

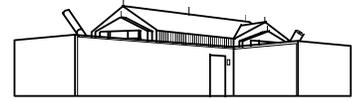
The Guide Star

Newsletter of the Amateur Astronomers Association of Pittsburgh Inc.

A Section of the Academy of Science & Art of Pittsburgh

October, 2002

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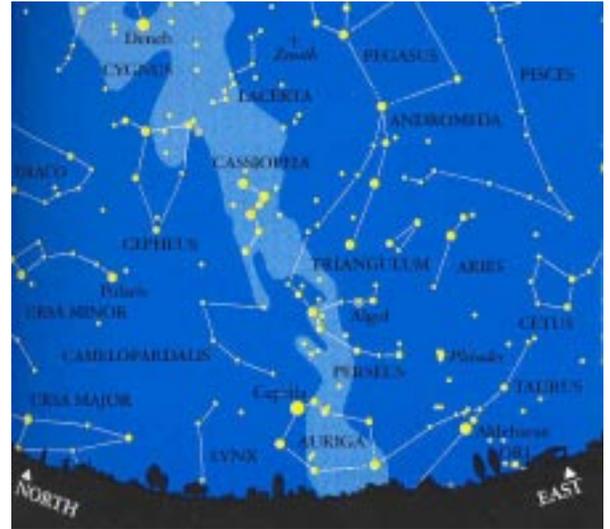
Nicholas E. Wagman Observatory

10-12 "Regular", 10-26 "Plus Moonrise"

The Good, The Bad and The Beautiful For Oct. Star Parties

For October 2002, we have some good news and some bad news as far as Wagman star parties are concerned. The good news is that many more hours of darkness are now available to view a sky plastered with many beautiful objects (late Summer, as well as Fall) on either side of the Milky Way arch. The bad news is that the same growing hours of darkness are guaranteed to bring cold, miserable weather by November, thus the **October 12** and **October 26** public star parties are our last events of the year (the Juneau Alaska Amateur Astronomers would be laughing at us ☺). The 10-12 Wagman event is your garden-variety star party with the Moon moving out towards First Quarter. The 10-26 event gives us one last stab at watching true Moonrise up over the eastern horizon. Both events start at **Sunset**, so make sure to take in an early, hot dinner.

(continued on page 2, column 1)

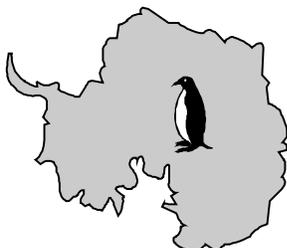


Antarctic Astronomy Topic

CSC Meeting Talk: Looking Up From The Bottom of the World

The guest speaker for the club's **October 18** meeting is Jeff Peterson, who will cover astronomical observations from the South Pole. As of Guide Star press time, we did not have Mr. Peterson's resume or details of his lecture. But if you have read anything in S&T or Astronomy mags about recent research from the Antarctic, you know that the place offers great advantages (e.g. dry air, unique celestial viewing conditions) and disadvantages (coldest temps on Earth) for professional astronomy. VP Terry Trees has a reputation for snagging excellent guest speakers (as he has done for LHSC); Mr. Peterson should be no exception.

(continued on page 2, column 1)



Joint Meeting at D.U., Oct. 16

AAAP/SSP Lecture Theme: Meteorites As History Books

This very busy month of October also includes our annual joint meeting with the Spectroscopy Society of Pittsburgh (SSP) at **Duquesne University, Wednesday October 16**. The SSP has been one of our most generous and consistent benefactors over the years, providing us funding for public education-oriented purchases such as the "Star & Planet Finders" given free to families attending Wagman star parties. **Dave Pensenstadler** inaugurated this relationship over a decade ago and continues to support the annual joint meeting as both an SSP and AAAP member. During the meeting, we proudly present our achievements for the past year and goals for the coming year and years (they will undoubtedly be surprised and delighted that we are planning a second public observatory).



(continued on page 2, column 2)

Eva Hamilton Presents Another Large Grant to AAAP

To say the least, we were surprised and delighted recently to receive another major financial donation from **Eva B. Hamilton**, a cousin of our observatory's namesake, Dr. Nicholas E. Wagman. Ms. Hamilton donated \$20,000 to the AAAP in June, 2001 towards the restoration of Leo Scanlon's Valley-View Observatory; the amount of this latest donation will be reported in a near-future Guide Star. In the letter to Treasurer John Holtz, Ms. Hamilton noted:

"I am enclosing my [donation] in memory of my cousin Nicholas E. Wagman how was an inspiration as he told us about the stars and what we were seeing in the heavens.

