



OBSERVATIONS



A MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF THE
CHESTER COUNTY ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY

★ President: Edwin Lurcott
★ Treasurer: Steven Lurcott

APRIL 1995
(VOLUME 3, NO. 4)

★ Vice President: Mike Tucker
★ Secretary: Nancy Armstrong

CCAS APRIL MEETING

DATE: Tuesday, April 11, 1995

TIME: 7:30 PM EDT

PLACE: Planetarium (room 186)
Schmucker Science Center
West Chester University

LOCATION: South Church St. & Rosedale Ave.
West Chester, PA (see maps)

Our three member nominating committee will present their slate of candidates for officers for the coming year. Elections will be held at the May CCAS meeting.

Following the brief business portion of this month's meeting, our speaker for the evening will be Dr. Al Nacman. He is an educator at all levels from secondary schools to universities. He will be describing some of the early Americans who influenced the development of astronomy in the nineteenth century featuring women and their efforts to encourage other women to become involved in astronomy. Many CCAS members have indicated an interest in the history of astronomy. We hope this presentation is of particular interest to them.

All members are invited and may bring friends. Following the presentation, members may socialize over coffee. In addition, if sky conditions permit, we may use the observatory on top of Schmucker Science Center. Members must proceed as a group to the observatory where Ed Lurcott will operate the 12" scope.

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MARCH CCAS MEETING

At the March meeting, Bob Rivell, Holly Silverthorne and Bill O'Hara volunteered to serve as the nominating committee. They are to present a list of candidates for the society officers at the April meeting. Many thanks to them for accepting this task.

Pete LaFrance showed us how he takes those beautiful pictures of many Messier objects. If I understood him correctly, he intends to photograph all 110 of them. Now that's ambition. His demonstration inspired many of us to try putting a camera up to the eyepiece of our scopes. We all benefited from his experiences when attempting to photograph deep sky

objects. He offered his help to anyone who would like to get started in astro-photography.

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CCAS OBSERVING SESSION

DATE: Friday, April 7, 1995

RAIN DATE: Saturday, Apr. 8, 1995

TIME: sunset - ?

PLACE: Brandywine Valley Association
(location of our summer meetings)
1760 Unionville-Wawaset Road
West Chester, PA (see map)

Last month's session was well attended by members as well as visitors. There was an assortment of scopes, ranging from 2 inches to 17 1/2 inches. (The Orion nebula was spectacular in the 17 1/2 inch.) We were finally permitted to have a usable sky on a scheduled observing session, even though it was cut short by the ever increasing clouds that night. Those who came enjoyed the viewing, many folks seeing some of the celestial objects for the first time.

Our April 7th (or 8th) session should also be good. The moon will be at 40 % phase (less than first quarter) and be less of an obstacle to viewing familiar objects. Mars will be over head and bright, but it is getting smaller as earth is pulling away from it. More challenging will be the rising Virgo cluster of galaxies, and M 3, the first of the globular clusters to appear in the East. There is always the challenge to split close binary pairs.

All are invited. Those bringing scopes may drive up the farm road to the left of the parking lot. Members not owning scopes are encouraged to come and enjoy the views through the scopes. Scope owners are always pleased to have others look through them. Plus, binoculars will enable you to see many objects in the sky, bring a pair!

The BVA is allowing us to use their facilities and CCAS members are reminded that we should leave the area as clean as we found it. Your cooperation will be appreciated. Even though it is Spring, the evenings still get chilly, so DRESS WARMLY !!!

For further information call: Ed Lurcott (436-0387)

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PRE-MEETING DINNER INVITATION

Mr. Nacman and members of CCAS are invited to a 6:00 PM dinner at West Chester Inn on the night of the regular meeting (April 11th). The West Chester Inn is located on South High Street and Route 202, south side of West Chester, PA. If you are planning to join us for dinner, please let Ed Lurcott know.

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SPRING OBSERVING SESSIONS

Observing sessions for CCAS members at the BVA property this Spring are as follows:

Apr. 7; rain date, Apr. 8

May 5; rain date, May 6

June 2; rain date, June 3

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DOUBLE STARS, ANYONE?

Many nights appear to be rather hazy (especially here in the eastern U.S.) and deep sky observers may turn to say it is not a good night for observing and give it up. This type of night-sky condition lends itself to double star observations. The atmosphere is hazy but very steady.

There are two basic types of double stars.

Optical doubles only appear close to each other. In reality they are at very different distances from us and only happen to lie in the same direction. They are not physically associated with each other. An example of an optical double is the star Delta Hercules located SE of the Hercules keystone and easily seen later this Spring and Summer. The secondary star is magnitude 9 and 9 arc seconds from the bright primary star. (R.A. = 17 hrs 15 mins., DEC. = + 24 degrees 51 mins.)

Physical double stars are gravitationally bound to each other and revolve about a common center of gravity. This type is far more interesting to astronomers. By observing them long enough, their orbits can be established and their distances determined and from these their masses can be found. This makes them one of the useful types of stars to astronomers. A good example of a physical pair is the star Castor, the northern star of the Gemini twins. The visible pair orbit each other in 511 years. They are presently 3 arc seconds apart and widening. (R.A. = 7 hrs. 34 mins., DEC. = + 31 hrs. 54 mins.)

