



R. A. C. NEWS

June - 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, Washington, 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

JUNE MEETINGS

Saturday, June 1 – Observing at Wawayanda
Friday/Saturday, June 7/8 – Observing at Wawayanda
Saturday, June 8 – “Up all night” at Lake Taghkanic
Saturday, June 15 – “Joy of the Universe” at Anthony Wayne
Friday/Saturday, June 28/29 – Observing at Wawayanda

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Pietro Carboni 8 Stone Ave., Greenwich, CT 06830.
Denis DiLallo (Info suppressed on request)
George Dreitlein 79 Lincoln Ave., Little Falls, NJ 07424.
Eugene B. Faulkner 39 La Salle Aave., Clifton, NJ 07013
Eric Fisher & Family 2400 Hudson Terr., Ft. Lee, NJ 07024.
Robert Lyons 77 E 2nd St., Clifton, NJ 07011.
Christopher Malek & Family PO Box 472, Lake Peekskill, NY 10537.
George McArthur 736 Milltown Rd., Brewster, NY 10509.
Michael McFall & Family 35 Kingsland Rd., Hewitt, NJ 07421.
Harvey Miller 105 Betty Rd., East Meadow, NY 11554
Frank R Monahan 20 River Rd., Tomkins Cove, NY 10986.
Arthur K Pallone 88 Ondaora Pkwy 2nd Fl., Highland Falls, NY 10928.

For Sale: Various SCT Accessories

- 1) JMI Model NGF-MiniS 1.25" Motorized Crayford Focuser and Hand Controller for SCT ----\$150.00
- 2) JMI MotoDEC model MDC8 for Celestron C5+ with single fork arm / C8 / Classic 8 / Super C8 / Super C8+ / C8+ Computerized / Celestar 8 / Fastar 8, Powerstar 8 / Ultima 8 / 9¼/ 11-----\$50.00
- 3) Celestron Model #94175 F6.3 Reducer/Corrector for SCT's -----\$80.00

All prices includes shipping. All parts are in almost new condition.

Please contact me via E-Mail: swendeman@nac.net

RAC OBSERVING - March-April

Tracking the elusive and devious Ikeya-Zhang

This clever comet has thrown many obstacles at us in a futile effort to avoid observation:

- 1) It hides in twilight and ungodly early morning hours
- 2) It throws hills, mountains and trees in our way.
- 3) It manipulates the weather, shrouding itself with clouds and schmutz (that's a technical term!) in strategic locations
- 3) It understands how to use light pollution as a cloaking device
- 4) It clouds our minds with navigational confusion, both on the land and in the sky.

The Club has had several bouts with the comet this spring, but we have managed in spite of all obstacles to find it and track it down in its lair.

Rockland Community College, Monday April 1st.

Frank Bifulco and I met just south of the field house, looking for an unobstructed view to the west. After some navigational fumbling and positioning ourselves to avoid the incessant light pollution, we caught a clear glimpse of the comet low in the northwest sky. Several degrees of tail were visible, when not obscured by schmutz or clouds.

Hawk-watch platform at the crest of 17A above Warwick, Thursday, April 4th.

We had about 10 club members and assorted Junior Astronomers, with 6 active telescopes and tripod-mounted binoculars set up on the ground near the bottom of the platform (including a 10" LX-200!). It felt a bit tight with everyone in the same place, but there was still considerable unused space both on the platform itself and on the flat area in front of the rocks.

The comet was clearly visible with binoculars, with several degrees of tail. It easily outshone M31, which was 1/2 field away in my 20x80's. Louis had his 10-inch LX200 set up as well, which was too much power to show the tail, but gave sharp definition to the head and coma, unavailable in 7x50's or the several pair of giant bino's. But for the tail, 7x50's were hard to beat. I was using 20x80 bino's, but, in retrospect, think I would have done better with a rich-field scope and some kind of LPR filter (red, orange, or possibly an Ultrablock).

The hawk-watching platform is not a bad place, but is relatively small, and has more light pollution than Wawayanda or even Anthony Wayne. Its main virtues are the unobstructed horizon from Southwest to Northwest and that it is available to the public without advance planning. It is a bit hard to find, and next time the club does a quickie observing session there, I will see about putting up a sign visible from 17A. De-

spite those few problems, the sky was almost completely clear, and about 10 club members showed up, staying until 9:30 or so. Not bad for a weekday night!

