



Disappearing Act!

Get ready for two disappearing acts coming our way.

Yes, I'm talking about the total lunar eclipse! It's disappearing ... for the rest of this decade, but not before one last hurrah this month!

February 20th will be our last total lunar eclipse for the next couple of years. The umbral shadow will begin engulfing the moon's surface at 8:43pm with totality beginning at 10:01pm and lasting 51 minutes. See if you can tell if the northern limb appears darker than the southern limb during totality because it lies deeper in Earth's shadow.



During totality, check out the background stars of Leo the Lion, as they pop into view.

Regulus will be 3° above the "ruddy red" colored moon with an added treat of Saturn about 4° to the lower left! As the eclipse progresses, watch the distance between the moon and Saturn. We sometimes lose sight of the movement of our celestial neighbors as

we gaze upon them even though we know it's there. This will be a good gauge of that movement.

If you miss this total lunar eclipse — you will have to endure until next decade! The next one won't come around until December 20/21, 2010!

The Next Meeting of the Kiski Astronomers



will be Thursday, February 7, 2008 at 7 PM at
Kiski High School in the LGI Room.

John Labrecque will have the presentation for the evening, on regional star parties for 2008

Snacks: Dave Koren

Drinks: Terry Trees

During the business meeting, we will:

Get updates on area parks and decide on a location and dates for public star parties.

Need to set a date and plan for our annual summer club picnic.

Get feedback on club website

See you there!

President's Report

By John Labrecque

Here's A Brief Summary of Action Items from the January Meeting.

A. Club Presence and Visibility

1. Website

a. Wini to investigate club website maintenance and domain name with Kevin Daily. Costing to be determined.

b. Larry M. and Terry T. to develop a prototype club website. Aim to have prototype ready for Feb. meeting.

2. Newspapers

a. Denny H. to look into the requirements for Valley paper stroller and perhaps smaller mail delivery papers.

b. John L. to look into Butler Eagle for meeting and star party notice postings.

B. Star Parties

International Year of Astronomy 2009 Is Coming!

It all began in 1609, when Galileo heard of this device that was invented in the Netherlands a year before. It was called "seeing faraway things as though nearby." and was quickly spreading throughout Europe. He quickly picked up on how to build his own device and by June or July of 1609, Galileo made his first 3 power 'spyglass'. By August, he presented an eight-powered instrument to the Venetian Senate and turned a twenty-powered instrument to the heavens in October or November. With this instrument he observed the Moon, discovered four satellites of Jupiter, and resolved nebular patches into stars. He then published Sidereus Nuncius in March 1610 of his findings and started a scientific revolution.

Although Galileo wasn't the first to point a telescope towards the heavens, he was the one who made it famous! And the rest is history ... and began of a new branch of science that is the foundation of our modern day astronomy that has opened the search for our origin and place in the universe and has become a hobby and passion for many of us over the years.

Now with the 400th anniversary of that first look through the telescope at the heavens, the United Nations' General Assembly has formally proclaimed 2009 **The International Year of Astronomy**, where millions of residence, in a hundred participating



countries, will unite to partake in this year long celebration.

The president of the International Astronomical Union, Catherine Cesarsky says: "*The International Year of Astronomy 2009 gives all nations a chance to participate in this ongoing, exciting scientific and technological revolution.*"

Astronomy has bridged borders, nationality, race, politics, sex, age, and prejudices with collaboration between colleagues in the pursuit of knowledge and discovery. Now the IYD2009 can be the instrument to allow these bridges to be crossed by everyone in the world in the peaceful pursuit and excitement of personal discovery, the pleasure of sharing fundamental knowledge about the Universe and our place in it.

The International Year of Astronomy 2009 is, first and foremost, an activity for the citizens of planet Earth and the IAU will function as the facilitating body for this momentous even.

Astronomy is an invaluable source of inspiration for humankind throughout all nations. Let's make 2009 a year for renewed enthusiasm for the young and old and see what we can do to promote these ideals in our own area!

Check out these websites for more information:

<http://astronomy2009.us/> ,

<http://www.astronomy2009.org/>

Presidents Report cont. from page 1

1. Site selection

- a. Kunkle Park – Terry T.
- b. Kiski Academy area – Mark O.
- c. Lou V. – Kiski HS
- d. Gary S. – Moraine State Park
- e. Denny H. – Northmoreland Park
- f. Tony O. – Freeport/Laube Hall
- g. Other alternatives/volunteers

Items to investigate:

Contact Names and positions

Interest level of staff

Restrictions – closes at dark, permits required, insurance required.

Costs

Facilities – electricity, shelters (charges), restroom facilities

Site conditions – sky coverage, lighting, light pollution levels, parking, observing field condition (gravel, grass, tall grass, paved)

Please try to gather as much info as possible for February's meeting. We should try to get a star party site selected by March in order to get gatherings advertised and set up schedules by April. I will present the annual large regional star party dates at the February meeting so we can select non-conflicting dates.

