

# The Guide Star

Newsletter of the Amateur Astronomers Association of Pittsburgh Inc.

A Section of the Academy of Science & Art of Pittsburgh

January, 2003

Vol. 36, No. 10



Nicholas E. Wagman Observatory

## 1-17-03 At the CSC

### Jan. Meeting Lecture: Studying Volcanoes From Space

The first AAAP meeting of the new year (*January 17, 2003, 7:30 pm at the CSC*) features a talk on the new science of "Satellite Volcanology" given by Mike Ramsey of the U-Pitt's Department of Geology & Planetary Sciences. Here are some excerpts from Mr. Ramsey's lecture summary:

*"My primary focus is in thermal infrared remote sensing as applied to physical volcanology and eruption monitoring. Specifically, I am interested in the linkage between the renewal of activity at an explosive volcano, and the ability of remote sensing to detect that activity and mitigate the resulting hazards....Studies such as these are critical for both an understanding of the mechanics of eruptions, and also for the impact such eruptions have on the local populations....I am most interested in being able to monitor, model and mitigate this natural hazard....."*

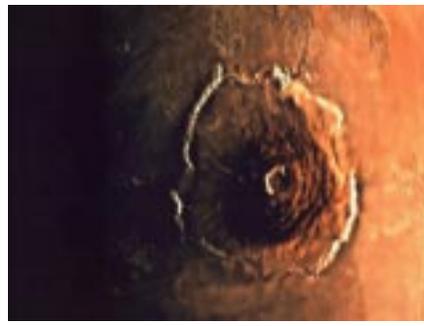
*"I am utilizing data to observe the textural changes, which can provide clues into the rate of new lava reaching the surface. This work relies on field mapping, differential GPS surveys, laboratory modeling and image visualization, and has applications to other styles/compositions of volcanoes on Earth and Mars."*

*"My current field sites include volcanoes in the Cascade, Caribbean and Andean arcs as well as Hawaii and Kamchatka."*

Let's show Mr. Ramsey our appreciation at the January meeting by "erupting" in a round of applause.

### Read This Now...Or Else!

As before, members are asked to proceed directly to the CSC's main lecture hall in the right-hand corner of the main lobby. If severe winter weather threatens, check with any club officer as to the status of the meeting, or consult the club's Internet Listserver.



### Holtz, Trocki, Pritt and Smith

### 2002 Service Award Winners Helped On Many Fronts

As the Brits would say: "Hip-hip...hoo-ray, hip-hip...hoo-ray" to the AAAP's 2002 Service Award winners, who were announced at the club's Holiday Party in December:

George Lindbloom Award: **John Holtz** – What can we say about a guy who eats, drinks, sleeps, walks and talks popular astronomy and AAAP activities during most of his free time? In addition to serving well as the club's Treasurer, John finds time to lend major help to events such as Wagman star parties (e.g. parking cars), LHSC, Wagman Winterfest, Astronomy Day, etc. etc. With all these irons in the fire, John also finds time to chase after lunar graze and

*(continued on page 2, column 1)*

### Zeiss and Siderostat Moved from Old Buhl Planetarium



The Zeiss-II Star Projector and 10-Inch Siderostat telescope, well known to anyone who ever visited the original Buhl Planetarium & Institute of Popular Science, were recently moved from the old building in Allegheny Square to the Carnegie Science Center for safe keeping and future restoration. These instruments were transferred, in part, so that the old Buhl building can be refurbished as an extension of the neighboring Pittsburgh Children's museum, under an agreement with the City of Pittsburgh. Plans call for the Zeiss to be cleaned, repaired and set up as a permanent display outside the entrance to the new Buhl Planetarium at the CSC. The 10" Siderostat will be restored and put back into service as a public viewing instrument in conjunction with the CSC's upcoming expansion project (which will also relocate the existing rooftop observatory).

The AAAP played a prominent role in the design and use of the original Buhl Planetarium over 60 years ago, as well as its astronomical equipment and public programs. In a near-future Guide Star, we'll cover the complete story of the Zeiss and Siderostat transfer to the CSC, as well as the CSC's plans for their reuse.



## 2002 Service Award Winners



Clockwise (from L):  
John Holtz, Elaine  
Trocki, Charlie Pritt,  
Paul Smith

## Fine Choices for Service Award Winners

(continued from front page)

asteroidal occultations passing anywhere near our area. Not surprisingly, John is already a past winner of the Lindbloom Award.

