



R. A. C. NEWS

January - 2002

www.rocklandastronomy.com
Message Line (201) 768-3295



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Observing and Meeting Locations

North Rockland High School Planetarium	Thiells, NY
Rockland Community College	Suffern, NY
Iron Horse Farm, Mike Pass, 914-496-6320	Campbell Hall, NY
*Anthony Wayne Recreation Area	Exit 17, Palisades Interstate Pkwy
*Silvermine Ski Area	Exit 18, Palisades Interstate Pkwy
*Wawayanda State Park, 973-853-4462	Highland Lakes, NJ
Tahgkanic State Park	Taconic State Parkway, Ancram, NY

- *Special permits required*

JANUARY MEETINGS

Saturday, January 5 – Observing at Wawayanda

Tuesday, January 8 – Advisory Committee Meeting at the Challenger Center at 8:00PM.

Friday, January 11 – General Club Meeting at North Rockland High School Planetarium. “How to set up and use Meade GOTO Telescopes”

Saturday, January 12 – Observing at Wawayanda

Thursday, January 17 – Advisory Committee Meeting at the Challenger Center at 8:00PM.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Olga Anderson 78 Ondaora Pkwy. Highland Falls, NY 10928
(845) 446-2831.

Eugene S Gorman 175 Truman Dr. Cresskill, NJ 07626.

George Olenskyj 20 Shore Rd. Edgewater, NJ 07020 (201) 461-7567.

Steven Tancer 111 Sycamore Ct. Old Tappan, NJ 07675
(201) 358-8487.

Coalition Urges Governor to Sign

Light Pollution Bill

(Albany, NY) - Amateur astronomers, environmentalists and energy policy advocates came together today to urge Governor Pataki to sign a bill addressing New York's extensive light pollution problem. A coalition that includes: SELENE (Sensible and Efficient Lighting to Enhance the Nighttime Environment), Environmental Advocates of NY, the Sierra Club and the New York Public Interest Research Group (NYPIRG) supports legislation to limit excessive and misdirected outdoor illumination, a move that will save energy, enhance safety, protect nocturnal wildlife and help provide more livable communities statewide. The bill they want made into law - A.5352b (Assemblyman Grannis)/S.3386b (Senator Balboni) - passed both houses of the legislature last spring and is on the governor's desk awaiting his signature.

"This bill would establish New York as a national leader in this important policy area," said David Higby, a project director for Environmental Advocates, "it's an issue of increasing importance, not only to people who want to see the night sky that's too often denied them by glare, but to drivers, pedestrians, property owners and every American, since the energy savings will help wean us from our dependency on fossil fuels."

The legislation would require state agencies and public corporations to use full cut-off luminaires (lamps that are directed completely downward) for new and replacement outdoor fixtures; direct the Environmental Conservation Commissioner to identify and propose restricted light use for "dark areas" in New York; and provide cities, towns and villages with a model outdoor lighting ordinance. Such ordinances would require municipalities to consider energy conservation, glare minimization, and light pollution in outdoor lighting design. It would also set up a system for compiling and distributing written materials for educating officials, the public and electric power suppliers about the advantages of efficient outdoor lighting.

Susan Harder, representing SELENE - a state organization of volunteer citizen activists affiliated with The International Dark Sky Association - and a member of the Energy Advisory Committee for East Hampton, pointed out that the measure before the governor has significant esthetic implications as well as practical ones. "Attempts to view the recent Leonid meteor showers showed many New Yorkers what we've known for some time," said Harder, "wasteful lighting is denying us our night sky heritage." Recent studies have demonstrated that 99 percent of Americans are subjected to light pollution; in places like New York City where the misdirected light is especially pronounced, fewer than 10 percent of the stars in the night sky are visible because of glare.

Laura Haight, senior Environmental Associate of NYPIRG, stressed that improved outdoor lighting design would also result in considerable energy savings. "Wasteful, misdirected, unnecessary and inefficient outdoor lighting requires power plants to produce more electricity, causing more pollution, which in turn creates widespread negative effects for the environment and public health," Haight said, "and the governor has a real opportunity to do something about it. This bill represents our only opportunity this year to rein in the power generation sector, New York's number one source of industrial air pollution, and therefore the greatest producer of toxic gases that cause acid rain, global warming, mercury poisoning and asthma attacks."

For more information, visit: www.selene-ny.org

OBSERVING PERMITS

It will be at least 6 to 8 weeks before the 2002 permit for observing at Wawayanda State park is received. Until that time, RAC members may continue to observe there, but should always have a copy of the 2001 permit in their possession.

