

OBSERVATIONS

A MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF THE
CHESTER COUNTY ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY

★President: Edwin Lurcott
★Treasurer: Steven Lurcott

SEPTEMBER 1994
(VOLUME 2, NO. 9)

★ Vice President: Mike Tucker
★ Secretary: Nancy Armstrong

CCAS SEPTEMBER MEETING

With the September 13th meeting of CCAS, our regular meeting time and location will be resumed. Regular meetings are held at 7:30 PM on the second Tuesday of each month in the planetarium (room 186), Schmucker Science Center, West Chester University, West Chester, PA. See map on the back.

The date of the September meeting was incorrectly stated as September 12th in the July "Observations." The correct date is **September 13th**.

Mike Tucker, our Vice President, will describe his experience while attending the Texas Star Party (TSP) last May. The TSP is one of the largest and best star parties in the U.S. and located near the McDonald Observatory of the University of Texas.

Following Mike's presentation, there will be socializing over coffee and donuts. If weather permits, WCU's observatory will be open for observing through their 12" cassegrain telescope.

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CCAS WELCOMES NEW MEMBERS

Our Treasurer, Steve Lurcott, reports that 10 people signed up as new members of CCAS. The following new members are welcomed into the society:

Kathy Cseke	Mike Phillips
Peter Cseke	Bill Reiley
Rafiel Gonzalez	Myles Snyder
Jay Gross	Letisia Veence

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AUGUST OBSERVING OF THE PERSEID METEOR SHOWER DISAPPOINTING

The August meeting of CCAS was well attended with about 30 people at the Brandywine Valley Association's (BVA) headquarters, 6 miles

West of West Chester. The weather was not cooperative. In fact, after the moon set one could not detect any stars let alone any meteors.

Preceding the observing session, Ed Lurcott described the source of the meteor shower and why it appears different from year to year. He reported that some predictions of the next return of Comet Swift-Tuttle (the parent of the Perseid meteors) in August 2126 will be quite spectacular with a small but very real possibility of it striking Earth. Mark your calendars.

Following his presentation, some walked up to the observing site on top of the hill next to the BVA headquarters and waited in vain for the clouds to go away. At first, it looked as though they might, for we could see some stars between clouds. But the longer we waited the worse it became. All left in an hour or so not having seen on Perseid Meteor - Wait till next year!

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SATURN NOW CONVENIENT FOR OBSERVING ALL NIGHT

Rising in the southeast about sunset, Saturn is visible all night long. The rings are getting quite narrow as the plane of the rings approaches the Earth. They are tilted at an angle between 5 and 8 degrees during 1994. They will appear edge-on in 1995 and will be invisible in all but largest telescopes.

The rotation of Saturn's 18 moons causes them to be constantly changing. Only 5 or 6 moons are visible in amateur scopes. The largest, Titan, orbits Saturn in only 16 days and is the brightest and easiest to see. Rhea, Dione, Tethys, Iapetus and Enceladus are other moons visible in order of decreasing magnitude. How many you see can depend on your local sky conditions. How many can you see on a clear moonless night?

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FIRST ANNIVERSARY OF CCAS

This September is the first anniversary of CCAS. In addition to our excellent speakers at our monthly meetings some highlights of the year are:

The first meeting, held at Ed Lurcott's home, was attended by 10 of 11 potential members.

West Chester University agreed to a cooperative relationship with CCAS and permitted the use of the planetarium room as a regular meeting place as well as occasional use of their observatory.

The severe winter weather of 93-94 kept many from attending meetings. One meeting even had to be canceled.

March 19th saw our first observing session in Ed Lurcott's backyard where snow and ice had been cleared away for observing.

Exton Square Mall permitted CCAS to set up a table for exhibits on National Astronomy Day, April 16th. Seventy-five people inquired about the society and thirty-four signed up to receive complimentary copies of "Observations." As a result, some became members.

