

AAAP Membership Renewal Form – 2008

Completely fill in the following information on this form:

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____ - _____

Phone (home) _____ (work) _____

E-mail _____ or _____

Check if you want your e-mail on the AAAP List Server (_____)

How do you want your "Guide Star" Delivered? Online (_____) Snail Mail (_____)

Which of the following AAAP positions would you volunteer for?

- I would like to help at star parties at: Mingo (_____) Wagman (_____)
- I would like to serve on observatory committees at: Mingo (_____) Wagman (_____)
- I would like to serve on other association committees (_____)
Specify Committees:

- I would like to run for an association office (_____)
Specify Offices:

What areas of astronomy interest you?

What type of Astronomical equipment do you want listed under your name in the membership directory?

(over)

AAAP Membership Renewal Form – 2008

(2)

ITEM	PRICE	ENCLOSED PAYMENT
AAAP Adult Membership (Jan. 1 to Dec. 31 2008)	\$24.00	
AAAP Junior Membership (under 18)	\$15.00	
“Sky & Telescope” Subscription (12 issues per year) Only new subscriptions! All current subscription renewals are done directly with Sky Publishing, not the AAAP. Use your S&T renewal notice and make your payment directly to Sky Publishing.	\$33.00	
“Astronomy” Subscription (12 issues per year) Both new and renewals are processed through the AAAP. Do not renew your subscription directly with Kalmbach Publishing, you won’t get your discount.	\$34.00	
Key Fee Only current key holders! Brashear is an added \$15.00.	\$15.00	
Tax Deductible Donation	----	
TOTAL PAYMENT	----	

It is very important that all payments be received by 12/15/2007 so that magazine subscriptions can be processed in a timely manner.

Prices are subject to change without notice. Payments must accompany this application.

Make checks payable to:

AAAP, Inc.

Send this form with payments to:

Mark G. Schomer, Membership Secretary
103 Johnson Lane
Connellsville, PA 15425-9708

Membership questions?

E-mail: MembershipSecretary@3ap.org
Phone: 724-628-3499

Billing questions?

E-mail: Treasurer@3ap.org
Phone: 724-348-9087



Mingo Creek Park
Observatory

The Guide Star

Newsletter of the Amateur Astronomers Association of Pittsburgh, Inc.

Founded June 9, 1929 by Chester B. Roe and Leo J. Scanlon

Website: 3ap.org



Nicholas E. Wagman
Observatory

October 2007

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FROM THE TREASURER

Michael Meteney

Enclosed in this issue of the "Guide Star" is the membership renewal form that everyone planning on renewing their membership must fill out and return to the Membership Secretary, Mark Schomer. It is very important that we get this information and payments returned to us by no later than **December 15, 2007** so that we can process everything for 2008, the sooner the better. There are a few things related to the renewal that need some explanation.

Page one of the renewal form is needed to check and up-

date our database. I want to make a personal comment on the list server and the "Guide Star" selections. The list server is a nice tool to keep up with what is going on with the organization, members, and some of the Astronomy related news and events taking place. I know there has been some inappropriate use of the list server in the past, but you can always hit the delete button. I would encourage everyone to select to get the "Guide Star" online. You will receive it earlier, it will be in color, you will save the association printing and mailing costs, and you may save some trees (unless you print it out at home).

You will notice that there is a section where you can check off if you want to participate in star parties, committees, or even run for office. If you think you don't know enough, or you are just new to the club, or too shy to get involved, please reconsider. We really do appreciate and need any help that members can give. By getting involved, you will get to know more people and share information and ideas with them and probably learn some new things.

On page two you will find the payment information. The first thing you will notice is that the dues have increased. Why? Our dues haven't changed for quite a few years. During that time our organization has grown, we have two observatories, and more telescopes and equipment. During that time our operating expenses, such as electricity, phone, and insurance have all increased. We need to be able to cover our operating expenses with our income. We have estimated, based on the size of our membership, that we need to increase our dues to \$24.00. This will enable us to balance our regular expenses with our income and use our investments for capital improvements. Also remember that all memberships expire at the end of the year.

The second thing you will notice is the magazine subscription renewals. Due to the outsourcing of their subscription payments, "Sky & Telescope" is handled differently. If you are a current S&T subscriber, you make your renewal payment directly to Sky Publishing. If you are not a current subscriber, you must make your initial subscription through the AAAP. Once you are established as a subscriber through AAAP, you then renew directly with Sky Publishing.