**Lois Harrison Award (Posthumous): Elaine Trocki** – Elaine was any easy choice for best contribution from a female member. Not too many months prior her death last year, Elaine was a frequent and energetic helper at Wagman star parties and LHSC. She worked side-by-side with friends Mari-Jo and Wayne Meyers and helped everywhere help was needed. Accepting the posthumous award for Elaine were brothers George and Tim Trocki, her sister Chris Straznick and Chris' husband Norb. Chris spoke on behalf of the family at the Holiday Party and thanked the club for the Harrison Award.

**Nova Award: Charlie Pritt and Paul Smith** – In the best traditions of this award, these new AAAP members jumped hip-deep into AAAP activities soon after joining. In particular, they provided invaluable help in many areas of last year's Laurel Highland Star Cruise.

## New Candidates Urged to Step Forward

### Like Al Gore, I Won't Be Running for President

by Larry McHenry

It is with much regret that I would like to announce that I will not be seeking re-election as President of the AAAP for a fourth term. These past three years, I have worked hard to look out for the best interests of the AAAP, and I believe I have been for the most part successful in that. Now I feel that it is time to give another member the opportunity to serve the club, and bring some fresh ideas to the membership.

Having worked with a number of you these past years, I know that there are more than a few members who are quite capable of the task, and would like to encourage you to step forward to lead the club. Do not let the AV technology associated with the monthly club meetings deter you from running for office. I've always felt that having the AV presentations actually helped take the pressure off of doing the meetings. I will be happy to pass on my presentations to whoever needs them, and will assist them in setting up their own shows, and getting off to a smooth start.

(continued on page 3, column 2)

## Twass the Best Amateur Astronomers Holiday Party In the 'Burgh...

OK, so it was the only amateur astronomers party, and it wasn't really in Pittsburgh. But the AAAP 2002 Holiday Party was still a super-friendly affair, with best in foods & refreshments, door prizes, friendly banter and all the other ingredients that make these events one of our most popular of each year. A broad-band "thank you" to all the members who made it all possible. Here are the highlights:

### Ever So Many to Thank for Food and Refreshments

by Emily "Ma" Bell

Thanks again to everybody who made our 2002 holiday festivities possible! In no particular order:

**Ann Norman** thai'd one on with her wonderful Lat Na.

**Truman Kohman** made his very own delicious apple cake.

**Helen Kalan** brought a big batch of cookies.

**Larry McHenry and family** brought the savory cheese dip and crackers.

**Mark and Lynn Jablonowski** brought brownies and a pumpkin roll, and their new daughter, Anna, too, who certainly was a candidate for best-dressed.

**John Diller** made his very own home-made applesauce to share.

**Chuck Kollar, Carol Tenny, and Ruth Kollar** supplied the eggnog.

**Kevin and Cindy Van Horn** and son **Grant** came with her famous Taco dip and chips.

**Linda and Warren Snyder** brought her equally famous strawberry/pretzel pie.

**Donna Shannon** brought **Gary** and a platter of her famous cream puffs.

**Linda and Rich Bailey** brought chocolate chip and molasses cookies, and jelly tots, too.

**Alison Conte** brought an assortment of cakes and cookies.

**Charlotte Tunney** served up her hot wings and cookies (but not in the same dish).

**John Close, Joe McCafferty, Kurt Toperzer, Frank Pastin, Tim Manka, Bill Roemer, and Don Hoecker** brought armloads of soft drinks.

**Frank Pastin** also supplied the potato chips.

(continued on page 3, column 1)



## Holiday Party “Thank-You” List Would Stretch to the Moon

(continued from page 2, column 2)

**Tim Manka** also brought cookies.

**John Close** also provided shortbread treats.

**Don Shepherd** cooked up a pot of his yummy kielbasa.

**John Holtz** scooped and served his fabulous hand-cranked ice cream.

**Flacc Stifel** topped it off with his luscious butterscotch sauce.

**Judy Urban** brought a big batch of chocolate chip cookies, along with **Richard** and **Peter**.

**Bill and Maureen Moutz** brought the cutest little “chocolate-covered pretzels” I ever saw.

**Ed Moss** skillfully brewed up the coffee for us (in the super-sized pot **Flacc** brought in).

**Kenn and Josh Lippert** brought Mrs. Lippert’s groggy rum balls....mmmm.

Every year, I’m sure I forget to list people, so please accept my apologies if I’ve done so this year. Our parties are enjoyable precisely because of all your many contributions of food, supplies, and especially time. Thanks to each of you.

