

# SIDEREAL TIMES

The Official Publication of the  
Amateur Astronomers Association of Princeton

Director:  
Kirk Alexander

Treasurer:  
Pete Oppenheim

Program Chairman:  
Mark Lopez

Assistant Director:  
Ralph Marantino

Secretary:  
Bill Murray

Editor:  
Victor Belanger

Volume 31

May 2002

Number 5

## From the Director

**Tracking Our Own Stars** I am very much looking forward to the next meeting of the Amateur Astronomers Association of Princeton since a great tradition will be revived in force! For the first time in almost a year we will have a speaker from the club who will come to share with us his experiences. Bill Murray will come to talk with us about astrophotography. Bill is the club's CCD expert and has much to share with us about his experiences. He has worked with many different kinds of equipment and knows the ins and outs of our own observatory scopes. In June Bob Vanderbei will be following up with his version of this topic as our keynote speaker at Jersey StarQuest. I applaud not only that these guys are willing to share their time with us but the very nature of their experiences. In particular I have benefited from Mr. Vanderbei who is essentially a self-taught astronomer. You will learn how he decided to get into our great hobby and how piece-by-piece he built up both his array of equipment and his experience to the point where he can shoot outstanding astrophotos from the heart of New Jersey with only a 3.5" scope. Both of these CCD guru's have their work represented on our own website in the Gallery Section. Be sure to visit <http://www.princetonastronomy.org/>

During the same meeting we have another surprise in store for us and this I hope will become a tradition as well. Mr. Gene Ramsey decided that it was time to do a little spring-cleaning around his house. Fortunately for the AAAP Gene decided to clean up his Astronomy quarters in which he found a number of treasures. In typical generous Ramsey fashion Gene decided that rather than hock his wares on one of the astro-marts or action sites that now abound on the Internet he would prefer to donate his used equipment to members of the AAAP who might be on the look out for an eyepiece or diagonal. Gene hopes that his contributions will find their way into the hands of some of our newer members that may still be adding to their own treasure troves of astronomical junk gear!

Take a look at the front table when you arrive and talk to Gene about the items you find. Perhaps others who get the spring-cleaning fever can follow this example of good will.

One more note for the next meeting. It is time to vote for the next

Simpson Observatory (609) 737-2575

slate of officers. Our nominating committee will be presenting their slate of candidates and members will be asked to cast their votes during the regular business meeting following the astrophotography talks. However, if you don't see your name on the slate please feel free to talk with me about other opportunities to help out in the club. There are many tasks that can use new hands...and others that members have invented themselves. Maybe you would like to host a local school class or scout troop some evening or represent the AAAP on the radio? Anything is possible!

And keep an eye on the planets...there will be some special opportunities this month to see several at once. Happy Observing!

Kirk

## Jersey Starquest

For those seeking adventure, relaxation, and really dark skies, AAAP's annual Starquest is the place to find them. Taking place during the waxing of summer on June 7-9 the event unfolds in the heart of dairy farming land. The Hope Conference and Renewal Center, being surrounded by wooded thickets and two adjoining lakes is an ideal spot for some great fun. Having a spacious plateau with a wide view of the heavens the Hope Center provides a wonderful area to set up telescopes for some serious deep sky observing. So please come and enjoy! Take in a serene morning walk or an exciting kayak (you provide) trip down one of the two nearby rivers. Following the mid-day meal, leisurely laze in the center's swimming pool (lifeguard provided) and later take in an interesting and informative lecture. After a hearty dinner and after darkness has settled in, stargazing will swing into high gear. No worries if you do not own a telescope as there are many members who delight in sharing the images that lie in their eyepieces. For those interested in escaping to a land of beautiful vistas please fill out the registration form attached to this issue of the Sidereal Times. Detailed information and registration forms can be found at the AAAP web site:

<http://www.princetonastronomy.org/starquest2002.html>

If you have any questions please send them to the following e-mail address:

Anthony Monticello

Minutes of the  
Regular Meeting of the AAAP  
April 9, 2002

Program Chairman Mark Lopez called the meeting to order at 7:59 PM.

