



# September, 1998

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*At the September 4 meeting...*

## ***Planetary Rings in Astronomy and Cosmology***

**Dr. Laura Barge,  
Houston Baptist University  
H.A.S. member.**

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***Houston Astronomical Society***

# ***GuideStar***

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**Starline - 281-568-9340**

Houston Astronomical Society presents *Starline* -- a recorded message of Society events and astronomical happenings. This service is updated regularly, so call often to keep up-to-date on Society functions, new comets and more.

**H.A.S. Web Page: <http://spacsun.rice.edu/~has>**

**Schedule Changes & Up-To-Date Information**

See the GuideStar's Monthly Calendar of Events to confirm dates and times of all events for the month, and call Starline for any last minute changes.

**Observatory Site Telephone: 409-732-8967**

★★★★★ **The Houston Astronomical Society** ★★★★★

The Houston Astronomical Society is a non-profit corporation organized under section 501 (C) 3 of the Internal Revenue Code. The Society was formed for education and scientific purposes. All contributions and gifts are deductible for federal income tax purposes. General membership meetings are open to the public and attendance is encouraged.

★★★★★ **Officers and past president** ★★★★★

President: Don Pearce H: 713-432-0734	Treasurer: Bill Flanagan H: (713) 699-8819
Vice Pres: Kirk Kendrick H: 281-391-3834	Past-President: Allen Gilchrist H: 281-558-1190
Secretary: Matt Delevoryas H: 713-795-0808	

★★★★★ **Additional Board Members** ★★★★★

	Liaison responsibility
John Blubaugh ..... 713-921-4275	Publicity, telescope
Jay Levy ..... 281-992-2708	Program, Field Trip/Observing
Warren Wundt ..... 713-697-2960	Audit, Program, Field Trip/Observing
Tom Fox ..... 281-358-5419	Education, Welcoming

★★★★★ **Committee Chairpersons** ★★★★★

Audit ..... Mike Gumler ..... 409-938-4793	Program ..... John Chauvin ..... 713-981-8281
Education ..... James Benthall ..... 713-669-0838	Publicity ..... Marg Nunez ..... 713-529-2549
Field Tr./Obsg. .... Kenneth Drake ..... 281-367-1592	Telescope ..... Clayton Jeter ..... 281-383-1337
Novice ..... Mitchell/Goldberg ..... 713-461-3020	Welcoming ..... Susan Spore ..... 281-493-2614
Observatory ..... Michael Dye ..... 281-498-1703	

★★★★★ **Ad-Hoc Committee Chairpersons** ★★★★★

Historian ..... Leland Dolan ..... 713-529-0403	Publ. Star Party ..... Marg Nunez ..... 713-529-2549
Librarian ..... Peggy Gilchrist ..... 281-558-1190	Rice U. Coord. .... Matt Delevoryas ..... 713-795-0808
Logo Mds Sales ..... Judy Dye ..... 281-498-1703	Schedule Obs'v'ty ..... Steve Goldberg ..... 713-721-5077
Long Range Plan ..... Don Pearce ..... 713-432-0734	Texas Star Pty ..... Steve Goldberg ..... 713-721-5077
Parliamentarian ..... Kirk Kendrick ..... 281-391-3834	

★★★★★ **Special Interest Groups & Help Committees** ★★★★★

These are now listed on the inside of GuideStar (not every month). See the Table of Contents

★★★★★ **Advisors** ★★★★★

Dr. Reginald DuFour, Rice Univ.                      Dr. Lawrence Pinsky, U. of H.

★★★★★ **Dues and Membership Information** ★★★★★

Annual Dues: Regular .... \$33.00	Student ..... \$5.00
Associate .... \$5.00	Honorary ..... None
Sustaining . \$50.00	

All members have the right to participate in Society functions and to use the Observatory Site. Regular and Student Members receive a subscription to *The Reflector*. Regular, Student, and Honorary Members receive *The GuideStar*. Associate Members, immediate family members of a Regular Member, have all membership rights, but do not receive publications. Sustaining members have the same rights as regular members with the additional dues treated as a donation to the Society. *Sky & Telescope* mag \$27/year, *Astronomy* mag \$24/year -- see club treasurer.

