



# OBSERVATIONS



A MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF THE

## Chester County Astronomical Society

★ *President:* Mike Turco

★ *Treasurer:* Pete LaFrance

**SEPTEMBER 2000**

(VOLUME 8, NO. 9)

★ *Vice President:* Steve Limeburner

★ *Secretary:* Doug Liberati

[http://members.tripod.com/~ccas\\_2/ccas.html](http://members.tripod.com/~ccas_2/ccas.html)

### CCAS September Meeting

DATE: **Tuesday September 12, 2000**

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. If you arrive early enough, you may be able to get an on-street parking space.

Our program for September 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. There will be refreshments and socializing after the meeting.



### CCAS September Observing Session

The next CCAS Observing Session will be on Friday September 22, 2000. If it's too cloudy on Friday, then the Observing Session will be on Saturday September 23, 2000. At the observing sessions, there will be help available to set up and use your telescopes. If you're having trouble using your telescope, or finding your way around the sky, come on out and get some assistance. All members are invited whether they have a telescope or not. Telescope owners are always glad to share the view through their scope. CCAS Observing Sessions are always free of charge. Children are always welcome as long as an adult accompanies them. Make sure to bring jackets and hats, as it can get cool rather quickly at this time of year.

To get to the observing site at the BVA, turn off Route 842 into the parking lot by the office: look for the signs to the office along Route 842. From that parking lot, go up the farm lane to the left; it's 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.



### Report on the Black Forest Star Party

The CCAS was well represented at this star party held in Potter County PA, at Cherry Springs State Park over the Labor Day Weekend. Steve Limeburner, Pete LaFrance, Ed Lurcott, Ed's son Stan and his daughter Alyssa, and Ed's daughter Linda and her daughters Jill and Janel. There were about 300 people in attendance. The weather did not cooperate, though, and they only got in about 1-2 hours worth of decent observing. What they saw was great. With the club's 20" telescope, they were able to see dust lanes in the arms of the Andromeda Nebula (M31), V Aquilae (a very red star), Lagoon Nebula (M8), Trifid Nebula (M20), the Veil Nebula, NGC 6751 (see the July newsletter for a description of it), and more. Ed's granddaughter Janel won a door prize, a 6" f/4 homemade reflector telescope (a Dob). The gang took some day trips, including one to the PA Grand Canyon where Stan led all the girls on a hike down one side and up the other side of the canyon. Pete and Steve bunked out in Pete's trailer, and on Sunday night Pete cooked filet mignon for Pete and Steve (so now you know whom to go with to star parties). So despite the weather, the CCAS contingent had a good time and is looking forward to next year's BFSP.



### Report on the CCAS 20" Telescope

Steve Limeburner reports that the club's 20" telescope, built around a mirror donated to the Society by the University of Pennsylvania, was used at the Observing Session on Friday August 25. Steve said that the telescope's performance was noticeably improved by Ed Lurcott's work on the secondary mirror alignment. "This was evident in its ability to split the Double-Double, and also in its fine views of emission nebulae with an O-III filter. We viewed M13, M57, M27, M17, M16, M8, and M20. Very nice!"

Steve also reports that efforts to make a dedication plaque for the 20" are moving forward. One thing we'd like to put on the plaque is a list of those who donated toward its completion. This will be discussed further at the September meeting.

Ed reports that the primary mirror is getting dirty, and will need to be washed pretty soon. He is also working on a better cover for the mirror box.



## September Skies

### Autumnal Equinox: September 22

On Friday September 22 at 1:27 p.m. EDT, the Sun crosses the equator to the southern side, and our day and night are of equal length. This event marks the start of autumn in the Northern Hemisphere, and the start of spring in the Southern Hemisphere.

### Moon Phases

First Quarter	09/05
Full Moon	09/13 "Harvest Moon"
Last Quarter	09/20
New Moon	09/27

### The Planets

Mercury is low in the evening sky in late September, setting about 30-45 minutes after the Sun. It won't be easy to see.

Venus is also low in the evening sky in September, but higher than Mercury will get. Venus will be setting about 60-75 minutes after the Sun.

Mars is in the morning sky this month, rising as much as 2.5 hours before the Sun by month's end.

Jupiter rises at about 11:00 p.m. EDT in early September, and earlier each night after that. It's a great sight in a telescope of any size.

Saturn is near brighter Jupiter all month, making it easier to find. The two planets remain close to the Pleiades and Hyades star clusters this month in Taurus. Saturn's rings are now tilted "open" the most they have been since 1990: 24°.

Uranus and Neptune are well placed for evening observing all month; they are both in Capricornus.