Mark then introduced the evening's speaker, Dr. J. Anthony Tyson of Bell Labs. The title of Dr. Tyson's talk was "The Large Synoptic Survey Telescope". The talk was well received.

In the absence of Director Kirk Alexander, Mark Lopez chaired the business meeting.

Nominations Chairman Rex Parker reported that he had successfully assembled a slate of candidates for the elections in May. The candidates for the 2002-3 term are:

|                  |                |
|------------------|----------------|
| Director         | Kirk Alexander |
| Asst. Director   | John Miller    |
| Program Chairman | Mark Lopez     |
| Treasurer        | Pete Oppenheim |
| Secretary        | Lisa Yeh       |

Nominations remain open until the May meeting when the election will take place. If you are interested in any of the above positions contact Rex.

A motion to accept the minutes from the March meeting was passed.

Treasurer Pete Oppenheim reported that the club currently has 152 members. The treasury balance is \$8,338.28.

Assistant Director Ralph Marantino had no report.

Program chairman Mark Lopez reported that he is working on finding a new speaker for Starquest, as Mike Peoples will be unable to make it there.

Observatory chairman Rex Parker reported that the club star party on Baldpate Mt. on April 6<sup>th</sup> had gone well. Fifteen club members and guests showed up and the night was clear (but cold). The site turned out to be very nice but there is no noticeable improvement in the sky glow problem. The site may be used in the future for club public events. A problem with the observatory gate at Washington Crossing has been resolved (the rangers had placed their lock on the gate hasp.). Gene Ramsey reported that the grass is growing on the new landscaping outside the observatory but will need to be watered. Rex reported that keyholder training for new keyholders would commence soon (on Thursday nights).

Membership chairman Saul Moroz had no report.

Sidereal Times Editor Vic Belanger noted that the procedure of sending PDF's of the Times to publisher Michele Novatski was working well. The deadline for the May issue of Sidereal Times would be Tuesday, April 30<sup>th</sup>.

Webmaster John Miller reported that there is a new "Features and Articles" section on the club website. This section contains the minutes of club meetings and articles submitted by members. Clicking on the Earth icon on the website's introductory page can access the new section.

Starquest chairman Anthony Monticello reported that 8 people have registered for Starquest so far. Larry Smith has agreed to

write an article about Starquest for the next issue of the Sidereal Times. Ralph reported that his daughter had finished the design for the Starquest T-shirt and submitted it for examination by the club. 50 shirts will be ordered (80% XL, 20% L with a few mediums). Pete Oppenheim will find out what the available colors are and report at the next meeting before a final decision will be made.

Secretary Bill Murray reported that there would be a special NASA sponsored International Space Station exhibit at the state planetarium on Saturday, May 4<sup>th</sup> and Sunday, May 5<sup>th</sup>. He asked for volunteers to do solar observing from 10 AM to 2 PM on those days.

There will be a board meeting at Kirk's new office in Frist Hall on Thursday, May 2<sup>nd</sup> at 7 PM.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:53 PM.

Bill Murray, Secretary

---

### From The Program Chairman

We are in for a real astronomical treat this month. Our very own secretary, Bill Murray, will be giving a presentation of some of his best CCD imaging in a talk he has titled "Amateur CCD Imaging and the Tricks of the Trade". Bill's interest in astronomy goes back to his early teens and he has been a member of the AAAP for 16 years. During this time, he has served as Director, Assistant Director, Program Chairman, Observatory Chairman, Starquest Chairman, and Publisher of the Sidereal Times.

Bill graduated from Iona College with a degree in Physics and Mathematics and he has been employed as a software engineer for eighteen years in the field of electron optics at Sarnoff Corporation in Princeton, NJ. He is also a part-time console operator at the NJ State Museum Planetarium in Trenton, NJ. In addition to his very active role in the AAAP, Bill is also a member of the Princeton University OSETI group and the Minor Planet Search Team. Both are located at the Fitzrandolph Observatory.