Membership Application: Send funds to address shown on outside cover of *Guidestar*. Attention - Treasurer, along with the following information: Name, Address, Phone Number, Special Interests in Astronomy, Do you own a Telescope? (If so, what kind?), and where you first heard of H.A.S.

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***Call the Starline, 281-568-9340 for updates and changes***

## **Welcome to New Members!**

The Houston Astronomical Society encourages you to join our group of active amateur astronomers and take advantage of the benefits of membership. As a member you'll have access to the club observing site near Columbus, Texas. (You're required to participate in a site orientation meeting before you get the gate lock combination.) The site has concrete pads for setting up your telescope, restroom and bunkhouse facilities, and areas set aside for camping. No new members this month.

## **Special Interest Group Listing**

*Any member who wants specific information on a SIG listed below may call the listed individual. Also, see the "Ad Hoc Committee Chairpersons" on the inside front cover and the "Special Help Volunteers" listing (not in every issue).*

Advanced .....	Bill Flanagan .....	713-699-8819
Comets .....	Kenneth Drake .....	281-367-1592
Lunar & Planetary .....	John Blubaugh .....	713-921-4275
Occultations & Grazes ...	Wayne Hutchison .....	713-827-0828

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## *The President's Message*



**O**n September 26<sup>th</sup> we celebrate Astronomy Day, (to be held at the George Observatory at Brazos Bend State Park). This will be my 14<sup>th</sup> annual Astronomy Day, and for the last few years we have been meeting at the Houston Museum's facility in a cooperative venture with the Museum and the other area astronomy clubs.

I would like to devote this message to the prospective new member who has not joined any astronomical society, but is considering astronomy as a hobby. I think anybody who enjoys nature and natural phenomena is a candidate for being an amateur astronomer.

Astronomy, while a science, is an endeavor for anyone who can acquire a telescope. Eventually, after some learning and experience, an amateur astronomer can literally contribute to the science of astronomy through discoveries of objects such as comets and supernovae. Two of our current members have accomplished this, while members of the Ft. Bend Astronomy Club have discovered many asteroids. I doubt that this (amateur contributions) could be said of some other disciplines such as medical science or organic chemistry.

But whether one ever discovers anything or not, observing, particularly with friends, (friends you generally meet through astronomy clubs) is great fun and relaxing. And I think that understanding and enjoying the cosmos brings much satisfaction and is soothing to one's psyche. What more could you ask?

Clear skies and le croissant lunaire

*Don Pearce*

# *Houston Astronomical Society*

*Meeting Notice  
For Friday, September 4, 1998*

## *Planetary Rings in Astronomy and Cosmology*

*Dr. Laura Barge,  
Houston Baptist University  
H.A.S. member.*

*The programs for the remainder of the year are now set.  
See the H.A.S. WEBSITE for details.*

### **Schedule of meeting activities:**

**Novice meeting: ..... 7:00 p.m.**

Last month, Scott Mitchell (pictured at right) gave us a very nice presentation on Astrology and Astronomy (complete with 'wizard' hat). See what's up this month!!

**Site orientation meeting: ..... 7:00 p.m.**

**General meeting: ..... 8:00 p.m.**

**See the inside back cover for more  
information.**



# September Calendar:



<i>Date</i>	<i>Time</i>	<i>Event</i>
3	1:00 a.m.	Uranus is at opposition
4		<b>HAS Club Meeting</b>
	7:00 p.m.	Novice Presentation - U of H
	8:00 p.m.	General Membership Meeting - U of H
6	6:22 a.m.	Full Moon
	12:00a.m.	Lunar grazing occultation of Aldebaran near Waco, call Wayne Hutchinson, 713-827-0828
12	8:59 p.m.	Moon at Third Quarter
		Members Observatory Night-Columbus
15	7:00 p.m.	Advanced SIG Mtg.-Rice Univ., contact Bill Flanagan, 713-699-8819
	10:00 p.m.	Jupiter at Opposition
19		Prime Night-Columbus
20	12:02 p.m.	New Moon
23	12:38 a.m.	Autumnal Equinox-sun enters Southern celestial hemisphere, Fall begins
26		<b>HAS Astronomy Day at George Observatory</b>
28	4:11 p.m.	First Quarter Moon
October		
2		<b>HAS Club Meeting</b>
	7:00 p.m.	Novice Presentation - U of H
	8:00 p.m.	General Membership Meeting - U of H
5	3:12 p.m.	Full Moon
10		<b>HAS Picnic at Columbus</b>