"Astronomy Magazine" renewals and new subscriptions must be handled by the AAAP in order to get the reduced rate. Don't send your renewal to Kalmbach Publishing.

Current Observatory Key Holders should send in their key

fee for 2008 now. If you want to become an observatory key holder, you must go through training with the observatory directors before paying any key fee. You pay your key fee to the directors who issue you a key and pass the payment on to the treasurer. For the few people who hold keys for the Brashear, you should send in your payment also and make a note on the payment form that you are including an additional payment for the Brashear.

If you have any billing questions, please contact me at: Treasurer@3ap.org.

Again, please try to send your renewal in as soon as possible. Mark and I have over 500 members to process and we would like to have everything completed by the end of December. This is very important for any "Astronomy Magazine" subscription renewals.

TREASURER'S REPORT

By Michael Meteney

The following is a report of our current account balances and a summary of our income and expenses through 9/12/2007.

Account Balances:

Dollar Bank CD	24,458.26
USX CD	105,577.29
Cash	50.00
PNC Checking	605.87
General Savings	11,759.56
Govt. Savings	0.00
Valley View Savings	32,860.65
Total	175,311.63

The Govt. Savings account was used to construct the restroom at Mingo and that account has been finalized and closed and the DCED report finalized and accepted by the State.

Year to Date Income and expenses

Income:	
50/50	292.00
Donations	1770.25
Interest	113.54
Memberships	3,584.75
3M Stock	5,476.55
Mingo Const. Fund	3,686.03
Total Income:	12,860.87

Expenses:	
Awards	21.30
Bank Charges	113.69
Equipment*	8,655.05
50/50 winners	146.00
Guide Star	1,329.21
Insurance	3,612.00
Mail	279.53
Honorarium	150.00

Memorial	118.72
Merchandise	35.00
Officers, Membership	268.20
Officers, Treasurer	155.11
Planetarium service	600.00
Brochures	35.20
Software*	1,635.95
International Dark Sky	250.00
Stamps	79.41
Star Finders	979.07
Utilities, Wagman	2,295.50
Utilities, Mingo	1,649.70
Total Expense:	22,408.64

*Some of the equipment and software expenses were covered by reimbursing the AAAP for restroom related expenses the association paid for out of building funds prior to receiving the government grant of \$25,000 to cover those expenses.

FEATURED SPEAKER AT CARNEGIE SCIENCE CENTER OCTOBER 19, 2007 7:30 P.M.

By Ann Norman



Our own Chris Genovese, explaining "How to Get Started in Amateur Astronomy".

Chris Genovese joined our club in 2004 and in one year went from newbie to expert observer, perhaps rivaling Wagman Observatory Director, Tom Reiland. He has developed a step-by-step program that anyone can follow. He is generous with his observing tips and eagerly shares them with visitors to the hill (Wagman Observatory). Remarkably, he has taught his elementary-school-age son to find most of the Messier objects. Chris's methods will be useful to the novice as well as the experienced observer who is still having a little trouble sorting out the Virgo Cluster.

SPECTROSCOPY SOCIETY MEETING

By David F. Pensenstadler

The Joint meeting with the Spectroscopy Society of Pittsburgh (SSP) will be held on Wednesday, October 17, 2007 at Duquesne University.

The Tech Forum talk will begin at 5:30 p.m. in the Laura Falk Auditorium of the Mellon Hall of Science. The speaker will be Professor David Snoko from University of Pittsburgh. The title of his talk will be: "Lasing Without Inversion: Bose-Einstein Condensation of Polaritons in Semiconductor Microcavities".

A social hour and dinner will follow this talk in the Duquesne

University Student Union Building. The main meeting will then convene in the Laura Falk Hall at about 8:00 p.m.

The speaker for the main meeting will be Professor Lucy McFadden from University of Maryland and Co-Principal Investigator of the Dawn Mission. The title of her talk will be: "NASA's Dawn Mission: Journey to the Asteroid Frontier".

Dinner reservations are required. Please phone or email David F. Pensenstadler at 412-673-6797, or dfpens@comcast.net with your reservation. All dinner reservations must be received by Friday, October 12.

All AAAP members will receive the SSP meeting notice in a few weeks. Let's show our support for the SSP and the annual grant given to the AAAP with a good turnout at this meeting.

KEVIN BRUNELLE ASTROPHOTOGRAPHY CONTEST

By Alison Conte

Plan now to enter the Kevin Brunelle Astrophotography Contest! The 2007 Kevin Brunelle Astrophotography Contest is November 16!