Wawayanda, Saturday April 6

An excellent night of observing, with about eight of us present. I caught my best view of Ikeya-Zhang in the mid-twilight evening near the horizon, using a tripod-mounted AstroScan at 15x, with an Ultrablock filter. The Ultrablock gave sharp contrast on the tail, with 2-3 degrees clearly visible. Alan Traino also zeroed in on the head and coma with his C-14 at relatively high magnification (100-150x?). The head was a bright spot somewhat smaller than Jupiter, and quite distinct from the more diffuse coma, perhaps 1/4 degree in diameter and fairly sharply bounded. Even in the early evening, the sky had that deep blue color that promises transparency and high definition on the "faint fuzzies." Alan saw we were in for an exceptional night and decided to take his children home and come back for round two. Other deep-sky observing was a pleasure, with most of us staying until about 1:00. At one point we had at least 3 or 4 scopes all aimed at M13, which showed off its arms and interior detail to a level that I have rarely seen. I also saw the arms in the Whirlpool Galaxy for the first time (a treat for me, being used to way too much light pollution). The evening was punctuated by cries of "Hey, come check this out!", and "I've got M92 over here!" We finally packed it in at about 1:30 AM and retreated to the West Milford diner for hot chocolate and welcome sustenance. All in all, a memorable night!

Insomnia-Zhang

Torne Brook Farm, early morning of April 17

This morning was one of the few times my insomnia paid off. I accidentally awoke about 4:40 and decided to go out for a quick look-see at our visitor. The sky was just starting to brighten when I got out at 4:50. I found it almost due north-east, about 8 or 9 degrees above and to the East of Caph, the last bright star in Cassiopeia, and comfortably high at about 40 degrees altitude. The tail was visible in my binoculars for about 3 degrees. I did a magnitude check by defocusing my 7x50's. It was roughly equivalent to delta Cepheus and about 5 degrees directly below it. So, I estimate Mag 4.1.

It was just at the edge of naked eye vision in the early twilight, and I think I could have made it out bare eyeball (without averted imagination, that is!) if I'd been out just a bit earlier, or in a darker sky. When I gave up at about 5:20, sky was already quite bright, but the tail was still faintly visible in binoculars.

Keith Murdock

A CLUB MEMBER'S REPORT

I have really been enjoying my new binoculars, thanks to advice from RAC members, *Sky and Telescope*, and a good introductory astronomy book. Despite a multitude of obnoxious outdoor lighting in my backyard, I have seen a lot. I have learned to spot several constellations, and I can now hold my 10X50's steady enough when sitting in a chair. I got a glimpse of Ikeya-Zhang one night, and last night I found The Beehive. It's a good target to practice finding, and as I kept looking back at it, my "aim" got better and better.

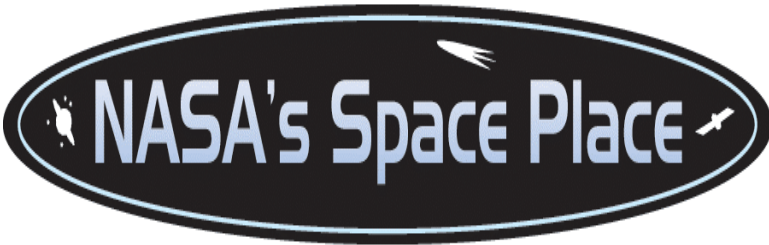
I finally got a telescope. It is a used Astrorubinar 100mm Mak. I bought it on the Astromart. I was looking for something of good quality and extreme portability. Last night I saw the bands of Jupiter and four or five moons. I am having some difficulty finding other objects, I think partly because I have to get used to the narrower field of view and partly because the video tripod that came with the scope is a little creaky. I have an excellent 40mm Televue eyepiece with lots of eye relief. It gives 25X on my scope. I've noticed that as I move my eye around, trying to get it into the exit pupil, the image of a star or even a planet seems to split into several images or bleed into a teardrop which changes shape as I move my head. (This seems to happen less when I take off my glasses.) However, once I get my eye in the right spot, I get a crisp view even with my 15mm EP (at 67X).

I was hoping to get in some viewing this weekend and maybe ask an experienced club member to check out my scope, if there is a club observing session.

Steve White

NASA CONTRIBUTIONS

We are pleased to announce that NASA will be providing articles and information for our budding astronomers. So, pass the newsletter on to your kids!!



What Space-age Inventions Have You Touched Today?

Exploring space is not easy. Space engineers and scientists have invented many new things to make it safe and not too expensive to go into space. Some of the inventions are used to help humans live in space. Showers and toilets that work

without gravity are examples of inventions used on the Space Shuttle and International Space Station. Other inventions are used on spacecraft going to Mars and beyond.

