

OBSERVATIONS

A MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF THE CHESTER COUNTY ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY

OCTOBER 1993

[VOLUME 1, NO. 2]

♠ acting president, edwin lurcott ♠ acting vice president tim ryan ♠ acting treasurer steven lurcott

Meeting Notes

The next meeting of the Chester County Astronomical Society will be on October 12, 1993 from 7:30 to 9:00 PM at the planetarium room of the Smucker Science Center at West Chester University. Smucker Science Center is located at the corner of Church Street and Rosedale Avenue in West Chester, PA. The following meeting will be held on November 9, 1993. Details will appear in the November edition of **OBSERVATIONS**.

Old Business

The first meeting of the CCAS was held on September 17, 1993 at Ed Lurcott's. This "founder's" meeting focused primarily on resources that the organization will make available to potential members. It also focused on drafting a constitution & by-laws for Society members. Since the by-laws and constitution will govern the activities of the Society, any interested member is encouraged to participate.

Because of uncooperative weather, astronomical observations were rather limited at the last meeting, and consisted chiefly of peering through the rain and fog while driving to and from Ed's. Hopefully, Mother Nature will be more gracious in October.

New Business

The October meeting will be a member participation meeting. Members will be invited to describe a recent project or experience they have had that might be of interest to the other members. The subject should be related to astronomy, and can include topics as diverse as fabricating a piece of equipment, an observing experience or a visit to an astronomical facility. Individual presentation will be from 10 to 15 minutes. Individuals interested in giving a presentation should contact Ed Lurcott at (215) 436-0387 before October 8, 1993. This program will help the Society learn where the member's interest lie.

Professor Hugh Harber of West Chester University will also be present at the October meeting. Professor Harber was instrumental in providing the planetarium for the October meeting, and will describe more fully the relationship the Society will have with West Chester University. The Society is extremely grateful to Professor Harber for this and other efforts on our behalf.

Worth Seeing

If you find yourself looking up in the next few weeks, here are some objects of interest:

SATURN - Saturn is in the southeastern sky at sunset. The ring system is now tilted about 13° to our line of sight and will close to 0° in a few years. At that time, the rings will not be visible even to large telescopes. Saturn is a spectacular subject, amateur scopes will provide adequate resolution not only for the rings, but also the large moon Titan and 3 or 4 other satellites, depending on local conditions.

Saturn's inner moons only take a few days to orbit the planet and shifts in their positions may be noticeable in only a few hours.

COMET MUELLER (1993A) - As reported in the October issue of *Sky & Telescope*, Comet Mueller is approaching the inner solar system, but will not cross the orbit of Mars. It is rather faint (presently 10th magnitude) and is expected only to brighten to about 9.3 magnitude in November. It's apparent path is predicted to pass less than 8° from Polaris in the middle of October, and passing just south of epsilon Ursa Minor on October 23rd. By November 7th it will be between epsilon and delta Draconis. This will be quite challenging, you will need clear dark northern skies. See if you can spot it by the November meeting.

ASTEROID VESTA - This is an easier object and follows Saturn in the southern sky. It is already past its opposition and is fading from magnitude 6.6 to magnitude 7.2 on November 1. It will be stationary in R.A. on October 12th, about 2/5 of the way from Saturn toward the bright star Fomalhaut in the southeast. Vesta is about 335 miles in diameter and appears star-like in all but the largest telescopes. It will be easier to detect its movement from night to night during November. During this time its apparent motion will increase to greater than 20 arc minutes/day. In order to confirm your sighting of Vesta, make a sketch of the star field and compare it to what you see a night or two later.

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

The Chester County Astronomical Society was formed to provide a local organization dedicated to promote an interest in Astronomy through meetings, discussions, speaker programs and active Observations with a variety of telescopes. All individuals with an interest are encouraged to join. There are a variety of membership plans available. Please note that these initial membership rates do not include a subscription in *Sky and Telescope*. As membership grows, we hope to incorporate a subscription to this publication with each membership. If anyone is interested in membership, contact Edwin Lurcott at (215) 436-0387.

- Regular \$20/year
- Student \$15/year
- Junior \$10/year (18 years or younger)
- Family \$30/year

Contacts:

Edwin Lurcott
1384 Station Rd
West Chester PA 19380
(215) 436-0387

Steven Lurcott
P.O. Box 891
Avondale PA 19311
(215) 268-3426

CONTRIBUTIONS TO OBSERVATIONS

Members are welcome and encouraged to contribute articles to **OBSERVATIONS**. The deadline for the November edition is October 26, 1993. Contributions should be sent to:

Timothy Ryan
1864 Brackenville Road
Hockessin DE 19707

Every effort will be made for the timely inclusion of submitted articles.