Send calendar events to [JBlubaugh@aol.com](mailto:JBlubaugh@aol.com) or call 713-921-4275.

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# *Astronomy Day*

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Astronomy Day is September 26, 1998. The event is from 3:00 pm till 10:00 pm at the George Observatory, which is in Brazos Bend State Park. Several positions are available for persons who would like to help. For example: Challenger Center, publicity, exhibits, tables and chairs, solar telescopes, and night scopes, computers for displays, loading and unloading, two-way radios are needed, and someone to take care of the equipment and see that it is all there and ready.

Any one who would like to fill these positions, please call Judy Dye at 281-498-1703, or E-mail me at one of these two addresses: judydye@hotmail.com or mbdye@aol.com. You may also volunteer by contacting HAS members Tom Fox and Warren Wundt.

Volunteers from any area club (FBAC, JSCS or Beaumont) are invited to participate as well.

There is an urgent need for someone to do publicity for the event. This task involves contacting TV stations, radio stations, and newspapers to make sure that they have the information they need to announce the event.

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## *Other Meetings...*

**Brazosport Astronomy Society** meets at 7:00 p.m. on the 2nd Thursday of each month in the Planetarium of the fine Arts Center at Brazosport College. Call Steve Lamb for program details (409) 297-3984

**Fort Bend Astronomy Club** meets the third Friday of the month at 8:00 p.m. at the First Colony conference Center. Novice meeting begins at 7:00, regular meeting begins at 8:00. Web site: <http://rampages.onramp.net/~binder/>

**Johnson Space Center Astronomical Society** meets in the the Lunar and Planetary Institute on the 2nd Friday of each month. Web site: <http://www.ghgcorp.com/cbr/jscas.html>

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# *Lunar Libration and the Sea of Crisis*

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By Leland A. Dolan

Most people who glance even casually at the Moon, are aware that it keeps the same side facing towards earth. This results from the fact that the Moon's rotational period is equal to its orbital period. We would (naturally) expect that only half of the Moon's surface is visible from earth. Actually we can see about 59 percent of its surface over a period of time, due to a phenomenon known as "*libration*". Libration in latitude (north and south) might be likened to the Moon nodding "yes," while libration in longitude corresponds to the Moon shaking its "head" from side to side, as if to say "no". These two motions are independent of one another and take place in different rhythms, none of which is synchronized with the Moon's phases. Here we will concern ourselves only with libration in longitude, because it is easier to spot.

"Proof" of lunar libration can be demonstrated by observing a conspicuous reference feature near the Moon's limb (edge of its disk). One prominent feature is the Sea of Crisis, or *Mare Crisium*. We'll call it "*Crisium*" for short. When the Moon is near the meridian the *Mare Crisium* appears near the Moon's right-hand limb. *Crisium* is visible without optical aid to anyone with good eyesight, but it is seen better in binoculars. Its shape appears "oval" but this is due to foreshortening, just as a dinner plate appears oval when tilted at an angle. In fact, *Crisium* appears more elongated when closest to the Moon's edge.

Look at the two photos (next page) showing the *Mare Crisium*. The picture on the left shows the *Crisium* farther from the edge, because the Moon had rotated several degrees to the left. The libration is positive (+), in this case +6.4 degrees. In the second photo *Crisium* appears near the Moon's edge, indicating that the Moon had rotated to the right. The libration is negative (-), here equal to -4.3.