The very highest of accolades and my deepest thanks go to the people who worked in the kitchen and cleaned up afterward. **Diane Yorkshire** nobly “womaned” the drinks room with her helpers. In the kitchen were **Donna Shannon**, **Joann Trees**, **Charlotte Tunney**, **Ed Moss**, **Beth Stifel** and **Helen Kalan**. I know there were a number of folks who folded up and put away all the chairs we sat upon, but not who, exactly. Please tell me if I’ve neglected to list your name anywhere so I can write an addendum. Thank you for letting me be of service to the AAAP.

## Art and Science of “Star Hopping” Explained

Our thanks to **Tom Reiland** for continuing the decades-long AAAP tradition (started by Dr. Nicholas Wagman) of giving an astronomy lecture at the annual Holiday Party. Tom revealed the many interesting facets of “Star Hopping”...the technique of finding a specific celestial object by hopping from a familiar stars or asterisms to the target object’s location. He started with perhaps the most famous star hop of them all - jumping from the end stars in the bowl of the Big Dipper to Polaris (a.k.a. the “North Star”) – to remind us that we are all star hoppers in one form or the other. Tom traced his interest in the subject to his childhood baseball throwing skills and his Marksman rating while in the military. Among his tips to observers: Develop your hopping skills first on the naked-eye level, then progress to binoculars and finally to the telescope. Also, look for “arrows” and other directional asterisms that may point to the target object, and make sure to put star hop markings on copies of your star charts, not the originals! Again, “good show”,



## Don’t Let Alison Get “Zapped”: Subscribe to GSOL

What does this wild-haired woman at the right have to do with the sending out the Guide Star? This is what our tireless Corresponding Secretary **Alison Conte** looks like after she has processed several hundred paper copies of our newsletter. After enough foldings and labelings, she builds up one heck of a static electrical charge! :-)



To help keep Alison sane and avoid burn-out, consider converting your U.S. snail-mail subscription to the on-line version available on the AAAP web site. You can “unsubscribe” by writing “I Want My GSOL” with your name and address, and emailing it to Alison Conte, corresponding secretary, at [alisonconte@hotmail.com](mailto:alisonconte@hotmail.com). During the first week of each month, when the new issue of the Guide Star Online is posted on the web site, online users will receive an email reminder with a link to the site. If you don’t like it, you can re-subscribe to the paper version at any time.

You don’t need to be on the list server to access GSOL, but you do need Adobe Acrobat Reader -- available as a free download - - to read the Adobe Acrobat pdf file. Obviously, you also need to have access to the Internet.

Understandably, many members like having a paper copy to read on the bus, file or pass along to friends. And no one has to give that up if they don’t want to. But if you lose the Guide Star under a pile of junk mail, search in vain for back copies, or find yourself in Cincinnati trying to make appointments that won’t conflict with AAAP meeting dates, try going online, with the GSOL.

## Alert! Password Change On Website

Just as we change the Wagman Observatory gate and door combinations at the top of each year, we’ve also decided to change the member’s-only password to selected areas (e.g. GSOL) of the club’s Internet web site which is currently NCC-1701C. The new password will be: **Vega**

As before, this password is initial caps/case-sensitive. If you have any problems accessing the members-only parts of the web page, please contact our Webmaster **Kenn Lippert** at [lippert@nauticom.net](mailto:lippert@nauticom.net) or 724-444-1045.

## New AAAP Leadership Welcomed

(continued from page 2, column 1)

I plan on remaining active in the club leadership, serving on the Executive Committee as specified in the club by-laws. Also, I plan to concentrate on club events, such as StarCruise, and AAAP activities at the CSC, and in other areas that interest me the most, such as videoastronomy, and solar observing.

I would like to thank all the Officer & Executive members and committee chairs that I have worked with these past three years. It has been a pleasure working with you to accomplish club goals and making our club a better organization, you have made it all worthwhile.

## A Flurry of Winter News Items...

- \* Sky & Telescope informs us that our own Wagman Winterfest will be featured in the March issue of the magazine. This added publicity is certain to draw even more people to the **March 8, 2003** event than usual. Thus, make certain to clear your schedules for that date and gather your contributions (food, books, other donations). And don't forget to put in a prayer to the Weather Gods. :-)



- \* Speaking of S&T, George Guzik directs us to the December issue and page 78 for the photo from Cedar Key Star Party. Club members Gary and Donna Shannon are in the photo, and (we believe) John O'Hara on the right?
- \* "One Good Reminder Deserves Another Dept." – After January 1, the Wagman gate, door lock and security system combinations will be changed. Make sure to contact **Tom Reiland** or **Flacc Stifel** if you plan to use the site or the building during the winter months. On a related note, do not attempt to open either of the observatory's roofs if they are covered with snow. In addition to scraping all this snow into the telescope rooms, such a movement could damage the roof cranking mechanisms.