I hope you have many like him who have stretched their world heavenward his way. You seem to have an active group of Astronomers."



(continued on page 2, column 2)

Allegheny Observatory, Oct. 11**Yinz Goin to Open Hahse An 'Aht?**

It's amazing how many local folks have only a vague knowledge of some big scientific "something" in Riverview Park on Pittsburgh's North Side; we hear it all the time at Wagman and Wave Pool star parties. Perhaps they've seen three large white domes off in the distance while driving through the North Side and wonder what "they" are doing up there. On **October 11**, we help the staff of **Allegheny Observatory** show off their world-famous facility during the annual **Open House**. It's a rare chance for members of the public to (a) satisfy their curiosity about what goes on under those domes, (b) find out about the AAAP and its slate of activities, and (c) prove the amateurs' telescopes can give celestial views rivaling those of the Observatory's big scopes.



The AAAP has been helping with AO Open Houses for many decades. We set up portable scopes on the observatory's front lawn, in part to entertain visitors while they wait their turn on the tours. Some members also put on their best "go-to-meetin'" clothes and help out in various ways inside the observatory. All helpers are rewarded with a late-evening meal and refreshments and a chance to hob-knob with professional researchers.

If you would like to participate in the 2002 A-O O-H, please contact Lou Coban at 412-321-2400 or coban+@pitt.edu. Note: As of Guide Star press time, there were about 100 Open House tickets still available. Call the 2400 number if you would like to acquire tickets for family or friends.

It's A Wrap On Wagman Season*(continued from front page)*

Note: Don't assume that our Fall star parties will be less well attended than Spring and Summer. We're finding that many school kids come up to get ideas for science projects, or to fulfill some kind of science class "field assignment" (you know, the ones where parents wind up doing all the work away way ☺). As a result, we need all-hands-on-deck providing portable scopes, crowd control, parking, etc. Thanks and see you there.

CSC Lecture: South Pole Astronomy*(continued from front page)*

The **October 18** AAAP meeting will be held at the Carnegie Science Center, starting at **7:30 pm**. As we did last month, members should go directly to the "Science Stage" (not the planetarium) which is accessible on the right-hand side of the CSC's main concourse. Members with digital images are reminded to forward their stuff to Larry McHenry (lsmch@attbi.com) as soon as possible so that he can compile his meeting program.

AAAP/SSP Oct. 16 Meeting Continues Long and Rewarding Tradition*(continued from front page)*

The main speaker for this year's SSP/AAAP meeting is Mr. O. Richard Norton of Science Graphics. Here are the particulars of his talk "Meteorites and the Early Solar System" (forwarded by Larry McHenry):

"Mr. Norton is the author of the best selling book, "Rocks From Space", which is the 'bible' for anyone studying meteoritics. His most recent book, "The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Meteorites" was published in April, 2002. He will have his books available after the meeting for sale and autographing. His talk will discuss the various types of meteorites that exist, and search for clues suggesting their early history, including how structures within these meteorites tell us where they formed in the solar system and under what conditions."

As in previous years, the SSP/AAAP meeting is preceded by a "Tech Forum" dinner, which AAAP members can also attend. Here are all the facts and figures of both events:

Event: Tech Forum Lecture and Dinner
 Date/Time: October 16, 5:30 pm (dinner @ 6)
 Location: Duquesne University Student Union
 Dinner: \$8.00, payable by check
 Speaker: Mr. Richard Kloc, University of Rochester ("Trilobites - Using Camouflage to Avoid Predation")
 Contact: Janeth Pifer (412-825-3220 Ext. 136) before noon on October 11, 2002.

Event: Joint SSP/AAAP Meeting and Main Lecture
 Date/Time: October 16, 8:00 pm
 Location: Duquesne University - Mellon Hall/Faulk Auditorium
 Speaker: Mr. O. Richard Norton, Science Graphics - "Meteorites and the Early Solar System"

We hope to see a goodly number of AAAP members in attendance to show interest in and appreciation for the SSP's ongoing support. Additional information will be coming in your snail mail.



As in recent years, the joint AAAP/SSP meeting takes place in Mellon Hall at Duquesne University.