The permit for observing at Lake Tahgkanic is good until June of 2002. No delay is expected in receiving a new permit for this location.

Notify Don Urban to have your name added to the club's "Permit Request List." Permits will be sent to you when available.

Club members are reminded that observing at Anthony Wayne Recreation Area, Silvermine or any other park under the jurisdiction of the Palisades Interstate Park Commission is restricted to specific dates indicated on the attached "2002 Schedule of Events." Your presence at these locations at any other time may result in your being asked to leave by PIP officials or the Park Police.

ASTRONOMICAL LEAGUE MEMBERSHIP

The RAC Advisory Committee, by unanimous vote of those present at the last meeting, recommended that the club terminate its membership in the Astronomical League. RAC initially joined the League in 1993 to take advantage of the low cost liability insurance policy made available through its selected insurance carrier in Chicago.

Over the last 8 years, the combined cost of League membership and the annual insurance premium has risen from just under \$500.00 to more than \$1,200.00 while at the same time, membership dues in the Rockland Astronomy Club have remained stable at \$20.00 annually.

A new insurance policy has been secured through the efforts of club member Mark Hettinger, at an annual cost of \$500.00 resulting in a savings of \$700.00 a year. Mr. Hettinger, a registered insurance broker employed by the New Milford, NJ firm of Nelson - Patterson Insurance, will not personally derive benefit from this transaction.

RAC members who may wish to continue receiving "The Reflector", the quarterly magazine published by the Astronomical league, may do so by joining the League individually.

WE ARE LOSING THE FIGHT! **THE TIME TO WRITE LETTERS IS NOW!**

ALBANY, Dec. 21 – Seldom in this capital of compromises can a fight over a bill be called a battle between darkness and light, but that describes the struggle over a bill passed this year that was intended to let more New Yorkers see the stars.

The forces of light, led by Mayor Rudolph W. Giuliani and other mayors across the state, are trying to stop the legislation, which would foster more darkness for stargazers, who want unobstructed night skies.

The bill passed both houses of the Legislature in June with little fanfare or debate. The measure would require the state and local governments to gradually replace streetlights and other outdoor lights with ones that focus light downward rather than spraying it out to the heavens. It would also make it illegal to erect lights that bother neighbors and would direct the state to designate darkness preserves where outdoor lighting would be restricted.

But Gov. George E. Pataki, who prides himself on his environmental record, has not been keen on the bill, in part because it would cost the state millions of dollars to carry out, his aides said. For six months, he has kept the legislation at bay by threatening to veto it if it is sent to him in its current form.

"I appreciate the goal of the bill. In fact my brother is an astronomer, so I mean he's got to be in favor of it," the governor said this week during a radio interview. "And I remember going with him many a time and looking out in a telescope and trying to find the darkest part of the sky."

"In concept," he said, "the idea of taking measures to make our energy use lower when it's unnecessary and to help neighbors from being blinded in the middle of the night is something that I would like to support." But, he added, he did not know whether he would sign the bill, because he had not read all the provisions.

The sponsors, Senator Michael A. L. Balboni and Assemblyman Alexander B. Grannis, have proposed amendment after amendment in an effort to satisfy the governor's concerns, so far without success.

Mayor Giuliani and others have argued that the measure would not only cost hundreds of millions dollars for new lights but would also jeopardize the safety of urban residents, since cities could no longer light up high-crime areas as they see fit, without the state's approval.

But astronomers, environmentalists and groups like the International Dark-Sky Association argue that the dome of glaring light over cities and towns from mercury-vapor bulbs and other security lights is a form of pollution. They argue that the current lighting systems keep people from seeing the stars, disrupt the rhythms of wildlife and waste millions of dollars on light projected upward.

"The city could save money in the long run," said Susan Harder, a retired art dealer from East Hampton who is a member of the International Dark-Sky Association. "There is a horrible financial waste."

If Mr. Pataki were to sign the bill, New York would become the seventh state in the nation to enact a light-pollution law intended to allow people to see the stars better. In addition, hundreds of municipalities in North America, including San Diego, Tucson and Calgary, Alberta, have converted to the downward focused lights.

"This is a major bill," said Assemblyman Grannis, a Democrat from Manhattan. "This is what noise pollution was a decade ago."

David L. Crawford, a retired astronomer who heads the International Dark-Sky Association, based in Arizona, said recent studies suggest about 70 percent of the people in the United States cannot see the Milky Way because of light pollution.