Once again, there are three people serving as co-coordinators of the contest: Dave Conte, Dave Smith and Mark Arelt. We are looking for photos, digital images and slides of astronomical objects. Peruse your images from this past year and choose your best to compete for fame, honor and prizes. (See contest rules below to decide what qualifies). As always, the contest will be held at the November AAAP meeting, which will be Friday, November 16 at the Carnegie Science Center. Cash prizes are awarded to the three first-place winners.

The deadline for entry submission is 10 days before the meeting, November 6.

Please get your entries submitted in one of the following ways: Hand them to Dave, Dave, or Mark at the Friday, October 19 AAAP meeting at 7:30 PM at the Carnegie Science Center; mail them to Dave Conte at 112 Bower Drive, Sewickley, PA 15143-8412; e-mail them to Dave Conte at allybiz@verizon.net. Please include your name, telephone number, the category for each entry, and the titles of your images with your entries.

Digital images (JPEG, GIF, TIFF) are easiest for us to work with. Mark Arelt will be happy to scan your slides or negatives into a digital format for projection. Please allow extra time for him to do this.

If you have questions, call Dave Conte, 412-366-4846; Mark Arelt, 412/835-6806 or Dave Smith, 412-390-0870.

CONTEST RULES

1. The contest is open to all active members of the AAAP.
2. The contest date is the November 16 meeting of the AAAP. Entries will be viewed and judged by all AAAP members present at this meeting.
3. All images entered must be originally captured by the contestant.
4. Entries are limited to images concerning areas of interest within the AAAP.
5. Images may be submitted as 35mm transparencies or negatives, photographic prints, or as digital media (in formats accepted by the AAAP Audio-Visual Committee).
6. Only images taken since the date of the previous contest deadline (Oct. 31, 2006) are eligible.
7. There are 3 categories:
 - Astronomical images taken with optics of focal length no greater than 150mm
 - Astronomical images taken with optics of focal length greater than 150mm
 - Images of atmospheric phenomena
8. No more than 5 entries per contestant per category are allowed for each contest.
9. Entries must be received by the contest coordinator no later than 10 days before the contest date.
10. Entries will be judged for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place in each category, with each voting member assigning points respectively (3, 2, and 1). The entry with the highest total number of points in each category will be declared the winning entry, and will be eligible for prizes. Entries that place 2nd and 3rd in total points in each category will be recognized by the AAAP.

FIRST MINGO TRAINEE GRADUATES

By Larry McHenry

Nine AAAP members completed their basic training of what a keyholder needs to know in opening/closing the Mingo Creek Park Observatory building, using the various rooms and telescopes, and received their keys. (see photo below).



Graduates pictured (from left) Paul Campbell, Gerard Schuster, Todd Kelly, Don Hoecker, Steve Schafer, Bill Snyder, Mary DeVaughn (not pictured - Richard and Peter Urban). The picture also includes MCPO Committee members Larry McHenry, Ed Moss, Kathy DeSantis, Mike Meteney, Craig Lang (not pictured - Al Paslow photographer).

The two-hour training session was a team effort by the MCPO Committee, led by past AAAP President/past MCPO Director, Larry McHenry, with specialized demonstration instructions from MCPO Director, Al Paslow, and AAAP President/past MCPO Director, Ed Moss, and general assistance from AAAP Treasurer/past MCPO Associate Director, Mike Meteney, and committee members Craig Lang and Kathy Desantis.

From the first building footer that was poured back in the summer of 2004, going back to the site selection in the summer of 2002, all the way back to the initial proposal made by Dick Haddad in 2001, this is the goal we've all been working so hard for!!!

Congratulations go to both the first class of trainees and to the MCPO Committee for all of their hard work in reaching this point!

DISCOVERY OF GALILEO TELESCOPE

By Kathy DeSantis

In about one year, we will pass the 400th anniversary of the discovery of the Galileo Telescope, the first optical telescope, October 2, 1608. Italian stargazer, Galileo Galilei, did not build the first telescope. Hans Lippershey, also known as Jan or Hans Lippersheim, was a lens grinder in the Netherlands, who wrote about his invention he called a "kijker", which means looker in Dutch. When these writings reached Galileo, he began building his own telescopes. Galileo, already a renowned stargazer, used the information to revolutionize astronomy. Since that time, far more powerful visible light telescopes have been developed, along with an array of instruments capable of probing the "invisible" parts of the electromagnetic spectrum: infrared, ultraviolet, radio, x-ray, and gamma-ray. Whether or not Lippershey's "looker" was the first telescope is still debated by historians. Lippershey's own discovery is accompanied by a tale that he acquired the "concept" from two children playing with his lenses. Reputedly, the children discovered a church steeple appeared larger when seen through two lenses held apart. Apparently, whoever made the first model, Lippershey was the first to write about the instrument, and his writings reached Galileo who "applied" the technology in a way that took the science of astronomy a giant leap forward.

