



OBSERVATIONS



A MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF THE
CHESTER COUNTY ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY

★President: Edwin Lurcott
★Treasurer: Pete LaFrance

APRIL 1997
(VOLUME 5, NO. 4)

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

CCAS April Meeting

DATE: **Tuesday April 8, 1997**
TIME: 7:30 p.m. EDT
PLACE: **Health & Physical Educ. Bldg.**
South Campus
Room 325
See Special Note below!!!!
West Chester University
LOCATION: South New Street
West Chester, PA (see maps)

Special Note: This month our meeting will be on the South Campus. The Health & Physical Education Building is the large building between the tennis courts and the football field. There is ample parking around the sides and rear of the building. Go in the front door of the building, and turn left after crossing the lobby. At the next corner of the hallway is a stairwell. Go up one floor, and turn left. Room 325 is the first room on the left. Look for directional signs inside the building. A map is included.

At the April meeting, Frank Angelini will talk with us about "CCD Photography." Matt Patzek, a student at St. Joseph's School in Coatesville, will be our guest speaker. Matt will talk to us about the constellation Centaurus. The election committee will present the names of the candidates running for Society offices for the coming year. We will be electing a new President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer. The President will then appoint the Chairs for the various committees. Copies of the Society's Constitution, detailing the process, will be available at the April meeting. Also, CCAS members will vote on officers for the Astronomical League. See details below, under "Astronomical League Elections."

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April CCAS Observing Session

The next observing session will be held on Friday April 4, with a cloud date of Saturday April 5. This will be the last of our regular observing sessions where you will be able to see Comet Hale-Bopp. By May it will be much lower in the sky and getting dimmer. And don't forget Mars, now ending one of its biennial close passes to Earth.

The observing session will be held at 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. Remember to dress warmly, because you don't move around a lot when stargazing, so you can get cold real fast.

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March CCAS Meeting

An Election Committee was formed to oversee the election of officers for the coming year. Kathy Buczinski, Chuck Shorten, and Robert Hartje are the members of the committee this year.

A telescope committee of Frank Angelini, Jim Anderson, and Ed Lurcott was formed to purchase a 6" f/8 reflector for the Society. It will be a loaner 'scope, that Society members can borrow.

Rob Cordivari and Karl Krasley, from the Chesmont Astronomical Society, were our featured speakers. They gave a very interesting talk about light pollution, and ways to curb it. They distributed handouts with information on where you can get better outdoor lighting fixtures. Copies of this material will be available at all future meetings.

Kathy Buczinski gave us a good presentation on the zodiac, with lots of interesting tidbits of information.

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Telescopes and Astronomers Needed!

CCAS has been invited back to East Bradford Elementary School to again participate in their annual Student Interests Night. At this event, many displays made by students about their interests or hobbies are in the gymnasium/auditorium for viewing by the public. The Science and Math Committee at the school has invited us to bring telescopes and display items about astronomy, and showcase astronomy as an interesting hobby. If the weather is good, we can set up the `scopes in the school yard and offer views of the heavens to the attendees. We had a lot of fun last year; don't miss out on it this year! Date: Wednesday April 9, 1997. A map is included on a later page of this newsletter.

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Astronomy Day 1997

Astronomy Day 1997 is on Saturday April 12. Exton Square Mall has agreed to give us a table in the Mall on Astronomy Day, **with electricity** this year. Now we need members to sign up for an hour or two that day to be at the table to answer questions, talk about the Society, etc. Members are encouraged to think creatively about how we can promote astronomy in general, and the CCAS in particular. Submit all ideas to Ed Lurcott; bring them up at the April meeting. Remember, no idea is too crazy for consideration!

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ASTRO FACTS by Frank Angelini

Did you know that only two of the eleven stars within ten light years of our Sun are visible to the unaided eye? These two are Sirius (visible in our evening sky in April) and Alpha Centauri (not visible from our area.)

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Star Party Help Needed: April 23

CCAS has been asked to help with a star party at Park Ridge Elementary School, in Plymouth Meeting. Time is 8:00 thru 9:00 p.m. This party is a joint effort between the CCAS and the Delaware Valley Amateur Astronomers. We've done this party for several years now, and it's always a lot of fun. The students really know their stuff and appreciate

our sharing of our telescopes and time with them. Don't miss it! A map is included on a later page.

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Welcome New Members!

We'd like to welcome the new members who have joined the Society in recent months. Hello goes out to Roy Beatty, Eileen Whitman, John Bodnar, and Donald Eisele & family.