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## *Lunar Libration... from previous page*

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Moon with  
+6.4 libration

You cannot observe the Mare Crisium at both positive and negative librations during the same month. In fact, for the remainder of this year, maximum positive libration will occur when this *Crisium* is in darkness, as the Moon will be near Last Quarter. Mare Crisium is only seen between New Moon and Full Moon. The next two maximum negative librations will be visible on the evening of Sep. 2 and Sep. 30.

Here's a project

for those deep-sky observers who "hate" the Moon when it is full. Instead of sitting inside feeling frustrated and just watching TV, go outside with your binoculars (or small telescope) and note how far or how close Mare Crisium is from the Moon's edge. It will appear different from one Full Moon to another.



Moon with  
-4.3 libration

★ ★ ★ ★ ★  
★ ★ ★ ★ ★  
*GuideStar deadline*  
★ ★ ★ ★ ★  
*for the October issue*  
★ ★ ★ ★ ★  
★ ★ ★ ★ ★  
*is September 15*  
★ ★ ★ ★ ★

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# Observatory Corner

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By Michael B. Dye Observatory Chairman



As I stated last month, the Houston Astronomical Society Annual Picnic is scheduled for Saturday, October 10th, 1998 (early next month). This year's Picnic Committee Chairman is Larry Wadle. Members can order food from Larry Wadle or they can bring their own and cook said food on the new Bar-B-Q grills. The cost of the catered food is \$4.50 per person. The menu includes Bar-B-Q Beef and Sausage, Potato Salad, Beans, Cole Slew and Iced Tea.

The standard trimmings and condiments will be provided i.e., Bread, sauce, pickles, onions, jalapeno etc. We expect to start serving the main meal at about 5 PM. We expect to have the same recreational and telescope viewing activities we have had at all the previous picnics. To use the grills, Charcoal must be provided. The society does not supply charcoal.

October 10th is also Members Observatory Night. All members are urged to contact Larry Wadle and sign up for the picnic. Members are encouraged to bring family members and guests to this annual activity.

With the close of the Fourth month of the 1998 Observatory Site Fund Raising Drive, the amount raised has grown by \$76 to \$4,412. The fund raising drive continuous and as I said before no donation is too small. If you use and enjoy the Observatory Site, please donate to the Observatory Committee so that we can continue to add improvements to the Site and the Facilities. All donations are tax deductible and receipts will be issued by January 31, 1999.

We got our first Randalls statement this month covering the months of April, May and June. Members spent a grand total of \$280.01. The bad news is that this is not enough to qualify the H. A. S. for a donation check. The good news is even though the total purchases were less than \$2,500, the total purchases will automatically carry over to the next quarter. Randalls also changed the payment schedule to one percent on

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## ***Observatory Corner... from previous page***

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all purchases over \$2,500.

If you have a Randalls Card, please have it coded with #6618 which is the H. A. S. code. The more we buy at Randalls, the more it will help the Houston Astronomical Society.

Two Saturdays before the Annual Picnic will be Astronomy Day, which, like last year, will be held at the George Observatory. If you would like to help in this annual "Show the public Astronomy" event, please contact Judy A. Dye. Judy's phone number is in the *GuideStar* inside front cover. Judy also has an E-mail address which is listed on the H. A. S. web page. Please come and help make Astronomy a success. Assorted sandwiches will be available for all volunteers for \$4.19 each. The price includes sandwich, drink, chips and a cookie. Please contact Judy Dye if you want to eat at the event. The money has to be collected before Astronomy Day so we can figure out how many to order. Please make your check out to the Houston Astronomical Society and mail your money to :

Judy Ann Dye  
12352 Newbrook Drive  
Houston, TX 77072-3910

The last item I would like to cover this month is to thank Barbara and Buster Wilson for coming out to the Observatory Site (when all weather indications said that they should have stayed in Houston) to run the August Members Observatory Night. They were able to get some semi clear skies. They had about 5 or 7 members/guests looking through the Observatory Telescopes. Again my thanks to Barbara and Buster Wilson. The system works when Observatory Key holders volunteer to come out the Observatory Site and help with duties that have been requested of them.