- \* **Flacc Stifel** recently completed a compilation of literature and equipment donations to Wagman Observatory from **Truman Kohman**, **Rich Hansen** and others. Among the many contributions are professional quality star chart sets, various high quality eyepieces, prisms, refracting lenses, a "barn door" tracking mechanism, optical tools and others. We will give more detailed accounting of these generous contributions in a future Guide Star, as well as their eventual dispositions. In the mean time, many thanks to all the contributors of these valuable items.

- \* Congratulations to **Ann Norman** for becoming our most recent recipient of the Messier Award. Ann observed 87 objects in the famous Frenchman's catalog, in spite of a loaded schedule as a Guide Star Associate Editor and helper at various AAAP events (not to mention being a full-time mom and professional editor as well).

- \* **Phil Breidenbach** reports that we're in the home stretch on finishing the new mirror and secondary for the Manka Telescope at Wagman Observator. The 21" Zerodur primary has been figured and awaits only the addition of a small central ring for alignment purposes; after that, the mirror goes out for coating. The secondary is polished and needs to be shaped prior to its coating. Note: We plan to "hand-carry" the optics to the out-of-state company that will apply the aluminized coating; not taking any chances with a package delivery service.



- \* **Ed Moss** has been named Coordinator for the South Hills Observatory project and will represent the AAAP in all discussions with Washington County government, our benefactor **Dick Haddad** and the various contractors that will be involved with the construction work in Mingo Park. As of Guide Star press time, there were no major new developments in the project, however all parties remain eager to get on with the work.
- \* Channel-Surfing Note: Watch for "Cosmic Journey - The Voyager Interstellar Mission and Message" on A&E, January 16 at 9:00 pm. Among the producers of the program is Ann Druyan, wife of the late great Carl Sagan. Editor's note: All club members are encouraged to report upcoming TV programs of astronomical interest for reporting in the GS.
- \* Planning continues for the 2003 Installment of the Laurel Highlands Star Cruise (LHSC). If you would like to help in any way (mental, physical, metaphysical ☺), please contact Terry Trees soon. Star Cruise is scheduled for Wednesday, **June 25** through Sunday, **June 29, 2003**. Program details will begin appearing after the New Year at: [www.lhstarcruise.org](http://www.lhstarcruise.org). Note: We're considering a new presentation "How to Observe With Kids". If you have any ideas to contribute, contact Terry at [TNTrees@BellAtlantic.net](mailto:TNTrees@BellAtlantic.net).

### 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

#### 2002-2003 Officers:

President:	Larry McHenry	412-884-4924
Vice President:	Terry Trees	724-337-3231
Treasurer:	John Holtz	724-352-7596
Corresponding Sec:	Alison Conte	412-741-3216
Recording Sec:	Dennis Derda	724-224-4688
Membership Sec:	Brent Hudock	724-437-5990
Guide Star Editors:	Eric Fischer (news)	412-487-7011

#### 2000-2001 Executive Committee (in addition to officers):

Wade Barbin** (724-443-3404)	Tom Reiland* (412-487-8326)
Ed Moss (412-734-0255)	Dave Smith (412-390-0870)
Bob Novack (724-538-4242)	Flacus Stifel** (412-486-8067)
John Radzilowicz (412-388-1562)	Bill Yorkshire (412-793-9552)

\*Wagman Observatory Director, \*\*Associate Directors

Group Scheduling Coordinator:  
 Paula Meddings (724-745-2447)

AAAP Homepage: [3ap.org](http://3ap.org)  
 AAAP Webmaster: Kenn Lippert ([lippert@nauticom.net](mailto:lippert@nauticom.net))

#### Guide Star Associate Editors

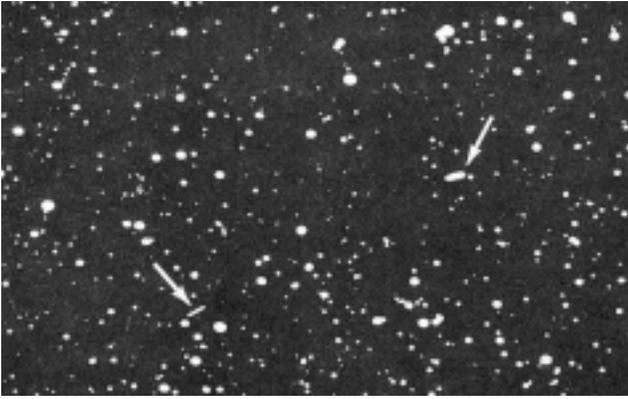
Ann Norman (412-242-6806) Cathy Rivi (412-782-4605)

