

OBSERVATIONS

A MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF THE CHESTER COUNTY ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY

JANUARY 1994

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♠ 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 January 11, 1994 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 February 8, 1994.

Old Business

The December meeting of the Society was held at the planetarium room of the Schmucker Science Center at West Chester University.

A draft of the proposed constitution and by-laws for the Society was distributed at the November meeting. A final draft should be available soon for formal adoption by the Society. This will be followed by the election of permanent officers. Since the membership of the Society is growing, there is plenty to do behind the scenes, not only for potential Society officers, but also for our various committees. Anyone interested (all paid Society members are eligible) should contact Ed Lurcott.

For those members who missed our December meeting (the holidays did have an effect on attendance), Prof. Hugh Harber gave a very interesting lecture on Mason and Dixon and the project to establish the Mason-Dixon line. Their work started here in Chester County. Also covered was the related setting of the "Star Gazers Stone" (Pennsylvania's answer to Stonehenge).

New Business

The January meeting of the Society will feature a video recording of the July 11, 1991 total solar eclipse. This video was taken by Ed Lurcott while in La Paz, Mexico and was the culmination of years of planning and hardware design by Ed and his son Steve. The eclipse was one of the longest of this century and was viewed in absolutely clear skies. Some members of the Society have had the privilege of viewing the video after production in 1991. It is an outstanding achievement which demonstrates what a truly talented astronomer can accomplish. All members are urged to take the time to see this video which captures the event in a spectacular fashion.

Worth Seeing

First of all, a correction. In December's "Observations" the distance to the Orion Nebula was erroneously given as 16,000 light years instead of the correct distance of 1,600 light years. The editor/publisher apologizes for this mistake but wishes to point out that the resulting error of 14,400 light years is, cosmically speaking, peanuts.

SATURN - will be above the western horizon at sunset and will remain visible for an hour or two before it sets.

JUPITER - does not rise until about 2:00 AM in the middle of January, but by the middle of February will rise around midnight. Jupiter is my favorite subject for viewing. Even very modest equipment will provide outstanding resolution of the planet's striking banded pattern and the famous Great Red Spot. The four large inner moons (Io, Europa, Callisto and Ganymede) are also easily visible. These satellites, collectively known as the Moons of Galileo, were responsible for inspiring that famous astronomer to embrace the Copernican model of planetary orbits.

COMET MUELLER (1993a) - is still visible in our evening sky as a ninth magnitude fuzzy spot. On January 14th and 15th it will be passing a little over 1° SW of the star 9 Pegasus. This star can be found as follows: Locate the great square of Pegasus high in the western evening sky, draw a line along the southern two stars and extend it westwards a distance equal to the distance between the southern two stars. Slightly north of this location is a line of three stars. The brightest and westernmost of these is 9 Pegasus. The three day old moon may interfere with viewing.

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 (610) 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 February edition is January 25, 1994. Contributions should be sent to:

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