Second Major Donation from Eva Hamilton*(continued from front page)*

We've run out of superlatives for the generosity of the Wagman family in general and Eva Hamilton in particular over the years. All we can say is "Thank you very, very much" for this latest donation. Both Dr. Wagman and Leo Scanlon would be proud and pleased for the organization, and for the restored Valley-View Observatory.

South Hills Observatory Advances On Several Fronts

Key Meeting with Washington Co. Officials

by Wayne Gondella (from AAAP Listserver)



I'm sorry I couldn't bring this news a little faster, but work on the Mingo Park Observatory has become so broad and complex that I've been consumed with dealing with the immediate concerns of it. On Sept 22, Dick Haddad and I met in Washington Pa with the County's Park Planning Commission to discuss arrangements and issues over the use of the Park for building a club Observatory. The meeting was

with the Director, Planning Administrator, Maintenance Supervisor and their assistant.

Issues discussed included the usage of the adjoining area by Scouts, free access and use of the gates which allow entry into the area, improvement of the roads and winter maintenance, development of the area, scheduling, usage and advertising, electric power, phone line access, insurance, and the formation of an agreement and lease.

The Park Authority is extremely interested in this project, enthused, and entirely supportive. They expressed no reservations whatsoever is working with us and doing whatever necessary to make this a reality, possibly beginning early next spring. However, at this time, we are next slated to meet with the County Commissioners over this, as they have the final say and approval on their end. It is likely that the Park Authority and Commissioners will be brought up to Wagman to see our facility there, the telescopes, meet the staff and take a tour of the grounds. This will give them a better feel for what we do and have done, and show them the caliber of equipment and people within the Club.

(Editor's update: The SHO Committee members are scheduled to meet with the Washington Co. Commissioners on October 8. Results of that meeting will be reported in the Nov. Guide Star.)

South Hills Observatory Web Site

by Wayne Gondella (from AAAP Listserver)

The Mingo Park Observatory Committee has been working on a web site for the proposed project of building a second AAAP Club Observatory out there. The website is now ready for member use. It contains pictures taken from the location, a general statement of the goals, and a news board to keep people abreast of the latest developments. Our thanks to Shawn van Mastriq for being the web master who developed and manages the site. This site is just so people can see something of what's been going on. As things develop, I would assume everything out at Mingo will probably be eventually integrated into the regular AAAP website, but that's something to be figured out. One step at a time! The site is:

<http://home.attbi.com/~vmaestro/SHOproj/southframes.htm>
Thanks again, Shawn. Hope everyone likes it!



Executive Committee Names Wayne Gondella SHO Acting Director

We are pleased to announce that **Wayne Gondella** has been formally named as Acting Director of the planned South Hills Observatory: Here is the complete text covering this and related resolutions passed by the EC and forwarded by President Larry McHenry:

- 1) *The AAAP formally endorses and authorizes the construction of a 'South Hills Observatory' (SHO).*
- 2) *That the AAAP formally appoint **Wayne Gondella** as acting Director of SHO until such a time as the AAAP club Constitution & ByLaws are amended to provide for the proper election or appointment of said directorship.*
- 3) *That the AAAP formally give the acting Director of SHO (Wayne Gondella), the same authority bestowed upon the Wagman Observatory Director: to appoint assistant directors, schedule star parties, make spending decisions, and the ability to negotiate on behalf of the AAAP all matters pertaining to the SHO project with Washington County & Mingo Creek Park officials, and to be considered a official member of the AAAP Executive Committee (along with any associate SHO directors he may appoint).*

New Home for Planetarium

From Guide Star Editor: The small planetarium we purchased earlier this year will now be housed in the new South Hills Observatory. We had originally planned to add a wing to Wagman Observatory for this purpose, but incorporating the equipment as part of the new construction will be simpler and less expensive.

Guide Star On Line: It's Only Logical



"Fascinating newsletter".

If Mr. Spock came back to our century and joined the AAAP, would he use the primitive Terran distribution system called the "U.S. Mail", or would he use the more advanced electronic medium called the "Internet" to get his Guide Star? If you consider yourself a logical person, write "I Want My GSOL" with your name and address, and e-mail it to Alison Conte at alison.conte@wordwritepr.com.

High-Reaching Aurora Surprises and Delights Local Observers

Sorry...no member's photos of the Aurora were available as of G.S. press time, so we had to run this pix taken from Connecticut.



