



OBSERVATIONS

A MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF THE
Chester County Astronomical Society



★ *President:* Mike Turco
★ *Treasurer:* Pete LaFrance

JULY 1999
(VOLUME 7, NO. 7)

★ *Vice President:* Steve Limeburner
★ *Secretary:* Frank Angelini

http://members.tripod.com/~ccas_2/ccas.html

EXTRA!

CCAS and University of Pennsylvania's Flower & Cook Observatory Win Honorable Mention in Sky & Telescope's annual National Astronomy Day Award program!

We have just been informed via e-mail, literally as this newsletter is going to press, that the Astronomy Day Program conducted on Saturday May 22, 1999 at the University of Pennsylvania's Flower & Cook Observatory by the Observatory staff and the members of the Chester County Astronomical Society made it into the final round of judging for this annual award. All final round entries receive an Honorable Mention Award. The award will be presented at the Astronomical League's national convention (AstroCon '99) on July 13-17, 1999 in Cheney, WA on the campus of Eastern Washington University. Anybody planning on attending AstroCon '99?? You can pick up our award if you're going; call Mike Turco to let him know, so he can tell the award coordinator who will be representing the CCAS that day. Congratulations for a great job very well done by all involved!



Public Open House: F & C Observatory

There will be a FREE public open house program at the University of Pennsylvania's Flower & Cook Observatory in Malvern, PA on Friday July 30, 1999. The program starts at 8:00 p.m. EDT with a talk about a topic of astronomical interest. If the skies are clear, there will be observing with the Observatory's telescopes. The Observatory is located on Providence Road, just west of the intersection with Warren Avenue. A map is included below.

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CCAS July Meeting & Observing Session

DATE: **Friday July 16, 1999**
RAIN DATE: Saturday July 17, 1998
TIME: 8:15 p.m. EDT
PLACE: **Brandywine Valley Association**
(BVA)
LOCATION: 1760 Unionville-Wawaset Rd.
(PA Route 842)
West Chester, PA (map is included)

Special Note: During the summer months of July and August, the monthly meeting will be combined with the Observing Session out at the BVA. There will not be any meetings at West Chester University in July and August. That means that if the Friday Observing Session evening is clouded out, we will try again on Saturday evening.

To get to the observing site at the BVA, from the main parking lot by the office, go up the farm lane to the left, about 800 feet or so to the top of the hill. If you arrive after dark, please turn off your headlights and just use parking lights as you come up the hill. 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.

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July 7: Double Star Club Meeting

There will be a meeting of the Double Star Club at the University of Pennsylvania's Flower & Cook Observatory in Malvern, PA on Wednesday July 7, 1999, starting at 7:30 p.m. EDT. A map to the F & C Observatory is included.

The Double Star Club is composed of anyone in the CCAS who is interested in working on the Double Star Observing Award from the Astronomical League, as well as members who have already earned the award. The purpose of the meeting is to exchange information, tips, etc. about double star observing. There will be at least one semi-formal presentation entitled "The Double Stars of July". The talk, centered on the double stars from the AL list that are visible in July, will include more general information as well. Things like filling out the observing logbook for the award will be covered (any member who has earned the award is asked to bring their logbook as an example). How to determine directions in a telescope's field of view will be covered. Another topic of possible discussion is starting a CCAS double star observing program at the F & C Observatory for

scientific purposes: making accurate measurements of interesting visual binary stars. Many of the members are aware that very very few professional astronomers are involved in such work these days, yet such measurements are vital to our understanding of stellar dynamics. This could be an interesting long-term program for the members of the CCAS to pursue.

If the weather forecast is for clear skies that night, bring your telescopes and we can do some double star observing when it gets dark.



AL Observing Awards

Several CCAS members have earned observing awards from the Astronomical League lately. Congratulations go out to the following members for their observing accomplishments:

Frank Angelini earned the Honorary Messier Award (certificate and pin), for finding and logging all 110 Messier objects.

Steve Limeburner earned the Double Star Award (certificate and pin), for finding and logging all 100 double stars on the A.L. list.

Jim Anderson earned the basic Messier Award (certificate), for finding and logging at least 70 of the 110 Messier objects.



CCAS 20" Telescope News

We would like to extend a big thank you to some CCAS members who have donated money to the Telescope Fund:

Peter LaFrance \$100.00
 William O'Hara \$100.00

The Telescope Fund was established to pay for the construction of a telescope around the 20-inch diameter telescope mirror given to the Society by the University of Pennsylvania.



Calendar Notes

August 13/14, 1999: CCAS Observing Session and Meeting, Brandywine Valley Association 8:15 p.m. EDT

August 27, 1999: Free public open house at the Flower & Cook Observatory in Malvern 8:00 p.m. EDT



CCAS Lending Telescope

You can make arrangements to borrow the telescope for a month by contacting Kathy Buczynski (610-436-0821). Club members can borrow the 6" f/8 reflector for a month at a time; longer if no one else is waiting to borrow it.



July Skies

Moon Phases

Last Quarter	7/06
New Moon	7/12
First Quarter	7/20
Full Moon	7/28

The Planets

Mercury will be visible for as much as 90 minutes after sunset on July 1, so that will be a good opportunity to see Mercury. After that it sinks rapidly closer to the Sun, and by mid-month will be lost in the Sun's glare.

