders of the Fall Sky” BREC Education Curator Amy Northrop will take the audience on a fascinating tour of Baton Rouge’s autumn season. She’ll highlight the celestial gems that will sparkle throughout the next three months—gems visitors will be able to see live if they continue to visit HRPO!

PLUS NIGHT: “The Outer Giants”

Saturday 13 September from 7pm to 10pm

for ages six and older / no admission fee / binocular recommended

During Plus Nights and extra features are available to the public...

*The well-known marshmallow roast takes place at the campfire ring (weather-dependent).

*Seven to ten of HRPO’s collection of over fifty physical science demonstrations will be on hand to perplex and amaze. Which demos will it be?

*An unaided eye sky tour takes place, showing the public major features of the sky for that month.

*Filters are inserted into the viewing mechanisms, to show patrons “hidden” details of the Moon, Mars and Jupiter (when they are available).

*Reveal your age, and be shown any “birth stars” in the sky at that time.

SOLAR VIEWING SPECIAL SESSION

Tuesday 16 September from 11:30am to 2:30pm

for ages six and older / no admission fee

Weather permitting, viewing of the Sun’s image in three different manners—transferred onto a white surface, directly with safely-filtered optical light, and directly in safely-filtered hydrogen-alpha wavelength—will take place for two hours. Protective clothing and sunscreen are recommended.

TITAN TRANSIT OF SATURNFriday 19 September from 11pm to 1amSATURNIAN OPPOSITIONSaturday 20 September from 9:30pm to 11:30pmNEPTUNIAN OPPOSITIONSunday 21 September from 9:30pm to 11:30pmSOLAR VIEWINGSaturday 27 September from 11:30am to 2:30pmfor ages six and older / no admission fee

Weather permitting, viewing of the Sun's image in three different manners—transferred onto a white surface, directly with safely-filtered optical light and directly in safely-filtered hydrogen-alpha wavelength—will take place. Protective clothing and sunscreen are recommended.

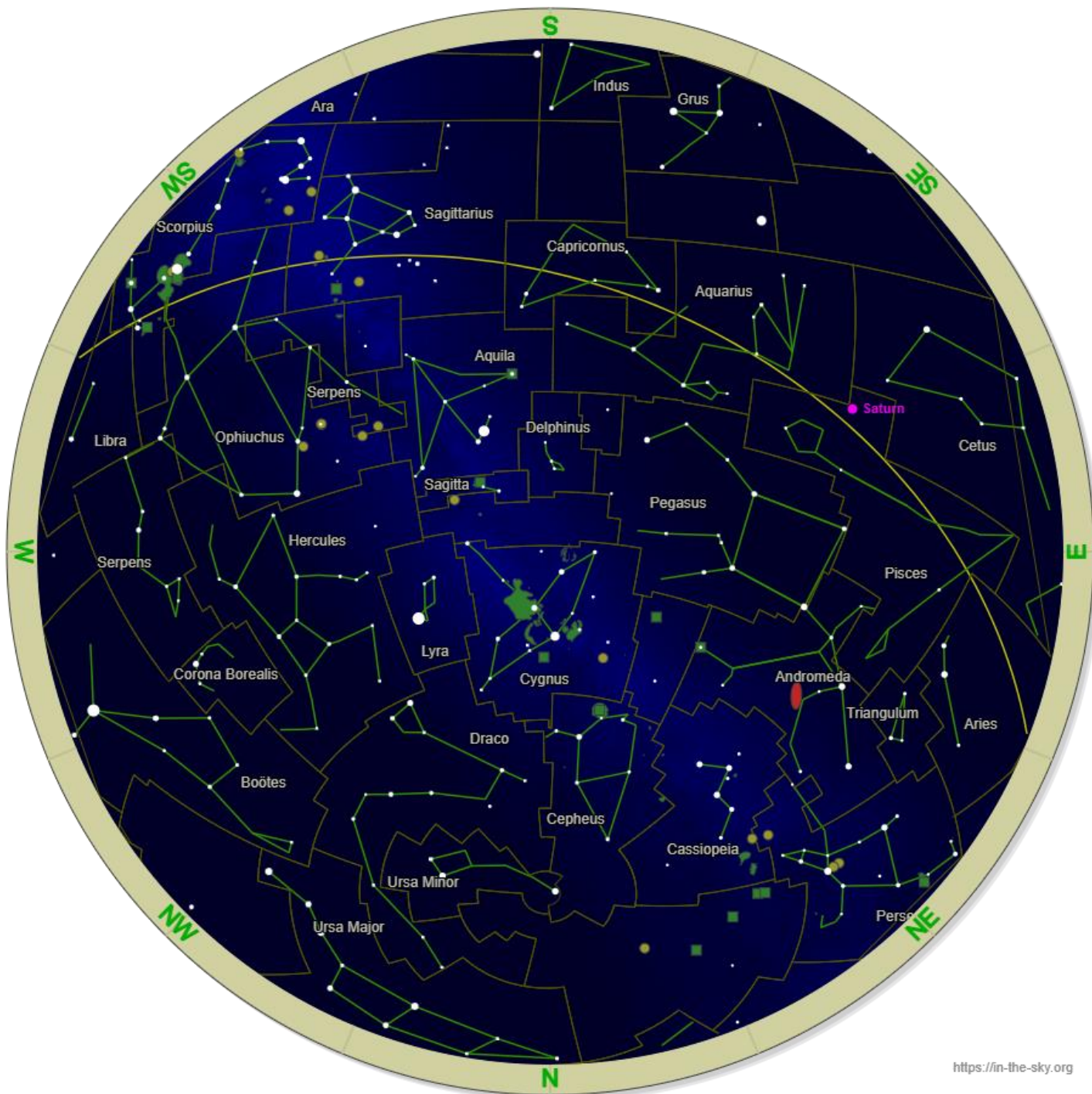
STEM EXPANSION: “Aerospace Engineering II”Saturday 27 September from 2:30pm to 6:30pm

