



OBSERVATIONS

A MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF THE
CHESTER COUNTY ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY



★President: Edwin Lurcott

★Treasurer: Pete LaFrance

NOVEMBER 1997

(VOLUME 5, NO. 11)

★Vice President: Kathy Buczynski

★Secretary: William O'Hara

CCAS November Meeting

DATE: **Tuesday November 11, 1997**

TIME: 7:30 p.m. EST

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.

The monthly constellation presentation will be given by Gabrielle Rowan on the constellation Aquarius. A presentation entitled "Dead Constellations II" will be given by Jim Anderson. Using the evening sky for the month of November as a starting point, Jim will talk about constellations that used to be there, but are no longer. What happened to them? Did the Great Extincter wipe them out?? Did they disappear into a black hole??? Come to the November meeting and find out!



CCAS November Observing Session

The next Observing Session will be on Friday November **21**, 1997, with a cloud date of Saturday November **22**. Note the change of date; the October issue of *Observations* incorrectly said the 28th. If the weather is bad both days, there will not be an observing session in November. 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. Remember to dress warmly! It gets pretty cold real fast standing around a telescope in the middle of an old pasture in November.



October CCAS Meeting Notes

Kathy Buczynski gave a good talk on the constellation Capricornus, a dim constellation that is usually hard to find around here. Except for this year, when Jupiter is in it! Kathy also pointed out the many other interesting sights in the constellation.

Ed Lurcott gave an interesting narrated slide show of Mars pictures sent back by earlier spacecraft, like the Viking ships of the 1970's. The show gave us an excellent tour of the major features of Mars.



October Observing Session

The evening of Friday October 24 was cloudy and rainy, so that night was a no-go. The next evening, Saturday October 25, it wasn't raining at least; but the thick overcast looked like it might start raining at any moment. So there was no October observing session. Well, we needed the rain badly. The Thorndale outpost of the CCAS Weather Bureau recorded 1.6" of rain that Friday night.



Upcoming Events

December 11: CCAS Meeting at West Chester University

December 19: CCAS will participate in a Winter Solstice Celebration at the Brandywine Valley Association. There's a pot-luck dinner; bring bread or hot soup. A storyteller will be on hand to spin tales for your entertainment. Our own Roger Taylor

will give a "sky tour", with telescope-viewing afterwards. CCAS members should bring their telescopes to help out with this part of the program.

December 26 (27): CCAS Observing Session at the Brandywine Valley Association



CCAS Lending Library

Our Librarian, Bill O'Hara, has the books in our library all ready for members to borrow. 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. We will be publishing sections of the list each month, though; the first part is below. Bill's phone number is 696-1422.

Books in Category 1, "Beginners and the Solar System":

- 101 - *Astronomy*, Baker, 1955
- 102 - *Exploration of the Moon*, Branley, 1966
- 103 - *Managing Planet Earth*, Sci.Amer., 1990
- 104 - *The Solar System*, Wood, 1979
- 105 - *Observational Astronomy*, Birney, 1991
- 106 - *The Moon*, Gamow & Stubbs, 1973
- 107 - *Observational Astronomy for Amateurs*, Sedgwick, 1971
- 108 - *Strange World of the Moon*, Firsoff, 1959
- 109 - *The World of Natural History*, Saunders, 1952
- 110 - *Matter, Earth, and Sky*, Gamow, 1965
- 111 - *Americans to the Moon*, Gurney, 1970
- 112 - *Wall Map of Mars*, Nat. Geo. Society, 1973



CCAS Lending Telescope

Our Society telescope (a 6", f/8 reflector) has been out on loan every month since we got it, so far. We are still looking for a volunteer to be Telescope Coordinator. This person would keep track of who has the telescope, check on its condition from time to time, and keep the Society informed on the condition of the telescope. Interested parties can contact Ed Lurcott.



AL Observing Programs

One of the benefits of joining the CCAS is that you also become a member of the Astronomical League, a national federation of astronomy clubs. The AL has a series of Observing Awards, and 4 observing clubs based on these awards have been started in the CCAS. 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. Working on these awards also gives you a plan of observing, so to speak. "What will I look at tonight?" becomes "Which Messier objects are visible tonight that I haven't seen yet?" Packets of info on the various clubs are available at CCAS meetings. Each club has a volunteer coordinator:

Messier Clubs (both): Bob Hartje (610-325-7285)

Lunar Club: Ed Lurcott (610-436-0387)

Double Star Club: Jim Anderson (610-380-4512)



November's Skies

Moon Phases

First Quarter	11/07
Full Moon	11/14
Last Quarter	11/21
New Moon	11/29

The Planets

Mercury is in the evening sky during the second half of November, but rather difficult to see.

Venus is in our evening sky in November 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 southwest after sunset.

Mars is in the evening sky, a bright orange or red "star" in the southwest at dusk. It will be near much-brighter Venus all month.

Jupiter continues to reign over our evening sky in November. It is the brightest "star" in the south at dusk, easy to find in the faint constellation Capricornus. Jupiter is the most fascinating planet to study with even the smallest telescopes.

Saturn is in the southeast at dusk in November. The rings are now tilted nicely, about 10°. Its largest moon Titan can usually be seen even in telescopes as small as 60mm.

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.

November 17: Leonid Meteor Shower Peaks

The annual Leonid meteor shower peaks on November 17. Alas, the Moon will be just 3 days past Full, so its light will "wash out" all the fainter meteors from view. There will probably be some bright enough to be seen anyway; best viewing is during the early morning hours.



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@hboc.com

Or mail the contribution, typed or handwritten, to:

Jim Anderson
19 Bluff Road
Thorndale, PA 19372-1104



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.



CCAS Membership Information

The present membership rates are as follows:

REGULAR MEMBER.....\$20/year
SENIOR MEMBER.....\$10/year
STUDENT MEMBER.....\$ 5/year
JUNIOR MEMBER.....\$ 5/year
FAMILY MEMBER.....\$ 30/year

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

President: Edwin Lurcott (610) 436-0387
Vice Pres: Kathy Buczynski (610) 436-0821
Treasurer: Pete LaFrance (610) 268-2616
Secretary: William O'Hara (610) 696-1422
Program: Kathy Buczynski (610) 436-0821
ALCor and Newsletter: Jim Anderson (610) 380-4512
Librarian: William O'Hara (610) 696-1422