Pluto is high in the south about the time it gets fully dark in September, near the star 20 Ophiuchi. Finding Pluto, however, requires at least an 8" telescope, dark skies, good charts, and lots of patience.



### **CCAS Purpose**

The Chester County Astronomical Society was formed in September 1993, with the cooperation of West Chester University, as a non-profit organization dedicated to the education and enjoyment of astronomy for the general public. The Society holds meetings (with speakers) and observing sessions once a month. Anyone who is interested in astronomy or would like to learn about astronomy is welcome to attend meetings and become a member of the Society. The Society also provides telescopes and expertise for "star nights" for school, scout, and other civic groups.



## Quote of the Month

*What happens to the outer world happens to the inner world. If the outer world is diminished in its grandeur, then the emotional, imaginative, intellectual, and spiritual life of the human is diminished or extinguished. Without the soaring birds, the great forests, the sounds and coloration of the insects, the free-flowing streams, the flowering fields, the sight of the clouds by day and the stars at night, we become impoverished in all that makes us human.*

Thomas Berry



### **South Jersey Star Party: Sept. 29**

The South Jersey Astronomy Club is hosting this star party on September 29 through October 1, 2000. The star party will be held in Belleplain State Forest in Cape May County, New Jersey. For more information, visit the Web site at:

<http://members.aol.com/sjastroc/sjacsplb.html>



### **CCAS Lending Telescope**

Contact Kathy Buczynski to make arrangements to borrow the Society's lending telescope. CCAS members can borrow the lending telescope for a month at a time; longer if no one else wants to borrow it after you. Kathy's phone number is 610-436-0821.



### **CCAS Lending Library**

Contact our Librarian, Bill O'Hara, to make arrangements to borrow one of the books in the CCAS lending library. Copies of the catalog are available at CCAS meetings. Bill's phone number is 610-696-1422.



### **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

### **Dark-Sky Website for PA**

The Pennsylvania Outdoor Lighting Council has lots of good information on safe, efficient outdoor security lights at their Website:

<http://home.epix.net/~ghonis/index.htm>



## 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](mailto:sny114@aol.com).

Or mail the contribution, typed or handwritten, to:

**Jim Anderson**  
19 Bluff Road  
Thorndale, PA 19372-1104



## CCAS Newsletters Now Available via E-mail

You can now receive the monthly newsletter by e-mail. When the newsletter is finished, I convert it to a special type of file (a .pdf, for Portable Document Format) using a utility called Adobe Acrobat. Then all you need on your PC, besides an Internet connection with e-mail, is the Adobe Acrobat Reader program for your PC or Mac. This program is available free of charge from Adobe. Just connect to their Website at [www.adobe.com](http://www.adobe.com) and follow the links and directions for downloading and installing the correct Reader program for your PC or Mac. On the main screen (home page) of Adobe, at the top look for a "button" labeled "Products" and click it. On the next screen, scroll down to where it says "Adobe Acrobat Reader", and click that. Then click on "Download Now". Make sure the version number of the Reader you get is at least 4.0 because I'm using Adobe Acrobat version 4.0 to make the .pdf files. If you have an earlier version of the Reader, like 3.0, you'll have problems reading the files I make with Acrobat 4.0. The 4.0 Reader, however, can read 3.0 files without a problem, so if you're currently using a 3.0 Reader you will still be able to read older files produced by Acrobat 3.0 if you upgrade your Reader to 4.0.

Once you've done that, then just send me an e-mail to let me know you want to switch to e-mail delivery of the newsletter. The biggest advantage of getting your newsletter this way is you get it two to three days earlier. Another of the advantages of getting the newsletter this way is that the photos and/or drawings that are color in the original will be in color in your copy of the newsletter. When we make the paper copies for mailing, they get copied in black & white, and sometimes the copy quality of pictures is not good. Another advantage is that getting your newsletter by e-mail will save the Society money in copying and mailing expenses. In the past year some issues have cost the Society \$75.00 and more in copying and mailing costs. So if you want your newsletter by e-mail, send me an e-mail at [sny114@aol.com](mailto:sny114@aol.com) and I'll get you set up on the e-mail distribution list.



## 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](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).



## 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:** Doug Liberati (610) 827-2149
- ALCor and Newsletter:** Jim Anderson (610) 380-4512
- Librarian:** William O'Hara (610) 696-1422
- Observing:** Ed Lurcott (610) 436-0387



## 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

## 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

## Sky & Telescope Magazine Group Rates

Subscriptions to this excellent periodical are available through the CCAS at a reduced price of **\$29.95** which is much less than the newsstand price of \$54.00, and also cheaper than individual subscriptions (\$39.95)! 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.