***Please fill out the appropriate log form  
when you use the site.***

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# ***HAS Logo Sales***

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*by Judy Ann Dye*

If you are interested in any of the following items and would like to place an order, please contact me (Judy Dye) at 281-498-1703, or send a check for the items requested to 12352 Newbrook, Houston Texas, 77072-3910. Below is the current list of logo items for sale:

WHITE SWEATSHIRT W/BLUE STARS .....	\$ 13.00
GREY HOODED SWEATSHIRT (M to XL) .....	\$ 25.00
GREY HOODED SWEATSHIRT (XXL) .....	\$ 27.00
BLUE SATIN JACKET W/LOGO ONLY .....	\$ 36.00
*BLUE SATIN JACKET W/LOGO AND NAME .....	\$ 40.50
*BLUE POCKET T-SHIRT W/LOGO .....	\$ 12.44
BLUET-SHIRT W/LOGO AND NO POCKET .....	\$ 11.00
WHITE T-SHIRT W/HOUSTON SKYLINE .....	\$ 11.00
LARGE BLUE & WHITE TRANSFER .....	\$ 3.00
SMALL SEW-ON PATCH .....	\$ 4.00
22 OUNCE THERMAL CUP .....	\$ 5.00
OBSERVE MESSIER .....	\$ 4.00
OBSERVE HERSCHEL .....	\$ 4.00
OBSERVE COMETS .....	\$ 7.00
OBSERVER'S GUIDES -- Essential guidebook to 1998 astronomical events. .....	\$12.00

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## ***HAS Web Page***

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The Houston Astronomical Society Web page has information on the society, its resources, and meeting information.

The address is: <http://spacsun.rice.edu/~has>

Want your astronomy work and name on the Internet for the whole world to see? Have some neat equipment? Pictures in film, CCD, hand drawings or video format are all welcome on the page. Do you have an idea to improve the page? I'm listening. Send me Email at [goldberg@sccsi.com](mailto:goldberg@sccsi.com). (You can click on my name on the HAS home page). Or, you can call me, Steve Goldberg (WebMaster), at 713-721-5077.

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# *B&Ps from the IAUCs*

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by *Kenneth Drake*



## *Microlensing Event*

Circular 6935 reports the discovery of a likely exotic gravitational microlensing event in progress toward the Small Magellanic Cloud. Follow-up observations indicate that the lensing system may be binary in nature. A request is made for observations during the predicted second event. Circular 6939 confirms the binary-lens interpretation and narrows the predicted time of the second crossing. Only a 1.5 hour window! More measurements are requested in order to determine if the lensing object is in the Small Magellanic Cloud or the Milky Way's dark halo. IAUC 6946 reports the measurement of data points and the availability of the light curve at <http://www.lal.in2p3.fr/EROS/erosa.html>. More about MACHO's (MASSive Compact Halo Objects) can be found at <http://wwwmcho.mcmaster.ca/>.

## *SGR 1627-41 (Soft Gamma-ray Burst)*

Circulars 6944, 6948, 6950, 6962, and 6966 report repeated soft gamma-ray bursts from apparently the same location. It appears this is near both the black hole candidate 4U 1630-47 and the supernova remnant G337.0-0.1. If it is within the SNR, then it lies between the two radio lobes. An image can be found at <http://ssl.berkeley.edu/ipn3/sgr1627-41/>.

## *Meteors*

Circular 6954 reports that several observers in Japan observed a sudden meteor shower around June 27.6 UT. One person reported seeing 40-50 meteors per hour even through 80-90 percent cloud cover. Between June 27.58 UT and 27.67 UT, Y. Kushida recorded numerous meteors by VHF radio. Many bright meteors with trains were reported by T. Hamane (Misato Astronomical Observatory). In circular 6966, the Skiymet meteor radar in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan was reported to have detected a strong increase in radar rates centered on June 27.6 UT.

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## *B&Ps from the IAUCs... from previous page*

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Two radiant centers were reported: RA15.2+54 and RA14.6+61. Czech stations of the European Fireball Network were able to photograph two fireballs connected with this shower (June Bootids) as reported in circular 6973. It was reported that the orbit for these fireballs corresponds to that of comet 7P/Pons-Winnecke.