The weekend of Sept. 6-7-8 was already a great one for general observing, and was made even more memorable with a colorful Aurora Borealis during the mid-evening of Sept. 7. Here are several accounts of this very nice display from diverse locations around the area:

Flacc & Beth Stifel: "...There were red patches in the northwest and northeast, covering Ursa Major and Cass., reaching up almost to the zenith.....At the brightest there was some ray structure and tinges of yellow."

Charlie Pritt - "Ed Jones and I observed the aurora from Pinehill Campground, at it's peek it practically lit up the whole field.....The "beams" of light, the "curtain" affects, the "ribbon" affects, red, orange, green, blue, white.....all I could do was stare in amazement."

Pete Zapadka - "A large group of us watched the aurora from Wagman....Awesome! At one point, spikes from the aurora nearly reached the zenith.....After the initial outburst died down (around 10 or so), we observed the aurora picking back up later, though not as intense."

Shawn van Mastrigt - ".....a great night at Mingo Park! We were treated to a brief but very impressive aurora display.....This was only my second time observing an aurora. At times it looked like Hollywood spotlights shooting up...."

Mark Arelt - "I was at the Greene Co. site last night doing some wide field Milky Way shots.....I happened to gaze straight up toward the zenith and noticed behind me what I first took to be a patch of cirrus cloud....quickly I stood up and looked toward the North and discovered my mistake. A full-blown Aurora was in progress along the entire northern horizon! Only my second "really-good-just-like-up-in-Canada" one!....Mostly just a slowly coruscating sheet of faint, whitish light with an occasional spike launching off toward the zenith."

Mary DeVaughn - "What an incredible sight! Everything I ever said about "yinz guys making it up", I now take back!.....Sadly, my little digital camera couldn't do justice to the aurora, since I can't do any sort of timed exposure -- but who needs pictures, I will have the memory forever!"

Tim Hagen - "....Close to 600 people....countless dollars worth of telescopes sitting idle....everyone sitting on sleeping bags and lounge chairs watching and cheering the pinks and greens and yellows of the Aurora. My son's first big star party and first aurora. He asked 'Dad, are star parties always this cool?'"

Frank Pastin - "The aurora was nothing but great. I haven't seen a display like that since I was flying to Goose Bay Labrador with the Air Force in 1959 and 60."

Report On Year's Last Wavepool S.P.

by Wayne Gondella (from AAAP Listserver)

September 14 was the final Wave Pool star party for this season. With a late afternoon storm, I thought it was surely a "wash". But it sort of cleared up with patches of blue sky so I figured I better get out there to great the public. Jack and Janet Greenberg were there (they organize the events too), as was Mark Arelt and his daughter.



I'm sorry to say that other than them and me, no one else from the club showed up, including any of the people from the South Hills Observers, which left me alone with my one telescope to deal with about 15 people total who showed up! What the Hey!

The public in attendance were mostly parents and several small kids. I brought my 5" Mak and wrongly thought to include a stereoscopic viewer. Wrong thing to have around kids! These kids, ages 5-7 obviously aren't used to being around telescopes. The first kid grabbed ahold of the bino-viwer and rather than put her eyes to it, tried to pull it to her! Another girl tripped over the leg and nearly took out the whole scope. The rest of the time, the kids held onto that thing like it was the handlebar of a Harley! Then this other real nice girl, fascinated by the mirror inside, put her face to the corrector--- I thought for sure I was going to have a nose print. The finale was the other girl who, when done viewing and looking around the sky, would put her hand on top of the eyepieces while looking around. She even explored the lens with her finger wondering how the Moon could be in there!

The Moon made itself shown for maybe a half hour or so, but we all had a good time and talked a lot afterwards. A couple might have been intrigued to join the club. While I was working the scope with the kids on my end, Mark was demonstrating planospheres to the other group of adults on his end. And there were actually some pretty good views of the Moon.

Not bad considering everything. My thanks again to all who showed and helped out.

Oct 26-27: A Very Busy Night Indeed

by John Holtz

The night of **Oct 26-27** looks to be a very busy night, clear skies permitting: Final star party of the year at Wagman Observatory, three grazing occultations, and an asteroidal occultation squeezed in! Plus 12 total occultations, assuming you're not driving around the countryside. You can bet that I'm hoping for clear skies.