Many things invented for space are also very useful right here on Earth. New inventions or new uses for things invented for space are called "spinoffs." For example, special materials were developed for space suits to protect astronauts from the harsh environment of space. These same materials are used in the special clothing that fire fighters wear to protect them from the harsh environment of a building on fire! Cordless tools were invented for the Apollo astronauts to use on the moon. Cordless drills and vacuum cleaners are examples of spinoffs from these inventions.

Doctors can now take amazing pictures of people's insides to find out exactly what is wrong with them. These pictures are possible because of technology developed to process pictures from space. And what about the TV satellite dish you may have on your roof? Space program technology helped to make those pictures and sounds crisp and clear.

If it weren't for the space program, some of these wonderful inventions might never have come about! Find out about more space program spinoffs and play the Spinoffs Memory Game at The Space Place, <http://spaceplace.nasa.gov/spinoffs.htm>.

The Space Place is a web site for children with fun and educational activities and facts related to many of NASA's space missions. This article was provided by NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory, managed by Caltech in Pasadena.

FAREWELL TO A GOOD FRIEND

Tom Massey, one of RAC's senior and most knowledgeable members, has sold his home in Glen Rock and is moving to Clearwater, Florida on Friday, June 14. When it comes to anything astronomical, Tom has done it all – grinding mirrors, building telescopes, astrophotography, and digital imaging. He also served as Master of Ceremonies at NEAF for many years.

I first met Tom in 1988 at a club observing session at Lake Sebago. Over the 14 years since, I've relied upon Tom's friendship, wisdom and advice in many of the decision-making processes that have built RAC into the fine organization it is today.

Tom will be missed, but he and Jane will be returning to familiar surroundings at our Summer Star Party later this summer.

Good Luck, Tom and godspeed!

Don Urban

SPEAKING OF SSP

More than 3 dozen reservations for campsites have been processed as you read this, and most of the choice ones have been assigned. But there is still time to register and claim one of those that remain.

So, fill out the registration form and mail your check today to Don Urban, 73 Haring Street, Closter, NJ 07624-1709.



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June 2002

SUNDAY

MONDAY

TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

SATURDAY

2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Sunrise 05:26 Set 20:22 Moonrise 01:33 Set 12:11 ● LQ	Sunrise 05:25 Set 20:23 Moonrise 01:59 Set 13:11	Sunrise 05:25 Set 20:24 Moonrise 02:23 Set 14:09	Sunrise 05:25 Set 20:25 Moonrise 02:45 Set 15:08	Sunrise 05:24 Set 20:25 Moonrise 03:07 Set 16:07	Sunrise 05:24 Set 20:26 Moonrise 03:31 Set 17:08	Sunrise 05:26 Set 20:21 Moonrise 01:04 Set 11:10 WAWAY ANDA OBSERVING
PRIME OBSERVING WINDOW						
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Sunrise 05:24 Set 20:27 Moonrise 04:27 Set 19:15	Sunrise 05:23 Set 20:27 Moonrise 05:03 Set 20:21 ● NMI	Sunrise 05:23 Set 20:28 Moonrise 05:46 Set 21:24	Moonrise 06:39 Set 22:21	Sunrise 05:23 Set 20:29 Moonrise 07:39 Set 23:12	Moonrise 08:47 Set 23:55	Sunrise 05:23 Set 20:30 Moonrise 09:58 Set --- JOT OF THE UNIVERSE AT ANTHONY WAYNE
PRIME OBSERVING WINDOW						
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
Moonset 00:31 Rise 11:10 Father's Day	Moonset 01:03 Rise 12:22 ● FQ	Sunrise 05:23 Set 20:31 Moonset 01:31 Rise 13:34	Sunrise 05:24 Set 20:31 Moonset 01:59 Rise 14:45	Moonset 02:27 Rise 15:57 OPHICHEADS	Moonset 02:57 Rise 17:11 Summer Begins	Moonset 03:31 Rise 18:23
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
Sunrise 05:24 Set 20:32 Moonset 04:10 Rise 19:34	Sunrise 05:25 Set 20:32 Moonset 04:56 Rise 20:39 ○ FM	Moonset 05:50 Rise 21:35	Moonset 06:49 Rise 22:23	Sunrise 05:26 Set 20:32 Moonset 07:52 Rise 23:02	Moonset 08:56 Rise 23:34	Sunrise 05:27 Set 20:32 Moonset 09:58 Rise ---
30	WAWAY ANDA OBSERVING					
Moonrise 00:01 Set 10:59	WAWAY ANDA OBSERVING					

MAKE SSP RESERVATIONS NOW - CONTACT DON URBAN