A side note: The June Bootids normally produce only 1-2 per hour at peak rates with average magnitudes near 5. Notable strong activity was seen in 1916 with 1921 and '27 producing good displays. It appears that the Japanese were fortunate to catch this years unusual activity. They will be well placed during this years Leonids during the period of a possible storm also.

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## *≈ Want Ads ≈*

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**For Sale: Meade 2120LX5**, 10" f/10 SCT, with field wedge, tripod, 9x60 Polar viewfinder with circular calculator, Telrad, compass, Motofocus, paddle, power supply, 1 1/4" back, 1 1/4" 90 degree mirror, 1 1/4" 26mm Super Plossl eyepiece, carrying trunk for tube and mount. First \$1000 takes it, or best offer by September 20 (\$800 minimum).

Call Ed Preston or Drew Saunders at 281-992-8501. Scope is set up and can be seen in Friendswood.

**For Sale: Meade 2045D**, 4" F/10 SCT. This is a great portable telescope for grazes, occultations, eclipses (are you going to the 1999 eclipse?), public star parties, vacations, and quick looks at astronomical events. (I used it for the occultation of Saturn by the moon early in the morning.) Package includes: 4" SCT, diagonal, eyepiece, finder, fork mount, field tripod, wedge, battery pack, table-top tripod legs, hard case (telescope only). Package price is \$500... Call Bill Pellerin, 713-880-8061 or email at [billp10566@AOL.COM](mailto:billp10566@AOL.COM)

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# Observatory Duty Roster

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by Michael B. Dye, Observatory Chairman

This is the duty list for September, October and November. Be sure to contact your supervisor for any information that you may need and the date and time to be at the site. You may change from site duty to open house or from open house to site duty by pre-arrangement with the Site Supervisor for that month. Changes between months require Observatory Chairman coordination.

**For September supervisor ..... Logan Rimes ..... 713 681-5397**

John Chauvin ..... Site  
Art Ciampi ..... Members Observatory Night 09-12-98  
Mickey Davis ..... Members Observatory Night 09-12-98  
Kenneth Drake ..... Site  
Jean-Marc Follini ..... Site  
Fred Garcia ..... Site  
John Garza III ..... Site  
Clifton Goldman ..... Members Observatory Night 09-12-98  
Ronald R. Carman ..... Site

**For October supervisor ..... Matt Delevoryas ..... 713 795-0808**

David Granadino ..... Site  
Michael Gumler ..... Members Observatory Night 10-10-98  
Chai S. Heng ..... Site  
David L. Herlinger ..... Site  
Gary Hlivko ..... Site  
John Huff ..... Members Observatory Night 10-10-98  
Wayne Hutchinson ..... Site  
Clayton L. Jeter ..... Members Observatory Night 10-10-98

**For November supervisor ..... Charles Foyt ..... n/a**

Stanley Jones ..... Site  
Arnie Kaestner ..... Site  
David Kaestner ..... Site  
Bill Krell ..... Site  
Howard Leverenz ..... Members Observatory Night 11-14-98  
Mary Lockwood ..... Members Observatory Night 11-14-98  
Robert Menius ..... Site  
Larry Mitchell ..... Members Observatory Night 11-14-98

Please remember that Site work can be done anytime and does not have to be done just before Members Observatory Night. Contact your Site Supervisor for details. Names are selected for Site Duty using the current Alphabetical listing for Observatory Key Holders. If any member knows of a conflict please call me before your name is listed.

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# ***Trips***

*(where they went, what they did)*

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**Date:** July 23-27, 1998

**Destination:** Fort Griffin State Park

**Personnel:** Richard Bunkley, David Schmidt, Tom Fox, Kenneth Drake, and Don Pearce

**Reported by:** Kenneth Drake

The annual pilgrimage known as the “Bunkleyville Trip” had been planned for several months and it looked as if clear, dry skies would grace the group this year. Most of the gang convened at the Golden Corral in Huntsville for lunch on Thursday in order to caravan into Albany, about 115 miles west of Fort Worth. Richard was visiting his folks in Breckenridge and David would arrive on Friday. The Albany Motor Inn provided the sleeping quarters and was just 15 miles south of the park.