An occultation occurs when one object, such as the Moon or an asteroid, passes in front of a smaller apparent object, such as a star. The occulted object winks out instantly. Total lunar occultations, where the star passes directly behind the Moon, are common. A grazing occultation, where the star passes in and out of the Moon's mountains along the limb, are less common but more exciting. You may have several events in the span of 3 minutes! Asteroidal occultations are fairly rare because the path

(continued on page 5, columns 1 and 2)

Labor Day Weekend: Everything But the Celestial Kitchen Sink

by Tom Reiland (from AAAP Listserver)

Editor's note: This is one of numerous accounts posted on the club's Listserver, all in response to several very fine weekends of observing in early September. Here are some excerpts from Tom's detailed report:

Sept. 4: What a glorious night!....I watched as the last sliver of the Sun disappeared and witnessed a green flash that lasted 2 seconds.....Venus is showing a nice crescent....I decided to try to find Comet Swan even though it was only 5 to 6 degrees about the horizon.....It was fan-shaped and about 7th magnitude.....Comet Hoenig was visible all night several degrees North of Mizar-Alcor.....Later I saw Ceres and Melpomene with my 10 X 50's and 16"....I found Neptune's large moon, Triton, with ease, six moons of Saturn and the four Galilean moons of Jupiter.....The best satellite of all was our own Moon.....the Earthshine was fantastic....I observed about 10 meteors, some 1st mag. or brighter....I watched the ISS flash into view and for several minutes it was brighter than Sirius and almost as bright as Jupiter.....Mira is still an easy nude-eye object at 3.3 mag. and R Leporis was blood red.



The Helix Nebula was barely visible in binocs, but easy in my 16" with a nebular filter....I did observe the North American Nebula with my binocs.....several dark nebulae in Sagittarius along with emission, reflection and planetary nebulae.....The two supernovae remnants, M1 and the Veil Nebulae were easy.....The Andromeda Galaxy was spectacular and it's dark lanes were prominent.....The best deep sky object, the Orion Nebula, filled the field of view in my 16"

Occultation Traffic Jam On 10-26/27

(continued from page 4, column 2)

certain of the three types; hence, one usually has a miss. But if successful, you can help astronomers measure the size of the asteroid! The only equipment required is a telescope (preferably with motor drive), a time source (short wave radio tuned to WWV), and recording equipment (ea tape recorder so that you can watch visually and makes calls, or a sensitive video camera). Here is a timeline of the night's best events.

Oct. 26, 11:57 pm EDT (3:57 UT). The first occultation of the night is a total occultation. The 8.0 mag star SAO 78629 will reappear from behind the Moon's dark limb. Look at a position angle of 297 deg. (66 deg. from the northern cusp).

Oct. 27, 12:07 am EDT (4:07 UT). As the Moon slowly passes through Gemini, it grazes the 7.3 mag star SAO 78653. The path goes near Zelenople, Portersville, and Prospect (conveniently located near I-79 to get to the other two grazes!)

Oct. 27., 1:13 am EDT (5:13 UT). The night's brightest occultation occurs when 3.2 mag Mabsuta (epsilon Gem) reappears from behind the Moon's dark limb. Not that you will need to know where to look (it is so bright), but concentrate on a position angle of 227 deg. (44 deg. from the southern cusp).

29 Years of Personal Observing Logs Continue to Grow

by Tom Reiland (from AAAP Listserver)

The recent good weather has allowed for some fine observing. I observed with binoculars or a scope or both on 94 out of 100 nights until Sept. 15. I didn't miss a night in July and Sunday night was the first night I missed this month. I had 20 hours observing, with one night each of the first six months. In the last two and a half months I've logged 38 hours in eight nights in the log book I keep for my personal observing program. In about three or four nights I will complete my 11th book since I started keeping records almost 29 years ago. I hope to start book number 12 sometime next month.

The late George Lindbloom was the member who suggested that I keep a record of my observations. I recommend it to all of you who want to have something that you can go back to when you want to check on an object you observed or a special event. The next six or seven weeks are usually the best for observing during the year. If I were to pick THE PERFECT NIGHT to observe, it would be a New Moon on a Sunday sometime between the first week of September and the last week of October. Less light and air pollution; fewer people around to bother you; it's the driest time of the year and the leaves are still on the trees to cut down air pollution. A light wind out of the west at 3 to 5 miles an hour, along with good seeing and transparency would make for a perfect night. Enjoy.



