



R. A. C. NEWS

March - 2002

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



ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Membership Services, Treasurer, Special Events, PIP Liaison
Don Urban, 201-768-3295, 73 Haring St, Closter, NJ 07624
DonUrban@RocklandAstronomy.com

Newsletter Editor
Lisa Canino-Dymbort, 908-835-8995, 1 Edgemere Terrace, Wash-
ington, NJ 07882. Lcanino@juno.com

Webmaster
Dan Roman, 201-385-7675, N2mfc@injersey.com

Assistant Webmasters
Peter Aurelio, 914-235-2207, paurelio@iscnet.net
Keith Murdock, 845-753-5625, Keith_Murdock@hotmail.com

NEAF (Northeast Astronomy Forum & Telescope Show) Chairman
Alan Traino, 973-423-3017, Alan3203@sprynet.com

SSP (Summer Star Party) Organizer
Don Urban, 201-768-3295, 73 Haring St, Closter, NJ 07624
DonUrban@RocklandAstronomy.com

Astrophotography
Tom Massey, 201-447-2908, Cmassey@k2tmk2tm@aol.com
Bill Thys, 973-881-8372, billthys@aol.com
Dominick Morelli, 845-623-5633, morelli1@worldnet.att.net

CCD Imaging
Jim Burnell, 845-986-3332, Burnell@Frontiernet.net
Dominick Morelli, 845-623-5633, morelli1@worldnet.att.net

Telescope Making
Jim Burnell, 845-986-3332, Burnell@Frontiernet.net
Mike Pass, 845-496-6320, ironhors@frontiernet.net

Wawayanda Observing Coordinator
NY -- Frank Bifulco, 845-354-3965, frankbif@earthlink.net
NJ -- Alan Traino, 973-423-3017, alan3203@sprynet.com

Mid-Hudson Observing Coordinator
Mies Hora, 845-429-0923, mies@ultimatesymbol.com

Children's Programs
Ed Siemenn, 845-783-3442, edsiemenn@hotmail.com
Lisa Canino-Dymbort, 908-835-8995, Lcanino@juno.com
Audrey Salvatore, 845-928-6697, nebula@frontiernet.net

Model Rocketry
Mark Hettinger, 201-768-5720, mlmkshett@aol.com

Equipment Manager
Ed Siemenn, 845-783-3442, edsiemenn@hotmail.com

Advisors
Al Nagler, 845-354-2552
Dr. Jack Rosen, Deepsky3@juno.com

Observing and Meeting Locations

North Rockland High School Planetarium	Thiells, NY
Rockland Community College	Suffern, NY
Iron Horse Farm, Mike Pass, 845-496-6320	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

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

John J. Ardan 881 Union Valley Rd., West Milford, NJ
07480 (973) 697-3343.

Nancy Blane 20 Old Chestnut Ridge Rd., Montvale, NJ
07645 (201) 391-7996.

Barry Diament 107 Ridge Rd., Valley Cottage, NY 10989
(845) 268-1221.

Nobou Ibaraki & Family 212 Chirchill Rd., Tenafly, NJ
07670 (201) 569-2433.

David W. Opderbeck 20 Smith Lane, Midland Park, NJ
07432 (201) 652-8255.

Stephen Rubinstein & Family 14 Mark Dr., Wesley Hills,
NY 10977 (845) 362-4312.

Abhijeet Nakhwa & Family, 144 Kinderkamack Rd Apt 1,
Westwood. NJ 07675 (201) 594-0929

Noel Jablonski, 104 Sarah Wells Trail, Campbell Hall, NY
10916 (845) 496-1126

FOR SALE

Tectron 15" Dobsonian Telescope
-15" f/5 Galaxy Optics mirror - Serrurier truss design -
Tectron 2" rack & pinion focuser (with 11/4" adapter) -
Tectron black cloth shroud -Telrad finder -Tamrac (from
Orion) gray cordura padded case for trusses -Full set of Tec-
tron collimating tools (sight tube, Cheshire and autocollima-
tor) - Perspective on Collimation by Vic Menard and Tippy
D'Auria - The Modern Dobsonian by Tom Clark (Tectron
designer/builder)
\$2200
Call Barry Diament (845) 268-1221
If no answer, leave message with your number.