for ages twelve to sixteen. / \$15 each per in-parish registrant; \$18 each per out-of-parish registrant. Advanced registration via [WebTrac](#) required [activity #231321]. Part I is not a prerequisite.

This program offers advanced topics, topic extensions and all-new games and activities to an older crowd. Certificates will be earned, and a section of archived experiments, some not seen in over fifteen years (and some *never* performed on site) take place. There are also giveaways and door prizes.

{HRPO is closed to the public on 26 September.}

Sky Map



<https://in-the-sky.org>

Map centered on 15 September at 10PM.

Quick Picks—Events for September

- Sun 7 [Full Moon](#)
- Sun 7 Total Lunar Eclipse - Mag: 1.362
- Mon 8 [Saturn](#) 4.0°S of [Moon](#)
- Wed 10 [Moon](#) Perigee at 364,781 km.
- Fri 12 Pleiades 1.0°S of [Moon](#)
- Fri 12 [Mars](#) 2.0°N of Spica
- Sat 13 [Mercury](#) in Superior Conjunction
- Sun 14 [Last Quarter Moon](#)
- Tue 16 [Jupiter](#) 4.6°S of [Moon](#)
- Tue 16 Pollux 2.4°N of [Moon](#)
- Wed 17 Beehive 2.0°S of [Moon](#)
- Fri 19 [Venus](#) 0.4°N of Regulus
- Fri 19 Regulus 1.3°S of [Moon](#)
- Fri 19 Occultation of [Venus](#) by the Moon
- Sun 21 [Saturn](#) at Opposition
- Sun 21 Partial Solar Eclipse - Mag: 0.855
- Sun 21 [New Moon](#)
- Mon 22 Autumnal Equinox
- Tue 23 [Neptune](#) at Opposition
- Tue 23 Spica 1.1°N of [Moon](#)
- Wed 24 [Mars](#) 3.9°N of [Moon](#)
- Fri 26 [Moon](#) Apogee at 405,552 km.
- Sat 27 Antares 0.6°N of [Moon](#)
- Mon 29 [First Quarter Moon](#)

All times localized to Greenwich, England. For exact times see Stellarium.com

In Memoriam

As you may have already heard, we recently lost a great physicist, astronomer and friend. For those that haven't been around our club for very long, Dr. Greg Guzik was the driving force that got the Highland Road Park Observatory built.

I was lucky enough to have known and worked with him. After being trained and signed off by him to use the telescopes and CCD cameras at the HRPO, we would often work through glitches and issues with the hardware and software out there. I'd always send him my astrophotos from the CCD and from my personal scopes as I progressed and he was always encouraging with his comments and quick with a "keep 'em coming!"

Past Presidents Melanie Templet and Merrill Hess worked most closely with him in getting the HRPO off the ground and we've asked them to share their thoughts about him with us here. I've also added this video of a capture he and his son made of the ISS using the 20OGS at HRPO. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6zMY7WDa3HU>

- Gregory Guzik, Grand Vizier, Greg, friend, mentor, father of Highland Road Park Observatory. Greg came to LSU after I had graduated so I never had the pleasure to be in his class. We met while BRAS was running the 11" Clark telescope on top of Nicholson Hall at LSU, later named the Arlo Landolt Astronomical Observatory (the Professor who gave us the key!). I was president of BRAS and at work at Galvez Public Library when the phone in my office rang and it was Greg. After the first pleasantries, I was hit with the question that would change all of our lives forever, "How would you like to build an observatory together?" Those of you who know me, I am not usually at a loss for words. This was one of those times.