Treat yourself to a preview of Bill's handiwork by visiting the AAAP website at [www.princetonastronomy.org](http://www.princetonastronomy.org). You will experience breathtaking images of NGC4565, M27 (Dumbbell Nebula), M57 (Ring Nebula), M1 (Crab Nebula) and M15 (Globular Cluster in Pegasus), just to name a few. These examples should wet your appetite for more of Bill's celestial images. The best way to satisfy this appetite is to come to the next meeting and experience more of Bill's handiwork and share in his vast knowledge of astronomy and CCD imaging. In my experience, Bill is one of the most knowledgeable amateur astronomers that I have had the pleasure to know and he is also a very nice guy. By attending the meeting on Tuesday, May 14, you will have an excellent opportunity to get to know Bill. An even better way for you to become more familiar with our guest speaker would be to attend the pre-meeting dinner. Join your fellow AAAP members for some good food and even better comradeship and conversation. As before, the dinner will be held at the Annex Restaurant, 128 1/2 Nassau St., at 6:00 PM. If you would like to join us, and I hope that you do, just telephone me at \_\_\_\_\_ or email me at \_\_\_\_\_ I look forward to seeing you there.

Mark Lopez

# Simpson Observatory

## 2002 Duty Roster and Public Nights Schedule

### Weather Policy

- a. On scheduled public nights the observatory will be open for the scheduled public nights when the skies are clear, partly clear, or partly cloudy.
- b. When the sky conditions are uncertain, it is the responsibility of the team-members to phone the team leader to decide on the evening's status.

### Absences and Substitution Policy

- a. If you know in advance that you will be unavailable for a duty night, arrange in advance for your own substitution.
- b. If last minute events prevent your attendance on a duty night, it is your responsibility to contact the team leader before dark.

### Keyholder Duty Roster

#### Team 1

Kirk Alexander \*  
 Gene Ramsey  
 Darryl Foyuth  
 Pete Oppenheim  
 Peter Fireman

#### Team 2

Vic Belanger \*  
 Chris Moser  
 Greg Mauro  
 Rich Armington

#### Team 3

Bill Murray \*  
 Tim Young  
 Pavel Studenkov

John Miller  
 Steve Kescses

#### Team 4

Ralph Marantino \*  
 Saul Moroz  
 Bill Fesio  
 Don Monticello

#### Team 5

Ron Mittelstaedt \*  
 George Walker  
 Mark Lopez  
 Larry Smith

#### Team 6

Rex Parker \*  
 Mark Jaworsky  
 Nick Hillman  
 Manick Rajendran

\* Team Leader

---

### From the Treasurer

Welcome to three new members, Jack Gelfand, Frederick Potzer and Douglas Braun. This brings out total membership up to 153. The treasury balance stands at \$8,336.00. **Be sure to check your Sidereal Times mailing label for your membership expiration date and keep your membership current!**

Basic AAAP membership is \$30 per year. \$60 includes a one-year membership and a one-year subscription to either Sky and Telescope or Astronomy Magazine. Both magazines with membership is \$90. Renewing members should include their magazine renewal form with their payment. Checks should be made payable to Amateur Astronomers Association of Princeton and mailed to P.O. Box 2017, Princeton, NJ 08543.

Pete Oppenheim

### 2002 Observatory Public Night Schedule

| <u>Team</u> | <u>Cycle 1</u> | <u>Cycle 2</u> | <u>Cycle 3</u> | <u>Cycle 4</u> | <u>Cycle 5</u> |
|-------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| 1           |                | 3-29-02        | 5-24-02        | 8-2-02         | 10-18-02       |
| 2           |                | 4-05-02        | 5-31-02        | 8-30-02        | 10-25-02       |
| 3           |                | 4-26-02        | 6-7-02         | 9-6-02         | 11-01-02       |
| 4           |                | 5-3-02         | 6-28-02        | 9-27-01        |                |
| 5           |                | 5-10-02        | 7-5-02         | 10-4-02        |                |
| 6           | 3-1-02         | 5-17-02        | 7-26-02        | 10-11-02       |                |