* * * * *

I am selling my much loved TV-101. All that has been
said about this scope is true - not much more I can say. This
one is two years old and in like-new condition. It was cleaned
and checked by Televue about a year ago. I have had this
scope side-by-side with a TMB 650 Triplet, and it was hard to
tell the difference between the two. This is truly an excep-
tional scope, no longer made and well-cared for. OTA color
is evergreen and not a scratch on it. You get the OTA, Ever-
brite Diagonal, Starbeam Finder, and case. Price is \$2,400
firm. Will wait a week or two before posting on Astromart,
as I'd really like to see it go to a club member. I am also sell-
ing my Losmandy Lightweight Tripod for the G-11 and G-8.
It is in excellent condition and comes with a set of Celestron
Vibration Pads that are permanently attached to the legs (you
can remove if you want) - Price is \$220. Please contact me via
Email at anthony.valvo@citicorp.com

MARCH MEETINGS

- **Tuesday, March 5** – NEAF Sub-committee meeting at the Challenger Center starting at 8:00PM.
- **Friday and/or Saturday, March 8/9** – Observing at Wawayanda.
- **Friday, March 15** – General Club meeting at North Rockland High School planetarium starting at 8:00PM. “Steven Hawking’s Universe – Black Holes”.
- **Saturday, March 16** – Messier Marathon – see article below.
- **Wednesday, March 20** – RAC Advisory Committee meeting at the Challenger Center starting at 8:00PM.

RAC MESSIER MARATHON

Dates: Saturday, March 16

Location: Wawayanda State Park

Time: Sunset to Sunrise (or any hours in-between)

Due to the unique positioning of the Messier objects – a wide area of the sky does not contain any of them - it is possible to view all 110 objects in a single night. Notice I said “possible.” Most times, however, even the most experienced observers catch only about 105 – 108. Factors that come into play include (1) the phase of the moon – a new moon is best, but two days on either side are also very good; (2) the dates observing will be done – ideally the best dates are within 5 days of the Spring Equinox; and (3) the location from which you are observing – the flatter the horizons, the better your chances of picking up the objects hugging the horizons in the twilight at dusk and dawn.

This year’s observing opportunity is almost as good as 2001, as the new moon occurs on the 13th (7 days before the equinox) and will not be a factor. And the date is good, falling on a weekend when you don’t have to get up in the morning to go to work. Of course, the most important factor is weather. March is notoriously fickle. One year we had 3 consecutive days with daytime temperatures in the 70’s and nights in the 40’s. But in 1993 there was 36 inches of snow on the ground!

ASTRONOMICAL LEAGUE

CERTIFICATE OF ACCOMPLISHMENT

The “Messier Marathon Observer Log” included with the March newsletter can be used to qualify for a “Certificate of Accomplishment” issued by the Astronomical League. It is important to note the date and time each Messier object was observed.

When all 110 objects have been observed, the log sheet should be mailed to Don Urban and he will forward it to the Astronomical League.

Unlike a Messier Marathon, where all 110 objects are usually observed on a single night or weekend, you may take as long as you like view and record them for the special award.

Note: It is not necessary to have each item verified for this purpose since the Astronomical League assumes that no

one will claim to have seen an object that he or she did not see.

ABOUT CHARLES MESSIER

Charles Messier was an 18th century comet hunter living in France. His telescope was about 4 inches in diameter, just about the minimum size to catch all 110 objects. And although his telescope was optically standard compared to those in use today, he did have one great thing going for him – no light pollution. Of course, Messier did not catalog all of them in a single night. Rather, it took him a number of years.

In his search for comets, he would frequently come across what he referred to as “trash objects”. To avoid wasting time trying to determine if they were comets, he cataloged their positions in the sky. Subsequently, whenever he saw one, he would refer to his log to see if he already had it entered. If he did, he would quickly continue his search for comets. My memory escapes me – and I’m too lazy to look it up – but I believe he discovered more than 36 comets during his lifetime.

Little did Messier know that his “trash objects” would become the most observed celestial delights by amateur astronomers of the 21st century!

Don Urban

OBSERVING PERMITS NOW AVAILABLE

Observing permits for both Wawayanda State Park in NJ and Tahgkanic State Park in NY have been received, scanned, converted to JPEG and PDF files, and sent via email attachment to each member who requested copies.

To prevent non-members from obtaining copies of permits, they are not being uploaded to either the club web page or the Yahoo group pages.

If you have not received your copies, or would now like to get copies, please send me an email message letting me know which permits you want and the format you desire.

NEAF-2002 IS SHAPING UP NICELY

RAC’s premier annual event, the Northeast Astronomy Forum & Telescope Show (NEAF), is less than 3 months away as you are reading this. Scheduled on the weekend of May 17 – 19, this year’s NEAF has been expanded to 2 full days, with 9 lectures and 2 workshops that should appeal to both novice and experienced amateur astronomers. (For details, see the Speaker Schedule that is attached).