The Mason-Dixon Star Party was attended by CCAS members: Pete LaFrance, Ed Lurcott, Nancy Armstrong and Jill Fragale.

Thanks to Connie Shapiro the Brandywine Valley Association offered to have joint meetings at the BVA headquarters and to use their open fields for three summer observing session. These were very successful.

The Community Courier's article this summer describing CCAS resulted in a large turnout at our July and August meetings and many new members..

There are now 43 members of CCAS and the executive committee is looking forward to an activity filled year ahead.

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REQUEST FOR COMET - JUPITER CRASH OBSERVATIONS

Members are requested to report their observations of the comet fragment impacts on Jupiter. We need the following information:

When did you see them?

What did they look like?

How long could you see them?

What instrumentation was used?

Submit your drawings and/or written descriptions to Ed Lurcott, 1384 Station Place West Chester, PA 19380. A summary of all observations will be published in a future issue of "Observations."

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VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR FOURTH GRADERS' OBSERVING SESSION

Pete LaFrance had arranged with the New Garden Elementary School Science Alliance to hold an observing session for fourth grade students on the school grounds Saturday, October 8, 1994, starting at sunset. Rain date is Sunday, October 9, 1994. Pete is requesting CCAS members with portable scopes to help show the stars and planets to the students. There may be as many as 100 students and their parents; therefore 10-15 scopes will be needed.

This is an opportunity to help CCAS become better known in the community. It is just this kind of activity for which CCAS was founded, 'to help the general public become more aware of the universe in which we live.'

The New Garden Elementary School is located on New Garden Road just off Route 41, about 1 mile southeast of Avondale, in southern Chester County. If you can help, give Pete a call at 268-2616 and help these youngsters and their parents learn about astronomy.

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CCAS MEMBER SURVEY

Enclosed with this issue of "Observations" is a survey form, which is to be filled out by each new member. If you filled one out last year you need not fill one out this year. This survey is intended to learn about the interests of the members, so that programs can be arranged accordingly.

Members are requested to fill out the forms and return them to Ed Lurcott, 1384 Station Place, West Chester, PA 19380-1334 or bring them to the next meeting.

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HELP WANTED SECTION

The Chester County Astronomical Society has openings in the following areas:

Public relations-involves sending meeting notices to newspapers and bulletin boards.

Hospitality and refreshments-welcomes people to meetings and arranges for refreshments.

Program chairperson-arranges for speakers and programs at monthly meeting.

Observing host-occasionally offers their backyard for observing sessions.

Since CCAS has grown over 40 members, this presents an opportunity for members to help with the operation of the society. These responsibilities will greatly assist the executive committee. Interested members contact Ed Lurcott at 436-0387.

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WATCH YOUR MAILING LABEL

With CCAS's anniversary, many of the first members will need to renew their membership. The date appearing on your address label is your renewal date. While there is a grace period, why not insure your continued membership by renewing it before that date.

Checks should be made out to our treasurer, "Steven Lurcott" and given to him at a meeting or mailed to him at P.O. Box 891, Avondale, PA 19311.

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LOGO UPDATE

Two suggestions have been submitted so far. I know there must be more ideas out there. Sketch them out and bring them to the next meeting.

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CHESTER COUNTY ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY'S PURPOSES

The Chester County Astronomical Society was formed in September, 1993, with the cooperation of West Chester University, as a non-profit organization dedicated to the education and enjoyment of astronomy for the general public. The society holds meetings with speakers and observing sessions once a month. Anyone who is interested in astronomy or would like to learn about astronomy is welcome to attend meeting and become a member of the society.

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MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

The present membership rates are as follows:

REGULAR MEMBER

(18 years or older)\$20/year

SENIOR MEMBER

(65 years or older)\$10/year

STUDENT MEMBER

(full-time college student) \$ 5/year

JUNIOR MEMBER

(under 18 years old)\$ 5/year

For further information on membership or society activities you may call Edwin Lurcott (610) 436-0387.

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