#### AAAP Member Dues\*\*\*:

AAAP Dues:	\$18.00
Junior Member (under 18):	\$13.00
<u>Sky &amp; Telescope Magazine:</u>	Add \$30.00
<u>Astronomy Magazine:</u>	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



## No Shortage of Occultations In January

by John Holtz (from AAAP Listserver)

There are a number of asteroidal occultations in January that I just received information about. All of these are predicted to be in our general area, so the actual track could pass right over us (or of course, could move away from us ☺! Here are the events that will occur during and after the time frame when the Guide Star hits the streets:

- Jan 7, Tyche will occult an 11.1 magnitude star (R.A. 7h 16m 41.12s Dec. +0° 2' 5.9") at 5:05 UT (12:05 am EST on Jan 7).
- Jan 8, Aguntina will occult a 10.7 magnitude star (R.A. 6h 29m 19.03s Dec. +15° 37' 29.7") at 23:42 UT (6:42 pm EST on Jan 8). Guess what? We're right in the predicted path.
- Jan 11, Bathilde will occult a 7.7 magnitude star (R.A. 9h 25m 22.5s Dec. +4° 17' 8.2") at 3:52 UT (10:52 pm EST on Jan 10). We're in the shadow!
- Jan 16, Bohemia will occult a 10.5 magnitude star (R.A. 1h 15m 28.88s Dec. +18° 20' 32.4") at 1:35 UT (8:35 pm EST on Jan 15).
- Jan 22, Arethusa will occult an 11.6 magnitude star (R.A. 7h 33m 58.62s Dec. +5° 48' 53.6") at 2:30 UT (9:30 pm EST on Jan 21).
- Jan 27, Tokio will occult a 12.4 magnitude star (R.A. 8h 37m 45.56s Dec. +25° 20' 14.0") at 6:25 UT (1:25 am EST on Jan 27).

Holy cow! If the weather were to cooperate for all of them, and if we were so lucky that the paths all were correct, I could double the number of asteroidal occultations I have seen in just one month! Time permitting and favorable prediction updates, I will place finder charts on my web site.

### Tip of the Month

**If you would like to make a brief presentation at an upcoming AAAP meeting, or bring up an issue that may require some discussion time, please notify the club President in advance so that agenda time can be allocated.**

## Is Your Membership Directory Entry Is Out of Date?

Membership Secretary **Brent Hudock** is gearing up for another end-to-end update of the club's unique Membership Directory in February, so please take a moment to review your entry and pass along any revisions to Brent. Our directory is unique among most because it lists individual member's interests and roster of equipment. This allows members with like interests to directly contact one another. Look for the 2003 edition of the directory with your February Guide Star.

Note: We've neglected to thank **Don Hoecker** for providing ongoing editorial updates (spellings, zip codes, phone exchanges, etc.) to the directory database. Given that we are a 500+ member organization, that's an impressive task.

## "May the Stars Rise to Meet You" (Welcome New Members)

The following folks were voted into the AAAP at the December Holiday Party:

Bradley Kusman	Sam Provil
Robert Mertz	Jason Stern
Nancy Provil	

## ...And We Hope You Reach Many More AAAP Milestones

Congratulations to these AAAP members upon reaching key membership milestones:

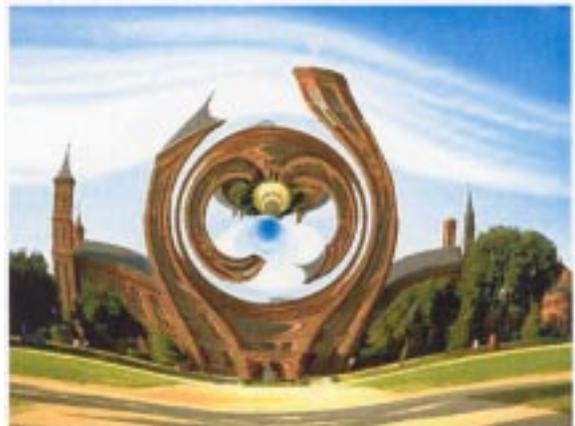
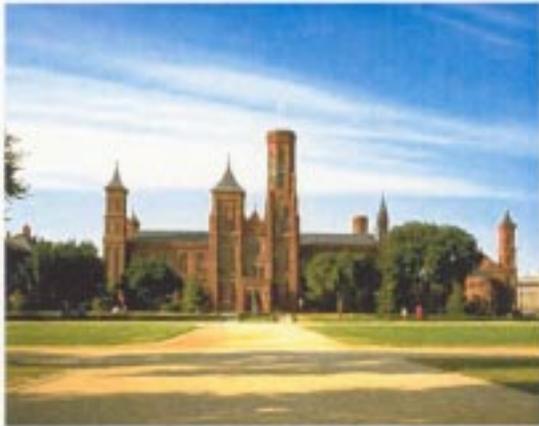
<u>20 years</u>	<u>5 years</u>
R. Scott Soroko	Debra M. Banach
	Tim Colbert
<u>15 years</u>	Kevin Dibert
Dominic F. Dornetto	Stephen Doell
Terrence A. Finnegan	Eric Dzugan
	Brett Alan Horn
<u>10 years</u>	Pete Johnson
Don Graham	John O'hara
Robert S. Sapienza	Chuck Rae
Dr Regina Schulte-Ladbeck	George Renaldi
	Michael Skowron
	Keith H. Sueker
	Devon Yorkshire
	Julie Yorkshire

## A Lot Like the Telescopic Image

What color stands out when you view M42 in Orion? Green, of course. Larry McHenry used photoshop to adjust this digital video image of the famous stellar nursery.



## Something for Everyone at A. O. Lecture Series



The Smithsonian Institution to the left and as imaged with a gravitational lens to the right  
(from B. McLeod, CASTLES project)

by **Ann Norman**

“Probing the Universe with Quasars,” the first in a series of astronomy lectures to be held at Allegheny Observatory, drew a half-capacity crowd of eager laypersons, only three of whom I knew to be AAAP members.

From reading the advertisement of formidable-sounding topics I feared I would be crashing a party of astronomers presenting their inaccessible research to each other.

Nothing could be further from the truth. Professor David Turnshek of the University of Pittsburgh began his lecture with a 10-minute segment aimed specifically at kids, describing the dimensions of our galaxy and our place in it. After that, the twenty or so kids in attendance were escorted by the lecturer’s wife (AAAP member Diane Turnshek) to a nearby room for further activities--wild games, guessing from the cheerful screams and pounding of feet.

Then we were lead, step by step, through quasar research, starting from basic principles and ending up over my head, with plenty of fascinating, understandable stuff in between.

Quasars are the centers of active galaxies powered by supermassive black holes. We learned that background quasars are used to detect the gas surrounding foreground galaxies. Since these galaxies have different redshifts, we have observations of the state of gas and galaxies at different times in the past. From this collection, clues can be gleaned about the evolution of gas and galaxies, and of the large-scale structure of the universe, over time.

Also, in rare cases, quasars are gravitationally lensed by massive foreground objects, yielding information about the mass and shape of the, sometimes invisible, foreground object.

Everything was liberally illustrated with cool pictures like the set above, which illustrate how the image of the Smithsonian Institution would be distorted if a Saturn-sized black hole were placed in front of it.

*(continued at right)*

Perhaps the best part was a freewheeling question-and-answer session that included the following queries:

“How does that gravitational lensing work, again?”

“Does light have mass?”

“What if we live in a giant wormhole?”

“Does astronomy have any practical use? Why not devote the money to cancer research, instead?”

Every question was fielded nicely, including that last curveball. David Turnshek noted that hundreds of years ago people were burned at the stake for suggesting that other stars had planets around them. Now, thanks to ongoing astronomical research that is shared with the public, no one is tortured for believing such things.” (A very big practical benefit for amateur astronomers like ourselves!)

An audience member contributed his thoughts: “Why pay Tom Cruise 30 million dollars a movie? Because he provides great entertainment! If nothing else astronomy is great entertainment, as evidenced by the curious crowd here tonight. And astronomy provides a sense of wonder that goes beyond entertainment.”

For more wonderful entertainment, check the advertisement. Lectures are free and open to the public, but you must phone in your reservation. It’s like having two AAAP meetings a month!

The next lecture is January 17 at 7:30 at Allegheny Observatory. (Come early for refreshments at 7:00.) Professor George Gatewood of the University of Pittsburgh will talk about “Finding Planets Outside the Solar System.” (There are no plans for a children’s lecture this time.)