Oct 27., 3:29 am EST (8:29 UT). The asteroid Alagasta will pass in front of the 6.5 mag star SAO 97305, as seen from somewhere in our area. The current predictions indicate that south of Pittsburgh is the place to be, which makes it really convenient since that's where I'll be for the next two events.

Oct 27., 3:47 am EST (8:47 UT). The Moon grazes the 7.0 mag star SAO 78795. The path goes near Clarksburg W.Va. (How long does it take to get from Zelenople to Clarksburg?)

Oct 27., 4:56 EST (9:56 UT). The Moon grazes the third star of the night, 7.9 mag SAO 78824. The path for this event crosses the previous graze! With a little bit of luck, I will be able to set up in 10 mile by 1 mile "diamond" from which both grazes will be viewable without moving a foot! Otherwise, one hour to break down, travel to the second site, and set up again at 6 o'clock in the morning may be too much to expect.

Oct 27., 5:49 am EST (10:49 UT). The night's final event is a difficult one: The 5.8 mag star 37 Gem disappears on the Moon's bright limb. Will you be able to see it? Or will it be washed out by the Moon's limb?

Am I crazy? Perhaps, but not for running around the countryside in the middle of the night to catch a few occultations, and collect data at the same time. If you would like more details, contact me or visit my website (<http://members.aol.com/jwholtz/occult>). I will post information sometime before the events. If you would like to join me on this expedition, please let me know (724-356-7592, jwholtz@aol.com).

A Plethora of Wagman Observatory Reports (and Lots of Them, Too!)



Even through the public star party season is winding down at Wagman Observatory, there's a lot on the platter as of this month:

- The club is looking into purchasing a hydrogen-alpha filter for the Brashear 11 Inch Refractor. This type of filter affords detailed views of the Sun's surface such as its granularity and the finer features of Sunspots.
- We're also thinking about outfitting the 20 inch (soon to be 21 inch) Manka Telescope with video imaging equipment, under the guidance of "Mr. Astrovideographer", Larry McHenry. With this capability, we will be able to show the scope's images on monitor(s) elsewhere in the building. A key benefit of this arrangement will be to entertain visitors waiting in line to look through the scope.
- Phil Breidenbach reports that work on the new 21 inch Zerodur mirror for the Manka Telescope has accelerated in recent weeks. While we don't have a specific complete date forecasted, perhaps we and the visiting public will be looking through a vastly improved telescope early next year. (The coating on the current mirror is in ever-sadder shape).
- Everyone is buzzing about our "B"-Team recently taking care of a large wasp nest up in the loft over the observatory's storage room (a.k.a. "John Holtz Bedroom"). We know of at least two members, Bill Hayslip and Erik Heckathorne, who did the dirty work. Thanks to anyone else who participated in this "Raid".

Welcome to the AAAP Universe

As happens each Fall, we are pleased to post a large number of new members that have signed up for AAAP membership during the summer, and were recently voted into the club. Welcome also to returning members.

Leonard Ashcroft	John Dull	William Moutz
Fritz Bekker	Jeff Franklin	Venugopal Nair
Jim Bock	Robert Frederking	Sarah Norris
Ed Borrebach	Walt Gasiorowski, Jr	Mark Orsatti
Fran Borrebach	K. Howard Gray	Nicholas Pruszyński
David Burkhard	Hunter Hopkins	Paul Smith
David Burton	Helen Houggy	Albert Torcaso
Herb Byrns	Jacob Johnson	Ruth Weir
Mike Cook	Joseph Kamon	John Wilson
Ron Deslauriens	David Mankey	Kenneth Winovich
Dylan Jon Dull	Linda McNair	Ed Zullo

The Whole News and Nothing But...

- Deepest gratitude goes to **Dr. Truman Kohman** for his recent donation of optical components to the club. Included are a number of lenses, diameters 35-95 mm, all achromatic and most mounted. Truman acquired these over the years by purchase, gift, or AAAP door prizes. The set also includes several 1-1/4" eyepieces. Truman hopes the items can be placed on sale at various events or used as door prizes.
- This report from **Tom Reiland** on a special-group star party at Wagman Observatory on Aug. 27: "I'd like to thank *Flacc Stifel, Terry Trees, George Guzik, Charlotte and Jim Tunney for helping with last night's group from Point Park College. We were lucky enough to get enough breaks in the clouds to show them a few double stars, M13, M15 and M31, along with three or four satellites. They really seemed to enjoy and appreciate our effort and they asked many good questions. We had about 45 or 50 people in the group.*"
- **Art Glaser** reports he has been in touch with a person that is offering a John John Brashear Biography, written by Gaul & Eiseman. ca1940. The price is \$20 plus shipping and tax. Contact Art if interested (412-341-5862 or aglaser+@pitt.edu).