"That part of the environment is disappearing and disappearing fast," he said. "If the children aren't in touch with the sky, it's really criminal. The only place they get to see these things is in an artificial environment, a planetarium."

But Mr. Giuliani and other city managers are less worried about children learning the constellations than they are about deterring crime. They are also concerned about the cost of installing new fixtures and what the new lights might do to street lighting systems based on older lights.

In a letter to Mr. Pataki, Mr. Giuliani said replacing the city's 180,000 streetlights with fixtures that focus downward, known as full cut-off lights, would create patches of dark on the roadways.

The city would have to double the number of streetlights, Mr. Giuliani wrote, to keep the lighting even, at a cost he estimated at \$700 million. That sum would not include the cost of changing 130,000 other floodlights in parks, playgrounds, overpasses, and above signs, he said.

The mayor also made it plain he did not want the state meddling in the city's decisions about lighting aimed at stopping crime. The law would require a city to apply to the state for a waiver to install security lights.

"In terms of public safety it is extremely unwise for a state statute to dictate the appropriate lighting standards to a municipality," Mr. Giuliani wrote.

Edward C. Farrell, the executive director of the New York State Conference of Mayors, said many city managers are bristling at the notion that local police officers will have to enforce the bill's "light trespass" provisions, which prohibit putting up lights that disturb a neighbor's sleep or privacy.

"At a time when local public safety resources are being stretched to the limit because of concerns about terrorism," Mr. Farrell said, "becoming the light police would be a very low priority."

Legislative aides say Governor Pataki is also worried the definition of "light trespassing" might be too broad. He also is troubled that the bill treats outdoor lighting solely as an environmental issue, ignoring its role in reducing crime or attracting tourism. Times Square's lights, for instance, might run afoul of the bill's provisions, aides said.

"We are still working with the sponsors to remedy some of the concerns," said Suzanne Morris, a spokeswoman for the governor. "It's too soon to say what's going to happen."

Senator Balboni, a Long Island Republican who sponsored the bill in the Senate, said he still hopes to reach a compromise with the governor. He said many of the governor's and mayors' worries about the cost of new lights were shortsighted. "Most of these places would save money," he said.

Many environmental groups, meanwhile, have been pushing hard to get the bill signed. A federal study has shown that about a third of outdoor lighting in the United States is pointed skyward. The dark-sky association estimates the country now spends about \$4.5 billion a year on what it considers wasted light, the equivalent of 30 million barrels of oil. It is unclear how much energy could be saved in New York.

"This is the only bill passed by the New York State Legislature this year that will actually lead to a reduction in energy," said Jeff Jones, a spokesman for Environmental Advocates. "We think the bill is great, and could be signed as it is."

This article appeared in the New York Times on December 22

SPECIAL NOTICE REGARDING HOW YOU RECEIVE THIS AND FUTURE ISSUES OF YOUR NEWSLETTER

This January issue of the newsletter is being sent via US Mail to every current member of the Rockland Astronomy Club, including those who have chosen to receive it by email or by reading and downloading it from the new site on Yahoo Groups. This is because we are including an updated membership list, but do not want to publish the list on Yahoo where it might be compromised. (Yahoo Groups has replaced the earlier method of electronic delivery using the LISTBOT system).

Future issues of this newsletter will only be available by e-mail, on-line on the club web site (www.rocklandastronomy.com) or at the clubs site on Yahoo Groups. Therefore, if you have not already joined the club site on Yahoo Groups, you are urged to do so. Besides being able to access the newsletter on-line, you will be able to read and post messages on any topic related to astronomy, telescopes and equipment, and impromptu observing sessions. Also, by signing up you will have access to the newsletter at least 3 days sooner than if it is mailed to you. The club will realize a substantial savings, since it currently costs about \$12.00 a year per member for postage and printing.

If you wish to continue receiving the newsletter via US Mail, your annual membership dues will be increased by \$12.00 at your next renewal date.

To learn how you can join Yahoo Groups, contact Jim Burnell (he set it up and has instructions) by email at Burnell@Frontiernet.net or by telephone at 845-986-3332.

