

OBSERVATIONS

A MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF THE
CHESTER COUNTY ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY

★President: Edwin Lurcott
★Treasurer: Pete LaFrance

AUGUST 1995
(VOLUME 3, NO. 8)

★ Vice President: Jim Sylvester
★ Secretary: Nancy Armstrong

CCAS AUGUST MEETING

DATE: **Friday, August 18, 1995**

RAIN DATE: **Saturday, August 19, 1995**
(regardless of weather)

TIME: 8:00 PM EDT

PLACE: Brandywine Valley Association (BVA)
1760 Unionville-Wawaset Road (Rte. 842)
West Chester, PA (see map)

This will be the last of our combined monthly meeting and observing session this summer at BVA headquarters. If the weather is questionable on Friday evening, you may call Ed Lurcott at 436-0387 to find out if the meeting will be held on Friday or Saturday.

A question and answer session will be held this month where members are encouraged to ask any astronomical questions they like and perhaps the more knowledgeable will be able to provide an answer. If no one can provide an answer we will do some research and present the answer at the September meeting. This way we will all learn more about astronomy.

Following the Q & A session, there will be observing from the adjacent BVA field (weather permitting). Tiny Mars follows the sun in the western sky. Jupiter dominates the sky after sunset. The four Galilean moons frequently present occultations and transits. On Friday evening Io will disappear behind Jupiter at about 9:39 PM EDT. On Saturday evening the shadow of Io will be seen on Jupiter from 8:16 PM to 10:27 PM EDT. The well-known red spot of Jupiter will be on the meridian just about the same time 10:24 PM. Lately the red spot has been rather faint and presents a challenge to even see it.

About an hour after sunset Saturn rises but will be too low for viewing for another hour or so. When it becomes high enough, be sure to take a look through a telescope. As you probably already know the plane of Saturn's rings passed the Earth for the second time this year on August 10th. The

rings are so thin that we will most likely not be able to see them on August 18th or 19th. So Saturn will appear to be ringless. Earth will again pass through the ring plane next February, but not again until the year 2009. This condition gives us an opportunity to see the faint moons of Saturn perhaps as many as five or six, depending on the sky conditions and the size of the 'scope used.

In addition, Uranus (mag. 5.7) and Neptune (mag. 7.9) are in a convenient location for viewing, only 3.3 degrees apart in the southern sky. With the help of finder charts and a large enough telescope, you can see Pluto (mag. 13.7) about 15 degrees NNW of Jupiter. Therefore, all seven of the planets outside of Earth's orbit are now in view in the evening sky. How many can you find?

Deep-sky enthusiasts will also be pleased as this date was chosen so that there would be no interference from the moon. All of the summer M-objects will be readily visible including clusters galore, nebulae, and galaxies.

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. For further information call Ed Lurcott, 436-0387.

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JULY CCAS MEETING

Clouds again hampered our meeting on the weekend of July 21st and 22nd. However, they cleared some what by 9:00 PM and the observing

session was held will about ten people in attendance. With the help of his two sons, Steve and Stan, Ed Lurcott set up his orrery and the outdoor solar system model along the road leading to the observing area. Rapheal Gonzales demonstrated his newly purchased C-5 telescope. It showed excellent optical quality. Observations were made of Jupiter, Mars, M-13 (Hercules cluster), M-57 (Ring nebula), and several other objects before we left at 10:30 PM.

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A REQUEST FOR OCCULTATION TIMINGS

Here is an opportunity to contribute to actual scientific data. About 9:29 PM EDT September 22nd, 1995, it is predicted that the 11.0 magnitude minor planet, Aquitania (387) will occult (temporarily block the light from) a 9.6 magnitude star known as PPM 736636. Therefore, there will be an abrupt drop in magnitude of about 1.5 for a maximum duration of 33 seconds. Uncertainties of the star's position and the orbital elements of the minor planet make it impossible to predict the exact location on Earth where the occultation will be seen. However, the path can be predicted within a few hundred miles and this includes most the northeastern United States.

If enough observations are made from identifiable locations, an actual profile of the asteroid can be obtained. It requires accurate timing of the beginning and ending of the occultation. Any and all observations are welcome, but it would be most advantageous to spread observers along a NE to SW line. To make an observation, one would need at least a six inch 'scope, finder charts, tape recorder or a helper to record the time.

All those interested in contributing observations should contact Ed Lurcott (436-0387) as soon as possible for further information and a pre-event meeting.

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EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

The CCAS Executive Committee members met at the home of Ed Lurcott on July 28th. Many items were discussed which will effect the membership.

Proposed Changes in the Constitution:

1. Establish a family type membership where the spouse of a regular member may become a voting member by paying the dues of \$10.00. Children of this family may become junior members with no addition dues. Family membership dues then would be \$30.00.
2. Continue the senior type membership with the dues of \$10.00.
3. Revise the nominating and election process.

These three items require the approval of 2/3 of the members to amend the Constitution before being put into effect. A draft of these amendments will be sent out with the September issue of the *Observations* newsletter.

Other Items Discussed:

1. Continue monthly observing sessions in addition to the regular monthly meetings.
2. Proceed with the purchase of membership cards.
3. Request a lock-up room or cabinet in Schmucker Science Center that would be available to CCAS in which to store meeting supplies.
4. Expressed the urgent need for a Program Chairperson.
5. Investigate NASA and other sources for available program material.
6. Establish the annual budget by the September 12th meeting.
7. Contact the Astronomical League for possible membership.
8. Exchange newsletters with neighboring astronomy clubs.

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MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS

Many members have already renewed their membership, but there are some who have not. Now is a good time to check the date printed on the address label of this issue. If you are due to renew, you may send your renewal check made out to our new Treasurer, Pete LaFrance.

Mail to: **Pete LaFrance**

413 Church Rd.

Avondale, PA 19311.

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FALL MEETING SCHEDULE

Starting in September CCAS will again meet in the Schmucker Science Center Planetarium room (186), West Chester University, located at South Church Street and Rosedale Avenue, West Chester, PA.

Meetings will start at 7:30 PM on the second Tuesday of each month. As far as we know now this time and place will hold until next Spring. On clear nights we are permitted to use the observatory on the roof of Schmucker Science Center unless there is a conflict with laboratory sessions with the university.

The dates for the remainder of this year are:

September 12	7:30 PM EDT
October 10	7:30 PM EDT
November 14	7:30 PM EST
December 12	7:30 PM EST

Mark your calendars now as to not miss a meeting!



CHESTER COUNTY ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY'S PURPOSES

The Chester County Astronomical Society was formed in September 1993, with the co-operation 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.



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:** Jim Sylvester (610) 696-1102
- Treasurer:** Pete LaFrance (610) 268-2616
- Secretary:** Nancy Armstrong (610) 873-7531
- Pubic Rel:** Kathy Cseke (610) 644-9543
- Obs Chm:** Mike Tucker (610) 584-8236

