

OBSERVATIONS

A MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF THE CHESTER COUNTY ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY

NOVEMBER 1993

[VOLUME 1, NO. 3]

▲ 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 November 9, 1993 from 7:30 to 9:00 PM at the planetarium room of the Schmucker Science Center at West Chester University. Schmucker Science Center is located at the corner of Church Street and Rosedale Avenue in West Chester, PA. A map is available and will be mailed to any that request it. The following meeting will be held on December 14, 1993. Details will appear in the December edition of OBSERVATIONS.

Old Business

The October meeting of the Society was held at the planetarium room of the Schmucker Science Center at West Chester University. The planetarium will be the Society's meeting place for the foreseeable future. Any change in the meeting location will be provided to members.

At our October meeting, we learned from Hugh Harber that the University not only will grant us access to the planetarium, but also will allow us the use of any audiovisual aids. Our access to the observatory and telescope will depend on student usage. Hugh said we can expect to see more available time in the spring.

The results of an "observing survey" taken at the September meeting was presented by Ed Lurcott. The 10 most popular activities (in order) were (1) Galaxies, (2) History, (3) Nebulae, (4) Comets, (5) Deep Sky, (6) Clusters, (7) Planets, (8) Cosmology, (9) Moon, (10) Sun. Hopefully we will be able to arrange observing sessions which will focus on each topic.

Many members have expressed an interest in serving as Society officers. Because of this interest, a draft of the by-laws and Society constitution will be ready for the November meeting. Approval of the by-laws is necessary before election of permanent officers can be held. All Society members are urged to review the by-laws, all comments will be welcomed.

There were two technical presentations at the October meeting. Steve Lurcott discussed the design of a simple computerized equatorial drive system. The discussion focused on the technical challenges the design presented. Steve will make the documentation available to anyone who is interested in attempting their own design. Ed Lurcott discussed the fabrication and use of a double star micrometer. Ed has been using this device to track the proper motion of the star 61 Cygnus for the last 17 years.

New Business

The Winter Star Party will be held in the Florida Keys from February 7-13, 1994. The cost has been estimated at \$800-900, not including airfare. For those who can attend this meeting is a real occasion. Because of its tropical location, many southern hemisphere stars not visible at our latitude can be observed. Of course, there is also the fact that being in Florida in February is not such a bad deal.

Our November meeting will also feature the Society's first guest speaker. Dr. John Stolar will address the Society on the subject of astrophotography.

Worth Seeing

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

MAIN EVENT - Total eclipse of the moon (Nov. 28-29) The event starts about 11:40 PM, with totality occurring from 1:02 AM to 1:50 AM. The eclipse will end about 3:12 AM.

Anyone who watched last December's eclipse knows what a spectacle this can be. Unlike December's eclipse, this will occur high in the sky. Weather permitting, this represents a great opportunity to get some photographs, particularly after listening to Dr. Siolar's presentation at the November meeting. Bring your pictures to the December meeting. **COMET MUELLER (1993A)** - Comet Mueller has proven to be elusive, Ed Lurcott was unsuccessful at finding it even with the West Chester U. 12" 'scope, and at home with his 10" 'scope. Ambient light levels at both locations may have been too high. Has anyone picked it up? It is predicted to pass between delta and epsilon Draco on the night of Nov 6-7, at magnitude 9.3.

M31 (THE ANDROMEDA GALAXY) - Northwest of the star Beta Andromeda, M31 is well up in the east sky in the evening hours. This naked eye galaxy is easily seen with binoculars and is spectacular using just about any telescope in dark skies. The apparent diameter of M31 is more than 3 times the apparent diameter of the moon. The central bulge and spiral arms should be visible, despite the fact that M31 is a prodigious distance away, about 2,300,000 light years. This "neighbor" is very similar to our own Milky Way galaxy (at least, we suspect....).

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. 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. and active

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

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CONTRIBUTIONS TO OBSERVATIONS

Members are welcome and encouraged to contribute articles to OBSERVATIONS. The deadline for the December edition is November 23, 1993. Contributions should be sent to:

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