MEMBERSHIP FEES AND NEWSLETTER OPTIONS

Newsletter by US Mail	Newsletter by E-mail, Web Site or Yahoo Groups
\$42.00 Family membership	\$30.00 Family membership
\$32.00 Individual membership	\$20.00 Individual membership
\$22.00 High School Student	\$10.00 High School Student

Regardless of the method by which you wish to receive the newsletter, you must inform Don Urban of your preference. Contact him by:

Telephone 201-768-3295 and leave message or
US Mail 73 Haring Street, Closter, NJ 07624-1709 or
E-mail DonUrban@RocklandAstronomy.com

ROCKLAND ASTRONOMY CLUB 2002 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

PRIME EVENING OBSERVING PERIODS – DARK MOON

<u>Date of Last Quarter Moon</u>	Date of New Moon	Four Days After New Moon
Saturday, January 5	Sunday, January 13	Thursday, January 17
Monday, February 4	Tuesday, February 12	Saturday, February 16
Tuesday, March 5	Wednesday, March 13	Sunday, March 17
Thursday, April 4	Friday, April 12	Tuesday, April 16
Saturday, May 4	Sunday, May 12	Thursday, May 16
Sunday, June 2	Monday, June 10	Friday, June 14
Tuesday, July 2	Wednesday, July 10	Sunday, July 14
Thursday, August 1	Thursday, August 8	Monday, August 12
Friday, August 30	Friday, September 6	Tuesday, September 10
Sunday, September 29	Sunday, October 6	Thursday, October 10
Monday, October 29	Monday, November 4	Friday, November 8
Wednesday, November 27	Wednesday, December 4	Sunday, December 8
Thursday, December 26	Thursday, January 2, 2003	Monday, January 6, 2003

SPECIAL EVENTS

(RAC events in **Bold Print**)

Saturday, February 23	RAC Annual Dinner Banquet
Monday – Sunday, February 10 - 16	Winter Star Party in Florida Keys
Sunday – Sunday, May 5 – 12	Texas Star Party, Ft. Davis, TX
Saturday, May 11	“Up All Night” Observing at Tahgkanic State Park
Saturday – Sunday, May 18 - 19	Northeast Astronomy Forum & Telescope Show
Memorial Day Weekend	Riverside Telescope Makers Convention, Big Bear, CA
Friday – Saturday, June 7 – 8	NJ Starquest, Hope, NJ (Exit 12, Interstate Route 80)
Saturday, June 8	“Up All Night” Observing at Tahgkanic State Park
Saturday, July 6	“Up All Night” Observing at Tahgkanic State Park
Friday – Sunday, August 2 – 11	RAC Summer Star Party & Family Camping Vacation at Shady Pines CampGround, Savoy, MA
Saturday, September 7	“Up All Night” Observing at Tahgkanic State Park
Friday – Saturday, September 6 – 7	Connecticut Star Party, Colebrook, CT
Friday – Saturday, October 4 – 5	South Jersey Star Party, Belle Plain State Park

"JOY OF THE UNIVERSE" - PUBLIC STAR PARTIES

Except as noted, events are held at Anthony Wayne Recreation Area, Exit 17 on the Palisades Interstate Parkway.

Saturday, April 20	Saturday, May 18	Saturday, June 15
Saturday, July 13	Mon, Aug 12 (Perseid Meteors, Silvermine)	Saturday, August 17
Saturday, September 14	Saturday, October 12	Fri, Dec 13 (Geminid Meteors, Silvermine)

The above dates and locations are subject to change and will be canceled if skies are not clear, or the venue is not available for our use. Each event begins 30 minutes before sunset (7:00PM in September thru December).

GENERAL CLUB MEETING DATES

Meetings are held in the planetarium at North Rockland High School and start promptly at 8:00PM.

Friday, January 11	Friday, February 8	Friday, March 8	Friday, April 26
Friday, September 27	Friday, October 25	Friday, November 22	Friday, December 20

These dates are subject to change or cancellation. Always refer to the club newsletter to confirm dates.

FOR CLUB MEMBERS ONLY


Observing at Wawayanda State Park and Taghkanic State Park

Members are reminded that they may observe from these locations any night of the year, providing one person in the group has a copy of the permit in his or her possession. Permits for Wawayanda are issued each February. Permits for Taghkanic are issued in June. **NO PUBLIC EVENTS WILL BE HELD AT THESE LOCATIONS.**