BOOK REVIEWS

By John Cheng

Sky and Telescope's "Field Map of the Moon", the Mirror Image Edition is inexpensive (about \$10) and is laminated, so it's designed for use at the telescope. Folded it is four 12 x 12 inch squares, opening into a large chart that actually includes the libration zones. Get this...you may not need anything else.

Now, about atlases....*"The Atlas of the Moon"* by Antonin Rukl is considered the best available. It contains 76 charts - drawings really - that cover the surface of our moon which faces us. I find it cumbersome to use outdoors and a longstanding criticism of the book is that the borders of the charts don't overlap sufficiently so moving between areas is a chore.

By the way, the same guy who drew the charts for the "Atlas" is the same who drew the image captured on the "Field Map" - Antonin Rukl.

Again, not a paper atlas, but something I use at home is the freeware *"Virtual Moon Atlas"* by Patrick Chevalley. It is one of the better tools available for an amateur astronomer and it's free. As an added bonus, it also maps the far side of our moon.

But okay, if it's a "bible" you want, look at the resources online at the Lunar and Planetary Institute: <http://www.lpi.usra.edu/>. Some of the beautiful charts produced in conjunction with our space program are available online and for a nominal cost, they will send you CDs containing certain atlases. Some of these may still be available on paper, but I think they might be very expensive.

BLACK FOREST STAR PARTY CHERRY SPRINGS, PA OBSERVATIONS

James Schultheis: Sent to list server: Tuesday, September 18, 2007. Friday night was sort of scary when the wind blew so hard that our tent wall was actually touching my face while I was trying to sleep. Then, to add to it, the rain was so forceful, it actually started to diffuse through the pores of the tent fabric in a fine mist. At first, it was cool but then Sue and I got a little unnerved. Being that the skies are so dark at CSSP, Sue and I set up to observe some very faint objects the next night. The first thing we attempted was Jn-1, (or the name I like, Jones 1). With not much hope of finding this one, after about 5 minutes with an O-III filter, I found one of the most beautiful, large planetary objects I have ever seen and yes, it was Jn-1. Sue, in all the excitement, then grabbed my finder chart and started the search to also identify the star field and then observe Jn-1 with her 12.5" f/5. The planetary has an irregular disk with traces of ring structure and is fairly large at 5.3'. It is 15.1 magnitude and located

in Pegasus (well worth seeking out). Sue then went after the Pac Man Nebula, NGC 281, which I thought was impossible in our scopes but then she called me over to her eyepiece and sure enough through the O-III filter, the Pac Man shape was evident and you could see the glitter of the open cluster IC 1590 within. Sue said the nebula was in the shape of a football helmet, not Pac Man.

We then observed IC-10, a dwarf galaxy that looks like a granular haze within the Milky Way, a pretty amazing sight in such dark skies. The next was a try at the Gamma Cassiopeia Nebula, IC 59/63, with no luck. No wonder we could not see it, because we were using an O-III filter and too far away from Gamma Cassiopeia. (Next time we will get it). We were really enthusiastic on observing the Zodiacal Light at CSSP this weekend but could not stay up that late.

Sue Schultheis: Ed Ting stopped over to see my 12.5". He was the third guy I heard say "look how cute it is". That was funny to me hearing guys say "cute". He asked if I would sell him my scope twice and laughed, but he was serious too. He hung out and observed in my scope for about half an hour or so. I found out he was living in Greensburg in the 1990s and was asking about Seven Springs and the Dupre family along with Lars Skyling. He is a super nice guy. It was great meeting and talking with Bill and Maureen as well.



Larry McHenry: Sent to the list server: Monday, September 17, 2007. This was the first year that I attended the Black Forest Star Party and I have to say, it was the best convention that I've been too! (except for LHSC, of course!). I was originally planning on traveling to Black Forest on Thursday, but I had taken Wednesday off to prepare for the trip. I spent Tuesday evening and Wednesday morning hauling out the needed equipment from my backyard observatory (accessible only by two flights of steps).