Dues Deadline!!!

Dues for 2008 are due! They are \$15 per family and \$10 for students.

We ask that you pay before the end of February 2008. Anyone that hasn't paid will be dropped from the mailing list.

You can send your payment to:

Ed Kuzemchak
397 Dairy Farm Rd
New Kensington, PA 15068

Happy Birthday To Us!!

Let's wish ourselves a big Happy Birthday! Our meeting this month celebrates the 39th anniversary of the Kiski Astronomer's first public meeting, first held on February 7th, 1969 at Vandergrift #1 Firehall. Congratulations to all of the past and present members that have done such an outstanding job of keeping the club going!

**2008 Officers****President:**

John Labrecque
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Treasurer

Ed Kuzemchak
412-952-5347
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Dues for 2008

\$15 adult & family
\$10 Students

Magazine Subscriptions**Astronomy Magazine**

\$34/ year, \$60 for 2 years.

Sky & Telescope

\$32.95 first time through club.
You can renew yourself after that.

Astronomy Technology Today

\$18/year
Subscribe online at:
www.astronomytechnologytoday.com/subscribe.asp

Send payments to:

Ed Kuzemchak
397 Dairy Farm Rd
New Kensington, PA 15068

Website:

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/kiskiastronomers/>

Club Email List server

Open forum messages
kiskiastronomers@yahoo.com

**Nocturnal Notables
February 2008**

- 06 ○ New Moon, 10:44 P.M.
- 06 annular solar eclipse
- 06 Mercury in inferior conjunction
- 13 ☾ First Quarter Moon, 10:33 P.M.
 Moon at perigee
- 18 Mercury stationary
- 20 ● Full Moon 10:30 P.M.
- Total lunar eclipse**
- 24 Saturn at opposition
- 27 Moon at apogee
- 28 ☾ Last Quarter Moon 9:18 P.M.

March 2008

- 05 Mercury 0.2° north of Moon, occultation
- 05 Venus 0.2° south of Moon, occultation
- 05 Neptune 0.2° north of Moon, occultation
- 07 ○ New Moon 12:14 P.M.

**The
Galactic Gazette**

is published & edited by
Denny Hill

Contributions to the newsletter are greatly appreciated!
Please consider sharing your knowledge and experiences along with any expertise
with me for future issues!

This is your newsletter! Make it the best it can be!
Email your articles to me at dhill955@alltel.net

Contributing a Presentation to KA

By Ed Kuzemchak

Due to our small size, the Kiski Astronomers do not often have outside speakers for our club meetings. Members normally present information at club meetings on topics that interest them. One of the ongoing challenging tasks for the club President has been to locate a presentation for each month's meeting.

The purpose of this article is to encourage first-time presenters, or those that have not presented often, to try their hand at doing a presentation for a club meeting. I recall my first presentation to the club years ago. I talked about an interesting method I had recently learned for determining the visual limiting magnitude (i.e. darkness) of your local night sky. It was a challenge because I was still new to the hobby. But the group was respectful and even interested, it seemed. Since that time, I have presented many times on various topics of interest.

As a club member, you may fall into the trap of thinking one of the following:

- 1 I don't know anything particularly interesting that others in the club don't already know
- 2 I've never done a presentation to a group, I might not be 'good' at it

Nothing particularly useful? Think again.

If this describes your feelings, you are giving yourself too little credit (and the rest of us far too much!). Each person has some bit of knowledge that they have been exposed to in this hobby that is unique to their experience. Each of us has different interests in what draws us to this hobby. Taking one of those interests, maybe applying a few hours of research to it and presenting it is a great way to share it with the rest of the club. Here are some examples:

- You've been considering a purchase (binoculars, astro software, eyepiece,...) and you've done a ton comparisons and read all the reviews. Why not share that information with the club?
- You saw an interesting article on astronomy (comets, Mars, Cassini, ...) or observation techniques (collimation, polar alignment, photoshop, guiding, dew zappers, ...) and you had enough interest to go learn more about it. Why not share what you've learned.
- You have some specific interest (lunar, solar, deep sky, electronics, ...). Discuss your equipment and techniques that you have found useful.



If you look back at the club presentations that you've most enjoyed over the last several years, they will likely fit one of these categories. You can contribute similarly with your own presentation and it will be similarly received by the group.

Never done a presentation before?

Some of our members do presentations for a living (teachers, salespeople, project managers). Even if you are not in that group, you have likely done many informal talks that you might not consider a 'presentation'. Remember, KA is a very informal club, and our presentations are similarly informal.