### Important phone numbers

|                                       |          |
|---------------------------------------|----------|
| AAAP Observatory                      | 737-2575 |
| Observatory Chairman: Rex Parker      | 730-0670 |
| Wash Crossing State Park HQ           | 737-0623 |
| Wash Crossing Park Ranger after-hours | 292-7172 |

THE AMATEUR ASTRONOMERS ASSOCIATION OF PRINCETON

PRESENTS THE 13<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL  
**JERSEY STARQUEST**

Held at the Hope Conference and Renewal Center, Hope, NJ (908) 459-4435  
Beginning at 5 PM Friday, June 7<sup>th</sup>, 2002 and running through 12 PM Sunday, June 9<sup>th</sup>  
(Friday dinner, 6:30-7:30, food will be available for late arrivals)

**Please note:** This event will take place regardless of the weather conditions!

*Featuring*

Stargazing at an amazing, dark sky location  
AAAP sponsored "Deep Sky Observing" contest  
Free space available for astronomical swap meet  
Indoor cabin accommodations (First come, first served)  
Ample space for camping & RV's  
Hot showers for all  
Five catered meals  
Raffle & Door prizes

*Scheduled Lecture Program*

Prominent Experts will conduct Saturday afternoon seminars.  
A keynote speaker will address the group after Saturday night dinner.

*Other Planned Activities Include*

Solar Observing  
Demonstration of Laser Collimating  
Field Trip to AAAP Observatory at Jenny Jump  
CCD Demonstration

*Plus*

Swimming (life guards provided), Fishing, Volleyball, Basketball, Hiking, Game room  
Boating on two lakes adjacent to property, and on the nearby  
Pequest, and Paulins Kill rivers-- bring your own kayak or canoe.

*Registration Fees*

Camping and RV -- \$35.00 per person (\$45 after May 24<sup>th</sup>)  
Bunkhouse -- \$45.00 per person (\$55 after May 24<sup>th</sup>)  
Family Registration Discount -- After 2<sup>nd</sup> paying family member, subtract \$5.00 per child, 6-12  
Children under 6 years of age -- Free

*Meals*

(Friday dinner, Saturday breakfast, lunch, and dinner, Sunday breakfast)  
(Friday dinner, 6:30-7:30, food will be available for late arrivals)  
Adult -- \$33.00 per person  
Child (ages 6 -- 12) -- \$18.00 per person  
Children under 6 years of age -- Free

Please send the registration form and your check or money order (payable to AAAP) to:

Jersey Starquest Registration

Need more information? Send email to Anthony Monticello at

## JERSEY STARQUEST REGISTRATION FORM

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL (will be used for registration confirmation) \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_

CLUB \_\_\_\_\_

TOTAL NUMBER OF ADULTS IN YOUR PARTY? \_\_\_\_\_

TOTAL NUMBER OF CHILDREN (Ages 6 – 12)? \_\_\_\_\_

TOTAL NUMBER OF CHILDREN UNDER 6 YEARS OLD? \_\_\_\_\_

### ACCOMMODATION PREFERENCE(S):

INDOOR \_\_\_\_\_ TENT \_\_\_\_\_ RV \_\_\_\_\_

Would you like to enter into a "Deep Sky Observing" contest? \_\_\_\_\_

Will you need space to set up an astronomical swap table? \_\_\_\_\_

### FEES:

(No charge for children under 6 years of age)

|   |               |                                 |
|---|---------------|---------------------------------|
| Registration (per person)   | \$35.00 _____ | (camping or RV)                 |
|   | \$45.00 _____ | (bunkhouse)                     |
|   | \$10.00 _____ | (late fee <b>after May 24</b> ) |
| Meals (Adult)   | \$33.00 _____ |                                 |
| Meals (Child, ages 6 – 12)  | \$18.00 _____ |                                 |
| FAMILY DISCOUNT<br>(after 2 <sup>nd</sup> paying family member, per child 6-12) | -\$5.00 _____ |                                 |