The group had gear unloaded and scopes setup just after sundown after a stressful search for dinner in Albany. Dairy Queen ended up getting our cash! This was mostly caused by missed exits on I-20 and a 95 MPH run north on FM 880. Ask Don for the details. For several years this group has used this park for astro trips due to the hospitality of Lester (park ranger) and the dry, clear air and excellent seeing at the overlook. It did not disappoint this time! The equipment this year covered a wide range, from the 6 inch f/5 finder on my 24 incher to the brand new virgin (Tom was praying for no clouds) Meade LX200 12 inch. We had two 18 inch class Dobs also. Tom’s new 12 inch performed flawlessly with excellent images and no hiccups from the **MegaStar** driven laptop. The go-to functioned well but damned those inverted (read screwed-up) images through the star diagonal. Don’s 17.5 inch and David’s 18 inch, both with custom optics, performed to the max. Both are very well baffled and shrouded surrier truss Dobs that were kept well collimated throughout the expedition. I had the 24 inch f/5.6, an alt-az, stepper-motor driven Dob known as Virtigo I.

*Continued on page 19...*

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## ***Trips... from previous page***

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Ok, so now you're asking what the heck did this group observe with all this fire-power and great conditions! I can more easily answer what we did not observe. Comet Klemola eluded Don and yours truly three glorious mornings. I tried desperately Sunday morning for over 15 minutes to glimpse the little periodic comet. As it turns out M. Lehky of Hradec Kralove, Czech Republic claimed to have seen it in a 17 inch at mag 13.9 about the same time. Oh well. My personal hit list included comet Schwassmann-Wachmann 1, (not seen), comet Howell seen as a mag 12.8 very diffuse 2 minute oval, comet Meunier-Dupouy near mag 11 and moderately condensed 1.5 minute and round, comet Giacobini-Zinner was seen as a faint but condensed 30 arc second by 20 arc second oval in P.A. 165. One of the real surprises was comet Harrington-Abell, normally about 21st magnitude, it had flared just days before the trip! I was able to view it about 5:00 AM Sunday morning as a mag 12 elongated (60x30") mottled glow with a P.A. of 50 degrees. This was just shortly after witnessing a -4 magnitude Iridium flare! In Tom's 12 inch, we were able to glimpse IC 4677, a 15.7 mag galaxy just west of the spectacular planetary NGC 6543 which took on the appearance of the CBS logo in the 24 inch. The Crepe Ring of Saturn was a standout and will grab you in David's 18 inch with a light blue filter. I know the seeing must have been sub-arcsecond many times during these four perfect nights at the overlook. The festoons and ovals of Jupiter's bands were a deep brown and bright white in the 24 inch. A challenge object was on my hit list known as Gylbudaghian's Nebula. Tom Polakis turned me on to this nebula recently and there is an image of it in Vicker's CCD Atlas North page 227. It turns out that it is a variable nebula with the illuminating star being PV Cephei (mag 11-18). The group was unable to see the star, near mag 18, but part of the nebula was seen in the 24 inch as a 10 arc second smooth round glow with a sharp border. We were able to see it in Don's scope with averted vision 50% of the time. More info can be found on this object at <http://www.psiaz.com/polakis/deepsky/gylul.html>.

The group split up on Monday, everyone going their own direction back home. I must say that it was great sleeping uninterrupted til 3:00PM

*Continued...*

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## ***Trips... from previous page***

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each day, observing all night under dry, pristine skies, driving back into Albany during sunrise and then eating a great home cooked breakfast at the T & J's Steakhouse. Great Blueberry pancakes and homemade sausage. I left at 11:00 AM on Monday after getting about 6 hours sleep. I did a lazy farm to market road drive back stopping at the Front Porch Restaurant in Rising Star for lunch. I checked out the countryside and all the historical markers along the way. What a trip!