Amateur Astronomers Association of Pittsburgh, Inc.

A section of the Academy of Science and Art of Pittsburgh

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

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President:	Larry McHenry	412-884-4924
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AAAP Member Dues***:

AAAP Dues:	\$18.00
Junior Member (under 18):	\$13.00
Sky & Telescope Magazine:	Add \$30.00
Astronomy Magazine:	Add \$29.00

***Basic Procedure for Paying Dues:

1. Make check payable to "AAAP Inc."
2. Send check to John Holtz, Treasurer, 176 Hidden Hill Rd, Sarver, PA 16055-8907

 **OCTOBER 2002**

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1 	2	3	4 "Second" Light for Brashear 11 Inch Refractor (1994)	5
6 	7	8	9 	10	11 Allegheny Observatory OPEN HOUSE 7:00 p.m.	12 Public Star Party Wagman
13 	14	15	16 Joint AAAP/SSP Meeting, 8 p.m. Duquesne University	17 	18 AAAP Meeting 7:30 p.m. Carnegie Science Center	19
20	21 "Changing Season Moon"(Dakota Indian) 	22	23 	24	25	26 Public Star Party Wagman (Moonrise Special)
27 Many Occultations (See page 4) 	28	29 	30	31 		

<p>Looking ahead: Wagman Winterfest: 4 p.m. Saturday, March 8, 2003 Looking up: You should be.</p> <p>"And yet ... it moves." Galileo Galilei (1564–1642), as he rose from signing a recantation—forced on him by the Inquisition in Rome—of the Copernican theory that the sun, not the earth, was the center of the solar system.</p>	<p><u>AAAP Long-Range Meeting Schedule</u></p> <table> <tr> <td>Nov. 15, 2002</td> <td>Feb. 14, 2003</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Dec. 13, 2002 (Holiday Party!)</td> <td>March 14, 2003</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Jan. 17, 2003</td> <td>April 18, 2003</td> </tr> </table>	Nov. 15, 2002	Feb. 14, 2003	Dec. 13, 2002 (Holiday Party!)	March 14, 2003	Jan. 17, 2003	April 18, 2003
Nov. 15, 2002	Feb. 14, 2003						
Dec. 13, 2002 (Holiday Party!)	March 14, 2003						
Jan. 17, 2003	April 18, 2003						

Fridge Calendar by Cathy Rivi

Black Forest Star Party

by Tim Hagen (from AAAP Listserv)

I had the pleasure of attending the Black Forest Star Party on September 7 and 8 and I'm still savoring the good time I had.

My journey to Cherry Springs began at about 7:30 AM on Saturday. The first part of the trip to Dubois via Punxsutawney is scenic enough. However, mankind steps aside and nature takes over just north of Dubois and the latter part of the trip was 90 miles of picture post card scenery. Blue skies, green hills, and valleys colored with goldenrod.

You know when you reach Potter County. In fact you can't miss it! The sign beside northbound Route 238 reads "Potter County – God's Country." The last 15 miles from Wharton to Cherry Springs is along a narrow 2-lane road surrounded with fields, streams and hills. I wanted to stop, pitch a tent, and stay a few years.



I arrived at Cherry Springs State Park after lunch. The folks at the registration desk noted that their count of attendees was approaching 500.

The AAAP was well represented at BFSP. Bob Novack, George Kepple, Gary and Donna Shannon, Ed Moss, and several other members made the trek from Pittsburgh.

I first attended Sissy Haas's talk on observing double stars. Her talk sparked a lively discussion on describing the colors of stars based upon visual observations. She also touched on the wisdom of maintaining a logbook of observations. Sissy noted that logs would preserve observations future generations who may have less favorable sky conditions.

I then caught the last part of Thom Bemus' talk on the National Public Observatory's Stars-N-Parks program. Thom is a busy man and is spreading the word of astronomy far and wide.