ROCKLAND ASTRONOMY CLUB - (201)768-3295

January 2002

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1 Sunrise 07:20 Set 16:37 Moonset 09:23 Rise 19:16 <i>New Year's Day</i>	2 Sunrise 07:21 Set 16:38 Moonset 10:04 Rise 20:30	3 Sunrise 07:21 Set 16:39 Moonset 10:40 Rise 21:44	4 Sunrise 07:21 Set 16:40 Moonset 11:11 Rise 22:57 QUADRANTID METEORS BEFORE DAWN	5 3RD QTR OBSERVING AT WAWAYANDA Sunrise 07:21 Set 16:41 Moonset 11:40 Rise --:-- ● LQ
6 Sunrise 07:21 Set 16:42 Moonset 00:08 Set 12:08	7 Sunrise 07:20 Set 16:43 Moonset 01:18 Set 12:36	8 Sunrise 07:20 Set 16:44 Moonset 02:27 Set 13:07 7:30pm NEAR COMMITTEE MEETING AT LHVCC	9 Sunrise 07:20 Set 16:45 Moonset 03:36 Set 13:41	10 Sunrise 07:20 Set 16:46 Moonset 04:43 Set 14:21	11 Sunrise 07:20 Set 16:47 Moonset 05:47 Set 15:07 7:30pm REGULAR CLUB MEETING AT NRHS PLANETARIUM	12 Sunrise 07:20 Set 16:48 Moonset 06:45 Set 15:59 NEW MOON OBSERVING AT WAWAYANDA
PRIME OBSERVING WINDOW						
13 Sunrise 07:19 Set 16:49 Moonset 07:36 Set 16:56 ● NMI	14 Sunrise 07:19 Set 16:50 Moonset 08:19 Set 17:55	15 Sunrise 07:18 Set 16:51 Moonset 08:55 Set 18:56	16 Sunrise 07:18 Set 16:52 Moonset 09:26 Set 19:57	17 Sunrise 07:18 Set 16:53 Moonset 09:53 Set 20:56 7:30pm ADVISORY COMMITTEE AT LHVCC	18 Sunrise 07:17 Set 16:54 Moonset 10:17 Set 21:55	19 Sunrise 07:17 Set 16:55 Moonset 10:40 Set 22:53
PRIME OBSERVING WINDOW						
20 Sunrise 07:16 Set 16:57 Moonset 11:03 Set 23:52	21 Sunrise 07:15 Set 16:58 Moonset 11:26 Set --:--  <i>Martin Luther King, Jr.</i> ● FQ	22 Sunrise 07:15 Set 16:59 Moonset 00:53 Rise 11:52	23 Sunrise 07:14 Set 17:00 Moonset 01:56 Rise 12:22	24 Sunrise 07:13 Set 17:01 Moonset 03:01 Rise 12:58	25 Sunrise 07:13 Set 17:03 Moonset 04:09 Rise 13:42	26 Sunrise 07:12 Set 17:04 Moonset 05:15 Rise 14:36
27 Sunrise 07:11 Set 17:05 Moonset 06:17 Rise 15:40	28 Sunrise 07:10 Set 17:06 Moonset 07:11 Rise 16:52 ● FM	29 Sunrise 07:09 Set 17:08 Moonset 07:58 Rise 18:09	30 Sunrise 07:09 Set 17:09 Moonset 08:57 Rise 19:26	31 Sunrise 07:08 Set 17:10 Moonset 09:11 Rise 20:42		

RAC ANNUAL DINNER BANQUET

Date: Saturday, February 23, 2002

Time: 7:00pm to 11:00pm

Location: Ondine's, 597 Piermont Road, Closter, NJ

Speaker: TBA

Bill of fare: Cash Bar (4-hours) with Hot Hors'doeuvres
Filet Mignon Teriyaki,
Fried Shrimp with Cocktail Sauce
Swedish Meatballs
Mozzarella Sticks with Fresh Tomato Sauce
Cocktail Franks in Pastry
Fried Mushrooms Tossed with Parmesan & Romano
Rolls & butter
Fresh Garden Salad
Choice of: Roast Prime Rib of Beef
Breast of Chicken Francaise
Baked Salmon
Fresh Steamed Vegetable Medley and Red Bliss Potatoes
Assorted dessert cakes & cookies at each table
Coffee or tea

Cost: \$37.50 per person (sorry, the club can no longer subsidize the cost as it has in years prior.)

Reservations by: Monday, February 18

Mail check and form below to: Frank Bifulco, 34 Astor Place, Wesley Hills, NY 10952.
Phone: 845-354-3965 for info or Frankbif@earthlink.net

Name	_____
Address	_____
C/S/Z	_____ Phone _____
E-mail	_____
Number of people	___ x \$37.50 = \$_____
Meal choice	___ Beef ___ Chicken ___ Salmon