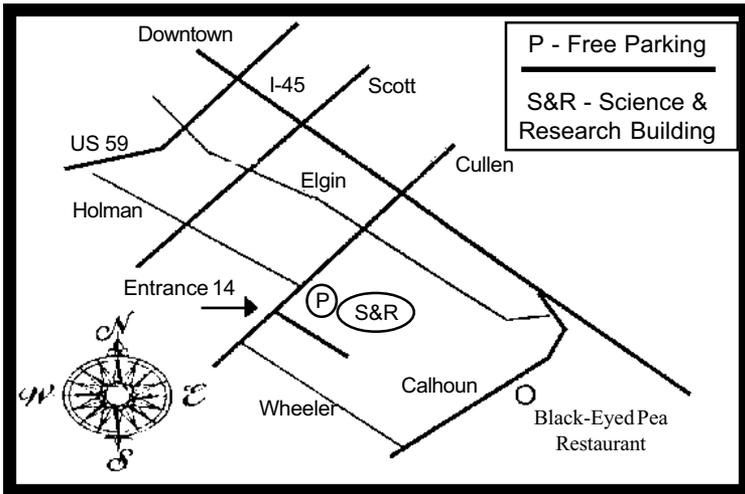
**Date:** August 12-13, 1998

**Destination:** Perseid Meteor Shower from near Stephen F. Austin State Park

**Personnel:** Don Pearce, Kenneth Drake, John Blubaugh, Bill Hand

**Reported by:** Kenneth Drake

The gang rendezvoused at the Denny's at I-10 & Washington Ave. After a quick bite and loading chairs and binoculars in Don's Voyager, all personnel headed west on I-10 to San Felipe. Taking FM 3318 to the park, we ended up on one of the golf greens. Fearing an attack of the park ranger, we decided to hook 'em north on 3318 to look for more open territory. This crazy group ended up sprawled out at the edge of the lightly traveled road staring at the cirrus veil in the direction of the rising radiant. John was the first to nail a Perseid and caught several more before I saw my first, a magnitude 1 with a 25 degree trail. I totalled just 5 in the 2.5 hours we were there. The groups total may have been near 20. One notable one was caught by Bill and when everyone turned, all we saw was a 20 degree long train hanging straight down for about 30 seconds. This was supposed to be the new third peak that has appeared in recent years, but I believe conditions were not good enough in our location. This group looked like a scene out of Dancer, Texas - Pop. 81 as the chairs were moved into the road to get a better view. The capper for the night was watching the last quarter Moon rise in a very reddened sky. The trip back was without incident unless you count waiting 30 minutes for service at a Brookshire truckstop.



### General Membership Meeting

The Houston Astronomical Society holds its regular monthly General Membership Meeting on the first Friday of each month, unless rescheduled due to a holiday. Meetings are in Room 117 of the Science and Research Building at the University of Houston. A Novice Presentation begins at 7:00 p.m.. The short business meeting and featured speaker are scheduled at 8:00 p.m. Also typically included are Committee Reports, Special Interest Group Reports, current activity announcements, hardware reviews, an astrophotography slide show by members and other items of interest.

### Board of Directors Meeting

The Board of Directors Meeting is held on dates scheduled by the board at 7:00 p.m. in Room 106 of the Space Science Building at Rice University. Call StarLine for Board Meeting information. Information provided to GuideStar will be published. The meetings are open to all members of the Society in good standing. Attendance is encouraged.

### GuideStar Information

The H.A.S. *GuideStar* is published monthly by the Houston Astronomical Society. All opinions expressed herein are those of the contributor and not necessarily of Houston Astronomical Society. The monthly Meeting Notice is included herein. *GuideStar* is sent via bulk rate mail to Regular, Student, and Honorary Members of H.A.S., selected individuals and recent visitors to the General Membership Meeting. Contributions to *GuideStar* by members are encouraged. Electronic submission is helpful. Submit the article in ASCII text, MS-Word (preferred), or WordPerfect format on an IBM format floppy or via AOL (BILLP10566). Mail copy to the address shown on the outside cover or to the editor at 256 East 5th Street, Houston, TX 77007. Copy must be received by the second Friday of the month for inclusion in the issue to be mailed near the end of the same month. Or, bring copy to the General Membership Meeting and give it to the Editor, or phone to make special arrangements.

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