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Coming Attractions

May 2-4: The DelMarVa Stargazers will be holding their third annual DelMarVa Star Party. This event, held in Tuckahoe State Park near Queen Anne, Md., will include dark-sky stargazing. Contact Ed Lurcott for more details, or the Website

<http://www.udel.edu/dmiller/gazers.html>

Friday May 16: CCAS and West Goshen Township hold a FREE public star party at West Goshen Township Park. Telescopes and members needed.

June 6-8, 1997: Mason-Dixon Star Party, outside York PA. Copies of the brochure and registration form will be available at the CCAS April meeting.

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Astronomical League Elections

As a member society of this nationwide federation of astronomy organizations, the CCAS has the opportunity to cast a vote (one vote representing the Society as a whole) in the election of AL officers for the coming year. Two posts are up for election in 1997, the Treasurer (1997-2000 term) and the Secretary (1997-1999 term). There is only one candidate for each office, but we can write-in someone else if we so choose. I will have copies of the biographical sketches of the candidates at the April meeting, for your review. During the business part of the meeting, we will take a vote amongst the members present to determine the Society's vote.

Jim Anderson, ALCor

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April's Skies

Moon Phases

New Moon	3/07
First Quarter	3/14
Full Moon	3/22
Last Quarter	3/29

The Planets

Mercury will make its best appearance of the year in the first week of April. It is in the evening sky. Look about an hour after sundown (when you can see Comet Hale-Bopp), to the right and below the Pleiades and Aldebaran.

Venus is lost in the Sun's glare all month.

Mars is now past opposition, and getting farther away from Earth this month. You can, however, still do a lot of good observing this month.

Jupiter is in the morning sky this month.

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

Uranus is in the morning sky, in Capricornus, a bit west of Jupiter.

Neptune is in the morning sky, in Capricornus, near Uranus.

Pluto is in Ophiuchus, and high in the south by dawn.

Comet Hale-Bopp

You can now find Comet Hale-Bopp very easily without optical aid. It even **looks** like a comet to the naked eye now! The *Philadelphia Inquirer* is now running daily finder charts for it. If you haven't seen it yet, get out there and look! It's easy to find in the evening sky about an hour after sunset.



For the kids...in all of us by Connie Shapiro

To help learn the constellations, try this easy and inexpensive project. Use a reference book for pictures of the constellations. A good one is *The Stars, A New Way to See Them* by H.A. Ray.

Shoebox Constellation Boxes

Materials: Shoebox with top, pencil, black construction paper, scissors, tape, outlines of several constellations, straight pin

Instructions: Cut out a rectangular hole in one end of the shoebox. At the other end, poke a small hole with the pencil to create a viewing hole. Cut a piece of the black construction paper slightly larger than the rectangular hole. Place the constellation outline on top of the cut piece of the construction paper, and using it as a guide, poke holes through it and the construction paper with the straight pin. Tape the piece of black construction paper into the rectangular hole in the end of the shoebox. The side of the paper that shows the stars in their correct alignment should be on the inside of the box (or else you could learn the constellation backwards!) Place the lid back on the shoebox. Look through the small hole at the other end of the shoebox while aiming the end with the constellation toward a light. You should see the constellation shining the way you would observe it in the night sky.



Join the Fight for Darker Skies

Consider joining the International Dark-Sky Association. Run by volunteers, this 10 year old organization is dedicated to promoting better outside lighting everywhere—lighting that will reduce energy wastage, truly enhance security, and restore the stars to our sky. The membership dues go to producing a quarterly newsletter, and to the costs of maintaining a library of information that can be used by members in light control efforts. For more info, you can check out their Web page at <http://www.darksky.org>

Annual dues are \$20.00 for an individual (more if you can afford an additional contribution). The IDA is an IRS-registered non-profit organization, so donations (but not dues) are tax-deductible. Checks can be made out to IDA, Inc., and sent to:

International Dark-Sky Association
3545 North Stewart
Tucson, AZ 85716



Contributing to *Observations*

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 the contribution, typed or handwritten, to:

Jim Anderson
1086 W. King Road Apt. I312
Malvern, PA 19355

The deadline for receiving contributions is the 27th of the preceding month.

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Membership Renewals

Check the date printed on the address label of this issue of *Observations*; "exp." appears in front of it, just after your name. 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. Or you can bring it to the next Society meeting and give it to Pete there. Buying a subscription this way also gets you a 10% discount on other Sky Publishing merchandise.

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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
Obs Chm:	Mike Tucker	(610) 584-8236
ALCor and Newsletter:	Jim Anderson	(610) 993-0261

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