After seeing Wednesday evening's great weather forecast for Coudersport, I hurried up and finished loading

the car and got a late start for Potter County. After wasting a good bit of time stuck in road construction on Route 28, I arrived at Cherry Springs with about an hour to go before sunset. It was an amazing site. Two days out from the official start of Black Forest, there were more people there than at the May Cherry Springs Star Party (and they kept coming!)

Here are several pictures of the field: (almost all of the green space filled up) <http://home.comcast.net/~lemastro/bfsp2007/bfsp07-02.jpg>

These are a few images of the on-site observatory domes: <http://home.comcast.net/~lemastro/bfsp2007/bfsp07-03.jpg>

<http://home.comcast.net/~lemastro/bfsp2007/bfsp07-04.jpg>

<http://home.comcast.net/~lemastro/bfsp2007/bfsp07-05.jpg>

My campsite: <http://home.comcast.net/~lemastro/bfsp2007/bfsp07-06.jpg>

<http://home.comcast.net/~lemastro/bfsp2007/bfsp07-07.jpg>

<http://home.comcast.net/~lemastro/bfsp2007/bfsp07-08.jpg>

Bob Kalan's camp: <http://home.comcast.net/~lemastro/bfsp2007/bfsp07-09.jpg>

<http://home.comcast.net/~lemastro/bfsp2007/bfsp07-10.jpg>

I was lucky I was able to find a spot across from Bob Kalan and Denny Hill from the Kiski Astronomers. I rushed setting up the campsite and getting my 8" SCT assembled. Unfortunately, the weather forecast from the morning seemed to be a little off, as we were mostly clouded out! Most of the campers around us only had their telescopes partly together and covered up. But then, around 10:00 PM, the front passed through and the sky cleared. The views of the Milky Way were the most spectacular that I have ever seen! The contrast between the bright edges of the Milky Way with the blackness of the rest of the sky was tremendous! The great rift in Cygnus was very prominent, with the bisected sections brightly visible all the way through Aquilia and Serpens, merging back into a single glowing mass in Sagittarius! Even the area about Cepheus and Cassiopeia showed structure that I had never seen before. The entire Milky Way had an almost three-dimensional appearance to it. Needless to say, everyone scrambled to uncover and finish setting up their telescopes, occasionally pausing to just stop what they were doing, look up, and loudly exclaim how beautiful the sky looked!!!

Throughout the night, deep-sky objects were just popping out of the eyepiece (or in my case, the video monitors). We were even treated to dozens of faint meteors that seemed to be originating from under Polaris in Camelopardalis. Eventually, the intense dew, lateness, and cold got to most of the observers, but staying up until 3:00 AM to see Orion striding over the horizon with his belt and sword made a great ending to a great night! Easily, it was the best night observing I ever had.

Later, on Thursday, we were joined by Ray Montgomery, Winni & John Labrecque, and Bob Novak and we all shared a common field area between our campsites. (I was made a temporary Kiski member for the weekend so they could hang their club banner on the side of my tent).

During the day on Thursday, I had my solar observing setup going, hooked up to the monitors showing views through the PST Ha, PST CaK, and with the Daystar through the 8" SCT, but as we are going through solar minimum, there wasn't much disk detail visible, other than a small area of plage and a few limb prominences.

Thursday evening stayed clear, but the seeing had noticeably decreased from the night before. Still, Thursday evening was great, besting the evenings that I remembered from the StarCruise site, and far surpassing anything we might see from the Pittsburgh area at our observatories. Thursday night was another long evening of observing until Orion put in his appearance again.

A few hours later, with Friday's dawn, came the clouds! The rain held off through the morning and noon hours, with even an occasional glimpse of the Sun to taunt us a bit. Then, mid afternoon the rain started! We had several good downpours during the afternoon that sent everyone scurrying between their camps and the vendor tents. Friday evening was a cold and damp bust with occasional showers and lightning but the good folks from the Central Pennsylvania Observers put on several movies at the pavilion to entertain us. They did a great organizational job throughout the weekend! Most everyone went to bed early to try and catch up on some sleep, but around 12:30 -1:00 AM, the storm really blew through waking everyone! What started out as a soothing tapping on the van roof soon turned into a roar! It was as if a group of people were standing around the van pounding on the roof with their fists! Eventually, the front passed and everyone got back to sleep.

