



# OBSERVATIONS

A MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF THE  
CHESTER COUNTY ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY



★President: Edwin Lurcott

★Treasurer: Pete LaFrance

**OCTOBER 1997**

(VOLUME 5, NO. 10)

★Vice President: Kathy Buczynski

★Secretary: William O'Hara

## CCAS October Meeting

DATE: **Tuesday October 14, 1997**

TIME: 7:30 p.m. EDT

PLACE: Department of Geology and  
Astronomy Lecture Room  
(Room 113 - Boucher Building)  
West Chester University

LOCATION: South Church Street  
West Chester, PA (see map)

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.

Our presentation will be given by Ed Lurcott, who will show us slides of some of the images of Mars returned by various spacecraft. The constellation presentation will be given by Gabrielle Rowan and Kathy Buczynski on the constellation Capricornus.



## CCAS October Observing Session

The next Observing Session will be on Friday October 24, 1997, with a cloud date of Saturday October 25. If the weather is bad both days, there will not be an observing session in October. The 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. As always, CCAS Observing Sessions are free of charge. Children are always welcome as long as they are accompanied by an adult.



**Happy Birthday CCAS !!!**

The Chester County Astronomical Society was four years old in September! Many happy returns!



## September CCAS Meeting Notes

Frank Angelini gave a good talk on the constellation Sagittarius, including CCD images he captured of some of the deep-sky sights in Sagittarius. Jim Anderson gave a talk about Astronomical League Observing Awards, and 4 observing clubs were started. These are the Messier Club, the Binocular Messier Club, the Lunar Club, and the Double Star Club. These "clubs" will arrange times for the members working on those awards to get together to share experiences and advice in finding interesting sights in the night sky, and possibly also to observe together. Different people volunteered to be the coordinator for each club; thanks!

Messier Clubs (both): Bob Hartje

Lunar Club: Ed Lurcott

Double Star Club: Jim Anderson

If you missed the September meeting, there will be information packets available at future CCAS Meetings and Observing Sessions that will help you get started on an Observing Award.



## September Observing Session

The evening of Friday September 26 was partly cloudy, with a forecast that promised "rapid clearing after sunset". Quite a few of the members showed up at the BVA for the session that night. The Weather Service's definition of "rapid" was found to be somewhat questionable, but the sky was mostly clear by the time full darkness descended. Quite a few visitors showed up, including a whole troop of Girl Scouts. The National Park Service estimated the crowd size at "somewhere under 100,000". We all

had a fun time showing the visitors some of the constellations and some of the more interesting sights in the night sky. We also answered numerous questions. After the guests left, a few stalwarts hung on enjoying the sights, and waiting for Saturn to get above the treeline. It was a grand sight when it did come into view, and we had a good time comparing views in the different `scopes and debating how many moons we could see in each `scope. Jupiter, which was occulting two of its moons that night, was also a big hit with the members and with our visitors. Finally around 11:00 even the stalwarts could no longer fend off the heavy dew (not to mention the rising ground mists and fogs) and were forced to pack it in for the night. A good night indeed.



### **CCAS Lending Library**

Our Librarian, Bill O'Hara, has categorized the books in our library. The categories are:

- 100 - Beginners, Solar System
- 200 - Sun, Sextant, Eclipses
- 300 - Universe
- 400 - Deep Sky
- 500 - Telescope Making
- 600 - Photography
- 700 - Instructor's Guides
- 800 - Nebulae, star clusters, giants, comets
- 900 - Space

You can drop by Bill's place (call first, of course) to borrow a book. Or you can call Bill before a meeting and ask him to bring a book to the meeting for you. The complete list of books is too big to include in the newsletter; there will be copies available at CCAS meetings. Bill's phone number is 696-1422.



### **Welcome New Members!**

We'd like to extend a big welcome to the members who have joined us in recent months. Hello and Clear Skies to Jim Coll and Family, Jennifer and Kathy Morris, and Donna Anderson.



### **Upcoming Events**

Saturday October 18: the second annual Octoberfest at the Brandywine Valley Association, 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Price \$5 for adults, \$10 for family. Event is on the grounds of the BVA, where we hold our observing sessions. See the attached maps. Phone 610-793-1090 for more info.

Sunday October 26: End of Daylight Savings Time, remember to turn your local time clocks back 1 hour (Universal Time is unaffected). If you're logging official UT for observations, we are 4 hours behind UT now. At 02:00 a.m. DST on Sunday Oct. 26 our local time becomes 01:00 a.m. EST on Sunday Oct. 26, and we are then 5 hours behind UT. An extra hour of observing time!!!

October 30 - November 3: Ed Lurcott and Pete LaFrance are going to the Mid-Atlantic Star Party '97 at Boy Scout Camp Reeves, near Robbins in North Carolina. If anyone is interested in joining them, contact Pete for more details.

November 11: CCAS Meeting at West Chester University (also Election Day, vote for Dark-Sky candidates!)

November 28 (29): CCAS Observing Session at the Brandywine Valley Association

January 26 - February 1, 1998: Annual Winter Star Party in the Florida Keys. Registrations must be in by October 15, 1997. Contact Ed Lurcott for more details if you're interested. Or the Web site at [www.scas.org](http://www.scas.org)



## CCAS Lending Telescope

We have a Telrad finder for our telescope, donated by Rivers Camera Shop in Dover NH. Frank Angelini arranged the donation. Ed Lurcott has the Telrad, and will attach it when the telescope comes back again. At this writing it is out on loan.

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## October's Skies

### Moon Phases

New Moon	10/01
First Quarter	10/09
Full Moon	10/15
Last Quarter	10/23
New Moon	10/31

### The Planets

Mercury is lost in the Sun's glare in October.

Venus is low in our evening sky in October and easy to spot due to its brightness, but it will not get high enough above the horizon for good telescopic viewing. It will be the first bright "star" you see in the west after sunset.

Mars is in the evening sky, a bright orange or red "star" in the southwest at dusk. It will be above (east) and to the left (south) as you are facing much-brighter Venus.

Jupiter, the king of planets, reigns in splendor in October. It is the brightest "star" in the evening sky, easy to find in the faint constellation Capricornus, in the southeast in the early evening. Jupiter is the most fascinating planet to study with even the smallest telescopes.

Saturn is rising at dusk in the east as October opens. The rings are now tilted nicely, about 10°. Saturn reaches opposition on the night of October 9-10.

Uranus, in Capricornus this month, is a bit west of much-brighter Jupiter.

Neptune is also in Capricornus, not far from Uranus.

Pluto is pretty much lost in the Sun's glare for the rest of this year.

### October 20-26: Orionid Meteor Shower

The Orionid meteor shower peaks during the week of October 20 through 26. A waning Moon may interfere with viewing during the early morning hours.

## See an Asteroid !

The minor planet (asteroid) Vesta is at opposition in October, and is shining at magnitude 6.4 (or thereabouts). That makes it observable with steady binoculars, if you know where in Pisces to look. It's about an hour of Right Ascension behind (east of) Saturn. A finder chart appears elsewhere in this issue. Add an asteroid to your observing trophies list!

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## 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 [Jim.Anderson@hbc.com](mailto:Jim.Anderson@hbc.com)

Or mail the contribution, typed or handwritten, to:

Jim Anderson  
19 Bluff Road  
Thorndale, PA 19372-1104

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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

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## 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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