Venus will be the brightest "star" you can see in the evening sky in July, although it will be closer to the horizon each evening at sunset. On July 15 there will be a nice close grouping of Venus, Regulus, and a thin crescent Moon.

Mars is in the south-southwest after sunset, looking like a bright reddish-orange "star" near a bright blue-white star (Spica). We are still close enough to Mars for good telescopic viewing in early July, but by the end of the month we will be too far away for good views.

Jupiter rises between midnight and 1:00 a.m. EDT in July.

Saturn is rising about 45 minutes after Jupiter in July.

Uranus and Neptune are in the constellation Capricornus, approaching opposition at the end of July. By the early morning hours when Jupiter and Saturn are rising this month, these two planets are nearing the meridian.

Pluto is in the constellation Ophiuchus, near Zeta (ζ) Ophiuchus in the evening skies of July. Determined hunters will need dark skies, at least an 8" telescope, and a good finder chart in order to bag Pluto (14th magnitude).



Astroblast '99: August 13-15, 1999

This star party, organized by the Oil Region astronomy clubs in PA, will be held in Venango County's Two-Mile Run Park near Franklin, PA. Gates open at 3:00 p.m. Friday August 13. There will be various talks, a pizza party 6:30 Saturday, a Messier Marathon, and dark sky observing. Registration is \$14.00 before July 30; \$20.00 after that. Camping fees are \$3.00 per night. For more information, call John O'Hara at 814-677-3972 or e-mail at ohara@galacticis.com



MegaMeet VIII: Sept. 4-5, 1999

Sponsored by the Lehigh Valley Amateur Astronomers Society, this star party is held on the mountaintop near Hawk Mountain Sanctuary, at Pulpit Rock. Gates open at 4:00 p.m. Saturday. "No Fuss, No Frills, No Fee" is their motto. Camping is encouraged. There are no facilities for campers or RVs. For more information, call Tom Smith at 610-944-0752, or via e-mail at TSmith5230@aol.com



Black Forest Star Party: Sept. 10-12, 1999

This new star party, organized by the Central Pennsylvania Observers, will be held at Cherry Springs State Park at an altitude of 2300 feet. You can camp in the park; there are some electrical hookups. There will be door prizes, speakers, demonstrations, and dark dark skies. The State Park is located on PA State Route 44 in Potter County. State Forest Land surrounds it: the nearest clearing (yes that's clearing, not town) is at least 5 miles away! There is a good field for observing at the Park. Registration is \$25.00, including camping fee. Pre-registration deadline is August 20; after that registration is \$30.00 including camping. Park closes at 10:00 each night; after that you can't go in or out. For more information contact Michael J. Coslo at 814-238-7690 or via e-mail at black_forest@pop.psu.edu

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News from Neighboring Societies

From *The Delaware Valley AMATEUR ASTRONOMER*, the newsletter of the Delaware Valley Astronomical Association; upcoming Meeting Topics and speakers:

July 9	"The Big Bang Never Happened"	Eric Lerner, author
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DVAA meetings are held at the Schuylkill Center for Environmental Education, Hagys Mill Road, Philadelphia. Meetings start at about 7:30 p.m., with the main talk held at about 8:00 p.m. DVAA meetings are open to the general public, free of charge. Contact Mike Turco (610-399-3423) for more information or directions, or for a ride to the meeting. Or check the DVAA Website at

<http://www.libertynet.org/~dvaa/>

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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. Copies of the catalog are available at CCAS meetings. Bill's phone number is 610-696-1422.

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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. Working on these awards also gives you a plan of observing: "What will I look at tonight?" becomes "Which Messier objects are visible tonight that I haven't seen yet?" Each club has a volunteer coordinator:

Messier Clubs (both): Frank Angelini (610-873-7929)

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

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

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CCAS Website

Pete LaFrance has set up a Web page for the Society on the World Wide Web (Internet). He has included some pictures taken by CCAS members. Check it out at:

http://members.tripod.com/~ccas_2/ccas.html

Pete welcomes any additions to the site by Society members. The contributions can be of any astronomy subject or object, or can be related to space exploration. The only requirement is that it is your own work; no copying copyrighted material! Give your contributions to Pete LaFrance (610-268-2616).

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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 19311-9785

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Sky & Telescope Magazine Group Rates

Subscriptions to this excellent periodical are available through the CCAS at a reduced price of \$27.00, which is much less the newsstand price of \$48.00, and also cheaper than individual subscriptions (\$37.95)! 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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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 SNY114@aol.com

Or mail the contribution, typed or handwritten, to:

Jim Anderson
19 Bluff Road
Thorndale, PA 19372-1104

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Join the Fight for Dark Skies!

You can help fight light pollution, conserve energy, and save the night sky for everyone to use and enjoy. Join the nonprofit International Dark-Sky Association (IDA) today. Individual memberships start at \$30.00 for one year. Send to:

International Dark-Sky Association
3545 N. Stewart
Tucson, AZ 85716



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



CCAS Officers

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

- President:** Mike Turco (610) 399-3423
- Vice Pres:** Steve Limeburner (610) 353-3986
- Treasurer:** Pete LaFrance (610) 268-2616
- Secretary:** Frank Angelini (610) 873-7929
- ALCor and**
- Newsletter:** Jim Anderson (610) 380-4512
- Librarian:** William O’Hara (610) 696-1422
- Observing:** Ed Lurcott (610) 436-0387

