



Newsletter of the Baton Rouge Astronomical Society



May, 2014

Next Meeting May 12th 7PM at the HRPO



Space X Falcon 9 rocket launch April 18th Photo by NASA/Kim Shiflett

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President's Message

Outside of our May meeting, the big event for BRAS is Astronomy Day, Saturday, May 10, 2014. BRAS will join the Highland Road Park Observatory for our celebrations from 3 -10 PM.

That said, we will need volunteers. BRAS will have its own information table and will set up telescopes both for solar viewing and night viewing. Likewise, we would like to have members there to answer questions the attending public may have. In past years, upwards of 800 people attended Astronomy Day, so expect crowds. No pressure though because there will be a couple dozen other groups with exhibits that day.

While we await the Lundt solar telescope's arrival, our next big ticket raffle item is actually fairly small. It is a high quality vintage binocular made by Celestron, donated to BRAS by former member Art Newman, who sadly passed away from cancer Sunday, April 27, 2014. Art wanted the binoculars to go to someone who would be able to appreciate them and care for them as he did. And he did, purchased in the early 1990s, they almost look brand new. They are an odd size, 9.5 X 42. Wally did some research through Celestron and found that they would have probably sold for around \$450.00. Art said they have fully multi-coated fluorite lenses, which alone puts them into a much higher realm of optical quality. They are very lightweight and well-made for bird watching and other nature observing. Although the objectives are fairly small for astronomy, the optical quality can make up for the smaller apertures. They will go up for raffle at our next meeting, \$5 per ticket or 6 tickets for \$25. We have set a reserve price on them, so as soon as we sell enough tickets to meet that reserve, we will draw for the winner. You will not need to be present to win. You will need to buy a ticket though.

I passed by the BRAS Dark Sky observing site in Maringouin and the bridge is still closed. It looks like it will be a couple more months before it is completely finished. If anyone knows of an alternate site in the meantime, let me know.

Clear skies,

Merrill Hess
President

Secretary's Summary: April 2014 Meeting

- Craig is passing around a signup sheet, looking for BRAS volunteers for International Astronomy Day on May 10th. Members helping out will be manning an information table as well as providing support in different areas for this event. While we on the subject of IAD, it was mentioned that Trevor had suggested that BRAS hold an astronomy garage sale at IAD. Details are supposed to be ironed out later on this. It was also announced here that Trevor is receiving his PhD.
- There was some discussion about prizes for the upcoming BRAS raffles. We currently have a Lunt solar telescope on backorder; it should be coming in in the next 4 – 6 weeks. Also Art Newman has donated a good pair of Celestron binoculars to the raffle; these are valued at approximately \$300. We are planning to raffle these off only when we have sold at least \$295 worth of tickets. There was some discussion at this point about the price per ticket for this raffle item.
- While we were on the subject of raffles, Chris mentioned the Astroblast from Orion that the Observatory is raffling off on IAD. Tickets are \$5 for this and the half dozen other prizes that are available.
- Don Weinell announced that this was the first year that he didn't break even on the Hodges Garden Star Party. There were 31 people that signed up, plus two donations. This was not bad for an event that had three out four nights of bad weather, plus a tornado (Friday night), plus the power being off. This might have affected the number of public participants on Saturday night. Merrill mentioned that the Mid South Star Party held their event the same weekend and had the same weather. Next year's dates for Hodges Gardens are March 18 – 22.
- Wally got up and encouraged BRAS members to reach out to help the public. He mentioned that there are some young ladies at St. Joseph Academy that need help with their school science projects. He talked about one that he had helped whose work on the relationship between sunspot activity and hurricanes had won several awards.
- Dr. Suniti Karunatilake gave an interesting talk on The Activity of Water on Mars.
- There was mention made at the end of the lecture about the June meeting/barbecue possibly taking place inside a building at LIGO instead of the picnic pavilion where it's usually held.
- The meeting adjourned without a raffle, and the rest of the events of the evening were scrubbed due to inclement weather.

Roslyn Readinger
Secretary

HRPO

FRIDAY NIGHT LECTURE SERIES

all start at 7:30pm

2 May: "Journeys to the Moon"

9 May: *HRPO closed*

16 May: "Amateur Radio Service"

CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS

*Saturday, 10 May from 3pm to 11pm. *Eleven to fourteen volunteers; two- to four-hour shifts.* **International Astronomy Day.** Staffing of front desk, children's rides, raffle ticket "booth"; operating telescopes. All needed training given. Even at this late date, HRPO will take more volunteers.

20/20 Vision Campaign

Deadline: November 2017

SQM Goal: 20.0 (back viewing pad at HRPO)

The Campaign will be actively introduced to the public during IAD. There are some good foamboard displays Trevor McGuire used for this year's Earth Day celebration; we can use them at IAD, preferably next to the BRAS table (if there is going to be one). We will also tie in new construction in town and the GLOBE at Night program.

Assistance greatly appreciated.

Remember—the first measurement is in May!

INTERNATIONAL ASTRONOMY DAY

8th Consecutive Year!
Raffle with over \$500 in prizes

Saturday, 10 May
3pm to 11pm

- *Adventure Quest
- *Baton Rouge Amateur Radio Club
- *Baton Rouge Gem and Mineral Society
- *Baton Rouge Metropolitan Airport
- *Baton Rouge Zoo
- *Bluebonnet Swamp Nature Center
- *BulahBot Robot
- *CAMD
- *Chemistry Demonstration
- *Children's Rides (slide, spacewalk, Adrenaline Rush)
- *City Gelato
- *Comet Construction
- *East Baton Rouge Parish Library Bookmobile
- *LIGO
- *Renaissance Sundial
- *Scope-on-a-Rope
- *Train Like an Astronaut

***Viewing: Sun, Moon, Mercury, Jupiter, Mars, Saturn, Omega
Centauri(?)**

GLOBE At Night

*until 29 April,
then 19 May to 28 May*

Everyone's favorite winter light pollution exercise is back...except it's no longer just for winter. During 2014 the GLOBE at Night staff will collect observations during *all twelve* New Moon periods!

This is an excellent time to start compiling a good historical record of sky glow in Baton Rouge. Each BRAS member should take at least one measurement per season during 2014. The GLOBE at Night website makes it as easy as possible, with step-by-step instructions and an downloadable instruction manual.

In April and May, participants use the constellation Leo.

The heading on this page hyperlinks to the BRAS Forum thread devoted to GLOBE at Night. Visit there regularly for updates and answered questions.



Imagine Your Parks 2: Better Parks, Better Living

As we all know, an astronomical observatory needs a certain type of environment to function properly. One of the most pressing concerns at this time is the re-darkening of the sky above HRPO's domes. This would be incredible and thrilling to accomplish step-by-step over the next few years, especially since both large professional telescopes have new motors, new computers and new operating programs. Capping/shielding of lights in the local area would also contribute to the re-darkening of skies above most BRAS members' residences.

Thanks so much to those BRAS members who have attended at least one meeting to show support for dark skies over HRPO and voice BRAS concerns as they relate to public outdoor lighting.

Anyone else interested in the most successful future for HRPO (and the darkest skies for local amateur astronomers and schoolkids) should attend the final IYP2 meeting.

FINAL IYP2 MEETING

Thursday, 1 May from 6pm to 8:30pm [Independence Park Theatre](#)

[If one's residence is at such a distance that attending is inconvenient, call BREC directly at \(225\) 272-9200, email \[planning@brec.org\]\(mailto:planning@brec.org\) or use the powerful Mind Mixer interactive tool.](#)