In addition to the vendors and telescope manufacturers you have seen at prior NEAF’s, there will be a lot of new faces at this year’s show, all of them demonstrating and offering for sale just about any kind of equipment you could want.

A special 2-day adult admission ticket will be offered at \$25.00 as well as single-day tickets at \$15.00. Student tickets are \$5.00 each day and children under age 12 will be admitted free.

RAC members who volunteer a few hours of their time at NEAF will receive a free 2-day admission ticket. Your help is really needed, so take a look at the list of jobs on the next page and let us know when you can work.

NEAF HELP WANTED!

RAC needs club members to assist at NEAF on the weekend of May 17 – 19. If you'd like a free, 2-day admission ticket to NEAF, please contact Mike Pass so he can add your name to his master list of volunteers. Mike's phone number is 845-496-6320 and his email address is IRONHORS@FRONTIERNET.NET.

Please make your selection from the table listed below. You may choose more than one job if you wish.

Day and Date	Job	Shift Hours	People per shift
Friday, May 17	Vendor Assistance	12:00 – 18:00	6 – 8
Saturday, May 18	Admission Ticket Sellers	08:00 – 12:30	2
		12:30 – 17:00	2
	Raffle Ticket Sellers	08:30 – 13:00	2
		13:00 – 18:00	2
	RAC Club Booth	08:30 – 13:00	1
		13:00 – 18:00	1
	Theater Usher	09:00 – 12:15	1
		13:30 – 18:00	1
Sunday, May 19	Admission Ticket Sellers	08:00 – 12:00	2
		12:00 – 16:00	2
	Raffle Ticket Sellers	08:30 – 12:30	2
		12:30 – 16:30	2
	RAC Club Booth	08:30 – 12:30	1
		12:30 – 16:30	1
	Theater Usher	09:00 – 12:00	1
		13:30 – 16:30	1
	Sign Removal	15:00 – 16:00	1
	Vendor Assistance	17:00 – 20:00	4 – 6

Job Descriptions

- Vendor Assistance – Help vendors during setup and breakdown by carrying merchandise from and to their vehicles.
- Admission Ticket Seller – Sell tickets to attendees, safeguard funds collected. Distribute show program and any literature that may be required. At end of shift, transfer funds to Alan Traino or his designee.
- Raffle Ticket Sales – Sell raffle tickets to attendees from RAC Club Booth, maintain security of prizes on display.
- RAC Club Booth – Accept cash for membership applications, merchandise sold. Answer questions about our club and its activities.
- Theater Usher – Provide a physical presence in the theater before, during and after speaker talks. Ensure compliance with RCC theater regulations that prohibit sitting on steps, carrying into theater food and/or beverages.
- Sign Removal – Take down all NEAF signs that were set up to provide directions to attendees.

NEAF-2002 EVENT SCHEDULE

Saturday, May 18	
8:30am – 6:00pm	Exhibitor demonstrations, equipment sales, door prizes, ATM display, planetarium shows, activities for children, solar observing, workshop
Classroom Workshop	
9:00am – Noon	*Dennis di Cicco – “Introduction to Astrophotography” (\$10.00 registration and materials fee charged)
Speaker Schedule	
9:15am – 9:30am	Alan Traino and Jim Burnell, Rockland Astronomy Club Rick Fienberg, Editor-in-Chief, Sky & Telescope Welcome and Opening Remarks
9:30am – 10:30am	Dr. Ted Williams, Rutgers University “The South African Large Telescope”
11:15am – 12:15pm	Richard Berry, Former editor of Astronomy “The Milky Way in 3-D Perspective”
1:30pm – 2:30pm	Rob Gendler, Renowned Astrophotographer “Pushing the Envelope - Advances in Aesthetic CCD Imaging”
3:15pm – 4:15pm	Dr. Alan Hirshfeld, UMASS Dartmouth “Parallax – Measuring the Universe”
5:00pm – 6:00pm	Dr. John Grunsfeld, NASA Astronaut “Hubble Space Telescope Repair Mission”
Sunday, May 19	
8:30am – 4:30pm	Exhibitor demonstrations, equipment sales, door prizes, ATM display, planetarium shows, activities for children, solar observing, workshop
Classroom Workshop	
9:00am – Noon	*Richard Berry – “Advanced CCD Imaging” (\$25.00 registration and materials fee charged)
Speaker Schedule	
9:15am – 9:30am	Alan Traino and Jim Burnell, Rockland Astronomy Club Rick Fienberg, Editor-in-Chief, Sky & Telescope Welcome and Opening Remarks
9:30am – 10:30am	Dennis diCicco, Senior Editor, Sky & Telescope “Telescopes 101”
11:00am – Noon	Dr. Mary Lou West, Montclair State College “Solar Astronomy – The Active Sun”
1:30pm – 2:30pm	David Eicher, Managing Editor, Astronomy Magazine “Finding Our Place in the Universe”
3:30pm – 4:30pm	David H. Levy, University of Arizona “Tails and Trails: A Lifetime of Observing the Night Sky”