Saturday dawned cold and wet. Occasionally, the sky would clear (which the predictions were calling for) and I would start thinking about getting out the solar equipment but then a cloud band would come over and dump some rain so I ended up just carrying all of the solar stuff over to the pavilion as show-and-tell for my afternoon talk. The presentation went well with lots of questions afterwards. Most of the BFSP attendees, which kept increasing in spite of the weather, either spent the day listening to the presentations, visiting the equipment vendor tents,

or lounging at the food vendor tent. There were a number of families with kids, and a number of college students there, so during the dry periods, people were out riding bikes around the observing field or playing various ball games. During the day, I ran into several AAAP members - Maureen and Bill Moutz and Fred Klein. (Earlier in the week, I met John O'Hara from ORAS).

After the talks concluded with a greatly hilarious presentation by Ed Ting, the door prize drawing was held. They had some great stuff from software to eyepieces, to telescopes. Even blueberries from a local farm! (I think the only lucky member from our group who won anything was Bob Kalan).

At sunset Saturday, the skies finally cleared enough to uncover the scopes but we did get occasional cloud banks go over throughout the evening. (They made for good opportunities to go get something hot from the food vendor).

The temperature also dropped—really dropped (down into the thirties). I had on every sweatshirt that I had brought with me, including my winter coat, gloves and hat. It kept me warm enough till about 2:00 AM, when I started getting chilled. At that point, after an extended wait for a long cloud bank to pass, I decided to quit for the night. Taking a stroll around the observing field with John and Denny, most of the other attendees had also turned in for the night but there was still an occasional group of hardcore observers out, getting ready for the next wave of clearing!

Sunday morning dawned cold and clear. By the time I rolled out of my sleeping bag, about 9:30 AM, most folks had already started packing, or had even left. By noon, I was ready to go, and the last to leave from our group.

Black Forest was a great event! Two and a half nights of awesome observing! I highly recommend going next year. I'll be there!!!

Fred Klein: Sent to the list server: Sunday, September 16, 2007. I had planned to go up Friday, but postponed due to rain and cloud forecast. When I got there Saturday around 11:30, it was still spitting from time to time. It was cool and cloudy all day. Then at 9 PM, it suddenly cleared and the Milky Way overhead dazzled! I dashed back to my scope and took two pictures that may turn out decent. Then at 12, the clouds came back and stayed. I had frost on the car in the morning. I met several AAAPrs. It was worth the drive.



A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

By Ed Moss

I have been thinking about what to write about for the Guide Star recently. We did a survey last spring in the Guide Star to determine how to improve our club. So far, Dave Smith has received about forty or so responses. This is about the same number of responses we received about seven years ago when we conducted another similar survey.

I've been reading the list server comments and also other comments from people attending star parties at Mingo observatory. The big complaint we always seem to get is that the club doesn't do enough for the new members. Well, I have given this a lot of thought lately, a whole lot of thought.

I have looked at who does what for our club. It is the same usual faces most of the time. I have also seen many new faces both at Mingo, and at Wagman, the few times I get the opportunity to go there. Almost all of my time is spent at Mingo. After all, I am a director there. Not everyone in the club has the time to teach new members about astronomy. Tom Reiland has set aside much of his time to help members, especially new members, to learn more about astronomy and observing. Not too many members have taken advantage of Tom's services. We have had many of these learning events where few members have shown up.

Chris Genovese is giving a talk on "Getting Started in Astronomy" at the club's October Business Meeting at the Carnegie Science Center on October 19th. I would highly encourage all new members to attend this meeting.

If you are new to astronomy, the two best ways to learn about astronomy are to sign up for the Night Sky Network, and attend as many star parties as possible.

The Night Sky Network is free for all members. It is sponsored by NASA and JPL, and administered by The Astronomical Society of the Pacific. It is a NASA program to help member astronomy clubs to teach people new to astronomy the basics of observing and astronomy. Being a participant does not require a person to teach astronomy to other people. It is a good source of information.

Attending star parties is the absolute best way to learn about observing and astronomy. When I joined the club, I missed very few star parties. It gives you your best chance to see all the different telescopes there are, and to look through them. The public is usually gone between 10:30 to 11:00 PM. This is a great time to learn from other members about observing and astronomy in general. The members are only too glad to help you out and offer you their advice.

If you want to learn about observing and astronomy, you have to attend club events. We as a club have neither the time nor the resources to cater to the individual needs of the members. If you want to learn, you the member must make the commitment to learn. Take advantage of the opportunity when it is available. There are only a limited number of times we can help you. Remember, you only get out of something what you are willing to put into something. Hope to see more of you at the meetings and the star parties.

