



OBSERVATIONS



A MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF THE
CHESTER COUNTY ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY

★President: Edwin Lurcott
★Treasurer: Pete LaFrance

NOVEMBER 1996
(VOLUME 4, NO. 11)

★Vice President: Emil Volcheck
★Secretary: William O'Hara

CCAS November Meeting

DATE: **Tuesday November 12, 1996**
TIME: 7:30 PM EDT
PLACE: Department of Geology and
Astronomy Lecture Room
(Room 113 - Boucher Building)
Schmucker Science Center
West Chester University
LOCATION: South Church St.
West Chester, PA (see maps)

Parking is available behind Sykes Student Center on the south side of Rosedale Avenue, and behind the Bull Center at the corner of Rosedale Avenue and South High Street. A map is included.

Our program for November will include a showing of the video Ed Lurcott made at the total solar eclipse on July 11, 1991 that swept across the Baja California peninsula. Also, Jim Anderson will do a presentation on the constellation Andromeda. There will be refreshments and socializing after the meeting.



Next CCAS Observing Session

The next observing session will be held on Friday November 8, with a cloud date of Saturday November 9. The location of our observing sessions through May of 1997 will be the Brandywine Valley Association (a map is included). At the observing sessions, there will be help available to set up and use your telescopes. All members are invited whether they have a telescope or not. Telescope owners are always glad to share the view through their 'scope. Dates for the observing sessions through May will be in the December *Observations*.



Star Party Report

In October, the Chester County Astronomical Society provided telescopes for a star party for a Downingtown-area home school association. It was mostly cloudy, but with a little persistence all there got good views of the Moon, some double stars, and even Saturn. During the cloudy portions of the evening, Kathy Buczynski gave some good classes on constellations. The several families who showed up with their children all had a good time. The Society extends thanks to Ed Lurcott, Kathy Buczynski, and Bill O'Hara for making this party possible.



Winter Star Party

See Ed Lurcott if you're interested in attending the 1997 Winter Star Party on West Summerland Key, 30 miles NE of Key West, Florida. It will be held on February 3 through 9, 1997.



November's Skies

Moon Phases

Last Quarter	11/03
New Moon	11/10
First Quarter	11/17
Full Moon	11/24

The Planets

Mercury will not be visible this month, as it is too close to the Sun.

Venus dominates the morning sky again this month, rising before the Sun.

Mars is now rising shortly after midnight, but is still too small (i.e., too far away) for good telescopic views.

Jupiter is easily found right after darkness falls in the evening, appearing as a very bright star in the southwest. After this month, you won't be able to get a decent view of it until next year, so enjoy it now.

Neptune is about four binocular fields east of brighter Jupiter. Neptune shines at about magnitude 7.8 in the constellation Sagittarius.

Uranus is in Capricornus, shining at about magnitude 5.7. It is about one binocular field east of fainter Neptune.

Saturn is visible after sunset, looking like a bright star in the southern sky. It's the brightest star in that part of the sky.

Pluto is lost in the Sun's glare this month.

Leonid Meteor Shower: November 16-17

The annual Leonid meteor shower will peak in the early morning hours of November 17. It should be a good show, especially after the First Quarter Moon sets. You can expect 60 or more meteors per hour.

Space Exploration Notes

Historical Notes for November

In 1957, the Soviets launch Sputnik 3, carrying the first living creature to orbit the Earth: the dog Laika.

In 1964, the U.S. launches Mariner 4.

In 1969, the astronauts of Apollo 12 are the second crew to land on the Moon.

In 1970, the Soviets' Luna 17 lands on the Moon, becoming the first wheeled vehicle there.

In 1971, the Soviet spacecraft Mars 2 is the first artificial object to hit Mars. Also in 1971, the U.S. spacecraft Mariner 9 is the first spacecraft to orbit Mars.

In 1973, the U.S. launches the Mariner 10 spacecraft. Also in 1973, the third Skylab crew is launched for an 84 day mission.

In 1980, Voyager 1 flies past Saturn.

Upcoming Mission Launches

Mars Global Surveyor

This spacecraft, designed to orbit Mars and survey the planet from above, is scheduled to launch from Cape Canaveral sometime between November 6 and 15. There are two "launch windows" each day during those 10 days. According to the mission's Web page, the spacecraft and launch vehicle have completed all tests; now it just depends on the weather.