***Workshop fees are in addition to the regular admission fee. Due to limited space, attendance at workshops requires pre-registration and pre-payment. Make checks payable to Rockland Astronomy Club and mail to NEAF Workshops, C/O Jim Burnell, 160 Pine Island Turnpike, Warwick, NY 10990-2714. Please indicate the workshop(s) you wish to attend. Info: Burnell@Frontiernet.net or 845-986-3332 (evenings).**

ROCKLAND ASTRONOMY CLUB – MESSIER OBJECTS LOG SHEET

M-#	Date	Time	Confirmed By	M-#	Date	Time	Confirmed By
1				56			
2				57			
3				58			
4				59			
5				60			
6				61			
7				62			
8				63			
9				64			
10				65			
11				66			
12				67			
13				68			
14				69			
15				70			
16				71			
17				72			
18				73			
19				74			
20				75			
21				76			
22				77			
23				78			
24				79			
25				80			
26				81			
27				82			
28				83			
29				84			
30				85			
31				86			
32				87			
33				88			
34				89			
35				90			
36				91			
37				92			
38				93			
39				94			
40				95			
41				96			
42				97			
43				98			
44				99			
45				100			
46				101			
47				102			
48				103			
49				104			
50				105			
51				106			
52				107			
53				108			
54				109			
55				110			

UNDERSTANDING THE UNIVERSE – AN INTRODUCTION TO ASTRONOMY

The headline banner above is the title of a college-level course presented on videotape by Dr. Alex Filippenko, Professor of Astronomy at the University of California at Berkeley. The entire course consists of 40 professionally filmed classroom lectures of 45 – 60 minutes duration on 15 VHS Videotapes. Utilizing a variety of teaching aids – including stunning photographs, diagrams and charts – Dr. Filippenko takes his virtual class on a safari that begins at the instant of the Big Bang, and ends when the light from the last remaining star in the Universe is forever extinguished.

The Rockland Astronomy Club purchased this course one year ago, with the intent of making it available to club members to watch in the comfort of their own homes. But since originally publicizing its availability, no one has asked to borrow the tapes.

So now, beginning on Monday evenings in March and continuing every Monday for the following 14 weeks, a small group of club members will have the opportunity to watch and listen to Dr. Filippenko, while enjoying a variety of cocktail sandwiches, condiments and beverages.

Attendance at these video lectures is limited to 8 people, the number that my living room can comfortably accommodate without feeling cramped for space. To cover the cost of food and drinks, a non-refundable fee of \$75.00 will be charged, and must be included with the reservation form below.

Presentations will start promptly at 7:30PM and last no longer than 3 hours after which, when weather permits, everyone is welcome to step out into my back yard and do some telescope viewing.

A complete schedule of dates and program titles is attached for your information.

Reservation Form – Mail to Don Urban, 73 Haring St, Closter, NJ 07624
Make check payable to “Rockland Astronomy Club”

Your Name _____ Date _____

Phone # (_____) _____ - _____

Email Addr. _____

**UNDERSTANDING THE UNIVERSE
PROGRAM SCHEDULE**

Lecture #	Date	Lecture Title
1	11 Mar	A Grand Tour of the Cosmos
2		Journey Through Space and Time
3		Light – The Supreme Informant
4	18 May	The Fingerprints of Atoms
5		Tools of the Trade
6		Space Telescopes and the Celestial Sphere
7	25 Mar	Our Sun – The Nearest Star
8		Lunar Phases and Glorious Eclipses
9	1 Apr	The Early History of Astronomy
10		The Copernican Revolution
11		On the Shoulders of Giants
12	8 Apr	One Small Step: The Earth and Moon
13		Paradise Lost – Venus and Mars
14		Planetary Behemoths – Jupiter and Saturn
15	15 Apr	Distant Worlds and Solar System Debris
16		Comets and Catastrophic Collisions
17	22 Apr	Distant Suns
18		Social Stars – Binaries and Clusters
19		Nature’s Nuclear Reactors
20	29 Apr	The Fate of Our Sun
21		Exploding Stars: Celestial Fireworks!
22		The Corpses of Massive Stars
23	6 May	Hearts of Darkness
24		The Quest for Black Holes
25	13 May	Starting at Home – The Milky Way
26		One Giant Leap – Other Galaxies
27		The Dark Side of Matter
28	20 May	The Birth and Life of Galaxies
29		Quasars – Cosmic Powerhouses
30		In the Belly of the Beast
31	27 May	Are We Alone? The Search Begins
32		Communicating with Extraterrestrials
33	3 Jun	The Expansion of the Universe
34		The Age of the Universe
35		The Geometry and Fate of the Universe
36	10 Jun	Einstein’s Biggest Blunder
37		Echoes of the Big Bang
38		In the Beginning
39	17 Jun	The Ultimate Free Lunch?
40		A Universe of Universes