NEW MEMBERS

Cecilia M. Kaminski
Robert E. Kaminski
Robert W. Meyer
Erin E. Brubaker
Craig Dunn
Martina Guercio
Peter Guercio Jr.
Barry M Jones
Anthony Lapiana
Helen M. Marks
David J. Torhan

FOR SALE

One Televue Everbrite Dielectric 1-1/4 diagonal. Used but in very good shape. Mirror looks good. A few small scratches on the focuser end due to set screw use but otherwise in very good condition. It has a brass compression ring to protect the eyepieces, of course, and comes with two nice, fruity orange end caps. Solid-made, literally out of a single block of aluminum with 99% mirror reflectivity. Much superior to the standard diagonal that comes with a Meade, Celestron, or Orion scope and probably others as well. A nice upgrade. Astronomics is asking \$190.00 for a new model. My price is \$80.00 and its yours. Why am I selling? I really like this diagonal but I just got a new 2" hefty Astro Tech diagonal (among other things) which, besides giving me 2" capability, helps out considerably with balancing the heavy objective lens and clears up some awkward focusing with my 1-1/4 UO Konigs. So this is now a redundant piece of equipment for me. Call Mike Nizinski at 412-372-5615 or email me at: COLSKI@aol.com if you prefer. First come first serve. Prefer cash, of course.



My deceased father had a beloved Renaissance, purchased in 1985, which I am selling for my mother. I will sell it for the best offer. If any member would be interested, please have them contact me for more information. Includes: 10.5 mm Plossl, 40 Plossl, 21 Plossl, 2.5X Barlow Porro Prism, 2 holder rings, carrying case, 2000 equatorial system, aluminum tripod. Contact Pat Howell at 814-474-3044.

Equatorial Platform drive kit for DOBS.

Equatorial Platform drive kit consisting of Powermax 1.8 degree stepper motor with gear reduction, mounted drive wheel, CMD microstep 260 drive controller, 24 VDC power supply, 7 new extra hardness skate wheels and bearings, all with wiring documentation including calculations, photos for building a platform, for 40 degree latitude. Asking \$145. Wood platform plans also included. Contact: Carl M. Chernan at 724-224-7691 or email carlm01@comcast.net



For all who have waited with baited breath for the first generation of computers to become available, the Executive Committee has decided not to place them in the club's archives (a decision we may regret in 400 years or so) but rather to offer them to the membership and, in the remote chance that they are not immediately snapped up, recycle them through the Goodwill program, which keeps them from going into landfills. So, hoping that there will be no bloodshed in fighting over just who gets these, here is a list. I can provide excruciating details on each. If anyone is interested, please email Flac Stifel privately at fstifel@verizon.net

- Apple Mac Centris 650, Kbd., mouse, "picture window" 12" color monitor.
- Apple Mac Quadra 700, Kbd., mouse, 12" color monitor.
- Apple Mac Ilci, Kbd., mouse, 12" color monitor.
- HP Pavilion desktop, Kbd., mouse, 12" color monitor.

Most are functional, the Centris currently does not boot up, which could be the CPU but more likely is the hard drive; it's the one that was most used in the Brashear room. Can bring any/all to meeting Friday, so you won't have a long wait to get your hands on these bargains!



I got a better look at that Celestron 11" today. I almost bought it myself but I have one scope set up in my living room and two more set up in my basement. I just can't do it. Using a flashlight, when looking through the corrector to the primary mirror, there are a few spots maybe 1/4" to 1/2" in diameter where these very fine, thin lines emanate from the center of these spots. They are not deep lines. They appear to be confined to the mirror coating. I will speculate that the mirror would need recoated at some point. Except for these spots, the mirror looked fairly good. The corrector plate looked okay, just very dusty. I unscrewed this 6" tube with a lens in it off the back of the scope. The threaded area on the back of the scope was about 3" in diameter. This is where on my CPC I would screw on my visual back, which is a smaller diameter opening than the C11. This tube might be a visual back and I'm just not familiar with this configuration. What I'm saying is, and this is where my unfamiliarity comes into play, I don't know how the visual back attaches to the C11. I assume it is just like my CPC or my C8 only a bigger unit, true? I also looked through the visual back hole

to the secondary mirror and the mirror looked very good, almost dust free. It is a safe bet that the scope will need collimated.

I moved the focuser in and out of its full travel while watching through the corrector plate. The movement was smooth and even and I could see the mirror moving in and out of its full travel.