Mars96

The Russians plan to launch their orbiter (with probes that will land) on November 16.

Mars Pathfinder (& Sojourner)

The spacecraft are now at the Cape, being assembled and undergoing checkouts. Rollout to the launch pad is scheduled for November 21, with launch on December 2. Pathfinder will land on Mars on July 4, 1997, open up, and then the little rover Sojourner will roll out and drive around the landing area.

Send your name to Saturn!

As part of the Cassini orbiter mission to Saturn, scheduled to launch late next year, NASA has a program to send signatures on the spacecraft. All you have to do is send a plain postcard (you can buy pre-stamped ones at the Post Office) to the address below, with your signature on the non-address side. You can put more than one signature on one card; you don't have to send a separate card for each signature. Volunteers from the Planetary Society will scan the signatures and digitize them. The signatures will be placed on 2 CD-ROM disks, which will then be secured onboard the spacecraft. Any cards received after January 1, 1997 will NOT be included, so hurry and send your card this week! Address:

Cassini Program

Jet Propulsion Laboratory

4800 Oak Grove Drive

Pasadena, CA 91109-8099

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November Star Story

Appearing to the west of the meridian this month, between Aquila, Cygnus, and Pegasus, is the little constellation Delphinus (pronounced del-FIE-nus), the Dolphin. At first thought, one might think that this constellation was a latter-day creation. This is especially so because it is small, and composed of faint stars: most of the newer constellations are like this. Truth be told, though, it is one of the older constellations in the sky.

The quadrilateral of fairly bright stars that make up its most easily recognized pattern (especially in binoculars or finderscopes) is the head of the dolphin. Its tail stretches off to the south. This is not the bottle-nosed dolphin (a.k.a. Flipper) that most of us think of when you mention dolphins. This is another species of dolphin that looks like, well, a large fish. It is immortalized in the heavens as the

friend of Man. The dolphin is also a symbol of philanthropy, and the Greeks considered it to be a sacred fish.

There are two legends associated with Delphinus. In the first one, a great poet and musician, Arion, was sailing to Greece. For some reason the ship's crew turned against Arion, who played a tune on his lyre to summon a school of dolphins (dolphins are notorious for their love of music). Arion jumped into the sea and was borne to safety by the dolphin that now appears in the sky. When they reached Greece, the dolphin insisted on accompanying Arion to the court, where the dolphin succumbed to a life of luxury.

Another story says that Delphinus is the dolphin who helped Poseidon find the mermaid Amphitrite. The dolphin carried Amphitrite to Poseidon's golden palace on the bottom of the sea, and also persuaded the mermaid to marry Poseidon. For its reward, Poseidon placed the dolphin in the heavens.

Clear Skies!

References:

The Box of Stars, by Catherine Tennant

Skywatching, by David Levy

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Contributing to the Newsletter

Contributions of articles relating to astronomy and space exploration are always welcome. If you have a computer, and an Internet connection, you can attach the file to an email message and send it to the editor at skywalkr@voicenet.com. Or mail to:

Jim Anderson
1086 King Road IVY-312
Malvern, PA 19355

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Membership Renewals

Check the date printed on the address label of this issue of *Observations*. If you are due to renew, you may send your renewal check made out to our Treasurer, Pete LaFrance. Mail to:

Pete LaFrance

**413 Church Rd.
Avondale, PA 19311**

Sky & Telescope Magazine Group Rates!

Subscriptions to this excellent periodical are available through the CCAS at \$27 per year, about half the newsstand price, and also cheaper than individual subscriptions! Make out a check to the Chester County Astronomical Society, note that it's for *Sky & Telescope*, and mail to Pete LaFrance.

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CCAS 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

FAMILY MEMBER

(husband, wife & children)\$ 30/year

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

President:	Edwin Lurcott	(610) 436-0387
Vice Pres:	Emil Volcheck	(610) 388-1581
Treasurer:	Pete LaFrance	(610) 268-2616
Secretary:	William O'Hara	(610) 696-1422
Program:	Kathy Buczynski	(610) 436-0821
Public Rel:	Kathy Cseke	(610) 644-9543
Obs Chm:	Mike Tucker	(610) 584-8236
Newsletter:	Jim Anderson	(610) 993-0261

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