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SKY & TELESCOPE

Six subscriptions have been mailed to Sky Publishing Company for members of CCAS. Those who signed up will receive *Sky & Telescope Magazine* direct from the publisher. Anyone wishing to sign up for the magazine should send a \$20.00 check to Steve Lurcott, indicating it is for the *Sky & Telescope* subscription.

Steve Lurcott

P.O. Box 891

Avondale, PA 19311

BVA CALENDAR OF EVENTS

As a family member of the Brandywine Valley Association (BVA), the CCAS members are invited to any of the BVA events. Join the fun!

EARTH DAY - April 22

Orienteering-10-1 PM, stimulating sport for competition or pleasure, cost \$3 for map, same day registration
Brandywine Creek Clean-Up-8:30-12 noon, retrieve litter from creek and shoreline, wear creek clothes, meet at Northbrook Canoe Co., refreshments served
-register by April 17

Dedication Ceremony- 12 noon, brief dedication of BVA/RCVA renovations in honor of Bob Struble Sr.
Brandywine Watershed Bus Tour-1-5 PM, see treatment facilities, erosion control measures, Marsh Creek, Struble Lake, and new Hibernia Lake from a new perspective, Kraft coach (limited setting)
-register by April 14, cost \$5

Field and Forest Nature Hike- April 29, 10-12 noon, guided hike through 300 acres in wildflowers season
-register by April 25, cost \$5

Photography Workshop with Michael Kahn- May 6, 9-3 PM, learn from a pro about equipment and composition, classroom and field instruction.
-register by April 28, cost \$80, bring a lunch

Rolling, Rolling, Rolling Down the River- May 6 educational canoe trip on the Brandywine, bring a lunch, meet at Northbrook Canoe Co.
-register by April 28, cost \$20

For more information call the BVA 793-1090

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NATIONAL ASTRONOMY DAY: MAY 6

Saturday, May 6, 1995 is National Astronomy Day. Our society will use this opportunity to make ourselves better known in the county by having a display table in the Exton Square Mall. We will have some of Pete LaFrance's astrophotographs, some signs and other displays as attention getters. Pamphlets describing CCAS and its goals will be handed out to those interested persons. The table will be set up at 10:00 AM and manned until 8:00 PM. Six members volunteered to help out with the display. At least two members should be at the table at all times to answer questions. This is an activity which fulfills one of the purposes of our society: to encourage the education and enjoyment of astronomy by the general public. There was a good response to our display last year and we hope to have an even better display this year. Even if you cannot help out at the table, come see the display (across from Pearl Vision Center) anyway.

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ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STAR NIGHT

Chester County Astronomical Society has been asked to bring 'scopes and help the first grade students of Ridge Park Elementary School learn about stars and planets. The date chosen is Wednesday, May 3 with a rain date, Thursday, May 4. It would be nice to have as good a turn out of 'scopes as we had last year for the New Garden Elementary School. The Ridge Park School is located between Plymouth Meeting and Conshahocken, just off Butler Pike. A map will be furnished to those volunteering to take part in this activity. There will be about 40 students and their parents present. Therefore we will need at least 5 or 6 'scopes. Please call Ed Lurcott if you can help out. .

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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 meetings and become a member of the society.

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WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

The executive committee welcomes three new members to CCAS:

Jyotin Patel
Jason Calgani
Naveen Sekhawat

We hope they enjoy their participation with the society. Thanks for joining.

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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