ROCKLAND ASTRONOMY CLUB - (201)768-3295

March 2002

SUNDAY MONDAY TUESDAY WEDNESDAY THURSDAY FRIDAY SATURDAY

	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
3	Sunrise 06:27 Set 17:49 Moonset 09:07 Rise 23:14	4 Sunrise 06:26 Set 17:50 Moonset 09:40 Rise --:--	5 Sunrise 06:24 Set 17:51 Moonrise 00:29 Set 10:18 ● LAST QTR 7:30pm NEAF COMMITTEE MEETING AT LHVCC	6 Sunrise 06:22 Set 17:53 Moonrise 01:31 Set 11:30	7 Sunrise 06:21 Set 17:54 Moonrise 02:32 Set 11:48	8 Sunrise 06:19 Set 17:55 Moonrise 03:26 Set 12:42	9 Sunrise 06:18 Set 17:56 Moonrise 04:13 Set 13:40
10	Sunrise 06:16 Set 17:57 Moonrise 04:53 Set 14:39	11 Sunrise 06:14 Set 17:58 Moonrise 05:27 Set 15:40 UNDERSTANDING THE UNIVERSE - VIDEO SERIES	12 Sunrise 06:13 Set 17:59 Moonrise 05:57 Set 16:39	13 Sunrise 06:11 Set 18:00 Moonrise 06:23 Set 17:39 ● NEW MOON	14 Sunrise 06:09 Set 18:01 Moonrise 06:47 Set 18:37	15 Sunrise 06:08 Set 18:02 Moonrise 07:09 Set 19:35 7:30pm REGULAR CLUB MEETING AT NRHS PLANETARIUM	16 Sunrise 06:06 Set 18:04 Moonrise 07:32 Set 20:34 MESSIER MARATHON AT WAWAYANDA
17	Sunrise 06:04 Set 18:05 Moonrise 07:56 Set 21:34	18 Sunrise 06:03 Set 18:06 Moonrise 08:22 Set 22:35 UNDERSTANDING THE UNIVERSE - VIDEO SERIES	19 Sunrise 06:01 Set 18:07 Moonrise 08:52 Set 23:38	20 Sunrise 06:00 Set 18:08 Moonrise 09:27 Set --:-- VIRGINIDS <i>Spring Begins</i> 7:30pm ADVISORY COMMITTEE AT LHVCC	21 Sunrise 05:58 Set 18:09 Moonset 00:42 Rise 10:10 ● FIRST QTR	22 Sunrise 05:56 Set 18:10 Moonset 01:43 Rise 11:01	23 Sunrise 05:55 Set 18:11 Moonset 02:41 Rise 12:03
24	Sunrise 05:55 Set 18:12 Moonset 03:32 Rise 13:12 <i>Peter Starkey</i>	25 Sunrise 05:51 Set 18:13 Moonset 04:17 Rise 14:27 UNDERSTANDING THE UNIVERSE - VIDEO SERIES	26 Sunrise 05:50 Set 18:14 Moonset 04:55 Rise 15:44	27 Sunrise 05:48 Set 18:15 Moonset 05:29 Rise 17:02	28 Sunrise 05:46 Set 18:16 Moonset 06:01 Rise 18:19 ○ FULL MOON <i>Passover</i>	29 Sunrise 05:45 Set 18:17 Moonset 06:31 Rise 19:36 <i>Good Friday</i>	30 Sunrise 05:43 Set 18:19 Moonset 07:02 Rise 20:52
31	Sunrise 05:41 Set 18:20 Moonset 07:35 Rise 22:06 <i>Easter</i>						

FREE ADMISSION TICKETS TO NEAF - SEE NEWSLETTER FOR INFO.