To see the schedule of upcoming topics go to [www.phyast.pitt.edu](http://www.phyast.pitt.edu). For reservations call AO at 412-321-2400.



## Those who never look up ... miss the **GREEN FIREBALL**

### FROM THE AAAP LISTSERVER

**Jerry Zhu:** At around 6:38 pm today [Dec 11 by the email], I was waiting in a car for traffic light in front of Carnegie museum when I saw a meteor in the west through windshield.

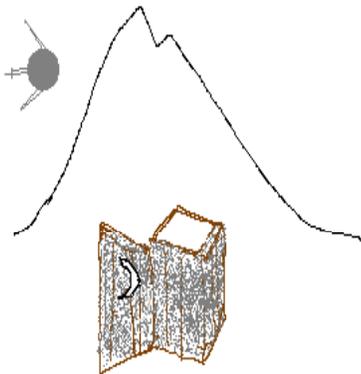
It started at around 30 degrees high (that's the cutoff of the windshield), traveling downwards and slightly to the right towards horizon, at a 'slow' pace. I estimate it took 3 to 5 seconds to get low enough to be hidden by buildings. It had a long tear drop shape; the head was quite large. Most significantly the head was shining brilliant green, while the rest of the teardrop was pale white. As it got low (about 10 to 5 degrees above the horizon), it broke into two parts. Both heads emitted bright green light.

The meteor was conspicuous despite all the streetlights. Its magnitude was definitely brighter than Venus, but less than the moon. Maybe -6 to -10. Sky was clear.

Might it be a Geminid Earthgrazer?

**John Holtz:** I saw this fireball as well. I was preparing for the grazing occultation near Butler/Saxonburg. The thing that struck me (mentally, not physically) was how it brightened like an Iridium flare, then subsided, and then broke into pieces.

## To Boldly Go!



### Compiled from the AAAP Listserver

A plaque was recently installed at the site of an outhouse in Fairbanks, Alaska, commemorating an important event in the history of armature astronomy. In October 6, 1957, Dexter Stegemeyer was sitting in the outhouse with the door open, when he noticed a spot of light cross the sky at slow, steady pace. Stegemeyer had become the first Westerner to sight Sputnik.

AAAPers digesting the news could hardly contain themselves.

**Tom Reiland** wonders,

- "Does this mean the door should be open at Wagman?"

**John Cheng** asks,

- "Will Dexter's be considered a semi-naked, naked-eye observation?"

(continued on page 9, column 1)

## How Many Different Obs. Have You Made?

by Eric Fischer

The other day I was cleaning up some papers and found several post-it notes I had written to mark notable observations (specifically, the last observation of Mir and the first observation of the ISS). This got me thinking "What have I and have I not seen in 40+ years of observing?" So I sat down and compiled a list of every different astronomical/celestial object or phenomena I have seen, plus stuff I have yet to observe. See how you have done with this list which, admittedly, will be more complete for us older observers ☺: (\*Things I have not

- Naked-eye sunspots
- Solar prominences
- Total solar eclipse
- Partial solar eclipse
- Annular Solar eclipse
- Merc./Venus transits of Sun\*
- Venus rise or set
- Venus at mid-day
- Total Lunar eclipse
- Partial Lunar Eclipse
- Penumbral Lunar Eclipse
- Earthshine on Moon
- Lunar libration\*
- Lunar occultation of star
- Lunar occultation of planet\*
- Lunar graze occultation\*
- Mars polar caps
- Phobos or Deimos\*
- Naked-eye asteroid
- Near-earth asteroid
- Visible-motion asteroid
- Jupiter's Great Red Spot
- All Jov. moons on one side\*
- Jovian shadow transit
- Multiple Jovian transits\*
- Jovian moon in/out shadow
- Jov. moon mutual occult\*
- Saturn's rings edge-on
- Shadow on Saturn's rings
- Star occulted by Sat. rings\*
- All of Sat's visible moons
- Any of Uranus' moons
- Any of Neptune's moons\*
- Pluto
- 2-planet conjunctions
- 3+ planet conjunctions
- Naked-eye comet
- Comet tail break-up
- Visible-motion comet
- Recognize all constellations\*
- Star in daylight
- Visual binary star
- Telescopic binary star
- Variable star at min/max
- Red (carbon) stars
- White dwarf
- Supernova
- Supernova remnant
- Naked-eye nova
- Telescopic nova
- Open cluster
- Globular cluster
- Star-forming nebula
- Planetary nebula
- Planetary neb. central star\*
- Face-on spiral galaxy
- Edge-on spiral galaxy
- Elliptical galaxy
- Irregular galaxy
- Galaxy cluster
- Quasar\*
- Meteor shower
- Meteor storm\*
- 2 meteors at same time
- Bolide
- Meteor with fragments
- Lingering meteor trail
- Daytime meteor
- Aurora Borealis
- Red or blue Aurora
- All-sky Aurora
- Daytime aurora\*
- "Green flash" of Sun
- Crepuscular rays
- Anti-crepuscular rays
- Solar halo
- Sun dogs
- Circum-zenith arc
- Tangential arc
- "Twilight Wedge"
- Double rainbow
- "Glory" (circle rainbow)
- Lunar halo
- Lunar corona
- Moon dogs
- Tumbling satellite
- Retrograde satellite
- Satellite into/out of shadow
- Close-staged satellites
- Reentering satellite\*
- Satellite propellant dump\*
- Geostationary satellite
- 2+ geosats in 1 field\*
- Geosat. in/out shadow\*
- Mir
- ISS
- Space shuttle
- ISS/shuttle in formation
- Shuttle water dump
- Shuttle with deployed sat.
- Hubble Space Telescope
- NOSS trio
- Iridium flare
- 2 Iridiums at same time\*
- Daylight Iridium\*
- Gravity-assist spacecraft\*