As to the age of the C11, I couldn't guess. There is a tag on the tube that says STARBRITE COATING if that is any kind of clue. The black tube is in fairly good shape. There is one small dent, a few scratches, and some blemishes.

The ALT-AZ mount looks like an older design to me. It is similar in design to my Orange tube C-8 in that the center attachment point that holds the legs rigid is the same. Same leg fold-up design. The mount and tube has setting circles with manual DEC.& RA. turning knobs that did move the scope smoothly. The tension lock knobs worked as well and held the scope in all positions.

My opinion of the scope is this: if I was into taking a scope apart and cleaning it, perhaps have the mirror recoated adding a part here and there and I had the room, I would take it. As far as price goes, would I offer \$100.00 for it? Sure, \$200-\$300, possibly \$500 or more, only if I was good with used scopes and knew it was worth that much.

My coworker, who is selling the C11, doesn't expect much for it. He doesn't have a figure in mind because he nor I know what a used C11 that needs some work would sell for. Hence, "as is make offer".

I would suggest to anyone interested in having a look at the scope, bring a star diagonal that fits a C11 and some eyepieces. We'll set it up in our parking lot. Have a look. If anyone wants to come to Green Tree to see it, email your phone number to Michael Fisher at: michaelfisher55@verizon.net and I'll call you.

COOL WEBSITES

<http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2007/09/070921-meteor-peru.html>

<http://www.alleghenycounty.us/parks/dlfac.aspx>

<http://www.darksky.org/>

<http://science.slashdot.org/article.pl?sid=07/09/08/1635219&from=rss>

http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2007/08/20/070820fa_fact_owen?printable=t

<http://al-paslow.smugmug.com/gallery/3486114>

IMPORTANT DATES

October 1-31—Mars is visible in the late evening and morning sky among the stars of Gemini brightening from magnitude -0.1 to -0.6 . It rises around 11 p.m. at the start of the month and 9:45 p.m. at the end. The Moon lies above it on the night of October 1-2 and again on October 29-30.

Jupiter lies in the southwest evening sky at magnitude -1.9 remaining visible for over 3 hours after sunset at the start of the month but only 2 hours by the end. The crescent Moon lies below it on the evening of October 17 and to its left a night later.

Saturn lies in the eastern dawn sky under the body of Leo at magnitude 0.8. It rises around 4 a.m. at the start of the month and before 2:30 a.m. by the month's end. Brilliant Venus passes to its right in midmonth. The waning crescent Moon lies above right of Saturn on the morning of October 7.

October 1 and 2—Tom Reiland's tentative star hopping class for members only

October 4—50th anniversary of the launch of Sputnik 1, the world's first artificial satellite.

October 6—Mingo star party with girl scouts.

October 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14—Mid-Atlantic Star Party.

October 10—40th anniversary of the coming into force of the United Nations Outer Space Treaty, the basis of international space law.

October 11—New Moon.

October 12—Wagman members only night.

October 12, 13—South Jersey star party.

October 12, 13—Jersey Star Quest.

October 12—Stella Della.

October 13—Wagman members only night.

October 13—Mason-Dixon star party.

October 15—Conjunction of Venus and Saturn 3° apart in morning sky.

The 10th anniversary of the launch of the NASA/ESA Cassini Mission to Saturn carrying the Huygens probe which landed on Saturn's largest moon, Titan.

October 18—40th anniversary of the arrival at Venus of

the Soviet probe, Venera 4, the first probe to send back data from within that planet's atmosphere.

October 19—Membership meeting Carnegie Science Center 7:30 p.m.

Wagman private star party.

40th anniversary of the flyby of Venus by NASA's Mariner 5, which passed 2,500 miles from the planet's cloud tops.

October 20—Wagman public star party.

Mingo public star party.

Orionid meteors.

35th Anniversary of the death of Harlow Shapley, American astronomer who discovered that the sun lies 2/3 of the way from the center of the galaxy to its edge.

October 21—40th anniversary of the death of Danish astronomer, Ejnar Hertzsprung co-inventor of the Hertzsprung-Russell diagram.

October 25—130th anniversary of the birth of Henry Norris Russell co-inventor of the Hertzsprung-Russell diagram.

October 26—Full Moon.

October 27—Wagman public star party.

Rising Moon occults the Pleiades.

October 28—Daylight savings time ends 2 a.m.

Venus at greatest western elongation (morning sky) 46° from the sun.



Amateur Astronomers Association of Pittsburgh, Inc.

*Founded June 9, 1929 by
Chester B. Roe and Leo J. Scanlon*

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