After regaining my composure, I asked how we would go about doing that, Greg said he envisioned a joint project with LSU, BREC and BRAS writing a joint GO Bond grant for \$140K to get things off the ground. Merrill Hess, former BRAS member Walt Cooney and I set about building our part of the grant. Greg was right there with us, meeting multiple times to make sure the wording was just right. After the grant was awarded, I moved out of state so I wasn't around during the actual building of the facility. I moved back not too long after HRPO opened and was able to work closely with Greg and everyone to learn how to use this amazing, one of a kind, observatory. That's where the Grand Vizier came about. This facility was his baby! He ruled the domain for sure! I admit I was a little scared of him at first! He had us all on ladders one hot day inside the dome wiping the dust off the curved, black walls. We all thought he was a little crazy, but we did it... don't think it was ever done again.

What he taught us helped me put together another joint observatory in Rio Rancho, NM. The Rainbow Park Observatory is a joint venture with the Rio Rancho Parks and Rec and the Rio Rancho Astronomical Society. It's much smaller, but the concept is the same.

I soon realized how big his heart was and loved the gruff teddy bear. He was a force for sure. Astronomy, outreach of all kinds, LSU and all of us have lost a shining light but each time we go observing and 'bringing astronomy to the public' there will be a light looking down on us and nodding. Thanks, Greg, for everything.

Melanie Templet

- I first met Greg Guzik around 1995, at an introductory meeting at the Physics & Astronomy Department at LSU. Greg had recently arrived to the faculty at LSU and had an interest in building an observatory with our club. Melanie Templet had already been in contact with Greg, through the Department Director Joel Tohline, to begin planning for the project. The purpose of the meeting was to form a team and begin investigating its feasibility. Melanie was moving out of state, and she wanted to ensure that the project

continued, since thereafter she could only participate from a distance. Many interesting and serendipitous things happened – too many to list here – that told us that the Observatory was meant to be.

Greg had a strong drive and good organizational skills. He also had access to funding and sources that were unavailable to us as a club. Although, the project was a joint operation, I believe the Observatory would have never been constructed without his leadership.

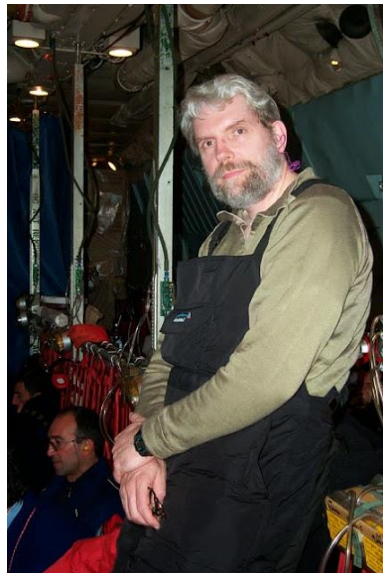
Greg was very focused and fixed on his vision for the Observatory, but he was always open to new ideas and respected the opinions of others. His attitude was that this was our observatory and we had to build and operate it together for our mutual interests.

One thing I remember most about Greg was his passion for astronomy education. He held several teacher education camps for local high school teachers. Most were new to astronomy but they were excited. By the end of the camps, they were proficient in the subject and able to pass it on to students. Some of you may remember some of the 6” kit Dobsonian telescopes that were left at the Observatory from those camp sessions.

His Antarctic adventures with the multi-year ATIC high-altitude balloon platform project left some fond memories. It was my first experience monitoring a science project remotely, as you could follow the flights live online. During one club meeting, he made a remote video call from Antarctica to give us updates about the project and tell us stories of living there. He said it took a while to adjust to life with 24 hours of sunlight during the Antarctic Summer. One of his most amusing stories was his daily encounters with the Skuas that dominated the camp. They are a gull-like bird that engages in aggressive thievery. He noted that you could not take anything edible outside the buildings, or they would steal it from your hands.

Despite an occasional bit of crustiness, Greg was always friendly, open, and encouraging. He had a good sense of humor and enthusiasm for learning that drove his personality. Although we were not close outside of our relationship with the Observatory, I regarded him as a friend. He is already missed.

Merrill Hess



Dr. Guzik from his first trip to Antarctica for the ATIC project.

Contact Information

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Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Baton-Rouge-Astronomical-Society-122591151112271/>

Reddit: <https://www.reddit.com/r/BRAstro/>

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