# January 2003

## Fridge Calendar by Cathy Rivi

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Your New Year's Resolutions here:			1 <b>A Happy New Year!</b>	2 	3	4
5	6 	7 Galileo Galilei discovers major moons of Jupiter, Jan. 7 & 10, 1610	8 Birthday of Steven Hawking, 1942, British theoretical astrophysicist	9	10 	11 William Herschel discovers Oberon and Titania in 1787.
12 	13	14 	15	16	17 AAAP Monthly Meeting Carnegie Science Center 7:30 p.m.	18 
19	20	21 Birthday of John Couch Adams, 1792 (predicted existence of Neptune)	22	23	24	25 
26	27 	28	29	30 	31 35 DAYS UNTIL WAGMAN WINTERFEST!	

Your astronomical goals for 2003 here:	<u>AAAP Long-Range Meeting Schedule</u>	
	Feb. 14	Sep. 12
	Mar. 14	Oct. 10
	Apr. 18	Nov. 7
	May 16	Dec. 5

## To Boldy Go....

*(continued from page 7)*

- Did Dexter speak with anyone while he was still flush with the excitement of discovery?"
- Will tourists be allowed to sit where Dexter sat?
- Will there be outhouses for the crowds who come to visit the Outhouse?
- Will the "THIS WAY TO THE OUTHOUSE" sign end up confusing tourists who need to use the facilities?"

**Dan Fundo** considers,

- " Will this lead to a new design in observatories, or will the design stink to high heaven?"
- What about the wind-breaking abilities of this design?
- Will the observatory only be used for observing crescent moons, or will full moons be observed too?"

**Don Shepherd** responds,

- "Full moons will only be observed while rising and setting.
- I wonder if the observer will wish for greater aperture..."

## Classifieds

**FOR SALE:** Unique telescope built at Brashear Center (Pgh. South Side): Wood tube Newtonian with cored 10-inch primary (probably f/6 or f/7). Includes secondary holder with blank and tool (plan was to complete a convex secondary for use as a Cassegrain). Base built of 2 x 6 lumber in shape of a 3-sided pyramid, about 6 ft. to 7ft. on each side at the bottom, with wheels on two corners, rising about 4-5 feet high. One edge carries polar axis of massive fork mount.

Fork constructed of 4" double-strength wall steel pipe and fittings, screw threaded tightly and then pinned to prevent movement. Massive double-ball bearings shrunk in place and moves, even after sitting for years, with silky smoothness. Everything bolted together with massive bolts; assembly will not shake or flex appreciably. Spider is installed with 1/2 by 13 bolts through the tube. Contact Flacc Stifel at 412-486-8067 or flaccs@nauticom.net.

**FOR SALE:** - Modified 17.5" f 4.5 Coulter Dobsonian/truss reflector. Contact Brent Hudock at [hooty@charter.net](mailto:hooty@charter.net).

**INFORMATION WANTED/REWARD OFFERED:** \$1000 for information leading to arrest and conviction of person or persons responsible for theft of Fujinon 10 x 70 binoculars from Tim Colbert's van. Identified by a home made aluminum "L" bracket tripod mount, deteriorated black case (fake leather). Contact Detective Mark Paganico Hampton Township Police at 412-961-0600 or 724-443-7844

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