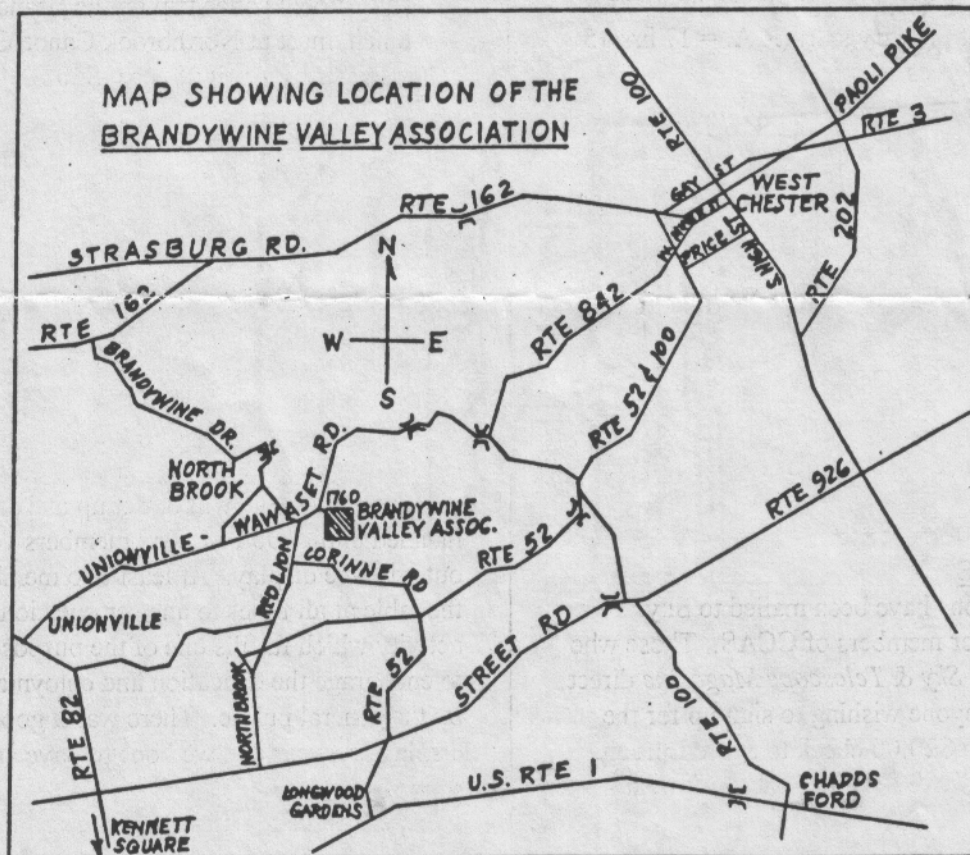
JUNIOR MEMBER

(under 18 years old)\$ 5/year

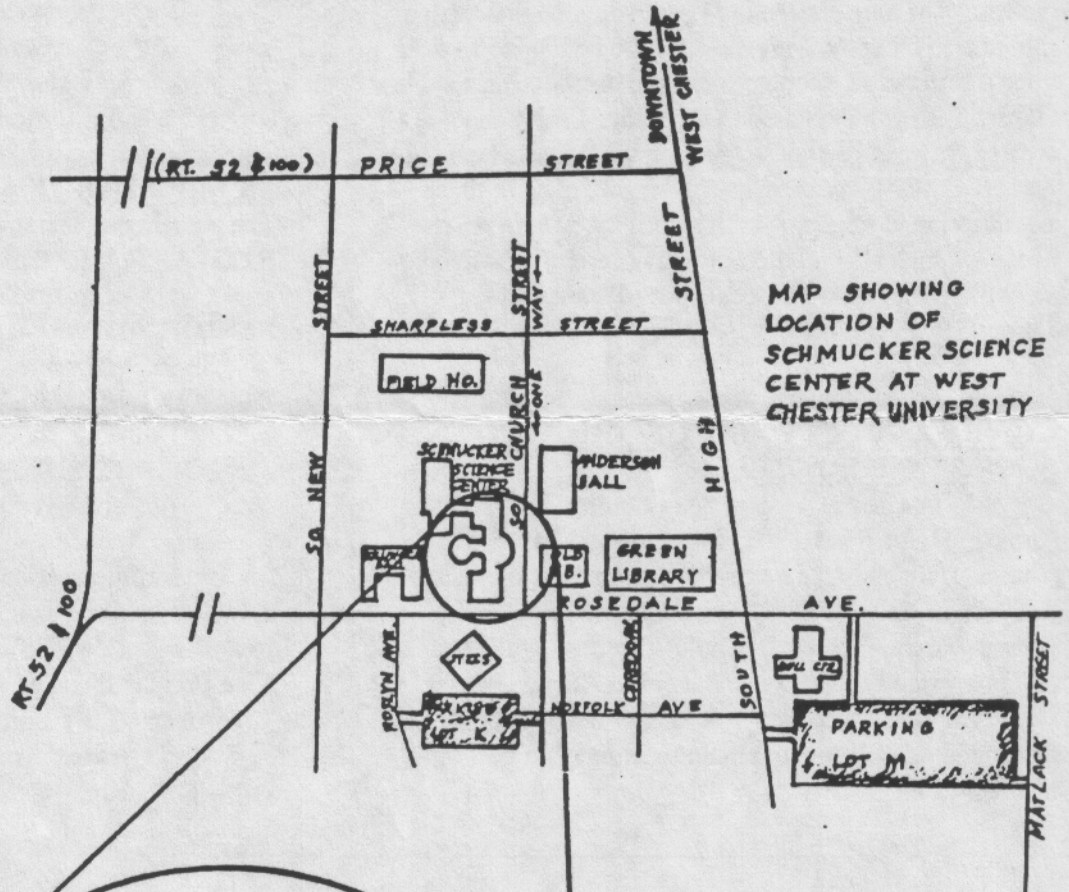
For further information on membership or society activities you may call:

President: Edwin Lurcott (610) 436-0387
Vice Pres: Mike Tucker (610) 584-8236
Treasurer: Steve Lurcott (610) 268-6943
Secretary: Nancy Armstrong (610) 873-7531
Pubic Rel: Kathy Cseke (610) 644-9543

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MAP SHOWING LOCATION OF SCHMUCKER SCIENCE CENTER AT WEST CHESTER UNIVERSITY



Note:
New Meeting Room is over Here