When the audience cleared between presentations I moved right up front in preparation for Leif Robinson's very interesting talk on the role of the moon in artwork over the past 3000 years. Robinson is synonymous with Sky and Telescope magazine, which he edited for many years prior to his recent retirement. A man of many talents, he is also an amateur art historian and he traced the artists' interpretation of the moon through many famous, and many not so famous, works of art. He showed the significant changes in renderings of the moon following the development of the telescope.

Following dinner with friends, I returned to the park with them just before 9 PM and set about giving them a tour of some of my favorite objects in the night sky. The "program" for the evening

(continued at top right)

included M57, M13, M31, M32, M110, and Alcor and Mizar. We also had some great views of M6, M7, and the Lagoon near Sagittarius. The dark, clear sky made it so easy to locate objects. How was the Milky Way? Horizon to horizon with lots of structure easily visible. M110 was visible without eyestrain and imagination. Want to see M31? Just look up - you don't even need binoculars.

Sometime during the tour I glanced northward and noticed what appeared to be a light dome rising just above the trees. I'm new to Cherry Springs and not very familiar with glare conditions so I brushed it off as light from towns to the north. Then the shouting started!

I heard the commotion, looked up from the scope, and turned north to see a pillar of light rising from the horizon to Polaris. Aurora! Over the next 10 to 15 minutes the sky filled with curtains of light that spread and traveled eastward past Cassiopeia and extended upward about 45 degrees. This aurora was bright enough to make objects on the ground easily visible. It included tinges of pink at higher altitudes, very pale green near the horizon. Being only the second aurora that I have ever seen, it was a real treat. I was dazzled and amazed.

My friends bid farewell at about 10:30 and I continued to go at it for a few more hours, observing Uranus and Neptune in an easily visible Capricornus. The Double Cluster was the classic "diamonds on black velvet" view. After spending a night in the "Henry Ford Hotel," i.e. the car, I awakened around 6 AM to observe Saturn and Jupiter, M42, and a sunrise over Cherry Springs airport.

Cherry Springs is simply a great place for astronomy and the Black Forest Star Party is a terrific event. If a future BFSP doesn't fit your schedule then consider a trip to Cherry Springs at another time of the year to enjoy some of the best night sky on the East Coast.

PREPARE FOR THE GOD OF WAR

A book review By Bob Schmidt

Review of "John Mellish, Gorge Hamilton, and the Craters of Mars" by Rodger Gordon and Paul Katt. Typographica Publishers. Release date: October 2002

Our angry red neighbor, the god of war, will be paying us a very close visit next year at this time. On August 10 it was shining at its weakest, 1.8 mag. From there its telescopic size of 3.5 arc-seconds will slowly balloon until it reaches a very respectable 25 arc-seconds, surpassing the great opposition of 1924.

During such uniquely favorable approaches, surface features such as Olympus Mons, Valles Marineris, and several of the larger craters and scarps, will be fair game for modest-size amateur instruments on nights of GOOD seeing.

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Classifieds

FOR SALE: Bardou/Clark-Lundin telescope, exhibited at the Pittsburgh 2001 September ATS meeting and the 2002 April AAAP meeting. Described and pictured on Web site at "My First Telescope" (see photo). Web address:



<http://www.andrew.cmu.edu/~tk11/firstscope.html>.

\$3000 or best offer. Bid must include a proposal for getting it from my place to buyer's, since it has no case(s). Contact Truman Kohman (412-561-8343, tk11@andrew.cmu.edu)

FOR SALE: Meade 12" LX200 Telescope & Tripod. \$2,900.00. Contact Bernie Kriger for details (412 787-1171, evenings, leave a message).

FOR SALE: Astrophotography equipment: Mamiya 645 Pro medium format system and some Nikon camera gear, several camera bodies, about 11 lenses and some accessories. All items in good condition, owned by professional photographer. Contact Phil Breidenbach for complete list and prices (412-486-1450, booksareme@hotmail.com).

FOR SALE: Meade 2045 4-inch telescope, like new. \$160.00 Call "Tom" at 740-283-3169.

Mars Book Review

(continued from page 8, column 2)

Observations of this type are discussed in detail and are supplemented with drawings made at the telescope by various experienced, top notch, observers throughout the century in the upcoming, comprehensive, book: "John Mellish, George Hamilton, and the Craters of Mars" by Rodger Gordon and Paul Katt.

Those who truly enjoy hunting down fine detail on planetary surfaces will find this book a worthy and valuable supplement for the upcoming pass.

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