As for format, 'Powerpoint' is a useful tool, but not a requirement for presentations. If you are more comfortable just talking or doing an actual demonstration of something, that is great. If you do use 'Powerpoint', these tips may be helpful:

- Slides should be bullet-list of the main topics, not all the words you are going to say. 3-6 bullets of 6 words each should be about as much text as you want on a slide. Use the slide text to guide your talk and highlight the main points.
- Pictures and graphics help reinforce your point
- Use at least 18 pt font, even with our projector, anything smaller may be hard to read.
- Plan on about 3 minutes per slide. So, 7-10 slides is 20-30 minutes of presentation, then 5-10 minutes for discussion and that is a very nice length.

If you use Powerpoint or Word or anything that can write PDF files, then you do not need to bring a computer or projector to present.

Contact me prior to the meeting and I'll be sure to bring a laptop and projector to the meeting.



Think about it

The Kiski Astronomers club meetings are our opportunity to get together and share information and to learn from each other. Whether you are a regular presenter, a one-time presenter or have never presented, consider doing a presentation for the 2008 club season and sharing your unique interest in this hobby with the club.

You might be a redneck Astronomer if

{Apologies to Jeff Foxworthy}

Galactic Humor!

Submitted by Gary Shannon

1. The most important part of your instrumentation is the pickup truck.
2. You have a Tasco refractor up on blocks in the front yard.
3. Your observing site would be perfect if it weren't for the alligators.
4. You carry a shotgun to deal with skunks, raccoons, and streetlights.
5. The board with holes on the side of the DOB mount fit beer cans (the eyepieces already have a little box they came in -duh!).
6. A cup holder by the eyepiece has a partial beer to balance different eyepieces. (Amazing how many need replacing as they get too light.)
7. You will fight that SOB trying to find WWV when it was already on a perfectly good country station.
8. You tell all the guys at the star party about that neat dang drinking fountain next to the toilet in them big fancy hotels.
9. The counterweight on your Dob doubles as a spit can.
10. You've used lard to slick those declination bearings.
11. Others at the star party complain about the smoke when you barbecue spam.
12. You start to giggle when you tell your buddies that you have a 16-incher.
13. You ever wonder what your granny's truss has to do with building a telescope.
14. You've ever tried to use your granny's truss to build a telescope.
15. You nostalgically refer to Canis Major as Old Duke.
16. You look at pictures of the Flame Nebula (or the Rosette) to get in the mood.
17. You lie and tell your buddies the next morning that your red eyes are from drinking and partying rather than stargazing.

Shattered Dream!



Kiski Minutes

The Kiski Astronomers met at 7pm at Kiski High School in the LGI room.

The program was presented by John Labrecque, "Crystals in the Sky", what PA astronomers can observe in the winter.

The business was called to order at 7:58pm by president John Labrecque

Reading of November's minutes were waived because they were posted in the newsletter.

Treasurers report: Opening balance: \$831.37. Closing balance 1009.62.

Old Business:

Christmas Party was recapped.

Observations:

- John Labrecque observed Comet Holmes and Mars, Dennis Sopchack had over 70 observations of Mars. Larry McHenry reported the sun was boring and that magnetic reversal is starting. There was a report that the Geminids are still active a couple days after peak.

New Member:

- Larry McHenry joined the KA this evening. John Labrecque to get his name added to the Astronomical League list.

New business:

- As his last act as president of 2007, Ed Kuzemchak read a letter he was submitting to the Astronomical League's Mabel Stern Award entering Denny Hill and his December 2007 newsletter in their contest for outstanding editing of a League-society newsletter.

January 3, 2008 Minutes

- Members discussed the ways and means for club visibility. The following were points of action discussed.
 - ♦ John and Wini to look into a website and domain name and it's cost.
 - ♦ Larry McHenry volunteered to do a mockup of a website for next meeting and have it available on Comcast.
 - ♦ Denny Hill to look into getting newspaper exposure in the Valley News Dispatch's "Stroller".
- **Public Star Parties**
 - ♦ Lou Vergari to look into the possibility of having parties in the back parking lot at Kiski School.
 - ♦ Gary Shannon to check out Moraine State Park.
 - ♦ Terry Trees to check out Kunkle Park.
 - ♦ Mark Orsotti to look into Keystone Park and Kiski Prep
 - ♦ Denny Hill to look into Northmoreland Park.
 - ♦ Tony O. to look into Freeport Park.
 - ♦ Look at doing programs for school students. Talk to heads of Science departments and handing out brochures in public libraries, schools, etc.

February's program – 2008 Star Parties by John Labrecque

Drinks – Terry Trees,

Snacks – Dave Koren



Last but not least!

Larry McHenry is an avid solar observer, viewing and photographing flairs and prominence on the surface of the sun. Here is a handy chart he emailed for classifying those phenomenon!