TOTAL ENCLOSED \_\_\_\_\_

Please send completed registration form and your check or money order (payable to AAAP) to:

Need more information? Send email to Anthony Monticello

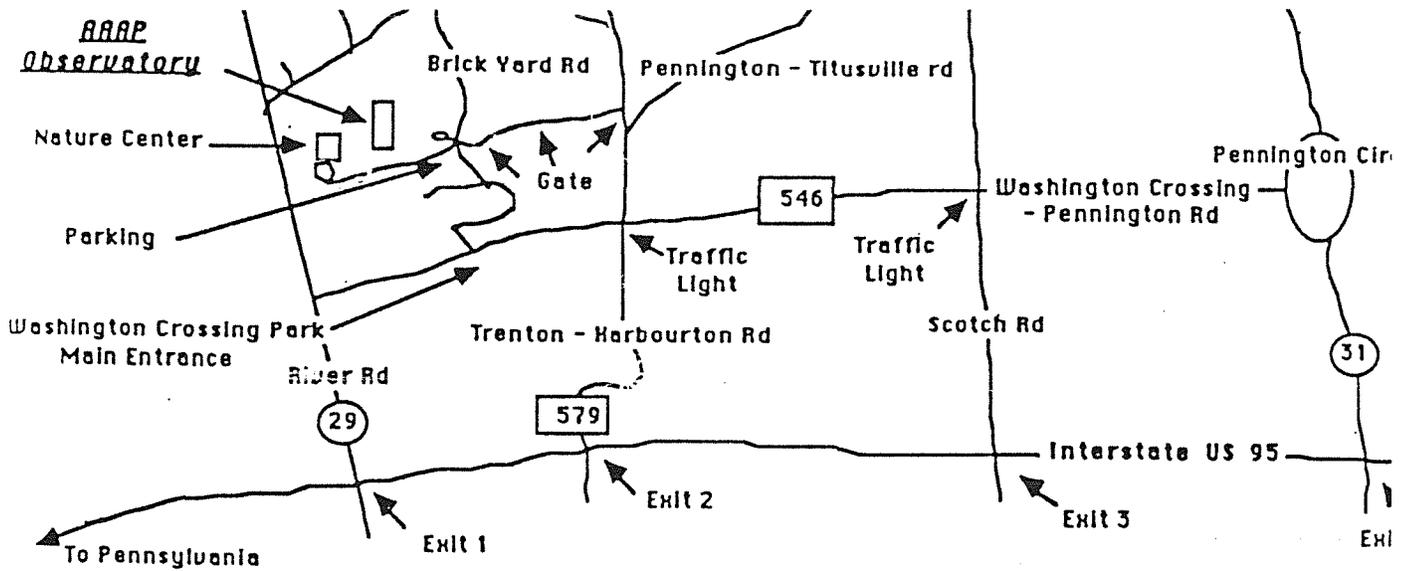
**IMPORTANT – Registration Deadline is May 24, 2002**

**Please Note** – Pets are not permitted at the site.

This event will be held regardless of the weather conditions.

**Sorry -- No Refunds for Cancellations received after May 24, 2002.**

Thurs by 10



The best way to get to the observatory is to take Interstate 95 South towards Pennsylvania. Then take Scotch road at Exit 3 and proceed north (this amounts to right). Then, at the third traffic light take a left onto the Washington Crossing-Pennington road (County Route 546). Take this road to the first traffic light and take a right onto Trenton-Harbourton road (County Route 579). Take this road to the first driveway on the left, this is the Phillips Farm/Soccer Field entrance to the park. There is a series of three gates with club combination locks. If the gates are not open, you will need the lock combination to open the gate or be accompanied by a Keyholder member.

Amateur Astronomers'  
 Association of Princeton  
 PO Box 2017  
 Princeton, NJ 08543

May 2002



See us on the Web: [www.princetonastronomy.org](http://www.princetonastronomy.org)

